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Views and Opinions.

Science and Religion.

CONSIDERABLE notice has been taken of Professor Julian Huxley's lecture on "Science, Religion and Human Nature." I am not surprised at this because there are many good things in it apart from the points I have selected for criticism. Moreover, Prof. Huxley bears a well known name in the scientific world, and newspapers count the value of a man's utterance according to the position he holds, and thinks nothing of asking a professional footballer what is his opinion of Relativity. I am quite sure that if the Prince of Wales were stupid enough to express himself on that subject he would impress thousands with the importance of what he said. Finally, in his lecture Professor Huxley did not damn all religion, but only certain forms of it, and that is a very safe thing to do nowadays. Actually he made a plea for a new religion, though why the devil we should have a new religion, and what the devil we are going to do with it no one knows. Still he is not like the wicked Atheist who takes away an absurdity without giving you another absurdity to put in its place. Professor Huxley leaves the world with an absurdity which is at least as ridiculous as the one he displaces. And that is in the true line of popular reform.

Professor Julian Huxley is a grandson of the great Thomas Henry Huxley, and it is in no way surprising to find him regarding with affectionate admiration the work of his grandsire. But when this admiration is offered to the general public some critical judgment should be exercised. For instance, in the opening of his lecture he says that on looking up the controversies between science and religion, which took place at the close of the nineteenth century, in which the protagonists were men like Gladstone and his grandfather, he was surprised to find out how

dead were these discussions about the Mosaic account of creation, and whether the whale really swallowed Jonah. "These controversies killed the pretensions of orthodoxy as dead as mutton, and it is no longer possible for the fight to take place on the same ground."

Family affection is a fine thing, but when the necessary knowledge is lacking to give an ancestor his right place in the development of thought it is apt to appear ridiculous. If Professor Julian were acquainted with the history of Freethought in this country he would know that the particular subjects on which T. H. Huxley and Gladstone debated had been, in educated liberal circles dead for some years. He would also know, and so might have given the credit where it was due, that these beliefs had been killed, not so much by highly placed men, as by a succession of men and women, who for nearly a hundred years had been fighting the massed forces of religious superstition and social snobbery. The view of the Bible that Gladstone was defending was then repudiated by numbers of the advanced clergy. Huxley was putting forward, in his fine style, criticisms which had been for years the daily topics of Freethinking street corner speakers, and the subject matter of popular Freethought pamphlets for at least thirty or forty years. In educated Freethinking circles it was a matter for amusement to see a man in Huxley's position a late convert to these aspects of elementary Freethinking propaganda, and Freethinkers were able to congratulate themselves on having so modified the intellectual atmosphere that it was possible for men in Huxley's position to speak from the platform they had provided. Professor Julian really should pay some attention to the historical development of Freethought before he again speaks on this subject.

* * *

Huxley and Conway.

There is one other subject on which a preliminary word of comment may be said. Professor Julian Huxley was delivering the Conway Memorial lecture, and in referring to Moncure D. Conway, he said:—

From the testimony of his writings and of those who knew him, it seems he was of different temperament from Thomas Huxley, his colleague in the work of liberating the religious spirit. He could not escape the intellectual climate of his age, nor the theological difficulties which the dead hand of orthodoxy forced on all those who endeavoured to think for themselves. But his main preoccupations were less intellectual than ethical and practical.

I only met Conway twice, but I listened to him several times, had some correspondence with him just before his death, and had a great respect for his character and his work. And the antithesis between intellectual and ethical or practical is not merely

false in itself, but is quite untrue with regard to Conway. When Conway freed the slaves he had inherited from his father—about his only inheritance—he was not more ethical than intellectual, he was only showing that he had enough moral strength to carry his intellectual convictions into operation. And that intellectual strength was characteristic. When he saw that religious education should be banished from the State schools he said so; it was left for T. H. Huxley quite gratuitously to provide Christian defenders with a foolish plea for its retention. When he saw a wrong was done, or a right denied, he was prompt in speaking out in unmistakable manner, as in the case of the prosecution of the *Freethinker*, and the imprisonment of G. W. Foote. When he found himself a Freethinker he called himself such without looking round for some "rationalizing" term as Huxley did when he found himself without a God, and invented the wholly irrelevant word "Agnostic" to cloak his Atheism. Conway never paltered with himself or his convictions. He had a wholesome dislike for half-terms and ambiguous meanings. He had not the pugnacity of T. H. Huxley, and did not take the same pleasure in a fight, but in carrying his intellectual convictions into practice and in saying a word of cheer to "forlorn causes" he was Huxley's superior.

Fighting Windmill.

The need for Professor Huxley paying some little attention to the history of Freethought before engaging in the ancient game of teaching his grandmothers to suck eggs is shown by the following:—

Another . . . danger comes from the complacently destructive attitude of many representatives of Rationalist thought. They, it seems, have not realized that the real battle has moved elsewhere, and continue to fight with the camp-followers of the other side as if it were the main army. Half a century ago destruction was the prime necessity, the false claims of authority and inspirationalism had to be broken down before the free spirit of religion could emerge. But now, though much minor destruction is still necessary, the prime need is construction.

I do not like the term "rationalist thought," because it is ambiguous, misleading, and inapplicable to the religious controversy. The distinction between a Roman Catholic Archbishop attributing an earthquake to God's displeasure with short skirts, and the explanation which Professor Huxley would give is not that between reason and non-reason, but the difference between logical and illogical reasoning. Words actually are instruments of thought, and if our thinking is to be fruitful we really must pay some attention to the language we use. Neither do I intend dwelling upon the farcical distinction between destructive and constructive work. All destructive work is of necessity constructive, since all destruction of false teaching must move along the lines of establishing some measure of positive teaching. What I wish to stress is the absurdity of the statement that Freethinkers are unaware that the battle has "moved elsewhere," and that the attack is still solely against positions that were held fifty years ago. In the case of some Christian clergymen I should be inclined to put it down to deliberate mis-statement. In the case of Professor Huxley, I can be charitable and put it down to sheer ignorance of the situation.

I say this because the facts are so clearly to the contrary. I assume that Professor Huxley does not read the *Freethinker* which, inasmuch as it is the only accredited organ of militant Freethought in this country, he really ought to read if he wishes to speak with any authority. And I defy him to take

any volume of the *Freethinker* for the last thirty years without finding it following the advocates of religion in all their twistings and turnings through the worlds of science, philosophy, ethics, and sociology. To assume that Freethinkers, after they had made it possible for T. H. Huxley publicly to attack the story of the Gardarene swine, or to criticize the creation story of Genesis, stopped their advance is simply laughable to one who knows anything of what Freethought has actually done. The world of Freethought has not stood still from Huxley to Huxley.

* * *

A Daniel Come to Judgment.

What the up-to-date Freethinker, the kind that is akin in spirit to Moncure Conway, has done is to proclaim that the new forms of theology are the old ones disguised, and that religious teachings are still being used to perpetuate the same old social and intellectual evils. He declines to say to the enemy that if he will only spell God in a different way he will believe in him, and if he will call his church by a different name he will cease to attack it. It is not names, but things that he is fighting. It is not phrases but ideas that the Freethinker is out to destroy. Moreover, the cruder forms of religion are still held by multitudes of people who send their representatives to Parliament, whose hold is still upon the schools of the nation, and who can still prevent the press from giving publicity to news that does make a genuine attack upon religious ideas. If Professor Huxley only knew what Freethought propaganda meant, he might recognize that the old criticism is still necessary, even though it has to be supplemented by something else. He would also be aware that both lines of development have been in existence ever since the days of Richard Carlile. Let him read the *Freethinker* and he will soon realize the truth of what has been said.

Perhaps he does occasionally realize this, for a few pages after giving the assurance that the beliefs against which Freethinkers once warred against are quite dead, he awakens to the discovery that these dead things show considerable vitality, and rightly remarks:—

The truth of the matter is that so long as the outworn ideas continue to stand uncorrected, implicit in all that is most sacred and essential in the Christian creed and liturgy, so long must liberal Christian theologians endure being told that they are trying the impossible game of having their cake and eating it. The creeds, the words of every book of the Bible, the very fact of petitionary prayer, the language of any and every hymnal—all implicitly, or more usually explicitly, assert a belief in a personal God, a God who can survey from the outside the world he has made, who controls its normal workings, and can miraculously interfere with them, who listens to prayer and may grant its petitions, who can be pleased and wrathful, who can purpose and plan, who deliberately sent his son into this world to save sinners.

and he remarks that within a few years we have had a South African Heresy trial and a Dayton Evolution trial—forty years after his grandfather had killed the ideas for which these things stand, and which Freethinkers are wrong in wasting their time over! So that in the end it would seem that the ideas against which Freethinkers have fought and are fighting are not quite so dead as they might have been. Their death has been exaggerated. All that Professor Julian Huxley really proves is that certain religious beliefs are dead for all those who no longer believe them to be alive, but are still alive for vast

numbers who do not know they are dead. I can assure Professor Huxley that I agree with him in these profound observations.

All of which appears to show that Professor Huxley is in an admirable state of mind to excogitate a new religion, which I do not think is quite so original as he appears to believe. With that I will deal next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Friendly Fitzgerald.

"That same gentle spirit from whose pen
Large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow."

Spenser.

"Who loveth not his brother at his side,
How can he love a dim dream deified?"

James Thomson.

EDWARD FITZGERALD, a great English writer, died in 1883, almost unknown. Only a few people had even heard his name. The public had little chance of hearing it, for he was so shy that he took more pains to avoid fame than many do to seek it. He wrote about remote subjects, which appealed only to cultured readers. When his friend, Tennyson, dedicated *Tiresias* to Fitzgerald, the tribute seemed the outcome of friendship. The reader discounted the praise of that:—

"Golden Eastern lay,
Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well."

To-day Fitzgerald's version of Omar Khayyam is probably read as much as any verse except that of Shakespeare. It is quoted in leading articles, it crops up in novels, and it has been set to music. If a man is known by his friends, the world has small need of a formal introduction to Fitzgerald. He was a man of many and notable friendships. At school he made acquaintance with Spedding, the Baconian critic, and at Cambridge University with Thackeray. The years which followed united him to Tennyson, Carlyle, Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, Lawrence, the painter, and others.

Fitzgerald's biographer, like the immortal knife-grinder, has no story to tell. He was born at Bredfield, near Woodbridge, in 1809, the same year as Darwin and Tennyson. He was educated at Bury St. Edmunds, and afterwards at Cambridge. He followed no profession after taking his degree. Till 1853 he lived mainly in a thatched cottage at Boulge, near Woodbridge, close to his brother's residence, Boulge Hall. He was in lodgings in Woodbridge from 1860 to 1874, when he settled in a house of his own outside the town. He remained there till his death, at the age of seventy-four, in June, 1883. He is buried in Boulge Churchyard, and a rose, transplanted from the tomb of old Omar Khayyam, has been planted over his grave.

Fitzgerald lived the life of a recluse in Suffolk, on the North Sea coast. His friend, Carlyle, saw in it all "a peaceable, affectionate, ultra-modest man," and "an innocent, *far niente* life." Like Shelley, he had a great fondness for the sea, and a deep affection for fishermen and sailors. One old Viking, the hero-fisherman of Lowestoft, whom we know as "Posh," he numbered among his friends. Fitzgerald characteristically considered "Posh" a greater man than either Thackeray or Tennyson, because he was not self-conscious. The Viking succumbed to an undue devotion to Bacchus, but that did not trouble Fitzgerald, for he was no harsh judge of human frailties. Curiously, the man who gave us Omar's *Rubaiyat*, that rhapsody of wine, woman, and song,

was very abstemious. He was a vegetarian, and he nearly killed Tennyson by persuading him to adopt the simple life for a few weeks.

With one exception, Fitzgerald's books were all published anonymously. Four editions of his masterpiece, *Omar Khayyam*, appeared before his death, the first appearing in the year of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, without raising a ripple on the waters of contemporary literature.

Owing to his living in the country, Fitzgerald devoted much time to his correspondence, and he proved himself one of the best English letter-writers. His friends, be it remembered, were men of outstanding ability, and the companion of such giants must have possessed extraordinary qualities. When a man is loved by other men of his own intellectual stature, and of a wholly different type, we may be certain of his worth. Men do not like another man simply because he is a genius, least of all when they happen to be geniuses themselves. Fitzgerald corresponded with a circle of geniuses for nearly half a century.

Fitzgerald's letters are most charming and piquant reading on account of their literary heresies. His taste was all for ancient books, old friends, familiar jests, and well-known places. He loved the great writers, Cervantes and Scott, Montaigne and M^{de}. de Sevigne, she herself a lover of old Montaigne, and with a spice of his Freethought and speech in her. He loved also that old Persian, Omar, and that other old-world Freethinker, Lucretius. London had no attraction for him, chiefly because it hid Nature. Like Thoreau, Fitzgerald knew the life that suited him, and had the wisdom to refuse to be turned aside from it.

If any justification were needed, his version of Omar's *Rose-of-the-hundred-and-one Petals* would be enough. The charm of that wonderful poem is that it voices the scepticism at the back of all thoughtful men's minds, and makes music of it. What a translation of Omar was Fitzgerald's "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," said Tennyson. In truth, the translation is admitted to be finer than the original, and in this resembles the Authorized Version of the Christian New Testament, which, as Swinburne reminds us, is translated from "canine Greek" into "divine English."

In his version of the *Rubaiyat*, Fitzgerald showed himself a consummate artist. The magnificent opening is not Omar at all, but pure, unadulterated Fitzgerald; and again and again throughout the poem the master hand is revealed. In one of the later verses, for example, by the addition of two words Fitzgerald has turned a commonplace into the quintessence of blasphemy:—

O Thou, who man of baser earth didst make,
And even with paradise devise the snake,
For all the sin wherewith the face of man
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and take.

In particular, Fitzgerald voices Secularism:—

"Oh threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!
One thing, at least, is certain—This life flies
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;
The flower that once has blown for ever dies."

Lamentation, just as in *Æschylus*, or Marcus Aurelius, or the Book of Job, is apparent in the poem, and it is allied to "linked sweetness, long drawn out":—

"Yet ah! that spring should vanish with the rose,
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close;
The nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence and whither flower again—who knows?"

Fitzgerald points out the folly of prayer in verse of passionate bitterness:—

"And that inverted bowl they call the sky,
Whereunder crawling, cooped, we live and die;
Lift not your hands to it for help, for it
As impotently rolls as you and I."

Like Lucretius, the old-world Freethinker, Fitzgerald introduces argument into his poetry, and with the same startling effect. Noting how contradictory is theology, he thunders:—

"What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted pleasure, under pain
Of everlasting penalties if broke!
What! from his helpless creatures be repaid
Pure gold for what he lent him, dross alloyed—
Sue for a debt he never did contract,
And cannot answer—oh, the sorry trade!"

"A sense of tears in human things" breaks out in the following beautiful lines:—

"Ah, Love, could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire;
Would we not shatter it to bits, and then
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire."

The simple truth is that Fitzgerald created a great English poem, comparable to Gray's *Elegy*, out of material that he found in the pages of that old Persian Omar. By this masterpiece, wrought in the spacious leisure of a dilettante life, Fitzgerald made an imperishable name for himself, and his reputation is secure on the lengthy headroll of English literature.

Eight centuries separate Omar Khayyam and Edward Fitzgerald, but both poets were Freethinkers. One attacked Mohammedanism, and the other opposed the Christian Superstition, but each, in his way, symbolized the eternal quest of mankind which will one day make all things new, and will change the face of the earth. In that day superstition will be transformed into the religion of Humanity, and both Christianity and Islamism will be as remote as when the Star of Ormuzd burned out in the unquiet skies.

MIMNERMUS.

A Fight for Freethought.

PROFESSOR J. L. MORISON, Professor of History at the Armstrong College, Newcastle, has resigned from the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society. The reason given is—"It is the beginning of a fight for Decency and Purity, it is not a storm in a teacup and I will go to the last ditch. My demand is that the list of lectures shall be cancelled at once."

Prof. Morison objects to the plays and writings of the late D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, and Aldous Huxley, and the latter is the Author of *Do What You Will*. Readers of the *Freethinker* will have in mind the recent article I contributed under the title of, *The Life Worshipers' Creed*. I have not read any of the works of Lawrence or Joyce, but I read, *Do As You Will* from beginning to end, and I must confess I found in it nothing indecent. It contained much that denoted a fevered outburst of prejudice, thus contradicting the author's creed which might fairly be expressed: "Every man has as much right to a philosophy of life as he has to a liver."

It is certain no real Freethinker will deny this, but there is some excuse for those who say: "Keep your liver to yourself, I won't have its stench thrust under my nostrils." No one is obliged to witness a play or read a book by any of these authors, and Prof. Morison is not compelled to remain a member of a Society which desires to introduce their works into its winter programme; and in resigning, he is exercising a freedom he is rightly entitled to. But if in doing so he seeks to rob others of the freedom they are entitled to, he is guilty of attempting to scotch free thought.

The incident raises the whole question of the relation between individuals and society. No doubt Prof. Morison feels himself the champion of society, but the fact of society arises from man's nature, and its form has no universal sanction. It is out of man's reason that laws for prescribing this or that course of conduct take their rise, but unless they have the natural laws to support them they have no claim to authority.

It is frequently urged by Christian Apologists that the honour of the abolition of slavery belongs to Christianity, but it can easily be shown that an anti-slavery sentiment had been inculcated by the great orators and philosophers of the pagans, and it is not impossible to show that the Church not only did nothing to oppose slavery but actually encouraged it. The Popes issued edicts of slavery against whole towns and provinces, e.g., Boniface (VIII)—Clement (V)—Sixtus (IV)—Julius (II).

There had grown up in Rome a privilege which lasted some years, of allowing a slave who took refuge on the Capitol to become free. *This was abolished by Paul III in 1548.*

In *Studies in European History*, page 75, we find: "A theological sanction was discovered for the existence of slavery, and it was declared a Christian institution, since original sin had deprived man of any right to freedom.

Therefore the teaching of Jesus was no new sentiment in respect to slavery. He, like the pagans who preceded him, was turning towards the recognition of the rights of those whose poverty and accident of birth subjected them to those more fortunate. In fact one must infer that Jesus held the opinion that no society was possible which did not contain "the poor"—in spite of all the claims of Christian Socialists who preach equality.

Religion was at one time presented as being divinely revealed, and under this myth arose those social upheavals which centred round the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings.

Science, however, has floored this, and shown religion to be naturalistic.

It was Spinoza who wrote: "Freedom of thought within the State is the prime condition of its health."

As Hooker concluded: "There are two foundations which build up Society—one—A National Inclination, whereby all men desire sociable life and fellowship—and the other—an order expressly or secretly agreed upon touching the manner of their union in living together."

Again, as Hobbes asserted: "Right or Wrong are what Society make them. The Natural Law and the moral law do not exist outside Society."

Now it is perfectly obvious that the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society is *not* Society, and if it feels disposed to adopt the Natural Law as an individual, it is for Society to say what it thinks about it.

But Society, to be effective, must turn to its representative, the State, and as in the case of the Blasphemy Laws, it must make use of the Law before any action can be taken to restrict the freedom of Philosophical and Literary Societies in conducting their own affairs.

We may broadcast Political and Religious Propaganda, but we must not utter Blasphemy, because Society has allowed its freedom to be taken away by those who pose as the custodians of man's bodily and spiritual welfare.

When Spinoza demanded Freethought and wrote, "When men think one thing and speak another, the loyalty which is the very basis of State is destroyed"—what happened? The book containing it was confiscated and burned, and its sale and further printing

officially prohibited. His teaching was declared evil and blasphemous.

Though nearly 300 years have passed since then, the blasphemy laws have not been repealed.

The *Theological—Political Treatise* of Spinoza (the only original work of his published in his lifetime) was written in order to demonstrate that Society could not exist without freedom. His *Political Treatise* (unfinished owing to his death) attempted to show how settled government could be prevented from becoming a tyranny—a *danger still threatening society*.

The Doctrine of Divine Right of Kings is being transferred to Politicians, and we content ourselves by calling this Democracy.

It is a sorry state of affairs when slaves point to their fetters and call them bracelets—when public opinion is but a name for an irresponsible Press and a Public Censor.

The Lectures of a Society are not forced upon Society, and no one is compelled to attend; and if the lectures at Newcastle are sparsely attended, it will be no criterion of what Society (that is the Law) thinks about the writings of Lawrence, Joyce and A. Huxley.

CULLWICK PERRINS.

The Golden Age of Arabian Enlightenment.

THE intellectual light of later antiquity faded rapidly into darkness with the death of Galen and his few contemporaries who were seriously interested in science. The rise and progress of the Christian religion; misgovernment, internal strife, and the constant encroachments of barbarous races, all conspired to accelerate the decline and ultimate downfall of Imperial Rome.

Amid all the turbulence and devastation that characterized the barbarian invasion of Italy, the province of Gaul preserved for a time some remnants of the culture of Pagan Rome. But with the widespread misery that succeeded the barbarian conquest, many of the more refined inhabitants fled by sea from Western Gaul. These emigrants sought shelter in Ireland, which appears to have been a peaceful if uncivilized land. In that isolated country the classical tradition was maintained, and it is asserted that throughout the sixth and seventh centuries of our era Ireland continued the centre of a culture inherited from the classic world.

Although the Western Empire had been ruined and degraded, the Eastern or Byzantine State, with Constantinople as its capital city, survived under autocratic secular rulers and the Greek form of the Christian faith. There, some attempt was made to treasure the science and letters of earlier days, but beyond this no advance occurred. This feeble apology for the great Imperial State formerly centred in Rome, persisted more or less ingloriously until the Turkish triumph in the fifteenth century.

In the seventh century, an Oriental religion had arisen in Arabia, and made remarkable progress not only in the land of its birth, but in many countries that owed allegiance to the cult of Christ. Babylon, Persia, Syria, and Egypt were rapidly overcome by the Moslem Caliphs. The vast and important territories of Northern Africa were later annexed by the victorious Moslems, and Spain itself was destined to become the seat of a brilliant if ephemeral Moorish civilization.

Unpolished as the desert-dwellers were, they showed themselves highly susceptible to the charms of culture. Unlike the uncouth Galileans, the Moslems who settled in invaded lands betrayed little an-

tagonism towards the native institutions. So long as the subject peoples paid the taxes imposed by the new governors, their traditional customs were rarely violated. The leisured official classes gradually became interested in forms of culture superior in many respects to their own. They proved themselves sympathetic observers, and soon appreciated the pleasures of the intellectual life.

The strict letter of the law, as laid down by the Prophet in the Koran, that the Moslem Bible is the be all and end all of human knowledge would, if truly applied, paralyze all progress. But as the Saracens and Arabians became more settled and civilized, the plain meaning of the sacred text was ingeniously evaded. Some of the more pious and obscurantist princes strove to enforce the Prophet's command. Yet, under the wise and tolerant Free-thinking Caliphs, a liberty of thought, utterance, and inquiry obtained in Moorish Spain and other Moslem communities that was completely absent throughout the neighbouring Catholic world.

In these circumstances, the Moors rendered priceless services to science and humanity in preserving ancient manuscripts that might otherwise have been lost or destroyed.

Still it was wise to be wary, and to stave off suspicion of heresy or Atheism much of the work of Arabian investigators assumed the form of commentaries on the writings of Aristotle, Galen, and other earlier philosophers. Some of the most daring speculations were disguised in this manner, and suffered in consequence from the disadvantages inherent in a system which inevitably depended on the mere verification and amplification of ancient pioneers of science.

Even so, despite the danger of the arresting hand of orthodox religion, important advances were made in medical science. Anatomy, however, showed little progress as the Koran firmly forbade the dissection of the human body. Chemical pharmacy was practically created by the Arabians, and the researches incidental to *materia medica* and pharmacy stimulated inquiries in the realms of botany and chemistry. Pains-taking students, the Arabs laid permanent foundations for future developments in chemical science. Indeed, it may be said that the experimental method was first consistently pursued by the Moslems.

For three centuries—the eighth to the eleventh—a rich intellectual harvest was reaped. The study of philosophy prevailed in Alexandria, Cordova, Bokhara, Bagdad, and other cities. In the exact sciences the Arabs made great strides, and their contributions to astronomy were considerable. The Indian numerals, that are commonly termed Arabic, were introduced into Europe under Moslem auspices, and permanently displaced the cumbersome Roman system of notation previously employed, although we still retain these numerals in our watches and clocks, and they linger in the date of publication of many modern books.

The Arabs also developed algebra as an applied science. As in the vain search for the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone the old alchemists unconsciously promoted the growth of chemistry, so the astrologers in their attempts to divine the mysteries of the stars were expanding human knowledge of the orbs of heaven. For now the science of the stars was eagerly studied in the famous Moorish colleges, and splendid observatories were erected in Cordova and Bagdad. Alhazen studied and described the science of optics, and the *Almagest* attributed to Ptolemy was translated into Arabic in the opening years of the ninth century.

Aristotle was venerated by the few Arabian philosophers, who were attracted to the natural history

sciences. To them the great Greek was the supreme master. Among Arabian thinkers, two men tower, above all others, as biological pioneers. These were the far-famed philosophers, Avicenna and Averroes.

Avicenna was a native of Bokhara, where he was born of Persian ancestry in 980 A.D. At that time, the land of the inimitable Omar Khayyam was distinguished by a superior standard of culture. In fact the intellectual altitude of Persia at this period has been justly compared with that of educated Italy at the flowering season of the Renaissance.

Professionally a physician, Avicenna was also eminent as an astronomer, mathematician, poet, and sage. A philosopher who keenly appreciated and pursued the pleasures of life, his worldly fortunes suffered many changes. At one stage a power in the courts of princes, at another a disgraced and fallen minister, Avicenna found full scope for meditation on "the instability of human greatness, and the uncertain tenure of great men's favour."

Perhaps the more valuable of his many writings is his *Canon of Medicine*. This treatise, second only to Galen's, constituted the chief authority of the time. From the philosophical standpoint, Avicenna is fundamentally Aristotelean in outlook, but the later neo-Platonic mystics also tinge his thoughts. He discerns purpose in Nature, and shares in some of the fallacies of Galen. As a physiologist, however, he strikes a more independent note, and utilizes the advantages conferred by the current progress in physics and chemistry. His contemporary fame in the East, however, and his subsequent celebrity in the West were less due to his solid additions to science, than to his masterly arrangement of his material and his superb style of composition.

The second and the greater naturalist of the Arabian culture was the majestic Averroes. The son of a legal luminary, he first saw the light in Cordova in 1126. For several centuries Cordova was the intellectual centre of Moorish Spain. There Averroes occupied an exalted official position, but he found time for deep studies in medicine, jurisprudence, and philosophy.

During the closing years of the twelfth century Moslem orthodoxy recovered much of its lost ground. In company with men of character and intellect, all down the ages, Averroes was defamed and persecuted as a dangerous innovator. Under the reign of a reactionary sovereign he was deprived of his honours and emoluments, imprisoned, and afterwards banished. But unjust princes are not immortal, and when this ruler died, his more enlightened successor promptly restored Averroes to his former rank. Death, however, soon laid his icy hand on the wronged philosopher's brow.

Averroes was a Freethinker in the best sense of that term. His strict adherence to Aristotle appears more in form than in substance, for he evolved an independent line of thought, and departed more completely from the accepted tradition than any of his predecessors or contemporaries. It is true that his teaching was based on the sounder side of Aristotle's doctrine, but he developed the concept of evolution on more modern lines.

Averroes proclaims the existence of a Universal Reason, apart from the thinking faculties of the individual man. He denied the doctrine of personal immortality, and declared that reason and not blind faith is man's passport to divine philosophy. And by interpreting the Koran in terms of Aristotle's teachings, he founded a Moslem metaphysic of theology, which has given rise to many later heresies and sects.

Avicenna, Averroes and others, through their com-

mentaries on Pagan authors, assisted Christian Europe towards a comprehension and appreciation of a classic civilization whose very existence had faded into a shadowy tradition. And when the brief reign of Arabian science had ended the Western World had made sufficient progress to utilize the heritage handed onward by the Moors.

T. F. PALMER.

God in Contemporary Philosophy

(Concluded from page 677.)

WE are conscious of no partiality in these selections, except that the "Theism" of Gentile and Alexander is of so shadowy a character that we doubt whether any Theist would wish to claim them. Perhaps, on the Atheist side, Parker has not made an important move, but then neither has Hocking, Haldane or Rashdall, and let us bear in mind that Webb is, and Rashdall was, paid to support Theism. The forces of Theism and Atheism in present-day philosophy are about equally divided, and the consistent Christian Bible-Theism is nowhere. Taking them in the mass, these philosophers are fairly intelligent men, and in the realm of philosophy Atheism is not only holding its own, but growing. As we descend the scale Theism begins to preponderate. Go to the popular novelists, and you will find that many believe in a God. Walpole believes in one even though his belief is proved false. And at the level of "Jimmy's" public and the Salvation Army, the Atheistic forces are—let us hope—at zero.

We have one or two comments to offer before closing:—

(1) What will be the fate of all these "dummy" Gods? History will show us.

Where is Wundt's World-Will to-day? Where is Green's Spiritual Principle? Where is the Universal Consciousness (Rogers); The Mediator (Geulinx); the Mirror-in-which-we-see-externality (Malebranche); the élan vital God (Bergson's concession to his Christian friends)? They are gone.

And the good old Christian Jehovah survives the lot.

(2) We now return to the question raised in our introduction. To know *whether* God exists and ask *what* he is, or to know what he is and ask whether he exists—which is the more profitable method of approach?

We cannot see that a verdict of Atheism can be escaped either way. If we start by accepting the term God we can fix on its definition so as to leave no room for discussion. "God," then, is a survival of primitive theory, now proven erroneous, and remains a subjective idea without objective reality. This saves the laborious and unnecessary task of dealing with every "God" that the Theist cares to advance.

On the other hand, if we wait for the Theists to announce their Gods, there will be roughly four distinct categories of treatment, viz:—

(a) If God is Good-will (Dotterer), or Natural Law (Ziehen) or the Universe (Huxley, Maeterlinck, Millikan, etc., etc), or Substance (Einstein, etc.) God does exist. But a term has been misused.

(b) If God is Absolute Cause (Deism), or Immanent Transcendality (Ward), or Omnipotent Omnibenevolence (Christianity) God does not exist, any more than a triangular circle, for the terms are contradictory.

(c) If God is Jehovah, or Allah, or Zeus, or Am^{on} Ra, etc., etc., God's existence is mythical.

(d) If God is a being tucked away somewhere in the Universe with a mind so extraordinarily developed and powerful that he stands out conspicuously above all other mental beings, God *might* exist, but there is no evidence for supposing so, nor does it follow that he is interested in this earth, and to worship such a fantastic possibility is about the limit in stupidity. And again, a term has been misused.

(3) Since modern Theists almost unanimously reject the classical arguments their opponents, it would seem, require no longer to lean on Kant and Hume.

The only consistent Theist is he who declares Reason invalid, and accepts some revelation in its entirety.

(4) The Gods of the Theists are mutually contradictory.

On one point they appear to be all agreed. The traditional God must be profoundly changed. That much is quite certain. But in the manner of the changing there is much argument. In Idealist circles God is a popular outcast whom everybody wishes to adopt.

God is the dying invalid whom his parent, Religion, can do nothing to improve. This is most disconcerting, for God is the breadwinner of the priest.

However, a horde of doctors are soon on the spot in the form of philosophers. "Ah!" they say, "he needs an operation. Hand him over to us."

The patient is duly handed over, but here a new difficulty arises. Each doctor suggests a different operation—it all depends on the particular bee the doctor has in his particular bonnet.

Dr. Pringle-Pattison takes away his Transcendality. Then Dr. Schiller relieves him of his Omniscience. Dr. Rashdall follows, and says, his Immanence is destroying his goodness; let it be removed. But Dr. Hobhouse discerns the root of the trouble; it is his Omnipotence, so off with it. That still leaves his Individuality, but Dr. Alexander comes along, and God is no longer individual.

Finally, the Atheist doctor has his say in the matter. "This invalid," says he, "would be better dead. Let me put him out of his misery. Where is he? . . . Oh, I see you've done the job for me."

(5) Atheists should on no account consider their case established *because* modern philosophers are embracing the belief. *Atheism is true whether Professor So-and-So believes it or not.* It is not the views of this or that man that count; it is their reasons for holding those views.

On the other hand, we should like to suggest, if we may, to Atheist lecturers in particular, that a double-barrelled argument is now at their command when authorities are thrown at them. "Authority does not count, but if it does, it's fifty-fifty."

(6) Finally, we may be challenged on our selection of topic.

The topic of Theism is important for one reason, stated in *Theism or Atheism* (Cohen): "It has become so entangled with notions of right and wrong that it is everywhere used as a buttress for institutions" inimical to social welfare.

Give us Secularism and Freethought and we won't waste another drop of ink on God.

G. H. TAYLOR.

Let the motive be in the deed and not in the event. Be not one whose motive for action is the hope of reward.—*Krishna.*

Necessity is the last and strongest weapon.—*Livy.*

Acid Drops.

We do not suppose that any intelligent person bothers in the least about the opinions of Sir Hall Caine on questions of science and philosophy, but he has a well-known name, and that is quite enough to cause the *News-Chronicle* to give a column on the front page expressing his opinion on Sir Arthur Keith's disbelief in a future life. It is astonishing what power over the unreflecting a well-known name has, whether the subject on which he is speaking is one that falls within his province or not. We are quite sure that the opinion of Einstein on baking apple dumplings would be taken as authoritative if he were foolish enough to give one. So Sir Hall Caine is given space in which to ventilate a string of commonplace stupidities that are hardly worthy of the morons who caper on an evangelistic platform.

But the main purpose of the article appears to be a very mean one, but quite Christian in its spirit. Sir Arthur Keith is a candidate for the Lord Rectorship of Aberdeen University. We presume he has not been asked to stand because he did not believe in future life, nor because he was expected to believe in it, but simply because he is an eminent scientific man, and the University will be honouring itself in electing him. But the Christian spirit of Sir Hall Caine comes out in all its historic purity and typical meanness when he suggests that Sir Arthur, because he does not believe in a future life is not a suitable person to represent a Scottish University.

Sir Hall Caine is an old man, and it is a pity that his age has not taught him to keep silence on such matters. But the assumption that a man ought not to occupy a public office because he does not agree with Sir Hall Caine's childish superstitions is a reminder that there is a lot of work yet for Freethinkers to do.

What is lacking in sense must be made up in sound. A performance at the Palace Theatre, Westcliff, was held up for five minutes owing to a preacher outside speaking through an amplifier. This announcement appears in the *News-Chronicle* in the same issue as the contribution of the Rev. H. Elvet Lewis M.A., and he informs his readers in the "Saturday Pulpit," that "the Spirit . . . is now surely working in fruitful silences to bring in the Kingdom of truth, of righteousness, of good-will, of peace."

As everybody, including the *News-Chronicle*, is down on the Vicar of Pelton, Durham, for his pronouncement of excommunication on three parishioners, we take up the cudgels on his behalf. The Vicar, as representative of a creed derived from our primitive ancestors, who perhaps knew no better, appears to be acting within his rights. According to Lecky, excommunication was a form of moral discipline. In the *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, page 3 and 4, the reader who regards newspapers and their views as a form of opera bouffe, will be able to find out for himself the devil of a time given to the heretic.

The Rev. M. Cotton Smith, vicar of Nettlesham (Lincs.), is to be congratulated on his common sense. Winds, trade depressions, and thimble-rigging—chiefly the latter, have brought about a state of idiotic affairs whereby apples are not worth picking and sending to market. The Vicar of Nettlesham has started a village market of his own, and is selling apples, that otherwise would rot, at a halfpenny a pound. We suggest that

his enterprise, small in its way, is of more practical value than a ton of sermons.

President Hoover has been incurring the displeasure of the National Catholic Welfare Council of America. The cause is to be found in his greeting sent to Lutherans in commemoration of Reformation Sunday. The American President mentioned in his message "the principle of the separation of Church and State." This has the touch of Thomas Paine; it approaches something like equity, and with the usual Catholic obtuseness a Father Burke, we are informed, protested in vigorous terms.

Viscount Brentford cannot see why it is easier for people to go to the cinema than churches. An oculist has an opportunity of selling his lordship a pair of spectacles.

In Mr. Graily Hewitt's book *Lettering*, Seeley, Service, 15s., the author enters a protest against misplaced lettering, announcing a trouser stretcher as an "Ideal Christmas Present." He could not see any connexion between this modern luxury and Bethlehem—neither can we.

It would be appropriate to say that the Vicar of Edmonton is taking a dog in the manger attitude towards greyhound racing that takes place near his church on Sunday mornings. The point of view of the vicar is no different from that of the Puritans who opposed bear-baiting.

A Sydney Magistrate, Mr. W. McMahon, says that it is distressing to note the number of lies told by people in court, who have called on God Almighty to witness that they are telling the truth. But is that really surprising? The original idea behind the "S'lp me Gawd" is the ordeal. It is believed that God will do something terrible to the man who tells a lie if he has been asked to witness that he is telling the truth. And while God struck men blind, or dead, or paralysed, things were different. But then God neglected his side of the business. He didn't seem to care a brass button whether people told a lie or spoke the truth. Nothing happened—except they sometimes rose to very high places in the Church—and quite naturally people ceased to be frightened by the mouthing of an oath. And as these people had been brought up Christians and could see nothing wrong in telling a lie, so long as you were not discovered and penalized for being found out, they went on lying quite cheerfully in the Christian method prescribed by the law courts.

The new President of China has turned Christian. That is great news for Christian Missions, who may be trusted to exploit the circumstances to its fullest. And now we may expect to see that China follows the glorious example of the Christian nations. It may enlarge its army, create a fighting navy, get in a good supply of poison gasses, a plentiful supply of big guns, and have military displays all over the country. In this way China will be brought up to date, as the Christian nations count progress. For every Christian nation in the world has looked with contempt on the Chinese methods of making war. Any Christian nation would have killed five times as many men as China has done in its recent wars, and in about one-tenth of the time.

It is always the case that when visitors from other countries visit us, officially, we delight in showing them what sort of war we are ready for. So it is in accord

with precedent that directly the overseas representatives came to England the Government should provide them with a military display on Salisbury Plain. With big guns firing and tanks carcering, and troops marching, we were able to show them all how well equipped we were to promote the cause of peace. There is nothing like showing the world we are in dead earnest when we talk of our hatred of militarism. And no one in this country wants any more wars—until we are better able to afford them than we are at present.

Workers for Snow Hill Congregational Church, Wolverhampton, visited 4,300 homes, leaving invitations to the church services. They discovered two things: (1) The definite way in which Roman Catholics announce their adherence to their faith, and (2) the utter lack of religious conviction among non-church-going people. From the last item, it would be quite in order to prophesy a revival of religion before long!

Writing about Christian education, the Rev. Ernest Braham says:—

Adult Christian education is part of our problem, but watch the Cradle Roll. When a new baby appears the Sunday school teacher should soon appear as well as the parson and gather round the bairn . . .

Since capturing the adult intelligence is nowadays far from easy, we quite appreciate the parson's anxiety concerning infants. With a creed like Christianity, it is imperative that some religious notions be forced into the infant mind before intelligence awakes. This is the only way of ensuring a future for the Church and the priests. We should be glad if some parson would explain why a baby-snatching creed and Church are undeserving of contempt.

Nottingham Methodists are on the alert. Two members for each chapel have been appointed to keep an eye on local administration "lest the people should glide into paganism." We know what that means. It means that so far as possible every kind of healthy enjoyment during at least one day in the week shall be prohibited, and if possible on others. It means besmurching everything that is natural and healthy with the uncleanness of Puritanism. Above all it means all the trickery, the dishonesty, the intolerance and the hypocrisy that always accompanies the intrusion of religion into public life.

The complaint of a reverend gent named Thomas Smith Cogwell, is that the Church has never provided him with a living wage. We assume he is complaining. But he may be rejoicing at his good luck. For, as the creed he expounds glorifies poverty, condemns the hoarding of wealth, and utters a warning to the rich, it is obvious that the nearer to poverty a preacher is, the more he becomes like unto Christ and the greater this certainty of reaching Heaven. Good luck of this kind ought to make any parson rejoice.

Mr. John Murray says: "I sometimes wonder whether the work of a publisher is litter or literature." Such an unnerving wonder never worries our Bible Societies and other religious publishers; otherwise they might be sorely tempted to curtail their distribution of so many tons spoilt paper. This aside, any critic without a pious prejudice will agree, we think, that that blessed combination the inspiration of God and the perspiration of the godly achieves much more litter than literature.

A Bill is before the Swiss National Council to compel the observance of Sunday as a day of rest.

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.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. THOMPSON.—You have our sympathy in your protests against the men who had not the decency to behave themselves during your meeting. In the long run such methods defeat those who use them. Hooliganism in a public meeting is one degree worse, and several degrees more cowardly than hooliganism in the streets.

OUR CONTRIBUTOR, Mr. C. H. Lea, writes that he is not the C. H. Lea mentioned in a recent issue of this paper as a writer on Christian Science. We can assure Mr. Lea that his writings are far too sane for anyone to think of the identity of the names as indicating anything more than a coincidence.

A. NETTLESHIP.—Sorry we are unable to use the manuscript sent.

F. G. JONES.—Your kindly rebuke is deserved and noted, we hope, with beneficial results.

A. H. SIMPSON.—We are never averse to an occasional article, assuming it to be suitably expressed on any subject of human interest.

F. HOBDAY.—We note your letter to the B.B.C., pointing out that you have relinquished your licence until such time as the B.B.C. ceases to monopolize so much of Sunday for exclusively religious services. We have heard of others taking a similar step.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 2) Mr. Cohen will lecture twice in the City Hall Saloon, Glasgow, at 11.30 and 6.30. His subject will be "How Man Found God." In the evening, "How Man Found Himself."

Owing to Mr. Cohen being at Glasgow the Paisley Branch will not be holding a meeting this evening (November 2). On Sunday next, November 9, Mr. G. Hale will lecture on "How Worlds are Made."

On Monday evening, November 17, Mr. Cohen will debate with Canon Elliot in the Co-operative Hall, Bridge Street, Bolton, on "Will Secularism Benefit Humanity?" Admission will be 1s. and 6d. The Proceeds of the debate are to be given to Bolton Infirmary. Tickets may be obtained from Mr. W. H. Sissons, 197 Eskrick Street, Bolton. Those who wish to attend from a distance should write for their tickets at once. It will probably be impossible to get them on the night of the debate as the hall, we hear, looks like being filled several times over.

The fourth and concluding lecture of the series that Mr. Cohen has been giving in Liverpool was brought to an end on Sunday last. The hall was again crowded, and the Liverpool Branch has thus made a capital start with its winter lectures. Meetings will be continued every week until April next, and the way the Branch is working should command the moral and financial support of all local members and friends. There are quite enough Freethinkers in Liverpool to supply the Branch with all it requires, financial and moral, and we hope to hear that what we are now saying has had its influence. Reference to our lecture notice column, week by week, will give all the information necessary.

The debate between the Rev. F. J. Gould and Mr. R. H. Rosetti, at Watford, provided an interesting evening. The audience was a good, and well behaved one. The Rev. F. J. Gould was a courteous opponent, but although he undertook the affirmative in "Is Christianity Consistent with the Laws of Evolution," his Christianity was not allowed out that evening. Mere statements, such as Classical Christianity, Universal Christianity had to suffice. A show of hands was taken at the end of the debate, and the chairman, Councillor Grieve, announced the vote in favour of Mr. Rosetti by a "considerable majority."

The Rationalist Press Annual for 1931 is now out (price 1s.) and is well up to its usual standard. Sir Arthur Keith opens with an article expressing his disbelief in immortality, but ends with the curiously inconsequential remark, "Sir Oliver (Lodge) believes we return to space when we die; I believe we return to dust. In this sense we both believe in immortality." Why will men like Sir Arthur Keith, whenever they say something sensible about religious beliefs, proceed to counteract it by saying something that is either silly or meaningless? Immortality means the persistence of personality or nothing. We are glad to see that Professor Laski, in his contribution, follows the lead of the *Freethinker* in asking for a militant Freethought. He calls it a "militant Rationalism," but anything that is really militant against religion has got to be Atheism, however much it may be disguised. But when Professor Laski speaks of the necessity for a *recovery* of the militant temper, we may remind him that it has never been lost. The position to-day is exactly what it has always been. There has always been a certain number of Freethinkers who have been genuinely militant, with others who were fearful of offending respectability and orthodoxy, and so found any number of excuses for not being militant. That is exactly the position to-day. But that does not call for a *recovery* of militancy, but

only for arousing it in the timid. We may also remind Professor Laski that militant Freethought did not end with Charles Bradlaugh, as he appears to think. Both the name and the spirit of Bradlaugh have always been kept alive by the National Secular Society. Bradlaugh had to fight the same fight when he was alive that we are fighting now. That fight still goes on.

Mr. Robert Arch has an article in the Annual that is of interest to militant Freethinkers. He writes on "The Old Rationalism and the New," which involves an historical inaccuracy as, so far as the Freethought attack on Christianity is concerned there is no *old* Rationalism. "Rationalism" in this connexion is quite a new thing. Mr. Arch thinks that the old criticism of the Bible has lost much of its point now that so much is accepted by Christians, and in this we are inclined to agree with him, although it is well to remember that it still has its use. He admits this, but says that the "agnosticism of the educated takes time to permeate the masses." To this we reply that we hope it never will permeate the masses, it has done mischief enough already. It is largely responsible for that invertebrate mentality against which Professor Laski rightly protests. And as Freethought permeates the masses we hope that it will give birth to a stronger mentality than that which delights in discovering all sorts of terms to hide its real unbelief.

Mr. Arch is, however, unconsciously humorous when he writes that in relation to some social questions "Rationalists" must become more militant. He says, that "If we are to appeal to the rising generation we must go into this fight with the gloves off." That is good, and looks like a call to battle. But we can hardly avoid a smile when we read that the two subjects on which we are to go for orthodoxy "hell-bent for leather," and damn the consequences, are reform of the marriage laws and birth control! The first of these is well on its way to victory in even the political world, and the battle for birth-control is practically won—even the clergy are preaching it. That battle was won by the fighting Atheists of the nineteenth century, from Francis Place to Charles Bradlaugh. When Bradlaugh and Besant had finished their fight the struggle was practically over. Little courage is required nowadays to advocate a doctrine that has been sanctioned by a Church Congress, and blessed by prominent politicians and clergymen of all denominations. If Mr. Arch is anxious to take off the gloves and experience the thrill of a real fight, we suggest that he should take up (1) a direct attack on the god-idea in all its forms, which will involve avowed Atheism, and (2) a direct attack on the Christian conception of morality, including that monstrous piece of humbuggery the ethically ideal Jesus. That will be quite enough to go on with, for he will find before he has gone very far that he will be attacking religion and religious interests all along the line. But Birth Control may now safely be left to such as are not inclined to take on the genuinely militant work. There are always plenty who will preach doctrines that are practically established; real pioneers concentrate on making the unpopular and financially unprofitable things sufficiently common for others to take up.

We are asked to state that the Metropolitan Secular Society, which has held its meetings in the Orange Tree Hotel, Euston Road, is at present, owing to circumstances beyond their control, without a meeting place. A new meeting place is being sought.

It is a curious paradox that precisely in proportion to our own intellectual weakness will be our credulity as to those mysterious powers assumed by others; and in those regions of darkness and ignorance where man cannot effect even those things that are within the power of man, there we shall ever find that a blind belief in facts that are far beyond those powers has taken the deepest roots in the minds of the deceived, and produced the richest harvest to the knavery of the deceiver.—*Colton.*

Is God A Noun ?

AMID the mutations in the modern religious world, we readily recognize the reason why the Churches in general are steadily becoming emptied of worshippers. The Altars of Jehovah are fast being forsaken for the fields and fresh air, and most youthful couples now repair on Sunday evenings to the Cinema in exchange for the stuffy pew.

This is as it should be, and we welcome the signs as indicative that the day is fast approaching when the majority of churches and conventicles will bear the interesting legend—"To Let"—

Freethought in the last decade has made giant strides, especially since Paine, Ingersoll and Foote; and victory after victory follows the flag of intellectual freedom in every part of the world—thanks to those fearless protagonists who sacrificed themselves in the task of storming the citadels of superstition, and mining the walls of mummery and magic. We rejoice in all these signs—we have the right to rejoice, for orthodox religion has been and yet is man's chief bar to progress and happiness here on this great cinder we call the earth. But when looking round at the various denominations to note where they stand facing the serried armies of Science, we mark with more than usual interest that of the recent organizations claiming to be religious in aim and outlook, the Ethical Churches have been among the first to feel the late Victorian debacle. Why is this, for we hoped that they would have helped in the struggle to free the mind of man from the chains and fetters of mystery-mongering? Yet, somehow they have ever funked the firing line. One by one they have gone into oblivion despite the fact that they held out such hopes of survival, and their platforms were manned by men of fervour and the highest intellectual attainments. The start was excellent though the aims were vague, the end was dismal and in some instances devastating. Is it because they projected into the skies a glorified Noun, and in the name of religion made a new mystery of "The Moral Ideal?" In any case they speedily extinguished themselves after much apeing of church ritual, and so passed away unhonoured; simply because they too dealt in abstractions and succumbed to the tyranny of words. Even the generous benefactions of rich devotees could not and cannot save them from disintegration, the one outstanding success is that of Adler in New York. Scarce a vestige now remains of the effort they initiated so proudly—even their journals have become pulp. We regret that such promise was so speedily exhausted; though the attempt was to gild the mumbo jumbo of orthodoxy, and the intention was good. Looking over the ruins we note that the effort was largely one where they sought to bridge the gulf between the fixed idea of orthodoxy—and the scientific dogmas of the post-Darwin period.

The bridge has now collapsed into the dark stream of indifference flowing below, and so they have gone their way along with all those who juggle with words and attempt to make new gods from the dictionary. We well remember some of these so-called churches, and sat among their early audiences; but the atmosphere was not conducive to elevation of the mind, nor did we get much stimulus for the grim business of being a human being. Addresses were delivered by able men, clad in some cases in the robes of priest and prelate, but we marked how soon they were lost in empty verbiage, and stultified their efforts by emphasizing the perpendicular pronoun. Where any church still survives, it is because it is more or less Freethinking in character and plainly rationalistic in outlook—despite the legend in bold gold letters hanging outside.

Analysing the causes of failure, so far as we can determine, their chief fault was undoubtedly the avowed egoism of their leaders—this we state frankly. Egoism may be forgiven in an ignorant Methodist local preacher—but is a first-class offence within the walls where men worship “The Moral Ideal”—whatever that may mean—for religion it is certainly not. These new Stoics were obviously born out of time, and could not fit into this fevered age when the laughter of the cynic is the measure of popular indifference to all churches in general and ethical churches especially. Veiled agnosticism, though wrapped up in nicely painted words, backed by organs, statues, and the ritual of orthodoxy, could not strike root in the Neo-Pagan soil of the twentieth century—which will grow the right thing, but not the product of the academy and the cloister. Here, however, the word religion need not be discussed, for who among us is agreed upon the content of that unhappy word—probably it means a hypothetical solution to a logical enigma. The ethical effort has now evaporated and become a part of the continuum of Space, never to come this way again—it has had its day.

The warning has gone forth—the gates are marked Ichabod—for Freethought demands freedom from the tinselled trappings of pseudo priests, and hymns based on the lightnings of Swinburne and the sweet pessimism of Omar—the world will not have it at any price.

True, some ethical exponents are to be found among the avowed Rationalists of to-day, but that link is forged out of sheer fear of being lost in the welter of words poured out by the Demosthenes of Birkbeck College, who lost his place among the minor prophets of Israel. The whole thing is a veritable Punch and Judy show. Yet, be that as it may, we now realize that any elaborate attempt to masquerade ethics (what are ethics?) in the guise of religion, is doomed when the obvious intent is to avoid the consequences of being labelled as a Freethinker. The whole sorry business consequently collapsed as was foreseen, and the demise of the ethical churches is almost complete.

Next, let us look at the Unitarians who approximate very closely to the ethical churches in character. They stand halfway between overthere and nowhere—a frigid and eclectic people who espouse either a dismal deism or grasp at the hem of an attenuated theism—what the difference may be heaven only knows. We have sat among their congregations and listened to torrents of words poured out by learned D.D.'s of Manchester University, and then quickly arrived at the conclusion that they were after all only mere Doctors of Delusions. True, they could preach or expound and were masters of Exegesis—but were they not announced in some cases as B.D.—having won that Hall Mark of learning and waded through the wisdom of God, called Theology which we Freethinkers regard as the anatomy or dry bones of religion—inert, lifeless and mummified. Their audiences were thin, and the collections amazingly thinner, yet again—they hold on by endowments a hundred years or more old—otherwise the churches would become Cinemas and the tiny audiences scattered among the New Thought Mountebanks, and Psychology Clubs, where “psychology” usually covers the attempt of ignoramuses to handle the complex problems of the sex equation. The spacious and peaceful days of the great Martineau are gone—Unitarianism reached its zenith then, and since, the lesser lights have failed to make progress, the reason being their studied aloofness and the fact that they could hardly claim to be Christian except in a vague Pauline sense—but were rather a mixture of Buddhism and Platonism—or similar hotch potch. Ed-

dington cannot save them and Einstein holds out no comfort for them—for they too have had their day and their yearly reports; Year-book, and the pages of *The Inquirer*—make sad reading. So far as we can discover, to be a Unitarian is to be a Nothingarian, for with them God is only an abstraction wrapped up in similar verbiage as that used in the lamented ethical churches. Salaries are better than in many of the orthodox churches—but congregations are tragically smaller and the work (if work there is) not so hard for the ministers as the slogging of a devoted Salvation Army Officer, whose conception of religion does express itself in good works of the social service order, rather than the cold frown of the Levite and Pharisee at sight of the bottom dog. So let them pass—on the other side, just as they please—who cares.

Of all the brands of so-called Christians—the Unitarian is the most puzzling—for examining their practice and outlook, they belong rather to the Old Testament than the New.

Jesus is to them mere man—a morbid Initiate. He is not even perfect man; indeed in some of their churches men wince at the sound of his name—though they delight in sermons on Shaw, and high brow homilies on the best seller.

When looking round their Book Room in Essex Street, we marvel at the products of their press—but what they really mean by religion—baffles us completely, for they are indefinite and skilful at word-mongering. They espouse philosophy and cling to a kind of Joadism rather than Judaism.

In the growing light of Science their fate is sealed—they too will pass along with the night of superstition peopled by fanatics and fakirs of every brand, and when they pass—we shall not miss them.

ROFFERY HOIT, D.C.L.

The Dialogues of Dimple and Dad

(3)—H . . . LL.

Scene: *The Rev. Veriwyse (Dad) is seated in an armchair, reading what looks like a Bible. He has a simple, kindly face which is clean-shaven, and his blunt nose is bridged, somewhat precariously, by a pair of pince-nez. His age is about forty-five years. On the floor, playing with a Noah's Ark, is his Benjamin (Dimple). To judge from the child's questions and answers, his age is anything between five and 500 years.*

Dimple: Dad—I've changed my mind 'bout Heaven.

Rev. V.: What do you mean, Dimple?

D.: I don't want to go there—'t any rate, not just at first.

V.: Well, of course you won't at first. I hope you'll first have a long and happy life.

D.: The same to you, Dad, and many of them.

V.: Ha-ha, ha-ha! You don't really mean “many of them,” Dimple. That's impossible. We shall only live once, you know; and then we shall all meet in the sweet by-and-bye.

D.: P'raps, Dad.

V.: What do you mean by “perhaps,” Dimple?

D.: Well, when my soul flies away out of me after my life has fled away out of me (like you said the other day)—I'm going to fly it away somewhere else first, before I go to Heaven—if I 'cide to go to Heaven at all. After all—there are other places to go to, aren't there, Dad?

V.: M'm—yes—perhaps. But anyhow, my dear child, it is not for you, but for God, to decide where your little soul should fly to.

D.: Yes, but you see, I and Him have 'scussed it all between us very frankly. And we fixed it up last night after I had finished with gentle Jesus.

V.: Te-hee! Hrrmph! (*To himself*: Dear, dear, I must really control my nerves.) Oh, really! And what do you fancy that you arranged, eh?

D.: Not fancy at all, Dad. Even if God doesn't talk to you, you can't prove that He doesn't to me—so there!

V.: (*To himself*: The dear little innocent! What a wonderful thing it is to have a childish imagination.) Well, what was it you arranged?

D.: I 'ranged to go first to the place you told that—that God-shaken Nationalist to go to on the phone.

V.: (*shocked*): Tut, tut! Now who is the inquisitive little Paul Pry that listens through keyholes, eh?

D.: (*cheerfully*) Me, Dad! Only one keyhole, though.

V.: It's very wrong of you, Dimple, you know. You shouldn't eavesdrop or pry into matters that don't concern you.

D.: But how was I to know it didn't concern me unless I listened? Anyhow, Dad, do you s'pose he'll go there?

V.: Who go where?

D.: That Godforshaken Naturalist to—

V.: Hush, Dimple! "Godless Rationalist," is what I said.

D.: That's the chap. And you told him to go to—

V.: Now, Dimple, that's quite enough.

D.: Why—what's the matter with Timbertoo, Dad?

V.: (*Heaving a sigh of great relief, mutters*: Timbuctoo! What a mercy! I shall really have to be more careful in future.) Oh! So that's where I told him to go to, is it?

D.: Yes, Dad, why? Did you think you told him to go to—

V.: (*Interrupting hastily and crossly*) Dimple! I shall be very annoyed if you persist in discussing things that don't concern you.

D.: You're not losing your temper, are you, Dad?

V.: (*irritably*) Of course I'm not.

D.: 'Cos you told me that little boys what losted their tempers wouldn't go to Heaven, you know. So you'd better be careful or you won't go there either.

V.: (*humbly*) As long as we trust in God's saving grace, Dimple, we have no need to fear.

D.: Very nice for us, Dad; but what about that Goddles Rasheralist?

V.: (*To himself*: Dear me, how persistent the child is.) God will deal with him according to his deserts.

D.: He's a very bad man, isn't he, Dad?

V.: Well—er—not perhaps bad, Dimple. But he's very irreligious.

D.: You mean he doesn't come to our church on Sundays and put threepence in the plate.

V.: He doesn't believe in God, Dimple. Isn't that dreadful!

D.: Oh, I don't know. Not so terribly awful. He might believe in the perspiration of souls, Dad. Then he'd turn into a bluebottle fly of a walloping big effluent when he died, wouldn't he.

V.: Ha-ha! Ha-ha! Ahem—hm! No, no, Dimple. The transmigration of souls is a preposterous conception.

D.: Oh, Dad! I thought it was such fun. If I didn't like Timbertoo, I was going to fly my soul into a Candy King. But if you say it's a prosperous deception, I shan't do it. Not much!

V.: That's just as well, Dimple. After all, one life per person is all that we have a right to expect—er, that is—one life on earth.

D.: If you don't believe in the admiration of souls, Dad, what about burglary?

V.: Burglary? What do you mean?

D.: Burglary, Dad—the place where naughty Roman Candlesticks go to if they don't go to—

V.: (*hastily*) Ah! You mean purgatory. A Romish fable, my boy. There's no reason whatever for believing in such a place.

D.: Then where does the terribly baddest souls go to, Dad?

V.: Well, Dimple, as far as we know, God has prepared a place for them where, doubtless—though we have no right to be dogmatic about it—h'm, h'm!—as I was saying, they will doubtless be dealt with justly, if not mercifully—er—what I mean is, we have to believe in something of the sort, Dimple, otherwise we would live for ever and ever in the same place as all the robbers and murderers and wicked people who—er—well, I mean, you wouldn't like that, would you, Dimple?

D.: What's it called, Dad?

V.: Mm—ahem—well, it isn't a nice word for anyone to say, my boy, and I would rather you didn't learn about it just yet. So, if I were you, I wouldn't bother your little noddle about it any more. You'll understand all these things when you're a little older.

The previous dialogues have shown how Dimple takes this oft-repeated evasion. When the slow smile, which spreads over his face on these occasions, gives place to a look of innocent vacuity, there are rocks ahead for the Rev. Veriwyse.

D.: Dad!

V.: Yes, Dimple.

D.: Do all good people go to Heaven?

V.: Yes, Dimple—that is to say, unless they had been told about God, and had deliberately refused to accept Him.

D.: So even if that goddles Rapturalist is a nawflly good man, he won't go to Heaven?

V.: Well, I think that is one of the things which we ought to leave to God to settle.

D.: Yes, I think we better had, 'cos I don't think He really cares very much one way or tother. Anyway, Dad, is Cuthbert the choir-boy a good people?

V.: He's a very well-behaved lad, Dimple; and since I confirmed him last Easter, he has been most regular in his attendances and devotions. Yes, I think one might safely call him a good person. But why do you ask?

D.: Because I don't want to be in Heaven with him.

V.: Oh! Why not?

D.: Because when I told him to go to Timbertoo, he smacked my—he smacked the back of my front.

V.: But you shouldn't have said that to him, Dimple.

D.: Why not? He said something much more frightfully awful first. He told me to go to—(*gulp and swallow*)—to go to—

At this critical juncture the dinner-bell rings, effectively drowning Dimple's final remark. The Rev. Veriwyse jumps up with alacrity and a loud clearing of his throat, and holds out a hand to his son.

V.: Now then, Dimple. There's the dinner-bell. Come along and wash your hands like a good boy.

D.: All right, Dad.

He picks up Mr. and Mrs. Noah and looks at them inquiringly. "When you're both dead—I wonder," is all he says, pulling them back into the Ark as far apart from each other as possible.

D.: Dad! I've thought of a place to rhyme with Bell.

V.: H'm—we can't start a game just now, Dimple.

D.: Please, Dad—just one guess.
 V.: (*racking his brains*) Oh—er—let's see—Dell.
 D.: Is there a place called Dell? I said a *place*, Dad.
 V.: (*testily*) Oh, I really don't know—er—er—Pall Mall, then.
 D.: (*gleefully*) Wrong again, Dad. Shall I tell you?
 V.: I don't want to play any more, Dimple.
 D.: All right then—it's—*Timbertoo!*

C. S. FRASER.

Towards the Greater Light.

WHILE I was busily engaged in selling the *Freethinker*, after the debate between our President and Mr. Barbanell, an elderly man approached me and whispered in a confidential tone, that he had read the *Freethinker* for a number of years and learned nothing, then he saw a Spiritualist paper and learned something from the first copy. I glanced at the man, it was a sufficient explanation. On the same evening I obtained a copy of a Spiritualist publication called *Beyond*, which was being distributed. I must admit that from that copy I began to learn things I did not know before. Of course, I already knew that spirits could sing, whistle, curse, and fling bricks about. I also knew there was a low type of spirit, sometimes impersonating the spirits of great men, and often getting away with it. But I always imagined everybody was happy in the spirit world. That the spirit world was a place where one ate fruit, smoked cigars, and smiled sweetly at everybody. On pages 140 and 141 I learn it is not so. Dr. Lascelles says in spirit land there are family quarrels, disputes over wills, and constant fighting between good and evil. How does Dr. Lascelles know? Well, he is a spirit doctor. That doesn't prove he knows. Well, he directs the Guild of Spiritual Healing, and he must know or he could not fill the job. Besides, after reading Dr. Lascelles, it is so clear that it must be as he says. Dr. Lascelles says, "When you pass out of your body you are just the same 'you' with all your faults." The reasoning is quite clear, so all the other follows.

From page 133 I am pleased to learn the Harmony Prayer Circles are doing some very effective work as the following extracts from recent reports will show:—

My health is still improving steadily. I am so much stronger in every way and sleeping well; nearly free from pain. No one would believe it possible for the terrible wound I had in my face to ever close, but now, thanks to God and to all your prayers, it is nearly closed. The doctors are amazed at my recovery.

He had a very bad operation and was going to be sent into hospital again for an open wound in the chest. After being put on the Harmony Prayer Circle he was so much better that he did not have to go into hospital and the wound has healed up. He does not know he is on the Harmony Prayer Circle.

You will notice the advantage of the Harmony Prayer Circles, is, one may obtain the benefits without being a member:—

I am very thankful to be able to report that during the last month I have begun to feel better. I no longer have the extreme weakness to contend with, and am walking with less difficulty. Having had Arthritis for thirteen years, one could not expect to be cured very quickly, but I am rejoicing in the fact that a start seems to have been made and I am progressing slowly. —(*Report after two months treatment*).

Please note the sting in the tail.

At the bottom of page 141 I am pulled up with a start. Someone has asked, Shall we see our pets again, and Dr. Lascelles replies, "Very often." He had seen many spirit dogs, but not any cats. How about chickens, Dr. Lascelles? I am getting worked up into a nervous state, because, during my life I have wrung the necks of about two dozen roosters. Their only offence was they were gentlemen birds. I could have forgiven them that, but they would not lay eggs. I gave them every chance, until they were suitable for the table, and then, only

then, did I wring their necks. I am now perturbed about the future. When I pass over, am I destined to be confronted by two dozen spirit roosters, with heads hanging limp on their spirit spines, voicing their protests, in cock spirit tones, at the vindictive treatment, and ignominious end to their mortal remains on the earth plane, at my hands?

R. H. ROSETTI.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

RELIGION IN THE SERVICES.

SIR,—A great deal has been published in the *Sunday Express* and kindred newspapers on "Religion in the Services," written mostly by religionists with no knowledge of the Services, or by Civilian Officials, whose sole source of information appears to be the Army Chaplains' Department. It has been stated that "no necessity exists for the abolition of Church Parades, as the men are anxious to attend." (!)

Whilst the average Service man is not an Atheist (generally speaking, he has never given the subject sufficient thought), he has no "desire" to attend Church Parades, because Sunday is the one day when, to a great extent, he is free from "fatigues," and the usual routine of camp life. Naturally, his one idea is to enjoy himself in his own way. This idea is abhorrent to the chaplains, who wish to see the men paraded "for their souls' welfare." In addition to their pay as Army, Navy, or Air Force Chaplains, a collection is made at these compulsory services (most of the camp churches are kept in repair at the public expense). Quite a paying business for the parson! On certain large stations, he has control of the Unit Sports' Fund, and, occasionally runs the Station Cinema, besides organizing dances and whist drives.

The "common soldier" has no voice in the matter of attending church, but has to listen to the parson bleating platitudes about "Brotherly Love," which the soldier may or may not believe, but which the padre certainly does not. His one idea is to have a good time at the Officers' Mess, and to get a fat bank balance in addition.

It is laid down in the "King's Regulations," that "Every man is required to state his religious conviction with complete freedom." If he says he is an Atheist he is shown as Church of England! The following examples of "religious freedom" will serve to illustrate the broad-mindedness of the authorities:—

1. Boys must pray every night for ten minutes.
2. "Extra Drills" and "Confinement to Barracks" awarded to men who dare to talk or laugh in church.

W. H. FIELD.

BIRTH CONTROL.

SIR,—I have read with pleasure Mr. Sherman's wise remarks on birth control in your issue of October 26, and should like to add a few statistical facts which are little known even to birth controllers.

1. Birth control is already so widespread that the birthrate is now less than half what it was fifty years ago, and a third less than it was ten years ago.
2. Birth control is spreading fast among the poorest classes, Poplar and Stepney have a far lower birthrate than the whole country had ten years ago.
3. In a few years the population, not only of Britain, but of all North-Western and Central Europe, will be diminishing. The Committee on National Debt and Taxation has reported that our population will be diminishing after 1940.
4. Advanced Roman Catholic countries have now almost as low a birthrate as Protestant ones. Great Catholic cities like Milan, Turin, Genoa, Vienna, Munich, and Prague, have a lower birthrate than either London or Paris.
5. France has come as near abolishing unemploy-

ment as is humanly possible. For many years there has seldom been more than one registered unemployed person to every forty thousand of the population. All authorities attribute this to the fact that the French population has long been nearly stationary.

R. B. KERR.

Society News.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

THERE was a crowded house to listen to Mr. J. P. Gil-mour on "Stands the Universe Where it Did?" The speaker outlined the change of the human conception of the world during the last forty-eight years, when he first, as a young man of twenty-two, grappled with the subject.

Though the idea has changed the world remains the same. Tracing through the ages and mentioning the various pioneers in Chemistry and Biology to the present.

The whole lecture was very instructive and full of information. There were many questions and some discussion and a desire for a return visit of the lecturer, who was thanked by the audience. Councillor H. A. Savary ably occupied the chair during the evening.

B.A.LEM.

Obscenity is not a quality inherent in a book or picture, but solely and exclusively a contribution of the reading mind, and hence cannot be defined in terms of the quality of the book or picture.—*Theodore Schroeder.*

The history of intellectual progress is written in the lives of infidels.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

E DUCATED Irish Freethinker, single, 56, returning from India early next year, would like to hear from a "Saint," preferably in or near London or suburbs, who would befriend him on arrival. Is a non-smoker and teetotaler. Is not fussy; has no fads. Active and cheerful. Small appetite; easy to cater for. Interested in poultry, garden and orchard. Prepared to assist in any congenial or clerical work. Has life pension of £70 per annum.—*O'CONNELL, c/o Freethinker, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (L.C.C. Hall, 249 Dawes Road, Fulham): 7.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"The Roman Catholic Revival in England and Freethinkers Interest in it."

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (The Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, November 5, Mr. Lombardi.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Social Effects of Wireless."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Mr. Arthur Kitson—"Present Economic Position."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road): 7.15, Mr. Maurice Barbanell (Vice-President, Spiritualist Alliance)—"Spiritualism."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square): 7.30, Mrs. Janet Chance—"Freedom of Thought and Sex Education."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (National Union of Textile Workers Room, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.0, Mr. Blakey—"Past Gods."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Lecture—"Anatole France"—Mr. T. L. Peers, of Bury. Chairman, Mr. Jack Clayton. All welcome.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—City Hall Saloon, Glasgow. Mr. Chapman Cohen (London) will lecture at 11.30, on "How Man Found God," and at 6.30, "How Man Found Himself."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Miss Stella Browne—"Sex Problems from a Freethought Standpoint: Present Conditions and Future Possibilities."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): Sunday, November 2, at 7, Mr. J. Arnold Sharpley (Liverpool), "Is Religion a Private Matter?" Doors open 6.30. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester): Mr. D. Capper (London), Secretary, Teachers' Labour League, 3.0 "Abolish Religion in the Schools." 6.30, "How Education Dopes the Workers."

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

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