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

Views and Opinions.

God and The B.B.C.

THE REV. H. R. L. SHEPHERD, before he became Dean of Canterbury preached so often over the wireless that he became known as the Broadcast Parson. Towards the end of his occupancy of St. Martin's Church he distinguished himself in a mild way by claiming that the B.B.C. had received no more than twenty letters of protest against its Sunday sermons. After repeated pressure he admitted that he ought to have written 200. Two thousand would have been an underestimate, I expect, but to get as near the truth as twenty is to 200 is not so bad—for a parson. In a politician such a mis-statement might have had serious consequences, but in politics the standard of truth seems to be higher than it is in religion—at least in politics when a man lies he must not be found out, to be so inexpert as to be found out quite destroys a man's chance of political promotion. In religion, being found out does not seriously matter. Generally people judge each other in the light of expectations as to how each will act, and the little surprise that is expressed when a parson is "bowled out" is very revealing to a student of human nature.

The other day, in the course of an address to a rural dean conference, Mr. Shepherd referred to the number of letters he had received thanking him for his wireless sermons. He added that "he had no doubt that God was using the wireless." The statement is a trifle obscure because it is not quite clear whether Mr. Shepherd meant his hearers to infer (a) that it was actually God who was speaking over the wireless, or (b) that God was using Mr. Shepherd's voice box to speak unto the people, or (c) that he was speaking on behalf of God, or (d) that God would have said what Mr. Shepherd said if he could have said it as well. The general conclusion would seem to be that Mr. Shepherd is quite convinced that God

could not have said anything more satisfactory than he did, and that he magnanimously gives God all the credit for it.

\* \* \*

Is God to Blame?

Now I want to quite dissociate myself from this habit of ascribing anything to God. Ever since the magicians of ancient Egypt saw in the plague of lice and locusts and "sich" the finger of God, it has been the habit of his avowed followers to put all sorts of disagreeable things to his credit. Earthquakes, storms, the sinking of ships at sea, gales with attendant loss of life and damage to property are officially and legally "Acts of God." When the father of a family is stricken down, and wife and children left without their breadwinner, it is said that God has called him home. I think this very unfair, for there is no evidence before the court that God caused the storm or the earthquake or the loss of life. There is in fact no evidence that he does anything at all. And now to have him saddled with the responsibility for wireless sermons is the crowning indignity. It is almost equivalent to charging him with congenital imbecility. In the name of God, I protest. It is not fair without the strongest possible evidence to make God responsible for fevers, tempests, plagues and broadcast sermons.

But, to a scientific mind any hypothesis is admissible in the endeavour to get at truth. And one is bound to admit that the hypothesis that God is responsible for the broadcast sermon is one that explains a lot. For my own part, soon after the Sunday sermon was instituted, and after listening to a few, I framed an hypothesis of their origin which seemed to me to cover the facts. It may be remembered that Dean Swift once propounded a theory that all the Bishops in Ireland were disguised highwaymen. He said they had the word of the Government that wise and good and upright men were always appointed bishops, but, said he, these wise, upright, good men never arrive. So he thought the explanation to be, that on the journey from London to Ireland these men were waylaid by highwaymen who killed them, stripped them of their clothes, disposed of the bodies, then came to Ireland in their stead and took up the positions and the salaries. So I imagined that by some means the religious committee of the B.B.C. had been captured by Atheists in disguise who were resolved to exhibit to the whole world, by the preachers selected, the unbelievable stupidity of the present-day clergy. I could not see any other reasonable way to account for the unrelieved stream slush and drivel that came over the wireless. Bad as the general level of the clergy is, I knew there were some capable of better stuff than that which came through the B.B.C. agency. Such consistent stupidity seemed to savour of some deep laid plot. The theory that the Committee and Sir John Reith were all Atheists in



disguise, bent on completely discrediting the British clergy, appeared to fit the facts.

\* \* \*

#### Saving Man's Skin.

But, alas, a closer acquaintance with the facts dissipated the theory I had built up. I found that the Committee really was composed of genuine Christians, and that I had paid Sir John Reith too great a compliment in thinking that he had reached the intellectual level of Atheism. He had not even developed to the amorphous stage of a "reverent Agnostic," or to the stage of believing in the comically ineffective God of Professor Julian Huxley. The whole thing was really what it pretended to be. And so I was left without an adequate explanation. And now comes the Dean of Canterbury with his theory. It is God who is using the wireless. That is illuminating. At all events, as in the call that the Bishop of London says he received from God to the post he now occupies, it relieves man of all responsibility. Neither Sir John Reith nor the Committee are responsible for the wireless sermon. It is God alone whom we must blame for it, and when we think of it, or while we are listening to it, we must say as the prayer book instructs the parson to say when visiting the sick, and place it with the other disasters and diseases concerning which we may "be assured that it is God's visitation." His alone is the blame. The explanation of the Dean of Canterbury relieves the Committee of all responsibility. They are not responsible for the "cussing" that takes place every Sunday when sermon time arrives. Theirs is not the fault that foreigners smile at the Englishman being tied up to religious services, for so may wireless hours on Sunday. The fault is entirely God's. The Dean of Canterbury says God is using the wireless. God help us!

\* \* \*

#### A Simple Story.

Mr. Shepherd has one suggestion of his own—at least I assume it is his own as he does not saddle God with the responsibility for it. He says that broadcast religious messages should be confined to the simple Gospel story. To that I would merely add that the story should be related in language of current simplicity so that its character should not be misunderstood by the simple people who take so great a delight in listening to it. That would be something quite interesting to which to listen. Consider the interest with which many of the younger generation of to-day would listen to the beautiful story of the man in the New Testament who was engaged to a young lady, but before marriage discovered that she was about to become a mother, and he knowing that he was not responsible for the child was greatly troubled, but when he dreamed that the child was the product of a miracle, felt quite content, because that was the way in which such things really do happen. I am sure that such sublime trust in one's future wife would commend itself immediately to our young people who might find themselves in a similar situation.

Remember, it is the "simple gospel story" that the Dean of Canterbury recommends, not a sophisticated version in which one half is explained away altogether, and the other half interpreted so that it is made to mean something quite different from what it says. Parts of the simple gospel story might be told in this way:—

In those days all diseases were the products of the devil and his angels. But Jesus knew one kind of devil from another, and was able to tell the people which kind went out of the man through fasting, and which required other treatment. In one instance, there were two men whom the doctors of to-

day, when devils have ceased to exist, or are at least inactive, would have said were suffering from epilepsy or some disease of that character. But in the time of Jesus it was due to taking possession of the body. So Jesus ever full of compassion resolved to cure the men, and after arranging with the devils that if they came out of the man they should have somewhere to go, sent them into the bodies of a number of peacefully feeding swine, and the devils went into the swine, and the swine ran into the sea and were drowned. And when the people of the city heard of what Jesus had done, and what had become of their property, "The whole city came out to meet Jesus," and when they saw him, so impressed were they by what he had done and by his character, that "they besought him to depart out of their coasts," probably fearing more damage to their property if he remained.

Now I am quite sure that a story told thus simply, merely stating the facts, in language that would be easily understood by the modern listener, could not help producing a very definite impression in the minds of the listeners.

But if that were done I am afraid there would be many of his brother clerics who would attack the Dean. They would point out that the Bible is a "sacred book," and a sacred thing is in its essence different from other things. A sacred building is not what other buildings are. As Mr. Chesterton would explain, it is a building, plus its sacredness. Every sacred thing has this additional quality, and the essential feature of a sacred quality is that it cannot be expressed in language that may be understood by simple people. So to tell the gospel story in simple language that could be understood by everyone, would be to mislead them under pretence of enlightenment. Unless the Gospel can so read as to mean something different from the plain meaning of the story, there is an end to the whole of theology, to Popes, priests, ministers, churches, and chapels. I am afraid that the Dean's suggestion would be hailed as a diabolic attack on the Christian religion, and he himself denounced as an agent of Bolshevik Russia. And so my old theory of the constitution of the B.B.C. religious committee might come in once again.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Tyranny of Theology.

"Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant,  
More life and fuller that we want."—Tennyson.

"I can only teach you two things, sorrow and the end of sorrow."—Gotama Buddha.

WHEN Tennyson died the name of one woman was mentioned among the possible candidates for the position of Poet Laureate, and Christina Rossetti would have been a far better choice than Alfred Austin. It would have set the final seal of honour on a deserved reputation. Fate was unkind, however, and Alfred the Little succeeded Alfred the Great.

Christina Rossetti was an outstanding poetess of her time, and it is indeed noteworthy that one family should have produced two such eminent poets as Christina and her brother Dante Gabriel. Christina shared with her brother the delight in medieval colouring and theme, and in the sensuous appeal of verse, but, unlike her brother she had a very strong strain of superstition in her character. Soon she lost her vision of a brightly-hued and romantic world, and turned her tired eyes to the contemplation of purely religious subjects.

At the first Christina's verse exhibited a definite personality. It is, perhaps, her sex which renders her lyrics more bird-like than her brother's sonorous



verse. It can be nothing but her constant experience of ill-health which made her dwell so constantly on the morbid side of religion.

Death, which to Shelley and Swinburne and the Freethought poets seemed own brother to sleep, was to her a more horrific shape, and was a perennial subject for her verse. The constant burden of her poetry was the mutability of human affairs. When to physical ailments were added love disappointments, entirely caused by religious bigotry, there is small difficulty in understanding how Christina Rossetti became a devotional poet. She was one of such distinction that only Crashaw, Donne, Vaughan and Francis Thompson can be held her compeers. And, Dr. Donne, be it remembered, mitigated his raptures concerning his Saviour by writing poems on such less sacred and more welcome subjects as seeing his mistress getting into bed.

Christina made herself as much a Christian martyr as she knew how. She gave up the game of chess because she was afraid that such frivolity "might distract her mind from 'God.'" She considered a social party an occasion for temptation. She renounced her first love because he was a Roman Catholic whilst she was an Anglo-Catholic. She refused to marry a second admirer because he was heterodox. And, unkindest cut of all, she "dressed like a pew-opener." She even forced her muse to deal with trite theological themes. In nothing is her undoubted power so much shown as in the fact that so few are commonplace. Had she not had genius, they might have sunk to the dead level of pious verse, orthodox in purpose, and contemptible in execution. The only trait she has in common with the ordinary hymn-writers is a certain strain of morbidity. She disembowelled the Christian Bible, and her brother, William, said, with justice, that if all the Biblical phrases had been taken from his sister's verse, it would have approached a vacuum.

Starting her poetic career as the one woman member of the Pre-Raphaelite enthusiasts, she gave the world, "Goblin Market" and "Prince's Progress," both of which have all the glow of Dante Rossetti's and William Morris's early works. The meditative and introspective sonnets of her later years show the survival of this artistry. But what a change was there! It is impossible not to deplore the petrifying of Christina's poetic interest. Here was a woman of warm blood and a passionate sense of beauty, who, with better health and satisfied affection, might have interpreted the joy of life. Instead, she turned to the sickly delights of a barren religiosity. She was a paradox, an anomaly, a Puritan among Anglo-Catholics, a nun outside the Romish Church, and yet, again and again, Nature will out, and the old romantic instinct asserts itself.

The truth is, she was not a sacred, but a secular poet. Her religious bias forced her sympathies into wrong channels. To the real world she became indifferent. With actual life, its humours, its despairs, its hopes, its loves, there is no sympathy. Beyond the walls of her sheltered home her tired eyes saw but a mad world rushing to perdition. Her idea of wisdom is to shut the door, draw the curtains, and meditate on things that never happened. Her piety was of the womanly, prayerful, submissive kind, so attractive to priests of all ages and all countries. It only kneels in adoring awe, and gives money and service freely.

Looking out timidly from her pious prison-house Christina's picture of "the world" bears very little relation to reality:—

"Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy  
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair."

And she fears lest her own feet "cloven, too, take

hold on hell." This quaint view of life blinds her eyes. When she notices the beauties of Nature it is always through religious spectacles. So hampered she could not rise to the art of Coleridge's:—

"Hidden brook  
In the leafy month of June,  
That to the sleeping words all night  
Singeth a quiet tune."

Or to the magic of Meredith's:—

"Hear the heart of wildness beat  
Like a centaur's hoof on sward."

Nor could she utter the brave defiance of poor, stricken Emily Bronte:—

"No coward soul is mine."

But she has a haunting music all her own:—

"When I am dead, my dearest,  
Sing no sad songs for me  
Plant thou no roses at my head,  
Nor shady cypress tree;  
Be the grass green above me,  
With showers and dewdrops wet;  
And, if thou wilt, remember,  
And, if thou wilt, forget."

This, however, is an exception. Too often, her emotions were regulated and refined by ascetic priestly traditions, and this places her at a great disadvantage among singers of unfettered utterance. At the worst, she is never crude, extravagant, or commonplace. She challenged comparison with the greatest of her sex. Elizabeth Browning is the inevitable foil of Christina Rossetti, and the two suggest each other by the mere force of contrast. The author of "Sonnets from the Portugese," "Casa Guidi Windows," and "The Cry of the Children," is the very antipodes of the shy, devotional "New Poems." There is none of Mrs. Browning's fluency in Miss Rossetti's austere work, but the sister-poet lacks the splendid humanity of the other. Christina, despite her lyric gifts, hardly stands the comparison, although Professor Walter Raleigh says defiantly that "her lyrics make a cheap fool of Browning, and leave Elizabeth Browning scarcely human," which is a proof that professors sometimes talk too much.

Christina Rossetti's existence was "bounded in a nutshell." A delicate spinster, she held the Christian Superstition in the most absolute and most literal manner. Shadow, not light, was her nourishment, and her music was a delicate undertone. We long for something individual. Like the dying farm labourer, we like something concrete. His friends tried to solace him with the golden joys of heaven. He raised himself for a last word. "Tis all very well for thee, but give I a game of darts at the "Three Horse-shoes." His mortality, like that of so many of us, was unequal to the raptures of the morbid and half-mad fathers of the Christian Church. Christina Rossetti's life-work, is, in its way, an indictment of the Christian Religion. In spite of its picturesque associations, it explains nothing, and adds nothing to human knowledge, but leaves the world in the meshes of an ignorant and barbarous mediocratism.

MIMNERMUS.

There can be no doubt that had the objections of Porphyry, Hierocles, Celsus and other enemies of the Christian faith been permitted to come down to us, the plagiarism of the Christian Scriptures, from previously existing Pagan documents, is the specific charge that would have been brought against them.—Robert Taylor.

In our common editions of the Greek Testament, are many readings which exist not in a single manuscript, but are founded on mere conjecture.—Bishop Marsh.

Too much gravity argues a shallow mind.—Lavater.



## Freethought : Militant and Independent.

THE cause of Freethought is never to be prejudiced by frankness. And without disparagement to the work of Freethinkers other than myself, I should wish to be permitted to give expression to some thoughts that arise in me after a survey of the field of Freethought activities in Britain in recent years. Of course the conclusions of one cannot be the same as those of another. One's opinions are necessarily coloured if not formed by one's heredity and environment, and by one's own individual experience of religious contacts in one's own individual life. The directions in which I regard the effect of religion as having been most disastrous may be less emphasized by others. It is happily a characteristic of Freethought that we do not seek to force one another's views.

But with much submission and deference to gifted workers and writers with whom I cannot always see eye to eye, I think there are certain fundamental matters upon which we ought to have a clearer mutual understanding. It has become a fashion to regard as Allies in the task of freeing minds from the deadening grip of the dead hand of superstition, certain outstanding divines who are regarded as having advanced, modern or liberal opinions. Now I personally regard this fashion as not merely dubious, but as an actual hindrance to the work of Freethought militant and independent.

"Oh," I am told, "you are taking up an attitude of bigotry and dogmatism—the very thing you blame in religionists! If an eminent clergyman discards some orthodox opinion, why should you not regard him as an ally to that extent anyway? Let us welcome workers for deliverance wherever they may be!" One of our learned and charming writers uses his pen to this effect. "It would do Rationalism no harm to award occasional tributes to the worshippers who try to cleanse their temples and to priests who expose the evils of priestcraft. The impulse of social and mental evolution is like a harp with many strings."

Now as a plain blunt man who has striven to distinguish the true from the untrue, that is a passage which emphatically does not appeal to me. I have no wish to call such worshippers and priests as our friend refers to bad names; but I am firmly of the opinion if his counsel were generally acted upon, we should finally find ourselves in a situation clouded with an atmosphere of obscurantism nauseating to simple believers in the devastating untruth of religion. The finest literary appeals and the most absorbing poetic diction cannot change the fundamentals. The "Modernist Christian," as he is styled, is a very peculiar kind of hybrid bird, who fouls his own nest from the point of view of his simple-minded fellow-Christians, who accept the verities of the Christian Faith without hesitation, reservation or qualification. If it be possible for one to remain in a Christian Church and at the same time question such of its verities as the Virgin Birth, the Divinity of Christ, the Miracles or the Resurrection, then it is possible to mix oil and water and science and supernaturalism.

From the standpoint of the sincere, militant and independent Freethinker the eminence or insignificance of religious personalities who create a sensation among their fellow religionists by uttering in speech or writing certain heterodoxical opinions does not count. Our pursuit is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. In the nineteenth century there were men like Colenso and Gilfillan, who certainly showed their courage by protesting against certain things—the first

as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the second as to the debasing doctrine of Eternal Punishment. But their cases are not analogous to those of the present day Modernists. Another point is that Colenso and Gilfillan both suffered personal loss and endured contempt and reviling for their views. Gilfillan was indeed excommunicated by the Scottish United Presbyterian Church. But nowadays eminent eloquent divines can think and say what they choose without the fear or risk of any serious material deprivation. They still remain members of the Ecclesiastical Corporations with which they were originally identified. It just shows what a mockery and travesty of honest thought the Christian Churches have become.

That is the crucial point: These men remain as part and parcel and paid servants of the Ecclesiastical Corporations which ordained them, and some of whose fundamental tenets they repudiate.

From another point of view, this practice to which I am taking exception finds a parallel in the practice of Churches and other religious bodies and their representatives of claiming Freethinkers with exceptional talents and great character as "really Christians." To this end with the view of hocussing the common people, these outstanding Freethinkers have their rationalism ignored by pulpit and press; and manufactured evidence is broadcast to support the lies. One divine some years ago (Rev. R. J. Campbell) had the impudence to say of Mr. Robert Blatchford, that he was a Christian without knowing it. Mr. Foote very properly animadverted upon Mr. Campbell's bad manners, pointing out that he was insulting either Mr. Blatchford's sincerity or his capacity, and asking what Mr. Campbell would have thought if Mr. Blatchford had described him as an Atheist without knowing it.

The temptation of some professed Rationalists to do obeisance to prominent religionists who are much in the limelight, and who figure frequently in the press seems to be very strong. Seldom do we hear from these Rationalists such protests as Paine and Tolstoi made against ecclesiastical organizations and priesthoods, which wield over the unthinking a tremendous power derived from a sedulously sowed belief in supernatural tyranny. It is amazing to think that many working men who decline to submit to any earthly tyranny unquestioningly subject themselves to the tyranny of an authority which does not exist!

Social intercourse and intellectual companionship between scholarly Rationalists and scholarly Christians may have the effect of blurring in the eyes of the former the abysmal distinction and difference between minds enslaved and minds free. Freethought will be no longer militant when it sacrifices its independence in compromising with the actual representatives of and apologists for the very system which it proclaims to be the greatest foe of humanism. Academic debate and discussion may be very attractive and enjoyable to learned minds and historical investigators. What our ablest exponents of Freethought have got to remember is that their chief and first duty is towards the warfaring man; the ordinary working man; the poor man—to direct him to the reliable sources of information—to get into friendly contact with him and show him how to honour his own manhood by finding out the means of his own emancipation, and thereafter the emancipation of his fellows. There is in my humble judgment a real danger that a haughty intellectualism may blind some to this really serviceable duty. We may become too "highbrow." We may come to attach undue importance to and be obsessed by class and social distinctions. What are these in the Great Cause for which we are pledged and engaged to do battle? Titles (which Paine des-



cribed as "nicknames") are trifles light as air—yet what flunkies, toadies and idolatrous sycophants they can command! How the Churches worship them as part of a divinely ordained constitution! To those who would coquette with and pay court to ecclesiastical leaders one is disposed to address the injunction: "Come ye apart; be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing." With the fundamentalist we know where we are. With the Modernist we never know.

IGNOTUS.

## God in Contemporary Philosophy

(Continued from page 662.)

THERE is also another approach to God. He is "the object of religious worship." "Whatever we worship, that is God" (*Space, Time and Deity*). We throw out our "feelers" and grope for God, and religion is exactly "this sense of outgoing towards deity" (*ibid*). First, he says, ask if there is room for the quality of deity; then verify its possessor; then see, if it coincides with the object of worship; and—voilà—there is your God again.

Such is the curiosity offered by Prof. Alexander. The total number of its supporters, we believe, amounts to one. His name is Prof. Alexander. Needless to say, he called forth a volume of indignation from Christians, and a special groan from Prof. Webb.

Maeterlinck, usually prone to flatter, calls Alexander "old-fashioned, diffuse, unduly Aristotelian, Biblical," and carrying a "deceptive mysticism." Having had the pleasure of seeing and hearing Alexander we should say his philosophy is the outcome of a personality essentially creative and artistic.

We can, if we see fit, believe in the emergence of his phenomenon, in the same way that we might subscribe to Shaw's superman, but we are not therefore compelled to call it God.

### (C)—ATHEISTS.

Naturally, the Atheists have less to say on the subject than the Theists. When an Atheist writes a book on philosophy it is delightfully free from Godism—no reference to a God is required. But the Theist sets out with an axe to grind, and it is such a long and difficult job that—however, the paper trade, at any rate, may derive some benefit.

E. Belfort Bax has no belief in God, and prefers to be called an Atheist rather than an Agnostic (cf. *Reminiscences and Reflections*).

Prof. G. E. Moore, discussing Theism in *Ethics*, says: "I think myself that in all probability there is no such being, neither a God, nor any being such as Universal Will, True Self, etc.," and this is corroborated in his contribution to *Contemporary British Philosophy*.

The late Prof. J. McT. E. McTaggart, an Idealist, protested against philosophers making the term God suit their own purposes. God belonged to religions, and was a myth (cf. *Nature of Existence*). This also is corroborated in his contribution to *Contemp. Brit. Phil.* By "God," he understood a good and powerful self, and he saw no evidence anywhere for such a being.

The late Prof. B. Bosanquet followed Bradley in composing a Neo-Hegelian Idealism with an impersonal Absolute, not to be confounded with God. In *The Meeting of Extremes*, he regards the two ideas of God and immortality unthinkable.

E. D. Fawcett has made occasional contributions to British philosophy from his residence in Switzerland. He underwent some changes of opinion and recanted

on two books consecutively, but he held Atheism throughout. He had no use for either personal Gods or the dummy gods of philosophy; and as for the Grand Être of Positivism, "I laugh. Frankly, I laugh," says he (*Individual and Reality*). (cf. also his contribution to *Contemp. Brit. Phil.*)

Prof. De W. Parker of America is a sufficient reply to those who accuse Atheism of pessimism. To one who has renounced belief in God "a new world dawns." "After having lived for some time away from the theistic position one does not look back with regret upon it." "The conception of man as the world's darling, cared for by a benevolent heavenly father . . . is too unreal and too little challenging to courage and adventure to keep hold on the twentieth century man. He finally ceases to wish to live in that protected world" (*The Self and Nature*).

Prof. John Dewey (America) has just stated his philosophy in two recent volumes, *Experience and Nature* (1929) and *The Quest for Certainty* (1930). The result is a statement of Materialism in a new way. Dewey completely rejects the Supernatural, and calls his method "Empirical Naturalism" (see also his contributions to *The Forum* and to *Contemporary American Philosophy*, 1930).

Benedetto Croce (Italy) is doing fine work for Free-thought in Italy, where it is badly needed. Too little is known of him in this country. He is to Italy something like what Ferrer was to Spain, and what Paine was to America. He stands for Atheism, Secularism and Culture. Keeping clear of metaphysics he has poetically represented existence as the struggle of mind against hostile forces (see his lengthy *Filosofia del Spirito*, 4 vols.)

As editor of *La Critica*, he has the respect of intellectual Italy, and the fear and hatred of the Catholic forces. For some years he has made a vigorous and—in Italy—telling onslaught on religion in all its forms, and he stands out conspicuously in a country that has produced few great thinkers since Bruno. Bosanquet and Carr have introduced him to English philosophy, and that his work has met with such acknowledgment is the more remarkable when we remember that he has no degree of any kind (was it not Schopenhauer who said "A sure sign of a philosopher is that he is not a professor of philosophy.")

One quotation from Croce may suffice: "Surely what the religious man says with the words, 'Let us leave it in God's hands' is said also by the man of reason with the words 'Courage and forward'" (*Conduct of Life*—trans.)

Prof. C. D. Broad holds a type of Emergent Materialism (cf. *Mind and Its Place in Nature*), and though he is always non-committal on the question of Theism he repudiates the various arguments for Theism as he has occasion to deal with them (see *ibid*). He has sketched his philosophical standpoint without utilizing the idea of a God at all, and acknowledges a sympathy with the philosophy of Russell.

There is no need to go into details about Messrs. Bertrand Russell, Chapman Cohen, Joseph McCabe, C. E. M. Joad and Geo. Santayana. Their views are too well known for that, and all are Atheists. Prof. Santayana has now completed the second part of his *Realms of Being* (1929-30), thereby filling out a position sketched in *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, and he calls himself, "a decided Materialist" (*ibid*).

G. H. TAYLOR.

(To be concluded.)

Measure not men by Sundays, without regarding what they do all the week after.—Fuller.

The common people are to be caught by the ears as one catches a pot by the handle.—Anon.



## From the Spirit World.

### A FANTASY.

I SAT before a low fire. In my hand I held an open book, but I was not reading; instead I was listening to the howling wind and the pelting rain, whose combined efforts threatened at any moment to smash all the windows and shatter every door into fragments.

Suddenly, above the fury of the elements, I distinctly heard three discreet taps on the door. Thinking that more than likely it was some prank of the wind, I decided not to forsake the comfort of my armchair. But, even as I settled down to read, a deep, hollow voice sounded in my ear.

"I am from the Spirit World," it said, mournfully, "and as you are my sole remaining relation on earth I have taken the liberty of calling on you for an hour's chat."

I swung round. A tall, gaunt shadowy outline of a man, thin and cadaverous of face, with greed, hypocrisy, and fear written plainly on his features, stood at my elbow. As I scrutinized him he emitted a short apologetic cough.

"You are probably shocked at my nakedness," he remarked.

"Not in the least," I replied; "just a little curious that is all."

"Well, you see there are no clothes at the other side—"

"But," I interposed, "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was wearing evening dress at the Albert Hall gathering of Spiritualists, according to a medium."

"It is not true. Whoever made the statement was, I am convinced, afraid of hurting the susceptibilities of the people who were present."

"No," he resumed, after pausing to regain breath, "we do not wear clothes because they are mundane things and have no significance in our world. Similarly we have no music—except an occasional song from a new arrival—no cars, houses, shops, trees, flowers, and alas! no books. The explanation is that in order to qualify for our world it is absolutely necessary to have a soul. And I would like to mention that we use the word 'soul' to mean desire for immortality. Man, of course, is the only being to possess such a desire."

"But, are there no cats, dogs, birds?" I ventured.

"Unfortunately, no. Men and women are the only inhabitants."

"How do you pass away the time?" I asked.

"I'm hanged if I know . . . Believe me, existence is such a dreary affair that would be thankful for the company of a flea to relieve the monotony."

"Surely you are jesting?" I cried. "Is there no enjoyment there?"

"Enjoyment!" He laughed bitterly. "There are no talkies, no football-matches, no horse to back."

"These things alone do not constitute enjoyment," I interrupted. "What about the many conversations, arguments, discussions, debates, and so forth?"

"The first three we experience frequently, but they are always paltry, petty, puerile affairs. The main topic is usually scandal or slander; the victims being either mortals or spirits who are not within earshot."

I pondered this statement for some considerable time.

"Look here," I said, at length, "when you have adapted yourself to the new environment at the other side, are not all the mysteries of this earth explained to you? By mysteries I mean problems in nature which it is beyond man's knowledge to solve satisfactorily."

"Good heavens, we never bother our heads with such matters."

"Do I take it that none of you are sufficiently interested, then?" I inquired.

"It is not quite so bad as that. Sometimes we do get a new arrival who is ebullient with enthusiasm to find out all about this old ball of mud, but in a very short time the general air of apathy has its demoralizing effect

on him. At every turn his ardour receives a fresh douching, until finally it fizzles out, and from then on he is content to drift with the sluggish tide."

"Why is it that this apathy exists?" I queried.

"Because the fact of one knowing that eternal life is his, also that the struggle for existence, has no meaning in the Spirit World rather tends to destroy his appetite for knowledge. The brain consequently has few active calls made upon it, and in time, while it does not lose what is stored within, it becomes stagnant."

"But cannot you utilize it in other directions?" I protested. "For instance, why not help us to prevent any further wars; or better, unite with us in an endeavour to wipe the curse of war from the earth for ever . . . Then your co-operation would be welcomed in the matter of solving the unemployment problem."

"Granted," cut in my visitor, "but unfortunately you are never likely to receive assistance in any shape or form from us."

"How is that?" I demanded.

"Well, when we desire to know what is happening on earth we have to consult a medium. This, by the way is entirely our own fault. Had we possessed an ounce of energy and a spark of determination among us, there would have been no necessity for these fickle tyrants. As it was we allowed them to get the upper hand, and now we have to go hunting through space for them (not a very pleasant or easy task) when we want news concerning our former abode. Naturally enough, in a short time we become fed up with this. Indifference sets in and eventually we take up the attitude, Why should I worry over those people on earth, anyway? Why should I go out of my way to make their lives happier? For what reason should I try and improve their conditions of life? To the devil with them! let them fond for themselves!"

"If, as you say, you have to chase after these mediums for news, how does it come about that you are here to-night? Surely, if you can come once, there is nothing to stop you coming seven times in a week?" I said.

"So it would appear. But the explanation is, that as I am one of the many who have no sorrowing relatives anxious to get into communication, the medium, after a great deal of pressure on my part, consented to give me a permit to visit the earth for just one night . . . And that reminds me," he said, glancing at the clock, "my time is nearly up."

"I'm sorry to hear it," I said, rising to my feet. "I have been most interested in your conversation."

He thanked me, then with his hand on the door-knob he said:

"I have no doubt you imagine that the joy of meeting those who departed for the unknown destination before you, fairly compensates for the loss of most of the pleasures you are to miss in the Spirit World. Let me tell of my experience. Naturally, when I arrived my first search was for my parents. I found them at length, but to my dismay they failed to recognize me. In vain did I reiterate that I was their son. They laughed and jeered at me; how could I be their son when I was years older than they? was their derisive query. When I attempted to prove my case they shouted me down, and in the end I was compelled to turn away in despair. The same thing occurred with most of my uncles, aunts, cousins, and friends. They did not know me because I had been young when they had passed over. Still, I found out later that there was no need to feel disappointment over this. For relations are of no value, and friendship will not thrive in the atmosphere . . . Ah, well! I had better leave you now. Farewell."

"One moment," I cried, as he opened the door, "is there no escape from this Spirit World?"

"Yes. Those who have striven to make this earth less miserable to live on; those who have championed the oppressed and shown them the path to liberty; those who have enlisted under the banner of truth to destroy the evil forces of ignorance and superstition have no place in our world. Their spirits remain on this earth educating man, aiding man, and withal urging him towards the goal of happiness."

TOM BLAKE.



## The First Epistle of the Apostate to the Romans.

I HAVE recently returned from a six weeks sojourn in Belgium. During my stay in Brussels, in the provinces, and in the villages, I visited no less than thirty-five churches, thus seeing and examining in all a minimum of two hundred waxen images of Jesus Christ. My findings in every case confirmed to the theory on which I had been thinking for some time. There were not two identical. By identical, I mean neither more nor less than the simple dictionary definition of the term: just the same. Indubitably one recognises that the representations are meant to be of one and the same man. But this moulder has given Jesus big feet; that moulder has given Jesus small feet; and the other moulder, for reasons unknown, has exaggerated out of all proportion the length of his loin cloth so that it droops to cover that part of the body which, if we are to believe the book on which everything Christian is based, were, in those days, constantly in need of soap and water. Perhaps there had been something more than modesty in the moulder's mind.

In addition to this constant variation in the size of Jesus' feet, we find differences also in the degree of "determination" in his chin; in the length of his nose; and in more than anything else, in the ease with which his ribs are countable.

I mention these anomalies as being of the highest significance, despite the fact that the Church might easily attempt to defend itself, as has often been the case, by the apposite use of a sceptic's clever aphorism, as for example: Nothing is fixed, but all is change, except for the fixity of this change.

Bearing these points in mind, we must now return to the theory mentioned earlier on. Its fountain head is to be found in the constant advancement that is taking place in the theory and administration of education. Education, as everything else, is subject to the process of evolution, and the evolution, like all evolution, consists of a series of revolutions. To-day, we are nearer the ultimate goal of education than ever before: the capability of the individual for appreciative and independent inquiry.

The contention then, is that unless the Catholic Church, realizing as it must this last point, accepts one or (preferably) both of the suggestions now to be submitted, Catholicism will die its ultimately inevitable death earlier than anticipated.

Not being a Catholic myself, the submission of the conclusions that my inquiries have yielded, thus becomes purely altruistic.

Firstly, Jesus must be standardized. If the Pope decides he is to have curls, a fair complexion, golden hair, and an Anglo-Saxon build, well and good. But by no means must he resemble a Frenchman in Paris and a Dutchman in Amsterdam.

Secondly, Jesus must be rationalized. As much as it may be our desire to do so, it is ridiculous and absurd to try to make black white, or white black. According to the Church itself Jesus was a Jew; the son, grandson, and great-grandson of other Jews. Jesus was as Jewish as Judas. And the Church has always portrayed Jews as being men of the lowest order.

Let them be consistent!

Jet-black, curly, greasy hair; a hook-nose; a swelling belly—these personal attributes are surely more plausible and attractive, if not to the propagandist instinct, to the instinct of truth.

And God is Love, and Love is Truth, and Truth is God (or at least good.)

MARCEL D. RODITI.

Morality may exist in an Atheist without a religion and in a Theist with a religion quite unspiritual

F. P. Cobbe.

If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him.

Buddha.

## Acid Drops.

Politicians and many others have had a go at the question of unemployment. None has found a solution. Even Mr. Thomas, in spite of taking samples of coal with him on his travels, failed. The greater the credit due to Father Fleming, P.P., of Preston, who has found a way out. From petitions offered to St. Theresa in the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, over two hundred jobs have been found for people who placed their needs fairly and squarely before St. Theresa. Others have been cured of ailments, and others have been helped in financial troubles. Now here is a case of solid fact, and those scientific gents who so ponderously investigate "Psychic Phenomena" in the wrong way, would do well to investigate. For here the facts are unimpeachable. The Church is there, the picture of the Saint is there, the people who prayed can be produced, the dates on which the prayers were offered can be checked, and it can be shown that 200 people have found jobs *after praying*. As so many are saying Materialism is confounded, and we shall have to consider closing down the *Freethinker*.

Of course, all who ask for work do not get it, but there are plenty of other saints, and they might be induced to join in the task. If each saint in the Roman Catholic calendar does his 200, it will not be long before their spiritual labour exchanges will have done the trick. We believe the petitions must be definite. We take that to mean that in offering the petitions, age, experience, occupation, wages expected, etc., must be made quite clear. Otherwise Saint Theresa may act with the wisdom of our geniuses who managed the Carter Paterson War of 1914-18, and sent clerks to road-making and navvies to accountancy. But here is a way out of all our troubles. Blessed be St. Theresa. We are not sure what kind of a life this lady led while on earth, but she is having a hell of a time in heaven.

In *Radio Times*, a grown-up person addressed a letter to Canon Woodworth in these terms:—

Your children's service on Sunday . . . was a delight to listen to, and we grown-ups wished you had been able to give a longer address. It was so interesting and had so much in it that one could think of afterwards with great advantage. Thank you, sir, for a real treat.

Unfortunately for the progress of civilization, many grow up physically, but not mentally. But to deprive them of their simple treats would merit the attention of the R.S.P.C.C.

Another of the B.B.C.'s patrons complains about the pronunciation of certain words. And as we gather that the real function of words is to make sounds, and not to convey ideas, we must class him also in the category of Peter, Parish grow-ups.

A Wesleyan Missionary Society advertisement runs thus:—

"If any one of us is ill, the Doctor comes at once!"

Will each one think what the last ten years of his family history would have been, if they had passed without medical or surgical help of any sort? But millions and millions live without help or hope of it.

Anyone might imagine from this that providing medical assistance to the natives was the main concern of the Society. Whereas, it is merely a side-line, and adopted as a means of catching clients. If the Society is so greatly concerned about millions of natives being without medical assistance, it should devote the whole of its income to that end. After all, the medical need of the natives is an actual fact; the religious need is merely supposition. And from the point of view of common sense it is better to attend to an actual necessity than a suppositious one.

Mr. Hannen Swaffen informs *Daily Express* readers that John Galsworthy is "England's one literary giant."



And we gather that this judgment beds down mainly on the fact that Galsworthy has said nothing likely to offend the susceptibilities of the best Christian people of the English race. This, of course, supplies an infallible principle by which a literary giant can at once be detected among a herd of authors! Nevertheless, we fancy our best literary critics will have discerned the greatness of Galsworthy as an author without their needing to resort to Mr. Swaffen's criterion.

As a sample of up-to-date Methodist preaching, the following piece by the Rev. R. Moffat Gautrey will do:—

Golf clubs can become a fetish, and motor cars a means of spiritual dissipation. The Lord's Sabbath can be profaned as effectively in the fields as in the gilded halls of vice, or along the gaily alluminated highways which slope so swiftly to hell.

This seems a trifle liverish. But it should be remembered that Sunday golf and motor riding are not improving the parson's prospects. And even the most patient of the men of God are entitled to lift up their voices and howl when the future seems dark.

In an article on "Priesthood and Priestcraft," a Wesleyan writer, the Rev. A. E. Whitham says:—

As the idea of priesthood gives a supernatural dignity to man, it also gives supernatural meaning to the whole fellowship of the Churches. The priest of old did for others what they could not do for themselves, went where they could not go, offered what they could not themselves offer.

The priest of old did nothing of the kind, nor does the present-day priest. He merely persuades credulous dupes into believing so—to his, not their advantage.

The Rev. Dr. Rattenbury believes that London is not more difficult than other places to evangelize. The statement is probably put in this way to cheer up a pious audience. But we fancy the rev. doctor's real belief is that London is as hard to evangelize as other towns. In these days of religious decay, our parsons are becoming adept at feeding the pious multitude with a thimbleful of optimism.

At a School Board Election in Scotland a good many years since, a canvasser for one of the candidates called at a working class house and was met by the housewife, who informed the caller that her husband was in bed; but as he was not asleep she would deliver a message to him. The canvasser thereupon related his business; and the wife shouted, "Jock he wants ye tae vote for — for the Schule Board." "Tell the b—," shouted Jock in reply, "that he needna come for ma vote unless he's in favor o' religious eddication."

A thought for to-day. The parson who prays for rain in dry seasons, should keep a stock of umbrellas at his church to loan to his clients. This would help to convince them that he really did believe that his petition would be answered.

Speaking about mission work in Swaziland, the Rev. Herbert Robinson said that he often marvelled that these primitive people could so soon learn such loyalty to Christ. He has no need to marvel. It is only natural that primitive intelligence should easily get in tune with a primitive religion such as Christianity. For our part, we should marvel if it didn't.

Addressing some girls, the Rev. Dr. W. R. Maltby said that doors were open to women and girls with opportunities such as their mothers never dreamt of. And he warned them that if their liberty was not used well it would be harmful. The girls might well have retorted that since the parsons had nothing to do with women gaining their present liberty and opportunities, it is rather impertinent for a parson to solemnly advise them how to use those liberties.

There is, says a writer, something wrong with the

man who would be young again. If this kind of person is "wrong," what shall we call those who want to "live for ever," and cherish the hope that "millions now living will never die"?

Bloodless surgery is said to be the surgery of the future. And we are reminded that bloodless religion seems to be a possibility, also. For the shedding of blood as a means of settling differences of opinion is out of fashion already in religious circles. And some of our more sensitive theologians are shocked at too much emphasis on Blood in the Christian message. But although a religion suffering from pernicious anæmia may be a possibility, we don't fancy its chances of capturing the world.

Prof. Winifred Cullis says she will be ashamed of women if they go back to long skirts. After that, all intelligent women will realize the advisability of allowing long skirts to be the monopoly of our neuter sex—the priests.

The British people, according to a Government official, spend on alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and gambling £50,000,000 a year. This total could be made even more impressive by the addition of the millions wasted on that other dispensable commodity, religious dope.

Apropos of the disaster to the Rior airship, a newspaper thinks it "thrilling" that the flag escaped undamaged. Presumably, the thrill comes from the realization that Providence managed to safeguard the British flag in preference to the crew.

The Cinema, we are told, leaves the public nothing to do. From this it should be obvious that the Cinema is inferior to the Church. For she does expect the public to open its mouth and shut its eyes. And it will cheer the parsons to know that, so long as this imposes no strain on the public's mental constitution, the Church will never lack patrons.

Mr. A. V. Alexander, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who casts the blame for his being where he is, and what he is upon some Baptist preacher who prevented his growing to intellectual manhood and kept him a Christian all his life, suggests that if we let the Bible drop out of our lives the British Empire will decay. We fancy we have heard this kind of thing before, but it is very interesting to learn that unless we believe in turning one cheek when the other is smitten, Mr. A. V. Alexander runs a chance of losing so many thousands a year for seeing that the navy is ready to hit anyone a punch in the eye who attempts to attack the British Empire. We think there may be something in it, that but for the Christian Religion Mr. Alexander would never have been where he is. After all, people in power depend upon there being a certain kind of public for their being where they are. Anyway, if we wish to blame anyone it must be that Baptist preacher.

Several readers have written expressing their surprise at the *Daily Herald* giving publicity to a letter from a Mr. T. R. Dale, which repeats the old story, that when dying Thomas Paine said "I would give worlds if I had them, that *The Age of Reason* had never been published." We had imagined that this particular Christian lie was quite dead, but with a religion such as Christianity one can never be quite sure. Mr. Dale cites as his authority *Great Thoughts from Master Minds*. It should have been entitled "Master Thoughts from Christian Liars." But, perhaps, "Thoughts from Christians" would have been sufficient. The rest would have been taken for granted.

Don't hedge a child round with rules, advises a nursery expert. Observance of this advise must mean depriving the child of first-class Christian education. For the Christian religion has an abundance of rules, fearsomely introduced with "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not," as well as many auxiliary regulations invented by the narrow intelligence of bigots, prudes, and kill-joys.



## National Secular Society.

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

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

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

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

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—A. Diver, 5s.

W. H. PERSHOUSE.—We have read your letter with considerable interest. Shall be writing on the subject soon.

L. HAMMOND.—We hope it was not altogether a waste of time, and we cannot pick our opponents. A man of first-rate intellect is not to-day likely to be in the Church, and if such a thing should happen he is not likely to engage in public discussion. A man who has intelligence enough to put up a really able defence of religious beliefs, usually has intelligence enough to realize that he has no case good enough to stand the test of public dispute.

S. GERAUT.—The "God" that Professor Julian Huxley posits is just a trifle more absurd than the God he displaces. But it is an unfortunate habit of some people where religion is concerned, that if they get rid of the absurdity they must get another one to put in its place. Professor Huxley's lecture was a very good one, nevertheless, and we intend dealing with it at length in a week or two. It is a pity that it was not more thorough in analysis and expression.

W. L. DRIVER.—Sorry we received your letter too late to be of use in last week's issue. You did well in raising a protest against the Rule of the Sabbatarian, even though it had no immediate effect. But it is always well to let the rabid Sabbatarians know that there are others in the world.

H. KERR.—Pleased you so much enjoyed the Queen's Hall Meeting. We are too busy just now with other things, but as soon as we can find time we may write a special series of articles dealing with Spiritualism. It is one of the great illusions of to-day.

J. DAVIDSON.—Sorry, but we cannot place the quotation you send.

R. YOUNG.—Symbolical of an early phase of religion, but not an expression of origin. Thanks for sending it on.

W. STEVENSON (Melbourne).—More power to your elbow in protesting against the censorship as exercised in Australia. The censorship everywhere is a more or less hideous thing, and the less decent minded men and women have to do with it the better.

S. L. WILSON.—The only time Mr. Cohen will be lecturing in London this side of the New Year will be on November 23, in the Town Hall, Stratford. We quite agree with your other point. But the better educated type of Spiritualist, like the better educated type of Christian, naturally fights shy of debate with one who understands *his* case as well as his own. The most interesting and the most amusing thing about the scientific men who have "examined," is the persistent manner in which they have looked in the wrong direction. See reply to H. Kerr.

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.

## Sugar Plums.

There was another crowded hall for the third of Mr. Cohen's course of lectures in the Transport Hall, Liverpool. Mr. Egerton Stafford occupied the chair, as before. To-day (October 26) Mr. Cohen delivers the concluding lecture of the series on "The Coming of Man." The lecture will probably be more controversial to a Freethinking audience than the others have been.

This really ought to have appeared last week. Mr. T. Griffiths, in enclosing £2 for the Endowment Trust, writes:—

Enclosed you will please find my further donation of two pounds, towards the "Freethinker Endowment Trust."

I wonder would it be wise, or otherwise, to publish the full amount to hand. I am anxious to know how near we are to the £10,000 aimed at.

I have a genuine admiration for the *Freethinker* and staff. I promise a further donation at Christmas. For the benefit of Mr. Griffiths, and others, we reply here instead of privately. When the Fund was formally closed, over the stipulated £8,000 had been raised in the phenomenal—so far as the Freethought movement is concerned—period of two years. But less than £8,000 was available for investment, as about £700 had been taken from the subscriptions—as was publicly stated—to make good the customary annual Sustentation Fund. This was done because it was thought inadvisable to run two funds at the same time, and all subscribers were informed each year of exactly how much would be taken from their subscriptions to make good this Fund, leaving the rest available for investment, of which only the income would be used. The Estimated income of £400 has not, therefore been actually available, but we have managed to keep going.

It was in view of these circumstances that the Trustees intimated they would like to see the Fund raised to £10,000, but very little towards this has been done. No special appeal has been made, beyond the advertisement that the Trust is still open for the receipt of subscriptions, including legacies. Several of the largest subscribers to the Trust have intimated their willingness to subscribe again if others would "chip" in, but Mr. Cohen did not think the opportunity ripe for such an effort. Next year we celebrate the jubilee of the *Freethinker*. In May, 1931 the paper will then have been in existence for fifty years, and that may be a fitting occasion to test the good will of Freethinkers towards the oldest Freethought paper in Europe, and the only organ of militant Freethought in this country. Meanwhile we carry on, in the hopes of being able, when we retire from the field, to leave the paper in a more secure position than any Freethought paper has ever been.



That will be a splendid monument to our memory, and the only one we desire.

The *Empire News* of October 12 publishes an article by J. M. Holland, whoever he may be, which is a plain incitement to Christians to raid the bookshop attached to the Secular Hall, Leicester. Mr. Holland writes on behalf of "the moral and spiritual health of Leicester" concerning the display made in the window. There is actually displayed a quotation from Aldous Huxley, "God is a sensation in the pit of the stomach, hypnotized," another from Rabelais, "When kneeling to the priest keep your hands in your pockets," and—"Jesus is always on the side of no war when no war is about," "Ignorance, not Mary is the mother of God." Mr. Holland kindly points out for the guidance of the people of Leicester, that there are towns where the exhibition of such things "would lead to the place being wrecked within an hour." Doubtless, but Leicester is not one of the towns where religious bigotry and ignorance has such a strong hold, so it is not likely to happen.

With great fear and trembling we put the question to Mr. Holland, but what about God? What is he doing? There was a time when he attended to this branch of the business himself, and sent an earthquake, or fire from heaven, or struck such wicked people dead, or blind, or dumb. What has happened to him? After all the advertising is primarily his business. And if he does nothing why on earth should Mr. Holland get so excited about it?

South London Freethinkers are reminded that Free-thought lectures are held every Sunday evening at the Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road, at 7.15. The speaker this evening, October 26, will be Miss Stella Browne. The local Branch has arranged an interesting syllabus and deserves the support of the local saints.

The Birmingham Branch were unfortunate in starting their Winter Session on Hospital Sunday, the one Sunday in the Year when all Cinemas are allowed to open. But in spite of this there was a very good audience, and Mr. R. H. Rosetti's lecture was very well received. A number of questions were put.

A novel development in the relations between an author and his readers has occurred in the case of the Welsh essayist, Dan Griffiths, and his little book, *Human Nature* (The C. W. Daniel Company, 2s. 6d. net). The publishers inform the correspondents who criticize or even question the Determinist thesis of the book that "the author is prepared to debate the subject publicly anywhere in Britain." This is a bold challenge to those who hold the opposing Freewill view of life.

### The Blinded Linnet.

LINNET, singing sweetly  
In your tiny cage,  
Heart you fill completely—  
Dreams of foliage;  
Yet the while I listen  
To your glad refrain,  
How mine eyelids glisten  
At your pain!

Summer skies are blue, sweet;  
Sun's a ball of gold;  
On each rose the dew, sweet,  
All now may behold.  
This for you means sorrow;  
Masterhands unkind  
Slew your bright to-morrow—  
You are blind!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Quitsha, Nigeria.

## A Short Essay on Civilization.

(Concluded from page 652.)

So much, then, for some of the more obvious features of what we call civilization. The most terrible part of everything, however, is this: that not content with making an inferno of the centres of civilization so that longevity bestowed on us by one science is being taken away again by others, we are allowing the centres to spread at such a rate that it truly seems as if it can only be a matter of time before the whole of an area like England will be one vast city.

This is no idle nightmare.

I am not passionately fond of motor cars, although they are convenient on occasions, and give a fleeting glimpse of countryside to many who otherwise would be reduced to counting the blades of grass in their gardens, and now that they have wider opportunities, prefer to count telegraph poles (as many to the minute as possible). Nevertheless, I recently permitted myself to accept an invitation to go motoring, and needless to say had the satisfaction of once more confirming my opinion that an express train is a vastly preferable mode of conveyance for a journey of any length. As I am not pig-headed, I will admit that the drive gave me real enjoyment. But it filled me with a fierce longing for the throbbing companionship of fields and lanes and the smell of damp grass beneath trees instead of the hectic pleasures of a flying panorama and the faint odour of leather and petrol that always pervades a motor car.

As a matter of strict fact, I went for three drives, and on each occasion I was frankly appalled by the distance that it is necessary to travel from London before reaching unspoiled countryside. In all directions the metropolis spreads and goes on spreading. Places which, from earlier recollections, I had considered to be quite "in the country" are now little better than suburbs, connected with town by a fast and frequent service of electric trains and motor buses.

I passed one place where we used to live some fifteen years ago, when it stood on the very edge of the town. I did not realize that it was so long since we were there, until I actually thought about it, although fifteen years is a short period in the life of a city. I suppose that our presence there at that time was the thin end of the wedge, because when I looked for the field with the stream running through it, where I used to go and catch tadpoles, I found only a piece of half-converted building land, bordering on a parade of shops. And a hundred yards further on, where I noticed something familiar in a twist of the road, I suddenly remembered a lane along which I was once taken for a ride in a pony-trap. But the lane has disappeared, and in its place is a select avenue with only room for a garage between the desirable residences.

And if I ask myself: "What is going to be done about it?" the answer, without a doubt, is "Nothing!" So I might just as well not worry about it any more. But for my own amusement at least, I can consider what ought to be done.

Firstly, then, what are the principal material evils of our civilization? I put the question in this way because, if anything ever were going to be done about it, the problem would have to be framed in such a manner that it at once formed a popular appeal, since only propositions which do this are favoured with the attention of current politics.

Let us begin with the time-worn favourites—unemployment, housing, the high cost of living or the low scale of wages—whichever way one chooses to



look at it, although since just now it is prices that have risen and not wages that have fallen, the former is, strictly speaking, correct. These, which, broadly considered, all come under the heading of Poverty, will do for the moment.

Now the cause of unemployment is that there is not enough work for the number of people who want it, and the cause of the housing problem is that there are not enough houses for the number of people who want them. The high cost of living is due, we are told, to the high cost of production, which in its turn is due to the high cost of materials, which is due to the high wages that have to be paid. This shows that we were altogether wrong when we imagined that wages were low. On the contrary, it proves that wages are high, and will be a source of great satisfaction to those who are unable to purchase as much with their money as formerly. Indeed, it leads to the conclusion that the only safe, and perhaps the only truthful, view to take is simply that the value of money has fallen, and then one can blame either wages or the cost of living according to one's mood at any given moment. For the purpose of this little argument, however, I wish to assume that the cause of low wages is the same as that of unemployment, namely, that the demand for labour is not as great as the supply.

The steps taken by successive governments to counteract these evils have been to create more work and to build more houses, some, by a stroke of super-genius, discovering that they could do both in one operation.

But if anyone trying to solve these questions were to consider the point of view that there are too many people for the amount of work, and too many people for the number of houses, instead of too little work and too few houses, there would only remain the single problem of reducing the number of people. As a theoretical method, this is certainly quite logical, and under present conditions, extremely sensible. Properly undertaken, it ought to be comparatively easy to put into practice.

At a recent political meeting, the speaker was asked for his views on the question of limiting the population. Several people in the audience tittered; some blushed and looked uncomfortable. The speaker missed the point of the question altogether, and replied that in his opinion the matter was one for the woman who would have to take the consequences to decide, at which there were more titters and more blushes. The answer was a very right and sensible one as far as it went, but I thought at the time that its reception typified the general attitude towards a vital question. Only afterwards, when it occurred to me that those who blushed were blushing to hear the titters, and that those who tittered were tittering to see the blushes, did I realize that of course this could not be so. However, the questioner did not trouble to point out the misunderstanding, and the speaker proceeded to discuss solutions for the problems of unemployment.

I wonder how many of our social evils are not rooted in overpopulation. Few indeed. And I think, that, to a certain extent, governments have realized it too. Their attempts at emigration show this. But emigration, even when carried out on a sufficiently large scale, is only transferring surplus humanity from crowded regions to those sparsely populated, where in time history will repeat itself. In this way, civilization extends laterally in a material sense and not vertically in a moral. And I hate to think that before long there may be no part of the earth's surface which will not have felt the influence of man's presence.

Some very interesting information on this subject is contained in *Whittaker's Almanack*, which quotes various figures relating to population and the growth of population, and then in a footnote adds that according to estimates, the maximum number of inhabitants which the earth can support "will be reached about A.D. 2100, at the present rate of increase."

This is surely rather an appalling thing, and I cannot imagine how such a fact, stated in a publication so widely read and respected, can have failed to create something approaching consternation. But no one seems to be in the least perturbed. Perhaps nobody has read that page, or if they have, they probably refuse to believe it (always very comforting) and stifle any stray misgivings by repeating, "What has posterity done for me?" Or do they think that nature will find a way, and that something will happen to prevent the fateful time from arriving? I sincerely hope that something will happen, but unless we ourselves act, the hope will not be realized, because it seems as if matters have now reached such a stage that they have been taken out of nature's hands, and nature, who has never before been called upon to deal with such a situation, will simply continue functioning in the same way as hitherto.

Birth control, therefore, is indispensable to the well-being of the race. It will solve, or assist in solving, all these problems arising from overpopulation, including, let me here remark, that of vast empires, acquired and maintained, so those who are ashamed of their lust for possession inform us, in order to absorb the products, animal, vegetable and mineral, of an overburdened motherland. There ought to be no need in the beginning to enforce it by law when propaganda and publicity (of which there has been a certain amount lately) could obtain fairly satisfactory results, and when one can see that among intelligent people it is already practised. But unfortunately many still appear to regard birth control as a sort of joke, and treat it much as they would any other slightly improper joke that had happened to stray into the drawing room. A little more publicity would probably do much to dispel these misapprehensions, but I have no doubt that if birth control were ever seriously contemplated, propaganda would be found inadequate, and state action (international state action, of course) would ultimately be unavoidable. The reason for this is that the most prolific classes are impervious to persuasion, since nature has rather unwisely decreed that they should be the least intelligent. But it follows that they will automatically cease to be most numerous when, because of their stupidity, compulsory measures are introduced.

I will not now enter into a discussion with myself on the advantages and disadvantages of birth control, because I consider that the vital urgency of limiting the population completely sweeps aside whatever disadvantages there may be, and the discussion, therefore, would be rather one-sided. But, without wishing to appear unduly morbid, I see only one way, other than by control of the population, in which we shall escape the time when the earth will be surfeited with humanity. It is possible, of course, that we may not escape, but if we do, it will simply be because long before then the conditions of life will have become so intolerable that no one will beget children who can possibly prevent it. Birth control will have introduced itself, but too late.

Or can it be that war is nature's method of limiting the population? Or, as someone has suggested to me, disease? Knowing what we do of nature, both seem possible.



Sometimes when I am writing, I find that my thoughts have carried me away, so that I suddenly discover myself going in a wrong direction. And I have been thinking of late that perhaps something similar has happened to civilization; that somewhere in its onward march civilization has taken a wrong turning.

. . . . Where, I will not pretend to know, nor is it easy to imagine what things would be like had they developed differently. We cannot now (as I can) go back and find the place where we deviated from the path, although it is possible, but most improbable, that we may work down to it again in the course of time.

What the future will bring depends upon ourselves. The question is not "What has posterity done for us?" but "What will posterity do because of us?" Until now modern civilization has been allowed to evolve itself. In the last hundred years or so, the process has become more rapid because we have suddenly grown so ingenious and clever. But our intelligence has not kept pace with our cleverness. At the moment, intelligence is a long way behind, and so cleverness has got rather out of hand. When we understand this and when our intelligences rules our cleverness, we shall make what we will of life. Otherwise, civilization will continue to evolve itself, and then there really will be a nasty mess.

One word more.

I realize that while writing this essay, my outlook has been somewhat restricted because it has been bounded both in the past and in the future by the period commonly known as "history." This is the obvious limitation imposed by my subject, and I am glad that it has kept its hold upon me as I have thus been able to consider "history" as the beginning and the end, without being troubled by the recollection of certain elementary metaphysical facts, which, like a conjuror, can make objects of all shapes and sizes appear and disappear with truly startling suddenness.

GEOFFREY SIHERMAN.

### Graft.

THE minds of the citizens of New York are very much upset at the present moment by the allegations concerning the buying and selling of judicial offices. The people know that such a practice leads to dirty administration and, naturally, they are fearful of the consequences. Of all corrupt practices, that of bribery is one of the most difficult to discover and to counteract.

In England, all things go by face value. The idea of any extraneous influence is repugnant to the mind of the general body. That is what we are always told. It is in the United States alone that positions are bought and traded in terms of the Almighty Dollar.

In England we have no Almighty Pound. The wealthy man stands no better chance of the lucrative position than the pauper—such things are of no account. In England we have but one qualification for earthly wealth and well being. That is—wait a moment for you are in too much of a hurry with your talk of "merit." How dare you! I did not mention the word, and it must have been your evil mind which led you to think such an awful thing.

I must say, dear reader, that you are lucky in that you do not live in Rome. Had you used that word there, Musso and Pius would have contrived together to damn you—not only spiritually but bodily as well.

But I was dealing with England, wasn't I? And we have no Pope, have we? Only a couple of Archbishops, a few moderators (no one can discover who or what they moderate) and sundry other elders whose set purpose it is to rule the lives of their fellows, either directly or through the medium of some thousands of black-garbed satellites.

Has something gone wrong? I started off to show that

England was different from all the rest in the making of appointments, and I appear to have lost myself up a side alley. But perhaps that alley is a short cut to a newer main road. Let us see.

We deprecate "Graft," the use of money bribes if foreign to our ideas. Instead, when we settle in a new job or open a new shop, we have a look round to see which religious sect is the strongest. Arrived at the result, we join that church and become devout members of it—for what result? Just to reach Heaven, brother, only that! But, incidentally, the process of reaching Heaven allows us to leave a few more "dibs" behind for our progeny to spend in their efforts to get to Hell inasmuch as our efforts are so strongly supported by the rest of the congregation.

Mrs. A. gets her groceries from Mr. B. because "He carries the bag so beautifully in church, my dear," and Mr. C.'s bakery flourishes in view of his voice in prayer being heard above that of every other member of the flock—such a "good man." The candidate for the road sweeper's job who attends church every Sunday, gets the full support of the vicar in preference to the better sweeper who utilizes Sunday for the digging up of his garden. Mr. Blank, the auctioneer and valuer, gets all the sales and probate jobs in which the members of his church may be interested, and so it goes on. The Crown has got to profess and the lesser lights are expected to do so or else stand a far smaller chance of the jobs or business available.

There is no "Graft" in England, is there? No Almighty Dollar, no Almighty Pound, but just an Almighty God, who needs just as many dollars and pounds as his devotees can get together—and of those there is no reckoning. "Almighty God" is a business-promoting and job-getting trade, which also shows a good profit for the directors. The better the results to the customers of the trade, the more they are inclined to hand over to the sources of introduction. *There is no Graft in England—aboveboard.*

A PLAIN MAN.

### Disaster and Morality.

IN addition to the London and Provincial Daily Press that is so largely responsible for peoples opinions and ideas, there is also the weekly County Press that has a considerable influence over the minds of the rural population. Of this class the *Essex County Chronicle* has occupied for over a century and a half a very respected and honourable position. The editor is very just to all correspondents and allows the expression of more Free-thought views than many other journals will, giving all sides a fair innings. A regular and distinctive feature of the *Essex Chronicle* is two columns under the title of "A News Miscellany," by Mr. W. H. Creasy. Here every topical subject is passed under review and commented on. Mr. Creasy reveals himself as being widely read, very liberal in his views and opinions with a considerable knowledge of literature and history combined with good taste and judgment. A very perplexed reader deeply shocked at the fearful disaster to RIOR has written to Mr. Creasy for sweetness and light, to ask him how such appalling events can be reconciled with an over ruling providence. He thinks, and no doubt quite rightly, that there must be many others whose minds are equally agitated and who are in doubt and troubled. And to restore their tranquility of mind to revive their belief and trust in the divine guidance of natural events Mr. Creasy devotes considerable space to a consideration of the question. What effect it will have on other readers I do not know. For myself I find its logic and reasoning altogether too feeble to be in the least convincing.

Mr. Creasy tunes himself in with his readers by warning them not to make the mistake that "J. S. Mill dwells on his System of Logic" of seeing their own human personal qualities in the universe. He will also assume they have got beyond the primitive stage of supposing that there is any connexion between our immoral actions and natural catastrophes. God does not make a scapegoat of some as a terrible warning to all. Mr. Creasy pertinently reminds us pain is ever present, and



death ever near and inevitable. Great disasters are only an enlargement of what is common and perpetual. Admitting all this, is there any reason to think that the universe is rational, or that it is entirely devoid of object and purpose? Mr. Creasy frankly confesses he cannot bring himself to agree with Prof. Julian Huxley that the universe seems to have an "appalling meaninglessness." For, says Mr. Creasy, consider the order and method everywhere so apparent. To merely rule out moral considerations and think only of intellectual ones is a stupendous proposition. It is useless to stumble over the difficulties of belief, without considering the alternative difficulties. From this it is apparent Mr. Creasy, notwithstanding the wholesome warning from J. S. Mill, has not entirely freed himself from primitive habits of thought. Doubtless an unfortunate consequence of a religious environment. To consider or look at the universe purely intellectually, that is, without any intrusion of bias of preconceived opinion or sentiment, in that utterly unemotional completely impartial way in which a judge tries a criminal, considering the facts and seeing and admitting the conclusions implied in them, must inevitably convince us that the universe can have no concern with man's welfare or ultimate happiness; that it has only for him an "appalling meaninglessness" in this respect. The "order" everywhere so apparent is change, an inherent eternal energy ever transforming itself and repeating its changes. It is impossible to think of it, for the same things must produce the same results. If they did not, they would not be the same. It is the elemental principle of identity in difference. Every change, every cause and effect is complete in itself and its end. What other ultimate end or purpose could there be? This year's fruit is last year's leaves, all the little rivers run into the sea, and so on eternally. The fallacy here is, the universe always "is" not going to be.

We shall better understand this if we can conceive of ourselves as able to live without any memory or knowledge of past or future, it would then be always "now" with us, and we should not look ahead and imagine things to be different. What end can an infinite universe move on to if it is all and everything? It can only transform itself. In a preceding half-column Mr. Creasy discusses the causes of the disaster, and says an inquiry is to be held by a committee of experts. The probable finding will be, according to informed opinion, that the weight of water from heavy rain and a very strong gale forced it down on to the hill. Assuming this to be so, it explains what further moral significance is there in these facts. Had this shocking disaster not occurred, the moral issue would not have emerged. It did happen, the moral issue has emerged because the builders of Airship Rior did not know when it was built what the accident has taught them since. The issue is not a moral one at all but one of ignorance or inexperience, the fact of a committee of inquiry implies that. If it were not possible to find out the causes of the mishap, and to derive valuable knowledge from it, what use would it be to hold it? Wind, rain, water and neither moral nor immoral, they are non-moral. Nor is it possible to prove that a conscious control and direction of them is anywhere to be discovered or necessary.

In view of these obvious facts what Mr. Creasy says further is of "appalling meaninglessness" "It is at this point that Christianity emerges from the Julian Huxley view, it is much less concerned with ritual and creed, and historical evidence, than in preserving in the human heart the confidence that life in some way. That life for all its mystery is not meaningless. The belief that cause and effect in some way express an intelligent scheme is one that has not been proved scientifically, but which is an assumption like the reality of the outside world can hardly be avoided. And to many unbiassed minds it will always seem morally necessary." I think it must be such a passage as this George Elliott must have had in mind when with that acute feminine criticism, she speaks of a characteristic Englishman who likes nothing in extreme, and particularly an "undefined Christianity that opposes itself to nothing in particular."

M. BARNARD.

The greatest truths are the simplest: so are the greatest men.—Anon.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### A RATIONALIST SCHOOL.

SIR,—Permit me to invite readers of the *Freethinker* who are interested either in the education of their own or other people's sons, to write to me for particulars of the opening of a boarding and day school for boys on Public School lines, where the teaching of religion will be conspicuous by its absence. The house and beautiful grounds are selected, and being within easy distance of town, it is hoped that many day pupils will be entered by parents objecting to the forcing of religion instruction upon their sons. A lower, middle and upper school is proposed, and on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope full particulars of the proposed idea, scholarships, etc., will be forwarded.

GEOFFREY KIMBER.

### THE BIGGEST GAMBLING CONCERN ON EARTH.

SIR,—Out here, in Catholic Canada, we are oh so religious. You don't know what "religion" is in England. We get the real stuff here. In this one province alone there are over 700 towns or villages named after saints, from St. Achille to St. Zotique, and including thirteen different St. Joseph's! One of the "sights" of Montreal is the Shrine of St. Joseph (No 4) reached by enormously long flights of stone steps, up which you can see the pilgrims crawling *on their knees*, even in the winter time, with deep snow all around. Why there is one Sunday set apart for the "blessing" of our motor-cars! It doesn't seem to prevent a huge weekly death roll—but I should be regarded as an extremely wicked person if I gave expression to such a thought publicly. And we feel that gambling is dreadfully wicked too. Although "hold-ups" in broad daylight are becoming almost a common occurrence, our police spend quite a bit of their time raiding "gambling hells." Last week they seized and destroyed over 100 "nickel in the slot" machines in Montreal alone. Of course we draw the line at the "Church," which has "drawings" for all sorts of objects, with prizes valued at thousands of dollars. Naturally the tickets for these big prizes are beyond the reach of many of our purses—we have plenty of slums in Montreal and thousands of very poor folk. So we provide a "flutter" for the very poorest (and incidentally, of course, another goldmine for the Church) as thus. In all the Catholic Churches there are shrines with life-size images of local or popular "saints." At the side of the image stands a moneybox with two slots, one marked "offering," and the other "request"—one for the cash and the other for the "slip," with your "fancy" written on it. Your chances are supposed to be better at certain very famous shrines, and "Our Lady of the Cape" is held to be pretty nearly a "cert."

But half the fun of winning lies in letting other folks know of your luck. So a list of the lucky ones is published every month (charge per insertion, 1s.). In this month's list of over 150 "winners" there are lots of items like these:—

- 1/- for the good birth of my baby.
- 3/- for my son to pass his school exam.
- 2/- for the healing of my bad leg.
- 4/- for my husband to find work.

By far the most of these gamblers are women. Of course if you buttonhole one of them on the QT, and ask if she has drawn a winner lately you get a slightly rueful "No, suppose it was not considered good for me." But if you talk till you are hoarse you will never convince one of them that an "answer" is not entirely the result of the "prayer," and wholly due to the special influence of "Our Lady" with the authorities. In fact, it is much safer to keep a quiet tongue in your head. A Canadian who spoke disrespectfully of the famous "Virgin" about a year ago was promptly locked up in the Prison Asylum, and lies there still, although five well known Montreal doctors have certified that he is perfectly sane. Such is the loving kindness of our "religion."

QUEBECOIS,



## Society News.

## WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

LAST Sunday evening Mr. Robert Arch delivered at Conway Hall the second of the series of lectures arranged by the West London Branch. The hall was full, several being unable to obtain seats. In dealing with the subject of "Freethought, Old and New," the lecturer contrasted the task before Secularists fifty years ago with the task before them to-day. Three parts of what the older generation of Freethinkers had worked and fought for had now been won. No educated man to-day believed in the Genesis account of creation and the fall—always excepting, of course, members of the Roman Catholic Church. Such questions, again, as the historically of Jesus Christ were of interest to scholars, and the pro's and con's of Materialism might form the subject of a debate of considerable interest to students of metaphysics. But such questions had little direct bearing on the real task before present-day Freethinkers, who should concentrate on social and economic reform, and emphasize the bearing of Secularism upon it. He showed that the much-lauded ethics of the New Testament, once declared to be the last word in the moral code, had broken down before the problems of a modern progressive community and had been obliged to adopt, as far as it could, ideas which Freethinkers had held and disseminated for several decades. In particular, to-day we find even a section of the clergy advocating birth control and the reform of the marriage laws. At the conclusion of his address, Mr. Arch was confronted by a host of questions, which, in turn, were followed by a very interesting discussion.—A.D.M.

## Miscellaneous Advertisements.

**S.O.S.** WILL B. J. (Islington)—last seen in the correspondence columns of the *Daily Mirror*, write at once to R. H., 19 Prospero Road, N.19, as some of his conclusions are seriously ill.

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## 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. (Rushcroft Road, Brixton): Wednesday, October 29, at 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Friday, October 31, at Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine; Every Wednesday at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Ward and C. Tuson; 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, Mr. Alexander F. Dawn—"The Dangers of Obedience."

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (The Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, October 29, at 7.45—Debate, "Would Socialism Restrict Liberty?" *Affir.*: Mr. A. Eager; *Neg.*: Mr. G. Head.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"The Medievalism of To-day."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road): 7.15, Miss Stella Browne—"An Answer to Lambeth."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Debate—"That Capitalism is 'Two-Class Society.'" *Affir.*: Mrs. B. Taylor; *Neg.*: Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square): 7.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour (Chairman R.P.A.)—"Stands the Universe Where it Did?"

## COUNTRY.

## INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (National Union of Textile Workers Room, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.0, Councillor Ernest Fox—"Bradford City Council: A Criticism."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Club Rooms, Front Street): 7.0, Mr. T. Brown—"Footprints of Early Man." Chairman, Mr. F. Price. Friends and members please note

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Soul in the Making." All welcome.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—At 6.30, Mr. Hugh MacMillan—"Poverty—Its Cause and Cure." Ramble from Millerston Car Terminus, meet at 11.0 a.m.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Joseph McCabe—"Fifty Years of Secularism."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): Sunday, October 26, at 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Coming of Man" (The final lecture of the course on "Man and God.") Doors open at 6.30. Reserved seats one shilling. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.0, Members meeting.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, Forbes Place): 7.0, Dr. Mrs. Madeline Archibald—"Some Social Aspects of Venereal Diseases." The usual Branch meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 29, at 7.30, in the same hall.



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