

FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

# The FREETHINKER

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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,  
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

## Views and Opinions.

### For the Glory of God.

We are almost tired of answering the question whether Charles Bradlaugh died an Atheist. It is one of the stock Christian lies told about every well-known Freethinker, and the only way you can stop the majority of Christians inventing and circulating lies about their opponents is to stop them being Christian. Among the earliest of institutions established by the Christian Church was a lie-factory, and it has been working hard ever since—sometimes at high pressure, but always working. The names of documents the Christian Churches have forged, or tampered with in the interests of their religion, would make a rather bulky pamphlet. The number of lies they have manufactured about their opponents would fill a volume. And they are still at it. I am still receiving stories about the death-bed of Voltaire, the profligacy of Paine, the recantations of all sorts of unbelievers, stories that are now being printed and issued by religious publishing houses, kept going by subscriptions from very Christian people. And I do not find that any of the clergy, who apparently, lack the courage to tell the lies themselves, ever raise anything in the nature of a protest against their followers "lying for the greater glory of God," or do anything to correct them. They probably think that it may keep some within the fold, and so serves a useful purpose. "Blessed be ye truthful," is not one of the Christian maxims. It might have emptied the churches.

### Pious Lies.

Personally I have never troubled very much about these stories of death-bed conversions, etc., and I have certainly never got into a temper about them; mostly I have not even bothered to contradict them. If the stories were about Freethinkers who were alleged to have got drunk, or to have been bad char-

acters, I have mildly enquired whether there is anything in the nature of things why Christians should have a monopoly of all the blackguards in the world? We have a right to some, although whether we have our fair share is a matter on which I have doubts. I am quite certain that we never have received full value for the proportion we pay to the upkeep of prisons. Just as we are taxed for the keeping up of religion in the schools and for the maintenance of churches and chapels, so we are taxed to provide hospitality for Christians in prison, and for the payment of chaplains who are there to see that the souls of the inmates are made safe, even if the property of other people is not. The churches ought to show a keener appreciation of the hospitality we help to provide for so many of their members.

And the death-beds? Well, it is really a matter of very little consequence how Bradlaugh or Voltaire, or Foote died, whether they died Freethinkers or Calvinistic Methodists, or Presbyterians or Roman Catholics. If the stories were true they would affect me only in the way that the sight of a strong man reduced to childishness or old age would affect me. It would be very distressing to witness—the sight of disintegrating human intelligence is always sad, but that would be all. I do not know that anything can be done to prevent intelligence disintegrating as one approaches the inevitable end; and Freethought is only concerned with stimulating man's intelligence while he is really alive. The disintegration of human faculty is something that no one can guard against. Naturally it gives religion a chance, and the parson is not slow to grasp it.

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### Helping the Enemy.

I have a very strong suspicion that Freethinkers themselves have helped these stories to live by the seriousness with which they have met them, and the importance they have thus given them. The rogues who invent these stories and the morons who credit them, are not at all impressed by the Freethinker who lifts himself to heights of moral indignation in denouncing them. It usually succeeds only in convincing both of the value of the charges. The liar sticks to his lie because it serves his purpose; the fool to his story because he is too stupid to see that it is a matter of no consequence whatever, so far as the truth of certain teachings is concerned, whether a dying man returns to the beliefs of his childhood or not. And in this connexion the liar depends upon the fool; rob him of that support and this particular lie ceases to be of any value to him.

But do you not rob the fool of faith in his folly by arguing seriously with him as though his belief is a matter of tremendous importance. All you succeed in doing is giving him a sense of the value of the folly he is cherishing. He believes it is of importance



whether a Freethinker maintains his disbelief in religion to the end, or whether, when it comes to what he regards as the testing time, the *pretence* of disbelief is cast aside and the real conviction appears. And the Freethinker who nowadays takes that kind of man seriously is convinced that it is also a very serious matter to him whether his fellow-unbeliever "reverted" or not on his death-bed. So the purpose of the original liar is accomplished; for that purpose was not to convert the unbeliever, but to prevent the believer becoming one. The Christian believes in the immense importance, the overwhelming importance of a man dying "right," and the Freethinker often agrees with him by trying to prove that the unbeliever dies "Allee Samee Clistian."

\* \* \*

#### The Christian Values.

The principle involved goes, of course, much farther and deeper than tales of blackguardly Freethinkers and converted unbelievers. We are accepting the Christian's conception of values, a policy which sends the Freethinker into the fight against Christianity with one hand tied behind his back. So long as the Christian can secure this being done he is sure of warding off complete defeat, the most that can be done is to compel him to restate his claims. You may not accept the way in which he states his belief, but you admit its essential value. If, for example, you admit the great value of a future life, if you go round, as do many half-mentally baked unbelievers, talking of the "wistful" manner in which they must regard their inability to believe in some future state of existence—an expression suggested to them by Christians, the Christian is happy because you have admitted the value of his idea, and your fight never becomes anything more serious than an affair of outposts. That is why the Christian is always ready to take to his heart Freethinkers of that type. If he cannot talk about him as a brother in Christ, he can at least point to him as one who would like to be, and who envies the others their Christian serenity of mind.

Or take an example of the same evil in another direction. The original reason for belief in Jesus was his supernatural character which involved the power to see that his followers when they came to the next life were—to use a financial expression—let in on the ground floor. Nowadays, when that conception is too ridiculous for large numbers of people, the Jesus offered is that of the social reformer and ethical teacher, the man with unbounded love and infinite compassion for all kinds of suffering. Of course, the orthodox Christian would much rather that you accepted Jesus number one, but if you will not, then he is content if you will accept Jesus number two. In fact, if you will only do this he will nowadays treat you quite decently. If you are in a university he will not oppose your getting a professorship, if you are a journalist you will find it easier to get a job, if you are a politician you will find it easier to get into parliament. You have surrendered the fortress, so he will permit you to live peaceably under its shadow. The sympathetic, ethical, reforming Jesus is as much a myth as the incarnate God, but it preserves the Christian standard of value. You have admitted that the Christian has really got hold of something that is fundamentally valuable, although you do not quite agree with his method of stating it; and so with many a "wistful" regret that you cannot be quite such a jackass as the fellow next door, you proceed to make obsequious to the divine Asinity. The modern Christian would indeed be a fool if he disdained such valuable allies.

#### Wait Till You Die.

Death-beds were of importance to Christians because the *way* you died determined where you were going. But Freethought revalues moral values. It says it really matters little how a man dies, but it does matter considerably how he lives. It is nothing of value for a man to repent of his misdeeds on his death-bed; but it is of value for him to have none for which to repent. Consequently the indignation exhibited over "Infidel Death beds" is a little misplaced. It tends to confirm the Christian in his sense of values, and that is a very bad policy. To say to the Christian, "I do not believe in your religion, but I can die as well as you do," or "I do not believe in the divinity of Jesus, but I have a profound respect for that loveable, sympathetic character who gave his life for his ideals," may make for peace of living, for advancement, or negatively, save a lot of annoyance, but it is undiluted nonsense, and convinces the Christian that he is substantially right. Nothing would please the Fundamentalists more than to see the world seriously discussing the accuracy of the Bible story of the Flood, or the miracle of the Gadarene swine, as Huxley did with Gladstone. What they cannot stand is to see these and kindred tales treated with the contempt they deserve. A shot that does not hit the target is an obvious waste of ammunition.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Who Made the Angels?

"I want to be an angel."—*Popular Hymn.*

"The Christian Church has failed infamously."  
Bernard Shaw.

"You do not believe, you only believe that you believe."—*Coleridge.*

"ANGELS' visits are few and far between," says the popular and untruthful proverb. They come in shoals in parish magazines, on cinema films and picture postcards, in melodramas, and in Spiritualist publications. Alleged fine-art shops in mean neighbourhoods display pictures of angels all the year round. Monumental masons usually include a good-sized angel in their exhibitions of sepulchral marble. Roman Catholics are as fond of angels as North-Country miners are of whippets, and adorn the walls of their homes with highly-coloured representations of these celestial visitors. So popular are they, indeed, that during the great war, legends were current that angels had appeared at Mons. One sturdy Christian soldier who had maintained that he had seen an angel on horseback during the battle, was asked what made him think that the figure he saw was really as he described. He replied that the figure was like his deceased aunt. Who could deny that the late-lamented lady was an angel? Would it not have been churlish? Anyhow, that was the most authentic piece of evidence.

Yet the blunt fact remains that artists have all along created angels. Indeed, these saucy artists are responsible for so much in religion. The traditional figure of Christ is the work of the wielders of the brush. The Madonnas were the portraits of their favourite models, who were not always virgins. In the old Saxon manuscripts the dear angels are dressed in shirt and undervest in the fashion of that unfashionable period. With Perugini, Luigi, and Raphael died the old, simple, and ascetic angelhood. The more modern varieties are elegant creatures, and the very latest resemble nothing so much as the charming



ladies of the Gaiety Theatre chorus. This may explain, partially, why angels remain so popular in a materialistic age.

From the iconography, the written or drawn pictures of angels, to their osteology, is but a single step, but it is the one narrow step which divides the sublime from the frankly ridiculous. Faithful Christians are warned against science by their pastors and masters. In this case the warning is not unnecessary, for believers would be well advised to let the bony structure of angels alone. With Michelangelo, Watts, and other artists, the skeleton might be left to take its chance under ample and beautifully coloured draperies. As for some of the up-to-date cheeky artists, there is no need for worry, for when these fellows paint a portrait it looks as if it were the ground plan for a river-side bungalow. Although artists study anatomy, the point of juncture of the wings with the body of an angel has always caused them fever of the brow, as well it might. Concerning the articulations necessary for a six-winged angel, like the resplendant creature figured on a stained-glass window at Merton College, Oxford, the least said the soonest mended. Such discussion is mere verbal gymnastics, more or less resembling Charles Lamb's jocular question to the sedate Coleridge as to how many angels could dance on the point of a needle.

The fact emerges that Christian theologians borrowed their angels with so much else of their religion from their Pagan predecessors. Christian art merely followed the Christian tradition, and merely elaborated angelic construction. Some of the responsibility for the iconography of the angel must be thrown on the old Greeks, who, according to their own imperishable works, possess backs broad enough for the burden. The "winged victory" of the Greeks is unquestionably more sublime than any feathered creature of the Christian imagination.

This matter of angels, just as much as the instance of demons, reminds us that a deal of the traditional ideas associated with the Christian Religion is so much medieval junk, and can no longer be made current coin in the intellectual world of to-day. Priests of all ranks, from the Archbishop of Canterbury with his £15,000 yearly, and two palaces, to the ordinary clergyman with £5 weekly, and a house thrown in, are simply perpetuating the dogmatic nonsense of pre-scientific times. They are using modes of thought and language that belong to the Dark Ages when the human race was considered to have originated six thousand years ago, and the earth was supposed to be the centre of the solar system, and only recently created. The old theology has gone to pieces, but it is a national misfortune that the ministers of all denominations still teach the old nonsense, still preach the old untruths, because their livelihood is bound up with the maintenance of the Christian Superstition.

Forty thousand priests in this country live entirely by intellectual dishonesty. They know perfectly well that the things they teach are not true, but they prevaricate in order to safeguard their salaries. It is an odd thing, and one not flattering to priests, that the clergy butter their bread by the exhibition of precisely those qualities which are associated with race-course thimble-riggers. The old ages of Faith were pitiless centuries. Uniformity of opinion was obtained by burning men and women who dared criticize the clergy. Heresies change in the course of the years. The priests of to-day, who prevaricate in order to stem criticism, would have been put to death in the Ages of Faith for heresy. Unfortunately, the thousands of clergy of this country have not yet

caught up with the nineteenth century, much less with the twentieth century, and for them it would be a considerable advance if they would spend their time in an attempt to understand evolution. For, as the poet Shelley reminds us, "nought may endure but mutability." The Christian Churches are but an anachronism, a stereotyped superstition, supported by dead men's money, and seeking to perpetuate dead ideas.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Problem of Sex.

THE simplest and least evolved plants and animals are sexless. Yet, from the immeasurably remote past when life first appeared on our planet, living matter appears to have possessed the capacity of reproduction.

Reproduction in the realm of life is the result of growth, with subsequent separation of the offspring from the parent body. These, in the nature of the case, tend to resemble their progenitors. Every individual mode of living-substance tends to lose its vigour as time goes on, and then death and decay soon supervene. Those that leave no descendants are therefore speedily eliminated from the scroll of life. Reproduction has therefore been ordained by Nature for "the world's increase."

Animals that consist of one living cell only, such as the amoeba, paramecium, and innumerable others; when the limits of cell growth are reached, proceed to multiply by means of splitting by mechanical division into two equal halves. The two single-celled animals thus generated function precisely like the parent cell. They feed and grow, and when they have attained their maximum size, they themselves divide, until, in course of time, a numerous colony is established. That the reproductive rate is rapid is seen in the fact that the paramecia when living in favourable surroundings divide some three times in two days. In other words, the original paramecium splits into two, these into four, and these again into eight in forty-eight hours, and so on, until a time arrives when the flagging vitality of the tiny creature has to be restored, and this is effected by conjugation. Two paramecia unite, and through their delicate cell-walls, part of the nuclear material of each journeys across to join and fuse with the nucleus of the other. Thus rejuvenated, the two tiny organisms part company and division recommences, and their descendants continue to multiply by simple division until conjugation is again essential.

With all the multicellular animals, however, and with the majority of the higher many-celled plants, the perpetuation of life is secured by special procreative cells destined to generate new lives, when these are separated from the parent organism. This specialization of the reproductive material constitutes the marked distinction which exists between sexual and asexual or sexless multiplication. A further complexity resides in the circumstance that in most organisms the special procreative cells are of two species. There are the comparatively large and passive ova of the female, and the relatively small and usually extremely active spermatozoa of the male. In the majority of cases these differing cells are mutually dependent, and soon perish unless their union is consummated. When this union or impregnation occurs, a new life commences.

From early antiquity the mystery of sex has exercised a fascinating influence over most speculative minds. In modern times an imposing array of publications, large and small, has poured from the press relating to sex and sex-determination. Sensational



articles occasionally appear in the popular organs announcing an alleged discovery of the secret of sex-control. But, so far as science is concerned, a solution of the problem of sex-determination is still sadly to seek.

About two hundred theories of the why and wherefore of sex have been launched upon the world, but it can hardly be claimed that one has succeeded in establishing its truth. Undaunted, however, by the difficulties that encompass this vexed problem, naturalists are still striving to pluck out the heart of the mystery.

Both from the theoretical and practical point of view, the subject of heredity and sex is fraught with far-reaching consequences. To the extremely religious mind, the problem is settled by the statement that divine Providence decides the sexes of the nobler forms of life. "God made male and female" is the be-all, and end-all of the matter.

Practically speaking what we all want to know is: What are the forces that determine whether a fertilized egg-cell or ovum will develop into a boy or a girl; a cock or a hen? The average man or woman is mainly concerned with the problem as it affects humanity. The plant or animal-breeder's interests are wider, while those of the philosophical biologist embrace the entire realm of life.

Without trenching on the still thorny question of the inheritance of functionally wrought modifications, it is universally conceded that we derive our physical organism from our parents. While our surroundings necessarily play a large part in moulding our lives, yet it must never be forgotten that the organism, with all its characters, is the product of its ancestors, immediate and remote. There is something to ponder over in Heine's semi-satirical saying that: "A man should be very careful in the selection of his parents." And doubtless, our inherited aptitudes, our strength or weakness, bodily or mental; force or lack of character, with various other attributes largely determine success or failure in life's battle. We cannot evade our heritage, good, bad, or indifferent, as it may be. But although we were not consulted concerning our birth and upbringing, there seems no valid reason why the selective methods utilized so successfully by the breeders of racehorses, pedigree farm stock, and indeed, prize animals of all kinds, should not be employed in the production and rearing of a sound and serviceable race of men.

A favouring environment is a treasure above rubies. This should permit and encourage the healthy functioning of all organs physical and psychological. But the constitution of the living creature, with its congenital capacity to appreciate at their proper worth the higher aspects of life remain an expression of heredity. As Herbert Spencer observed: "Inherited constitution must ever be the chief factor in determining character."

The several scientific attempts to unveil the secret of the factors that determine sex have been made in various ways. The statistical method is one of these, but has yielded few, if any, conclusive results. The study of the cell itself has led cytological investigators to provisional conclusions in certain cases. For instance, research workers have detected two kinds of ova in some animals, and the larger of these tend to develop into females. It is thought that the rabbit produces two sorts of ova in the ovary, while two kinds of spermatozoa have been distinguished. Half of these spermatozoa have been shown to possess an additional chromosome which is absent in the remaining half. This variation in the size of the ova or germ-cells occurs in several types of organisms, as also the accessory chromosome in half the sperm-cells

or spermatozoa. It appears that germ-cells or eggs fertilized by sperm-cells possessing the extra chromosome produce female offspring, while those impregnated by the male element, minus the additional chromosome give rise to males. Each germ-cell contains a nucleus, which seems indispensable to the life of the cell. It is now generally thought that the chromatin-bodies or chromosomes—the stainable bodies always associated with the cell-nucleus—are the leading, if not the sole, carriers of the hereditary qualities.

Experimental tests to ascertain the sex of the future offspring have been made with eggs, embryos, and even the parents themselves. These have been subjected to special conditions of temperature, nutrition, etc., and the sex-ratio of those studied has been compared with that of those organisms which have produced offspring under natural conditions.

Although no unanimity of opinion as yet prevails, the view is widely entertained that, at least among the higher animals, the sex of the future offspring is irrevocably settled at a very early stage in the life of the germ cells. But this conclusion is qualified by several important facts which appear to imply that the nutritive, and other incidental circumstances of the parents may regulate the ratio of male and female germ-cells.

The doctrine of sex-determinism is stoutly maintained by Dr. John Beard. He asserts that there are two distinct types of ova, one of which produces females, and the other males. He contends that: "Any interference with, or alteration of, the determination of sex is beyond human power. To hope ever to influence or modify its manifestations would be not less futile and vain than to imagine it possible for man to breathe the breath of life into inanimate matter." These uncompromising assertions may be safely left to the test of time. For, with all its splendid achievements, the science of life is still in its infancy. Moreover, as Prof. J. A. Thomson remarks, Russo, a competent experimenter, might justly reply that "he has succeeded in effectively interfering with the determination of sex." (*Heredity*. Revised Edition, 1926.)

Russo prosecuted experimental researches with rabbits. These rodents were treated with lecithin, and the results at least suggest that the germ-cells may be stimulated to develop male or female progeny by means of high nutrition. Russo inclines to discount the importance usually assigned to the chromosomes as bearers of hereditary characters, and attaches greater importance to the general metabolism of the animal organism. In any event, doe rabbits injected with Merks' lecithin littered an enormous proportion of female young. The rich food supplied to the rabbits is regarded as the cause of female preponderance. Still, it is very disappointing that subsequent researches conducted by other investigators seem to have given negative results.

The view advanced by Professors Geddes and Thomson in their joint work *The Evolution of Sex* (Revised Edition, 1901) concerning the causes of sex-determinism has as much evidence in its favour as any other. This theory is thus summarized: "The female seems to be relatively the more constructive, whence the greater capacity for sacrifices in maternity; the male relatively the more disruptive, whence his usually more vivid life, his explosive energies in action."

The vast and varied phenomena of sex are based on physiological processes. Certainly, the structures and modes of reproduction displayed throughout the entire evolutionary series practically compel the con-



clusion that organic increase, from its most primitive manifestations in the simple division of single-celled creatures, along lines of slowly advancing complexity towards the highest forms of life, provides an unbroken illustration of continuous and discontinuous growth.

T. F. PALMER.

## God and the Legal Oath in the United States.

(Reprinted from the "Truth Seeker," February, 1930.)

A WIDE and steady stream of witnesses flows in and out of court rooms and other places where sworn testimony is called for and given. Each witness, before testifying, takes the customary oath. One familiar with the procedure knows with what haste the officials and witnesses ordinarily perform the preliminary ceremony, as if the administration of the oath were but an empty and unnecessary formality. No sooner does the witness begin to testify than is the oath, even if it has been taken with precision and solemnity, apparently forgotten, not only by the witness himself but also by others, including those interested on the opposite side in the litigation or hearing. No one assumes that the oath will of itself compel the witness to adhere strictly to the truth. If confidence is reposed in the veracity of the witness before he begins to testify, it is because of other considerations, such as his reputation, or his appearance and demeanour. If his testimony is believed after it is given it is not because it was preceded by an oath, however solemn, but for other well-recognized reasons. This situation is evidenced by the fact, among others, that it is the practice of the courts to instruct juries that in determining the credibility of a witness they may take into consideration his demeanour while on the stand and his possible interest in the result of the trial. Discounting the sanctity and effectiveness of oaths are the numerous rules which have been devised, and which are constantly invoked, whereby the truthfulness of a witness may be tested and, if possible, shown to be lacking. Rules are applied whereby the witness may be contradicted or impeached, even to the extent of revealing him as a wilful perjurer. The art of cross-examination is deemed of such importance that books are written upon the subject. It is employed in many cases for the purpose of showing that a witness wilfully testified falsely. Deliberate perjuries have been committed frequently, not only in recent times when the religious sanctity of an oath has become weakened, but even in the early days when Atheism was practically unknown and witnesses actually believed that a violation of the obligations of their oaths would bring punishment in a future life. The ecclesiastical courts, as well as the temporal tribunals, had frequent occasion to deal with false swearing. They placed so little reliance on individual oaths that they employed the numerical principle, "and elaborated many specific rules as to the number of witnesses necessary in various situations; against a cardinal, for example, twelve or perhaps forty-four witnesses were required."<sup>1</sup>

The people of to-day place very little reliance upon an oath. They make perjury a criminal offence, and punish it as a felony, though at common law it was a misdemeanour. They compel public officials not merely to subscribe an oath of office but to furnish bonds. Promissory notes are not secured by the oaths of the makers or indorsers. Banks care nothing for the oaths of borrowers, but everything for

the value of the security demanded. Confidence in the effectiveness of oaths is weakened also by the fact that sworn testimony is often contradicted by other evidence given under oath. Triers of fact are compelled to look to various circumstances in order to determine where the truth really lies. Even jurors are suspected, frequently, of violating their oaths, and for this reason the law has justly provided for new trials on the ground of passion and prejudice. Perjury is rampant, even in the most religious communities. Mr. Justice Dawson of the Supreme Court of Kansas, in a paper read before the Judicial Section of the American Bar Association, in 1926, said:—

The real and crying hindrances to a correct and efficient administration of justice lie in the widespread prevalence of perjury practiced with impunity by litigants and witnesses.

A similar observation was made by Hon. Charles H. Tuttle, U.S. attorney for the southern district of New York, when writing with reference to criminal justice.<sup>2</sup>

In almost every case of perjury, whether detected or not, the witness has a religious belief, or the reputation of having one, which is sufficient to satisfy a court that he is capable of taking an oath. He professes, if examined on his *voir dire*, to believe that a violation of the obligations of his oath will result in divine punishment here or hereafter. On the other hand, in the innumerable cases where truthful testimony is given, the truth is adhered to for reasons wholly apart from any fear of divine vengeance. The witness may be truthful from a fear of exposure, or because of a detestation of perjury and a hatred of liars. Most frequently it is because of a natural tendency or desire to speak the truth. Such reasons influence Atheists as well as others. Most people tell the truth when not under oath. A vast amount of business is transacted solely because of a well-founded confidence in the honesty and veracity of others.

In the light of the facts of common knowledge, there is no just reason for enforcing the ancient common law rule which makes Atheists incompetent to testify, a rule which, because of the reasons for it, means a law which bars from the witness stand any person who admits that he does not believe that any divine power will intervene to punish a witness if he shall testify falsely. Such a law still survives in some parts of the United States.

While in most states by virtue of statutory or constitutional provisions no person is incompetent to testify on account of any religious or irreligious opinions, in the following there are laws which render incompetent as a witness in any court any person who is a nonbeliever in divine vengeance: (1) Arkansas;<sup>3</sup> (2) Delaware;<sup>4</sup> (3) Maryland;<sup>5</sup> (4) New Hampshire;<sup>6</sup> (5) North Carolina;<sup>7</sup> and (6) South Carolina.<sup>8</sup> In New Jersey a nonbeliever is held incompetent if not a party to the suit.<sup>9</sup>

In Arkansas the state constitution provides that "No person who denies the being of a God shall . . . be competent to testify as a witness in any court." This provision must be interpreted in accordance with the common law rule and its reason. In order that a witness may be competent he must

<sup>2</sup> *Century Magazine*, v. 115, p. 1 (November, 1927).

<sup>3</sup> Const. Art. 19, sec. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 42 L.R.A. 553, note; *State v. Townsends*, 2 Harr. 543; *Perry's Admr. v. Stewart*, 2 Harr. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Declaration of Rights, Art. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Public Laws (1926), Ch. 336, sec. 23.

<sup>7</sup> N. C. Code Ann., Ch. 61; *Shaw v. Moore*, 49 N. C. 25.

<sup>8</sup> *State v. Abercrombie*, 130 S.C. 358, 126 S.E. 142.

<sup>9</sup> *Percy v. Powers*, 51 N.J.L. 432.

<sup>1</sup> 15 *Harvard Law Review*, 84.



have a belief in a God "who rewards truth and avenges falsehood, either in this or in a future life."<sup>10</sup> In Maryland the 36th article of Declaration of Rights requires of a witness that he believe "that under his [God's] dispensation such person will be held morally accountable for his acts, and be rewarded or punished therefor in this world or the world to come." Therefore if any one believes in God but further takes the view that the Supreme Being does not punish for any particular act, but ever remains a Comforter and Guide, he is not a competent witness in the jurisdictions mentioned.

The people in the States named are, in many respect, solicitous of the rights of others. Their laws require the payment of compensation to any one whose property is taken or damaged under the exercise of the power of eminent domain, as where a railroad corporation takes a strip of land for a right of way. They offer no compensation, however, to one whose rights as a witness, even in his own case, are stripped from him because of "nonconformist" opinions, however honestly entertained. Moreover, they compel him to pay taxes to help maintain the courts in which he is not allowed to testify. Again, they stigmatize him on account of his conclusions respecting certain theological doctrines. He is placed in a class below felons, for proof of conviction of crime may be used only to discredit the Christian witness, not to disqualify him, whereas the nonbeliever is not merely discredited but disqualified entirely, not on account of any previous conviction of crime, but solely because of his opinions.

FRANK SWANCARA.

(To be continued.)

### The Bishop Explains.

MOTORISTS and ramblers, with the open road or fascinating byway lying before them on a fresh Sabbath morn or darkling eventide do not stop to reason out their right to miss Church. They feel it.

But man cannot continue to flout the rules of traditional decency without being pulled up at some time or other, either by his own conscience or somebody else's. A time comes when, to keep on good terms with himself, he of the Tender Conscience must justify his behaviour. It is no use pointing to the sins of others as vindicating his own. He must establish the Right to Sin.

And so the public creates a demand, a demand to which the modern editor has not been insensible. The press gradually supersedes the pulpit as a purveyor of religious ideas. This is apt to be disagreeable to parsons, but some have characteristically bowed to the inevitable, and even claimed to be working in harmony, while partaking in reciprocal advertising. At the same time, the press has a longer arm than the pulpit, the journalist a more arresting tone than the parson. The press must give the public—to use Arnold Bennett's phrase—"What the Public Wants."

A certain public wants a justification for missing church. It is given them. And if I were asked which was the one great delusion, the one big fraud, which the press has foisted on the public in the last few years, I should say it was summed up in the popular little phrase: *Christianity is not Churchianity.*

This has been widely accepted, a fact which shows that, despite the decline of church-going, there still remains the same old unquestioning credulity that characterized the parson's audience. The man who used to look down on his secular neighbour can now say, "There are better Christians outside the Church than in it."

Whether or no the Church is an essential part of the

Christian religion will depend on whether it is man's privilege to change the meaning of words—it is a point on which William James might have had something to say. But a verdict based on history would have stronger claims. The point is, that in taking the Church to be essential, Rationalists and staunch Churchmen will agree. So, that in making the great secular public aware of the anti-Christian implication of their attitude, Secularists can expect help from churchmen like the Bishop of St. Albans, who has recently written *God's Plan* (S.C.M. Press).

According to the Bishop, Christianity is Churchianity, and the first thing one should do with one's wage is to set aside a portion for Church organization—"trust money for God," as the Bishop terms it. God's work, done by the Church, should make first claim on a man's pocket.

The Bishop begins with the sound observation that there exists a "terrible amount" of ignorance about Christianity, and it is the purpose of his book to combat this ignorance, and to instruct scout-masters and teachers how to "show how the different parts" of Christianity "hang together."

Three things are necessary to the beginner in Christianity:—

(a) "First make a venture of faith."

(Half the battle is indeed over). The next piece of advice after this shut-your-eyes-and-dive feat is

(b) "Study the life of Christ,"

a remark which might be enhanced somewhat if the Bishop would indicate which one.

The third thing is,

(c) "Then practise it,"

and as we have every wish to keep clear of gaols and asylums, we must again ask to be excused.

The Bishop has discovered the cause of "discord, disorder and disease." These are due to "our refusal to obey and co-operate with the laws of God." Christian, too, are his views of morality. "Morality," he affirms, "means obedience to the law of God." The Lord says, "do this," Bishop Furse adds, "and don't argue." Man is meant to be like Jesus, but is separated from him by sin, which is defined as "thinking our own thoughts rather than God's."

And so the book goes on. The Bishop sets out to explain what Christianity really is. He has partly succeeded. He has also illustrated—assuming his sincerity—the type of mentality that is produced by a theological training.

Dean Inge says, "It is quite unnecessary to go to Australia or Central Africa to find the savage; he is our next-door neighbour. The mentality of the stone-age exists on our platforms and in our pulpits."

G. H. TAYLOR.

### Abnormal.

A SONNET.

No more shall tramp this godly earth of ours  
The brontosaurus in his rage and pride:  
So oft we dream, amid refulgent bowers  
That horn and sabre-tooth are laid aside;  
But if—who knows?—we underrate the powers,  
(Tasting life's honey-mud all undenied!)  
Of retrogression in such somnolent hours  
The race may yet be humbled, far and wide!

In that lull hush which presages the storm  
We, meanwhile, fall on sure and swift decay,  
And may not hope to leave strong sons behind us:  
For, though we strive and strive till Judgment Day,  
Still comes one poignant thought to hold and bind  
us—

That we are off the Norm, the healthy Norm!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Nigeria.

<sup>10</sup> U. S. v. Miller, 236 Fed. 798.



## The Soldier in Heaven.

ANOTHER war book, and as usual the orthodox will receive shocks when they read it.

This time the book is by a French writer, Roland Dorgeles, whose *Cabaret up the Line*, is published by the Bodley Head at 7s. 6d.

Dorgeles appears to be one of France's outstanding writers of the younger generation; he portrays the French poilu amid vivid scenes of trench life, and on page 3 a character is made to cry out regarding a German murder of a priest, "I can't stick priests myself. But that's just it, they're not men, and no one has the right to kill them. If you do you're a bloody swine, that's all."

In our country we found that during the war priests were not regarded as men, but were exempt from taking their places alongside men in the firing line.

There is a ludicrous picture of a priest who ruled the parishioners with preaching and sermons, and who raved about the shortcomings of his flock from the pulpit. He fulminated against men who got drunk, gossips who chattered, the lost women who served drinks to soldiers after hours, and who displayed their calves for all the world to see, and had no more sense of shame than the beasts of the field.

But the story I like best is a satire called "Among the Angels."

In this story a certain Lousteau is killed and wakes up in heaven, where angels are playing hymns on their viols. When they see the soldier coming they fly panic-stricken, and are only pacified by the appearance of God who tells Lousteau to throw away his bombs, and then tells him he is to play the harp.

Lousteau finds none of his pals in heaven, and settles down to find fault with the place. He sees there are ten times too many inmates for the work which has to be done, and there seemed to be no proper organization.

Outside he sees going to Hell all the profiteers he had known as well as some of the brass hats who harried the men, and then lastly a poor woman from Montmartre. She is going to hell because she took too much cocaine and so killed herself, but Lousteau offers to change places and serve the ten years purgatory for her.

She accepts, but thinks it can't be done, because in heaven the substitution would be noticed. "Them notice anything!" he laughed, "No fear of that." He leant towards her and added confidentially, "Wait till you see . . . They're in a mess in there oh, they're in a proper mess!"

The book adds more weight to the growing proof that those in charge of affairs at the front were muddlers and heartless position seekers, and although it is written to show something of the lighter side of trench life, it is just as much an indictment of war as any of the other war books we have been reading lately.

NECHELLS.

## Acid Drops.

One of the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles was that no military education or training should be given in any educational establishment in Germany. Now we have some of the students at Harrow revolting against the number of compulsory military drills they are subjected to. That may be taken as an earnest of our genuineness when we talk of the wish to abolish war. Probably all that these people mean is that they wish to abolish all desire on the part of anyone else to at any time have a war with us. That may be the explanation of why in the interests of civilization we insist on Germany seeing to it that no military training takes place in its schools, while making it compulsory in some of our principal ones. The talk of the physical benefits of the training is just so much unadulterated humbug. Every item of physical exercise employed in a military

drill can be performed in ordinary gymnastic exercises. The idea of accustoming the youth of the country to the idea of war, and the inevitability of war, lies at the root of these practices. We venture to say that if any teacher in any of the public schools of England told his pupils that they were better serving the country by making the whole idea of militarism hateful than by making it attractive, he would be discharged.

Next to the Christian hypocrite comes the Christian liar. We have given above a sample of the one. Here is a sample of the other, from a religious paper, and concerns Dr. Nansen:—

It might be truly said of him that he feared nothing but God. . . . He was one of the soldiers of Christ, a warrior to whom no man owed his death, but to whom thousands of sufferers from famine and pestilence in Russia and America owed their lives. . . . When he left the world to pass over the river, all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

No considerations of decency or truthfulness ever daunts the genuine Christian liar. Nansen did not believe in God, he left explicit instructions that there was to be no religious service over his grave—a request honoured in his country, although we doubt if it would have been here, and now these carrion hunting Christians can smugly write about his fearing a God, in whom he did not believe, and being welcomed by emasculated trumpet-blowing angels in a heaven in which he had no belief, the whole intention being to impose on the ignorance of the amalgamation of sheep and jackass that makes up the average worshipper in a Christian Church.

A dewy morn, the bells of hundreds of Christian Churches pealing out the glad tidings of Ascension Day. The majority of the people who heard the sacred noises either turned over and went to sleep again, or else got up and went to work. This is evidence in support of the theory that there is imminent danger of a revival of religion. It also proves that the memory of Jesus is firmly established in the hearts of the people.

The childish custom of "blessing the wells" was observed near Ashbourne, with the spiritual help of the Bishop of Derby. England is supposed to be a civilized country. But the Bishop of Derby and his followers remind us that things are not always as they seem. The blessing of wells is mentally in line with the wearing of charms and mascots. So one need look no further than the Christian Church for an explanation as to the prevalence of the mascot-wearing mentality.

Miss Violet Markham told a women's political meeting that she strongly disapproves of the view that "education can always be made simple and easy, and that a child can pick up bits of knowledge as a hen picks up corn." For our part, we strongly disapprove of the notion that education is merely a picking up—easy or hard—of bits of knowledge. That kind of "education" only fits children to be members of a church or newspaper readers. Real education concerns itself—strange as it may seem to some persons—with training the intelligence and teaching to think, and not merely with memorizing large chunks of "knowledge."

Edith Picton-Tuberville, M.P., thinks that "men and women should believe in each other, and work in perfect comradeship for the good of the family and the State." This is expecting rather too much of a Christian-bred world. The Bible doesn't suggest woman should be regarded as a comrade, an equal. And it has, for centuries, familiarized men with the notion that woman is a chattel, a serf, or a temptress. Therefore, so long as the influence of the Bible lasts, the comradeship ideal must make but slow progress. Quite probably Atheistic Russia will be the first to reveal the possibilities of that ideal.



Sir Oliver Lodge told the East Ham Brotherhood that :—

People used to say evolution was a mechanical process, an automatic process. An automatic machine requires a great deal of mind to construct, to devise. The more automatic the machine, the better it works, the more it has been thought out. When you see an automatic machine working, you know it has been designed by a mind. So that this mechanical process, evolution, you must realize that behind it lies a guiding and directing Something.

Quite so; and since everything must have something to design and direct it, we presume the Something also had (or has) something to devise and direct it—and so on, *ad infinitum*. What the thoughtful Christian ought to pray to is not a God, but a series of Gods.

The Press, says a writer, is "a patchwork quilt of truth, gossip, and rumour, tastefully blended." The tastefulness of the blend is a matter of opinion. In any case, the patchwork could be vastly improved by the inclusion of a long piece of suppressed truth. The pattern would be much more tasteful, also, if the lie by suggestion and the lie by suppression were eliminated.

Another definition of the press is: "Life's looking-glass: distorting, magnifying, minimizing, and sometimes giving a true reflection." Perhaps we will be pardoned for suggesting that life would get along more smoothly with a new looking-glass.

To promote anti-war feeling, a weekly paper points out that of every pound of the national taxes, 13s. 4d. is being paid for war. This kind of statement is probably the only one likely to have any influence with a "practical minded" people. It would be taxing their mental or imaginative powers far too much to ask such people to comprehend that war is a stupid, brutal, degrading, and unintelligent mode of settling disputes.

Out of the proceeds of Gainsborough "Education Week," it has been decided to provide a schools' playing field for the town. We are pleased to hear it. But for God's sake, and the parsons', don't let the children use the field for games on the Sabbath.

A number of the religious papers seem curiously undecided about the late Archbishop of Canterbury. They seem to hover between "asleep in the Lord," and "Gone to his long rest." Neither seems applicable to the (Christian) situation. If the Church teaching is correct then he is certainly not asleep, but very much awake, and as he will be minus a nervous system, he will never go to sleep again. Sleep is a form of recuperation, and as Christians believe that when we are done with this earthly body, we shall have an immortal one, with no possibility of decay, and therefore, no need for recuperation, there will be no sleep for anybody. As to rest, well, the only occupation of angels that we read of is that they stand round the throne singing eternally, and everyone knows that an eternal song with an infinite number of verses is not much of a rest for the singers, and certainly none for the listeners.

Heine was right! Talk to the most stupid Englishman about politics, he said, and he will say something sensible. But talk to the most intelligent Englishman about religion and he will say something stupid. Here is a proof. Writing to the *Times*, Lord Dunedin tells two stories of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. The first is that when a boy he was in danger of drowning but a man, attracted by the cries of the future Archbishop's companions, came up in time to save him. The

second case was when a boy playing with a loaded gun shot him in the thigh. A groom was sent galloping to Edinburgh, and returned with a doctor in time to save the boy's life. So says Lord Dunedin :—

In view of the life of usefulness that followed, may we not say these were cases of what is sometimes called "a special Providence"?

Now Lord Dunedin is a man of great ability, a Judge, and one whose opinion on many subjects would be listened to with deference. Yet the moment he touches religion he lapses into sheer, drivelling idiocy. It is as though he were trying to demonstrate the truth of Heine's remark. We have no doubt that if one were to take the trouble one might find many burglars or murderers whose lives were saved in their early years in an equally "providential" manner, and many quite promising children whose lives were not. And the *Times*, gives nearly half a column of its space to this unspeakable stupidity of Lord Dunedin.

According to Professor Eddington, the total matter in the Universe is equal to 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 suns. Creating this amount of matter must have taxed all the resources of the Christian God. But no doubt it was mere child's play to a God who had already accomplished the harder task of creating himself, out of nothing.

The most popular fiction, says Dean Inge, is not only dirty, but mean. This remark seems rather well-timed, in view of the fact that the Bible Society has just declared the Holy Bible to be the world's popular book of fiction.

Everyone must have the greatest admiration for Miss Amy Johnson's flight to Australia. Her lonely journey exhibited courage of the very highest quality, at the side of which the courage that usually gains applause is of a poor kind. All the same, we hope, for her sake that the following newspaper paragraph is either the invention of a journalist, or that she did not mean literally what she is reported as saying :—

She expressed her faith in a higher power, and relating her thrilling experience over the Java sea, told how, when she almost abandoned all hope, she muttered a fervent prayer, and the clouds suddenly opened, and a double rainbow encircled her plane.

If it is true 'tis a pity, for one would like one's admiration of the lady to remain undiluted. Of course, the stupidity of those that can be religiously impressed remains. God sent the clouds, and when he heard Miss Johnson praying, suddenly remembered that she was in trouble, and conveniently cleared some of the clouds out of the way. But how much easier it would have been to have kept the clouds away? But God appears to be fond of these theatrical displays. He is like a novelist who first gets his characters into all sorts of dangerous situations, and then shows his cleverness by getting them out again. Still, that kind of God suits that kind of believer.

But suppose Amy had not prayed? Then, on the hypothesis, God would have let her break her neck, and his followers would have excused him on the ground that she was "flying in the face of Providence." Still, as God is fond of these spectacular exhibitions here is a good chance for him to redeem his character. Why not get a plane in which a Bishop should act as pilot, and half a dozen other bishops as passengers, and fly to Australia with only enough petrol to give them a start off? That would be something really staggering. But all these half and half miracles leave the unbeliever quite unaffected. We know one aviator, on one of the regular air services who reads the *Freethinker* regularly, and often has a copy with him. He gets to his journey's end quite safely. Perhaps God has not been informed of the matter.



## 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.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

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.

W. WEARING.—Thanks for reminder. The omission was quite an oversight, and we will see that it is remedied.

H. JACKSON.—We intended noticing the book soon, but other things have had to take precedence. No need to worry, we intend taking a few days off as soon as possible.

J. R. DUNCAN.—Thanks for cuttings, always useful.

C.L.—Mr. Cohen's *Foreign Missions* has been out of print for some years. The figures would need bringing up to date to warrant reprinting.

R. THOMPSON.—What is the use of talking about what Jesus meant? He meant exactly what his followers wish him to mean.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Sugar Plums.

We have just time to call the attention of London members of the National Secular Society to the Annual Conference which takes place to-day. The business meetings of the Conference will be held in the Palm Court, The Grafton Hotel, Tottenham Court Road, at 10.30 and 2.30. A luncheon, price 2s. 6d. will be served at one o'clock. In the evening, at 7, in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, there will be a public demonstration, at which Mr. Cohen will preside, supported by a number of speakers. Admission to this is free, but there are reserved seats, price one shilling. The hall ought to be packed.

Mr. Cohen's new booklet, *The Foundations of Religion* (9d. paper, and 1s. 6d. cloth) is now on sale. The delay in publishing was only, after all, two days. The essay gives the modern attitude towards fundamental religious doctrines, and states a position to which no reply has ever been made, and very few even attempted. But until some reply is given to it religion remains "the tale of an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Orders are coming along well, and for "Upasaka's" very effective work *A Heathen's Thoughts on Christianity*.

After a great deal of controversy it has been decided to permit Sunday games in one park in Lowestoft, but children are not to be allowed to play between two and four in the afternoon, because the parsons complain that if otherwise Sunday school attendance would drop off. Confound the impudence of these clerical kidnappers.

The concession well illustrates the greed and dishonesty of these clerically bossed and religiously-minded rulers. The park in which Sunday games will be permitted was given the town by Mr. Hollingsworth, of the firm of Bourne & Hollingsworth, and one of the conditions laid down by him was that there should be reasonable facility for Sunday games. Honest men would either have declined the gift or have carried out the donor's obvious desire. Being very religious they could not miss the chance of grabbing something, and being Christian they could not act straightforwardly. So they accepted the gift, permitted in one park what they will not permit in others, and proceeded to evade the conditions as much as they could. The manoeuvre is characteristically and hopelessly Christian.

We hasten to correct an error in our last issue. The Secretary of the Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. is Miss W. Black, 33 Southbank Road, Kingsway, Manchester.

Immediately after the Annual Conference Mr. G. Whitehead will begin his provincial tour, commencing at Plymouth, and ending in September at Glasgow. The entire cost will be met by the Executive of the N.S.S. Branches availing themselves of Mr. Whitehead's services will make the necessary local arrangements, which should include the presence of supporters at the meetings.

We hear that Mr. J. Clayton had a busy week last week, lecturing at Colne, Hapton, Crawshawbrook, Burnley and Accrington. The meetings at Crawshawbrook and Burnley were remarkably good. These are all towns in which Mr. Clayton is building up a reputation as a speaker, and we are naturally gratified at hearing of the meetings being successful.

The statements of "Revelation" have the undoubted advantage of being absolute; their great drawback is that they are not susceptible of scientific proof.

Georges Clemenceau.



## Pumpkin Center's Passion Play.

THE Sheriff of the Cow Town of Pumpkin Center was a tough guy and a terror to evil doers. He was Chief of the Morality Bureau, an ardent Prohibitionist and a pillar of the local Episcopal church.

When, therefore, after his return from a trip to Europe, he announced that he was going to clean up Pumpkin Center and make it a God-fearing, righteous and a hundred per cent efficient and sober town, his words were listened to with the respect due to a man who can pip the ace of hearts at forty paces.

"See here!" announced Sheriff Green, "When I was in Yurrup I stopped at a place called Ober Amergau—and I'll tell the world those guys have got the goods! What the citizens of this hyer burg need is a Passion Play. Uplift! Tha't what, and durn me if Pumpkin Center's version won't make Ober Amergau look like ten cents."

The Sheriff's proposal was received with acclamation—especially among the ladies. There was a good deal of unpleasantness and nasty back chat among the members of the Dorcas Society as to whom should have the honour of playing The Virgin.

Eventually, however, Sheriff Green settled all differences by nominating his daughter Sadie. He enforced his remarks with a couple of six-shooters and what he said—went.

That being settled, the question of the chief figure in the Passion Play arose, and there was a good deal of argument. Some suggested Sheriff Green, but that good man promptly vetoed the suggestion.

"The guy that plays Christ has gotta have a beard, folk—I ain't figgering on raising one in a fortnight that'll amount to a row of beans. We don't want no theatrical properties in this Passion Play. Them whiskers have to be honest to God whiskers or nix."

It was discovered to the chagrin of the committee that few people in Pumpkin Center had the requisite facial adornment to do justice to the star role of the production.

Old Man Schultz of the delicatessen store had a luxurious beard—but, as the Sheriff pointed out, he was too blamed old, so he was cast for the role of Zacharias.

The Passion Play project was held up for days through this unexpected snag, then the Sheriff came to a momentous decision.

The only man in Pumpkin Center who could possibly fill the role of Christ adequately was Big Bill Bulligan.

Unfortunately, Big Bill was the village bad man—a tough from Toughville. He had a magnificent auburn beard, and was a fine upstanding man withal. But Sheriff Green was not to be daunted. At the head of a posse of men they rounded up Big Bill at his favourite sport of shooting up Casey's saloon.

When the big cowboy had calmed down a little, the Sheriff explained his object.

"You've got one chance before we lynch yuh!" he announced.

"Quit drinking and take part in our Passion Play, thus saving your dogasted soul—or it's you for the neck-tie party!"

Now Big Bill was no fool and the idea tickled him.

"Sheriff, you've slobbered a canful. I ain't no actor—but put me wise to this Passion stuff and I'm your man!" he added with a sidelong glance at Sadie, who was a good looking girl.

"Nix on that sheikh stuff," said the Sheriff, "for the next fortnight you cut out the booze, come to Bible class and do as you're told."

Strangely enough, in the days that followed, Big

Bill forsook all his old ways. He quit drinking and swearing and became a model citizen.

Some put it down to religion and the signal honour of playing the part of Christ, others guessed it was playing opposite to Sadie Green, who, as I mentioned, was by way of being a peach. However—there was no doubt about it. Outwardly, Big Bill was a reformed man, and the prospects for the Passion Play at Easter Week were rosy.

The fame of Pumpkin Center's great project spread far and wide, and when the great day dawned the people flocked into town from miles around.

The play was to be performed in a natural amphitheatre, back of old Doc. Wheeler's ranch, and long before it was scheduled to start every seat was packed.

Big Bill, clad in a long white robe, with his beard carefully combed, and his hair parted in the middle, was very quiet and subdued before the show.

Obviously the grandeur and magnitude of his role was weighing on him.

Unfortunately, as some poet says, just when everything in the garden seems lovely you tread on the rake and Fate cops you a wallop on the bozo.

The sun shone gaily in a turquoise sky, even the birds seemed to be hushed into reverent silence that Easter morning of Pumpkin Center's Passion Play. The audience sang hymns before the rise of the curtain, folk had come from places as far off as Topaz City, Paris (Ariz.) and even Boobville, and Sheriff Green was loudly acclaimed for his uplifting and moral idea.

Unfortunately, however, Big Bill had a no account friend named Alkali Ike. He'd been over the border cattle rustling, when the Passion Play project had been mooted, and on his return to Casey's saloon, he learned for the first time of the extraordinary reformation of Big Bill Bulligan.

"Hot ziggity dam!" swore Alkali Ike, "If that ain't the centipede's spats and the alligator's gaiters. Big Bill's got religion!"

He called for drinks all round for his band of rough-necks, oiled up his six-shooters and purchased several crates of produce from Casey.

"Say ho. We're gonna lamp this Passion Play," he announced, and at the head of a dozen cowboys of his own calibre they rode for Doc. Wheeler's ranch.

The play had already started, and Alkali Ike nearly fell off his horse as he saw Big Bill in a white nightgown, lying on a kind of camp bed, with Miss Anabel Meecher, the school mar'm, breaking a pot of Pompeian Face Cream on his bare feet and then wiping it with her hair.

"Dog my cats!" gasped Alkali Ike, "they're plumb crazy!"

"Ssh! Ssh!" whispered a lot of folk round the arena.

Old Ike nearly bust himself holding in his laughter then he turned to his henchmen.

"When I says go—let 'em have it!" he whispered.

With that, they each armed themselves with ammunition in the shape of tomatoes, prickly pears and eggs—then waited for the signal.

Meanwhile, Big Bill brought tears to the eyes of the women in the audience by the beautiful and reverent way he acted, and when the play speeded up, and they saw him dragged through the crowd on to execution they sobbed hysterically. At last came the final tableau. Big Bill was revealed patiently hanging on the cross between the two thieves, played by Cy. Briggs the shoe store clerk, and old Paddy Maloney the ice man.

This was too much for Alkali Ike.

The sight of his old side-kick and sparring partner



hanging there in a white nightdress with a crown of cactus leaves round his head, nearly sent him crazy.

"Let him have it!" he roared, and then with a whoop he flung half a dozen ripe, squashy tomatoes.

Big Bill, arms outstretched, smiled a patient, forgiving smile that infuriated Ike.

"By Gosh!" he roared, "I'll larn him to pull that stuff!"

He pulled out his six-shooter and pumped in a hail of bullets all round Big Bill—about two inches away from his extremities, making him do a double shuffle Charleston to dodge them. Big Bill squirmed on the cross, for the bullets were unpleasantly close, but he gritted his teeth and determined he wasn't going to spoil the Passion Play.

His lips were just forming to mumble his piece, "Forgive them for they know not"—when Zunk! A raw, messy, and distinctly ancient Easter egg caught him full on the mouth, effectually stopping the lines. That evil smelling egg was the last straw.

Shaking his head savagely to remove some of the sticky putrescence, Big Bill spoke. His voice quivered with a desperate effort to keep his self-control.

"Ladies an' gentlemen!" said Big Bill Bulligan, "I shall endeavour to maintain this Christ-like attitude till the end of this hyer act—when I shall die—but"—here his voice rang out like thunder, and the look in his eyes was murderous—"I shall rise again, not in three days, but pronto! I'm the original blood sweating Behemoth of holy writ, and I shall descend among the audience, and God help the daggasted son of a flatulent sea cook who flung that egg!"

GWYN EVANS.

## Voltaire the Liberator.

(Concluded from page 242.)

CLOSELY on the judicial murder of Calas by fanatical Catholics, there followed the similar case of the Servens. Paul Servens was a Protestant at Castres, close to Toulouse, he had a weak-minded daughter, who, it was pretended wished to turn Catholic. She was taken from her parents and placed in a convent, where she was whipped until she became insane, and then callously returned to her parents, soon after which she threw herself down a well. Again, as in the case of Calas, the family were accused of murder; but, fortunately, they fled on foot to Switzerland, a married daughter dying, along with the child, in childbirth, on the snow-covered mountains. The parents were sentenced, in their absence, to be hanged.

Shortly afterwards a wooden crucifix on the bridge of Abbeville was found to have been damaged in the night. Two young men, the Chevalier la Barre, and D'Étallonde were charged, merely on suspicion, with the act. D'Étallonde escaped, La Barre was sentenced to be beheaded; he was tortured to extract a confession, but firmly refused, he was beheaded on the scaffold, he was only nineteen years old! Voltaire was deeply moved by this abominable crime, and immediately wrote a pamphlet, entitled *Narrative of the Death of the Chevalier de la Barre*, which he followed with one still more powerful, called the *Cry of Innocent Blood*.

It took Voltaire eight years to get the sentence on the Servens annulled; and, in spite of all his efforts, the sentence on La Barre and D'Étallonde was never reversed. Voltaire was now thoroughly roused. The time for trifling was gone, the time had come to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard. "These atrocities," says Morley, "kindled in Voltaire a blaze

of anger and pity, that remains among the things of which humanity has most reason to be proud." <sup>14</sup> The worst of the good people, said Voltaire, is that they groaned over a wrong, shut their lips, took their supper and forgot it. Voltaire could not do that. Says Morley:—

Cruelty was not to him as a disagreeable dream of the imagination, from thought of which he could save himself by arousing to a sense of his own comfort, but a vivid flame burning into his thoughts and destroying peace: wrong-doing and injustice were not simple words on his lips; they went as knives to the heart; he suffered with the victim, and consumed with an active rage against the oppressor. <sup>15</sup>

Voltaire himself had twice been imprisoned in the Bastille. The first time for writing some verses against the tyranny of Louis XIV, the real author of which, by his own later confession, was LeBrun. This lasted eleven months. The second time for offending a noble who had publicly insulted him, to which insult Voltaire made a witty retort. For this he was set on and beaten by the noble's lackeys, and when he challenged the noble to a duel he was thrown into the Bastille for nearly a month, and only liberated on the condition of exile to England. He declared that another term in the Bastille would end his life.

No books could then be published without official consent, and this was refused for his *Elements of Newton's Philosophy*. Although, says Parton: "The most bigoted reader would look through the work in vain to find either cause or pretext for the ministerial ban." <sup>16</sup> His *Letters on the English*, was publicly burnt by the executioner, the publisher thrown into the Bastille, and the edition confiscated. As the historian Buckle truly observes: "These repeated injuries might well have moved a more patient spirit than that of Voltaire. Certainly those who reproach this illustrious man, as if he were the instigator of unprovoked attacks upon the existing state of things, must know very little of the age in which it was his misfortune to live." <sup>17</sup> The marvel is that he should have held his hand so long. Writing to his friend, D'Alembert, from Ferney, he says: "For forty years I have endured the outrages of bigots and scoundrels, I have found there is nothing to gain by moderation, and that it is a deception. I must wage war openly and die nobly, 'on a crowd of bigots slaughtered at my feet.'" <sup>18</sup> It is a tribute to his unselfishness that it was not to avenge his own wrongs, but those of utter strangers, that he launched his great campaign of "Crushing the Infamous," to which he devoted the last years of his life. "With a sure hand," says the historian Taine, "and without seeming to touch it, he abruptly tears aside the veil hiding a wrong, a prejudice, a folly, in short, any human idolatry. The real figure whether deformed, odious or spiritless, suddenly appears in this instantaneous flash; we shrug our shoulders. This is the risibility of an agile, triumphant reason." <sup>19</sup> Or, to quote our own historian, Macaulay:—

When an innocent man was broken on the wheel at Toulouse, when a youth, guilty of only an indiscretion, was beheaded at Abbeville, when a brave officer, borne down by public injustice, was dragged, with a gag in his mouth, to die on the Place de Grève, a voice instantly went forth from

<sup>14</sup> Morley: *Voltaire*. p. 232.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Parton: *Life of Voltaire*. Vol. I, p. 367.

<sup>17</sup> Buckle: *History of Civilization*. p. 421 (Edition 1904).

<sup>18</sup> Wheeler: *Voltaire*. p. 42.

<sup>19</sup> Taine: *The Ancient Régime*. p. 265.



the banks of Leman, which made itself heard from Moscow to Cadiz, and which sentenced the unjust judges to the contempt and detestation of all Europe.<sup>20</sup>

We often hear it said that Voltaire should not have introduced ridicule and sarcasm into serious matters. That he should have argued serious matters seriously. But, as Buckle has pointed out, this would have been utterly useless, and a waste of time:—

No one could reason more closely than Voltaire, when reasoning suited his purpose. But he had to deal with men impervious to argument; men whose inordinate reverence for antiquity had only left them two ideas, namely, that everything old is right, and that everything new is wrong. To argue against these opinions would be idle indeed; the only other resource was to make them ridiculous and weaken their influence by holding up their authors to contempt. This was one of the tasks Voltaire set himself to perform; and he did it well. He therefore used ridicule, not as the test of truth, but as the scourge of folly.<sup>21</sup>

So well did he administer the punishment, says the same writer, that the ears of their successors tingle, when they read his biting words: "and they revenged themselves by reviling the memory of that great writer, whose works are a thorn in their side, and whose very name they hold in undisguised abhorrence."

Then, again, the pious can never forgive him for the unpardonable sin of bringing ridicule to bear on religion; but, as Morley has well said: "There are times when the inhumanity of a system stands out so red and foul, when the burden of its iniquity weighs so heavy, and the contagion of its hypocrisy is so laden with mortal plague, that no awe of dilettante condemnation nor minute scruple as to the historic or relative can stay the hand of the man whose direct sight and moral energy have pierced the veil of use, and revealed the shrine of the infamous thing." Moreover, he caustically adds, "the partisans of the creed in whose name more human blood has been shed than in any other cause whatever, these, I say, can hardly find much ground of serious reproach in a few score epigrams."<sup>22</sup>

It was because Voltaire saw that the fruit was so deadly, that he laid the axe to the root of the tree, "It was essential that the superstitions in which intolerance had its root should be proved detestable and ridiculous." He never ridiculed goodness or truth. "There is no case of Voltaire mocking at any set of men who lived good lives." Says Morley:—

Men spoke of the mild beams of Christian charity, and where they pointed he saw only the yellow glare of the stake; they talked of the gentle solace of Christian faith, and he heard only the shrieks of the thousands and tens of thousands whom faithful Christian persecutors had racked, strangled, gibbeted, burnt, broken on the wheel. Through the steam of innocent blood which Christians for the honour of their belief had spilt in every quarter of the known world, the blood of Jews, Moors, Indians, and all the vast holocausts of heretical sects and people in Eastern and Western Europe, he saw only dismal tracts of intellectual darkness.<sup>23</sup>

Men owed nothing to their fellows, but everything to God. "The times when such was the universal idea of the rights of the understanding, were also the times when human life was cheapest, and the tiny bowl of a man's happiness was spilt upon the ground with least compunction." (p. 15.) Voltaire was the first to contend successfully against this monstrous creed. His contemporaries, "were stirred to

the quick by the sight and sound and thorough directness of those ringing blows." Says Morley, "the flashing scorn, the relentless fire, the downright grapples, with which the hated Voltaire pushed on his work of 'crushing the Infamous.'" (pp. 8-9.) The Faith once so powerful, and recklessly cruel, has been bleeding ever since from the wounds inflicted by Voltaire. Even with the immense sums invested in our Churches, the Clergy are at their wit's ends to prevent the steady decline of their congregations. That can only end in one way. When the older members die out, where are their successors coming from?

"Take away that gibbet," said Voltaire, pointing to the Crucifix. Yes, take it away. We have lived under the shadow of the dreadful thing long enough. It has caused agony and tears enough to satisfy the most jealous and revengeful deity.

W. MANN.

### On the Library Table.

THE first book on my list, I welcome hugely. I am a convinced, unashamed and unrepentant Dickensian, and anything about Charles Dickens gets that handy corner of my library reserved for the choicest treasures. Mr. Kent knows his subject thoroughly, and it is more than a pleasure to read his lucid pages packed with allusions to the great novelist's immortal characters. He does not idolize Dickens—as, I am afraid, so many Dickensians are apt to do. He knows that no writer ever was perfect or could write twenty absolutely perfect masterpieces. For my own part, I am glad there are faults in Dickens for, after all, Dickens was human, and as the only perfect being who ever lived on this earth was Jesus, I am proud to think the creator of Pickwick and Mrs. Gamp, of Pip and David Copperfield, and of hundreds of other well known characters, never got as far as the "Saviour" to absolute perfection.

I am, like Mr. Kent, also conscious that Dickens was no great theologian like St. Thomas Aquinas or St. Augustine or a great philosopher like Kant or Hume, or a great biologist like Darwin or Sir Arthur Keith. He was a novelist and one of the greatest creative novelists who ever lived, and Mr. Kent is quite right when he says, "while the attitude of a literary genius towards fundamental problems must always command attention, even a genius cannot flood with light a subject he has not studied." Thus, I for one, am completely indifferent as to what Dickens may have thought about God or Jesus or the Christian religion or what he actually said. Certainly many of his published utterances profess complete belief, and if his opinion on these matters means anything or is worth more than two hoots, then I think it can be proved he was a Christian. But what kind of a Christian? The Christian who says only through Christ Jesus and nothing else can we be "saved"? Not a bit of it. If he is the social reformer his books prove him to be to most of us, then I know of no novelist who was so completely a secularist. Always by our own efforts, by a change of heart, by a deep love for and belief in humanity, by working night and day for social reform here and now, is the cry of

*Dickens and Religion*, by W. Kent (Watts & Co.). 1s. net.  
*A Heathen's Thoughts on Christianity*, by E. Upasaka (The Pioneer Press). 1s. net.

*Psycho-Analysts and Art*, by George Whitehead (John Bale, Sons & Danielson, Ltd.). 5s. net.

*De Electione Gratiae and Quaestiones Theosophical*, by Jacob Böhme. Translated from the German by John Rolleston Earle, M.A. (Constable & Co., Ltd.). 10s. 6d. net.

<sup>20</sup> Macaulay: *Essays*. p. 560.

<sup>21</sup> Buckle: *History of Civilization*. pp. 462-463.

<sup>22</sup> Morley: *Voltaire*. pp. 42-43.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 243-244.



his famous works. He attacked abuses with satire and with hot indignation, but it was secularism that impelled him. By the side of these attacks, his few allusions to Christianity and Jesus, seem almost a satire in themselves against religion.

Mr. Kent packs nearly 140 pages with close reasoning and analysis. He starts with Dickens' childhood and then goes right through every reference to religion he can find in the novels, letters and in the official life by Forster, and he points out how we almost always have "the same old Dickens; fiercely attacking all the human representatives of religion, yet never challenging the supernaturalism." For Dickens certainly did not like Stiggins and his like, and loathed "the indecent squabbles of priests of most denominations, and the exemplary unfairness and rancour with which they conduct their differences," as the novelist himself wrote.

How many Stigginses and Chadbands Dickens may have met I do not know. Mr. Kent is inclined to treat them, unlike many of the political and social characters, as figments of imagination pure and simple—"they were born of a union between humorous propensities and anti-Puritan prejudice." And so with many of the other religious characters.

Enough has been said, I hope, to send all true Dickensians, and all book lovers, whether Freethinkers or not, to Mr. Kent's excellent little work. It deserves a great success, and if any reader cannot immediately lay his hand on any passage or character quoted by the author, then it is his business to do so forthwith. For Charles Dickens is of the Immortals.

\* \* \*

Upasaka has already won his spurs in Freethought fields with that rather surprising little work *Buddha the Atheist*—for, certainly few of us looked upon the Buddha as a comrade in complete unbelief. Now we have *A Heathen's Thoughts on Christianity* from his pen, and Upasaka has given us a singularly fine epitome of the case against Christianity. It is not easy to compress in a volume of 100 pages, a wealth of argument against this particular superstition, drawn from some very wide reading, but Upasaka has put down his thoughts exceptionally clearly, and he has attacked the very roots of Christianity as well as most of the foliage. He quotes standard authorities, and criticizes fundamentals with exceptional acuteness. The chapter on "Who wrote the Bible," is one full of ammunition for our speakers, who cannot always be expected to carry dates and traditions in their heads. Indeed, every chapter is a "storehouse of information." Out of curiosity, I wondered whether Upasaka would mention the famous discussion Justin Martyr had with a Jew, where the latter says quite clearly that the Christians had invented (made or fashioned) a Christ for themselves, and it will be found on page 48. The book is packed with such references, and it costs but 1s. Beg, borrow, steal or buy it, but get it.

\* \* \*

Another book by Mr. George Whitehead. This time he deals with *Psycho-Analysis and Art*—though here art must be used in its broadest sense.

Mr. Whitehead is nothing if not clear. He has the quality always of making you read on, and whether you agree with him or not, you cannot fail to understand him. Personally, I hold that a good many of the deductions of psycho-analysis are not proven, but there can be doubt that Freud has let a flood of light fall on many obscure problems of psychology. Mr. Whitehead tries to solve some of these in this particular work, and he puts up an excellent case on behalf of psycho-analysis and its implications. "Sex" is, of course, treated frankly, and Mr. Whitehead ob-

viously does not like the post-war novel which "in gigantic profusion, wallows in stories of sex, blatant and unashamed." The chapter on "Women and Anarchy," will certainly not be liked by feminists, who really ought to reply to the author, while Socialists will not like the one on "Anarchy in Industry and Politics." Mr. Whitehead says: "'Get as much as possible and give as little,' is the attitude displayed in industry, politics and social affairs. More and more freedom is everywhere demanded by those whose last thought is that their opponents shall enjoy a similar advantage."

But Mr. Whitehead goes very much deeper into his subject than merely differing from feminists and Socialists. He writes excellent chapters on many subjects—"Racial Phantasies," "Art and Day Dreams," "The Psychology of the Penny Dreadful," and so on—all showing wide and diverse reading, and his book is an excellent introduction and more, to these and other topics. He has, indeed, rarely wrote anything better or more to the point.

\* \* \*

In front of Jacob Böhme, I feel dumb. There are some mystics and some mysticism I can understand a little, but before most of the tribe, I am helpless. What did they actually think about?

I do not know really what mysticism is all about. I do know, of course, that there are two aspects of Holy Religion, an exoteric and an esoteric one. The exoteric is for you and me, the "vulgar." We have got to believe exactly what we are told, to wit, there really was a Fall of Man, a crossing of the Red Sea, a genuine Jonah and a real live Jesus with miracles all complete. But for the mystic, all these things had another meaning—there was accompanying the outward story, an inner one, a "Secret Doctrine," and this secret doctrine was vouchsafed only to the "holy" ones on earth, to St. Teresa and Mme. Blavatsky, to William Law and Jacob Böhme and quite a number of other "mystics. Böhme has my sympathy for, living in such a period as the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, any departure from the dreadful orthodox creed of his neighbours brought upon him the taint of "heresy" and heresy could easily mean torture and death. His Biblical and Theistical speculations soon brought upon him the hostility of the Church, and after the publication of *Aurora* and other works, he was told to stop writing any more. He continued teaching, however, till his death, and his books were translated in other languages and had considerable influence on mystical thought everywhere, particularly in England.

The book before me is a stout volume of 330 pages, and includes an excellent biographical sketch of the author. That it must supply a long felt want is obvious from the care and labour involved in its production. For my part, I have tried my utmost to wrestle with the various chapters, and I have no doubt whatever that my inability to fathom Mr. Böhme's meaning is due to two factors. Firstly, I have precious little sympathy for anything which sets out to explain "God," whether from an exoteric or an esoteric point of view. Secondly, I cannot see, even with the best will in the world, that the German shoemaker has explained anything whatever. For example: "The unfathomable will is of God, for it is in the one. And yet it is not God, for God is only understood when the will of the unground shuts itself into a centre of threefoldness in the divine bringing forth, and leads itself out into the joy of wisdom." I did not pick this passage out specially; I just shut my eyes and opened the book, and there was the dazzling gem. There are hundreds more, and they must give joy to the hearts of our modern mystics;



but why should I, mere mortal worm, expect to understand such transcendental mysteries?

For those who are mystics by nature or wish to be by inclination, this is the book which will warm the cockles of their hearts.

It is beautifully printed, splendidly edited and translated—obviously a labour of love for its translator, Mr. J. Rolleston Earle, M.A. But it is too hard a nut to crack for a humble layman like myself. And so to bed!

H. CUTNER.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."  
EGYPT.

SIR,—Mr. Corinna's description of the way Egypt suffers from the incubus of Islam is very interesting, but I think he is wrong in calling Christianity a step forward. The reason the British are generally better than the Egyptians is not that they have, as incubus, Christianity instead of the younger brother Islam, but that they have as incubus an aged and feeble religion instead of a comparatively young and strong one. Islam is about the same age as Christianity was in 1350 A.D., the time of the Black Death, and we all know what Britain was like then. Oxford was what El Azhar is now. The Christian Church was 1500 years old before it was shaken by an earthquake which cracked its black heavy roof and let in enough sun to give ideas a chance to grow. The superiority of some Western Europeans to the people vaguely classified as "oriental" (a most unsatisfactory word) dates wholly from that earthquake; there is no trace of it before; and even now it only exists where the earthquake took full effect and enfeebled Christianity by splitting it into squabbling sects. Mr. Corinna seems partly aware of this when he calls Latin America "Eastern." He is not the first to do so; I possess a newspaper cutting about "the introduction of Western ideas into Ecuador"!

C. HARPUR.

## National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD MAY 30, 1930.

MR. CHAPMAN COHEN in the chair.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted, and the Monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Bethnal Green, North London, Bradford, and Parent Society.

Correspondence from South London, Liverpool, and the International Freethought Federation, was dealt with and the Secretary instructed.

Items connected with the Annual Conference were discussed, and the Secretary reported the arrangements, with minor exceptions, were complete.

The meeting then closed. R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

## Society News.

MR. GEORGE WHITEHEAD addressed a week's meetings at Leytonstone, which is not used to Freethought propaganda. As is usual with new places, a great amount of excitement was generated; but in addition there was, all the week, the worst display of Christian hooliganism we have experienced for some time. Interruptions and threats were incessant, and on at least one occasion there was a danger of the platform being rushed. By a mixture of good humour and very straight speaking, the opposition was dealt with in a manner calculated to provoke thought while the excitement was tempered to avoid any actual explosion. But the bad manners and bigotry of a number who insisted upon the redeeming power of religion demonstrated what appalling raw material there must have been originally to work upon. The Christian Evidence platform was present during

the week, but a particularly dull speaker failed to attract more than the most cursory attention until our lectures were over, in spite of the efforts of some local bigots, who tried to persuade our crowds to sample the rival fare.

Quite a favourable impression was made on a good number of people, who heard Freethought expounded for the first time, the intolerance of the faithful being a helpful factor in this connexion. Altogether this was one of the most satisfactory week's in our lecturer's career. And the work should be systematically continued on the same pitch.

Our thanks are due to Mr. F. Warner and his family for their enthusiastic assistance.—G.W.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

### LONDON.

#### OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road): Saturday, 7.30—Various speakers.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Mr. James Hart and Mr. A. D. McLaren; 3.15, Messrs. E. Betts and C. E. Wood; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, B. A. Le Maine and E. C. Saphin. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and J. Hart; every Thursday, at 7.30, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and Charles Tuson; every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine and Mr. A. D. McLaren. The *Freethinker* can be obtained after our meetings outside the Park, in Bayswater Road.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—No Service.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, 11.30, Wren Road, Camberwell Green, Mr. G. Whitehead; 7.0, Stonehouse Street, Clapham Road, Mr. L. Ebury; from Monday to Thursday, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, and on Friday, at Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.15, Messrs. Charles Tuson and W. P. Campbell-Everden.

### COUNTRY.

#### OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Mearn's Law. Meet at Speir's Bridge, 12 o'clock.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of High Park Street and Park Road): Thursday, June 12, at 8.0, Messrs. D. Robinson and J. V. Shortt. Chairman, Mr. A. Jackson. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale. Will all members, friends and sympathisers please note that we are trying to arrange a Wirral ramble for Sunday, June 22. Full details next week.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): Mr. J. C. Keast—A Lecture.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture in Plymouth from June 10 until June 15.

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