

# A STUDY IN FALSIFICATION.

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## Views and Opinions.

### A Study in Falsification.

It cannot be said with accuracy that man is naturally a truthful animal. The insistence placed by teachers and philosophers throughout the ages upon the need for observing truth is evidence of this. The most that one can say is that man is an animal with the possibility of being truthful; but like other possibilities it is not always realized. In this man imitates nature; for that too is not always truthful. One might say that nature only resorts to truth in the last instance. The face that nature turns to man is at first a false one. The earth appears to be flat, the stars seem to be near; in a hundred and one ways nature lies to man at the outset, and he only discovers what are the facts after long delay and tireless efforts. We find insects pretending to be dead leaves in order to save their lives. Others mimic plants in order to devour their unsuspecting relatives. Succulent leaves wear sham spines to warn off timid birds. Tasty insects imitate distasteful ones; from one end of nature to the other we have all sorts of tricks and imitations that present anything but the truth to the world. Man's elaborate falsehoods are but developed and vocal examples of a widespread characteristic of the world around him. Those who tell us to live according to nature as a counsel of perfection are telling us the greatest falsehood of all.

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### A Christian Science Apologetic.

The religious liar may therefore plead in his defence that he is imitating nature, and that to him nature is the very garment of God. And he is, in sober truth, as prolific in his lying as is nature. He gives you the lie direct, the lie circumstantial, the lie inferential, with many other varieties and with the apparent conviction that he is fulfilling the end for which God called him into existence. You have the lie direct in the shape of deliberately falsified stories

of everyday events. You have the lie circumstantial in the corroborative, religious, evidence to support the tales of infidel death-beds, testimonies to the appearance of angels, etc., and the lie inferential where the truth is told, but in such a way as to suggest a falsehood.

Christian Science, one of the newest of Christian sects, shows itself to be in the true apostolic line. Some time ago I called attention to the terroristic boycott set up by this mushroom body to prevent the sale of books which dealt with its teachings and the life of its founder in a way of which it disapproved. Its Church Manual lays it down very distinctly that no member of that sect must deal with a bookseller or publisher who publishes or sells "obnoxious books." The older Roman Church adopted the method of burning both the books and their writers; the new Church cannot burn, but it boycotts; it cannot imprison, but it will, if it can, bankrupt. When I exposed this method its press agent in London wrote that the Christian Scientists reserved the right to reply to criticisms which they considered unjust. As though that right had ever been questioned! I pointed out this much, and now I receive a lengthy letter from one of the Assistant Committee of Publication Mr. K. Primrose (see page 125), in which he repeats the assertion, with the added information that Mrs. Eddy pointed out that "The right of protest should be exercised with the most scrupulous regard for both propriety and wisdom," as though that disproves the teaching that Christian Scientists must boycott anyone who sells books of which the "Mother Church" disapproves. The teaching that members must not deal with offending tradesmen is clear and uncompromising; the exhortation that they must act with scrupulous regard for propriety and wisdom, is sheer hypocrisy. So did the Roman Church, when it handed the heretic over to the civil power and exhorted it to deal with him with all gentleness and without the shedding of blood, and then provided a guard of its own priests while he was roasted to death. That Church was also exercising its right of protest. And if in the course of the protest a few dozen heretics were roasted, who can blame the Church? Not a single Catholic. Neither Mr. Belloc nor Mr. Chesterton. Who shall blame Christian Scientists for following so excellent an example.

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### Mark Twain and Mrs. Eddy.

In his letter which appeared in these columns, Mr. Tennant said that Mark Twain declared Mrs. Eddy had organized and made available a healing principle that for two thousand years had been ignored and that she was a benefactor of the age. I asked for a precise reference for the quotation, and added that as Mark Twain did not believe in Christian Science to put him forward as believing in Mrs. Eddy and her

teaching was to mislead the public. Now, in the absence of Mr. Tennant, Mr. Primrose refers me to p. 1271, Vol. 3 of Paine's biography of Mark Twain for the quotation, and adds that "Christian Scientists do not read into it more than it says." The wording I may say is correct. As to the interpretation, I must leave my readers to judge.

Twain says his biographer, had always been interested in what was called mental healing, that is with the power of auto-suggestion in helping recovery from illness. It is a factor that no medical man would question, and upon which every medical man builds. Probably about seventy-five per cent of those who visit doctors have very little the matter with them that ordinary care would not remove; a large proportion of them have what are imaginary ailments (not the best of terms to use), and in addition there may exist any number of inhibitions that a little stimulus would serve, and does serve, to remove. Finally, the benefit of cheerfulness in all sickness, and in minimising sickness, is recognized and advocated by every medical man worth bothering about. Twain's attitude was that of every sensible person, although it was not expressed with the exactitude of a scientist. Moreover he had written against Christian Science, and in all his published writings had treated it for what it was—a creed that played upon hypochondriacs and weak-minded people, a Church that had developed a miraculous sense of dollar hunting. He was, therefore impressed with the future of Christian Science, not because of its "divine principle," but because of its organization and powers of acquisition. He said:—

Somehow I continue to feel sure of that cult's colossal future . . . I am selling my Lourdes stock and buying Christian science stock. I regard it as the Standard Oil stock of the future.

\* \* \*

#### Christian Truth.

Now the sentence cited by Mr. Tennant was not part of Twain's published writings, it occurred in the course of a conversation with Mr. Paine, and has all the looseness that a chance conversation is apt to have. I give the *whole* of the passage. Paine had been explaining to Twain that he had engaged in a course of mental healing for neurasthenia—a term used more for the amusement of patients than aught else—and had experienced benefit. Twain said:—

Of course you have benefited. Christian Science is humanity's boon. Mother Eddy deserves a place in the Trinity as much as any member of it. She has organized and made available a healing principle that for ten thousand years has never been employed, except as the merest kind of guesswork. She is the benefactor of her age.

"Christian Scientists," says Mr. Primrose, "do not read into it more than it says." If Mr. Primrose and Mr. Tennant mean anything at all by their quotation, they wish the public to believe that Mark Twain endorsed the "principle" for which Mrs. Eddy stood. For this there is not the slightest shadow of foundation. Mrs. Eddy's "principle" was the ridiculous one that disease did not exist save as a projection of man's "Mortal mind," that all disease, including the diseases of animals was due to man thinking disease, and that right belief would banish all disease. Twain's praise of Mrs. Eddy was that she had unconsciously emphasized the value of cheerfulness and the benefit of letting the mind rest upon thoughts of health instead of disease. And as those who take up with Christian Science appear to be, in the main, people who are of a semi-hysterical or hypochondriacal nature, the fostering of such an absurd proposition as that of Mrs. Eddy's does not prevent their reaping benefit from the "treatment," any more than prayers

taken with medicine prevents the physic having its effect. In the case of the ignorant Christian priest who says prayers over a sick person, while the patient takes every natural precaution to regain health, one may pass by the crediting the cure to a supernatural source as due to ignorance and nothing else. But seizing hold of a passage from a report of a man's conversation, and giving that passage a meaning which in the light of the conversation itself, and also in the light of the considered written opinions of the same man, it simply cannot bear, cannot be ascribed to ignorance, it is sheer falsification in the interests of a stupid religious creed. I could say myself that with a number of people, whether it be Christian Science or any other fantastic nonsense, from hugging a rosary to swallowing a bottleful of coloured water, so long as it helps to induce a more cheerful state of mind, and diverts attention from imaginary ailments, it is doing good.

The Christian Science statement is a good illustration of what I may call the lie inferential. It does not say what is untrue, but it is so stated as to lead people to infer what is untrue. The matter is not made better by Mr. Primrose saying that individual Christian Scientists or a local Church may have interpreted, in terms of boycott, the order not to patronize a bookseller or publisher who issues "obnoxious books." How else could they interpret it? The statement published in the *Christian Science Sentinel* is a piece of sheer humbug in face of the fact that booksellers are threatened with loss of custom if they continue to sell a book they have every right to sell. Finally, the comment on Mr. Dakin's book is radically unfair. The work is not an unsympathetic study of Mrs. Eddy. It is the study of an hysteric, with an hysteric's unreliability of statement, one with a greed for power and prominence, and a lack of education that placed her at the mercy of a peculiarly ignorant religious environment. To suggest that Christian Scientists are justified in ruining a man's business because he sells, in the ordinary course of trade a biography such as that of Mr. Dakin's, because it does not suit their worship of Mrs. Eddy is sheer impertinence. If they behave in this way of those who speak disrespectfully of Mrs. Eddy, what would they do if they had the chance to one who spoke disrespectfully of Jesus Christ! As a mere matter of theory, if the Christian Science theory be admitted it seems to me that in the interests of society all sorts of suppressions would have to take place. At any rate, one would have more respect for these people if having adopted this policy of boycott, they had the courage to stand by it when it was made public.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### The Cripple.

For twenty years I've cried in vain  
From my small world, a spinal chair,  
Wherein I'm told to bear my pain,  
For God above has put me there.

I lie each night awaiting dawn,  
Through long black hours of agony,  
Until at last, I'm told, the morn  
Is sent by God to comfort me.

Watching over me, 'tis said  
Throughout the night and through the day,  
And not an hour or week has sped,  
But that he turns and smiles my way.

One night in dreams where naught is ban,  
With glorious strength I smashed my chair,  
And faced that God as man to man,  
And used my hands—not maudlin prayer.

E. HUGH COOPER.

## The State Church Crisis.

"The price of Disestablishment would not be too great to pay for the Church's independence."

*Archbishop of York.*

"The only solution of the Church's independence is Disestablishment."—*Bishop of Durham.*

"We are face to face with the gravest challenge since the Reformation."—*Bishop of Winchester.*

THE bishops of the English State Church are in trouble, and this time it is serious. As faith has waned the ecclesiastics have become more and more dogmatic, and the result is that now there is a definite difference between the teachings of the bishops and the law of the land. Anomalies and contradictions are constantly arising between priestly pronouncements and that of the State. For instance, priests insist on views concerning marriage, which are in complete contrast with the marriage laws of the State. The majority of the bishops to-day are sedulous apes of the Romish Church, but the Anglican Church is by Act of Parliament, Protestant, and, therefore, Anti-Catholic.

A further bone of contention is the Revised Book of Common Prayer, which has received the sanction of the majority of the Anglican clergy, but has been rejected by Parliament, and cannot be used without illegality. A situation has arisen which has been described as the biggest crisis since the Protestant Reformation. So serious is it that no less a person than the Archbishop of York has declared that "the price of Disestablishment would not be too great to pay for the Church's independence." Other bishops voice the same opinion.

This constitutes a truly Gilbertian situation, for only a humourist could do justice to it. It is the priests themselves who are talking to-day of the disestablishment of the State Church, whilst the Socialist leaders, who are actually in office, sit dumb on the Treasury benches. What has happened since the stalwart Radicals of half a century ago insisted on the inclusion of the disestablishment of the State Church in the political programme? Is it due to the presence of so many former Free Church ministers in the Socialist ranks? It might be argued that as they are Nonconformists this is not the case. It is well, however, to remember that this is a distinction without much difference. As Milton once said: "Presbyter is but priest writ large." And these men were just as much priests as the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, although he is so much more fortunate in the matter of salary.

The Archbishop of York talks loudly of Disestablishment, but he says nothing concerning Disendowment. Curiously, none of the other bishops refer to this matter. They appear to be under the impression that a divorce can be arranged between their Church and the State without raising the question of alimony. Church and State are to separate, but the Church is to walk off with the cash-box beneath her robes. The priests hope to retain the huge properties now controlled by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the mining royalties, tithe-rent charges, ground-rents, and other sources of income, which together make their Church "wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice." Indeed, the Anglican Church's property has been calculated at the capital value of one hundred and twenty millions, which is, in all probability, an underestimate. Lord Addington's return of 1891 showed that the annual value of the Church's ancient ecclesiastical endowments was five and a half million pounds, exclusive of modern benefactions which amounted to £284,000 yearly.

The priests constantly assure their congregations

that this Church of England represents a religion independent of Parliament. The statement is untrue, but that never deters them from repeating it. The fact is that the form of the Christian Religion, which is known as the Church of England, has been manufactured by Parliament, and from time to time has been under the hands of its creator for alterations and repairs. The creator is a cynical association known as the House of Commons, having no religion in particular, and looking upon the theology which it patronizes as a special constable, whose duty it is to frighten people from attending too much to the affairs of life by promising them rewards when they are no longer alive. Most priests are notoriously ignorant of the culture of their own sorry profession, but the ignorance is unpardonable when they see from time to time the ritual, government, and doctrines of their Church being declared by Acts of Parliament. For these Acts are framed by Freethinkers, Roman Catholics, Jews, Unitarians, Methodists, and the other religions or non-religions professed by the six hundred members of Parliament.

It appears also that these clergy are many of them perjurers. They subscribe in the most solemn manner to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. But in practice they openly defy these ordinances, which are declared to be "the true doctrine of the Church of England, agreeable to God's Word." These articles include the beliefs that Adam was the first man, that the Romish religion is a vain invention, that the Christian Bible is the only pebble on the theological beach, and that the present tenant of Buckingham Palace is the head of Christ's Church.

To these Articles of Faith, among many others, every Church of England priest subscribes solemnly and we know that great numbers of them do not believe in them, or observe them, and that they are taking money on false pretences. Their main reasons for remaining in the Parliamentary Church of England are the salary attaching to the position, and the hopes of a bishopric, which means a substantial increase of money.

No reform of the Parliamentary Church of England is needed. It should be disestablished and disendowed, and the millions of money now used for the futherance of superstition diverted to worthier causes. To-day the alleged divine right of priests to misgovern is being challenged as was once that other equally mischievous theory, the divine right of Kings. Anyone who faces the facts squarely must realize that priestcraft is everywhere on trial. Few still believe that the voice of the priest is the voice of Cæsar beyond whom there is no appeal. So far as England is concerned this country would gain by the exclusion of the bishops from the Upper Chamber of Parliament. The disestablishment of the State Church would help to make this country safer for democracy, but it must be accompanied by disendowment. When the divorce takes place between the Anglican Church and the State it would be sheer folly to permit the priests alimony to the tune of one hundred and twenty millions of money to be used for the subversion of Democracy.

MIMNERMUS.

Our priests are unceasingly talking to us of the weakness and errors of the human mind; but is the mind of a priest more infallible than mine? Is his understanding less subject to error than that of an unbeliever, and may not his passions and interests deceive him in the same way that others are deceived?—*Diderot.*

I shall do what little I can to hasten the day when this earth shall be covered with homes, and when by countless firesides shall sit the happy and the loving families of the world.—*Ingersoll.*

## Secular Education.

THERE is every possibility that, in the near future, Parliament will be asked to amend the Education Act, so as to give greater scope for the teaching of definite religious dogmas in the Nation's schools, and that the various religious bodies will seek financial support from the State for their schools, at the same time retaining full control over the curriculum. In this connexion, it will no doubt be interesting to Free-thinkers to know what were the views of our present Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, in 1908, when the Liberal Government were endeavouring to reconcile the conflicting interests of the various sects by some modification of the Education Act.

At a meeting convened by the Secular Education League and held at St. James's Hall, Great Portland Street, on December 10, 1908, Mr. Ramsay MacDon-ald, in the course of his speech, said: "The case for the secular solution is a logical case, it is a just case. This is a question which concerns more particularly the children of the working classes. I am bound to say that nothing made me feel so disgusted as when I listened in the House of Commons, the other day, to gentlemen whose feet had never crossed the threshold of a Board School, get up and tell us about the tremendous amount of concern they had for the quality of the moral and religious teaching given to other people's children. All I can say is, I wish they would look after their own children. If they had only shown the same anxiety for their own children and seen that they were well educated in morality and religion, well bred, trained in the knowledge of what was right and wrong, and had left us to do the same with our children, modern society would have been a much holier affair than what it is to-day. I am not one of those who believe in peace at any price. I am in favour of a just and lasting peace, a peace that has been secured after the State and Church make up their minds to look after their own business. There is nothing more preposterous than that the State should attempt to do the work of the Church unless it is that the Church should actually expect the State to do its work. Let us suppose that we are all profoundly religious and that we are simply burning with anxiety to get the minds of our children, using the word in its very best sense, converted. The children have religious instruction for three quarters of an hour each day, and we are going to say: 'What a blessed religious exercise they have had. How enlightening it has been to their souls.' Three quarters of an hour's instruction in Jewish history—very ancient—and the child might say: 'Thank God, if I did not know that David was the King of Judah, I might have been a thief.' We have a right to test education by results. We hear a great deal about science nowadays. I would like to hear Mr. Haldane, who is a leader in science, give his genuine opinion as a scientist, from the point of view of a man who believes in the scientific method, as to the effect of Bible reading in the schools from the religious point of view. Let us begin on a secular basis. Let us secularize our schools. Let us bring in, not Bills to allow sectarian strife, but Bills to increase the efficiency of education. Let us make a real beginning in the State care of children. Let us try to devise some means by which the wisdom, knowledge and power and the financial strength of the State, can build up a physical, intellectual and moral character in our children so that when they are no longer children they shall be powerful men and women, prepared to face life in all its aspects. Bring in Bills to do that and peace will naturally follow. If we could get our education ministers to tear out

from the official volumes, all records of those round table conferences and barterings, and forget them, and simply go, day after day, to our schools, see the children, see the teachers and the buildings, and go from those schools to the factories and workshops and see the conditions under which the youth of the country has to work, and with that experience go back to the conference room, and construct an Education Bill which would enable them to meet those conditions, then you would have an education of the right kind. You would have peace, you would have a settlement which was not a surrender, and the whole country would benefit enormously as the result of those efforts."

Our late leader, Mr. Foote, spoke at the same meeting and, during his speech, said: "I quite agree with Mr. Chamberlain, that if you are to have religious education in the schools at all, the State must either pay for none, and that is, religion must be shut out of the schools altogether, or the State must pay for all, and I sympathize with the Churchman and with the Catholic who says, if we must have religious education in the schools, then I want my religious education. I believe that is the attitude of some Churchmen on the Executive of our Secular Education League, and I am thoroughly with them in the matter. It appears to me that the parents above all have the right, if anybody has the right, of deciding the religious opinions of their children. I do not say anybody has the right, but I do say if anybody has it, it seems naturally to belong to the parents rather than to a stranger. Secular education is the only solution. It is said the people won't have it. I answer, give them the opportunity. We have at least the repeated vote of the Trade Union Congress, which is unquestionably a representative body, and such an overwhelming majority as that Congress records in favour of secular education ought to justify us at least in saying that there is no absolute certitude that the nation at large would reject it. But secular education, we are told is dangerous. To whom? To what? If secular education is just, and logical and fair, and every leading statesman of the last quarter of a century has said so, then I submit that it cannot be dangerous to truth, and any man who wants privilege for his own opinions confesses that they cannot stand upon their own merits. Men go about the country saying secular education is dangerous, and they have allowed this country to enter into an alliance with Japan, in which secular education has obtained for nearly forty years. Has secular education weakened the morale, the discipline of Japan? Japan has given an object lesson to civilization. And next, we enter upon a good understanding, which many people say they hope will grow into something firmer, with France, where secular education has been the political and social salvation of the country. What, after all, is the ideal at which we are aiming? Every civilized nation finds out in time that the separation between what is called the spiritual and the temporal power is a vital necessity. That is one of the most established principles of the evolutionary study of history. Very well, we want simply to promote that idea, to extend it, to carry it into final effect. Let religion be recognized in the church and in the school as a personal matter between a man and his own conscience. Let each be free to worship in his own way, or in voluntary association with those who are like-minded with himself. But let there be no compulsion. He who brings brute force, the policeman and the jailer into matters of intellectual character is a traitor to the best interests of mankind. Now we have the 300th anniversary of John Milton being celebrated. John Milton was a great man, an eloquent man as well as a great poet,

and in that splendid plea for the liberty of unlicensed printing, Milton said: 'Let truth and falsehood grapple, whoever knew truth put to the worst in a free and open encounter?' Secular education is based upon that declaration. Truth shall fight in the lists free. No priest shall take it in charge. No one of any denomination shall go about arm in arm with it. Let it fight its own battles out in the open arena, and truth would be satisfied to leave the schoolmaster to his proper business, and the parent and the religious teacher to his."

After the above eloquent speeches no words of mine can accentuate the importance of Freethinkers making the question of secular education one of the first planks in their propaganda throughout the country.

H. R. CLIFTON.

### A Racial Calamity:—Losing the Sense of the Absurd.

THERE is no calamity on the social horizon so ominously depressing as the amazing rate at which so-called civilized nations are losing their sense of the absurd. A human being in that state is like a deflated balloon or airship; he has no power to rise.

Or rather like ground-lich condemned to spend their brief existence in the gloom of the ocean floor with no suspicion that high above there is a surface swathed in sunlight. The human mind in such a state is as impotent as a steel spring which has been de-tempered and deprived of its elasticity. It was this impotency that made it impossible for the race to emancipate itself from the thralldom of superstition and ignorance. So dormant was this sense in the average mind, that the most palpable contradictions and patent falsities gave no shock even when public attention was drawn to them in so poignant a form as the tortures endured by the martyrs.

We are now, however, faced with an alarming increase in this fateful insensibility to the fantastic—an increase of torpor that must, if allowed to grow, eventuate in a great reaction to the slough of insanity. This fact has falsified the sanguine anticipation of the vanguard of modern culture. The forecast was, inspired by prospects so bright as to amount to a feeling of certainty, that when the multitudinous discoveries of Science became well disseminated, this general dominance of the sense of the ludicrous would rapidly diminish. To find, therefore, that the very reverse is happening fills one with utter despair of the ultimate emancipation of the human mind from the permanent thralldom of superstition.

But it is in truth, though a racial calamity, not a real wonder, for such, indeed, have been the vicissitudes of all "progress" in every sphere of social life. The march of any kind of betterment has been as tortuous as the course of a Continental river. It starts, say, in a southerly direction, and then it tries, in turn, every point of the compass, often redoubling upon itself, proceeds in the direction of its source.

Such exactly is the story of man's efforts at mental emancipation from the tyrannous oppression of priestcraft. Often has it happened for a generation or two, led out of the woods by *superminds*, his path was direct towards the open and the sunlight. Then all of a sudden its course is diverted to left or right, or actually is turned round so as to face the wood once more. And what is worse, the re-action often lasts much longer than the forward lap. Such a vicissitude is sadly exemplified by the fate of Greek culture. For a few unforgettable centuries the Greeks made a phenomenal ascent. Who would—or could have then dreamt it possible that soon all their brilliant achieve-

ments would be wiped out by a degrading superstition, and that Europe would be kept under its benighted pall for a millennium and half. But at no time have anticipations been more falsified than at present.

Towards the close of the last century, the mental world was flooded with the benign and exhilarating light which emanated from those great luminaries—Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Clifford and Carlyle, not to mention that coming from the cohorts of toilers in the fields of astronomy, geology, and physical science, which resuscitated the rational faculty and revived our sense of the absurd. But, alas! today our sense of grotesque and fantastic is not merely dormant but well nigh atrophied.

What then is responsible for this Æonian racial calamity? The answer can be given in one term—viz., *Religion*. That vampire obsession so characteristic of the race is the fountain head of that ever-flowing narcotic stream that puts the sense of the absurd into a chronic sleep.

The ultimate elements of religion are all of necessity, fictitious, gratuitous assumptions—figments of the imagination; but before they can become objects of belief they must be accepted as truths. How is this metamorphosis effected? How does an essential absurdity become accepted as sanity or an intrinsic falsity, accepted as an eternal verity? How is such a miracle brought about? The problem is, by no means, difficult of solution.

The priesthood of all shades and grades down to their prototype—the medicine-man—is the perennial custodian of religion in all its multifarious varieties; it is the priesthood, therefore, especially in all priest-run religions, that constitutes the actual agency responsible for this fateful narcosis of a mental capacity so essential to man's well being. The priesthood, long back in prehistorical times, developed a craft—priestcraft—capable of effecting its ends, which was to get three wholly gratuitous fictions accepted as established truths:—

- (1) That the gods were real existences.
- (2) That the priesthood was a privileged class.
- (3) That as such they could mediate between man and his gods: either by presenting their petitions and offerings to the gods, or by receiving and delivering messages from them.

No 1 is basic, being the priestly axiom upon which the others rest. It gives to their claims and messages the sanction of truth, and invests their utterances with authority. The usual formula was—"the word of the Lord came unto me (or unto Moses) saying." If the message was the word of the Lord, it must of necessity be true (as God was assumed to be the embodiment of truth): and the priesthood were thus given authority to deliver the message and for insisting upon compliance.

The priest arrogated to himself such intimacy with the gods as to pose as mediator between them. It was this claim that gave them audacity enough to assert domination over their contemporaries. It was, therefore, imperative that this claim should not be denied or called in question. But man possesses a critical faculty which demands evidence. Reason wants proofs before accepting gratuitous statements as established truths.

How then did the priesthood get round this difficulty? The priestly class being astute had developed a priestcraft, as stated above, and one that was based on sound psychology. They well knew that the rational faculty in man does not acquire critical power till well advanced in adolescence or has reached adulthood. It has not unfolded on the mental stem of childhood; like an inflorescence it appears last. In

the child's mind critical reason is in complete abeyance. It is as yet only in bud or embryo. He gets all his opinions and beliefs implanted in his plastic mind by the adult population. The priesthood has exploited this fact to the utmost extent. It does not matter one iota how false, ridiculous, inconsistent with known facts or how mutually contradictory or even farcical ideas are, they are accepted by a child as positive truths, if he is told that they are the "Word of God" whom he has been assured from the first to be perfection in all goodness, power, and truth. So the priesthood took great care that the above three propositions, or assumptions rather, were duly impressed upon each new generation, so that the sense of the absurd in respect to them would be entirely dormant. And whatever is implanted in the child's mind as "gold" retains its character, and is as difficult of elimination as is the extraction of metals infiltrating our rocks—an arduous and a costly process.

KERIDON.

*(To be concluded.)*

### An Entertaining Parson.

FORTUNATELY for the country many parsons scattered throughout England in the interludes of doing God's work, seek consolation in less harmful activities. We remember Dean Hole and his roses, Canon Ellacombe and his begonias, and now we are reminded of Rector Goodrich and his parochial researches by a little book about Freshford and Hinton Charterhouse in Somerset. A few excerpts may entertain Freethinkers.

There was a religious house of the Carthusians at Hinton, and we read that King Edward III bestowed upon the monks there "a bin of wine in the port of Bristol to strengthen them the better to pray on his behalf for his estate." The author says the monks "literally carried out the command . . . they were faithful even to the last." Evidently Edward was of the opinion that God would sit up and take notice of him if the monks had strength to bawl loud enough! The still small voice, the solitary cry of distress or anguish is useless, what is needed is the cry of the well-nourished and intoxicated.

We see here that the brewers' refrain is founded on historical precedent:—

"The more we are together, the happier we will be,  
The more we are together, the busier God will be."

This is the principle underlying all the hysterical crying and shouting of Salvationists, of water-can Baptists and psalm-chanting Churchmen. I am reminded of the Chinese scoffer, Yuan Mei who wrote:—

I've ever thought it passing odd  
How all men reverence some God,  
And wear their lives out for his sake,  
And bow their heads until they ache.

'Tis clear to me the Gods are made  
Of the same stuff as wind or shade . . .  
Oh, if they came to every caller,  
I'd be the very loudest bawler!

Let us drink wine and howl—bay at the moon—disturb God from his eternal somnambulism!

The author also says there is at present a tombstone at Freshford to Joseph Samuels, who, "by the awful providence of God lost his life in a cloth factory at Twerton, near Bath."

Christians do not always carry their Fundamentalism to the tombstones, although every happening, however awful, dreadful, shocking or terrible, they must ascribe to the providence of God.

While we can understand the psychology of Christians that enables them to accept every terrible occurrence as "the act of God," even brutal murders, cinema fires, mine disasters, earthquakes and wars, it is difficult to understand their inconsistency.

It seems illogical if not blasphemous of them to institute inquiries into accidents, crimes, catastrophes—

to question God's providence. Can anything happen without God's prevision and permission? Does He not still control the world? Yes, He still moves in a mysterious way His awful wonders to perform, and selects "poor instruments" even if, crazy, careless, drunken or murderous to do His will!

Yes! and every tragedy is followed by religious congregations somewhere acknowledging his "awful providence," praising Him with sorrowful, humble and contrite hearts!

Another incident recorded by Rector Goodrich is the ringing of the Church bells when the Rev. John Wesley attempted to speak at Freshford so that he could not be heard. How tolerant these Christians are, and how they love one another! Yet so that the incumbent and successors should get a hearing, one, John Curll (1703) bequeathed £100 a year with some lands on condition the incumbent should officiate each Lord's Day, morning and evening!

Long suffering Freshford, to be disturbed through 226 years by the whim of a dead man!

MAX COORLEIGH.

### The Modernizing of Catholic Activities.

IN an article under this heading appearing in *Der Atheist*, the organ of the International Proletariat Freethinker in Vienna, some details of interest are given regarding the endeavours of the Roman Catholic Church on the Continent to unify and bring up to date its methods of propaganda.

Reference is made to the Catholic International Press Agency—known as the Kipa—with its headquarters in Freiburg, Switzerland, and to the International Catholic Missionary Society, known as the Miva. In regard to the latter, it informs us that a combined missionary enterprise, including ten motor cars, three motor boats, and wireless apparatus, is to be started in the Northern fastnesses of South West Africa.

Efforts are also being made in France and Germany to gain some sort of control, either politically or by means of the press, of the film industry.

In Holland the wireless service has been put at the disposal of the Roman Catholic University at Nymwegen, and lectures have been broadcasted from the Radio Station at Huizen on wavelength 1875 m.

The contributor who supplies these data comments as follows: "The modernization of Catholicism is a self-contradiction. In so far as a newspaper is Catholic it cannot be modern; in so far as it is modern it ceases to be Catholic. If Roman Catholic activities are to be modernized, we shall have little to complain of. The Catholic cinema will instil a taste for the worldly cinema. The wireless listener will not remain content with wavelength 1875 m., and will turn to other wavelengths. The Catholic motorboat will destroy the effect of stately processions; while the Catholic airship will raise doubts concerning the veracity of certain biblical fables."

*(Translated by C. S. FRASER.)*

Never, perhaps, before has so large a part of the population abandoned all interest in what the wisest of all ages have regarded as the fundamental problem of life, the problem of religion. It is not only that faith has lost its hold upon the majority of modern men and women. Even where religious feeling is deep and sincere there is, outside the ranks of professional theologians, a strong sense of the futility of the discussion of religious problems.—(*English Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, by D. C. Somervell (1929).)

A man may say with some colour of truth, that there is an Abecedarian ignorance that precedes knowledge, and a Doctoral ignorance that comes after it.

Montaigne.

There is not a more singular character in the world than that of a thinking man.—*William Melmoth*.

## Acid Drops.

A "Catholic Elector" writes to the *Glasgow Forward* warning the Labour Party that it runs grave risks if it acts so as to offend the Catholic voters by voting for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. He says that about 700 candidates owe their election to Roman Catholics, and plainly threatens these if they act so as to offend the Church. Well, we have pointed out that the growth of the Roman Catholic vote, because it is the most ignorant and the most obedient vote in the country represents a distinct danger to healthy political life. This may perhaps cause some of those who think the religious question is best left alone to realize that leaving religion alone means corruption in political life and a lowering of the whole tone of social life. There is not a country in the world in which the Roman Catholic Church has not operated to the injury of political honesty, and it is only worse than other churches because it has greater opportunities for evil. Those who want our public life to be clean and healthy will go on making Freethinkers.

One has to be very charitable indeed to acquit Christian preachers of misleading those who look to them for guidance. To those who know the facts, there can be no reasonable doubt as to the origin of the Christian doctrine of the Eucharist. It is a survival of the primitive practice of ceremonially turning a man into a God, killing him and then eating him. There are very few forms of the devotee partaking of the divine nature, but this is the plain root of it all. And there is hardly a competent anthropologist who is not aware of it. The modern doctrine is a toning down, a Rationalizing of a very brutal and a primitive process.

But here is the Rev. Dr. Selbie, whose business it is to direct Christians to the higher life. And this is the way he does it. In the *Christian World* for February 13, he explains that the Eucharist is closely associated with the communal supper of the early Christians, and that the eating the bread and drinking the wine as the body and blood of Jesus is "the thanksgiving for his work," and then proceeds to lament over the darkness of those who believe that the bread and the wine are actually transformed into flesh and blood. We agree as to the gross ignorance of those who can believe that the incantations of a priest can work such a miracle. Such ignorance is deplorable. The matter is different when we are dealing with men who must know what is the real origin of such a custom, and must also know what is the real nature of the custom, and who remain silent about this, while trying to foist on their followers an explanation which is simply and demonstrably false. As we explain elsewhere, there are more ways than one of telling a lie. But on this head we have nothing to teach the mass of Christian preachers. We may even have something to learn.

Proving that black is white is fairly easy in comparison with the ridiculous task taken on by Bishop Russell Wakefield in the *Daily News* pulpit. The poor are the comrades of Christ, he states, and it is not wrong to be wealthy, but wealth makes it difficult to be like Christ. These rags and tatters of reasoning is the *reductio absurdum* of trying to reconcile power and place in the church to shorn sheep.

The Rev. Austin Lee, the ex-Curate of Kew, has an article in the *Daily Mail*, on the hardships of the wives and children of deceased vicars. We have no wish to minimise the tragedy of any household when the breadwinner has gone, but the Rev. Austin Lee is taking the very parochial view of a small-minded man if he thinks that vicar's wives are singled out in the special sense that he indicates. Most homes in ordinary circumstances undergo an earthquake on the death of the husband, and from a reading of the article in question, it would appear that the writer has yet to commence growing up.

The *Passing Show* almost incurs the charge of disrespect for biblical teaching. It has a joke about Jonah taken from *Smith's Weekly*, Sydney. Jonah is being asked by Mrs. Jonah to give an explanation of his torn clothes, and he replies, "Someone did it with a harpoon when I was in the whale." It is now the Rev. Morse Boycott's turn to bring along proof that such things could actually occur.

Helen Hope, in the *Daily News*, is asking readers to go easy on the parson. Well, who is it who wants to be hard on him? Not Freethinkers surely, for they take him as a man, and expect him to be no more than a man. It is his profession that puts him in a false position, and "Retreat" may eventually play a big part in demonstrating that there is nothing of superhuman importance behind clerical dress, nasal intonation, and subscription to the thirty-nine articles. At the same time, all the stories of clerical poverty and hardship have their counterpart in the other and more useful branches of society.

When the arrangement between Mussolini and the Pope was first made public we pointed out that it contained elements of danger to the Papacy and also to the Italian dictator. The Church would certainly not permit the State to obtain a position of supremacy in men's minds and that was precisely what Mussolini was aiming at, and not merely that but also a single conception of the nature of the State. The aim of the Church is, and always has been to set itself above the State, and to make it a mere mouthpiece of the Church. The aims of Mussolini and the Papacy were thus inherently antagonistic, and sooner or later the clash would come.

Now we see that the Church has brought its Index to bear, and has banned several publications that have been issued from the official Fascist press. One of these has been condemned full of "the gravest offences to Catholic doctrine, to Divine law, to the supreme Roman Pontiff, and to the exercise of his powers." The position is a curious one. Mussolini cannot hope to perpetuate his autocracy unless he can secure control of the minds of the new generation, and the Papacy must get the State on its side if its going to perpetuate its rule. It is this that has driven the Church, which has any politics that serves its ends and the ruler who has no religion at all into combination. But it is a union that, in the nature of things, cannot last.

A very gracious individual is the Bishop of Woolwich. He informs readers of *John Bull* that he believes all healing comes from God. He says:—

In our view the medical man is also an agent of God's healing power, even though he may not recognize it. Hospitals, clinics, the work of the psycho-analysts, all these are part of the great healing mission of Christ.

What an unfortunate thing it is that so much of this healing work has been opposed by the followers of Christ, also how very curious it is that a work directly due to Christ should have been responsible for so many unavoidable blunders. One imagines that even without Christ it would have gone pretty much as it has gone on with him.

The very good town councillors of Derby have refused to permit golf on Sundays. It was opposed on the ground that if golf were permitted permission to play other games would also have to be given. Well, why not? There is no reason against it except the survival of the savage idea of "sacred" days. After all the clergy in Derby engage every Sunday in the game of "Beggar my neighbour."

Dr. Frederick Graves, formerly a surgeon in civil and military prisons, advocates painless extinction instead of hanging for condemned murderers. What? Do away with a venerated Christian practice that has had the

sanction of the Christian Church for centuries? This Secularism—how it is undermining the spiritual ideas of the nation! No wonder the Archbishop of Canterbury condemns it.

The League of Nations has appointed a Commission to settle the rights and claims of Jews and Mohammedans as regards the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem. Really, it hardly seems ethically right to attempt to deprive the faithful of opportunities for a good healthy religious fight. Religious enthusiasm, too, is sure to diminish if the Commission is successful. The League of Nations must be "anti-God" to make such an appointment!

A doctor, says that drinking water keeps one well. On the other hand, many people believe that they would not keep well unless they had a daily sip of wine with a priest's magic in it. And forty thousand men, educated in colleges, and called "reverend," encourage that belief. This fact should interest future historians a hundred years hence. It will be helpful in assessing the degree of civilization achieved in the twentieth century.

A weekly paper reminds us that there are 330,755 unknown dead among the 1,089,919 British soldiers killed in the war. Still, in the next war the number of dead will not be *quite* so large. Wise men are gravely discussing the limitation of armaments, and the relative humanity of poison gas.

The concertina was invented 100 years ago by Sir Charles Wheatstone, an electrical engineer. And now its chief use is to wait pious noises at street corners to the Lord Most High! As Shakespeare truly said: "The evil that men do lives after them . . ."

Sir Harold Mackintosh told the World's Sunday School Association that, as the pace in which people live grows greater, and life's affairs become more complicated, it is more and more necessary to read the Bible daily. Quite so. For example, what could be more tranquilizing than reading the true story of David the Giant-Killer, or the miraculous adventures of the Man of Sorrows, or perhaps the erotic imaginings of King Solomon's love poems!

Mr. Gilbert Housfall, speaking at Manchester, said that, "It is generally agreed that the children of to-day are a great improvement on any previous set of children." Most of the parents are indifferent to religion, and Christian religious discipline is no longer enforced. Grace before meals and prayers before bed, Bible reading and Sunday observance have gone out of fashion. Yet the children are not worse, but better! This upsets all the parsons' doleful prophecies. But it won't stop them from prophesying—dismal prognostication is part of their trade.

Mr. Edward P. Bell, of the *Chicago Daily News*, who is now in England, told a Methodist interviewer that:—

If we are to have world peace, the only way it can be brought about is through the Press. The combined Press pitted against war could do more than all the other forces in the world put together. It is not too much, even, to say that it is the *only way* to peace.

One thing is certain. World peace will not be achieved by that force known as the Christian Church. Its past unsavoury practice of moralizing war has aroused suspicion in millions of minds as to the Church's trustworthiness as a moral or ethical guide. The press could achieve world peace. But first of all, the progressive thinkers of the world will have to educate newspaper owners and editors to more civilized modes of thinking.

Already pious "temperance" organizations are claiming that the diminution of excessive drinking of alco-

holic liquors is due largely to the spread of their propaganda. Well, excessive drinking is mainly the result of boredom, monotony, ignorance, and lack of rational occupations for body and mind during leisure hours. Is "temperance" propaganda like to have any effect on such things? Of course not. It is the spread of education and of greater opportunity for wholesome mental and physical recreation that is chiefly responsible for any improvement in regard to excessive drinking. What the intemperate propaganda of total abstainers has achieved is—to attach a false glamour to "booze," which makes it attractive to certain type of intelligence.

At last comes a definition of "true religion." The Rev. J. T. Godfrey, of Upper Sunbury, Middlesex, supplies it to a daily paper:—

True religion is the practice of holiness and righteousness. Holiness is a reverent attitude of mind, heart, and will towards God. Righteousness is the fixed attitude of good-will towards all mankind.

This is so neatly comprehensive that adherents of almost all the great creeds can claim to be practising "true religion." What, then, becomes of the claim of the Christian creed to be the "only true religion"? And what point is there in spending millions of pounds trying to convert other "true religionists" to Christianity?

Mr. Godfrey's definition of "true religion" is helpful in one direction. The religionist who accepts it ought never again to slander a Freethinker by saying he is truly religious without knowing it. For no Freethinker professes or practices "holiness." He allows those with child-like minds to monopolize it.

The *Daily Express* has just concluded a series of articles concerning "Divorce." Thereupon, a reader, "A.W.B.," declares that he does not believe "in this frantic desire, on the part of English married couples, for either separation or divorce." He adds:—

The love of home is extraordinarily strong in English people. The morality of English people has been the admiration of the world, their home life the envy of all the nations. They will not, I am sure, allow the neurotic effusions of post-war writers, to disturb the decent and even tenor of their ways.

"A.W.B." is a bit astray. Divorce doesn't concern the happily married; nor is its purpose to destroy happy homes. Wider facilities for divorce are advocated to give the unhappily married an opportunity to find happiness, and a happy home, with a new partner. When there are, despite the opposition of Christian persons, greater facilities for the unhappily married to form new unions, there should be a greater quantity of happy home life in England for foreigners to envy. We feel sure "A.W.B." will be pleased at that.

The *Methodist Recorder* has been discussing "Religion and Trade." The following is a portion:—

We believe that Christian men should make the state of trade a matter of prayer. We are not anxious that our people should be prosperous for the sake of comfort and ease. Adversity has its uses, and we are discovering them in these difficult days. But it is time to face the fact that if Britain is to have a future as glorious as its past, no effort must be spared to restore our declining trade.

To prove that our pious friend is purely disinterested we quote another piece: "If the British nation should lose its industrial leadership, and sink into poverty, then its religious and philanthropic witness must inevitably decline." There's nothing like wrapping one's ideas up neatly! What our friend means is, that if Britain becomes industrially poor, the churches, parsons, missionary society officials, and religious journals will have a lean time. Obviously this is a case for prayer—bucketsful of it.



## National Secular Society

THE Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

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I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. H. ENGLISH (North Seaton).—Thanks for what you have done with regard to the Blasphemy Bill, also for your appreciation of our work. If you will write the General Secretary, we think a lecture might well be arranged.

C. S. FRASER.—Very pleased to see your strong, but temperate letter of protest against the religious policy of the B.B.C. But we imagine that this august body will go on religiously about the whole-hearted support its religious services gets, and deny that any considerable number are opposed to it. We have challenged it to take a plebiscite among its subscribers, but it declines. Your suggestion of preparing a protest by Freethinkers is worth considering, but it would fail of its object unless every Freethinker signed, and there are large tracts in this priest-ridden country where a great many would not care to expose themselves.

J. F. FELLOWS.—You will see that your letter is covered by the one published from Mr. Primrose. The point is not whether Mark Twain referred to Mrs. Eddy as giving a boon to humanity, but citing such a sentence so as to give the impression that he backed up Mrs. Eddy's belief that all sickness was a question of belief. The correct statement would have been that in so far as Mrs. Eddy's teaching involved the therapeutic value of auto-suggestion it was good for humanity. But this would not have been of service to Christian Science propagandists.

H. MARTIN.—Certainly distributing large numbers of the current issue of this paper is expensive, but the *Freethinker* is not run as a business proposition, and it is good business from the point of view of propaganda.

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

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

*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. Roselli, 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.*

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

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (February 23) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, at 7.30. His subject will be "The Savage In Our Midst," and in response to some Liverpool readers he will take occasion to deal with the question of the Blasphemy Laws. Some of the parliamentary representatives of Liverpool sadly need instruction on this subject.

We said last week that it would be ungracious not to acknowledge the number of Christian clergymen who resent the existence of such laws as those relating to Blasphemy. Here is one from the Rev. Richard Lee:—

I was interested in your Blasphemy number and especially in the Division List. Lovat-Fraser, Edwin Scrymgeour and W. Logan seem to be the only Socialists in favour of protecting their religion by the bludgeon.

It is worth noting how many officers of the Army and Navy and titled persons are in the noble seventy-seven.

I counted forty-seven superior persons of this type in the list.

The dragooning type of mind has little use for rational persuasion.

Though my philosophy and my religion are poles apart from the Freethinkers, I am with you in your stand for Rationalism and Freedom of Thought.

No one need respect the other man's opinions, but if we respect the right of every man to hold them and express them, that is the main thing.

Several of our readers have sent us newspaper comments on the House of Commons debate, in which the speech of Mr. Clynes is praised because he insisted that there must be some protection against language which may lead to a breach of the peace. So for the thousand and forty-first time we must point out that this protection already exists in the ordinary law. Moreover, there has never been any danger of a breach of the peace in connexion with any blasphemy prosecution that has ever been instituted. On the contrary, it has often been urged as a reward for the prosecution that the audience was a large one, and actually laughed at what was being said. Finally, the fact that the prosecution is not under the ordinary law is evidence that under ordinary law a prosecution would fail. It is language used in relation to religion upon which the prosecution has always rested its case. And that means a special law for the protection of religion, which is the very thing against which right-minded men and women protest.

Take an illustration of what has been said of the speech for which George Jacob Holyoake, a man who could certainly not be said to have been in the habit of going out of his way to wound the feelings of Christians. His fault lay in the other direction, that of going out of his way to please Christians. At the conclusion of one of his lectures he was asked a question, and in reply he said, that as things were the country was too poor to spend what it did on religion, and he suggested doing to the deity what we did to retired military officers—put him on half-pay. It is quite clear that if he had suggested putting the Prime Minister, or the King, or the whole of the Royal Family on half-pay, no such thing as a prosecution could have been instituted. But he had suggested economy in relation to God Almighty, and the result was imprisonment. That is, Christian demand a special law which shall prevent using in relation to the Christian religion forms of controversy that are used every day in relation to other subjects.

It is said that we must not laugh at Christianity. Why not? What is one to do with a ridiculous creed but laugh at it? When men solemnly pray for an alteration in the weather, or offer up prayers for the King's recovery, while the best medical and nursing skill of the nation is impounded to cure him, what can a sensible person do but laugh? When we are told that about two

thousand years ago a Jewish girl gave birth to a child without the aid of a male person, what can one do but laugh? One must either laugh or cry at an exhibition of such gross superstition. And of the two laughter is healthier and has better effect. The objection really rests upon the effectiveness of laughter as a killer of absurdities. We have been laughing at religion all our life, and expect to do so to the end, Blasphemy Law or no Blasphemy Law.

Mr. F. Gosling sends us the following:—

If some of your geometrically-minded readers care to amuse themselves with the list of voters given in your issue of February 9, I recommend them to select all those with handles to their names and underline both name and title—civil, in black; naval and military, in red; and civil and naval or military, in red and black. The result, even to those who think they know "who's who" is liable to be startling!

I believe a few M.P.'s do not flaunt their titles; but your list, which is a fair copy of that in Hansard, is good enough for working purposes. This basis yields me the following results:—

	Ayes	Noes
Plain "misters" ... ..	83%	17%
Sirs ... ..	7%	93%
Forces ... ..	16%	84%
Rt. Hons. ... ..	41%	59%
Doctors ... ..	80%	20%
All Titles ... ..	28%	72%

And with the help of the 1930 Whitaker I found that, of those who divided, the parties voted thus:—

	Ayes	Noes
Labour ... ..	123	1
Conservative ... ..	nil	72
Liberal ... ..	8	3
Independent ... ..	nil	1
Totals ... ..	131	77

A debate has been arranged between Mr. D. Capper of the Teachers Educational League, and the Rev. Prebendary Osborne, Chief Inspector for London of Religious Knowledge in Church Schools, on the subject of "Religious Education in the Schools, the Secular issue." The discussion will take place on Friday, March 21, at the Essex Hall. Mr. Cohen has promised to take the chair. Further details will be published later.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti visits the Chester-le-Street district this week-end, and will lecture in the West Pelton Miners' Hall on Sunday afternoon at 2.30, on "Spiritualism and Science," and in the evening in the Welfare Hall, Chester-le-Street, at 7 on "The Savage, the Christian, and the Missionary."

The West Ham Branch has arranged a Social for Saturday evening, February 22, in the Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, E. Freethinkers and their friends are invited, admission is free, and a really enjoyable evening can be promised. Commence 7 o'clock prompt.

We were glad to find the *Daily Sketch*, in a recent issue, suggesting that a combined protest should be made by those who object to the Sunday programme. It says, "It must be quite clear now to listeners that their letters and opinions as individualists, no matter how numerous, are absolutely ignored." We quite agree with this. To all objections the stereotyped falsehood is returned that all but a few are pleased with the religious programme. That we know is not the case, and we challenge the B.B.C. to submit the matter to any reasonable test. It is a public scandal that the B.B.C. which lives on a public monopoly should thus convert itself into an agency for Christian propaganda. It should leave religion alone, but if it will engage parsons to air their ridiculous views, in common justice they should allow the other side to be heard as well. At present it is in the fullest sense of a popular word sheer "lope."

## The Resurrection Resurrected.

*The Evidence of Scripture Points More to a Natural than a Supernatural Occurrence.\**

THE miraculous resurrection of Jesus is doubtless regarded by most Christians as the keynote doctrine of the creeds. "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then all our preaching is in vain" (Cor. xv. 14), says St. Paul.

Yet an incident of such profound significance seems to rest not only upon the most meagre evidence, but the record itself, if given any credence whatsoever, points unmistakably to what may easily be conceived as a perfectly natural occurrence.

Roman history tells us that the average individual suffering crucifixion lived from three to seven days, and not infrequently revived after being taken down for dead. We are told that when Jesus had been on the cross less than six hours, he cried "with a loud voice" (suggesting considerable remaining vitality) "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Shortly after his head sank and he "gave up the ghost." (Mark xvi. 34.)

All this I imagine is not the way church theologians would have written it. They should have kept him on the cross at least a reasonable period. I imagine also they didn't like his last words, so later writers added: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46), which sounds much more like the benediction of a clergyman. The other is the spontaneous outburst from one who had hoped, up to the last, that God would make some supernatural demonstration in his behalf. It was the natural cry of disillusionment and despair. No, the Christian Church would not intentionally or willingly have written this into the record.

And there is much more that the Christian Church would not have written which makes me more than suspect that in the gospels there is the remnant of a tradition which did not have its origin in Christian theology but in actual facts, not to be explained by any myth theory.

"And Pilate marvelled that he was already dead." (Mark xv. 44.) (This shouldn't have gone into the records either.) Two influential friends of Jesus had gone up to Pilate and begged the privilege of taking the body from the cross before sunset and, furthermore, as a special favour, that "his bones be not broken." (John xix. 38-39.)

They made the excuse that the Jewish Sabbath began at sunset. But in that case why did the Jews begin an undertaking, which usually consumed a week, on Friday afternoon? Pilate didn't care whether Jesus was left on the cross over the Sabbath, neither did the priests, apparently, who had insisted on his immediate execution.

I suspect Nicodemus (the same who came to Jesus by night) was somewhat of a politician. Then there was Joseph of Arimathea, a "rich man," who had a newly-made and unoccupied tomb in a garden near by. Marvellous combination—a rich man and a politician!

Pilate, as we know, at the trial was not awfully set on the death of Jesus. (Luke xxiii. 14, 15, 22.) He sent a soldier over to see that everything was O.K., and to forestall any disturbance, who incidentally made a gesture with his spear, wounding Jesus' side,

\* The writer is well aware that a vast amount of scholarly discussion has taken place over the questions of authenticity, contradictions, interpolations and the like. Such matters, however, are hardly germane to the present article, which aims at nothing more than a brief running comment on the story as it stands in the sacred record.

in place of the usual custom of breaking the legs. Now someone has recorded that "blood and water" (John xix. 34) came from this wound. As a physician, I have often wondered where the water came from. Assuming he had no disease like pleurisy or pericarditis with effusion, it is hard to account for this water unless the soldier pierced the stomach instead of the heart. Even then one would hardly expect to find water in a stomach of one who had fasted since the night before and refused to drink that which was offered him during the day on the cross. As a "symbol" it doesn't seem to have much meaning either; but to a physician who is also a rationalist there is only one explanation, and that a most natural one. Some person must have observed *serum* oozing from the wound after the first flow of blood—on the way to the tomb perhaps—(Jewish women are very observant of such matters) and this would naturally be reported as water.

But here's the rub: Serum doesn't ooze from the wound of a dead man. Ask any pathologist. He will tell you that the appearance of serum on a wound indicates the first act in the process of healing. The wound of a dead man dries up. The early church writers didn't know their pathology or they wouldn't have made so much of this peculiar "symbol."

The body of Jesus wasn't embalmed; neither was it buried "in the heart of the earth"; neither was it in the tomb "three days and three nights" (Matthew xi. 40) as prophesied. All this should have been attended to in order to make a good demonstration, just as the body of Jesus should have hung on the cross until dead beyond question.

We read that the tomb was found open at the "end of the Sabbath" (Mat. xxviii. 1) toward the beginning of the first day of the week. We are not told how long it had been open. This raises the question whether we have been correct for nineteen centuries in speaking of "Easter morn." It looks now as if Jesus may have come forth on Saturday night (or even earlier), does it not? The end of the Sabbath was sunset. Anyhow we read that it was dark when the tomb was found open; and accounts differ as to whether there were two young men or one angel sitting in the tomb. They do agree, however, that whoever it was, he (or they) appeared dressed in white. (Luke xxiii. 56; Mark xvi. 1.) Curiously the women came to embalm the body as if they had never heard that there was to be a resurrection. Odd, isn't it? A young man "in shining apparel" told the disciples and the woman that the Master was up and out. In other words—(of King James' day and court) "he is not here: for he has risen." (Mark xvi. 5.)

At this point in the narrative there is a little item related, which at first may seem inconsequential, but is significant from two angles. First, it is significant because it has so little significance that it would never have been recorded except as an actual observation. It is stated that Simon Peter observed the linen cloths which were wrapped about his body *and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen cloths but wrapped together in a place by itself.* (John xx. 6, 7.) For myself, the record of so trivial a matter occurring in the text is the best kind of evidence that we are dealing with matters of fact rather than fiction or theology. (This inference also applies to several of the other passages herein referred to.) Secondly, this passage is significant in regard to what follows, for it indicates that Jesus must have either gone out stark naked or have been supplied with clothes. Where from? By whom? What sort? My pious friend answers that "He came forth clothed in effulgent light. This is the teaching of the Church." But—note what happens:

Mary Magdalene—the woman who loved him, only the week before, in the home of Simon the Leper (Luke vii. 37), had poured over him a box of precious perfume; and who, after the burial, "sat over against the tomb" (Mat. xxvii. 61), when the others had departed—is now left alone in the garden and meets one *whom she mistakes for the gardener* until he speaks. (John xx. 15.) What about this "effulgent light"?

WILLIAM W. HARVEY, M.D.  
(To be continued.)

## Censorship.

THAT the question of establishing a censorship of books should have to be discussed at the present time is one of the most regrettable facts of modern civilization. Such a discussion should be entirely unnecessary in a highly enlightened community, and the fact that it is taking place is only proof of our being not nearly so enlightened as we are wont to think we are.

A society composed mainly of people who are capable of thinking for themselves and of selecting their literature for themselves would not need to spend time over the question of censorship and the banning of books. Such a question comes up only in a society largely composed of people who have not been in the habit of doing their own thinking, but have been accustomed to having their thinking done for them by priests, theologians, newspaper men, and others of the religiously-minded type. No society of Freethinkers would need to waste time over a censorship of literature. It would be realized that literature of any kind whatsoever, whether novel, play, article, or poem, that was not worth reading would not be worth the writing. If written it would quickly die a natural death; even if it did not fall still-born from the press. On the other hand, that the censorship should need be discussed in a society that has developed under Christian influences for hundreds of years is a fit testimony to the degrading power of Christianity on intellectual and moral life.

In the *Daily News* for March 2, 1929, we are told, by "an author of great repute," who fails to give his name, that he has "always maintained that if ever we have a literary censorship in England it is the authors who will be responsible for its existence," and "that it only needs the appearance of twenty such books in a season to make the institution of a censorship certain."

The "such books" are described as "blasphemous and pornographic" novels. This is not true. The appearance of twenty so-called or actually "beastly books" in a season will not be the reason for establishing a censorship of literature. It will be the excuse. The reason will be found elsewhere. It will be found in the existence of a widespread type of mentality that would have established a censorship long ago, had it not been for the fact of the counsels of a wiser mentality having managed to prevail.

The priest, the parson, the Sunday school teacher, and the thousands of like-minded persons would have had a strict censorship of literature years ago, but for the growing influence of Freethought in various walks of life. Unfortunately the power of religion keeps surging up in modern life and, still more unfortunately, we find not only newspaper men and politicians, but also too many scientists and men of literature ready to submit to and play up to religion.

Had religion been productive of manliness and straightforwardness in thought there would not be any talk of a censorship. It would not be considered needful. Nobody would think it worth while to take much notice of the "beastly book." It would die for want of readers. The few that might be ready to read it would not be enough to encourage an author to go on writing in that style.

The idea that authors of obscene books will make the establishment of a censorship unavoidable is not only untrue it is silly. It is about as silly as the statement that the "prudes and Puritans" are not the people who are likely to force a censorship on to us. The "prudes and Puritans" are just the people who take a delight in

spying out the spicy products of the press, and then crying out for a censorship that others may not be contaminated.

They desire to exercise over others a power of restraint to which they would object if it were directed against themselves. They wish to impose restrictions on literary output apart from considerations of social development. As if the suppression of so-called or actually immoral books could of itself make readers moral, in a society that perpetuates the very conditions which forces certain types of mind to require the obscene in literature as an outlet for feelings which might otherwise more dangerously express themselves.

Let the writer of the obscene continue to express himself, while he can. When he is not needed he will disappear. He has a right to express himself; and the man who desires to read obscene literature has a right to do so if he can get it; and while Christianity lasts he can get it, if it is only in the Bible which has not the least chance of being censored. At anyrate, no censorship will prevent the obscene writer or reader thinking and expressing his obscene thoughts. Nor will it ultimately prevent the publication and circulation of obscene literature. Modern society is too complex for that, and ways and means of getting such literature into the hands of those who desire it will be found. There can be "book running" as well as "rum-running," and allowing obscene works to see the light of the day in the open market will prove to be a more effective method in reducing their number and ultimately killing them off than the method of censorship. It is not suggested that the writer of obscene books should be encouraged, but that such writing should ultimately be made impossible by the social development of an intellectualism in which obscene thinking would not live. Permitting all "obscene" books to be sold in fair competition with other kinds of literature will make it possible for society to accomplish more in the right direction than can be done by driving the "beastly" works underground. It will make them the more subject to what is the only worthwhile method of rectification in such a matter. That is the social method.

It is not always realized that the writing of books, and the reading of them, is not anything like the entirely individualistic thing that it is so often represented as being. Literature is the outcome not of individual but of social evolution. To put it crudely, if each individual wrote and read his own books only there would not ensue a development of literature. This is important. We must look at the question of the censorship from the sociological point of view, and this is what those who concern themselves about the setting up of a censorship fail to do. They mouth "social purity" while they look to the individual as such, as if "he" were all and only to blame, and nothing is to be charged to the account of society.

The *Daily News* "author of great repute," who has no desire to see the censorship established, thinks "every society will ultimately defend itself against those who bombard it with filth," and that twenty obscene books next season will make this form of defence necessary. What on earth have twenty books got to do with it? Why wait for twenty? If society must have a censorship to protect itself against obscene literature it should set up the institution as soon as one obscene book appears, or better still, before any such book is issued; and it should keep the censorship there for all time. If only as a monumental warning.

It is this attitude of mind, this idea of society protecting itself as if it were doing so against outsiders, whose existence it did not make possible, that gives the whole case away.

The fact of the matter is that those who advocate the establishment of a censorship are not concerned with the social development of morality, but with trying to make all whom they can influence conform to their own particular "sect" or "party" idea of what should be moral living. They have no room for the natural development of morality which involves many variations. They wish by oppressive measures to make everyone conform to a "type" or at most a few types of character selected and approved in a most arbitrary manner, and in the main on religious grounds.

Never do they seem to realize that the complete and final elimination of the objectionable in literature (assuming it to be entirely desirable) can only be wrought out by the natural development of social life which will ultimately make impossible the continued existence of the author whose writings are of no use or value to society.

Now it is precisely because it is a question of social evolution that the elimination of obscene literature cannot be accomplished by means of a censorship. It can only be accomplished as a result of the development of a higher mentality throughout society, and a heightening of moral feeling which is primarily sociological. The existence of people who write obscene books is a social fact in the full sense of the term; not simply an individual fact. Such people are produced by society as the counterpart of a faulty and often vicious education in matters relating to sex; and the same may be said of those who wallow in the reading of obscene literature. The elimination of this type of writer and reader is a question of intellectual and moral development; and that not merely of a few individuals, as many seem to think, but of society as a whole.

There is no doubt that beliefs that have been formed and generally accepted under the influence of repressive and retrogressive teaching have been bad enough, but what would have been the effect of a consistently applied and successful censorship throughout the ages?

Scientific and philosophic progress would have been impossible. Every idea that conflicted with the teaching of those who wielded the censorship, would have been suppressed, with appalling results to society.

Fortunately no censorship is as successful as those who exercise it or desire it to be, and new ideas will persist in breaking through. If only for this reason it would pay society in the long run to be honest with itself. Censorship is one of the worst forms of social dishonesty. Freedom of thought and speech are the only means of ultimately making possible a general level of sound thinking throughout society.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

### Bradford Wakes Up.

At last Bradford, once a hotbed of Secularism, and the home of the last of England's prosecuted blasphemers (W. J. Gott) has wakened from its long slumber.

Whether the problem of making a living with the wool trade at a discount has proved too much to allow time for the fighting of the battle of Freethought, I cannot say, but wool certainly had gathered around the intellect of the city. Some of the wool has now been combed away, and Bradford has shown the teeth it has got behind the lips that have been silent for too long.

A short time ago a branch of the Secular Society was founded in the city, and under the tender care of Mr. T. Green, the secretary, and his committee, it has begun to flourish. To give the branch a spurt, and to tell Bradford "Some Things Christians Ought to Know," Mr. Chapman Cohen came down on February 3. His address at the King's Hall attracted a good deal of attention, and there were more people in the hall than even the most sanguine had expected, for Monday is a bad day for driving sense into Christians. It is too near Sunday. Anyhow, the attendance showed two things—what can be done by proper publicity, and what interest can be aroused (even on Monday) when an Atheist is announced as a visitor to a city smitten with a leaning to Roman Catholicism.

Yes, we had a few Catholics in the audience, and with true Catholic logic one of them denounced as a lie the statement (read from a newspaper cutting by Mr. Cohen) that the late Mr. T. P. O'Connor had been an Atheist from the age of eighteen.

"How do you know it's a lie?" asked Mr. Cohen, and with great wisdom the interrupter answered by repeating his assertion, "It's a lie." Mr. Cohen pointed out that he had not said it was true. He was merely quoting Viscount Castlerosse, in the *Sunday Express*—and one can hardly imagine Mr. Cohen accepting without question everything that Viscount Castlerosse says!

"But if it was true," declared Mr. Cohen, with emphasis, "T. P. O'Connor would not be the only hypocrite in the political world. There are scores of them who dare not express their real opinions, because they are afraid of losing their seats." Whereupon the audience showed its contempt of such public men by heartily applauding.

Some of us smiled when we watched about half a dozen girls, evidently attached to a home mission somewhere, who walked out of the room about ten minutes after Mr. Cohen began to speak. Appropriately enough, just as they walked out Mr. Cohen was talking about Jesus casting out the devils. He succeeded in casting out the angels, so that Jesus cannot claim all the miracles!

But wasn't it a pity those girls did not stay until a few minutes later, when Mr. Cohen described Christianity as contemptible because it suppressed the other side of the case. He was particularly referring to the type of Christian that dare not attend a Secular Society meeting because he is afraid his convictions will be shaken.

If the girls had stayed till then, they would have writhed in their seats, and would have had to stay to save their faces. And it might have done them good. At question time one intellectual gentleman rose to ask a question, and proceeded to tell Mr. Cohen that he (Mr. Cohen) had a stock of putty in his back yard, and made putty models. Mr. Cohen made putty of the man before he finished with him. The questions really did not come up to a decent standard, and that was a pity, for Mr. Cohen was apparently in good form, and would have made putty of archbishops, let alone intelligent looking gentlemen.

One of the sallies which did not get home as it ought to have done is worth giving here. There was a Nonconformist friend who remarked to Mr. Cohen that a new Nonconformist cemetery was being laid out in his district. "Oh," was the answer, "That's good news."

Taken as a whole, we had a very successful meeting, and Mr. Searle, the chairman, was pleasantly surprised to find so many to preside over. We had a good address, a good response to the "offertory" for expenses, and sold plenty of *Freethinkers* and other literature, which are probably now continuing the good work of the meeting. We had visitors from Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds, Keighley, and other parts of the West Riding.

We have revived the pioneer spirit of A. B. Wakefield, Edwin Robertshaw, and W. J. Gott. Let us carry it on!

Mr. Green, the secretary of the Bradford Secular Society, asks me to state that membership is not confined to Bradford, and Freethinkers living in other towns in the West Riding, where no branch exists, will be welcomed in the branch. SCRIBENDI.

### Mysteries.

THERE'S a mystery how we live,  
There's a mystery when we die,  
There's a mystery in the power of number seven;  
There are mysteries on the earth,  
There are mysteries in the sky,  
It's a mystery how the rich men get to heaven.

There's the mystery why the Devil  
Can do such a roaring trade,  
There's a mystery why the parsons we employ,  
There's the mystery of the hen  
And the first egg that was laid;  
There's the mystery of the penny saveloy.

There's the trinitarian mystery  
Of the triple Siamese,  
There are many others we can never know,  
But the wonder of the lot  
More remarkable than these  
Is making Gods of little bits of dough.

S. SODDY.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND THE BOYCOTT.

SIR,—In the absence on the Continent of the District Manager, Mr. Tennant, I have received a copy of your issue of the 9th inst., and in reply to the questions for which you are awaiting an answer I am glad to be able to state that the Church of Christ, Scientist, has not promoted and does not intend to promote a "policy of threat and boycott which may involve the ruin of book-sellers who display books which Christian Scientists do not desire to see circulated."

Hundreds of thousands of people who have been healed and regenerated through Mrs. Eddy's writings and example, consider that the recently published biography of Mrs. Eddy by Mr. E. F. Dakin gives a most erroneous and improper presentation of Mrs. Eddy. Many parts of the book are, they consider, invention, and others are not in accordance with fact. The publication of this book is not in accordance with their sense of fair play and propriety, and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that a storm of protest has arisen in consequence, and has fallen upon the heads of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, the publishers. It is quite true that in the Church Manual by Mary Baker Eddy there is a By-law enjoining members not to patronize a publishing house or bookstore that has for sale obnoxious books. Individual Christian Scientists, and in some instances a local branch church, may have interpreted that By-law to apply to Messrs. Scribner's Sons and to local agents exhibiting the book for sale, but it is quite untrue that any ruling has been issued by the Christian Science Mother Church that the By-law refers to the Dakin book. There is no "Index" in the Church of Christ, Scientist, and I have never heard and do not know of any such ruling ever having been made in connexion with that By-law. On the contrary, The Christian Science Board of Directors in Boston issued a statement in the *Christian Science Sentinel* of December 21, 1929, in which they say, speaking of the right asserted by Christian Scientists to protest against a publication which misrepresents their religion, its Founder, or its adherents:—

It is highly important, however, that the right of protest should be exercised with the most scrupulous regard for both propriety and wisdom. In the exercise of a right we must not commit a wrong. Our statements should be considerate and not exaggerated; they should be persuasive but not threatening.

May I add also that it is quite untrue that a special Conference of Committees on Publication was called in Boston because of the publication of the Dakin book, as has been alleged.

The remark of Mark Twain, which Mr. Tennant quoted in part, will be found in full on page 1271, Volume 3, of *Mark Twain: A Biography*, by Paine. The statement is an interesting one coming from Mark Twain, and Christian Scientists do not read into it more than it says.

WM. K. PRIMROSE,

Assistant Committee on Publication.

### PERSECUTION OF RUSSIA.

SIR,—If the Russian Soviet is persecuting for the sake of opinion, of course it is very wrong. But is it for the Pope to protest? Will he kindly ask the whole of Christendom to join in "a Mass of expiation, propitiation and reparation" in respect of the centuries of hellish cruelty perpetrated by the Roman Church? It seems to me that the head of that Church—which would behave now in the same way as it did formerly, if it had the power—is the last person to object to persecution by other people. But it must always be borne in mind that any devilry is justifiable if committed in the name of the Christian religion. SCRUTATOR.

### FINANCE AND LIFE.

SIR,—Sincere thanks to the writer of "The Book Shop," in the *Freethinker*, for February 9, for his friendly reference to the "New Age."

The rottenness of banking policy is primarily responsible for the poverty, discontent and political strife of today.

The popular press, the pulpits, and the "educational" system, succeed in diverting public attention from this fact. Party politics, also, play their part in the game of tyranny—each political party merely represents a different method of playing into the hands of financiers. A very able economic technician, Major C. H. Douglas, M.I.M.E., has admirably succeeded in exposing this state of affairs; and there is a small minority of people who are fully awake to it. They constitute the Social Credit Movement, which includes the Economic Party.

We have to realize that the old gospel that "if a man does no work, neither shall he eat," is out of date. Science has annihilated it; only banking policy and perverted religious psychology bolsters it up. The adoption of Major Douglas's scheme alone offers an escape from the relapse into chaos and barbarism into which the present financial and social system must lead us in a few decades at most.

Sincere thanks for your article on the "Blasphemy" debates.  
E. C. ASHWORTH.

#### GOING TO CHURCH.

SIR,—Last Sunday I attended the evening service at the local church. I determined to give the preacher a fair hearing, and the chance of a convert to the ranks of the faithful. In his sermon he could speak of nothing but the growing unbelief of the age. The authority of the Church was no longer respected—quite a doleful account of the unrest and heresy of the day. He then finished up by advising his flock that the only thing left to stem the flood of disbelief was to pray! If the teaching of religion has fallen this low is it any wonder that its failure is more and more apparent? I for one have lost all faith in Christianity.  
ICONOCLAST.

#### CORNWALL AND ITS PREHISTORIC MONUMENTS.

SIR,—I shall be much obliged if you will allow me to point out that there are some misprints in my letter to you on the above subject in your issue of February 16.

"Holy Mountains of Saxony" should be "Hartz Mountains of Saxony"; "atmo weapon" should be "stone weapon"; "anti-diluvian" should be "anti-diluvian"; "Lands End in Scilly Islands" should be "Lands End and Scilly Islands"; "prima facia" should be "prima facie."

WILLIAM CLARK.

#### Society News.

EVERY seat was occupied at Conway Hall on Sunday evening, and a most interesting lecture was given. The speaker was the well-known Secretary of the West London Branch of the N.S.S., Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The subject of the address, "Christ and Krishna," was expounded in the characteristically direct manner of this premier protagonist of Atheism. Many of the audience learnt that the central figure of their creed holds by no means an unique position in religious history, and were interested in the many striking analogies between the two religions.

A considerable amount of questioning and discussion brought to a close one of the most pleasant and successful of this series of meetings.—C.F.W.

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#### LONDON.

##### INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit—"The Frontiers of Experience in Art."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.) : 7.0, Mr. R. Dimsdale Stocker—"Bertrand Russell's Attack on Jealousy."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1) : 7.30—Mr. F. Botting—"Jesus the Atheist."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (361 Brixton Road, near Gresham Road, S.W.) : 7.30, Mrs. Ettie Hornibrook—"Birth Control."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, entrance Theobald's Road) : 7.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, Chairman of R.P.A.—"My Year of Jubilee."

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station) : 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit—"The World Crisis in Religion and Morals To-day."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1) : Thursday, February 27, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, Social and Dance, 7.30 to 12.30. Admission 1s.

##### OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.30, Messrs. Charles Tuson and James Hart; 3.15, Messrs. F. Betts and C. E. Wood. Freethought meetings every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and J. Hart; every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* may be obtained during our meetings outside the Park Gates, Bayswater Road.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall, Liverpool) : 7.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (London), President National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker*, will lecture on "The Savage in our Midst." There will be reserved seats at 6d. and 1s. On Thursday, February 20, at 8.0 p.m., Mr. E. Egerton Stafford, President of this Branch, will speak on "What is Secularism?" at a meeting of the Seaford Men's Co-operative Guild (at their request).

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture on Sunday in the West Pelton Welfare Hall, at 2.30, on "Spiritualism and Science." In the evening, at 7.0, at the Welfare Hall, Chester-le-Street, on "The Savage, the Christian, and the Missionary." Half hour's music before each lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road) : Dr. C. H. Ross Carmichael (Liverpool), will lecture at 3.0, on "Science Re-stated," and at 6.30, on "The Realm of the Spiritual."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mr. Harry Snell, M.P.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, A Door, City Hall, Albion Street) : 6.30, Mr. W. H. Marwick, M.A., will speak on "The Curse of Charity."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools) : 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Soul in the Making."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"As a Freethinker Sees Spiritualism."

#### Miscellaneous Advertisements.

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