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Views and Opinions.

The "Freethinker" and its Gospel.

JOURNALS of the class to which the *Freethinker* belongs are of the type that, in France, are called "personal," that is they are controlled by someone with a personal following, and they stand for ideas, for a Cause that makes a strong personal appeal. They are not commercial ventures in any sense of the word. No one would be fool enough to start one with any idea of monetary gain; if he did, experience would soon teach him the folly of his venture. The editor is such by accident; he is an apostle by temperament, by conviction and by choice. And an apostle gains followers whether they be few or many. The net result is the establishment of relations between the apostle-editor and his readers, such as can never subsist between an ordinary newspaper editor and its subscribers. The newspaper comes to its subscribers with all the detachment of a public notice stuck outside a local Town Hall. To the majority of its readers the *Freethinker* comes to them with all the anticipated pleasure of a weekly letter from a valued friend.

That is my excuse for taking advantage of the opening of a new year, and also the first issue of a new volume of the *Freethinker*, to talk about the paper and myself—or at least of as much of myself as is represented by the paper and the cause it represents. That would indeed be no small part of me. It is just short of forty years since I gave my first lecture on a Freethought platform, and nearly thirty-three years since, after repeated invitations from G. W. Foote, I contributed my first article to the *Freethinker*. Only one issue has since appeared without at least one article from my pen. I think that is a journalistic record for London, and I feel proud of it. In less than eighteen months the *Freethinker* will be celebrating its jubilee. No other Freethinking paper in this country will have achieved that record—I think, none in Europe.

A Strenuous Record.

The *Freethinker* commenced its career in 1881. What an army it would be if all those who have been rescued from superstition since that time through its agency could be gathered in one place! And if all the parsons and professing Christians who have had their opinions modified through its influence could be brought together, there is not a hall in England large enough to hold them. This is true not merely of definitely unorthodox religious views, but it is also true of the broader views of life that now obtain. It is quite wrong to imagine that it is possible to alter a man's opinions with regard to theology and leave his opinions with regard to other things untouched. Change a man's religious opinions, convince him that his ideas of God and a future life are absurd and useless, and you change his outlook on life, its possibilities and its duties. If that were not so he might just as well have remained where he was. The indirect results of Freethought are not by any means the least valuable of its consequences.

No genuinely revolutionary paper has ever done its work for so lengthy a period with such limited resources, or in the face of so severe a boycott as is the case of the *Freethinker*. It has always lived from hand to mouth, and often enough the hand has been almost empty by the time it reached the mouth. Certainly no one not immediately concerned can have a proper conception of the vigilance and the power of the boycott. For years the leading wholesale agents refused to handle the paper at all. One by one these came in, the last one gave way during the war. The newspaper boycott is still maintained; the name of the paper is carefully excluded from mention, although there is no embargo placed on the stealing of ideas from its columns. A few years ago the *Times Literary Supplement* actually refused an advertisement of the *Freethinker*, and quite recently, in the case of the *Daily News*, several days were taken to decide on the acceptance of an advertisement. News-agents are still threatened by clergymen and others with loss of custom if they display copies of the paper, and in other ways we are constantly reminded of the fact that Christianity is still what it was whenever it has the opportunity of making evident its real character. Such persistent hatred is very complimentary. The only satisfaction we can feel is that, from the Christian point of view, we have earned it.

* * *

Real Freethinking.

Throughout the whole of its history the *Freethinker* has remained true to itself. It has never forgotten that beyond its immediate onslaught on all forms of superstition there stood the duty of service to the higher ideal of Freethought in the widest sense of the term. It has claimed freedom of ex-

pression for those who were attacking Christianity, but it also claimed freedom of expression for those who were defending or expounding it. There is no great merit in claiming freedom of expression for oneself. Every Christian sect has asked for that. The real test of principle is when it is claimed for others, even for opinions to which one is opposed. On more than one occasion the *Freethinker* has spoken even in defence of the Roman Catholic Church—one of the worst of all institutions—when it appeared to be treated unjustly by either our own authorities or by those in other countries. I lay stress upon this point here because of a letter which appears in another column from my friend Mr. R. B. Kerr. The Russian Government is accused of attempting to forcibly suppress Christianity in Russia. I am not foolish enough to take the statements of the *Morning Post*, of the less responsible representatives of the Christian Church, or the wild statements made by the notorious "Jix" at their face value, but taking the mere fact of persecution for granted, I raised a protest against such a policy when carried out in the name of Freethought, just as I do when it is carried out in the interests of Christianity.

Mr. Kerr's letter raises many points of more than passing interest, and to these I may return later. At present I wish to stress one, Mr. Kerr says that persecution is a question begging word, and I agree that it may easily be that. But as I use the expression I do not think there is any ambiguity. By persecution I mean the infliction of punishment for holding, expressing or teaching certain opinions. (A qualification might be introduced here, but there is no need to stress that now.) And the question I would put to Mr. Kerr is this—Given two individuals, each holding an opinion which, in the eyes of the other is not merely wrong, but socially bad, is there any reason that would justify A suppressing B that would not also justify B in suppressing A? In other words, if an Atheist is justified in suppressing a Christian because he believes Christianity to be wrong, on what principle do we deny the right of the Christian to suppress the Atheist because he believes Atheism to be wrong? Of course, if Mr. Kerr believes that anyone with power to hand ought to suppress any opinion which he believes to be wrong and bad, then my question has no application to him, and one must adopt another line of approach. But I hardly think he takes up that position. At any rate, if he does, that is not the policy of the *Freethinker*. Its policy is to proclaim that the free movement of diverse opinion is essential to a progressive and healthy social life.

* * *

A Happy New Year.

It is because the *Freethinker* stands for this policy that in these New Year notes I am pressing its claims upon its friends. There is no question that never for a very long period was there more need for all round free thinking on the part of the public. In the political field there is actually less freedom of opinion than there has been for a century. There are many diverse opinions in politics, but within each political camp every individual is subjected to pressure that would make him a mere echo of that political equivalent for the Holy Ghost, the Party Voice. The newspapers become more and more the mere mouth-piece of certain established interests, from extreme Socialism on the one side, to extreme Conservatism on the other, and news is purveyed or "cooked" as it serves particular views. The Roman Church, the arch-enemy of everything that savours of genuine liberty daily becomes more arrogant in its claims;

and even though organized religion is visibly weaker than it has ever been, the mass of crude superstition existing, from palace to cottage, from the university to the gutter, is frightful to contemplate. Our work, far from being done, is hardly commenced.

During the New Year we are taking steps to make the *Freethinker* better known and so to increase its circulation and its usefulness. These steps involve expense, but there are ways in which others can lend a hand that are either inexpensive or not expensive at all. There are thousands of possible readers of this paper if only it and they were brought into contact. To every friend of the paper I put the question, Why not establish the contact? It can be done by taking an extra copy and giving it away, by giving your own copy away when done with, by sending us an address with six halfpenny stamps, which will secure the paper for six weeks for a likely subscriber. There are other ways which will suggest themselves to those really wishing to help. Why should not every interested reader resolve to present the Cause with a new subscriber during the next three months? Easily the circulation of the *Freethinker* might be doubled during 1930 if these plans were adopted. 1931 is our jubilee year, and it would be a great thing if by the time that 1931 had opened readers had achieved this result. So when we wish each other good health and fortune for 1930, let us make a resolve to make it a notable year in the history of a paper of which all concerned may justly feel proud.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Canon and The Castle.

"The sophist sneers: Fool, take
Thy pleasure, right or wrong
The pious wail; Forsake
A world these sophists throng,
Be neither saint nor sophist led, but be a man!"

Matthew Arnold.

In the present age of Jazz and Jesuitry there are still a few old-fashioned simple souls who think life should be real and also earnest. During the Yuletide recess the still small voice of simplicity has been heard, and one of the questions asked was, "Can a Bishop live in a palace without weakening his spiritual influence?"

The right-reverend Father-in-God specially concerned in this naive question is Dr. J. H. Greig, Bishop of Guildford, Surrey, who has so kindly consented to live at Farnham Castle, which has been provided for his comfort by his Ecclesiastical superiors. Taking his courage in both hands, Bishop Greig actually considers it his bounden duty to go to Farnham, whilst his opponents can, if they wish, go to the place so often mentioned in sermons.

Great minds do not invariably jump together, and Canon Hunter, who is at least as courageous as the dear Bishop, opposed the idea. The Canon believes that living in a palace may minimize a Bishop's influence, detract from his spirituality, and be a stumbling-block to the Faith.

Clearly, there was a deadlock in this position, and an appeal to the Throne of Grace seemed inevitable. Luckily, a compromise was effected and saved the faces of both holy men. It was decided that the Bishop will not occupy the whole of Farnham Castle, and his apartments will comprise only about a third of it. The rest of the castle will be used as conference rooms and for housing clergymen who attend meetings. Mrs. Greig, the Bishop's wife, is delighted. Taking a practical view of living in a palace, she notes that, under the modified arrangement, about a

mile less stair carpet will be required, for furnishing, and that the window cleaners' job will be a part-time one, and not a life-long occupation. In addition, the Bishop's reputation for sanctity must go up a further fifty per cent, and simple folks, who think that a Christian bishop should emulate the reputed Founder of their Religion rather than follow the Mammon of Unrighteousness, will be placated if not pleased.

As a working journalist I mix a great deal with poor people, and I knew something of the gulf between these purse-proud ecclesiastics and their humbler brethren. The so-called Church of England is losing its grip on the inhabitants of the mean streets; and a cheerful Secularism is more prevalent in these democratic days than ever before.

The clergy pretend, hypocritically, to be entirely uninfluenced by financial motives. Religion, they intone, is a thing without money and without price. Yet, they manage to keep sharp eyes on the main chance as stockbrokers. Thirty-nine archbishops and bishops share £180,700 yearly between them, without counting palaces and palatial residences. The bishops themselves suggest, rather ingeniously, that they spend what they get in the upkeep of the dignity of their positions. It is a characteristic pose, for they frequently leave large sums of money. A former Bishop of Colchester left estate valued at £60,848. Bishop Creighton, who used to talk of the fearful struggles of the wretched ecclesiastics to keep out of debt, left £29,500. Archbishop Tait left £35,000, and Archbishop Benson a similar sum. The biggest episcopal estate of late years was that of Bishop Walsham How, who left £72,240. A good second to this was Bishop Tuffnell's £65,800. Bishop Phillpot left £60,000, whilst Archbishop Thomson left £55,000 and Bishop Trollope £50,790. Compared with these sums, the £19,361 of Bishop Harvey Goodwin; the £10,000 of Bishop Tozer, and the £12,650 of Bishop Pelham seem quite modest.

The higher clergy look after the buttering of their bread, and are not over particular when it is buttered on both sides. It is absurd to pretend otherwise. The rectors and the vicars follow suit. In so many parishes the parson with his big and expensive rectory or vicarage too often is a miniature reproduction of the bishop in a palace too large for him and for the times. The late Judge Rentoul stated that at the annual banquets given to the clergy at the Mansion House the cost of the champagne alone was £40, and that the amount was about the same every year. It is singularly appropriate that this same Mansion House should have been the scene of the Bishop of London's tearful complaint of the "starvation" of the wretched clergy. "Londoniensis" himself is a bachelor who enjoys a modest salary of £200 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep forty ordinary families in reasonable comfort, whilst his clerical brothers of York and Canterbury fare better than Prime Ministers.

Just as the clergy are a caste apart from their fellow-citizens, so is their form of State Religion becoming increasingly antiquarian in tone and sentiment. For example, at the precise moment that this country possesses a Socialist Government, in thousands of State churches prayers are offered for individual members of the Royal Family, whilst forty-five millions of citizens are referred to as "miserable sinners." At the moment when the Legislature has come to recognize the equality of men and women, in those same thousands of churches women are regarded as "weaker vessels," and treated accordingly. At the time when humanitarianism is the order of the day, in those same places-of-worship the dogmas of "original sin," and "eternal punishment" are duly insisted upon. It is Topsy-Turveydom, not civilization.

What is to be done? No reform of the Church of England is needed. What is necessary is that this out-of-date Church should be disestablished and dis-endowed, and then let it reform itself like any other society. And why has the disestablishment and dis-endowment of this particular church been dropped out of the Socialist programme? The Anglican Church simply absorbs millions of money and so many offices and dignities. It is of no more importance than the Primrose League, which is an organization founded to perpetuate the memory of the most Machiavellian of modern politicians.

Elsewhere one knows what a Church stands for. You say this one obeys the Pope and the Italian Cardinals; that another is faithful to the Westminster Confession. Still another yields homage to the Eastern European patriarchs. But ask what the so-called Church of England stands for and who can answer the riddle? One points to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Protestant Faith, and the other looks Romeward; whilst both smile behind their dainty lawn-sleeves at the simplicity of laymen.

The Church of England concerns us all, Christians, Socialists, and Freethinkers. For, by a polite legal fiction, we are all parties to the constitution of this State Church. If it were in the United States, or the British Colonies, where no such thing as a State Church exists, we need not care a pin what humbug went on in a particular church. But the legislation of Parliament makes us all partners in this Great Lying Church, and compels us to be, as it were, privy to its chicanery and dishonesty. How much longer, fellow citizens?

MIMNERMUS.

Wordsworth and Religion.

(Concluded from page 820.)

THE perusal of Wordsworth's later poems, leaves the reader with the impression of the poet as a simple-minded old gentleman, full of humility and fine feeling. To his intimate friends and relatives, he, possibly, may have been; but to visitors who came to make acquaintance with the oracle of Nature, he conveyed a very different impression. Carlyle describes Wordsworth's conversation as: "for prolixity, thinness, endless dilution, it excels all other speech I had heard from mortals."² And complains: "The languid way in which he gives a handful of numb unresponsive fingers is very significant." To Emerson "he gave the impression of a narrow and very English mind; of one who paid for his rare elevation by general tameness and conformity." Dickens paid a visit to Wordsworth, and, upon being asked how he liked the poet, replied: "Like him? Not at all. He is a dreadful old ass."³ In private intercourse, says Brandes:—

There must have been something extremely irritating about Wordsworth. A contemporary declares that when he spoke he blew like a whale, and uttered truisms in an oracular tone. The word "truism" is applicable to more than his verbal utterances; it applies to the whole reflective and didactic side of his poetry. In it there is no remarkable force or passion, but a Hamlet-like dwelling upon the great questions of "to be or not to be."⁴

The one variety in his daily life, says the same author, was the reception of visitors in the neigh-

² Kingsmill: *An Anthology of Invective and Abuse*. p. 142.

³ Brandes: *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*. Vol. 4, pp. 54-55.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 55.

bourhood who had letters of introduction to him: "These strangers he received, surrounded by his admiring family; he conversed with them in a cold and dignified manner, and not infrequently repelled them by the egotism with which he quoted his own works, the indifference he manifested on every outward sign of respect being shown him, and the solemnity with which he repeated even the most insignificant things that had been said in his praise."

In a penetrating analytical study of Wordsworth's poetry, Prof. Herbert Dingle observes:—

With philosophy in the ordinary sense—the intellectual unification of Nature—he had no concern. He denounced it at times directly and openly, and much more frequently and severely by implication. The "best philosopher," in his view, was not Plato or Kant, but a little child, with no intellect at all . . . As a thinker he possessed little originality, preferring the primrose path of orthodoxy to the steeps of individual thought. His achievements in this direction have little value for anyone, and were worse than useless to himself, serving mainly, especially in his later years, to dam the springs of spontaneous poetry which otherwise might have flowed far more copiously from their true source in his inner feelings.⁵

It is only a slight exaggeration, says the same writer: "to say that if a native of another world were to derive his knowledge of the Earth only from Wordsworth, he would conclude that our planet was inhabited mostly by old men and sheep, of whom the chief occupation of the former was the care of the latter. This is not the attitude of one who loves individual men . . . The individual was nothing; the universal Spirit was all." That Wordsworth was capable of great poetry, there is no doubt. Take his sonnet: "The World is too much with us," and ending:—

I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear Old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

But this was composed during his early manhood, to the period of his generous enthusiasm for the French Revolution, of which he wrote:—

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.

Those were the days when he was sinful and human; when he went to France and begot an illegitimate child by a French girl. What he was capable of after he became spiritualized and conservative, may be seen in his sonnets protesting against the abolition of capital punishment, on the ground that, seen alone in the condemned cell, the murderer's heart might soften, and with "Taers of salvation Welcome death." While the "State," that is the hangman:—

Helps him to meet the last Tribunal's voice
In faith, which fresh offences, were he cast
On old temptations, might for ever blast.

In other words, break the murderer's neck while he is converted, as it is recorded that there is more joy over one sinner that repents than over ninety-nine righteous men—probably they would meet a murderer with bands and banners—and thereby ensure his salvation. His victim, having no such chance, being cut off in the midst of his sins, probably being consigned to hell.

Even the pious Browning could not stand this turning of coats, and desertion of the cause of emancipation, and confessed that he had Wordsworth in

mind when he wrote *The Last Leader*, with its well-known commencement:—

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat.

As Prof. Dingle observes: "Wordsworth had neither belief in the perfectibility of man nor the desire for it. In the later years of his life he became openly what fundamentally he always was—an uncompromising Tory."

But the greatest achievement of Wordsworth, from the religious point of view, is the *Ode to Immortality*. It is extremely rare for a sermon, or an essay, or an argument, dealing with a future life, to be concluded without dragging in the *Ode to Immortality*. It must have been cited millions of times. Let us see what the pith of it amounts to. The most quoted lines, the kernel of the whole poem, run:—

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:

It will be seen at once that is not an argument, or assertion of a future life, it is dealing with a past life, perhaps several lives, before this one began. As Prof. Dingle observes: "He had no hope of a future life. He had a *belief* in a future life, as we may read in more than one of his writings, but that is an entirely different thing. He had no desire for another world. This world satisfied him; he asked nothing more. Whenever we find the period after death referred to in his great poetry, it is always as a blank, a darkness." He also notes: "Even in his ode on 'Intimations of Immortality,' we find no hope of a future life: his immortality is in the past—it is a *past* life which is intimated to him. We find such lines as "In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave." There is a single reference to 'the faith that looks through death,' but there is no hint of what it sees, and there can be little doubt that it really looks, not through death but away from it." What he really wanted was, not some heavenly New Jerusalem, but to live for ever in the Lake District; and that was a peaceful and tame Nature. Says Prof. Dingle: "He allows the spirit of the moonlit lake to permeate his soul, but he ignores the spider sucking the life-blood of the fly, or the cat toying with the terrified mouse. He never asks of the tiger [as Blake did]: "Did He who made the lamb make thee?" The Spirit which he worshipped was not Nature, nor the Creator of Nature; it was simply a Spirit, a Presence . . . He did not see Nature 'red in tooth and claw.' The Spirit which he worshipped, in fact, bore the same relation to natural objects as a man's soul bears to his body. The one permeates the other, but is only partially represented by it and does not create it." In reality he was a Pantheist.

W. MANN.

Our Sin-Wallopers.

THERE was a time when fiddles stood
For all that is not good;
But now the puritanic moan
To hear a saxophone:
I wonder, will the Righteous carp
At Heaven's golden harp.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

⁵ Prof. H. Dingle: *The Realist*. June, 1929, p. 143.

Religion, Not Theology, is The Enemy.

I INVITE you to reconsider the problem of religion from a new angle, that of a *modern* psychologist. The use of this new approach means a revaluation of religion, according to the kind of intellectual methods that are used or encouraged, and according to the influence of religiosity and religious institutions upon mental hygiene. Already it becomes apparent that the problem of religion is here to be approached with a scientific temperament and aim. This implies the utmost of unconcern for the alleged truths of every theology, for the emotional valuations of every religion, for every variety of moral sentimentalism, and even for the hysterical joys now derived from religious exercises and observances. From the point of view of some of us modern psychologists, the need for religious emotions, theologies and moral values had better be prevented or outgrown. It is thought that only so can we ever achieve the better mental health and a devotion to the use of more mature intellectual method, even as applied to social problems. Perhaps then, I had better begin with some condensed description of the new psychology.

The material scientist is no longer satisfied with a mere classification of observed data, conceived as being relatively static and dissociated facts. His dominant interest and methods now concern nature's *processes*, and the conditions which control its varying behaviour. Modern psychologists have a similar aim. They are no longer content with a mere classification of symptoms—the outward, audible and visible expressions of inner urges and processes. Neither are they content with descriptions of the data of mere surface introspection. Like other scientists, they study nature's processes, here the subjective aspect of the processes of religiosity. These are studied in their relation to the racial and personal experience, as being important conditions in the control of the subjective aspects of its behaviour. Therefore a long-ranged, retrospective introspection is an important tool in such psychologic research.

As applied to the problem of religion, this means the relative depreciation of its creedal and ceremonial manifestations, with a predominant interest in the conditions which induce the desire for them, and which bestow upon them a seeming value. This dynamic aspect of religiosity can be divided into several factors. First, I think of the experiential conditions which create the emotional need for religion. Next come the physical and psychologic conditions which are an indispensable preparedness for achieving the answering "religious experience." As a third factor I am reminded of the experiential and cultural factors, which determine how the "religious experience" will be rationalized, in terms of morals, theology, etc.

This development in the dynamic aspect of psychology, I believe to be the most important, because it enables the psychologist to make a revelation of religion. For this purpose we may place each factor, in the mental content of religious experience and its rationalization, in its proper place in the larger process of psychologic evolution. This in turn is related to the problem of mental hygiene, and emphasizes the subjective aspect of the maturing of our intellectual methods.¹ From a sociological interest we may also ask: Why are there any and so

many who are without "religious experience" and who yet adhere to and support institutionalized religion?

By the foregoing brief analysis of this one psychologic approach, we may already see the process by which religion becomes separated from its objectivization, in metaphysical explanatory theories, in morals, in ceremonials, etc. This brings us at once to this question: From the psychologic viewpoint, what is the differential essence of religion? In nature there are no definite or fixed lines which give us precise distinctions between differences in human nature or of mental health. It is all a matter of a little, more or less, of relative emotional emphasis or of psychologic maturity.

Long before our modern psychology, some mystics had protested that religion was not a matter of ceremony or creed, but a matter of "heart," that is, a matter of the inner "experience of God," or of the "Absolute" by whatever name it may be called. In vain has Jonathan Edwards told us that those who have doctrinal knowledge only are not engaged in the business of religion. Modern analytical psychologists have also come to making a distinction between our professional and the varied mental content which it symbolizes for different persons, even when professing the same creeds. Under such conditions, the word "religion" is coming to symbolize a group of common characteristics in certain psychologic experiences and mental states, which underlie and find self-explanation and rationalization in terms of varying metaphysical or theologic dogma, varying religious morals, and of pious ceremonial propitiations. So far then some modern psychologists have come to a partial agreement with the mystics. From the psychologic viewpoint these must be regarded as the most thoroughly religious persons, as they are the most devoted enthusiasts. The mystics are the only persons who can claim to testify for the existence of God upon the basis of personal experience with him. This element of agreement between mystics and psychologists consists in treating religion as a psychologic fact, something very distinct from the religionist's theoretical or theologic explanation of the religious psychologic data. Now I am only seeking to emphasize this difference, between religion as a psychologic experience, and the religionist's explanatory, supernatural or transcendent theory about that experience. Also, I will point out some consequences which flow from that difference. Hereinafter the word mysticism will be used in its broadest, non-sectarian sense, as including the subjective aspect of all sorts of religious experiences.

The psychologists are also coming to see that the psychological essence of mysticism is the vital core of all religion, however differently it may be labeled, or differently rationalized. Psychologists and religionists will inevitably have a very different interpretation and valuation of mysticism. In other words there are varying degrees of religiosity, from the most thorough mysticism up to its fading-out point. Differences in the rationalization of the mystic thrill are to be accounted for in terms of varying intensity of the religious experience, and differences in the experiential and cultural preparedness which individuals bring to their religious experience. For his special purpose a psychologist may be tempted to draw an arbitrary line and declare all those and only those to be *truly religious* who have to some degree experienced the "mystic" thrill, and have adopted a supernatural or transcendental interpretation thereof. In another sense we may consider all those persons who have the religious temperament and method as being religious. For the practical purposes of social study we know that there are many millions

¹ For a synopsis of what this means to me, see *Deterministic Presupposition in Psycho-analysis*. Open Court, Vol. 41: 96, February, 1927. Also: *Psychoanalytic Approach to Religious Experience*; and: *Agnostic Psychologist on Religious Problems*; both to be published soon.

of persons who are classed as being religious, and who support the mystical leaders and religious institutions, but who have never achieved any religious experience, or else have not interpreted it as being of superhuman or transcendental origin, nature, or importance. Often it is only such a supernaturalistic interpretation which differentiates these ecstatic experiences as mystical religion.²

In other words, among the adherents and supporters of institutionalized religion, and even among its opponents, one finds every degree of religiosity, from the most completely obsessing mysticism, through all degrees of approach thereto, as to psychologic need and psychologic preparedness, up to the fading out point, where there is a close approach to the complete absence of the essence of a religious temperament. There we have the thorough scientist who, if he is thorough, is very objective even about human emotions and so called religious experiences. Here we are farthest removed from the mystical core of religion. The evolutionist must think in terms of such relative degrees of religiosity, and must find an evolutionary standard for distinguishing, relating and revaluing them.

Up to the time when Andrew D. White published his *Warfare of Science with Theology*, the blurred vision of most people seems to have made them unconsciously assume the identity of religion and theology. Thomas Paine has said: "I believe in one God and no more." With all the vehemence of a religious moral crusader he defended his conception of God against the libels that had supposedly been committed by the authors of the Bible. Paine was simply the hyper-fervid, religious, protagonist of the unorthodox theology of deism. Because of his intense emotional conflict over religion, he was very blind upon the following aspects of the problem which he had chosen to deal with. (1) He did not see that in his own very intense, subjectively determined opposition to the Bible, when literally interpreted, he was using such of the extravagant emotionalism which had made orthodox religion such a deplorable social menace. (2) Paine did not see that in his own indignation, he was unconsciously manifesting the same inner conflict of impulses which underlie all morbid religiosity and its hysterical moral valuations. It thus appears that he was only seeking to discredit, in others, manifestations of psychologic imperatives very similar to those which were also working in himself. With better psychologic insight he would have seen that all super-rational sanctions and all *emotional valuations* of moral as well as theologic dogmas might better be outgrown, even including his own. (3) These two propositions already involve the third, which is his failure to distinguish between religion as a psychologic fact and Christian dogmas as the more or less immature attempt to declare or rationalize the subjective necessities of a badly disrupted emotional life. Many others have also failed in these particulars. From the viewpoint of a genetic psychologist, Paine appears as one who is merely using a special plea to rationalize an emotional aversion to theologic authoritarianism, without having outgrown the subjectivism of religiosity. Notwithstanding that, he was a very useful person, because he impaired the harmful efficiency of the church by dividing the supporters of the emotional method. THEODORE SCHROEDER.

(To be continued.)

² See articles listed in: *A Unique Heathen*, to which is now added—*Theodore Schroeder on the Erotogenesis of Religion: A Bibliography*. January, 1922. Also: *One Who is Different*, to which is now added *A Bibliography of Theodore Schroeder on the Psychology of Religion*, by Nancy E. Sankey-Jones Cos. Cob, Conn., 1927.

"The Word of the Lord."

How was it people in olden days got into the habit of saying, "The Lord spake unto me saying . . ." or "The Word of the Lord came unto . . ."?

It was the way these ancient people had of investing themselves with authority. If a man could tell the tribe something which he said came from the particular god they worshipped he was obviously listened to.

In ancient days somebody had to keep the tribe in order and enunciate laws that would—in his opinion—be for the good of the community, and that particular function was assumed by the priest. One can easily see how tempted the priest would be to make laws that suited his ideas or were of benefit to himself.

"The office of priest," says Professor Sayce, "precedes that of King. There were High Priests of Assyria before there was a King of Assyria."

The unfortunate thing is that though the people of olden times accepted the word of an ignorant priest as the Word of God, there are still people to-day who believe that what that priest said was really the word of an omnipotent God. And a little consideration would convince any man or woman of common sense that what was said came from a man and not from a god.

These are some of the things these ancients wrote:—
"An evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." (1 Samuel xvi. 14.)

"We have heard a rumour from the Lord." (Obadiah i 1.)

"Evil came down from the Lord." (Micah i. 12.)

These old writers one sees did not hesitate in their ignorance to attribute evil to the Lord.

The priests dragged in the message from the Lord to get what they wanted. God is made to dictate chapter after chapter relating to details about sacrifices and meat offerings and peace offerings, concerning meats, clean and unclean, the purification of women, scabs and leprosy, trimmings and decorations, et cetera, et cetera.

Chapters in Leviticus begin: "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying." This kind of writing is not found merely in Leviticus but also in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Whenever the priest wished to make the people do something he said "The Lord spake unto Moses saying"—or words to that effect.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses saying,

"Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people . . .

"So Moses made war on the Midianites.

"And the Lord's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and three score and fifteen . . .

"And the persons were sixteen thousand; of which the Lord's tribute was thirty and two persons." (Numbers xxxi.)

That is clearly the priest writing his crude, barbarous views, and yet he does not hesitate to drag God into this savage business. He actually pretends God took as tribute "thirty and two persons," *i.e.*, women. And we know for what purpose these ancient priests wanted women.

The extraordinary thing is that the Christians offer these writings as inspired by God himself, and yet none of the Christian churches pay the slightest heed to these laws concerning sacrifices and burnt offerings and the thousand and one other things which they say God dictated to Moses. The Christians actually pour scorn on Judaism, and yet pass it off as God's specially appointed religion.

Which forces one to the conclusion they themselves think little of the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord."

W.H.W.

A New Year Card.

THOUGH sere the leaves the winter tempests fling,
The swelling buds foretell another spring.
And if the love of Truth our pulses stirs,
More than a summer sun shall light the coming years.

E. HORACE JONES.

Acid Drops.

Rev. Canon R. J. Campbell, the man who, at the City Temple, gained the reputation of being an advanced and daring thinker—on the strength of some things that were commonplaces to Freethinkers about a hundred years before, wrote for the *Sunday Express* for December 22 an article on "What Christ was Like." Considering that no one knew what he looked like—even if he ever existed—that there is no picture of him extant, Mr. Campbell had a clear field. So he sets out with the opinion that Jesus must have been "an expression of that ideal blend of masculine strength with feminine gentleness that is the moral goal of the race." For sloppy silliness this could not be beaten by James Douglas, and it is good of the editor of the paper to admit a competitor so near the throne.

Of course, Mr. Campbell had some material to work on. For example, he went to Nazareth, which place probably had no existence 1900 years ago—and saw what the people looked like there. Then he had the magic handkerchief of St. Veronica, a piece of linen on which Jesus wiped his face and which retained the impress of his features (one would think that a picture so gained would have been just a little blurred). Mr. Campbell says, that no picture is now observable on the linen, it shows nothing but a blackened surface, but still, it must have been there or it could not have faded away. Then there is a letter sent by Publius Lentulus, which also describes what Christ looked like, but, as Mr. Campbell says, that is not genuine. Still, although a late forgery, it may serve. Next, Mr. Campbell picked up a marble bust—date unnamed—and when he showed this to his friends they immediately recognized this as a picture of Jesus. This evidence is very strong indeed, it is supported by the fact that, as Mr. Campbell says, "When we see a portrait of Christ in the stained glass window of a church, in the pages of a book, or among the masterpieces of a picture gallery we know at once whom it is meant to represent." If anyone doubts that the Churches and religious journalism open up careers for downright imbecility the *Sunday Express* article ought to secure conviction at once.

The *Methodist Times* must be gravelled for matter when it is reduced to printing ancient fables from religious tracts, as per the following sample:—

Couldn't Find the Song. A very clever German anatomist, who was also an Atheist, declared that he would not believe in man's soul because he had never discovered such an organ in the body. A friend remarked to him one day: "A cat listened with admiration to the song of a nightingale. Ambitious to learn the secret of that entrancing music, he caught the sweet singer and tore it to pieces; yet, to his surprise, he found no musical organ present."

But perhaps our Methodist editor desired merely to reveal to all and sundry the type of intelligence he caters for.

A writer says:—

Dickens, who understood the spirit of Christmas, and indeed the spirit of Christianity, far better than most men, made Scrooge mark his repentance by providing a Christmas dinner for Tiny Tim, and many Tiny Tims this Christmas will have Christmas dinners because Dickens wrote the *Christmas Carol*.

More truly it may be said that Dickens understood the spirit of the pagan Anglo-Saxons, who sang, drank, feasted, and distributed gifts to celebrate the festival of the returning sun god. In all probability, too, Dickens did much to introduce this spirit into homes which the Evangelical Revival had puritanized.

The League of Nations, says the Archbishop of Canterbury, is creating a power for peace more sure than

pacts and treaties. To this remark a footnote wouldn't be out of place. Pacts and treaties were the best that Christian thought was able to inspire during the past centuries. Now that the Christian religion no longer dominates men's minds, a trial is being given to the lofty ideal of the despised and execrated Freethinker, Thomas Paine. The whirligig of time brings its revenges. Still, for all that, Christian historians will give the credit, not to Thomas Paine, but to a pious American President. That is the Christian happy little way of doing things.

Says Lord Grey: "It is exceedingly difficult to be accurate." Still, most of us try to be. The person of whom accuracy is not expected is the Christian apologist. His religion it is which hampers him. The Christian creed is a conglomeration of conjectures. Love of accuracy is not bred in a mental atmosphere of if's and perhaps's.

The Principal of Whitlands Training College says that the most beautiful thing in life is to make a home, and that all the gifts of craftsmanship and art are needed to make a beautiful home. Quite true. And we suggest that of all the millions of pounds that have been spent in making cathedrals and churches beautiful had been diverted to producing beautiful homes for the masses, the nation would have been fitted culturally to a vast extent. It may be well that aesthetically-minded persons can have lovely exteriors and interiors of churches to admire. But it would be better if the craftsmanship and art lavished on these had been available for producing lovely homes for the worshippers. Philanthropists might take a tip from this, and erect such homes to-day.

According to Alderman Cluter Ede, M.P., "Some are born to be dukes and some born to be dustmen, but the trouble is that Nature so often delivers the packet to the wrong address. Education should prevent such errors." To put it in another way—God makes a silly muddle of things in the first instance, and man has, through education, to do what he can to rectify the errors of God. After this, the next procedure, for Christian persons, is to give thanks unto the Lord God for his bountiful wisdom.

At a recent spiritualistic seance a female spirit rattled windows, threw baskets in the air, and slammed doors. We presume that a sojourn in Elysium doesn't cure souls of bad temper.

The Lord Mayor of London would rather go without his breakfast than without the morning newspaper. On the other hand, thousands of wireless listeners would rather miss their breakfast than the morning service. At least, certain interested parties wish the B.B.C. to believe so. It wants a lot of believing.

Plymouth Free Churches have forwarded to the City Council a resolution that the Council shall open each of its monthly meetings with prayer, led by the Mayor's chaplain. Before acceding to this rather impudent request, the City Fathers might make a few enquiries and do some comparing. They should select half a dozen Councils that open with prayer, and six that do not. They might then enquire whether the first six are greatly superior in civic legislating ability to the other six. Unless prayer does produce a noticeable superiority, the Plymouth Council need not trouble about it. For what is the use of prayer if it doesn't make a difference in the desired direction?

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been telling the Royal Society how he began and ended his connexion with science. For one year he was taught science by

Lord Kelvin, and the following incident occurred:—

Whether it was his fault or mine, I was an undistinguished pupil. My memory still smarts at the humiliation he publicly inflicted upon me when, having done my best to answer a question which he addressed to me and given my answer, he said: "Surely a more foolish answer was never given." At that point I ended my scientific career.

And so he turned to the Church; but there is evidently something in the predestination theory. With an inclination for foolish answers, a man would naturally gravitate towards the Christian Church. And the greater the inclination the higher the prospects of advancement! So it would seem from the example before us.

Among pedestrians audaciously exercising their right to use the King's highway after dark, a few have taken to wearing a rear light or reflector. In regard to this, puzzlement has now arisen as to its spiritual significance. Some say it is altruistic—there is a desire to give careless drivers the pleasure of a more direct hit. Others affirm it is materialistic—there is revealed a deplorable lack of faith in the Providence of God. Perhaps some of our metaphysicians will be able to discover the correct solution.

The *Evening Standard* has opened its columns to a series of letters reporting experiences with ghosts, and, as might have been expected, there is no lack of material. We see no reason why, once having started, the series it should ever come to an end. Every village in the country could forward its contribution, and as no questions are asked, and everyone is allowed to report these visions as he or she pleases, the effect on uncritical and superstitious readers will be that with so much testimony it must be true. As Dean Inge pointed out recently, also in the *Evening Standard*, it is that kind of testimony which established the truth of the Angel of Mons, and every other superstition. At any rate one can imagine that Mr. Shaw Desmond, who regards a multiplication of the same kind of evidence as confirmation of its high evidential quality, will be pleased.

One piece of evidence is in favour of a ghostly visitant by a retired teacher of University College, and concerns the appearance of the ghost of Jeremy Bentham in University College, of which institution he was one of the creators. This gentleman did not see the ghost but he heard it, and it was recognized as the ghost of Brentham because of a dragging step that was peculiar to Jeremy Bentham. The explanation given is that Bentham revisited the place in which he was so greatly interested. One must not expect coherence in Spiritualism, but the explanation makes one wonder. Ordinarily the explanation given by Spiritualists for the spirits wearing a body is that it is done in order to get recognition. If the spirits appeared as they are in "Summerland," no one would recognize them. Hence they borrow material from the body of the "Mejum" and assume their earthly appearance. But in this case Bentham was not manifesting himself to anyone, and if he wished to walk over University College, he could do so, he could just float round. But apparently to walk about the College he had to adopt the same limping walk possessed on earth so that someone might hear him, and then bolt before this same someone could catch sight of him. It is very strange, and if only Spiritualists could maintain something like coherency for the briefest of periods one might feel more inclined to pay serious attention to their absurd and horrible belief in a future life. Poor Bentham!

By the way, the widow of the man who was murdered in his shop at Reading has written an impassioned letter to the papers, in which she says that someone must have seen the man who killed her husband, and she begs them to come forward and to say what they know. Now there does seem a good chance for the spirits to do something useful. Even if no earthly per-

son committed the murder, some spirit must have done so; in any case, when we can be told of what is going to happen, and of things that happened years and years ago, the discovery of a murderer seems a trifling affair. But never by any chance do the spirits help in an affair of this kind. Never do they give warning of a great flood, or an earthquake, or of anything really useful. Spirits appear to be the most useless things known. If possible they are of less use than parsons.

Howard College, Alabama, a Baptist Institution, has just dismissed Dr. Horace Calvin Day, a lecturer in biology, for his refusal to accept the story of a whale swallowing Jonah, and that two of every animal went into the ark with Noah. We agree with the directors of the College, that they have acted as genuine Christians ought to act. Christians who connive at a man teaching in the name of Christianity things that are directly at variance with that religion have no place in a Christian institution.

Mr. Martin Shaw says: "We should not desire to go to Heaven before our time." For our part, we think it is a symptom of imbecility for anyone to desire to go to the Christian Heaven at any time.

We gladly reprint the following from the *Stockport Advertiser*:—

In the matter of Sunday broadcasting, the B.B.C. apparently accept the dictation of three or four persons in London, supposed to be representative of the religious denominations in the country, who have been consulted on several occasions, and refuse to consent to an extension of the time at present allowed. These people—and why they should have been created dictators to the B.B.C. one cannot tell—fear the churches would be empty if the broadcast religious service were held from 6.30, the usual time for evening service at places of worship. It does not speak very well for churchgoers to suggest that they would stay away from St. Solomon's at the end of the street in order to listen to a service broadcast from the studio. Indeed, to take this view, is an insult to members of the various churches. The broadcast service can never replace the church service, for man is still a gregarious animal, and participation with others in a public act of worship, offers something which cannot adequately be communicated by earphones or loud speaker.

Then, of course, there are other means for the greater attraction of the church service, but one need only mention the social reason; and quite a worthy one, too, that at church, each week, people meet friends and acquaintances, many of whom they have probably not had the chance of seeing since the previous week. Again, is it not reasonable to suppose that if church members were too lazy to go to church when a broadcast service was provided, they would seize on this excuse whatever the time of the broadcast?

Viewed from another standpoint, the present state of affairs is positively ludicrous. Would the B.B.C. alter the time of their weekly symphony concert because it clashed with some other musical event? What would be said to the music-hall proprietor who complained that the vaudeville broadcasts would empty his theatres unless they were held at some other hour than that of his own performances. The B.B.C. would immediately tell him that it could not be helped if the broadcast fare was superior to his. The B.B.C. never tires of reminding us that the religious services are greatly appreciated by invalids. This being so, the earlier they are held the better; preferably in the morning, and not at an hour when all invalids ought to be asleep.

As is pointed out while our priest-ridden B.B.C. makes Sunday the duller day in the week, on the Continent the brightest broadcasting is done on Sunday. But, as the great, but now translated "Jix" would say, "God protect us from the Continental Sunday!" Anyway, public opinion has certainly moved since we began the protest against using the B.B.C. for religious propaganda. The *Freethinker* may be boycotted, but its influence tells.

Testimonial to Mr. Chapman Cohen.

ELEVENTH LIST OF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Amount previously acknowledged, £1,412 7s. 10d.; Friends at Buenos Ayres, £3; A. Black, J. Erwen, P. Logan and W. A. Keig (S. Africa), 10s.; Elizabeth Leclimere (Second Donation), 2s.; O. Underwood (Second Donation), 5s.; Harriett Parkinson, 2s.; C. & M. McCall, 10s.; Mr. & Mrs. T. J. Sutherland (per F.E.M.), 10s.; Anon, 6d.; W. T. Musty & Son, 10s.; Artist Friend, 10s.; Mathematicus, £5; H. A. Armstrong, £2; H. T., £2 2s.; K.J. (Poplar), 2s. 6d.; C. F. Simpson, £1 1s.; Sons of A.J.F., £2 2s.; J.W.F. (Birmingham), £5; John Finn, 5s.; E. H. Grout, 10s. 6d.; Horace Dawson, 10s.; H. Williams, 5s.; W. Robertson (Glasgow), 5s.; J. Griffiths, £1; G. Burgess, 2s.; W. J. Miles (N.S.W.), £5; R. D. Voss (S. Africa), £1 1s.; A. D. Corrick (Second Donation), £3; Hugh Close, Senr., 5s.; Hugh Close, Junr., 5s.; F. J. Shotton, £2 2s.; E. Lyons, 10s.; Liverpool N.S.S., per S.R.A.R., £1 1s.; Wm. J. Lamb (Second Donation), £3; J. Thackray, 2s.; C. J. Tacchi, £1; C. L. France, 5s.; R.B.F. & V.V.W., 10s.; "Grateful," £1; Wm. Graham, 2s. 6d.; Peter Dewar, 2s. 6d.; W. Widdup, 10s.; Old Age Pensioner No. 2, 5s.; Mrs. M. L. Heath, 10s.; John McKenzie, 10s.; S. London Branch N.S.S., per H. Preece, £1 10s.; H. M. S. Butler, 10s. 6d.; J. T. Entwistle, 2s. 6d.; E. J. & H. Pugh, 15s.; The Family of Robert Radford, 11s.; James Ferguson, per Andrew Millar, 2s. 6d.; R. W. Cracklow (Ceylon), £10; C. Clayton Dove, £10 10s.; Total to December 30, 1929, £1,483 14s. 10d.

The Fund is timed to close to-morrow (31st), so I am unable to give the total to that date. I am hoping for many more donations, and am satisfied several are already in care of the P.M.G. It is now 5 p.m. 30th, and the postman has just delivered a good one. I cannot refuse any more that come along—what would you think of me if I did?

The presentation will be made at the Annual Dinner on January 18, 1930. Secure your tickets early.

I hope the Editor will insert, in his next issue, some more extracts from letters I have received from good and wise people—not only from the East. I have heard living human angels sing glory to our leader!

W. J. W. EASTERBROOK,
Hon. Secretary,
"Hillfield," Burraton,
Saltash, Cornwall.
December 30, 1929.

Extracts from letters on page 13.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- H. BLACK.—Package received. Contents quite harmless. Thanks.
- J. MACKAY.—You do not give the date of your "Musical Evening," but as your notice is dated the 23rd December, it was probably intended for the 29th. Not received in time for use.
- T. W. HAUGHTON.—Glad to hear you are well, also to have your appreciation as to what was said about Russia and religion. It is always wise not to sacrifice a principle to gain some temporary advantage. Best of wishes for the New Year.
- L. CORINNA.—A Church that actively intrigues against a government should be treated on exactly the same level as any other organization that acted in a similar manner. Our objection lies against legislation aiming at the outlawing of a form of opinion, whether it be religion or Communism.
- A READER for whose letter we regret we are unable to find space, thinks we are unfair to the Rev. Leyton Richards and others in last week's views, because we have not mentioned that some Christians have always been opposed to war. We admit the truth of the statement, but plead "not guilty" to the charge of only opposing war in peace time. If this correspondent will turn back to the *Freethinker* of the war years, he will find it to be about the one paper in the country that declined to

father the lies which helped to land Europe in its present difficulties. Our "Views and Opinions" for 1914-15 read to-day as much like accounts of what has occurred as forecasts of what would happen. For the rest, the fact of some Christians opposing war hardly lifts the charge against the Christian Churches as a whole.

J. NEIL writes to say that the expression "Clotted bosh" was used by him some forty years ago as a quotation from Thomas Carlyle.

R. DODD.—Glad to know you think *Shakespeare and Other Literary Essays* are excellent. Those who make their first acquaintance with G. W. Foote in this way will be astonished and delighted to see the difference between the real man and the G. W. Foote of Christian tradition. In our judgment the essay on "Emerson" ranks as one of the finest written on that author. Your other criticism touches the spot. Mr. Cohen will deal with that matter so soon as he has time, but there is no great hurry.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 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.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (January 5) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the new Conway Hall. His subject will be "What Are We Fighting For?" The chair will be taken at 7.30, not 6.30 as announced in last week's issue. The entrance to the Hall is in Theobalds Road, alighting point from tram or bus, the corner of Theobalds Road, and Southampton Row. Admission is free, but there will be a few reserved seats at 1s. each.

Next Sunday (January 12) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Elysium Hall, High Street, Swansea, at 7 o'clock.

Arrangements for the Annual Dinner of the N.S.S., are now well in hand. This will take place, as announced, at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras. There will be the usual first-class musical entertainment, with brief speeches. Mr. Cohen will preside, and we are asked by the Secretary of the Committee concerned with the Testimonial to Mr. Cohen, to say that the presentation to the President will take place during the course of the evening. We have only to add that it will help matters considerably if those who desire tickets will make application as early as possible. This is very advisable in the case of those who desire a vegetable menu providing. The function is open to non-members of the N.S.S., and the price of the tickets is 8s. each. Visitors from the provinces who desire help in securing accommodation of the week-end should write stating their requirements to the Secretary, who will do what he can in the matter.

We beg to remind all members of the National Secular Society that their Annual Subscription falls due

on January 1. The minimum subscription is obviously a nominal one, and it is hoped that members will see to it that the income of the Society approaches nearer its expenditure. We hope to hear from the Secretary that his mail during January is a heavy and a lucrative one.

The present, by the way, is a good opportunity for those who have not yet joined the National Secular Society to do so. There must be some thousands of *Freethinker* readers who have not yet joined the Society, and for no other reason than that they haven't thought about it. Now we invite them to think about it—very seriously. They will find information about the Society on page fifteen of this issue.

The following lines were written by Thomas Hardy in 1924:—

Peace upon earth! was said. We sing it
And pay a million priests to sing it
After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison gas.

Mrs. Hardy has given the National Secular Society permission to use these lines, and they have been printed on one side of a post-card, leaving the other side free for correspondence. These can now be supplied by the Society at the price of sixpence post free for twenty-five copies. The lines are certainly pungent, and they should excite a very brisk demand. We have for some time had requests for cards of this kind, and if the demand proves there is a genuine desire to indulge in this kind of propaganda a series of cards may be provided.

A correspondent is good enough to inform us that the expression "clotted nonsense," attributed to Mr. Cohen was used in the *Sun* newspaper for April 2, 1839, in the course of a review of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*.

Mr. L. Corinna, who is English representative of the International Esperanto Freethought news service and Sennaciera Asocio Tutmonda (Proletariat Esperanto International) would like to receive news and notes from *Freethinker* readers in out of way parts of English speaking countries for translation and use in the world's Freethought press. Mr. John McCrashan, V. Jeans, J. Widdowson, Mr. N. Pillai, and others are especially requested to note. The news service is voluntary and is the link between the various Freethought organizations of the world. A list of translations will be given for the benefit of co-helpers in the *Freethinker* from January, 1930, with the editor's permission. News from Canada and India is especially desired. Address communications direct to: Esp—Servanto, L. Korinna, 30 Wheatley Road, Halifax, England.

A friend, whom we should like to see get what is wanted, requires a portrait of Dr. Aveling, either on loan or to purchase. If lent the portrait will be taken care of and returned. Some of our readers may be able to oblige.

Equalities.

Seemeth death now as large a thing as life:
Life being the dusk, through which man vaguely sees
A dawn of even more strenuous toil and strife,
A wider ocean for his argosies.

And time?—A rushing river flecked with spray,
Eagert o meet that all-embracing sea;
For even as night must merge in ampler day,
So time will mingle with eternity.

Thus littlest wave will join its ocean vast;
Thus e'er fresh leaves must sink to primal earth;
And thus for man—who else might stand aghast—
Both birth and death seem things of equal worth!

Nigeria,

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Neutral Monism and The New Materialism.

"THE stuff of which the world of our experience is compared is, in my belief, neither mind nor matter, but something more primitive than either."

Thus Bertrand Russell, introducing his philosophy of "neutral stuff" in a course of lectures given some years ago, and now embodied in a volume, *The Analysis of Mind*. This, with his *Analysis of Matter* (1927), represents the outcome of Russell's philosophic thought, which has been developed since the publication of his *Problems of Philosophy*.

To-day he holds a position somewhat midway between Materialism and Idealism. It is his purpose, he tells us, "to assimilate the physical world to the world of perceptions, and to assimilate the world of perceptions to the physical world. Physics must be interpreted in a way which tends towards Idealism, and perception in a way which tends towards Materialism." Mind and Matter are each a logical structure of some more fundamental "neutral stuff" (*Analysis of Matter*).

It would seem that Wm. James may have been his precursor. Experience, for James, had no "inner duplicity and the separation of it into consciousness and content comes, not by way of subtraction, but by way of addition." (*Essays in Radical Empiricism*). James's "fundamental stuff" was "pure experience"—raw material which could be arranged in different patterns by its inter-relations. Some of these relations would condition mental facts, others physical.

Russell's graphic illustration is of a photographic plate exposed on a clear night. The plate reflects the stars: therefore something must be happening between each star and the place where it is recorded. Likewise each star may be reflected on many different plates, in different places and at the same time. And so we can collect:—

- (a) The appearances of different stars in a given place, and
- (b) The appearances of each star in different places.

"Physics treats as a unit the whole system of appearances of a piece of matter, whereas psychology is interested in certain of these appearances themselves" (i.e., where they are recorded as perceptions) (*Analysis of Mind*).

It is of leading importance to notice that Russell does not demand that everything should refer to these "neutral particulars," and here we come to a vital point. It may be stated thus:—

(a) Some things belong solely to the physical world, e.g., "unexperienced" (unrecorded psychologically) happenings—before "mind" made its appearance, for instance, as in the primitive nebulae.

(b) Some things may belong solely to the mental world, and so may be subject to laws other than physical.

(c) But Sensations belong equally to psychology and physics, and refer directly to the "neutral stuff," which is a common ancestor of both.

And again, dealing with "causal laws," or laws of change, which have replaced the old notion of cause and effect, Russell offers the suggestion that there may be different kinds of "causal laws."

(a) Laws of Physics solely, e.g., gravity.

(b) Laws of Psychology solely e.g., laws of association.

(c) But Sensations again will be subject to both kinds.

Sensations (sensa) thus bring us very near to the

"neutral particular" which Russell wishes to investigate. And, having constructed his space containing both percipients and physical objects, he is able to give to sensations, or "percepts," a "two-fold location in this space, namely, that of the percipient and that of the physical objects. Keeping one half of this location fixed we obtain a view of the world from a given place; keeping the other half fixed, we obtain the views of a physical object from a given place [i.e., where the object is]. *The first of these IS a percipient, the second IS a physical object*" (Anal. Matters). (First italics mine.)

Bertrand Russell's aim is to "minimize the gulf" between mind and matter. He tells us there is nothing in the mental or the physical world to suggest that they are radically different.

Here he must join with the Materialist. And in fact it offers an interesting investigation to discover how far Russell's "Neutral Monism," as he terms it, is compatible with the New Materialism.

Russell, of course, rejects Materialism on account of the vital changes which our conception of Matter has undergone. We say deliberately "our conception" because it is not Matter that has changed at all. It is only our feelings about it which change. To lose its solidity is not to lose its reality, and we choose to take as our conception of Materialism that given by Mr. Chapman Cohen in *Materialism Re-stated*.

As it will be our purpose to show the possibility of reconciling, at least to some great extent, Neutral Monism and Mr. Cohen's Materialism, it behoves us to have in mind a statement of the latter philosophy. (We must solicit the patience of many readers for a mere reiteration of what has been put so excellently in *Materialism Re-stated* but it is our opinion that the *Freethinker*, as a propagandist paper, might with advantage state weekly some of the main tenets of, say, Atheism, for the consideration of new readers). A very brief statement will suffice.

- i. Materialism stands as the challenge of Naturalism to Supernaturalism.
- ii. It endorses, and is practically synonymous with, the principle of Determinism.
- iii. Materialism does not depend on any particular conception of Matter.

Taking these points in order, and comparing them with the standpoint of Bertrand Russell, we remark that:—

i. Bertrand Russell, like Mr. Chapman Cohen, does not know of any objective reality to which the ideas of God and the supernatural will correspond. In plain words, they are both avowed Atheists.

ii. They are both Determinists. Compare, for instance, the views given in *Determinism or Free Will* with these selections from Russell.

"The sense of freedom is only a sense that we can choose what we please of a number of alternatives; it does not show us that there is no causal connexion between what we please to choose and our previous history" (our knowledge of the External World).

"The apparent indefiniteness of the future . . . is merely a result of our ignorance" (ibid).

"It is obvious that there is some degree of correlation between brain and mind, and it is impossible to say how complete it may be" (ibid.)

iii. Here we come to the point of (apparent) divergence. Whereas the New Materialism is not tied down by any particular definition of matter. Neutral Monism tries to fix it as a descendant of a more fundamental stuff, which is at the same time an ancestor of mind. We may examine a little more closely Russell's views of Mind and Matter.

G. H. TAYLOR.

War Memories.

THE latest journalistic fashion is the serving up of anecdotes of the late War. Mine would scarcely find a place in the daily, Sunday or weekly papers, whose readers are being encouraged to exercise their powers of recollection and invention in the good cause of emphasizing the fortitude and good-humour of individuals who took part in the silly business. But it is time some relief was offered from the never-ending yarns of Cockney cheerfulness, Public School heroism and Parsonic sympathy.

"What is your religion?" the officer at the recruiting station in Gray's Inn Road asked me when I enlisted. "I haven't got one, sir," I replied. "What do you mean? Are you a Jew?" he queried intelligently. "I mean that I have no religious belief; and I am not a Jew," I explained. "Then I'll put you down C. of E.; that's nearest"—a typically military piece of logic!

At the first Church Parade I asked my platoon officer for permission to be excused attending the service. He sent me off parade for that morning, and promised to get a ruling from the Company Officer. I heard no more about it, so continued to take it for granted that I could absent myself from the religious parades. For this appalling irregularity I received a sentence of "four days C.B. for absenting himself from Divine Service *without permission*." My Company Commander then gave proof of that excellent judgment and tolerance that have probably played a big part in fitting him to represent a Welsh constituency in Parliament to-day; he decided that in future I must attend the parades and march to church, where I could remain outside until the service was over every Sunday!

Every soldier going overseas was provided with an Identification Disc bearing his name, number, rank, regiment and religion. In my case, the last caused argument as usual. The man at the Regimental Stores refused to leave space blank and refused to stamp it "Atheist." He compromised by agreeing to stamp it with the word "None," hoping, he said, that in the event of my death it might be taken for "None," in which case I should be certain of a Christian burial by one or other of the Nonconformist bodies.

Early in 1915 my Brigade was getting its first experience at Givenchy of German rifle-grenades. The way they were continually dropping right into our trenches and exploding was perfectly nerve-shattering. After some hours of it, three men in a trench I visited started praying. They were quite beside themselves with terror; tears were running down their cheeks as they grovelled in the mud; and I heard them telling God quite a number of unmentionable things about the Germans and their parents. God answered their prayers by getting their officer to send them back into safety. I supposed the two dead men in that trench had put off praying until it was too late.

Another case of prayer answered was when a man in my platoon, quite worn out by the weight of his rifle and pack, after several hours of marching over the rocky Palestine hills, cried out, "Oh, God! Roll on death." He was the first man killed when we went into action the following morning.

Following the taking of one of the hills in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, I was put in charge of a small party to bury the dead. From early morning till late in the evening we collected bodies—heavy, distorted, mutilated bodies covered with filth—and carried them to one spot where we dug the best grave we could in the stony surface of the hillside. Half-way through the day, the

Padre came on the scene, expressed mild displeasure at our slowness, and disappeared for a few hours. Later he went through the pockets of the dead for their belongings, and finally did his own job of praying for their souls. This done, he departed for a good well-earned dinner in the Officers' Mess, leaving to the Atheist N.C.O. and his men the mere filling in of the grave.

In 1918 I became a cadet at a training school for officers, giving my usual answer to the question about my religion when arriving. A few days later the Commanding Officer sent for me and told me I was the only man of thousands who had passed through his hands who had ever made a declaration of the kind. I told him that I had already met six other cadets in the school who had expressed a complete disbelief in all religions to me; and I asked him whether he would not prefer them to say this openly. Instead of giving me an answer, he told me that he had always found it helpful to pray and feel that God was there to lift some of the responsibility of leadership from his shoulders. I could only answer that I was different from him, that praying was entirely foreign to my nature and seemed entirely useless, and that I had never found the need of a God to relieve me of previous responsibilities and hoped it would not occur when I became an officer. Considering his type, he took it all in very good part, and I hope it did him good.

Enough of such reminiscences! I would not have set them down had I not been sickened by the flood of sentimental slush recently outpoured in the Press. This I can state: that I never saw any human qualities displayed in war that are not being exercised just as plainly in peace to those who look for them. Perhaps it is because there was so much brutality, cowardice and selfishness rampant during the years of war that so much emphasis is laid on cases of humanity, courage and unselfishness in the stories now being published. But it is curious to notice the entire omission of all reference to intellectual virtues in them.

P. VICTOR MORRIS.

The Book Shop.

A READER who has taken upon himself the task of searching for the best and finest in the written word will never be short of something to do. On the one hand, there is the simple, silly—this is found in newspapers, and on the other, there is that kind of notice of a book slipping into the review very often by accident. *The Times Literary Supplement* had a notice of a book, *The Rambling Sailor*, and with extreme daring we are told, that Charlotte Mew, the writer derived no comfort from the glittering hereafter. Oh dear, Oh dear—here is a person who is not interested in the precious gee-gaws of those who flourish the hang-man's whip; this is how a poet expresses herself:—

"The splendour of that everlasting glare,
The clamour of that everlasting song.
And if for anything we greatly long,
It is for some remote and quiet stair
Which winds to silence and a space of sleep
To sound for waking and for dreams too deep."

These lines have the power of independence, and contain that little bit of iron that somehow adds dignity to human life. Lolli-pops for leading a decent life! away with such things. The serpent of Rewards and Punishment has a lot to answer for, but here is one who sends him packing. The publishers are "The Poetry Bookshop." 13s. 6d. net.

Mr. John Drinkwater makes a confession in *Everyman*. In an article, "A Writer on Reading," he says: "I am now sure that there comes a moment, and not very late in life, when the necessity for keeping abreast of what is called current literature begins to be less

and less apparent." A whimsical thought occurred to me as I sat watching the flames on their journey up the chimney. Suppose one could stand in the middle of a plough-field and be examined in one's real knowledge—to draw, as it were, on the memory only! The answers would be interesting. Mr. Drinkwater has, so he writes, referred to his memory only, and he tells what has really remained in his mind after thirty-four years of reading. Only the giants are recalled. Writers must live, and if artists are to be encouraged in the manner suggested by Mr. G. B. Shaw—no picture to be sold over £5, then our young genius of to-day should be encouraged, for the well of thought and ideas is never dry. A good ground work in the classics is an asset; time has to be spent with the noble thoughts of the illustrious great, but it is a good investment and gives one "a nose for a good book." It is curious, but where I find myself in agreement with Mr. Drinkwater on poetry and prose, I cannot assent to the same judgment when applied to books on philosophy and science.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, from my own experience, wears well. He can be flung to the top of the case when a friend enters the room holding so many silent companions, and taken down again when the evening is welcomed in an arm chair.

I am going to allow Holmes to help me to write this paragraph. In the *Poet at the Breakfast Table* he is in a reminiscent mood, and then he gradually glides into the following intimacy: "... and it always seems to me when I am most truly myself, I come nearest to them and am surest of being listened to by the brothers and sisters of the larger family into which I was born so long ago. I have often feared they might be tired of me and what I tell them. But then, perhaps, would come a letter from some quiet body in some out-of-the-way place, which showed me that I had said something which another had often felt but never said, or told the secret of another's heart in unburdening my own. Such evidences that one is in the highway of human experience and feeling lighten the footsteps wonderfully. So it is that one is encouraged to go on writing as long as the world has anything that interests him, for he never knows how many of his fellow-beings he may please or profit, and in how many places his name will be spoken as that of a friend." My distant friend has written to me and filled me up with questions that prove him to be in close companionship with nearly all the best beacon-lights in history. Gray, Shelley, Shakespeare, Burns, Cervantes, Omar Khayam, Kipling, Ruskin, Goldsmith, George Eliot—one cannot touch these without coming in contact with others. He has found a treasure that I hasten to share—a sonnet by Celia Hanson Bay:—

"Illimitable Blue. Ah, what a day!
Beneath a limestone crag I lie at ease
Among the pansies, where the murmuring bees
Invite repose. The lark's sweet roundelay
Shrills up, and dies in space; from far away
The cuckoo's note is borne upon a breeze
That stirs the buttercups; and in the trees
There sounds the rush of spray that breaks in waves.

Most blessed calm! Would God that men would cease
Their troubled ravings and accept the joy
Of earth florescent, and the fragrant air
Like happy children; their sad hearts at peace;
Forgetting all, save that flowers employ
Their vagrant fingers, and that Earth is fair."

To the invocation in the ninth line, one may give easy acquiescence, and then admit that this little gem expresses a longing that is neither Utopian or unreasonable. So many distractions haunt the path of life, so many undesirable things are made to appear desirable... it is not to be wondered at that a devil's dance by the newspapers, all without a sense of responsibility, claim countless victims. If I had my wish granted after giving the Christmas pudding a stir, it would be, that no one should receive anything worse in their letters than the lines above.

Messrs J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., in *The Bookmark*, 3d. quarterly, for September, cover a nice selection of

books. In the editorial notes, one is told that the author of the Hymn of Hate is trying hard to eat his words, and that two things are common to all of the best of the recent war books; one, an intense admiration of the behaviour of the individual under terrible physical and mental strain, and the other, an equally intense disgust at the failure of a social scheme which made such conditions possible. The writer should pluck up a little more courage and find out the principle authors of the social scheme. We had abundant M.P.'s in the House of Commons who did not affirm on taking their seats, all our public men had a double dose of religion during the recruiting days, parsons were well represented on various Councils, the Press was screwed up to the top note of religious fervour, and the sum total of all their activities was like throwing petrol on a fire to put it out. If the writer of the notes dares not say this, we will say it for him. And at one period of the war, I remember a captain in the infantry coming down into our dug-out swearing and crying at the same time. The next — war that he would take part in would be one in which only bladders on the ends of sticks would be used. He had, in front of Aveluy Wood, at half past four in the morning, just picked his corporal up in four parts. A booby trap had played its part in the insanity of war—that was the other side of the picture—possibly all along the front on both sides.

Richard Rees, in the *New Adelphi*, has an article entitled, "Second Thoughts About the War," and in the course of noticing such novels as the "Death of a Hero," by Richard Aldington, and plays like, "The Journey's End," he states, "The war was *not* a sudden thunderbolt hurled into a well-ordered society; it was the outcome of a bad system, based upon superstitions, morality and unsound economics. "Superstitious morality" is a queer phrase—it is a blurred picture, capable of being interpreted in many ways. Now that Mr. John Middleton Murry has burned his theological boats, it may be that in time a phrase like the one above, in the *New Adelphi*, will be given its proper name—"Christian Morality." This is a peculiar thing: it is hot and cold, black and white, and as unstable as water. It has fear in the background, reward in the future, and fits anything in the present. And no risen animal can find anything useful in it as a guide in the greatest adventure of all—the voyage of life.

C-DE-B.

The Chapman Cohen Testimonial.

I GIVE herewith the last batch of extracts from letters received. These letters have been read by me with the greatest appreciation, and I feel sure must have been read with great pleasure by others. They do at least enable readers of the *Freethinker* to, in a way, express their opinions on subjects of common interest.

Dr. Farmer says: "Circumstances have compelled me to offer this mite, which is out of all proportion to my admiration for my good friend Cohen in his work for Freethought. Chapman Cohen stands head and shoulders above any other in our movement as a clear and forceful thinker and advocate. One has only to take his method of approach in the question of *Free Will and Determinism*. From time immemorial most writers have been at pains to make this a difficult subject, either because they have been unable to rid themselves of 'inessentials,' or because it paid them better to avoid being exoterical. Cohen has made the subject as palpable as the noon-day sun."

W. K. Huth sends: "A small return for the many hours of pleasure and instruction derived from many years' acquaintance with the *Freethinker* and its contributors."

Frank Hill writes: "I also wish to endorse all the comments and good wishes which have already appeared, with my appreciation."

E. Bott writes: "I am not an educated man, and find some difficulty in expressing my sentiments accurately and concisely; but the enormous benefit I have received, from Mr. Cohen's articles and from

the *Freethinker* generally, on my outlook on life cannot possibly be represented by so small a contribution."

[Friend! We are a big orchestra.]

Friends at Buenos Aires wish to say, "that the amount we send must not be taken as the measure of our appreciation of Mr. Cohen's work, or of the pleasure we have in sending it."

W. A. Keig and his friends (S.A.) say: "Thanks for the invitation."

Elizabeth Lechmere, sending her second donation, wishes "it were a hundred times more, but it is sent with a big wish for his health to carry on his wonderful work."

Will O. Underwood kindly send full address?

Harriet Parkinson sends "a wee token of my esteem for one of the best."

C. & M. McCall say "May he long be our *Leader and Guide*."

Another old Derby Freethinker, W. J. Musty (6 Church Street) is reminiscent. He had the honour of introduction to Messrs. Bradlaugh, Foote and Cohen, and he hopes to shake hands again with the latter. He says: "Oh! the jolly times we had in the old days—most at Macquinness's . . . There was then a fine cluster of intellectual old gents . . . these old ones have passed—but not from my memory. Wishing Mr. Cohen long life—with many years of fight."

Again I say, why not revive the Derby Branch? The soil that will grow Pioneers should be cultivated! Woe be to those who neglect it! The seed raised from such a fertile bed should be carefully saved and nourished to make of Mother Earth a joyful garden!

W.J.W.E.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

RUSSIA AND RELIGION.

SIR,—In your issue of December 22 Mr. Chapman Cohen, criticizing the Russian attitude towards religion, says: "As a Freethinker I object even more strongly against persecution mistakenly designed to help Freethought than I do against persecution designed to help religion." Unfortunately, "persecution" is a question-begging epithet, and merely means conduct which the speaker does not like. I once heard Bradlaugh speak, and his speech was entirely devoted to denouncing persecution. The persecution he denounced, however, was the proposed enactment of a legal eight-hour day. He maintained that every man had an absolute right to work ten, twelve, or any number of hours, and that it was persecution to prevent him. To-day there are few Freethinkers who would agree with Bradlaugh on that point.

I have myself been accused of persecution, because I believe that parents should be legally prohibited from teaching their children the doctrine of hell-fire. The same persons, however, would applaud anyone who said that a father should not be allowed to beat his children savagely even if he did it in obedience to the Book of Proverbs. To prohibit physical cruelty is called humanity; to prohibit mental cruelty is called persecution. That is hopeless hairsplitting. Practical lawyers have long since discovered, in the divorce court and elsewhere, that it is impossible to draw a line between physical and mental cruelty.

Those who object to interference between parents and children in religion are fighting the last round in a losing battle. A hundred years ago it was universally believed that a father had a right to thrash his child unmercifully, to keep him from school, and to apprentice him to a chimney-sweep at the age of seven. The Factory and Education Acts have wiped out these superstitions. Those who now say that a parent has a right to teach his children whatever religion he likes, are making a last stand for the slavery of children, and calling it Freethought.

R. B. KERR.

MATERIALISM.

SIR,—Unless someone makes a protest, the word Materialism is likely to go the same road as the word Atheist. Apparently we are to give over the use of the word to suit certain people who do not like it. Atheist has been allowed to degenerate, until it is now a term of contempt. Seldom or never do we see the word Atheist used. Very occasionally a withering reference to Bradlaugh the Atheist. We have allowed G. W. Foote, the Atheist, to sink into oblivion. Is the same fate to follow for the present Editor of the *Freethinker*? Is Bradlaugh the Atheist, to be bracketed with Cohen the Materialist, as if these were the only ones of their kind? To my mind the more people dislike the term, the more we should press it. After all, it denotes what we mean, so why give way? To my mind the more people like Professor Eddington dislike the term, the more we should press it. The position is clear enough, the Churches are perishing through the indifference of the masses. So far this has left the business and materialistic side of the religious influence untouched. Witness the House of Lords, Education, Broadcasting and the Blasphemy Laws. Active Freethought can alone attack all this. Calling good Atheists Agnostics has not helped. No more will the admission that Materialism is finished, and must be replaced with a more high-sounding word help. Let us stick to our simple words. Perhaps some day even Atheist will be rescued from its present position. W.

ERRATA.

SIR,—Owing to my not seeing a proof, there are several errors in my article "How to Do It," in your issue for December 29; the two more important are noted herewith: Page 822, column 1, line 5: *Fleet Street* should be *Fleet*. Page 822, column 2, line 29: *wing-factory* should be *mug-factory*.

With congratulation upon the excellence of our paper, and wishing you the best New Year that the *Freethinker* has ever had. VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

Obituary.

MRS. CAROLINE NEATE.

WITH the deepest regret we have to record the death of Caroline Neate, at the age of sixty-three, wife of James Neate, one of the oldest London members of the National Secular Society. Mrs. Neate has been a Freethinker from her earliest girlhood, and had taken a very keen interest in many advanced movements. Her health had been very unsatisfactory for some considerable time, and she succumbed to a heart attack at midnight on December 24. This was not unexpected to Mrs. Neate herself, as she had discussed with Mr. Cohen its likelihood, and was quite prepared for the end. She was a woman of strong opinions, with a keen sense of justice to those around her. The Society had no warmer or more loyal friend.

Her funeral took place at Bow Cemetery, in which place rests her only son. As an old friend of both Mr. and Mrs. Neate, Mr. Cohen delivered a brief address before a number of mourners. Mr. R. H. Rosetti attended as representing the Executive of the N.S.S.

Society News.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

QUITE a large audience assembled at 361 Brixton Road, on Sunday last, to hear the local Secretary's address on "Luther and Erasmus," and on the whole, the lecture was very well received.

Both Luther and Erasmus have met with severe condemnation at the hands of critics; Luther on account of his tyrannical attitude towards the peasants on the occasion of their revolt, and Erasmus for his apparent lack of spirit; but as was pointed out, Luther's complete acceptance of the Gospels forced him to oppose the rebel against civil authority, and Erasmus's doctrine of moderation can be well understood when it is remembered that the Church invariably defended herself with the aid of the stake rather than by argument. That

both Luther and Erasmus played a great part in combating the grosser superstitions of the Church is obvious; as to which played the wiser part is a question not easy of solution.

Branch members are requested to note that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday next, January 5, and their attendance is earnestly invited. A.H.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C., entrance Theobald's Road): 7.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, Editor of the *Freethinker* and President of the National Secular Society, will lecture on "What are We Fighting For?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (361 Brixton Road, near Gresham Road): 7.30, Annual General Meeting—Branch members only.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Mr. Robert Arch—"John Galsworthy."

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Messrs. Charles Tuson and James Hart; 3.15, Messrs. E. Betts and C. E. Wood;

Freethought meetings every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and J. Hart; every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* may be obtained during our meetings outside the Park Gates, Bayswater Road.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Top Room, Royal Buildings, 18 Colquitt Street): 7.30, Mr. R. Farricker (Liverpool), Secretary, Pembroke Baptist Chapel—"Who Was Jesus Christ?"

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, A Door, City Hall, Albion Street): Dr. M. Marwick will speak upon Birth Control on January 12, at 6.30.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. Brighton will lecture on Friday evening at 7.0 in Bigg Market (weather permitting).

OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Darnley Glen, meet at Barrhead Centre at 11.30 prompt.

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

PORTRAITS OF GREAT FREETHINKERS.—A number of prints of great Freethinkers, Scientists and others for sale. Write or call—H. TAYLOR, 8 Rutland Road, Ilford, Essex.

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based
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