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

Views and Opinions.

The "Blot on the Brain."

It must be well over forty years since I first read Dr. Ireland's *Blot on the Brain*. At any rate I know that I read it a year or so after it was published, and the date of its publication was 1885. The book made a great impression on my youthful mind, but since then a great deal of work has been done along similar lines, and I have endeavoured to apply the principles of the work, combined with other lines of investigation in my *Religion and Sex*. Dr. Ireland took a number of men in religion and politics, and dealt with them from the point of view of a medical man with a strong interest in the psychological side of medicine. The result was striking, and, to the unprepared, startling.

I have just been glancing through a reprint of two works by an Australian doctor, Dr. MacLaurin, Lecturer in Clinical Surgery in the University of Sydney. (De Mortuis. Essays historical and medical, hitherto published in two volumes, entitled respectively, *Post Mortem and Mere Mortals*. (Cape. 7s. 6d.) Dr. MacLaurin writes with vigour and charm; there is not a dull page in his book, it is written for laymen, and refreshingly free from technical jargon. To those unfamiliar with this aspect of life, no better book could be recommended. It is as fascinating as a novel; and as real as a good novel, for as Henry Fielding once said the distinction between the writer of history and the writer of a good novel is that in the latter case the names and dates are plainly fiction, while in the former the names and dates are the only things that are real.

"Bluff King Hal."

Everyone knows the tag as to the difference that might have been created in the world's history had

Cleopatra's nose been a quarter of an inch longer. A very little thing may lead to great consequences, not because things happen in a haphazard manner, but for the same reason that a bullet travelling directly towards a man's heart may be deflected harmlessly by striking the edge of a button on its course. Some change in the career of the Roman Catholic Church must have taken place in this country sooner or later, but it is certain that so comparatively a trivial thing as the health of Henry the Eighth was a strong contributory cause to the Protestant Reformation occurring when it did and how it did in Britain. Had Henry the Eighth not been eaten up with syphilis, had he not infected the women who were unfortunate enough to marry him, had Catherine not been incapable—thanks to her husband's state—of bearing children, Henry would not have been so anxious to secure a divorce. He would have gratified his lust as so many of our kings have done—kept a number of mistresses and endowed them with titles of nobility and incomes from the purse of the nation. But he had to get a divorce in order to provide a legal heir to the throne, hence the break with the Pope. Hence his desire to reform the Church, hence his position as head of the Church of England and the title of "Defender of the Faith," ever since held by our English Kings. Dr. MacLaurin's book will probably depress our anti-Catholic Protestants when they learn that but for the syphilis of "Bluff King Hal," the Reformation might have been of a different character from what it was, and might even have meant no more than a reformed Catholicism leading steadily to a more courageous Freethought than now exists. Or, on the other hand, they are just as likely to see in the whole business the hand of God who infected the king with syphilis as a means of creating a true church. One can never be quite sure; and the ways of God are past understanding.

* * *

Religion and Pathology.

Dr. MacLaurin passes a number of well known men and women in review, including that "walking pathological museum" James I, and while it would be absurd to assume that one can offer a complete explanation of historical phenomena, whether sociological or religious in terms of physiological or psychological pathology, it is unquestionably true that to leave these aspects of life out of account is to under-rate, or misunderstand what has happened. Those for instance who imagine that they understand the question of Joan of Arc after reading the compound of bad history, and worse psychology, which George Bernard Shaw has fashioned into a play, would do well to turn to Mr. MacLaurin's medical study of the Maid, and also to the section in Miss Murray's excellent study of *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, which deals with the same topic. The sex

nature of Joan seems to have remained undeveloped, and it is idle to know this and not to realize that her mental life could not have been what it is with normally constituted women. Again, in the case of Luther, Dr. MacLaurin gives us an excellent essay on him, which, while containing nothing very new to the one who studies that hero of Protestantism, does provide a well connected picture of how Luther would have appeared to a competent physician had he been under one in the sixteenth century. He says:—

From about the age of twenty-seven he suffered from dreadful noises in the head, banging, whistling, thumping and crashing. These were accompanied by terrible attacks of giddiness . . . Towards middle life he became so neurasthenic that his mental condition almost became that of a lunatic. . . . He began to suffer from pains in the region of the heart . . . as he grew older he became deaf, and his cardiac distress became still more terrible. All these things can be explained . . . If we suppose that Luther was suffering from Meniere's disease of the labyrinth, a disease of the middle ear that occasionally attacks middle-aged and gouty people . . . What a difference a course of salicylate and bromides might have made to Luther and possibly through him to the whole Reformation.

A disease of the middle ear in Germany, a syphilitic king in England, as important factors in the "glorious Reformation"! Not quite the views that are placed before us by orthodox historians.

* * *

In Touch with the Supernatural.

There is no need to assume that a complete explanation of historic phenomena is to be found in physiological or psychological abnormalities to realize that both factors must be taken into consideration if an adequate understanding is to be reached. No one who studies the ecstatic visions of the "saints," male and female, can doubt the presence of suppressed or distorted sex feeling. The close connexion of religious conversion with adolescence is now one of the established truths of psychology. And here is an experience of John Addington Symonds under the influence of chloroform, which I present to Dr. MacLaurin in further evidence of the truth of his main thesis. Describing his feelings after the administration of the drug, Symonds says:—

After the choking and stifling had passed away, I seemed at first in a state of utter blankness, then came flashes of intense light, alternating with blankness, and with a keen sense of vision of what was going on in the room around me, but with no sensation of touch. I thought I was near death; when suddenly my soul became aware of God who was manifestly dealing with me, handling me, so to speak, in an intense personal reality. I felt him steaming in like light upon me . . . I cannot describe the ecstasy I felt. Then as I gradually awoke from the influence of the anæsthetic, the old sense of my relation with the world began to return and the new sense of my relation to God began to fade . . . Only think of it. To have felt for that long dateless ecstasy of vision the very God, in all purity, tenderness, truth, and absolute love, and then to find that I had after all had no revelation, but that I had been tricked by the abnormal excitement of my brain.

There is a whole volume in that "tricked by the abnormal excitement of my brain," if one reads what are called "religious experiences" with that in mind. In most cases of religious ecstasy there is not the deliberate use of drugs in order to produce their known consequences, but the facts are there unaltered. The fasting of the celibate monk, the unwholesome meditation on the possibility of standing

face to "face with God," the cravings of a starved or distorted sex nature, all serve as the equivalent of the chloroform used by J. A. Symonds. With a slight change in terminology one might take the language used by many modern "mystics" in describing their intercourse with God as a description of the feelings of Symonds while under the influence of chloroform. And one would be as true as the other.

In *Religion and Sex* I have given a number of cases to illustrate the way in which abnormal mental states have been utilized in all religions, in all ages to keep alive the sense of "spiritual" illumination and a conviction of intercourse with God. It is one of the most persistent features of all religions. Sometimes it is met in the crude form customary with uncivilized races. At the other extreme we find it in the mystical experience of present-day religious writers. And in the vogue of modern Spiritualism we have the general ignorance of the significance of certain abnormal or pathological mental states taken as proof positive of intercourse with legions of spirits.

I have asked many times, "What is the substantial difference between the visions of the Christian Saint and those of a man suffering from *delirium tremens*?" Very many times have I put that question, and to all sorts of people. But I have never met with anyone who could answer so plain and so pertinent an enquiry. Dr. MacLaurin's book should help them to give a satisfactory reply.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Chesterton the Crusader.

"Reason is a rebel unto Faith."—*St Thomas Browne.*

The crime of inquiry is one which religion never has forgiven."—*Shelley*

MR. GILBERT K. CHESTERTON is one of the best known figures in the literary arena, and it is customary to refer to him as a very up-to-date journalist. Yet it is as plain as a pikestaff that Chesterton does not represent contemporary thought. What he does represent is a reaction against the views current in the nineteenth century. He has attacked Woman's suffrage, he dislikes Jews and hates Freethinkers, and he is never happier than when telling the working man when and where he is wrong. The truth is, probably, that he is a Democrat who finds himself in the fold of the Popish Church, and being in Rome does as the Romans do. He is not a hard-shell Conservative, for his humour is continually coming to his rescue, but he has delighted the Conservatives more than the Intellectuals. His humour, too, is that of the schoolboy who has never grown up, and the printed page remains to show his Puck-like prejudices and perversity. Quixote, Democrat, Roman Catholic, humorist, he unites in his person some very odd combinations.

In his *Victorian Age of Literature*, which cumbers rather than adorns the "Home University Series," Chesterton used his strength tyrannously in the service of the hindmost of the Christian Churches. He has nothing but jibes and insults for the great "Intellectuals." Ignoring a shelf-full of masterpieces that have come from an outstanding genius, Chesterton says of Thomas Hardy that he is "a sort of village Atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot." Swinburne, a poet of poets, is accused of composing "a learned and sympathetic and indecent parody on the Litany of the Blessed Virgin," surely an ironical accusation in a Protestant country.

He belittles *Songs Before Sunrise* by sneering that the sunrise never arrived. According to Chesterton, the great Victorians were giants, but lame giants. Even Browning is lampooned for making puns about Catholic priests. One of the most remarkable of all women, Emily Bronte, is described as "unsociable as a storm at midnight." The only Freethinker to whom Chesterton is decently civil is James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, who he says, pontifically, "knew how to be democratic in the dark." As Chesterton spells this poet's name with a "p," the compliment is a doubtful one after all. And this is the man who challenges the dogmatism of the Agnostic; convicts science of ignorance, and who pretends to find liberty inside the folds of the Romish Church and in the barred cells of monasteries and nunneries.

This liking for burlesque is a mannerism with Mr. Chesterton. In his *Short History of England*, he dips his pen once more in vitriol and attempts to rewrite the history of our country in the light of Roman Catholicism. His quaint point of view is expressed in the phrase, "The thorn of Glastonbury from which has grown the whole story of Britain." Papists receive all the bouquets, and he lampoons the English who destroyed the Armada and stopped Spanish (and Catholic) aggression by saying that Drake and his colleagues were "as dingy, as undeveloped, as petty and provincial as Boers," which is unpatriotic nonsense. "The Stuarts," says Mr. Chesterton, "failed in England, but they fought for things that succeeded in Europe," an assertion that should make all the European despots smile in delightful unison. Indeed, sobriety of judgment is not precisely the quality which Mr. Chesterton regards as a qualification as an historian.

Although he keeps his eye on the path to Rome, and ensures, by robustious piety, a hearty welcome in sheltered homes and country rectories, Chesterton has his good points. Compared with so many present-day writers, he is a jolly and a breezy companion. He seems to say with Sir Toby Belch: "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" He displays more than a passing acquaintance with Freethought, and has introduced Stewart Ross ("Saladin") into one of his novels, *The Ball and the Cross*. Ross was a publisher and he and Chesterton used to argue across the shop counter to the interruption of business and the delight of the hearers. This may account partially for the iconoclastic note in some of Chesterton's writings. Here, for example, is a pleasant diversion on the lack of authority in matters of religious belief:—

Of all conceivable forms of enlightenment the worst is the Inner Light. Anyone who knows anyone knows how it does work. That Jones shall worship the god within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones. Let Jones worship the sun, or moon, anything rather than the Inner Light. Let Jones worship cats or crocodiles, if he can find any in his street, but not the god within.

From his abundant mine of epigram and paradox he shovels out diamonds and rubbish with a good-humoured carelessness. Here are some of his good things:—

"My country, right or wrong," is like saying, "My mother, drunk or sober."

Tradition means giving votes to our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead.

What is the good of words if they are not important to quarrel over. If you called a woman a chimpanzee instead of an angel, wouldn't there be a quarrel about a word?

The newspapers which announce the giant gooseberry and the raining frogs are the modern represen-

tatives of the tendency which produced the hydra, the were-wolf, and the dog-headed man.

What have we done, and where have we wandered, we that have produced sages who could have spoken with Socrates, and poets who could walk with Dante, that we should talk as if we had never done anything more intelligent than found colonies and kick niggers?

Gilbert Chesterton is such a boon companion, so full of laughter, and the lust of argument, that the reader is content to regard him as a licensed jester. Try as he will, he cannot keep the human interest out of his writings. His big, breezy nature refuses to be cribb'd, cabin'd, and confined within the narrow limitations of ecclesiasticism.

Too much has been made of Chesterton's supposed likeness to Doctor Johnson. Thus, when someone said, "You cannot put the clock back," meaning that you cannot put events back, Chesterton answers triumphantly, "The reply is, you can put the clock back." Johnson was fond of verbal victory, but he would have disdained such word juggling as this. The fact is, Chesterton uses his undoubted gifts a little tyrannously. His sense of humour sometimes slumbers, especially when he elects to ascend the pulpit. "Mythology and newspapers cannot co-exist," is a lively and a true epigram. Did it never occur to him that in introducing a rehash of superstition to a mixed audience he had done a rash thing? And if it had, would he have been better pleased at the knowledge that Chesterton in cap and bells cuts a much braver and more attractive figure than Chesterton in a cassock? It is too late for a jocose apologist for medievalism to be regarded seriously, although he loves:—

"To prove his doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks."

That Gilbert Chesterton should court approval as a modern Saint George attacking the dragon of Free-thought proves to what desperate shifts the champions of Orthodoxy are reduced. Resplendent in motley, banging a bladder, he attracts crowds by his high spirits and boyish playfulness. Happily, he nullifies the effect of his own work by making his audience feel that nothing matters very much, and that religion is a joke played on the people in the interests of forty thousand priests in this country.

MIMNERMUS.

A Question.

HAVE you e'er thought, my friend, that decent men
Are all like Daniel in the lions' den?
The wonder is that decent folk survive,
So hard it is for them to keep alive,
Surrounded as they are by rogues and fools
Who have learned villainy in Public Schools.

Although, like Daniel, they may live a while,
The lions all around them cramp their style
And render barren all their aspirations
To foster peace and justice among nations,
Till thinking people finally conclude
'Tis better not to think if one wants food.

The rogues set fools at fighting one another,
Father killing son, and brother, brother:
The rogues survive and, laughing, scoop the pool;
A decent man may starve like any fool.
When will the decent people make an end
Of fools and rogues—and will you help, my friend?

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The Virgil Celebrations.

THE greatest of the Roman poets was born on October 15, 70 B.C., and during the present month the two thousandth anniversary of this date is to be celebrated in Italy as an event of national importance. Virgil and the myths and legends that became associated with him or his poetry are of peculiar interest to Freethinkers living in a Christian community. As an ancient apostle of "sweetness and light," he claims the attention of all scholars; to us he is at the same time one of the Pagan witnesses to the lines along which the central idea of Christian mythology developed. In the whole rich literature of classical antiquity there is certainly no other poet whose work throws so much light on the organized superstition which still dominates Europe. For, first of all, his fourth Eclogue, often called the Messianic Eclogue, was once regarded by the faithful with the reverence accorded to an inspired writing. In the second place, the realistic description in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, of Æneas' "descent to hell," and what he saw there, presents to us conceptions of another world, and a last judgment held in some countries in the twentieth century. Nor are the references to Virgil in early Christian writers without significance on other grounds. They reveal the general mentality, and in particular the "historic sense," of Christians who stood more than fifteen centuries nearer to the fountain-head of their religion than we do. Apart from these considerations, however, Virgil is worth studying for his own sake. His real attitude to religion has been the subject of almost endless discussion, but I have little doubt that he was an Epicurean at heart.

The Messianic Eclogue celebrates the expected birth of a child, which is to mark the advent of a new dispensation for a world in travail, a Golden Age. It is nominally addressed to Pollio, who was Consul in 40 B.C., for during his term of office, the child, for whom the whole human race is waiting, and whose birth is predicted in the Sibylline Oracles, is to be born. Constantine the Great—let us give him his full name—seems to have been the first to interpret the poem, and the child, in the Messianic sense. He found in it references to the Blessed Virgin, persecutions of the Church, and the traitorous serpent whose head is to be finally bruised. Saint Augustine, whose writings abound in quotations from Virgil, has no doubt that "the child" represents Christ, though the poet himself was not aware of the fact. Again, and with perhaps more direct bearing on our subject, the Sibylline Oracles—the original writings were considerably manipulated by the hands of the faithful—were accepted as authoritative by Christian apologists throughout the second century of our era, and were so regarded down to a much later date. Tatian, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others, as well as Saint Augustine, all rely upon them as writings of indisputable authority. In all this there is little that need surprise anyone except perhaps a latter-day Christian. The third book of the Oracles gives us a picture which, in some of its features, closely resembles that found in Daniel, and was just as good evidence of the Messianic expectation. It is well worth noting here that in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican the Sibyls are represented in company with the great Jewish prophets.

Though the Messianic ideas current in the Eastern Mediterranean lands were not exclusively Jewish, it is probable that Virgil knew something of the Golden Age prophesied in Isaiah. But whatever may have been his sources for these ideas, we constantly find in the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*, as well as in the fourth Eclogue, the conception of a great deliverer who,

without ceasing to be national, was to usher in a new dispensation for the whole race. The Græco-Roman world, except perhaps the remote country districts, was in an intellectual and moral ferment, and the Levantine portion in particular was ripe, and over-ripe, for the acceptance of any imposture which seemed to confirm the promise of a Messiah. "The historic shape which it assumed," as Professor Toy has well said, "was an accident of the times." That "the child" of Virgil's poem was the one which, in 40 B.C., the wife of Augustus was expected to bring into the world, is the view now accepted by most classical scholars.

When Virgil wrote, the descents of Saviour-gods and others to the underworld belonged to the popular religious sentiment of the age. The descent was always made for some specific purpose. Dionysus recovered Semele; Heracles brings back Alcestis; and in the fourth book of his *Georgics* our poet gives a graphic description of the rescue of Eurydice by Orpheus. The prominence of the last-mentioned, the "hero of the lyre," in the Christian wall-paintings of the catacombs, requires no emphasis. Jesus Christ's descent to Hades is also for a specific purpose—to preach "to the spirits in prison." The *Gospel of Nicodemus* gives quite an interesting account of this visit. Jesus rescues Adam, David, and all the ancient patriarchs.

But it is Virgil's description of the descent of Æneas, to meet his father, Anchises, that brings us into close touch with Christian conceptions of the after-world. Hades, that is the whole realm of the dead, certainly provides for an intermediate state, between Elysium and Tartarus, where "each endures his own ghostly penance," until the last taint of guilt is completely purged away. Virgil's Hades also provides a special place—compare the Roman Catholic limbus—for children who died in infancy. In short, we have in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* the fully developed idea of an intermediate state, with purgatorial pains, that was current and familiar before and during the earliest Christian era, and is by no means absent from the New Testament. The idea itself is as old as the Egyptian Book of the Dead, but Virgil's description is coloured by conceptions probably borrowed from the Greek Mysteries. Protestants have long laughed at purgatory; but the only reason why the early Christians attached so little importance to it was that the last judgment was expected within their own generation. To many scholars Christianity has become little more than an interesting study in comparative religion. But Christian apologists may surely place one fact to the credit of the faith—in an age of science and criticism it enables them, with excellent financial results, to keep millions of men and women in constant dread of scarecrows, at which Aristophanes laughed four hundred years before their Saviour-God was heard of.

In the first book of the *Georgics* the "murky darkness" which covered sun and earth when Cæsar died, and the strange portents announcing the calamity, remind us of the similar phenomena recorded in the New Testament as happening at the time of the crucifixion. That an eclipse of the sun actually occurred in the year of Cæsar's murder is certain; but stories of the kind related in Virgil and the New Testament are as old as Numa Pompilius, who belongs to the period of the semi-mythical Roman kings.

That Virgil was familiar not only with the old religion indigenous to Rome, but also with the superstitious beliefs so liberally introduced from the East at a later period, is a fact impressed on nearly everything that he wrote. But what was his own personal

opinion of the stories of the gods and the after-life and the other superstitions current among the populace in his time? I think he rejected them completely and held with Epicurus that the best life is one which leaves the gods to enjoy their own unruffled calm, and concerns itself solely with this world. The story, in the sixth Eclogue, of the gradual formation of the world from the four elements, and of the early history of man, is essentially Epicurean, and the phraseology of the whole poem is Lucretian. A similar view of mankind's early history appears again in the first book of the *Georgics*. The oft-quoted lines in the second book of the *Georgics* (490-2) almost certainly refer to Lucretius:—

Happy he, who had the skill to learn
Nature's hid causes, and beneath his feet
All terrors cast, and death's relentless doom,
And the loud roar of greedy Acheron.

This was written about thirty years before Jesus the Christ was born, and nineteen hundred and thirty years afterwards Christian Europe is in possession of a "progressive revelation" from God. What would Virgil think if he could revisit his beloved Italy, and find that the intervening years have developed his "greedy Acheron" into a hell and a purgatory that inspire more dread than anything he ever tried to describe?

A. D. McLAREN.

God in Contemporary Philosophy

THE treatment and the solution of any problem is affected to an extraordinary degree by the manner in which the problem itself is approached; by the terms in which it is stated and conceived.

Take, for instance, the question of Theism. In the days of Hume and Kant, the question asked was, does God exist? To-day it has become fashionable in some philosophical circles to ask, what is God? There is a world of difference between the two methods of approach.

The first knows what God is, and inquires whether he exists. The second knows whether he exists, and inquires what he is. The first starts with his nature and proceeds to his existence. The second starts with his existence, and proceeds to his nature.

It is the latter way which has enabled a certain type of philosopher to formulate a "dummy" God in place of the old Jehovah; and one which he hopes will be favourably received. In other words, he tries to frame his definition of God in such a way as to make belief possible. So that (to take an extreme case—Dotterer, U.S.A.) where God is defined as the totality of all good actions there can be no doubt of God's existence. The same applies to a God who is the totality of laws (Ziehen, Germany). Such Gods are safely sheltered from Atheistic attack.

Which is the better method of approach, to know what and ask *whether*, or to know whether and ask what? We propose to defer discussion on that point until later.

As a sequel to the *God of Scientists* (see *Freethinker*, No. 28) we here wish to consider God in contemporary philosophy, and we are reminded that some time ago a rev. gentleman who—so he said—went about London proving to Atheist lecturers the futility of their position, had something to say in these columns to the effect that Atheism was disowned by all the "best" philosophers, among other things. A reply was elicited from Mr. Neuburg, and whether the rev. gent. still goes about smashing Atheism we cannot say, but as for the assertion that Atheism is disowned by all the "best" philosophers—we shall see.

A simple classification of Theists is rendered somewhat difficult by the fact that there are in the Western world roughly two well-marked types of Theism. There is the essentially Christian Theism with its Bible God, and there is the modern abstraction. Clearly, and in fairness to all sides, we cannot lump the Noumenal Substance together with the God from whom the Bishop of London has just had good news. The repugnance which the Bishop and his kind feel towards the Transcendental Absolute is only equalled by the contempt which Prof. Whitehead, etc., feel for the idea of a loving heavenly Father. Hence we take three classes; (a) Bible-God Theists, (b) Theists, and (c) Atheists, into which we allot contemporary philosophers. In the matter of selection, no living writer who has eminently contributed to philosophy has been omitted. Philosophy being taken in its academic sense, it will be understood that writers like G. B. Shaw are excluded, and we cannot do more than offer to deal with any strong objections that arise.

(A)—BIBLE-GOD THEISTS.

Nil.

(B)—THEISTS.

A. S. Pringle-Pattison says "If we are to reach any credible theory of the relations of God to Man, the traditional idea of God must be profoundly transformed." (*Idea of God*). That is an obvious example of starting with the "whether" and inquiring into the "what."

Rejecting all the classical arguments for the existence of God, he then goes on to give the name of God to "the Ground," a metaphysical term denoting the noumenon or substratum, analogous to Spinozism. This makes God's relation to the universe, in the professor's words, "organic, not accidental" (*i.e.*, ontological, not causal). But his whole interest in philosophy is, on his own showing, for the express purpose of justifying teleology (cf. *Freethinker*, No. 18), and finding materialism "an outrage on our deepest convictions" (*ibid*) uses his God as "the Power that works through change and makes it evolution" (*ibid*).

Dr. A. E. Taylor, who, since his bunkum about hell-fire during the war, cannot be held in very high esteem as a philosopher, makes God "the Source, not the All" (cf. *Metaphysics*), and ends up with a sort of purified Jehovah. "The only logical alternative to the Christian faith," he says (*Faith and the War*) is "pessimistic Atheism."

Prof. C. C. J. Webb says "God is perpetually being rediscovered." (*Contemporary British Phil.*). In the "Lost and Found" column of philosophy, as it were, God is cutting a conspicuous figure.

According to Webb, the method of philosophy should not be scientific, and having swallowed that his readers may be prepared for anything. Philosophy is "a search for the one in the many." Religion supplies this, and so lends its personal God to the philosophical Absolute, thereby making the latter fit to worship. God, then, is "the activity in which the Absolute is worshipped" (*God and Personality*), and "if God is not the Absolute, nonsense is made of Religion." Because of this we are told that "philosophy can never long flourish save in religious soil" (*ibid*), an obvious falsehood to anyone in the least acquainted with its history.

For the classical arguments Webb has no great use, and the only way of knowing God is through the "religious consciousness" (*ibid*), but he may be rediscovered in the following manner: our own incompleteness is in contrast to, and posits somewhere, that which is complete, *i.e.*, God. (*Divine Personality and Human Life*).

Materialism "strikes so terrible a chill to the heart" (*God and Personality*), that an Atheist like Bertrand Russell and his sort must be confirmed pessimists (see *Divine Personality*), although it may be allowed (*ibid*) that the Atheist may be quite a decent fellow.

As for the problem of evil, and such "difficulties" (Webb's term), they are "an indication that we are in the presence of a problem beyond our powers to solve" (*God and Personality*). And having looked the difficulty squarely in the face he lives up to his position as a paid propagator of the Christian religion, and passes on.

Prof. W. R. Sorley is rather more reasonable than the average Theist, and shows a readiness to concede the point rather than bluff himself with obscurities.

For instance, "the religious idea of God was taken over by philosophy without question, and used for expressing the final explanation of reality," so philosophy must be "aware of its real origin before using it." (*Moral Values and the Idea of God*). One by one he rejects the five classical arguments for the existence of God, and chooses for his approach one path only—Ethics. The moral order of the world demands the existence of a Deity and points to its existence. To which the Atheist might reply: it doesn't, and even if it did, it wouldn't. It is clear that Sorley's whole philosophy is based on a false method of approach.

G. H. TAYLOR.

(To be continued.)

Books in the Dog Days.

ON a Saturday afternoon of almost torrid heat, under skies of more than Italian blue I foresook, such is the perversity of man, the cool glades of the forest, and embarked on an aimless saunter through London streets.

I passed the long string of stalls, offering second to tenth hand wares in every stage of dilapidation, which line Farringdon Road, and slowly moved through the crowded bazaar of Exmouth Street, the air heavy with the odour of early Autumn fruit. Beyond are the stucco terraces, wide streets and spacious squares of Pentonville, where Arthur Machen has discovered a source of mystical wonder. The genius of Arnold Bennett too found this district an appropriate setting for his masterly study of the misers of Riceyman Steps. The inhabitants, however, whether panting home with full shopping baskets, or leaning out of second-storey windows in waistcoat and shirt sleeves, seem entirely oblivious of the romantic quality inhering in their Parish.

A moment after I left Myddleton Square I reached a bookshop. It had disgorged hundreds of its volumes, which formed three mounds of books supported on movable trays. Diligent search failed to detect any volume either rare or curious. Although the shop was indescribably dusty and musty and every artifice and device was apparently employed to stifle the spirit of enquiry, these premises were really the seat of a Secretarial Training College.

Hand-written signs, carelessly strewn among the medley of books, announced that Shorthand, Typewriting and Bookkeeping were taught by certificated teachers for an average fee of one shilling a lesson. Skillfully placed about the shop, where customers were most likely to fall over them, were typewriters from the period when they were built like battleships. On Sundays, as appeared from an intimation painted on a large lamp fixed above the door, the proprietor of the bookshop and principal of the secretarial training college conducted religious services in an upper chamber.

In the length and breadth of Essex Road are several shops and stalls which offer shabby or gaudy volumes. They may be regarded as a side line, which must not deflect the energies of the shopkeeper from the serious business of vending cats meat, or they may fill and over-

flow a shop equipped with a furlong of shelving. But I look in vain for titles that allure, or first editions in demand in the market.

My last halt was made within a stone's throw of Newington Green. Every possible obstacle was interposed to a free inspection of the books. Though late in the afternoon, the bookseller was not freshened up for a brisk day's huckstering, and perhaps he had little encouragement. A few questions upon the state of the book trade elicited some doleful comparisons. Last year he was taking £5 or £6 every Saturday, but now the turnover was scarcely ten shillings. He had gone some way towards repairing this appalling breach by displaying a few dozen books on some shelves wedged against the doorway, and when he could muster sufficient strength of will, he would exhibit some hundreds of books on trays in front of the shop, to attract a passing trade. Much of his decline in trade he put down to the loss of good customers. There was a printer who usually bought ten or fifteen shillings worth of books every week. Surely a rarity in Stoke Newington. And a religious postman, who was easily beguiled into acquiring any book of a theological flavour. On one memorable afternoon, when a fresh consignment of books had been delivered, the postman had selected ten pounds worth of volumes, including Pearson on the Creed, a top-heavy edition of *Paradise Lost*, fearfully and wonderfully illustrated, and ten volumes of the library of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, the purchase money to be paid by weekly instalments. It is, alas, easier to lose eccentric customers than to find new ones.

H. J. STENNING.

Acid Drops.

Hats off to the Baroness Yasnovsky, whoever she is. When the *Morning Post* Campaign on the cruelties of Atheism in Russia, there were many attempts to break all records in religious lying. But the utmost that journal could do was to draw vividly coloured pictures of Russia with every Church closed, and thousands upon thousands of priests killed and tortured for the crime of worshipping their God. The most that even Lord Brentford could manage was to take a bishop who was shot in 1922 for resisting government, resurrect him in 1929, and kill him again by having him drawn through icy cold water to the stern of a paddle-boat until he was dead, dead, dead. The Archbishop of Canterbury reached his highest level by first making the blood of his listeners curdle with the horrors he detailed, then promising to enquire whether they were true or not, and neither proving nor retracting. Of course, these tales did some, religious, good. They convinced the godly of the essential evil of Atheism, and even some of the ungodly hastened to support the "Atrociteers," for fear they lost the good opinion of their Christian friends. We should imagine these latter feel rather sick about it now.

But to return to the Countess Yasnovsky. She has taken front rank at one effort. This lady was addressing a meeting in Jersey, and according to a report in the *Jersey Evening Post*, told the gathering of the horrors that had come upon Russia, and "warned her hearers of what would happen if God was put out of our own Government. For example, when Russia was troubled with famine the Bolsheviks "issued little white tickets which entitled the holders to call at the hospitals, where they could procure a dead body to be taken home and eaten." That puts Lord Brentford, the *Morning Post*, and every religious liar in the country hopelessly in the rear. We salute this most Christian Countess. She is superb!

When the union of the Methodist Churches takes place, the Church will control finances and property estimated to be worth £60,000,000. Through fear of the Christian Hell, Methodist mugs have been induced to part with sixty million pounds of their hard-earned money. It's wonderful what a profit can be made out of fear, properly

exploited! And the larger Christian firms have worked this gold-mine still more thoroughly. If the altruistic Jesus paid a return visit to the earth, how delighted he would be to see all this wealth and property accumulated in his credit account! We feel sure his first move would be to give it all away to the poor.

We sympathize with the view of Mr. Norman Angell that:—

. . . much stupidity which makes others suffer is due merely to the refusal to think, and to try to understand. There is a moral obligation on us all to be intelligent.

There is no harm in adding that this moral obligation is not a Christian one. The Kingdom of Heaven was not promised to the intelligent but to the credulous. And the Church has always regarded the intelligent as dangerous and sought to suppress them. She found by experience that the non-intelligent were much easier to guide and control—for the good of the Church. Evidently, it was not an oversight, but wise forethought for his Church in the future which led Jesus to omit "blessed be the intelligent" from the Beatitudes.

In the midst of Harvest Festival rejoicings, there's no harm in noting the plight of the bees of Hungary. The unusually dry summer having played havoc with the vegetation, the honeycombs are only half-filled, and the bees have been raiding one another's stores of honey. The fighting that has ensued has resulted in the death of 600,000 bees. The Hungarian Government has sent some sugar to the bee-keepers—as God appears not to care what evil befalls the bees. Now, if only the bees were praying creatures like man, they would not be fighting but thanking God for a harvest, however small. The difference between the semi-intelligent bee and the wholly intelligent creature called man is that man is grateful for the kicks of God as well as his ha'pence.

Radio Times says:—

In the highest meaning of the word, broadcasting is journalistic, both in technique and content. It is even more journalistic than the written word. It is Everyman's living contact with the world about him.

Assuming the truth of this, what do the hours of Sunday silence ordered by the parsons bring Everyman in contact with—nothing? No doubt "nothing" has some kind of educational or amusive content, but the B.B.C. ought really to explain what this is, in order to appease the ordinary dissatisfied listener. As regards the wireless service, we presume this is to bring Everyman in living contact with the "other world"—which nobody really knows exists. Since this contact can hardly be termed educational, we presume the journalistic broadcaster features it as amusement.

Someone has a bright idea for the B.B.C. He says:—

Sunday programmes always seem to "drag" so, particularly for the young. What an improvement it would be to have an hour's community singing of hymns. I feel sure that many homes would appreciate this during the coming winter, between the hours of five and six.

We can quite appreciate our modern young people being highly elated with an hour of mob hymn-singing! What is noteworthy is how consistently *Radio Times* excludes all suggestions for really improving the Sunday programmes so as to make them acceptable to the majority of intelligent listeners.

A well-known doctor declares that "we are beginning to take our physical well-being seriously." This is a wholesome reversion to an ideal Hellenic paganism which shows how far the world has moved from the traditional Christian view of the human body as "vile," the neglect or ill-treatment of which would assist to "spiritual" perfection. With that stupid and degraded view current in the world, quite naturally neglect, ignorance and filth, and likewise their effects—disease and pestilence—were prominent features of Christian civilization for many centuries until quite recent times. To-day, it is only just beginning to be realized how

great was the harm done to the physical well-being of the human race by Christian beliefs and prejudices. Paradoxical as it may seem, the human race appears to go forward mentally and physically only as it goes back to pagan ideals.

Mr. Thomas Burke, in the *News-Chronicle* has an article entitled "The Hollywood Mind." Worthy of leaded type, so the writer thinks is the following platitude:—

Until films were invented nobody guessed that there were so many grown-up ninnies in the world.

Perhaps in the busy world of novel writing, Mr. Burke has not had time to notice men in the streets carrying boards with "Prepare to meet thy God," and other strange devices having no connexion with the world of reality. Perhaps, in addition, he has not read the arguments for and against Reservation. And perhaps also, he has not noticed that, whatever difficulties there may be in the housing question, there is money and material to spare for the building of new cathedrals and bank premises. Mr. Burke is to be congratulated on his lucky revelation, and we trust he will follow it up.

"No thinking man," writes the Rev. Tickner Edwards, in the *News-Chronicle*, "however strong his faith, can blink the fact that God does use evil to produce good." What a God, and what an expositor! Even Atheists do not credit God with such bungling methods with his children.

At a Library Association Conference, Mr. R. H. Mott-ram, the well-known author, stated:—

In spite of the intense publicity to which we have submitted these ten years, it still remains true that the permanent best-sellers are the Bible, *Robinson Crusoe*, Thomas Paine, and *Black Beauty*.

Our interest in the information is chiefly concerned about Thomas Paine. It is a sufficient reply to the libel on a great man, uttered by President Roosevelt, who, if he did not know the truth about Paine, could have told his fifty secretaries to find out about the author of *The Rights of Man*.

The man's face in the moon, says an astronomer, is due to dark spots. And we are reminded that many dark spots in history are due to the Church which specialises in "moonshine." There's no connexion between these two sets of facts, of course; but religion is a kind of lunacy, and lunacy is traditionally connected with the moon.

This modern era, says a speaker, will be known as the age of bankruptcy. Perhaps so; but what will also be known is that the bankruptcy reaped by this era was sowed by the statesmen, diplomats, and war-monegrs of a former era.

Canon Scott-Moncrieff says: "I thank God for the remarkable change in the spirit of journalism since my boyhood." We thank the Canon for this enlightenment. We didn't know the late Lord Northcliffe was God.

A weekly paper thinks the term "mister" is a title good enough for most men, and would like to see "Esquire" dropped altogether. Many people will agree with that. Let us reserve "Esquire" for official petitions to God, seeing that it is in keeping with the modern conception of God as a benevolent old gentleman in a top-hat. "O God, Esq., we request you . . ." would sound much less distant than: "Almighty God, we beseech you . . ." Again, "I have been saved through Mr. Jesus," would sound more respectful than the plain but rather too familiar "Jesus." By these means, perhaps the masses may be led back to the Christian religion.

Our solemn contemporary, the *Methodist Recorder*, affirms that one of the most ominous signs of the times

is the stealthy growth of the canker of self-indulgence in the life of all classes. This is very sad, but all it means is that people are spending their money on getting some enjoyment in this world, instead of doing as a former generation did—putting the money in the pockets of the parsons. This modern habit is naturally displeasing in the sight of God—and the parsons and pious journalists.

A parish magazine reminds us that every daily sitting in the House of Commons is opened by prayer. We hope people who disparage the work achieved by our legislators will bear this in mind. For, assuming that prayer is answered, what our legislators achieve is only by the inspiration of God, and therefore God must be held responsible, and all disparaging remarks ought to be addressed Heavenward.

Most legends, declares an expert, are pure fiction. Whether this dictum is true of Biblical stories is open to doubt. When they are not pure fiction they are often impure fact; and when they are neither pure nor impure fact they are often impure fiction. The only valid inference one can make from this is that the Bible is inspired from cover to cover.

The Bishop of Norwich deploras the fact that too many people don't even take the trouble to read through the marriage service before they meet it for the first time in the church. Perhaps, from one point of view, it is better so. A preliminary reading might lead many sensitive persons to experience a feeling of repulsion against the crudities of the Christian marriage service. And that repulsion might easily result in loss of clerical fees, if it were realized that there is nothing repulsive about a registry office ceremony.

Nonconformist ministers in Wales are taking steps to be compulsorily insured under the National Health scheme. Many of them have already adopted the voluntary system. To be consistent they will now, we hope, cease exhorting their congregations to "trust in the Lord." Preaching "take no thought for the morrow," and "the Lord will provide," will strike even the dullest of sheep as quaint advice to come from shepherds who are insuring themselves rather than trust themselves and the future to their God's tender care.

According to a pious journal, the climate of Wales appears to be conducive to longevity among bishops. The Archbishop of Wales is eighty-two, and there are two other bishops older than that. We should say that it is not the "climate of Wales" which is responsible. Rather is it the climate of the ecclesiastical profession in its higher branches, which "climate" possesses such useful things as an ample salary, a soft job, and freedom from fear of losing one's living. The climate of Wales, we note, does not appear to favour longevity among workers in mines, who have to work hard for a living.

Writing about "the Holy Family," a parish magazine says:—

According to tradition Joseph passed away while our Lord was a young man, and then He would become the support of the home. Christianity is a gospel for labour; the Founder of our religion was a carpenter. Jesus, we gather, got fed up with being the "support of the home." Probably noticing that itinerant preachers gained a fair living without needing to work, he bolted off to try his hand at the same game. And this is how Christianity became a gospel for tramps. The founder of that religion was a vagrant. And just as he lived on the gifts of the credulous and without being engaged in productive labour, so do his representatives to-day.

The "vast enterprise of American religion" is a heading in a Methodist weekly. This brings it into line with American big business—as it should be. After all, religion is one of America's—and England's too—best paying commercial undertakings.

Mr. E. Roffe Thompson believes that a new outlook on both crime and punishment is needed. He suggests that

reformatory treatment should be applied to some prisoners, whilst incurable criminals should be isolated as lunatics are. He adds:—

And we can do it just as soon as we care to recognize the desirability of ceasing to treat crime emotionally as a sin, and treating it instead scientifically as a disease.

Mr. Thompson will arouse the enmity of the parsons, if he talks like that. When crime is treated as a disease, there will be no room for chaplains in prisons, and no use for their preaching about "sin" and repentance to the prisoners. Again, Christian instruction to children will also be regarded as wrong, since it says a lot about "sin." It deals with conduct as an emotional affair. Whereas, if crime is to be prevented—and that is more desirable even than curing the criminal—moral tuition should also be on a scientific basis; that is, not emotional but rational.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, speaking to the Mothers' Union, at Coggleshill, says that the people are fast losing their good habits. "Young people want high wages and short hours." What the Bishop wants them to want is evidently low wages and long hours. A great many will be with him in this. At another meeting the Bishop said that what the country needs was more religion. Perhaps that might bring about an end of this criminal desire for high wages and short hours. At any rate there were no such things as high wages and short hours when there was plenty of religion in the country.

Someone ought to send the office boy who writes the leading article in the *Dail Mail* to a night school; otherwise he will one of these days be found out. Thus commenting on a lecture by Professor Julian Huxley, he remarks that "science itself is none too certain about these unalterable laws of nature. In the case of the atom they appear to vary from day to day." A law of nature that varies from day to day is quite a unique thing. When the office attends night school he may be told that all the alterations in statements by men of science concerning natural law are no more than attempts to more correctly state the law. Perhaps this will be too abstruse for the office boy, but winter is coming, and there are the L.C.C. night schools.

There is a strong flavour of Ibsenism in the following extract taken from *Casual Observations* by Arthur Ponsonby (Allen & Unwin). "Moral responsibility" is an altitude in human consciousness—perhaps it is better to define it as a refined sense of right and wrong, and it is also a sign that the human being with this idea developed is making progress from the brute stage:—

As only a minority of people have an acute sense of moral responsibility, as time after time the view of the few as opposed to the many has been found to be right, yet its acceptance has been long delayed because of the opposition of the many, how, then, can you defend a system of government which is definitely and exclusively based on majority opinion?

Although this statement is intended for the world of politics, it recalls the early and brave efforts of men like Shelley and Richard Carlile and all those brave spirits who hope to make "the unready mind recognize the obvious."

It is an axiom in the world of Freethought, that the public take hard won rights with scarce a "thank you." Popular writers, we mean specifically, Mr. Maurice Lane-Norcott in the *Daily Mail*, do not differ from the public in this respect. In an article "Merrie England," this writer is eloquent in attacking the puritanical spirit that is against the rational enjoyment of Sunday. This is all to the good, but there is never a word of acknowledgment to those who have brought about conditions to even make it safe for the expression of Mr. Lane-Norcott's opinions.

Eleven people were drowned in Lake Michigan as the result of a storm. This is an instance where the good spirits of Spiritualism could have earned their keep by issuing a timely warning; they prefer to rattle tambourines.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—V. H. Smith, 5s.

A.G.S.—Shall be glad to see the articles when ready. Criticism, if it is effective, is always constructive, and apart from this there is the whole world of science, sociology, and philosophy to engage attention when it has been diverted from religion. But we see no need whatever to set up another religion which shall be separate from these things. You are never likely to beat religion at the game of building churches.

DR. R. K. NOYES.—Thanks. Paper sent as requested.

R. DODD.—Any time after mid-day on the 13th will suit us.

G. HERBERT.—We are afraid that a criticism at any length in this paper would not affect Christian Science, because they are more carefully shielded from reading the other side of the case than are even Roman Catholics. And it is intrinsically too stupid to be dealt with at length in these columns:

L. CORINNA.—We are glad to see that the Bradford Branch is working so hard and so well to keep the Freethought view of life before the public.

O. L. POOLE.—We have gone thoroughly into the question of "Freedom" in our *Determinism and Free-Will*, and we can only repeat here what we said in last week's "Views and Opinions." "Free" is a word that is derived from sociology, where it has a genuine meaning as it is opposed to the man who is compelled to do what he does at the command of another. It has nothing whatever to do with the question of "Will," except by way of a figure of speech, and then so long as a man is able to follow his own dictates his actions are so far "Free." The essential issue is between Determinism and Indeterminism. "Free" as the Indeterminist uses the term means uncaused, and that is nonsense. There is no confusion in what was said. A nation is considered as a unity, as the body is a unity, although made up of diverse units. And however the actions of a unity is brought about, it is free so far as those actions are determined by inherent structure.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

On Sunday last the Liverpool Branch commenced its tenancy of its new meeting place, the Transport Hall, and in spite of the fearful weather prevailing the hall was crowded, a large number being unable to gain admission. Mr. Cohen's second lecture of the series of four was received with obvious satisfaction by those present, and the Branch deserves the success that its efforts have achieved. The Liverpool Branch is doing excellent work, and is developing into a strong Branch. We look forward to increased success.

Owing to the Queen's Hall Debate to-night (October

12) Mr. Cohen was obliged to break the course of four lectures into parts, and will give the third and the concluding lectures on October 19 and 26. To-night the lecturer will be Dr. Ross Carmichael, who will take for his subject "God and Knowledge." Those who have already heard Doctor Carmichael will need no pressing to be present. Those who have not we strongly advise to make a beginning. They will not regret it. We trust the weather will be more favourable than on last Sunday.

In deciding to make the Sunday question an issue at the coming municipal elections, the Bradford Branch of the N.S.S. has taken a wise step. It is likely that at the November elections the Labour Party on the Bradford City Council may secure a clear majority (at present they are equally divided with the two other parties) and it will be as well that the electors should know where the Labour Party stands on this question before it obtains its majority of members. We do not expect that the Labour Party will take any courageous lead on the Sunday question, relying, as it does, so much on the votes of the religious community in the city, but no harm is done by sounding the candidates, and a fair amount of good is done to Secularism by ventilating its principles. It is the intention of the Bradford Branch to submit a questionnaire to all parties, on the Sunday question. The answers should be illuminating! Other Branches might do likewise.

We note a special article in the *Yorkshire Observer* dealing with this activity of the Bradford Branch. The article is descriptive only, and refrains from expressing any opinion. In its way it is a model of what an article on the subject should be—just giving the news, and leaving the reader to form his own judgment. But that, perhaps would be too great a strain for the intelligence of the London morning papers, who all have their news digested for them. The Branch is also commencing regular Sunday evening meetings in the hall of the National Union of Textile Workers. The meetings will commence at 7.0. The speaker to-day (October 12) is Mr. R. Day.

We have refrained from publishing the very many letters Mr. Cohen has received from readers all over the country praising his *War, Civilization, and the Churches*. Many have said that these were welcomed at the time the articles appeared for the manner in which they kept the vital issues of the war before the public, and have been fully justified by events since the armistice. But for fear the writers of these letters should pride themselves on possessing judgment, we present them with the following from the *Harrogate Herald* :—

We have come to know what to expect from the Pioneer Press, and one of its latest publications, *War, Civilization, and the Churches*, by Chapman Cohen, is no exception to the rule. Once again we have the usual vindictive hatred of Christianity and all it represents, the inevitable denunciations of ministers of religion. With the exception of the introduction, the matter contained in these pages appeared in articles in the *Freethinker* between 1914 and 1920. They are now, the author assures us, printed at the often expressed desire of readers of that journal that the articles should appear in permanent form. Well, they have got what they wanted, and if they find the wordy nonsense of Mr. Cohen some consolation in these troubled times we ought not to complain.

We are wondering where so many of our readers found the good things they cite? Perhaps the fault is that the book does make, along with other things, an attack on the Churches. But the *Herald* is wrong in thinking we hate Christianity. We have only a contempt for it. Hatred can only exist between equals.

As something on the other side Mr. C. Taylor, sending for another copy to be sent to a friend says :—

I write to tell you what great pleasure it has given me. I think the arguments are so telling and the logic so sound, that it would be an excellent piece of propaganda work if a copy of the book could be sent to every clergyman and every member of Parliament, and

I suggest that every Freethinker should purchase a copy for this specific purpose. It looks as though Mr. Taylor finds more in the book than did the *Harrogate Herald*. Certainly it takes all sorts to make a world, and we should not find our world nearly so amusing were it not for such papers as the one from which we have quoted.

In spite of rain which fell heavily before both meetings, Mr. R. H. Rosetti had good audiences at Fails-worth. There was a naming ceremony for the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Maule prior to the evening lecture, and mention should certainly be made of the really excellent singing of the choir under the conductorship of Mr. Cyril Jones, which added materially to the pleasure of the festival.

America appears to be a land of surprising contradictions. On the one side you have Dayton and Daytonism with its crowds of ignorant and intolerant Fundamentalists. On the other hand you have an amount of liberalism in relation to Freethought such as simply does not exist in this country. Some well established newspapers will publish news of Freethought action such as is never allowed to appear in this country. Freethought addresses are given over the wireless. Now we have the Community Church in which on the same evening addresses on Present Religious Tendencies were delivered by the editor of the *Christian Herald*, Mr. Joseph Lewis, the uncompromising Atheist, and others. Nothing of the kind would be permitted here. The platform would be restricted to avowedly religious speakers, or to some timid Freethinker who could safely be trusted to say nothing to upset Christians. Mr. Lewis has wisely reprinted his address under the title of "Atheism," and a well worded and definite address it is. We congratulate Mr. Lewis on its production. The pamphlets published by "The Freethought Press Association," New York, at ten cents. We wish it a large circulation.

We regret that in noticing the two books just issued by Messrs. Watts in their Forum series, the title of the one dealing with the evolution of the earth was omitted from the paragraph to which it belonged. The title is *From Meteorite to Man*. The price is one shilling.

Religion's Strongest Basis.

Even as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
Fear God: Honour the King.

In the laying of a bowling green, I am informed that the lowest stratum consists of hard stones—the next above of cinders—the next above of sand—and the last of turf.

Similarly in the case of religion, its lowest stratum consists of the hard cold stones of fear—the next above of the cinders of ignorance—the next above of the sand of superstition, and the last of the turf of tradition, upon which the priestly augurs play their games with human bowls.

Superstition requires the supports of ignorance and fear. Fear is the most effective, as well as the most disastrous obstacle to individual human development. Fear creates in the individual an inferiority complex. Thus it is that men herd so much together in crowds. There is safety in numbers. At least we think so. The parsons are never done declaring that man is a social animal and also a religious animal. Unhappily in large measure he is both—by the force of false traditional teaching ecclesiastical domination and social pressure. If you dare to be a Daniel and dare to stand alone, you are an eccentric freak. It pays the Churches to deal with people in herds or flocks.

But there are not the excuses for ignorance that there were.

The Church guarantees you an immunity card against the wrath of God and hell-fire, and a passport to heaven, once you have filed your declaration that you have seen the light and accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Many of the possessors of these immunity cards and passports settle down to a life of their own choosing in association with some particular herd or flock, and forget any vows that were required in securing their future. In name they are now Christians—heirs of the promises; and "no one can pluck them out of his (Christ's) hand"—according to the Scripture. This is not *quite* consistent with the doctrine that backsliding (out of Christ's hand) or the commission of "sin against the Holy Ghost" are each of them possible in individual cases whereby an heir to the promises may be cut off with a bad shilling. But these are intricate and involved matters to be elucidated only by learned theologians—the gifted mystification mongers, who profess to have the secret of the alchemical art of turning gold into brass and brass back into gold again. We need not look for much consistency among the supernaturalists.

One of the greatest problems of the hour is whether the minds of our children are to be kept free from the blight of superstition before they attain puberty. Man must be caught young if he is to be inoculated with the fetishes of the faith. The reverence for divine and ecclesiastical authority—the fear of God—the quality of self abasement and humility and meekness cannot be developed in the rising generation without adequate religious instruction. It is notorious that many modern parents are indifferent or negligent about their supposed duty to give their offspring religious teaching. So the clerics are employing all their power to retain and extend religious teaching in the schools.

When our greatest sailor was but a little boy, he was asked with reference to some project of his whether he had no fear. "Fear," said he, "What is that: I have never seen it or known it." What an awful example an dreadful warning for our Sunday school children!

Historical and other writers have—under the current religious influences of their time—depicted characters who feared neither man nor devil; *but who feared God*. No doubt they would regard a person who feared neither God, man, nor devil as a lunatic. The "horrible hisfidel" is in for an 'orrible hend"! Ah, just wait till he comes to die!

As an instance of theological inconsistency there may be cited the New Testament writer who is reported to have said: "Perfect love casteth out fear." How that saying got wedged into a book which repeatedly insists on the desirability of fear is rather difficult to understand. And the priests very well know that their trade goes when fear is cast out. But they also know that it cannot be got rid of except by strenuous digging—or by dynamite. Fear is religion's deepest and most enduring basis.

There's a friend for little children
Above the bright blue sky.

What a degradation of that beautiful thing friendship, that it should be supposed one friend could fear another! Friendship knows no artificial limitations. Fear says: thus far and no further. And yet modern preachers tell us that God is Love! More corroboration of the inconsistency of the supernaturalists!

Fear is an oppression, a bondage, a tyranny. Its co-partner is Falsehood. They are the foes of Truth. So we have the supernaturalists representing Falsehood as Truth, enslaving and warping human minds,

repressing intellectual talents, denying original qualities their natural outlets, and so producing mental weakness, mental disease, mental perversion. Yet some day the devoted sappers and miners of Freethought will come into their kingdom, when Fear shall be no more!

IGNOTUS.

A Short Essay on Civilization.

EVER since I was old enough to understand that everything in the world is not as it should be, I have tried to devise schemes for rectifying matters. Who has not? The schemes have varied according to my age and mood from the practical expediency of prayer to impractical visions of an all-powerful despot bestriding the earth, and by his will moving all men to do right.

But there are sanguine moments (though it may scarcely appear credible) when nothing seems to be wrong at all. Indeed, I have often wondered how it is that I should sometimes visualize existence as a thing so noble that in its higher phases it barely escapes divinity (or what is commonly meant by divinity), and that at others I should be quite unable to convince myself that it is not the most unhappy blunder ever committed by a malignantly careless providence.

I suppose it must mean that both are true, and when I try to enumerate these aspects of human existence which constitute the unhappy blunder, I find that they are principally what one might call "exterior appurtenances," that is to say, the things we make and use and the things we do to make and use them. This is a convenient way of expressing it, because it preserves racial self-respect by allowing me to say that in spite of everything there is still deep within us the finer streak upon which any hope of saving ourselves from ourselves must depend.

But to blame exterior appurtenances may sound rather stupid, since few will attempt to deny that all exterior appurtenances are conceived and planned by the inner being, and that, as everything produced is a reflection of that which produced it, the inner being cannot be so very fine after all. It would seem, therefore, that in most people the finer streak, although present, plays only a small part in regulating their everyday actions, and that these are still governed by the blind, instinctive forces of the animal world. Nothing but a severe jolt to the universal complacency can cause the finer streak to stir, and even then it is usually not the finer streak that stirs.

I was reading, the other day, a newspaper article by a man named Norman Venner, who wrote about the senselessness of what we are pleased to call progress, and showed only too clearly how we go on and on, not stumbling, but rushing headlong, towards we know not what, feverishly embracing every new idea, without attempting to imagine its consequences, and realizing nothing beyond its most superficial bearing upon our immediate circumstances.

This article impressed me very forcibly, and the more I now reflect on our civilization, the more despicable it seems. It is not as if civilization were new, and we had to find out everything for ourselves. Two, three, four thousand years ago there were civilizations which in many respects were as high, if not higher, than our own. And what have we to show for the time that has elapsed since then? In a burst of optimism, a dozen answers may spring to mind, but when they have been carefully examined and discounted at their true value, there is little outside the world of art and academic knowledge that will remain.

It would, perhaps, be as well to consider one or two of the things which are generally quoted in reply to such a question. Medicine, for instance. People at once say: "Oh, but think what a much greater chance you have now of being cured of illness, and see how the duration of life has been lengthened!" True indeed! This, as far as it affects the general health, is real progress. But medicine (and health too, for that matter) is only a means to an end. We are cured of our maladies and given good health in order that we may enjoy the things we have around us, and there is no justification whatever in saving or prolonging life unless we have something worth living for.

Then hygiene. We have sewers and drains and bathrooms and places which nice people avoid mentioning. But all of these were known before (except perhaps the latter, and even there some provision must have been made). Possibly, there may not have been in other times such gratifying quantities of baths, and those that were available were probably more for the use of the rich and powerful than of the ordinary citizen, but the causes of dirt were by no means so manifest, and a bath must have been a pleasant indulgence rather than a sanitary necessity as it is to-day. It is, however, a point to the credit of the last fifty years that in this respect such rapid improvements have been seen, so much so that one begins to hope that the time may not be far distant when the personal cleanliness of the lower classes will cease to be deplorable.

Freedom of thought and action is certainly an advance on civilizations where these were lacking, and there is progress in quickness of travel, up to a point, although which point it is rather difficult to decide. But in the general condition of our cities there is no progress. On the contrary, the matter is almost too painful for contemplation. A city is physically the mark of civilization on the earth's surface, and the marks which we are making compare somewhat unfavourably with the marks left by other civilizations. The century in which we live is not alone to blame for the existing state of affairs; it is the result of many generations of stupidity and lack of foresight. Wren planned a London of wide streets and open spaces, and his plans were rejected by the city fathers. But we in our turn are behaving in a manner equally culpable and are allowing a situation to develop for which future generations will reproach us far more bitterly than we reproach our predecessors. The subject, however, is too wide to be dealt with in generalities, and so for the moment I will only say that when I think of the number of times I have heard people speak with pride of London as the largest city in the world, I close my eyes, and think of the mile upon mile of mean, ugly streets with their acre upon acre of dirty houses, filled to overflowing with unintelligent humanity, and I wish with the hopelessness of a never-to-be-fulfilled wish that London were not quite so large.

I am here considering civilization essentially in its material aspects, with little regard to the moral and spiritual. Let me therefore take something essentially material which few people nowadays would dream of criticizing. We are so accustomed to the sight of a busy street, with all the hurry and scurry of everybody going about their business or pleasure that one of the most amazing spectacles which modern civilization presents to the eye goes quite unremarked. But here is an epitome of modern life, and when I think that we have been able to evolve nothing better, I see it all as a tragedy of lost opportunity, the more tragic because so few realize what has been lost.

I sometimes wonder what a visitor from another

planet would say if he were to be shown one of our streets, that is, what we ourselves would say if we ever paused in an attempt to consider our surrounding with absolute impartiality. Such a thing, of course, is practically unheard of, and so for quite a lot of people, a visitor from another planet is far more easy to imagine.

To begin with, his vision would be obscured and his breathing impeded by the vapours from motor exhaust pipes. Then, assuming that he could shout loudly enough to make his voice heard above the general din, he would probably want to know why we chose to allow the hub of our material and communal existence to become so extremely unpleasant. And when we had replied that we really didn't see anything wrong with it, we would say that in any case we didn't choose, but merely took what was provided for us. If it happened to be myself who was conducting the visitor, and if we happened to be in London, I should hasten to explain that we were not such utter fools as he might be led to imagine, because in Modern London there was at least one logical feature, and I should then hurry him off to see our tube railways, which hide deep underground the tiresome business of getting from place to place, and do their best to leave the upper air free and unpolluted for the more important matter of living.

In a burst of pessimism a short time ago, I wrote that every new invention nowadays was a sign of degeneration rather than of progress. One does make these sweeping statements sometimes, and nearly always regrets them afterwards. But this I do not regret. I only wish, now that my ardour has cooled, to modify the word "every."

The best illustration I can think of to bear out such an indictment is already quite popular for this purpose with people in my present frame of mind; but I bring it forward again because it is so typical: the compressed air road breaker, a gem of ingenuity which makes noise enough to awaken the dead, and shakes the man who works it until he must feel like a jelly. It has replaced the sledge-hammer and pickaxe, which were comparatively quiet implements, and developed magnificent physique, but it possesses one important advantage: that it is operated by only one man while doing the work of six or more, which means the saving of a great deal of money to the body that authorizes its use. Whether the State (I suppose it is the State) considers this financial gain a good exchange for the racket of Hades let loose in its midst, five more men on its unemployment roll and one physical wreck instead of half a dozen Samsons, I do not know, and to be truthful, I doubt whether the State has really thought about it.

I think I have now written enough to give a fair idea of how I see our present existence, and I should like at this point to consider particularly our relaxations. But there still exist, thank God, opportunities for the indulgence of all tastes, and not only of the most general, and we are not, for instance, compelled to find distraction in the more modern examples of classical literature as we are compelled to make the acquaintance of motor lorries if we venture into the streets. For that reason, I will say nothing of our leisure occupations, although I wish to put on record the great effort by which I refrain from commenting upon a pastime connected with a certain form of bicyclic locomotion, which is characteristic of all popular entertainment. To be perfectly honest, however, there is another cause for my reticence. Clearly, it is essential to the life of any community that its members should have distractions suited to their varying standards of intelligence. If the

general standard of intelligence is low, the distractions will correspond, and must be tolerated if not actually encouraged. Raise the standard of intelligence, and through this the standard of living, and the standard of the distractions will automatically rise also. Of course in practice it is not all quite so simple as that, because there are two factors: mode of living and standard of living. Intelligence governs standard of living but partially governs and is partially governed by mode of living. Yet it cannot be denied that much may be done to raise the intelligence even of adults by the compulsory improvement of the standard of living, in which might be included the provision of intelligent pastimes. This, I am afraid, is wandering from my point, namely, that recreation is merely a necessary complement, and therefore, in theory at least, should be free from criticism. But there is still another consideration. We are all savages at heart, and in many cases the veneer of civilization is very thin. This being so, I cannot help feeling that crime fiction, dirt tracks, and the rest justify their existence by satisfying that part of our nature which demands a thrill, and thus engaging instincts which but for these might be forced to find an outlet in crime and vice.

GEOFFREY SHERMAN.

(To be concluded.)

The Life Worshipper's Creed.

MURDER NO CRIME.

HAVING recently read a book bearing the title—*Do as You Will*, and an essay on Pascal by the same writer, I will give the reader some information about Life worshippers.

To become a L.W. you must bovaryse your personality for a beginning. This means you must imagine yourself to be what you are not. Yes, a little difficult at first if you go into details. I once knew an Inspector of Schools—an Irishman—who tried to explain imagination. Folding his arms and closing his eyes he proceeded thus: "Now boys—I am seeing a beautiful garden—in it is a fountain—by the fountain is a beautiful bird—a robin redbreast—I see it hopping towards the fountain—Now it is drinking." He stopped and then asked—"What am I doing?" Only one little chap in the back row put up his hand, "Telling lies Sir"—said he.

The first fundamental assumption of the L.W. is that *life on this planet is valuable in itself*. This enables one to see right into it at once, because with such a fundamental the edifice must necessarily be slight in matter and therefore very dense. Rather opposed to modern science which finds that the less matter there is in a thing the greater its density becomes. But William Blake, the Mystic Poet, was no scientist, and must therefore not be criticized too severely. There is an increase in the number of suicides and in the number of unemployed, suggesting that Life Worshipping is not receiving the attention it deserves.

A (L.W.) will ask seriously—"Is it not better to be alone and love earth, only for its earthly sake?" If you reply—"Give it up"—he will burst out with triumph in his tone at having floored you—"It is—particularly if you have Blake's gift of seeing eternity in a flower." Well I haven't, all I see in mine is the Greenfly just now.

I asked a gravedigger this conundrum the other day. (He's been putting in a lot of overtime of late—heretical L.Ws. perhaps) and he replied—"It depends on the amount of earth."

I have looked up Blake on Roses, and I find the Greenflies are little fairies waiting to be borne away to their graves on the leaves. But what shall I do with a Rose without a leaf? Call it by another name I suppose.

The Life Worshipper's second assumption is—"The

end of life is more life," and the L.W. considers that "Perfection is Nirvana." But what about "Perfect Angels?" He dare not tell his wife that. She'd say, "Nirvana—and what is Nirvana pray?" He'd reply—"Oh, *nothing* my dear." But she'd go on—"Oh yes it is—you meant something or you wouldn't have said it." Then he—seeing red—would take her in his arms and whisper—"What I meant dear, is that the end of life is a continuation of it," and she'd snap out—"I hope to God it isn't." Being a decent sort of L.W. and believing in having as much diversity and contrast as one can get, he'd then put on his hat and pop round to the Post Office to get some stamps. It is William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that the L.W. finds his best metaphysic, but some there are who prefer prussic acid, and divorce is on the increase, so I fear the Cult is on the wane.

William Blake lays down that "Without contraries there is no progress." No dyspeptic with Mary's garden full of cockle shells would swallow that. He also claimed that *He who desires and acts not breeds pestilence*. Imagine a burglar caught in the act with this in his hat, and though it is a wise child who knows its own father, every child is not a pestilence, though sometimes called a pest. The same Life-Worshipping Poet writes:—

"Abstinence strews sand all over
The ruddy limbs and flaming hair—"

I can hear Lear exclaiming—"What abstinence!—with all-the-sand-which-is around one and smothering one."

Great importance is attached by all Life Worshipers to the relation between a man's viscera and his philosophy. For instance. Nietzsche became a madman. He was no half-hearted Life Worshipper but his liver upset his brain. On the assumption that "the end of life is more life," I feel sorry for Nietzsche and William Blake, for if, as the L.W. contends, "each self is the true self as long as it is there in possession of his consciousness" Nietzsche is still where he is, as mad as a hatter—and Blake knows it.

True the Life Worshipper tries his best to arrange that the appropriate self shall be *there* at the appropriate time. So after all Nietzsche is not being over-worked.

What is generally called justifiable homicide is interpreted by L.W.'s as meaning the necessary murder of an undesirable soul. But he finds it a wearisome task, as "the end of life is a continuation and—more life.

Pascal is anathema. He kills them right out, but the L.W. considers this a slaughter of the innocents, and soundly rates him.

"All I know"—states the writer of *Do as You Will*—"is that a man has a perfect right to murder such of his personalities as he does not like or feel the need of." But what is the use? they all pop up again soon after, for the end of life is a continuation of it. Yet I will give them their due—Life Worshipers contend that no man has a right to be a liar.

Their Calendar of Saints is made up mostly with the names of Artists. This is strange, because Goethe was careful to leave Artists out of his calendar, and he was no half-hearted Life Worshipper. In fact, up to the age of thirty or thereabouts, he was a stickler for orthodoxy. Possibly what he saw in the green room at Frankfort during his youth compelled him to leave Artists out of his calendar. His philandering with "undesirable souls" brought on a serious illness before he was twenty-one. It may be he had turned a blind eye to some of the fundamentals. At any rate, what with the green room and an epidemic of Hamlet a-la-mode world weariness, he suddenly became a would-be murderer of "undesirable souls," and, to make sure of the job, took a dagger to bed with him to press himself back to life by a contiguity with death, like the harper in Wilhelm Meister. The slaughter must have been terrible. There was "Gretchen"—"Aemnschen" the daughter of his landlord (perhaps he merely schlossered her)—"Frederica Brion" the daughter of a Protestant pastor—"Charlotte the betrothed of a friend—"Lili the coquette," a sixteen year old widow—"Frau Von Stein"—"Minnie Herzlich"—"Ulrica Von Levezow" and heaven knows how many others. No wonder he needed a dagger for

the bloody business. But it was all to no purpose, for at the age of seventy or thereabouts, he found in Christiane Vulpis that the end of life was a continuation of it—and more life thus proving the L.W.'s maxim "Perfection is Nirvana." Defying his principles he married her. He was not the author of "Quand nos vices nos quittent, nous nous flattons de la creance que c'est nous qui les quittons," but he wrote:—

"As is a man so is his God

That's why so often God's a thing of scorn."

To sum up. The Life Worshipper must be excessively moderate that is, he must have, not one principle—but many principals—not one self, but many selves.

This is the Life Worshipper's Faith, without which, a man cannot be—fooled.

Following Sir Ian Malcolm's advice to readers, to enter in the fly-leaf of every book read, what one thinks of it, I have written one word inside *Do What You Will*—It begins with a capital N. You have guessed wrong—it is Nirvana.

CULLWICK FERRINS.

Pastoral.

WHAT truly belongs to one, will in due season come to one of its own accord. A tremendous yearning to find some quiet corner of peace had made itself felt for years; limited travel had brought occasional hours of repose in calm stretches of country in France, Holland and Belgium, but the time waited on circumstances and the spirit at last entered into its inheritance in a place situated on the Sussex Coast. The strong and health-laden south-west winds shook and then cleansed the musty corners of the dwelling place called man, and tranquil communion with the vast sky space unlocked the prison gates, and liberty was gained once more. Liberty for what? There is no need to ask this of a few choice spirits who, having glimpsed their duty in the sanctuary of their consciousness, find their answer in loyalty to the human race. A deflection from the life stream, upwards for tyrannical power, downwards for crime brings temporary advantage, but either position is false, and the inward voice ceases to sing.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

A REGRET.

SIR,—Kindly permit me to express my regret to the members of the West London Branch and others of the N.S.S. for the inability in obtaining admission to the Hall on Sunday last. In future the doors will be opened at 7 p.m., and to give preference to members, it would be advisable that membership cards should be produced at the entrance.

I very much regret that numbers of people should have been turned away, that of course could be remedied by all those who believe in our cause in helping to procure a bigger Hall next season.

B. A. LEMAINÉ.

Society News.

THE series of lectures organized by the West London Branch for the coming winter at Conway Hall had a brilliant get-off last Sunday, when Mr. Joseph McCabe delivered his address on "The Twilight of the Gods." The hall was packed to suffocation, and an equal number of people had unfortunately to be turned away. Mr. McCabe, who has not been on the lecture platform in London for some time, does not seem to have lost any of his power both to draw an audience and to hold it enthralled, and his devastating criticism of the Theism of many of the eminent modern men of science, who still profess that worn-out creed, was followed with the keenest attention and interest. Although—as he himself pointed out—he had passed his sixtieth year when people were supposed to shed some of their old heresies and become more or

less tamely conservative, it was gratifying to note that Mr. McCabe was as heretical as ever, and he wanted, emblazoned on a banner for a League of Youth, the words "No Compromise, No Tyranny, No Verbiage." In spite of all reactionary movements and setbacks, Mr. McCabe was confident that Atheism was coming on rapidly, and that by the end of the next century, religion would be quite dead.

To-day (October 12) there will be no lecture, but on October 19, Mr. Robert Arch will deliver his address on "Freethought, Old and New." We hope Freethinkers everywhere, who can, will rally round the Branch and make these lectures a huge success.—H.C.

The last week of Mr. George Whitehead's tour for 1930 was spent in the Bradford district. Meetings were held in Dewsbury, Skipton and Bradford. A meeting announced for Great Horton failed to attract a crowd and the pitch being totally unsuitable we adjourned to Bank Street, Bradford, and managed to collect a scratch audience. The Skipton meeting suffered partly through lack of advertising and partly as a result of a Parliamentary bye-election, which appeared to have absorbed most of the local attention. The best meetings of the week were held in Bank Street, where the pitch is ideal, and good attendances at all our meetings are the invariable rule. Bradford offers as much promise for Freethought as any centre in the country, and the Secretary, Mr. Green, provides both ability and enthusiasm to make the best of the opportunities if all the local members will put their shoulders to the wheel.

Summing up the present season it may be fairly said that in spite of appalling weather, and reoccupations of the public with unemployment on the one hand, and jazzy amusements on the other, our meetings have at least been up to the level of previous years. There has been less opposition from yahoos, and considerably more respect and sympathy shown for the message and those associated with its delivery. But, as usual, the actual work of organizing and running the meetings has been left far too much to the willing few, in the bulk of cases the Secretary of the Branch, and one or two members having had to bear the full weight of the burden. To these enthusiasts we tender our hearty thanks, and hope that the future will necessitate the extension of our gratitude.—G.W.

GLASGOW BRANCH held the first meeting of the Winter Session on Sunday last, when Messrs. Weir and Hale spoke on various incidents in the career of Charles Bradlaugh. There was considerable discussion and many questions.

If we are told a man is religious, we still ask, what are his morals?—*Boufflers*.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road, opposite Walham Green Church): Every Saturday at 7.30.—Various speakers.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Arlington Road, Park Street, Camden Town): Every Thursday evening, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Wednesday, October 15, at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, at 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Friday, October 17, at Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Mr. C. E. Wood; every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith, W.): 3.15, Messrs. C. Tuson, and A. Hearne.

INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Dr. C.W. Saleeby, "The Celestial Organ."

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (The Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, October, 15, at 7.45, Mrs. B. Taylor, "What Shall we do to be Saved?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe, "Can Britain Hold India?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Alison Neilans, "Fighting the Traffic in Women." Questions Invited.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Debate—"That a World Without Consciousness is Unthinkable." *Affir.*: Mr. R. Arch; *Neg.*: Mr. T. F. Palmer.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (National Union of Textile Workers Rooms, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.0, Mr. R. Day—Lecture and Discussion.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton, "The Gods and the Daughters of Men."

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble from Clarkston, meet at 11.0 a.m. Musical Evening at 6.30 p.m.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Islington, Liverpool): 7.0, Dr. C. H. Ross Carmichael (Liverpool), "God and Knowledge." Doors open 6.30. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale. Reserved seat tickets for Mr. Chapman Cohen's lectures on October 19 and 26, will be on sale.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dramatic Performance of "The Barber of Seville" (Beaumarchais). Silver collection.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, Forbes Place): 7.0, Mr. R. Stevenson, "Esperanto at Oxford."

RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION (Glasgow District). Opening Social and Reception to Prof. Crew will take place in the Caldoro Restaurant, on Saturday, October 18, at 6.15 p.m. High Tea will be served at 6.45. Tickets 2s. 6d. each, can be secured from the Secretary, H. A. Kerr, 18 Kingshore Drive, King's Park, Cathcart, Glasgow.

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MAURICE BARBANELL and CHAPMAN COHEN

(Spiritualists' National Union)

(National Secular Society)

ON

SUNDAY, October 12th, at 7 p.m.,

Door Open at 6.30 p.m.

ADMISSION:

RESERVED SEATS: Stalls, 5s. and 3s.; Grand Circle 5s. and 3s.

UNRESERVED SEATS: Balcony, Area, and Orchestra, 1s.

Tickets may be obtained at the offices of the "FREETHINKER," 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4, the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4, and the RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, 4 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.4. An early application for tickets is advisable.

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