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

Views and Opinions

Christian Truth

We all know there is something that goes by the name of Christian Truth. It is, of course, not of the same kind or character as truth in science, philosophy or everyday life. If it were, the distinguishing adjective would be unnecessary. Ordinary truth is good enough for all, and is the same for all. If we speak of a scientific truth we mean no more than that it is a truth discovered by scientific methods. Once discovered it is a truth for all. Christian Truth has, however, a peculiar quality. It is distinctive of Christianity. No, that is going too far, for it need not be true for all the Churches. A Roman Catholic truth may be a lie to a Protestant, Presbyterian truth a lie to a Methodist, and so forth. A Christian truth stands for itself by itself. It is a truth that requires a miracle for its birth and a mixture of credulity and impudence for its continuance.

The second of these qualities was well to the front in the course of an interview which a representative of the *Daily Mail* recently had with the Right Rev. Paul Fulcrand de Labillere, Dean of Westminster, and the Dean probably hoped for the first ingredient to be supplied by the general public. The interview was concerned with the reciprocal influence of the war and Christianity. The Dean was careful not to dwell upon the influence of Christianity. To do so would have been dangerous. It might have suggested to some that, after all, the countries now at war have been Christian for many centuries, the churches have enjoyed great power, they have been until yesterday very powerful in statecraft, education, and general control of life. And now Christian leaders are telling us that civilization is fighting for its existence, and the outcome is none too certain. The situation does not contain a very powerful testimonial to the uplifting character of Christian influences. Even war itself has tended to become more brutal and more devastating. The thoughtful onlooker might well ask whether we should or could have been in a worse posi-

tion if Christianity had never existed and if the evolution of thought and life had been continuous from the days of Greek culture and the rule of the Roman Empire. The world might easily have been better. It could not well have been worse.

* * *

The War and the Churches

Asked by the interviewer whether the war would lead to a Christian revival the Dean replied:

I am quite sure the war will not produce that. On the other hand it may produce great sacred literature.

Note the quality of the Dean's mind. The war will not lead to a revival of Christianity, but it may lead to a great "sacred" literature. If the sacred literature does not arrive the Dean will say he is not disappointed. If it does arrive the Dean is ready with "I told you so, let us thank God"—the Christian God. He is like a sporting tipster who names every horse in a race as likely to win and then says "I told you what would win."

The interviewer had another try. "Do you think the ideas of war and Christianity incompatible?" The Dean was equal to the occasion. "Of course war is contrary to the whole outlook of our Lord. But let us be realistic in these things. . . . When we have attained a Christian world such a question would be unnecessary. But when we are up against paganism and barbarism . . . there can be no alternative but to meet such ideas on their own ground."

There it is! As clear as the Athanasian creed, as convincing as Joseph's warranty of the parentage of Mary's child. Christianity is against war, but when the world has become Christian there will be no more war. We seem to see here an echo of Hitler. When Germany is on top of the world, and the said world acts according to the wishes of Germany, then war will be at an end. Meanwhile we are left wondering in what way Christianity can bring world peace? From the Dean's statement all that one can gather is that when universal peace is established by non-Christian methods then the Christian Churches will be ready to step in and claim credit for what has been accomplished. It is what we may call the Christian method of living on unearned increment.

* * *

The Church and the Public

But let us be fair to the Dean. He believes that

these are days when the great Christian values are coming into their own in England, in the hearts of those willing to admit them. Look around and see what we are fighting for, and what it means to the ordinary man—freedom of speech, of thought, of conscience; the idea of fellowship among men and nations and an essential unity of good purpose.

I should have been accused of unfairness if I had left out this statement of *Christian* values, but they put

the Dean in rather a bad light. Let us assume—but only assume—that the Dean is a believer in freedom of speech, etc., etc.; he must still, as a Christian priest, hold that all the things named are dependent on belief in Christian doctrines. His teaching *must* be that, given the belief in Jesus, in heaven, in God, and so forth, all the other things will follow. But, if he said this, the falsity of it would be so glaring that not even the most rabid of educated Christians could make the claim without blushing. For it is as clear as daylight that the things named by the Dean do not follow from Christianity, even though we may grant that, up to a point, many Christians support them. Would the Dean say that he agrees with the absolute equality before the law of all opinions concerning religion? If his answer is yes, it would mean the disestablishment of all religion, the abolition of Bishops in the House of Lords, the sacrifice of the many millions given by the State every year in the shape of remission of rates and taxes, the abolition of the blasphemy laws and the teaching of religion in State schools, the liability of all clergymen to conscription for military service, and the abolition of all sabbatarian laws and regulations. Such statements as those made by the Dean are all very well in the *Daily Mail*, for that paper will guard him against drastic criticism; but as they stand, no man ever compressed into a few lines so much falsity and so many double-dealing terms. If the Dean really meant what his words imply, there would be a vacancy in Westminster.

The Dean has a word concerning Conscientious Objectors. He suggests that they should volunteer for service in minesweepers since that would not mean they would be engaged in taking life. I have myself considerable respect for anyone who stands up for an opinion, quite independent of the value of the opinion that is held. Freedom of thought does not consist in holding a right opinion, but upon a man being free to hold a wrong one; and while I give full respect to the expression of opinion, I say of the law concerning conscientious objections to war exactly what I said in the last war. There are two logical ways of raising an army, these are by conscription and by voluntarism. We have chosen the former, and I am not going to discuss it. But I do say that to pass a law binding upon the people, and then say "if you object to this law you need not obey it," is neither one thing nor another. It is an unredeemed absurdity. On many occasions the conscientious objector has to pay for his courage, and he will have to pay for it under most circumstances. That is the penalty that independent opinion has always paid, and Dean Labillere's religion has done more than any other to make men pay dearly for mental independence.

As to the suggestion of minesweepers, that is a stupid insult. As I understand conscientious objectors, what they object to is settling international difficulties by war, and when a man is on a minesweeper, even if he is there as cook or cabin boy, he is carrying on the war. It is just *idioty* to imagine that anyone in this or any other country can stand apart from the war. If they grow corn, or make boots, or clothes, and can even see to it that these things are not used by soldiers, they are saving that amount of labour for purely military purposes. Everybody in the nation, from the babe to the greybeard must suffer or benefit from the war. A man proves that he has moral courage when he stands aloof and takes his punishment for showing his independence. And even though we may believe him to be wrong, that devotion to the principle of mental independence is of supreme value, and was never more so than to-day.

But I do know one exemption from conscription that is socially indefensible. That is the order to which the Dean of Westminster belongs. Is there any

reason at all why ministers of religion should be exempted from military service? We no longer believe that the magic of the medicine-man will bring victory. No general really places any great value upon whatever prayers are offered for the defeat of the enemy. Our leaders in this country do not point to the fine body of efficient parsons we have, but to the ships, the money, the munitions we have. Why exempt the clergy, or, if the Dean really believes that the profession of a soldier is not suitable for a parson, let him advise *them* to go in minesweepers? But it ill becomes a member of a class that is guarded by law against conscription to offer a stupid alternative to the few who have an opinion and value it.

I know there are a number of clerics who have actually enlisted in the active army. I am not foolish enough to believe that the parsonry are made up of cowards. I do not believe in the clergy, and therefore I expect them to show just the same average of cowards and courageous men that is found elsewhere. But I do object to ministers of religion in this country being lifted outside of a law which applies to every citizen, and with no better justification than that they are carrying on a trade that has its origin in the benumbed brain of primitive man.

* * *

Religion and Morals

There is another, but kindred matter, on which I will say a word. The *Schoolmaster* for April 18 says that:—

The discussion on the unhappy *Times* agitation on religion in schools is developing into a discussion on religion. This was bound to happen. The complaints of religionists about the decline of religion is in such startling contrast with the obvious improvement in morals and manners of the nation that the dichotomy was bound to be noticed. I see that after the recent Easter Bank Holiday merrymakings on Hampstead Heath no person was charged at the local police court. . . . And I hear on all hands that the behaviour and bearing of the recruits to the Army as they travel about in trains and buses is exciting great admiration.

It will be seen that the parson and the schoolmaster join hands, and the combination casts a slur on the schools of the country. We are living in 1940, the modern theory of evolution has been before the world for nearly a century. It is accepted by scientists all over the world, and its bearing on moral and social evolution is known and well understood. And here is a journal that claims to represent the teachers of this country calmly trying to disprove the statement that there is a decline of religion by saying that the manners and morals of the people are greatly improved. They have, and the improvement has kept pace with the decline of religious belief. The teacher who does not know this, or who is guilty of the confusion of two such things as religion and morals ought to give up his job and turn to an occupation where the moral responsibility is less and the opportunities for harm are few. Imagine a number of boys and girls leaving school without any knowledge that religion and morality develop from different stems, and who cannot distinguish one from the other! Again, as with the clergy, I do not look on teachers as being different or of a higher type than the people who are found elsewhere. I only say it is a sad, even a dangerous, thing when teachers are represented to the public by a paper that can write as the *Schoolmaster* does in the passage I have cited. The brighter side of the picture is that among my teacher acquaintances and friends I know there are many who will smile at the passage. But it is bad when the medicine-men deliberately say one thing and mean another, and when a paper that claims to represent the teaching

fraternity plays second fiddle to them. They should remember the words of Kingdon Clifford, "Keep your children away from the priest, or he will make them the enemies of mankind."

I would like to see all teachers, male and female, carry that lesson deeply in their minds. I am quite sure their teaching would be the better, and their pupils more richly equipped for life.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Soldiers and Literature

I do not know if I am entitled to a laurel-wreath, but lay on my coffin a sword, for I was a brave soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity.—Heine.

Books on militarism are as thick as "leaves in Val-lombrosa," but among the tens of thousands of works on this subject it is the rarest thing to find good battle-writing. Soldiers are usually men of action, and do not often possess literary gifts. When Sir Walter Scott decided to write an eulogistic poem on the rousing subject of the battle of Waterloo he applied to the Duke of Wellington for really accurate information, and a few touches of local colour on the subject. After several attempts the Duke did answer: "All I know is that it was a damned near thing." So Sir Walter wrote his rousing, patriotic poem without the British Commander-in-Chief's assistance. Julius Cæsar was a first-rate general, but his famous "Commentaries" do not compare with the purely imaginative passages in Homer's *Iliad*, where the records of high courage lift the mind as mountain air refreshes the body. Shakespeare, too, has reproduced "the vasty fields of France" and "the casques that did affright the air at Agincourt," but the creator of bluff Jack Falstaff and brave Prince Hal was himself no soldier, and knew more of inns than he did of battlefields. Yet how potent was his art, and with what gusto does he portray Brutus, Cæsar, Cassius, and Othello. Recall the high courage and habit of command of the gallant Moor when he intervenes in the fight:—

Lower your bright swords, gentlemen, or the dew will rust there.

And remember also the dignified farewell of Brutus to Cassius:—

If we should meet again, it will be well,
If not, this parting is well made.

Thackeray, who viewed life from a West-End club window, has some notable military portraits in his novels, the best being Colonel Newcome, but they are all similar to those retired warriors who strut along the sweet, shady side of Pall Mall, worthy men, but dull.

Laurence Sterne was of sedentary habits, and knew no more of war's horrors than a spinster, but he eclipsed most of his rivals with his superb characterization of that lovable old veteran, Uncle Toby. Charles Lever, who filled his pages with warriors of the Peninsular War, was a consul, but how cleverly does he describe the deeds, humorous and otherwise, of soldiers on service. Seton Merriman, a novelist of yesterday, who painted that unforgettable picture of the Napoleonic *Barlasch* of the Guard, was an underwriter at Lloyds. Stephen Crane, the young American, who wrote the "Red Badge of Courage" was in ill health, but Ambrose Bierce, whose collection of short stories, *In the Midst of Life*, is as fine as anything by Daudet or Maupassant, was a brave soldier, who fought in two campaigns. Rudyard Kipling was a civilian, but he possessed genius, and his pictures of the Anglo-

Indian soldiers are as perfect as his vignettes of the quiet Sussex scenery which he so loved and commemorated. For riotous humour, *The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney* could not be bettered, whilst *Soldiers Three* and *Gunga Din* show another facet of his brilliant art. Whatever faults Kipling may have had, he possessed one supreme merit. He helped to make India a reality to dwellers in other English-speaking countries. This was no mean achievement.

It is, however, to grand old Alexander Dumas that we must go for the most dashing and dare-devil soldiers who ever emerged from the printed page. *The Three Musketeers* have captured the imagination of boys of all ages, and their admirers would make an army strong enough to conquer the world. But Dumas was one of the greatest of story-tellers, as all who have read *Monte Cristo* can testify. He had a pretty wit in private life. His son lived in a house with a very tiny garden. "Open the back door and give the garden a little air," he advised. But the old spendthrift's last joke was his best. Whilst dying he said to his son: "They will tell you that your father wasted money, my boy. I came to Paris forty years ago with five francs in my pocket. They are now on the mantelpiece."

One of the really great books of the world contains the best of all portraits of soldiers. Cervantes may have originally intended, in portraying Don Quixote, to laugh "chivalry" out of Europe, but the character ran away with its creator, and the old Don becomes a tragic rather than a comic figure. As the book proceeds Don Quixote becomes less eccentric, mellow, less an object of irony, so that he has become a world-figure. To-day the word "Quixotic" is applied everywhere to whatever is gallant and foolish, an epithet which reflects the measure of affection and pity in which the old Don is everywhere held. The book meant for laughter comes very near tears, whilst it remains one of the wisest and wittiest of all romances. As for Sancho Panza, what wonderful things come from his lips. "Blessed be the man who invented sleep," is one; and "All cannot live in the palace, but all can enjoy the sunshine," is another. Brave old Cervantes certainly knew the book of the world no less than the world of books, and therein lies the secret of his universal popularity.

There has always been Quixotism in this world of ours, and, fortunately, for all of us, some of it has been devoted to far nobler and more worthy ends than chivalry, which Gibbon said, acidly, was dedicated to "god and to the ladies." Recall Byron hurrying across Europe to find a hero's grave in the cause of Greek Independence. Think of young Shelley, who devoted the whole of his too-short manhood to humanity. Remember Elizabeth Browning at Casa Guidi windows, her eyes alight, watching the Italian patriots. And consider the tremendous struggle for a free press, extending over many years, and involving courage as rare as any that is to be found in human annals. In this struggle Richard Carlile and his colleagues endured 50 years' imprisonment, besides being fined heavily. In a similar struggle Charles Bradlaugh suffered defeat after defeat for sixteen long years in a battle which was Homeric in its intensity, and his dying ear never caught the sound of his triumph, a tragic boon which was not denied to Wolfe at Quebec, or to Nelson on the shot-riven "Victory." G. W. Foote, too, had to listen to the mocking voice of the Roman Catholic judge telling him he had devoted his great talents to the service of the Devil. Were not these men the soldiers of liberty? They were heroes without the laurels, conquerors without the jubilation of victory. For in their hours of apparent failure these men had actually triumphed. Thanks to their courage and their devotion, heterodoxy is no longer the danger it

was to the citizen. Through the bigotries and prejudices of our time they have forced an opening large enough for heretics to pass through, and, in many directions, our lives are fuller and better because of their lifework. The bare records of the doings of these pioneers thrill and fascinate by very reason of their honesty and simplicity. By giving their best to the service of intellectual liberty, they helped to lay the deep foundations of the future greatness of the human race.

MIMNERMUS

Polynesian Mystery and Beauty

THE many archipelagoes scattered over an immense area in the Pacific Ocean, world famous under the name of Polynesia, are replete with interest and instruction. These isles embrace the Tonga or Friendly Archipelago, Samoa, the Hervey and Society Islands (Tahiti), and various others, while isolated in the vast Pacific stands Easter Island with its gigantic monuments, whose origin and history remain the great enigma of island life.

Stranded in our earth's deepest ocean, 1,400 miles from the Pitcairn, and more than 2,000 from the shores of South America, and nearly as far from the island Rapa, from which its present population is supposed to have migrated, Easter Island is the solitary outpost of the whole Pacific group. It is small in size, with a major diameter of thirteen miles only, and volcanic in character, as its extinct fire mountains prove. The island's soil consists entirely of decomposed lava and is highly fertile. Running streams are absent, but a few springs supply water. The lonely island is treeless, the only vegetation attaining heights of ten or twelve feet consists of Hibiscus bushes and kindred plants. Yet, dead and decayed tree trunks and the wooden appliances possessed by the present natives indicate an earlier abundance of floral life.

Discovered on Easter Day by Roggewein in 1721 and later explored by Captain Cook and La Pérouse in their celebrated voyages, the latter composed an instructive account of the weird and wonderful statuary for which the island is so famous. It is estimated that the natives then totalled 3,000, but these numbers were seriously reduced in 1863 by the shameful conduct of Peruvian navigators who landed on its shores. The crews of these foreign vessels seized every inhabitant they encountered and then shipped them to the guano diggings on Chincha Island, where most of them perished. Indeed, in 1901 only about 100 Easter Islanders survived. Prepossessing in appearance and amiable in disposition, the survivors have been converted to Catholicism by a Jesuit mission. Agriculture is conducted under European supervision and several different crops are cultivated. Livestock is said to be abundant, and, despite the island's small area of 45 square miles, some years since it contained 18,000 cattle, 20,000 sheep and 70 horses. Even if these figures are excessive, there is no question that at the beginning of the present century domesticated animals were numerous in Easter Island.

Every endeavour to ascertain the identity of the prehistoric people who erected the immense monuments for which Easter Island is renowned has proved abortive. It is true that Professor Perry and his colleagues have contended that these stupendous structures were probably raised by early Egyptian voyagers, but this conjecture lacks proof. But, be this as it may, the ruins and remains include stone dwellings, and sculptures of a religious character

created on a colossal scale. Several observers have described these megalithic memorials. Captain Cook and La Pérouse recorded their existence, while more recent accounts are those of Palmer in 1870 and Captain Barelay and his companions in 1899.

Nearly 100 stone houses with their entrances facing the ocean stand at the south west of the island. "The walls," it is stated, "are five feet thick, and five and a half feet high, built of irregular flat stones, but lined inside with upright flat slabs. The upright slabs inside are painted in red, black, and white, with figures of birds, faces, mythical animals and geometric figures. Great quantities of univalve shells were found in many of the dwellings, and in one of them a statue, eight feet high and weighing four tons, now in the British Museum. Near these houses, the rocks on the brinks of the sea cliffs are carved into strange shapes. There are hundreds of these sculptures, often overgrown with bushes and grass."

But even more astounding are the statues and pedestals that have been erected on the headlands encircling the island, all nearly in a state of ruin. To the waves of the sea enormous platforms are presented with walls a score or thirty feet high and ranging from 200 to 300 feet in length. Built of massive stones sometimes six feet long, they are skilfully fitted together with no trace of cement, while terraces of steps of enormous breadth look landwards. "On the platforms," writes Dr. Guillemard, "there are slabs serving as pedestals to the images that once stood upon them, but which have been thrown down in all directions and more or less mutilated. One of the most perfect of the platforms had fifteen images on it. . . . The usual size of these statues was usually 15 to 18 feet high, but some were as much as 37 feet, while others are only four or five."

The head of the statues is flat, the top being levelled to permit the placing of a crown. These coronals were made of red volcanic stuff, taken from a crater a few miles distant from the structures. At this site, a quarter of a century since, thirty coronals were still awaiting removal to their intended destination. Some of these gigantic coronals were ten and a half feet in diameter. The images themselves were composed of material found at a crater eight miles distant from the crown quarry. Adjoining this crater stands an immense platform with several giant statues still erect, all the others in the island having been thrown down. "The face and neck of one of these images measures twenty feet to the collar-bone and is in good preservation. The faces of these statues are square, massive and disdainful in expression. The lips are remarkably thin—the upper lip being short and the lower lip thrust up. The eye sockets are deep and it is believed that eyeballs of obsidian were formerly inserted."

The present natives can throw no light on the origin of these memorials. They treasure small figures carved in hard wood, apparently ancient, but the features of these carvings are quite different to those of the statues. Wooden tablets have also been found that are inscribed with strange hieroglyphics and these, like the mysterious monuments, are evidently the handiwork of some long-forgotten race.

Their manner of construction can only be conjectured, but a long pebble chiselled at the edge has been considered the chief instrument employed in erecting these colossal structures. On the other hand, Professor Keane cogently declares that "it is almost incredible that with such imperfect appliances works so gigantic could have been executed, literally by hundreds, in an island of such insignificant dimensions, and so completely isolated from the rest of the

world. At present Easter Island is the great mystery of the Pacific, and the more we know of its strange antiquities, the less are we able to understand them."

Another interesting island is a member of the Society group named Tahiti. As a result of white settlement and missionary activity, the Christian cult, both Protestant and Catholic, has been established, while a minor colony of monogamous Mormons has erected a temple in the mountains. Tahiti is celebrated for its scenery and it was in this South Sea Island that Cook observed the transit of Venus in 1769. This intrepid navigator termed the island Otaheite, but Tahiti is its better known name. It is entirely volcanic in origin and extremely mountainous, and presents the appearance of two almost circular islands, united by a strikingly depressed and narrow neck of land.

Tahiti enjoys a splendid climate and tropical vegetation flourishes. "The wayfarer is soothed," an observer records, "by the fragrance of sweet-smelling flowers and delighted with the abundance of oranges, bananas, bread-fruit and coconuts, which supply perennial food to the natives. The guana, introduced at the beginning of last century, has run wild in such abundance as to have become almost a pest. The beauty of the island has been extolled by almost every traveller who has visited it." Indeed, Cook, when he first surveyed it, was so deeply impressed by its superb beauty, that he said, "that the spectator can scarcely help thinking that the very rocks possess the property of producing and supporting their verdant clothing." Also that the beholder's mind cherishes the conviction "that no place on earth can outdo this in the strength and beauty of its vegetation."

Tahiti is composed of lavas and other volcanic deposits. It is not of quite recent origin and has been so worn down that the craters of its once active fire mountains have almost disappeared. Extensive valleys have been excavated by the action of running waters where its wonderful flora flourishes in boundless profusion. The remains of former life imbedded under the most ancient lava streams differ very slightly from the plants and animals now present which shows that, geologically considered, the island is comparatively modern.

This earthly paradise is peopled by a remarkably fine native race whose splendid proportions excited the admiration of all early European observers. Their outstanding stature seems to have declined and this has been attributed to the evil influences of European intoxicants and other products of culture. They are still a fine race, but their numbers are decreasing with regrettable rapidity, and the influence of Christianity has probably stimulated their tendency towards extinction. The native festivals, dances and songs have been driven into the more secluded island districts. Dr. Guillemard regrets that: "The idyllic scenes of former days have already mostly disappeared under the influence of the missions; the short and picturesque national garb has been lengthened and rendered unsightly; the Sunday songs and dances have been prohibited; and to harsh treatment, intemperance and epidemics thousands have fallen victims."

A leading cause of the deterioration of this once splendid stock is apparently the widespread over-indulgence in alcoholic beverages which the natives themselves have adopted as a substitute for the harmless revels now forbidden by the Puritanical missionaries. Moreover, M. Jules Garnier informs us that the Tahitians "have been taught to ferment the juice of the orange so abundant in their island home, and thus produce a liquor with which to obtain the pleasures and penalties of intoxication, which men, women and children alike enjoy and suffer."

As in other Pacific isles, Tahiti contains various

ruins which indicate that in past times Polynesia was the dwelling place of peoples far more advanced in civilization than its present inhabitants. These remains seem to have been sepulchral or religious in character, or may have served for defence.

T. F. PALMER

The Gospel of Powys: An Essay in Heightened Life

THE late Llewelyn Powys' short book called *Glory of Life* was first published at the high price of three guineas by the Golden Cockerel Press. Every copy quickly sold. Later John Lane republished it, beautifully printed, and on hand-made paper at six shillings.

But it is high time that it was made available to the multitude in a cheap sixpenny edition. Would the sixpenny public think they were getting their money's worth in 44 short pages? Perhaps not. I am sure of one thing, however: no one who paid three guineas to read and possess a fine edition of this short essay wasted his money—whatever the second-hand war-market for books may say at the moment.

For here is literature.

Literature in the deep respectful sense in which connoisseurs of *belles lettres* use that word! A genuine masterpiece by a literary craftsman of no ordinary calibre!

If its fine quality does not sufficiently commend it to the readers of this journal, let me add that it is a repudiation of all gods and supernatural faiths in the clearest and most courageous terms. It is written in a style that combines beauty and strength as successfully as the incomparable Perseus with the severed head of Medusa by Cellini in the square at Florence. Like that product of agonized endeavour, this book holds up the Gorgan's petrifying head to us and its beauty overcomes one's natural horror at the spectacle of death.

To Powys it is patent that "the affairs of this world are not under the direction of an intelligent and sensitive Deity." You need not look at the existence of war; of death; or evil; of the universal law of Nature's abominable cruelty from the spider's treatment of the fly upwards to the martyrdom of man. Only take "an hour's observation of any acre of the world's surface" and your unbiassed intelligence will see for itself. So Powys calls for a dismissal of all gods by the human race—all of them "even Jesus, that great poet, human, romantic and compassionate." And then "what a sigh of relief would go up from mankind."

The gods gone and supernaturalism dethroned, what has Llewelyn Powys to put in their stead? (This is important: mere image-breaking is not enough, for man cannot live by bread alone.) He tells us that: "The true religion is the religion of the Atheist. The highest form of faith is a Godless Faith." We have pretended long enough. When we are dead we are dead. Listen how attractively he puts this (to most of us) mournful argument that death is the indubitable end:—

Observe a seaside crowd, so frivolous, so sense-obsessed and ponder upon the prodigious credulity that could claim for each guat-cheap soul a permanent survival. If any man could snatch a glimpse into the coopered barrel of his own restricted personality he would realize the absurdity of such a supposition in a flash. Every summer it is possible to hear the grass-hoppers in their green jackets chirruping: "We are immortal, we are immortal." Soon are their dry-grass chanties put to an end by the chill of winter.

That is beautifully written. But few of us can "take it" as film Americanese says. The French call Freethinkers *esprits forts*, and indeed it needs a strong spirit at times to face the stark fact that death is indeed the very end. Our cowardly inability to face this probability (or truth, if you wish) is responsible for much clinging to religious faith on the part of doubters.

On no question is the human mind more illogical, more cloudy, more under the domination of herd-hallucinations. . . . Men will jerk away, creep off on tender feet like sneak-thieves, be anything, do anything, say anything before they will face the fact of a doom that has been apparent to every honest mind since the world began.

Yes, indeed. The human mind recoils from the idea of its utter annihilation. Fear makes optimists of us all. Do you recall how the great Dr. Samuel Johnson feared death horribly and how cringingly religious his fear made him? For my own part, I will confess that the peril of being in a tilting and dubious aeroplane, a few thousand feet above the earth has made me readier to say prayers than any other experience.

But religious emotion would be more sincere and honourable when under no suspicion of fear or personal gain. The new religion for which Powys calls is "an adoration of life"—all life, and our own life. A worship of the moment in its duration; inviolate, detached and passionate. For "our delighted spirit can send out heathen prayers of gratitude for having seen sunlight upon corn." We are to live more deeply, more sensitively, more abundantly, in a heightened awareness of our own bodies and minds and our own environments. Give up all chimeras: belief in God, life-after-death, trust in an ordained moral order, realize that malfesance is ubiquitous and indestructible (for merely to breathe is to destroy), learn the essential terms of your earth-existence and *live*—really live—here and now.

A man may die "as a tramp in a ditch with grey hair against blackening nettles" (note the vivid phraseology in passing!) and "yet have lived to greater purpose than the prosperous haberdasher." Wilde was of similar mind when he put Reading Gaol above successful grocerdom. Better be "a cockroach scouting for crumbs in a lampless kitchen" than go through life as so many of us do: blind, deaf and dumb to its beauty and its glory. Realize and enjoy the significance of life. Is not earthly life palpitating with beauty and mystery? Our kingdom is the Kingdom of this world. Its very impermanence, its flowerlike fragility, adds edge to its delight.

The error that Powys makes, I think, is in assuming that his gospel is a complete gospel for all mankind. It is the gospel of a poet, "simple, sensuous and passionate," as Milton declared poetry ought to be. Perhaps no gospel is a gospel for all men—in spite of bold declarations by Christian and other faiths to the contrary. If compulsion (whether inner or outer) imposes a gospel not naturally suited to a man upon his temperament, he will travesty it and adapt it to his own personality as St. Paul travestied and adapted Christ.

Gospels, anyway, are made for men, not men for gospels. And most men are not poets like Powys: they have not his joy in the senses, not his delight in the visible material world.

Most men I fear are utterly incapable of living in "the glory of life." Glimpses of it no doubt all of us experience. As Matthew Arnold well said, "most men in a brazen prison live" and "their lives to some unmeaning task-work give." My observation of mankind tells me that the herd are natural slaves and

always will be, for if they be not enslaved by their fellows, they infallibly enslave themselves. What is the use of shutting our eyes to this unpleasant reality? Even for all the choice and master-spirits of the age "the gospel of Powys" is not always applicable. A Bernard Shaw would reject it. And what appeal would it make to an Einstein? Yet if it be not the whole truth about life for all men, there's some truth in it for everyone—particularly in its call for a "heightened awareness" of life.

I think, however, that if any man rose from the dead his immediate reaction would be that of Powys. Immediately he would have that sharpened sense of the glory of all earthly things, even the least and lowliest. To him, like the sick wretch in Gray's poem, "the common sun, the air, the skies," the meanest flower of the vale, the simplest note of the wind's music would be "opening Paradise." But man is not for enjoyment and appreciation alone, nor always. If there were no pain and toil and disquiet and strenuousness, we should invent them, for they correspond with a deep need in our nature. Bliss is not for mortals—certainly not undiluted bliss. No ordinary unmusical man could stand twenty-four hours of Heaven's pure bliss as depicted by some Christian imaginations: perpetual praise would bore him to death. But neither Heaven nor Hell—if they exist outside ourselves and this life—can possibly be so bad as they are painted.

You perceive how far Powys' teaching is from the Christian or any supernatural religion. Powys is indeed a disciple of Epicurus. Eat, drink and be merry—"there is no wiser word"—he is not afraid to say that. But his creed is wider than mere indulgence. We are to enjoy—what? Everything in life, even the simplest. The sight of a milking-stool even. Even to pour water from a jug. Yes, even going to what Lord Chesterfield calls "the necessary house." We should not even rest an hour in the country without a godless prayer in gratitude for the rich guerdon of being alive. Bodily gratifications are great things—and the greatest of them is natural love-inspired, sexual intercourse. "Mutual desire is its own justification at all times and in all places, and if our neighbours prove sulky or our mother or our father or sister or brother or mistress or guardian, they must be deceived from cockerow to cockerow." In the spirit of Shakespeare's words: "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" Powys enquires: "Are there no feathers in the world to oil locks with, no back pantry door-keys, no hayricks, raspberry canes, apple-lofts?" and declares what I suppose the modern teaching of Freud largely approves, namely: "More people are injured by sexual restraints than by sexual indulgence."

This is extremely wicked. This is utterly immoral as every curate can see. And like most thinking for oneself, this is extremely dangerous, if not to the thinker then to many other people. "Damnable Opinions" indeed! It is easy, however, to say that a lot of this is explained by the fact that Llewelyn Powys was consumptive, a sick man, with poetical senses sharpened by his malady and by approaching death. All this may be fact. But may it not also be that Powys saw glimpses of the truth the clearer for those facts?

Certainly he wrote fearlessly and beautifully upon the great subject of this mortal life—and if you say his message is not completely new or completely true I can only ask in return what message at this stage of human knowledge is? The expression at any rate is original and beautiful and in our modern days such courage to think and to write as he did is rare indeed—nothing rarer. That this rare and radiant spirit should

be quenched in death! It is a national, indeed, more than national, misfortune. Than Llewelyn Powys England could better afford to lose, in Shylockian phrase, a whole wilderness of her monkey-writers, together with her whole Cabinet and Parliament—but perhaps that's not saying much!

C. G. L. DU CANN

Acid Drops

The Budget will not have brought many surprises, and we may expect, if the war lasts over another year, to have fresh taxes imposed. We suggest to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that one reform might be attempted. The Churches and other buildings devoted to religion (the other religions come in because it would have been glaringly one-sided not to have included them) are free from rates and taxes to which non-religious buildings of a non-commercial kind are subject. How many millions of pounds the Churches would be called on to pay if they were taxed as other buildings are it is impossible to say. But if one considers the mere site value of churches and chapels, etc., one can realize what a huge sum this would represent. Why does not one of the more daring of the Members of Parliament raise this issue? If the poor can be made to pay extra for the bare necessities of life, what justification is there for making every member of the community pay for the upkeep of religious buildings for which many have no use, and who do not believe in the doctrines preached?

Our daily papers of April 30 report the following broadcast from Moscow:—

We cannot tolerate the spirit which oppresses and denies freedom and liberty to men merely because they happen to be born Jews, Negroes, or some other so-called inferior race. Nations in which this barbarous spirit is prevalent are sub-human since they deny humanity to others.

This broadcast was in Russian and German. It looks very promising. At all events it is a deliberate and official repudiation of the Nazi brutality.

We received the other day a copy of the *New Zealand Free Lance*, a pictorial magazine, which contained a number of illustrations of a religious procession, with one large page filled with pictures of three overfed-looking men, each with what Pooh-Bah would have called "a caricature of a face." They were dressed in grotesque headgear, and each had a lace-covered dress reaching down to his feet. The letterpress ran: "His Excellency, the Papal Legate, attends Children's Mass." We looked at them in a kind of dream state, and gradually the rich brocade and costly silk died out and in their place there was the fantastical headgear and painted face of the primitive medicine man; the trees faded and the forest-clearing took its place; the singing of hymns was drowned by the chanting of the savage's appeal to Mumbo-Jumbo and the beating of the Tom-Tom. We are quite certain that if one of the primitive New Zealanders could have been resuscitated he would have joined in that procession and have thought how little things had altered since he was last on earth.

Here is another interesting thing. There is a Roman Catholic Society called "The League for God." We did not know of its existence until recently, and its history is told by Father W. Kelly in the *Catholic Times* for April 19. It seems that a number of Catholics in Port Sunlight were outraged when the International Free-thought Congress was held in London. These tender souls prayed to God to do something about it; explained that they were not responsible for it; and probably ex-

pected that some minor disaster—such as a localized earthquake in Red Lion Square—would have shown the Lord's displeasure. But nothing happened. Perhaps God, after listening to Cardinal Hinsley and others, got confused and interfered with the wrong meeting, for there was quite a disorder at a religious meeting to protest against the "insult to God."

Something was done. A house-to-house canvass was arranged, and, says Father Kelly, it was found that 85 per cent. of the people were without religion. Much as we should like to believe this to be true, we must take this as the "whoppiest" of "whoppers" that was ever "whopped." We cannot believe for a moment that 85 people out of a hundred in any part of this country have achieved such a state of intellectual development as to have got rid of their religious beliefs. There is no evidence whatever that any such blazing epidemic of common sense has swept over the British Isles. Father Kelly was evidently trying to emulate the early Christian writers. We are more modest and would be delighted to find that eighty-five were Christians and the remaining fifteen complete Freethinkers. Father Kelly ought soon to be made a Cardinal. Cardinal Hinsley would never have given such exact figures. They are too easily criticized. This rashness might lose Father Kelly promotion. Otherwise we would say he deserved it.

Anyway, the League for God is here. We hope that Father Kelly will report progress. God is being neglected. If not 85 per cent who disbelieve in God, eighty-five of every hundred have forgotten all about Him. And gods cannot afford to be forgotten. Like film-stars, gods must have publicity. Without publicity they would soon cease to exist. The *League for God* is here. The relief column is on the march. The Goebbels of the Roman Catholic world are getting active. If Father Kelly will report progress to this paper we promise to insert his message. We like to give fairplay—even to gods.

Lord Hugh Cecil is a very able man, and belongs to an able family. But it is astonishing how stupidly conservative even able men can become when they touch religion. It has been proposed that women shall be permitted to read prayers in church, but not from the pulpit. So Lord Hugh comes down on the proposal with the following:—

I believe that the ministry of women in churches—that is, in assemblies of Christians gathered for worship—is contrary to the teaching of St. Paul and to the unvaried practice of the universal Church in all ages. I regard the teaching of St. Paul as in substance given under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and I think the unvaried and universal practice of the whole Church may reasonably be traced to the same Divine Power. It follows that the proposed ministry would be disobedient and without the divine vocation necessary for such a ministry.

That is good Christian teaching, backed up by Church law, the New Testament, and Christian sentiment. But how completely ridiculous it is!

Mr. Alfred Edwards, the Socialist M.P. for Middlesbrough, is to call the attention of the House of Commons to the conduct of judges and magistrates in making "unwarranted attacks upon persons not in a position to reply to them." We consider it high time that some notice was taken of this matter, particularly with regard to petty magistrates. There was a very obvious recent case that called for both reprimand and correction in the case of a refugee who had been joined by his son, who had just escaped from a concentration camp. The son was without a passport, but the father gave him shelter, a thing that every parent with any human feeling would have done. The magistrate, not satisfied with giving the father the heaviest possible punishment, expressed

regret that he could not make the punishment heavier. It is not surprising that a higher tribunal reduced the sentence from six months to one month.

The Rev. Dr. England (Presbyterian), from what we know of him, should have been above pleading for religious tests for teachers of religion in our State schools—on a ground that is just about as weak as it could be. He argues that the test should be applied, and says:—

A teacher of mathematics is required to give evidence of mathematical competency. Should not a teacher of religious instruction himself be at least a religious person?

This is very, very poor. We know what a teacher of mathematics should teach and it is a simple matter for him to offer evidence of his competency. We know what he is supposed to know, and there is no difference of opinion as to what he ought to teach. But when we tell a teacher he must teach religion, does anyone know what he will teach? Would Dr. England's own Church agree with the religion taught by a Roman Catholic? Would any member of any religious sect agree that a member of another sect to which he was opposed really understand "true religion"? How would anyone decide that a form of religion taught by someone was true or false? Why, Christianity itself is split up into numerous sects who cannot agree on what Christianity means. Dr. England's argument is more than weak; it is positively childish. He should have known better than ever to have used it.

A writer in the *Guardian*, apparently not at all favourable to Bishop Colenso, asks us to note that the famous "heretic of Natal" was not primarily accused of infidelity in relation to his book on the Pentateuch, in which, by the way, he did much more than prove merely the mythical character of its alleged "Mosaic" authorship. The writer reminds us that

the Church of the Province of South Africa condemned him for an earlier work, a *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, in which he denied the validity of the sacraments. Later on he objected "to prayer to Christ on scriptural and apostolic grounds."

The fact is that Bishop Colenso was—within the limits of the subjects he tackled—a thorough-going Freethinker.

The Good Shepherd was the subject of a sermon by Canon Down at Kennington recently. The Canon of course piled detail on detail in describing the adventures of a runaway sheep which the Good Shepherd sought in the wilderness and elsewhere. Apparently the flock in question was very badly "folded," or were exceptionally naughty sheep. He speaks of all the sheep having been scattered in odd corners and unlikely places. Of course the "G.S." found them all right. The Canon discloses the unexpected fact that the G.S. "sought them out one by one" and "according to their several needs" "binding up the broken heart" of one, and "comforting the sorrowful grief" of another, knowing the whole gang and even "calling them all by name," and (by a queer mixture of metaphor) "He meets them as they pass through the waves of this trouble." The one thing Canon Down avoids mentioning is that the slaughter-house awaits the lot, and joints of mutton will in the end prove exactly how benevolent is the conduct of the best of good shepherds.

The late Father Woodlock, the well-known and well-boosted Roman Catholic priest, once said that the English Church was rotten with "Modernism." Modernism, as all know, is the movement which is very much ashamed of Christianity "pure and undefiled." It aims at importing acceptable reasoning into its doctrines and a more enlightened conception of human nature into its ethics. Of course, doing these things is not acting honourably towards historic Christianity, but from that point of view one cannot be both honest and pious. Anyway, all we

wish to do in this paragraph is to put Father Woodlock's expression into plain, clear, English—which is that the English Church is rotten with reason and humanitarianism. We agree that when a Church gets badly infected with these two things, it is, as a church, in a very bad way, and Father Woodlock should not have let the cat out of the bag in this way. But he probably knew his audience.

It is announced that difficulties of travel are not to interfere with the usual pilgrimage to Lourdes. Why should it? If the army of saints, to say nothing of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, cannot protect their devoted followers over a short sea voyage and railway journey, the power of God must have shrunk considerably. As an alternative, why cannot the particular saint that looks after the holy water at Lourdes set up business on this side of the Channel? If the mountain cannot come to Mohammed, why cannot Mohammed go to the mountain? The angel would not run even the risk of being seized for travelling without a passport. And so far as the Church is concerned the cash returns would be quite as good. We suggest the lake in St. James' Park as a good place for operations. We also guarantee a good audience.

Here is what George Bernard Shaw had to say some years back when he was asked by the Rev. "Dick" Shepherd to write a kind of revised version of the Prayer Book of the Church of England:—

I was soon convinced that revision is impossible. The book is so saturated with the ancient and to me quite infernal superstition of the atonement by blood sacrifice, which I believe Christianity must get completely rid of if it is to survive among thoughtful people, that I could not delete it without leaving the book an eviscerated corpse.

I have no patience with it. I can keep my temper when I read of the Carthaginians flinging living persons into their sacred furnace to propitiate their deity; and I have climbed the altars on which Mexicans, like our Druids, cut the throats of youths and maidens with the same object. But neither the Carthaginians nor the Mexicans ever, as far as I know, gave as a reason that "God so loved the world" that he had to be propitiated in this horrible way.

As to teaching that we can all escape the guilt of our sins by allowing an innocent victim to suffer for them, thus assuring every crook that he can go on with his crookedness because he can wash away his guilt in the blood of the Lamb next Sunday, it would wreck any nation if it were not that the secular law sternly refuses to accept the alleged cleansing, and will admit the rascal to no redemption, but that of ceasing to do evil and leaning to do well."

The *Guardian* is exercised in mind because all Christians are aware that

prophetic witness is the primary function of the Church and this Church journal seems to object to "outlining a pattern of conduct in accordance with the teachings of Christ." If we did, says this authority, we should have to adopt the doctrines of "non-resistance and indiscriminate almsgiving," and thus

lay upon men burdens for more grievous than the tradition of the scribes and Pharisees, for their tradition could be kept, but this new law is generally admitted to be impossible of fulfilment in the world as we know it.

Well, "the world" has always been "the world as we know it." It must have been so in the legendary days when Christ is said to have made this "new law"—which scarcely one single "believer" ever practised, or even tried to practise. Jesus is reported as never qualifying or modifying or restricting His utterly worthless, because impossible, "laws." The logical course is ceasing to pretend to respect rules which have no relevance to mankind's existence.

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THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

For advertising and distributing the *Freethinker*: C. M. HOLLINGTON, 208.

C. McCALL.—We do not know how you could get a copy of G. W. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought* other than through some second-hand bookseller. It has been out of print for some years.

J. HUMPHREY.—Like yourself we cannot say on whose side God is in the present war. But as there is never a very earnest appeal to him unless people are in a very desperate situation, the less we hear about it the better.

E. SYERS.—Thanks for reference. Machin said that he avowedly based his story of the Mons Angels on the old legend of the Heavenly Twins succouring the Roman Army. It is a fairly wide spread legend.

P. C. HEAD.—Sorry we have no time to deal with the matter at any length.

L. D. M.—You do us an injustice. We are not "deliberately flouting God's laws." We simply do not know where they are, what they are, or why they are. You move on a level of knowledge that leaves us gasping.

C. H. THOMPSON.—War-time is inevitably a period of retrogression, and we must be on our guard against all who hate advanced opinions taking advantage of the situation.

A. W. WARD.—We conclude from your letter that your ideal society is one in which no opinion contrary to your own is permitted to exist. What a terribly dull life it will be for independent men and women!

B. C. J.—Thanks; shall appear next week.

G. H. TAYLOR.—Next week.

C. DRYLAND.—We will publish your interesting letter soon. It will not worsen for the keeping.

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1567.

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

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

Sugar Plums

Arrangements for the N.S.S. Conference are now complete, and there is a good attendance promised, despite war conditions. But Manchester is a good centre for visitors, and we hope to record a large attendance of individual members. The arrangements for a Monday excursion are not yet completed owing to difficulties arising out of current conditions. Any who have not written for accommodation to be reserved over the week-end should write at once to the General Secretary.

Added to the steadily increasing cost of production we now have an increase in the postal rates. In addition to those extra costs of postage, which cannot by any means be "passed on," we have postal subscribers to the paper whose subscriptions—which include postage—will have been paid for the current year. Our contract, will, of course, be carried out. We shall have to consider what can be done in the case of new subscribers. Even an extra halfpenny per copy is something to think about when it has to be added to an existing deficit. There are easier jobs in the world than running a Freethought weekly.

We have not yet got in the *Schoolmaster* a good plain statement of the case against religious teaching in the schools, but the following is worth reprinting from its issue for April 18:—

SIR,—To those examples given of late of the concerted action of the clergy and a number of politicians, backed

up by the *Times*, to use the war as an occasion for getting a larger measure of dogmatic religious instruction brought into the State schools, I have to add the Bishop of Chelmsford (Dr. Wilson). He says:—

"Religious instruction cannot be given by people who do not believe in it and who do not practise. . . . It is not a question which can be settled by providing a good syllabus. We have that already, but if the teacher does not believe the syllabus and is conspicuous by his absence from Church on Sunday, the whole thing becomes a farce."

I do not disagree with this in the least. It is logical, and if we are to have religion in the schools we must be prepared for its consequences. Religion is not something that can be taught as ordinary school subjects are taught. It must be taught as an act of faith, and it must be accepted as such. It is given *ex cathedra*, and must be accepted as an unquestionable dogma.

But as one who has "taken Scripture" for nearly six years, and has studied religion for the last fifteen years, I hope that the teachers—who really hold a key position in this matter—will realize what is before them. The aim is to see that dogmatic religion is taught in the schools; also that the teachers shall be themselves religious, and that they shall prove that religion by attendance at church. I know that there are many young teachers who do not believe in religion, especially those who have taken Honours Degrees in Science. These may escape trouble, in company with others, by becoming complete hypocrites and "teaching the Bible as a story," but they cannot continue as independent thinking individuals. It is time that teachers' organizations paid close attention to something that is really more important to the nation, and even to themselves as a class, than wages and pensions. I readily admit that teachers are grossly underpaid and that their pensions are far too small. But intelligent self-respect must be with the teacher if he is to encourage it in his pupils.

On no account should teachers miss the paragraph quoted below from the *Church Times*, in an article on "Unhappy Judas":—

"It is for us to judge no man, but one of the saddest things about the present troubles of the world is that Hitler, Stalin, Goebbels and many of their confederates were all brought up as Christians and Catholics. Stalin, so it appears, at one time contemplated the priesthood; while, so I read, Hitler's name is included in the German Catholics' 'Who's Who.'"

If all the people who are condemned by the *Church Times* had been brought up as Scientists or Atheists they would have served as a terrible example of what happens when religious education is neglected. As they were given a religious training they prove the need of more religion! It seems to be another case of "Heads I win, tails you lose."

EDWARD WARD

We compliment Mr. Ward on his excellent letter, and also, as a teacher, on having the courage to publish his name. If all those teachers who share his opinions were courageous enough to follow his example in their avowal, there would be less talk of introducing religion in the schools. To be made the cat's-paws of the parsons is undignified and a very poor position for men and women who are entrusted with the education of the nation's children.

Bromley has joined the places in which the people will be permitted to indulge in the violent dissipation of visiting a cinema on Sunday. There are the usual conditions attached, so far as the proprietors of the cinema are concerned. There is to be a contribution to charity from the profits on Sunday, and another contribution, subject to the regulations made by the Secretary of State. We see no reason whatever why this form of "rake-off" should be applied to cinemas, any more than to public houses and churches. It is a piece of legalized robbery that should be abolished.

A Bromley paper in a leading article remarks in that wobbling manner peculiar to leading articles when dealing with the Churches:—

The decision of the Council is in conformity with modern conditions, but there are many sober-minded middle-aged people who will note the decision with regret.

We share that belief, and we would advise these hard-shelled chapel- and church-goers not to visit the cinemas on Sunday. We can assure them they cannot be compelled to attend.

We offer a cordial welcome to a new weekly venture in the shape of *Youthopia*, published at threepence. It is a journal edited by youth, and primarily addressed to youth, and it will certainly do the older members of society good to know what the young ones are really thinking. The editor says the journal is issued by "a handful of young people armed with little capital, but lots of faith." We hope the faith will be justified, for *Youthopia* is brightly written, and we beg those older ones who happen to read the journal to remember that for good or ill this younger generation is the creation of us older ones. In the case of *Youthopia* we think we may congratulate ourselves on the product. If we do not happen to agree with all that these young people say, let us bear in mind that this altered point of view is also our doing. The elder brethren should feel pleased when the younger ones correct their blunders and amplify the good they have done. The address of *Youthopia* is 3, Colwyn Road, Northampton. Four issues of *Youthopia* will be sent post free on receipt of one shilling.

Get Right With God

If you would be successful as this world goes you must develop a technique on this God question. It is not difficult. You must take care when you open your mouth to be heard of men on the subject of religion that you lack clarity. You need have no misgivings on this point for few will expect anything else of you. You must drag into your conversation—it is never out of season—that you are of the spiritual as opposed to the materialistic. It is necessary for you to suggest that those who run after such objectives (you must not term them *ideals*) as the abolition of poverty and unemployment are sordid folk destitute of soul qualities. *They lack vision*. You must decry aims of this kind, as smelling of the earth, earthy. You must hint at a Great Alternative—*For or Against God*. *For God* means that you are of the Lofty; *Against God* means that you are of the Low. By this time you will have become expert in a vicious vagueness, a characteristic which is the hall-mark of a truly spiritual vocabulary. And whenever you meet a person (your utmost carefulness will not be sufficient to cut out this occasional disagreeable encounter) who is aggressive enough to tell you that he rejects the evidence for the statement that the Moon is made of Green Cheese, you must say *Ah!* and after a noticeable pause you must confound him with the question, put with deliberation and an air of profundity, "What is Truth?"

Yes, the technique is simple enough and it has plain advantages. If you adopt it, your passage through life has every chance of becoming smoother. You will pass in many circles as a man of understanding and culture—a most superior person. And you will be indeed unlucky if it does not tend to put money in your purse. Your material welfare will have become less precarious and that material welfare will have suffered a sea-change (thanks to a religious vocabulary) and become a spiritual welfare. For as the Godly become possessed of the things of the earth, so, *pari passu*, do they become possessed of the true spiritual outlook. This thing has become "added unto them." What of it if it was the blood of the martyrs that was responsible for the Church? That was a very long time ago. The Church has become a big tree by now and the fruits thereof can be enjoyed

by the spiritual without their being physically, or in any other way, discommoded. It is only the grossly materialistic who think seriously about food and raiment. Crude things such as cold and hunger bring on objectionable symptoms. The spiritual have discovered an easy way to avoid that materialistic abyss. All they have to do is to keep a full stomach. On such a solid physical basis rests spiritual contentment.

Those who stand up for God are lofty people. They disport in the empyrean. They soar. And as they are nearer Heaven by so doing they become God's Aristocrats. In their presumption they nobble that earthy word "morality." They puff it up with the bellows of inexactitude until this excellent word becomes a piece of sickly Pecksniffian windiness of the shape and consistency of an air-cushion. God's Aristocrats make of morality both an abstraction and a subtraction; they profess to have cornered it. Well, what they have managed to corner they are welcome to. There are still people left who give morality a homely significance. This significance is very, very earthy. It is so utterly earthy, so very unspiritual, that God's Aristocrats profess to hold it in contempt. Those who confine their attentions to man's secular interests are sneered at. The word *Secularist* is pronounced disagreeably. It is changed (without the *Secularist's* consent) even in these modern days, to the word "infidel" the use of which is an infallible sign of intellectual benightedness. The resurrection of the word "infidel" has taken place deliberately because those who use it think the word sounds unpleasant. In the time of good Queen Victoria there were soaring divines who confessed that that was why they used the word. To-day those who neglect the things of the spirit and lay up for themselves treasures on this earth run not the slightest risk of being called infidels. Those who are perfectly faithful to beliefs that the Aristocrats do not share will not however escape the term. For, to them, any stick is good enough to beat a dog with. Those who think of man's secular interest are therefore the *Infidels*; they are the scum of the earth. They are to be eliminated by almost any means, of which fair play is not one. For God's Aristocracy, belong, strange as it may appear to the tyro, to the Stick at Nothing Brigade. Their morality is not of this earth; it is of the skies. It is not concerned with men; it is concerned with Gods. With God on their side they must march against the infidel. They must become Crusaders. In this Holy War they must throw themselves (and others) with enthusiasm—for there is much to lose. With the Cross of Jesus, so much of importance is bound up—so many lofty, ethereal things! The unspiritual may misconstrue their motives, but they have not absorbed the Blood and Body, their vision is impaired. They would worship the highest if they saw it, but being without the Fruits of the Spirit, they do not see the Highest. Their eyes are on the earth—the Lowest.

The Cross of Jesus has not however proved an infallible talisman, and from this fact those who sneer at a Moon made of Green Cheese may derive hope. Often with thrice-blessed and blood-stained banners, with the Cross of Jesus, and even the Host itself, going on before, God's Aristocrats have been licked to a frazzle. For the Christian God is much the same as all other Gods. He insists on his friends having lashings of ammunition and that they are dry. He prefers his friends to be linked up with big battalions and he likes them placed in advantageous situations. Then, and only then, will Jehovah show his preferences. If these accretions do not materialize, Jehovah will transfer his affections to any Fifth Column who think first of their own interests and not of His. For God will always contrive to be on the winning side—he has all the opportunities and he takes them. And should

God prove again to befriend the Fifth Column. Christian Arrogance will never moult a feather. Christianity never receives mortal wounds. Such an unmixed blessing is avoided by their verbal ingenuity. Bathe them in the pool of humility; bring them into contact with the warm brown earth; still they learn not neither do they forget. God's Aristocrats could indeed learn much by inclining their ear and listening to the talk of common men. They will, indeed, hear often the expression Bread and Butter, but they will hear much more. They will hear a good deal of the common and good things of every-day life; they will hear something about love, something about affection. They will hear something about a Square Deal, which, being interpreted, means justice. Justice is quite a good word, having enough marrow in it to form a new and a simple gospel. They could learn these things—were they so disposed.

Yes, it would be good for God's Aristocrats to learn that a full emotional life can co-exist with mental integrity, and that the soulless are not at all disposed to leave the earth and try their wings in spiritual regions. These benighted ones have lost the Holy Trinity, the Benefit of Clergy, Angels and Devils, Cherubim and Seraphim, Incubi and Succubi, Vampires and Werewolves. All these things they have lost and they feel, strangely enough, nothing but a sense of relief. Their "spiritual contentment" does not require one of these things as a factor. They are prepared to sack the lot, feeling that their condition will be in no useful sense the worse. God's Aristocrats may be alarmed by this and in their alarm become aligned with disgusting, but not strange, bedfellows. They will even appear to be anxious to compromise and show reasonableness. But the weapon they will give up last will be their precious vocabulary, their predilection for puns, their juggler's jargon. Merlin will come down to earth in God's Own Time, but the last thing he will willingly relinquish will be his artistry in Telling the Tale, his superlative skill in suggesting the Thing Which Is Not. For use has bred a habit in the man.

T. H. ELSTON

Highways and Byways in English History

VI.—EMPIRE AND SLAVERY—BLACK AND WHITE

AFTER the English Revolution the victorious mercantile interests were able to turn their energies from civil struggles to exploit the advantages which they had won. Nearly half the period from 1689 to 1763 was taken up by wars with France, as a result of which Britain acquired no small portion of her present Empire. From a domestic point of view, the enduring monuments of that age are the Bank of England and the National Debt, which both saw the light in 1694. The National Debt originated in a war loan of £1,200,000 raised from London merchants on the security of the revenue. By 1697 it had risen to £14,000,000, by 1719 to £50,000,000. In those days the Whigs were the war party and the Tories the peace party, for reasons which are easily seen. The Whigs represented the moneyed men, the Tories the landed interest. Every new war caused the National Debt to mount by leaps and bounds; and every new loan increased the proportion of the national income which went to enrich the stockholders. Landowners, on the other hand, whose chief source of income was their estates, and who as taxpayers had to find the interest on the National Debt, were considerably less bellicose. As successful

business men were always buying landed estates, and the aristocracy and gentry always investing in stocks and shares, the cleavage was not fundamental; but its existence is patent to anyone who studies the polemics of the time in the writings, for example, of Addison and Swift.

Another feature of the time was the growth of the slave trade, which made the fortune of many a Bristol and Liverpool merchant. Few outside the small and uninfluential Society of Friends¹ troubled themselves over the intimate connection between rising prosperity and slavery. In 1713, as a result of Marlborough's victories, Britain secured a thirty years' contract for the exclusive supply of slaves to Spanish America. This monopoly was granted, in return for a loan of £10,000,000, to a group of wealthy merchants incorporated as the South Sea Company. The operations of this company, assisted by bribery of several Cabinet Ministers, led a few years later to the crash of the South Sea Bubble. In 1750 the monopoly was surrendered to Spain for £100,000. By that time the supply of slaves to British colonies was by itself remunerative enough to satisfy the reasonable ambitions of Bristol and Liverpool merchants. The number of negroes shipped across the Atlantic averaged twenty thousand a year—seven thousand to Jamaica alone. Parliament, ever thoughtful of the moneyed interests, enacted that in case of a planter's bankruptcy his negroes might be sold up like other chattels and pass to new owners regardless of conjugal or parental ties. There was only one drawback. The impression prevailed in South Carolina that a Christian could not be a slave, and that baptism involved automatic liberation. The planters looked for guidance to their national church, and were not disappointed. Edmund Gibson, bishop of London, satisfied his countrymen that a Christian negro was still the property of his master, and enabled them with a serene conscience to serve both God and Mammon.

The cruelties of colonial slavery are almost indescribable. In 1760 the negroes of Jamaica rose against their owners and killed a number of whites. Englishmen, who three years before had thrilled with horror over the Black Hole of Calcutta, wreaked a more than savage vengeance on the insurgent blacks. A colonial court caused three to be burnt alive, two to be hanged, and two to be gibbeted alive, that is, to be suspended in irons twenty feet above the ground without food or drink, exposed to noon-day heat and midnight cold, until they died. One negro lived nine days in this agony. "There is," coolly explains a correspondent in the *Annual Register*, "a necessity for the most rigorous punishments." In 1767, after another slave insurrection in Jamaica, the planters showed their superior civilization by burning their prisoners alive in a slow fire. In 1768 the negroes of Montserrat plotted a revolt, but were prevented in time. Three were racked to discover accomplices, one was hanged, one gibbeted alive, and two burnt alive. Others eluded by suicide the humanity of their Christian masters.

In 1787, Thomas Clarkson, a young Cambridge graduate, who had been influenced by the Quakers, managed to interest Wilberforce, Pitt, and other public men in the case against the slave trade. A society founded to promote its abolition was liberally supported by the manufacturers of Birmingham and the Midlands, but violently opposed by the planters and the Liverpool merchants, who in 1788 forwarded a petition to Parliament representing that the suppression of the slave trade would involve many of them

¹ The Society of Friends may be considered as a vestigial survival of those former heretical sects which in their day, as we have seen, were forerunners of Freethought. Like other vestigial survivals, the Society does not grow.

in little short of ruin. For the present nothing was done beyond passing an Act, in the teeth of Liverpool and Bristol opposition, to limit the number of negroes carried in each ship.

Much is often made of a judgment in court, some years before this, which pronounced any slave setting foot in the British Isles to be free. The strength of vested interests is illustrated by the fact that, in spite of this, a fugitive negro girl was arrested and taken on board ship at Bristol as late as 1790.

In the abolition of the slave trade, other countries were ahead of Britain. Denmark put an end to it in her West Indian colonies in 1802. Slavery in the French colony of San Domingo was terminated by a bloody uprising of the coloured population themselves, who under Toussaint l'Ouverture, the ablest leader the negro race has ever produced, defended their liberty both against their French masters and against the British force, which went to the help of the planters. With this example at hand, slavery in the British West Indies became a dangerous anachronism. In 1807 the trade in negroes was prohibited, though so lucrative was the traffic that it was years before the prohibition was made effective. Slavery itself continued; and flagrant instances of cruelty continued to occur. A clergyman named Rawlins, who managed an estate in St. Kitts, had a runaway slave severely flogged, driven to work chained to another slave, and then flogged again because he was too badly hurt to work. "The wretched being died, actually chained to his fellow-slave." Rawlins escaped with a fine of £200 and three months' imprisonment. More often, bills were thrown out by grand juries, or the delinquents acquitted.

The causes which led to the eventual abolition of chattel slavery in the British Empire must be reserved for later treatment.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

(To be continued)

The Origin of Religion

RELIGION is a phase of social evolution. The idea that it is a manifestation of an alleged religious instinct in man is to-day untenable. It is equally absurd to imagine, as so many primitive peoples have believed, that someone came from the spirit world and taught religion to a particular people, who afterwards carried the "glad tidings" to others. Religion in its most primitive form and in all its early forms is no more than the registration of primitive man's ideas concerning the world in which he finds himself. The mastering of that fact is the first solid step towards an understanding of religion. In this respect the mental evolution of man runs along substantially the same lines as does his physical evolution. As his physical body is derived from the lower animal world, so his ideas of religion, of morals, of things in general, are derived from the uninformed conclusions of his most primitive ancestors.

If one can picture man starting at zero, knowing nothing of the nature of the forces around him and yet driven by his developing intelligence to devise some theory of how things happen, one will not find it so difficult to understand how all the different religious ideas in the world came into existence.

We may briefly summarize the three main theories of the origin of religion as follows. The Animistic theory of Sir E. B. Tylor, the Naturalistic theory with which is usually associated the name of Max Muller,

and Sir J. G. Frazer's theory that religion is the child of magic.

Let us consider them in the reverse order. Frazer puts forward the hypothesis that man first attempted to control nature by means of magic, found this impossible and then resorted to entreating, which is essentially a religious act as distinguished from magic. In fact, Durkheim objected that, contrary to Frazer's view, magic is the child of religion rather than vice versa.

Frazer's theory does not seem to get really down to the origin of religion, what then of Naturalism? This theory seems to be nearer the mark. It is based on the tendency among primitive savages to fear and venerate such objects of nature as thunderstorms, waterfalls and mountains that appear to be powerful. To these things they ascribe life. Likewise kings and wizards are revered, the sun is regarded as a great being and the moon and stars as slightly lesser beings or as a mother and her children. All objects of nature are personified and those that are awesome are revered.

Hopkins puts forward the following objections to this theory. He says that it assumes in the savage too pronounced a tendency towards personification and that it holds that a belief in spirits is secondary. It will be seen later, however, that Marett considers animism to be a later stage and in fact that his theory is quite similar to Muller's.

The belief in spirits as the primary religious conception forms the basis of Tylor's theory of animism, perhaps best known of all theories. The theory may be outlined as follows:—The savage notices active objects, thinks they are alive and that they possess that spirit which he thinks he himself possesses. The savage dreams that he is performing various acts and on awakening attributes the performance of the acts to his other half—his spirit. Similarly, if he dreams about a dead man and sees him apparently alive he thinks that the dead live. The world is peopled with spirits and some may be considered malevolent, the savage therefore makes offerings to them.

In some ways Tylor's theory is very satisfactory. It is known that many savages literally live in a world of spirits which are mainly malicious, and his theory regarding dreams is quite acceptable. Nevertheless, it would appear that the most primitive savage is not able to distinguish so clearly between body and spirit as this theory implies. Furthermore, there are records of undoubted cases of direct worship of natural phenomena of which animism does not take account.

Later observations of fetishism has shown that the savage does not always regard his fetish as containing a spirit, all he may see in it is power or something awe-inspiring.

R. R. Marett and others are of the opinion that behind animism there is something more general and rudimentary, a generalized form of belief of which animism and all higher types of religion may be regarded as later developments.

In his book "Primitive Man," John Murphy says: "The first observable, germinal form of religion is the dim sense of a 'life' like his (the savage's) own, a 'power' like his own . . . in things outside himself—image concepts which are necessarily earlier than the animistic stage of thought."

Murphy thinks that before man came to distinguish clearly between animate and inanimate objects there was a more primitive, simpler conception which can be known as "mana."

Marett goes into the question more thoroughly in "The Threshold of Religion." He says that primitive religion is a wider and vaguer thing than Tylor's minimum definition, "the belief in spiritual beings." He

tells us, "not to stop short at animism but to dig deeper into human nature in the search for the roots of religion."

He puts forward the point that a rudimentary religion can exist before the ideas of spirits and ghosts have become dominant, a stage which may be called pre-animistic. Primitive man was filled with awe at the sight of various natural phenomena and these were treated as powers, without any assumption of spirits. Even in such cases where the objects are regarded as being alive, this does not reach the animistic stage.

Marett's pre-animistic stage would seem to be similar to the theory of naturalism of Max Muller. It accounts for the direct worshipping of natural objects where animism does not, and it does appear to be a more primitive conception. There is no doubt that a thunderstorm would be an awe-inspiring sight when not understood, so would a large tree, a mountain, a fast river or a waterfall, and there is not far to go before such things would be considered to be alive.

Marett says:—"In response to the emotions of awe, wonder and the like, wherein feeling would seem for the time being to have outstripped the natural explanation there arises in the region of human thought a powerful impulse to objectify or even personify the mysterious 'supernatural' something felt."

The question is by no means finally settled. No doubt objections will be found to the pre-animistic theory, but it does seem that this has taken us nearer to the origin of religion than Tylor had got. Animism is undoubtedly an early religious idea for spirits are outstandingly prominent among the majority of savage religions to-day. But even if we can ascertain the most primitive form of religion known to-day it need not be the first religion ever. Primitive savages now in existence are not necessarily the counterpart of early man. Nevertheless the lowest forms of religion found among savages of to-day probably reflect in a large degree the forms of religion of savages who existed in the past.

We conclude with a short summary of what we know at the present time regarding the origin of religion.

The evolution of man is generally represented picturesquely as a tree. We can look at the evolution of religion in a similar manner. There may not have been a single point of origin or its beginnings may be like a small seed which started, indefinitely and uncertainly and broke the surface probably merely as a feeling of awe for the power of natural objects. After a time probably largely through dreams this pre-animistic or naturalistic idea grew and developed into animism. As society became more highly organized this was reflected in religious beliefs concerning chiefs, kings, wizards, etc. The development of religion takes many forms, but their fundamental identity is unmistakable. In the evolution of religion there is also seen a remarkable nemesis. In the earlier phases of religion the social feelings and practices are explained in terms of religion. To-day we see the general tendency is for religion to be explained in terms of social utility. The circle is complete.

C. McCALL

BODY OR SOUL?

The boat was sinking. The Captain called to the crowd of passengers. "Who among you can pray?" "I can," replied a minister. "Then pray, mister," ordered the skipper. "The rest of you put on your life-belts; we are one short."

From the "New Statesman"

Correspondence

THE FREETHINKER AND THE COMPLIMENT

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I hope the following little incident which happened to me the other evening will interest you. It is illustrative of the point you recently raised about our knowing little of what our neighbour is thinking.

I was riding on the top of a bus with some copies of the *Freethinker* in my hand. Incidentally, I was carrying them for distribution to prospective new readers. The conductor of the bus asked me if it was not the *Freethinker* that I held. On saying that it was so, he exclaimed that it was the first time he had ever seen anyone with a copy on a bus. He said that he himself was a regular reader and added that he thought there were only about eight or nine subscribers in all Bristol.

I should have liked to have pursued the conversation further, more especially as I should not have expected to find such promising material amongst the bus conductors of this city. But, unfortunately, the duties of the conductor prevented this. There is much strong ground in Bristol.

Whilst writing, I may add for my part, that I like to see that my copy of the *Freethinker* is read, and not cast indiscriminately aside. I am glad to say that I have induced several people to read it, and two have promised me to subscribe. I hope others will follow.

P. M. TOVEY

A TRIBUTE

SIR,—As a sapper and miner, in what George Meredith called the "Best of Causes," I should like to express my great pleasure in agreeing with the message of congratulation—sent by the members of the West London Branch—on the attainment of your Fifty Years' N.S.S. advocacy of the principles of freethought.

Nearly fifty years ago, I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Cohen lecture in Victoria Park; and, in my humble way, I helped some of the stalwarts of the movement in their efforts to prevent him from meeting the fate of some of the pioneers of the past.

In conclusion, I should like to say what a deep debt of gratitude I owe to Mr. Cohen for helping to liberate my mind from the fetters of the supernatural.

GEORGE SMITH

Obituary

DAVID MAPP

By the death on April 21, in his sixty-ninth year, of David Mapp, the Manchester Branch has lost a consistent member—one of the staunchest of its diminishing old guard. He had accepted failing health with quiet courage for several years, anxious only that his illness and the end which he knew to be inevitable should not distress those dear to him. The sympathy felt for his widow and son and daughter, and the high regard in which he was held in his own neighbourhood, were expressed by the attendance of many friends at the Manchester Crematorium on April 24, when his close friend, Harold Bayford, conducted a Secular service.

In a just and sensitive appreciation of David Mapp's character, Mr. Bayford said David Mapp was a man who thought the noblest aim in life was to win the approval of one's own conscience, and that aim the speaker believed he accomplished. In a friendship extending over nineteen years Bayford never knew him to act meanly, dishonestly, or cruelly. His reading was wide and learned, and he had unusual intellectual attainments, and a marked determination with which, once he had decided that any course of action was right, he fearlessly pursued it. He spoke also of Mapp's humanitarian outlook, and of his high standing both as a book-wise naturalist and as a practising gardener—one whose whole working life had been connected with the soil.

"Politically," said Bayford, "he believed in any movement which would further the realization of the maximum of social and individual freedom, and he was strongly in favour of securing equal rights for all men and women and free access to the land for the whole of the people."

C. E. T.

SAMUEL JOHN ROSE

We have to announce the death of Samuel John Rose, which took place on April 22 in his 88th year. With a keen and alert mind he became a Freethinker as a young man, and accumulating knowledge in many directions he developed into a conversationalist both interesting and instructive. He was a reader of the *Freethinker* and took a general interest in the welfare of the movement until his death. His remains were interred in the Reading (Old) Cemetery on April 25, where before a large assembly of relatives and friends a Secular Service was read.

R. H. ROSETTI

Dream Bastilles

You need not tell me, for I know it well;
I am imprisoned in a self-built cell;
Or if I did not build, my parents did,
By what they counselled and by what forbid:
On every side arises a high wall,
Which, unlike Jericho, will never fall.

I sit within this life-confining cell,
And, on the whole, I find that suits me well;
But through the window of my cell I see
Men come and go, and act as they were free;
I wonder if these men have broken out
From self-built cells, with an exultant shout.

Perhaps it is but for an hour or so
These men are free, then back to prison go;
Just prisoners released upon parole,
The body freed, but not the fettered soul;
Maybe they go as walkers in deep sleep,
And when they wake lost freedom they will weep.

My jealousy finds comfort in this thought,
Which may be false, for I was badly taught;
Taught to believe, like all my kin and kith,
That freedom is for mankind but a myth;
Taught to despise and crucify desire;
Instructed that I should not "play with fire."

For fire will burn these prison walls of paper;
Outside, the prisoner with joy will caper;
Will realize, with something of a shock,
His prison door had neither bolt nor lock;
That he had only got to push this door
Open to be a prisoner no more.

I, knowing this, still sit within my cell,
And lack the will to end my self-made hell;
I burn with passion, but not quite enough;
The over-civilized are seldom tough:
I want what all barbarians have prized,
But know that I am super-civilized.

BAYARD SIMMONS

For he lives twice who can at once employ
The present well, and ev'n the past enjoy.

—Alexander Pope

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. E. M. Joad, M.A., D.Lit.—"Some Experiences of Psychological Research."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mrs. N. Buxton.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 6.30, Mr. J. H. Barker.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner): 7.30, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Sunday, a lecture. South Hill Park, 7.30, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 7.0, Thursday, Mr. Saphin. Friday, 7.0, Mr. Barnes. Sunday, 3.0, until dusk, various speakers.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

PAISWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL: Afternoon, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"That Person the Parson." Evening—"Politicians and People."

OUTDOOR

BIKENHEAD (WIRRAL) BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (1 Colmore Street, Horse Pair): 7.30, Friday. Important meeting at this address.

BLACKBURN MARKET: 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

BLITH (The Fountain): 6.30, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S.: Sunday, F. J. McCulloch, B.A.—"Federal Europe."

COLNE (Vivary Bridge): 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

HUNCOAT: 7.30, Monday, Mr. J. Clayton.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Bury Market): 7.30, Stevenson Square, 3.0, Sunday. Ashton Market, 7.30, Sunday.

Blackburn, 7.15, Monday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will address these meetings.

NELSON (Chapel Street): 7.30, Wednesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 6.30, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTHEND BRANCH N.S.S. (Marine Parade): Sunday afternoon, Mr. G. Taylor will speak

STOCKTON (Market Cross): 6.30, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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I have no words to express my admiration and amazement on reading *The Psychic Stream*. The foresight of Ernest Renan in saying: "I envy the man who shall evoke from the past the origin of Christianity; such a writer would compose the most important book of the century"—has come to pass. *The Psychic Stream* is the book which he foretold. Your work is unique and you are the first man to provide the right key to open the lock behind which lies the solution of a most vital problem. The shelves of literature are crammed with the works of theologians and scholars who have been groping in the dark for that key and never found it.—H. L. Williams, author of *Foundations of Christianity*.

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