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

Views and Opinions.

(Continued from page 707.)

Science and God.

In his Conway Memorial Lecture, Professor Julian Huxley is so representative of the tendency of English public men to trim their sails to the religious breeze, that one is sorely tempted to deal with him as a physician lecturing a class of students might dwell upon certain surface symptoms as indicative of some deep-seated disease. For instance, despite his disclaiming the belief in a religious instinct, he speaks of the "vitality of the religious spirit seeking expression" as though religion represented something in itself quite apart from other aspects of human nature. If there is a specific religious spirit struggling to find expression, much as thwarted instinct will find outlet in either a normal or an abnormal manner, the distinction between this and a genuine instinct is not very vital. If there is not, then Professor Huxley is simply trying to emulate the gentleman who said that he had rejected the errors of the Church of Rome in order to embrace those of the Church of England.

Strangest of all is this, which I take from his Broadcast Lecture on Science and Religion, delivered just before the Conway Lecture:—

Now the man of science, if he is worth his salt, has a definitely religious feeling about truth. . . . And what he asks is that religion, on its theological side, shall continue to take account of the changes and expansions of the picture of the universe which science is drawing. I say *continue*, for it has done so in the past, although often grudgingly enough. It gave up the idea of a flat earth; it gave up the idea that the earth was the centre of the universe, or that the planets moved in perfect circles; it gave up the idea of a material heaven above a dome-like sky, and accepted the idea of an enormous space

peopled with huge numbers of suns, and indeed with other groups of suns each comparable to what we for long thought was the whole universe; it accepted Newton's discovery that the heavenly bodies need no guidance in their courses; and the discoveries of the nineteenth-century physicists and chemists, about the nature of matter; it has abandoned the idea that the world is only a few thousand years old, and accepted the time-scale discovered by geology. And it finds itself no worse off for having shed these worn-out intellectual garments. But there are still many discoveries of science which it has not yet woven into its theological scheme. Only certain of the Churches have accepted Evolution, though this was without doubt the most important single new idea of the nineteenth century. It has not yet assimilated recent advances in scientific knowledge of the brain and nervous system, of heredity, of psychology, or of sex and the physiology of sex. And, in a great many cases, while accepting scientific discoveries, it has only gone half-way in recasting its theology to meet the new situation.

What is meant by the scientist having a definitely religious feeling about truth? It reads like a clumsy attempt at humour, for the one definite thing about religion—all religion—is that there is lacking a definite feeling about truth, as such. And of all religions there is none that has shown so supreme a disregard for truth as Christianity. There has been more than a disregard for truth, there has been a continued output of deliberate lies in defence of the Christian faith. I do not question that men of science have a regard for truth, that is part of their job, but of the clergy such a statement is simply not true. And the greater regard for truth that has shown itself in recent times may be attributed entirely to the influence of science on the general mind.

* * *

Why Bother?

Is it really the business of science to bother whether or not theologians agree with its decisions and bring their theology into line with scientific teaching? I agree that it is to the interest of scientific workers that all men should realize the nature of scientific discoveries; that is because it helps to create an environment favourable to scientific development. But why theologians specially? Why the anxiety to get theologians to modify their teaching in such a way that it may take in recent scientific teachings? What is there to be gained by science first of all discovering what is true and then handing it over to the theologian to be taught, not as science, but as theology? Of course, as Professor Huxley says, this is what theology has done in the past, but it has done it only after compulsion has been brought to bear, and then has just gone on perpetuating, so far as the modified environments would permit, the unmitigated evil of the religious type of mind. It managed to keep what Max Nordau called "the lie of religion" alive. If Professor Huxley thinks that this is his

job, and that as a scientist he is doing good work in keeping alive a type of mind that is essentially hostile to scientific development, he will go on asking that religions which have found their essential teaching to be false, should go on pretending that they were teaching the truth all the time, and all that is required is an altered verbal presentation of their creed. But he will not otherwise continue his present policy.

But I suggest another explanation. In a very admirable article in the *Sunday Express* for November 9, Sir Arthur Keith clearly states the purely Secularistic and Atheistic view of life, and in the opening passage confesses he finds a "strange reluctance" in setting down what he believes concerning God, Man, and the universe." This may be, he says, "worldly wisdom," but:—

The real explanation lies deeper: it is fear or cowardice, if you will. By nature I am one of the common herd. I fear ostracism. And I court it—perhaps deserve it—when I break the seal of my inner sanctuary and expose the beliefs which rule my conduct and dominate my outlook.

It stands to the credit of Sir Arthur Keith that he should make so brave a confession. Fear or cowardice, I am quite sure, lies at the root of the silence of very many public men concerning their real beliefs on religion, but not many have the supreme courage to confess, as does Sir Arthur, that they feel this fear, but are determined to overcome it. If others had been equally bold we should never have had so many half-terms used as have been used, nor would the upholders of a rationalized superstition have been able to perpetuate their stupidities under the shelter of the timidity of those who have outgrown it. I do not think we need go much further than Sir Arthur's statement for an explanation of Professor Julian Huxley. I do not mean that he is conscious of the inner prompting that leads to him writing as he does, but any psychologist worth his salt will know the mechanism of the process by which this rationalization is achieved. And the chief, if not the sole cause of the timidity of men to speak out as they should on religious matters is the theological world which Professor Huxley asks to please extend its patronage to science.

* * *

What is Religion?

What now, in the opinion of Professor Huxley, is religion? We must, he says, consider religion as a function of human nature. I see nothing to object to in this, but it is quite destitute of distinctive meaning, and so can be of no value to anyone. The function of anything is what it does, and as human nature does manage to produce religious beliefs, religion must be a function of human nature. It is a grandiloquent way of saying nothing, although it will please theologians because they will make it read that religion is an inescapable quality of human nature. And that is a different thing altogether. When, however, Professor Huxley goes on to say that many Freethinkers will not accept religion as "a natural product of human nature," and others cannot see "how religion can be defined in terms of human function," one wonders whether visions are about. What else can religion be but a natural product or a supernatural product? Really——!

There is very little more in the further statement that, what all sorts and kinds of religion have in common is, "a reaction of the human spirit to the facts of human destiny and the forces by which it is influenced." Again an impressive way of saying nothing at all. Everything that man does, everything he believes, everything he desires is a reaction

to the forces with which he is surrounded. What else can it be? A burglar cracking a safe, a rowdy cracking a policeman's skull, St. Teresa experiencing ecstasy in the arms of Jesus, a mother giving her life for her child, a mother soaking in drink and neglecting her offspring, Professor Huxley holding out the hand of fellowship to the Churches, the editor of the *Freethinker* trying to wipe them out of existence, all are reactions of man to the forces which surround them. It surely did not need a special lecture or profound thinking to tell us that much.

Again, there must not merely be a reaction, but "a reaction into which there enters a feeling of sacredness." In his broadcast address this is expanded by saying:—

Somewhere at the root of every religion there lies a sense of sacredness; certain events, things, ideas, beings are felt as mysterious and sacred. . . . The existence of the sense of sacredness is the most basic of these common elements.

Now there is nothing mysterious about this sense of sacredness, and if Professor Huxley will spend an hour or so with, say, Professor Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*, or the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, or Sir James Frazer, or any other modern work of similar scope, he will, I think, cease parading such a thing as "sacredness," either as lying at the root of religion or being identical with the modern and ethical sense of the term. Religion does not arise out of sacredness, sacredness does not lie at the root of religion. This is not a matter of opinion at all; it is a mere statement of elementary fact. The whole significance of "sacred," like the kindred words "clean" and "unclean," is that of something set apart from the God or something devoted to the God. But the gods do not begin to be because something is set apart from them, or some place is thought to be their residence; it is obviously the other way about. We see the truth of what I have said in the fact that a Church is a sacred place, so is a book devoted to the sayings of the god, and articles used in the worship of a God are sacred. "Sacredness" develops from religion, it has nothing to do with the origin of religion.

The position becomes still further confused when we are told immediately after explaining that "sacred" must include feelings of fear and fascination and reverence and mystery in order to give rise to religion, that objects may "become charged with the feeling of sacredness without becoming specifically religious." So that, after all, the particular cluster of feelings that go to make up "sacredness" really has no necessary connexion with religion. The specifically religious feeling turns out, as one would expect, to be ordinary, normal human feeling expressed in relation to religious belief. I agree with this, and next week I will try and show its importance in studying religion. But if Professor Huxley had not been so very anxious to provide the world with another superstition in place of the one that is wearing thin, he might helpfully have dealt with all religious beliefs as misinterpretations or distortion of normal human faculty. That would have been useful to those who have listened to him on Science and Religion. But then I am reminded of the brave confession of Sir Arthur Keith that the explanation of his own reluctance to say precisely what he thinks about religion arises from fear. And perhaps the strongest and clearest proof of the truth of the confession is that people who in this country say just what they think are really regarded by some as very brave, and by others as fools for running so great a risk as to try to be intellectually honest in a Christian community.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

A Doubting Dean.

"This mystery of vending spiritual gifts is nothing but a trade."—*Swift*.

"Is not religion a cloak?"—*Swift*.

"Swift is Rabelais in his good sense."—*Voltaire*.

"Not a fantastical fool of them all shall flout me out of my calling."—*Shakespeare*.

THE Christian Church has contained in its fold many great men. Some of them were sincere believers in the doctrines they preached. Others were Christian from force of circumstances, or held to the dogmas for the material gain which has ever been no inconsiderable bait with which to catch men. To which class did Jonathan Swift belong? Was this great genius a sincere Christian, or was he merely a professing believer for the sake of the position he hoped to gain? Would he have remained a Christian had actual deaneries and possible bishoprics with their emoluments had no existence? Should we have found Swift among the Scotch Covenanters on the field of battle, or in the arena with the lions at Rome, had his birth placed him in different circumstances?

His biographers, Scott, Johnson, and Thackeray, all describe Swift as a religious man, and the general opinion agrees with them. One hesitates to enter the lists against such eminent writers, but a candid opinion compels us to say that we believe that Swift was a Christian only in name, that he remained in the Church for the same reason that prompted Judas, in the legendary story, to sell his master. In fact, Swift was not merely un-Christian; he was one of the most irreligious of men. Compared to him, Paine, Voltaire, and Bradlaugh, were saints, for these great Freethinkers had at heart that unquenchable enthusiasm for humanity, that love of their kind, which was entirely absent in Swift. The author of *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Tale of a Tub*, was intellectually incapable of being a Christian, and emotionally incapable of loving his fellow men. The *Tale of a Tub* is one of the most tremendous indictments of the Christian Religion, from the purely intellectual side, that has ever been given to the world. *Gulliver's Travels* expresses such a scorn of the human race, with its Lilliputian littleness and its Brobdnagian coarseness, that its writer was physically and constitutionally incapable of sympathizing with Christianity, which, in the last analysis, is a religion for slaves, and a soporific for those in suffering.

Voltaire, a most excellent judge, regarded *The Tale of a Tub* as casting ridicule on all forms of the Christian Faith. The man who wrote that book was perfectly aware of the logical inference of his propositions. The bishops who advised Queen Anne, when they counselled her not to appoint Dean Swift to a bishopric, were not without sagacity. There can be no doubt that Queen Anne and Voltaire were both right when, from their very different points of view, they regarded Swift's literary work as anti-Christian.

Swift was irreligious, and a life-long dissembler. He could be coarser than Rabelais, and profaner than Voltaire. Men have been burned at the stake for treating so-called sacred subjects less offensively than Swift treats the Christian rite of the Holy Communion. Consider the facts of his life. He was brought up in the household of the epicurean, Sir William Temple, and educated in the library of an avowed Freethinker. Why Swift should take holy orders, except for the loaves and fishes, it is difficult to say. He put the cassock on for a living, but was choked by its bands. Swift was the boon companion of Pope, and a friend of the Freethinking

Bolingbroke. He deliberately chose these sceptics as the closest friends of his life, and the recipients of his confidence and affection. It is not difficult to imagine him joining in many a profane argument and blasphemous jest over Pope's port or Bolingbroke's burgundy. It is significant, nay, almost conclusive, as to the insincerity of Swift's religious professions, that he advised John Gay, the author of "The Beggar's Opera," and the wildest of the wits about town, to turn parson and look out for a seat on the episcopal bench.

The paper Swift left behind him, *Thoughts on Religion*, is merely a set of excuses for not openly professing disbelief. He says of his own sermons, quite truthfully, that he preached pamphlets. They have no special Christian character, and might have been preached from the steps of a Mohammedan Mosque as from the pulpit of a Christian Church. There is no cant, for Swift was too great and proud for that cowardly and sorry device. Tried even by the low standard of the eighteenth century, his sermons are singularly secular. The following amusing passage from Swift's sermon on the fate of Eutychus, who is said to have fallen out of a window while listening to Saint Paul preaching, will illustrate our meaning:—

The accident which happened to this young man in the text hath not been sufficient to discourage his successors; but because the preachers now in the world, however they may exceed St. Paul in the art of setting men to sleep, do extremely fall short of him in the working of miracles; therefore men are become so cautious as to choose more safe and convenient stations and postures for taking their repose without hazard of their persons, and, upon the whole matter, choose rather to entrust their destruction to a miracle than their safety.

It is, of course, true that in ecclesiastical and theological controversy Swift always took the Orthodox side, for outwardly he was loyal enough to his employers. For Deists of his time, such as Toland, Asgill, and Collins, he expressed contempt. He refers to "that quality of their voluminous writings which the poverty of the English language compels me to call their style." In his famous and sinister argument upon the inconveniences which would result from the total abolition of the Christian Religion, he drenches his opponents with vitriol. But it is all purely dialectic fencing. Swift's polemic was aimed at guarding the material prosperity of the Church, of which he was a paid official; just as a counsel will argue for whichever side pays him his retaining fee. If Swift's sword was sharp, it was a double-edged weapon, as may be seen by the sardonic climax:—

To conclude: whatever some may think of the great advantage to trade by this favourite scheme, I do very much appreciate that in six months after the Act is passed for the extirpation of the Gospel, the Bank and East India stock may fall at least one per cent, and since this is fifty times more than ever the wisdom of our age thought fit to venture for the preservation of Christianity, there is no reason why we should be at so great a loss for the sake of destroying it.

When face to face with death, Swift let the mask slip from his features, and we see for a brief moment the real man. When he wrote his own epitaph, he disdained any religious allusion. A pillar of the Christian Church, he refused to permit any pietistic platitudes upon his tombstone. A dignified worldliness, an appeal to the memory of his fellow-men, but not a syllable of "god" or the "Second Person" of the Christian Trinity:—

Here lies the body of Jonathan Swift, Doctor of Divinity, Dean of this Cathedral Church, where fierce rage can tear the heart no more. Go,

traveller, and imitate, if you can, an earnest, manly champion of freedom:

The original is in sonorous Latin, and the dates were the only additions. His allusion to his fight for freedom is genuine, for he fought for the liberty of Ireland.

Rabelais and Renan, both great sceptics, left the Christian Church, and chose the hard road to mental freedom. Swift stayed in the Church and failed in his ambition. In spite of a life-long servitude, Swift was a disappointed man. He had to be content with a petty deanery, when his ambition was at least a bishopric. The fierce rage, of which he wrote as lacerating his heart, was intensified by loss of preferment. He had prostituted his great and splendid genius. After all his dissembling, he died, to quote his own painful words, "like a poisoned rat in a hole."

MIMNERMUS.

The Burden of the Bolsheviks.

THE age of great writing is not past, at least of good writing, which is more to the purpose, always the æsthetic waiting on the essential. It has just been my privilege to read an engrossing book—*Russia, Yesterday and To-day*, by Dr. E. J. Dillon (Dent, 16s.), a pleasure also, for while sound and recent history, the work thrills like a novel, and will captivate alike the tyro and the savant and lastingly instruct. One feels that having read Dr. Dillon's analysis of the situation there, then and now, that one knows something about Russia, while those less fortunate may know nothing, or worse. Truly the book is a revelation, and should be in the hands of every friend and enemy of Sovietism, especially of those pious political and moral detractors of this great unhappy country struggling in the birth throes of its new dispensation. I have just been able to make a few hasty notes as the great work passed through my hands, but even so these may indicate the sterling qualities and mature scholarship of a noble and most necessary piece of writing. There is, so to say, meat in every line, and written by a (at least once) Roman Catholic, there is abundant food for the Freethinker.

The author had come to Russia, the young scion of some good family in the reign of Alexander II, finished his education there, became Professor of Oriental Languages, engaged in politics, became intimate with celebrities in literature, art, etc., was later adviser to Count Witte, returned to England, and now revisits the new Russia. In one place our author describes the Russian peasantry as a "good-natured, lying, thieving, shiftless, ignorant mass, many creatures of mere existence, not things of life, little concerned with politics, yet easily carried away by the wiles of pious or political visionaries. Then the Revolution came:—

On the fall of the Kerensky Government Hell was let loose, the whole social and political system long since decrepit and baneful, entered upon its death-throes accompanied by the tramp of warring hosts, the boom of heavy guns, the gutting of palaces, the glow of burning mansions. Death in hideous forms stalked the land by day and by night, smiting good and bad indiscriminately—Life was not worth a day's purchase. Outsiders cannot realize the vastness of the October Revolution. All the cultural fingerposts, the hallowed institutions, the well-trodden tracks, the inherited modes of thought and action sank into the abyss . . . God and the Czar who together had determined the course of events in Russia since the days of Vladimir had now to yield their thrones to a board of plain men burning with

patriotic zeal for their own unholy mission, animated with fervid faith in the saving grace of Marx and Engels. From the schools the Deity was banished . . . sexual offences especially ceased to exist . . . incest, abortion, sodomy, and kindred aberrations were legally permitted . . . Many people will be thoroughly shocked at all this and few will inquire into the motives of the law giver, or put themselves in his place . . . In a *Book About Women*, M. Nekidoff has one frightful passage: "We may affirm positively that if the law were to punish debauchery, concubinage and adultery, young boys would be the officiating judges, and all the others would be prisoners at the bar." In a word, the Bolshevists have contrived to meet the problem, to place it in the order of the day, to make the world realize how provisional and fleeting are our traditional definitions of morality, justice, liberty, law . . . Russia was as a huge giant put to sleep by magic spells. Suffering, tortured, ruined people! who will stand up for them—Lichens are on him and mosses have grown over him. He has slept and every unclean and slimy thing has crept upon him, every species of vermin.

There are some terrible passages describing the post-revolution famine of the outcast children. Some had come to look upon such famine as annual and inevitable, and dates are given from 1137 to 1914. Russia was awaiting the coming of a Prince Charming; is Bolshevism that beneficent liberator? If so, it has not yet uttered the magic words. Then there was:—

that never-to-be-forgotten disastrous episode of the out-cast children . . . stunted bodies, almost naked, infected by vile diseases, chewing leaves, rags, the bark of trees, disfigured bodies of those horrible young, selfless and wholly debased by loathsome surroundings . . . Those Lilliputians like beasts of prey swept down upon this district or that, striking terror into passers by, who would bite them and infect them with their horrible diseases. The Children's Crusade of the middle ages was but a flea-bite to this . . . Seven millions all told . . . addicted to every vice, girls of eight given up to sexual vice, and murder swelled the list of misdeeds . . . Sleeping in outhouses, in limekilns not cooled down, feeding with cattle, fighting for morsels of offal. Authorities affirm 7,000,000!

To this plague also the Soviets set their hands, this with a hundred other deterrent, well nigh insuperable, obstacles such as no rulers were ever before faced with in the history of the world, and more certainly never faced by any Government with such original single-minded dynamic energy. The dynamic, if you like, a fanatical Marxism, but more hot and burning than any religious zeal:—

But the ferment, which is not quite the same thing as concrete Bolshevism or Christianity, is bound in the fullness of time to leaven in varying degrees the entire mass of mankind and bring about a fundamental upheaval in the social and political world . . . hindrances and set-backs there were enough to deter ordinary reformers, but to which the Soviets presented an indomitable will-power and ignoring alike apprehension, doubt, caution, forged ahead . . . the efforts of those enthusiastic light-dispensers will undoubtedly challenge the sympathy of the humane onlooker—unless he belongs to that group of thinkers who hold that already there is too much teaching and preaching in the world for the happiness of mankind.

In Russia, as elsewhere, there was much solicitude about the next world (no wonder!) and never wanting zealots and charlatans to exploit fantastic beliefs, offering "seats in heaven—the very last vacant—inestimable bargains! . . . but the sense of the Unseen is atrophied. Hostility to all forms of religion is one of the most eagerly fostered sentiments in the

schools . . . Biology is one of the most important subjects taught." Culturism has become a craze, criticism is welcomed, of self, parents, teachers, preachers, of Government plans and schemes of uplift—these latter no doubt all within the rugged gospel according to St. Marx and Lenin :—

To sum up, all Russia is thrilled with heart-expanding fervour, and passion is at white heat. Nowhere is life so intense, so volcanic and absorbing . . . projects complex, colossal, costly, simple, plebian, and provisional . . . Orthodoxy was very chary of conferring saintship on females and the people acquiesced. Russian proverbs reflect the brutal contempt of women (now all this is being reversed with women active, independent, everywhere, the light of the world, the eyes of the Government, inspectors in domestic and business premises, a new kind of Sisters of Mercy, when they are not bringing defaulters to book) . . . Meanwhile the disenfranchisement and cultural uplift of the peasantry is one of the most marvellous feats on record . . . one cannot deny the magnitude of the deterrent difficulties, habits of life and wretched social status . . . this is not a proletariat (but) . . . a return to savagery . . . no trace of anything human remained . . . To keep the soul-spark of those semi-savages from being totally extinguished, to make them active members of the human community was the work to which the Bolsheviki set their hands. However the conflict may be settled the peasantry owe a deep debt of gratitude to their liberators who verily raised them from the dead. Like the dry bones into which the prophet Ezekiel breathed life and force, and upon which he laid flesh and sinews, the Russian Mooshik has been restored to the ranks of humanity . . . Sovietism may be as some of the friends of the good old times have called it, a demoniacal monster, but it is at anyrate a genuine reality as was the worm that gnawed away the tree of Ygdrasil, and brought about the twilight of the Gods and the end of the world . . . Like Moliere's Diafoirus it may be held that the best way for a patient to die is according to strict medical rules, so it may be decided that the proper way for a coming world catastrophe to be brought about is in the good old traditional manner by trained statesmen armed with monocles, orchids, breastfuls of decorations, and an impressive oracular vocabulary . . . Esperanto has 16,000 registered readers in Russia . . . in the schools English has first place, German second, French third, Esperanto fourth . . . English all intent on goodness, German coarse, French erotic. The Russian alone is distinguished by its philosophy and psychology, is unique, a powerful crystal spring bubbling up from the depths of the soil . . .

Were it not irreverent one might suggest that Statesmen of the older generation—the human foxes hereft of cunning—who are not yet too old to mislead their respective peoples should likewise deign to pay an occasional visit to the red Russian demons in order to have their eyes opened, and pick up helpful hints in the art of politics.

I have not yet begun, but must end thus fragmentarily. I am proud to have handled a book so noble in purpose, so just in analysis, to have had communion with a writer who senses the tragedy of Russia, whose humour is robust and thoughtful, whose hope though distant is the only hope of the world. Let the final words of the book be again his own :—

Bolshevism is no ordinary historic event. It is one of the vast cathartic agencies to which we sometimes give the name of fate which appear at long intervals to consume the human tares and clear the ground for a new order of things—it takes its origin in the unplumbed depths of being nor could it have come into existence were it not for the necessity of putting an end to the injustice and inequalities that infect our superannuated civilization. It is amoral and inexorable because transcendental. It

has come as Christianity came, not with peace but a sword, and its victims outnumber those of the most sanguinary wars. It seems to me the mightiest driving force for good or evil in the world to-day. It is certainly a stern reality, smelling perhaps of sulphur and brimstone, but with a mission which will undoubtedly be fulfilled.

ANDREW MILLAR.

The Book Shop.

WITH very vivid recollections of reading two stories by Mr. Liam O'Flaherty in *The London Aphrodite*, I turned to his latest book, *Two Years* (Jonathan Cape, 30 Bedford Square, 7s. 6d. net). The stories were *Patsa* and *Red Barbara*—a brace of good short sketches written with the vigour of a young man who enters the literary arena with a whip in his hand—and that is the correct entry for any aspirant to the honours of the world of books. I am not disappointed with *Two Years*, for it is the odyssey of a young man who has commenced by kicking the world, and, it will be safe to say, will finish by trying to understand it. That is the note on which it concludes. The book is the record of a wandering through many countries, the author changing his job more frequently than the moon changes from sickle to scythe. Civilization is not an unbroken line of benefits; artfully made laws render its blessings somewhat doubtful—gypsies will not have them at any price, and a powerful personality almost automatically picks out the odious restrictions and defies them. Charlie Chaplin's success is, to a great extent, built on the fact that he caricatures the solemnity of society, burlesques the silly conventions, and appeals in the last extremity to all those primitive and boyish instincts of schoolboy fun. In a similar manner, Mr. O'Flaherty, according to his story, found very little in his adventures to respect or cause him to bow the knee. In his sparing compliments he finds a good word for the London police, and one very fine thought is arresting: "As soon as individual thought becomes extinct in any society, that society perishes because individual thought is necessary for progress, and things which stand still rot and are overwhelmed." That is very good Freethought. Mr. O'Flaherty is very emphatic about his beliefs, or, more strictly speaking, his unbeliefs. Whilst, in Smyrna, in company with a man named Ross, he startled this conspirator, who appeared to be a trafficker in drugs.

"D'ye mean to say," he cried, "that you have no religion?" And our author replies, "Quite so, I dislike the character and teaching of Jesus Christ, but personally, mark you, from an intellectual point of view." Freethinkers will find the narrative in *Two Years* extremely interesting. It is something achieved in the history of the growth of Freethought to find that an author with an assured reputation avows his adherence to the very simple tenets of disbelief in accepted religion. Other authors, and their names are well known, fear any definite statement about their real views on the current opinions of the respectable. Mr. O'Flaherty shows them the way. There is much fun in this book, fine writing, pathos, and swashbuckling. He reminds me in places, of Maxim Gorki, but with one difference. He is, in his attitude, mostly a spectator of the world, whereas Gorki was in it in all his writings. *Two Years* is a book to buy and keep. It concludes: "A godless hermit, I began my communion with the cliffs, the birds, the wild animals, and the sea of my native land." Here, Mr. O'Flaherty may find that one short life is not long enough to accomplish the task of correcting all the humbug and nonsense at large, but there is the hope in his work that he is now well equipped for giving us his best towards that end. There is plenty of room in the vineyard of Truth where two constitute a crowd.

At a time when many city inhabitants are more than ever tasting and enjoying a return to such beauty in the country that is left, Messrs Chatto & Windus publish a book *The Wind on the Heath*, 7s. 6d. net. It is a gypsy anthology chosen by John Sampson, adorned by

Augustus John with a Head of a Gitana, and fourteen designs by John Garside. Dr. Sampson, in the compilation of this book, has cast his net in the sea of antiquity, the breezy days of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, and in the yesterday of George Borrow. There is, in the prose and poetry, much for and against. Milton cites the gypsy in his contest with Smectymnus, Hardy remembers a story told by Charles Leland at the Savile Club (Leland was an authority on gypsy lore), Apuleius is plundered, and there is a general ransacking of history to compile this delightful book, which will make pleasant fire-side reading for winter nights. Borrow figures largely in the pages; Jane Austen's account of gypsies is not in their favour, but Sir Walter Scott has, in an extract, a mind for the gypsy's side of the case. Asked, when imprisoned, where would be his boasted freedom, the Bohemian replies:—

"In my thoughts, which no chains can bind; while yours, even while your limbs are free, remain fettered by your laws and your superstitions, your dreams of local attachments and your fantastic visions of civil policy." There are also extensive quotations from Matthew Arnold who, perhaps will live longest by his *Scholar Gipsy*, the origin of which may be found in a close search of the poets ancestry. *Poisoning the Porker*, by Borrow, still makes good reading, and it may explain the antipathy of farmers to *Gyppos*, as they are called in some counties. *The Wind on the Heath* speaks well for the industry and wide reading of the compiler, who, for his title borrows from Borrow. It is a healthy book and brings fresh air into the chambers of the mind.

Freethinkers, in *Romanism and Truth*, The Faith Press Ltd., 3s. 6d., have a good opportunity of looking over a hedge and watching the scuffle between G. G. Coulton and his Roman Catholic adversaries. The author very seriously examines the various claims of Rome, is painstaking in the proofs of his refutations to such claims, and by bringing scholarship to bear on the subject, he invests the matters with more importance than they are worth. He assiduously worries the non-sense of Papal Infallibility, and one is really sorry to read that he thinks Agnostics make merry over differences between Protestants and Catholics. The squabbles of big and little bogeys over their various *methods* of obtaining power over mankind are hardly subjects for mirth. Fear through ritual, fear through threats of hell, are not really subjects for laughter among grown-up men and women as distinct from those who need telling what to think and do by priests. They are simply matters for healthy contempt. Professor Coulton, as is always expected of him, brings learning and wide-reading to the making of this book; in his efforts he also provides Freethinkers with additional ammunition. All the chastity and cruelty of Catholicism are underlined; all the deceits and lying of organized imposture is recorded. Melchior Cano, an orthodox Catholic, in 1550, wrote on ecclesiastical history, and, to quote from the book under notice, he made the following admission in one of his books: "I say it rather with grief than in contumely, that (Diogenes) Laertius wrote the Lives of the Philosophers far more strictly than Christians have written the Lives of the Saints; and that Suetonius has rehearsed the affairs of the emperors with far more impartiality and integrity than Catholics have rehearsed, I do not say the story of the emperors, but (even) of martyrs, virgins and confessors." Professor Coulton demonstrates also, in other places, that modern historians of Catholicism do not change their spots. *Romanism and Truth*, for its information, is well worth buying, but the author of it should know that Agnostics have no time to be merry about low heels and high heels, as to who has the genuine mystery; they spend what spare time they have in trying to make the earth habitable, that the millions of shepherds have made a menagerie. In fact, they are so serious that they wear braces to keep their trousers up, and prefer a glass of beer to Christian religious, penny plain or twopence coloured. Professor Coulton writes with studied restraint, but he appears to be obsessed with his subject as resolving itself "either or." Either Catholicism or Protestantism is rather provincial in outlook. There are a hundred alternatives,

but only one after a survey of the history of man's brave ancestors who lived in spite of ignorance and priests. And that one is reason. Professor Coulton will earn the gratitude of Freethinkers for his book for different reasons than those of his friends.

C-DE-B.

Belief.

WHEN a professor speaks of a "personal god," does he mean that the god has personality, or that it is, in the mind of the believer, private property? The question is suggested by a certain professor's public oration wherein it was stated that the days of the belief in the personal god, and the efficacy of prayer have gone for ever. If the god is personal in the sense of having a personality and character of its own, like, say, the Jahve of the Hebrews, an obvious anthropomorphism, its day, so far as educated people are concerned, probably has gone. The Semite evolved a god that, automatically and mentally, was himself, and stereotyped it for all time by teaching that it had created mankind in its own image. Modern research, discovery and knowledge have stultified that conception of divinity. But so long as human minds, educated or not, have even a suspicion that there may be some power that takes an interest in the affairs of mankind, there must be a feeling of proprietorship attached to that power, else it is a devil, malevolent. My king or our government may not be perfect but for me or for us they do their best. "My" god may, or may not exist, but it is not on the look-out for an opportunity to do me an ill.

Many people to whom the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures are merely a mixture of philosophies, histories and incredible anecdotes pray, occasionally, to the god that they were told, when young, was the creator of the universe. Family prayer is a thing of the past, public prayer nearly so. No longer do the maids, headed by the cook, file into the breakfast room and take their seats along the wall. No longer do the gentry go to divine service of a Sunday morning to set a good example to the village. Few men and nearly as few women pretend to believe in the creed of any Church. The maids and the villagers are free to believe what they can, except that their employers are hypocrites, false and cowardly. Yet prayer, prayer for what one needs, for the safety of one's beloved ones, has its use and, perhaps mere coincidences, sometimes seems to be efficacious. Often, in the storm-tossed land of France, came a curious sense of safety to one who knew mother or wife was, many times a day, down on her marrow-bones praying to the god she thought she knew, to bring one safely through the war. Did it bring one? Who knows? But safety in danger is only material. Prayer has a spiritual effect. That is more important.

In a Scottish kirk the minister was preaching against stealing. He pointed out the risk the thief ran of being caught and imprisoned, but agreed that detection could be avoided. He ended up his lengthy discourse on the subject by reminding his congregation that though they might escape all penalties in this world nothing escaped the All-seeing, and they would have him to reckon with in the next, "otherwise stealing would be sheer profit." Were a child or an adult contemplating a crime, would it pray for help to commit it? No. It would be afraid to. Prayer to a power, perfect enough to be worth praying to, could only be for a worthy object. Hence prayer keeps one's ideals at a high level.

And it matters not to whom or to what one prays. Walk through a continental town at night. See, so far as the light allows, that woman in the street there praying to something up in that niche, a crucifix or the effigy of a saint. If there is any benevolent power that listens to the appeals of humanity, it will hear although that little man-made thing to whom the poor woman addresses herself is but the confession of humanity that the abstract is incomprehensible by it, and that it hungers for the concrete, for the visible and tangible. And, even if unanswered, the prayer brings peace, the *slm* of the Arab; the woman has done all she can, given all she has and surrendered all to her god. Idols?

What are Idols? Merely the confession that the senses are more powerful than the intellect. If anything is moved by prayer the image of a saint, of the Buddha, of Mumbo-Jumbo, could not jam the transmission of the appeal. In the cathedral of Cologne there is an image of the Virgin. When Attila, the Hun (A.D. 451) crossed the Rhine, his army, in which Franks, Goths and other Teutons served, "martyred" 11,000 virgins in that Roman city, since when the Virgin has been patron saint of it. In the lap of the image is seated a mouse, wrought in silver. During the post-war British occupation of Cologne an officer was gazing at the image. He was joined by a German, who gave him the legend. In medieval times there came a plague of mice. Nothing could abate it. Mice were everywhere, in the beds, the baker's ovens, the *Rathhaus*, everywhere. At last the Cologners bethought them of the Virgin. They prayed to her image and, to keep it in mind of their urgent need, they placed in the lap a silver mouse. The plague suddenly ceased and has never returned. "Now, I can't believe that tale," said the Englishman. "Neither can we," replied the German. "If we could there would now be there an Englishman in gold."

The amount of energy expended when the human brain thinks or prays is so small that the ether disturbance that results can only be infinitesimal. No receiver man has yet invented can record it. Yet animate nature, even inanimate, for the ether pervades all matter, may be endowed with receiving powers that man has not yet discovered. When the woman, in dire distress or fear, sends out her S.O.S. as she kneels at her bedside, or before the crucifix at the roadside, all nature may, subconsciously, register her appeal and some of it may, unconscious of it, respond. The "flat" backs a card or a horse in a desperate effort to retrieve his foolish losses. His S.O.S. might be effective. Unfortunately it has to fight against the "sharper's" skill, or the percentage on which the totalisator flourishes, or the bookmaker supports his family and himself, so the odds against its being able to cause intervention in his favour are so great that the S.O.S. is usually energy wasted.

W. J. RICHARDSON.

Acid Drops.

Abyssinia is one of the oldest Christian nations in the world, and has only partly advanced from savagery, it is certainly not clear of Barbarism. Its existence is one of the best comments that be given on the plea that Christianity promotes civilization. At the Coronation of the King of Abyssinia there was the usual barbaric display of the kind that survives in the strongest manners in the ceremonies that surround churches and thrones, and after the ceremony the King threw open the palace doors, allowing the soldiers to come into the courtyard in which a herd of oxen had been stalled. The report continues:—

The soldiers fell upon the oxen with swords and daggers, slaughtering, them, drinking the blood, and tearing pieces from the carcasses and eating them.

These orgies will carry the mind of anyone versed in anthropology a long way back in the history of the race, and it is to scenes such as these, when the man-god was killed and eaten and his blood drunk, that one has to look for the origin of so many millions of Christians eating the flesh and drinking the blood of their saviour in their respective churches. To-day it is only bread and wine which ignorance and knavery combine to continue as either a miracle or a symbol. But it began in sheer cannibalism, and if anyone wishes to recreate the state of mind out of which Christian doctrines have grown, they would do well to reflect upon the Christian followers of the barbaric King of Abyssinia wallowing in the blood and eating the raw flesh of the sacrificial cattle.

We were profoundly impressed—almost to tears—by the newspapers and letterpress showing and describing

the Duke of York kissing his mother. Presumably, in Royal circles, it is usual for a prince to kick his mother, and the fact that in our own Royal Family sons act towards their mothers just as though they belonged to the lower classes, is well worthy of chronicling.

Writing of Russia, Mrs. A. Williams Ellis (daughter of the late St. Loe Strachey) says in the *Spectator*:—

I feel that he must be a dull and limited man who finds nothing to admire in the Russian effort, and a credulous man who believes all that has been said on the subject of the oppression of religious persons there. The Churches can apparently see nothing noble in Russia, and here exercise neither tolerance nor imagination.

As for the charge of not exercising imagination, the Churches can easily refute that. They have merely to point out that their stories about Russia could not have been created without the use of vivid imagination. They could also add that to exercise tolerance would be contrary to the best traditions of all the Christian Churches, as intolerance has been the consistent practice of the Churches for so many centuries.

As a super-salesman for a patent cure-all, the Bishop of Chelmsford declares that this country will never be put on its feet until the people go back to the faith of their fathers. What the Bishop implies, of course, is that his God is either punishing the nation for lack of belief, or else withholding prosperity for the same reason. To sum up, we can say that the Bishop is endeavouring to excite fear of his Bogey in the skies in order to drive the ignorant and timid back into the churches. This is a very ancient wheeze, which has been and is employed by medicine-men in all countries when threatened by loss of patronage. The Bishop's use of it acquires a certain piquancy from the fact that his religion professes to be a religion not of fear but of love.

Religious papers have made the most of the story that the Chinese President, General Chiang Kaishek, has become a Christian. But Dr. George Pearson (of Paoking, Hunan), in a letter to the *Methodist Recorder*, appears to have doubts as to whether Christian rejoicing may be premature. The conversion, he suggests, may be one of the greatest events that have ever happened in China, or it may develop into a positive hindrance to Christian work. Is the conversion genuine? he asks. Or is General Chiang merely "playing politics"? Is he seeking an alliance with the "Christian General" Feng? If, says Dr. Pearson, General Chiang's confession of faith is only another clever political move, it can have no lasting good for Christian mission work. It might even give the Chinese nation a wrong conception of what Christianity really is. Still, on the principle of hoping for the best while fearing the worst, Dr. Pearson exhorts Christians everywhere to pray "very specially" for the President of China, that he may have all the strength and wisdom he needs for the great task he has in hand. These prayers ought to be helpful if the President is merely "playing politics"!

After racking their brains over the Budget of expenditure and income for 1931, the Wesleyan Missionary Council have decided that acceptance of the Budget means a request for £25,000 beyond the amount received last year. Its rejection would mean a recall of missionaries. But this the Council unanimously agreed would be "against the Will of God and the wishes of the Methodist people." It is very odd how the "Will of God" always coincides with what is best for the parsons! Hence, the Wesleyan Missionary Society proceeds to tell Methodist mugs that:—

God starts counting when we're giving what we can't afford.

What a funny God is he who wishes his people to impoverish themselves!

In 1913-14 this country spent £77,000,000 on its armed forces. In 1930 it is spending £112,000,000 a year. This seems rather appalling. But the way to look at it is

that the expenditure might be doubled but for the fact that we have a Government religion employed in preaching the doctrines of a pacifist Christ.

To cheer up the depressed, a writer says that sadness, like cheerfulness, is merely the point of view in which one looks at the world. Still, when one remembers the sad story of dear Jesus, and notes the terrible sinfulness of the world, and also the diminution of respect for the parson, how can one possibly be cheerful?

A new organization has just been formed and will be known as "The British Field Sports Society." The aims of the Society is a worthy one, namely, resistance to any attempts to abolish blood sports. We commend the Society to all who haven't sufficient intelligence to discover ways of amusing themselves without causing pain to animals.

National health, says Sir George Newman, is not dependent upon doctors and nurses, but upon the people themselves. What is here implied, we presume, is that the nation will be healthy only if the people live in accordance with the information and advice furnished by medical science. If such is the case, there seems little sense in praying to God to keep one healthy. Break the rules of health, and all the prayers in the world won't ward off ill-health. Obey the health rules, and you can dispense with prayers for health.

In a weekly journal we learn that a large number of quacks still find it profitable to tour the country and impose on credulous people. We haste to add that not all the quacks deal in medical remedies. Some of them are more ambitious and hawk around a patient nostrum to cure all the evils of this world. They are known as professional evangelists, and their cure-all is the Blood of the Lamb.

A pious writer says that religion is as essential to man's being as food is; that man is a religious being; that human nature is essentially religious. This is a pretty thesis. But somehow it fails to explain those thousands of men and women who, without any belief whatever in religion live happy lives and die happy. A better thesis for our friend to handle is that a large portion of mankind and earthquakes, his poisonous in- and therefore are religious. He would have no difficulty in proving his case.

The Rev. Lionel B. Fletcher has come all the way from New Zealand to tell the stupid English that if you take Christ away from the world, you take everything. Well, then, we are entirely against that being done. Take away God's storms and earthquakes, his poisonous insects, and reptiles, his microbes, and deadly diseases, by all means. But let no one take away our Christ who died that priests and parsons might live as social parasites.

An assortment of Free Church ministers requested preachers on Armistice-Day to quote the Lambeth resolution: "That war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ." The preachers might also be asked to add that though they deeply regret that this wonderful discovery has taken 1930 years to emerge into Christian daylight, yet they are grateful to God for keeping the discovery back until after 1914-1918. For the parsons were thereby able conscientiously to urge on the men to fight, and thus make it possible for God to award a victory to the Allies.

A woman reader of a Christian paper, Miss Edith Shrewsbury of Torquay, says it seems to be taken for granted that women should be kept in the background in the Church. Long ages of repression, she says, have had their effect, and women accept unthinkingly their subordinate position in the Church as a matter of course. And she warns the clergy to take heed that:—

Unless the Church takes steps to establish the spiritual

equality of women with men, it will continue to lose many of its thinking women, who are finding their work and interest where they are not hampered and restrained.

If Miss Shrewsbury will but study the writings of St. Paul and the Christian Fathers, she will quickly discover why women have been repressed, treated as subordinate, and denied equality with men. If she is one of those thinking women she mentions, she should soon reach the conclusion that a creed which could inspire so degraded a view of women is not worthy of her adherence. Nor should she experience any difficulty in finding some socially useful work outside the Church.

Pastor Jeffries, one of the crowd of faith-healing Fakirs, has come a cropper at Stoke-on-Trent. The City Council has declined to let him any of the rooms over which they have control, unless an undertaking is given that he will not experiment with those children for whose welfare the Council is responsible. The reason for the decision is that in many cases the "alleged faith-healing treatment has resulted in very serious consequences. In certain instances recovery is retarded to such an extent that recovery instead of taking one year would take two." But what, after all, is the question of the recovery of a few sick children compared with the glory of the gospel and the well-being of Pastor Jeffries?

We refer elsewhere to Sir Arthur Keith's excellent article in the *Sunday Express*, but we cannot forbear commenting on the editorial comments thereon. The editorial is headed "Hold Fast the Faith," and contains such gems as the following:—

The cold faith of the scientist suits the cold scientific mind. It is not enough for men and women who want warmth and inspiration in their belief . . . When the average person loses his faith his world goes to pieces around him . . . There is where many men and women triumph over the scientist. They possess the peace which annoys him because it passeth understanding.

No, Mr. Editor not annoys, merely interests. Many of the cases he meets in asylums passes his understanding, but they do not annoy him. He is interested in them because his job is to try and follow the curious twists of their unbalanced intelligence. The editor does not quite understand the scientific mind—cold or hot.

The following piece from a sermon by a Scottish divine, Dr. Archibald Fleming, seems to indicate that he is in danger of straining his brain:—

The problem of prayer and its answer is difficult enough even as among the living, yet we go on praying. Can we wonder if it be equally perplexing as concerns the dead? Yet we feel that here, too, we needs must pray. But I am not sure that we can do much more than just pray that God will do what he sees best for them. If you say to me that surely we can trust him to do that in any case, I have no very ready answer, save this, that anyway, I think God likes us to pray thus, for at least it shows him a side of us that it gladdens him to see. And it is good for us to do it. It is good for us to imagine in how many different ways God may at this moment be doing his best for our dead.

Meanwhile, we have to assume that there are no pressing problems in this world on which Christians could exercise their imagination in solving. If there were, perhaps the Church would deserve thanks for keeping its adherents concerned about the spiritual, and therefore not hampering the efforts of men who might be endeavouring to solve the problems of this world.

What day in history, asks a religious paper, is known as the "Day of Dupes," and who were the dupes? That's an easy one. The "Day" was when a number of credulous folk were persuaded by some astute men that a God had appointed the clever ones—calling themselves priests—to rule over and guide them, and had ordained that the clever ones be provided with free food, shelter and clothing. The dupes were known as the Christian laity.

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F. J. CORINA.—Will try and bear the distinction in mind and not confound the persons of the duality, although we are glad to see that the substance is indivisible. Shall hope to see you when we visit Bradford at the end of the month.

T. WRIGHT.—Will bear your suggestion for a republication of our criticisms of Eddington, Julian Huxley, and other scientists. Please do not take it that we are questioning Professor Huxley's ability as a scientific workman. On that question we have no authority whatever. It is when he blunders in his understanding of scientific method, and draws clearly false conclusions from scientific results that our right to criticize arises.

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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 16) Mr. Cohen will lecture, afternoon at 3.0, and evening at 6.30, in the Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints Road, Manchester. His subjects will be, "The Origin of the Gods," and "How Man Discovered Himself." On Monday evening he will be

debating at Bolton with Canon Elliot, which will mean an early journey on Tuesday morning to see that week's issue of the *Freethinker* through the press.

A new work by Mr. Chapman Cohen, entitled *Opinions, A Book of Random Reflections and Wayside Sayings*, will be issued not later than the middle of January. The work consists of epigrams and reflections, which should make very lively and interesting reading. It will be well printed on superior paper, tastefully bound, and accompanied by a portrait of Mr. Cohen, for which he has just sat. The book will be quite suitable for either a Christmas or a New Year's gift, and as it covers questions of ethics, politics, science, as well as religion, should be suitable to all classes of readers other than Roman Catholic priests or Presbyterian parsons. The price will probably be 3s. 6d. Orders before publication will be discharged post free.

Another work issued, which will be issued by the Secular Society, Limited, is the third part of Mr. George Whitehead's *Religion and Psycho-Analysis*, entitled *Religion and Sex*. This consists of a booklet of about 96 pages, and will be published at ninepence, by post three half-pence extra. The three parts, forming the whole of the work, will be sent post free for 2s. 6d., or in one volume, 3s. 6d., by post 3s. 9d.

Unless we monopolize a whole issue of the *Freethinker* every now and again, it is impossible for us to deal with all we should like to deal with and at due length. For that reason we make a few brief notes on Sir James Jeans' latest work *The Mysterious Universe* (Cambridge Press, 3s. 6d.) leaving detailed treatment for another time. We are doing this because of the use made of it by the popular press, which has, in the desire to interest the less informed section of its readers, taken advantage of a few incautious expressions of Sir James, and used it to bolster up religious beliefs which the author would, we expect disown. It is only right to say that Sir James invites distortion of his meaning, and that kind of thing will go on until scientists properly understand the significance of their own generalizations, or cease to burden a scientific treatise with the jargon of the pulpit. We may say at once that the expository portions of *The Mysterious Universe* are, as one would expect, excellent. This is the more praiseworthy, as the general tendency is to present us with a picture of the universe around us in so many mathematical formulae, at which the mass of even educated readers can only stare and wonder. It can be read with interest and profit by that rather shadowy individual, the general reader, and we cordially commend it to all.

The most ignorant and the most unscrupulous exploitation of the position taken up by Sir James Jeans appears in the *Daily Express*, which, taking advantage of a poetical burst by Sir James, provides its readers with the headlines—on the front page—"The Book of Genesis Endorsed. Universe Made of Light Waves." That is about all large numbers will make of Sir James Jeans' book, and all the interest they will have in it. If Sir James happened to be fishing for the applause for unscrupulous newspaper editors and proprietors, and the approval of a number of ignorant religionists who will neither read his book or would understand it if they did, then he will have achieved his end. We hasten to say that we have not the slightest suspicion that this was the object of Sir James. What Sir James says is that the tendency of modern physics is to resolve the universe into waves, and wave energy to light, and that the process may be expressed "God said, 'Let there be light.'" But Genesis does not say this. It says God made the heavens and the earth, and afterwards, finding himself in the dark created light. It is a pity Sir James used the phrase. Perhaps he hoped for some lingering sparks of intellectual honesty in the Christian world.

The root of the trouble appears to be that Sir James has made a discovery that he ought to have made at the very beginning of his scientific career, but which the

vast majority of working scientists do not yet appear to have made. This discovery involves a principle which I have been emphasizing in these columns for over thirty years, and which is worked out in my *Materialism Restated*. This is that whether we talk about matter, or mind, or ether, or any other scientific generalization we are dealing with so many "fictions" which are created in order to provide us with a working model of the world around us. But this appears to be the last thing many scientists realize. They use certain tools all their lives, they apply them with a skill which commands our admiration, but as to the nature of the tools, exactly why they are made, or how they do the work they perform, they are very much in the dark. They are like a boy pressing a button that sets going some gigantic machinery at a distance. The consequence is that having mistaken scientific generalizations for more than they are, they are profoundly surprised when they stumble upon the nature of the truth. This is largely responsible for such stupidities as are put forward in the name of science by such men as Sir Oliver Lodge, or Professor Julian Huxley. We hope to deal with this work of Sir James Jeans at length, later, but at present we only desire to call attention to a really interesting little volume, and to put those of our readers who need the warning on their guard.

The Annual Dinner of the National Secular Society is fixed this year for Saturday, January 17. Last year the room in which the dinner was held was rather overcrowded. It will help to avoid this if those who intend being present will write the General Secretary as soon as possible. All that need be done just now is to say they intend being present. If circumstances necessitate an alteration in plans notice will be given. The tickets will be, as usual, 8s. each.

When the cremation of G. W. Foote took place at Ilford Crematorium in 1915, there existed no arrangements for placing in a Columbarium either an Urn or a tablet. A Columbarium has now been opened, and an Urn with suitable inscription has been placed therein. Some little opposition was raised by the Burial Board of the City of London, but this has now been overcome. But with less firmness on the part of the Executive of the N.S.S. this would not have been the case. Or with greater obstinacy on the part of the Burial Board the matter would have been brought before the courts. Happily the case has been settled amicably.

The Plymouth Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged a course of lectures for the winter season, the first of which will be delivered by Mr. A. D. McLaren. This is Mr. McLaren's first visit to Plymouth, and we hope that Freethinkers will do their best to see that the hall is well filled. Decidedly Mr. McLaren is a speaker who should not be missed. He is widely read, widely travelled, and a man whose ability should command the attention of all thoughtful minds. The lectures will be delivered in the Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street. The subjects will be, at 3.0, "The Mythical Christ"; at 7.0, "Why Believe in God?"

The Bethnal Green Branch made a successful start with their course of Sunday evening lectures to be held fortnightly at the Workers Circle, Great Alic Street, Aldgate E. Mr. R. H. Rosetti was the speaker, and an interesting evening appears to have been spent. We understand the *Freethinker* is now available to readers in the Metropolitan Borough of Bethnal Green Public Library.

No man dares say so much of what he thinks as to appear to himself an extremist.—G. Bernard Shaw.

Sir, there is no end of negative criticism.—Johnson.

We are not all equal, nor can we be so.—Goethe.

Science in the Ages of Faith.

AFTER the overthrow of Roman civilization, centuries rolled by before any cultural advance took place. In Christendom, until the year 1,000, serious endeavour was enervated by the dread that in that fateful year the world was doomed to destruction. But as the year passed peaceably away, and succeeding seasons witnessed no outward and visible signs of an impending Day of Wrath and Judgment, men manifested their sense of respite in various spheres of human activity.

The earliest Crusade to recover the lost land in which the Saviour was born, and taught, and died, was in 1,096. Presumably, both Church and laity by this time were assured of a continued earthly existence. And it was in the eleventh century that the first philosopher appeared who displayed any real independence of thought. Anselm of Canterbury, and his more intelligent contemporaries derived ideas from a few fragments of the ancient classics which had been preserved.

In the twelfth century, Abelard and his pupils strove to extend these fertilizing influences, and in small measure succeeded, despite the sullen antagonism of the Church. The Crusaders, returning from their barren conflict in the East, brought with them a widened outlook. Travelling students, again, who had sojourned in Moorish Spain, came home with enlarged sympathies. Through these and other channels, the ruder races of Christendom obtained their knowledge of the eminent thinkers of Pagan antiquity, and Plato and Aristotle, Galen and Hippocrates lived again in Western Europe.

Academies now arose in which the primitive science of the time was imparted. Cathedral colleges had been earlier attached to churches, by Charlemagne in which instruction in music and theology was given. The newly instituted universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Paris, began to attract scholars from every land in the West. But the scholastic doctrines favoured by the Church proved sadly detrimental to progress. Hidebound dogma was supreme, and any deviation from the beaten track was viewed with stern disfavour. The strictly limited freedom accorded the universities at their inception was soon surrendered. In the thirteenth century, when the criminal charge of heresy was hurled against all those who ventured to think for themselves, the recently created religious orders proved highly efficient agents of the orthodox cause in stamping out mental emancipation, and they ultimately secured complete control of religious teaching in the new seats of learning.

Thomas Aquinas, in several respects the most powerful intellect of Catholicism, was a true child of the thirteenth century, in which dark age the Church has dwelt theologically ever since. Aquinas attempted in his *Summa Theologiæ* to provide a complete repertory of thought on every matter relating to theology and philosophy. In this scheme the universe is separated into three kingdoms. These are Nature, blessedness, and grace. Grace and blessedness are strictly confined to the Christian faithful. Natural knowledge, however may be possessed by all men and no one has delved more deeply into the secrets of Nature than the heathen Aristotle. When in doubt concerning profane science, all that the true believer need do, is to consult Aristotle, whose pronouncements are final. The serious concern of God's children is with grace and blessedness. The first they may enjoy in this life, while the second will be their reward in heaven.

These strange doctrines were eagerly accepted and championed by the Church. Aristotle's teachings

became as authoritative as the Scriptures themselves. Stagnation in scientific research resulted, and supremely gifted men who might have furthered the world's advance, dedicated their lives to mad metaphysical speculations that gave rise to theories that completely suppressed all rational studies.

The four centuries' conflict between the Nominalists and Realists well illustrates scholastic futility. The former cited Aristotle as their guide; the latter appealed to Plato. The Nominalists maintained that there is nothing in the Universe of mind and matter but separate individualities. The Realists asserted that universal or abstract notions were not mere language symbols, but that they possessed objective existence. The Realists won the approval of the Church, but the battle went on, and raged with great violence. Nominalism suffered severely, and was on the verge of extinction, when it was successfully revived by William of Occam, whose ultimate victory was secured by his setting forth the real problem in clear and simple language.

The petrification of science which signaled the supremacy of the Church is powerfully illustrated by the barren state of the biological realm. A descriptive work appeared in the Early Middle Ages, which was little better than a collection of fantastic fictions relating to animal life. This production served the interests of the clergy, containing, as it did, many edifying stories of a pious cast. Long before the invention of printing, it appeared in several editions that enjoyed a wide circulation, and was translated into several tongues.

But even in those dark times, some there were who rejected the legends disseminated by the clergy. The work ascribed to the nun Hildegard, shows signs of improvement, while the treatise attributed to the Freethinking Emperor, Frederick II, breathes the spirit of modern science. Like a later rationalist, Frederick the Great, his thirteenth century namesake in his Italian kingdom, encouraged the company of the philosophers of the period. Under the Emperor's auspices Aristotle's writings were rendered into Latin, and the celebrated medical college at Salerno was instituted. In a treatise on falconry, which is still extant, Frederick describes in detail the structure of birds, and also rectifies errors contained in the Greek sage's anatomical writings. The Emperor fought a gallant battle with the inveterate obscurantism of the clergy, but when his progressive activities were ended by death, the Church ruthlessly destroyed the greater part of his educational handiwork. The arresting influence of the Church prohibited dissection, and the medical world was constrained to relinquish research, and once more blindly obey mere popular tradition.

Albertus Magnus was a born student, who early displayed a pronounced love for learning. Later in life he joined the Dominican Order. He obtained preferment, and became a bishop, but soon retired to the seclusion of a monastery and resumed his studious life. He was inflamed with the ambition to edit the Latin translation of Aristotle made by Michael Scotus, under the direction of the dead Frederick. Albertus was a voluminous writer, and extensively treats of theology and metaphysics. In physics he was eminent as a pioneer chemist, and appears to have been the earliest to prepare arsenic in a free state. In more spacious times Albert the Great would have been an outstanding investigator. As a naturalist, he accepts uncritically the dicta of Aristotle, and ignores the corrections made in his teachings by scientists who lived in Pagan antiquity. But in reawakening interest in the Grecian doctor's studies Albert's activities were distinctly useful.

Perhaps the most powerful philosophical mind of

the thirteenth century was that of Roger Bacon. A painstaking student, both at Oxford and Paris, Friar Bacon, as he afterwards became, proved one of the great forerunners of physical science. He was, however, far in front of the age in which his clouded life was cast. Tolerant in matters religious, he made himself envenomed foes. Hatred and jealousy combined to deprive him of his liberty, and he seems to have spent ten years of his life in an ecclesiastical prison.

Yet, apart from the malice of his enemies, the abject superstitions of the period made men afraid of Bacon's then amazing physical and chemical experiments. He was suspected and accused of the diabolical arts of necromancy, and wizardry, and was consequently prevented from prosecuting researches that might have led to far-reaching discoveries. It is, indeed, as an independent thinker that he stands with the world's great men. He repudiated dependence on mere authority, or popular prejudice and custom. He pitilessly scorned any pretence of knowledge that really masks ignorance. He was sufficiently a child of his age to cherish a belief in astrology, and to credit the potency ascribed to the philosopher's stone.

Bacon's chief invention is the magnifying glass. His views on optics were novel and ingenious, while his discoveries in chemistry were almost miraculous to his contemporaries. He ascertained in terms of experiment, for example, that sulphur, saltpetre and charcoal were highly explosive. Like Omar the poet, he rectified the calendar, and one of the treatises commonly attributed to Albertus Magnus may have been Bacon's.

Experiment he regarded as the lifeblood of science. Utterly opposed, as this principle was to the theories of the Schoolmen, its enunciation intensified the antagonism with which his scientific proclivities were confronted. Moreover, his brother friars regarded his superiority with feelings of envy and resentment, and were only too eager to blacken his name.

But the time was approaching when the travels of Marco Polo; the adventures and discoveries of the Portuguese navigators; the landing in a new world by Columbus; with other epoch-making events, hastened the advent of the Renaissance adorned with all its splendours in art, science, and letters that were closely associated with a spirit of humanism unknown in Christian Europe since the eclipse of the classic age.

T. F. PALMER.

The Crazy Poet.

*I heard poor Tom o' Bedlam sing;
Cracked was his crown,
But what he sang I jotted down.*

BECAUSE the world doth laugh, I smile,
Remembering
That in a little while
These simple songs I sing
Will ring like anthems through Time's vaulted
aisle:

Because the world doth laugh, I smile.

Because the sun doth shine, I sing;
Each happy song,
Well worth remembering,
A prince among the throng:
The laureate may sing to please a king;
Because the sun doth shine, I sing.

*His loss of wits we must, of course, deplore,
But are we really right to call him poor.*

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The Dialogues of Dimple and Dad

(4)—FREE-WILL.

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: Does God know everything, Dad?

Rev. V.: Yes, Dimple. God is omniscient.

D.: Everything 'bout everything that ever was?

V.: Everything, Dimple, about all that ever was and is and will be.

D.: Gee! How dull!

V.: Why—what do you mean?

D.: Well, He'll never get any s'prises, Dad.

The Rev. Veriwyse curbs a chuckle and looks benignly over his pince-nez at his offspring. Having no useful comment to make, he remains silent.

D.: Does God know what I'm going to say next, Dad?

V.: Certainly, Dimple.

D.: Could He alter what I'm going to say, if He wanted to?

V.: Of course He could.

D.: Then how can He know what I'm going to say next if He hasn't made up His own mind 'bout it already?

The Rev. Veriwyse looks somewhat puzzled. After a moment's reflection, however, he thinks he has found a way out of the difficulty.

V.: Ah, but you haven't got it quite right, Dimple. It isn't God who changes His mind. He knows from the first what our words will be. You may think you have changed what you intended to say, but God knows all along what you were really going to say.

D.: I see, Dad. I only think I change my mind, but God has got it fixed what I'm going to say before I say it.

V.: Quite right, Dimple.

D.: Then God *can't* change what I'm going to say next.

The Rev. Veriwyse glances doubtfully over his pince-nez. His colour is rising and a frown threatens to ruffle the placid surface of his normally smooth brow.

V.: "Can't" is hardly the word, Dimple. God is omnipotent as well as omniscient; and whatever He chooses to do, so shall it come to pass.

D.: "Chooses" is hardly the word, Dad, if He knows everything ahead of when it happens.

V.: (*testily*) Really, Dimple! You're talking about things you haven't the least idea about.

D.: (*meekly*) That's why I'm asking you 'bout them, Dad.

V.: (*pacified*) Well, there's no harm in that. But these matters are mysteries even to the wisest among us, Dimple. And even I, though I have studied these questions deeply, would not venture to be dogmatic. They are things which, doubtless in the fullness of time, will be revealed to all of us.

D.: I see, Dad. What you mean is that you don't know any more 'bout it than I do.

The Rev. Veriwyse, despite his usual good-nature, is quite pink about the gills now. He coughs once or twice, jerkily changes his position in his chair, looks with increasing suspicion at his son and then, for lack of anything pertinent to say, returns to the perusal of his book. Five minutes elapses before he is again addressed.

D.: Dad!

V.: Yes, Dimple.

D.: If God has 'ranged all 'bout what you and I say, He must have 'ranged the way you answer my questions.

V.: Er—yes—I suppose so.

D.: Then it's Him answering me really, isn't it?

V.: (*flattered*) Ahem—h'm! Er—yes—I suppose one might almost say something of the sort.

D.: Well then, Dad, I think His answers is pretty soppy.

V.: (*flattened*) Dimple! Well I never—really! you—you—

D.: I mean, Dad, if God knows what I'm going to ask and what you're going to answer, He might have made us *both* more sensible, mightn't He? No kidding, Dad—mightn't He?

V.: We have no right to question God's will or actions, Dimple. He knows far better than anyone what is best for all of us, and probably there are many things that He doesn't wish us to know just yet.

D.: Then why does He make me ask you 'bout them, Dad?

V.: He doesn't *make* us ask questions, Dimple. He has endowed all His children with the inestimable boon of Free-will, and we are at liberty to use our Free-will in choosing what we shall say or do—er—that is—within limits. The whole problem of Determinism versus Free-will is one of those intricate questions of philosophy which have puzzled the minds of the astutest thinkers of all time. But there isn't the least doubt that we can choose—as I said, within limits—to say and do the things which—er—which—well, which we choose to say or do of our own free-will.

D.: Thank you, Dad. The whole thing is *perfectly* clear to me now. (*For a while the boy seems buried in thought. Then suddenly he heaves a terrific sigh.*) Oh, dear!

V.: Why, what's the matter, Dimple?

D.: I wish I hadn't got a Free-wheel!

V.: Te-hee! Er—hrrmph! My dear child, you ought to be thankful for it. Just think what a terrible thing it would be if we all acted under compulsion and could never choose what we wanted to do.

D.: But if I can really choose one way or tother, then God can't possibly know which way I'm going to choose until I've choosed. If He *does* know beforehand, then it's all fixed, and my Free-wheel is just tommy-rot.

V.: My dear boy, as I told you before, these are matters upon which we have no right to pass judgment. Don't you remember what the Bible says, "For now we see through a dark glass—er—I mean—through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known." When you're older, Dimple, you will understand a lot more than you do now.

Other dialogues have shown with what little respect Dimple receives this oft-reiterated admonition. He grins knowingly at his reverend sire and then settles down into a temporary, yet ominous, quietude.

D.: Dad?

V.: Yes, Dimple.

D.: S'posing—just for a second. I mean—s'posing we left God out of it for a bit, just *s'posing* we do—only *s'posing*.

V.: Well?

D.: There'd be no Free-wheels then, would there?

V.: Quite right. We would all be acting under compulsion. That is to say, all our actions would be conditioned by previous circumstances.

D.: What's previous cir—circuses, Dad?

V.: Ha-ha! Ha-ha! (*To himself*; I must really

jot that down in my note-book.) Well, it's like this. If you were to offer me a pen or a pencil, I would choose the pencil, because I have plenty of pens and very few pencils. Having the pens and not having the pencils are the circumstances which are previous, because they come before my choice and are the causes of it.

D.: And if you had a free-wheel, you'd choose the pen?

V.: Yes—er—no! Of course not.

D.: Then what's the diff'rence?

V.: Well—er—well, let's see. I'll put it in another way. You know the difference between right and wrong, don't you, Dimple?

D.: Sometimes, Dad.

V.: And sometimes you choose to do wrong even though you know what would be right, don't you?

D.: Sometimes, Dad.

V.: Well, there you are!

D.: Where, Dad?

V.: I mean—don't you see—it's because you have free-will that you are able to choose even against your better knowledge.

D.: Then I don't want no free-wheels, Dad. If my free-wheel makes me choose wrong, I don't want it.

V.: But it also gives you the opportunity of choosing aright.

D.: Then why do I ever choose wrong, Dad?

V.: You ought to now that, Dimple. I'm sure I don't.

D.: Well, Dad, s'prising as it may seem to you, I do know.

V.: Oh, indeed!

D.: Yes, indeed. And what's more, I'll tell you. I choose wrong 'cos of—'cos of—devious circuses. And God has *nothing* to do with it.

At this critical juncture, fortunately for our young Freethinker, the dinner-bell rings. The Rev. Veriwyse jumps up with alacrity and asperity, 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 out a couple of monkeys from amongst his animals and puts them down in front of the lion. "That reminds me," he murmurs; and sweeping his toys into the Ark, he rises from the floor.

D.: Dad!

V.: Yes, Dimple.

D.: Once 'pon a time a huge big lion with a free-wheel caught two little monkeys. (Pause.)

V.: Oh! Poor things. What happened to them?

D.: Not so poor, Dad. They were both nice and plump. And since Mr. Lion was dreadfully hungry, he was looking forward to a 'licious meal. (Pause.)

V.: Well?

D.: But the monkeys was both so 'zackly alike that poor Mr. Lion couldn't make up his mind which to begin on. (Pause.)

V.: Well? Which monkey did he choose in the end?

D.: I just told you, Dad.

V.: No, you haven't.

D.: I told you the monkeys was both so 'zactly alike that he didn't know *which* to choose.

V.: Well, what happened?

D.: Poor old Mr. Lion just died of hunger, Dad.

C. S. FRASER.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

BIRTH CONTROL AND PUBLIC OPINION.

SIR,—In your issue of November 2, the writer of "Sugar Plums" says: "The battle for birth control is practically won."

In any country except England such a statement would be ludicrous beyond belief. In France the preaching of birth control is a serious crime, and several propagandists have lately been punished. In Italy it is a crime, which Mussolini uses every effort to punish. In Germany it is not yet a crime, but Hitler has announced that part of his programme is "Prison with hard labour for advocates of birth control, and for all sellers and buyers of contraceptives." In the United States and Japan it is a crime, and frequently punished. Nearly all other countries are in the same position.

In England the preaching of birth control by contraception is now fairly free, although a few weeks ago a well-known medical manual on birth control was seized by the police of Chichester. The other form of birth control, however—by abortion—is more severely punished in England than in almost any other country. In Russia and Esthonia it has been legalized, and in many countries the agitation in its favour is so strong that the law has become a dead letter. In England, however, it is still regarded with horror, largely by Freethinkers, who oppose it with the Christian arguments at which Plato and Aristotle would have smiled. In the Conference of the World League for Sexual Reform, held last year in London, nine speakers advocated the legalization of abortion, but only two of them were English.

Even as regards contraception, we shall be wise not to go to sleep in England. Twenty years ago anyone who had said that contraception would ever be a crime in France would have been called a lunatic. So long as the working classes understand the population question as little as they do, while Mussolini and Hitler and their English equivalents understand it thoroughly, there will be danger of reaction.

R. B. KERR.

[Our comments were, of course, concerned with the question of Birth Control in England, and expressed the opinion that no great courage was required to advocate it to-day. We quite agree that watchfulness and continued propaganda is necessary.—EDITOR.]

Society News.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S.

THE Co-operative Society's Hall was comfortably filled last Sunday to hear Mr. B. A. Le Maine lecture on "Christianity and Mithraism." The West London Branch Secretary proved very interesting to his audience, and after dealing with his subject in a most thorough manner, invited many questions. This Sunday (November 16) the speaker will be Mr. Eustace Steele, and his subject will be "The Religion of an Odd Fellow." Mr. Steele is well known in Fulham, and we trust our friends will see to it, that he has a good meeting.—A.J.M.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

As a change from the usual serious propaganda style of address, the Conway Hall meeting on Sunday evening was given a series of lively recitations on Freethought, by that veteran of the movement, Mr. A. H. Hyatt. For about one and a half hours the audience was kept interested and amused, and constantly showed their appreciation by rounds of applause. The meetings this year, of which last Sunday's was the fifth, have filled the hall to capacity, and there is every indication that the session is going to be a great success. Councillor H. A. Savory took the chair, and after the conclusion there was a considerable demand for the Freethought literature on sale in the hall.—C.E.W.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S.

A BIG step forward in the direction of securing games and entertainments has been taken in Bradford as a result of the activity of the local Branch of the N.S.S. during the municipal elections. A questionnaire was sent out to every candidate, and to party headquarters, testing them on the three points—Sunday games in public parks; Sunday opening of art galleries and museums, and Sunday opening of cinemas and theatres. Not all the candidates had the courtesy to reply, but many of them did so, and, as the answers show, it is apparent that there is on the City Council a strong section of supporters among the newly-elected members. Two thirds of the Council, of course (those who were not defending their seats) have not been tested, and it is possible that the Sunday movement might find its position stronger than is hoped when the issue is forced.

That the issue will be forced is certain, for the society has received a promise from a member of the Council that he will raise the question early in the new year.

The Bradford Free Church Council, by the way, evidently received a severe shaking up by the Secular Society's activity, and after the publication of the questionnaire in *The Yorkshire Observer*, they made a screamingly illogical appeal to electors, in a letter to the Editor, to vote against candidates who were supporting the questionnaire. Their letter, however, was effectively answered by Mr. T. W. Green (Secretary of the Bradford Branch) and the general effect of the correspondence could only have been to strengthen the Secularist case in the eyes of intelligent people.

"God is Love?"

MEN say His love enfolds us all,
His mercy's Infinite!
He watches every sparrow fall,
He sleeps not day or night.

Creation preys upon itself;
They say He knows, and hears
The cries of stricken birds and beasts,
The sounds of pain and fear.

They'd have us think that we should cry
To Him for grace and strength.
But all the prayers of hungry men
Remain unanswered yet!

If God there be, where is His love,
Where is his mercy then?
Like Thomas I must see the marks
Before I'll worship Him!

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.

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. Wood 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.

INDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (London Co-operative Society's Hall, 249 Dawes Road, Fulham): 7.30, Mr. Eustace Steele—"The Religion of an Odd Fellow."

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (The Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): 7.45, Wednesday, November 19, Mr. W. Elson—"What is Individualism?"

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. J. Katz, B.A.—"The Quest for Certainty."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road): 7.15, Mrs. J. Chance—"The Value of the Diety as a Humane Weapon."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY—Social and Dance at 101 Tottenham Court Road, on Thursday, November 20, 8.0 to 11.30. Admission 1s. 3d.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, facing Cattle Market): 7.30, Debate—"That Capitalism is a Two Class Society." *Affir.*: Mrs. B. Taylor; *Neg.*: Mr. C. E. Ratchiffe.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"Unemployment as a Moral Problem."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Robert Arch—"The Universe Around Us."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square): 7.30, Mr. F. J. Gould, Hon. Associate R.P.A.—"How the Second Century Created Jesus."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—City (Albion Street) Hall, 6.30, Mrs. Alice M. Hicks (London)—"Parenthood by Choice or Compulsion." Ramble from Spiers Bridge, leaving 10.30 a.m. prompt.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Bridge Street, Bolton): A Debate between Canon Spencer Elliott, M.A., Vicar of Bolton, and Mr. Chapman Cohen, Editor of the *Freethinker*, on Monday, November 17, at 7.30, subject—"Will Secularism Benefit Humanity?" Proceeds for the Bolton Infirmary. Tickets 1s. and 6d.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.0, Mr. Thomas Sutcliffe—"Shelley."

BURNLEY S.D.F., St. James' Hall, at 11.0, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Basis of Religion."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Club Rooms, Front Street): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Materialism and What It Means." Chairman, Mr. T. Birtley.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. A. Blain of Manchester—"What is Zionism?" and "The Balfour Declaration Question." Questions and Discussion.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): Sunday, November 16, at 7, Mr. F. Biddle (President of the International Society of Rationalists and Secretary of the British Occidental Society) "Psychology and Religion." Doors open 6.30. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Harry Snell, M.P.—"Great Britain and the Palestine Mandate."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints, Manchester): Mr. Chapman Cohen, Editor of the *Freethinker* and President of the N.S.S., will lecture at 3.0, subject—"The Origin of the Gods"; at 6.30, subject—"How Man Discovered Himself." Admission Free.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, Forbes Place): 7.0, Mr. J. K. Oliphant—"After Death, What?" Wednesday, November 19, Branch Meeting at 7.30, in the same Hall.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street entrance): 3.0, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"The Mythical Christ"; 7.0, "Why Believe in God?"

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Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Secretary: MR. R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

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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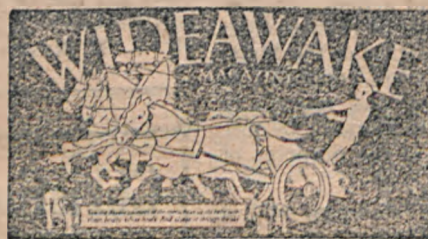
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