

# The FREETHINKER

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## Views and Opinions.

### The New Year.

1918 opens, as did 1917, with Christendom still at war. And so far as Christianity is concerned, 1928 might see the world still engaged in the pastime of destruction. Whenever and however the War comes to an end, the end will not be in the least due to the influence of Christianity, whether organized or unorganized. Discontent in the world of labour, the implied threat to capitalists if the War continues, the feeling that the lengthening of the War may threaten the security of a dominant class, scarcity of food, even the war-weariness in the Army itself, all these factors may combine to bring the War to a close; but no one would be daring enough to suggest that the influence of Christianity will be strong enough—even as a discernible factor—to lead the world back into the ways of peace. Powerless to prevent the War breaking out, the Churches of Christendom show themselves equally impotent to bring it to a close. All they can offer the world is the futile imbecility of a Day of Prayer. But it is not the intercession of prayer the world requires; what it needs is the intercession of common sense.    \* \* \*

### The Savage in Our Midst.

Each year of the War has been ushered in by a Day of Prayer, and each year has seen the War growing more ruthless. That is God's answer—if he answers at all—to the petitions of his followers. In each country millions of Christians pray to their Deity that he will help them to kill a few hundred thousand of his followers in some other country—for that is really what a Day of Prayer amounts to. They do not put it thus plainly—religion in a civilized country is nothing if it is not hypocritical; but as our leaders are convinced that peace is impossible until enough Germans have been killed to break the German military class, and as German leaders are equally convinced that peace cannot come until the "mailed fist" and "shining sword" have established their supremacy, no other meaning can be given to the petition. And if God does answer these prayers, his reply

is to be read in the casualty lists. In the mediæval period, people carried the images of saints in front of them for protection. Further back in the history of human culture we find savages carrying their gods before them when advancing to attack a hostile tribe. The savage with his Ju-Ju, the mediæval Catholic with his image, the modern parson with his Day of Prayer, what is the mental difference between the three? There is none; despite difference of language and dress, they are absolutely upon the same level. The dress of the archbishop masks the paint and crude ornaments of the savage medicine-man; the paint of the medicine-man holds the promise of the elaborate dress of the archbishop. Modern God and primitive Ju-Ju, primitive priest and present-day parson, they are all of a piece. A substantial identity exists beneath a difference of dress. The call to a Day of Prayer is a call to the savage in our midst. Civilization has not destroyed the savage yet. He is merely restrained with occasional periods of liberty. And on January 6 he is having a day out—by Royal Command.    \* \* \*

### What Has God Done?

One may well wonder whether any reasonable being really expects anything to follow from this "Command" day of prayer? Will it have any effect on the German armies? Will it have any influence on our own? If it will, why not concentrate on prayer, and end the War in a way suitable to ourselves? Why trouble about economy campaigns, and loan campaigns, if our vital need is really a prayer campaign? Why not mobilize the parsons and leave the laymen at home? We have the King's word that we can only have victory if the "blessing of Almighty God" rests upon our endeavours. But in a war victory usually rests on someone's endeavours, and we must, therefore, conclude that whoever succeeds, God has blessed their endeavours. And a further conclusion is that, when the Germans were driven back from the Marne and the Somme, God blessed our endeavours, and when the Germans swept over Poland, and Serbia, and Belgium, and Italy, God blessed their endeavours. But, perhaps, the truer view is that God has nothing at all to do with it. That would certainly be more complimentary to the Deity. For imagine the moral value of a God with the power to end the War refusing to act until the nation goes on its knees and asks him to intervene! A God worth spending sixpennyworth of incense on would have ended the War long ago. He would have prevented the German armies marching across Belgium, he would have stayed the sinking of civilians at sea, and the murder of civilians on land. He has done none of these things, and we are now asked to collectively arise and remind him that there is a war on, that it is time he did something! Could absurdity go further? A God who needs petitioning in such a connection is not worth the trouble of asking.    \* \* \*

### The Bursting of a Bubble.

Certainly 1917 can have given the Churches small



cause for pleasure, and 1918 offers them but little comfort in prospective. When the War commenced, all the Churches did what they could to make capital out of the world-agony—the falsehood that the War was due to the growth of Freethought, alternated with deliberately concocted lies concerning revivals of religion at home and abroad. There is no need to mince matters; the people who spread these stories about a revival of religion must have known they were not true. When men like the Bishop of London went to France and told the soldiers of the revival of religion in England, they knew it was not true. And when they came home and told us about the revival of religion amongst the troops, they knew the tale was false. There was no room for an innocent mistake. There was no revival either at home or abroad, and that fact is now so patent that even the pretence of a revival is given up. The War did not revive men's faith in Christianity; on the contrary, it broke through the cover of a formal profession of faith, and brought them face to face with facts. And the result is that at no previous period have the Churches stood so low in the public estimation as now. Thousands have discarded Christianity who but for the War might have gone on rendering it a formal support. The War has broken through many shams, and one of them has certainly been the sham of religion as a beneficent force in human affairs. \* \* \*

#### The Future for Freethought.

But if the outlook is dark, so far as the immediate future of the Christian Churches is concerned, it is promising enough for Freethought. We are not among those who foresee a millennium when the War is over. We do not believe that with the declaration of peace, the capitalist and the working-man, the squire and the agricultural labourer, will embrace and forget all their old differences, and causes of conflict. On the contrary, we foresee a stormy period ahead, and even a struggle to get back some of the liberties that we have lost for the avowed purpose of prosecuting the War. But we need not wait for the end of the War to see the progress made by Freethought. It is not that there have been—to use a cant term—conversions. We have no belief in conversions of any kind. It is rather, as we have said, there has been a realization. The shock of the War has compelled thousands to some sort of self-examination, with results wholly profitable to Freethought. There is a keener demand for militant Freethought literature to-day than has been the case for many years. There is a keener interest in Freethought lectures, and this in spite of so large a number of the younger and more adventurous spirits being out of the country, serving in either the Army or the Navy. The position of this journal, after more than three years of War, is itself an earnest of better days in store. The breaking down of Supernaturalism of necessity involves a gain to Naturalism; a weakening of faith in God is only the other side of a strengthening of confidence in reason and humanity. Peace will see a world weary of War, and largely disillusioned as regards the value of religious belief. And this will give Freethought a better chance than it has yet had to make its power felt in the life of the world.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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It is startling to think of the heavy, rough, actual wood of the Cross, and to observe that now the Cross has become only a symbol, and is decked with silken tassels and little velvet flags, and is guaranteed easy for carrying. Moreover, its victory was assured when it was accepted among the world's trinkets and worn as jewellery.—*W. R. Paterson, "Benjamin Swift."*

## Stocktaking.

One calls to me out of Seir (Edom), Watchman, what of the night? Saith the watchman, Morning cometh, and also night; if ye will inquire, inquire; go, come again (Isaiah xxi. 11, 12).

THAT is a delightfully sensible passage. It encourages neither unreasoning optimism nor hope-extinguishing pessimism. Egypt was being invaded by the Assyrian hosts, and the prophet represents the inhabitants of Idumæa as eager to learn whether or not their beloved country was likely to fall within the invaders' sweep. The prophet's answer was characteristically diplomatic. On the whole their chance of escape was good; but they must be on the alert; they must be neither unduly elated with confidence, nor cast down into despair; their duty was to keep their eyes and ears open, and be ready for any emergency. They must also be in close touch with their leaders, and never fall asleep. That is a principle applicable to any cause in any age or country. It behoves Freethinkers, every now and then, to inquire: "Watchman, what of the night? How do we stand? What are our prospects?" This is the season for stocktaking, for making an examination and inventory of goods in hand, and the prospects of the business, whatever it may be. Soon after the War broke out, clergymen confidently predicted that the death-knell of Rationalism had been sounded; in fact, that all anti-Christian movements were doomed to disappear—never to return. One of the loudest of such prophets was the Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Regent's Park Chapel, who joyously assured the readers of the *Christian World* that the future belonged to Christ and his Church, and that Freethought organizations had received notice to quit. At the time, to superficial observers, it seemed as if the prophecy had every likelihood of being speedily fulfilled. Churches and chapels were crowded to the doors, and the obsolete prayer meeting shot into prominence as the most popular institution of the day. Even the secular press had such headlines as "A Nation on its Knees," and "A Whole People at Prayer." The War was going to bring about the mightiest revival of religion the world had ever seen, and here it was already knocking at the doors. Surely this was the day of the glorious triumph of Christ, and the final overthrow of all his enemies.

For a while, we repeat, it looked as if Freethought was actually at the end of its tether, because the nations were returning to the God of their fathers; but only for a very short while. In a few months the religious wave that swept over the land had spent itself, and the people borne Christwards on its crest drifted back to where it had picked them up, with the result that in a recent interview the Rev. Dr. Orchard had the courage to admit that religion is now at a deplorably low ebb throughout the land. Instead of a religious revival, a religious decline appears to have set in everywhere. *And Freethought is still alive.* Even the *Literary Guide* and the *Freethinker*, over which Mr. Spurr waxed so sarcastically merry in one of his articles, have not had the decency to verify the reverend gentleman's prediction, but are even flourishing, despite the extremely adverse conditions under which they are being published. Indeed, we may honestly say that the outlook for our cause was never more encouraging and inspiring than it is at this moment. It is admitted by fair-minded clergymen that the War has destroyed the faith of multitudes, and added numerous recruits to the ranks of the army of freedom. Such being the case, one naturally asks, why do the people of to-day abandon the creed which their ancestors cherished with such ardour for so many centuries? Why does the religion of the Cross so com-



pletely fail to meet their intellectual and moral requirements? Mr. Bottomley has told us that he went to hell on the battlefield, and there saw the glory of God; but that is the first time we have ever known the place of torment to yield such a glowing, happy vision. Does the editor of *John Bull* verily believe that hell, wherever it may be, is a revelation of the glory of the God of justice and love? Is it not rather an irrefragable evidence of the non-existence of a Supreme Being who is said to rule the world in righteousness and truth? Some there are who argue that the War, at its worst, is only an egregious aggravation of evils and miseries and horrors from which humanity at the best of times has never been wholly free. We admit it, and have always maintained that the prevailing conditions of life afford an unanswerable argument for Atheism. What we are calling attention to now is the fact that in this War those evil conditions have assumed such unprecedented proportions, and become so enormously intensified, that thoughtful men and women are having their eyes opened to the infinite absurdity of the belief in a righteous and good Deity. It is an old argument, brought home to thousands for the first time by the horrible carnage going on day and night on the battlefields. In this respect Freethought stands to gain even by the War, while religion is being increasingly discredited thereby. How frequently have we recently heard the exclamation: "This war has robbed me of faith in Divine Providence, and made an Athiest of me." Seeing hell at the Front, many a British soldier has had a radically different vision from the one described by Mr. Bottomley.

The Christian religion is being so entirely discredited because it is not true. Many of its present-day champions assert that the two most cardinal articles in its creed are the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. As a matter of fact, however, neither article is to be found in the New Testament. The Gospel Jesus never throws out even the remotest hint that God is the Father of the human race as such. The Jews who persecuted him said: "We were not born in fornication; we have one Father, even God." Jesus gave them the lie direct, saying, "If God were your Father, ye would love me"; and to his disciples he confidently spoke of God as his Father and theirs. In John's Gospel we read thus: "As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." One of the great words in the Pauline Epistles is "adoption"; and the doctrine taught therein is that we are not children of God by nature, but become so by adoption. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." In the New Testament brotherhood also is restricted to the disciples of Christ. By Jesus himself his followers were addressed as "brethren," while "the Gentile and the publican" were treated as outsiders (Matt. xviii. 17). Paul invariably spoke of his converts as "brethren." In 1 Peter ii. 17, we are exhorted to "honour all men" and to "love the brotherhood."

Now, whatever some modern preachers may say, the fact remains that the Bible does not represent God as the Father of all men, or all men as brothers. Furthermore, Christianity ignores the natural greatness and dignity of man, and persists in depicting him as fallen, depraved, and lost, and as incapable of a life worth living except through faith in the finished work of Christ. They who become Christians confess that this world is not their home, that their citizenship is in heaven, and that their life here, as such, possesses no value whatever. On earth they are but strangers and pilgrims, "seeking after a country of their own," and looking for "the city

which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The only legitimate inference from such expressions is that Christianity is a religion, not for this world, but pre-eminently for the world to come. Indeed, St. John instructs his readers to be on their guard against setting their affections on things earthly, because, he says, "the world passeth away," and is not worth bothering about.

These aspects of the Christian religion, once they are seen in their true light, condemn it as utterly unworthy of survival as the alleged inspirer and guide of man's life on earth. This is being found out by an ever-growing number of people, with the inevitable result that they become non-religious. Dr. Fort Newton recalls the pathetic refrain in classic lore, "The Gods do not care"; and he admits that "in one form or another this idea of Divine indifference pursued the classic mind like a Nemesis," and that "its long shadow has not entirely vanished yet." The reverend gentleman is not quite blind to the fact that to-day "faith is terribly tried and men everywhere are troubled by grave questionings"; but he is fundamentally mistaken when he describes the loss of faith as due to "giving way to impulsive illogic." The truth is that belief in God's care for men is always entertained in spite of the logic of facts. Does not Newman himself affirm that "it is a great question whether Atheism is not as philosophically consistent with the phenomena of the physical world as the doctrine of a creative and governing power"? That great man came to a pass when he had to embrace either Atheism or Catholicism; and though for himself he chose the latter, he has left it on record that an unbiased contemplation of the phenomena of the world leads to Atheism, Pantheism, or Polytheism (*Apologia*, pp. 323, 377, 379).

All things considered, then, we conclude that we have every reason to stir up our courage in confident hope of the final victory of our cause. The Freethought tree is spreading its branches in all directions, and all classes of men are finding grateful shade underneath them. There is no room for despair, or even for doubt. Within the Churches as well as without, our banner is held aloft, and many a clergyman is at heart on our side. Mr. Augustine Birrell speaks slightly of Paine's *Age of Reason*, characterizing it as a work which "nobody is ever likely to read for instruction or amusement"; but be that true or false, the fact remains that the critical conclusions of the *Age of Reason* are now adopted and expressed by all the leading Biblical scholars, and scarcely anybody has the temerity to protest. Superstition is visibly passing; and the period of moral and social reconstruction on a purely natural and sound basis has already commenced. This affords ample ground for rejoicing, and justifies us in predicting for one another a happy and prosperous new year in the noble service of humanity.

J. T. LLOYD.

### A Tame Torquemada.

The creed of Christendom is gradually melting away, like a northern iceberg floating into southern seas.—G. W. Footc.

EVERY bishop, it seems, must have his biography; and there have been episcopal biographies which made their readers groan. Hence, it is not surprising that a leading light of Nonconformity should have "related himself to paper," and Dr. Robert F. Horton's *Autobiography* (Allen & Unwin) is amply justified. It is the intimate record of a very full life, told with sincerity. Earnestness is its outstanding quality; and the wonder is that after so many years tilting at windmills, this Free Church Don Quixote should retain his crusading spirit unabated.

Dr. Horton is one of the last of the "hot gossellers,"



but he has stronger affinities to Newman Hall than to Spurgeon and Billy Sunday. Indeed, Spurgeon regarded him as one of the "Down Grade" heretics. The life-like portrait Dr. Horton has painted of himself emphasizes most clearly the outstanding differences between himself and the Boanerges of the Newington Tabernacle and the Playboy of the Western World. Dr. Horton has a passion for "crying for the moon," and has always set himself seriously to the solving of some of the social problems of the age. He has not hesitated to say frankly what he thinks; and, doing so, has offended susceptibilities. The most interesting quality of Dr. Horton's *Autobiography* is, however, not the prejudices of the author, but the light thrown on the religious and social life of our time.

Reared in a Nonconformist home, Dr. Horton was eyed with some suspicion in his schooldays. At Shrewsbury school he was appointed crier, which compelled the holder to end announcements with the pious adjuration, "God save the Queen, and down with the Radicals." He only escaped this pleasant ordeal by his removal to New College, Oxford. It will be news to many to learn that Dr. Horton rowed in the Oxford Eight five years consecutively. Still in his study hangs the oar which helped the boat up in 1887; and his section of the victorious vessel is now a cupboard to hold books.

Dr. Horton was fortunate with his acquaintances, and he watched the celebrities he met with a critical eye, and jotted down his impressions with determination. He tells an amusing tale of Professor Bywater, who was always talking of Plato: "When I was a child I was vaccinated and christened; neither of them took." The talented and unfortunate Oscar Wilde was also a student, and sat for his examination with Horton, who says:—

I see him now, with his flabby face and ruffled hair, striding up to the desk for fresh paper after the first hour; then handing in his book half an hour before time was up. He was a genius, and for him to pose was second nature. Of course, he was in the first class; he reached by sheer ability a position which I had gained only by the concentrated and interested labour of two years.

These recollections of his Oxford days have more than a passing interest. "Milner," he says, referring to the Union debates, was the speaker of that time who made the greatest mark afterwards. He had a somewhat foreign accent, and never struck us as quite English, but his intellectual mastery was the prophecy of his famous career." Dr. Horton adds a caustic comment on the intelligence of the governing classes:—

My Union experiences were not without their value in opening my eyes to the nature of English public life. When I was president my predecessor and successor were Lymington (now the Earl of Portsmouth) and Brodrick (now Lord Middleton). Thrown a good deal into their company, I found out the slender equipment with which the governing classes, by the weight of their traditions, could be carried to the highest places.

Dr. Horton decided to adopt the ministry, as his father and grandfather had done. "I knew that in Dissent," he writes, "it is absolutely impossible to obtain a distinction which gives you any acknowledged place in the national life." This is a hard saying in a civilized country, for Horton belonged to the Congregationalists, one of the oldest, wealthiest, and most reputable of the Free Churches. Always a "whole-hogger," he announced his intention of declining the title of Reverend and refusing to adopt clerical dress. "I shall wear," he declared, with a plentiful lack of humour, "no clothes to distinguish me from my fellow-Christians." The Oxford "barbarians" made rare fun of this remark, and caricatured Horton soaring to the sky and tearing off his clothes.

There are more serious things in the book than these trifles. Dr. Horton's first speech at the Oxford Union was in defence of the rights of Nonconformists to bury their own dead with their own rites. A Free Church minister had lost his wife, and when he brought her to the churchyard he found that the place allotted to her was a rubbish-heap. It was happenings such as this which determined Horton to enter the Congregational ministry. Had it not been for these ecclesiastical antagonisms, he might have entered the Church of England, and, to quote his own words, "even have risen to be a canon." And, as canons go, he would have been a good one.

Dr. Horton's indignation at the Church's conduct towards Nonconformists was only natural; but it must be remembered that the Church's attitude towards the working classes was equally objectionable. What sixteen centuries of the rule of the Bishops had done for the common people has been told by Joseph Arch, the first agricultural labourer who became a member of Parliament. In moving language he described the conduct of Churchmen towards their poorer brethren:—

First up walked the squire to the communion rails; the farmers went up next; then up went the tradesmen, the shopkeepers, the wheelwright and the blacksmith, and then, the very last of all, went the poor agricultural labourers. They walked up by themselves; nobody else went with them; it was as if they were unclean—and at the sight the iron entered into my heart and remained fast embedded there. I said to myself, "If that's what goes on—never for me!"

The Torquemada strain in Dr. Horton shows itself in his abortive efforts to impose Puritanism on his fellow-citizens. Once he determined to preach in support of a crusade against music-halls. "Then it occurred to me," he says, naively, "that I had never been to such a place." So he went, and found the performance decorous and commonplace. "It was deplorable," in Dr. Horton's view, "that human beings should find pleasure in things so banal, stupid, and insipid." However, to his credit, he recast the notes of his sermon.

Dr. Horton's personality could neither have grown nor thriven outside the British Isles. It is one of the oddest of blends, for it includes a good deal of Paul Pry, a touch of Pecksniff, and an infinite amount of Sunday-school teacher. In the bad old days of absolute monarchy it was a law with all good citizens that "the king could do no wrong." This adage Dr. Horton has applied to himself. He magnanimously denounces all those who dare to utter a word that might not profit the little boys and girls of that Hampstead conventicle he himself adorns. Dr. Horton's theology, however liberal it may be, has not yet reached the level of Freethought, nor can it ever do so until it ceases to be theology and becomes simple Secularism. For any purpose connected with the real welfare of the people, the Christian religion might as well be dead and buried—as it will be when the people see the truth.

MIMNERMUS.

### A Fragment on Matrimony.

AMONG civilized communities the system of monogamy is in every way the best. That love which lies deep does not depend upon external attractions alone. It arises from mental sympathy, and is permanently nourished by mutual affection and esteem. This form of love deepens and develops as the years roll round, and there is, perhaps, no more beautiful human spectacle than that displayed by the venerable married couple most happy when most united, albeit youth and youthful beauty have long since fled. Not that youth and beauty are



necessarily associated. Many a grandparent possesses an intellectual loveliness of feature which is the harvest of a well-spent life. Professor Bain has shrewdly observed that:—

The sociable interest is by its nature diffused; even the maternal feeling admits of plurality of objects; revenge does not desire to have but one victim; the love of dominion needs many subjects; but the greatest intensity of love limits the regard to one.

Nor is this overmastering passion for the sole possession of the adored one peculiar to the higher human stocks. Uncivilized races furnish examples of its power, while Brehm and other careful observers have described its occurrence among birds. In his *Descent of Man*, Darwin submits evidences of the monogamous instincts of domesticated mammals, and there is ample proof that most birds pair for life. But although an unbroken partnership constitutes the ideal state of matrimony, this need not discountenance reasonably easy and inexpensive divorce. When an ill-matched couple find it impossible to endure enforced companionship or cohabitation, every rational facility should be afforded for divorce with the right to re-marry so long as the interests of the innocent children are properly safeguarded. The offspring are necessarily the first consideration, for they were not consulted as to their birth; the children are frequently helpless; they suffer acutely amid domestic misery, and in them resides the future of the race. Therefore, with complete security of the rights of the children unsuitable alliances could be expeditiously dissolved with great advantage to the distracted partners, their offspring, and the social organism.

The duration of wedlock varies widely among different communities. With some peoples the ties of matrimony are so slender that they scarcely endure for a season. On the other hand, Man, the traveller, asserts that in the Andaman Islands the marriage union is absolutely indissoluble. The Yeddahs of Ceylon, certain New Guinea races, and several tribes of the Indian Archipelago never part until separated by death. But in the majority of cases the marriage contract is easily broken. In Greenland, Nansen tells us the married couple frequently separate after a six months' marriage. Waitz states that the Wyandots take their partners on trial, and should the experiment prove unsatisfactory the parties separate after a few days have elapsed. Among the savages of Australia, the natives of Samoa, the Dyaks of Borneo, and numerous other uncivilized stocks, divorce is as easily obtained as marriage. In the far eastern East love is so fleeting that the people are incessantly occupied in changing their mates. Divorces are an everyday episode of Moslem life. The matrimonial bond is so loose with the Bedouins that Burckhardt met men of middle life who had been married more than fifty times. In Egypt, Lane noticed a similar state of affairs. Very few are the dwellers in Cairo who have not divorced one spouse at least. In fact, as Professor Westermarck records in his invaluable *History of Human Marriage*, many native Egyptians—

have in the course of two years married as many as twenty, thirty, or more wives; whilst there are women, not far advanced in age, who have been wives to a dozen or more men successively.

Winwood Reade, in his *Savage Africa*, remarks of the Sahara Moors that they considered it improper for man and wife to live too long together, and "the leaders of fashion are those who have been the oftenest divorced." Old wives vanish, and new spouses appear so frequently in the household of the Bongo Negro that the paternity of the children is a subject of the haziest conjecture.

With various races in all stages of savage and semi-civilized development the husband has full liberty to

send his wife away. The Aleuts commonly bargained their women for food and raiment. In Tongo the man merely informs his helpmeet that he desires her no longer when he wishes to divorce her. Among the ancient Israelites, again, if the woman failed to reach the man's standard of excellence he simply bade her depart. This is plain from the following verses:—

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it into her hand, and send her out of the house.

And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.—(Deuteronomy, ch. xxiv. v. 1, 11).

With other peoples other customs prevail, even the Greenlanders rarely dismiss their wives when they are mothers, and divorces are infrequent among many of the North American Indians. With numerous native races in all parts of the world the marriage tie is regarded as much too sacred for hasty dissolution, and many instances are recorded from China to Peru where divorce is the exception rather than the rule.

Recognition of the parent's duties towards the offspring has materially influenced the marriage customs of quite uncivilized races. No divorce is available among the Kukis if the wife has given birth to a son; but if the union prove barren, the man may discard his spouse and wed another. In Indo-China divorce is permitted among the Red Karens when the marriage proves childless, but the birth of one child is sufficient to prevent divorce. Hunter states that with the Santals and Tipperahs of India the consent of the husband's clansmen or that of a jury of village elders is essential to secure a divorce. With sundry backward tribes adultery alone will condone divorce, and among various other communities public sentiment serves to strengthen the dignity of marriage. Even with some extremely uncivilized races the wife's assent forms an important factor in cases of separation. The ancient Mexicans viewed matrimony as a permanent contract, and divorce was frowned upon both by the priests and the people. Adultery, in Nicaragua, constituted the only offence which empowered a husband to divorce his partner. Although divorces are easily obtainable in China, Medhurst ascertained that separation is comparatively rare in that country. Legal facilities for divorce are very reasonable in Japan; but according to Professor Rein and other authorities, the softening influences of family life are so healing that the marriage bond is seldom broken, and divorces are relatively rare.

In Rome and Greece divorces were easy of accomplishment, particularly in their later periods. With the triumph of the Christian religion, facilities for judicial separation were restricted, and the New Testament text, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," was sternly quoted against all dissenters. Still, divorces were from time to time conceded to the rich and powerful, until the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, "definitely suppressed the last traces of divorce as a legal practice."

Catholic countries still suffer from the Church's pronouncement. Divorce was established in France by the great Revolution. It was sanctioned and utilized by Napoleon, but it disappeared with the reaction which succeeded his fall. The Republic waited until 1884, when the Government became sufficiently stable to withstand all the plots of the royalists and clericals. Then, on the 27th of July, divorce was restored to the statute books of France. In Spain and Italy a husband may apply for a legal separation, but the marriage contract cannot be annulled.



The Reformation led to an amelioration of the Canon Law in Protestant States. The proof of adultery on the part of the wife is now sufficient to secure dissolution of marriage throughout the Protestant world, although the law varies in other respects in different countries. Under the Prussian "Landrecht," debauchery, drunkenness, insanity of more than a year's duration, and the combined wishes of the two partners in the absence of offspring, are among the provisions for divorce. When the married pair have remained judicially separated for three years, divorce is available in Denmark and Norway by mutual consent. Even in Jesuit-ridden Austria unconquerable aversion, when conclusively established, finds its solution in divorce. Clericalism, however, was, in the 'fifties, too powerful in Ireland to permit the inclusion of that country in the new divorce legislation of England. To this hour divorce is only possible in Ireland by special Act of Parliament.

It is a legitimate inference from analogy that aboriginal man paired with his partner until after the birth of the offspring. Whether the union persisted longer, we cannot say. Trustworthy observers have noted that the man-like apes form family groups, and it is a fair deduction that the habits of primitive races were very similar. After a long and careful consideration of all the available data, Westermarck concludes that on the whole the tendency towards lifelong unions has increased with the advance of civilization. Nevertheless, that anthropologist regards a further freedom as inevitable among civilized mankind. For—

It must be remembered that the laws of divorce in Christian Europe owe their origin to an idealistic religious command which, interpreted in its literal sense, gave rise to legal prescriptions far from harmonizing with the mental and social life of the mass of the people. The powerful authority of the Roman Catholic Church was necessary to enforce the dogma that marriage is indissoluble. The Reformation introduced somewhat greater liberty in this respect, and modern legislation has gone further in the same direction.

Even in England there is now a fair prospect for an advantageous rationalization and reform of our effete laws relating to divorce. And despite the angry antagonism of the representatives of Rome at the top, right down to the pastors of the puniest Bethels at the bottom, this urgent and far-reaching improvement cannot long be delayed.

T. F. PALMER.

### The Parson's Thanksgiving Prayer.

The following lines—slightly altered—appeared in the *Freethinker* at the end of the Boer War. They are so appropriate to the present situation that we have ventured to reprint them.

ALMIGHTY GOD, whose only Son  
Was dead against all "scrapping,"  
We very nearly had begun  
To think that Thou wast napping.  
We now approach Thy Throne of Grace,  
Not far from Ludgate Circus,  
To "kid" the foolish British race,  
And—keep us from the "work'us."  
O Lord, we're thankful 'tis Thy will  
To set the nations squabbling;  
We're glad Thou art a Briton still;  
We thought Thou had'st been "wobbling."  
We thought that Thou had'st been and gone  
And joined the Hun rapsallions,  
Forgetting that Thou'rt always on  
The side of big battalions.  
Almighty God, we hope that we  
Shall bring them to submission,  
Those horrid Germans, thanks to Thee  
And—lots of ammunition.

We beg an answer to our prayers,  
Clear cut, without evasion,  
Regretting Thou hast answered theirs  
On more than one occasion.  
Thanks, Lord, for leading us in war,  
The field to slay the foe on;  
"Thanksgiving Day" would be no more  
If nations had no war on.  
O pardon what we've done amiss  
To make our vict'ry tardy;  
O Lord, we'd quite forgotten this:  
The Kaiser's not the Mahdi.  
There's one thing more we ask of Thee,  
And trust that Thou wilt heed it:  
Fill us with generosity;  
Thou knowest that we need it!

ESS JAY BEE.

### The Blank Wall.

#### VI.

THE tragedy of the child in modern civilization has been, or should have been, made obvious to every thinker by the conditions of life which we find around us to-day. The child mind, so delicate and pure in quality; so susceptible to environment, and so fanciful in its imagination, has for its home to-day an insane hot-bed of corrupted brains and decadent ideas. All things would seem to conspire against the purity and delicacy of the child mind. It is born flower-like into an atmosphere reeking with the foul odours of extreme commercialism, sordid competition, struggles for existence, militarism, and general degradation.

Who can adequately estimate the disastrous psychological effects of this diseased environment upon the infant personality? What reward would sincere investigators receive? What attention and honest thought? Practically none. The idealist and the reformer cannot but be forced to one conclusion; that high-minded purpose, idealism, beauty, and the coloured joy of life, are utterly alien, and even repulsive to the modern brain, which prefers to fatten upon gross and ugly realities of its own manufacture. Observe, for instance, in the large and popular toy-shops (which set themselves the task of pleasing the child mind) how important the idea of militarism has become since the War. Remember that the emotional and spectacular imagination of the child is inflamed by the sensational "Khaki Outfits," toy swords, pistols, cannons, soldier's hats, and even miniature uniforms, &c. Look for beauty in a modern toy-shop and you will be disappointed. This is only one example of the systematic corruption of the child mind. Contamination awaits it at every turn—escape seems impossible. Only those children gifted with abnormal personalities and even genius can withstand, or attempt to withstand, the polluted stream of civilization as it sweeps down into the gutters of time.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

### THE FATE OF CHRISTIANITY.

The same means that have supported every other popular belief, have supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, murder, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is. We derive from our ancestors a belief thus fostered and supported. We quarrel, persecute, and hate for its maintenance. Does not analogy favour the opinion that, as, like other systems, Christianity has arisen and augmented, so like them it will decay and perish; that, as violence, darkness, and deceit, not reasoning and persuasion, have procured its admission among mankind, so, when enthusiasm has subsided, and time, that infallible controverter of false opinions, has involved its pretended evidences in the darkness of antiquity it will become obsolete; that Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they would now do at the metamorphoses of Jupiter, the miracles of Romish saints, the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.—*Shelley*,



## Acid Drops.

The article in the *Nation*, by "An Officer," to which reference was made in these columns last week, has been followed by a letter from "Another Officer" on the same lines. He endorses the statement that "the most unpopular feature of Army life" is the Church parade. He adds:—

At a certain Cadet School in Sussex (name herewith) it was decided, some months ago, to make Church Parade voluntary. Result—no Church Parade and the issue of an order to the effect that one Company would turn out each Sunday.

The Church has no more hold on the civilian in the Army than it has on him outside the Army. Therefore the armed (and powerless) civilian does object very strongly to being forced to listen to men (who, in many cases, obviously do not credit him with the intelligence of a Tierra del Fuego native) preaching at him.

At the present time the soldier's religion is, probably, composed chiefly of a little faith and a lot of hope; that he will one day escape from the horror and misery of war; that he may be delivered from the endless parades—church and others—the dull, brainless routine of army life, and be a man again, free to walk how, when, and where he chooses, and to have his haircut when he likes.

In the meantime it would interest him to know why the Padres are all officers.—Yours, &c.

Many others besides soldiers would like to know why parsons rank as officers—with a comfortable salary.

On one point, however, "Another Officer" is mistaken. He says: "Soldiers are officially obliged to have a religion, and if, in the flurry of joining up, they are unable to think at the moment of one, they are entered as C. of E." But this is not the case. Soldiers need not profess any religion on joining the Army. Many men, and many officers, seem to be of a different opinion; but it is not the case. A soldier is asked his religion, and his reply must be taken as given. It is because so many are ignorant of this that a profession of some religion is insisted on. And in a profession where men are washed by order, dressed by order, and put to bed by order, probably many do not see why they should not have a religion by order likewise.

The clergy are quaint folk, and, in the expressive French phrase, "live in balloons." For instance, note the interest these men have in the War. They are exempted from military service, and when they do act as army chaplains they get the pay of officers and not that of privates. Their profession is almost the only one unaffected by the War. The burning question of the moment with them is not the prosecution of the War, but concerns the orthodoxy of Dean Hensley Henson, who has been appointed to the see of Hereford.

"Christmas waits have been scarce this year," sighs a contemporary. We wonder what the folk who have stood in the food queues think of it.

Lord Hugh Cecil has expressed his staunch faith in eternal punishment—for other people. This reminds us of the story of the two Scotch elders who were discussing the question of the everlasting bonfire. One of the elders scouted the notion of mercy, and broke out, "A kirk without a hell isna worth a single dam."

Reviewing a small book on the *Achievements of Christianity*, the *Church Times* contrives to pay the author a left-handed compliment. The object of the book is to show that Christianity is not discredited; that it has done and is doing much for civilization. The student of apologetics is told that if he reads the four short chapters he will hardly fail, "if not to be convinced, at least to be moved," by the arguments. We do not doubt it. Many readers will be moved to pity the writer for wasting his time and energy on so ungrateful a subject. But in the name of common sense, what is the value of an argument that does not convince?

Still, the reviewer is cheerful, if a bit muddle-headed. One ends by praising this "real thinker" whose arguments

are not convincing, and assures us that there is a good time coming for the Christian faith.

One of the most encouraging signs of the present day is the way in which the younger men, both clergy and laity, are devoting themselves to hard thought on the new problems, both theological and social, of the coming age. These problems they are facing with courage and confidence. They may make mistakes, but none can say that Christianity is bankrupt of intellectual and spiritual power when he thinks of the brilliant young men who are content to fight under its banner to-day. It is the agnosticism of the Huxley period that, like Giant Pope in Bunyan's allegory, has grown "crazy and stiff in its joints"; and has almost lost its power to injure.

We have read some of the sociological studies of these clerics and clerical minded laymen, and have found them disappointingly amateurish. After all, what can we expect from people who imagine that anti-Christian polemic is still where Huxley and his Agnostic friend left it? One Agnostic we know is, curiously enough, a Broad Church clergyman, whose strong point is not coherent thinking. Most people who use their brains are Atheists. They know that they are as much entitled to deny the existence of God as Christians are to deny the existence of fairies. There is not an iota of evidence to show that fairies do not exist; but as soon as it was obvious that there was no evidence to show that they do exist, the case went against them by default. We not only *doubt* their existence—we *deny* it. Agnosticism, as a witty writer once put it, is a feather bed to catch a fallen Theist.

The Bishop of London has once more unburdened his episcopal soul. "This is the time," he says, "for the nation at the critical moment of the conflict to tighten the belt." Surely a counsel of perfection from a bachelor bishop who enjoys a salary of £200 weekly for preaching the Gospel of Poverty.

One of the Yellow Press publications was quite lyrical in its Yuletide leader. "Let this Christmas be spent," it said, "by the faithful, in prayer." We wonder how many journalists had "housemaid's knee" owing to their devotions.

Bishop Welldon is exultant because "the birthplace of the Saviour is now safe under the shadow, not of the Crescent, but of the Cross." Couldn't Providence safeguard the old home without the assistance of Thomas Atkins?

"Christmas Day finds the British at Bethlehem," says the *Sunday Pictorial*. We thought that Cook's excursionists were no uncommon sight in the Holy Land.

"France has her holy places," declares that accomplished theologian, Mr. Horatio Bottomley. Perhaps he remembered that when good Americans die they go to—Paris.

Business men do not seem to mind whose corns they tread on when they are on the war-path of commercialism. Recently we saw a cigar-box with a coloured portrait of Buddha on the lid. Perhaps, before long, some enterprising tradesman will name a brand of cigarettes after the Second Person of the Trinity.

A cripple, charged at a London police-court with begging, admitted that he sometimes took five pounds in a day. The dear clergy will smile at this modest result.

A writer in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* says that when Dr. Hensley Henson, the new Bishop of Hereford, came to the East End of London, he at once challenged the "Bradlaughites" to put forward their best man. A debate was arranged with the result that the said "Bradlaughites" cheered Dr. Henson to the echo and "hissed their own champion off the platform." With the usual care for the feelings of Freethinkers, we note that the name of this discredited champion is withheld. It would complete the story if the readers of the *Sentinel* were told that the man hissed



off the platform was Bradlaugh himself. When one is telling a lie one might as well go the whole hog and have done with it. As it is, the story is spoilt for want of a little artistic trimming.

We fancy the authority for the story is an unnamed curate, as it is a curate who informs the *Sentinel* writer that he remembers what a "disastrous blow" Dr. Henson dealt at "the truculent propaganda of Atheism" in East London. Well, we have a personal acquaintance with Atheism in the East End of London for going on thirty years, and we can only marvel at its rapid recovery. But the Bishop of London usually explains that it was he who laid out Atheism in the East End. Now it turns out to have been Dr. Henson. We rather imagine it was "Mrs. Harris."

The American Young Men's Christian Association has raised ten million pounds in two months. This raises begging to one of the fine arts.

An ugly doll, representing a Conscientious Objector, has made its appearance in the toy-shops. And this is a country that professes to worship the Prince of Peace.

Pious folk who hailed the conversion of Mr. Horatio Bottomley to Christianity as a victory for the Faith had better moderate their transports, for it almost appears that the distinguished theologian is still searching for spiritual satisfaction. Writing of the British occupation of Jerusalem, Mr. Bottomley says, "may not one of the first fruits of the New Occupation be the merging of all the creeds of the Churches into a new Evangel for the succour of the souls of mankind?"

The dear clergy are always proclaiming their hard lot in converting a naughty world, but they do not say much about the "cushy jobs" in their profession. A Sunday paper declares that "the Dean of Windsor has little to do beyond supervising the services in St. George's Chapel, and he receives £2,000 a year to keep up the Deanery, a most comfortable residence in the Castle precincts."

Lord Longford, Prof. H. W. Mackintosh, a couple of canons, with other folk, sign a letter published in the *Irish Times*—the proper address of which would have been the district asylum. The lesson these people derive from the present state of affairs is that we are near the close of the "Times of the Gentiles," that the "Personal return of our Lord" cannot be far distant, all affairs should be considered in the light of this "Blessed Hope." What a long way off the "Age of Reason" does seem when one comes across such a production as this letter.

A writer in the *Sunday Chronicle* suggests using the Churches as centres for food distribution. We see no objection, and it would certainly be putting them to a more useful purpose than they serve at present, although if it were done we should find the Churches using it as an argument in favour of the truth of Christian doctrines. But why not ask the Churches to pray for a repetition of some of the Biblical miracles—say, of the loaves and fishes. That would get over the trouble at once.

The *Times*, which is so ready to exclude letters on all sorts of subjects that do not suit its policy, continues the publication, week after week, of letters on "Christian Reunion." And it is an illustration of the power of Christian brotherhood that after all these centuries Christians should be discussing whether it is possible for them to worship together. They can meet and work together on all sorts of non-religious matters, it is only when religion is on the carpet that they separate.

The *Daily News* of December 22 refers to a decision of the United States Supreme Court annulling an ordinance of Louisville which segregated the black population. It then refers to a case in which certain South African natives were forbidden to attend service on board a British transport on account of their colour. Someone wrote to the Primate

about it, and he did not see his way to interfere in the matter. He added that "No problem has caused more distress and difficulty than the problem of the mixture of white and black at Divine Service." The brotherhood of man is a most elastic doctrine in all Christian countries.

We do not agree with the Society of Friends that "Christianity requires the toleration of opinions not our own lest we should unwittingly hinder the worship of the Spirit of God," for the reason that such has never been the opinion of any considerable body of Christians at any time or place. But, nevertheless, we do appreciate the decision of the Society to continue its publications on War and Peace without submitting them beforehand to the Censor, as required by Regulation 27c. That is the way to meet regulations of this character. Mere protest is useless. Tyranny is never disturbed by bluster, only by determined action. We repeat what we have said before, that we have no objection whatever to proper legal penalties being attached to treasonable literature, provided the decision as to what is treasonable be left to the Courts. But to make certain individuals, whose elevation to power may be the result of party political accident or trickery, the judges of what ought to be allowed publication, is an act of sheer tyranny. The public has no means of knowing what is suppressed, or why it is suppressed. Free opinion is stifled at its birth, and all that is left is a manufactured opinion both vicious and worthless. We don't care a brass button about the fortunes of political parties, but we do care a deal about freedom of speech and of the press; and we have hopes that this latest attempt to muzzle opinion will yet be given up as unworthy the traditions of British freedom.

Mr. H. B. Irving, speaking at the City Temple, said that some of the old Puritan prejudice against the theatre was due to the fact that more people went to the theatre than to church. This was getting right on the spot, and had Mr. Irving carried his researches back far enough, he would have discovered that the objection of the early Christians to the Roman games on Sunday was avowedly based on the fact that they kept people away from church. Later, this business aspect had to be disguised, and moral reasons were invented. These always flourished best here, for John Bull was always an easy first in discovering a moral reason for everything he did or contemplated doing.

The Rev. John Godsell Prentice, a Nottinghamshire rector, and his wife, were remanded at Nottingham the other day, charged with stealing 664 tickets, value £12 9s. 4d., from a Church Army canteen. Mr. and Mrs. Prentice will be tried on January 8. But it hardly seems the touch of a 'prentice hand.

"The creation of a strong, wide, tolerant, orthodox, reformed Church of England, as nearly as possible co-extensive with the nation," is the great need of to-day, says the Dean of Manchester, Whose need? We presume the Dean means his need, and the need of those in the same line of business as himself. No one else appears to be conscious of any such need. Anyway, we fancy the Dean will wait a long while before he sees a Christian Church co-extensive with the nation.

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## Man and Nature.

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THE world rolls round for ever like a mill  
And grinds out death, and life, and good, and ill;  
It has no purpose, reason, mind, or will.

Man might know one thing, were his sense less dim,  
That it rolls not to suit his petty whim,  
That it is quite indifferent to him.

Yet mind is born as bursts a beauteous flow'r,  
And man attains to intellectu'l power—  
From clods, not gods, is caught this sentient dower.

AVON DALE.



## C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 6, Manchester; January 13, London; January 20, Southampton; January 27, Swansea; February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester.

## To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 6, Birmingham; January 20, London; January 27, South Shields; February 3, Failsworth; February 10, Swansea; February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester.

THE Editor begs to return thanks for the many Christmas and New Year good wishes that have reached him. As an earnest of goodwill, they are greatly appreciated.

J. F. AUST.—Thanks. See paragraph. Our best wishes for the New Year.

R. H. ROSETTI.—Your card reached us on Christmas Eve, and we were pleased to see it, as an indication that you are still well. We hope to see you before long.

A. F. DICKINSON.—Copies of the *Freethinker* for so far back as 1885 could only be obtained second-hand. It might be possible to pick up a bound volume for that year.

H. BULL.—We endorse your opinion that if people could only be induced to read and think sufficiently, the game of Christianity would be ended. However, greater numbers are now both reading and thinking, and that is so much to the good. Shall be pleased to see you when we visit Birmingham.

VINCIT OMNIA VERITAS.—Papers are being sent, and hope they will reach you safely. Balance will be used for sending copies of *Freethinker* to men at the Front. Thanks for good wishes, which we heartily reciprocate.

J. RANKIN.—The *Bible Student's Monthly* is distributed from house to house, and its character almost defies comment. There are some things in the world that are protected from criticism by their very stupidity. The leaflet you enclose is one of these.

J. H. WATERS.—Received, and shall appear. Thanks.

F. S. LAWES.—Pleased to know your newsagent is willing to display *Freethinker* poster, and also to display copies of the paper. When that is done sales are certain. We are sending on the posters for use.

S. CLOWES.—We did not mean that the victory over the L.C.C. had not a value for those outside London, only that it was of special value to Londoners as their liberty was directly attacked. That is why we directed our appeal specially to them.

C. W. GREEN.—There is no end to these fanciful interpretations of the Bible, which we regard as so much wasted ingenuity, even though they may carry with them a certain interest.

V. NEUBERG.—Pleased to hear from you, but sorry you have been spending time in hospital. Hope to see you home again soon, and that good luck will follow you through 1918.

"SAMMY."—Criticizing writings of the kind you enclose is a sheer waste of time. People who write and people who read this "prophetic" stuff are hopeless. It is the most hopeless form of religious imbecility.

W. W. KENSETT.—We are obliged for the consideration shown in your note. Having to face such things is one of the penalties of our position. We regret that want of space prevents our publishing your letter this week. We have received others on the same subject. If we cannot find room in our next, we may summarize the more pertinent ones.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings and best of wishes for the New Year.

C. GOODWIN.—We do not think 1918 will be easier for us than was 1917. It looks like being much harder; but we are not at all discouraged. And we feel sure that 1919 will see us still pegging away.

*When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.*

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

*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.*

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

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

*The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.*

## Sugar Plums.

We commence with this number the thirty-eighth volume of the *Freethinker*. So far as Freethought journals in Europe are concerned this constitutes a record. Thirty-seven years is a long while for a journal, such as this one, to endure, and its survival argues an unusually strong bond between writers and readers. And we think we may safely say that during the whole of its existence the *Freethinker* has never ceased to battle for freedom in a larger than a sectarian sense. It has championed Roman Catholic or Protestant equally with Freethinkers whenever it saw the legitimate freedom of either attacked. It has aroused bitter hatreds and devoted friendships; and the same cause has led to both. When a man or a paper acts with strength, he or it is bound to make both warm friends and fierce enemies. The latter may be avoided by a policy of hesitancy and compromise, but the former will also be sacrificed. And we certainly would never dream of losing our friends for the sake of placating our opponents.

And so, in spite of the depressing circumstances around us, we greet all our readers with the best wishes for a Happy New Year. The best of good fortunes would be that which brought back peace to this priest-ridden, superstition-drugged, and blood-deluged world. We owe our readers much for the help they have given during 1917, and we have evidence that there will be no slackening of effort during 1918. The *Freethinker* has more than held its own during these three years of war, and we have every confidence that the *Freethinker* flag will be flying as bravely and as proudly as ever when the War is over. The struggle gets harder as the War lengthens, but there is some consolation in the thought that every month brings us nearer the end.

We have planned a fairly elaborate programme for 1918, the details of which will become apparent as circumstances permit their realization. But we have mapped out for publication over a score of pamphlets, in addition to several books, some of the former of which will be of special interest to Freethinkers. Two things will determine the rate of their appearance—the possession of capital and the paper shortage. We fancy we can overcome the first, if the second does not become too acute. But the supply of paper grows shorter, and the price gets higher. Still, we have managed to put a number of new publications on the market, and some more new ones will certainly follow within the next few weeks.

The Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. commences its New Session to-day (January 6) with two lectures by Mr. Cohen in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick, at 3 o'clock and 6.30. The secretary writes that he is expecting good meetings, and we hope he will not be disappointed. There is nothing like a full house for encouraging audience, speaker, and organizers.

The Birmingham Branch opens its New Year course of lectures at the Repertory Theatre, Station Street, on Sunday, January 6, with a lecture by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, entitled "God and the War," with special reference to Mr. Arthur Machen's articles on the subject in the *London Evening News*. Comment will also be made on the National Day of Prayer.

We wish to call special attention to the course of Sunday afternoon lectures arranged to take place in the West Central Hall, Alfred Place, Tottenham Court Road. The lectures are arranged by the Executive of the N. S. S. Mr. Snell opens the course to-day (Jan. 6), at 3.15. His subject is one that should attract a good audience.



## Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

THE purpose of this Fund is to raise the balance of expenses—estimated at between £80 and £100 incurred in defending the right to sell literature at public meetings in the London parks. On the initiative of the N.S.S. a Protest Committee was formed, and after carrying the question into the High Court, the London County Council was induced to rescind the offending resolution. It was a splendid victory, and one which should specially appeal to all Londoners.

Previously acknowledged:—£31 2s.; J. G. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; S. Clowes, 2s. 6d.; P. Shakespeare and Cannon Friends, 5s.; J. White, 5s.; Four Draughtsmen, 10s.; O. A. S., £1; W. W. Kensett, 10s.; John Weeks, 2s.; B. B., 5s.; G. Grove, 2s.; Sam Hampson, 4s.

## The Crows.

IN these times the young are beginning to realize what a fearful legacy their ancestors have left them. They cannot lay their fingers on the plague spot. Now, it must be very clear that fetters cannot be placed on our hands unless our minds have first been so thoroughly subjugated that we are, at any rate, ready to receive them. If we are the children of working-class, or so-called middle-class folk (for in actuality there is no difference), unless we are very lucky we receive our first fetter but a few days after we are born. What is this fetter? We are made members of some religious body or other, as like as not the Established Church of England. Whether it is Church of England or not, we come under the influence of the "Crows." Well did a more enlightened French nation dub the black-coated sycophants who neither toil nor spin, but whose whole subsistence depends upon the credulity of simple folk, blood suckers who prey one upon the other, and all upon the poor. This sounds like mere abuse, the invective of the untutored agitator, but it is true. I have searched in vain for one great action of the modern churches to help democracy and the mass of the people. On all hands they encourage the worst elements in the community. They encourage the idle, both rich and poor, the vagabonds to increase like mice and flood the labour market with cheap and inefficient labour, thereby forcing the artizan worthy of the name to lower himself in order to include the worthless as comrades. They encourage the exploiter of labour to put up the price of his wares, and to lower the pittance doled out to those he employs, they encourage the professional soldier, that enemy of progress, the lawyer, and in fact, all those in the community whose existence is sustained and dependent upon subservience. "But," you may say, "if this is so obvious, why is it tolerated in the first place, it is not so obviously brought up in its tainted atmosphere in minutes of their existence. It is very hard to eradicate. In dogmatic and abusive, let us say, systems piecemeal. Of this I do not speak, its many faults were the bitterest enemy of political; but let us, in comparison with the Early Church did at actual rapacious government who excommunicated the knocker had a significance to the Church to-day. The separation of Church and State is Christianity pure and

ness and non-resistance. The Church, with its twin brothers, the Army and Navy, practically form the nucleus of the State. So we see that the Church in its very essence is essentially unchristian.

Since the doctrine of the Church is unchristian, what is it? Since it is not Jesus which binds all the Churches together, whether free or fettered, what, in the name of humanity, is it? When considering the subject, let us erase from our minds Jesus and the Brotherhood of Man, since it is only left to Freethinkers to respect them, and looking deeper, expose the real doctrine to light.

The Crows tell us that it is impossible to "make the best of both worlds." Nearly all the various sects and schisms agree on this point, especially that withered and anæmic object, the Church of England. It is a lie, unless to make the best of this world is to be either a business man or a clergyman, for if there is a Heaven above, there is no room in it for the conscious Pharisee. How dare they attempt to say to the starving man "that it will be made up to him" in the next world, with their dinners waiting for them at home? The first to talk like this is usually that monstrosity the "muscular Christian" curate, whose face is red with the blood of the meat meals he engulfs. How dare he talk of showing men the way to God when he knows nothing of God or the way? The yokel in the fields who sees the blue sky, the brown earth, and the green trees, or the sailor who sees the great waves trying to swallow him up, and hears the gale shrieking through the rigging; or, again, the mechanic who tends and feeds some huge engine with its remorseless steel arms and whirring wheels, knows more of God and his ways than this puny object. The Crows claim that they tend suffering and visit the sick and poor—another lie. If they spend so much time visiting the sick and trying to cure them by prayer, why is there so much sickness? Or is it that they merely cry "Baal! Baal!" to a God that hears them not? It is left for the hard-working doctor to bring them recovery or a more or less painless death. And if they do comfort the sick, they are paid to do it, a thing which the ordinary man does from the best motives for nothing. Their religion has not created human sympathy. And as for visiting the poor, it is a sham and a lie. How little do the unfortunate relish these compulsory district visitings by the miserable lay worker, who is usually some idiotic woman with no useful occupation; indeed, no occupation at all, except to meddle with what is best left alone. They preach an ascetic denial of this world's goods to those that don't possess them, but never to those that do, or to their own bishops and high paid clergy. And for this the wealthy, of whom their Founder said it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for such to enter the kingdom of heaven, thank them, for it all helps to bind the thinking artizan and to pauperize the vagabond. They teach chastity to the young, and have enormous families themselves, for whether the marriage law should be amended or not, it is not the chatter of the clergy that renders the impure pure, all in a twinkling. They teach the idle and stupid to increase and multiply, to flood an already overstocked labour market, and to provide material for the "charitable" (loathsome word!) orgies of their parishioners. To prevent children is unheard of by them; it is potential murder. This, they say, when they must know that it is a hundred times more immoral to flood the world with children that cannot be kept, and for whom there is no room, and who, after wandering the streets, must ultimately become either hooligans or prostitutes. Nor will they touch upon the real and terrible problems that face us, such as unemployment (the result of their own teaching, by the way) or prosti-



tution or venereal disease. Oh dear, no! Such things are not discussed in the drawing-rooms they frequent. Nor do they give a thought to their own sex-starved daughters who "help in the parish." We who are young and to whom the problems of life and love are very real, can procure no help whatever from our spiritual pastors. I know, for I am one who has tried. What do they offer us? Mouldy doctrines of sacerdotal rites. Do they really believe that a babe is "made a member of Christ," whatever that is, by a priest's fat hand and a little water? I trow not. Do they really believe that a child who dies without this rite, to quote a Jesuit, "crawls the red-hot floors of Hell"? If they do believe it, they are monstrous beasts; if not, liars. I hope and believe that the majority do not believe such rubbish, for it is easier to deal with a silly rogue than with an obscene fool. Is it possible that they still believe that indifferent port and war-bread can miraculously change to blood and wine, and that there is miraculous curative power in a bone that a dog would scorn to gnaw? No. The truth is they don't know what they believe and, what is more, they don't care.

And such are the men to whom the spiritual guidance of children is committed! It is a matter for great congratulation that the Sunday-schools both of the Established and of the "Free" Churches are annually being more and more depleted. Year by year they have to retreat from one stronghold to another, but their grip is still tight upon their hapless victims. How can we expect Labour to take the dignified position it merits, when the labourers of the future are spiritually suckled upon the milk of subservience? Link by link is the moral chain firmly riveted: first by baptism, when the recipient is quite irresponsible; from baptism, by easy stages, to catechism. This impudent *protes verbalis* teaches yet more subservience. The words, "to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters, and to submit myself lowly and reverently to all my pastors, masters, and spiritual teachers," are always dinned into the young head. If you throw enough mud, some will always stick. Just at the impressionable age it does stick right readily; and the pity of it is that this unspeakable cant is always taught just before the young person is entering the labour market. Mark this well, for it is very significant. The bud is nipped at exactly the right moment, and the mischief is done. After that, the young mind is further worried by being admitted to the communion. With regard to this rite, the Church of England has no definite doctrine at all. It wobbles between the two stools of meaningless symbolism and the facetious doctrine of transubstantiation, and ends up by sitting heavily and ignominiously on the floor. The mischief wrought by the Crows would fill a huge volume, and at any rate far outrun the scope of this essay. Mischief between husband and wife, parents and children, thereby severing the greatest and most sacred bond between humankind; misappropriation of funds, public and private; grabbing of land and rents (for the Ecclesiastical Commission is a notoriously heavy-handed landlord), all go to swell the long catalogue of the misdeeds and crimes of the Church. All that applies with equal force to the dissenting bodies, for whether one pipes to the multitude wearing a cope and mitre, or a black cassock, or a white tie, or a scarlet jersey, the net result is the same. They all stand for mental bondage and domination. They are all playing the tyrant's game. The only difference between the various breeds of Crow is that the chains they wish to bind on us differ in colour. They pipe, but happily fewer and fewer dance to the tune.

The War for a time restored to the Crows some of their vanishing power, for in the mental disorder that

inevitably follows on any upheaval, people lose their balance and fall back on superstition and darkness. Hence we see that the Crows, along with necromancers and fortune-tellers, for a time regained some of their lost popularity. It is easy for a cleric to twist, and the Prince of Peace is soon made to don khaki. However, the mental miasma soon lifts, and the Crow is seen with his feathers more ruffled than ever. How cheerfully they shouted for king and country, and went from door to door, recruiting. One priest I know of went so far as to decorate his altar with red and blue bunting. They yelled louder than any that all must go and fight their fellow-Christians. How gladly they urged the young poor man to give his life, and the old rich one to give his money, for a consideration. Suddenly, however, all are forced to go, and with yelps of fear all the eligible curates run to find protection behind their respective bishops' gaiters. The truth comes out at last; they have been urging upon others to do what they themselves were unprepared to do. However, they rose to the occasion, and sat upon tribunals to deliberate as to others. It is a notorious fact the clergy who sat upon tribunals were far more deaf to the appeal of the widow's son with many cares than were his "lay" brethren. Woe betide the Conscientious Objector, who, at any rate, was only following the teaching of his Prophet, whether right or wrong, who was to be judged by a Crow. Again, the clergy have spent much breath urging upon the laity to lend their money for the prosecution of the War. It is significant that the official body of the Church felt it necessary to wait to lend their money until it could procure a higher rate of interest, and then invested three million sterling of filched money. It now transpires that, foreseeing the disaster that surely waits them in the future, they are making an effort to regain a footing by endeavouring to make themselves teachers in the schools. Let us not allow this hardly won privilege to be taken from us, this progress to be destroyed, while our minds are engrossed elsewhere. I appeal especially to those between twenty and thirty, in whose hands the future lies, to be up and doing now, as there is great danger ahead.

Let us not be led by any false sense of delicacy to spare the feelings of these men. A refinement of taste must hamper us in combating these folk. Always let us remember that they call out about their offended feelings while executing the laws against "blasphemy"—which is, in plain language, disagreeing with them, and saying so—with all the ferocity of which they are capable. Have they not always vilified great names in the history of Freethought? Are we to show consideration for the persecutors of Thomas Paine, Ingersoll, Bradlaugh, Foote? Are *our* "feelings" of no account? Let us not be afraid. I recommend every young Freethinker to speak fearlessly, to be proud of his freedom on every occasion possible. For let us remember the struggle is to be one of life or death for our views. There can only be one possible issue to such a contest in the long run, as truth must ultimately rout falsehood. Let it not be said that we in any way retarded the advent of cleaner and more wholesome thought.

E. G.

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### Heinrich Kitzler.

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AUTHORSHIP is a singular thing. One man has luck in the practice of the craft, and another meets with misfortune.

Perhaps the saddest mishap befel my poor friend Heinrich Kitzler, Master of Arts at Gottingen. No one there is so learned, no one so fecund of ideas, no one so industrious as this friend, and yet, up till this



hour, no book of his has appeared in Leipzig. The old library attendant always laughs when Heinrich Kitzler asks him for a book, which he greatly needs for a work he has in hand. "It will be in hand for a long time," murmurs the old attendant while he ascends the library ladder. Even the cook laughed when she went to the library to fetch a book "for Kitzler." He was commonly regarded as a fool, but, at bottom, was merely an honourable man.

Nobody knew the real reason why no book of his was forthcoming, and only by chance did I discover it once when I called on him at midnight to light my lamp, he being my study neighbour. He had just completed a treatise on the *Excellence of Christianity*, but seemed in no way to be rejoicing at the circumstance, and woefully looked at his manuscript. I said to him: "Now, at last, will your name figure in the Leipzig book catalogue, among the works that are just coming out." "Ah, no," he sighed deep from his heart, "this work, too, I must throw on the fire, like its predecessors." And then he confided to me his dreadful secret. The poor doctor met with the saddest misfortune when he had written a book. As soon as he had developed the groundwork of the theory he had set out to demonstrate, he felt obliged to acquaint himself with the objections which any opponent could maintain against it; he investigated the most cogent arguments attaching to the opposite standpoint; and, as these unconsciously took root in his understanding, it always happened that when the book was ready the opinions of the poor author had similarly been transformed, and a conviction quite contrary to that maintained in the book had grown up in his mind. He was, then, honest enough, as a French author had likewise behaved, to sacrifice the laurel of literary fame on the altar of truth; that is, to consign his manuscript to the flames. For this reason he sighed so deeply when he had demonstrated the *Excellence of Christianity*.

Mournfully he said, "Now I have made excerpts from the works of twenty Church Fathers; whole nights I have been glued to my desk, reading the Acta Sanctorum, while punch was being drunk, and songs were being sung in your study. For the theological works necessary for my book I have paid thirty-eight hardy earned thalers, instead of buying a pipe-bowl with the money. I've worked like a dog for two years—two precious years of life, and all to make of myself a laughing-stock—to make me turn away like a convicted boaster when I am asked, "When will your *Excellence of Christianity* be out? Ah, the book is ready," continued the poor man, "and it would also please the public, for in it I have glorified the victory of Christianity over Heathendom, and have thereby shown also truth and reason triumphant over hypocrisy and folly. But, unfortunately, I feel in my heart of hearts that—"

"Don't say any more," I cried with genuine indignation, "Do not dare, O Deceiver, to blacken the sublime, to drag the splendid through the mud. Even if you would deny the miracles of the Gospels, you cannot deny the victory of the Gospel was a miracle itself. A small company of defenceless men went forth into the great Roman world, and, in spite of its railers and philosophers, triumphed by the mere power of the Word. Corrupt heathen society trembled and tottered at the word of these strange men and women, who announced a new kingdom of heaven, and feared nothing on the old earth, neither the claws of wild beasts, nor the fury of wilder men; neither the sword nor the flames, for they themselves were the fire and sword of God.

This sword has cut down the withered leaves and decayed branches of the tree of Life, thus healing it of gathering corruption. This fire has again warmed from

within the torpid trunk, that it may put forth fresh leaves and new blossoms. These pioneers of Christianity—their struggle and their complete victory—are the most awful and sublime phenomena in the world's history." These words were spoken with the more appropriate expression, as that evening I had taken too many glasses of beer, and my voice sounded the more resonant. Heinrich Kitzler allowed himself to be in no way impressed thereby. With a painful ironic laugh he said, "Friend, don't give yourself so much trouble. All that you have just said I have myself, in this manuscript, far better and far more thoroughly set forth.

I have painted in the sharpest colours the abandoned condition of the world in Pagan times, and I may flatter myself that my boldest strokes recall the work of the greatest Church Fathers.

I have shown how vicious the Greeks and Romans became through the evil example of those gods, who, if we are to believe the crimes imputed to them, were hardly worthy to rank as men. I have said, in plain language, that even Jupiter, the first of the Gods, would, if judged by the Criminal Code, have deserved the prison, if not the gallows, a hundred times. On the other hand, I have expounded the moral teachings which are to be found in the Gospels, and shown how, after the pattern of their godly example, the first Christians, in spite of the contempt and persecution which they suffered therefore, only taught and practised the best and purest morals. The finest part of my work is where, full of inspiration, I recount how the young Christianity, the little David, measures itself against the old Heathendom, and kills this great Goliath. But this dual has since appeared to me in a different light—all the pleasure and love of my apology dries up in my breast when I picture to myself how any opponent could represent the triumph of Christianity. To my undoing, a new author, one Edward Gibbon, came to my notice, who did not express himself very favourable over this victory, and did not seem to make much of the fact that those Christians for whom the spiritual sword and fire did not suffice, sought refuge in the material fire and sword.

Yes, I must confess that at last my deepest sympathy was evoked for the vestiges of Paganism, those lovely temples and statues, which were no more a part of the religion that was dead long before the birth of Christ, but which belonged to Art, which is eternal. It all came to me once when, with moist eyes, I chanced to read in the library the *Appeal for the Temple*, wherein the old Greek Libanius most pathetically beseeched the pious Barbarians to spare those priceless masterpieces with which the genius of Hellas had decorated the world. But in vain—that memorial of a springtime of humanity, which will never return, and which could only flourish once, was irretrievably destroyed by the dark fanaticism of the Christians.

"No," continued the Doctor, "I will not by publishing this book lend countenance to such crimes. Never. And to you, the shattered statues of beauty, and to you, ye Manes of the Dead Gods, to you who are now only lovely visions in the Shadow Kingdom of Poetry, to you I sacrifice this book."

With these words Heinrich Kitzler threw his manuscript in the fire, and of the *Excellence of Christianity* nothing was left but grey ashes.

(Translated from Heine's "Die Gotter in Exil").

By H. J. STENNING.

The *Sunday Pictorial*, in its Christmas issue, had a leading article on "The Star of Bethlehem." The other Sunday papers devoted columns to theatrical stars.



### A Day of Thanksgiving.

WHAT have we to thank thee for O God of Heaven?  
 For loosing on our peaceful lands the bloody hounds of war,  
 For murdered son and outraged sister, ruined homestead,  
 loss of limb,  
 Lover's voice for ever silenced in the bloody din?  
 Is it because the harvest is less than the year before,  
 That famine and tornado, pestilence and flood  
 Stalk through the lands that are not yet at war?  
 Is it that thou hast taught us through centuries of grace,  
 How by scientific warfare we can reduce the race?  
 (More humane means we knew of but thy servants did  
 forbid.  
 Since in using them thy power we did withstand).  
 Is it for empty cupboards, is it for fireless grate,  
 The piteous wail of little ones, fretful sound of children,  
 Crying for their birthright, sobbing for their rest,  
 That before Thy throne, O Great One, with song of praise  
 we wait?  
 With clasped hands, and with bended knee, we often thee  
 besought,  
 Right strenuously we prayed to thee for peace.  
 We have built thee noble mansions, we have furnished them  
 with taste.  
 We have clothed thy priests in broadcloth, we have decked  
 them out with lace.  
 We have given of our earnings which we could ill afford,  
 And thy servants they did tell us "we were pleasing to the  
 Lord."  
 Yet in thy anger thou hast smitten we who strove so hard to  
 please;  
 Toiled with aching brain and muscle to keep thy priests in  
 ease.  
 In thy blind and wanton fury, thou hast lashed us till the  
 \*gore  
 Poured in torrents from our body, and we swore to bear no  
 more.  
 Yea, O God, we haste to thank thee, to lift our voices to  
 the skies,  
 Since the mask at last has fallen from humanity's tired  
 eyes.  
 And we see beyond the darkness the first gleam of morning  
 light,  
 And we know we near the ending of the Gods' long night.

FRANK BETTS.

### The Churching of Bacchus.

January 6 being set apart for national prayer, the public-  
 houses are to be closed upon that day.—*Daily Papers.*

AH me! how sad it is to think  
 That beer and prayer such rivals are,  
 And living waters as a drink  
 Are ousted by the "public" bar.  
 But though the inns are tippler free  
 Upon the holy day; I think  
 The loudest prayer of all will be,  
 The prayer of thirsty souls for drink.

PERCY RIPLEY.

### Correspondence.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Major G. O. Warren, like most critics of the Malthusian doctrine, has quite misunderstood it. What Malthus showed was that if people married and had children without restraint, the number of births in each year would in all but exceptional cases exceed the production of additional food in the same period, so that either a check must be put upon reproduction, or there will be poverty and excessive mortality.

This is true, whether there are a few thousands or thousands of millions of people upon the earth, as new land can only be brought into cultivation gradually. The fact that much of our land is uncultivated does not in the least show that our country is not over populated. In simply means that in recent times a unit of labour here enabled more food to be obtained by the exchange of our manufactures for the food of other countries, than it would have done if directly expended on our own soil. There is not the slightest justification for the assertion that our country could support twice its present population. This is derived from Kropotkin, who has utterly ignored the fundamental chemical question as to the amount of fertilizing material (especially fixed nitrogen) available for production on the large scale.

Major Warren appears also to have been captured by that plausible compendium of economic fallacies, Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. That capital is absolutely essential for the employment of labour can be seen in an instant by simply considering (which Henry George carefully abstained from doing) what would happen in this country if capital were destroyed—dwellings, factories, tools, railways, ships, and other means of transport, flocks, and stores of food. How many people would be employed or be able to work in any fashion at the end of a month?

As a lifelong Freethinker, who has watched the progress of the Freethought and Rationalist Movements for many years, I have been both amused and saddened to see how, in employing the Darwinian doctrine for the iconoclastic purpose of destroying the Christian faith in a beneficent Deity thwarted by the machinations of Satan, many "Freethinkers" have persistently neglected Darwin's own warning as to the necessity for bearing the principle of the struggle for existence in mind in considering all biological phenomena, and have merely substituted the Socialistic faith in a beneficent Nature thwarted by the machinations of the capitalists. The Malthusian doctrine, which is absolutely substantiated by modern vital statistics, is equally destructive of the myths of theology and of Socialism, and it has the merit of giving us a sound basis for constructive rational ethics—the crying need of the Freethought Movement.

CHARLES V. DRYSDALE, D.Sc.

[We have received several letters from other correspondents, for which we regret we are unable to find space.—ED.]

### Society News.

The North London Branch debates re-open this evening. Mr. Percy Friedberg will support the contention that Freethinkers ought to be Socialists, and Mr. A. Eager will oppose. We expect a lively discussion, and hope the North London "saints" will attend in full force and bring friends with them. For further particulars, please consult the Guide notice.—H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec.

We hear from Mr. J. Partridge, the indefatigable Secretary of the Birmingham Branch, that the lecture fixtures for January, February, and March include Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, F. J. Gould, H. Snell, A. D. Howell Smith, E. Clifford Williams, and F. E. Willis. Mr. Partridge will be delighted to forward a printed programme to anyone applying for it to 245 Shenstone Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham.

The New Manchester Branch of the N.S.S., which commenced its first regular series of meetings early in October, has proved an undoubted success. The weekly gatherings have been well supported, and the "papers" given—exclusively by members of the Branch—have led to some interesting discussions. The lectures, so far delivered at the Downing Hall by Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, and Palmer, have had good results, and we are looking to the future in the confident assurance that the committee's efforts will be rewarded by a further increase of members, and an active participation in the propagandist work of the Branch. A social has been arranged at the Downing Street Hall for Saturday, January 12, at which, it is hoped, that all the members will endeavour to be present.—H. BLACK, Secretary.



## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, "Ought Freethinkers to be Socialists?" Affirmative, Percy Friedberg Negative, A. Eagar.

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.15, Mr. H. Snell, "King George's Day of National Prayer."

#### OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Kells, Swasey, and Ratcliffe.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "God and the War."

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N. S. S. (14 Beavor Street): 3, "Shelley's Queen Mab."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, E. Ilsley, "The Futility of Prayer"

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (Collingwood Hall, Clayton Street East): 3, Members' Meeting.

NEWMANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "Morality Without God"; 6.30, "The Savage in our Midst"—A Study of the Day of Prayer.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, Mr. R. Chapman, "The Service of Man."

## Wonderful Value.

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## . GERMAN CRIME AND SECULAR EDUCATION.

A Telling Exposure of the Falsehood that German Crime in the War is due to the lack of religious instruction, and a consequence of a system of Secular Education.

Every Freethinker should assist in the distribution of this Tract.

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## Population Question and Birth-Control.

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Where to Obtain the "Freethinker."

The following is not a complete list of newsagents who supply the "Freethinker," and we shall be obliged for other addresses for publication. The "Freethinker" may be obtained on order from any newsagent or railway bookstall.

#### London.

E.—E. T. Pendrill, 26 Bushfield Street, Bishopsgate, M. Papier, 86 Commercial Street. B. Ruderman, 71 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields. J. Knight & Co., 3 Ripple Road, Barking. Messrs. Duncumb & Sons, 287 High Street, Stratford.  
E.C.—W. S. Dexter, 6, Byward St. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Rd. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch St. J. J. Jaques, 191 Old St.

N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Rd., Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Rd. (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Rd., Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore St., Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Rd. E. S. Smith, 7 Turnpike Lane, Hornsey.

N.W.—W. I. Tarbart, 316 Kentish Town Road. W. Lloyd, 5 Falkland Road, Kentish Town.

S.E.—J. H. Killick, 1 Tyler Street, East Greenwich. Mr. Clayton, High Street, Woodside, South Norwood. W. T. Andrews, 35 Meetinghouse Lane, Peckham. B. Dean, Southwark Bridge.

S.W.—R. Offer, 58 Kenyon Street, Fulham. A. Toleman, 54 Battersea Rise. A. Green, 29 Felsham Road, Putney. F. Locke, 500 Fulham Road. F. Lucas, 683 Fulham Road.

W.—Mr. Fox, 154 King St., Hammersmith. Mr. Harvey, 1 Becklow Rd., Shepherds Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82, Seaford Rd., West Ealing.

W.C.—J. Bull, 24 Grays Inn Road.

### Country.

Aberdeenshire.—J. Grieg, 16 Marischol Street, Peterhead.

Askam-in-Furness.—Mr. J. Gill, The Pharmacy, Duke St.

Barrow-in-Furness.—J. Jowett, 56 Forshaw Street. E. L. Jowett, 84 Dalton Road.

Beccles.—C. Chase, Station Road.

Birkenhead.—Mr. Capper, Boundary Road, Port Sunlight.

Birmingham.—J. C. Aston, 39-40 Smallbrook St. A. G. Beacon & Co., 67 & 68 Worcester St. F. Holder, 42 Hurst St. Mr. Benton, High St., Erdington. Mr. Kimber, Ash Rd. Post Office, Saltley. Messrs. Stanford & Mann, New St. Mrs. J. E. Burns, 478 Bordesley Green.

Bolton.—E. Bassett, Church Street, Westhoughton. W. Atkinson, 364 Blackburn Road.

Breconshire.—Mrs. Jenkins, Gartly House, Talgarth.

Carlisle.—Ashton Ridley, 16 and 18 Bridge St., Caldewgate.

Carshalton.—Mr. Simmons, 29 North Street.

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