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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Praying for Peace—The Editor</i> - - - - -	353
<i>Cross and Crescent—Mimmermus</i> - - - - -	355
<i>Messianism—D. B. McLachlan</i> - - - - -	356
<i>Death of a Worm—C. G. L. Du Cann</i> - - - - -	357
<i>Emile Zola—H. Cutner</i> - - - - -	358
<i>Our Inheritance—Geo. B. Lissenden</i> - - - - -	362
<i>Conflict and Conversion—Idris Ll. Abraham</i> - - - - -	362
<i>Courtship—George Wallace</i> - - - - -	363
<i>Highways and Byways in English History— Archibald Robertson</i> - - - - -	364
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions

Praying for Peace

In the last war the motto of the Germans was "God is with us." Our parsonry challenged the claim on the grounds that God was with us. There was nothing new in either claim. So far as the belief in one god is concerned each side has always claimed that he was with them. Victory merely confirmed the claim on one side without destroying that on the other. The winning side praised God for his good taste, the losing one said that God was punishing them for their sins, but that the next time, with better munitions and more men, God would help them to victory. So far as God was concerned it was really a case of "Heads I win, tails you lose." No Theist, particularly a Christian, would think of blaming God. Christians, like camels, take their burdens kneeling. Generals may be "removed" because they blundered or are inefficient; God keeps his place whatever happens. In fact the more God appears to neglect the Christian the more he grovels. There are exceptions, as when the Sicilians finding that their patron saint did not answer their prayers for rain, promptly threw his effigy into the sea.

We are at war and we have established a working combination with all sorts of people. Taken collectively they constitute almost an encyclopedia of religions. There is the Jew with his single god, there is the Christian with his trinity made up of a wifeless father with a son the same age as himself, and a mysterious something or other called the Holy Ghost. There are Brahmins and Mohammedans, Buddhists (although genuine Buddhists have no god) and Parsees, with many others, and a not inconsiderable number of Atheists, Agnostics and Freethinkers. All are quite Catholic in their attitude concerning munitions and other implements of war. All are unified so far as making war is concerned, and all would agree that without unification successful war would be impossible. There are all sorts of officers from Corporals to Generals, and there is a Commander-in-Chief above the lot. In religion there is no such unification. The

god of each group issues his usually conflicting commands, and bestows his favour on his own followers and, by inference, gives the others "hell." There is no united god-front. Each worshipper wishes, as Heine would say, to go to Hell in his own fashion. This must be rather unpleasant to the galaxy of gods represented in the allied forces. For gods never work together, they are "jealous" gods, and if one gives victory to the mixed army, each of the other gods, through their followers will claim full credit for it. And no god will submit to the credit that is due to him being given to some other deity—particularly the Bible God who has plainly told the world that "I thy god am a jealous god," and has ordered to be stoned to death anyone who poaches on his preserve by introducing other gods to his followers.

* * *

Is it a Joke?

But we have just had an attempt to present a God-front to the world. The King, at the instigation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, one may assume, ordered a day of National Prayer. Concerning that day of prayer we last week made the following curt observation:—

Sunday, May 26, was by the request of the King and the connivance of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a day of National Prayer. That is it was a day of prayer for all who cared to pray. Tuesday, May 28, brought the news that Belgium had surrendered to Hitler. God had plenty of time to give a considered reply. Can it be there is a fifth column in heaven?

Within twenty-four hours of the publication of the paper, I received an unsigned letter calling me to account. I do not usually notice anonymous letters, but the writer, owing perhaps to his own lack of a sense of humour, did me an injustice. He tells me that this is no time for joking. But I was not joking. It is, says the Bible, a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, and I am sure that to play a joke on him would be something inconceivably horrible. We read of God being angry, or pleased, at the birth and development of his son, but I do not recall the Christian God ever laughing or joking. Anyway I do not agree that the present time is not a time for joking. I consider it an admirable occasion for both humour and wit. There are, I admit, times when mere humour is out of place, but when humour rises to wit it is always in season. Humour may even be dangerous, as when Mr. Chamberlain came from Munich brandishing that historic sheet of paper which in the name of "Peace in our time" gave Hitler control over a large and important piece of Europe, a commentary on which is now being written by Holland, Belgium, France and Britain.

Look at the situation. I will not repeat the hackneyed phrase that we are fighting for our lives, because not having received a Christian education, I do not place the value upon merely living that is felt by

Christians. Our serious problems are concerned with life, not with death. At its worst death is no more than an extinction of individuality, and whether that comes to-day or to-morrow or a few years hence is not a thing that concerns the dead.

When once the fates have cut the mortal thread,
The man as much to all intents is dead,
Who dies to-day, and will as long be so,
As he who died a thousand years ago.

So I say we are not so much fighting for life as we are fighting for all that should make life worth living. And to think of our children growing up under Fascist rule—whether German or Italian—worse still to think of their having become so degraded as to welcome life in such circumstances, is to regard their timely extinction as a stroke of good fortune. It is one of the counts in the indictment of Christianity that it has managed neither to get men to die with decency nor to live with intellectual self-respect.

* * *

A Christian War

Now in this war the Government made no special or exclusive call on Christians. It decreed that every man, whatever be his religion, or be he without religion at all, was subject to be placed in the armed forces or to be used in whatever capacity was thought needful. The only exceptions to this rule were the clergy, the sick, the incapable, and the insane. In the face of this situation the leaders of the Church and many of their adherents perpetrated two thumping lies. One was by implication, the other was in set terms. The one by implication was involved in the day of National Prayer. It was the Christian God who was to be petitioned and advertised. To have done otherwise would have been to admit that other gods were operative. Other religions did take part, but that was because they did not wish their god to be quite shut out. They came upon the scene much as the representatives of foreign states are present at a royal marriage or a royal funeral. The other gods represented were obvious outsiders.

The second lie was deliberate. The people were told, so frequently that I find it is being repeated by the man in the street, that we were fighting for the preservation of Christianity. If there ever was a doubly-damned lie it is that one. And those who originated it must be fully aware of its quality. The multitudes of Mohammedans, of Hindoos, of Jews, of Atheists, of Freethinkers generally, are not fighting for the preservation of Christianity. They would work rather for its destruction. There was never the slightest suggestion when these men were called to the colours that they were fighting for the preservation of Christianity. I think it quite possible that if anyone began to conduct a campaign, the object of which was to prove that the war was for the establishment of Communism, or Socialism, or Liberalism, or Conservatism, or Atheism, he would be imprisoned on a charge of trying to undermine the morale of the army, or sabotaging our chance of victory. If it be true that we are fighting for Christianity, it follows that thousands of young men will be led to death under false pretences. But it is not true. We are fighting for something that is higher and more enduring and more important than Christianity. We are fighting for the right to human freedom, irrespective of colour or creed. And even though we may not realize these ends as completely as we would wish, we are fighting to retain the possibility of securing them.

* * *

Intercession

The British public was invited to ask God for his "intercession" and to give us victory. Why? Does he not know there is a war on? Does he need

the why and wherefore of the war to be explained to him? Is not the slaughter of men and women and children, of wounded men, enough to induce intercession? Is God also playing the part of a neutral, or are we to assume that the whole nation must go on its knees before this God of "righteousness and goodness" can be induced to take action? More, if God can intercede to stop the war by giving us victory, could he not have prevented its occurrence? These are all old questions, but they are now, as always, relevant ones. The possibility of God's interference raises far more difficulties than it removes. Is there any man in this country who, if it were in his power to give the world a real peace, and end this terrible slaughter would not do so? Why should mankind continue to worship gods that are less worthy than themselves? It is rank humbug for parsons and B.B.C. fifth column religionists to chatter about the wickedness of man as the cause of war. What wickedness could the mere boys who give their lives in the air, on the sea, and on the land have committed that would justify the supineness of the Christian deity? Or if we must not blame God, why pray to him at all? If the issue rests with us why pray to God? If the issue rests with God why blame man? And is a God worth bothering about who can see the deliberate murder by the Germans of refugee women and children, and who insists that men must grovel before him in prayer before he will act? Quite properly the Government has decreed that there shall be no profiteering from the war. Whether that resolve is carried out or not it is at least a gesture in the right direction. But the greatest profiteers we have are the clergy. They seek to profiteer from the war, to use it for their own aggrandisement. The war is, we are told, because we have ignored God. We must have a day of National Prayer and national humiliation so that God will interfere. Well, we had the day of National Prayer—and God moved the heart of the King of Belgium to surrender his army to Hitler, and to enable him to threaten the lives of huge numbers of our own men. No more instant answer to prayer has been given for many years.

There is a common practice among primitive peoples when they are about to make war. Religious exercises are enforced; the help of the tribal gods are invoked. A solemn march is made to a place sacred to the gods, and a considerable amount of imitative and compulsive magic is wrought. The gods are asked to give power to men's arms and victory to the worshipping tribe. We also have our religious customs. Our medicine-men bless battle-ships and consecrate war flags. Our medicine-men also lead the people to a "sacred" place, and perform magic that will induce the tribal joss to give us victory. There is only one difference in the two situations. If the gods do not give a primitive tribe victory they are likely to exchange them for others of a more useful character. The savage has honesty of belief and applies it in practice. The modern Christian when his god does not help, flattens himself out more completely and hopes that by grovelling he will arouse pity.

One other analogue. When the Romans went to war they closed the temple of peace and opened the temple of Janus. When peace came they closed the temple of war. Our religion is more accommodating. We have no separate temple for peace and war. The one temple does. It preaches war or peace as occasion serves. The same gospel, the same god, the same medicine-man. If we are victorious we thank God for it. If we are not victorious we still praise God, and pride ourselves on our humility of spirit. Camels and Christians take their burden kneeling.

Cross and Crescent

The star of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set.—*Shelley.*

BUT for the Battle of Tours, Mohammedanism might have been the chief religion of Europe, and the Koran been expounded at the English universities and schools. For it was at this battle that Charles Martel saved Europe by defeating the Moors under Abd-ur-Rahman, thus checking and hurling back their victorious advance into Western Europe.

Even to-day Mohammedanism remains Christianity's greatest religious rival, and the Koran is one of the most widely read books in existence. Moslems number some two hundred and thirty millions, who use the Koran for public worship, and in schools more Moslems than Christians use their Bible. The numerous Protestant sects of the world number only one hundred and fifty millions, while the Roman Catholics do not encourage undue familiarity with their Bible among the laity. The ecclesiastics of the Greek Church are in the happier position of catering for far more innocent folk who care more for life than for literature. Moslems are as fanatical as they are pious. They really regard the Koran as divine, and as revealed to their prophet, Mohammed. So profound is their reverence for their sacred volume that they may not even touch it without ceremony.

The Moslem Bible, revered by over two hundred and thirty millions, of whom eighty millions are British subjects is a little known book in Christian countries. It is a curious volume, much smaller than the Christian Bible, and makes hard reading even in translation. If the arguments by which the divine inspiration of the Christian Bible are worth a straw, this Koran must be inspired also. There is the same incompatibility of the author with the writing, a borrowed background, the same wealth of Oriental imagery, the same claim to prophecy and the fulfilment of prophecy.

The outstanding divergence is that there is no claim on the part of the prophet to work miracles, although the Koran is based on Hebrew legends. The same mythical characters—Abraham, Lot, Noah, Moses, Solomon, and many others—appear again and again in its pages. Another divergence is that Mohammedanism is monotheistic. Its theology is simplicity itself compared with the mazes of the Christian creeds and the tangle of the Trinity. In spite of the differences, however, there is a very familiar ring in the phrasing. Take the first Sura from the Koran:—

Glory to God, Master of the Universe, the Merciful,
the Compassionate, Lord of the Day of Judgment, we
adore Thee and implore Thy aid, guide us in the
right path.

Then, again, "There is no God, but God; God is most great" was a bold message for an unknown Arab to bring to a nation that had deities by the dozen, and sharp swords and strong arms to defend them. The morality, too, is impressive in its narrow way: Take the faith as laid down in the second Sura:—

Piety does not consist in turning your faces to the East or the West. He is pious who believes in God, and in the prophets; who, for the love of God, gives of his own to his neighbour; to the orphans, to the poor, to the traveller, and to those who ask; who ransoms the captives, who observes prayer, who gives alms, fulfils the engagements he contracts, who is patient in adversity, in hard times, and times of violence. These are just and fear the Lord.

The Christian Churches have always been envious

of Mohammedanism. The history of the eight Crusades shows some of the extent of that envy, and also emphasizes that Christian love is a loose kind of equipment. The Papacy pitted Christianity against Mohammedanism, and staked the authenticity of each upon the result. Had not the defeat of Islam resulted, a predominant part of the world might have become Moslem, and the Koran been expounded in thousands of mosques in England.

Compared with Christianity, Islam possesses great advantages. It did not originate behind a smoke-screen of monkish suspicion and superstition. The text of the Koran was finally settled within a few years of Mohammed's death, and, so far as his own life is concerned, friends and enemies are agreed as to the main facts of his career. The prophet's life may be traced in the stately sentences of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in the picturesque phrases of Thomas Carlyle, and in countless other volumes. An ardent propagandist, Mohammed made only thirteen converts in three years. Think of it. To-day a large proportion of the human race mention his name with reverence. Such forceful propaganda as Mohammed's meant the risk of death or most severe punishment. Forced to take the sword in hand, it took him ten years' hard fighting before he prevailed.

Where is the secret of Islam to be found? Some critics have contended that it was but a triumph of a personality added to the glory of a successful soldier. Mohammed was an ignorant man, and his Koran, where it is not stolen, is poor stuff. Carlyle thought it but "a wearisome, confused jumble." And a howling dervish, spinning in circles until he becomes senseless, is a symbol of this religion. The one word, Kismet (it is fate) settles everything for the Moslem. Death in battle has no terrors for him, but in peace he soon sinks into indifference. Hence it is a fighting religion, and its true home is in the camp. Still there have been whole eras in the history of Mohammedanism, especially in connexion with its rule in Persia, Spain, and India, signalized by real outbursts of intellectual life, but they dazzled for a while and died down. For five hundred years, from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the thirteenth century, it was superior to the Christian world in intellectual and social culture. Speaking broadly, there is something arid in this Moslem creed, as if the proximity of the desert had to do with hampering the reigning conception.

Yet, with all its limitations, Islam is still a powerful factor in Eastern life. Hundreds of Oriental cities shimmer with the fair architecture of mosques. From thousands of fair, filagreed pulpits the glory of Mohammed the prophet is daily proclaimed. Throughout the wide expanse of the Orient men still turn their faces to the East, and repeat the time-honoured formula of the faithful. Unquestionably, in this age of Unfaith, the peoples who revere the Koran still possess a solidarity that is lacking to-day in the nations of Christendom, and they may yet prove that they have a staying power as unconquerable as the sword of their own prophet.

MIMNERMUS

GOD AND MR. MIDDLETON

Parson: "Rastus, that's a fine garden you have there."

Rastus: "Yah suh, Pahson."

Parson: "You must thank the Almighty for that."

Rastus: "Pahson, did you ebbah see dis piece of ground when de Almighty had it all to hisself?"

Messianism

(Continued from page 348)

II.—JUDAISM

THE Jewish exiles in Babylon found there a civilization superior to their own, and, after Babylon was taken by the Persians, a religion better than their own. This religion they resolved to adopt as far as they could. Cyrus gave them permission to return to Jerusalem, of which only some availed themselves. Babylon was thenceforth the headquarters of their law and learning, their home from home. They had abundant materials ready to hand, Chaldean as well as Iranian.

Unwilling to admit that they owed their religion to another people, the Jews expressed in the Hebrew language the fundamental notions of Parseeism, and pretended that it had always been their own religion revealed to them by their own God and prophets.

Ormuzd was called Elohim, Yalveh and other names; Ahriman became Satan. Judaism had no Satan until then. The archangels and angels received Hebrew names. The creation in six days is practically the same in both accounts. Adam and Eve are Masha and Mashyoi. The Psalms are imitations of the Gathas. The doctrines of the Millennium and the Messiah were gladly taken over, with the difference that the Jews would provide the Messiah and become the ruling nation of the Golden Age. There was nothing Messianic in the Canaanite Judaism.

According to Haug: "Spitama Zarathushtra's conception of Ahura-Mazda as the Supreme Being is perfectly identical with the notion of Elohim (God) or Jehovah, which we find in the books of the Old Testament." (p. 302). "The Zoroastrian idea of the Devil and the infernal kingdom coincides entirely with the Christian doctrine. The Devil is a murderer and father of lies according to both the Bible and the Zend-Avesta." (p. 309).

The Chinvat bridge was not taken over. The Jews took no interest in heaven and never wished to enter it. Their sole aim was earthly power and glory. In what is called the Mosaic law there is no reference to rewards and punishments in a spiritual world.

To realize Messianism by ordinary means was impossible for a small ruined nation. Only God could do it. To move him thereto they would be the most holy people on earth—ritually at least—a race of priests and saints incessantly worshipping God. This explains the copious new legislation and the sudden increase in the number of priests and levites. It was their own choice to be the Chosen People. The majority never lived up to the standard set them by the prophets, and were constantly being damned for their shortcomings.

To fit their new destiny the history of the Jews had to be reconstructed, and perhaps now for the first time written. It must show that they had always been a Peculiar People, nobler in every way than the rest of mankind. The new history is strewn with miracles, roseate prophecies, brilliant military victories, delightful slaughterings. All this was easily believed by the majority and crystallized into infallible truth, ensnaring a glorious and, as it proved, a disastrous ideal. That is their Messianism. It bred in them a megalomania that made them unpopular everywhere.

There are four manifest reasons for believing that the Jewish Messianism is nothing but a plagiary of the Zoroastrian.

(1) If Judaism was Messianic from the time of Solomon it is incredible that the Ten Tribes should have separated from the other two. It was to the interest of all to hold together and be as numerous and

strong as possible. The Ten would never have exchanged the lofty Messianic hope for the trumpery Calf-worship.

(2) If Moses ever existed his tomb would certainly be known. He was merely the Jewish Zoroaster.

(3) The old religion would not have been neglected and forgotten until a book describing it was found in the Temple. That was the explanation of the new post-Exilic Judaism.

(4) Persians had an elaborate religion and a numerous priesthood before they came in contact with Jews. Is it likely that a triumphant people—the Persian Empire was then the greatest that had ever been—would exchange their faith for that of a defeated, broken remnant who were never of any importance? As well suppose that the Whites of North America owe their religion to the Negroes.

A few minor details may be noted.

A Persian maiden was impregnated by bathing in water in which semen from Zoroaster had fallen long before, and where it was preserved by a multitude of angels. She was the mother of the penultimate Messiah. That may have suggested the Virgin Mother of Judaism (Isaiah vii. 14).

A Parsee made the sun to stand still. It was easy for a Jew to do one better and make both the sun and moon to stand still. The plagiarist has a motive for enlarging his subject, none for abridging it.

Persia is mountainous and difficult for travellers, so it was decided that in the Millennium the mountains should be flattened out. The Jews agreed and resolved that the valleys should be filled up; also that there should be no sea. They were bad sailors.

In the Messianic Age the wild beasts will be harmless, for their nature will be changed. That is all the Parsee said on the subject. The idea is expanded by Isaiah: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb," and so on for several verses.

Ormuzd sometimes spoke of himself as I AM WHO I AM; so Jehovah calls himself I AM THAT I AM (Ex. xxx. 14).

A Millennium without eating and drinking (and marrying) would not appeal to a Jew. In Isaiah and Revelation we are told that in the happy future we shall neither hunger nor thirst. This I take to mean that the food will be supplied miraculously. It does not mean that we shall not be hungry or thirsty enough to enjoy our meals.

In course of time the Jews felt that the Messianic religion was not working out according to plan. There was no sign of a coming millennium. Then it occurred to some that the delay was owing to the arrogant manners and pretensions of the Jews; so a party of them started what may be called the Benevolent or Humility Stunt. Henceforth there were two Jewish ideals, the Harsh and the Gentle. This indicated no change of character, only a change of policy or tactics. The aim was always earthly supremacy.

The harsh ideal was priestly and national. This is the one whose Chief would have the nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. He would break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

The gentler sort was more like the original Parseeism. This Messiah would be a humble, affectionate and tolerant teacher. He would suffer, because he would certainly be opposed by priests and probably by foreigners, but would prevail in the long run. Here is Micah's version (ch. iv. 1-5).

"But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us

go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach you of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between many peoples, and shall reprove strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever."

The Second Isaiah is a series of lively fancies about the expected Messianism. The Jews will be masters of the world, and will treat their subjects mildly or harshly as may be expedient.

If Messianic notions are found in writings placed before the Babylonian period it is consistent with Jewish editorial practices. The Pentateuch was composed during and later than the Babylonian captivity.

D. B. McLACHLAN

Death of a Worm

The origin of religion in primitive man has been traced to nothing more respectable than Terror. If anyone doubts the truth of this proposition a study of such a monument of learning as Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* should convince him. Again are we not adjured by the Christian religion to "fear" God and to accept the view that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom? In these modern times, religious folk are apt to soft-pedal on the terroristic element in the Christian religion and its concomitants, hell-fire and everlasting torment, but old-fashioned folk still speak with approval of a "God-fearing" man.

Just as religion originated in fear so, in the last analysis, religion is sustained by the same ingredient. We are all cowards; and when one examines the terms upon which we hold our lives this is not surprising. Our tenure of breath is so utterly precarious. No man, not even Hitler or Stalin, is master of more than the moment—and no man can count with certainty upon even the moment. This, of course, is platitude. But it is also reality. Worse than this reality remains for most of us. Most of us indeed, cannot even count upon our daily bread in old age or sickness perhaps, or upon the economic welfare of our nearest and dearest when we die. Even if we have wealth, what of our health or the health of those we love? If we possess health to-day, shall we to-morrow? Who can say?

No wonder man is afraid. Afraid of the insecurities of life; afraid of the uncertainties of death. Afraid for himself; afraid for his loved ones; afraid for his business or livelihood; afraid for his country—especially in days like these. "Men's hearts failing them for fear"—yes, indeed. As always, the nations are equally governed by Fear. Germany afraid of England and England afraid of Germany; Russia afraid of both and both afraid of Russia; the U.S.A. afraid of Europe; Italy afraid of herself; the Balkans afraid of everyone; China afraid of Japan and Japan afraid of Western interference—one could continue the contemptible tale of fear that frightens nations into their lunatic wars. National fears and individual fears stalk everywhere.

Unfortunately neither nations nor individuals talk

of their fear-phobias. They suffer them in secret. Openly they will boast and brag and indulge in bombast. If only they expressed their fears, half the terror would be minimized. But this is contrary to natural impulses of foolish human nature. What man or nation will admit simply: "I am frightened."

This sense of fear is the greatest of all evils and the parent of still more evils. Greed is the child of fear—the fear of lacking something. What is at the back of the profit-motive but greed which is fear-engendered? Why do men wrong their fellow-men? They are afraid of not possessing what a lying fear tells them it is necessary to possess. Nations wrong each other from the same fear. Is it not ludicrous that Germany which possesses a Beethoven and a Goethe should think colonies more important, and that England which possesses colonies does not realize that her literature is a more precious possession? And we watch fear driving Germany into Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium in the name of "military necessity," while England and France expend blood and treasure to stop her in the name of "defence." A mad world, my masters! And what is it but this nameless unexpressed fear that drives the world to this war-madness as to all others?

What is it that men want to deliver them from the menace of their own minds, their own ghastly fear. In a word, it is security. Give them security and most evils would die a natural death. But is that gift of the gods to be got? Statesmen and politicians must wrangle over the problems of international and national security—the failure to solve them is responsible for this war, and doubtless will be responsible for the next—but who shall give the individual his personal security? Alas, in England, the wealthiest land in the world and in history, we are so mismanaged that the ordinary person's economic security is not yet accomplished? What a ghastly reproach this is to our contemporary politicians?

But if economic security were achieved that is only one facet of the insecurity which threatens human life and happiness. All of us must die. That last terror is not to be gainsaid. What humanity craves for, entire security, will never be ours, for it is in the nature of things that this shall be unattainable.

Hence the impulse of the frightened human mind towards the security promised by religion. Of the two sexes it is woman who is the more haunted by the spectre of insecurity, and who most fears incertitude and "The End." Therefore it is woman who is the Church-goer and the believer rather than the man. Take from the Christian religion its promise of security after death and great numbers of adherents, especially its female adherents, would fall away. Women cling to reunion and resurrection more than to any other dogma and this is not surprising, the nature of woman being what it is.

It is worth noting how persons truly "converted" to religion rejoice and are happy. This is because all sense of insecurity is lost. Worth noting, too, is their emphasis upon "Salvation," and their question to others: "Are you saved"? These facts betray them. They have been terrified as John Bunyan and John Wesley were terrified. At last, after their terror, they feel safe and certain in an unsafe and uncertain universe. They are "going to be all right" which is what they really mean when they say "my sins are forgiven." Bunyan put it very well when he described the burden slipping from Christian's shoulders since deliverance from fear, any great fear, feels exactly like a weight lifted from the oppressed mind. But when one analyses this religious happiness or joy or satisfaction, this sense of selfish personal salvation, is it really worthy of respect? "Safety first" is a good enough motto for transport on the roads, but not

for heroes in living any more than for soldiers in war.

But for those of us to whom the "consolations of religion" are spurious, what weapon remains to combat the fear that arises from the ever-present sense of insecurity? Only this I think: to grasp the nettle, to look bravely at the Gorgon in the mirror of our Perseus' shield that our blood may not be turned to stone. To embrace insecurity as our natural and known fate, as the law of universal Nature and in embracing insecurity to cast out fear. The grass may wither, the flower may fade, but we know the eternal immutable law that prevails throughout the universe that nothing is lost, nothing ends, for every end is merely a change.

A stark outlook, you say! But having watched that swift speckled thrush drag the worm from the shaven lawn in the beautiful garden of the Queen Anne house, where I write these words I reflect (as I drive away the tortoiseshell cat that hungrily watches the thrush in turn) that the law of life is stark indeed. What sense is there in pretending that the gobbled worm will rise again in glorified wormhood though the phantom of Justice in my mind insists that it ought to? For was not its death as little deserved and as abominable as that of Christ on the Cross recorded by the Four Evangelists? But if the worm may not rise again why should the human worm rise again after similarly being gobbled by Death?

Let us be honest: the ordinary humble worm in justice deserves to have its innocent useful life renewed far more than we human beings, most of whose lives for the greatest part consist in doing harm to others or ourselves, and are perhaps better terminated for ever.

C. G. L. DU CANN

Emile Zola

I.

It was quite right that the centenary of the birth of the great French writer, Emile Zola, should call attention to his magnificent championship of Dreyfus, the Jew which, in the ultimate, resulted in his rehabilitation, and the crushing of the combination of Militarism and Roman Catholicism which conspired to send an innocent man to the most horrible of prisons. That story has been told so often that it is bound a little to obscure Zola's great reputation as a novelist "with a purpose." In general, didactical novels are not quite as interesting as those which are, or which are intended to be, pure "art." But in the hands of a genius like Dickens or Zola, they more often than not transcend the bounds of mere "purpose," and become great works of art even in spite of the author.

Zola tried to do what the great Balzac attempted to do, but in quite a different way. They both set out to draw the life around them with the utmost realism, but Balzac did this far more subjectively than Zola. Balzac surveyed humanity from a psychological standpoint, and drew his characters from within; Zola was a great reporter, but he did not altogether neglect the psychological aspect. And, of course, Balzac was a great reporter as well.

The death of his father when Emile was a boy drew upon him and his mother great hardships, but perhaps his privations sharpened his observation, as similar hardships did with Dickens. One of Zola's first jobs was to pack and label books for the French publishing firm of Hachette, but in a very few years he published a book of short stories, and attracted the atten-

tion of critics with his powerful but extremely morbid study of adultery in *Thérèse Raquin*. This novel gives the key to a great deal of his work, but his principal idea as soon as he definitely became a man of letters was to write a complete epic of life, in all its branches, under the Second Empire.

In *L'Œuvre* he introduces himself as one of the characters (Sandoz) and sketches his ambitious project; and the twenty volumes which make up the Rougon-Macquart series prove how wonderfully he succeeded.

Zola is probably little read nowadays—even in France. He has become a Name, a Champion of the Oppressed, for life in these more hectic times—even apart from war—moves on a far quicker tempo. In those years which preceded the last war, and which we of an older generation like to think was a genuine Golden Age, we seem to have had more time for solid reading. A big book did not frighten us. Most of Zola's ran into 600 pages, and they were in a curious way "unskipable." In my own case I found the few I read in an English translation of absorbing interest. I could imagine nothing greater than *L'Assommoir* (*Drink*, in English) had ever been written against the evils of intemperance; while *Germinal* horrified me, and *La Débâcle* painted the awful horrors of war in an unforgettable realism.

A few years ago chance made me the possessor of Zola's complete works in French, and I determined to go through them all in the order in which they were written; my admiration for his work has enormously increased thereby, and I find some of the criticisms levelled against it both pathetic and amusing. One need not agree with him in everything, and one may admit the justice of some of the critiques; Zola was bound to make mistakes, but he was a great writer for all that. It has been a real disappointment for me to see how Zola the writer has been slowly but surely depreciated by people not fit to clean his boots.

In *L'Œuvre*, the book in which Zola deals with Art—it was he perhaps more than anybody else who put Édouard Manet "on the map"—he brings in a journalist called "Sandoz," who explains his ideas on various social questions such as marriage, the Press, and other things. And in this connexion it is interesting to note how Zola, though a Socialist and Freethinker, proved himself a staid bourgeois who believed, as he said, in stability, and order, and quiet. It was silly to imagine that a wife killed the artist in a man, that she broke his heart, and ate up his brain. On the contrary, the tranquillity and peace marriage gave him helped a man to do good and constant work.

Zola believed in a Press, powerful and invincible in moulding opinion; but, of course, it was man, man as he is, that he wanted more than anything else to study—not, he exclaims, a metaphysical puppet, but the real physiological man formed by his environment and acting as the result of all his organs as well.

Thought was not, he insisted, just the product of a man's brain, but of his whole body. You could not separate the psychological from the physiological—"The one inter-penetrates the other, and both to-day are only one; the mechanism of man is the sum total of all his functions . . . there," cries Zola, "you have our formula . . . it means the death of old ideas, the birth of a new society. . . ." Nowhere in all his books (as far as I have read, of course) is his Materialism so clearly stated as by Sandoz in *L'Œuvre*.

Later, "Sandoz" told Claude, the hero of this book, his vast literary ambition:—

I am going to take a family, the members of which I shall study, one at a time, from where they come, to where they go, how they react upon one another; in fact, a kind of small world in which humanity moves and behaves . . . in addition, I shall put my

good people in a precise historic period which will give me the environment and events of history . . . it will form a series of books, fifteen or twenty perhaps . . . episodes which keep together each in its own frame . . . in fact, a number of novels to build me a house for my declining days—that is unless they knock me out first!

It was indeed a great idea, and the twenty volumes of the Rougon-Macquart series are a marvellous monument to Zola's great qualities not only as a pure story-teller, but as a delineator of character and a descriptive writer almost unequalled in French literature.

Apart from the first, *La Fortune des Rougon*, which, so to speak, introduces the whole series, and the last, *Le Docteur Pascal*, each book more or less describes one slice of life in the moulding.

For example, *Germinal* deals with coal mines and miners, *La Terre* is concerned with the peasant and the soil, *L'Argent* with the Bourse and its machinations in Paris, *Nana* with prostitution, and so on. But through each book runs a dozen or more subsidiary by-paths, full of human, often of tragic interest, though Zola never lets go of his main idea, the terrific force of heredity and environment on human beings. Critics complain that he ran his "hobby-horse" too closely for truth, and, of course, in real life things may not have turned the way Zola makes them. But he had his own ideas and he was writing fiction; he had to compress a whole life, or a series of lives, in a book, quite a different thing from the vast space and time of a Universe.

And as he grew older and more experienced one senses his slow revolt against religion expressed but tentatively at first, but openly and defiantly expressed later with fierceness and contempt.

It was not altogether the Dreyfus case which made Zola hated by the Army and the Church—even more perhaps by the Church than the Army. Anti-Semitism gave the Church a very convenient weapon to use against one whom it recognized as an enemy, for the Church recognized, as it always has done, an enemy; and in Zola it rightly saw one of its bitterest—and most powerful. And Zola had to pay dearly for his freethought.

H. CUTNER

Acid Drops

The President of the Western Baptist Association, speaking at Taunton, on May 23, said, "I must protest against the action of some of our parsons to-day. They are in a reserved occupation. . . . I can think of nothing more disastrous to the Church of to-morrow than the parson of to-day sheltering behind his occupation and enjoying privileges at the expense of someone else's life. To me it is a mean and despicable action." Mr. Jackman looks like getting himself into trouble. After all, but for the clergy, we should not have had our day of national prayer, and without it God might have forgotten not to interfere with the King of Belgium's action.

The Archbishop of Canterbury does not seem quite satisfied with a single day of prayer. Addressing the Convocation of Canterbury, he advises "continuous and persistent" prayer. There seems to be something in this. God may easily dodge one prayer, but if the people will pray continuously and persistently (can they pray continuously without praying persistently) God may do as they wish in order to get a few moment's peace. All parents know how often they give children what they want just to "keep the persistent little beggar quiet." As we have before remarked, our Archbishop is "sly, devilish sly." His advice is worry the Lord until he does what you want. There seems something in it.

But one recalls the prayer of the American coloured man with a hungry family round him who prayed to God to send him something to eat. And a passer-by, with a loaf in his hand, heard the prayer and threw the loaf in at the window, breaking the glass in so doing. And the coloured man looked round and said, "Dere y'are Lord, dere y'are. Yer send me a fourpenny loaf and break an eighteen-penny winder."

Archbishop Downey (R.C.) of Liverpool, says that one cause of the war may be that "Irreligion and the neglect of God's public worship" have grown of late years. Readers may note that it is the neglect of public worship that distresses Archbishop Downey. In other words it is the business side of the matter that troubles him. Public worship means going to Church. Going to Church means keeping the priests in being. So we are given the theological version of the bootmaker's motto, "Nothing like leather."

Downey—perhaps it should be spelt "downy"—says, "it may be that God is allowing us to suffer the anxieties and horrors of war as a purifying ordeal." We hope the language will be noted. God *allowing* us to have a war. It will do us good, spiritually, that is; it will bring us to Church and keep Downey and his kind busy. From Downey's point of view we ought not to regret being at war. We ought to thank God for "allowing" the war. The war was not made by Hitler. All our leaders are liars when they blame Hitler. God looking down on England said, "These British people have been neglecting public worship, and my servant Downey will find his occupation gone if this continues. But I will not be hard. I will *allow* the British people to have a war, then they may come back to offer public worship to me." What a God, what a priest? As Ingersoll said of Knox and Calvin, they fit each other like the upper and lower jaws of a hyena.

There is a curious phrasing in the war news that no one appears to have noted. We learn that the *French Navy* is co-operating with the *Royal Navy*. We ought to be consistent. Either we ought to speak of the *Royal Navy* and the *Republican Navy*, or the *French* and the *British Navy*, or the *Royal Navy* and the *President's Navy*. Is it fear of that word "Republican," or the desire to advertise our Monarchy that dictates this one-sided phraseology? No one can believe that our Navy would fight less gloriously if consistency of language was the rule.

We think that the lowest depth of Christian lying for the glory of God is reached in a Sermon by the Rev. Leslie Weatherhead, reported in the *Christian World* of May 30. We are not referring now to any Prayer which Germans may offer for their victory over us or any which British Christians may offer to the same God for an Allied victory. But we have the right and duty to protest in the name of myriads who are giving their lives to fight the German menace, when an English stay-at-home parson, highly paid to talk and broadcast, thus describes those who do not pray, but only devote all they own to prosecuting the war with every human resource in our fight against Hitler. These are his words:—

Remembering, then, the immense labours of our own men and the labours of our Allies, carried out at this moment at the cost of their lives, it would be black treachery to evade or neglect the duty of engaging in earnest prayer, since prayer, which so powerfully affects the minds and hearts as well as the bodies of men, might well be as important a factor in the situation as bombs and high explosives.

To accuse all Freethinking soldiers of "black treachery" is an insult to a very valuable part of the Allied armies.

Lord Home, President of the "Boy's Brigade" (many of these organizations are little better than a cover for Christian propaganda), wants the religious education of the younger generation to continue until 18 years of age. He says that will change the whole face of the country.

We agree. But, ye gods, what a face it would be! It isn't changed faces that we want, but the right kind of change. That is where the real consideration commences.

Those who live by Missions have a high opinion of the importance of these Missions. The Right Rev. Bishop Noel Hudson—Secretary of the well-to-do Missionary Society, called the Society for Propagating Christianity—recently preached at St. Peter's, Ealing. He said that the first re-action of one's getting interested in Missions was "a passionate desire to share the gospel with those who do not know it." It is not always a sign of appreciation when we want to pass our troubles on to other people. Bishop Hudson assured the Ealingites that nobody in Ealing churches could be half as anxious as God was to get hold of the Ealing people. Then the Offertory was taken, the Bishop assuring the congregation that much more than mere generosity was wanted, their alms "should be sacrificial." A sort of cutting-off their "arms" perhaps?

Dr. Robert Menzies tells the story of a converted drunkard who was asked if he really could believe in such a fairy tale as Christ turning water into wine. "Oh yes," he said, "I have no difficulty about that because Jesus Christ has done a far bigger thing for me. He has turned beer into furniture." This is not half such a good story as that of Fred the Furnaceman, who had accepted some very tall tales such as Jonah and the Whale on the word of Holy Writ. But when the preacher read from the same Bible a yarn about three men alive and walking about unharmed in a terrible fiery furnace, Fred walked out of the church exclaiming: "And now I don't believe in your Fish story either."

Cambridge Churches, says a correspondent, seem determined to win the war, however much sacramental wine has to be drunk in the process. At several churches in the Borough, there were six or seven separate "passing round the cup" each Sunday. Like the non-stop Movies there were frequent performances of Matins and Evensong—often enough to bore the Almighty Himself. At many of these churches there are special attractions—a good band at one, a cinema performance at another, and one church tries to fill the church by announcing the subject in some fantastic fashion, like St. Andrew's Church, where the Sermon is to be about "Heart Disease." We fear at all the churches the sermon will have something to do with indigestion—or perhaps be recommended as a cure for Insomnia.

The *Sunday Outlook* is a weekly booklet issued by the London Transport for soldiers as a guide to places of interest. In an introduction to Westminster Abbey it states: "Rifles seem out of place until one remembers the swords and shields of the great soldiers of England." Rifles "out of place," indeed! When weapons of war have the blessing of God through his holy agents! And didn't rifles make a holy slaughter fired from churches in Spain on behalf of that "Christian gentleman," Franco? To quote the *Evening Standard* reporter again, the booklet has, each week, "a paragraph headed 'Sunday Pulpit,' telling where and when well-known preachers can be heard, and how to get to their church." . . . Can't one hear "Tommy," robbed of precious recreation by church parades, comment in good film English: "You're telling us!"

Lies have a strange vitality, but there are none so tenacious of existence as religious lies. Most of them are, in essence, centuries old, but they come to the front with a freshness that timid truth very seldom displays. In form the lie that we are fighting a war to preserve Christian civilization is new, but in essence it is centuries old. We deal with this lie in our "View and Opinions," but we should now like to put a plain question to intelligent Christians. By the term "intelligent Christians," we mean those professing Christians who will set aside their religion for a moment, and inform us just what ele-

ments of life it is that are really Christian, and which we are fighting to preserve. And to make the situation quite clear, we are asking someone to name precisely those elements of our civilization that are worth preserving, and which are dependent upon Christianity for their initiation and continuance. Then we may get somewhere. Loud-mouthed assertions about "Christian civilization" lead us nowhere and serve only to prove that Christian speakers and writers place their chief reliance upon the poor mentality of their followers.

The handling of snakes in churches as a test of faith, a practice which has been fairly common in the Eastern Kentucky mountain region, has been banned, says a Louisville message, by a law which comes into force next month. But the members of Little Pine Mountain Church of God have announced that they will fight in the courts for their right. They quote the 18th verse of the 16th chapter of St. Mark, which says: "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them."

When will papers such as the *Church Times*, and the clergy in general, not forgetting the B.B.C. religious speakers, drop the drivel about our troubles being due to the people "forgetting God?" Poland was one of the most religious nations in Europe. Belgium and Holland were, as nations go, also very religious. And in this country we remember God in our State Church, and our King is one who has had a special dose of oil rubbed into him at the Coronation Service. There are also about forty thousand professional preachers of God in this country. The boast is sent out every year of how many thousand Bibles are distributed, and God is established in every school. And yet we hear that the war is due to our forgetting God!

We have a Coalition Government and to what do they attribute our present trouble? Not to our forgetting God, but to our forgetting armaments. Which people have engaged most frequently in war? The followers of God. Which nations have taught the world that the way to be secure is to be armed? The Christian nations. And what is the use of a God who can be forgotten, or mislaid, or put on one side. We ought to have a new definition of God—One who can be easily forgotten, and leaves the world none the worse for being overlooked.

The *Church Times* also tells us that the world will never be saved by "platitudinous moral sentiments." Well if mere intellectual development or moral sentiments, or material development, will not save us, what will? Thus we reach the great cure-all. What we need is *faith*, religious faith, the unintelligent acceptance of ridiculous doctrines, and ill-understood primitive beliefs. Back to the primitive should be the "slogan" of such journals as the *Church Times*.

Two of the 87 departments of France have urged the Government officially to re-establish the Roman Catholic Church in France. The Church will never miss an opportunity of gain, even though the world is in the grip of war. But the French are not the people likely to be frightened out of a logical conclusion—even in a time of war. The influence of the great French Freethinkers has not yet exhausted itself.

The Assistant-Chaplain-General to the Scottish Command asks all ministers of religion to give the State every *spiritual* help it can. But why should not the clergy decline the exemption of ministers of religion from the operations of conscription? There are, of course, numbers of the clergy who would rather this exemption were removed, but it should be abolished altogether. It is useless pointing to the number of chaplains in the army—all having officer rank and pay. There should be no exemption, save under such conditions as apply to all other citizens.

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- THE General Secretary of the N.S.S. acknowledges for the N.S.S. Benevolent Fund, 7s. 6d. from C. H. Drewey.
- C. MASON.—Very decidedly we do not agree. We believe the study of religion to be not only an interesting one, but a very important one. Put religion on one side and history becomes non-understandable. What man believes may be true or false, but so far as he believes in it and therefore, to a varying degree, acts upon it, is essential to our understanding of him.
- J. HUMPHREY.—Much obliged for cuttings. Always useful.
- F. BEAN.—There is nothing to evade. That "man" is descended from a "lower" animal form can be demonstrated in any text-book of evolution. We cannot enter in full details here of a subject that is so accessible and so easily understood.
- H. G. CONCREVE.—We doubt if H. G. Wells would so express himself to-day. It is a pity, though, he did not revise the passage before reprinting. Pleased to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*.
- G. W. WALLACE.—Thanks. Will be used as soon as possible.
- J. W. BRAY.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.
- W. PRICE.—Sorry we cannot trace the vote of money given to Roman Catholics about the date you name. But there were direct sums of money given for the building of Churches and for the help of Christianity up to about a hundred and twenty years ago. The money given for the upkeep of religion, apart from that paid to prison chaplains, army chaplains, etc., now takes the form of remitting the payment of rates and taxes, which must run into a very great sum of money.
- A. HANSON.—Thanks for lines. Will be used.
- G. H. PEATE.—Your information is correct, but we do not know the circumstances. So far as we are concerned we did not follow that course. There was a sketch of Carlyle's life written some time ago by Guy Aldred.
- A. CATTERALL.—Many thanks, but we already have a copy of the book.

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To believe without examination is no belief in reality, but merely an assent that such and such things are believed by others, and is, in fact, only believing that we believe.—Bacon.

Doubtless even sincere thinkers often differ widely in their conclusions; but the degree of concordance attainable will be strictly proportional to the diffusion of clear and symmetrically-developed habits of thought, united with intellectual courage.—Constance Naden.

Sugar Plums

The price of paper has been raised by another ten per cent. Our fight on the home front is not getting easier with the passing of the days. From some points of view it is more difficult than it was in 1914. Still we shall pull through all right. Our friends are too numerous and too staunch for us to doubt that.

We desire to call the attention of readers to the existence of the Benevolent Fund of the National Secular Society. While no legitimate application for help has ever been refused, it must be stated that the Fund is at present in debt, and that should be avoided if at all possible. There are no charges for administration. Donations should be sent to the General Secretary, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

We have had more appeals to leave London while the war position remains as it is, with offers of accommodation, free, gratis and for nothing. We appreciate these offers very much, but must decline them. One cannot well conduct a paper such as the *Freethinker* from a distance. And there are many other things that require personal attention. Besides we do not really see that London is a more dangerous spot than anywhere else. Finally, the first step towards getting frightened is to be over anxious about security. So the grimmer things look, the greater the need for a smile. And let all remember what we have so often said, life is too solemn a thing to be taken very seriously. The man who faces life without smiling at its most serious aspects enters the arena with a weakened spirit.

Birmingham Freethinkers and their friends wishing to join the members of the local N.S.S. Branch in a tour of the Botanical Gardens are asked to meet outside the Gardens at 3.30 p.m. to-day, June 9. Tea will be arranged in the grounds, and it is hoped that as many as possible will join the party.

The *Sunday Dispatch* has corrected our assumption that God's answer to our day of prayer was to move Leopold, two days later to sell the Belgian people to Hitler. It has discovered the answer to the Day of Prayer, and also to the French Prime Minister's remark that if it required a miracle to bring victory then he would believe in a miracle. So, like a lightning's flash, the *Dispatch*, on the front page, which all the innocents read first, unhesitatingly declares that God answered our Day of Prayer, and also gave Reynaud his miracle. He saved four-fifths of the Allied Forces before Dunkirk. What a pity he could not stretch the miracle and answer the prayer completely. For those who prayed did not pray that four out of five would be saved, they wanted the whole lot saved. And they didn't want that merely, they wanted to beat the German Armies. Still we probably got the best miracle in stock, and God did his best under trying circumstances. And why not a day of prayer once a week instead of spending such huge sums on armaments? Why not, also, appoint a religious committee to help the Government?

THE PERFECT SLEEP

LONG night will come when we shall be asleep,
And in that rest regain the silent peace
We lost at birth. Nor can we ever reap
The wealth of utter rest when we do cease
Our hold on life; sleep only is enjoyed
When there is waking. Not then from such sleep
Shall this be known. Yet sleep so unalloyed
Should welcome be; no one at death should weep
When life returns to dust, voiding the lease
So lightly held, and sinking in the deep
Eternal night of quietest release.

H. SEFTON

Our Inheritance

RICH man, poor man, beggar man, thief—everyone of us inherited something the moment we were born, but what that "something" was we never can tell—exactly. No matter who our parents were, or the time, place and circumstances of our birth, we cannot tell, nor is it possible for anyone to tell us, precisely what has gone before, and therefore to what extent fortune has favoured us or what is the burden we have to carry. All we can do is to try to understand the import of all this and provide accordingly.

OUR BIOLOGICAL INHERITANCE

If we desire to know, even approximately, where we stand in relation to those around us and the world at large, we must first get to know, if we can, something of the history of our parents and our grandparents, and their parents and grandparents—back through many generations, because only so can we form any estimate of what is ours biologically. If there is perfect relationship between ourselves and our parents, some of this information will be readily forthcoming during those heart-to-heart talks which are the joy and inspiration of the ideal family, and to that extent we shall be fortunate. But should we not be so well placed, we must go elsewhere for what we want: to the places where our forefathers lived, and to those whom we can trust to be helpful, as well as to the offices where marriages and the children of such marriages are registered.

The result of such an investigation will, to say the least of it, enable us to decide whether we come from a sturdy, virile and long-lived stock, or alternatively whether, judging by past history, we are not particularly well-blessed physically. The notoriety or fame achieved by those who have preceded us will be helpful up to a point, but only up to a point, because the effect in every direction of the marrying and intermarrying of our ancestors will escape us, no matter how closely we may enquire into their doings. There may be indications that a generation or two ago there was a well-nigh perfect stock, with a pedigree of which one might legitimately be proud, and then apparently something went amiss. The graph in the record which we have been so careful to prepare takes a sudden plunge, and we are left guessing. . . . But guessing won't help us—so long as we are concerned only with facts, and the fact we have to face, when trying to figure things out, is that should that have occurred—should there, away back, have been a flagrant case of wrong mating, wrong that is, either organically or mentally or both, as to which we can only speculate—then, do what we may, we cannot measure the result in any set terms. In other words, there is no means of checking up, to a nicety, what is our biological inheritance, and we can do nothing more than take such stock of ourselves as is within the range of our enquiries and our intelligence.

OUR SOCIAL INHERITANCE

We can, perhaps, be a little more certain with regard to our social inheritance, but here again we cannot be dogmatic. We may, when we reach the reflective age, recall our home life and the state and condition of the people in whose midst we were born and brought up, and we may try to estimate the influence of those people and their pastimes upon us. But at best this can only be an "estimate," and in any case it will most probably be a long way out, simply because we are the creatures of those circumstances referred to a moment ago—the product of conditions

which it took thousands upon thousands of years to build up—and we are therefore incapable of seeing ourselves as we really are in our present setting. Our very outlook is coloured to a greater or lesser degree by what we have been and are, by virtue of our prenatal and postnatal history, and our judgment may be warped through no fault of our own, though we may tell ourselves that our vision is clear, and our ability to arrive at a just conclusion perfect.

The history of our people—whatever our nationality—is a fairly open book, but even some pages of that record are mutilated or missing, thanks to the barbarians of one sort or the other who have taken a keen delight in destroying, rather than building up and preserving. The activities of our people—any people—for a good many centuries are, however, fairly well known, or can be, because they are recorded in some way or other for our information and guidance.

But everything that we have—our language for instance—has been handed on to us more or less wrapped in mystery, as it were, and the man who says, for example, "I would as lief . . ." is, perhaps without knowing it, echoing an ancient past and using a tool of thought which was invented long before either he or his parents saw the light of day. It is the same with our institutions and ceremonies, our clothes and our customs—any and all of them: they were originated ever so long ago, in some form or other, and we have to accept many of them as relics of the childhood of the human race.

In short, everyone of us is the product of a very long and—yes—painful process, and what we have in the shape of body, mind, thought, language, family and social surroundings, with all the trappings that go with them, is the outcome of thousands—nay millions—of years of struggle and strife and experiment, and all we can do is to trace the evolution of things as they are, try to measure the extent and value of our inheritance, whatever it may be, and give credit where credit is due.

GEO. B. LISSENDEN

Conflict and Conversion

FROM the time we are born to the time we die there is an unceasing conflict between the individual self and society. At first it is open and unashamed strife that is modified by experience until the conflict is pushed down into the dark recesses of the unconscious mind, there to lie hidden but not quiet, until an opportunity arises for these unconscious thoughts and impulses to break through into the open.

Thus the personality is built up by this constant adjustment to the external world. Personality is the sum of the constituents of the mind and their relations to each other. Sometimes an adjustment cannot be made and the trouble is pushed into the unconscious. Then there is an inhibition. An ingrowing toenail is a painful thing. When an instinct is turned inward instead of to a desirable object, it is just as painful.

The mind is a well-balanced unit consisting of the primary impulses, sex, hunger and thirst, self-preservation, the self, that is the ego, and what we can call social heredity, racial knowledge. This is sometimes known as the "super-ego." These three parts must adjust themselves to the outside world.

A fully-developed and normal mind—which by the way does not exist, and cannot exist at the present—is like a beautifully-balanced piece of delicate machinery. It can be likened to the parallelogram of forces. No separate part must predominate or play

less than its part in the work of the mind, but in real life there are few minds that are so well-balanced. When there is an inhibition or "ingrowing instinct," the result is an inner conflict that is pushed into the unconscious part of the mind.

This knowledge made possible by modern psychology, is of very great value in studying religion, and especially the phenomenon of conversion. All of man's secondary activities, religion, politics and so on, arise from, or are caused by, his attempts to adjust himself to his environment, and represent the solutions he has found so far. Therefore, when he talks of the need of religion he is voicing the fact that an inner conflict is well nigh universal, and up to the present, it has been resolved by the rationalizations of religion.

Take a typical case of conversion—someone converted by the Salvation Army. He is brought on the platform as a witness of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the Word to heal the spiritually afflicted, and cure, what I heard a lady evangelist call, a "sin-sick soul." After telling us at length the intoxication of his present state of bliss, he describes his former condition of wickedness and despair. Most converts enormously exaggerate the blackness of their sins, and an allowance must be made for their enthusiasm. But out of the welter of self-denunciation the following sins come to light:—

- Firstly, the gentleman used to beat his wife.
- Secondly, he got drunk every Saturday night.
- Thirdly, he consorted with other women.

It sounds pretty bad, but there is no need to despair of humanity; he is now one of the saved. There is no need even of believing our converted friend is a desperate villain redeemed. Religion is a part of the Super-ego, and its persistence shows that the convert is but feeling what mankind has felt before. It is a safety valve invented thousands of years ago, and the Salvation Army convert finds it ready to hand when he wants it.

Now the Super-ego is a projection from the ego and its modification by circumstances. It is like a lantern-slide thrown on to a screen. The inner conflict is re-interpreted in terms of the cosmos. The Microcosm governing the Macrocosm. And it is well to remember that just as the lantern-slide must be put in *upside down*, so in the process of conversion the excuses for conversion are turned inside out. Thus in the case of our converted friend, after stripping his confession of its verbiage, we come to the conclusion that:—

- Firstly, he did not beat his wife, but would have liked to very much.
- Secondly, got mildly "under way" on a Saturday night, but not so much as to get drunk.
- Thirdly, had amorous desires he was afraid to satisfy. His wife wouldn't let him.

When our child of sin found himself listening to the exhortations of the salvationist, he discovered something he had not known before. He was a miserable sinner. He might have been miserable but he was no sinner. But as he listened and got caught in the flood of age-old rhetoric, he felt a change in himself. He had a conviction of the sin he had been trying to commit all his life. He became converted and resolved to sin no more. He had not sinned before, but that does not alter the conversion. The convert now feels himself a new man. His inner conflict has been rationalized. He goes from meeting to meeting giving his testimony, and in time he really believes he was a great and mighty sinner.

I do not think this is an exaggerated or unfair pic-

ture of conversion. Assuredly very few *real* sinners ever get converted. They have too much pleasure out of sinning to feel the thrill of conversion. Conversion is a poor substitute for reality. A convert gives up a desire for a shadow. When a real sinner is converted he generally has become too old for the pleasures of the world, the flesh and the devil.

And this explains, I believe, why religion has persisted so long, and why it will persist for centuries yet. Not Christianity perhaps, but under other names it will crop up to befog the minds of men and tempt them from the strait and narrow paths. The history of man is the story of the pursuit of strange gods and the incessant search for the elusive chimera that never exists and is as intangible as a sunbeam. Some day a great discovery will be made that will pale the greatest treasures of religion into the phantoms that they are. A pair of strange creatures will be found on the earth, man and woman. They will be eagerly studied, and from that day Man will become a civilized being.

IDRIS L. ABRAHAM

Courtship

The season of love is that of battle.—*Darwin*.
(*Descent of Man*, Part II, p. 366. Ed. 1874.)

ARTICLES, lectures, etc, are only introductions to a subject, at best. Speaker, or writer, can only hope to incite hearer, or reader, to study for themselves. The key, of personal effort, opens every departmental store of the world's knowledge.

The above observations apply to the following scrappy notes.

Whilst taking my morning ramble recently, "full of the joy of Spring," my attention was arrested by two cock larks fighting for a hen, who sat watching them. After a few minutes' spirited combat she took flight—the signal that her capture would now determine her acceptance of the winner. Directly the successful cock caught up to the hen, the other turned back, leaving the happy pair free to spend their flighty honeymoon together.

That the males of all mammals eagerly pursue the females is notorious to everyone. And this may be said also of birds, insects, or fishes. The exertion of some choice on the part of the female seems a law almost as general as that of the male. The female seems less eager than the male; requires to be courted; generally exerts some choice; and often accepts not the male which is attractive to her but the one which is least distasteful. (*Darwin: Descent of Man*. Part II, pp. 221-2. Ed. 1874.)

Nature takes infinite pains to array every living creature, great and small, with glory and beauty, whither it be frogs that would a-wooing go, beasts, birds, fishes, or insects. Fancy, for example, a diminutive creature like the male stickleback (*Gasterosteus leiurus*), being "beautiful beyond description!" The back and eyes of the female are simply brown, and the belly white. "The eyes of the male, on the other hand, are of the most splendid green, having a metallic lustre like the green feathers of some humming birds. The throat and belly are of a bright crimson, the back of an ashy-green, and the whole fish appears as though it were somewhat translucent and glowed with an internal incandescence." After the breeding season these colours all change, the throat and belly become of a paler red, the back more green, and the glowing tints subside. (*Ibid.* pp. 340-1). Nature decks the tiny stickleback and the Bird of Paradise with the same artistic care.

Some males are chosen for fighting, some for singing, some for their gay plumage. Attractions vary. Birds, for instance, who are gifted with song are plain-coloured. Even in the tropics, brilliant birds are hardly ever songsters.

Pugnacity is not determined by size. The little male stickleback is a quarrelsome creature—a great fighter, and the male salmon is equally so. Of the latter, Darwin tells of some 300 of them being found dead, in the North Tyne, in June; 1868. All of these dead salmon, in the opinion of an expert, had lost their lives in fighting. (Ibid. p. 332). The season of love amongst animals, is that of battle. Yet these battles, says another authority, “seem all a sham” (salmon seem to take it seriously!). “I have never been able to find a maimed hero, and seldom more than a broken feather.” (Ibid. 332-367). We humans, with our self-conscious pride and intellectuality, are we any better morally than they? Our great quarrels—war—are not of a sexual origin. The quarrels of animals are of a sexual nature, and many of their combats are caused by unpaired males and females—wanderers—who try to distract the peace of already mated pairs. Can we throw stones at them? Do not our male and female wanderers make a cock-pit of the Divorce Court?

With many animals courtship is a prolonged affair—anything but love at first sight! The voice of the female may be gentle and low. The male may be the glass of fashion and the mould of form. Yet, in these, the native hue of resolution, to secure a mate, is sicklied o'er by the pale cast of custom. Many of them spend two and three months over their courting. But man often spends years. In his ballad “The Lang Courtin,” Lewis Carrol playfully and satirically describes this human peculiarity. The lady of the ballad thus addresses her suitor:—

“Nae use, nae use for sighs and tears:
Nae use at all to fret;
Sae ye've bided sae well for thirty years,
Ye may bide a wee langer yet.”

To bide a wee langer yet seems out of the question to her lover. He considers himself rejected, and soliloquises:—

“O gin I find another ladye,
He said wi' sighs and tears,
“I wot my coortin' sall not be
Anither thirty years.”

“For gin I find a ladye gay,
Exactly to my taste,
I'll pop the question, aye or nay,
In twenty years at maist.”

The coortin' of an old friend, which seemed to consist in being comforted with tea in the banqueting house of his lady-love, every Sunday afternoon, lasted fifty years.

Another old friend, now 87 years of age, says he started courtin' in earnest, after marriage, 60 years ago, and he still continues to do so. From his example we may safely infer that if real courtship, after marriage, followed that of playful courtship, before marriage, unhappy marriages would be practically unknown. What a romantically beautiful thing playful courtship can be, and what a delightful thing real courtship may be. The man who has never really courted has lived in vain.

The subject of courtship is a great one. Far greater than most of us imagine it to be. Says the poet Browning:—

“For life with all it yields of joy and woe
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.”

GEORGE WALLACE

Highways and Byways in English History

X.—THE OLD ORDER PREGNANT WITH THE NEW

JUST as the characteristic ideology evolved by savages is that described in Frazer's *Golden Bough*, just as the characteristic ideology of a servile or feudal society is a “revealed” religion of the type of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, so the characteristic ideology of industrial society is scientific Materialism. Only the class struggle inherent in capitalism necessitates a more or less hypocritical lip-service to an official religion taken over from pre-industrial civilizations, and useful chiefly as an opium for workmen, women, and subject races. This is signally illustrated in the history of modern England. Man's conquests over nature have become more and more impressive. Scientific theories have been more and more verified by the test of practice. The religion established by squires and merchant adventurers in the reign of Elizabeth, and even in those days disbelieved by many, carries less and less conviction to men whose life is founded on scientific postulates, and whose relations with Asiatic and African peoples bring them into contact with myths as irrational, and yet as implicitly believed, as those of the Bible. The bulk of educated Englishmen cling to the Protestantism of their forefathers, not from a living conviction of its truth, but from a fear of the revolutionary effect of Freethought on the working class, and from a vague feeling that the Bible has made England great.

This attitude, half hypocritical, half stupid, saturated Victorian society from the Queen down. It is seen to advantage in connexion with British rule in India. That rule had been built up under the East India Company by the crudest methods of grab and plunder. But in the nineteenth century British administrators began to feel that their presence in India needed justification. They saw themselves as apostles of civilization in the benighted East. India must be developed as a field for the investment of British capital. Money was sunk in railways and telegraphs. Their introduction was acclaimed, not only by missionaries, but by the Queen herself, as facilitating the general conversion of India to Christianity!

Down to the sixties Britain was still the workshop of the world. In spite of recurrent commercial crises, industry leapt ahead, and people believed in its endless expansion and progress. Science, which had played so great a part in that expansion, enjoyed immense prestige. Thenceforth, however, a change began. Other countries developed their industries. Foreign competition began to be felt. And this had various results.

Firstly, a national system of education became not only desirable, but vitally necessary. The more Radical manufacturers, including at that time Joseph Chamberlain, agitated for free and secular schools. Forster's Education Act of 1870 rejected this programme, continued and increased the subsidy to denominational schools, and authorized the provision of rate-aided “undenominational” schools only to stop gaps in the voluntary system. Technical and higher education were still left to private enterprise. Not till 1889 was public support given to scientific and technical instruction. Not till 1891 was free elementary education introduced. An important section of the governing class did not, and does not, believe in teaching the masses too much. In 1900 certain expenditure of the London School Board on scientific and technical teaching was disallowed by a Government auditor named Cockerton. The School

Board took the matter into court. A number of Tories, including Lord Hugh Cecil, formed a committee to fight the case against the School Board, and obtained a ruling that any application of the school rates to scientific or technical teaching was illegal. In 1902 some provision of technical education was made obligatory on local authorities, but at the price, exacted by the Tories, of the extension of rate aid to Church schools, to enable them to hold their own in competition with those publicly provided. To this day our educational system is semi-national rather than national.

The second effect of the industrialization of the world has been Imperialism. Foreign markets could no longer be left to chance. They had to be sought in the undeveloped regions of the earth. This led to a scramble between capitalist countries for colonies and spheres of influence in Africa and Asia; this led to naval and military rivalry; and this led to world war.

With the crisis of capitalist civilization has gone a widespread loss of belief in progress and of faith in science. It is not merely the clergy who call for a "scientific holiday." Not many years ago Sir Alfred Ewing, President of the British Association, publicly joined the defeatists. Year by year scientists like Eddington and Jeans publish books of which the tenor is that science tells us little or nothing of the universe, and that we are free to believe, and indeed had much better believe, in some God suitable to our degree of credulity. These books are favourably reviewed and widely read; those with a contrary tendency attract little notice and are published with difficulty, except by means of book clubs with a guaranteed sale. The dominant atmosphere is no longer progressive, but reactionary.

Above all, as Belfort Bax wrote as long ago as 1889, "the bourgeois is acute enough to connect Atheism with Communism." When Bax wrote this, Communism stood for nothing except the memory of a Paris insurrection stamped out in blood. To-day it is the working creed of one-sixth of the earth's surface. To the capitalist class that fact is a more powerful argument for belief in God than all the works of theologians and metaphysicians put together. Lip-service to Christianity, support of the Church as an institution, subsidies to religious education, and vilification of those who dare preach to the masses the Materialism which is the working hypothesis of their so-called Christian masters every day of their lives, will be the policy of the latter as long as they hold economic and political power.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

A Reply to Mr. Robertson

On reading the *Freethinker* this week I nearly emitted three loud cheers in discovering that one Marxist at any rate knows of Critical Realism. My pleasure was short lived, however, for Mr. Robertson's letter told me very plainly that he has not understood the materialist development inside Critical Realism. For instance, he picks out Drake and Strong. But alas, these are Panpsychists. Hard luck!

Sellars was the one specifically named by me, and I put it to Mr. Robertson that Santayana is only a junction on the road to Sellars' self-styled "new materialism." I do not recall Mr. Robertson ever showing his acquaintance with this aspect, and I have been reading him (not without profit) since I was a youth and he Robert Arch.

To suggest Marx was in any way a precursor of Critical Realism is nearly enough to lower Mr. Robertson to the level of Stalin as a philosophical critic. Early

and Dialectical Materialism had this in common: (1) they lacked an adequate epistemology, (2) they failed to exploit ontology. As a result philosophy had to pass through the subsequent stages of Idealism. This, however, is a big thesis, not to be developed here.

Nor must he expect me to tabulate all the evidence I have collected to show how responsible Communist writers are aiming at a link with Christianity. I only gave samples. Other Freethinkers have agreed that the evidence is considerable, but it would look better published in the *Daily Worker*. What a hope!

The main point of my article, that Stalin's own words convict him of appalling ignorance, especially in equating metaphysics with mechanical materialism, stands quite unchallenged, and this main point Mr. Robertson leaves severely alone.

I said metaphysical theory treats of noumena. Mr. Robertson's reply is that Kant said they couldn't be known. I know perfectly well what Kant said, but I don't know how Kant or anyone else can make a statement about something without starting to consider it.

I said no metaphysician has yet presented us with a world in which nothing happens. Mr. Robertson's reply is that Bradley, Bosanquet and MacTaggart denied space and time. I never said such systems could not be logically shown to issue in a dead world. I was concerned only to refute Stalin, who foists on metaphysics an immobile universe. For Bradley and Bosanquet the Whole alone may be said to be stable, the changes in nature falling entirely within its matrix. For MacTaggart the nature of a thing changes when any of its relationships change. Does this sound as though they believe nothing happens? Does it justify Stalin's assertion that metaphysics holds existence to be stagnant? I said the entire history of philosophy proved him wrong, and I meant it: the three mentioned were picked by Mr. Robertson; he can take his choice from the whole history of the subject, and similarly seek in vain for a valid example.

Mr. Robertson says the Idealists carry bigger guns than Bergson in academic estimation. But in his *Idealism; a Critical Survey*, Prof. Ewing attempts to estimate the value of Idealism "now that its day of dominance is over," while in *Recent Philosophy*, Prof. Laird suggests Bergson's has been the "biggest noise" in philosophy for some time. Both are academic writers.

I never said Clifford, Mach and Russell accepted the label "materialist." I said they were "in the materialist line." Russell says, "Those who would formerly have been materialists can still adopt a philosophy which comes to much the same thing" (*The Scientific Outlook*). If I categorically called Russell a materialist I should be a little wide of the mark. But Mr. Robertson says quite confidently that he is "nothing of the sort," and that is grotesquely false. He is "something of the sort."

Mr. Robertson says that "of course" (time honoured phrase) scientific developments "have been in the direction of Dialectical Materialism." He forgot to add, "But only the dialectical materialists have noticed it."

And finally, he says I have not even troubled to study what I attack. I will leave previous articles on Dialectical Materialism, going back to 1934, to answer that charge.

G. H. TAYLOR

MATTER

Matter, as such, is a pure creation of thought and an abstraction. We leave out of account the qualitative difference of things in comprehending them as corporeally existing things under the concept matter. Hence matter as such, as distinct from existing pieces of matter, is not anything sensually existing. If natural science directs its efforts to seeking out uniform matter as such, to reducing quantitative differences in combining identical smallest particles, it would be doing the same thing as demanding to see fruit as such instead of cherries, pears, apples, or the mammal as such instead of cats, dogs, sheep, etc., gas as such, metal, stone, chemical compound as such, motion as such.

Frederick Engels, "Dialectics of Nature," pp. 322-3.

Correspondence

A TRIBUTE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER,"

SIR,—No doubt much will be written about the late Mr. Tuson regarding his Secular activities by those who knew and worked with him much longer than I did, but these are a few words of personal appreciation for a man who was directly responsible, through his sincerity and delightful friendliness, in securing my devotion to the Freethought Cause, and which led me eventually to the work I now do from the platform. His encouragement, his uncompromising criticism when he thought I needed it, and his unflinching charm and cheerfulness have helped me at all times. The West London Branch has lost one of its staunchest supporters and promoters, and I have lost one of my best friends, but both will retain a memory which will continue to increase our efforts for the cause to which he devoted so much of his time.

(Mrs.) N. B. BUXTON

[Several letters are unavoidably held over until next week.—Ed.]

Obituary

CHARLES TUSON

It is with sincere regret that we announce the passing of Charlie Tuson, a well known and respected figure in London Freethought circles.

Joining the N.S.S. through the West London, and the Fulham Branches, his ability and generous character soon made him in popular demand by all the London Branches. He was perhaps best known in Hyde Park, where for many years he was a regular speaker on the West London Branch platform, and where he won, and retained, the head and heart of his audiences. He served as Secretary to the Branch, and in that capacity his great desire was efficiency in service to the advantage of his Branch and the movement generally. In 1935 he was elected to the Executive of the N.S.S., and on that body his loyalty, zeal, and open character, won the esteem of all his colleagues. During the three years he was a member of the Executive he was never absent from any of its meetings.

The movement has lost a faithful and lovable warrior who will be missed, especially by his fellow members in the West London area. To the surviving members of his family we offer sincere condolence. The remains were cremated at the Hendon Park Crematorium, on Monday, June 3, where before relatives and a large number of fellow workers and friends of the movement a Secular Service was read by the General Secretary N.S.S.

R.H.R.

J. REEVES

We regret to report the death of Mr. J. Reeves, well known to our readers for his welcome and scholarly articles in these columns. Mr. Reeves was a Freethinker of man year's standing, firm in his opinions and unselfish in his actions. We worked with him for many years on the Committee of the Secular Education League, of which he was one of its most esteemed members. He was always an efficient aid in drawing up leaflets and the like for the League, and in this experience as a Government official, and his close acquaintance with the working of the education acts, were of great use. He also lectured occasionally for the S.E.L. The League will have lost a good member, and Freethought a conscientious and valuable man. With characteristic thought of benefiting others he desired that his body should be given for scientific research. His wish was faithfully carried out by his relatives.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD MAY 30, 1940

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Hornibrook, Rosetti (A. C.), Bryant, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Silvester, Perry, Griffiths, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Quinton, Mrs. Buxton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. The Monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to West London, and Rossendale Branches.

Motions remitted from the Annual Conference were dealt with.

Messrs. Clifton, Rosetti (A. C.), and Mrs. Quinton were elected as a Benevolent Fund Committee.

Instructions were given concerning correspondence and two wills in which the Society is interested.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary

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, John Katz, B.A.—"The Will to Victory."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. E. C. Saphin.

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, 7.30, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 7.30, Friday, Mr. G. W. Fraser.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. F. A. Ridley. Liverpool Grove, Walworth Road, 8.0, Friday, A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 7.30, Thursday, Mr. E. C. Saphin and supporting speakers. Sunday, 3.0, until dusk, various speakers.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BERKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 7.30, Saturday, Mr. G. Whitehead. Sunday till Saturday inclusive.

BRIERFIELD MARKET: 3.15, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

COLNE: 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

DARLINGTON (Market Steps): 6.30, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Sauchiehall Street): 8.0, Tuesday, Muriel Whitefield. Minard Road, 8.0, Thursday, Muriel Whitefield.

NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market): 7.45, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SABDEN: 7.30, Thursday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

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