

*The*  
**FREETHINKER**

FOUNDED • 1881

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

Vol. LI.—No. 45

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1931

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Society and Religion.—The Editor</i> - - -	605
<i>The Way to Dusty Death.—Mimnermus</i> - - -	707
<i>When Christianity Reign'd.—W. Mann</i> - - -	707
<i>The Holy: The Inveterate Bane of Mankind.—Keridon</i>	709
<i>The Materialistic View of Existence.—G. H. Taylor</i> -	714
<i>Holy Shop.—C. R. Boyd Freeman</i> - - -	715
<i>The Young Christian.—A.H.</i> - - -	717

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

Views and Opinions.

**Society and Religion.**

LAST week we were dealing with a letter from a correspondent in Vienna, who argued that (1) religion was essential to capitalism; (2) that as Freethought was destroying religion it was helping to destroy capitalism; (3) that, therefore, Freethought could not but make for Socialism so far as it succeeded in its aim of destroying religion. To these statements I urged that religion is no more essential to capitalism than it is to any other theory, that in destroying the influence of supernaturalism Freethought was carrying out its historic function as serving as a critical solvent with reference to all established ideas and institutions, and that any social theory, whether capitalistic, socialistic, or other that was not based on a belief in God or on some form of supernaturalism was essentially an atheistic system. They are atheistic as science is atheistic, they are mixed up with religion either because of the timidity that fears to run counter to established religious beliefs, or from sheer muddled thinking. I also agreed with the writer of the letter when he said that religion under capitalism was used as a "dope," only I added the proviso that religion had been so used under other than capitalistic systems, and might even be used in that way under Socialism. And, as a matter of fact, Socialistic and Communistic communities have been established on an avowedly religious basis and have passed away from causes that were not connected with religion.

\* \* \*

**Vested Interest and Religion.**

Let us try and get down to bottom facts. It is quite clear that religion does not arise out of capitalism, and therefore is in no wise dependent upon capitalism for its existence. Religion begins in the very earliest stages of human society, and from one point of view represents a method by means of which

man adjusts himself to the ghostly powers by which he believes he is surrounded. And like every other conscious or semi-conscious adjustment, this afterwards becomes crystalized in institutions—notably that of the priesthood. From that stage, and setting on one side other aspects, we may regard religion as being one of the means by which certain habits, customs and beliefs are conserved. Fear of social disaster that will follow offence to the gods, serves naturally to protect the vested interests that are built up around religion—not merely financial or material interests, but the interests of place and power and prestige. Every one who studies early society and who can see through form to reality cannot avoid recognizing the degree to which this is the case. It is not merely in the later stages of social evolution, and for a particular type of society that religion is used as a "dope" which serves to maintain the *status quo*. It does this in every stage; unconsciously in the earlier stages, more consciously in the later ones.

But to say this is not to identify the force of religion with any one social form. It may be used in connexion with any and every social form, although there are some forms that naturally lend themselves more readily to the influence of religion than do others. For the real generalization is not that religion is necessary to capitalism, but that it may be used as a "dope" to conserve any kind of power or vested interest. The religion which forbids breaking the taboo associated with the primitive tribal ruler, slips into the religion that makes it a sin to revolt against the king; that may give way to the sin of revolt against the Government of the day, or of uprooting an established institution. But always and everywhere religion serves as a force which fights against change, and which "dopes" the people in the name of God to the extent of regarding the revolutionist and the reformer as the deadly enemy of society. Religion makes for the conservation of power, and it does not matter in the least what kind of power is conserved, so long as it is not a power that wars directly with the vested interest that lives under the name of religion. Religion was as great a supporter of serfdom as it is to-day of capitalism. And it would support Socialism just as heartily, provided it was a form of Socialism that did not make war on religion.

\* \* \*

**Dope.**

Blindness to this somewhat obvious fact is due, I believe, to our living in a state of society where the ruling class use religion as a "dope" to protect its interests. But what reason have we to believe that if the existing form of society were not what it is there would of necessity be any less use of religion than there is at present? Or if not religion, of some other form of "dope" that would be used to the same



end? For the moment, Mussolini uses the Christian Church as it has always been used. But everyone knows that for a time he imagined he could fight the Church, and only compromised when he saw the probability of defeat. And even if the result had been otherwise, would there have been any substantial difference between the "dope" of the "State" in Italy and the dope of the Christian religion? Or in Russia? Is there any difference in principle between the use of the magic word "State" or even "Proletariat," and that of "In the name of God!" In each case unquestioning obedience is demanded; in each instance rebellion is treated as a sin, and in each case we have developed the same fundamental type of mind. The aim of the ruling "dope" is beside the point; the fact that in one set of circumstances the "dope" is not so lasting in its effects, is beside the point. The central fact is that we are putting certain conceptions to the same use that the religious conception was put to. We have a governing class seeking to perpetuate its rule by what is essentially the same method. It is the persistence of the religious type of mind that is seen, and, as I have so often said, it is not merely religious belief and religious doctrine that we must kill, but the religious type of mentality in both science and sociology. I agree that in the absence of the Christian theology it would not be necessary to send deputations to Parliament asking for the suppression of the Blasphemy Laws. But there might, if the religious type rules in politics, be a need to send a body of determined men to Parliament who were resolved that limits should be placed to the deification of the State, the Government, or the Proletariat. An established power that can neither be questioned nor peaceably removed is a threat to the highest interests of civilization.

\* \* \*

#### Religion the Enemy.

I quite agree that so far as we desire to modify or completely change the existing state of society we must fight religion. I have taught this all my life, and have done so because I have always realized that religion was one of the forces that made for stagnation and retrogression, and the religious type of mind a terrible obstacle to reasonable and progressive reform. For I do not regard any social state, or any social reform as final. The best can only be a step towards something better, and if it is not that then it is nothing. Even the achievement of a new set of conditions will operate towards making a still newer set which will in turn make a still further advance necessary. Moreover, it is extremely likely that whatever be the form which is to succeed the present social structure we shall find the religion in use a little more tolerant than is the present one, and the religiously mental type prevalent a little weaker than the present one. And that will be because every reform accustoms men's minds to the fact of change, and demonstrates also that every social institution requires overhauling from time to time, with either modification or removal. In this direction we need to get back to the standpoint of the ancient Greeks with whom every social form was frankly an experiment, the sole test of which was whether it produced results that were beneficial, or desirable, to those living under it. Not the least of the ill-services done by Christian society, as it exists, is having a "divine" origin, and making the act of revolt a sin against God.

\* \* \*

#### Above the Storm.

Finally, I suggest to those who are intelligently interested in social development, as well as a further

justification of the standpoint of the N.S.S. and of the *Freethinker*, that it is all to the good that there shall exist in this country a movement which shall keep clear of what is called "practical politics"—so often the least practical of things, and emphasize the importance of first principles in considering social changes. The recent election is surely an example of this need. All but those who are incapable of sane political thinking, or who are not blinded by party interest, must have viewed the conduct of the campaign with misgiving. On all sides it was evident that political parties operate on the principle that the decisive vote is to be given by the unthinking, the hysterical, the generally ill-balanced. Whatever the result, it has certainly emphasized the desirability of having in our midst a body of opinion which shall stand for the advocacy of those considered principles which must determine action if that action is to yield profitable consequences. By all means let us bring home to people the fact that they have been the dupes of a religious system that has for many generations played the game of vested interests, both social and religious. That must, indeed, be the first condition of reform. But that should be but the preliminary to the work of clearing away the theological type of thinking, and to prevent its rebirth under the camouflage of a system of economics. The power and development of science has been entirely due to the cultivation of the right type of mind, and it is certainly not less useful in sociology. In the early years of the war, when every attempt was being made to reduce the people to mere automatons, to be moved this way or that way by an official order, I said that what the people had to make up their minds was whether they wished to kill Prussianism, or were merely envious of it, and desired its annexation. Results proved that it was the latter that was aimed at, and the whole world is now feeling the ill-consequences of it. So we must make up our minds whether we desire a society of men and women with one type of mind, and all repeating the same things, or whether we shall aim at creating a society in which there shall not only be the widest diversity of opinion on every subject, but in which this shall be regarded as highly desirable. That seems the choice set before the world to-day. Naturally we all strive for the triumph of our own pet theories, but to the genuinely scientific sociologist that triumph may be purchased at such a price as to lead to ever recurring disaster.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

---

#### Syren.

---

COME down to earth; forsake the dizzy height;  
 Seek my soft arms, sure haven of delight;  
 On my broad bosom rest thy weary head;  
 Let thy stiff limbs relax on my soft bed;  
 And rest thine eyes in this well-shaded light.  
 I will watch o'er thee as Niobe might  
 Her children twelve: no noise shall thee afright  
 In this secluded spot whence strife is fled.  
 Come down to earth.

When near the sun Icarus took his flight  
 And fell in ruins, like a broken kite,  
 The little nymph who found him, it is said,  
 Knelt by his side and whispered to the dead:  
 "Hadst thou not soared thou wouldst not in this plight  
 Come down to earth."

BAYARD SIMMONS.



## The Way to Dusty Death.

"We are such stuff

As dreams are made of, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep."—*Shakespeare.*

"Why should we fear death? For where death is,  
there are we not; and where we are, there death is not."  
*Epictetus.*

"If we'd think of death as the hand of nature, it'd be no worse than lying down to sleep in a corn-field. It's when the parsons trick out a natural process with all sorts of common regalia like heaven and hell that it becomes something to fear." This quotation from Aloysius Horn gives terse expression to the opinion that, but for priests, death would have no terrors; they have made death terrible for their own sorry ends.

Priests cannot escape from this accusation. Christian priests for two thousand years have threatened the flames of hell to sinners and saints alike. In still earlier times the priests of older superstitions relied as much upon this lever of fear. During the Middle Ages all the terrors that theology could gather from savage nations were added to increase the horrors. Never has death been the cause of such craven timidity as in the Christian world. To visionaries like Catherine of Siena or Emanuel Swedenborg, it may have been different, but to the uncultured, uneducated masses of Christian countries death has been, and is, the king of terrors, from whose approach they cower in an agony which Marcus Aurelius and Socrates would have scorned. The great Pagans invested death with dignity, but Christians fear death as children fear to go more in the dark.

This sensibility to the fear of death, and also of pain, has increased instead of decreased among the dwellers in the great cities. Fear of death scarcely exists among Asiatics, because, living in the open, their experience tells them that death and life are ever entwined in mastery; that the victorious soldier of to-day is the corpse of to-morrow. Under Asiatic skies death is regarded as no less benign than birth, and the shadowy figure with the scythe is not to be feared as an enemy. Inhabitants of towns necessarily acquire their knowledge of nature from books, or from superficial and fleeting observation. For five months in every year nature is represented in the towns by fog, rain, and snow, and the necessity for fires and artificial lighting. Dwellers in mean streets have no chance of meditating on the rigid processes of natural law, and are the ready prey of priestly charlatans.

The clergy artfully and of set purpose exploit this ignorance. Death is, according to these pastors and masters, the "king of terrors." They heighten the effect by appealing to the fears of their hearers, and use an imaginary devil and his fireworks as a lever. The terror such stories inspire is largely owing to the very innocence of the audience. Men fear it, like children, through not knowing what it is. The fear of the night can be dissipated by a little light. Death would be no bugbear if it were known better. And nobody is there to tell people, except a small number of devoted Freethinkers, who are anathema to all the churches of Christendom. The sermons from the clergy, archaic in thought and inflated with nonsense, deal in the grossest exaggerations and tergiversations "The wages of sin is death," is their quaint idea of wisdom. Priests are hopelessly out of touch with modern man and common sense. Hence the churches are emptying of congregations. The "cure of souls" is passing into the physician's hands with the care of the body.

Nature, unlike the priests, is merciful. She takes precautions that our lives shall not be darkened by constant fear of death. When we are young death seems distant and incredible, and when we are old it shall not seem unwelcome. "To cease upon the midnight with no pain," is felicity and not horrors upon horror's head. Nature has a use for us, but when this has been accomplished she hurries us away. Such are the terms of our bargain, and nature has the last word.

This is not a counsel of perfection. It is, in fact, just what Marcus Aurelius, Plato, Epictetus, and the Stoics thought, and they regarded death with indifference. Death to them was regarded as the work of Nature, and to be afraid of what is natural simply childish folly. Modern science shows that the Freethinkers are right. For example, the pains of death are non-existent, for where death takes a man he is beyond feeling. Indeed, as thousands of poets have sung, death is a sleep. Many will agree with Sancho Panza that sleep is one of the greatest pleasures of life, rest for the weary, food for the hungry. Priests claim that the king of terrors can only be encountered by aid of their faith. Yet modern Japanese have as great a contempt of life as the old Greeks and Romans. As a truth, the clergy, for their own base ends, have harped upon the terrors of death.

The constant harping on death, the gloating on hell, is but priestly stock-in-trade. Death is the universal law of Nature, which befalls all living beings, though the vast majority encounter it sooner than man. The terror of death is now slowly passing away, because the Christian religion is decaying. Priests are no longer believed as implicitly as in the dark ages of Faith, when their power was so predominant that merely to challenge their lies meant a cruel death and an immortality of infamy.

MIMNERMUS.

## When Christianity Reigned.

"For thou didst groan, not weep,  
When from its sea of death to kill and burn,  
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,  
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap."  
*Shelley. "Ode to Liberty."*

"Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world  
has grown grey from thy breath."

*Swinburne... "Hymn to Proserpine."*

"The Cross as the rallying sign for the most subter-  
ranean conspiracy that has ever existed—against  
healthiness, beauty, well-constitutedness, courage, intel-  
lect, benevolence of soul, against life itself."

*Nietzsche. "The Antichrist," p. 353.*

If we listen to the pulpit testimonies to Christianity, or read the popular expositions of its defenders and apologists, we find that the greatest virtue claimed for it is its unselfishness. It is claimed to be the religion *par excellence* of altruism. In sober truth it is the most utterly selfish religion the world has known. It is in this very respect that Christianity differed from Paganism. The Pagan's thoughts and ambitions were centred on this world, and this life. He was proud of the Empire. He was proud of his town, or city, and when he made money he spent it lavishly to make them great and beautiful for the benefit of all, as Sir Samuel Dill has so well shown, in that fine historical work, a classic of Roman history: *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*. Sir C. P. Lucas has observed: "Christianity was the very opposite of the Roman religion. It made itself felt in the Roman Empire, as the religion of the individual



not of the State, and thus as Professor Bury points out, it operated as a dissolvent force in the Empire."<sup>1</sup>

Christianity centred men's attention on the individual; the soul and its fortunes beyond the grave. Earthly affairs lost all their value. In fact they were a clog and a hindrance to the spiritual life, and distracted a man's thoughts from heavenly things.

Lecky says of the early Christians, under the Roman Empire: "It was at once their confession and their boast, that no interests were more indifferent to them than those of their country." And further:—

Their home and their interests were in another world, and, provided only they were unmolested in their workshop they avowed with frankness, long after the Empire had become Christian, that it was a matter of indifference to them under what rule they lived. Asceticism, drawing all the enthusiasm of Christendom to the desert life, and elevating as an ideal the extreme and absolute abnegation of all patriotism, formed the culmination of the movement, and was undoubtedly one cause of the downfall of the Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup>

In confirmation of this view, Lecky cites the testimony of that Church of England historian, Dean Milman, as follows: "According to the monastic view of Christianity, the total abandonment of the world, with all its ties and duties, as well as its treasures, its enjoyments, and objects of ambition, advanced rather than diminished the hopes of salvation. Why should they fight for a perishing world, from which it was better to be estranged?"<sup>3</sup> How different from the Roman ideal:—

"Then none was for a party;  
Then all were for the State;  
Then the great man helped the poor,  
And the poor man loved the great:  
Then lands were fairly portioned;  
Then spoils were fairly sold:  
The Romans were like brothers  
In the brave days of old."<sup>4</sup>

Wherever Christianity has attained to complete ascendancy, in a State, it has proved to be a curse. The Middle Ages, which succeeded the fall of the Roman Empire, and lasted a thousand years, were the Ages of Faith, Christian Faith; when all Europe knelt at the foot of the Cross. Its greatest achievement was the launching of the Crusades, or Holy Wars, to recover the tomb of Christ, which lasted for two hundred years, and drained Europe of men and money, besides causing unutterable misery. "Taking them broadly," says Cotter Morison, "the Ages of Faith were emphatically ages of crime, of gross and scandalous wickedness, of cruelty, and, in a word, of immorality. And it is noteworthy that in proportion as we recede backward from the present age, and return into the Ages of Faith, we find that the crime and the sin become denser and blacker."<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the people were fanatically religious.

The rule of the Presbyterians in Scotland, during the seventeenth century; is described by Buckle, as: "one of the most detestable tyrannies ever seen on earth? When the Scotch Kirk was at the height of its power, we may search in vain for any institution which can compete with it, except the Spanish Inquisition. Between these two there is a close and intimate analogy. Both were intolerant, both were cruel, both made war upon the finest parts of human nature, and both destroyed every vestige of religious freedom."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir C. P. Lucas: *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky: *History of European Morals*, Vol. II., p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> Milman: *Latin Christianity*, Vol. II., p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> Macaulay: "Horatius," in *Lays of Ancient Rome*.

<sup>5</sup> Cotter Morison: *The Service of Man*, p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> Buckle: *History of Civilization in England*, p. 790. (Ed. 1904.)

"That is how practical Christianity—concentrating on saving the soul—whether it is Catholic or Protestant; in the first century or the seventeenth, always works out when it obtains control of the government.

Take again the reign of the Puritans over England during the Commonwealth. So intolerable did the Puritans render their brief term of power, by the suppression of even the most innocent amusements; that upon its overthrow, at the Restoration of Charles II., there was such an explosion of popular relief and joy, as was never experienced upon the overthrow of a government in this country, either before or since; and was succeeded by a debauch of licentiousness surpassing all previous records. The passions so sternly repressed under Puritan rule, says Macaulay: "broke forth with ungovernable violence as soon as the check was withdrawn. Men flew to frivolous amusements and to criminal pleasures with the greediness which long and enforced abstinence naturally produces."<sup>7</sup> As he, elsewhere, pungently remarks, "the training of the Puritans ended in the reign of the harlots."<sup>8</sup>

The great evangelical revival under Wesley and Whitefield, in the eighteenth century, so belauded by the Nonconformists, was quite as bad, although, fortunately, the evangelicals never succeeded in seizing the reins of government. We are still suffering from their influence, for as Lecky rightly observes:—

To the strength of Methodist and Evangelical opinion is mainly due the strange anomaly that, at the present day, after nearly fifty years of almost uninterrupted democratic legislation, the great majority of public museums and picture galleries in England are closed on the only day on which the bulk of the people could enjoy them. The working classes have thus been deprived of a source of amusement and instruction of pre-eminent value, and the public-houses of their most formidable competitors.<sup>9</sup>

Although fifty years have passed since that was written, yet it is still largely true of to-day. Every Cinema that opens on Sunday is breaking the law, and although the Government dare not enforce the law, yet they have not the moral courage to repeal this obsolete act, for fear of losing sabbatarian votes.

Of Wilberforce, one of the greatest Evangelical heroes, the Hammonds tell us that the humanitarians who were with great courage and public spirit, exposing abuses and pleading the case of the lower classes: "at every step they found Wilberforce resisting them and throwing the cloak of his character for independence and moral singleness of purpose over every species of oppression."<sup>10</sup> Cobbett, in 1824, declared that "the bitterest foes of freedom in England have been, and are, the Methodists. Amongst the people of the north they have served as spies and blood-money men."<sup>11</sup>

But what had Christianity to do with freedom, or humanitarianism? The Methodists were out to save souls, not bodies: "The Methodist movement was a call not for citizens but for saints: not for vigorous, still less violent redress of injustice, but for the ecstatic vision." And indeed: "The early history of the Primitive Methodist connexion reads like the history of the Early Christians in its isolation from the world and its expectation of an imminent day of judgment." (pp. 282-283.) As the same historians point out:—

The Trade Union Movement made loyalty to a

<sup>7</sup> Macaulay: *History of England*, p. 47. (Ed. 1907.)

<sup>8</sup> Macaulay: *Essays*, p. 114 (Ed. 1883.)

<sup>9</sup> Lecky: *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. III., p. 152.

<sup>10</sup> J. L. and Barbara Hammond: *The Town Labourer*, p. 244.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.



class a virtue, teaching men and women to think of themselves as the citizens of a community struggling to be free. The Methodist movement had just the opposite effect. It preached an intense spiritual individualism. It taught men and women to think of themselves, not as members of a society with common interests, common hopes, common wrongs, but as individual and separate souls, certain to suffer eternal damnation unless they could attain by a sudden spring of the heart a victorious sense of pardon and escape from sin.<sup>12</sup>

In consequence: "It diverted energy from the class struggle at a time when wise energy was scarce, and money when money was still scarcer." (p. 285.) The Evangelical Revival, with its fiery gospel of hell-fire and judgment-day, stampeded thousands of workmen into the gospel net, and even to-day many of their leaders are still under the spell. The intelligent Freethinking workers see with disgust some of their leaders, either from stupidity or expedience, on their knees before the Cross. The workers of France and Germany gaze on with perplexed amazement, while to those in Russia, these leaders appear, at the best, as fit objects for contempt and derision. At the worst, as traitors and hypocrites.

Let them take heed to the warning of Professor Clifford, who denounced Christianity as: "a system that had already destroyed two civilizations" and declared: "The system, if it should ever return to power, must be expected to produce worse evils than those which it has worked in the past. The house which it once made desolate has been partially swept and garnished by the free play gained for the natural goodness of men. It would come back accompanied by social diseases perhaps worse than itself, and the wreck of civilized Europe would be darker than the darkest of past ages."<sup>13</sup>

W. MANN.

## The Holy: The Inveterate Bane of Mankind.

(Concluded from page 678.)

### THE HELL DOGMA.

"Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire  
Where poisonous and undying worms prolong  
Eternal misery to those hapless slaves  
Whose life has been a penance for its crimes."  
Shelley.

To realize what an ineffable curse the "holy" has been to mankind we must consider the cardinal dogma of the Christian creed, to wit, its Hell.

The hell-dogma is not only the most revolting conception ever conceived by man, it is the acme of the infinitely grotesque and of the irremediably impossible. And yet under the ban of taboo it influenced mankind more desecrately than the rest of the Christian creed.

To begin with, it implies the capacity of feeling pain or agony by a gratuitous disembodied entity which possess not a vestige of sense-organs which universal experience has shown to be inseparable concomitants of all mental states and activity. The gratuitous assumption belies, without an iota of evidence, the absolutely universal experience of the race.

Such assumptions were common to primitive man before a trace of the most rudimentary knowledge of physiology was known. The tomb of Tutankhamen was provided with food and other requisites, all material in kind, for the supposed needs of his soul

in the spirit world. Such policy and practice was not considered at all absurd in the pre-scientific world.

The facts of physiology were then as unknown as are the objects of a landscape invisible, on a pitch dark night. But a dogma that now assumes such fantastic ideas in the noon-day light of the twentieth century is the quintessence of the absurd to every person whose reason has not been narcotized by priestcraft during childhood.

To prevent the hellish dogma from being found out and exposed by the mind in its true character, it was placed like all other dogmas under the ban of taboo which forbids reason touching it.

Moreover the dogma is not only absurd but ferocious. Its atrocity is equal to its absurdity. It has singled out the most excruciating of human agonies—the sensation of burning.

The selection was purposive with a definite objective—to serve as a menace for terrorizing the masses steeped in ignorance and superstition to accepting the Christian creed. It was this very dogma that established Christianity as a new world-religion (may the shade of the immortal Gibbon pardon me). For the Church made disbelief of this very dogma a crime heinous enough to merit the punishment expressed by it—an eternity of woe. The *raison d'être* of the dogma was thus simply diabolic.

And this fact does not exhaust its villainy. It is not only ferocious but fiendish. The dogma goes beyond its original prototype—the living animal. For when the creature is killed or dies the pain or agony ceases forthwith. But the ferocious dogma makes it everlasting.

If there were any true analogy between the material fire and hell-fire, and also between the animal body and the "soul," there would, of course, be a corresponding analogy in the term "burning," otherwise the dogma is a bogus affair fraudulently assuming an analogy where none existed. The animal body in burning is consumed and vanishes from existence. And if the "soul" is not likewise consumed by hell-fire, the assumed analogy is a wickedly concocted verbal jargon. In point of fact, "hell-fire" is merely a word representing no reality, just as the term, "soul" stands for no entity. The application of the term "burning" to a "soul" is not only nonsense, but a dishonest use of language.

The dogma is a sample of the wicked verbalism with which priestcraft seeks to delude mankind. To apply to two non-existences a term with a most definite meaning in the material world was a heinous device of the priesthood with a view to whipping mankind into the Christian fold.

The hell-dogma was evolved much as a conjurer does his sleight-of-hand tricks. The *agony* of the sensation of the physical process was the only item that concerned the priest. He never attempted to inform us what was the relation between "fire of hell" and the "soul," for the simple reason that he had no information to impart. He always stressed the paramount agony endured, when any part of the living body is in contact with fire, and then with the aid of the coined jargon "hell-fire," he passed on the real agony of the living flesh to the "soul" as if it were the same thing, just as a conjurer would do. And so the hell-fire dogma came into being.

It is probably the most nefarious act of infamous jugglery ever perpetrated by man.

Besides that of existence and non-existence there is another difference, and one of paramount importance. The sensation of burning in animal life is (1) benevolent and (2) transient. The meaning of the pain to the victim is to goad him to get away from the fire if possible, and save his body from being consumed. The agony has thus a benevolent objective.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>13</sup> Clifford: *Lectures and Essays*, p. 393.



It is also transient. If the creature can get away, its destructive action is stopped and the burn healed. If that be impossible, it again ceases as soon as life is destroyed. In no case is the agony the end desired.

Now consider the relation of "hell-fire" and "soul," assuming for a moment that such things exist. The burning is not to save the soul, but to agonize it—agony is the sole objective of the process. Again, it is not transient, but is everlasting; the burning goes on for ever without consumption. It is therefore in the fullest sense of the term fiendish—the most fiendish conception ever harboured in a human mind.

Little, I fancy, did the creed makers realize what an unmitigated Fiend they made their god in their creed. It moreover shows how ferociously callous they themselves were. In the case of others, the eternity of agony was nothing to them.

Apart from its agonizing fiendishness the Christian heaven is intrinsically a hell. The materials out of which heaven is constructed are precisely of the same order as those out of which hell was made. The only difference being that agreeable or pleasurable sensations were chosen instead of agonizing ones, and so the drama turned out to be a comedy. Mere reflection is alone necessary to convince anyone with unfettered reason that the whole thing has no more reality than a mirage of the desert. The so-called spirit of the dead has no more capacity for enjoyment either bodily or mental than a marble statue. It does not possess a trace of the living organism which makes such sensations possible for an instant let alone an eternity. What a phantasmagoria is the view implied in the contention that the spirits of the departed recognize each other in heaven and converse together! The claim is intrinsically too fatuous for discussion.

Just reflect, suppose you were placed alone in a room from which there was no escape. And suppose further that you were in perfect health and free from all pain, and that your life would be maintained miraculously without food or drink, but that you were bidden to remain there for an indefinite period. At the end of one year, let alone an eternity, you would deem such a painless existence an unmitigated hell, and you would consider extinction a heaven too blissful for human speech to express.

To kill time is the *raison d'être* of all entertainment, recreations, sports of the world. The anguish of the bedridden is often more due to time than to bodily affliction.

KERIDON.

It's a hard world, neighbours, if a man's oath must be his master.—*Dryden*.

Persecution is not wrong because it is cruel; but it is cruel because it is wrong.—*Whately*.

### A Thought for the Week.

#### THE WAY OF PEACE.

THE inadequacies of philosophy are shown by the existence of a number of clashing and contradictory theories. The fallibility of science is seen in the prevalence of conflicting theories, any one of which may claim high support. Religion alone rises superior to both science and philosophy by the fact that when it gives us two theories that are humanly contradictory, she enables us to accept both.

### Acid Drops.

Mr Edgar Wallace does not occupy a very high place in the world of intellect, although his genius for invention would have made him a conspicuous figure in the region of theological apologetics. But he said one thing during his election campaign at Blackpool which contained more truth than any other expression used during the political campaign. Here it is:

Politics is the only criminal game in which there is no honour among thieves. That honour among thieves deserves perpetuating. Politicians know they cannot trust each other, when the public discovers that it cannot trust politicians the outlook for a better life will be considerably brighter. Even since 1914 we have been sending back to power the same men that—in conjunction with the politicians of other countries—brought us to the verge of ruin, and we are still playing the same stupid game. In business bungling is the prelude to dismissal, in politics it appears to be the royal road to promotion. No wonder that mediocrity hungry for distinction turns to politics for gratification.

We are not concerned with the partizan implications of the General Election. We regret that in the deluge more than one good friend of Freethought has been put out of action in the Parliamentary field, and among these Mr. Ernest Thurtle in particular. If the new Government keeps its pledges—which will be a novelty—it must avoid "controversial legislation." We fear that it will be more concerned to avoid collisions on matters on which opinion is divided upon party lines, than to use its disproportionate majority to deal with some matters which do not come into that category. In any case no Government can do worse than the late Labour Government did in its action with regard to the Blasphemy Act, the Sunday Performances Bill and its own Education Bill. The surrender of the latter to sectarian clamour, and that by a Labour Government, which, when most of its members were propagandists, had secular education in its programme, is as good evidence as any reasonable person could require of the folly of associating our movement with the opportunists of any Party.

The Rev. A. Price Hughes, of Southport, declares that religion is a vital necessity for right thinking and clean living; it is the only thing that makes a man big enough to face life. The implication, of course, is that people who don't believe in religion are evil-minded and bad living persons. Another inference, which the pious will not fail to make, is that Christians are the only right living and noble human beings on the earth. It is by such subtle suggestions as these that the parsons try to keep the goodwill of their dupes. As for the statement that religion makes a man big enough to face life, who could credit that? Here in this country there are great national difficulties confronting the people, and directly the Christian portion of the community realizes what it is up against, it starts to whine to God for help. That is the kind of courage the Christian reveals when the problems of life press him hard. Grovelling on his knees and snivelling to his God for aid, what a perfect exhibition he gives us of Christian bred courage.

One of the religious papers declares that Edison will "find a place in history as one of the greatest benefactors of humanity." There is no mention as to whether Edison believed in any religion. The omission is significant. One may be sure that if there had been half a chance to claim Edison as a Christian, or even half a Christian, the claim would have been shoved in.

Another of such papers has a heading "Edison's Faith," under which we are told that whether Edison "was a religious man in the conventional sense or not, he was a man of great faith, a supreme example of the faith which 'laughs at impossibilities and cries it shall be done.'" And the humble Christian is left to infer that Edison possessed at least one typically Christian characteristic! We may add that the item was sandwiched between two jokes.



"Quiz," in the *Daily Herald*, has a very good story of Edison, an extract being as follows:—

Not (as some people imagined) an Atheist, he would say. "I can almost prove the existence of the Divine Power by chemistry."

But to a Philadelphia elder, in doubt whether it would be fitting to equip a church with a lightning-conductor, he said, "By all means. You know Providence is sometimes absent-minded."

This may have been a mental genuflection to current nonsense in America, but, irritated neighbours apart, a Freethinker's tribute to the grandfather of gramophones may not be out of place in an Acid Drop. He could bring the Queen's Hall orchestra into the most humble home; for that, and its implications, people not too high-brow, will remember Edison.

The Master of Balliol, Mr. A. D. Lindsay, has been making a much needed protest against noise. He was joined in this burst of common sense by Professor A. M. Low and Sir Maurice Craig, the physician. Perhaps in another hundred years, Salvation Army bands, Boy Scouts banging and blaring, and clanging church bells may be regarded as real nuisances—just to prove that Oxford is not the home of lost causes.

The Archdeacon of London (the Ven. E. N. Sharpe) preaching at Emmanuel Church, West Hampstead (of which he was formerly Vicar), enlightened his old parishioners with the following story, which, he said, "they might have heard from that pulpit before." A friend of the Archdeacon's, chaplain to a seaman's mission, told him that one night, leaving the mission after a service, he was approached by a sailor who, before returning to his ship, handed him a sovereign. At first the chaplain thought it was a shilling, but when he found it was not, he said to the sailor: "My man, you cannot afford to give me this." To which the man replied: "Yes, Sir; for since I have been coming to this mission, I have found Christ, and *He has made all the difference to me.* Please keep my offering!"

Comment on the above would be superfluous; but the Archdeacon went on to point this extraordinary moral. "Numbers of people are engaged, much time is spent, in improving sanitation, making better homes, getting better wages, all good things in their way. But the only real change is the inward change which Christ brings, and having him, we have life, bodily mental and spiritual life, "and have it more abundantly." This is good news to all the inmates of mental and other hospitals and to the destitute, or it would be if it was not such a traversery of truth and a cruel exploitation of suffering and necessity. As to the sailor, we suspect him of rejoicing in the name of Harris.

It is not yet the time to throw hats in the air at the disappearance of superstition. Arm in arm with spooks, most religions have waddled through the ages, and it is not surprising that the twentieth century finds a few disembodied spirits still prowling about. One of them is haunting the residence of a former priest of St. Mary's, Liverpool. It is possible that this ghost has returned to register its vote, but, whatever the reason, holy water has been sprinkled in the house, and, we have no doubt, this spook has made a spiritual hop. Looking at the calendar again, it is 1931. Why in the name of Hades do Freethinkers flog a dead horse?

Mr. Gandhi has made a gramophone record, and he has declined to take any payment for it. He has evidently not picked up the Western idea in these matters. Part of his record is as follows:—

I do not perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds altogether, that creates, dissolves and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God; and since nothing else that I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

Mr. Gandhi calls the phenomenon of change God; it would get us just as far if he called it X or Mesopotamia.

The Rev. W. Charter Piggott declares that he has "never been more attracted by the young people round our churches than to-day." But is the gracious approval of a reverend father-in-God really a recommendation? About all it means is that the "young people round our churches to-day" are more pliable in the hands of the parson, more easily manipulated, than are those young people who are outside the churches. The reverend gent's compliment would appear to be a left-handed one. Anybody can earn a parson's approval by believing what he is told and doing what a parson tells him—in other words, by ceasing to do his own thinking. Young people with any intelligence would see that they didn't deserve such approval.

On the authority of Mr. Wickham Steed we learn that invisible clouds of poison gas have been invented which will penetrate any gas mask. A few samples should, we suggest, be forwarded, for the appropriate ceremony, to those reverend gentlemen who specialize in blessing war-vessels, etc., so that "God, our help in ages past" will be made fully conversant with the nature of any future war he will be expected to help win. Be that as it may, we hope that those who survived the last war—whether soldiers or civilians—will duly appreciate that the military chemist is doing everything possible to ensure that the next "war to end war" will be as free as possible from bloodshed. That will be cheering news to pass on to their descendants. Meanwhile, we can but continue to educate our statesmen and diplomats into understanding that disputes between nations cannot be settled equitably by force of arms—even with the help of God. Some day they will learn that the more money there is devoted to ensuring peace the less money there will be required for preparation for war.

A reader of a religious paper has asked the Rev. Dr. W. B. Selbie to set out in simple terms "What is the Christian Gospel?" Christianity involves, he replies, a new world-view and a new way of life. He adds:—

In its simplest terms the message of the Gospel is that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." . . . In Christ, God revealed himself as a God of love ready to forgive the penitent and waiting to be gracious. The Gospel, then, was and is the power of God unto salvation, and these two words "salvation" and "power" are crucial. Only those who feel their need of salvation, and who are really burdened by sin or by the dullness and insufficiency of the life they live in the flesh, can ever hope to realize the meaning of God's saving grace.

How remote all this is from the thinking of the modern man! He regards the Gospel tale about the "Fall" of man, and the theory of reconciliation which was based on it, as merely a story which somehow or other was omitted from Hans Anderson's book of fairytales. He refuses to believe that man is "sinful" and in need of "salvation" or heavenly forgiveness. He realizes that what man is burdened with is ignorance—for which burden God, his alleged Creator, must be held responsible—and that the only kind of salvation man needs is knowledge. What is more, he appreciates that such knowledge does not come ready-made down from Heaven via Christian priests, but has to be slowly and painfully acquired by his own unaided efforts. As modern psychology can give him more reliable information about his own mental nature, he rejects the ancient and false notions about it which the priests with their Holy Bible ask him to believe, and he merely smiles at the silly Gospel which has been erected on the foundation of these false notions.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, God Almighty's two chief official representatives in this England, blamed the Labour Party for the state of the country. But the Rev. R. F. Horton takes a little different view. He says that the "crisis" is "God's winnowing fan." He is clearing the husks out of the wheat. For says this preacher, "It is not likely that He will leave secularism triumphant, or make godlessness a success." So now we know why



the crisis has been brought about. God was putting down his foot, or his hand, or whatever he does on such occasions, that he simply will not stand this growth of godlessness and secularism. And all the time some of us have thought that when the Versailles Treaty was drawn up it snapped the thread of international trade and laid the foundations for future trouble. How mistaken we can all be!

From the *Sydney Bulletin* :—

"Guniga Tan"; In the police courts of Papua the oath is administered to Europeans in the usual way, whereas native witnesses, on the assumption that they are unlikely to be made more truthful by being obliged to kiss the book, are merely warned that "Suppose you tell a lie you go to gaol." The distinction resulted in a native of the Gulf Division walking into the Resident Magistrate's office recently and putting a shilling on the table. An interpreter elicited that the applicant wanted to buy a book which would win court cases for him. The R.M. asked for further information and got this: "E say when white man make im court you give 'im this book, sir" [indicating the court Bible, which lay on the table]. "E say white man 'e smell this book and 'e say 'my Gawd' and 'e win 'im case, sir. 'E say 'e want to buy that book!"

One of the Sunday Papers announce that it has arranged with eight well known novelists to re-write some of the best known Bible stories. They are to tell them, apparently, as God Almighty would have told them had he been trained in a present-day school of journalism. We have often said that God's venture in journalism was most unfortunate, since he never managed to write plainly enough for people to understand what he meant. These eight novelists will try and show him how to make it short, bright, and snappy.

During a recent "world-wide" Methodist Conference held in America, Vice-President Curtis, who was a member of the Conference, strongly urged "all believers in old-time religion to combat false doctrines and anti-religious movements." This has the authentic ring of "pure religion and undefiled." It is the stuff which inspired intolerance, persecution and bloodshed in the departed but unlamented "Age of Faith." If it be true that a world-wide revival of religion is waiting just round the corner as some people believe, one will not be far wrong in suspecting that intolerance, persecution, and bloodshed—the constant companions of red-hot religion—are in waiting there also. They have always been in evidence whenever an attempt has been made to establish the reign on earth of the Prince of Peace.

A parsonic scribe avers that "harvest thanksgiving represents a true human instinct." This is evidenced, he declares, "by the number of people who come to church then and then only." He considers that attendance at harvest thanksgiving services "a proof of the essentially religious in man." For our part, we have noticed that any unusual kind of show at a church will bring an extra crowd of sight-seers—whether the show consists of nigger-minstrels, a "sports" service, the attendance of some royal nonentity or a political notoriety or celebrity. And we infer that this is evidence of the essentially stupid curiosity of the average man and woman.

At a Roman Catholic mass meeting held in the irreverent atmosphere of the Victoria Palace (Theatre of Varieties) presided over by Cardinal Bourne, some speakers who followed him made some statements which, even for such an audience, were daring in their mendacity. For instance, Father O'Hea, S.J., referring to the industrial revolution and the Manchester School of Economics, said that the evils that had arisen from these developments were due to the fact that "the restraining force of religion" was not available, for religion "had almost lost its hold on the working classes and on the new employers of England." The "new employers" were, however, evangelical Christians almost to a man, who would and did approve of what Father O'Hea himself advocates, namely "a stern insistence on the moral law, enforced with vigour by the civil authority." Another speaker, Mr. W. S. Bishop, "Supreme Knight of

the Knights of Columbus," said "if elemental Christian doctrines had been implanted at the meetings (i.e. of trade unions) they might have been spared the terrible spectacle of the general strike." The next speaker, Mr. G. Elliot Anstruther said, "Catholics are now looked upon with envy for their unity and security in doctrinal matters, and outside that sphere for the light they are able to throw upon the solution of national difficulties." We have not observed that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who has some pretty tough difficulties just now, has borrowed any "light" on their solution from the quarter mentioned.

Dr. Horton (in the *Christian World*) suggests another quarter to which the nation may look for help in its crisis "the gravity of which no wise person denies." He says, "I calculate—it is, of course, a very rough calculation—that there are nearly a million people in this country who pray: I cannot discover any more. . . . That prayer in ascending will be heard. He will not leave us in trouble, though forty million people neglect and despise him. The people who pray will be heard." Again, he says, "When there seems no human wisdom big enough for the situation, we hear quite distinctly as from a distant world, like a wireless message in our ears, the voice of Jesus: "Fear not; only believe." We wish we could believe that as many as forty million people in this country share our view that this is tommy rot.

At Marlow Petty Sessions, the other day, two bright Christian boys, "choir boys and servers," were bound over for breaking open the offertory boxes at Little Marlow, Hambleden, Lane End, and other churches. The Vicar of Marlow said "he had known both boys intimately practically all their lives, and the only reason he could think of for their lapse was a "desire to show off." It transpired in evidence that these clever lads "were so interested in churches that they were attempting to compile a book of local church history!" If, as an old rhyme has it, it is the function of religion to look after the children, and

"To save them from ten thousand snares  
To mind religion young."

it would appear that in this case the "minding" part of the instructions was taken somewhat literally by the pupils.

The Salvation Army is nothing if it is not respectable these days. It is announced that General Higgins will "conduct a service" on November 11 in the nave of Canterbury Cathedral. It is only the other day that Mr. Gandhi was formerly received at the same place. The latter, the *Church Times*, October 30, asserts, "is not a Christian, and "has expressed open hostility to Christian missions." As to General Higgins, our contemporary demands to know if the Dean of Canterbury has inquired as to whether the General has been baptised. He is the head "of a schismatic body who repudiate the sacraments," and the church liturgy maintains a prayer for deliverance "from all false doctrine, heresy and schism." Those people who sometimes tell us that Christians are more tolerant these days will find it difficult to explain why acts which at least show a trace of liberality should be denounced by a Christian organ as "stunts which bring the Church into disrepute."

### Fifty Years Ago.

THE greatest bugbears against which men have had to war in all ages have been the gods; the greatest stumbling-blocks to the gods have been the devils, and man who made both, and fitted them with the most hideous attributes, has blamed the gods for his existence, and the devils for his miseries; has fallen down and worshipped the most malicious, and in his devout and pious moments has been persuaded to revile and slander the least cruel and tyrannical, the more powerful and consistent of his own terror-made myths—the devils.

The "Freethinker," November 6, 1881.



TO CORRESPONDENTS.

D. HENDERSON.—Thanks for the efforts you have made. Is it a fact that no denominational papers are admitted to the library?

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

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

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

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 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.

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

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.

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.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 8) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Co-operative Hall, Green Street, Sunderland, in the afternoon, at 3.0, on "Do the Dead Live?" and in the evening, at 7.0, "What the World Owes to Unbelief." We understand that Mr. Cohen's visit is attracting attention in the locality, and we hope to be able to report good meetings. Next Sunday Mr. Cohen visits Glasgow.

The first of the season's meetings of the Fulham Branch was held on Sunday last. The lecturer was Mr. R. H. Rosetti. The meeting was not a large one, but it was an interested one, and the audiences will improve as the lectures become better known. To-day (November 8) is being set aside for a debate by Mr. H. Cutner and Mr. C. Tuson on "Socialism versus Capitalism." The meeting place of the Branch is the Co-operative Hall, Dawes Road, Fulham.

Our one prediction about the result of the General Election (in our last issue) is authenticated by the news (in the Star, October 31), that a Birmingham clergyman held a "non-party" thanksgiving service for "the return of the National Government." Our contemporary inquires, with awful irreverence, whether a warm welcome was extended to "non-party" Labour men!

The Cost of English Morals, by Mrs. Janet Chance (Noel Douglas, 5s.) is at once wider and narrower than the title implies. Narrower, because it is mainly concerned with the influence of conventional teaching on sex relationship, and wider because it does actually imply a serious and informed consideration of fundamental questions of general morals. And withal it is one of the wisest and best books we have read on the question of sexual morals for some time. Nothing is shirked, all is plainly and soberly stated, it could raise a blush

on the cheek of no one save such as the Bishop of London or a Roman Catholic priest, and in their case it would not take a great deal of searching to prove that the coloration had been worked up for public display. Mrs. Chance's is the more telling because she writes with a restrained passion that gives her statements the appearance of coldness, while there are passages in the work that rise to the level of eloquence, but eloquence that is always the expression of thought and not its substitute.

Here is a passage that well indicates the spirit of the book:—

Sex life is not a personal matter which may privately be wrecked or publicly debased and no one but the individuals concerned be much the worse for it. It is of national and international importance that sex life should be sanely conducted. It matters vitally. It is to-day, in England a matter of the gravest concern that sex life should have reached the low level of esteem and achievement which it plainly has. It is rare in England to find sex matters treated happily. They are treated jocularly, they are treated basely, or they are treated with a reverence which goes hand in hand with fear. Sex to the English is a jest, a degradation, a sacrament or merely a routine.

No one can question the essential truth of this. And the reason Mrs. Chance finds for this is that our consideration of sex has been dominated by the Christian clergy. Sex has been treated with a "combination of mystery and dogmatism," and nothing could be worse for any subject, but it is particularly bad for sex, and all that pertains to procreation. As a consequence we have children brought up in entire ignorance of the functions of their own body, left to acquire information when and where they can, and in circumstances that do more harm than good. Politicians fight shy of the subject because of the hostility of Church and Chapel, even text-books of physiology—some of the more recent ones are cited by Mrs. Chance—treat the body as though procreation were something quite adventitious in its nature. The clergy, who still dominate our educational system, insist that youth shall learn nothing openly about the functions of the human body, and that adults shall take no steps whatever intelligently to regulate their own multiplication. And all this is not only wrong, it is ineffective. We do not stop youth finding out things, we do not stop contraception, we do not stop abortion. All it means is that knowledge is acquired in the wrong way, birth prevention goes on in the wrong way, abortion takes place in thousands of cases with irreparable evil consequences to all concerned. It is not really a question of not preventing certain things being done, but one of whether they shall be done intelligently or not. As things stand, as Mrs. Chance says in one of the epigrams scattered through her book, "The evasion of sex is the beginning of vulgarity," and if this misdirection of education, this vulgarization of sex is part of the "divine order," then, again to cite Mrs. Chance, "If such absurdities and cruelties are the ruling of God, into whose hands death will deliver us, let us defend from Him at least this life. Let there be somewhere in this universe, even if only for a brief moment, a life, better than the heavenly, based on standards higher than the divine."

Messrs. Watts & Co., have added two new volumes to their "World of Youth" series. The first is Boys, Girls and Gods, by Mrs. Naomi Mitchison. The author has the quality of vivid story telling, and the book contains the short story "The Garden of Epicurus" to which attention was drawn in these columns when it appeared in another form. The work makes history, or that border land of history and mythology very fascinating for young readers. The second volume is by Miss Bellis, and is more ambitious in aim. The title is From Pyramid to Skyscraper, and tells us the story of architecture for the past three or four thousand years. That is not a story that could be entrusted to anyone with safety, but Miss Bellis has performed her task with great success. The work is well illustrated. Each volume is published at 1s. 6d.



We see that Sir James Jeans' *Mysterious Universe* has now reached its hundred thousand. In the latest edition it is said that Sir James has endeavoured to remove all ambiguities from his arguments. From a glance through it we do not find any real improvement on previous editions. As Mr. Cohen has pointed out in his *God and the Universe*—a work to which Sir James has never ventured a reply, it is not ambiguity from which Sir James suffers, but confusion of thought. In plain language, when he gets away from the scientific workshop he is just muddled and mistakes aspiration for argument and religious yearning for philosophical demonstration. One need only bring his various statements together, as Mr. Cohen has done in the work named above, to make this muddle-headedness so plain that it should be obvious to even a curate.

Readers of the *Freethinker* will be glad to learn that our old contributor, Mr. Andrew Millar, is making steady progress towards recovery. We send him our very best wishes, and we are quite sure we may do that on the behalf of all our readers.

The Study Circle which meets every Monday evening in the offices of the National Secular Society, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4, has been holding some very interesting and instructive discussions. The Circle provides an admirable opportunity for platform preparation for young people of either sex with an ambition to become Freethought speakers. Mr. A. D. McLaren who conducts the Study Circle would be pleased to welcome any such newcomer.

## The Materialistic View of Existence.

ATTENTION is first drawn to the title of these remarks. Many of the protagonists of the view here considered are loath to adopt the label "Materialist," yet are obviously capable of classification as materialistic. That their work is of a materialistic character is fully understood, as may be instanced from the following:—

Eddington: "Materialism in its old form is long since dead, but its place has been taken by other philosophies with a virtually equivalent outlook." (*Science and the Unseen World*).

McDougall: "The repudiation of Materialism generally means the repudiation of the now old-fashioned Atomic Materialism of earlier centuries." The modern view "avoids the earlier crudities." (*Modern Materialism*).

Russell: "Those who would formerly have been Materialists can still adopt a philosophy which comes to much the same thing." (*Outline of Philosophy*).

Why has the old term become unpopular with friends of the materialistic standpoint? Are they "warned off" by the repetition of croneous statements about Materialism such as these:—

"Materialism ought to hold mind to be material." (Prof. H. Höffding and Prof. A. E. Taylor).

"It is the view that only matter exists. (Canon Streeter).

"It tries to explain the whole world in terms of matter." (Prof. Flint).

"Materialism, with its inert matter . . ." (Prof. A. N. Whitehead).

" . . . dead atoms." (Haeckel).

" . . . Dead matter in hard unyielding lumps is the sole ultimate reality"—a block universe in which nothing could happen. (W. C. D. Dampier-Whetham; *History of Science*, 1929).

" . . . has no respect for psychology." (Külpe).

"The Materialist outlook sees only electrons and protons. It leaves mind out of account, regarding it as an illusion produced by living matter." (Prof. Thomson).

"It is not compatible with morality. (Prof. Taylor).

"It cannot account for beauty, and so is untenable." (Prof. Webb.)

"It puts out of the dictionary words like will, intention, purpose, hope." (Prof. McDougall).

"It is Fatalism." (Prof. Haldane, Prof. Millikan, F. Harrison, C. Hooper).

The above are a group of untenable positions which never rightly belonged to the Materialist. In striking contrast Bergson says *the only way to disprove Materialism is to show that matter is dead*, because in that case there is room for the *élan vital* to account for change.

Materialistic philosophy in contemporary thought is exemplified by Russell (*Neutral Monism*) and Prof. Dewey (*Empirical Naturalism*), who both start from "events"; by Prof. C. D. Broad and Prof. Dotterer, who prefer *Emergent Materialism*; by Prof. Alexander, whose Space-time "does the work of itself without appealing to mind"; by Santayana, Cohen and McCabe, who retain *Materialism*; by Prof. Huxley ("world-stuff"), Prof. Hogben (Publicism), and eminent scientists in England, Russia, America, and elsewhere.

It is possibly hoped that to modify or discard the term "Materialism" is to render oneself immune from popular misrepresentations, and to safeguard oneself against being forced to answer for some obscure, indiscreet passage in an old writer.

It is partly for those reasons, and partly because the old Materialists did not, in their writing, fully appreciate the fact of emergence, that I prefer "Emergent Materialism." To render it still more adequate I would also add a metaphysical tenet. With none of those just mentioned (except Alexander) is metaphysics very popular, and I wish to suggest that a few statements about their principle of existence, held in common, might help to stabilize their position, and make for a greater degree of unity. I have said that Materialists should participate in metaphysical controversy, primarily with the object of competing with false theories of existence. The following considerations are now enlisted in support:—

(1) It will not do to restrict Materialism to Determinism. Materialism must be more than Determinism. If it adds nothing to Determinism there is no need for an extra name. To make it synonymous with Determinism is to let in the Teleologist, who also believes in Determinism, and who makes it run conjointly with a non-intervening purpose. It lets in the holist, who says emergents are the (deterministic) expression of a holistic principle. It lets in the Lodgean Neovitalist, who says the course of events follow a pre-determined path laid down by life. And so I contend that Materialism should go further. In a debate with a type of Vitalist there is no need to go further, for Determinism is all there is at stake, but with a Teleologist the Materialist will find himself compelled to say more. Determinism tells how substance behaves; it does not say what is the character of substance, and does not, by itself, dispose of the question, why substance behaves as it does.

(2) It seems inadequate—though again necessary—to say, "Have any conception of matter you please; our withers are unwrung." If science fixed on a final definition to-morrow, the metaphysician would still be in the fight. He might say, "Call it matter if you will; it is a tool in the hands of God." "Let it be electricity; it is the eject of Mind." "Have it ether if you like; it is the working material for a Life Force." And so forth. To give it a name is to state the problem, not to solve it. Therefore I maintain that in addition to a scientific definition the Materialist requires a conception of the character of his datum, leaving it to be tested by experience. Is it intelli-



gent? Unintelligent? Active? Creative? In what sense? Is it God's tool? Is it a mental eject? Or has it self-existence? Is it organic? (cf. Whitehead's complicated philosophy). Is it dynamic? Pro-human? Anti-human? Self-purposive? Simple? Is it concerned with other existential principles?

(3) It is possible for anti-metaphysical writers to lapse occasionally into metaphysical statements. Take, for instance, that fine thinker, Herbert Spencer.

Spencer, it will be remembered, said science points to an inscrutable, underlying substance. He said, truly, it was impossible to avoid making the assumption of self-existence somewhere, and "the nature of the reality transcending phenomena cannot be known, yet its existence is necessarily implied." Then he goes on to say it is mechanical and not purposive. After telling us it is unknowable, and that "no conception of the reality can be framed," he goes on to say, "the attributes of personality cannot be conceived as those of the unknown cause." First he tells us we can frame no idea of it; then he in effect says it is more difficult to conceive it as personal than impersonal; and that it is mechanical and not purposive. Let us not—to use a well worn phrase—turn out metaphysics by the front gate and smuggle it in by the back door. Is it not better to give it a fair entertainment, and enlist it in our service?

(4) From the purely Secularist standpoint metaphysics may be of some worth. In its fight against superstition the N.S.S. has to contend, not only with the Church, but with some of the metaphysicians as well—men like Webb, Sorley, Taylor, P. Pattison, Hocking and others; men who avowedly conduct their philosophy with the intention of finding support for religious doctrines. And when the Church finds itself intellectually bankrupt it goes about seeking testimonials from prominent laymen such as these. It all reminds one of what Kant said of metaphysics. "It throws round religion the bulwark of invisibility, so that the sword of the sceptic and the battering-ram of the Materialist fall harmless on vacuity."

In rejecting the Christian religion we are rejecting a fairly comprehensive scheme of the universe, and, in doing that, we are doing something towards putting ourselves under the obligation of replacing it. It is not necessary that the Atheist should have, what neither Bradlaugh nor Foote had, viz., a cut-and-dried philosophical doctrine; but it will be an advantage if he can indicate the lines along which the nature of the universe can be understood without having recourse to an old theological prejudice. The point has been stressed often enough. Warschauer, who wrote a booklet (*The Atheist's Dilemma*) telling how he had completely bottled up Foote in debate (a fact which presumably had not been apparent at the time), taunted his opponent with not having a theory of the universe. Flint, too, made it a point in his Baird lectures. Of course it is not the case. The Atheist's rejection of something carries with it an affirmation of something else; and if he proceeds to Materialism he will, I think, find himself called upon to frame a working conception of substance.

Let us next, then, try to suggest a metaphysic for the Materialist.

G. H. TAYLOR.

Music of all the liberal arts, has the greatest influence over the passions, and is that to which the legislator ought to give the greatest encouragement.—*Napoleon*.

Service cannot be expected from a friend in service; let him be a freeman who wishes to be my master.

*Martial*.

## Holy Shop.

### THE MODERN PHRASE.

MANY people think that Luther and the Reformation put a stop to the sale of indulgences in particular, and to the crude swindles in general of the Middle Ages. Most History books leave this impression because they say no more about the financial affairs of the confidence tricksters. But in Latin countries the trade continued practically as usual. At Rome itself there had to be less brazen effrontery in the spending of the money, because the spread of printing ensured more publicity, and the pressure of public opinion enforced more decency and some amount of "keeping up appearances." But essentially there was no change. Holy Shop was not going to give up its profits for moral scruples.

There is no record of any people, in any age or country, whose lives were so foul and putrid as those of the Popes and priests of Rome during the Middle Ages.

Every country in Western Europe was pouring money into Rome, the easiest money any set of men ever obtained. The Pope against whom Luther revolted spent ten million pounds in eight years largely in personal luxury and dissipation (McCabe *The Popes and Their Church*).

To give an idea how the money went we quote again from Mr. McCabe: "Sixtus IV. brought his young nephew to Rome, and gave him bishoprics and abbeys that yielded him £100,000 per year. His clothes were laden with gold; his favourite mistress, Teresia, wore hundreds of pounds worth of pearls on her slippers alone; his banquets lasted hours. When he entertained Leonora of Naples he built a superb palace for the day, and the banquet lasted six hours. All the fastest youths of Rome and the choicest courtesans enlivened his palace, where there were several hundred silk-clad servants. He wore out his strength in two years and one month of this kind of life, spending £600,000 and leaving a debt of £50,000 to the Pope." (p. 72).

Burchard, the chief official at the Vatican under three Popes kept a diary, which was not meant for publication, but has been brought into the light of day.

At the date of October 30, 1501, he notes in this diary that the Pope did not attend Vespers, though it was Sunday. But in the evening Alexander (the Pope) and his daughter Lucrezia dined with Cesare (his son) and fifty prostitutes in Cesare's rooms in the Vatican. The women, after the banquet, danced unclothed. In one dance they had to flit, nude, between lighted candles and pick nuts from the floor. And this incredible yet indisputable scene ends with the "Vicar of Christ" and his daughter distributing prizes to those servants of the Vatican who—I put it more obliquely than either Burchard or Mr. McCabe—had shown most virility (pp. 79-80).

In such ways went the money that was subscribed by ignorant fools for keeping themselves out of Purgatory, or getting their relatives out of it. And in the present day, ignorant fools are still parting with their money for the same purpose. And undoubtedly the priests continue to spend a lot of the profits on the same objects as of yore—only behind locked doors.

(Just one instance to show how truth leaks out—and how it is suppressed. Some years ago, in Quebec the evils due to blackguard priests became very serious, and two journals took up the matter very strongly. The Bishops condemned the journals because (they said) laymen have no right to criticize priests—it is only Bishops who may do this. The



Bishops forbade their chattels to buy or read the two journals, and Quebec is so priest-ridden that the Bishops ban ruined the two papers and they ceased to exist) . . . but to continue our samples of Holy Shops various pocket-emptying dodges. Some of these display humour of the unconscious kind.

An ex-priest tells of a dodge he knew of in Spain. The Friars there divided purgatory into eight compartments, corresponding to eight different degrees of heat and eight degrees of ability to pay for masses in order to get out. Kings, being presumably the richest people, were in the hottest compartment, but the kings (their successors) were well able to pay for the relief of their ancestors. Poor people were in number one compartment for (said the Friars) "the providence of God has ordered everything to the ease (?) of His creatures and, foreseeing that the poor could not afford the same number of masses that the rich could, his infinite goodness (!) has placed them in the place of less suffering."

Tradesmen (and their wives and families) were in the second compartment. Ladies and gentlemen of quality were in the third—and so on. And, says the ex-priest, "it is a remarkable thing that many poor silly tradesmen's wives do ask the Friars whether the souls of their fathers, mothers, sisters, can be removed from the second apartment to the third; thinking by it that though this third degree of fire is greater than the second, yet the soul would be better pleased in the company of ladies of quality . . . the Friars make such women believe that it may be done very easily if they give the same price for a mass that ladies of quality do."

"Holy Shop" or "Papa's Shop" has long been the by-name in Italy for the Romish Church. Our next illustration is from Italy and is quoted from a book on *The Frauds of Romish Priests*, published in London in 1687 (we are working our way to the present day to show that the Vatican gang has practised its confidence trickery at all periods since the Reformation "There is never a village in Italy but has its confraternity for the souls in Purgatory, and at the least a score of priests who live on it very plentiful. Besides the money for their masses, they have people who carry boxes through the streets from house to house begging of all they meet, with a great deal of importunity, some money for the souls in purgatory, which money the priests afterwards share amongst themselves. In many places, in order to have a settled income they farm this purgatory money to some layman . . . to one confraternity at Milan the farmer pays 4,000 crowns a year . . . he maintains forty box carriers, who are clothed in white . . . they have each a shilling a day allowed, and their business is to run through all the streets of the city and beg money for the souls in purgatory. They are picked men, cunning and skilful . . . so importunate and impertinent that they follow a man the length of two or three streets without quitting him . . . neither is it without danger to give them any rude or churlish answer . . . for you might probably get recommended to the inquisition to learn more manners. The farmer of the Souls in Purgatory has the keys of all these boxes . . . when they bring them full he gives them something over their ordinary pay to encourage them. He places his boxes in Inns, Taverns, and other public places. Those that have travelled Italy know that the host doth bring in his box and desire his guests to put in their charity . . . at harvest the farmer sends his missionaries into the field with wagons to bring some portion of what is gathered, corn, wood, wine, even to very hens and eggs . . ."

The Friendly Society idea has been applied to the business, both in England and Ireland. Holy Shop

does not disdain even penny-a-week subscriptions. Here is Rule 2 from one of these Purgatorian Societies. "That every well disposed Catholic wishing to contribute to the relief of souls in purgatory pay one penny per week, which shall be appropriated to the providing of masses to be offered up for the repose of the souls of the deceased parents, relations and friends of all the subscribers, etc."

Rule 9. That the Superior shall on every All Soul's Day advance to the parish priest of St. James' Chapel whatever sum is necessary for obtaining an insertion in the mortality list of the altar, names of the parents, relations and friends of all the subscribers, etc.

Another regulation says that the Superior at his death shall have three masses, the Rector two, and every member one, provided he has been a subscriber for six months, and be clear of all dues.

An Italian ex-priest wrote: "Confessions are very gainful to the priests by reason of the pecuniary penances they impose. There is always a box at the lower end of their Churches, of which they are the turn keys, and according as they know a person to be stocked with riches they command him, for his penances to go and put such a sum into the box. We gathered once five hundred crowns on one of the Easter Holy Days in a parish of Venice, and the next day we divided the money among eight of us."

The same ex-priest tells of "deaf Confessions," called deaf "not because they are really deaf," but because they never used to question the penitents and, in short, did the business for about 6d. "One such, in Lent, has more business than twenty others. All habitual sinners go to "deaf confessors," who not only give absolution for the 6d., but a certificate in which it says the sinner has fulfilled the commandments of the Church."

A great feature of the Middle Ages was the pilgrimage to saints' shrines, holy and miraculous images, etc. At all of them, of course, Holy Shop did business—and naturally it has kept up the feature ever since. In these present times it has re-introduced this class of business into England and Scotland.

Owing to the effect of cumulative suggestion, and to the countenance afforded by company, people in a crowd may behave like lunatics in a way they would never think of doing individually and independently. Especially is this true of a crowd of ignorant superstitious heathens like Hindus or Catholics.

Religious ecstasy is like drug-taking, it grows into a habit, and it causes increasing feebleness of mind. Holy Shop's business is founded on feeble minds, so it encourages these pilgrimages and their cult of religious ecstasy. Many of the people in these crowds get into quite an abnormal psychological state. They see visions, hear angels, or demoniac voices, and in their excitement may throw off diseases such as paralysis and atrophies—all of which phenomena Holy Shop turns to financial account. There is nothing spiritual about Roman Catholicism. It is a Materialistic religion throughout. The chattels want material benefits. Holy Shop purports to supply them. The ignorant chattels make these pilgrimages to material idols because they believe the idols themselves have power to grant material benefit. The idols in fact are the lineal successors of the old pagan local deities, and are believed in as such. It must be emphatically stated that these ignorant Catholics do actually worship the actual wooden or stone idol. In their own theologians' phrases, the worship is terminated upon the idol, i.e., the worship is spent on the idol and does not go past it to some being whom the idol represents. Dressed up dolls are considered divine and powerful, and are worshipped by members of a Church which says it is infallible



and inspired. That Church doesn't care what sort of lunatic behaviour its adherents practise, so long as they pay due attention to the collection plate. In fact it goes on the proved principle that the bigger lunatics they are the more they will put in the plate. So it dopes them with lunacy-mixture.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be concluded.)

### The Young Christian.

(Without apology to G.K.C.'s "The New Freethinker.")

JOHN GRUBBY, who was pale and thin,  
And grubbier than he need have been,  
Had never had a single doubt,  
And thought that play and sin and rout  
Were all forbidden to the kid  
Who thought just as his father did.  
He from the tender age of three,  
When seated on the curate's knee,  
Had learned to think the Bible page  
His title to a heritage  
Which would be his when he was dead,  
For that was what the curate said.  
Now young boys do, as is well known,  
Sometimes have feelings of their own,  
The young idea is bound to shoot  
And, partial to forbidden fruit,  
While still to all appearance small  
Repeat the process of the fall,  
And come to find in its conceit  
Forbidden fruit uncommon sweet.  
John Grubby found it so just when  
He reached the pliant age of ten,  
And knowing 'twas against the rule,  
One day he "played the wag" from school,  
And to the distant city dim  
Took his playmate along with him.  
Returning somewhat late at night  
Tired, dirty, weeping and afright,  
Unto his pious parents who  
Were in no doubt what they should do.  
His father placed him o'er a chair,  
Swished a light cane high in the air,  
And brought its stinging cuts to bear  
Until his mother, standing near,  
And fearful folks next door might hear  
The bad boy's screams, most kindly said  
"Stop man and send the boy to bed."  
To bed he went, and when within  
The sheets, his mother said to him,  
"Get up and pray to God my son,  
He knows exactly what you've done,  
And you will get no food until  
You cease to disobey His will."  
And sore and sad John sobbing prayed,  
Said he was sorry he had played  
The truant, and would be as good  
In future as a weak boy could,  
And sunk to sleep to dream that he  
Was worse than any boy could be.  
Next morning came and family prayer,  
Father and mother kneeling there,  
Besought God from the kitchen floor  
That John might go and sin no more.  
He went to school, was told to stand  
In front and hold out his right hand  
Whereon another nimble cane—  
The master's, smote him might and main,  
And stood him in a corner so  
All might see where the bad boys go.  
And sore of hand and wan of face,  
And bruised in another place,  
He saw the class dismiss for play,  
Thought goodness was the better way,  
And dimly, that in point of pluck  
Those with the most had the worst luck;  
That canes and prayers were cowardly things  
For boys against the King of Kings,

And that there was not any fun  
For lads who learned religion young.  
His father always said when wild  
"Don't spare the rod and spoil the child;  
His mother often spoke of hell  
Its smoke, its heat, its fire, its smell;  
And impiously John thought that sin  
Was kindlier than anything,  
And that, though he might act a part,  
He'd serve the devil in his heart,  
And sometimes sneak away to find  
Companions of his sort and mind,  
While acting both at home and school  
According to the golden rule.  
And thus when John became a man  
He had worked out a useful plan,  
And grown in knowledge and in grace  
A credit to his native place.  
And if he sometimes went astray  
'Twas not upon the Sabbath day;  
Then he was always in his pew  
And often thought, but never knew,  
Of those who every Sunday came  
And mostly played the self-same game.  
For cant and piety are brothers  
Each of their vices are each others;  
John Grubby and John Grubby's God  
Had got each other on the nod,  
And someday both will die and be  
Forgotten for eternity.

A.H.

### Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

"CIVILIZED SAVAGES."

SIR.—As you point out in your admirable "Views and Opinions" (*Freethinker*, October 25), "the primitive" savages are still numerous in the populations—they have a long ancestry and will pass from us very slowly, especially as they have the support of all the religions—which is why things are as they are.

As a criminologist, I collect all kinds of cases as evidence, and have a number in which the "Devil" is seriously put forward as the instigator of crimes.

In 1923, a learned counsel put forward the plea in court that "his case would be that it was not John Doe who murdered his wife, but an evil spirit which was upon him at the time." (*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 29, 1923). Here is another example, Dr. L. addressing a men's meeting at Whitefield's Tabernacle on the treatment of the insane, said "he believed that in some cases evil entities or spirits took possession of the patient." (*Daily News*, March 31, 1924). And I have many other examples.

The coroner in the case you refer to is, I believe, also a Lay Reader. TAB CAN.

### SOCIALISM AND FREETHOUGHT.

SIR.—My letter of September 29, 1931 to the *Freethinker*, regarding the relationship of Freethought to Socialism which was so critically dealt with by Mr. Cohen, seems to have started quite a controversy between different readers and Mr. Cohen, if we are to accept the latter's article on the front page of this week's issue.

In my opinion this is all to the good of Freethought, because it is bringing out the various points of view that are so rarely clearly elucidated. But I notice, that whilst Mr. Cohen does not agree, from the *Freethinker* point of view, that Socialism should be propagated with Freethought, he does agree with one paragraph of Mr. Wilshere's letter, if only Mr. Wilshere would permit an alteration of the last sentence. The last sentence reads: "One cannot help but be of assistance, to Socialism and antagonistic to Capitalism." And Mr. Cohen suggests that if, after the word assistance, the sentence was altered to read, "to the creation of a Social state in which the interests of the whole shall become the cou-



scious aim of each." Surely Mr. Cohen is not ignorant of the fact, that his suggested alteration is the essence of Socialism, and that a "Social state" must be a state of Socialism.

And after all, is it not the principle lying behind Socialism, Freethought, or any other progressive movement, that matters, and not the individuals or institutions that exploit and violate them for personal or retrogressive purposes?

I mention this because Mr. Cohen seems to think that anybody can be a Freethinker or a Socialist simply by saying he is one.

ROBERT TISSYMAN.

[I could only agree with Mr. Tissyman if I were guilty of begging the question at issue. The identification of individual with general well-being is no more a part of Socialism than it is of Capitalism or many other 'isms. That one system may better realize this end is arguable, but it will not do to take it for granted. That is assuming the whole question at issue. My point is that Freethought is critical of every form of Government and every established institution, and is, therefore never likely to be encouraged by any, whether Socialistic or otherwise. Every vested interest tends to the suppression of opposition. I do not expect to find this law abrogated because we call an existing or ideal form Socialism instead of Capitalism.—ED.]

SIR.—The closing paragraph of Mr. W. C. Elliott's letter on page 653 of your issue, October 11, reads: "The Socialist Party of Great Britain—does 'definitely oppose religion.'"

I have before me a cutting from the *Daily Express*, January 22, 1931: "M.P.'s put Religion before Party. Mr. John Scurr, M.P., Socialist Member for Mile End, and Mr. Logan were the tellers against the Government." I have also the names of *twenty-three Socialists*, who were among Mr. Scurr's notable forty. Those who remember that excellent display of Socialistic Politics, may be sharing with me the pleasure of knowing that they are nearly all *out* of it, tinged with the regret that Mr. Lovat Fraser is not also *out*.

Personally I think, there will never be any real progress while there is a Priest or Politician unburied. So the N.S.S. has quite enough hay on its fork for the time being.

C. TUSON.

[Mr. Tuson appears to have overlooked Mr. Elliott's point, which was that the S.P.G.B. was definitely anti-religious, not that religion did not enter into other forms of Socialism.—ED.]

## National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD OCTOBER 30, 1931.

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Clifton, Rosetti (A. C.), Ebury, Preece, McLaren, Sandys, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted, and the Monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted as follows: Bradford, Birkenhead, Ashington, Hants and Dorset, N. London, S. London, Bethnal Green, Wembley and District, and the Parent Society. Permission was granted for the formation of new Branches of the N.S.S. to be known as the Ashington District, and Hants and Dorset Branches.

Correspondence from Liverpool, Brighton, Saltash, and West Ham was dealt with, and arrangements for lectures at Stratford, and Brighton authorized. Mr. A. D. McLaren reported satisfactory progress with the Study Circle, and emphasized the importance of the Circle to young people with an ambition to become speakers from the Society's platform.

Details in connexion with the Annual Dinner, and Annual Conference were passed to the General Secretary for attention and the meeting closed.

The next meeting of the Executive will be on November 27.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

## Obituary.

MRS. LILY ROBINSON.

A LITTLE tardily, through no fault of our own, we have to record the death of Mrs. Lily Robinson, of Ouston, wife of Richard Robinson, one of the old guard of Freethinkers. She had suffered much of late years, from an illness that baffled the best medical skill that could be obtained. But her faith and interest in the Freethought cause never wavered, and both her and her husband were always deeply concerned with anything that concerned the welfare of those around her. She leaves behind her a son and a husband, and to both of them the sympathy of all that knew the kind of wife and mother they mourn will be readily extended. A secular funeral service was read by Mr. J. Brighton.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrod's Road, North End Road): Saturday, November 7, at 7.30. Messrs. A. J. Mathie and E. Bryant.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead, near the Tube Station): 11.30 a.m., Mr. L. Ebury.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Every Tuesday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture outside Hampstead Heath Station, L.M.S., South End Road. Every Thursday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture at Arlington Road.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; at 3.30, and 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Hyatt, McLaren, Tuson and Wood; Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Wood; Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. McLaren and Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

INDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (London Co-operative Hall, 249 Dawes Road, No. 11 bus): 7.30, Debate—"Socialism versus Capitalism." Mr. C. Tuson and Mr. H. Cutner.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. R. Dimsdale Stocker—"The Unpopularity of the Moralists."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): Monday, November 9, at 8.0, Mr. H. Preece will open a discussion on "The Inevitability of Religion."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The Religion of Communism."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Marshall Jackson, L.C.C.—"Fifty Years in the Schools."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, Hall No. 5, near Clapham North Station, Underground): 7.30, Mr. J. H. Van Bienen—"Ignoring the Obvious."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): Tuesday, November 10, at 7.0, Dr. Bernard Hollander—"The Prolongation of Life and Youthfulness."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, five minutes from the Brecknock): 7.30, Mrs. Emily Grant—"The Hand of God."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Saturday, November 7, opposite Open Market, at 7.30—Messrs. de Lacey, Legge and Byrne.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, entrance in Lorn Street): 7.0, F. C. Moore, M.A.—"Religion in the Soviet Union."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Mr. R. Day.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton. Questions and discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (City Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room): 6.30, Mr. T. F. Taylor—"Present Tendencies in Germany."



LIVERPOOL (Merseyside BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Buildings, 41 Islington, Liverpool, entrance Christian Street); 7.0, Mr. A. D. McLaren (London)—"The Roman Catholic Revival in England and the Freethinker's Interest in it." Current *Freethinkers* on sale, also large and varied stock of literature.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. John Dugdale—"England and America."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, Hall No. 1): 3.0, Mr. G. Whitehead.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, 5 Forbes Place): 7.30, Mr. R. Stevenson—"The Causes of International Hate."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street, Sunderland): Mr. C. Cohen, President N.S.S., and Editor of the *Freethinker* will lecture at 3.0—"Do the Dead Live?" At 7.0—"What the World Owes to Unbelief." Admission free. Questions and discussion. Teas may be had at a suitable Cafe near the hall.

WILL someone adopt bright healthy baby girl. Full surrender, no premium. Good home essential, Freethought for preference.—Box 35, FREETHINKER, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

**ACADEMY CINEMA, Oxford Street,**  
(Opposite Waring & Gillows). Regent 4361.

Last few days

Trauberg's Brilliant Russian Sound Film.

"THE BLUE EXPRESS,"

Sunday November 8, for one week,

Rene Clair's Great Comedy

"THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT"

and Emil Jannings in "FAUST," (U.F.A.)

A Book that should be in every Library:

## The Story of Religious Controversy

By JOSEPH McCABE

£1 : 1 : 0 Post Free (Inland Postage only).

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

## 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 Case for Secular Education

(Issued by the Secular Education League)

PRICE SEVENPENCE

Postage 1d.

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

## War, Civilization and the Churches

By CHAPMAN COHEN

Paper 2s. Cloth 3s.

Postage—Paper 2d., Cloth 3d.

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

## Christianity, Slavery and Labour

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN

THIRD EDITION. REVISED AND ENLARGED.

Paper - 1s. 6d. Postage 2d.

Cloth - 2s. 6d. Postage 3d.

## History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science

BY PROF. J. W. DRAPER.

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

Cloth Bound. 396 Pages.

PRICE 2/- POSTAGE 4½d.

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

## SEX and RELIGION

BY

GEORGE WHITEHEAD

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

Price - 9d. Postage 1d.

## THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

Cloth Bound THREE SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE  
Postage 2d.

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

## SHAKESPEARE ... and other ... LITERARY ESSAYS

BY

G. W. FOOTE

With Preface by CHAPMAN COHEN

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

Price 3s. 6d. Postage 3d.

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



# SHILLING CLASSICS

**ANATOLE FRANCE'S**  
"PENGUIN ISLAND"

**H. G. WELLS'S**  
"SHORT HISTORY OF THE WORLD"  
310 pp.; 20 maps

**CHARLES DARWIN'S**  
"ORIGIN OF SPECIES"  
Final, copyright edition; 434 pp.

**LLEWELYN POWYS'S**  
"THE PATHETIC FALLACY"  
First Cheap Edition

**Sir JOHN MACDONELL'S**  
"HISTORICAL TRIALS"  
Socrates, Joan of Arc, Galileo, etc.

**Rt. Hon. J. M. ROBERTSON'S**  
"A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY"

Other Authors represented in "The Thinker's Library"  
are EURIPIDES, SPENCER, HAECKEL, TYLOR, MILL, H. T.  
BUCKLE, LESLIE STEPHEN, and T. H. HUXLEY

**THE  
THINKER'S  
LIBRARY**

TO BE HAD OF  
ALL  
BOOKSELLERS



1/- net  
(by post 1/3)

Full list and speci-  
men copy of "The  
Literary Guide"  
(monthly, 3d.) free  
on application

**WATTS AND CO.,**  
JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

## GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

EDDINGTON, JEANS, HUXLEY & EINSTEIN

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN

With a Reply by Professor A. S. Eddington  
Second Edition.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

Paper 2s                      Postage 2d.  
Cloth 3s.                      Postage 3d.

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

JUST PUBLISHED.

## BRAIN and MIND

— BY —

Dr. ARTHUR LYNCH.

This is an introduction to a scientific psych-  
ology along lines on which Dr. Lynch is  
entitled to speak as an authority. It is a  
pamphlet which all should read.

Price - 6d.                      By post - 7d.

A Book Worth Having.

Just Published.

# FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST : : :

By J. M. WHEELER

With a Biographical Note by VICTOR B. NEUBURG

CONTENTS:—Early Religion; Animism; Fetishism and Idolatry; Totemism; Were  
the Jews Savages?; Religious Dances; Sympathetic Magic; Kings, Priests and Gods;  
Killing the God; etc., etc.

Joseph Mazzini Wheeler was not merely a populariser of scientific studies of religion, he was  
a real pioneer in the field of anthropology. His present work is rich in ascertained facts, but  
richer still in suggestions as to future lines of research. It is a book that should be in the  
hands of all speakers and of students of the natural history of religion.

Price 3s. 6d.

228 pages.

By post 3s. 9d.

Issued for the Secular Society, Limited by the Pioneer Press, 61 FARRINGTON ST., E.C.4.