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Views and Opinions

Religion and the Public

I HAVE some respect for the person or the institution that says with regard to religion "Thou shalt not question." That is the first article in every genuine religious credo. It is logical and, what is more important, it is true to the essence of all real religion. The gods did not come into being as a consequence of an exercise of that process of reasoning which governs the formulation of a theory in science, or even of ordinary everyday life—a process in which one weighs the pros and cons, and then comes to a definite conclusion. Every investigation into the origin of the belief in gods proves that it crystallized out of the feeling of complete helplessness when man became dimly conscious of the struggle he is engaged in with the forces around him. I do not agree with Sir James Frazer that magic has an origin that is independent of religion. I prefer to think of both magic and religion as products of the same state of mind, although I do believe that the weakening of pure magic leads to the strengthening of religion, and how closely connected the two are may be seen in the persistence of the Christian Eucharist, which is in essence one of the most primitive of religious practices. It is sheer magic to believe that the muttering of certain formulae will transform an ordinary biscuit and a glass of ordinary wine into the blood and flesh of a crucified god, and even though it may be taken as a symbolic transformation, the evidence of its origin is none the less clear. But, then, New Testament Christianity is in many respects a return to the lower phases of religious belief.

At any rate one of the earliest effects of belief in gods is the prohibition of questioning. The gods never permit that, for questioning is the gateway to discussion, and discussion implies the possibility of being wrong. The favours of the gods have always been given to those who believe, not to those who ask questions.

Religion and the Press

But we live in an age of discussion, and religion is discussed—in a mixed way. There is the genuine discussion in which the pros and cons concerning religion are ventilated, and which is wholly to the good, and there is the faked discussion in which, under the pretence of dealing with all sorts of opinions only a selected class is heard. To this class belong the sermons delivered in Churches and Chapels, and, nowadays, over the wireless, in which the speaker commences with a pretence of presenting a situation, but leaves one whole side untouched. Another aspect is the symposiums which are staged in the press. Here the avowed purpose is to present to the reader all sorts of opinions. What is given are varieties of the same opinion, and that is a very different thing. It is the religious form of the confidence trick, and if practised in ordinary business transactions would get one into serious trouble.

One peculiar feature of these newspaper discussions on religion is that very, very rarely do those who control the discussions succeed in discovering in the whole country a single outspoken, forthright opponent to religion. Some differences must be permitted or the trick would just degenerate into a very ordinary, easily detectable lie. Out of the fifty millions of inhabitants of Great Britain the newspapers are unable to discover a single person, man or woman, who will say that he or she does not believe in any god, save as members of that great body of gods and devils, fairies and spirits, of which history is full, and which modern scientific thought has so effectively disposed of. In fact, if a visitor from another world were to visit Britain and judge British opinion on religion by the newspapers, he would take it as quite clear that the one thing we all agreed on is belief in a god of some sort. Of course, this visitor might reflect that a god of "some sort" is equal to a god of no sort, as each god simply cancels out all the others, but if he wrote a letter to the newspapers pointing out that as each god cancels out the other gods, we are left with out any god at all, his letter would be "crowded out."

* * *

Editorial Bunk

All I have said hitherto has resulted from finding among my press cuttings a page of *Tit-Bits* (I think I remember buying the first copy of that paper) containing one of a series of articles "What has Religion to say Now?" It is stated that the people who have been invited to write are all "people of knowledge and experience of life in various phases." This may be true, but nine articles have been issued—up to June 8—and the tenth is advertised, and there is not one pronounced Atheist in the whole bunch. They are people who can be counted on to be undecided, or to be doubtful, and all would either be religious in set terms, or be full of dubious religious yearnings and

invite sympathy for their state of mind. And yet part of the editorial introduction to the series should have been enough to stiffen a jelly-fish. Here it is:—

There can be few who do not feel the need for spiritual comfort. The less religious we are the more difficult it is to find strength and comfort for the spirit, healing peace for the harassed mind.

That is a perfect mixture of knavery, foolishness and cant, and should have aroused revolt in the minds of some of the contributors. Does the man without religion really show less composure in times of stress and strain than is shown by the man with it? Can one detect by appearance, bearing, or conduct at such moments whether a man believes in God or brushes the idea on one side? Who is it who falls upon his knees, or rushes to Church to implore God for help, confesses his own unworthiness, informs God that he is "sore afraid," that he (the man on his knees) is without strength or resolve, that without God's help, he (again the man on his knees) is a sinner, and richly deserves the danger that threatens him, but if God will overlook his unworthiness and help him, he will do better in future. It is not the Atheist who behaves in this way. Is there anything more essentially contemptible than to find a cathedral packed with men and women "humiliating" themselves before God in the hope of being helped and comforted, while loudly professing they deserve neither help nor comfort? Is that attitude of any higher quality than that of the man who at the approach of trouble finds consolation in a bottle of whiskey?

Of course we all know that many manly men and womanly women join in this debauch of self-depreciation, and then give what they have prayed the lie by behaving just as though they were intelligent unbelievers. And it is fairly certain that if one were to yank one of these men to his knees, just after he had prayed, "O Lord I am full of sin, I have done all that is ill, I have done that which I ought not to have done, I am weak, and helpless and wicked," and say to him, "I agree with all you say. You look as if it is quite true," there would be a case of assault and battery. It is risky work telling a robust Christian that you really believe he is the miserably weak object he has been assuring the Lord he is. But the fooling of gods as well as the fear of gods is a very ancient religious game.

* * *

"Coldly Rational"

The contributor to the *Tit-Bits* series of June 8 is Mr. John Powys, described as "Lecturer and author." He falls into line with the stock heretical contributor so far as the kind of article one is expected to write is concerned. He holds the view "coldly and rationally"

that it is extremely probable that there is such a thing as a great Soul of Nature, or Over-Soul, who uses as its antennae, or as its infinitely various mediums of experience, all living creatures, and perhaps inanimate things, too.

Mr. Powys is quite safe in putting forward this kind of thing "coldly and rationally," or warmly and fantastically, for no one will be able to make sure what he means. The only "soul" we know anything about is that "double" which primitive man thought inhabited the body, could get out and return, finally to get out permanently and to continue in the savage never-never land. Spencer was probably correct in assuming the soul had its origin in the savage puzzlement over the phenomena of dreaming, etc. But I fancy Mr. Powys would repudiate this as being altogether too understandable. And the editor of *Tit-Bits* would not like it either. Reduce these fantastic

"yearnings" to "cold" common sense and they lose all their religious value.

Mr. Powys does not "dogmatically reject" the idea of a future life, but the future life has no influence on his "simple moral code," which would also remain intact (this is good news for Scotland Yard) were some Atheist to convince him that God did not exist. But this, he says "will never happen." That is also good news for the editor of *Tit-Bits*, but of slight value to anyone else. But Mr. Powys is quite gunproof against complete conviction against the existence of God. The Bible has a passage somewhere in reference to God. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Mr. Powys goes a little further than Job, and says, "though some Atheist might prove God is an illusion, yet will I believe he is a reality." That is real Christian faith. "I believe because it is impossible." Across the ages Mr. Powys shakes hands with Tertullian.

Mr. Powys is good enough to provide the readers of *Tit-Bits* with a final confession of faith. He says:—

If I must confess the whole truth and nothing but the truth, I am constantly tempted when I am driven by my distrust in the dogmas of science to imagine Him (God) as a Being partly good and partly evil; more good than evil, I admit, else the world couldn't go on, but certainly not entirely good.

Cheers! God is dismissed, not without a stain on his character, but with the consoling remark that he might have been worse. He is not wholly good, and he has his faults. Probably these faults are spasms of temper, or the loss of a balanced judgment. Probably if Mr. Powys continues his consideration of the universe, "coldly and rationally," he may discover a kind of Borstal institution for gods where they can be trained to be less liable to temper and more skilful in their work.

This is the kind of article in which these symposiums delight. It is the kind of article which they aim at getting, and in many instances it is written in the full knowledge that it is the kind of article that is required. They present, as opposed to the definite statements of the really religious, a person who when he or she leaves the beaten religious track experiences nothing but uncertainty, uneasiness, and such a dramatization of their feelings that the real religionist will say, "Look at A.B. the eminent author. The poor unhappy devil cannot make up his mind; he is tossed about in a sea of uncertainty. He cannot decide whether there is a God or a future life. His life is one long irresolution." I do not imagine for a moment that Mr. Powys is in this irresolute state of a mind, probably he is just unconsciously dramatizing a situation for the benefit of his readers.

So, in essence, the whole bag of primitive religious tricks and misunderstandings is shouldered; the clergy rejoice and the papers do what they can to hide from the general public the fact that to-day there is no mystery concerning the nature and origin of the belief in gods and a future life. The whole process is well known, and the prostitution of the social sense in the interests of sheer superstition is a thing of which all publicists should be heartily ashamed. Mr. Powys is evidently under the impression that his pose represents a man who has "pondered" (One must use that word because it looks so much more impressive than "thought") seriously and scientifically on the subject with which he deals. I have no desire to be offensive, but mere truth urges me to say that where religion is concerned Mr. Powys merely demonstrates that he is suffering from an attack of what Emerson somewhere calls, measles of the intellect.

The Symbolism of Science

Verse is the form most apt to preserve whatever the writer confides to it; and we can confide to it, besides all sentiments, almost all ideas.—*Sully Prudhomme*.

SULLY PRUDHOMME'S name does not mean much to the present generation, but his significance in European literature lies in the fact that he caught a glimpse of the new poetry which science has revealed, and which is grander than that which it will one day destroy. People commonly assert that this is a scientific age, and that good poetry is impossible in such an atmosphere. The poets themselves, great and small, help this delusion by taking their subjects from the past. Instead of drawing inspiration from the world around them they find subjects in the classics and remote periods of history.

Yet Sully Prudhomme who broke away from this literary tradition was awarded the Nobel prize for the greatest work in pure literature. To those who admired the sham antique school of poetry it was a shock that the prize for the ideal in literature was awarded to a man who, more than any other poet, embodied in his verse the new material gathered by science, and best expressed the rationalist spirit which characterizes the age.

Prudhomme foreshadowed the "Bobby Burns to sing the song of steam," whom Rudyard Kipling called for. He was not a poet of the people like Beranger, or a writer of music-hall songs. But he differed widely from other literary men in that he caught a glimpse of the new poetry which science reveals. He did not hold to the theory that a centuries' old vocabulary was better to express modern thought and feeling than the living language he used himself. A poet who sang of balloons and barometers, of submarine cables and photography, of evolution and specific gravity determinations, was indeed a novelty.

According to the popular standard, the sword is more poetical than the gun. Cavalry may be mentioned, but to introduce torpedo-boats and submarines into poetry is to break with tradition. A smattering of astronomy is taken for granted, but that a poet should sing of biology, chemistry, or physiology, is unpardonable. In English the difference between the literary and popular vocabularies is greater than in French, and there is real need of poets bold enough to bridge the gulf which separates literature from life.

This is not by any means an entirely new note in literature. Twenty centuries ago the Roman poet, Lucretius, made his readers thrill with his magnificent presentation of the atomic theory and other scientific ideas. His very method is but part of the modern method; it is the modern method in its infancy. We may gain some notion of the general effect of his masterpiece *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of Things) if we conceive Tennyson to have devoted his rare genius to versifying Herbert Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy*, or Swinburne to have subordinated his splendid gifts of language to the poetic presentation of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. But Lucretius' presentation of the hidden truths of nature hardly found any further poetic expression until the advent of the nineteenth century.

Yet it was well worth doing. Science would have imposed upon poetry clarity and sincerity. Too many poets permit themselves a freedom of phrase, seek to be musical rather than truthful, and do not care what they say so long as they say it beautifully and artistically. Prudhomme proved that scientific exactness did not destroy charm. Our own Tennyson, in English, showed the same thing. Passages from *In Memoriam*, and *The Two Voices*, express scientific ideas accurately, and prove that it is not necessary to be false in order to be poetical.

It was once thought that the advance of science would make poetry impossible. We now know that this is not the case. There is as much poetry to be seen through the microscope and the telescope as with the naked eye. Prudhomme had a truer insight into the significance of the efforts of science on poetry than John Keats, consummate artist that he was. Walt Whitman did not find it necessary to use the old costumes in the literary property-room. What beauty and force the metaphors of science may give to literature has been shown abundantly by Ruskin and Tennyson in English prose and poetry. Maurice Maeterlinck's *Life of the Bee*, and many another work, are examples of what can be achieved by those who can handle the new symbolism. Rudyard Kipling did his clever best to use the material of science, and succeeded very well. But it takes a big man to make words his servants. The average poet masks his incapacity and his littleness by using words and thoughts which he knows are poetical because poets have used them for centuries before he was born.

The domain of poetry must be extended, or it will cease to interest thoughtful readers. That very charming American writer, Oliver Wendell Holmes, realized this, and tried to break fresh ground with *The Chambered Nautilus*, and *The Living Temple*. These two poems are of very unequal merit, although it would be hard to say why the anatomy of a mollusc should be more susceptible of poetic employ than that of a man.

It will be seen that the new symbolism of science disconcerts the little poets. It takes a great artist to overcome the struggle with intractable material, and the stress of his mind is too often reflected in his verse. Yet the task must be done. The poet of the future must hold his ear close to the movements of the modern world, and attempt to bring away with him some sounding echoes of its music. Fulsome adulation of the past will not serve much longer. We should prefer that a real and unmistakable poet was silent than that he should chortle in such a chorus. For, in the last analysis, high thinking means noble writing. All else is as ephemeral as ocean foam.

MIMNERMUS

The Rev. Chandler—God—and Earthquakes

THE Rev. C. W. Chandler, who possesses two pulpits, one his parish church, the other in a popular weekly newspaper supplement, and who is *Star* reporter to Heaven, the Devil and the Palestine Mythology, in his Easter Sermonette, discourses on the advantage of earthquakes to mankind, by the resurrection of courage that comes therefrom to rebuild anew from the ruins.

He quotes the example of Napier, N.Z., from the inscription on its "Sound Shell":—

Although his buildings crumble to a mould of worthless ruins, Man has always found the urge to build a stronger city there.

The Rev. Chandler continues: "The greatest Atheist, the most deeply dyed unbeliever, if he is possessed of reason, cannot fail to find in the heart of the Easter Message that kernel of truth which is the very mainstay of progress."

The moral of it all is—the more earthquakes, the more progress Mankind will make.

What a strange apology to offer for the Acts of Providence! Yes! but what a cruel, tragic moral it is! The Napier earthquake was a minor shake compared

with the recent gigantic upheaval in Asia Minor, when over 200,000 of our fellow creatures were killed, injured or rendered homeless, including more than 30,000 little children, dead, maimed or rendered fatherless.

Why did not the Rev. Chandler's Christian God prevent this? Were these little children punished for their own sins or the sins of their generation? From these holocausts the Rev. Chandler is enabled to point out a moral as to the advantage of earthquakes by "creating a resurrection of man's courage in rebuilding anew" and, as in the allegory of Easter, "see something beautiful emerge from a Calvary of sacrifice and pain"—"so that our poor frustrated hopes will break forth into victory."

What brave words! I wonder if he would have written them, had he been in San Francisco's earthquake, as I was?

What faith the Rev. Chandler possesses, to excuse and apologize for these tragic disasters!

We unbelievers ask of the Rev. Chandler and other religious apologists, this simple question: *Is their Christian God responsible for His earthquakes?*

Let us get to Bible root for the Christian explanation of creation and causes. Here it is! They believe God is the Creator of all things; He can make or prevent earthquakes. God is omnipotent! God is omniscient! God is omnipresent! All things are known to Him—Past, Present and Future. God knows the strains and stresses of His Earth, which He created. God knows the instant when an earthquake will occur. God even knows beforehand the number of men, women and children who will be killed, maimed and tortured by the "Act of Providence!"

We unbelievers ask again: Why does the Christian God make the earthquakes—and cause all these tragic human miseries when He can prevent them, as all faithful Christians believe?

As an unbeliever, I, too, will suggest an allegory, and point a moral concerning earthquakes!

A Man builds a house for his wife and his little children to live in.

The man knows the strength, the strains and stresses of the house he has built.

The Man knows beforehand that owing to weaknesses of construction the house will collapse.

The Man, outside and safe, sees the house crash down.

The Man stands idly by and watches the tragedy, some of his children are crushed to death—others are maimed and must spend the rest of their lives on crutches, to be haunted by weaknesses.

What would all decent men and women think of a man? Would they not intern him in the nearest mental hospital, to restrain him from further crimes?

Why does the Christian God stand idly by, and allow *His* children to be killed and maimed when He possesses the power to prevent it?—for is He not omnipotent? Surely! "the most deeply-dyed" Christian, "if he is possessed of reason" cannot fail to find an answer to this simple question.

I asked a Christian friend for a reply to this momentous query! He said sadly: "*It is all an inscrutable mystery!*"

Religion-mongers dearly love a mystery; to them it offers an endless opportunity for invocation and prayer; and also a venue for their Gods, Ghosts and Devils, for these all thrive on Mysteries.

To Freethinkers! a mystery is represented by the letter "X," an unknown quantity, and forthwith! it becomes a matter for scientific enquiry.

Science has cleaned up many mysteries that even baffled the inspired vicars of the Christian God—who Himself did not even trouble to correct His agents

in their "Bible Truths," that the world was flat, or that devils caused disease.

We Agnostics have some charity for "whatever gods may be." Our reason teaches us to credit that if there could be any God who "marks the sparrow's fall," and "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," surely! such a Power would not create the Human Race and then torture it with earthquakes of His own making, which He could prevent. Such a God would be more justly labelled "Devil"!

The silence of the Christian God in the face of all the "accidents of Providence" that afflict Mankind—in the face of all the tangled troubles human flesh is heir to, of War, Pestilence, Famine, and Disease—His silence is deafening.

The Truth—Nature pursues her path, unmoved by the emotions of Man, all the hysterical prayers and invocations of Popes, Priests, and their sheepish flocks cannot alter Nature's ways one iota.

If all the untold thousands of Priest, Parsons and Medicine-Men of the thousand and one different religions of the world, even including the Rev. Chandler, could forget their jealousies and discordancies, to pray in chorus, they could not make one simple blade of grass grow.

It is better so! A Universe that responded to a babel of prayers from the thousand and one diverse theologians who have not yet found fraternity amongst themselves, would be confusion confounded.

No! Despite the theological threats of Hell, or the cajolements of a hypothetical Heaven, Humanity will by Reason, Experience, and Science, gradually build a better world.

And that inverted Bowl we call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to it for help!—for it
Rolls impotently on as Thou and I.

HENRY J. HAYWARD

New Zealand

Emile Zola

II.

ZOLA took as his starting point for the *Rougon-Macquart* series a woman, Adelaide Fouque, who married a man called Rougon, and who lived with another called Macquart, and had children by both. She was the transmitter of the original "neurosis," her children and their children reacting according to their own constitutions and the environment in which they were placed. It could be argued, of course, that Adelaide herself was the inheritor also of certain tendencies, as well as her husband and her lover, and that therefore there was no "original" neurosis; but Zola had to begin somewhere, and in the twenty volumes which he composes his great epic—for that is really what it is—he develops his theories with astonishing originality and often even with grandeur.

No matter how much Zola strays into all sorts of extraordinary by-paths, he never relinquishes his main ideas; his heroes and heroines therefore act very often quite unlike what we might expect from them. It would have been far more in the tradition of great romance if Claude Lantier in *L'Œuvre*, though he is shown as a great and original painter with creative ideas in advance of his day, had never committed suicide. We never cease to have pity and hope for Gervaise in *L'Assommoir*; but compelled thereto by her heredity and environment she dies a drunken and dirty slut. How much superior in many ways is Nana to the "respectable" married women with whom she comes into contact, but her death was in-

evitable. There could be no "living happily ever after" in her case. And so one could go through almost every character conjured up by the remarkable and fertile genius of Zola, characters which, like those of Dickens, have passed into current coin.

One can never, also, forget many of the incidents in his novels—surely some of the most powerful in the whole range of fiction. *La Terre* provides many of these, written with a realism which so shocked this country, that the unfortunate translator of that work into English was given eighteen months in prison. The ethics of this case were discussed for over a generation—the question being, of course, how far need a novelist go in describing contemporary life. Zola saw no reason why he should not deal with peasant life exactly as he dealt with that of the miners, or with that of a laundry woman in the heart of Paris. But there were aspects of this life which, it was contended, need not have been exposed; no good purpose in any way could come from such an exposure. If the average French peasant wanted to live like a pig, if he really was as dirty as the manure he had to use, if it could be proved that he was greedy, cruel, sensual, and ignorant, why expose him to the derision of the world? Rather would it be better to idealize him in the way George Sand did in the charming but utterly false picture of country life shown in such novels as *La Petite Fadette* and others.

But Zola never swerved from his purpose. He was giving to the world a slice of real life, and, if he were permitted to do so in such a work as *Le Rêve*, one of the most beautiful recitals ever written of the love and hope of a young girl, he could see no reason to suppress the brutal truth when, as in *Germinal* and *La Débâcle*, it was most horrifying.

And here one can see why, when he resolved to expose the infamy of the Roman Church and the French Army in the Dreyfus case, he once again never swerved from the truth as he saw it. The Zola who felt it necessary to show the French peasant as he really was, also felt it necessary to show Church and Army as they really were. Not all peasants acted as did those of *La Terre*; not all soldiers and priests acted as did the principals in the Dreyfus case; but how well Zola brought out the inordinate bestiality of both. There was very little to choose between the savage brutality of the peasant in *La Terre*, and that of the highly placed French military officers in the Dreyfus case. There can be found some excuse for Buteau, perhaps, but what excuse is there for General Mercier?

In *Le Docteur Pascal* will be found Zola's summing-up of his ideas not only on their scientific value, but also on what he thought of religion in general. Dr. Pascal, who escaped all inherited taint, and who as a doctor devoted his life to science and the cure of the ills of mankind, discusses all the Rougon-Macquart characters with his niece. In addition some inimitable pictures of religious bigotry, ignorance, and superstition, are sketched, showing how these resulted in the almost complete destruction of Pascal's laborious studies on heredity and environment. Zola's attitude towards religion cannot be understood without a careful reading of *Le Docteur Pascal*.

There is an excellent critique of Zola and the realistic novel in Professor Lanson's *Histoire de la Littérature Française*. Lanson deals with him in a sort of supercilious way, with not a little scorn for his deterministic theories—he claims that this "natural history of a family under the Second Empire teaches us nothing whatever of the law of heredity, that it neither proves it nor explains it." The idea of starting with one person who would unite all the heroes of the twenty books, is to Lanson only literary artifice and quite useless at that. And Lanson points out—

truly enough—that while it is Gervaise who is one of the Rougon-Macquart characters, and that therefore it is she who really ought to have been the drunkard because of her "neurosis," it was actually her husband Coupeau who first took to drink and Gervaise might never have gone the same way but for her husband.

Lanson does, however, recognize the immense epic quality of Zola's work, its romanticism and poetic power. His romances are poems, heavy and unpolished if you will, but still poems. His descriptive powers are intense, striking, even overwhelming and fantastic, not just reality simply transcribed. In fact, in the hands of Zola a romance tends to become an enormous allegory "where in a more or less confused way will be found some conceptions of a scientific or social philosophy of little value and no originality." I am by no means sure that this judgment of a famous literary critic is not inspired a little by Zola's Freethought. For in the close analysis Lanson gives to the great writer he nowhere mentions his antagonism to the reigning religion.

What Zola thought of Lourdes can be seen in his famous novel—if it is a novel—of that name. It is one of the most crushing exposures of that fraudulent shrine ever made, and it stands high as an exceedingly powerful piece of description. That forty-six years after it was written there are millions of people who believe in its divine mission of healing the sick is proof of the way in which charlatanism and humbug, when allied to religion, can still influence the lives and thoughts of men and women against all reason. It is a question, however, to be solved more through pity than reproof.

Like so many of our great literary masters Zola is perhaps suffering a temporary eclipse. One finds few people nowadays who have read *The Newcomes* or *Middlemarch* or *Peveril of the Peak*. An exciting detective story, providing it is not too long, is more to the taste of a large number of modern readers; there may be a few who will spend their time in reading the masterpieces of the past, but their number seems to decrease.

Yet Zola is still worth reading as a story-teller pure and simple. I can fancy nothing more superbly told than certain pages of *Pot-Bouille*, that terrific satire of a Parisian mansion with its flats on every floor, and the kind of people who may be supposed to live in them. It is a realistic portrayal of the bourgeoisie, stark and true, and it excited the admiration of George Moore who, in his *Esther Waters* and other books, was a fellow worker of no inconsiderable merit. He had little use for the making of books according to the standard of schoolgirls; at all events he was bold enough to declare that the "great literary battle of our day is not to be fought for either realism or romanticism, but for freedom of speech; and until that battle be gained I, for one, will continue to hold out a hand of welcome to all comers who dare to attack the sovereignty of the circulating library." Moore compared *Pot-Bouille* with Juvenal, Pope, Voltaire and Swift—and that is high praise.

And the passing of time will, it is hoped, not only confirm this judgment, but will place Emile Zola with the supreme masters of fiction.

H. CUTNER

Had I a careful and pleasant companion that should show me my angry face in a glass, I should not at all take it ill; to behold a man's self so unnaturally disguised and disordered, will conduce not a little to the impeachment of anger.—*Plutarch*.

Lord Roberts in Stained Glass

"I DON'T see him," said the middle-aged man who was one of our company.

About twenty of us were being shown over the new cathedral by an informative canon who was attached to the place.

"Run your eye up the right pillar of the reredos," said this gentleman, patiently. "And just visible over the top of it you will see Lord Roberts."

And, naturally enough, most interested, we were all looking upwards into the great window. I soon saw Lord Roberts myself, most incongruously keeping company with J. S. Bach! I smiled. The man who had asked the question, however, remained unsatisfied. Even after the canon had repeated the instructions he was still searching the window, vaguely. Perhaps he did not understand what a reredos was.

Suddenly a young man who was standing near to me said: "Why is Lord Roberts in the window?"

The canon explained that it was a *Tc deum* window and that Lord Roberts occupied a place in the section reserved for the holy church throughout all the world.

"But I thought Lord Roberts was a soldier," the young man said. "I thought that he was to some extent responsible for thousands of men dying."

"He was a soldier of Christ," was the brief reply.

The young man was disposed to argue; but the canon turned from him.

Another man spoke then. Slowly, scratching his head, he said: "I went all through the last war; and I must say I didn't see there was anything Christian about it."

Some of the others who were there murmured agreement with this.

The canon looked angry and embarrassed. . . .

That was some years ago.

In the same cathedral, more recently, I attended morning prayer. A rare sunshine was glowing in the coloured windows. . . .

The clergy, it seemed to me, were misusing the service. An emotional atmosphere of a most dubiously Christian sort was being created. The fact of war was troubling greatly the people of the congregation, touching closely not a few of those who were there. As they knelt, the choir sang of "the love which asks no questions, the love that pays the price, that lays upon the altar the final sacrifice." Emphasis was laid upon sacrifice. Our supposed aims in this war were spoken of. And prayers followed to prolong this theme.

A man, sitting at the front, almost opposite to the lectern at which the officiating cleric was reading the prayers, rose, and spoke with a quiet, steady voice through the silence which followed one of the prayers. "With all my heart, I must protest against what you are doing. . . ." he said. "With your permission, Sir, I will withdraw." And taking up his hat and coat he walked swiftly towards the door. At least one other person followed him.

If any conclusion at all is to be drawn from these two incidents it is surely that the present leadership of the church is having to face a challenge coming from its own people.

The interrupter of the morning service was, I should say, protesting against love of one's country—interpreted in the circumstances as the material interests of the State—being used by the church as an incentive to sacrificing one's life. Sacrificing one's life, too, was rather less than half of the truth as the man who "went all through the last war" realised.

In supporting war, the leaders of the church are simply betraying the faith of thousands of good people. In the lives of these people—many of whom do not enter churches—the beneficent influences of the teachings of the man Jesus are still seen: in their tolerance, in their mutual helpfulness, in their desire never, wilfully, to harm their neighbours. In supporting the war, the leaders of the church are asking these people, these Christians, to put aside tolerance and kill or to provide the means of killing the people of another land.

In whose name do they ask this?

The protest implicit in the confusion of those sightseers

and made vocal by the man at the morning service must be heard. The bishops and clergy must listen.

The cock is crowing.

But the clergy are deaf, shall we say? Quite deaf.

J. CLIFFORD KING

Tried: Found Guilty, But—

"You have tried others—now try us." A very common trade slogan, all will admit. But this particular quotation is from the advertisement of a certain Austin F. Hatcher in a journal called *The Leading Spiritualist Weekly* as a secondary title. Austin is just appealing for customers to "try" his skill as a "medium." The "us" includes Miss E. Little, "Secretary" (to Austin, presumably).

Well, let us "try" the enterprising pair on a report of their "performance" published in the same paper. This describes a "seance" they held in Cardiff, attended by "14 sitters,"—a happy term for the audience of a "Hatcher." The report proceeds: "The room was in darkness except for a dim red strip light over the cabinet." (One may here reflect on the totalitarian "darkness" over our political "cabinet," but must not assume that the "strip light" had anything to do with a "strip tease" turn in Spiritualism):—

Within the space of one minute of sitting, a Sister of Mercy materialized, and gave the opening prayer. She was immediately followed by Mr. Hatcher's chief guide, "Colombo," who spoke. . . .

Two other guides of the medium materialized following the departure of "Colombo," both being little black girls. First to come was "Topsy," who, after greeting everyone and skipping in the centre of the circle (skipping rope provided for her by Mr. Hatcher) (our italics), sang "Bring Back My Bonnie."

"Topsy" was superseded by "Pansy," who took some flowers from the lap of one of the sitters and dematerialized them (after the meeting was closed the room was searched and no trace of them could be found). . . .

Came other "forms," one of which "materialized, but did not show itself." (An artful spook that!)

It amused itself by stroking the faces of some of the sitters and lightly pulling their hair, thus proving the spirit form's solidarity (!) Simultaneously, the trumpet was floating gently round the room (the trumpet is made visible by luminous bands).

A guide . . . distributed two sea shells (such as were used as a form of money by certain natives many years ago) to the sitters.

An aunt of another sitter . . . presented the sitter with a silver brooch with her name embossed on it (this was identified by the recipient as one his aunt used to wear before her passing).

A daughter of another sitter next appeared and presented her father with a green cut-glass pendant.

What sober comment is possible on such amateur stage magic posing as a cultural doctrine by blazoning the names of Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge and other people who have achieved eminence in different spheres of life quite non-spiritual?

"The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone" for far more tangible reasons than the "civilized" credulous can give for accepting trumpets, gee-gaws, incense, and a varied assortment of red, black, and yellow ghosts as instruments to attune them with the gods.

Is war the worst calamity the world has to face, after all?

A. G. DUNN

I have observed that in comedies the best actor plays the droll, while some scrubb rogue is made the fine gentleman or hero. Thus it is the farce of Life—wise men spend their time in Mirth, 'tis only fools who are serious.—*Bolingbroke*.

Acid Drops

Evidently the Archbishop of Canterbury has a grudge against France. Knowing what happened after the last day of National Prayer, the retreat from Dunkirk, the betrayal of Belgium by the King, the withdrawal of the British from Norway, the entrance of Italy into the war, and the retreat of France before the Germans, the Archbishop asks for a day of prayer for France. France needs, and deserves all the help that civilized people can give her, and it is monstrous that Dr. Lang should try to put fresh difficulties in her, and our, path. At least this very much overpaid clergyman should have the decency, if not the common sense, to remain silent. God has allowed the Allies to suffer pretty heavily up to the present, and even he may well get annoyed at having his carelessness or lack of interest in human welfare so loudly called to the public notice.

Consider! Sunday, June 16. A Day of Prayer. Monday, June 17, France asks Germany for terms. It is high time the Government prohibited these Days of Prayer. Or, alternatively, cannot the Archbishop be persuaded to order a Day of National Prayer for Germany and Italy?

It has been reported in some of the papers that in the fighting in France, bands of young German soldiers have advanced to the attack, closely packed, shoulder to shoulder, with the light of a "fierce religious fanaticism" in their eyes, careless of how many of their number fall before the French fire. We count that as quite a good description. Nazism, if we omit the large number who are just criminals (we should say that many of the leaders come under this head), is a religious movement with the younger generation. Hitler himself is a profoundly religious man, stopping at nothing, shrinking from nothing that will further the end he has in view. The man who does not reckon on this religious furor will never understand what is taking place in the war-area. Nazism in its development is as great a religious movement as the world has seen. And fanatical religious movements, as history shows over and over again, are religious movements in a most virulent form.

On the other hand the religious motive does not play so large a part in the Italian move. There is little there but sheer criminality and a complete disregard for the rights of others. Mussolini could have been bought at any time had the Allies thought it worth while to buy him. He and his immediate followers are gangsters through and through.

But let it never be forgotten that the character of the leaders of both the Italian and the German movement has been well-known for many years. They have played the game too openly to be misunderstood. And one day the historian will have to judge those English leaders who hobnobbed with the Fascist leaders—Italian and German—made them social pets, paid them compliments, and so prevented the British public recognizing them for what they were until it was almost too late. No body of political criminals ever laid their cards so openly on the table as Mussolini, Hitler, and their immediate followers. Why did not the whole of the British nation earlier recognize their true character?

It is noteworthy that Italy entered the war on the anniversary of the assassination of Matteotti by the order of Mussolini. Here again we may note the close and familiar associations existing between the Mussolini gang and leaders of English "Society," and the flattering opinions of him expressed by responsible diplomats. Yet his character and deeds were perfectly well-known, and his behaviour towards Spain was notorious. Let us hope that in the new world which *should* be built after the war that it is seen we have responsible Ministers and leading politicians who have more self-respect and a greater (and more intelligent sense) of duty to the country than they appear to have had for some years.

One should always use the word "comparatively" when saying that we have a free press. A Government control—not a legal control—always appears to be in operation. For example. Ever since Mussolini was helped to "conquer" Abyssinia, it has been known to many that the conquest of Abyssinia was very incomplete. But our "National" press remained practically dumb. Now it is beginning to be pointed out in the press that the whole of the North-West of Abyssinia, in addition to other parts, is controlled by the Abyssinians, that we have officially ceased to flatter Mussolini, and there is a cessation of the type of paragraph that he has done a great deal for Italy, because he has built new roads and restored some ancient buildings. Might we not carry out the unfulfilled treaty we made with the Emperor of Abyssinia, and assist him in getting modern arms? That done, the Abyssinians will take care of that portion of the Italian Empire.

These paragraphs should have appeared earlier, but they are too good not to be recorded. Both appeared in the same issue of the *Star* (June 3), which can always find room for something that is intensely superstitious—so long as the superstition is Christian:—

A working man, unexpectedly met going to church on Sunday morning: "I'm not a religious man, but this great deliverance of our chaps, coming after last Sunday, makes you think."

This is the second item, and which is more of an advertisement, and may be taken as the serious opinion of the Government as to what is really needed:—

STICK THIS OVER YOUR BENCH

PRAYED FOR PLANES

All the time we prayed for Allied planes, but none came.

—A French officer, describing the ordeal on the beach at Dunkirk.

This message stresses once again the importance of the appeal by Mr. Herbert Morrison, Minister of Supply, asking workers to

GO TO IT

The "working-man," who probably owes his existence to the writer of the *Star Man's Diary*, believing that it would please the more stupid of his religious readers, will—if real—be in danger of brain fever if he tries to think this out.

The Free Presbyterian Church (Scotland) is seriously annoyed by the desecration of Sunday by Government departments, and, (ye gods!) by the B.B.C. That is, after all the humbugging religious lectures they have staged and the epidemic of religious addresses that have been inaugurated! But the Free Presbyterian Church is not satisfied. Their idea of a *free* people is when every one is compelled to be miserable, or at least to look miserable from Saturday night to Monday morning. Their favourite theme is "Let's all be unhappy on Sunday."

An amusing state of affairs exists in a Cambridge Parish Church. Owing to the war—and perhaps owing to so many Priests preferring to dress up as Officers and to receive the emoluments of Army Chaplaincies—the Council of the Senate of the University of Cambridge have admitted others besides Clerks-in-Holy-Orders to preach what is called the University Sermon, at St. Mary's Church. The Bishop of Ely (there is no Bishop of Cambridge) has protested against this utter wickedness. The Vicar of St. Mary's almost fainted to see a mere curate—or lesser dignitary—actually preaching! He too has protested. In vain. Cambridge University has its own laws and customs. But this is a pretty time to choose for idiotic quarrels of this character, and we suggest a way out, namely Close Down ALL churches till the war is over. We wonder how many unendowed churches would ever open at all if once closed.

A considerable number of "Conchies" are, or profess to be theological "students" who have recently

acquired an ambition to become ministers-of-the-gospel. This new hypocrisy is distinctly due to the total exemption of the clergy from active service—but not from getting snug billets outside the danger-line at salaries far beyond that of soldiers who offer their lives in defence of civilization. We no more condemn genuine C.O.'s than we condemn conscientious people in any other sphere, and in any case a man who "hath no stomach to this fight had best" be allowed to "depart"—an army is better without than with them.

We have biblical authority for asking God to "Make speed to save us." This sounds very abrupt and lack the usual amount of "grovel" present in prayers. It has a kind of "Hurry-up-there" kind of sound that even a sergeant-major might resent. But Professor Maurice Relton is even more peremptory, for he says the Allied case against Germany is so conclusively right that "however unworthy we be, our prayers *must* be answered." God may resent this, carefully-worded suggestions to be done by one who is credited with knowing everything may pass, as when an order is given to the King—who is, by his coronation service, some kind of a God—with an "if your Majesty please," to sign this or that. But to be told what he *must* do, is enough to rile even the Christian deity.

Apparently Professor Relton thinks God might send, or manipulate, a tremendous dose of something like poison gas against the Germans; for he thinks "wave after wave" of "spiritual force" would overcome the Germans. It is very good and patriotic, and also intelligent.

With the declaration of war Mussolini succeeded in capturing one notable prisoner—the Pope. Vatican City, with its own laws, post office, diplomats, railway system and army is an independent State. But that State is restricted to a very small portion of Rome, and an insignificant part of Italy. But Mussolini permits the Pope to rule that City. The war has converted the City into a prison for the Pope. Meanwhile the Pope is permitted to persuade himself that he is free, and even to take walks outside his prison should he feel so inclined. Whether he would be permitted to leave Italy altogether may be doubted.

But the Pope must be careful. There is, for instance, a paper published by the Vatican. It is an official paper, and through it the papacy keeps in touch with the world. There seems no reason why he should not. For the Pope is Pope by the will of God. By the will of God he is where he is; he is God's mouthpiece for all that concerns morals and religion. He is the spiritual Hitler for many millions of people, and nothing must be done by any of his followers to challenge his authority or weaken his power. Theoretically he is the most powerful ruler in existence. He is "sacred" in a sense that no other ruler is sacred. Not even our own King, after he had been greased and prayed over by the Archbishop of Canterbury is so "sacred" as the Pope. For the Pope is where he is by the grace of God. King George is King George because he was appointed to be King through some people appointing him nearly two hundred years ago, and is the incarnation of the tribal deity by the magic of the Archbishop.

But there are limits? The paper issued from Vatican City has been banned by Mussolini because it contained comments on the war. God's representative caved in at once, and has promised that the paper should carry no more war news. In substance the Pope has agreed that, so far as the war is concerned, he will continue to express the will of God—subject to the approval of Mussolini. Some of his friends of the Roman Catholic Church defend the Pope's action by saying that no other course was possible. We do not agree. The Pope is the spiritual guide and controller of half the world of Christians. It is true that a Pope gave Mussolini a blessing when he invaded Abyssinia, and was silent when Mussolini's son—

the brutal son of a brutal parent—wrote home gloatingly of the "fun" it was dropping bombs on unarmed natives and on women and children. A Pope also blessed Mussolini when he sent an army to Spain to overthrow the Spanish Government. Could he not have atoned a little for his past sanction of robbery and murder by standing up against Mussolini, even at the risk of his life? A *man* would have done this. And, if he had done this, and ill had come to the Pope as a consequence, anger and the cry for justice would have been heard throughout the whole of the Roman Catholic world. But the Pope, the representative on earth of God Almighty has so far surrendered. Perhaps he will pray lustily. In that case he will have as an accompanying dirge, the slaughter of women and children by Mussolini and his ally. Some Popes we can think of *would* have stood up against the secular powers. But not this Pope.

How these priests stick to one another! Suggestions have been put forward that the clergy, like other sections of the community, should take their share in National Service, and the *Church Times* is very indignant. "No priest," it cries, "is expected by the Church, or desired by the State, to put volunteering first. His first duty is that of prayer and ministry . . . his duty is spiritual." But the *Church Times* is always ready to encourage the soldiers, who are not even religious, to do their duty—and die for the State if need be. In France it is *La Patrie* first even with priests. Here, as can be seen, it is the Church first—always Church and State, never State and Church. Yet one of the ignorant and stupid attacks on Jews had always been that the Jew invariably puts Judaism before his duty to the State. Whatever the truth may be as far as Jews are concerned, this is, on the *Church Times'* own showing certainly true of the Christian clergy in this country.

Writing about the recent correspondence in the *Times* on "Various Bible Translations," the Editor of *Sunday Times* explains why the Revised Version (1881) was so dismal a failure. He says truly that this edition was merely a selection from existing texts. Of course there could be no "new translation" because there is no original to translate; nothing but copies of translations—to the 20th power or worse. It is queer to read that the British and Foreign Bible Society rarely uses the "Authorized Translation" for its numerous foreign versions. It is quite conceivable that the Bantus and the Eskimos are reading a more "authentic" Word of God than those who study the Bible in an English Theological College.

Canon Lindsay Dewar is a great believer in dogma. That we can quite understand. A dogma is not anything that laymen may reason about; he may not even have a voice or vote in its acceptance. They just tell the people what they are to believe. That develops what the clergy call a fine spiritual character. Canon Dewar's preference in the region of dogma is for rocks. There is the rock of Jesus, and there is the "Rock-man" Peter on whom Jesus built. And on this firm basis Canon Dewar feels justified in saying that "the things which are happening in these days are exactly the things which, as Christians, we should expect to have happened." In that case it would seem that Mr. Chamberlain was right. Hitler *could* be trusted, and we must cease to blame him and his followers. They are just carrying out what had to happen. Of course it is rather rough on the young men who are being slaughtered, and on the women and children and old men who are being machine-gunned or crushed beneath the weight of huge tanks. But that is the way things *must* happen, since, if they did not, the expectations of some Christians would not have been realized. Christian dogmas are very comfortable things, when one looks at them from the right point of view.

Lady Baldwin wishes every church to fly a flag to show that it is Christianity we are fighting for. Lady Baldwin appears to be quite as truthful in her statements as her better known husband was during his Premiership.

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THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We are asked by Miss Thelma Tuson, daughter of the late Charles Tuson, to thank all those who have written to her expressing esteem of her father, and sympathy for herself. To Advertising and Circulating the *Freethinker*.—F. Smith, £1 3s. 9d.; H. G. Newlove, £1; Mrs. M. Vanstone, £1.

FRED C. HOLDEN (U.S.A.)—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.

THE General Secretary N.S.S. acknowledges a donation of 5s. from R. B. Harrison to the Benevolent Fund.

JACK BENJAMIN (New York).—Thanks for letter. It is nothing unusual to find a man fairly well advanced in one direction and backward in another. But these racial theories are curiously unscientific for an advocate of science to adopt. The idea that one can trace cultural characteristics to biological qualities is about as absurd a theory as one can imagine. Thanks for compliments. Have read the article with pleasure.

FRANKLIN STEINER.—Pleased to hear from you. We hope to print your article soon, but have a lot in hand at present.

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
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When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

Sugar Plums

We go to press on Tuesday, and it is therefore unprofitable to speculate on what may happen in the next few days. But short of the very unexpected happening, it would seem that fighting in France is at an end. But that is not the end of the war, and between fighting and surrender to German dictation there should be but one choice. Outside Germany and Italy, Hitlerism is now recognized by the whole of the civilized world as a threat to all that makes life worth living, and the rest of the world will be forced by considerations of its own well-being to join against the common enemy. For that reason we have no doubt as to what the end will be. And at the side of a German conquest death is a light and even welcome thing. The stupid and cowardly cry of "Peace in our Time" has helped to place us where we are to-day. We prefer the advice of Thomas Paine, let us face with resolution whatever trouble there may be in our time, and so make the future happier and better for those who follow. Our children will at least be able to treat the memory of us with respect, instead of with contempt.

We are not surprised that the miserable religious displays have aroused among people outside the ranks of avowed Freethinkers disgust at the large doses of religious rubbish served up by the B.B.C. If the listeners were confined to a colony of certified morons, some of these religious displays could not be more intellectually contemptible. There is one that is particularly objec-

tionable. It comes just before the 8 o'clock news—just before, because it is planned for a time when those who are waiting for the eight o'clock news must listen. It is mostly a mixture of slime and cant, or one might run it into descriptive phrase as slimy cant. Here is a letter published in the *Daily Telegraph* for June 10:—

Sir,—Surely the B.B.C. could send us about our business in the morning in a rather more inspiring fashion. I refer to the gentleman who at 7.55 a.m. broadcasts for five minutes on a "Thought for To-day." Seldom is his tone other than painfully lugubrious. And the counsels he usually has to offer are often uncommonly depressing.

When, moreover, he keeps insisting that our present troubles are due to our lack of faith and sinfulness, he becomes as exasperating to listen to as he is patently illogical. The nation hardly needs to be reproved for lukewarm faith when it has just offered a thanksgiving for what it believes to have been its miraculously answered prayers.

Why cannot the B.B.C.'s preceptor give us a heartier and more stimulating "thought" with which to face the new day's duties and trials? Something more manly, forthright—and, if you will, realistic—would make these five minutes worth while.

Yours faithfully,

A. H. REDFERN

Mr. Donald Dale writes us in appreciation of the character of Mr. George Bedborough, whose death we chronicled last week, and says he was working hard to found a Branch of the N.S.S. in Cambridge. Mr. Dale wishes all who are willing to assist in forming a Branch to write him at 142 Chesterton Road, Cambridge. Mr. Cohen has promised that in the event of a Branch of the N.S.S. being formed, he will deliver the inaugural address. Mr. Dale says that Cambridge badly needs a Branch of the N.S.S.

Mr. Dale also writes:—

I have been reading *Almost an Autobiography* on and off the last few days with the greatest of pleasure. It is the most remarkable book I have ever read, and it is an unforgettable experience to read it, but I am afraid that those who need it most will never give it a fair trial, for they will either never come across it, or if they do, not being emotionally prepared to receive it, either by inclination or education, it will do them no good at all. People hate to be made small, and you always make the "learned" men of the Church, besides those who have made their names as novelists, etc., look so hopelessly small.

The situation is not, we are glad to say, quite so hopeless as Mr. Dale thinks. Here and there are found men and women who are appreciative of our case when it is set before them. And we are pleased to say we have evidence that the autobiography is doing good propagandist work among outsiders. But Mr. Cohen was not aiming at propaganda in writing the book. It was written mainly for those in all parts of the world who have stood by him so well for so many years. If the title had not been used by Richard Jeffries for one of the finest biographies written, Mr. Cohen would have called his book *The Story of my Heart*. It is that, or nothing.

Last week we mentioned that the *News-Chronicle* headed its editorial column with a quotation from Thomas Paine. The passage was taken from the first *Crisis* written by Paine, and which virtually saved the American Revolution. The *Crisis* was written when the American Army were in full retreat from the British troops, and everything seemed lost. The outlook was as black as the French outlook is to-day, but under the influence of Paine's inspiring words the Army rallied to final victory. There was a whole series of the *Crisis*, every one of them direct in its influence on the people. The *News-Chronicle* showed a better judgment than usual when it called Paine to its aid. Even the few lines published carried more real inspiration to the people than the mealy-mouthed official prayers ordered (through the King?) by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Men could read Paine standing on their two feet, with their eyes open and their heads up, not on their knees with their eyes closed and their heads bowed, mumbling official prayers to a mere myth.

The *News-Chronicle* gave but a truncated passage. But that first number of the *Crisis* is so good that we will give the passage again in full, with other passages, which, with the mere alteration of a word, fit the present situation. We put the equivalent words in brackets:—

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he who stands it *now*, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph. . . .

Whether the independence of the continent (the action of the Allies) was declared too soon or delayed too long, I will not now enter into as an argument; my own simple opinion is that had it been eight month's earlier, it would have been much better.

With almost prophetic foresight of the "appeasement" policy which has come within an ace of wrecking European civilization, Paine narrates how he saw a man who said, with the thought of his son in his mind:—

Well, give me peace in my day. . . . A generous parent should have said, "If there must be trouble, let it come in my day, that my child may have peace." And this single reflection, well applied, is sufficient to awaken every man to duty. . . . Say not that thousands are gone, turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day on Providence, but show your faith by your works. . . . The heart that feels not now is dead, the blood of his children will curse his cowardice. . . . It is the madness of folly to expect mercy from those who have refused to do justice. The cunning of the fox is as murderous as the violence of the wolf, and we ought to guard equally against both. . . . By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue, by cowardice and submission the sad choice of a variety of evils—a ravaged country—a depopulated city, habitations without safety, and shelter without hope.

Every number of the *Crisis* was full of good sayings that reached the core of human troubles, because Paine saw the permanent feature that was imbedded in the transient. He was not the kind of writer who seizes on the obvious, dwells upon it with the air of a discoverer, and sees nothing at all of the deeper and more permanent issues. Our men in the army might find a strengthened resolution if instead of Company services they were treated to some selected readings from Paine.

We have been sending books and copies of the *Freethinker* to the Forces, but with a view to distributing these to the greatest advantage, we should be obliged if some of our friends who belong to the Air Force, the Army, or the Navy would advise us as to what kind of literature would be best appreciated by their friends and acquaintances, and also the destination of what is sent.

Benito Juarez

THE film *Juarez* is at present being shown in the provinces, and of the large number of people who see it I think the majority will agree that it is a very fine film. It is, however, much more than just a good film, it should stir up the people and, in contrast to the conflict in which we are now engaged, show what a real fight for freedom and democracy is like. But it is unlikely that many cinema-goers will realize its true significance, and still fewer are likely to read further of the life of the hero. This is unfortunate, for it is a great story.

Benito Juarez was born in 1806 of Indian parents near the town of Oaxaca in Mexico, and it was intended that he should enter the Church. When twenty-one, however, he began studying law, and five years later obtained his degree. He was made Advocate of the Supreme Court in 1834, and later, at the age of forty-one became Governor of Oaxaca. In this post he greatly improved provincial conditions,

but he was considered dangerous by the new Government under Santa Anna, and was imprisoned. Escaping, Juarez took refuge in the United States, but he returned two years afterwards and took part in a successful revolt against Santa Anna.

In the new Government under Comonfort he was made Justice of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and in this capacity Juarez began his great work of reform by restricting the privileges of the clergy and the military. The army and the clergy rose against the anti-clerical Constitution and took the capital when President Comonfort fled. Juarez declared himself constitutional successor to Comonfort and set up his headquarters at Vera Cruz.

The United States recognized his Government, and in 1859 Juarez issued his Laws of Reform, which completely secularized the Church in Mexico. These are worth giving in some detail.

1. The Church was completely disestablished and disendowed.

2. Marriage was taken out of the hands of the Church and was declared to be a purely civil contract.

3. Baptisms and burials were likewise taken away from the Church.

There was, therefore, a complete separation of Church and State in Mexico. Religious establishments were dissolved, and it was forbidden for nunneries to receive any further inmates. Agricultural property of the Church was sold at public auction, and the proceeds turned over to the Church.

Cemeteries were taken out of Church control, and many monasteries were taken over as public libraries and art galleries.

The Clericals were defeated, and in 1861 Juarez entered Mexico City and was constitutionally elected President. The country after five years of civil war was in a state of chaos. The Government lacked funds, and the economic situation was desperate, and Juarez issued a decree suspending payment of the national debt.

This involved him in another conflict. Napoleon III. of France used the decree as a pretext in order to wage war on Mexico. Spain and England at first supported the French, but eventually withdrew leaving Maximilian, the puppet king, and the French armies opposing the Republican forces.

The French executed large numbers of peasants, but it is said of Juarez that "amid the merciless he was ever merciful. . . in an age of bloodshed he was ever ready to spare the lives of his enemies."

During these struggles he travelled up and down the country in a plain carriage, but the French armies finally withdrew and Juarez was successful. Mexico City was taken and Maximilian was captured, tried and sentenced to death.

Ambassadors from many European countries pleaded for the life of Maximilian, but Juarez refused to pardon him. "How many of you," he asked, "pleaded when the French were shooting innocent peons?" "The law must take its course!"

Juarez remained President until his death in 1872, and is one of Mexico's national heroes. He fought continuously for freedom of thought and speech, for the abolition of clerical interference in affairs of State, for the equality of rights of all citizens, and for intellectual progress. He was opposed by the Conservatives, the Army, the Church and a foreign monarchy. The armies of his opponents wore crosses and other religious symbols and carried banners displaying pictures of saints.

Juarez thought always of the freedom of Mexico, and he probably did more than any other person to attain that end.

In his *Life of Juarez*, Burke tells us that "he disliked pomp and despised parade. . . undaunted by

fierce opposition, undismayed by constant danger, unshaken by enormous temptation, he set Law above Force in Mexico."

In the film his struggles with the clergy are omitted and the part played by the Church in what they made a holy war is not shown, but there are some fine incidents, and it may not be out of place to note one here.

Juarez asks Diaz, one of his generals, the meaning of the word "democracy." The General replies that it means justice, freedom, the right to think and worship as you please. "What right would you have under my Government that you would not have under the monarchy?" asks Juarez. "Only the right to rule ourselves," replied Diaz. "Ah!" says Juarez, "then that must be the meaning of democracy!"

The figure of the famous Indian in his black clothes and hat will be remembered and honoured in the Republic of Mexico as its greatest liberator. The name of Benito Juarez should be known by all Freethinkers as a man who deserves to go down in history as one of the world's greatest reformers. A student rather than a soldier, he nevertheless waged a great war of freedom against monarchy, militarism, and the superstition and power of the Church. It is significant that when Juarez was victorious he immediately greatly reduced the size of the army.

C. MCCALL

A Religious Syllabus

DURING Napoleon's "Waterloo," which lasted but a day, some 37,000 men were killed. During my grandmother's "Waterloo" (she was married on June 18, 1815), which lasted a quarter of a century, she gave birth to eleven children.

To pay for Napoleon's "Waterloo," these eleven children and their fellows were heavily taxed, a taxation which only gave rise to much grumbling, it being accepted as inevitable.

The payment of tithes for the maintenance of the clergy, and other Church purposes, on the other hand, created ill feeling and opposition—the tithe-pig, or tithe-hen selected the night before the arrival of the tithe-collector, being just of a quality to meet demands—a wastrel-pig, a moulting-hen, etc.

No tithes were collected in my day, but the Parson and the squire still dominated our village community—Nonconformist children were commanded to respectfully touch their caps to the Squire and the Vicar.

But not until our old free school was demolished (1876), and a new National School took its place, were we taught Imperially to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters—our Dictators! In other words, to pray:—

God bless the Squire and his relations,
And keep us in our proper stations.

In our National school we had prayers every morning and evening, at which we beseeched the Lord to enlighten our darkness. But without avail! Our little enlightenment came from the schoolmaster.

Scripture lessons and prayers occupied the first twenty minutes of each day. And one day in the year was devoted to a Scripture Examination. I have a vivid recollection of one of these Exams., at which I was asked by the Examiner—a Mr. Pennethorne—"which do you consider the greatest miracle recorded in the New Testament?" I replied: "The Resurrection from the dead!" "Why do you think it the greatest?" said he. "Because," said I, "if Christ was God, and he was actually dead, I cannot imagine how he could raise himself from the dead!" He seemed to leave me, very thoughtfully.

He awarded prizes later, and I was astonished to get the 1st prize—a large *Illustrated Life of Dr. Livingstone*, for being, said he, the only boy in the school who had displayed any independent thought.

"In the old days we suffered from inferior educational methods which gave us false impressions of the character of God and the real value of the Bible," says the Lancashire Education Authority.

This Authority, in 1931, issued a Syllabus which is still in use in Lancashire. It was drawn up by a Special Committee—(a) The Church of England Diocesan Authorities in the County; (b) The Nonconformist Churches; (c) The National Union of Teachers; and (d) the County Education Committee. And it is divided in four sections. In § (I.) *The Place of Religion in Education*, we are told that:—

A child is impoverished if he grows up without access to the most significant religious experiences of the human race, and to the best thought about them that has so far been achieved. Of this, for the Western world, at least, the *Bible* is the classical repository.

In (II.) *The True Character of the Bible*, we are informed that whereas in the old days we suffered from not only inferior educational methods, but from a want of appreciation of the real nature of the *Bible*. Now, *out of the welter of changing ideas* a new and vital view of the *Bible* has emerged, which can be taught with a freshness and a confidence hitherto impossible.

And that the old time methods of teaching

seemed to bring discord and confusion to those who valued the *Bible*. It appeared to exhibit it as a jumble of folk lore and history, of moral teaching and of religious poetry, and of detailed ritual injunctions of extremely diverse value. But it has now become clear that the *Bible* is a unity and has a single theme, though in a different sense from what was formerly supposed. On one side it is the record of men's progressive discovery of the true nature of God which the *Bible* exhibits as coming through the medium of experience of a particularly gifted race. The truth is only very gradually disentangled from many errors and much misunderstanding. On the other side it is the record of God's gradual revelation of Himself, and His character to man, as they become able to apprehend the truth. God was regarded at first as a jealous tribal deity; but he is gradually seen to be the Creator and ruler of all the races of mankind, etc.—in short the only pebble on the beach!

In (III.) *The New Perspective*, we are informed that it

illustrates the enormous religious gain that is due to critical study, and its origin and to the frank recognition of the very different degrees of value which different parts of the *Scripture* possess. . . . It is now possible to recognize quite frankly that parts of the *Old Testament* are crude and even repulsive, and yet to see that even the cruder and more barbarous elements have their place and contribute to the whole picture.

And finally:—

The *Old Testament* is to be read in the light of the *New Testament* and not as a preliminary to it.

Alphonso the XII. of Castille said if he had been present at the Creation he could have given the Almighty some valuable hints. And so, evidently, could the Lancashire Education Authority!

In (IV.) *The Principle of Grading*, varying forms of instruction according to the ages of Pupils are advocated, and warning given to avoid methods which may give rise to

a conviction in the pupil's mind that *religious knowledge is intellectually contemptible*. . . . So far as their religious ideas are concerned, large numbers of adults are suffering from arrested development; and for this the teaching they have received, when growing up is often largely responsible.

The success of the religious education of any child may really be measured by the degree to which from year to year the idea of God "greatens in his growing mind."¹

The above sentences which I have italicized speak for themselves.

That the Lessons given, at the end of the Syllabus, graded for all ages, with the smutty verses excluded, defeat their own ends, the police, male and female, can bear witness. The sexual depravity of children (male and female) from 10 years of age and upwards is a result of such teaching, the verses left out of each lesson being gloated over in secret.

It was so when I went to school and a teacher informs me that it is so still. We all read such passages about Lot and his daughters (Gen. xix. 30-38); how Amnon defiled his sister Tamar (2 Sam. xiii. 10-14)—one boy of my acquaintance defiled his little sister through reading this infamous story. We also read how David danced before the ark; his adventure with Bathsheba, and his other escapades, ending in his comfortable death described in 1 Kings i. 1-4, etc.

These lessons, carelessly avoided by teachers, were gloated over by every child in the school.

That the Bible is a dangerous, and a dirty book, unfit to be placed in the hands of children, every sane person will, I think, admit. If God's Word is unfit to be taught and explained as a whole, it ought to be left alone.

GEORGE WALLACE

¹ The dirtiest minded boy in our school became a minister of the Gospel.

Save the Children

THE agitation for increased religious instruction in schools must be watched. The primal function of the schools is not the imparting of religion. The time occupied by religious instruction could be easily devoted to more important and useful training. To teach as real history such stuff as the Genesis myths and the Jonah story is not giving any useful knowledge to a child. But the parsons have their eye on the future. If the children leave school at fourteen little heathens, there's little chance of "saving" them later on. The churches will become empty and many cushy billets will go.

They remember the aftermath of the last war, and they don't want a repetition of it. So they are taking advantage of the nation's preoccupation with the war to urge a tightening up of the thumbscrew in religious instruction.

The Bible occupies no small space in the school. Scripture lessons can be wholly oral too, then the teachers take the chance to put over, his or her own sectarian views. It is not easy to avoid, but it will continue until religious teaching is abolished altogether. Moreover, the teacher gets such lies over as, that Christianity abolished slavery, made the world "civilized," and England a "great" Empire. Religion and patriotism are combined.

It is time the teachers stood up for themselves instead of for Jesus. They are an organized body, and it is up to them to fight Christian tyranny and nip it now. They should not require the Freethought Cause to fight their battle for them; we'd advise and

help, but they themselves must decide whether or not they are going to tolerate further clerical domination. If they lose the fight it will be their own funeral. Afterwards, only teachers of avowed Orthodox stamp, and church attenders, will get a post. The parson's fight to recapture the children is on. They may seek to enlist Government support to strengthen it.

It is the duty of every parent who sees the danger signal to fight for their children against these Dope agents. M.P.'s should be given to understand that the people will not submit quietly, that their job is to express the electors will on this question on the floor of "the house," and not to allow themselves to become clergy's catspaws.

The future of the child is of more consequence to the State than that of the Churches. On a question of "church or child," we must go for the child always. Secular Education in the schools is long overdue. It is the only solution to the problem of religious instruction. From the writer's own school experience of religious instruction he sees the "wisdom," and the danger of the religionist's slogan "catch them young." We must see to it that the children are not caught at any age; if we have their welfare at heart, we can prevent it.

"NORMAN NORTH"

Dialectical Materialism

As Mr. Taylor still thinks me an ignoramus about Critical Realism, I will take the liberty of quoting what I wrote in my additional chapter to Benn's *History of Modern Philosophy*, published in 1930:—

"Even before the verification, in 1919, of Einstein's theory a number of American philosophers adopted a position which, under the name of Critical Realism, amounts to a substantial retreat from the extreme Realist attitude [of the so-called "New" Realists]. Notable among their number are George Santayana (*Scepticism and Animal Faith*, 1923), Durant Drake (*Mind and Its Place in Nature*, 1925 . . .), and C. A. Strong. These thinkers part company with other Realists in differing degrees. One and all, however, they agree in drawing a sharp distinction between the 'existence' of objects, which is independent of their perception by us, and the 'essence' (or sum of qualities) which we rightly or wrongly ascribe to them. How much of the 'essence' which we attribute to an object is apparent only, and how much is its real essence, the Critical Realists leave to be decided by purely pragmatic criteria."

I did not confine myself to Materialists. Why should I? And I left out Sellars, as Santayana seemed to me more important and representative.

So much for Critical Realism. Now for Marx. In his *Theses on Feuerbach* written in 1845, but not published till 1888, Marx wrote:—

"The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory, but is a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth—i.e., the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question."

Engels says in his introduction to *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (1892):—

"This line of reasoning [Human agnosticism about the external world] seems undoubtedly hard to beat by mere argumentation. But before there was argumentation, there was action. *Im Anfang war die That*. [In the beginning was the deed. A.R.] And human action had solved the difficulty long before human ingenuity invented it. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. From the moment we turn to our own use these objects, according to the qualities we perceive in them, we put to an infallible test the correctness or otherwise of our sense-perceptions."

These passages, amplified in Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, from which I could quote indefinitely if space allowed, give the epistemology of Dialectical Materialism. The gulf between this and the mechanical, sensationist epistemology of early Materialism is obvious; and its anticipation of Santayana is equally obvious. Mr. Taylor's reference to the inadequacy of Dialectical Materialism having led to philosophy passing through "the subsequent stages of Idealism" is nonsense. Idealism was founded by Plato, revived by Berkeley, and perfected by Hegel, before Dialectical Materialism came on the scene.

Mr. Taylor had better read Kant again. He will find that Kant does *not* start by considering noumena, but by considering the nature of knowledge—not the same thing. Mr. Taylor can also turn, if he likes, to the first few chapters of Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, in which time and space and a lot of other things are shown to be "contradictory, and therefore unreal." If he thinks that anything could *really* happen in that sort of universe, I cannot supply him with logic.

If "only the Dialectical Materialists have noticed" the dialectical tendencies of recent science, that is not surprising. Until the last ten years, official science and official philosophy ignored the very existence of the Marxist contribution to philosophy. So much was this so that, although I took Greats at Oxford, and spent much time on academic philosophy down to 1931, it was not till then that I even heard of Dialectical Materialism. I then found that it filled gaps in philosophy which had not previously been filled, and that, unlike the mill of academic logic-chopping through which I had been forced, and which I had been diligently grinding for twenty-four years, *this* mill actually ground corn. I have the satisfaction of knowing that Professors Levy, Haldane and Bernal share my opinion; so I am not unduly daunted by the fact that Mr. Taylor thinks I do not understand these things at all.

ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

Stalin as a Philosopher

It is probably true to say that one will cling to one's principles and beliefs so long as they are not tested in practice. When, through the agency of Freethought and kindred teachers, I was liberated from the fetters of Supernaturalism, and having been convinced of the correctness and reliability of their guidance, I embraced my newly-found emancipation with the zeal of the convert. Thereafter, for a number of years, my cultural education, derived mainly from Freethought sources. The development of the world crisis, however, called for a deeper examination and clearer explanation of the forces responsible for the said development, and I turned to the theory of Marxism. The inadequacy and insufficiency of my erstwhile theories rudely shook my former self-assurance. These few reflections are prompted by a study of Mr. G. H. Taylor's article "Stalin as a Philosopher," in the *Freethinker* of May 12. I began reading with a tense expectancy as I had come to regard Mr. Taylor as one capable of penetrating to the heart of a big subject. Disillusionment was rapid and complete. As serious criticism it is doomed by the Superior detraction of Stalin made in his opening statement. His splenetic gibe at members of the Left Book Club is just priggish scholarliness and in questionable taste. It has not even the merit of being true.

It is demonstrably clear that Mr. Taylor has not read in full Stalin's essay on Dialectical and Historical Materialism. The omission of the fourth principle postulating the inherent contradictions in phenomena is significant: he has torn three statements from the main context—always an objectionable practice—and then proceeds to swing his critical chopper with preposterous clumsiness: What is the gravamen of his charge? It is Stalin's effrontery in throwing Metaphysics and Mechanical Materialism into the same pigeon-hole as if they were interchangeable terms. Now, it is as well to remind

Mr. Taylor that Metaphysics, from Aristotle down to our day, has had divers connotations. It is used by Stalin in the Formal-logical-thinking, sense. Despite Mr. Taylor's pontifical pronouncement to the contrary, Metaphysical-formal-logical-thinking will *not* admit that "becoming" is "being and not being at the same time." (Hegel). It will accept the truth of "being and not being" only in isolating one from the other. (Rudas). From this it follows that Metaphysics:—

- (a) Investigates things as finished objects and, in consequence
- (b) cannot regard nature as a state of continuous movement, and
- (c) does not explain the *how* of development.

If Mr. Taylor does not comprehend the implications of this method of investigation it simply argues his inability to grasp the essence of Metaphysics. It is misleading to suggest that in his essay Stalin is at pains to proclaim to the world that Mechanical Materialism is a danger to the progress of thought. That both Metaphysics and Mechanical Materialism are in the last analysis hostile to Dialectics is of course true, and both are unceremoniously consigned, not to a pigeon-hole, but to the mental dust-bin.

We are asked:—

Since the Dialectical Materialists acknowledge development in all things, why cannot they see the development in materialist thought which is non-marxist?

This is exactly on a par with the statement:—

Why cannot Darwinism be explained on Rational Special Creationism?

This is not philosophy, it is philosophical garbage.

The accusation of religious fixity and narrow dogmatism is not so devastating as he would lead one to believe. Every honest critic will understand that Marxists could not in the past, and cannot as yet behave otherwise bearing in mind the harm caused by the Plekhanovs, Bukharins, Kautskys, Macdonalds, Blums, etc.

Any value as criticism it may have had is vitiated by the failure to recognize the importance of the practical application of the principles of Dialectical Materialism to the History and Development of Social Life. The separation of Theory from Practice is the characteristic of bourgeois intellectuals. The only country that bases all her efforts on the Dialectical method marches from triumph to triumph, while the bourgeois countries can only attempt to resolve their difficulties in rivers of blood. The lessons and conclusions to be drawn therefrom are inescapable.

Now that our social system is on the point of disintegration and hurtling to its inevitable doom, the resultant cracks and fissures in the cultural superstructure reveal the ugliness of the class limitations of the bourgeois intellectuals. With much noise and greater confusion, and from many and varied platforms they shout their shop-soiled wares and peddle their pseudo-scientific philosophies. That Freethinkers, once in the forefront of the army of liberty and progress, lend their names to this base occupation is a saddening spectacle.

I have a haunting suspicion that Freethinkers too have a fear for the removal of the old and the establishment of the new.

ESSAY

He who loves not books before he comes to thirty years of age, will hardly love them enough afterwards to understand them.—*Clarendon*.

The most remarkable achievement of the Jew was to impose on Europe for eighteen centuries his own superstitions—his ideas of the supernatural. Jahveh was no more than Zeus; yet the Jew got established the belief in the inspiration of his Bible and his law. If I were a Jew, I should have the same contempt as he has for the Christian who acted in this way towards me, who took my ideas and scorned me for clinging to them.—*Huxley*.

Correspondence

EMILE ZOLA

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I was very pleased to hear from Mr. de Montmorancy that Zola was still being read so much in France (before the war). I had mostly in mind England—where, though of course my experience is very limited, I have never found anybody under 40 who had read anything by him. For the rest, I can only say that my admiration for Zola almost equals that of Mr. de Montmorancy.

H. CUTNER

TWO ARCHBISHOPS AND PRAYER

SIR,—As, apparently, Canterbury and York, at £300 a week and £200 a week respectively, the former sum being more than an efficient teacher with an Honours Degree is paid in an Elementary School in a year, do not seem to be getting any results worth showing out of God, might I suggest through your columns, that, starting as soon as possible, Canterbury should be cut down to £3, and York to £2 a week? The balance, £495 per week, could be better employed in helping to pay for those arms which the Allies so clearly need, and which are shown by modern science and actual experience to be more efficacious than "God's Arm," whatever that may be, which is distinctly not "sufficient alone." I would commend this scheme to all Members of Parliament who are sufficiently honest and well educated not to believe in Gods, Angels, Devils, Virgin Mothers, Holy Ghosts, Spooks, etc.

EDWARD WARD

APPRECIATION

SIR,—The Freethought Movement in England lost two good stalwarts by the deaths of Charlie Tuson and George Bedborough this month.

Both had done valuable propaganda work on public platforms—both were kindly and tolerant, and both ardent followers of Freethought.

The N.S.S. has lost two staunch supporters, and many of us feel that we shall miss two good friends.

F. A. HORNIBROOK

Reverie

I THOUGHT, upon a night most cold,
Of tales of myth-like gods of old;
Worship of Jove and all his might,
Was but a fear-infested rite.
Venus arose, serene and proud,
With war-god Mars, trailing death's shroud,
Through the bright galaxy afar,
Those neon-lights of cosmic star.

How creeds and worship of present day,
Do not alone show the right way;
These man-made gods do not recall,
The Eden myth of man's first fall.
The garden that Khayyam did tread,
With wine and verse, and little bread,
A charm still holds for pagan heart,
For in his garden I've a part.

Give me a seat beneath the trees;
A wind that bloweth where it please;
A river bank to rest upon;
A garden fair to gaze thereon.
Give me the outdoor sports of men,
Only in verse I wield the pen;
And in the majesty of sun,
May all my homage e'er be done.

Give me the sun-god shining free,
With power to heal and comfort me;
A friendly chariot, riding high,
That dominates the summer sky.
To him give praise and thankfulness,
For he does give us healthiness,
We see his face and love his smile,
As in his warmth we rest awhile

HARRY SEFTON

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, Dr. K. Mannheim—"A Diagnosis of Our Time."

OUTDOOR

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

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

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. L. Ebury. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. F. A. Ridley. Liverpool Grove, Walworth Road, 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury.

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

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Hall Steps): 7.30, Friday and Saturday, Mr. G. Whitehead.

BURNLEY (Market): 7.30, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at these meetings.

DARLINGTON (Market Steps): 7.0, 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, 3.30, Sunday, Ashton Market, 7.0, Sunday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at these meetings.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Stevenson Square): 7.30, Messrs. Taylor, McCall and Newton.

NELSON (Chapel Street): 7.30, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak.

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

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

N. CORNWALL.—Furnished House To Let, six rooms. Moderate rent for long period. Warne, Alma House, Perranporth.

Freethinkers and the War

ALL men entering the Army, Navy or Air Force must answer a question as to their religion. *The official in charge is legally bound to record the answer as given*—Atheist, Agnostic, Freethinker, Rationalist or whatever the recruit may choose to call himself. Questioning by the official in charge is gratuitous, and unauthorized. The recruit should refuse to sign any document where his reply to the question of "Religion" is not accurately recorded. Those members of the forces who have been wrongly entered as belonging to some Church, or where they have changed their opinions since entering one of the Services, have the legal right to have the record altered in accordance with their views.

If any difficulty is experienced in securing recognition of these legal rights, the National Secular Society, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, should be communicated with.

BOOKS WORTH READING

Some Pioneer Press Publications

BOOKS BY CHAPMAN COHEN

A GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT. A Statement of the Case for Freethought, including a Criticism of Fundamental Religious Doctrines. Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d., postage 3½d.

BRADLAUGH AND INGERSOLL. Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 3d.

DETERMINISM OR FREE-WILL? An Exposition of the Subject in the Light of the Doctrines of Evolution. Second Edition. Half-Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING. First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Series. Five Vols., post free 12s. 6d., each volume 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGION. A Lecture delivered at Manchester College, Oxford, with Appendix of Illustrative Material. Paper, 9d., postage 1d.

FOUR LECTURES ON FREETHOUGHT AND LIFE. Price, 1s., postage 1½d.

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