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## Views and Opinions.

### The Spencer Centenary.

Two days later than the date borne by this issue of the *Freethinker* occurs the centennial anniversary of one of the most notable thinkers of the nineteenth century. It is impossible to say what notice will be taken of the fact by the general Press, but it is safe to say that the notices will not be overwhelming in number. For Herbert Spencer was neither a prize pugilist, a military adventurer, an imperialistic financier, or the inventor of a new kind of gun. He was, in sooth, but a philosopher, and for that kind of man the ordinary person and the ordinary newspaper—which lives by making that same person more ordinary still—has small use. Moreover, it has become the fashion of late, largely by those who know his writings more by hearsay than by study, to refer to Spencer as a back number. If by that is meant no more than that some of Spencer's conclusions are now seen to be faulty this may readily be admitted without any disparagement of Spencer. Only those would think otherwise who are not aware of the nature of his contributions to scientific thinking, and who overlook the condition of thought at the time when his principal writings were published. For if revolutionists often stand as conservative in their old age, it is not so much that they go back as it is that the world sweeps on, and they fail to keep pace with the revolution that they themselves have initiated. It is their leadership that points the road along which others of less heroic mould are able to outpace them. It is only the best of teachers who enable their pupils to quickly do without them, and who in virtue of the inspiration given them purge the teachings of the master of whatever error they contain, while carrying forward his principles to a more successful application.

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### Spencer the Pioneer.

Herbert Spencer was born in Derby on April 27, 1820. He died December 8, 1903. His life covers, therefore, just over four-fifths of the nineteenth cen-

tury, and was contemporaneous with one of the greatest intellectual revolutions in the history of mankind. In that revolution Spencer himself played no small part. He had the rare good fortune to see a scheme of work, almost without a rival for its comprehensiveness, brought to a successful issue, and to see accepted as a datum of all scientific thinking a principle of which he was one of the world's chief exponents. It was well said that he took up a word and converted it into a philosophy. But it was a philosophy that was almost unique of its kind. It claimed to rest on a basis of solid verifiable fact, to be literally a science of the sciences, and subject to all the tests that apply to them. It excluded the supernatural and its shadowy representative the "mystical," and it applied the key of evolution to the whole range of cosmic existence. No religionist ever fought with greater faith for his religion than did Spencer for his philosophy. At the opening of his career no publisher would stand responsible for the issuing of the works. They were accordingly issued at the author's own risk. Two or three times Spencer was compelled to issue notice that their publication would be abandoned, but some small legacies saved the situation. At the end of 12 years he found himself £1,500 out of pocket, and after 24 years' work was only financially where he started. Some years later Spencer told a Royal Commission that if the public had to choose between a dose of cod-liver oil and a course of the Synthetic Philosophy he thought that they would prefer the purge to the pabulum. One feels that he was not far off the truth. The public tolerates the man of ideas; it can scarcely be said to love him. But man never fought more strenuously for the victory of an idea than did Spencer. And throughout there was no truckling to public opinion, and no conscious compromise of teaching for the sake of gaining public favour. He had a supreme contempt for titles and decorations, seeing in them little more than the survival of the paint and feathers of the savage. Even honours offered by universities were refused. The really great man gains nothing from a title; and the wearing of one by a man who is not great only serves to advertise his deficiencies.

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### Materialism.

Spencer founded no school, and he commissioned no disciples. Nevertheless, his influence was very great, and for many years he stood as one of the law-givers in the philosophic world. On the Continent his influence was in some respect greater than it was here. Although not a practical biologist, he was able to make some very weighty contributions to biological science (his biological work is discounted somewhat to-day by his clinging to the inheritance of acquired characters), and also in a more marked manner to psychology. Those who have

read with a discerning mind the "Principles of Psychology" cannot but have been struck by the power of analysis there displayed, which to my mind is greater than of any other writer on the same subject. And incidentally, it may be remarked that it is from the "Psychology" one may derive the corrective to much that is faulty in his sociology. When Spencer wrote, Psychology as a science could not be said to be generally existent. In 1855 the first edition of the "Principles" was published in one volume, subsequently enlarged to two. The work makes a clean sweep of much that was then current. It is materialistic through and through. Spencer shows to demonstration that between the highest display of intelligence and the lowest degree of sentiency there is no break, but a continuous evolution. More, given the simple neural shock, which he postulates is the raw material of mind, and we are able to follow the development of intelligence to its highest forms. And just as the division between the inorganic and the organic is an artificial and not an actual line of demarcation, so the division between mental and bodily life is one that we create for our own convenience or as the result of our want of knowledge. Much of what Spencer did in these directions is now incorporated in the stock of current knowledge, and people use it, as they use other products of his brain, without knowledge of origin. Most people, for instance, fancy that when they talk of the "survival of the fittest" they are using the language of Darwin. They are not. The phrase is Spencer's, and is more exact than Darwin's, which was "natural selection," and has been so grievously misunderstood by hosts of writers and speakers.

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#### A Message for To-Day.

In some later notes I intend to deal with Spencer's attitude towards religion and sociology. For the present it is enough to pay a tribute to one who did so much to put before the men and women of his time a view of the universe that was inspiring in its sanity and elevating in its outlook. If I may judge from the effect that, as a young man Spencer's writings had on me, thousands of young men must look on him as one of their spiritual parents, or much as a traveller who has been for days groping about the undergrowth of a dense forest greets a first fresh glimpse of sunlight and pure air. In my youth there were two men who profoundly affected my mental life. The one was Spinoza, the other was Spencer, and I have often amused myself in imagining that had Spinoza had in his day at hand the knowledge that Spencer had in his, he would have written the Synthetic Philosophy. There was the same generalising power in each, the same power of psychologic analysis, the same contempt of public honour, and the same devotion to truth. There is in Spinoza a greater power of emotion—always kept well under control—but the same high intellectual ideals rule both. And although Spencer is not what one would call an eloquent writer, though always extremely lucid, it is instructive that one of the few passages in which he breaks into eloquence is where he is impressing upon people the need for speaking their minds upon the problems of life.

Whoever hesitates to utter that which he thinks the highest truth, lest it should be too

much in advance of the time, may reassure himself by looking at his acts from an impersonal point of view. Let him duly realise the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force, constituting with other such agencies, the general power which works out social changes; and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction, leaving it to produce what effect it may. It is not for nothing that he has in him these sympathies with some principles and repugnance to others. He with all his capacities, aspirations and beliefs, is not an accident, not a product of the time. He must remember that while he is a descendant of the past, he is a parent of the future; and that his thoughts are as children born to him that he may not carelessly let die. . . . The highest truth he sees he will fearlessly utter; knowing that let what may come of it, he is playing his right part in the world—knowing that that if he can effect the change he aims at—well: if not—well also; though not so well."

A noble doctrine nobly preached, and one of which the world never stood in greater need than it does to-day.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### God in Captivity.

BISHOP GORE is evidently so very fond of the strange verse: "He delivered his strength into captivity and his glory into the enemy's hand" (Psalm lxxviii. 61), that he has made it the text of several recent sermons, one of which was reviewed in the issue of this journal for March 28. Another discourse based upon it was preached for the Christian Social Union in Bow Church, Cheapside, a report of which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for April 14. This is an exceptionally remarkable deliverance. His lordship declares that the reference is to the victory of the Philistines over Israel, when the ark in which Jehovah dwelt was taken into captivity. The Psalmist treats that episode as God's own act. He is represented as deliberately delivering his strength into captivity and his glory into the enemy's hand. "That is the way of God," Dr. Gore calmly affirms. "Again and again he has done it." If God exists he is perpetually in captivity. Both his strength and his glory are constantly in the enemy's hand. The Bishop says: "And, of course, most markedly of all, that is the meaning of the Cross." Surely this is an original interpretation of the death of Christ, and it demands a careful examination. This is how the preacher puts it:—

It would be the natural expectation that God should say, "They will reverence my Son; and not only they will but they shall." But he delivered him up; he made no sign; he died there in weakness; he delivered his power, his strength, into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day." "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" That is the meaning of the Cross.

Then the death of Christ was a martyrdom cruelly inflicted upon and complainingly endured by a wholly innocent person. The Bishop admits that "it seems to

show the impotence of God," but, to our mind, it seems to show the cruelty and injustice of God. He who could deliver up his only begotten Son in that manner would thereby prove himself to be the very reverse of a loving Father.

Bishop Gore, it must be remembered, is an eminent theologian, as well as one of the chief leaders of the Catholic party in the Anglican Church. He was editor of the famous *Lux Mundi* (1890), and author of the well-known work, *The Incarnation*, being the Bampton Lectures for 1891, *The Body of Christ*, *The New Theology and the Old Religion*, and numerous *Expositions*. In fact, he has devoted his life to the study of theology, and theology, for him, concerns itself supremely with the person and work of Christ. Now, strangely enough, after stating that God delivered up his own Son in the fashion already depicted, the Bishop furnishes a vivid and interesting sketch of the career of Jesus as the great Prophet, the unique revealer of God, and the Saviour of men:—

He came to tell men of God, that the Being who made them, the Ruler of the world, is the Father of each and all; that he is love, that where love is God is, and where love is not God is not; and that if men would abandon their selfishness, their cruelty, the indulgence of their selfish appetites and lusts, they would be happy, and the kingdom of God would be visible among men; the kingdom of God which was at hand, which was within you, among you. And he did mighty works of love. He had a strange power, corresponding to the beauty of his words and their authority. He went about doing good and healing all that were possessed with devils, for God was with him. And no one had a word to say against him; there was no question that he was perfectly good, perfect in kindness.

Assuming the historicity of the Gospel Jesus the record of his life is fascinatingly beautiful. But, as the right reverend gentleman points out:—

He came up against all the great interests—ecclesiastical, political, financial—and, as generally happens, they were not open-minded; they were not prepared to listen; they were not prepared to ask whether their interests were the true interests. They simply were determined to get rid of this troublesome voice.

At first the common people heard him gladly; but ere long they turned bitterly against him, mainly, according to the Bishop, because he did not put himself at the head of the nationalist movement, or because the grace of patriotism was not in him. He was despised and rejected of his own people; and their hatred drove him to the cross. Pilate regarded him as innocent and harmless, but, yielding to the national prejudice against him, he ordered his crucifixion. According to the Gospels, he was crucified between two thieves, a martyr to righteousness and love. If this is a truthful account, it was not God who delivered him up to death, but the hatred and contempt of his nation. He was treated exactly as everyone has ever been treated who has had the courage to rise up in vehement condemnation of the beliefs, opinions, and customs of his age. The Bishop is frank enough to say that "if a like voice, with like power, making a like claim, came amongst us," the great interests would, in all probability, spurn it, utterly declining to listen to it. Jesus was a heretic, with whom the Jewish Church had nothing in common, and whom it pursued with persecution until it secured his execution. And is not this the way in which the Christian Church has punished heretics in all ages? In all such cases God has been conspicuous only by his silence and inactivity. As Dr. Gore puts it, "It is the martyrdom of the Advocate of Right that you see upon the Cross." Jesus felt that God had forsaken him and left him to his cruel fate.

In the first half of the sermon Jesus is "a crucified, martyred man," forced to his doom by his conflict against the spirit of his age; but in the last half he figures as God manifested in the flesh, as "the Eternal Son of God manifesting in the intelligible lineaments of a human character and human antecedents the Eternal Being of the inaccessible God." Is it not clear beyond the possibility of a doubt that the second half of the Bishop's address is a complete negation of the first? His lordship admits that Jesus was "not only a crucified, and martyred man"; but if he was God himself voluntarily delivering his strength into captivity and his glory into the enemy's hand, he was not a martyr at all, and his nation was guilty of no crime against him. The Jews were heaven's instruments, unconsciously doing the Divine will, when they put to death the Prince of Glory. The crucifixion was God's supreme act of self-abnegation, "the most startling instance of that principle of Divine working," by spontaneously delivering his strength into captivity and his glory into the enemy's hand. In other words still, the crucifixion is a startling disclosure of what is the real mind and method of God; and "the belief in this disclosure is the heart of Christianity." What is Christianity? Not a scheme or plan of deliverance from the guilt and power of sin through faith in the atonement offered to God by Christ on Calvary, as Paul conceived it to be, but a system the cardinal truth in which is that salvation is possible only through co-operation with God in the grand mission of redeeming the world. Such is the Gospel, Bishop Gore tells us. Then he exclaims:—

And can God fail? No. If God be God he must ultimately come into his own. So in this signal instance he came into his own; he raised him from the dead. So here you have an epitome of the Divine healing, the fullest exhibition of the Divine weakness, followed by the sufficient manifestation of the Divine strength, and that at the last God will vindicate himself.

Does not this speculative interpretation of the Christian Gospel reduce it to a hopeless, terrific farce, stuffed full of ludicrous, impossible incidents and tragically absurd and false expressions? The Bishop is immersed in a shoreless ocean of superstition, and his outlook upon life is unnatural and misleading. For example, he asks, "Is the Power which made and rules the world All-Good?" characterizing this as "the question of questions." In our opinion it would be much more pertinent to ask, "Is there a Power which made and rules the world? Is there a God of omnipotent justice and love at the helm of the ship of existence?" To this question, with the history and present condition of the world in mind, it is impossible to return an affirmative answer. Realizing this, Dr. Gore seeks refuge in the notorious illusion of Free-will. At the core of the Universe he imagines that there is a real Being whose heart is Love; but this real Being who is love has his method of working, which is thus described:—

That he will not destroy the free wills of men, that he has given them free spirits which shall continue free to work havoc in God's kingdom, and that evils of all kinds, wilfulness and selfishness, shall be manifest in their result. God will not intervene to destroy men's freedom; no, he will work through it, suffering in men's suffering, afflicted in all their afflictions.

In reality Free-will is a refuge of lies, men's actions being as fully determined by the law of causation as the movements of the solar system. But even on the assumption that human beings are free to work havoc in God's kingdom, the fact that stares theologians in the face is that there are two wills at work in the world, the Divine and the human, and that of the two, looking at them in the light of history, the human will is the more powerful and effectual. God loves peace; man makes

war. God works for righteousness and truth; man often thrives on guile and fraud. The Bible is wrong when it so often declares that God's will is supreme and always prevails. God is at man's mercy, and does according to his will only when man lets him. As a matter of fact, God's existence is a fictitious creation, and man's free-will a theological invention. It was recently lamented by the Bishop of Peterborough that God no longer counts in human life, and the natural inference is that he does not count because he does not exist. But man does exist, and ought to count. Why believe in a God who neither speaks nor acts, while iniquity of all kinds flourishes? Let us rather believe in man, and work for his emancipation from the tyranny of superstition, and for his growth and development as a member of the social organism. The time is rapidly coming when theology shall be no more because humanism will have come into its own.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Priests and the People.

If we live thus tamely,  
To be thus jaded by a piece of scarlet,  
Farewell nobility.

—Shakespeare, "Henry VIII."

Clericalism, it is the enemy. —Leon Gambetta.

MANY worthy folk are captivated and ensnared by the siren song that priestcraft is not now what it once was, and that it is wholly altered in its features. That Clericalism may be, that it has been, checked and limited by the pressure of external circumstances is undoubted; but priestcraft is unchanged and unchangeable in its spirit and purpose. It wants only the opportunity and the power to again forge those fetters which shall rechain the minds of men in the bonds of a silly superstition and damnable despotism. A revival of priestly power is one of the greatest dangers of the age, perilous alike to civic liberty, to social progress, and to the hope of Democracy. Even so late as 1902 a reactionary Government passed an Education Act at the bidding of the Anglican and Roman priesthood, which threw their schools entirely on public funds, but shielded them from local public control. At the same time the Act destroyed the School Boards in the hope that the new authorities would be more easily subject to clerical pressure. To-day the clergy are making a fresh demand of the right of entry into the schools of the Nation, and if the Coalition Government should retain power they will make yet further demands.

The time has come to speak quite plainly. To the Anglican and Romish Churches the progress of Democracy is offensive. Under the glamour of the Gregorian chants, wax-lights, and antiquated Oriental vestments, is a despotism none the less real because thatched by ecclesiastical stage properties. Such despotism, meekly accepted by millions of nerveless ladies and invertebrate men, cannot be regarded lightly, especially when the average worshipper deems it profanity to call an ape an ape if the creature but wear a clerical collar. The Anglican Church, less intolerant than her elder Catholic sister, and superior intellectually, to any Nonconformist body, is still as hostile as ever to all modern impulses. The "Established" Church has not entitled itself to the respect of liberal-minded men and women. A glance at the conduct of the Lords Spiritual is sufficient to rouse the lasting hostility of all right-thinking persons. Here are a few examples of the votes of the Bishops in the House of Lords, which show Christian ethics in practice in a Christian country:—

19 bishops voted against Catholic emancipation.

22 voted against admitting Nonconformists to University degrees.

17 voted against removing the civil disabilities of Jewish citizens.

24 voted against abolishing compulsory church rates (payable by Freethinkers, Jews, Nonconformists, as well as Churchmen).

16 voted against permitting burials without the Church service.

11 were present, but neither spoke nor voted for an address against war with China for the opium trade.

18 voted against the resolution condemning the war.

19 voted against the vote of censure for not helping Denmark against Germany.

21 voted against the Reform Bill of 1831, and 15 voted against the Reform Bill of 1832.

2 only out of the whole Bench of Bishops voted for the suppression of the Slave Trade.

1 only was present when the Bill forbidding child chimney-sweeps was brought in.

1 only supported the first Bill for limiting the hours of child labour.

13 voted against the proposal for an inquiry into working-class conditions (1850).

None took part in the Bill for improving madhouses.

None voted against the Bill for imposing the death penalty for rioting and machine-breaking.

5 voted for still inflicting death for thefts over £5.

None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, flogging women in prison, or flogging men in the Army and Navy.

15 voted against a Committee of the Privy Council to draw up an education scheme.

13 voted against Free Education for the people.

17 voted against allowing deserted wives to marry again if deserted for five years.

8 voted against admitting women as members of London Borough Councils.

2 only supported the provision of seats for shop assistants.

Is it not plain that the Established Church is not the Church of the people, but the Church of the clergy? When the most terrible war in our history was fought, and all men fit to bear arms were forced into the Army and Navy, the clergy were exempted from military service. We must never forget that the extreme priestly theory is that the State should be subordinate to the Church. With such prelates and such a record, the Christian Church is indeed in a bad way in this twentieth century. It is this terrible record of reactionary despotism, coupled with a two-thousand years' old superstition, which explains the manless congregations of this country. The Church of England suffers from the drowsiness of all institutions that keep themselves apart from the people. It is largely mediæval, and it has become more and more a caste apart. The Church is asleep to everything except her own interests. The printed sayings of bishops and parsons prove how hopelessly out of touch they are with realities. The old world of the twelfth century has gone, as though some cosmic catastrophe has smashed it. The growth of knowledge has swirled us on to a new planet, and we are face to face with new conditions. Modern civilization cannot be longer ruled by petticoated priests and their manless congregations. Gambetta was right when he said Clericalism is the enemy. It is the enemy of justice, the enemy of peace, the enemy of truth, the enemy of light, the enemy of progress, and above all the enemy of the People.

MIMNERMUS.

Life is an art that cannot be taught, just as death is an accident that cannot be avoided.—Barry Pain.

## Does Man Survive Death: Is the Belief Reasonable?

*A Debate between Mr. Horace Leaf and Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, Thursday, February 26, 1920. Chairman, Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, LL.D.*

### II.

(Continued from p. 246.)

#### MR. COHEN'S FIRST SPEECH.

MR. CHAPMAN COHEN: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen, I do not say it by way of complaint, but merely by way of observation. Every man who speaks and every man who debates is the supreme judge of what he shall speak about and how he shall conduct a debate, and, so, merely as an observation, I want to say that I am just a little disappointed at what Mr. Leaf has said. That is my own fault. I take full blame for it. I ought not to have expected anything. (Laughter). But, then, life is made up of expectations which are more or less realized, and, as that expectation has not been realized in this world, I suppose, on Mr. Leaf's theory, it ought to receive gratification in the next. (Laughter).

Mr. Leaf commenced by telling you—I am bound to follow him—that this question was, of all questions, the most important that one could deal with. I venture to differ profoundly from that statement. (Hear, hear). I would say that, from an *a priori* point of view, of all questions that a man can deal with, there is no question of so little importance as the next world. (Applause). Death comes to all whether we wish it or not. (Hear, hear). If there is another life it will come to all whether we want it or not. (Applause). And, therefore, the prime duty of man is not whether he will live again, but whether he is living worthily and well here. It is only because men and women allow their time, and attention, and energy to be frittered and wasted on a dream of a future life that it is necessary to call their attention back to the reality of this one. (Applause). That is my justification for spending an evening in discussing it. Mr. Leaf said that the War has sent millions of people—young people—into the next world. But millions of people are going out of this world, or are, at least, dying every year. The War brought nothing new in the shape of death. It was larger than most wars, but a frontier war with a primitive African tribe has all the elements of human pathos and sorrow that the Great War had. The savage mother who is mourning the loss of her boy, killed by a civilized Gatling gun or bomb, suffers all that any English woman, or French woman, or German woman did during the Great War. The War brought nothing new. What it did was this: it kept us all at attention for five years. It frayed our nerves, it played on our emotions, it made us susceptible to this or that impulse which, at a calmer time, we should have had strength of mind enough to stand against, and thousands of people, because of their frayed nerves and wasted energy, because their attention has been so fixed upon death, have lost their balance of judgment, and have been ready to lend an ear to teachings that at other times they would have rejected. That is not preaching the solemnity of death. That is exploiting the fact of death, and we have had all the Churches at it for centuries. (Applause).

Now, Mr. Leaf says that when an individual dies consciousness is not dead. Well, then, what is it? I say that primarily man is a body, and all you know of consciousness and all you know of mind are as functions of an organism, and there is not a doctor in the kingdom who would ever dream of treating mind from any other point of view. I not only do not know mind apart from

organism and I cannot think of it. I cannot think of consciousness apart from a human frame. What have you got in your mind when you banish the organ?—nothing. Try to think of something on that line. Why, even when Spiritualists talk of people in the next world, they are bound to give them organs on which to base the functions. Mr. Leaf talks as though consciousness were an absolute, separate entity; but consciousness, the personality of man, is the result of a number of very complex factors, and you can see it being built up. Watch the child from the cradle upwards. Watch how its consciousness and individuality are built up, and then watch that same consciousness and individuality under the action of drugs, drink, excitement, and disease. Watch it as any person may watch it, and see the very individuality that has been built up in health being disintegrated under the action of disease, until at the end you have not got a human being at all, but may have only a mere breathing lump of animated matter. These are the commonplaces of medical practice and medical experience. There is no room for discussion here.

I want to dissent very emphatically to the very crude statement, not Mr. Leaf's statement, but the crude statement that was made that the brain secretes consciousness. Really, no scientific man would talk in that way to-day of the brain secreting consciousness any more than he would talk of a sheet of polished steel secreting brightness, or a piece of coal secreting heat. Coal has a capacity for creating heat, polished steel has a capacity for reflecting light, but no one speaks of consciousness as being secreted as the liver secretes bile. Mr. Leaf said that sentiment was a rational thing. Who denies it? Mr. Leaf seemed to confuse sentiment with sentimentality, which is a very different thing. There is a sentiment of honour, a sentiment of truth, a sentiment of duty, a sentiment of comradeship, and who on earth says that these are bad things? No Materialist ever said they were bad things. All he says is—keep your sentiment under the control of your intellect, but when you allow your sentiment to overpower your intellect then you become sentimental. (Laughter). To believe in sentiment and to be sentimental are not the one thing. They are two opposite things, and often contradictory things. Then Mr. Leaf says that you possess qualities that cannot be adequately expressed here. I hope your qualities never will be adequately expressed here. Why, when a man can express all he has got, he has got nothing more to express. A man who can express all he has, has no room for growth. Inadequate expression means growth—the possibilities of growth. And I believe Mr. Leaf has a theory which says that you go on growing in the next world, not for a year, but forever. (Applause). But if you are going to grow forever, you will always be in the stage of inadequately expressing all that is in you, so that Mr. Leaf gains nothing in the next world that he has not got here. He has the benefit of a change, or the trouble of a removal, without gaining larger accommodation. Mr. Leaf says you cannot express yourself here. But you can express yourself here. If you say that you feel you would like to do more, we all of us feel that. I feel that I would like to do a lot to-night that I possibly shall not be able to do. I should like every man and woman in this room to take a sane and sensible view of the subject, or what is to me a sane and sensible view of the subject; but I do not suppose I shall, and I shall have a lot more work to do when I leave here, because if I were able to do all I wanted to do here, there is still Glasgow. (Laughter and applause).

Now, I want to put a pointed question to Mr. Leaf: "Is the next world identical with this? If it is, what do we gain by the change, and if it is not, how the

deuce are we going to fit it?" We forget what is the A B C of scientific teaching and every human being's experience—that all life is a question of adaptation to environment. Every organism is fashioned and formed, and grows to fit, a particular environment. Remove that organism out of that environment and it will not fit, the organism cannot function. Put a fish on dry land and it dies. Put a man into the sea and he dies. Each organ is built for this life, and not only each organ but every feeling. What is the feeling of father and mother for children, of husband and wife and children? What are they?—but fashioned in accordance with this environment, with an environment in which children are born and die, and in which men and women live and love and die. Put us into an environment in which men do not die, and how are we going to fit it? Ladies and gentlemen, it is sentimentality, not sentiment. It is sentimental to talk of the horrors of death, and it is unscientific to talk of the horrors of death and the evil of death without talking of the blessings of death. Life is built on death. The affection that every man and woman feels for their children is built, not on the immortality of the child, but on its mortality, on the actual certainty that that child is exposed to danger and disease, and may one day die, and there is never an affection that gathers round the cradle that is not born in the tear that is shed over the grave. Life and death are indissolubly linked together. Remove one and you remove the other. Remove the conditions of life, with its pains and sorrows, and its joys and pleasures, and put us into that fantastic and pantomimic future state about which so many people are talking, and life would not be worth living.

I wonder why on earth we were told that if certain things do not occur there is something wrong with the world. Suppose there is—I am not responsible for it, you are not responsible for it. What is the good of telling us—if man does not live again, Nature is cruel. But Nature is cruel, if you are measuring it by human standards. Personally, I do not think we should call Nature cruel or kind, because it is not conscious; but, if you are going to measure it by human standards, Nature is cruel. Look at the myriads of people and animals born into the world, and how many live?—and we know that the condition of some living is that the many will die. Is anything more brutal than that? Look at the parasites that live on man. (Applause.) Why, there are pretty well four score of parasites that live on man, without counting the gentlemen of the Established Churches. (Applause.) Cannot we imagine a tapeworm saying that, unless there is another world in which I can gratify my capacity for living on human beings, Nature is cruel. What does Nature care about the life of a man? Let us face facts and cling to sentiment, even while we get rid of sentimentality.

Mr. Leaf said he was coming to the more scientific side of the case, and I began to be hopeful; and he said that, if the Materialist is right, to every change in mind there should be a change in the brain, and *vice versa*. How does Mr. Leaf know that there is not? How does any man know that there is not? Mr. Leaf read a quotation which said that there are no pathological or anatomical changes in the brain in cases of insanity; but he went on to read further, which gave me all I want as a Materialist and takes away all he needs, because he said there are chemical changes and metabolic changes—and that is all I want. Insanity may be either a functional derangement or more. What happens when a man gets a bottle of whisky—pre-War whisky, I mean? What do you get? The action of alcohol on the brain produces functional derangement, and you are trying to stand up and lie down at the same time. It is a func-

tional derangement, and, if that man going along the street fell on the back of his head and killed himself, and the day after there was an autopsy, it is a thousand to one that there would be no anatomical change. It is a functional derangement that takes place. You have to take Mr. Leaf's own definition. What Mr. Leaf should have read was that there were no changes whatever; but the doctor who said that would probably be kicked out of all sorts of practice. Suppose you have a bilious attack, would an anatomical change take place in the liver? None at all; but the bile is there. There are thousands of things that take place in man without anatomical change. Consciousness is made up of functions. Functions are made up of lesser functions, and, if Mr. Leaf will follow that line of investigation, and will follow out the way well known now to students of mental pathology, how consciousness, being not an entity, but made up of a number of subordinate groups of memories and experiences, just as a nerve ganglion is made up of subordinate nerve centres, and that in drink, in disease, in all sorts of complaints, you may get a dissociation of consciousness, a working up of a secondary group, he will find there the explanation of much that has been puzzling him about Spiritualism. The more scientific of Spiritualists are coming to that point of view. You know there was a crude Spiritualism whose view was that somebody takes possession of the medium and talks through him. Men like Dr. Hyslop, in America, and even Sir Oliver Lodge, think a great number of these things are no more than cases of secondary consciousness. For instance, there is the famous case of Mrs. Piper and the French doctor who has forgotten French, and of whom no one knows where he was born, and who cannot write a prescription; and Sir Oliver Lodge says you must not treat that as a personality, but as the development of Mrs. Piper's secondary consciousness; and I say that if Mr. Leaf, instead of hanging on to the brain physiology of half a century ago, will take on with the brain physiology of 1920, and will pursue the study of mental pathology as laid down in the works of the great French and American and English writers, or a case such as that laid down by Dr. Morton Prince, of Boston, in the case of Miss Beauchamp, he will find a great deal of what he did not find in the thousands of *seances* which he has been attending. The fact of the matter is that we are largely where the world was a couple of hundred years ago, when it was dealing with cases of insanity and epilepsy. You remember that when people saw other people on the ground in an epileptic seizure, they said, "That man is possessed of an evil spirit," and they adopted all manner of tricks and methods to get the evil spirit out of the man. The man was possessed. By-and-bye the medical man came along, and he said: "I do not think there is any spirit there. What I think is that there is some nerve lesion," and when the possessed man or woman was examined, there was no spirit found, but a lesion was. Possession in epilepsy and insanity died out just in proportion as men and women began to understand the function of the nervous system. Step by step the spirit theory fled from what was known to what was less known, and then took its stronghold in what was not known at all. The study of the functions of the brain is, of all branches of physiology, the newest. Our knowledge of psychology, especially of experimental and pathological psychology, is the most recent. We are groping our way. We are to-day in front of the tricks and subterfuges of the mind. We are to day where the people of 250 years ago were when they saw people possessed of devils. And we say as men and women who look at the world historically, and from the standpoint of common sense—we think it is far better to say that, just as we one day explained the

spirits that were ruling the planets, as one day the spirits that took possession of the epileptics were explained out of existence, so to-day we shall be able to explain all that takes place in the *seance* room and elsewhere wherever it is genuine. Eliminate all that is fraudulent, keep the residuum of what is genuine, and then you have only a problem in mental psychology. In other words, we are asking you not to worship, but to observe; not to kneel, but to stand up, keep your minds awake, be as critical as you will, and remember that man, who has conquered everything else, is not to be tied down by the tricks and traps and vagaries of the *seance* room. (Applause.)

(To be continued.)

## Acid Drops.

Some of the papers profess to think that Mr. Fisher's educational proposals are dead. Mr. Fisher, they think, was "kite-flying," and the reception accorded him will prevent his going any further in the matter. That may be the case, but, if so, it presents to the reflective mind a nice picture of the mental, and even moral, calibre of our leading statesmen. Apparently they have no policy and no principle save that of doing what they feel they must, independent of its being either right or sensible. On a subject so vital as that of education, a number of private conferences are called with some of the most sinister interests in the country, then a preliminary public statement is made as to what is *vitally* necessary, but when the proposal is threatened with opposition of a strong character, the minister climbs down and promises not to do anything at all. This is the type of character that is entrusted with the government of the country. Some of our readers are surprised that we think so little of politics. It is rapidly becoming a game for men without either character or intelligence, men who are ready to take up or discard any policy so long as it fits in with their own interests.

If the politicians are without principle in the matter of education, it can hardly be said that the larger body of religionists are occupying a really higher platform on the matter. Nonconformists, as a body, pledged though they are in principle to resist State interference and State principle in matters of religion, are nevertheless, for the most part, content to uphold a system which is plainly State interference and State patronage of religion—so long as it is confined to children and gives them what they want. The *Christian World* says, for example, that the country will not tolerate denominational teaching in schools that have "been held inviolate for half a century." But that is sheer verbiage. Christian teaching of any kind is denominational in relation to that large portion of the country which is not Christian at all. The schools can only said to be inviolate so long as that state of things continue, in the sense that thieves are kept inviolate by the non-intrusion of the policeman. When the *Christian World* gives as an added reason that denominational teaching in the schools would prevent a religious tone being kept up, it gives the game away completely. Like the others, it wants a religion that it believes in taught at the public expense. Further than that its principles do not go.

Meanwhile, what we should like to discover is some leading politician who has really some principle in this matter of education. We should like to see or hear of such a one who would say what he believes to be right in this matter of education and fight for it. We know that very many of our politicians are believers in the policy of Secular Education—we fancy that Mr. Fisher himself is one of these—we should like to see them with just enough moral courage to say so. They might get more support in the country than they think.

A yellow-press journal quotes the following as an example of wit: "What is an Atheist?" "One who does

not believe in Mr. Bottomley." If the three-headed Christian God were as substantial as the editor of *John Bull*, there would be no Atheists. —

Miss Maude Royden and the Rev. P. Dearmer are paying special attention to the music and singing at their new church. But women always did go to church for the sake of the *hims*. —

Bishop Bury, who is popularly known as the Bishop of North and Central Europe, finding his diocese too small and unimportant, has been inducted to the rectory of St. Anne and St. Agnes, Gresham Street, London. "Blessed be ye poor"!

The House of Lords passed Lord Buckmaster's measure for divorce reform, but there was the reactionary House of Commons to deal with, and the passage of that measure through the Lower (we desire to emphasize the *Lower*) House has been blocked by a hostile resolution that was carried by a majority of forty-three. Lady Astor, the only woman in the House, supported the blocking resolution, and there was a great deal of religious nonsense talked. The Assistant Postmaster-General informed the House as to the "teaching of Christ" on the subject, and the members never laughed at the absurdity of settling the matter of divorce in 1920 by an appeal to what a Jewish celibate teacher of 2,000 years ago is reported to have said on the subject. On the whole, the House of Lords comes well out of the matter, and the House of Commons makes itself more ridiculous than ever.

The *Daily Mail*, which, in common with the rest of the Northcliffe papers, does so much to keep the morality of the nation on a very high level, says that the "greatest tenderness should always be shown to religious feeling," as though it is not the very fact of the intrusion of religious feeling that is hindering a rational settlement of the subject. Otherwise people would not be long in seeing that no harm can be done to good marriages by dissolving bad ones, and that the surest way to bring an institution into disrepute is to keep it on a level of life that sensible people have long outgrown. The Church should be told to mind its own business in this matter, and when public opinion is strong enough to make it do so we have every confidence that the *Daily Mail* and papers of its kind will tell it so.

A London newspaper reported the death of Canon Bury, of Peterborough, one day, and in its issue of the following day stated that the Canon was "more comfortable."

Speaking on the subject of "The Divorce Laws," Sir E. Marshall Hall, K.C., said "the priests who first started the doctrines affecting marriage were celibate and of an alien religion. A palpable hit!" —

The clergy were exempted from military service in this favoured country, and, having saved their skins, are turning the War to their own account. An Aldershot Catholic Church is to be rebuilt as a War memorial.

Our old friend, Mr. Greevz Fysher, of Leeds, noticed recently in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* an account by Canon Cooper, of Filey, of an Atheist, an "infidel lecturer," who was converted to a belief in God on beholding a certain view on the Rocky Mountains. Being, as he says, interested in the psychology of this Atheist, Mr. Fysher wrote the Canon asking him for his authority for the statement. The Canon promptly gave a book called *Christ or Socialism*. The book was out of print and could not be procured. There the matter ends so far as the Canon is concerned, although it reflects small credit on his intelligence to be the mouthpiece of stories that would be a disgrace to an idiot asylum. As for the author of the book cited, one may hazard the guess that it was sheer invention. Religious writers are in this respect the most shameless of all, and show less regard for truth than a Cabinet Minister. Certain lies have become traditional in the religious world, and any religious writer feels at liberty to use them. If he can add a few more on

his own account so much the better. It is all an example of the low ethical standard set up by Christianity.

Nine bicycles have been stolen from outside churches at Weybridge. This ought to be a severe lesson to those who ride to church instead of walking.

Formerly a clergyman, James Fox, of Moseley, Birmingham, was at Wigan fined ten shillings for being drunk and incapable, and lying on the footway.

It is some time since we read an article which was so full of unsupported and unsupportable statements, and so well calculated to play the part of a sinister form of reaction, as one by Sir H. H. Johnston in the *New Statesman* for April 17. The article is entitled "The World and Islam," and the title seems to call for broad views. It, however, leads off with the statement that the protests of Islam need not be taken into account "because the Mohammedan religion is inherently warlike and intolerant.....and the most inclined to fight with fierceness against progress." We should be the last to question the statement that *all* religions are inherently intolerant and make for war. But, other things equal, the whole history of Mohammedanism shows it to be less warlike than Christianity, and immensely more tolerant. Mohammedanism extended the principle of toleration to all religions when Christianity kept the fires of persecution blazing in all directions. And the statement that Islam is inherently warlike, while by comparison Christianity is not, is one of those Christian vulgarisms from which Sir H. H. Johnston—who, we believe, calls himself a "Rationalist"—should be free.

After that one is almost prepared for such statements as that the most potent agents of the destruction of the Roman Empire were Arabs, Persians, Berbers, etc., "banded together in the yoke of Islam"; that the Christianity of Christ "disappeared under the faiths of Isis and Mithras" (as though Christianity, in any genuine sense, was more than a re-hash of these older faiths); that "Judaism had virtually dissolved into Christianity a hundred years before the coming of Christ, and it is only a foolish petulance which prevents the Jews of to-day from avowing themselves followers of Christ." The article seems written for a purpose, although it is a little difficult to see what that purpose is. But it causes one to wonder at the curious currents that are at work in the present-day world.

A newspaper paragraph states that a golfing parson was "two up on Bogey." This is not surprising, for the clergy have been so long associated with Bogeys.

Providence, it is said, cares for sparrows, and is fond of counting the hairs of our heads. In other matters Providence is too often playful. On Easter Monday a kind-hearted motor-bus driver tried to avoid running over two dogs at Shooter's Hill. The result was thirty-one people were injured, three being killed, by the overturning of the bus.

The General Assembly (Presbyterian) held its annual meeting in Belfast recently, and it was quite agreed that Christianity was the final religion. By that they meant there could be no religion better than Christianity, and that may be taken as just another instance of Christian egotism. Most religionists would say the same of their own creed, and we may easily believe that the devotees of all the religions that are dead and buried said the same of their religions in their turn. From another point of view we are quite inclined to agree that, so far as this country is concerned, Christianity will be the final creed. One cannot readily conceive the people of a civilized country, having got rid of a supernatural religion, re-establishing another one. There are some lessons that once learned are never forgotten, and nothing short of the destruction of all our knowledge of the nature of one religion could ever make possible the establishment of another, once we have rid ourselves of this one.

Traditionally, and by a polite fiction, parsons are supposed to be without an eye to the main chance. But there are *some* exceptions. Thus, the *Motor Cycle and Cycle Trader*, in its issue for March 26, gives an account of a letter from a bishop in one of our Eastern Counties, written to the Militor Motor Cycle Co. (Agents, the London and Midland Motors, Ltd.):—

I am not aware that any British bishop is seen riding a motor-cycle, certainly not a Militor, but if you, for advertising purposes, will send me, free of charge, one of your Militor combinations, and I ride it, as I should ride it in full episcopal attire, I undertake to say that it would soon become known in the Eastern counties as well as in other parts of England. I have a good deal of travelling in this as well as in other dioceses, and I should have ample opportunity of making the Militor known.

This bishop evidently knows his way about, and it is also clear that he considers acting as an advertising agent to be a more likely way to get a motor cycle than by asking for it in prayer. The paper from which we take the above says that the bishop's request is not likely to be granted.

A touching account of the sufferings of the Rev. T. H. Birks, of Hammersmith, and of his wife's noble efforts to maintain their home by opening a shop, appeared in the newspapers. It was stated that the unhappy man's stipend was only £170 a year. On the following day the vicar, the Rev. J. S. Clementson, wrote that, during 1919, Parson Birks received £249 "besides special gifts through the bishop." Thus is another Christian martyr deprived of his halo.

Things are not going well, religiously, in Cleckheaton. The vicar has just informed his bishop that owing to the dearth of candidates for presentation, the confirmation service cannot take place. The vicar also states that while it is easy to get helpers for concerts, coffee suppers, and the like, yet when it is a question of getting help for some definitely religious work, the assistance is not forthcoming. We fancy that this experience holds good of more places than Cleckheaton. And if the definitely social interests were separated from the religious ones, the majority of the Churches in this country would be compelled to shut up.

Father Vaughan says that the country must now get back to its old tradition—"For God, For King, For Country." It seems to us that the first of the Trinity ought to be able to do for himself all that is necessary; the second is already well looked after, and can afford to stand on one side; and we are strongly of opinion that until the third leaves off bothering its head about the first two, it will always stand at the bottom of the list instead of at the top. Father Vaughan's list might be read—first, my own job; then that of my friend's; and then, if there is any time left, we may think about others.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S.—The tram workers' strike materially affected the attendance at our annual meeting on April 10, but the members present were satisfied with the statement of accounts presented, which shows a good balance in hand to commence next season's work. All the present officials were re-elected, and the new Committee is as follows: Mr. and Mrs. Pulman, Mrs. Emery, Miss Williams, Messrs. Turner, Wilcock, and Friedman, Mrs. Rosetti. The attendance at the Evening Social was much better, and the proceedings were very enjoyable. In addition to the dancing, Mrs. Henshaw and Miss Clara Tilley entertained the company by excellent pianoforte selections; Miss Worsley—a clever child artist—with songs and dances; also Master Harry Black and Mr. G. Bailey, with songs. The newly formed Dramatic Society gave a humorous sketch, entitled "R. B.," and the efforts of Mr. Britain to obtain his "rise" were followed with considerable enjoyment. Last, but not least, our thanks are due to Miss Williams and Mr. John Allcock for their services at the piano during the season.—H. BLACK, Hon. Sec.



## C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 25, Mardy.

## To Correspondents.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—J. W. Bishop, £1; Mrs. C. M. Renton, £3.

D. RICHARDS.—Your paper was sent, and we have now forwarded another copy. Will you please complain to the postal officials at your end, and see what they say?

J. SCHNEIDER.—We are not surprised at hearing from you. We have many friends and readers in South Africa, and hope one day to get a regular agency established. We are sending you out some literature for distribution. Hope that it will prove of use.

MR. C. S. GOULDING, of 7 Alfred Street, Gainsborough, would be glad to hear from Freethinkers living within a thirty miles radius of Gainsborough with whom he might strike up a cycling acquaintance, or on whom he might call.

J. LEWENTON.—Thanks for cuttings. Always useful.

P. WEINER.—It would be quite correct to describe Christianity as an offshoot of Judaism historically, with considerable elements introduced from the various Pagan religions. It is always a dangerous procedure to trace Christianity back to a single source.

C. MARVIN.—We have always advocated the withdrawal of children from religious instruction in schools, and if all who believe in the principle of Secular Education were to do so, it would go a considerable distance towards educating public opinion on the subject.

J. H.—We are always pleased to receive newspaper cuttings from our readers calling attention to items which they think will be of interest. It is the only way by which our paragraph columns can be kept up to date. In that way the "Acid Drops" may really be regarded as a co-operative product. And it is never safe for a reader not to send on the assumption that someone else is sure to do so. The "someone else" is probably moved by the same impression. We should like someone in each town to make it their special business to see that we were kept informed on local items.

MR. E. MANNIE writes from South Africa:—"I feel that I must express my admiration for the *Freethinker*, a paper which for the last two years has been a weekly literary treat that I have enjoyed with keen relish. I became a Freethinker through reading the *Bible Handbook*, a book which, if more widely distributed and circulated round, would, I think, bring many more recruits into your ranks." We are glad to have Mr. Mannie's good opinion of our paper. The Handbook will soon, we think, be reprinted.

MR. H. IRVING, Secretary of the Barnsley Branch, writes pointing out that the Branch report headed "Sheffield" should have been "Barnsley." He asks us whether we are aware that Barnsley is the right eye of Yorkshire, and asserts that Sheffield possesses not sight but only suction. He also suggests that we ought to publish a woodcut showing the editor in "crepe-de-sackcloth" weeping tears of repentance at the wrong done Barnsley. Mr. Irving may consider this done, while one of our Sheffield friends says he will look up some gazetteers and see if any of them can tell him whereabouts in Yorkshire Barnsley is situated. He professes to be fond of visiting out-of-the-way villages.

E. WATSON.—If you could secure a hall, it would be possible to arrange for a lecture to be delivered in your district. Leaflets are being sent.

E. DUFFY.—We have inserted the notice of the Branch meeting at Plymouth Chambers on Thursday, April 22; but as your card did not reach us till the morning of the 20th, we are afraid it will not be of much service. The notice should have been sent us in time for the issue dated April 18.

We have been asked if there is in existence a society having for its object funeral reform with special attention to dress, etc. We have a notion that some such society did exist, but are uncertain if it is still alive. Perhaps some of our readers can give us information on the subject.

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

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

*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.*

*All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."*

*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, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.*

## Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen closes his lecturing season with a visit to-day (April 25) to South Wales, which makes the third visit within a month. In the afternoon he will lecture at Mardy, at 3, in the Workman's Hall on "The Collapse of Christianity and its Causes," and in the Workman's Hall at Ferndale, at 7, on "Do the Dead Live?" Both meetings are, we believe, attracting much interest, and we hope to see that interest reflected in crowded halls.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference is being held this year at Birmingham. This is fairly central for the whole country, and we are hoping for a good muster of delegates and members. All members of the N.S.S. are entitled to be present, and we trust that all Branches will manage to send a delegate. If it is quite impossible for a Branch to send a delegate, representation may be by proxy, in which case members of the local Branch or others who are attending would doubtless act. But we would prefer to see a direct representative. Those requiring hotel accommodation must write early in order to secure it. An excursion will be arranged for the Monday, of which details will be given later.

The Swansea Branch brought its season's lecturing to a very successful close on Sunday last with two lectures from Mr. Cohen. There was a good audience in the afternoon in spite of the fine weather with its temptations for a stroll down by the sea, and in the evening the hall was quite filled. Several new members were made, and the Branch is proposing a strong forward movement for next season with an endeavour to promote Freethought in the district. And the field is ripe for the harvest.

We are asked to again draw attention to the Social of the West Ham Branch on Saturday evening (April 24) at Earlham Hall, Forest Gate. The Social commences at 7, and admission is free to all Freethinkers and their friends.

Now that the finer weather is approaching some of our friends may feel inclined to lay themselves out for a little propaganda work on behalf of this paper. There must be numerous opportunities of introducing the paper to a friend, and very much may be done in this way. Last week we warned our friends not to imagine that because the War was over the fight for existence had ended. Prices in most directions have advanced, and the cost of this journal is at present as great as it was at any time during the War. And now we hear that another very considerable advance in wages is agreed upon, which will put about another £200 a year on our wages and printing bill. It should be said that this advance has nothing to do with editor and contributors. They have no trade union, and must, therefore, do as they best may. Then we have to add the new increase in postage rates, just announced, that will also make a considerable advantage to our expenses. But we are not disheartened, and if our readers will see that there is a good influx of new subscribers we shall feel quite cheery. It is quite exciting editing an advanced paper with no money behind it in these days.

We have received the annual Cash Statement of the Manchester Branch of the N. S. S., and we are glad to note that the Society concludes a vigorous and successful season's work with a balance on the right side. This is the more gratifying as the Branch adopted the policy of free admission right through. Altogether, the position of the Branch is an example of what may be done in two or three years by persistence and judgment. There has also been a very gratifying quantity of literature sold under the management of Mr. Rosetti. The Branch appears to be very fortunate in its officials.

The Birmingham Branch are having a ramble on May 2 at the Lickeys. Leave Navigation Street by Selby Oak Car 2.30, and Selby Oak terminus 3 o'clock. Members and friends are cordially invited, and are asked to notify Mr. J. Collier, 181 Frederick Road, Aston, Birmingham, of their intention of doing so, also state if they desire tea, which will be arranged for at the Bilbery Hill tea rooms.

### Kindness.

Even Shakespeare never compacted more sturdy truth and healthy sentiment into four words than when he said: "Beauty lives with kindness." Freedom and justice are the foundation of civilized happiness, but kindness is its superstructure. Kindness can never take the place of freedom and justice, nor do the work that can only be done by them, but it can greatly smooth the way for the doing of that work.

I am glad that Shakespeare did not say "Beauty lives with love," because love has so many different meanings. What did Christ mean when He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyself"? What did He mean when He said: "Thou shalt love thine enemy"? In what way are we to love our enemies and where are we to draw the line? Are we to love the Devil? And how can we love neighbours whom we cordially dislike?

Can we learn what this Christ-taught love is by watching the practice of the Church or of the majority of individual Christians? After nearly two thousand years of preaching it looks as if the Christians had given up this problem of what love means and were trying to make it quite plain that they know how to practise what is certainly does not mean. And I am sure it does not mean anything that calls for such a lavish use of bombs and machine guns, policemen's clubs and hangmen's ropes, as we are accustomed to see encouraged by the clergy.

The apostle John said: "God is love." What does that mean? Are cancers and slums, floods and famines, blockades and wholesale starvation of women and children, expressions of God's love? When Christians tell me that God is almighty, which means that He can do whatever He likes, and have things just as He wants them, and then look round upon the way He has fixed things, I can see plenty of evidence of hate, and I can believe anything about God except that He is love. He may be bad, or He may be so weak that some other power gets the better of Him, but in that case He is not God.

But it is easy to understand what kindness means. I can treat my neighbour, or even my enemy, kindly, though I do not know how to love either of them. There is not a relation in life wherein kindness is not only possible but expedient, for

there is nothing that oils the machinery of society like kindness. Many people think that unless they fight for their rights they will be trampled under foot. This is true if you have a craven spirit and bow before injustice with slave-like humiliation; but it is not true if you are brave enough to clearly point out wherein you have been wronged and to use no weapon save arguments tempered and made strong by kindness. Such people say that the social revolution can never be brought about except by force of arms. If that be so it is because so many of the workers are cowardly or careless. They are afraid to speak up firmly and kindly to their employers, and too careless to attend public meetings or support a labour press that would plead their cause for them. The really brave man is not he who flies to arms, but he who lets his wrongs be known and fearlessly trusts to public opinion to see that he is righted.

Nobody can deny that our industrial affairs have got into a deplorable mess. Look at the disparities of life. Here is a man who rolls to his office in a sumptuous motor car, spends a few hours there, and then rolls away to his luxurious club or home. And here are a thousand workers toiling for him, each producing three dollars wealth for every one they get. It is a barbaric state of things which allows one man to pocket two-thirds of the earnings of a thousand workers. But nothing can change it until people are free to use any vacant land they can find, and to pass any kind of money that other people will accept. But what can be done in the meantime by way of apology for the shame of a state of society that turns a thousand men into mere machines for grinding out superfluous wealth for one man? Only kindness. The commercial king need not stand so far away from his subjects; he need not steal from them quite all that the system allows, and they need not hate him, or destroy his property.

Here is a woman who sleeps most of the day, decks herself out in diamonds, and dissipates most of the night. There is a woman who takes care of this idle woman's child. She wears a cap and apron to show that she is a menial. And there are other women who scrub and cook. They all live under the same roof, but they are not one family. The mistress is rude, overbearing or patronizing to the servant. Often, indeed, she is the most ill-bred person in the house.

This is a travesty of civilization. It means that society enables a few persons to live in luxury without working, and compels many others to put up with humiliating conditions in order to live at all. It is a disgrace to human thought that this should be so, but it is so, and it will be so until society is so arranged that no able-bodied person can live without earning his or her living, or, in other words, until the present unjust monopolies of banking and of vacant land are abolished. Meantime this shameful state of things can be mitigated only by courtesy and kindness.

In the old days of chattel slavery there were white masters and black slaves who loved and respected each other. This did not make the relation of master and slave less wrong, but it made both happier under a condition with which neither should have been content. We should not forget for a moment that social and industrial conditions

are terribly out of joint, or cease to expose their infamy, and when necessary call men and things by their right names. What I mean is that as we rub elbows with people it is better for our own sakes to be kind, courteous and good natured, for beauty lives with kindness. Hatred, thoughts of retaliation, and bitterness of feeling poison our own happiness. Revenge is the consolation only of the stupid; angry words the language only of the fool. But to laugh when others fly into a passion; to extend the hand of friendship to those who have injured you; to be even more courteous to your enemies than to your friends—these are marks of beauty, for beauty lives with kindness.

G. O. WARREN.

### Spiritualism, A Temporary Symbol.

If the idea of the immediacy of death were constantly present in the human consciousness, life itself would be so intolerable that there would be but little reason for allowing it to continue. It is the very real impossibility of realising death in normal times that permits the human race to misconduct itself in the many ways it has chosen. There is the ever-present idea that there will be plenty of time to do those things which are acknowledged to be wise after the foolish ones, and even the existence of religion in all its manifold and ubiquitous forms has been unable to impress upon mankind the character of death, and its connotations. All that religion has been able to do is to promise an extension of life in another form, although such a life is clearly in the realm of the unknowable, except for the demonstrations of the occult, which are not altogether comprehensible, and may prove to be explicable in other terms than those of a future and continued life.

During the years which ended in November, 1918, however, the human race had been brought closer than ever before to a realisation of the immediacy of death, and that not because of any natural cause, but by its own creation of factitious and misguided circumstances. Having thus voluntarily overwhelmed himself with sorrow of the most potent and anguishing character, and having lost faith in the comforts provided by a religion which had in the main ceased to have any bearing upon the life of the average man, even so far as it provided a system of rewards and punishments in a future life, it was natural that man should seek for a more satisfactory solution of the mystery of death than that with which his previous concept of religion had supplied him.

That concept of religion had not, curiously enough, altered very materially since the historic childhood of the race, and it is only by speculation that its probable evolution before the historic period can be determined.

The speculation, however, has a sound basis for its ideas in the study of peoples who have not emerged from conditions which were probably general before the historic period. It seems that in the least developed and civilised peoples there is existent the concept of a universal and individual deity who is present as a unit in each material thing which composes the environment of man.

Thus each stone, each tree, each stream, each mountain, is personified as an individual god, who must be worshipped and placated.

At a later stage, the gods, so to speak, represent classes of phenomena, rather than individual things. At this time there would be worshipped, a god of the waters, a god of the land, a god of the forest, a god of the rain, lightning, thunder, and so on. With increasing knowledge the number of gods decreases until is obtained the Trinity, expressed by the Ancient Egyptians as Isis, Osiris and Horus, and by the Hebrew Christians and their Roman Catholic successors, as God the Father, the Invisible, the Begetter, the Virgin Mother, and the Holy Child, who is a human physical person, but at the same time the Son of God.

An even more simplified idea is that which sprang out of the desert. It is the one god of the Mussulman. The one god, whom Moses discovered when he fled out of Egypt to escape the penalty of murder. In the desert life was simple. Environment was simple, and therefore it seems that God was simple. He was one, a sort of embodiment of all the harshness of the desert. Where man could find no help in nature, they could find but little in their deity, who was cold and harsh in his justice, a God who verily inspired the fear to which he owed his adoration.

All these various stages of the idea of God were one with the stages of man's development. In the desert physical environment was simple; in Egypt it was less simple but still easily comprehensible for that the physical phenomena occurred at stated intervals. In Greece the whole outlook of man upon nature was much more complex. Cooped in little valleys, bounded by mountains, watered by glittering streams, bearing vegetation as varied as that which in other physical circumstances varies almost between the Arctic and the Equator, it was a much longer time before man reached out to the unity of nature, and consequently it was not until the spread of the desert religion, that the Greeks were able to reduce the number of their gods. Even then it was hardly a spontaneous development of the Greek mind, but rather a cult carefully grafted upon that mind.

Be it noted, however, that the highest ideal of all these slightly varying concepts has always been, and, indeed, is very general to-day, that of a personal god, in whose image man was made. But with the growth of the knowledge of the nature of mind, and with increasing acquaintance with natural phenomena, God has become gradually less personal, and more remote in the conception held by the brightest intellects. When man first became conscious of himself, he decided that he was the noblest development of the Earth Mother, and he therefore conceived that it was a necessary corollary of this knowledge that God should be a higher type of man. Now, when man is beginning to understand that those attributes, with which he had endowed the Godhead alone, are possible, nay, certain, to be developed in himself in the course of time, his idea of God has become less concrete, less tangible, and he hesitates to make any definition of the Godhead, which he acknowledges to be incomprehensible.

While however man admits the unknowable nature of deity, he cannot, and reasonably cannot,

admit that any part of his human mind is incomprehensible to that mind, although for the time being he may not fully understand some portion of it.

(To be concluded.) G. E. FUSSELL.

## Does It Matter If We Die Like Dogs?

WHAT is the objection to dying like a dog? There is supposed to be something very horrible about a dog's death—almost as horrible as a drunkard's death; the latter, however, possessed of an immortal soul, is on a much higher plane than the domestic dog, who, when it dies, is completely done for.

At a time like the present, when the world of science would appear to be drifting into a kind of ultra-supernaturalism, when hard-headed, logical thinkers are cleaving to superstition like drowning men clinging to straws, we are more or less forced to consider what is really wrong with the idea of dying like a dog.

In the first place, of course, nobody but a supreme snob would object to a dog's death. The dog is a good, fearless, and faithful creature; the dog possesses both character and intelligence—that it knows nothing whatever about original sin may be against it, but man himself is ignorant in many important directions, and it would be manifestly unfair to blame an innocent dog for being ignorant of a quality that is alone applicable to man himself. Dogs were never cursed by God; we must never forget this. Dogs did not misbehave themselves in the Garden of Eden!

The domestic dog is much cleaner and healthier than fifty per cent. of the human race. Dogs are not cursed with half as many diseases as are men and women. We cannot, as we might wish, say that the dog is an Atheist—the dog believes in the omnipotence of man. Man, according to the Gospel of Anatole France, is the god of the dog—and man, in return for this beautiful dog-thought, looks upon his domestic cur with lofty contempt. "Who wants to die like a dog?"

The really queer thing is that the dog alone among the swarming multitudes of man's spiritual inferiors is used to illustrate the ghastly consequences of disbelief in immortality. But why does man object to dying like a dog? Is man so much greater than a dog? It is true, of course, that dogs cannot write plays like *Hamlet*, neither can they play the piano like Mark Hambourg—but can they invent poison gas? Ah, now we've got you! Can dogs use the bayonet? Can they destroy dog life wholesale? Can they create many orphans? Can they produce miseries in the mother heart?

Is a dog's life so very much more horrible than the life of a man? Why should a man fear to "die like a dog"? Is there not at the basis of this peculiar problem the psychology of a third-rate mentality? Man objects to die like a dog, not because he really thinks of his evolved personality—priceless as that commodity may or may not be—but he objects to being *classed* with a mere animal—he imagines himself to be something much more than an animal not only in life but in death too. The Bible is supposed to inform us that man is higher than the animals—that he is something nearer the divinity of his creator. I have never been able to find this information myself, but I take the word of those who possess better eyesight.

But why, if all animals are lower in the scheme of creation than man, should the dog be chosen to so vividly illustrate the essential distinction? We never hear people say: "Who wants to die like a lion, or a tiger,

or a panther, or an elephant?" It may be, of course, that the dog is one of the few animals that a man can kick with safety. On the other hand, as my title plainly shows, the problem may be solved by taking into consideration "alliteration's artful aid." The phrase "die like a dog" contains two very emphatic Ds. This neat little phrase rolls off the human tongue in a dramatic fashion that really does carry weight.

But, to sum up. A man's brain weighs about five times as heavy as the brain of a dog. This extra amount of brain matter, specially convoluted, secures man against a dog's death. It provides a kind of divine insurance against an inferior *rigor mortis*.

So our problem really works out something like this:

Dog's brains: five ounces, no immortality.

Man's brains: sixteen ounces, eternal life.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

## De Profundis.

I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul. —Henley.

Oh lips that the live blood faints in, the leavings of racks and of rods,

Oh ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted Gods,  
Though all men abase them in spirit before Thee and all knees bend,

I kneel not, neither adore thee, but standing, look to the end.

—Swinburne.

THERE are days in everyone's year when despondency settles like a cloud on the brain; when life is but a darkness visible; when the blackness of the pit hangs all around. Jinn-like hallucinations of a perverted imagination rise threateningly. We are afraid; to move this way or that seems impossible. We are caged in by fear of self. The timid cry to God: the bravest is dumb. Out of those moments of weakness has been forged the tyranny of creeds. Man at his lowest made God, and at his highest destroyed the image again. Happiness is the right of man, but, as yet, that heritage is but a fleeting shadow that eludes our trembling grasp. We are not yet man enough to seize with sure hand the glory that awaits our threatening. Even the noblest bends before the horror of environment. The blackness of things is too visible, too overwhelming to withstand for ever.

Those who view this seething mass of submerged life from without must shiver at its awfulness, but those alone who have been engulfed in its living maelstrom can know the full agony of its terror. Day after day, week after week, year after weary year, the dregs of humanity wear themselves out in their endless struggle against circumstances. In the depths, in the depths they surge in a welter of hopelessness. They have no knowledge of the *altiora*, the higher things. Superstition has dragged them into its *Death-in-Life*. There, in its birth-place, religion struggles in its death-throes. Even in the lowest, some raise their heads and dare to stand alone. Even there some shake off the parasite that would suck the life blood and leave the bulk for the bonfires of religion.

These know life too well to be satisfied with the promises of a creed whose God made immutable the stations of all in this world. Hell holds no terrors and paradise—well, doubtless, there would be degrees there as here, and, again, they would occupy the least. Yet there, there are some who fall beneath the sway of "the city bright," and how could it be otherwise? Even the faintest ray of hope in the darkness of their despair seems a beacon-light. They forget the archbishops and their hierarchy of salaried hypocrites who batten on the misery of humanity, who know the truth but are afraid

to lay aside the things of to-day and tell it. And so religion, made strong through the miseries of the weak, the helpless, the *submerged tenth*, blatantly belches forth its gospel of Equality. Equality? What does Christianity know of Equality? It grows fat through a scheme of systematized *inequality*.

Were there Equality in fact, there would not, nor could not, be any Christianity. God waxes fat on the miseries of man.

Out of the pit of despair and ignorance was born that phantasm that bears the name of Deity. They cant about the universality of Education. That such a farce should have such a name! True, they lift a child out of its environment for a moment, and teach it things it can never need. Amongst this *necessary* knowledge must be included Religious Instruction. And this mockery proceeds until the child is *almost* able to look on the world with its own eyes. What then? Does the educating proceed? The child is thrust back to the place from whence it came, to its mansions—or to its slums.

Education is the vantage-point from whence one can look out on the magnificence of *Creation*. A truly magnificent thing, Creation, with its slums, its dens of iniquity, its hopelessness, its despair. And into these depths we must descend before we can eradicate the cancer that is wearing out Humanity. We must work up, not down. In the regeneration of the lowest lies the regeneration of mankind. Too long we have worked solely for the *intelligentsia*. It is time to see things in their true perspective. We have put off the inevitable too long with our eternal, "Oh, they don't understand; they can't understand." We must see to it that they *do* understand. The material wellbeing of Humanity is our goal. Material wellbeing is the natural precursor of mental wellbeing, and on the day that that culminates, the downfall of Religion and Superstition in all their various disguises is assured.

H. C. MELLOR.

### A Visit to the "Freethinker."

HAVING an hour or so to spare when I was in London last month, I called at the office of the *Freethinker*. I was received quite cordially as soon as the director was aware that I was one of the editors of *La Pensée Internationale*. I was fortunate enough to find myself in an intellectual atmosphere conducive to the exchanges of ideas. The office is, of course, not luxuriously appointed, but, at least, it has its own printing-house on the premises, and I contrasted its fairly independent position with that of our paper which depends for its existence on the sacrifices, the untiring devotion and energy of comrade Peytrequin.

We talked about the position of Freethought in Europe, and regretting the uncertainty of the existence of its organs under the present economic conditions.

Mr. Chapman Cohen, who is both director and editor of the paper, is a man of remarkable energy, whose mission it is to carry the good news of Freethought through the length and breadth of the British Isles. I have not had an opportunity of hearing him defend our cause on the platform, but I can imagine that he would make short work of his Christian opponents, for he has a firm grip of his subject. He is a worthy successor of the late Mr. G. W. Foote.

He was kind enough to present me with a number of his books and pamphlets, which it is my intention to study, and share my impressions and criticisms with our readers.

Let me say here that the *Freethinker* has published a good number of books and pamphlets which should certainly be on the shelves of Freethinkers who have an acquaintance with foreign languages.

G. BROCHER IN *La Pensée Internationale*.

The comfort of having a friend may be taken away, but not that of having had one.—*Seneca*.

### The Fourth Age.

V.

THE GROTESQUE.

WE had heard rumours of a big advance in August. They were all received with resignation. Nothing seemed to matter. We had settled down in an orchard, and many of us had given up hope of seeing the end. We had made our sleeping quarters in the cellar of a windowless cottage. Swallows were building inside the house; I could not help noting our affinity with these pretty birds, and I envied their freedom. At every position we occupied we had to make a place to live in. In the garden of the cottage I found a volume of *Voltaire* under a currant bush. I could not keep it, for the minimum of possessions lessened one's troubles.

From this place we made three moonlight marches to the right of Arras, where we joined the Guards' Division. Cavalry, tanks, infantry, heavy artillery—all seemed to be concentrating in this area. Instinct told us that the presence of cavalry meant movement. On parade, orders were given that no man should have more than regulation equipment. Iron rations were issued, and we were only allowed to send home the regulation field card—which was about the last word in ingenuity. I here pay my tribute to the wonderful brain that devised it. On it is found the concentrated wisdom of ages—a man writes by making straight lines; a permanent state of war would remove the necessity of education. This might not be displeasing to certain sections of society. Are we really seven hundred years from the dark ages? The end of the war has given us no *Æschylus* with his drama of "The Persians," which, you will remember, shows the Greeks being compassionate for the vanquished. By the utterances of our demagogues it would seem that they are under the impression that we are still at war with Germany. One could think of no worse punishment for those fat, comfortable editors and such trash than to issue them a field card each for the expression of their opinions at this moment.

If, reader, you saw a cow in the branches of a tree, you would probably pinch yourself. It appeared to be the rule that a man's nerves would last so long under war-strain—after that he was down and out; and I cannot but think that incongruities met on active service were no small cause of this collapse. There seemed to be a time when I was moving in a dream. To sleep and dream pleasantly was the only luxury left to us. We were moving along to our position with four guns. On the roadside I saw a horse in the hedge. It was standing upright—dead—but its eyes were open. Just a rapid glance at it as we passed—but it remains photographed on my mind. It seems to be more permanent than the picture of the dead mule's legs sticking out of the ground on a spot chosen by our cook for the purposes of making tea and stew.

Our dug-out had been occupied by the enemy a few days previous. Mills' bombs had shattered the steps, and also brought down some of the roof. From under this earth there came a most curious smell not to be mistaken; it was a smell that no willing man seeks. In this place we had our post brought up to us. It was a deep, dark, and ghostly cavern; a place for any realist to rejoice in. I received here *The Grammar of Life*, by G. T. Wrench, and *We Moderns*, by Edward Moore. I read a part of the latter to the Major whilst he was having a soldier's wash in bed. In answer to his question, I told him that it did not contain any reference to the end of the war. Was it not remarkable that he should require this information, when many of our blatant civilians and fireside soldiers had recognized the war as a permanent institution? I think that they would have longed for the end if they had *only* been as verminous as ourselves.

In reaching this place, we had made our first move forward. On a road that had once been in no man's land, were several of our soldiers lying with the enemy dead. They were all mere frames within their uniforms. The teeth of one of our men gleamed in the August sun, and the wheel traffic had flattened out the head. They were all mummies. In life they had met and fought. Scientists had devised the weapons to reduce them to dust. We must examine the credentials of scientists in the New World; if they cannot do better than this we must support conscription of them

to a madhouse, and allow them to exterminate each other. And we must beware of the lip-service to the sanctity of human life in Christian countries. Let us never again have our eyes drawn to the barbaric practices of the Chinese, or Hindus, or savages; the civilized savage, a more dangerous specimen, is within our midst. And the name of God is often on his lips, and the Devil of evil in his heart.

WILLIAM REPTON.

## Correspondence.

### AGNOSTIC OR ATHEIST?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The controversy *re* the terms Agnostic and Atheist seems to me to be a very hardy plant, and, although this subject should have received its *coup de grace* long ago, it springs up with the regularity of a hardy annual; so that I, for one, am not at all surprised to peruse some more letters on this topic, once again, in some of your recent issues.

Irrespective of all previous and the present controversies, a correct decision, to my humble mind, is not very difficult to arrive at, provided the matter is looked into from a common-sense point of view. And in this connection I would respectively advise Mr. Lennard to adopt the courage at least of the Theist, who does not hesitate in declaring that all the gods, other than his own, are either false or non-existent. The Moslem also quite emphatically and courageously declares that there is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet. (The capitals are mine.) Similarly, Christians in India proclaim openly that their Jehovah is the only true and living God, and that all others are local false deities, and do not exist.

Such being the attitude of the Theists in respect to the claims of genuineness of their respective deities, where comes the harm of denying the existence of the whole lot of them? When disputing with a Christian, surely enough data can be furnished that Jehovah does not now exist from the Bible itself. Allah can be similarly treated from information obtained from the Koran or his disputing adherents. There is certainly no necessity for adopting a "No nothing" attitude so far as these particular favourite gods are concerned. And if one has further doubts as regards the correct definition of any particular definition of any particular deity generalized as God, one has only to look up any dictionary and satisfy his doubts or curiosity. And if the doubter is still not satisfied, he may have resource to any one of the numerous publications on this topic by the believers of each particular deity, and at least try and learn something, instead of adopting a "No nothing" attitude, much to the delight of the common enemy.

During my peregrinations I have met with every civilized race, class, and condition of various people that inhabit this globe of ours, and I have been on intimate terms with many of them; but I state with regret that, in theological matters, it was only the Britisher who adopted a circumlocution method when expressing an opinion on Theistic subjects which, undoubtedly, he had no belief whatever in. Why this should be the case is hard to understand, but not difficult to answer.

JOHN HARRINGTON.

235 Second Avenue, Khargpur, B. N. Ry., India.

### THE ETHICAL CODE.

SIR,—I am pleased my endeavour to restate the old truism that there is one law for the rich and one for the poor was so freshly done as to stir up a certain controversy. For my part I am more inclined to agree with Mr. Harding than with Mr. Fothergill.

To take one example of how the legal and authorized ethical code is perverted by the possessing class, I think it will be found that in English law the ownership of land is based upon user. Need one say more?

My endeavour in the article was to emphasize the old truism, and, further, to point out that the Ethical Code was invented and is maintained for predatory purposes rather than as a basis for the regulation of society for its good as a whole.

The possibilities were and are understood equally by the clerics and the politicians, and it is only when they also are forced to conform—the advantages of preaching what you do not practice are immediately apparent—that any ethical code can have any final sanction in its effect as a benefit to mankind.

G. E. FUSSELL.

## 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.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 7, Social Gathering—Music and Dancing.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. F. A. Davies, "An Hour with the Devil."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Dr. John Oakesmith, "The Religion of a Rationalist."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, E.): 7, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "Primitive Brains in Modern Skulls."

#### OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Ratcliffe, and Baker.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

FERNDALE (Workman's Hall): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Do the Dead Live?"

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30.

MARDY (Workman's Hall): 3, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Collapse of Christianity and Its Causes."

PLYMOUTH AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): Thursday, April 22, at 8, Mr. Hayes-James, "The Puritan Revolution."

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