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Views and Opinions

The Religion of the B.B.C.

SOME time back the B.B.C. staged a series of lectures under the title of "A Christian Looks at the World." There is, of course, no reason why a Christian should not look at the world, or why he should not tell other people what he sees. But this was just one more piece of sectarian religious propaganda, utilizing the fact of the country being in a state of war to enhance sectarian interests. If it had been a genuinely honest attempt to discuss world problems from different points of view, the course of lectures would have been followed by another course on, say, "The World looks at Christianity." That would have shown both sides of the shield and so enabled listeners to form something like a considered opinion. But that is not the method of the B.B.C. It has expressed quite plainly its purpose of preventing "any decay of Christianity," and it has used for this purpose the quite religious weapons of boycott and misrepresentation. If it does not lie in so many words, it suggests a lie by its policy. We have had a fine example of Christianity in action in the lie told by the Archbishop of Canterbury that we are fighting the present war in order to preserve Christianity. That was not said in the excitement of a heated discussion; it was said deliberately, and the man who said it, knew that it was not merely false, but that it was something large numbers of those who are fighting the war—not using their canonical smocks as a means of evading military service—would hotly repudiate. But the Hitler-Goebbels technique was practised by the Christian Church long before the notorious pair saw the light.

No, the B.B.C. has not introduced anything new in its method of propaganda. But it must be admitted that it has acted honestly up to its dishonest policy. It has also acted up to its promise that year by year there would be seen an increase in the religious part of its work. It has reached the stage when we not only have open or disguised pleas for Christianity introduced in connexion with all kinds of subjects, but only safe men are invited to talk to the public. If

complaints come that the public is getting an overdose of religion the customary reply is an appeal to the shoals of letters received approving of what has been done. No one is permitted to check the reputed number of these letters, or to see how many are received on the other side. We recall a time when a bombardment of protesting letters was sent to the B.B.C. We are on firm ground here because we were instrumental in quietly organizing the protest, and so had some idea of the quantity of letters received. But it was left for that saintly figure, Canon "Dick" Sheppard, to say that while there were thousands of letters (after an appeal from pulpits had been made for them) approving the religious services, only 200 letters of protest were received. When pressed he explained that he had made a mistake by "accidentally" omitting a nought from his figures. Sheppard was clumsy. A mistake may be corrected, a lie never. An efficient liar would just change the subject. With the whole history of the Christian priesthood before him Canon Sheppard should have known better.

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The World and Christianity

I repeat that if the B.B.C. had a sense of fair play, or genuine desire to educate the people where religion is concerned, it would have followed the first course of lectures with a second one on "The World looks at Christianity." This would have shocked many old ladies—of both sexes—and might have encouraged the suspicion that the "dear minister" could be wrong. But the present religious director of the B.B.C. bids fair to out-Reith Reith. Under cover of the war he has engineered several courses of lectures, but never one that has had the slightest tendency to cast doubt upon the civilizing value of Christianity. We hope to deal with one or two of these courses later, for some are now in print, and can be cited with effect. They offer a fine exercise in misrepresentation in what they say, and a good example of duplicity in what they leave unsaid. At present I wish to confine myself to the suggestion of a lecture, or lectures, on "The World looks at Christianity," that *might* be given.

Assuming the lectures to be launched, how might one reasonably expect them to run? The lecturer might commence by asking in what way could we regard the "Christian" as being possessed of knowledge and understanding that was not possessed by or accessible to non-Christians? Ultimately a view of the world that is of use to us must be concerned with the world in which we are living; the qualities of mind exercised must belong to this world, and things done must be tested by their consequences in this world. To plead either that the Christian has knowledge not obtainable by other men and women, or that the justice of the Christian claims will be manifested in some other world, is no more and no better than a religious "confidence trick." If the Christian ap-

peals to science or to social experience he is dealing with things that are common to all. If the Christian who is looking at the world speaks of the value of honesty, of a sense of brotherhood or loyalty, he is making use of a currency that is valid all over the world, with uncivilized as well as with civilized peoples. They have no necessary connexion with Christianity or with any other religion. They are facts with which religions may deal, and this for the simple reason that unless religious keep in contact with non-religious ideals and appetites it would not last for any length of time. No one has a greater right to call these virtues "Christian" that are upon the lips of Christian preachers than he has for calling them Mohammedan, or attributing them to any other form of religious belief.

The fact, of course, is that fundamental human qualities, ethical and other, are the essential conditions of human society, and it is curious that the direct influence of supernaturalism should be most vigorously asserted of just those qualities that are inevitable so long as human society continues to exist. No Christian has ever claimed that any of the sciences owe their origin to religion, or to the inspiration of religious belief. It is obviously the fact that every science has had to struggle for existence against religious opposition. But if man could, without the belief in a "crucified saviour," discover all he has discovered about the world in which he lives, if he could create the different sciences, and gain the control of natural forces without Christian inspiration, is it reasonable to believe that he owes his trust in the elementary qualities of social life to the fantastic legends of the Bible and the New Testament?

A further situation might be stated by the lecturer looking at Christianity. Suppose we were to grant that justice, loyalty, truthfulness, etc., were revealed to man by some supernatural influence, and would not be existent but for that power. Well, their value is recognized now, that value is well established. But once anything is recognized as good, its importance is in no wise dependent upon the accident that first brought it into notice. In whatever way mankind discovered that it was better to be truthful than to be a liar, better to be honest than to be a thief, better to be kind than to be brutal, he has discovered these truths. And even though they came the way of belief in supernaturalism they are now valued for themselves and their effect upon human relations. In what way will society lose, in what way will any individual lose, if he discovers that all the virtues named are born of human experience, and not nurtured in the cess-pool of supernaturalism? The only answer to this plain question that I can think of is one that most Christians would to-day be ashamed openly to state. This is that they behave themselves in this world only to escape punishment in the next world if they do not, and will reap reward if they do. In that case all the fine talk about Christian ideals reduces itself to the would-be criminal who refrains from criminality only when he is certain of detection and punishment. There are, in fact, many of the B.B.C. lecturers who in disguised language adopt this plea.

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The Christian Tradition

From this, I think, the lecturer might advance to another point of view. Commenting on all we hear of the tremendously humanizing influence of Christianity he might well call attention to certain historic facts. Christian lecturers speak as though they were the advance agents for a teaching that might be soon introduced. With all the assumed confidence of the vendor of a new patent medicine they speak of the wonderful power of Christianity for healing all our

ills and preventing new ones developing. But Christianity is not a new thing. It is a very old one, and one that has been well established for many centuries. It has existed under the most favourable conditions for operating. Multitudes have swallowed it with all the faith, and with the professed benefits expressed by the patent medicine addict who has just come across a new cure-all. Finally, many of the most prominent members of society, writers, poets, judges, scientists, etc., have sung hymns of praise concerning Christianity. With what result?

Consider this country alone. For fifteen centuries Christianity has been established. Under the rule of the Roman Church supremacy was claimed, and conceded, in morals, religion, education and the family. Because of its divinely derived power the Secular State was compelled to obey the commands of the Church, under penalty of excommunication, a punishment which has brought Emperors to their knees. Non-Christians were prohibited holding office of a public character. The severest punishments were inflicted on those who adversely criticized the teachings of the Church in religion or science.

With the fall of the Roman Church in this country Protestantism inherited the power, the privileges, the control which the Roman Church had forfeited. In some directions the control exercised by Protestantism was more complete than it had been under Romanism, because for the first time we had a legally established State Church. The control of marriage, religion and morals was continued; public office remained impossible without a profession of belief in the religion of the State. And even to-day many of these bars to criticism of Christianity continue. Christianity still makes hypocrisy the easier way to distinction. If ever in the world's history a system has been tried and tested—and found wanting—it is Christianity. In spite of wealth and power, in spite of the fears of hell and the joys of heaven, it stands intellectually lower than it ever did. Its followers are among these who have developed the art of war to a greater degree than ever before. The pagan Roman Empire ruling from the Hebrides to the Euphrates and surrounded by barbarians could keep the peace with a standing army of four hundred thousand soldiers. We cannot keep the peace in Christian Europe with thirty times that number. The barbarians are within the Christian gates. The Roman peace was something real. The Christian peace means, Be always ready for war with a certainty that at any moment it may come.

* * *

Suppose!

Our imaginary speaker, such a one as the B.B.C. is never likely to have, might continue thus: Suppose that some religion other than Christianity existed in this country, but with a history otherwise identical with that of the Christian Church. Suppose also that some Christian missionaries landed here; would they not conclude that the religion of this country had been a ghastly failure? Why does not the same conclusion hold good of Christianity? Let it be remembered that Christianity is not an ordinary system, subject to the faults and frailties of all systems. Christianity came from God. It was established by God, and if it has not been specially favoured and protected by God, then it stands condemned as one of the greatest of historic lies. And so much greater the failure.

Or advancing to a more positive position our imaginary lecturer might point out that as a matter of unquestionable fact every advance in this country has been achieved by way of a repudiation of Christian doctrine. In science the true history of the world and of man had to fight for its very life against the

Bible legends. Medical science was impossible until it had weakened the belief in demons as the cause of disease. Witchcraft could only be suppressed when the Christian teaching was destroyed. Greater respect for freedom of thought and speech was won by the weakening of "Thou shalt have no other God but me." A developing humanity killed—or at least weakened—the doctrine of eternal damnation. Sabatarianism had to be robbed of much of its power in order to lift the cloud from one seventh of the life of each of us. There is not a single reform of the past three centuries secured in part or in whole, that has not been brought about in the teeth of violent Christian opposition. All ran counter to Christian teaching or practice.

I must stop here. I have sketched an outline of what might be said by one who was permitted by the B.B.C. to give a series of lectures on "The World looks at Christianity." But that is never likely to happen. At least not so long as the influence of the mentality of the position-pushed John Reith continues, and the B.B.C. is governed by a parsonic committee that is dead to a sense of justice to the general public. The B.B.C. has become an outpost of the Churches.

CHAPMAN COHEN

The Making of a Saint

The heretics of our age are the aureoled saints of the next.—*Ingersoll.*

OVER three thousand of the people of Paris knelt in Notre Dame Cathedral, their most famous church, on Sunday, May 10, to supplicate Joan of Arc, and other French saints, for victory. But this particular service of intercession ended with the Marseillaise, France's own song of hope and victory. This happens, he it noted, in this twentieth century. Thus has the whirligig of time brought in its revenge. Burnt to death as a heretic, Joan is now claimed by the Roman Church as a "saint," and exploited for national services.

Joan herself was a figure of the early fifteenth century, a period of unbounded superstition and unbounded faith. We know how the world wagged in those far-off days. Its dirt, its devotion, its grime, its sordidness, its ignorance, and also its fair flowers of human nobility, mark out the France in which Joan lived and exerted so potent an influence. It was the France of Francois Villon, whose lyrics have survived across the centuries. With an imbecile king, ruling by divine right, a profligate Court, and a corrupt priesthood, France was in a condition of chaos. Long years of domestic warfare had reduced the French people almost to the condition of brutes. Such ignorance prevailed that the very wildest legends found ready believers among rich and poor alike. One French knight was said to have sold his hand to the Devil; a great baron—a marshal of France and one of Joan's own companions-in-arms—was reputed to have decoyed young children to his castles and offered their bodies as sacrifices to the Evil One. In fact the records throw a searchlight upon the mentality of medieval man and sadden us in the prospect.

In this murky atmosphere of credulity and ignorance Joan of Arc herself appears like a lily in the mouth of Tartarus. The daughter of a peasant, she was devout and hysterical. In her paroxysms she imagined she heard voices telling her to save France, then under the dominion of the English. She procured an introduction to the uncrowned King Charles VII. By him she was given a troop of soldiers to lead

to the relief of Orleans, then besieged by the English. Her faith infused new courage into her countrymen and the siege was raised. Other victories were won, and Charles crowned at Rheims. Joan was wounded and taken prisoner by the Burgundians and sold to the English. By them she was tried and burnt alive for heresy and sorcery. In 1920 she was canonized, and made a saint in the Romish calendar.

Despite her great services to her country, Joan was "butchered to make a Roman holiday." Undoubtedly, Joan was heretical, however pious and saintly. She put her own private inspiration far above that of the ecclesiastics of the Catholic Church, and she aggravated her offence in the eyes of her pious murderers by the complete independence of her replies. Her execution by burning at the stake (she was but seventeen years of age) produced an enormous impression everywhere, an impression which Catholics will never efface by a trumpety and belated rehabilitation many centuries later.

Posterity has been kinder to this Maid of Orleans than her contemporaries. A large literature has grown around her memory, and men of genius have considered her personality worthy of their attention. Our own Bernard Shaw devoted his finest masterpiece to her, and Anatole France made her the subject of one of his finest efforts. And as librarian of the French Senate, with full opportunity for research, his contribution was both weighty and valuable. For instance, he clears away many popular misconceptions. He points out that it is never certain whether little Joan was sent actually in command of the French army, or the army itself in command of the girl. His own opinion is that Joan was much more of a military mascot than a soldier. It is to be noted, however, that Anatole France does not belittle Joan, he laughs through her at the tricks of French Priestcraft.

Even medical men have been caught in the discussion concerning this French peasant girl. They have traced her "voices" to the effects of epilepsy, and recalled that Mahomet and others were similarly affected. They have also pointed out that Joan suffered from repression of the sex complex. That mighty force which should have manifested itself normally was transferred to religious zeal. They also insist that it is more than coincidence that priests arrange the age of confirmation of the young at the period of puberty. Further, these doctors point out that Joan suffered from arrested development, which they contend is proved beyond dispute by her answers to the questions at her trial. She was but seventeen years of age, and mentally a child of twelve. Joan believed earnestly in her "voices." To her contemporaries this seemed passing wonderful, but then there was no Sigmund Freud to fathom the depths of the human mind, and, if there had been, he would have been burnt alive as assuredly as the peasant girl.

What is remarkable is the blind credulity and unbounded superstition of both the English and French people in the fifteenth century. The English regarded Joan as a witch, and the French as a religious mascot. Just consider what condition of mind obtained in the earlier and still darker ages of faith. So far as the religious world is concerned, the key is to be found in the Apocryphal Gospels and in the Lives of the Saints. In these works to the neurosis of religious enthusiasm is added Oriental exuberance until the cooler Western mind boggles at it.

The *Acta Sanctorum* is something apart from other literature. It is utterly divorced from life, and perilously close to the very border line of sanity. Not only are these stories childish, but they are entirely out of harmony with nature. They are the work of lonely students, remote from reality, and only

modern Spiritualism records similar stories of deranged balance. It is, as it were, an Oriental painted screen that only partially hides the vestibule of a madhouse. "You cannot fill your belly on the east wind," said a wise man. Believers seek an anodyne, and the theologians offer them fairly tales. Pious souls, full of resignation and tender melancholy, fancy that they derive consolation from sheer sentimentalism. For Joan was a heretic and was burnt alive because of her heresy. If there is a word of truth in Catholicism, Joan is condemned everlastingly. Is it not, rather a case of mass hysteria? As Coleridge acutely says of similar people, "they do not believe, they only believe that they believe." Bounded in a nutshell, such people have no suspicion that beyond their narrow world of innocence there stretches the larger world of ordered knowledge.

MIMNERMUS

Burning People Alive

AN APPEAL TO COMMON SENSE

It seems a pity that the good old custom of burning people to death for holding unfashionable views on religion should fall into disuse. For unquestionably it had many advantages to all of us.

In brighter days than the present era, the Roman Catholic Church found it useful for extirpating heresy, schism, rebellion, and intellectual-independence. There is a lot of intellectual-independence about just now. For instance quite a lot of English people openly disbelieved Cardinal Hinsley, when in a recent letter to the *Times* he said, that the organ of the Vatican was the "most impartial newspaper in the world." Some said it was nonsense; others—"lewd fellows of the baser sort"—said that this Prince of the Church had uttered a naked untruth. Burning such Englishmen alive would teach them better! It would also remind them of the glorious reign of Bloody Queen Mary when the souls of Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer and hundreds of other Englishmen were saved by cooking their bodies over the fires at Smithfield, where good meat is still to be obtained (uncooked however) to-day.

Besides, to be reminded of historical facts is good for all of us. Therefore, let us have no hesitation in commending to his Eminence, the only Cardinal in England and the head of the Italian Mission to English folk, the revival of the excellent burnt-sacrifices of the Holy Apostolic Church.

I would also commend the idea of burning folk to my Right Reverend Father-in-God, Cosmo Archbishop of Canterbury. For as a patriot I see no reason why our National Church should enjoy fewer privileges than the Italian Church. But one fact restrains me from commending fires to the Anglican Bishops. It is true that Archbishops of Canterbury have burned folk in the past. But Anglican clerics to-day are infected by a fatal tendency to compromise. Our much-admired Archbishop would certainly *not* do anything so definite as to burn people to death; he would want to steer a middle course and only roast them. "Neither overdone nor underdone" would be his motto. And perhaps His Grace would want them roasted on one side only. Anyway the Church Congress would dispute about which side should be roasted, the High Church party wanting the right side and the Low Church the left. On the whole the English Church had better be left out as it never can make up its mind—if it has a mind—about anything.

Let me, however, appeal specially to Farmers and Freethinkers on this important topic. I wish to re-

mind farmers that the excellent custom of burning people alive is really far older than religious bigotry. It had its origin in an early fertility rite. In those ancient days the victims' ashes were scattered over the fields as a sort of magic manure. But in these days, when horse-manure is scarce owing to the motor-car's ubiquity, and when Imperial Chemical Industries charge so heavily for artificial fertilizers (in short supply owing to the war) human ashes fill a long-felt want by the Farmers. Put the ashes in: speed the plough and "dig for Victory."

As to Freethinkers—let them reflect that a few human candles will arouse civilized folk to hasten on the day of deliverance from superstition. Is it not truly said that "the blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church"? Free-thinkers must have their martyrs too, I suppose. Burning is quite as humane and civilized as blowing folk to bits with high-explosive or choking them with poison-gas or riddling parts of them with machine-gun bullets. Christian civilization allows these things—indeed nowadays approves them—so why boggle at a few fires which are not even everlasting like the fires of Hell? After all, such folk as Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, Lord Snell, His Honour Judge Cluer, Majorie Bowen, Chapman Cohen and others, are quite intelligent enough to realize that a temporary fire is better for them and more enduring than a permanent one; and I feel quite sure that, if they were tied to stakes with faggots heaped around and petrol sprinkled over them, and a box of Bryant & May's handy, they would see the force of this priestly argument. Even if they did not, a Roman Clergyman could explain it to them with a crucifix as priests used to do at an *auto-da-fé*.

Then there is the great English Public to be considered. They like their little bit of fun; and a few fires with no interference from Fire Brigades or Salvage Corps or Insurance Companies would be better than the cinema. They would also be warned by these fires of the abominable offence of thinking for oneself. Our working-class which loves "enjoyment-through-staring" at cinema shows and football-matches would thoroughly enjoy itself at the Smithfield Revival and return to its slave-labours thoroughly refreshed. And how the B.B.C. and the newspapers rightly would sensationalize this mild spectacle of a little cookery, so that invalids, the aged, and other absentees from the fires should lose nothing just as we stay-at-homes have had all the fun in Norway, Flanders and the Netherlands served up to us.

We must consider, too, the trading community. The Gas, Light and Coke Co., is not doing too well lately, and their coke is very reliable stuff, giving much heat and little smoke. Coal too, should be used, to keep our colliery-owners and miners in funds. I feel sure the Forestry Commission would prefer us not to use faggots of wood as the country needs re-forestation badly, and we have already cut down too many of our fine trees. After all it is not as if we are going to burn Joan of Arc or Savonarola, or anyone likely to be famous; only a few contemporaries of an unpopular kind. Coke or Coal is quite good enough for them. And as the Fuel Controller explained last winter, there is no shortage of fuel in the country. It was only a question of transport, and if we can't get enough to the site of the fires the spectators could be invited to bring a bit of coal each from their home-scuttles as an act of Christian charity to the heretic, schismatic, Freethinker, or other wretch who was being burned alive so that he could be properly burned and not merely slowly singed.

I hesitate to mention the august name of Lord Woolton, our Food Controller, in this connexion, first

because his name is so new to us all, and secondly because there are old-fashioned prejudices against cannibalism in England due largely to Daniel Defoe's book entitled *Robinson Crusoe*. Fortunately (as we have been told) there are ample stocks of food in this country, and so if sensitive folk prefer me not to pursue this particular aspect of burning people alive, it is not necessary for me to do so. But I will merely remind those who like their meat to be young, tender and juicy, that even to-day some theologians believe that unbaptized infants are to be eternally burned, and that there is a better alternative for the babes and for our hungry gourmets. Enough has been said: we can leave this idea to Lord Woolton and our wonderful Government, in which our country has complete confidence as the newspapers so emphatically tell us—just as we had in the Chamberlain and Baldwin Governments, and just as we shall have to have in the next.

But in war-time, material advantages are not enough, and we need spiritual advantages as the Churches remind us. We cannot doubt that this is a war for Christianity, and for God against the Devil and the forces of evil—for Archbishops, Bishops and curates say so. Similarly God approves of the cruel sacrifice of animals since the Bible plainly says that he did of old. No doubt the Roman Catholic Inquisition thought that a Being which liked the slaughter and burning of animals, and did not prevent the crucifixion of his only son when he had the power to do so would like a few human candles lighted to his glory. Logic approves their reasoning. It is only this ridiculous "pre-war" sensibility innate in a few foolish people that doesn't.

After what I have written if there be still any obstinate or over-sentimental folk who object to this proposed revival of burning (which I can hardly believe) or if Cardinal Hinsley is against burning people alive I would remind them and him that Cardinals of great learning and holiness in the past (as well as many Popes in Rome, the Vicars of Christ) have pronounced emphatically in favour of burnt bodies as a way to salvation from the everlasting Bonfires.

And, really, as the victims and their friends see it, bodies burned by modern "Christian" warfare (in which Cardinal Hinsley believes, and which he so strenuously advocates), are no less ghastly and pitiable than those burned by holy religion or Christ's body broken on the Cross, so let us once more indulge in burning other people alive and thoroughly enjoy ourselves.

C. G. I. DU CANN

Messianism

III.—CHRISTIANITY

The aim of the first Christians was to substitute definitely the milder Messianism for the other. They were tired of being priest-ridden and disliked. As members of the Diaspora they had learned something of Greek literature and Freethought, and could write Greek.

What they did was to collect devotional and moral tags, platitudes and parables of the milder tone, make a book of them and invent a suitable exponent named Jesus. The Gospel is more than mild; it is ridiculously benevolent and humble. Orientals always fly to extremes. It was not enough for a Christian not to do what he would like to do: he must do the exact contrary. He must turn his other cheek to the smiter, forgive seventy times seven, hate his friends, love his enemies, and so forth. That sort of conduct would

mark the difference between the old and the new Jew very decidedly, and would undoubtedly hasten the advent of the Millennium. If Jesus were a real person he would have written the Gospel himself, not left it to casual reporters. And he would not have written it in Greek.

A mythical person may have several characters, functions, duties. This was the case with Jesus. He started as a simple teacher and before long was the Messiah himself. The Millennium had begun with him. This was a stiff proposition since he did nothing that a Messiah was expected to do, such as driving the Romans out of Palestine or levelling hills. He drowned a herd of harmless swine, which was not a pretty thing for a Messiah to do.

To prove his mildness they gave him certain characteristics culled from the prophets—the humble birth in Bethlehem, the poverty and hardships, the riding on an ass instead of in a chariot, the thirty pieces of silver. It is not certain that these traits had any reference to the Jewish Messiah, but they emphasized the unnatural humility of the Christian Messiah. He was now surnamed Christ or the Anointed.

Christ did not make Christianity. Christianity made Christ.

Next, he was promoted to be the Son of God, an idea that was neither Jewish nor Parsee. It was suggested by the Platonic Logos.

Finally, he was the expiatory victim of a sacrifice ordained by God and Christ himself to atone for the sins of all mankind. The motive was obviously to spare sinners the cost and trouble of animal sacrifice. Two consequences follow. Since all possible sins are already atoned for we can go on sinning merrily for the rest of our days. Next, since the death of Christ was designed not only by himself, but by God, all concerned in it were the agents of God. Judas and Pilate were God's instruments and should be revered accordingly. Their canonization is long overdue. They should be made Saints forthwith. It was and is a flagrant injustice and a crass stupidity to blame Jews for killing Christ, since, if they had not killed him, there would have been no salvation for Christians.

In imitation of the Second Isaiah the author of the Revelation reeled off a screed of Messianic fancies even wilder than the Jewish. Jesus is established as the ruler of the world. He is figured as a Lamb, but a lamb that can if necessary be wrathful and destructive. A wrathful lamb would be a curiosity. There is to be no *night* in the Millennium, as the Parsee said.

The Humility Gospel had little success among the Jews. Those of Palestine knew that no person like Christ had ever lived and been crucified there. Some who had never been in Palestine accepted it, but the converts were mostly Gentiles of the humblest sort. It promised an improvement in their status. Christ would soon come again, this time in the glory of Heaven, and they would share in his grandeur.

For about four centuries Christianity was the mild sort. Christians were mostly poor and ignorant; but they increased gradually, and did their best to undermine Judaism and what they called Paganism or Heathenism; for which, naturally, they were punished. At last they were strong enough to force their religion on the State, and, at once, from being the mild or Gospel sort, it became the fanatical, ruthless Old Testament sort. The Beggar was in the saddle and took the usual route.

For the next ten centuries or longer the history of Christianity is sad reading. The sufferers were Jews, Moors, Huguenots, Protestants, Waldenses, Albigenses, Mexicans, Peruvians, and reputed sorcerers. Of these last it is reported that a hundred thousand were burned or otherwise killed in Germany and thirty

thousand in England. The Trinity doctrine lit the fire for some. Neither Jew nor Moslem would have anything to do with it, which is to their credit seeing what the resolution cost them.

If Europe is civilized it is due to the natural character and rationality of the people, not to their religion. The Church has been the steady foe of progress, at least of intellectual progress. Until lately it has insisted on belief in its preposterous literature. Messianism is now rarely discussed and is perhaps no longer believed by some. It is a vain idea, a Utopia that can never be realized. Life in Heaven is now the goal, for which the hardships of earthly life are meant to prepare us. One would suppose that the best way to fit us for Heaven would be to cause us to be born there. It would be absurd to settle people in Iceland to fit them for living in France.

Some writers notice the fundamental identity of Parseeism, Judaism and Christianity, but they shrink from drawing the obvious conclusion—that Zoroastrianism is the real origin of Christianity.

D. B. McLACHLAN

Dickens's "Life of Our Lord"

SEVENTY years ago on June 9, Charles Dickens died. It is a fact as remarkable as rare, that he left behind him no debris of discarded books, and only one unpublished manuscript. This was a sure sign of the demand there was for his work. Rejection slips never riled him unless possibly from the office of *Punch*, which strangely was more hospitable to Thackeray than to Boz. The press eagerly lapped up everything he wrote. He was never in the way of being a literary Achilles skulking in a tent—to be more literal, a chalet—disgruntled over a work which the publishers doomed to abortion.

The one manuscript left was the *Life of Our Lord*, written for his children in 1849 and left unsullied by the hand of compositor until 1934. Dickens had expressed a desire that it should not be published, and after his death, in 1870, the manuscript remained in the custody of his sister-in-law, Georgina Hogarth. On her death in 1917, at the advanced age of 90, it was transferred to Dickens's last surviving son, Sir Henry Fielding Dickens, who died in December, 1933. According to Marie Dickens (I assume a daughter of Sir Henry) who wrote a Foreword on its publication, he "was averse to publishing the work in his own lifetime, but saw no reason why publication should be withheld after his death." Sir Henry was a legal gentleman, and one wonders how he would have responded to cross-examination on this strange decision. It would have been pertinent to have asked whether he considered the wish of a deceased person, though not expressly conditioned by any period of time, should have only a moderate lease and was not to be held sacrosanct for ever. In other words, why did he feel his children might have free licence to do what his conscience had not permitted? I fancy Lady Dickens gave the answer in a note to the catalogue of the sale of books and manuscripts in which was included the MS. of the *Life of Our Lord*: "Charles Dickens wrote it for his children; it was for his family, and he never intended to publish it. My husband added, when speaking to me about the MS., 'I have no objection to our children selling it later on.'" *Selling it*. If Dickens's express wish was to be violated, it would have been a redeeming feature had the proceeds gone to charity. Written for children, it would have been appropriate that the Children's Hospital in Great Ormond Street, in which he had taken an interest, should benefit. I fancy if Sir Henry

could be cross-examined in that hypothetical place where we are told the secrets of all hearts are made known, he would admit that he knew his children would never resist the temptation, and thought he had better give his imprimatur to something he could not prevent except by the destruction of the precious paper. This was certainly a course that many would have justified. The sole purpose of the composition, the edification of the Dickens family, had long been fulfilled, or at any rate attempted. Alternatively the MS. could have been presented to the British Museum or for exhibition at South Kensington with the Forster collection. The grandchildren of the creator of Merdle and the avaricious Scrooge would have raged at such vain things. "There's richness for us," they must have said, in the language of Wackford Squeers. Richness there was. £40,000 for the copyright when it was published by the *Daily Mail*, and syndicated to a number of papers in Canada and the United States; £1,400 for the MS., £125 for a copy made by Dickens' daughter Mamie.

There was never a literary work more absurdly and exorbitantly overrated, judged by monetary standards. Dickens was 37 when he wrote it, but, if included in his collected works, it might be classified under "Juvenilia." If it had not been written by Charles Dickens it would hardly have drawn attention even if it had first appeared in a parish magazine. Perchance some zealous reader of this ephemeral literature would have remarked that it was written in a good style, and that the new vicar must be a bit of a literary gent. Beyond that what could have been said?

The long concealment of course titillated the taste of the orthodox. This reticence of Dickens was so religious. Your Englishman is a fine fellow either way. If he comes to church regularly he demonstrates that he is not ashamed to own his Lord. There are those who declare that Dickens was of this kind though that he did not attend church with any regularity I am convinced. It would have been against ordinary clerical human nature for some parson not to have written to the *Times* immediately upon his death, to announce the fact that the great novelist was a *humble worshipper* (the adjective could be guaranteed) in his church. It was known, too, that Forster was writing Dickens's life, and he would have welcomed such information; it never came. On the other hand, when George Jacob Holyoake's windows overlooked Dickens's garden in Tavistock Square, he reported the entertainment of friends on Sundays with a liberal supply of liquor. Still, if this point is conceded, the orthodox fall back upon another. Belief was latent if not patent, and perhaps the stronger for that. Deep down, you know, what depth! The less you say the more you mean! This might not answer with a man courting a woman, but it is held fitting for devotion to deity. So Dickens's private passion for our Lord prevented publication of his life; your Englishman does not wear his religious heart upon his sleeve. Certainly the long concealment added much piquancy to the theological savoury.

When, after such an unconscionable time, the dish was brought to table, even the parsons did not flock to the meal for reasons that are obvious. It is nice to have an ally springing up like this, but so embarrassing if he will insist upon occupying positions you have abandoned. It is like offering a Battalion of archers. Dickens dead was apparently as ignorant as Beverley Nichols living. The former never seemed to have heard of doubts of the miracles; the latter seemed oblivious of higher criticism—in *The Fool Hath Said*.

Mimnermus has twice expressed in the *Freethinker* the view that the *Life of Our Lord* was suppressed because of its heterodoxy. An amazing idea. He can

never have read it. In my *Dickens and Religion* I said that if it were published there would be revealed a St. Francis of Assisi with unlimited thaumaturgic powers. I was abundantly justified. Its facile acceptance of the miracles would have surprised some of his contemporaries; those of the broad church school like Robertson, Kingsley, Stanley and Maurice. It would be going too far to say that, at a later date, Dickens might have qualified for membership of the Salvation Army, for there is nothing about the blood of the Lamb. Dickens, I am sure, felt that blood-washing was messy and nauseating, and the idea quite unæsthetic. In acceptance of the supernatural, however, no Salvationist could have surpassed him. Here is the list of miracles passed on to the Dickens nursery without any question. Turning water into wine; healing of the palsied man; healing of the impotent man; the Gadarene swine affair; so heartily assailed by Huxley; stilling the storm; walking on the water; healing of the centurion's daughter; the miraculous draught of fishes; feeding the five thousand; the resurrections of Lazarus, the son of the widow of Nain, and of Jairus's daughter. By the way of make-weight, Dickens added the resurrection and ascension of Jesus himself.

This is all very awkward, for your modernists. If this great man could swallow all these miracles, some of their flock might ask why they were so squeamish. "Ye gods!" one of the former may have exclaimed, "the fellow might have drawn the line somewhere. Could he not have been content to leave the body of Jesus lying mouldering in the grave, like John Brown's, and talk of his spirit marching on, as Renan did? A few psychic appearances as evidence might have been allowed." One pious brother, struggling with the "Devil of doubt," is said to have told his Lord that he was swallowing all the miracles he could. But the Lord would not expect him to have the digestion of an ostrich. Dickens had no difficulties of digestion; he was rather like Sir Thomas Browne, who would have asked for more miracles as a salutary trial of his faith. "Jesus," Dickens says, "ascended in a cloud to Heaven." To-day it is doubtful if five per cent of parsons believe it. They turn a blind eye to the fact that, if you believe in physical resurrection, you are left with a body on your hands, and conveniently forget Ascension Sunday.

Then the glosses. "The angels are all children." In Christian art they have generally been young men and women. In the Wilderness Jesus "spent forty days and forty nights praying that he might be of use to men and women, and teach them to be better, so that after their deaths they might be happy in heaven." This is not in accordance with the text. There is no word of the Devil in Dickens, told that the writer feared that some young Dickens, might have the Devil had tempted the incarnate God, might have asked his father the question Friday asked of Robinson Crusoe. The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard has usually been given an economic twist. Ruskin took the phrase "Unto this Last" as the title of a popular book. Some years ago Dr. Orchard resented this interpretation, and an unbiassed reading would find more Calvinism than Christian Socialism there. God (the master of the vineyard) was entitled to do what he would with the labourers, as potter with pot. Here is Dickens's extraordinary exposition:—

Our Saviour meant to teach them by this that people who have done good all their lives long will go to Heaven after they are dead. But that people who have been wicked because of their being miserable, or not having parents and friends to take care of them when young and are truly sorry for it, however late in their lives, and pray God to forgive them, will be forgiven and will get to Heaven too.

Could there be a better illustration of how anything in holy writ can be turned to the taste and fancy of the preacher?

The devotion of time is of the essence of strong and sincere writing. This *Life of Our Lord* was so casual a production of Dickens's pen that it was not kind to resurrect it. I had an uncle who was a Sunday school teacher. One Sunday, after we had dined, he remarked as he handled his Bible about ten minutes before departure, with an air of virtue, "I always like to look at my lesson before I go to school." I started looking at mine on Tuesday or Wednesday, and I was invisibly shocked. I venture to say that just as casually Dickens looked at his New Testament before he put pen to paper for his infants. He was not going to spend much of his valuable time, when he had novels teeming in his head, even on the *Life of Our Lord*. He was probably well aware of its shortcomings. He may not have been single-minded in his desire for its privacy. It would have added nothing to his intellectual stature. With far more justice than Whistler was accused by Ruskin of throwing a daub of paint in the face of the public, Dickens might have been accused of throwing them a sentimental spate of words.

At any rate this book disposes of the absurd claim that Dickens was a Unitarian.

W. KENT

Acid Drops

Italy is now in the war. There is no need to repeat what has been said in the press of Mussolini. He is of the same type of Gangster as Hitler, with a little more intelligence, and he has shown complete ingratitude for all that Hoare and Baldwin and the Government of the latter, did to assist him. But "double crossing" is of the essence of gangsterism. As to the war we do not think Italy will materially alter the end. There is already a very large army kept idle watching Mussolini, and the only strain will be on the ammunition supply. And Mussolini's son will not find it such "fun" dropping bombs on British and French soldiers as he did in murdering the women and children of Abyssinia.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is the chief professional soul-saver in this country. He has a large and ragged army (ragged in the sense of being made up of all kinds of soldiers quite ready to attack the common "enemy," and all claiming to work under the same regulations), but all reading the rules in a different way. The result of this is one is never quite sure what any of the commanding officers mean. They use the same language, but they mean different things. What one branch of this holy army calls a defeat the other calls a victory, and at the slightest provocation or opportunity one section will turn upon the other. This must be rather trying to the Commander-in-chief for what he counts gain, some of his army may count as gain or vice versa, as for example the following, which we take from a reported speech:—

The ignorance of Christianity among evanee children and many fine fellows who have enlisted in the forces is a revelation.

But one has to be thankful that the children who knew nothing of the Christian religion, as also the adults, who have joined the forces are "fine fellows." In that case why bother about it? No complaint against either the children or the soldiers is made, save that they are ignorant of Christianity. That is, they are not likely clients for the Archbishop. In other words the concern of the Archbishop is much like that of the hat manufacturer who foresees a likelihood of everyone going hatless. We congratulate the children and the soldiers. Also we sympathize with the Archbishop.

For instance, like the Roman Catholic Bishops, Dr. Lang may only be lamenting the fact that the children and soldiers are not of his Church. It is hardly likely that any number of children in this country have never heard of Christianity. It sounds too much like the cases one reads about a boy of 12 or 13 years of age who has never heard of the Bible. We have never met one of these rather remarkable boys, but Missionaries have. They get their living by discerning such rarities.

In spite of the unpleasant answer to the Day of Prayer, the *Church Times* cheers us up with the assurance that there is "a benediction promised to the humble and the meek." Now we feel more assured. For if there is one thing that distinguishes the British soldier and sailor it is that he is meek. And if we have ever had a Prime Minister in our history who was distinguished for his meekness it is Winston Churchill. But there is one assurance of victory we have all got. We survived the Baldwin and Chamberlain Prime Ministerships. And a country that survives that ordeal has something in it that is indestructible.

We have before remarked that our Archbishop of Canterbury is a very "artful cove," the truth of which is borne out by a study of his face. So he reminds all and sundry in an official communication that we had a Day of National Prayer on May 26, and "the hearts of their fellow countrymen have been thrilled by the escape of the British Expeditionary Force." Therefore he suggested a "Day of Thanksgiving." For what? It was directly after the Day of Prayer that King Leopold ratted and brought about the death of thousands of our men. It also enabled the Germans to launch a further attack on France. And that meant many more deaths. Would anyone but a Christian Archbishop have the callous impertinence to invite everyone to give thanks for the kind of answer that followed the last day of prayer? For pure professionalism, regardless of common decency, this last move of the Archbishop beats everything.

The subject of the religious character of the men in the forces came up for discussion at the London Diocesan Conference. There was a strong tendency not to discuss the subject, but the Rev. G. L. Russell, Lecturer to the Church of England Moral Welfare Council, was not to be put off. Naturally, keeping the Church of England moral is his job, and we should imagine it is a full time one. At any rate Mr. Russell had to tell the men at the front they were

all jolly good fellows whatever they did, and to hide from them the fact that men and women, however gallant, were miserable sinners who came under the judgment, except for the mercy of God. War was the most anti-social of human activities.

Now that is good sound Christianity. There is none of your milk and water Christianity about Mr. Russell. It doesn't care what you do or how you do it. We are all sinners, and we are all under the judgment (condemnation) of God. You can only be saved by getting the right brand of religion. Then you will get to heaven, where Mr. Russell will be waiting to rubber-stamp you. It is a case of heaven for climate but hell for good company.

The Rev. W. H. Bourne, of Thornton Heath, pleads in the *Daily Telegraph* for the non-conscription of the clergy on the ground that we should "retain at least one order of citizenship for the sweetening of the vitiated atmosphere of the country." That is quite a striking picture. The conscription of laymen apparently vitiates the social atmosphere; the continuation of the freedom of the clergy from conscription will sweeten the atmosphere. We never quite regarded the presence of the clergy as lending sweetness to the atmosphere. And the suggestion is so very complimentary to the men in uniform.

During the raid on Paris a bomb dropped about six feet away from the American Ambassador, but failed to explode. Mr. Bullitt promptly telephoned to President

Roosevelt, telling him that he was uninjured, "God was with me." The message leaves one rather uncertain. Did Mr. Bullitt mean that the bomb was a messenger from God? Or did he mean that God seeing the bomb fall, promptly worked a miracle and prevented its explosion? Or does it mean that God was so interested in preserving the life of William Bullitt that he had not the time to be with anyone else, not even the children who were killed when the bombs dropped on a school, where the children might have been singing hymns? So Bullitt was saved because God was near him, and not even God can apparently be in two places at once. There is just one more possibility. God and Bullitt were close together. Had the bomb exploded it might have been fatal to both.

Clearly God cannot be in Paris looking after Bullitt and attending to affairs at a distance. So it happened that a whirlwind destroyed the Roman Catholic Church at St. Helena's, Louisiana, and left the local cinema untouched. And the Church authorities borrowed the cinema for its Sunday service. Probably most of the attendants would rather have had the usual show.

We notice a Church of "Our Lady of Lourdes." But we understood that the Lady of Lourdes only operated at Lourdes. Perhaps it is the war, and business, we know, must go as usual. If it prevents sufferers going to Lourdes, then the lady must come to the people. Business must go on. Cash must come in. The trade in faked cures and hysterical recoveries must go on for the greater glory of God and the increase of the income of holy Church.

Thomas Toplady, a rather interesting name in the annals of nineteenth century theology, writes to the *Daily Telegraph*, June 5, that clergymen, and others of the "Black Army" should not be exempted from military service, but should be called up and should be used "for national service in harmony with their calling." Those who are not needed as chaplains should be put into the Army Medical Corps, where they would rescue and save the wounded and the sick. For downright lumbag this "takes the cake." Why should the preachers be exempt at all? We ought surely to have got past the time when we might believe that wars are won by the national Joss interfering on the side of his followers. The Government and the army are not crying for more parsons but for more guns, aeroplanes, and men. We are not asking America to send us half a million parsons, but a few hundred thousand fighting machines.

But what is the substantial difference between this suggestion of Mr. Toplady's and the present arrangement? Ministers of religion are at present admitted as chaplains—with officer rank and pay. The only real difference is that Mr. Toplady, writing from the Lambeth Mission, suggests that *all* of them shall be conscripted, presumably as officers. But they are to be employed only on such service as is "in harmony with their calling." Mr. Toplady seems rather artful. The clergy, as the majority of them has always exhorted young men to join the army in times of war, and take part in military parades and services in times of peace, can have no conscientious objection to war, and to plead that their sacred calling prevents their taking part in actual warfare is so much hypocrisy when it is not deliberate lying. "Sacred calling" is actually, in the conditions described, what was described in the last war as occupying "funk-holes."

Bishop Walter Cary says "Everybody in their hearts believe in God. Even an Atheist believes in Right and Truth, and, after all these are only other names for God." Why then do such men as the Bishop denounce Atheists? It looks as if we might make the terms reversible and say that every parson is an Atheist because he *believes* in right and truth, even if he fails to practise it.

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THE General Secretary of the N.S.S. acknowledges for the N.S.S. Benevolent Fund, £1 18s. from T.D. (Glam.).

E. A. MARTIN.—There is a brief sketch of the life of T. H. Huxley, by E. W. McBride, published some six or seven years ago. So far as we recollect the work the statements of fact are reliable. Some of the author's comments on Huxley's opinions approach the very foolish.

L. ANDERSON.—A very trying time, but no reason whatever that we can see for despair. The worst is not often so bad as our fears are apt to paint it. We are taking every reasonable care. Further than that would not help anyone.

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

Sugar Plums

It is surprising how frequently of late references to and quotations from Thomas Paine have lately appeared in the general press. Here is the *News-Chronicle*, a paper that has been almost "miraculously" unaware of anything in the shape of Freethought propaganda, save when political capital could be made of it, actually printing the following from Paine, with due acknowledgment:—

Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation within us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly. . . . It would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.

The truth is that Paine, as we have pointed out, was a lorthright writer. A passage such as that cited could hardly be bettered. It goes direct to the point, and while rich in simple imagery is devoid of that verbosity which spoils so many speeches and so much writing. But Paine's genius as a writer was, in the eye of his enemies, one of the greatest offences. He could be understood by all, he was read by multitudes and is still read by multitudes. A dose of Paine at these critical moments would serve as a "bracer" to all who need it, and would delight all who do not.

Here for example is a passage from a letter just received from a lady who received a religious training. "I have been reading the *Age of Reason*. Looking back I wish I

had read it twenty years ago." There are still hundreds of thousands of people who might well express the same sentiment after the same experience. But all religious training contains within the essential principle of Fascism and Hitlerism—"Never read the other side, never think of the other side, except as something to be shunned and suppressed if possible." We think we have done no better "job of work" than when we issued our edition of the *Age of Reason*.

May we again impress upon those who experience any difficulty in securing their copies of the *Freethinker* that there is no justifiable reason for it. We are able to supply every order, and many more, and we hope that all will insist upon their copies being delivered. Not only that, but actually to increase sales. But to do this the task must be a co-operative one. Last, but not least, we have every hope to keep the paper as it is for some time yet.

There are a few copies left of the bound volumes of the *Freethinker* for 1939. There are few periodicals published in this country that so well repay binding, not because of the binding, but because of the permanent value of the majority of the articles therein. Needless to say, when these volumes are sold no more will be obtainable. The price of each volume is 17s. 6d. postage 1s.

We have again to thank those Annual Subscribers who have very thoughtfully and generously sent in the extra postage for the *Freethinker*. We shall shortly have to revise the subscription and rates so as to cover full cost of postage.

Two useful pamphlets just issued are *The God of War*, by Joseph McCabe, and *The Danger of Being an Atheist*, by A. Gowans Whyte. In the first Mr. McCabe traces the connexion from the Bible onward, with devastating effect on the pose of Christian representatives that their religion is one of peace and humanitarianism. In the second Mr. Whyte neatly and tellingly takes up the cant phrase that this war is a war fought for the defence of Christian religion and its dangerous consequences if the immense number of people who make up the population of the British Empire took such a claim seriously. What does emerge from the pages of Mr. Whyte's essay is that the Christian clergy have but one real and constant aim in view, and that is the aggrandisement of their own religion. To believe that end they are as ready to distort and lie without end. It is all for the "greater glory of God." A shilling would be well spent in the purchase of these two timely pamphlets.

There is ample evidence that the Churches are determined, if they can, to take advantage of the war and enlarge, and secure, their grip on the elementary schools. So we suggest that those who are interested might do something by circulating Nos. 10 and 14 *Pamphlets for the People*, "The Church's Fight for the Child," and "Freethought and the Child." The price is one penny each, and each pamphlet runs to 16 pages. They are not a commercial venture, and that gives us an added reason for again commending them to those who wish to do a little needed propaganda.

Praise God for Sister Earth in whom we dig
Shelter and safety for our guns—and us

Praise God for Sister Fire, for she will fly
Forth from the cannon's mouth and slay our foes

For Sister Water praise, for through her waves
We can send submarines to sink their ships

Praise God for Air, which offers no obstruction
When bombs rain down to prove our moral worth

O, little brother Francis, does such praise
Make heaven a burden, turn its songs to praise?

(Linda Bennet, in "*To-morrow*"
Christchurch, N.Z.)

Christian Morality in Danger

MORALITY we know. It is the kind of conduct that leads to a smooth and orderly existence for the inhabitants of this planet and tends ultimately to the strengthening and lengthening of life itself. Man had to devise codes in order to exist. As Ingersoll said long ago, when primitive man planted seeds it did not need a divine revelation to inform him that the results thereof belonged to him and not to the marauder who endeavoured to appropriate them. But Christian Morality! Man has been on the earth struggling, collapsing, recovering, for æons; he erected altars to Gods of all shapes and sizes; he ate them ceremonially, he grovelled; he sacrificed. Whilst he was doing these things he lived with his kind, with his woman, with his young. He found out much to make his life tolerable; he devised codes to that end. And then, just a few years ago relatively speaking, Jesus came. Then we got *Christian Morality*. True we got the old altars, the old sacrifices, the old God-eating. But we got something else. We got *Christian Morality*! Something entirely God-given. God, however, forgot to make it intellectually air-and-water-tight. The consequence is that the brains that God endowed men with found it inadequate. And it would appear if we are to believe our Faint Hearts that God did not want us to use our brains and is annoyed that we have done so. Consequently he is showing us the folly of trying to manage this business of living unassisted. For God is a jealous God. He himself has said it. He looked in the past at men like Voltaire, who gave us a new humanism; Paine, who foreshadowed Federal Union and a hundred other splendid things, and to-day at men like Norman Angell, and he sneers at their puny efforts to bring about Peace on Earth by hard thinking and unsparing activity. He does not want Peace on Earth brought about this way. What he wants is dependence. What he wants is Altars and Grovelling. What he wants is the admission by intellectual men that they are feeble, and that he is mighty. What he wants is crowded Temples and good business with the Chalice. Lashings of the Blood and the Body! Then he will help. Then and then only he will stretch out his hand and assist the submissive. But for thought and action to bring a Peaceful World he has nothing but contempt. Certainly he will not help.

Nor does he sympathize with more prophets than one. There is only one name under which Mankind can be saved and that name is Joshua. Joshua himself has told us that all that came before him were thieves and robbers. Good, sound Christian Morality! Muhammad had a morality of his own. He was a God-ite. He thought that to say that God had a baby was blasphemy. He believed with Christians that it was not only important to believe in God, but it was necessary to believe the right things about God. But he did not think that those who came before him were thieves and robbers. He believed that Jesus was a Prophet and that there had been many prophets all good men according to the dose vouchsafed them of divine light. *Muhammad's Morality* lacked authenticity; it was a pinchbeck thing, a poor thing but his own! Christian Morality, that conveyed the Thieves and Robbers touch, had emerged earlier from the womb of time and needed amendment.

The Christian ethic is in peril. What is this Christian ethic? Gilbert Murray hit the nail on the head when he recently wrote that what people call the Christian spirit is just the liberal spirit or the humane spirit and, says Murray, they call these things Christian just to lend to them some "authority."

They wish them to sound more important, just as a Hussar—tall enough to start with—is supplied with a busby.

Is there a distinctive Christian ethic? Cotter Morrison when asked to explain the "goodness" of certain Christian types replied that such people were also of the original stuff of which good secularists were made. If there were a distinctive Christian ethic it would illuminate—in any rate in part—all who take the Christian sacraments. But Constantine and Charlemagne and Pope John XII. wallowed in the sacraments, they enjoyed them, and there is no doubt that they thought much of their virtue. One has a right to expect some symptoms of the Christian ethic forcing itself through in such cases. Through all his bloodiness Charlemagne (an unlearned man himself) showed some respect for learning. Was this then the Christian ethic? And how then did it display itself in St. Cyril of Alexandria?

A Bad Age, we are told. In bad ages, we must expect bad men. Must we indeed? Even after Baptism, and frequent does of the Sacramental Wine? Did God when he acquainted these men with the beatific vision make feeble their hands when they bore the sword? Was it really necessary that through bloodiness the Christian ethic had to emerge? Apparently so for now, after all these years of travail, the Christian ethic, we are told, has emerged in all its splendour, or would emerge if thinking men would let it.

When a man tells you he is a Christian, does he tell you anything at all? Though you know he is a glutton for the Blood and the Body, do you also know he will return the books you lend him? Do you know that his word is his bond? Do you know that he is free from bigotry, that he allows intellectual hospitality? Does he give his employees a fair deal? Is he generous, is he thoughtful, is he just? After a couple of thousand years of the Christian ethic is there anything about a Christian that enables you to know him without being told about it.

If you meet a Muhammadan, a follower of the thief and robber,* there are a few things you can almost depend upon. You can be sure if he lends you money he will not charge you interest; you can be sure that he will refuse your offer of a glass of beer, and, mark it well! you can be sure he will be free from any feeling of racial distinction. If you meet a Brahman, you can be sure that he will not join you in a day's shooting. The Christian ethic will allow you to spend a day killing birds and expect that you will boast (whatever the facts) about your "bag." For as far as a Christian is concerned there is nothing that you can be sure about. It would appear that this Christian ethic which we are in peril of losing is, as it has always been, as elusive as a will o' the wisp. God sent his only beloved son to earth, gave Mankind the keys of Heaven and Hell, taught them solicitude about their souls, insisted upon magic processes, glorified ignorance, and put the divine into them in the shape of vainglorious phrases of which surely Christian Morality is surely the last word in insincerity and intellectual decrepitude.

Morality we know. Christian Morality we do not. And we do more than suspect, we believe that the return to Christian Morality is a dishonest slogan. What is really meant is a return to Relics in the shape of Old Bones, Old Nails, Old Timbers. A return to angels and devils, cherubim and seraphim, witches, wizards, were-wolfs, pygargs, cockatrices, unicorns, behemoths, dragons, incubi and succubi, fiery serpents, steeds of fire, leviathans and animated gollies.

* Charles Wesley absorbed the Christian ethic on this point, for in a hymn not included in the modern collection he referred to Muhammad as "that Arab thief."

wogs. A time of intellectual eclipse, humble and manageable men and women, and High Jinks amongst the cunning and unscrupulous priests and People in High Places!

T. H. HASTOB

The Psychology of Infant Life

THE late Professor James Sully's *Studies in Childhood*; Preyer's classical monograph, *The Mind of the Child*; Perez' discerning *First Three Years of Childhood*, and other pioneer works, have now been supplemented by what is claimed as a more strictly scientific approach to the problems of child psychology.

Investigations are conducted from various angles, and Anderson enumerates fourteen methods of inquiry. These include systematic as well as incidental observation; statistical tests, psycho-analysis and case history. The critics who urged the insufficiency of incidental, biographical and questionnaire systems of research should now be satisfied.

The biographical method pursued by the earlier inquirers undoubtedly furnished invaluable information concerning child psychology, and many of their conclusions have been confirmed by later and more exacting studies. As Dr. Collins, Lecturer in Psychology in the University of Edinburgh, acknowledges in his essay: "Modern Trends in Child Psychology," a chapter in *The Study of Society* (Kegan Paul, 1939, 10s. 6d.): "The time of appearance of the different items of behaviour recorded in different biographical studies . . . may vary from child to child, according as to whether the child is bright or dull, but their order of appearance remains constant, a very significant and important fact."

A method called co-twin control has been employed by Gesell. In this, identical twins are subjected to study, and it is stated that it has proved highly successful in inquiries relating to development and maturation, but as the number of identical twins is strictly limited, the application of this technique is seldom possible.

One investigation of this character conducted by Gesell and Thompson discloses interesting facts. In this experiment, two baby-girl twins, T and C, were placed under observation when a month old, until they reached the age of eighteen months. The test was devised to determine the extent to which their development corresponded and, in addition, to ascertain the amount of divergence occasioned by specific treatment to which one of the identical twins was subjected.

While under observation, these infants were examined 15 times to test any divergence in their developmental behaviour, but very few differences of response were disclosed. When forty-four weeks had elapsed a more detailed examination was made, but elaborate as the studies were, no pronounced dissimilarity in their reactions was observed. So far, the children's behaviour had proved practically uniform, and it was then decided to determine the effects of training in evolving variations in conduct. Twin T was then given a course of training, when her climbing capacity was compared with that of Twin C who remained untrained. "At nine o'clock in the morning," it is stated, "on six days of the week for six consecutive weeks, the experimenter took twin T from the nursery into a room equipped with a clinical crib and an experimental staircase, and trained her in climbing. After four weeks of training, at the age of fifty weeks, she climbed the staircase without assistance. Two weeks later, she climbed the staircase in twenty-six seconds." Yet, strange to relate, twin C, despite her untrained state, ascended the staircase unassisted at

the age of 53 weeks in forty-five seconds. Then, after a fortnight's training she accomplished this feat in ten seconds. Thus C's achievement at the age of 55 weeks far exceeded that of the fully trained twin at 52 weeks, despite the latter's earlier and more prolonged exercises. It is therefore concluded that the "greater maturity attained during three weeks of rapid development at this stage seems the only factor that can account for C's superiority."

Photography now plays an important part in child study and cinematographic films of the normal development of creeping, toddling, the power of prehension and other infant activities are now available. Photographs prove invaluable, as they serve to confirm or rectify notes taken during investigations and as permanent records of child movements and expressions which occupy time in their complete analysis. Indeed, the study of the identical twins previously described is not only recorded in a monograph, but is preserved in 65 photographs which portray the development of the children through a period of eighteen months.

The growth of grasping capacity in infants has been recorded in a series of cinematograph films. Tentative touches are steadily replaced by the hand clutch, and then appears the palm grasp which entails the opposition of the thumb and then emerges the still later independent functioning of the digits.

Clinical studies have also proved rich in result. When children are ill-adjusted to their surroundings their conduct is apt to become undesirable, and the clinical method enables the observer to diagnose the causes of the anti-social activities in question. Should the child dwell in an unsuitable home or suffer any physiological disability, abnormal conduct is apt to result.

Child-guidance clinics have now been instituted to diagnose and treat children's behaviour troubles. The importance of these methods is made manifest when we realize that the information gathered during the diagnosis of the ailments of the problem child adds materially to our understanding of the psychology of normal children, with great advantage to both. Thus, the clinical procedure proves of practical value to the general community as a mass of important knowledge has been accumulated concerning the nervous states of infants. Among the clinical studies undertaken Dr. Collins includes: "The modes of sleeping and eating; undesirable habits; difficulties facing the illegitimate or adopted child and the step-child; factors in the school situation such as educational retardation or speech defects; the effects of poverty." Clearly, studies such as these (if the contemporary menace to science is overcome and their continuance assured) should render priceless service in racial improvement.

Careful study has been given to the infant's acquisition of speech. The birth-cry of the babe occurs when the outer air enters its lungs and the squalling of the first days of its life is apparently undifferentiated in character. At birth, the child's head immediately encounters the surrounding atmosphere, and the air flows into the sensitive lung tissues. Breathing, in the form of inspiration and expiration thus initiated, seems to act painfully on the child's delicate structures. As Perez puts it: "This is why a new-born infant utters sounds similar to those produced by suffocation. It is only slowly and after several days' time, that the little being gets accustomed to the atmosphere which surrounds it. When it first comes into the world, unfurnished with the power of resistance which it acquires later, its delicate skin is suddenly enveloped in an atmosphere which is icy-cold compared with that which it has just left. Cold is the most serious enemy to new-born children. We know

with what care animals hasten to warm their little ones with the heat of their own bodies."

A few weeks after birth the child's cries cease to be uniform, and observant mothers and nurses are able to distinguish differences in those indicating uneasiness, hunger, fatigue and other sensations. But it is not until the end of the second month that the infant begins to babble, and this proves the inception of human speech. Apparently, appreciation of the meaning of the spoken word normally emerges at the close of the first year and this comprehension invariably precedes the child's use of language in its true sense. The rate of development varies, for an infant that expresses its meaning or desires through gestures to which its attendants respond, in this way delays the development of speech. A far-reaching factor in increasing the number of words is the little one's discovery that every object possesses a name. This fact is clearly demonstrated in Miss Sullivan's description of the pronounced progress made by her pupil the blind, deaf mute, Helen Keller. For when Miss Keller once realized that water has a name a new light dawned. She spelt the name "water" several times. "Then," continues Miss Sullivan, "she dropped on the ground and asked for its name, and pointed to the pump and the trellis, and suddenly turning round she asked for my name. All the way back to the house she was highly excited, and learned the name of every object she touched, so that in a few hours she had added thirty new words to her vocabulary." This identification of objects with their names appears the general rule with normal children also.

Girls not only precede boys in the acquisition of language in early stages of development, but retain their superiority in succeeding phases of growth. Naturally enough, children reared in humble and penurious surroundings have a far smaller vocabulary than those enjoying more favourable conditions of life. In a study comparing the command of language shown by children of from two to seven years old in working class families with that of the offspring of more cultured parents, the latter, of course, exhibited a distinct superiority. But, as Dr. Collins is careful to point out: "There is no suggestion that the children from the working class homes are inferior mentally. The discrepancy is explicable by the relative lack of opportunity and cultural background."

In their intercourse with adult companions and ministrants, three stages of juvenile psychology have been established. In the first instance, the child appears passive and depends upon its guardians for assistance. The second stage attains its maximum between the ages of two and three when there arises a resistance to adult authority and a spirit of independence. The third phase usually emerges at the age of four or five, and is signalized by an attitude of self-reliance and the child commences to co-operate with its parents and companions in a friendly spirit.

T. F. PALMER

I do by no means advise you to throw away your time in ransacking, like a dull antiquarian, the minute and unimportant parts of remote and fabulous times. Let blockheads read what blockheads wrote.—*Chesterfield*.

LIFE

To stand up straight, and tread the turning mill,
To lie flat and know nothing and be still
Are the two trades of man; and which is worse—
I know not, but I know that both are ill.

A. E. HOUSEMAN

Obituary

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

ANOTHER gap in the Freethought ranks is made by the death of George Bedborough at the age of 72. We had a note on June 4 to say that he was in bed suffering from internal pains. Taken to the hospital, an appendicitis operation was decided on. The operation was successful, but was followed by a collapse, and a telegram announcing the end was received on June 7. The cremation took place at Cambridge on June 11, a secular service being conducted by Mr. Rosetti, the N.S.S. General Secretary.

George Bedborough had been a Freethinker for so many years that the word "lifelong" is not out of place. His association with the National Secular Society covers about forty years, but that was not the beginning of his Freethought. It commenced many years earlier, and was applied to a much larger field than the mere attack on theology and on established religion. He showed a keen interest in many reforms, including those connected with the equality of the sexes, and of the "sex" question generally. He visited the United States, where he both lectured and wrote, winning many friends in the process. He could hardly avoid that, for his disinterestedness was marked, and in spite of the "advanced" opinions held they were stated in such a manner as to win the good-feeling of even those who were opposed to him. His frequent articles in the pages of this journal, also have been much appreciated.

We have a fancy that if George Bedborough had been asked to select a name for himself he would have preferred that of "Humanitarian" to any other. That was his main characteristic. A deep and abiding interest in all that concerned the welfare of mankind, a strong sense of human equality, and deep hatred of injustice. We fancy also the war came to him as a shock, perhaps the more so as, if he had a creed, it was that of thinking of the best in man, and a probably too great readiness to make, in individual cases, the good greater than it was.

A great lover of peace, he fought a battle into which he threw his best. It should be added that in all his struggles and trials he was blessed with a marriage which, so far as an outsider may judge, was all that anyone could desire to experience. His wife and he were loyal comrades of the Spirit. We take this opportunity of offering her in the name of those who knew George Bedborough the heartiest sympathy with her in the loss she has sustained. But the memory of that long life lived together will furnish the surest consolation in the days that lie before.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG

WE regret to record the death of Victor B. Neuburg, after a lengthy and distressing illness. Neuburg commenced his Freethinking career early. He contributed articles to the old *Agnostic Journal*, we think, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, or in the very early ones of this. He wrote for other Freethought journals and for many years was a very frequent contributor to the *Freethinker*. His work was always valued, because through all he wrote there ran the evidence of the careful thinker, and the talented writer expressing opinions solidly based on sure knowledge. He was also one of the very few men who had an intimate knowledge of Freethinking publications from the days of Richard Carlile onward; and what was also striking a familiarity with French Freethinking that is not very common nowadays. He was tolerant in temperament, and without self-seeking in his work. That is something which will always endear his memory to those who knew him. A select gathering of friends assembled at the Golders Green Crematorium on June 4th, to pay their tribute of respect to one who is now only a memory. An address was delivered by Mr. Bayard Simmons, which is here appended. It gives an aspect of his character worth recording.

This little gathering of relatives and friends has come here to give a last salute to the Soldier-Poet.

Victor B. Neuburg. For it is to that select company of English Soldier-Poets that our comrade belonged, and we, when we think of Sir Philip Sidney, Richard Lovelace, and Lord Byron, and all the wonderful company of soldier-poets in the last Great War and the Spanish Civil War, will remember that Victor Neuburg was of that immortal fellowship. It is indeed impossible to think for one moment upon Victor Neuburg without dwelling on his two-sidedness. He was the Man of Thought and the Man of Action. He was no Hamlet caught in a web of thought and rendered impotent for action. He was that *complete whole*, the Man of Thought, *in Action*, the sane and balanced man, in short, the Man of Genius.

There is a certain appropriateness in our comrade's passing at this hour of peril to us and to all of beauty, culture, and freedom of the spirit that Victor Neuburg strove for so manfully. We can almost hear the guns of the embattled Huns, who, there is only too much reason to fear, will shortly come pounding at our own gates. Although Victor Neuburg never shouldered a musket (nor carried a Tommy gun) to march in this *present* war, yet in very truth he has fallen, *On Active Service*. The delayed operation (that is, the re-opening) of a lung wound received in the last onslaught on this country has snatched from our midst this bright intelligence.

Victor Neuburg was an armed combatant in the 1914-18 War, but I should give the wrong impression if I left this company with the idea that he was a Fire-Eater. Indeed, I cannot recall any among my friends who was more gentle. In this Victor Neuburg resembled the prototype of all Soldier-Poets, the serene, and gentle, yet courageous and active, Sir Philip Sidney, our English Bayard. Victor, though called upon to face the private soldier's common lot, dirt and discomfort, wounds and death, was a soldier in the wider meaning of the term, a soldier in the struggle to deepen our sense of beauty, and to make wider the bounds of freedom. But what true poet that ever lived was not a soldier in this wider sense; a campaigner in the struggle against dullness, sloth, cruelty and oppression.

One had only to know Victor Neuburg even slightly to be aware of the fact that his sensitive soul would have gladly turned aside from the world's contentions to the undivided pursuit of Beauty. But our comrade was too great a lover of this world and its queer inhabitants to seek refuge in the Ivory Tower. It is reported that Michelangelo once reproached Leonardo for his indifference to the misfortunes of the Florentines. Da Vinci is said to have replied: "Indeed, the study of Beauty has occupied my whole heart." But Victor had the wider vision: he *knew*, as all poets know, that *Beauty* and *Truth* and *Right Living* are bound up together, and that none can flourish without the aid of the other two.

We must now speak of the Poet side of our dear comrade. What the good Soldier does has its value in righting a wry world, but this is perhaps not so well remembered as *what the good Poet sings*. This is not the place and time to assess Victor's contribution to the Art of Poetry, but one *can* say this. If in his earlier years he, like other young poets, was concerned with those subjects natural to youth—which are summed up in the word *Panic* (from the God Pan), so often used by our comrade; if, too, to some of his earlier work the word "precious" could be rightly applied; if, I say, such a judgment should be passed (and which young poet is altogether free of such tendencies?) then it must equally be emphasized that in later years Victor Neuburg became more and more conscious of the *social and prophetic* ingredients of the poets make-up. He saw clearly two words at grips, two systems struggling for man's soul, and he unhesitatingly put his great talents on the side of the spiritual autonomy of the individual man.

But over and above what a man may achieve himself, whether as a Soldier or a Poet, there is the effect of an artist's work on the rising generation. An

artist proves his wisdom by aiding and encouraging the younger people in his own art, never regarding them as his superseders, as they well may be, but actively and unselfishly aiding his own surpassing in the interest of the *greater* Beauty and the *deeper* Truth. In this direction Victor Neuburg's contribution to English letters, to English Poetry, is incalculable. It can only be compared to Mitrofan Beliaeff's contribution to Russian music. First, in *Poet's Corner* in the *Sunday Referee*, then, in his own valiant little organ *Comment*, by counsel, criticism, and, above all, encouragement, Victor Neuburg has made his mark on the rising English poets. If this present War, like that of a generation ago, produces "a nest of British singing-birds," the instructed among us will know that it was Victor's gentle hand that first guided their footsteps. The memory of Victor Benjamin Neuburg will be revered by many of these young men and women, and through their verses something of his dauntless spirit will be carried to generations yet unborn. *That* will be Victor Neuburg's best and abiding monument.

Victor Benjamin Neuburg, in the name of this company, I bid you Farewell, and untroubled sleep!

BAYARD SIMMONS

Correspondence

WAR FOR CHRISTIANITY

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—In your issue dated June 2, a "Sugar Plum" reports the case of a naval officer refusing to accede to a recruit's request to be registered as an Atheist, but offering to classify him as a "Presbyterian." This is stigmatized, and rightly, I think, as "a lie for the glory of God." But I differ entirely from the comment which follows: "We think that the lying statement of the Archbishop of Canterbury that this war is being waged for Christianity. . . ." It is my firm conviction that the war *is* being fought for Christianity, as a vested interest, as much as for survival, world markets, and supremacy. The abnormal activities of the churches, their permeation throughout both civil and military organizations, increased broadcasting of religious propaganda, the daily spectacle of clerics of all denominations scurrying hither and thither at railway termini, and wherever our armed forces assemble, the recurring calls to prayer and similar ways to stage a "back to religion" success—these are, surely, proofs in support of the Archbishop's claim?

Unfortunately, in war between Christian nations, God seems to be in the predicament in which the King of the Belgians found himself. . . And, so far as to this hour, Hitler appears to have been most worthy of God's help, his strategy being more in accordance with God's authorized manual of tactics; e.g., Deut. xx. 10-15 (*Bible Handbook* p. 100). Our strategy has suffered from a lack of that divine disposition which the Archbishop possesses in abundance. The only logical outcome of his Grace's attitude to the war would be his immediate appointment as Supreme Commander in the field. Leading his followers in the van ("like a mighty army," in fact) he should be able to settle with Hitler once and for all, whose God guides to victory. Prelate Lang has excellent precedents for his taking up the material weapons of Christian warfare along with the "spiritual"; some of his predecessors were doughty in battle.

I commend the suggestion earnestly to our Government and people. Should the Primate turn it down, let him in very shame for ever after hold his peace.

A. G. DUNN

RELIGION AND THE B.B.C.

SIR,—The religious bigots who have captured the B.B.C. (see your "Acid Drop" of the 2nd inst.) appear to be well entrenched.

Amidst all the present blather over freedom of thought

and speech and justice these bigots either do not realize their bigotry or they are prepared to dismiss all principles of justice for their own selfish errors and vested interests.

For a long time I was averse to the possession of a radiograph, and one of the reasons was the abuse of it by these bigots. At last I got one or rather one was got for me.

Not having listened to a religious sermon for many years, and desiring to learn whether modern sermons were like those I heard sixty years ago, I listened week after week to the eight o'clock Sunday evening addresses. Indeed I became fascinated by them in the realization that intelligent men could retail such matter as I listened to.

A close friend who has retained some of his early religious sentiment, and still carries a sneaking regard for the Church and clergy expressed surprise at my interest, and informed me that I was about the only one he knew who listened to these sermons.

Having now drawn my own conclusions as to their value, I have ceased to waste any more time on them.

In my opinion present-day sermons are of less value than the moral lessons given by a preacher under whom I sat sixty years ago, but I think he was slightly in advance of his time, but necessarily he had to adopt the Christian standard or otherwise he would have been dismissed by those who paid his wages.

CINE CERE

WAR AND ECONOMIES

SIR,—In your issue of June 2 you express your disapproval of a American paper, which says that the war is "essentially a struggle between rival imperialisms." The word "imperialism" is so vague that it has no scientific value, but if the writer had said that the war is a struggle for living space, he would have said what is not merely true, but is rapidly being accepted as sound economic doctrine. In his latest book, Mr. J. M. Keynes speaks of "the economic causes of war, namely, the pressure of population and the competitive struggle for markets." Professor Fairchild of New York, one of the greatest living economists, has just published a book, in which he says: "Population pressure has always been, and still is, the great underlying and predisposing cause of international war."

Mr. Colin Clark has just published a book in which he says that New Zealand has the highest standard of life in the world, and the countries nearest it are Australia, Canada, Argentina, the United States, Switzerland, and Great Britain. Four of these countries are the most thinly populated in the world and the only one which is very populous is Britain. Our country, however, is the centre of an Empire containing enormous areas of thinly populated territory, from which it draws a large revenue of one kind or another. It is not surprising that when a German, an Italian, or a Jap looks at that list of seven prosperous countries, he is ready to cry out, like Mussolini, "Some countries have everything, and others have nothing."

Many people in this country are ostriches, who imagine that by refusing to look at such facts, they can get rid of them. It is time that those who claim to be leaders of thought should give such matters very serious consideration.

R. B. KERR

EMILE ZOLA

SIR,—I have read Mr. H. Cutner's article on Emile Zola with very great interest and I compliment him on it. He says, however, "Zola is probably little read nowadays." May I say that some three or four years ago, I made enquiries at booksellers in Switzerland and in France?—at Berne, Montreux, Paris, Dijon, Toulon and Nice and I was told that Zola's works were selling better than ever; Anatole France, I was told, had gone off in popularity, but Zola was apparently more liked than ever.

I was glad to hear this, as Zola, to me, is the greatest writer of all time. I myself have most of his works, and

I have read *La Débâcle* fourteen times; *Rome* seven or eight times, and several others three or four times. In my opinion, *La Débâcle* is the greatest work ever written.

HERVEY DE MONTMORENCY

CHARLES TUSON

SIR,—I would, in the passing of Charles Tuson remember his unflinching courtesy extending over a period of many years.

To win the respect of an opponent is surely something worth while. In penning this letter I would emphasize this fact.

F. H. E. HARFITT

Secretary, Christian Evidence Society

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, Professor J. C. Flugel, D.Sc.—"Dual Personality."

OUTDOOR

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

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 6.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

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. L. Ebury.

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

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

BIKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. R. V. Shortt.

BOLTON N.S.S. BRANCH (Town Hall Steps): 7.0, Sunday, June 15 to Sunday June 23. Mr. G. Whitehead will speak each evening.

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

BLITH (The Fountain): 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End): 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.30, Mr. Smithies—A Lecture.

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

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Bury Market): 7.30 Saturday—Stevenson Square: 3.0 and 7.0, Sunday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at these meetings.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

READ: 7.30, Tuesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

ROSSENDALE (Scaunthottom): 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

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