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Views and Opinions.

Is Free Opinion Worth While?

In the *Freethinker* for January 5, Mr. R. B. Kerr offered a protest against my objection to the forcible suppression of opinion. He objected, to begin with, that persecution was a question-begging word and means merely conduct which the speaker does not like. That might be what the word means with some speakers, but emphatically that is not what I mean when I use the expression. There are things some people do which I dislike exceedingly, and there are some opinions they hold that I detest; but I should still maintain the right of these people to do or to say them, and would protect their right of action and speech. Mr. Kerr also uses as an illustration of his position the fact that he has been denounced because he believes that parents should be prohibited by law from teaching their children the belief in hell-fire, and argues that there is the same ground for prohibiting mental cruelty as there is for prohibiting physical cruelty; he adds that Freethinkers who say that a parent has the right to teach his children whatever religion he pleases, are making a last stand for the slavery of children and calling it Freethought. He also reminds me that it is impossible to draw a line between physical and mental cruelty. With this last point I am in substantial agreement, I would even add that the worst forms of cruelty are not physical. Many a man who periodically gives his wife a thrashing and so gains the reputation of a brutal wife-beater, is a less brutal husband than one who never lifts his hand to her, but manages to make every hour of her life a veritable hell upon earth, and is known abroad as a "good" husband.

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Poisonous Opinions.

Mr. Kerr's position—unless he is restricting his remarks to the simple question of teaching children hell-fire—was put many years ago by the late Sir

Leslie Stephen in an essay on *Poisonous Opinions*. Cromwell, he says, quoting Carlyle, held Romanism to be morally poisonous, therefore Cromwell did not tolerate it. One might add that Romanists held Cromwell's opinions to be "morally poisonous," therefore they did not tolerate him. This really raises the whole question of toleration, and although it has been often enough dealt with, it is, in view of much that is happening in the world, worth dealing with. It is, indeed, only the old questions that are eternally fresh; new ones are apt to soon grow stale, wearisome, and disappear. And in more than one quarter to-day one meets with the outspoken opinion that the right to suppress opinions held to be "morally poisonous" is a question of having enough power to make the attempt. Facists, and Communists, Joynson-Hicks and the Pope, are apparently in agreement on this head. But it is strange to have such a theory argued in the name of Freethought.

Let me say that I have no *a priori* reason against the forcible suppression of "morally poisonous" opinions. Man is no more born with a Bill of Rights in his hands conferring freedom of speech, than he is born with a Charter of Freedom in his mouth conferring liberty of action. Both, when they exist, and in the degree to which they exist are acquisitions, created by the Society to which he belongs. I, therefore, agree that if I were quite certain that my own opinions admitted of no mistake, and if it were possible to eliminate for ever every contrary opinion, I would raise no reasonable objection to suppressing a poisonous opinion as we now suppress disease germs. But the man with an opposite opinion may be equally convinced of *his* accuracy, and that would resolve itself into a struggle for physical supremacy, with social life a scene of continuous violence exerted by different sides. Social philosophy has reached the point of a principle of toleration as the only escape from this undesirable situation.

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Mental Cruelty.

The identification of restraint from physical cruelty with restraint from the expression of opinions which may in the judgment of some do grievous wrong to those who come under their influence is plausible, but misleading. In the first place, with even physical injury there is a border line at which it is difficult to draw the line. Physical violence, may go all the way from a push which inflicts no bodily injury at all, to an act of violence that may dislocate a man's jaw. And with mental injury there is the same phenomenon. A man who terrified his child by manufacturing ghosts and ghostly noises to the point of injuring its health, might, I think, be deprived of the custody of the child by a court order; and between that and the point at which whether harm is done is a matter of opinion only, we have a series of gradations of which it is



impossible to say precisely when the practice becomes positively criminal.

Secondly, when one talks of suppressing an opinion the assumption appears to be made that an opinion is a definite thing that has not merely a name, but also a "local habitation," and that one can therefore suppress it as one could pull down a house found to be a centre of infection. But opinion has no local habitation. It may exist in the minds of some individuals with greater definiteness than it does in the minds of others, but between the most orthodox and the most unorthodox of opinions regarding the same subject, there exists degrees of differences which make it quite impossible to say where we are to draw the line. With regard to the doctrine of hell. Suppose we take a case in which a parent is seriously convinced that his child is doomed to hell, unless he believes in the whole body of Roman Catholic teaching. Does Mr. Kerr seriously believe that *all* parents will refrain from teaching their children to believe in hell on the authority of a court order? The careless parent might; the good and courageous parent certainly would not. And there are the border line cases, made up of those who would obey the order in the word, but disobey it in the spirit. Clearly, in this case, we should be penalizing the more conscientious characters and encouraging the carelessness of character where the concern for the welfare of children is least. Or suppose we do decide that no teaching of hell shall be permitted, are we to say that only the extreme Catholic form of it is to be prohibited, or are we to extend the prohibition to the milder form of future punishment current in more liberal religious circles? Are we even to prohibit the teaching of a future life altogether, since that clearly implies some kind of punishment or reward? Surely the example of the Roman Church is enough to teach us that once we begin to make certain opinions the subject of punishment or prohibition, there is no place at which we can logically draw the line. Society was driven to toleration, not because it had any innate predilection for it, or started with a first principle of toleration, but because experience drove home the lesson that in its absence social life became impossible.

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#### Evolution and Ideas.

I do not want here to dwell upon the obvious considerations that in using force against opinion we do not change opinions, we merely manufacture hypocrites; or that the repetition of formulæ is not an expression of intellectual conviction, and can therefore be of little mental value to anyone. I desire to draw special attention to another consideration that is usually overlooked. Whatever theory of evolution one may hold, the fundamental importance of variation is unquestionable. The starting point of a new variety must be a departure from the normal type. Breeders know this quite well, and depend upon the variations that occur for a starting point for a new variety. Variation is thus the key-note of animal progress. Uniformity of structure spells stagnation.

But mental progress, social development comes under precisely the same rule. A new idea is as much a "sport" in the mental world as a variation is in the animal one. If there had existed in animal society some mechanism which automatically destroyed any variation from the normal type so soon as it showed itself, the human race would never have existed. And if in some way it had got a start, but there had existed some strong governing authority, able and willing to prevent any departure from established opinions progress would have been an impossibility. Fortunately it has never been possible for any Government or for any Church to altogether

suppress variation in opinion. The inevitable change in environmental conditions, contact with other peoples with whom different ideas are current sets up an intellectual ferment that leads to a questioning of accepted opinion. Stagnation in the mental life of a people is always a comparative term, the stagnation is never complete. The principle of variation, with the consequent struggle for existence is as true of the world of ideas as it is of the world of organic forms.

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#### The Failure of Intolerance.

Inevitably there are ideas that I consider unsound, dangerous, and which I seek to destroy. It is also true that my own ideas are held by some to be unsound, dangerous, and which they also seek to destroy. But to hold that, therefore, I am justified in taking advantage of any political accident, or any chance usurpation of power to forcibly suppress all ideas to which I am opposed is not merely to mistake the part that opposing ideas play in social development, it is to turn Society into warring camps, in which the desire to obtain truth is swamped in the desire to obtain mastery in terms of mere physical force. The plea that certain opinions were wrong, dangerous, and destructive of individual and social well-being has been the justification of nearly every persecution the world has seen. And while many attempts to suppress an opinion has met with a considerable measure of success, I cannot recall one that has been completely and permanently successful. That, perhaps, is the final condemnation of the attempt forcibly to prevent the expression of opinion. It always fails of achieving complete success, and in so failing inevitably achieves greater injuries than the benefits it is assumed to confer. It succeeds in making hypocrites where sincerity should obtain; it converts earnestness into fanaticism, and gives blind passion the status of a principle; it makes men the mouthers of verbal formulæ, and blinds them to the part that intelligent conceptions should play in a civilized social life.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### The Cry of a Curate.

"An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry."

Tennyson.

"The bulk of things I am doing as a curate have very little value."—Rev. A. Lee, Curate of Kew.

SOME short time ago the Rev. Austin Lee, Curate of Kew, startled Suburban Church circles by asking the momentous question: "Should a clergyman tell the truth?" As he had then been ordained less than a year, this was an ominous beginning. His congregation began to fear the worst. Either the young "pastor and master" would end by being a Suburban Savonarola, or he would listen to the strains of "The Soldier's Farewell," intoned by his superiors.

The worst has happened, and Mr. Lee has resigned. Not, mark you, because he was not allowed to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Decidedly not! He has resigned for a most materialistic and unspiritual reason. Forgetful of the ravens that are said to have fed the Old Testament prophet, Mr. Lee wants more cash, and he has gone out into a wicked world to seek it. His "swansong" on leaving the Christian ministry is worth more attention than most sermons.

Brother Lee is dissatisfied with an income of £5 to £6 a week, plus a "Whitsuntide offering." He is



still further dissatisfied because he officiated at weddings and funerals and his superior took the fees. This, he considers, is not sufficient remuneration for a guide who conducts people to such a beautiful place as heaven. Presumably, he wants similar fees to those obtained by couriers who conduct travellers to the sunny Riviera, and other holiday resorts. Perhaps he sighs for a sky-blue uniform as worn by alleged Hungarian bandmasters, with yards of gold lace on it, and the admiration of the other sex.

To be quite fair, it must be galling to a simple soul-saver to see men of not superior ability living in palaces, legislating in the House of Lords, and drawing incomes, varying from the £2,000 of the ordinary bishop to the £15,000 of the Archbishop of Canterbury. There is a vast difference between the curate's £5 weekly, and the £300 weekly of the Archbishop, although both curate and Archbishop manage to preach the blessings of poverty.

Indeed, if the Bishop of London is to be believed, the woes of the rich are really harder to bear than the trials of the poor. Once he explained, in full-throated tones, to an astonished congregation that, after drawing his episcopal salary of £10,000, annually, for fifteen years, he was £2,000 on the wrong side of the ledger, and actually worse off than when he started the awful experience of following in the footsteps of the Carpenter of Nazareth. On such fearsome bookkeeping it is abundantly clear that had his lordship's salary equalled that of His Grace of Canterbury, he must have finished his career "stonybroke" on a seat on the Embankment, or else have been dragged out of the Thames by a boat-hook in the seat of his trousers and deposited in a mortuary.

A curate with an income of £5 to £6 weekly may not be a millionaire, but neither is he starving. If this sum represents "starvation," he should know that millions of his fellow-countrymen are very much nearer the poverty line, and without any hope of a "Whitsuntide offering." Even a young doctor, with ten times the knowledge of a curate, has to face the world with empty pockets, unless his relations are sufficiently wealthy to buy a practice for him. As for the average man, the statistics of the State Insurance Departments, show beyond cavil and dispute that the curate's £5 to £6 weekly is far above the income of the ordinary citizen, male or female.

There are curates and others. The clergy of the State Church number nearly 20,000, and anyone who cares to consult Crockford's *Clerical Directory* can see that the average "reverend" enjoys a very comfortable existence. In addition to his "stipend," which is not niggardly, he lives in a decent house, often nicer than most of his neighbours. He has just as much, or as little, work as he likes to do. If he chooses to spend three-fourths of each day reading or visiting, there is no one to say him nay. He can count on dinner invitations and other hospitality all the year round, which is no small saving in household expenses. And he can take a lengthy holiday in August of each year. It was really unwise for the young curate of Kew to discuss the financial side of religion. That way opens discussion and criticism.

The blunt truth is that the English State Church is the richest church in Christendom. According to Lord Addington's return of 1891 the ancient ecclesiastical endowment of this Church then amounted to £5,469,171, exclusive of modern benefactions, which amounted to £284,000 yearly. Since that date the endowments have increased in value, and, curiously, during that same period bishoprics have been multiplied. How recklessly this has been done may be estimated by the bare statement that one English priest has been appointed "Bishop of Northern and Central Europe." The attaching salary is real

enough, but it is quite certain that very few of the inhabitants of those vast regions realize with what care the Anglican Church ministers to their spiritual needs.

Part of the huge income of the State Church is drawn from Tithe charges, a form of taxation which is as monstrous as royalties on minerals. Coal royalties also figure in the Ecclesiastical balance sheet to the tune of many thousands of pounds annually. In this connexion it is extraordinary that, whilst Socialists never tire of girding at the Duke of Northumberland for deriving part of his income from this source, they never so much as mention the Anglican Church having her fist in the same pie.

This Church also possesses property in the City of London worth over £2,000,000. Its hold on the population may be gauged by the fact that, not long ago, the Church authorities decided to sell nineteen derelict City churches in order to use the money in other ways. It is high time that Socialists grappled with this question of a State Church in all seriousness. Their acquiescence in the perpetual National endowment of their hereditary enemies is passing wonderful.

Mr. Lee assures us that a graduate taking Holy Orders has had upwards of £2,000 spent on his education. If this be true, it settles once and for all the Bishop of London's repeated assertions that the clergy are "starving." If it be true, it also shows that education is almost as expensive as radium. For the average clergyman is only educated in the matter of his profession, and that could be learnt by any actor in a couple of months, or even less. Sermons can be purchased for twopence a copy. Whole volumes may be found in booksellers' "fourpenny" boxes. And the "State" parson, unlike the Nonconformist rival, is quite indifferent as to the size of his congregation, for his salary does not depend upon the contributions of the faithful, whether silver, copper, or brace-buttons.

Leon Gambetta said half a century ago that Clericalism was the enemy. It is as true in this England of to-day as it is in France under the Republic. And Socialists can never enjoy power whilst they permit twenty thousand priests of a State Church to train whole congregations to regard all forms of Freethought as being the work of Satan, and therefore anathema to all good Church people. Unless this matter of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Anglican Church is taken seriously, Socialists will be well advised to go home and keep rabbits. As a hobby it is less onerous than the political game.

MIMNERMUS.

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### Fed Up.

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A little girl of seven, whose parents had gone away for a fortnight, left her with two very pious maiden aunts. There was grace before breakfast, grace before dinner and ditto before tea. She had to say prayers when she got out of bed in the morning, and also when she got into it at night. A good deal about "gentle Jesus" was stuffed into her at convenient intervals, and this went on until her parents returned home, and her "holiday" came to an end. Sitting by the fireside with her parents one evening, she got on her mother's knee and said: "Tell me a nice story mother but *don't tell me anything about that man 'Jesus.'*"

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And thus they cease not to demand of you the cause of the cause, until you take refuge in the will of God, that is to say, in the asylum of ignorance.—*Spinoza.*

If there be gods we cannot help them, but we can assist our fellow men.—*Ingersoll.*



## Morals and Faith.

MANY people cling to the old-fashioned religious beliefs in which they have been brought up, because they have been taught, and still believe, that morality is an offshoot of religion and cannot exist apart from it. They have been taught that the laws of morality were revealed, or ordained, by God. Therefore, they argue, if there is no God, there is no moral law; or no law with any authority behind it.

When these people speak of morality, they mean, of course, Christian morality. Not the morality practised in Indian temples, or by Mormons, or the various uncivilized races of God-worshippers. These they term heathens, idolators, and their religions as superstitions. But to the scientific student of religions there is no dividing line between superstition and religion. To the eye of science, the clergyman, or priest, praying to God for rain, or to heal the sick, is just as superstitious as the African witch doctor sacrificing to Mumbo-Jumbo.

They ignore, or are unaware, that a high code of morality existed, and codes of morals and laws were promulgated, in Egypt, Babylonia, India, and China, long before Christianity, or the Hebrew religion, from which it is derived, ever existed. Moreover, two of the founders, or teachers of these codes, Buddha in India, and Confucius in China, taught morality quite independent of any belief in God.

There are many nervous people who believe that morality is so bound up with religion—because they were taught them together—that they fear that if religion were to disappear, morality would not survive it. They fear that a state of things would prevail like that pictured in *Punch*, after the Irish were granted Home Rule. A driver was pictured as trotting along on the wrong side of the road, and when remonstrated with, replied, we can drive how we like now, it's our own country. If such a case really happened, the driver would soon have a rude awakening, and so would the person who thought the laws of morality were annulled by the death of religion. Morality was first in the field—for without some code of morality the human race could not have evolved at all—religion appeared later, and impudently claimed to be the founder, and guardian of morality.

There has just been published (by Messrs. Allen & Unwin, at 10s.) a book entitled *A Preface to Morals*, by Walter Lippmann, which is addressed to this large class of people who are no longer able to believe in the myths and mythologies they learned in their childhood, and yet are unwilling to give up their faith because they fear a collapse of the morality which, so they were taught, was bound up with it. As Mr. Lippmann points out, the position of modern men who have broken with the religion of their fathers is profoundly different from that of the men of former ages. He further observes:—

This is the first age, I think, in the history of mankind when the circumstances of life have conspired with the intellectual habits of the time to render any fixed and authoritative belief incredible to large masses of men. The dissolution of the old modes of thought has gone so far, and is so cumulative in its effect, that the modern man is not able to sink back after a period of prophesying into a new but stable orthodoxy. The irreligion of the modern world is radical to a degree for which there is, I think, no counterpart. For always in the past it has been possible for new conventions to crystallize, and for men to find rest and surcease of effort in accepting them.<sup>1</sup>

For instance, Christianity broke away from Judaism and established the Christian Church. Luther broke away from the Church and established Protestantism on the foundation of an infallible Bible. Then the Deist broke away from Protestantism. They found the Bible was not infallible, and swept all the mythologies into the dust bin, so that when their successors finished the operation by discarding God, there was nothing left with which to fashion any new idol.

It is true that Herbert Spencer, taking pity on the weakness of mankind—or was it an attempt to placate the wrath of the pictists which he foresaw that his godless system would arouse?—offered the public a cult of the "Unknowable," and Matthew Arnold wished us to bow down in worship to a "Something, not ourselves, that makes for Righteousness." But as there were no priests, and stipends, attached to them, it did not seem worth anybody's while to boom them, they fell flat. If some millionaires had come forward and endowed a few churches, they might, by this time, have become very flourishing concerns. But as it was, the public would not look at them. These shadows of shades were not at all the goods required.

As Mr. Lippmann further remarks, the disillusioned people of to-day: "have seen through the religion of nature to which the early romantics turned for consolation. They have heard too much about the brutality of natural selection to feel as Wordsworth did, that pleasant landscapes are divine." Neither can they: "make a religion of science like the post-Darwinians because they do not understand modern science. They never learned enough mathematics and physics. They do not like Bernard Shaw's religion of creative evolution because they have read enough to know that Mr. Shaw's biology is literary and evangelical." (p. 18.) And that is the position to-day. After more than a century of retreat, shedding much equipment by the way, the armies of God are now fighting in the last trench, there is nothing left to retreat to.

But there is no need to be anxious as to the future of morality. Morality is not an invention, it is the deposited wisdom, accumulated from the experience of humanity during the whole of its past existence. The vast majority of the people refrain from stealing, and murder, not because some God told them not to, but because people objected to being robbed and murdered, and then made laws to punish such crimes. As Mr. Lippmann well says: "We may be sure that no quality is likely to have become esteemed as a virtue which did not somewhere and sometime produce at least the appearance of happiness. The virtues are grounded in experience; they are not idle suggestions inadvertently adopted because somebody took it into his head one fine day to proclaim a new ideal." (p. 226.) But the human foundation of morality is heavily obscured: "and it is very hard, especially for young people, to realize that virtue is really good and really relevant. Morality has become so stereotyped, so thin and verbal, so encrusted with pious fraud, it has been so much monopolized by the tender-minded and the sentimental, and made so odious by the outcries of foolish men and sour old women, that our generation has almost forgotten that virtue was not invented in Sunday schools, but derives originally from a profound realization of the character of human life."

If parents persist in teaching their children that there can be no morality without religion, and then when the children grow up, and discover that the religious ideas they have been taught are false; the parents have only themselves to blame if their

<sup>1</sup> Lippmann: *A Preface to Morals*. p. 12.



children discard the morality along with the religion, and turn out badly. But most people who have sense enough to discover the falsity of religion, have sense enough to discover the true foundation of morality, and act accordingly.

W. MANN.

### Call Me Atheist!

Why all this squeamishness over the name "Atheist"?

"I don't like it," says one. "It is negative; and negative names indicate negative mentalities—minds without constructive aims and ideals."

"It is impolite," says another. "Give me the less offensive title of 'Agnostic.' That, at any rate suggests the open, undogmatic mind."

"Better still," says a third, "let us call ourselves Rationalists or Freethinkers or Truthseekers. There is nothing negative or harsh in these names."

Tut, tut! "Atheist" a negative word, forsooth! Why, with every language under the sun to choose from it would be difficult to invent a more positive term than this. Let us spend a profitable moment or two in analysing it. It may appear that we shall have reason to be proud of the despised label.

A—the first syllable—is, as we know, a negative prefix. But it implies more than mere negation. It implies "opposition to" as well; and as opponents we can be and are decidedly positive. Yet even if we take it as a simple negative, what is it that we deny?

Theism—in other words, the pure essence of negation. To call this word positive is as reasonable as to call the words "void," "blind," or "bankrupt" positive. The absence of a negative prefix does not prove that a word is positive in meaning; nor does its presence necessarily make a word negative as a whole. Ask the scientist whether "Atom" is to him a negative conception. See whether the "Nonconformist" will agree that his name implies lack of aim or ideals.

"Atheist" then, is a double negative, and as such is far more emphatic than any plain affirmation. For what is Theism now but a popular title for decadent beliefs in a glorified Nothingness. What has it stood for in the past but fear, cruelty and bigotry; and what does it stand for in the present but injustice, irrationality and ignorance. Where are the positive aspects of all these things, my friends! And in opposing them, how can Atheists be called negative.

As for having no constructive aims and ideals, the contrary is so evident that the accusation becomes laughable. Has no one heard of Bradlaugh, Ferrer, Holyoake, Hyndman and the rest of them? Then consider the main purpose of all atheistic propaganda: freedom from all mental and physical tyranny for the purpose of active research into every phase of experience with a view to improving the lot of humanity here and now. Atheism and Science go hand in hand, to destroy evil and to build up the good and the true. Space forbids a catalogue of all the things which Atheism has done for man's benefit and which it still intends to do.

"Atheist" is an impolite word, say you. Impolite, indeed! And to whom, or to what is it impolite? To those whose beliefs differ from ours? Far from it. If any impoliteness is implied, it is not to persons, but only to that debilitated relic of primitive superstition, that abstract nonentity called "God."

What conception, more than this one, deserves our impoliteness? I ask you, who profess belief in

"God," to tell me in the name of honesty and truth what single benefit to mankind can be genuinely proved to have resulted from his supposed action. Refer me, if you choose, to the records from a credulous past. But in those same records I will show you at least two crimes to his name for every one alleged act of grace. While as for the deeds of those professing to have acted according to his "divine" (save the mark!) guidance or instruction, the less said the better.

Apart from this mild indictment of "God" and his minions, consider your own lives and the lives of those around you. Is there any phase of these which can really be said to be the better for a belief in "God"? If so, what is it? And what difference would it make if the belief were absent?

Fear of death, you suggest, is lessened by such belief. Is it? I haven't noticed it. On the contrary, a multitude has feared death the more because of it. In any case, what has survival after death to do with a belief in "God"? Ah, I see! God is the Almighty Judge who will right all wrongs in the hereafter. How pleasant! But, pray, why must this almighty being delay his justice till the next life? Is he having a little game with us? Nice, kind fellow! Or is he in fact impotent to do anything? It looks uncommonly like it, doesn't it.

Almighty! Judge! Come, come, my friends. Is it not rather that you and I have been too cursed lazy either to face facts or to do something ourselves to right the wrongs in this world? It is convenient, is it not, to shift the responsibility elsewhere. You don't need to worry about the sufferings of others as long as you have a "God" to make it "all right on the night." A fine excuse for indifference and selfishness! Out upon your flaccid, useless, impotent "God"! To such a conception even our very impoliteness is a flattery.

And some of you prefer the name "Agnostic" because it suggests the open mind. Indolent, negative mind, rather. "Agnostic"—one who says he doesn't know, or doesn't believe, or doesn't believe he knows, or doesn't know what he believes. Well, well! Use it, if you like, but do not claim an open mind with such a label as that. For what else does the name imply than a negation of knowledge or the value of knowledge. "So far will I use my brains, but no further." That, in effect, is what the Agnostic says. It is a vague, meaningless label—a kow-towing to the admittedly powerful, yet unscrupulous, influence of Theism. Away with it!

Lastly you, my friends, choose such titles as Rationalist, Freethinker or Truthseeker. Well, Atheists must be all those things, or they could not be Atheists. It is by the use of reason that we have attained to free thought, and the freedom of our thinking has compelled us and will always compel us to seek truth. Furthermore, no man can call himself by any of these names unless he has first rid himself of the incubus of Theism. And as long as this intellect-deadening, mind-destroying, logic-twisting influence is anywhere to be found, so long must we fight to abolish it.

So why all this squeamishness over the name "Atheist"?

Go to! Call me "Atheist"! No other name could please me better.

C. S. FRASER.

So far as I am concerned, I have made up my mind that no organization, secular or religious, shall be my master. I have made up my mind that no necessity of bread, or roof, or raiment shall ever put a padlock on my lips.—*Ingersoll*,



## Christian and Atheist.

### A DIALOGUE.

(Concluded from page 28.)

EVENING.

- A: Good evening Brother! Have you thought over our conversation of this morning?
- C: Your criticisms leave me unmoved: the provinces of reason and faith are distinct. There are some things about which we must not reason, belief being all that is necessary to answer the questionings of the spirit. Besides, my religion gives me great comfort and supports me under the sorrows of life, so why should I forego a prop so comforting to lean upon in times of stress?
- A: Your remarks about the provinces of reason and faith depend for their validity upon what you mean by "faith." It is obvious that you mean by "faith" . . . Religious faith; faith in the truth of the cardinal dogmas of your ancient creed, not faith in the fundamental human verities . . . and in that case I agree with you, that where reason ends faith commences; that is quite true. So you regard your religion as a stout prop upon which to lean in time of stress? But supposing the prop breaks? What then? The outlook which demands some prop upon which to lean is the outlook of a mental cripple. I agree with Heine that Christianity is an ideal religion for cripples . . . but for sound men and women it is of no use as a philosophy of life. You will find a finer one in the philosophy of Atheism.
- C: You call yourself an Atheist, but I for my part have never seen one. All men are genuinely religious at heart, but in the "mad pride of intellectuality" of which the poet speaks they deny their Maker when they should be as sheep at the fold looking up with trusting faith in the good Shepherd, their Father in Heaven.
- A: Pardon me, you no doubt intend your remarks by way of compliment, but has it occurred to you that when you herd with the sheep you are liable to be sheared with the sheep; indeed that is inevitable. You have never beheld an Atheist? Perhaps you do not recognize the "critter" because you are ignorant of the distinguishing features. I will endeavour to enlighten you. In a few words Atheism is a way of looking at things: a form of thought. In the mental life of man, when all superficial differences are discounted, there remain two fundamental forms of thought. One is the primitive animistic form, and into this category all religions and their followers naturally fall: the other is the materialistic or atheistic form of thought which is the basis of all true science and philosophy. On one hand there is a belief in some form of supernatural agency animating phenomena: on the other hand, Nature . . . which to the Atheist is a term conoting the whole world of experience . . . is seen to produce all things from star dust to man and his thoughts, from the composition of non-intelligent forces. In the trenchant phrase of the Atheist Lucretius, "Nature is found to do all things of herself without the intermeddling of the gods." So much for the meaning of Atheism. I notice that you appear rather sad this evening. What is the matter?
- C: Well, this morning the Rev. Horrors delivered us a long sermon on the text "in the midst of life we are in death." Now if you will cease your sarcasm for a moment, tell me frankly . . . are you not apprehensive when you consider the fact that soon you are certain to die? Is it not a terrible thought? Be honest with me and tell me what you think!
- A: Still giving unconscious witness to your Christian training I see. "Be honest with you!" Why should I be otherwise? But we will let that pass.

So you consider it a terrible and saddening thing that some day you will die! Do you wish to live for ever then? To me, that is a far more terrible thought: but perhaps the terrors of everlasting life are too subtle for your comprehension. Why should I be saddened by the thought of death? Why do you not say . . . "See what a terrible thing it is; everywhere around things are being born?" And to be logical you should exclaim in that way. Is not death the necessary complement to birth? If we lived for ever death would be unnecessary: birth and death are mutually complementary factors in existence. To me, death, far from being a terrible thing is on the contrary a distinct blessing. No, I am not going to be cynical this time. But do you not see the important part that the conception of the certainty of death plays in the development of the noblest of human sentiments? Would you, for instance, love a thing very much if there should be no risk of your ever losing it? Why it is the certainty of death that forms the very bedrock of human love. Fie, Brother you are no philosopher! But I think I espy your trouble. The fact that troubles you is a product of your perfervid imagination, nourished by your priestly tutors. You imagine yourself lying in some clammy dark cavern underground, with grave-cloths swathed around you, and in full possession of those thoughts and feelings that we conote by the word "living." It sounds paradoxical, but you imagine "death" to be another form of "life," when in reality the terms cancel one another. But let me put it another way. Do you experience this terrible fear you mention at the moment preceding sleep? You do not! Well, death is no more than falling to sleep with this consoling difference, you do not wake again to conflict with a sad lunatic world. Death is a sleep and a forgetting. The trouble lies in your religious education. It is the peculiar feature of Christianity that the natural fact of death should have been surrounded throughout the ages with all the terrors imaginable by a collection of indecent sadistic imaginations. The priests of your debasing creed have always taught that there is a red-hot literal Hell awaiting you in which you must pay penance for your mistakes after this little life is done. They have tried to rob you of the only real world you know by the most fatuous of promises and the most villainous of threats. It is that of which you are afraid, but do not believe it. I, an Atheist, will give you comfort. After Life's fitful fever you will sleep well: the believer of all creeds; the unbeliever; the good, the bad, all will sleep well, and nothing will touch them further. Even these lying priests of yours who so richly deserve a taste of the Hell they have invented; they too sleep as soundly as the innocents they have poisoned with such debasing doctrines. Take courage, you are not fit for immortality anyway.

JOSEPH MARAH.

### Moonflower.

Last night, when the moon like a golden flower  
Bloomed alone on a starry tree,  
I plucked it down, as the deathless dower  
Of a promise you gave to me!

I will carry my flow'r to the city mart,  
That all, with a backward view,  
May covet the blossom I bear apart:  
Moonflower of my dreams—just you!

Nigeria.

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

The brain of man is Jove's eagle and his lightning  
on earth—the title to majesty henceforth.

George Meredith.



## How the Bible Was Put Together.

THE Bible is presented to us by the Christian as the Word of God. We are told that God, wishing to give a message to mankind, "inspired" certain people to write down what he desired to be known.

When we read the Bible we find it contains a great number of contradictions, stupidities, inanities, as well as some poetic and moving passages. No man using his reason alone, would come to any other conclusion than that the Bible was the sole work of men.

Shakespeare, Milton, Homer, Dante and many other great men have written works quite as beautiful as the most beautiful passages in the Bible, and nobody is so foolish as to pretend they were "inspired" by God.

The Jews had a literature such as we have. That is to say, there were people who wrote poems setting forth heroic deeds, tales of history, exhortations and cursings.

There was the *Song of Deborah and Barak*. Others copied the tale of the creation of the world from the Babylonians. The priests wrote their laws and exhortations as in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. History is told in Samuel, the Chronicles, Kings. The psalms are songs written by different writers—few, if any, by David.

It was a literature that grew in the days when there was no printing, the consequence being that, as the skins wore out, copies were made and each fresh copyist altered to suit his own fancy. But you can't alter the *Word of God*. The Jewish scribes altered their "sacred" writings freely—and therefore realized they were working on human material.

Jesus accepted these scrolls as Jewish sacred writings though he wasn't afraid to criticize them. "You have heard it was said by them of old time, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, *but I say unto you . . .*"

Jesus apparently did not treat these writings as the dictated Word of God. He differed from them.

But it was because Jesus was a Jew and his followers were worshipping Jews that the Jewish literature was adopted (with its strange, sensual, filthy tales, its absurd remarks put into the mouth of God like "I am weary of repenting," and its contradictory and false histories) by the Christians.

And in the early days of Christianity the follower of Christ read these old books and followed the Jewish religion. Slowly they broke away from Judaism, but they carried with them the books of these ancient Jews.

During these earlier years of the first Christian sects there were hundreds, probably thousands of letters or pamphlets or pseudo histories written by men of the time, and nobody knew how much importance to attach to each or to any. So at a council at Laodicea about 360 years after Christ, the Christian leaders decided what books should be accepted as authoritative. It was an age of credulity when men believed the impossible. And these leaders of the Church voted on the matter.

The various branches of the Christian Churches differ about these "sacred" writings to this day, though they make their followers accept them by saying they are the "Word of God."

There is not the slightest evidence that God inspired a single word in the Bible, and every honest man must agree that the lies and nasty passages it contains must have come from mere man.

W.H.W.

## Acid Drops.

Sir John Reith of the B.B.C., declares that the people of this country are "religious at heart or capable of being so." He appears to base this conclusion on the number of letters received in favour of religious items. We fancy that if the B.B.C. had taken a plebiscite of all listeners as to whether they desired to have religion in the programme, a different tale would be told. Not very long ago Sir John was touring around among pious gatherings imploring the pious to write to the B.B.C. and say they wanted religion broadcast. Apparently the Committee of parsons at headquarters were anxious to make out some sort of case for retaining religion in the

programme. Since there was so little enthusiasm for religion on the part of non-church-going listeners, an effort had to be made to beat up the pious. But we hardly think that the gallant response of the pious gives grounds for Sir John's assertion that the people of this country are religious at heart. Sir John Reith's control of the B.B.C., in the interests of the Churches is little short of a public scandal.

The Rev. Dr. S. W. Hughes believes that the Bible is the source of British greatness. He has been warning all and sundry that this country cannot retain its greatness on a minimum of religion, with desecrated Sabbaths and decreasing Sunday-school membership. As a final "flesh creeper," he adds:—

The bells of thirty-two churches in Moscow have been melted to celebrate the utilitarian demands of Communist propaganda. Let Britain beware lest pervading Secularism lead the people to forget that church bells for centuries have symbolized the eagerness and ecstasy of the faith by which Britain has attained the dignity and authority of world-leadership.

Centuries ago church bells used to be more utilitarian. They were for scaring away evil spirits before the service began. After that, they symbolized the fact that good Christians once harboured such childish superstitions. We shall be pardoned for doubting that the bundle of fluctuating superstitions called the Christian religion could ever have made a nation "great." Reverend doctors may say so. But then they are commercial travellers in religion.

Mr. Sid G. Hedges, in the *New Chronicle*, says:—

Snippets are among the curses of our age. The newspapers, with a few honourable exceptions, discourage sustained thinking by all the means in their power; and an intelligent Christianity can no more be built up by scrappy discussions than a sound scholarship can be gained from the "snappy paragraphs" of the popular press.

Yet, according to various deep thinkers in the Churches, the newspaper discussions on religion are evidence of a coming revival of interest in religion! Mr. Hedges also says that comparatively few outsiders are won into church membership. So it would seem that the discussions have really been of no benefit to the Churches, after all.

Prof. Cyril Burt, psychologist to the L.C.C. Education Department, has been lecturing on juvenile delinquency. Crime in a child, he declared, was assignable to no single cause. In nearly every case there were hereditary and environmental factors. To the small child delinquency was a form of sport. One of the best ways of dealing with moral failings, he said, was to have available plenty of athletic sport. This provided a safety valve for the overflowing spirits of the child. He urged that more playing fields should be provided. We gather that modern psychologists have dumped overboard "original sin" as an explanation. And hence their methods of cure for delinquency are rational rather than Christian. By all means let there be more playing-fields. But let them be open all day on Sunday, if they are to do their work with the greatest efficiency.

Parsons are anxiously scanning the horizon for signs of interest in things spiritual. They might note that the people are still interested in fairy-tales, as is indicated by their patronage of Pantomimes. Therefore, it follows that kindred things such as the Bible stories and the churches must also be of interest to the people. Also, more and more people are obtaining goods on the deferred payment system. Does not this clearly indicate that before long they will again take to paying for a seat in Heaven bit by bit every Sunday?

Canon Geoffrey Gordon told Nottingham Rotarians that for an adult to coerce the mind of a growing boy is an outrage. The Canon might have added that his Church has been committing the outrage for a good few centuries. Indeed, most of the Church's clients are obtained by this means. Compelling belief by stressing the certainty of ultimate punishment for disbelief is a kind of coercion which the Church has made a speciality. Although this is done in the name of a God of Love, it



is none the less an outrage. Let us not forget that the Church compels teachers to perpetuate the outrage in the State schools.

According to calculations, there will be in ten years time five million motor-cars on the road. Of those that are running on the Sabbath, one can safely affirm that four-fifths of the owners will not be wending their way to a church, despite the prayers and manoeuvres of the Lord's Dayers.

The most hopeful feature in the life of the world to-day, we are told, is the growth of co-operation between nations since the League of Nations was inaugurated. The League would appear to have achieved more in a few years than all the Christian Churches in nineteen centuries. Still, the Churches need not be discouraged. There's no reason why they should not continue with their chief diversions of praying and yapping. Spiritual efforts are bound to produce some kind of result in the long run.

Centenarians are steadily increasing in number in the United States. This is obviously an instance of divine wisdom. In this ungodly age it is evidently God's desire that people shall have extended opportunity to find Jesus and avoid the inevitable wasting.

Dr. Crichton Miller declares that it is natural for a child to like to make a noise. This is helpful. It enables us to know in which mental category to place those adults who make noises in churches, or who howl at street corners for the Salvation of mankind. There is more in the Christly injunction to be childish than one might think. Our medical psychologists are letting in a flood of light on this spiritual subject!

The Turkish Government has drafted a Bill by which all children of Turkish nationality in Turkey, whether Greek, Armenian or Jewish, as well as purely Turkish, shall be compelled to attend Turkish primary schools between the ages of seven and twelve. It would seem that now religion is not in the saddle, a little more attention is being paid to education for all.

Dr. Hugh Brown said recently at Greenock: "I believe that the domination of education by masculine ideals is as great a disaster to civilization as its domination by secular ideals." As regards the latter, the civilization of the present and past centuries was dominated by Christian notions. War was well in the picture, and we have just finished the largest. Perhaps there would be no harm in giving "secular ideals" a trial—they couldn't make a bigger mess of things than the other kind made.

Principal Rees said, at Milford Haven County School, that the world is made up of peculiar people, and in school one learns how to live with peculiar people without quarrelling with them. For our part we think that something more might be learned in school beyond this thin tolerance for achieving peace. A boy should leave school willing to listen to the all kinds of opinions of others, willing to investigate them, to discuss them, and to allow discussion of them in a fair and frank manner. This may not fit in with a truly Christian education, but it will, we hope, fit in with the education of the future.

A writer in a Sunday school journal says:—

When the famous enquiry was made, during the war, into the state of religion among the young men of this country, it was found that four-fifths of them were outside organized Christianity; and they were outside it principally because their first conception of Christianity had been altogether wrong. In other words, their education had been at fault. So then our task as Sunday school workers, both on Sunday and week-days, is rightly to educate youth so that misconceptions of Christ and His message, and God and His relationship to man, are not possible.

We suppose the writer had to try and find some sort of explanation for the facts he mentioned. He appears not to have noticed how odd it must be that all the churches should have been giving wrong misconceptions, and that they are still at it up to the present moment, if one has to judge by the fact that four-fifths of the younger generation are also outside organized Christianity. Neither

does it occur to him to wonder why his God permitted the stupid blunder all these years.

The *Morning Post* has a notice of a play "The Sin Machine," produced at the Three Arts Club. Mr. Philip Hurn, an American, is the author, and from the account before us, he appears to be indulging in a little crude Freethought of fifty years ago. He is not to be blamed for that; in time he may catch up with the real constructive side of Freethought, and he may be able to produce a play wherein Christians have renounced police protection for their religion, and social ostracism for holding Freethought ideas has become defunct. A brief extract given may place the ideas in time somewhere about 1817—when William Hone was tried before Lord Ellenborough for publishing a parody with an alleged intent to ridicule the Litany:—

We were ushered into the office of "Heaven and Hell, Inc.," where the Angel Gabriel and a horned personage called Nicholas sat at the tables with an angel-choir for typists and two lifts working, one to Heaven and the other to Hell.

An old gentleman, referred to as Santa Claus, or the "Big Idea," brings them a "Sin Machine," by which sins can be infallibly registered. They decide to adopt this as a time-saver.

Freethinkers of to-day do not ridicule the Litany, they explain it, and leave naughty American boys to discover that the road to mental freedom has been won via the gaol by the almost forgotten heroes of the movement.

The *Daily News* had better be careful! Embedded in the weekly article by F. W. Thomas, the humorist, we found the following bright thought:—

It is certainly very curious that when the weather is wet and we don't want it, we get all this rain; and in the Summer when there's a drought and we could do with it, we don't get a drop . . . Bad management somewhere, I think.

We are afraid that even the Chaplain of the Savoy Chapel, who writes on the same page about "Love Conquers All," would find it difficult to refute it.

One of many war books, *Retreat: A Story of 1918*, by C. R. Benstead, is in the nature of a criticism of a "padre" in the war. The "padre" (English variety) was a parson with officer's pay and privileges, and he was neither better nor worse than any other unit in the war, but he did not have to fight the good fight in its real sense; he was a non-combatant. He could get a drop of "sergeant-major's tea" when he wanted it, and also a drop of something else a little stronger. He was at least, somewhere near the real danger of warfare. In *Retreat*, we are told that the brutal realities shocked and bewildered this character, the Rev. Elliot P. Warne, and in a few weeks actually destroyed his reason. The author with *Retreat* has filled in a blank in the vast catalogue of war books, and it makes one hope that the next war will be fought only by representatives of Christianity (archbishops, etc., down the scale) as they have special and particular knowledge of the next world for which their calling makes them peculiarly fitted.

In a report by Dr. R. H. Crowley, Senior Medical Officer of the Board of Education, we are informed that there are about 75,000 mentally defective children in the country, in addition to about 30,000 imbeciles. Are we really in the throes of the Great War?

When the wonderful records of our twentieth century civilization are read at some distant date, it will be a speculation as to the relative place in our history of the Mr. George Lansbury and the Bishop of London. Hyde Park was the rendezvous of both: the popular George went there to kick off for three football matches.

Even Christians are becoming ashamed of the unreasonable things taught about God. In a book, *Can I Teach My Child Religion?* the author, George Stewart, warns parents against bringing children up to look on God as a police officer. He does not, however, suggest that time spent on religious teaching could be used to better advantage in fitting children up properly to be citizens on earth.



## The Bill for The Abolition of The Blasphemy Laws.

THE Second Reading of the Blasphemy Laws (Amendment) Bill will be moved in the House of Commons on Friday, January 24, by Mr. Thurtle. It is one of the chances of Parliamentary procedure that this Bill is first on the Order Paper, and that a discussion of the Bill is, therefore, assured. It will take precedence of other Bills. Such a chance has not occurred for some years, and may not occur again.

This makes it imperative for Freethinkers to *get to work at once*, and there is no time to spare. Every member of the N.S.S., and every Freethinker who is not a member should write at once to his Parliamentary representative, asking him to be in his place in the House of Commons on the 24th and vote for the Bill. The mistake must be avoided of trusting to someone else to do it, the more who write the better. Members will not be likely to bestir themselves if they find that Freethinkers are not bothering about it.

When writing it should be pointed out that there is certain to be a debate on the Bill, otherwise some may be under the impression that this is one of the numerous instances where members are asked to give their support to a Bill that is never reached.

For years there has not been so favourable an opportunity for Freethinkers. The Home Secretary of the last Labour Government, Mr. Henderson, promised his support to the Bill, and the Home Secretary to the present one, Mr. Clynes, expressed sympathy with it. There is also a very considerable amount of sympathy for this measure among members of the House.

To secure the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws would be one of the greatest victories ever won for Freethought in this country.

*There is no time to spare. Let every one set to work at once.*

CHAPMAN COHEN.

*President, National Secular Society.*

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TESTIMONIAL TO MR. CHAPMAN COHEN.—Previously acknowledged, £1,627 6s. 3d.; Anno Domini, £1; F. Borland, £1; The Pope (240 Pence), £1; F. S. B. Lawes, £1; P., 5s.; "Checkweigher," 2s.; W. Clowes, 5s.; S. Clowes, 5s.; T. C. Kirkman (3rd Donation), £2; Total to January 13, 1930, £1,634 3s. 3d.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—J. Latham, 5s.

Y. CAMPBELL.—The form of affirmation is that prescribed by the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888. It runs, "I—do solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm," etc., and omits all reference to deity or appeals to deity. Whether it is taken with uplifted hand or not is entirely at the discretion of the one who is making the affirmation. The conclusion of the one who is making the affirmation. The conclusion of the affirmation is determined by the nature of the matter concerning which the affirmation is being made. If any other form of words is imposed by a judge or magistrate a quiet and respectful refusal should be given and adhered to.

M. COORLEGH.—Thanks, shall appear as early as space will permit.

J. GILLESPIE.—Sorry we have not space to run an Esperanto column, as you suggest, interesting as it might be to some

of our readers. The matter of the translation you send is hardly up to standard. Thanks all the same.

JAS. MUIR.—Thanks for congratulations, and for your appreciation of the *Freethinker*.

A CORRESPONDENT enquires whether Robert Blatchford died an Atheist. Well, No. You see, the situation lacks the indispensable condition of Mr. Blatchford dying. When he performs that feat we may have more to say about it.

C. H. SMITH.—Thanks for good wishes. We shall think of you amid our festivities and drink to your speedy recovery. "SALISBURY."—Next week.

H. H. KEEN.—We quite agree with Professor Royce that the opinions of men are not "sacred." But as we know of no other opinions but those of men, it follows that no opinion is sacred—which is precisely the position of the genuine Freethinker. The literature you send is on the usual level of such productions.

M. BLAKE.—We are obliged; such things are always useful.

S. HARDING.—*The Biology of War* is quite a good book. We reviewed it in these columns on its publication. Recent war books appear to be undergoing a process of standardization.

*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.*

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

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

*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 "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.

We have only one word to add concerning the Annual Dinner, which takes place at the Midland Grand Hotel, on the evening of the 18th. Dinner will be served promptly at 7. There will be a reception at 6.30, and this will give an opportunity for Members to meet each other before sitting down. Those attending will find a plan of the tables in the reception room, which will show them their places. We anticipate a much larger number present than is usual.

Mr. Saplin's meeting at Plymouth on Sunday last was affected somewhat by the terrible storm that raged, but the audiences were, all things considered, satisfactory in numbers, and those present were greatly interested in the subjects dealt with. The Plymouth Branch is very energetic, and it pays special attention to advertising. That is bound to exert an increasing influence on the public in general.

The West London Branch of the N.S.S. continued its course of lectures, on Sunday last, with an address from Mr. Howell-Smith. We are glad to learn that the hall was well filled and the lecture listened to with interest. The lecturer this evening (January 19) is Mr. F. J. Gould.

Mr. Cohen's next lecture will be at Chester-le-Street, on January 26. We are asked by the local Secretary to say that he will be glad to hear from all Freethinkers in the district who are inclined to lend a hand in local organization. Address: J. Brighton, 18 South View, Chester-le-Street, Durham.

Something really ought to be done with some of our



coroners. They not merely are to be found often bending the law to their own prejudices, but occasionally their behaviour is such that if they were not occupying a judicial position they would invite, and might receive a thrashing. Here is case number one. Mr. Cowburn, the South London Coroner, had before him on January 13, the case of a young man of twenty who was found "gassed" in his home. It was a case of suicide. The man was out of work, and the medical evidence showed that he had bronchial pneumonia, abscesses, and signs of inflammation all over the lungs. Common decency would have demanded that with such a case before him, the Coroner would have treated the poor mother with consideration. What did occur was this. Quite unnecessarily he asked the mother whether she had ever given the boy religious instruction. The reply was, No. Well, said the Coroner, "This is the result of it." Later, he said the admission of the mother was "perfectly shocking." We have no hesitation in saying that no one but a religious brute, would have made such a remark to a mother in such circumstances. He may be an ornament to some local chapel. He is a disgrace to the Bench and to humanity. And unless his ignorance equals his impertinence, he must know how common suicide is among religiously educated people. There should be some method of bringing men to book who so abuse their position.

Here is case number two. At Birmingham recently a reader of this paper was summoned to attend as a juror before the coroner. When the other jurors were sworn, the Freethinker proceeded to affirm in the proper manner and in the words of the Act. But the coroner would not have it. He ordered the juror to repeat after him the following ridiculous formula:—

I solemnly declare and affirm that I shall accept the evidence on the same terms as the rest of the jury.

It is a great pity the Juror did not decline to repeat it, and insisted on the words of the Act. The Coroner might then have been taught a lesson which he evidently needs very badly. We suggest to all those who read this paragraph, that when summoned to a court they should insist upon the words as printed in *Information for Freethinkers*, and decline everything else. If any trouble ensues, let them write us at once and we shall soon find a means of teaching these men that part of their legal obligations with which they should be familiar before they are permitted to exercise judicial power.

## Religion, Not Theology, is The Enemy.

(Concluded from page 27.)

THE genetic psychologist searches for the antecedent causes of the morbidity, in both the external and internal conditions, which actually controlled the existence and the development of the homicidal mania. The maniac's subsequent theologic justification is irrelevant. In cases of functional disorders of the nervous system, not theology, but the *affective* influence of institutionalized religion may have been the more potent factor, in creating the emotional instability. The biblical text is a convenient pretext or justification for murder or war. Furthermore, in so far as we understand the importance of the genetic approach to psychology, we are less apt to be deceived into thinking that any imaginary voice or any more printed words *ever created* the murder impulse. At best or worst, it probably did little else than to fix the *time* when a new rationalization of the prior existing morbidity enters consciousness. The victims of such morbidity, and others who are ignorant as to modern psychology, will, of course, explain it all in terms which imply the relative omnipotence of thought. If a new rationalization was emotionally necessary, it would have been created out of whatever material was available. Nothing important

would have been different, if the biblical test had been absent. The dynamics did not inhere in the words of the "voice" nor in the Bible text, but in the antecedent psychologic imperatives of the morbid hearer or reader. The evangelical type of Atheist, who is religiously devoted to an *absolute* Atheism, is too religious in temperament to be able to see this.

Merely to supply a new rationalization for the religionist's subjectively and unconsciously determined, and more or less morbid compulsion and leave the morbid psychologic essence of religiosity unappraised and unimpaired, seems to be psychologically quite useless. It reminds one of the primitive man, who thinks he can kill his enemy by destroying some symbol of him; or of the physician who would seek to cure diabetes by surgically removing such a symptom, as the bags under the eyes. And yet on rare occasions, even an attack upon theology may have more social value, though it is void of any influence toward a true psychologic sublimation.<sup>5</sup> This advantageous attack upon theology occurs when many morons and psychoneurotics are induced even blindly to attach themselves emotionally to scientific dogmas, or to the promoters of freedom and of scientific progress. So they may prevent other morons and psycho-neurotics from passing laws that restrict the opportunity of healthy-minded educators, and scientific investigators.

Intelligent observers do not consider such adherents any less defective, or less morbid, merely because their emotions happen to be helpfully attached to persons who do something to promote real progress, or to prevent regression.

Of course, there are many persons who have not yet discovered that the problem of the origin, value and meaning of religious experience, and the resultant explanatory theologies, or associated concepts, are quite exclusively problems of genetic and evolutionary psychology. Such persons may remain content to throw bricks at Jehovah of the Jews, and may think that they can thereby destroy the morbid emotional need for mysticism, or for religious experience. Although they are quite wrong as to that, they may yet curb many anti-social manifestations of the more orthodox madness. For this let us remain grateful.

The intelligent Christian mystic may have no more quarrel with any fairly established hypothesis of the material scientists, than does the most intelligent Atheist. That is to say: the intelligent Christian mystic does not often accept literally, any parts of the Bible which he finds in conflict with well accredited scientific-hypothesis.<sup>6</sup> Of course the "good book" has much in it that seems unintelligible and contradictory, to the average critical reader. Much of this matter the mystic interprets as figuratively descriptive of the mystic experience; or as symbolic of a subjectively determined feeling of truth rather than of an objective fact. The mystic sees in the obscure and contradictory Bible text an effort to rationalize a subjective experience, in the figurative language of objectives. When the language is interpreted literally instead of figuratively, and as symbolic of objectives instead of subjectives, this produces the apparent confusion. Such seeming contradictions have only the importance of infidel delusions. Mystics and psychologists now often insist that the Bible can be adequately understood, only in so far as any one

<sup>5</sup> "Religion Not a True Sublimation"; *Open Court*. (Chicago). Vol. 36 (No. 8): 495-506; August, 1921.

<sup>6</sup> "On Manufacturing the Experiences of God." *Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. 14, (No. 1): 71-84; January, 1927.



reads it with an emphatic insight, and emphatic understanding.<sup>7</sup>

My view is that until "Rationalists" are able to read the Bible emphatically (approximately as if with imaginative reduplication of *the experiences, emotions, compulsions* and phantasy life of its authors) and understand the modernized mystical religionists through such emphatic reading, they are not very competent to discuss, much less to fairly appraise or discredit religion, as such. By such methods they may change an occasional half-baked mystic's theory about his religion; or change his theologic rationalization of it. They cannot, by such methods alone, weaken the morbidity of the subjective conflict of impulse, which expresses itself in religious activity. Neither can they cure the subjectivism, and the habitual emotional over-valuations of religious experience, morals, theology, or of anything else; nor minimize the like emotionalism in succeeding generations. In other words, by the old method of attacking theologies *instead of religion*, the critic will never change the fundamental, religious, immature psychologic imperatives, of any one who has a potent temperamental need for religion. Nothing can be so effective in impairing the valuation of religion, or curing the religious temperament, as the genetic and evolutionary psychologist's approach to all its processes.

One person, because of an emotional attachment to, or an effective identification with some theologian, may accept blindly all of the latter's theologic dogmas. In their ignorance of the mental processes by which such persons arrive at their beliefs, the religionist must glorify that ignorance by calling it "an act of faith," something more reliable than observation and conscious induction. Another person who is equally suggestible may, with an equal zeal and ignorance, accept and recite some contrary dogmas, perhaps formulated by scientists. Religious persons glorify the former performance as an advance toward holiness and righteousness. With equal extravagance they condemn the latter performance as evil. Such Freethinkers and Rationalists as are psychologically uninformed, or who are equally subjective and suggestible, very often reverse this approval and disapproval. The underlying emotionalism, and the accompanying immature intellectual methods and other psychologic defects, are quite often the same in both cases. This illustration again suggests the need of some standard for classifying religionists, other than a mere emotional glorification or damnation of the formal words of their professions. I find such a standard in my concept, of the subjective aspect of evolution in our intellectual methods, which must be applied to the whole of the religionist's mental content.<sup>8</sup> When we get beyond the mere appraisal of some particular religionist, to the consideration of the psychologic influence of institutionalized religion, the issue becomes one wholly within the field of mental hygiene.

I remind you that a phonograph, a parrot, an imbecile, a lunatic, a healthy child, an antique metaphysician, a modern clergyman, a mystical scientist or a philosopher, can each be made to say: "I believe in Mithraism," or "I believe in the Apostles Creed." From merely hearing the words, abstracted

from their source, or from all possible subjective context, you cannot know much about the religiosity of the source of such a profession.

Can it be said that a phonograph, a parrot, an imbecile, a child, a lunatic or a scientist are necessarily more of a social menace, as soon as they come to recite some ancient and popular religious creed for the first time? Or when they first come to accept a Rationalist's creed? I think not. The power for social evil does not consist in the mere noise or words of a theologic or moral creed, no matter how ignorant or absurd it may be. An ignorant creed is a social menace only as it is a minor component in the psychology of those persons within whom it is associated with an intense compulsion, which may be classified as being within or beyond the borderland of morbidity.

In some persons the creed symbolizes a *very acute* state of the differential, psychologic essence of religiosity. For others, who profess the same creed, the words symbolize a minimum of the religious temperament, even to the fading-out point, of all religiosity. Then the recital of the creed is a mere imitative social habit, sometimes quite void of either meaning or dynamics. Some psychologists therefore believe that the problem of religion should be, and soon will be, considered as one that deals quite exclusively with the subjective aspects of religiosity. Thus we may come to view our work over religion as a problem of psychologic maturing or of mental hygiene, rather than as a problem of the value, or of the truth or falsity of theological or moral dogmas. Such dogmas save no one from lunacy. Neither do they necessarily make the lunatic harmless.

I regard religion primarily as a special emotional need, and the creator of the resultant subjective experience. When religion becomes a matter of psychologic experience, then it is something which is essentially distinct from its explanatory theology, or justifying moral code. Mere theology I consider quite harmless. All moral valuations are pernicious just in proportion to the emotional fervor of their religious sanctions. The religious experience, and the extravagant *emotional valuations* that are usually attached to its implicit, infantile, psychologic urges, and to the immature intellectual methods which it glorifies, sanctifies and perpetuates; these are the real menace to the better mental hygiene and to social progress. Both of these depend upon the maturing of our intellectual methods, which maturing process I conceive to be always a matter of outgrowing the religious temperament and method. In short the evils of religiosity consists in its subjectivism, not in its dogmas. That is my thesis.

THEODORE SCHROEDER.

## Pre-History in Cornwall.

CONCERNING Mr. T. F. Palmer's article on "Cornwall and its Prehistoric Monuments" (the *Freethinker*, December 22, 1929).

What real evidence has Mr. Palmer, that tin was mined and exported from Cornwall in prehistoric times, or that the "*Cassiterides*" was Cornwall, which, to deserve the name "Tin Islands," must include the Scilly Isles?

The classical references upon this point are very fully discussed in *Chemistry and Industry*, for 1923. The conclusion I draw from the evidence there produced, is that the classical writers are totally unreliable as guides, and that the "*Cassiterides*," can equally well have been in the Indian Ocean, and is a view not lacking support. Anyone interested in the

<sup>7</sup> For a definition of these terms see: "Psychoanalytic Method of Observation." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. Vol. 6, part 2; 155-170, 1925. Abstracted in: *Psychoanalytic Review*. Vol. 15 (No.2): 460-6, October, 1928.

<sup>8</sup> A condensed summary of Evolutionary concept appears in: *Open Court*, Vol 41 (No. 2): 95, February, 1927. Also in: *Psychoanalytic Approach to Religious Experience*, soon to be published.



subject should read Mr. Lucas's able "Notes on the Early History of Tin and Bronze," in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. xiv. (1928), pp. 97-108.

Now, what archaeological evidence can be brought forward for prehistoric tin mining and trading in Cornwall?

Prof. Haverfield in his article on Romano-British Cornwall, part 5 Vol. II (1924) of the *Victoria County History of Cornwall*, is said to state, that pre-Roman objects have been found in the ancient workings, also said to mention the presence of a pre-Roman tin coinage and early ingots and vessels of pewter. It is curious that these points have not been stressed by latter writers.

Prof. Leeds in his "Report of the Excavation of Chun Castle," *Archæologia*, Vol. 76 (date 1926?), argues for a Cornish tin industry in 300 B.C. A footnote on page 235 of the same journal, says, "Apart from the discoveries at Chun . . . the close association of isolated finds of late Celtic objects with the workings is clearly shown by their distribution; as recorded in the *Victoria County History of Cornwall*, Vol. I (1906), pp. 371-373." Prof. Haverfield, when he writes in support of a Cornish tin industry in the Bronze Age, in the *English Historical Review* for 1904, p. 746, says, "the archaeological evidence is scanty." Too scanty, and the quotation from *Archæologia* just given, in my opinion, heavily discounts it; and even Prof Leeds' date of 300 B.C., is also discounted by the same quotation, because late Celtic objects can be very late, and even post-Roman. Moreover, in the discussion on Prof. Leeds' report, Mr. R. Smith, points out, that the pattern on some of the pottery found, appears also on Anglo-Saxon pottery.

One cannot discuss the Cornish tin trade without discussing the presence of Phœnicians. There is not a tittle of evidence that the Phœnicians ever landed on British soil. On this point see *The Druids*, by Dr. T. D. Kendrick, pp. 59-60. Greek influence in the south-east one or two hundred years before the Christian Era cannot be denied, but did it extend as far west as Cornwall in pre-Roman days?

Bronze Age articles from Northern Italy have been found in the Thames, and at Bath and Tewkesbury.

Clement Reid, in his *Submerged Forests*, 1913, says that Phœnicians trading to St. Michael's Mount for tin, seems to be the invention of a sixteenth century antiquary. In *Nature*, for November 11, 1929, p. 723, Mr. J. W. Gregory writes, "Negative evidence has lead some archaeologists to deny the presence of Phœnicians in Britain. I understand that with the exception of the tin ingot dredged in Falmouth Harbour, not a single Phœnician or Greek relic has been found in Cornwall. Yet the balance of opinion is still overwhelmingly in favour of the Cornish tin mining having been established under Phœnician influence." It would appear from this that many people think that "negative evidence" is positive proof.

To conclude, the first volume of the *Victoria History of Cornwall* appeared in 1906, the second volume in which will be published Prof. Haverfield's article on Romano-British Cornwall is not yet completed. Now, the publishers of the *Victoria County Histories* are pursuing a curious policy, that is, issuing volume two of the *History of Cornwall* in parts, but subscribers to the complete work do not get these parts as separate items, but have to wait until all the parts comprising a volume are completed. The consequence is, if subscribers wish to keep up-to-date, they have to pay for the separate parts in addition to their original subscription, that is paying twice over for the same work. Some of our Public Library Authorities, object to this, especially as the price charged

for some of these parts is very high. For instance, of the *History of Cornwall*, volume 2, part 5, is Prof. Haverfield's article, and extends to forty-three pages, and published in 1924, at a price of 10s. 6d., which, in my opinion, is most extortionate. Owing to the position just sketched, I have not been fortunate enough to peruse the article, and have only seen a few quotations from it. The most I have read, is in the form of a review in the *Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. XIV. (1924). I gather from this review that Prof. Haverfield does not give any credence to the idea that Cornwall and the Scilly Isles was the ancient Cassiterides, and that all the archaeological evidence affirms, is that if the Romans conquered and annexed Cornwall in the first century of the Christian Era, they left it severely alone; but in the second half of the succeeding century articles of tin appear, as far east as Brittany, also a local tin coinage, and ingots have been found in stations belonging to this century. The production of tin would appear to be most active between 290 and 330 A.D. Therefore, to my way of thinking, all that the evidence will support is that Cornish tin mining commenced round about 250 A.D. The evidence from Chun, at the moment being inconclusive.

As to later developments, statements are extant that the Saxons carried tin to France in the seventh century, but that the real history of Cornish tin mining does not commence until the twelfth century (*Victoria County History of Cornwall*).

Until I have read Prof. Haverfield's work, I cannot put the above statement forward as accurately representing his views. I have been misled by quotations before, for example, I have among my notes a statement from the *Victoria County History of Cornwall*, Vol. 1, suggesting that the finding of Anglo-Saxon objects in old tin workings, pointed to the working of the mines by the Saxons. Athelston's conquest of Cornwall took place in 937 A.D., but the Saxon objects found included coins of which the latest was dated 901. On reading the passage for myself, I found that the find was a hoard buried in some old tin workings, probably to be safe from Danish raiders. The only bit of evidence it supplies, is that this particular mine had probably been abandoned prior to the burying of the treasure.

There is another aspect of Mr. Palmer's article that I should like to challenge, that is his support of Drs. E. Smith's and Perry's *Diffusion of Culture* hypothesis. The position here is not so clear as in the case of tin; the ramifications of the hypothesis are great and tend to become nebulous. One does not deny that diffusion of culture takes place, but the implications of such extreme phases, as that Egypt was the centre and origin of civilization, and that somewhere about 3000 B.C., it began to spread its influence throughout the world, forming what has been called a world-wide "Archaic Civilization." The hypothesis in the beginning was really a revolt against the older conceptions of the origination of civilizations, independently, and necessarily arising in similar forms when the human brain had reached certain stages of development. Like most revolutions, it swung too far in the opposite direction. In its extreme form it has led to the production of such books as Mr. Massingham's *Downland Man*, which inverts or redefines archaeological terms, and manipulates facts to make them fit a preconceived hypothesis. From my reading of the works of Rivers, Perry and Smith, the hypothesis was formulated on facts collected east of Suez, and as time passes it seems to be of a more limited application than was at first thought to be the case. This is not at all an unusual fate for new ideas.



An implication of the hypothesis is that the British megalithic building, and by some it is held terrace cultivation also, was introduced by seafarers from Egypt in search of metals. Some, in order to bring areas deficient in metals, where megaliths occur would include pearls, hæmatite and amber. I am willing if the opposition so wishes, to include all that Prof. E. Smith calls the "Givers of Life."

It seems to me that a theory explaining the origin of megalithic monuments in the British Isles, must also be applicable to the north and north-west of Europe. Can a theory of the introduction by seafarers under the influence of Egypt cover all the facts, and further, if so, is there not an alternative explanation which will equally satisfy the available data? Then again, before one can conclude that ancient Egypt is the source of all civilization, one has to consider what, and how many of the elements of ancient Egyptian culture are native to the soil, and which came from outside. When the desert was habitable, it is highly probable that the Nile Valley was not habitable.

To return to Britain, its megalithic monuments, when classified into their various types seem to have originated from several sources, and were introduced by at least two different races of men; and to me Cornwall presents special problems, as there appears to be great overlaps with successive cultures which would suggest that it was a region of refuge in times of trouble.

There are apparently very ancient barrows, identical in every respect with one in which a Roman coin was found, this latter being the sole distinguishing mark. Can one date the others as pre-Roman? Again, at Harlyn Bay is a group of cist burials, which would be classified as pre-historic but for the finding of Roman coins in the graves, close to, on the other side of the estuary is a similar group, but the coins found belong to the twelfth century A.D.

There has been a considerable amount of work done on megalithic monuments during the last decade, with the result that they are not now dated as early as was formerly the case. Among the works, outside the journals devoted to Anthropology and Archæology, which I think especially interesting are: *The Long Barrows of the Cotswolds*, by O. G. S. Crawford, 1925; *O. S. Professional Paper No. 8*, 1924, dealing with long barrows of the south-eastern counties; *The Historical Geography of Early Ireland*, by W. Fitzgerald, 1925; *Our Early Ancestors*, by M. C. Burkitt, 1926; *The Axe Age*, by T. D. Kendrick, 1925; *The Druids*, by T. D. Kendrick, 1927; *The Circle and the Cross*, by A. Hadrian Alleroff, 1927. On the more general subject of the growth of civilization, one should read, *The Most Ancient East* and *The Dawn of European Civilisation*, both by V. Gordon Childe, the former published in 1928, and the latter, I think, in 1926.

By mentioning the above works, I do not wish to imply that Mr. Palmer has not read them; but firstly to show him the sources of most of my ideas, and secondly, the literature on the subject of pre-history is becoming, or rather has become, so vast that important work can be easily overlooked, thirdly, it has been necessary to bring this already over long article to a conclusion.

A. R. THORNEWELL.

Many a man thinks that it is his goodness which keeps him from crime, when it is only his full stomach. On half allowance, he would be as ugly and knavish as anybody. Don't mistake potatoes for principles.

Carlyle.

### The Lourdes of U.S.A.

OUR readers recently read a brief report in the *London Express* about the alleged "miracles" near Boston, U.S.A. Although these "miracles" have occurred on and off (it would be interesting to know why miracles are ever "off"), ever since Patrick J. Power was buried sixty years ago, it is only lately that vast crowds have gathered at Power's grave—with a corresponding increase in the columns of publicity always at the disposal of the Christian witch doctors.

Father Pat Power does not appear to have made any great impression on anyone in his lifetime. A little deaf, a very dull preacher, bereft of any sort of tolerance for "outsiders," he is just the sort of man likely to be more useful dead than alive. Malden Cemetery has become so popular amongst the benighted ignorant of America that it is stated, credibly enough, that the myriads of pilgrims visiting Malden in order to be cured of disease, include not only Catholics, but Moslems, Hindus, Protestants and Jews. Since Lourdes became the great European shrine a new generation has been caught in an orgy of sham "science"—faith-healing, Mary-Baker-Eddyism, and all kinds of spiritualism and theosophy. Rationalism has not succeeded in capturing more than a tiny fraction of those who once believed one of the orthodox creeds. The vast majority have been "converted" to some "fake" superstition worse than the diseased one they have escaped from.

After all, orthodox Protestantism which taught that the incredible stories of the Bible are true, was mostly perfectly rational in regard to all modern miracles. Nowadays there are crowds of people who believe everything "occult," if it is vouched for by an occult "teacher." This class falls an easy prey to modern miracle mongers.

It used to be said of superficial superstitionists that they believed everything miraculous said to have happened 2,000 or more years ago, but not in any recent miracles. It almost looks as if the Catholic Church is going to take advantage of the new "faith" which denies old stories and swallows the latest yarns of the same order.

A Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church has visited Malden, and there is a rumour that all the recent activity and publicity are part of a plan to establish on American soil an imitation Lourdes. There is a big Catholic press in U.S.A., and we need not be surprised at their newspapers suddenly launching into appreciative shouts when the order is given.

The really disgusting phenomenon is the lying service given by capitalistic newspapers to this publicity stunt. The *Boston Herald*, for instance, which cannot find a single fact to support the Malden claims, and does not know of one definite genuine cure, has the impudence to say:—

Regardless of the ultimate explanation of it all, the day and night processions of multitudes to the Malden grave are a subject which may well engage the thoughts of all serious people . . . It is evidence that the temper of the age is not materialistic.

Not a word exposing obviously dishonest pretences about the power of a few bones (or indeed of the grave-stones, or the grass, or the iron railings around them) to cure diseases.

The *New York Times*, with a reputation which apparently saves the editor from admitting the slightest value in these silly pilgrimages, cannot find in all its columns of description, room for a single rebuff for the terrible ignorance encouraged by an interested church for its own ends. The *Times*, like the *Herald*, rebukes the Materialists, who so far have not even objected to the thing, it being simply in line with all the rest of the religious paraphernalia. But says *The Times*, "these scenes are calculated to rebuke irreverence and unbelief." Perhaps the *Times* has given the whole show away with that one word "calculated."

The *New York Tribune* goes the whole hog. "Miracles have happened at this grave," it says. The *Tribune's* logic is of the ordinary (or negative) journalistic variety. It first begs the question by admitting the priestly pretensions—that cures have really happened:



then it says perhaps science cures through faith; then it triumphantly asks how could these people have been cured if they had trusted to science instead of faith? "So," it adds, "perhaps the instinct that clings to faith amid the welter of modern gadgets and scientific reasonings has its own rationalistic basis." It is the sort of topsy-turvy "rationalism" which enables Sir A. C. Doyle to prove that fairies must exist.

It is only fair to say that the *Baltimore Sun*, a journal published in the centre of American Catholicism has investigated three alleged cures, and urges "the value of a healthy skepticism which will serve to check the public hysteria in which any delusion may pass for truth."

*The New Republic*, as might be expected from so sensible a source, completely discredits the whole business from beginning to end. The details given by its Malden correspondent are sufficient to shock any intelligent reader. Hygienic laws are defied, cleanliness is ignored, dank dirt from a grave is rubbed into diseased flesh, leprosy-looking sores spread over a human face contaminate grass which hundreds of other devotees fanatically caress.

The blame for all this ought to be fairly divided between the Church which encourages it, and the helpless blindness of the irrational masses which can never be cured by anything short of healthy, reasoned, Free-thought. Merely to drop out of the Christian ranks because the Movies are more attractive will perpetuate and resurrect old follies. There is as much need as ever for militant crusades against superstition.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."  
WAR STRAIN.

SIR,—Apropos of the Memoranda of P. Victor Morris in your issue of Jan. 5. During the big push in November, 1917, at Paeshendale, an incident occurred that to me stood out as the most poignant of my experiences during the war. A Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment of the 11th Division had been relieved and were bivouaced at Gournier Farm, near Poperinghe, after leaving the front line.

Whilst our company (R.E.) were endeavouring to remake the main road for ammunition to reach the line which was practically impassable owing to mud, that was knee deep, a Tommy slouched across and asked for a "fag," which I was happy enough to supply, and in the course of conversation that followed he informed me that the Germans had captured the trenches they had been holding, and the battalion had been ordered out for a week's rest when they had to return and retake the lost positions.

To the reader this may appear quite a reasonable proposition, but to my way of thinking, nothing could have been more inhuman, to grant men a respite, with the mental anguish and strain of the deadly peril to come.

The only justification of submitting this narrative is in the hope of preventing a repetition of such organized brutality.

Late SERGEANT, Royal Engineers.

## Obituary.

MR. J. D. RICHARDS.

THE Swansea Branch has suffered a loss by the death of Mr. J. D. Richards, who met his death by a fall of stone in the coal pit in which he was working. He was a very ardent worker in the movement, and held the respect of all who knew him. Although sixty-five years of age, he had all the vigour and enthusiasm of a young man, not alone for the Free-thought cause, for which his warmest sympathies were exerted, but for many other reform movements with which he was associated. He was a very active spirit in the Miner's Federation, and a huge crowd assembled round the grave to pay their tribute of respect to him. The Swansea Branch has suffered a heavy loss by his death.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.  
INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Commandant Mary Allen—"Why We Need Women Police." Questions invited.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. John Murphy—"The Worship of Evil."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Dr. Bernard Hollander—"The Origin of Music."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (361 Brixton Road, near Gresham Road, 7.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"The Sermon on the Mount."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, entrance Theobald's Road): 7.30, Mr. F. J. Gould—"My Fifty Years of Humanism."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Lecture—"Should War Realism be Propagated?"—Mr. W. Farrell.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): Thursday, January 30, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, Dance, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s.

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. Free-thought 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, Mrs. A. Wokes (Liverpool) Theosophical Society—"Theosophy." On Sunday, January 26, the meeting will be held in the Picton Hall, and Mr. George Whitehead will lecture on "Religion and Birth Control." It is hoped that all members and friends will make this as widely known as possible.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Ladies' Chorus Room, A Door, Clark Town Hall): Monday, January 20, at 7.45, Mr. Geo. Whitehead (London)—"What Atheists Think of Jesus."

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, A Door, City Hall, Albion Street): Mr. George Whitehead will lecture in the morning on "Robert Blatchford's Views on Spiritualism," and in the evening, on "Who Created the Creator?"

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Club) Room, Middle Chase): 7.15, Mr. T. Brown will lecture. Chair taken by Mr. T. Birtley.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—A Social, Whist Drive and Dance will be held in St. Mungo, Halls, MacNeil Street, Glasgow, on Friday, January 17, at 7.30. Tickets, 4s. Carriages at 1.30 a.m.

## Miscellaneous Advertisements.

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Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1927, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

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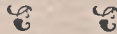
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