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Views and Opinions.

(Concluded from page 306.)

The Religion of Mental Disease.

Dr. Schou's object is to enable priests to understand the play of morbid mental states in connection with religion. It is made perfectly clear in his book that people quite commonly mistake their morbid or abnormal states of mind for direct intercourse with the supernatural. This is so common, and falls so often within the compass of the ordinary person, that the point needs little elaboration or proof. What one would like to know is the essential difference between those delusions that figure in purely medical annals, and which fall within the experience of every medical man, and those which have taken rank in the great religions of the world? Dr. Schou cites many cases of men who have been suddenly called upon by God or by the Holy Ghost to preach some new religious message to mankind. These, he says, are cases of religious paranoia. True, but wherein lies the difference between such messages as these and, say, the message which came to St. Paul? No medical man worth bothering about would doubt that the description given of St. Paul's conversion is of an epileptoid nature. Yet the one case is properly handed over to the doctor, the other is taken as one of the starting points of a new religion. Everyone knows that fasting, long and lonely vigils, constant brooding on certain ideas, over-indulgence in alcohol, etc., are all likely to induce derangement of hearing, or of sight, and otherwise to give birth to various kinds of hallucinations. Will anyone explain in what way the visions of St. Teresa differs from those of ordinary men and women, and which may be accounted for on strictly scientific grounds? To put it quite plainly, in what sense are the visions of the dipsomaniac less real than those of the saint? To the genuinely scientific thinker they differ only in form. Their substance is the same.

* * *

Some Parallel Cases.

Dr. Schou faces this question in the last few pages of his book, but he does so in the spirit of the theologian who said that the wisest way was to look difficult problems in the face—and then pass on to other questions. What he does is, after admitting

that the neurotic element is evident with most of the great religious "seers," after admitting this, he falls back upon the suggestion of Professor James that it is these neurotic states which open the way to a glimpse of another world. But one need not have waited for Professor James for this. It is one of the oldest of religious teachings; there is not a savage race on the face of the earth that does not believe it, and practise it. Universally, fasting, the eating of certain herbs, the drinking of certain things, and the like, are taken as the conditions of entering into communication with the spiritual world. But if we are not to take the visions of the savage, induced by the methods named, as the means by which he is brought into touch with an actual spiritual world, why should we adopt a different conclusion when we are dealing with substantially the same thing in the case of Christianity? Derangement of function is derangement of function whether we are dealing with a savage, the inmate of an asylum, or a Christian saint. And it is quite certain that if we take away from the religious history all the cases of spiritual vision that can safely be attributed to a misunderstanding of morbid mental states, not only have we nothing left to bother about, but we have removed one of the most insistent pieces of evidence in favour of the supernatural.

* * *

Sex and Religion.

In the history of religion we have not merely to do with the misunderstanding of morbid mental states, instances of which will be found in the lives of such men as Paul, Luther, Swedenborg, George Fox, St. Bernard, St. Teresa, and numerous others, but we have also to deal with the misunderstanding of normal frames of mind. This comes out very clearly in the case of sexual feeling. In the first place, it is quite clear that a great deal of the form in which much of the religious emotion of many great Christian figures are cast is nothing more than a perverted sexualism. I have given numerous instances of this in my *Religion and Sex*, and I do not hesitate to say that if one were to take some of the outpourings of the Christian saints, male and female, and in place of the name of Jesus or Mary introduce those of John Smith and Mary Brown, and take it that the impassioned sentences are addressed to a member of the opposite sex, its naked eroticism would be clear to the dullest intelligence. The vision of the naked Christ who descends and embraces the nun, or of the virgin who visits the monk in his cell, leaves no doubt of this. And many medical authorities have not hesitated to say that ecstasy—the common experience of the great Christian saints—"is probably always connected with sexual excitement, if not with sexual depravity." Even the Christian stress upon the virtues of celibacy and its obsession with the "evil" of sexual appetite is evidence to the same end. We are dealing with a disguised or suppressed sexualism denied a normal and healthy outlet.

Conversion.

As an illustration of misunderstanding, in the interests of religion, of normal mental states, we may well take the case of conversion. Dr. Schou says:—

If I had to cite a field in which the priest is particularly likely to be misled, and where, too, the practised psychiatrist may find it difficult to determine what is genuine and what is the reverse, it would be the cases of sudden conversion which occur among young people who have for some time previously been depressed and self-reproachful and conscious of sin.

We believe we were among the first to call attention to the significant connection between the ages of conversion and the period of adolescence. Later, those who had greater opportunities than we collected statistics which showed that if we eliminated the conversions which occurred during the period of adolescence, we might put on one side conversion altogether. Now the whole significance of adolescence, from the standpoint of a healthy scientific sociology, is the preparation of the boy and the girl for bearing his or her part in the larger life of the race. It is a time during which there are developed new functions, and also a further development of those already existing. There is a great development in susceptibility, less direct concern with self, a craving for sympathy, a growth of new desires and emotions, with considerable unrest. The scientific student sees in all this the development of the human being in the direction of carrying on the perpetuation of the species, and the preparation for playing his or her part as a portion of the social life of mankind. If we were quite free from the incubus of theology, and if we were sufficiently alive to what is going on under our eyes, we should recognize in this great formative period the organism as offering a golden opportunity for education in the direction of a healthy and useful social existence. As it is, it is the Tom Tiddler's ground of the professional evangelist and of the priest generally. The whole body of these new developments are expressed in terms of a primitive supernaturalism which leaves the young man and woman ignorant of the true nature of their own feelings and of their own development, and are handed over to the mercies of a body of men who from ignorance or self-interest, or from both, exploit their developing social natures in the interests of a crass supernaturalism. There is no wonder that our social life is as poor as it is when we thus abuse and neglect the best opportunities offered us.

Science and the Supernatural.

The importance of a right understanding of the part played by a misunderstanding of morbid mental states in the history of religion is two-fold. First, we have an undeniable key to much that has helped to mould the early history of all religions. Taking cases so far above the very primitive forms such as meet us in the New Testament, it is quite clear that the belief that epileptics and lunatics were possessed by demons, the conviction that all pathologic states were direct manifestations of the supernatural, strengthened the religious belief of all. It was to all direct evidence of the most convincing kind. And so long as no natural explanation of these states was available, they continued to give similar evidence to generation after generation. It offers one explanation of why religion has persisted generation after generation. Second, it helps us to understand the visions, the ecstasies, the feeling of direct communication with the supernatural which plays so large a part in Christian and other literature. There is the same kind of evidence continued in the craze of

modern Spiritualism. There is not the slightest doubt in the mind of competent observers that such things as mediumship, in which the medium's personality undergoes a transformation, crystal gazing, automatic writing, etc., are all explainable in terms of abnormal or pathological psychology. It is not the Freethinker who denies the "reality" of the visions of the "mystic," he admits their reality as he admits the reality of the visions, the hallucinations of sight, touch, or hearing of the ordinary man. What he will not do is to differentiate between the visions of the ordinary person, admittedly now pathologic, and those of the person who clothes his hallucinations in the garb of religion. Given this rational approach to what are called religious phenomena, and the lives of the saints, the picture of Luther hearing the Devil's voice, and throwing inkwells at him, Jesus casting devils out of epileptics, the ecstasies of Marie Alacocque, and others who tell us that they clasped the actual body of Jesus to their bosoms, are full of illumination and instruction. Naturally we have not the extreme manifestations to-day—at least when they do appear they are usually handed over to the doctor instead of to the priest. I agree with Dr. Schou that every priest should have an understanding of those morbid mental states with which his profession brings him into touch. We only add that if he really understood them he would soon bid good-bye to his religion and to his profession.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Religious Self-Exaltation.

THERE is nothing more natural to humanity than to regard itself as the highest, most perfect expression of itself which Nature has as yet succeeded in making. We are proud to think that we occupy the summit of existence, evolution, from our point of view, having been, on the whole, an upward process. Nevertheless, we have an instinctive objection to the notion that we are all equal. The so-called civilized man looks down upon and despises the savage. The religious person assumes an attitude of proud superiority to the non-religious, and Christians generally comfort themselves by the firm conviction that they alone are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. To them all Gentile or Pagan religions are either wholly false or at best woefully imperfect and immeasurably inferior to Christianity. Prior to the rise of their religion Judaism claimed to be the only true religion in the world, and the followers of Christ admit that the claim was fully justified. In the Old Testament Jehovah is represented as the only true and living God, and the Israelites are called his own people. In Deut. xiv. 12, we read: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth." According to the testimony of the Old Testament, the Hebrews prided themselves upon being other, higher, and better than their neighbours round about them. In fact, the best and noblest of their neighbours were not fit to serve them in any other capacity than that of slaves. "There were times," the *British Weekly* says, "when they lifted up their hearts in pure praise that it had been given unto them to have a view of life which made mere things intolerable." In *Hosea* we find God represented as saying: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him"; "I taught Ephraim to go, I took them on my arms"; "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." The writer of those words was a Jew, and they clearly

indicate in what high estimation the people held themselves, and as a natural consequence they spoke of and treated with haughty disdain, not only all other Semitic tribes but also all the Gentile nations on the face of the earth.

Now this position of proud pre-eminence which the Israelites occupied and generally enjoyed was mainly due to their religion, or rather to their *belief* in their religion. That distinguished scholar, the late Professor Robertson Smith, has proved conclusively, in his *Religion of the Semites*, that Judaism was only one among several Semitic cults, and that all of them were very much alike. To us, Freethinkers, they were and are all alike false. At this stage we are powerfully reminded of the fact that to the Jewish priesthood religion signified devotion to ritual. Pharaoh, in giving Moses permission to let the people go as requested, said: "Go ye, serve the Lord, only let your flocks and your herds be stayed;" but Moses replied thus:—

Thou must also give into our hands sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us, there shall not an hoof be left behind, for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither (Exodus x. 25, 26).

Here is a specific instruction as to what and how to sacrifice:—

All the firstling males that are born of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thine ox, nor shear the firstling of thy flock. Thou shalt eat it before the Lord thy God year by year in the place which the Lord shall choose, thou and thy household. And if it have any blemish, as if it be lame or blind, any ill blemish whatsoever, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God. Thou shalt eat it within thy gates; the unclean and the clean shall eat it alike, as the gazelle and as the hart. Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof, thou shalt pour it out upon the ground as water (Deut. xv. 19-23).

The story of the Passover as related in Deut. xvi. is exceedingly instructive when read in this connection; and in Deut. xvii. 12 we find this most remarkable verse: "And the man that doeth presumptuously in not hearkening unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die, and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel." Such was priestly religion in Old Testament times. It had nothing whatever to do with ethics. The sin of sins was disobedience to the commands of the priesthood. By and by prophets began to appear who had the courage to denounce unflinchingly this wicked form of religion. Samuel is reported to have lifted up his voice against it in the following words: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Isaiah, writing in the sixth century B.C. was firmly convinced that the priestly religion had egregiously demoralized the whole nation, with the result that then, instead of being nominally the best nation in the world, it was really worse than most. And this is how this prophet bursts out:—

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that deal corruptly: they have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are

estranged and gone backward.....To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

That is one of the finest and most eloquent passages ever written. The speaker, of course, is not God, but Isaiah himself, whose invincible conviction is that the predominant religion is utterly false to its very core, and inconceivably injurious to the character of all who practise it. In other words, what Isaiah condemns with such ironic bitterness in that long extract is religion itself as understood in his day, and what he substitutes for it is pure Humanism or Secularism. That he speaks in the name of God signifies nothing at all, because the priests do so with equal confidence.

We now come to a surprisingly curious and puzzling phenomenon. The *British Weekly* of April 29, devotes its leading article, entitled "Let My People Go," to a strange discussion of the very subject we are considering here. It says:—

The great insinuation which Christianity makes is that what was true of the Hebrew people, of the people who had their Exodus and their Exile, and who in consequence had it in them to write the Book of Psalms and Isaiah and Job—the insinuation which Christianity makes is that what was true of them is really true of us all, if we would only listen to the most secret movements and misgivings and ineffectual uprisings of our spirit. A day comes when a nation, or a section of a nation, hears a call; feels the stirring of powers and capacities within itself; and he is no friend of the race who would bid us all go to sleep and pay no heed to these noises in the night. For these noises in the night mark the passage of the feet of God down the corridor of time, and there is something in man which suggests that he must rise and follow.

Before we critically examine that extract, and other marvellous statements which follow it, we must remind the writer, presumably Dr. Hutton himself, of a deeply significant fact which he completely overlooks, namely, that Christianity is a perpetuation, with certain modifications, of the religion invented, developed, and forced upon the nation by the Jewish priesthood, and the process of the transformation is described with amazing cleverness and accuracy by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In Judaism salvation was by blood alone, and exactly the same thing is true of Christianity. In Hebrews ix. 13, 14 we read: "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Yes, Christianity is pre-eminently a sacrificing religion, culminating in the sacrifice of the Eucharist, in which the sacrifice of Christ is miraculously repeated every time it is duly celebrated.

But are Christians superior to non-Christians, and what are we to make of "the passage of the feet of God down the corridor of time"?

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

A Trail of Deception.

The system which begins by making mental indolence a virtue and intellectual narrowness a part of sanctity, ends by putting a premium on something too like hypocrisy.—John Morley.

FREETHINKERS are familiar with the methods of the Press Gang by which all matters relating to Free-thought are either excluded altogether or grossly misrepresented by Christian editors in the interests of their religion. Indeed, in some newspapers and periodicals, the conspiracy of silence against Free-thought is simply wonderful. The very name is taboo, like that of the god of the ancient Hebrews, which was never to be spoken. Where the conspiracy of silence is broken, accidentally, the Christians display another aspect of their hatred towards Free-thought, which is then misrepresented and slandered. Few people, however, are fully aware how this peculiar Christian habit is extended beyond the realms of journalism to literature itself, and that the campaign of calumny is just as apparent in some books as in newspapers and periodicals. Look, for example, at the works of reference which are to be found in all libraries, and many homes, and notice how Free-thought and Freethinkers are treated in their pages. Sins of omission and commission constantly leap to the eyes of the reader, who may be ill prepared for this exhibition of the fierce flash of the primitive Christian spirit of the Ages of Faith. For nowadays, Christians are no longer able to crush opposition, and they are obliged to answer its arguments, or make a show of defending their own doctrines. Feeling that the tendency of Rationalism is against them, and afraid to resist it in the old, bad way, they bend before it rather than break.

One of the most popular series of the day is the Home University Library (Williams & Norgate), which includes, among many other volumes, a work on the *Victorian Age of Literature*. This particular work has been entrusted to the versatile Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton, whose peculiar piety is so notorious that the editors of the series apologise for his exuberance. They may well do this, for Mr. Chesterton uses his talents most tyrannically in the service of the most reactionary of the many Christian churches. In this work of reference Mr. Chesterton has nothing but the crudest insults for the great Freethinkers of the nineteenth century. Ignoring the long series of masterpieces that have come from the greatest of living English writers, Chesterton dubbs Thomas Hardy a "village Atheist." Algernon Swinburne, a poet of the rarest and most brilliant genius, who enlarged the boundaries of English song, is accused of composing an "indecent parody on the Litany of the Blessed Virgin"—surely an ironical suggestion in a Protestant country. It would be sheer waste of time to catalogue the numerous insults hurled at the writers, men and women alike, who show independence of thought. And Mr. Chesterton does it all with the pretence of being in favour of Liberty, and being against all forms of intolerance. It is shameful on the part of any man, but more so in the case of a Papist. Put the Roman Catholic Church into power and there is no more heartless despot, no one with a more cynical contempt for the masses of the people.

Another work of reference, *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, by J. W. Cousins, issued in Dent's "Everyman Library," is open to somewhat similar objections. The following interesting passage relates to the opinions of the poet Shelley: "The charge of Atheism rests chiefly on *Mab*, the work of a boy, printed by him for private circulation, and to some extent repudiated as personal opinion."

The reader will notice that the writer knows so little of Shelley's life and works that he cannot quote correctly the name of the poet's best-known publication. And this precious nonsense is printed in a work of reference, intended to help students in the study of English literature. On another page of this recondite volume James Thomson, the poet, is introduced as an awful warning, for we are told his dreadful views drove him to drink, not wisely but too well. In the case of "George Eliot," the information is given that her general view of life is "pessimistic," despite the fact that this gifted woman expressly coined the word "meliorism," in order to show her own attitude with regard to optimism and pessimism. Robert Buchanan's fierce anti-Christian views are slurred over by the grudging admission that his most outspoken writings were "directed against certain aspects of Christianity." So the trail of deception goes on, and Freethinkers can do little to stem it except by an occasional exposure.

Still another reference book, *Chambers' Encyclopædia*, in an edition issued a few years ago, is full of bias against men and women of advanced views. Thomas Paine is insulted; Ingersoll is said to have attracted more attention than he deserved; and readers are referred for information about Charles Bradlaugh to the libellous *Life* by Mackay, a work which Bradlaugh himself proceeded against in the Law Courts and stopped. Even the once-popular novelist, "Ouida," is accused of "muscular heathenry" and "encyclopædic ignorance." Messrs. Chambers should be good judges of the latter, for their own reference book is packed with it.

This campaign of calumny is the latest and most up-to-date form of an infamous religious tradition which may be traced back through the centuries to Lucretius, and even earlier. So true is it that those who fight with priests know what to expect. The fortunes of really eminent writers like Shelley, George Meredith, and Swinburne, to mention but a few, have been very much influenced by this frigid and calculated campaign of calumny. Free-thought is the most feared enemy of superstition, and invariably incurs the hatred of the priests who realize that their easy means of livelihood are assailed. The priests fan up the hatred of the orthodox, and no enmity is more unscrupulous, more relentless, or more venomous. Remember, it is not all due to ignorance. This garbage is thrown at Freethinkers of set design and purpose. It is meant to discredit the characters and writings of men and women who seek to emancipate their fellows from the yoke of superstition. Free-thought has wrested so many positions from Christianity that in order to support the tottering edifice of superstition, believers will hesitate at nothing to buttress the wavering allegiance of their luke-warm fellow-Christians. Priests will never rebuke their faithful sheep for lying for the greater glory of God. In the Ages of Faith they used scaffolds, stakes, prisons, and torture-chambers; now they have to rely on lies, libels, and misrepresentations. It is the Freethinkers, conscious of the priestly crimes of centuries, and realizing that leopards do not readily change their spots, who alone can recognise the awful hypocrisy of the pretence of Christians loving their enemies. Besides, honest

men do not garble, lie, and traduce. They are like Mark Twain, when he was tendered the academic gown of a doctor of literature. "I don't know why you should give me a degree like that," he said, "I never doctored any literature. I wouldn't know how to do such a thing."

MIMNERMUS.

My Friend Stewart Headlam.

II.

(Concluded from page 310.)

To Mr. Bradlaugh I stated that my expression of willingness to teach moral lessons without theology would throw upon the School Board the responsibility of saying that no teacher could be permitted to teach morals minus theology. He replied:—

The matter is one in which I feel considerable delicacy in advising you, as I am not quite sure how far you look at such things from my standpoint.

Mr. Foote's view I will give in full:—

14 Clerkenwell Green, E.C.
January 2, 1891.

Dear Sir,—I hardly see how, as an Agnostic, and a disbeliever in the Bible as anything but a composite piece of human literature, you can teach from it either religion or morality in any common sense of the words. No doubt, however, your letter will raise an awkward problem for the School Board. With respect to yourself, if you are in any way a victim of School Board religious bigotry, and elect to make the case public, I should naturally befriend you if possible, and I have no doubt that the National Secular Society would do so too.

Yours truly,
G. W. FOOTE.

I may note here that I never considered myself a victim; and I may add that, later on in the year (November, 1891), Mr. Foote inserted my first contribution to the *Freethinker* in the shape of an account of the School Board affair which I am now recalling.

Mr. Picton considered that it was unwise to ask for the withdrawal of the exemption which I had myself asked for in 1887.

My old friend, Mr. Arthur B. Moss (whom, in 1926, I salute joyfully!) wanted to ventilate the question in the daily papers; and he said:—

I decidedly think that you are entitled to teach the Bible in our schools; in fact, that you are one of the few teachers who are pre-eminently qualified for the work. Mrs. Besant has gone terribly adrift over your case, honestly no doubt.

Perhaps the reader will smile, as I do, at the somewhat puzzled disturbance into which my experience had thrown the minds of various correspondents. The perplexity was quite excusable.

In February, Lyulph Stanley (afterwards the Lord Sheffield who died not long ago) persuaded the Board to pass to the "next business" when Headlam moved: "That the S.M.C. be instructed to accede to the request of Mr. Gould, assistant at Northey Street School, Limehouse, to be allowed to resume the duty of giving Bible instruction."

In his *Church Reformer*, Headlam attacked Mrs. Besant's attitude, and in the *National Reformer*, Mrs. Besant replied, and affirmed, with regard to me:—

It is dishonourable to accept a place of trust, and use it for any other purposes than those for which it was given.....Mr. Gould's position is a most extraordinary one; why a Freethinker should want to pose as a teacher of the Bible I cannot imagine.

In the *National Reformer* of March 1 (Mr. J. M. Robertson having taken over the editorship on Brad-

laugh's recent death) I rejoined, and closed with an aspiration which I repeat to-day:—

In spite of any errors of judgment I may have committed under difficult circumstances, I trust that in some way my experiences may hasten the approach of a more rational system of education.

On March 5, Headlam re-opened the "hornets' nest" at the School Board, and secured a discussion. The leading opposition came from Mrs. Besant. From a dusty old copy of the *Times*, I take the record:—

Mrs. Besant expressed herself as entirely opposed to the motion. She had been spoken to by the teacher in question, and her views were that religious controversy should be kept out of the schools (cheers), that the teachers had no right to use their position as teachers to promulgate their own opinions against the religious views of the majority of the parents (cheers). The parents, who had the protection of the Conscience Clause, sent their children to the schools with the confidence that the Bible teaching would be Christian teaching, and no one had the liberty to give that teaching in a spirit of antagonism to the views of the parents (cheers). She claimed for the parents generally the liberty which Agnostics claimed.

The Rev. Copeland Bowie supported freedom for the teacher. Thirty-five years afterwards, I renew my thanks to him.

The motion was rejected by 25 votes to 4. It may be of interest to mention that the Board's chairman on the occasion was Professor Gladstone, father of the lady who married J. Ramsay Macdonald. Headlam observed to me that the opponents appeared to object to an Agnostic learning or teaching any ethical lessons from the Bible!

Since 1891, I have travelled much, studied educational systems, mingled with crowds of teachers and theoretical educationists, and seen the inside of multitudes of schools. Hence, whatever may be thought of the two suggestions I proceed to make, it cannot be said they are based on scanty materials for judgment:—

1. In matters of religion, as in political doctrine, public opinion grows; it does not move in leaps or jerks. It grows all the time in countries like England or France. It is, therefore, absurd to calculate that (let us say) English opinion will be more liberal in 1956 than in 1926, and so we will wait till 1956, and then issue more liberal instructions to the teachers. Teachers are a part of the community, and the liberty accorded to them should be in a measure which goes parallel with, and in harmony with, general public opinion; and this principle will apply, whether "Religious Instruction" is specifically retained or not. As a matter of fact, the teachers, who are far more strongly organized now than in 1891, tend more and more to make their views felt with respect to the school methods at large. No Acts of Parliament and no municipal regulations avail without the co-operation of the teachers.¹

2. The character of the general system of youth-training will decide the religious issue more effectively than the retention or the abolition of "Bible teaching," or "Religious Instruction." Finer and richer modes of teaching history and science will inevitably affect the destiny of religion. That is why I have often presented the following proposal, not so much as a definite legislative plan, as a means of illustrating what I think will be the ultimate situation in the people's schools:—

The whole of the instruction given in the public schools shall be subject to the inspection and control of the Board of Education, religious instruction

¹ I take occasion to remark that, under the present law of England, no Education Authority is obliged to provide "Religious Instruction."

as recognized by the Elementary Education Act of 1870 being abolished. The general instruction will include such teaching, drawn from the religious faiths of the world, as may, in the judgment of the teachers, promote the enthusiasm and knowledge necessary to personal and social service and to good citizenship. No religious catechism or formulary or doctrine which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught.

The crucial point here is not the removal of "Religious Instruction," but the opportunity for a progressive public opinion to influence the school outlook on service and citizenship. I can, in any case, declare my conviction that the outlook is far saner and more helpful in 1926 than in 1891. To-morrow, we shall do better still.

Let my last word in this present paper return to Stewart Headlam. My final meeting with him, so far as I can recall, was at Caxton Hall, Westminster, in November, 1921. Ethical and kindred societies had organized a Conference of Modern Religious Thinkers, and Headlam delivered his views. Those views embodied the theological motives which most of his hearers did not accept. Everybody, however, felt the thrill of his passion to renew, to reform, to re-direct, so that civilization might reach higher levels. In the midst of this discourse he burst into a tribute to the social and civic endeavours of Charles Bradlaugh. In the unfolding of the universe, as Headlam understood it, Bradlaugh's spirit, critical and combative, was akin to the spirit of a redeeming Messiah—"whose fan" (as the Bible says) "is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor."

They who seek to fan the chaff from the corn amid the vast debates and agitations of the world's feelings, thoughts, and ideals, are many and diverse in type. It is a happy thing if, in spite of differences, a certain fundamental likeness of creative genius can be appreciated. We can pass beyond Headlam's creed, and yet candidly and gladly honour his personal worth and fraternity of vision.

F. J. GOULD.

Capital Punishment.

[The National Secular Society, having as one of its Immediate Practical Objects the Abolition of Capital Punishment, has become affiliated to the "National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty."]

THE institution of capital punishment is exceedingly old, far older than any other punishment. In fact, imprisonment was probably a mere preliminary to some form of killing. A man was "penned" like an animal to be ready for the inevitable slaughter. In all probability, if one can reason at all from data either non-existent or pre-historic, it was a stage in evolution when trial, ordeal, or mere deliberation took the place of slaying at sight.

The whole idea of penal treatment, the punishment of crime, has probably followed the earlier conception that a man who has taken the life of a fellow tribesman has forfeited his life by doing so. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed." Whence it may be argued that minor offences, once equally subjecting the offender to loss of his life, may in proportion require a portion of the offender's life to be forfeited.

It is a great step in moral evolution to have reached the stage in which the death penalty is reserved for practically one offence only. Whatever may be said about the relative moral values of some murderers as compared with some inhuman wretches whose

crimes are confined to gross cruelty and outrage, society is not wrong in regarding murder *per se* as the most serious of all crimes. Believers in the abolition of capital punishment are not less sensitive than the average citizen to the sanctity of human life. On the contrary, the movement for abolition is based on the highest possible regard for human life, even the life of a murderer, without in any way losing the deepest sympathy for the sufferings of his victim, and sincere horror at the incalculable effects of crimes of violence.

Our policy is not primarily sympathy with the murderer. It is often said that many criminals would prefer a death sentence to life-long detention. This may be true, but such a consideration ought no more to weigh with a citizen than would a demand for trial by ordeal, or, let us say, the suggestion that a criminal might be severely flogged and immediately liberated.

Some attention may be given to the mistaken idea of the expiation of crime. It is quite a theological conception. There can, of course, be no expiation in the true sense. It would be wrong to deprive an unhappy offender of any incentive he may possess towards good citizenship. The law of cause and effect precludes the possibility of his execution compensating society or his victim or anyone else for the wrong done. His idea of expiation may, however, be converted into a factor of some social value if directed towards a desire to serve mankind by a life of good citizenship. The possibility of that hope being accomplished must not be taken away, but it is obvious that any human being who has proved his incapability of being trusted not to kill his fellows cannot be set at liberty until long experience has convinced society that the offender is cured.

It is not necessary to argue out the whole case for penal reform; as far as capital punishment is concerned, all that the abolitionists ask is that penal servitude for life shall be substituted for the death penalty.

It must be remembered that the law allows the sentence of death to be passed on young people over the age of sixteen. There is abundant reason for raising the age limit. If a man cannot vote until he is twenty-one it is wrong to pass on him the irrevocable sentence of hanging. In the case of all young people guilty of homicide it would be better to have them "detained during His Majesty's pleasure." But a simple substitution of a life sentence in all cases where at present capital punishment follows the offence, would be an advance towards humaner justice.

The abolitionist movement is not a new agitation. A Royal Commission was appointed in 1865 to consider the question. Mr. Justice Denman in his evidence before that Commission gave as his deliberate opinion that "there is more on the whole done by Capital Punishment to induce murders than to prevent them."

In 1874 the House of Commons Committee unanimously reported against the death penalty. The list of supporters of abolition is so very weighty that one would imagine this reform should have been passed long ago. There is, however, a very strongly entrenched opposition, including "flogging" judges, bishops, and lawyers who seem swayed neither by logic, facts, nor humanity.

The value of some of their "testimony" may be gauged by a recent statement by Justice Darling in the *Evening News*, who said that "Monsieur Grévy, when President of France, commuted every sentence of death, with the result that murders multiplied beyond measure and it was made most difficult to revert to the former salutary practice."

The facts about France are that the death penalty has never been abolished. There was never a year during Grévy's presidency when there were no executions. Nine years before Grévy's presidency there were one hundred and six executions; during the nine years that Grévy was president there were forty-nine; and in the subsequent nine years there were ninety-one.¹

The strong argument against Capital Punishment is that there is a constant risk of imposing an irreparable penalty on an innocent man. Except in cases where the murderer confesses, or there are actual eye-witnesses to the crime it is impossible to say with certainty that the accused was guilty. In all other penal cases a judge and jury may justly feel that they can only weigh the evidence and come to a conclusion as to the probabilities of guilt. If an error has occurred there is a possibility of "pardoning" an innocent man (rather a clumsy form of rectifying any injustice at the best). But if the man has been hanged nothing can atone for such miscarriage.

It may be said, and with truth, that juries are exceedingly reluctant to give a verdict of guilty and are rather likely to strain a point in favour of the accused, even when on the whole his guilt is probable. This is not an argument in favour of the death sentence: a jury should be encouraged to do its duty towards society: the death sentence is bound to restrain a humane jury from risking a mistake on the wrong side.

Recently criticism has been raised against the unnecessarily voluminous details of divorce cases in our newspapers. Nothing could be more objectionable in that respect than the morbid interest of old and young in murder trials. Often the details are particularly revolting, but the public mind will continue to be excited in the "fight for a life" which every murder trial implies.

One ought not to leave out of account the distressing effect of Capital Punishment on the innocent wife, children, and family of the executed man. There is reason to believe that this distress is often felt in addition by the widow or other survivors of the victim of a murder. The whole prison too is flung into painful agitation which is not good for discipline. Also the hangman and all actively concerned in taking the life of a murderer must necessarily endure the suffering of acute mental strain unless their nature has already been hardened into insensibility by repeated experiences of the kind.

The following European countries have abolished the death penalty: Holland, Italy, Norway, Austria, Sweden, Portugal, Roumania, Belgium, and Denmark. Switzerland has abolished Capital Punishment in fifteen out of its twenty-five cantons, and it should be noted that Switzerland has the best record in the world for the rarity of homicide. There have only been seven executions in Switzerland during the past forty years. In all the countries mentioned there has been no noteworthy increase in homicides, in nearly all of them there has been a steady diminution. A variety of causes doubtless contributes to this general advance of civilization, but it is indisputable that the abolition of Capital Punishment does not lead to any increase in the number of murders.

In Australia, the State of Queensland has discontinued Capital Punishment. The American States which have abolished the Death Penalty take high rank amongst those with fewest murders: the States with the most murders retain Capital Punishment.

It is sometimes suggested that abolition would lead to more lynching. The experience of U.S.A. contra-

dicts this idea. The facts may be read in *America and Capital Punishment*, a pamphlet issued by the National Council for the Abolition of Capital Punishment. It is only too true that lynching most often takes the form of rescuing negroes from prison where they would be hanged in order to put them to death with greater cruelty.

Mr. Roy Calvert says:—

Capital Punishment will be retained in England until public opinion demands its abolition. The responsibility for its retention *rests upon you and me*. Our duty will not be fulfilled until we set ourselves to an active and persistent propaganda for the removal of the death penalty from the Statute Book.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of Durham in a letter to the *Times* protests against the action of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in permitting Sunday games on the property entrusted to them. One of his contentions is that the plea for Sunday games, based on the lack of leisure during the week, no longer has force; daylight saving and the increased number of holidays and opportunities for leisure make this argument valueless. One would fancy that by the way the Bishop talks his Church is responsible for securing these improved opportunities for leisure now enjoyed by the workers. We are not aware that the Church ever advocated lesser working hours, or agitated for a Bank Holiday, or supported the Daylight Saving Bill, as means for giving the people more time for recreation. The masses would have profited by none of these things if they had depended upon the Church to secure them. A question for the Bishop and his Sabbatarian fanatics is, if none of these opportunities for recreation were available would he withdraw his opposition to Sunday games? We know very well he would not. Then his implied contention that increased opportunities for games make Sunday recreation unnecessary is sheer cant.

Some of the disadvantages under which the children of the poor spend their early lives were mentioned by the Bishop of Hereford when addressing a gathering of the Ragged School Union. The child, he said, was for the most part the victim of his circumstances. Heredity blighted the lives of so many children, and their environment too often degraded their personality. Anything that was done to help and uplift required to be done in the spirit of sympathy based on knowledge and understanding. These are rather queer statements to come from a high official serving a creed which dogmatically asserts that every man, woman and child is endowed with a will absolutely free. If the child's personality is moulded by heredity and environment, obviously his conduct will be in keeping with his personality. And if this conduct is seen to be degraded or harmful and one attempts to alter it by improving the personality through the medium of better environment and of instruction, one is clearly working on deterministic lines to effect that improvement. And when one does that, one is tacitly admitting that the child has no "will" which is absolutely free in the theological sense of the word. Perhaps, then, the Bishop will tell us of what value is the Free-will theory if in practice it has to be dumped overboard and determinism installed as pilot.

A Baptist writer in commenting on Mrs. Sidney Webb's book, *My Apprenticeship*, says that a striking feature of contemporary life, as compared with that of half a century ago, is the large amount of both useful and unselfish activity which has no apparent connection with organized religion. Indeed, he continues, one of the difficulties of the life and work of the Church today is that it must compete with so many interests

¹ For further figures in regard to France, see *Common Sense and Capital Punishment*, by J. W. Hall, M.A., B.C.L.

that ultimately belong to the same Lord. There are people in the churches active in some form of social or philanthropic service, yet never pull their weight in the life of the Church. But, says this writer, what is more serious still is that a much larger number of those who serve with them are not with the churches at all. All this puzzles our Baptist friend, especially when he finds a woman such as Mrs. Webb, active in the cause of social reform and in improving the conditions of the people, who yet appears to stand aloof from organized religion.

For our part, we don't quite see why our Christian friend need be puzzled at finding that earnest workers for social and philanthropic objects are outside the Church. The key to the whole matter seems revealed in another passage quoted from Mrs. Webb's book: "We can neither see, think, nor feel alone, much less live, without the help of others. Therefore we must live for others, and take what happiness comes to us by the way." Given a man or woman socially conscious in this wise, and given a warm heart and sensitive mind, there is bound to be a sinking of self in service for others and an aiming to benefit the community. On the Baptist reviewer's own showing Christians can claim no monopoly of such men and women. It seems clear, then, that religion has nothing to do with the aspiration such workers feel; people without any religion at all experience the same urge and accomplish as useful work as that achieved by their pious-minded brethren. As for Mrs. Webb's habit of prayer and the consolation she appears to get from it, plenty of earnest social workers dispense with such things altogether, yet their efforts are equally useful. We hazard a guess that, on analysis, Mrs. Webb's prayer is little else than auto-suggestion following a meditation on social problems and ways and means of overcoming them. And the "Great Spirit" she fancies she thus gets in communion with is nothing other than her own great-hearted self. To men and women such as she Christ and the Church have nothing to offer. And so they turn aside from them, and work, not to secure selfishly a place in Heaven or to avoid consignment to Hell, but to bring about a better condition of things on earth.

The uproar raised by Sabbatarians against Sunday games is an offence against true religion, declares a contemporary. On the contrary. The uproar is merely the outcome of true religion acting as it always has acted and asserting that Sunday is a taboo day which the Lord hath decreed shall be given up to religious exercises. Our contemporary's blather about "true religion" serves no useful purpose. What the public should be told is that Sabbatarian uproar against Sunday games is an offence against common-sense and individual freedom—two things which have little in common with "true religion."

Mr. Sinclair Lewis, the novelist, recently startled chapel-ridden America by declaring he disbelieved in God. The pious had hardly got over this awful shock when he startles them again by dressing down some ministers in this wise: "You are a fine bunch. You get up to preach things neither you nor your congregations believe. Why don't you be honest in your pulpits?" Really, Mr. Lewis, you shouldn't ask an awkward question like that! Honesty in the pulpit? No one expects to find that. It went out of fashion in ecclesiastical circles many long years ago. It never did sit comfortably on a church pedestal.

The times have changed! It was but yesterday when the Rev. Stewart Headlam lost his curacy for defending the Stage against the revilings of the ultra-pious. And to-day, that astute old trimmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury presents the theatre with a slashing testimonial. Says he: "The Stage stands to-day for something that on the whole is for the untold good and not for the ill of the people." We would dearly love to hear the opinion of that merry "rogue and vagabond," Master William Shakespeare, on this piece of belated

ecclesiastical patronage. There is one question we would ask his Grace. Is he in favour of the Sunday opening during Church hours of those buildings where is to be had this "untold good"? If he is not, he is committed to supporting a policy which aims to withhold from the people untold good for fifty-two days a year. And that is a position, we may add, no righteous man could desire to be in. But possibly his Grace, like the majority of his Roman-collared craft, holds that Saturday's good is Sunday's evil.

More journalistic wisdom! Last week we dwelt upon the wisdom of Mr. James Douglas who discovered that we came through the General Strike as well as we did because we trusted to the power of prayer. Now the *Yorkshire Observer* discovers that "when any great national movement is afoot we do not turn to mere oratory and processions like the Italians and the French and the Germans, but to the ministrations and utterances of our own religious leaders." It seems almost a pity to disturb this by any kind of comment, but one is left wondering at the mentality of men who can write in this fashion. Is it due to sheer stupidity on their part, or is it written with a tongue in the cheek in unshakable confidence in the silliness of the average newspaper reader? We feel inclined to offer a presentation volume to the reader who sends the most satisfactory reply to this query.

What happens to children who die at birth? asked the Rev. Father Herbert Thurston, S.J., addressing the University of London Catholic Society. Did they, he continued, form a sort of celestial kindergarten? He believed that their intelligence having once been created must go on developing. Now, just fancy the kind of mentality these university men must possess to be content to spend time listening to this kind of puerile drivel. That they are content to do so would appear to indicate that *their* intelligence sadly needs to go on developing. But we doubt if it stands much chance of doing that so long as they put it to school with a Catholic priest. If there is such a thing as a Celestial Kindergarten, we should say that Father Thurston when he "passes over" is certainly booked for it. Judging by the things that appear to interest him, one might say he would make an excellent pupil.

In regard to the present unrest in all parts of the world, Mr. Shoran Singa (Secretary of the Indian Y.M.C.A.), declared that it was ridiculous to ascribe it to Bolshevism. Apart from all political propaganda, it was obvious that the spirit of Jesus was at work, creating a new outlook, a new hope, a great longing to live and not to be crushed. This Indian gentleman seems to have a queer notion of New Testament teachings. He appears not to have noticed that they exhort one to turn the other cheek to an aggressor, preach non-resistance to evil, abjure slaves to obey their masters, and so forth *ad nauseum*. In all this, which embodies the spirit of Jesus, there seems precious little for the oppressed to build "a new hope" upon.

The Rev. Arthur Gossip, of Aberdeen, said in a sermon recently that most people were rather like pebbles in the stream, rounded into an unarresting conformity; thinking other people's opinions, blown to and fro by the conceptions of our time, rarely with energy enough to live with some originality. We think it ill becomes a Christian minister to complain thus. It is the Churches that have done more to create the sheep mentality than has any other agency. They have persecuted heretics, both religious and freethinking. They placed embargoes on freedom of thought and utterance, and have thus discouraged originality and independence in order to achieve an "unarresting conformity" with their own superstitions and narrow notions. And it is only of recent years that the people are beginning to recover from this Christian blight upon intelligence. This recovery, however, is not one that the Churches are likely to welcome very warmly—it shows itself in emptying Churches.

Special.

We have hopes that the present issue of the *Freethinker* will reach all subscribers duly and without mishap. But that has not been the case with the two previous issues—the double number dated May 9-16, and the one dated May 23. Of the first-named issue only about one-fourth of the edition was put into circulation owing to the dispute in the wholesale distributing trade. Of the issue for May 23 we managed to dispatch about three-fourths of the edition, but there are many regular readers who are still without their copies.

In these circumstances we urge them either to order these back numbers through their regular agents or to send direct to the office. *To those who send direct we will supply the missing numbers at threepence per copy, post free.*

We again urge upon all the desirability of helping our circulation by introducing it to as many new readers as possible. We have many new readers of two or three years' standing, who tell us that they only became acquainted with the existence of the paper when they first began to subscribe. That alone proves the possibility of securing new readers if all set to work. We will send the paper free for six weeks to any name and address on receipt of threepence in stamps to cover cost of postage.

There was never greater need for a paper such as the *Freethinker* than there is to-day.

To Correspondents.

Those subscribers who receive their copy of the "*Freethinker*" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

V. J. HANDS.—Sorry to hear you have been unwell, and hope that the finer weather will help to put you right. Have had several enquiries about you of late.

B. D. SIDE.—One trouble seems to get out of the way only to make room for another one. But we manage to keep going for all that. It was, from one point of view, encouraging to know that people missed their *Freethinker* so much.

L. STERNS FADELE.—We quite share your opinion as to the quality of much of the so-called "sport" in this country.

H. THOMAS.—Yours is one of many letters that have reached us on the question of the omitted issue. There should be no trouble in your newsagent now getting the back numbers. If there is, please write us direct.

The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

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Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

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Letters for the Editor of the "*Freethinker*" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

Up to a date that made the final arrangements a matter of great haste, it was doubtful whether it would be advisable to hold the Annual Conference this year as arranged or postpone it till some more favourable date. Things cleared up sufficiently for the Executive to decide on holding the Conference, and it was quite harmonious and completely successful. Some delegates who intended being present, mostly from the North of England, were unable to come owing to difficulties caused by the Strike, and many individual members were also chary of coming from a distance on account of the train service. Both Mr. Lloyd and Mr. A. B. Moss were unable to come owing to their being indisposed, and letters of regret were received from other absentees. One of those who managed to get down to the Saturday evening reception, and to the Sunday evening meeting was Miss Baker, daughter of Daniel Baker, whose lengthy connection with the movement is one of the outstanding features of Birmingham Freethought. Her presence, under great difficulties, bore testimony to her warm interest in the movement.

We shall publish the report of the Conference proceedings next week. All the officials were re-elected, and Mr. Cohen now enters upon his eleventh year of office. The years seem to have rolled by very rapidly, since the death of G. W. Foote; they have been years of storm, stress, and trial such as the Society has never before had, and in thanking the Conference for the honour done him, Mr. Cohen said he could only hope that the movement had at least held its own under his presidency.

The evening meeting, a report of which appears in another column, was held in the handsome Scala Theatre, and was quite a good one, although not up to the average in point of numbers. This might well be accounted for by the pre-occupation of the public mind with the industrial dispute, and also by the short time allowed for making the meeting known. But the meeting itself was interesting and appreciated. The speeches of Messrs. Willis, Williams, Rosetti, Monks, Bedborough, and Miss Macaulay and the President were followed with evident interest and appreciation, and there was a good demand for literature at the close of the meeting. One was left with a strong impression of the vitality of the movement and the keenness and ability of those who made it their business to place it before the general public. The meeting lasted just over two hours, and to say the audience was interested from start to finish on a fine summer evening is the best tribute one can offer to the character of the speeches delivered.

The *Jersey Critic* reprints, with due acknowledgments, the article on "What is Wrong with State Education?" by Mimmernus, from a recent issue of the *Freethinker*.

Letters and other things have been getting all behind in consequence of the Strike, and so we have now only a chance to note the report of the Secretary of the South London Branch concerning Mr. Whitehead's recent campaign. As we have already reported, the meetings were very successful, in spite of the abnormal conditions, and we now learn that many new members were made. The Secretary desires to thank Mr. Leonard Rolph for his very effective help during the campaign.

N.S.S. Conference.

Executive's Annual Report.

BY THE PRESIDENT.

At the opening of this report it may not be out of place to congratulate the Conference on the fact of the country having so far recovered its normal condition as to admit of this gathering being held. It is a commonplace of our controversial opponents that our social life is permeated with Christian influences, and the ethical value of that is well shown by the fact that no better nor wiser plan of settling industrial difficulties could be found than that of plunging the country into what was virtually a state of civil war. Those who look beneath the surface will, however, find nothing very surprising in this. War in its cruder forms has never lacked encouragement under the rule of the Christian Church, and we must not be surprised if this form of the war spirit—the power of force as opposed to that of reason—spreads over into our social life.

The Executive has again to report a steady flow of new members, and during the year the formation of a new and energetic Branch at Ashton-under-Lyne. There is plenty of energy in this new Branch, and in a thickly-populated area in which it works, almost limitless opportunities for propaganda. It is to be hoped that it will meet with the encouragement and the support it deserves. A feature of the new members admitted into the Society is the number living overseas. The Society may thus congratulate itself on being well represented in many parts of the globe.

Every opportunity has been seized by the Executive to press forward the lecturing propaganda of the Society, and on the whole the meetings have been more than usually successful. Mr. R. H. Rosetti has been busy where opportunities offered, both in London and the Provinces, and has made steady headway in the esteem of his audiences. Messrs. Bedborough, Ratcliffe, and Cutner have also paid visits to provincial Branches and held successful meetings. Mr. Clifford Williams, of Birmingham, has been busy in holding discussions in local assemblies with conspicuous success. Many other local speakers all over the country have been active, and have done their share of the general work. The Manchester, Bolton, and Ashton-under-Lyne Branches have been very busy, and are endeavouring to effect a closer working combination of Lancashire Branches and members with a view to a more intensive propaganda. This is a step that may be commended to other organizations in other parts of the country. The Executive, as usual, engaged the whole-time services of Mr. George Whitehead during the summer months—May-September—and he has delivered very many lectures with marked success. The energetic West Ham Branch recently attempted a series of meetings in the Bromley Public Hall, which were completely successful, and which may be continued next season. The North London and South London Branches have maintained their indoor meetings during the winter and report many successful gatherings. In the Provinces, Branches from Glasgow to Plymouth also have been busy, although in many places they are still sadly hampered by the want of suitable halls for meetings. That is a difficulty which time alone seems able to cure.

The Executive also arranged for two special lectures by the President in the Century Theatre, London, and one at the Stratford Town Hall. All three lectures were well attended, and the meetings so arranged would have been extended had suitable accommodation been found.

At the invitation of the Vicar of Stratford, a discussion on the existence of God was arranged between Mr. Cohen and Canon Storr, of Westminster. Canon Storr is one of the leading theologians of the English Church, and proved an amiable and able opponent. Freethinkers were well pleased with the outcome of the discussion, and the Town Hall was crowded, large numbers being unable to gain admission. Another public discussion between the President and the Rev.

Mr. Mason took place at Burslem. Owing to some blunder over the advertising the debate was not so successful—from the point of view of numbers—as it might have been, but it had the result of arousing interest locally in the Freethought movement.

Another incident of the past year is worth passing notice. A number of daily and weekly papers in various parts of the country inaugurated discussions on the question of religion. In nearly every case the writers were carefully chosen, so that no very drastic attack on Christianity should appear. In one case there was, however, an exception. The *Manchester Evening News* invited the President of the N.S.S. to contribute an article, giving him perfect freedom of treatment. The offer was accepted. The interest aroused by the article was very great, and the Manchester and Salford Council of Christian Congregations regarded the matter as serious enough to select five representatives, including the Dean of Manchester, to reply. A further rejoinder by Mr. Cohen followed, with much other correspondence. The incident is interesting only as illustrating the policy usually followed. It was not the character of the article contributed by Mr. Cohen, so much as the consternation displayed at the "other side" being permitted a hearing, that is significant. We do not know how far other papers may feel inclined to follow the example thus set, but it is certain that if local Freethinkers were more assertive and insistent very much greater publicity would be given to Freethought than is at present the case.

It will be noted that the balance-sheet presented to the Conference—a statement which deals with the income and expenditure of the Executive only, and does not deal with the income and expenditure of Branches—acknowledges the sum of £62 os. 7d. as legacies. This is made up of £10 received under the will of Mr. Leeson, of Leicester, the balance being residue from the estate of Miss Day, the larger sum being acknowledged in last year's balance-sheet. Notice of a contingent legacy was also received by the Trustees of the National Secular Society under the will of Mr. Robert Bulman. Mr. Bulman was a very old member of the Society, and a life-long supporter of the movement. He was of a very quiet and retiring disposition, but well known to many London Freethinkers. By his will, of which Mr. Cohen is one of the Trustees and Executors, he bequeaths the income of his estate to his widow, and at her demise the estate is to be divided between the National Secular Society and Bartholomew's Hospital. It is expected that the Society will benefit to the extent of about £6,000.

Reference was made in the last report to the desirability of securing central premises in London as a suitable headquarters for the movement. During the year several premises have been inspected, but nothing suitable has yet been found. That object has not, however, been lost sight of. It is possible that owing to change of ownership the Society may have to vacate its present offices, but by the time that occurs it is to be hoped that something adequate will have presented itself. If a suitable building—something fitted to the work of the Society, and within the scope of the Society's resources could be found, many new ways of promoting our objects might be found. What can be done in present circumstances the Executive does, but it is quite alive to the fact that many other things might be done. Perhaps in this connection the Executive may be permitted to express its high appreciation of the work done by Miss K. B. Kough, who for some years has acted as the eyes of our General Secretary, and who has so freely and so ungrudgingly given her time to the movement. If more has not been said of this it is not because the Executive and others have been blind to the nature and the value of what has been done.

Regarding the movement for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws there is nothing special to report, save that a Bill is at present before Parliament awaiting the opportunity for a second reading. This year the Bill has been introduced by Mr. George Lansbury. This was not because Mr. Harry Snell was unwilling to again introduce the Bill, but because the Society for

the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws took the view that it was as well to remove any impression that the measure was no more than a sectarian movement, or the attempts of one or two faddists. It is indeed good to be able to say that the movement is gaining support with many who in no wise sympathise with our opinions, but who do wish to see these survivals of medieval intolerance swept away. The demand is made in the name of social justice, and it is on this basis that we have always rested our case. Freethinkers are the last to ask for any sectarian privileges, or to make demands for any advantage that is not to be shared by every section of the community. We have every reason for assuming that if and when the Bill does advance to the stage of a second reading it will obtain more support than any previous Bill has yet received.

An indication of this was given in a largely attended public meeting held in the Essex Hall on April 23, on which occasion the chair was taken by Canon Donaldson.

The meeting was organized by the Society for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, it received the support of many well-known men and women engaged in public life, and the interest and the enthusiasm shown speaks well for the future of the Bill.

With regard to the other agitation in which the Society approaches the field of political action—the demand for a policy of exclusively Secular Education in State-supported schools, the appeal of the Executive is for renewed watchfulness and increased activity on the part of all who believe in the justice of that policy. There are continuous attempts on the part of the Established and the Roman Church to secure some more definite form of denominational religious instruction in State schools, and this would not be resisted by Non-conformists if only a plan could be devised which would promote their sectarian interests also. In Yorkshire and elsewhere in the country a new form of compromise is being set up which enables definite denominational instruction to be given under certain specified conditions. In addition hope is expressed by Roman Catholic leaders that in that the near future new legislation may be attempted, and their schools, with, of course, such instruction as will suit the Church, will be “fully supported by public money.”

In the face of these attempts the Executive feels justified in seriously urging upon Secularists to see that the utmost opposition is offered, in the press and in the Council chamber, to these attempts to exploit the child in the interests of this or that Church. The struggle for the child is vital to the Church, the freedom of the child is vital to the best interests of civilization.

But the moral with regard to both the Blasphemy Laws and Secular Education is that we must go on making and multiplying the number of Freethinkers. Ingersoll well said that the Christian Church did not give up burning heretics because it no longer wished to burn them, but because the number of those who objected to being burned grew too large for convenient combustion. Justice to non-Christians by Christians has never been done out of love of justice, but because the number of non-Christians grew too large to be deprived longer of the justice due to them. There are hundreds of thousands of Freethinkers in this country, and there are other hundreds of thousands who are on the border line. So far as the first body is concerned the Executive is of opinion that every attempt should be made by local Secularists everywhere to bring them within the Society. If it cannot be done in any other way, their names and addresses should be sent to headquarters and attempts to enlist their support might be made from there. And with regard to the second group a more energetic propagandist spirit might succeed in bringing those who compose it, definitely over to our side. A wise distribution of suitable literature would be effective, free copies of the *Freethinker* sent them for a number of weeks would also be helpful. This is a work that everyone and anyone can do. It is earnestly to be hoped that they will do it.

This appeal is not made by the Executive because it ignores the great amount of work that is already being done by individual Freethinkers all over the

country. The Executive is so much alive to the value of this work that it urges its expansion. If we may borrow a phrase from the religious world, it is the missionary spirit that has made the Freethought position what it is, and it is by the cultivation of the missionary spirit that it will go on to renewed conquests.

Reference has been made above to the flow of new members joining the Society. That is very satisfactory, but it would be the greatest of errors to measure the value of a movement such as ours by mere numbers. The great work of Freethought has always been a work of permeation, and some of our greatest triumphs are registered among those who are not with us in name, and would hasten to dissociate themselves from us. Our great aim has been the humanizing and rationalizing of life, and in the steps that have been made in this direction during the past century the Freethought movement may fairly and justly claim front rank. If to-day we find prominent Bishops such as Bishop Gore deliberately throwing over many of the specific doctrines of Christianity, or men such as the Bishop of Birmingham repudiating the Biblical story of creation, if we find so many of the once cherished doctrines of the Christian religion reduced to the level of exploded superstitions, it is largely because of the Freethought propaganda of the past two or three generations. Only recently, we may note, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners decided to throw all the public spaces under their control open to Sunday games. When we remember the bitter opposition offered by all Christians to Sunday recreation, and the way in which our immediate Freethinking predecessors fought to obtain a rational Sunday, we may count this as not the least of the triumphs that our movement has largely helped to win, and without which it would probably never have been won at all.

But it would be idle to assume, when we dwell upon the gains already made, to count the battle won. There is a contra account here as elsewhere. The advances made in this and other countries by the Roman Catholic Church must never be overlooked, constituting, as it does, one of the gravest of menaces to the best interests of civilized life. That Church does not gain at our expense, but it does grow at the expense of the other Churches, and because of the unity of the Roman Church, and the docility of its members, because of its growing claims to recognition by the Secular powers, conceded in Italy and in one or two other places, it is a menace with which all reformers must reckon. And beyond this we must count as an ever present danger the immense mass of superstition still current among the people, and the tendency of politicians to pander to this or that section of the religious world in the hopes of party or political gain.

All this should serve to remind Freethinkers all over the country of the immense work that still lies before us, of the value to the whole of the community of a Society such as ours, and of the importance of the ideals and principles for which it stands. In these days when the power of authority, as such, appears to be growing in the political world, when masses of men are drilled like soldiers, and led almost like sheep, in the name of this or that party, or this or that church, the existence of a body of men and women who stand for the free and unfettered exercise and expression of opinion on all subjects, religious, political, and social, represents a social asset of incalculable value. It is surely of value to have men and women banded together who believe that the truth is something which will benefit all, that truth is something which can only be ascertained by free discussion on a basis of informed thinking, and that the only truth of value to anyone is that which is reached by the individual in this way. That is the ideal for which the Freethought movement in this country has always stood, and more than ever to-day is it essential if we are to realize the fact of a free, intelligent, and progressive community.

No pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth.—Bacon.

The N.S.S. Annual Conference.

Evening Public Meeting.

MANY of us wondered if there would be any Annual Conference at all this year. There is no need to emphasize the difficulties we apprehended. Whit Sunday was very near the Nine Days' Strike. The Mines' troubles were given as a reason for restricting train services everywhere. The total result, as far as we are concerned, was a diminution of delegate attendance. There was no lack of enthusiasm for the cause of Free-thought.

The Saturday Reception was a very cheerful function. With no formality of any sort old friends met, and new friends were introduced. Birmingham Branch members were very much to the front in hospitality and help to those who came from a distance. Our posters were well displayed, and the Branch members did all in their power to make the Sunday evening meeting a success.

The temporary closing of the Town Hall for renovations took away from us the fine opportunity for propaganda that magnificent building would have given to our Sunday evening demonstration. Failing the Town Hall, we could hardly have done better than to meet in the big and handsome Scala Theatre, a building quite as central as the Town Hall.

The audience was large, appreciative, and obviously sympathetic to our principles. The fact that there were certainly many who do not regularly attend Free-thought meetings was a tribute to the attraction of our speakers and the drawing power of our movement.

The President, MR. CHAPMAN COHEN, re-elected unanimously that morning, received a great ovation on rising to open the evening meeting. He briefly outlined the main principles of the N.S.S., taking for his text a poster at the door of the Scala Cinema: "Not So Long Ago." Our movement began in a sense when Thomas Paine started to tell some of the truth about the Christian religion. For many years, not so long ago, men and women were sent to prison for writing and circulating these truths. There never was a greater need than to-day for the masses of the people to be told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. In the churches to-day you get some of the truth, but only for the purpose of backing up the lies of the Christian religion. He mentioned Bishop Barnes, who has the reputation of an eminent theologian, a scientist, and an advanced thinker? Why? Because sixty-seven years after the publication of the *Origin of Species*, and nearly a hundred years after Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, Bishop Barnes rejects some of the more fantastic of the Bible stories and the Biblical account of creation. It says little for the intellect of those who call such a position "advanced thinking." What we want is complete freedom of expression of our thought, and we are as yet far from that ideal. It is of pressing importance that there should be a body of men like the N.S.S. to teach that truth is only to be discovered by research and the constant clash of ideas and ideals. It does not matter whether there is a future or not. If there is there will be enough of it to go round. Disbelief in it will make no difference.

Mr. Cohen drew attention to the enormous revenues of the churches, free from taxation. He drew Mr. Churchill's attention to this source of income for a revenue which taxes even bookmakers but leaves the parson alone. Why should churches and chapels not bear their fair share of taxation? The whole religious history of all the centuries has done nothing but hinder the realization of a happy, sensible, contented social life.

MR. GEORGE BEDBOROUGH paid a tribute to the President and Secretary. He referred to new theories about God, and to the new Bibles which modern times had found necessary, such as the Woman's Bible, the Child's Bible, etc. But with all these new developments not one of the great churches had in any way modified its creeds. The Articles of Religion, proclaimed in 1562, we still proclaim to-day as the unchanged basis of ecclesiastical teaching. Prayers for rain, fine weather,

victory, and so on were still appointed to be used in churches. Mr. Bedborough pictured the horrors of a world in which the Bible really turned out to be true.

MISS MACAULAY made an admirable speech—her first speech from a Secularist platform. She traced the history of her conversion from Anglo-Catholicism to Atheism. She explained how Robertson, of Brighton, Huxley, and others had influenced her, and how finally she had found that the N.S.S. was the best medium for those who sought an uncompromising enemy of religion. Miss Macaulay was particularly impressive in referring to the attitude of the Church on such pressing social problems as Divorce, Birth Control, etc. Altogether she proved herself a valuable recruit to our cause.

MR. F. E. WILLIS, so well known to Birmingham audiences, was at his best. In a witty and wise speech he referred to children being born neither Liberal, Labour, nor Conservative: they are born little Atheists. It is only when nurses and teachers and priests get control of them that they become victims of religion. He believed in Secular Education. Children should be taught only the things we all agree to be true—all the rest should be taught by parents if necessary. He knew that many who attend church for conventional reasons are beginning to doubt the efficacy of prayer. Prayer is a delusion. There is no single record of a prayer ever being answered. The history of all the churches has been persecution and the stultification of all attempts at human progress—from the days of Bruno to Paine, Truelove, and all pioneers of freedom and reform.

MR. F. E. MONKS said it is true that we inherit our religion just as we inherit our morals. He remembered how he had been, at sixteen years old, prepared for Confirmation. The whole idea of it was to make him see God as a ubiquitous policeman. "Thou God seest me." In other words, "Do right, or you will be found out." He referred to the three problems of the existence of God, the Future Life, and Freewill *versus* Determinism. When once one understands how the belief in God arose in the savage mind it is easy enough to dispense with such belief. The Spiritualists professed to offer proofs of a future life, but after investigation these proofs are found worthless. You can have no free will if you believe as we do that effect always follows cause; as soon as we realize the latter fact, it will influence all that we do. We shall agree with Omar: "I myself am Heaven and Hell."

MR. R. H. ROSETTI spoke eloquently and was warmly applauded as he roused the audience with his indictment of the evil influence and history of religion. He explained a problem that often perplexes the student: why the most roguishly evil enterprises have been blessed and received by the common people as beneficent. The reason, of course, is that such enterprises have always been falsely represented by religion and the real nature of wrongdoing has been obscured. People are humbugged into accepting dark deeds as if they were good and true. The Church has never told the truth about science and scientific writers, nor will it tell the truth about Freethought or Freethinkers. It dare not. It would never stand a chance if it once admitted facts about our ideas and teachings which would make their followers see us as we really are. If we had but one week of the opportunities and liberty the churches have enjoyed for centuries we would get every thinking man and woman out of the Christian Churches. Freethought to-day exposes Christianity as played out and obsolete and fit only for the shelves of our museums as an interesting reminder of the intellectual infancy of the race.

MR. CLIFFORD WILLIAMS made a most brilliant speech, fitting, as the Chairman said, for the last speech of the evening, alike for its matter and its delivery. He drew a striking contrast between what religion has done in 1,800 years and what science has done in a century. Christianity may not have been directly responsible for all the great wars, but it has never put any obstacle to war. Christians are beginning to realize that religion is moribund and played out. They see the writing on the wall.

G. E.

Statesmen—and Others.

AN EMERSONIAN SAVOURY.

THE intellectual calibre of a people may be estimated by the extent of its emancipation from those abstract fetishes, the Church and the State. I say "abstract" advisedly, for the nuclei of both are inherent in the individual and take tangible form and activity with the organized ignorance of the masses. Nature is said to abhor a vacuum; it also abhors chaos. Our present system of government is a crude attempt by nature to reduce to some semblance of order through man's very imperfect intelligence that grotesque hybrid "man" and that equally grotesque abnormality "civilization." As the electrons and atoms of man's organism cohere to make up each human animal, so seek the individual units of humanity to find expression as a living whole. And this whole we call, for want of a better term—the State. That bastard offspring of superstition—the Church—is embodied in this, of which more anon.

Intelligence is a question of degree. The greatest men that have ever lived, those who have had the acutest apprehension of objective reality and the finest psychological insight, have but seen as through a glass darkly the mysterious functions of our marvellous universe. To the wise man of the future, the possessor of the keenest sense perceptions of to-day will appear dull-witted. But, nevertheless, he who *thinks*: he who is jeered at as an idealist, or, maybe, abused and threatened as a revolutionary and an iconoclast by those who sit tight on their money bags and bribe the priest and other hired myrmidons to present the respective bogeys of damnation, celestial and terrestrial, for doubting that ours is the best of all possible states—he is building for the future and perhaps for eternity. All true progress is born in humble individual thought and endeavour.

A man is a "great" leader according to the intelligence of those he leads. That is why we have no "great" statesmen and why we never shall have any "great" priests. Greatness, of necessity, implies truth and honesty and incorruptibility and holiness; holiness in the sense that love is a stronger power than force. And, paradoxically, this sense of justice is a fundamental characteristic of the normal person, but is frequently lost in the masses who, in their blind trust and dull apathy, perpetually corrupt their government and incidentally perpetuate force instead of love.

The definition of "statesman" is "one eminent for political abilities," and for ages the word *politic* has been synonymous with *cunning*! No workman can do himself justice if his materials are of bad quality; yet the statesman is a workman who panders to the worst characteristics of his material—human ignorance, apathy, prejudice, and conventionalism. Yet he might attain greatness himself if he created the desire for greatness in those stagnant mentalities that suffer his leadership. If, instead of concentrating his administrative and legislative abilities on local and momentary measures, or even on national measures, which, more often than not, are engaged upon for his own aggrandizement, he devoted himself to the duty of fostering *formation of character* among citizens, which should be the object of *true statesmanship*, then might truly "great" leaders and a truly "great" nation emerge.

The formation of character—self-control—self-discipline—moderation—temperance in all things—honesty, truth, and holiness; all these can be attained by the individual if he so desires. Never be impressed by the "position" and "greatness" of

those who represent the State, and, least of all, of those who represent the Church. They are "great" in proportion to your own "littleness." You can be "great" if you desire it: "greater" than any of them. Both statesman and churchman batten on the credulity and ignorance of the people by specious promises to improve its position respectively in this world and the next. One exploits it in the name of Mammon and the other in the name of God. Every good man is constrained to break the law and to abhor the priest.

You yourself *are* the State. Every improvement, however minute, in your own character, adds to the State's greatness: every deterioration to its littleness. But, above all, distrust those who would be Church and State combined. As superstition is the negation of all reason, so the priest and his puppets are the negation of all progress. In whatever guise of "advanced" religion you are approached, treat them not only as suspect but as convicted liars. Whatever they touch, they taint; whatever movement they embrace, they demoralise. The first step towards mental emancipation is to cast out the priesthood of whatever denomination. Of all statesmen, those who have "got religion" are the worst.

W. THOMPSON.

Correspondence.

THE LAW OF POPULATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—While I must congratulate "Scio" for having read Malthus' *Law of Population* "several times"—a striking lesson for those members of the opposition who have never read it at all—I must frankly confess he has left me slightly muddled as to the result of that reading. He "demonstrates" firstly "the falsity and absurdity" of the belief in Malthusianism, then with a generosity for which he has my heart-felt gratitude, claims the best that can be said for it is "not proven," and finally concludes that "we do not yet know enough to pronounce definitely on this question of population."

Possibly "Scio" has some meaning for all this, but it has so far eluded me. "Scio" says that Malthusianism is "false and absurd" because of the "gradual improvement in the lot of the workers culminating in the luxuries and comforts enjoyed to-day." Here again I am not quite certain if he means that it is the workers who are wallowing in "luxuries and comforts." If he does mean this, then I heartily recommend such a striking refutation to my young friend, Conrad Ebury, who, the other day, finally demolished Malthus by roundly declaring he (or was it I) could put the whole of the population of England into the Isle of Wight!

Of course, the real reason why England more or less flourished during the nineteenth century was because she became "the workshop of the world" and could buy food cheaply with her manufactured goods from America and other comparatively new countries. But possibly "Scio" knows nothing of industrial and agricultural conditions, and I really haven't time to teach him such elementary facts. But he drags in Henry George! If it hadn't been Henry George, it may have been Karl Marx or Prince Kropotkin or somebody else, as if what *they* said has not been answered thousands of times! Henry George (for whom in any case I have a great respect) was "subjected to some very destructive criticism" by Dr. C. V. Drysdale, so that's settled.

Then "Scio" reproaches me for "implying" that if only the food problem were settled there would be no other "social problems then." This, I'm sorry to say, is the result of very slack reading, as, of course, I "implied" nothing of the kind. On the contrary, I expressly drew attention to the great problems society would still have to solve, and mentioned that of dis-

tribution in particular. Will "Scio" admit he overlooked this? Moreover, I did not mention the geometrical or arithmetical ratios of Malthus, and it would have been much more satisfactory if "Scio" could have dealt with what I actually said.

England had, in 1811, ten millions of people and thirty-six in 1911; we get thus an increase of over three and a half times. Would this country, which is one of the most densely populated in the world, stand the same rate of increase now—to, let us say, one hundred and twenty-six in 2011? If not, why not? Would that working-man's paradise, Russia, with over one hundred millions in 1900, be able to support three hundred and fifty millions in 2000? If not, why not? Will "Scio" please answer, *definitely*?

Malthus may have been (and possibly was) wrong in minor details, but his main thesis is still absolutely irrefutable—a fact which most great living economists admit to-day. In any case, he will have no difficulty in surviving the kind of confused criticism, hardly a sentence of which will bear serious investigation, put forward by "Scio."
H. CUTNER.

SIR,—I would have thought that the admitted "hopeless confusion" existing on "Malthusianism and Economics," Mr. Cutner's articles would have dealt more fully when he wrote upon the subjects in the *Freethinker*. Instead, he has lit upon some "Hyde Park orator" of no acknowledged credentials and dubbed his Communism—and, therefore Socialism, for Mr. Cutner treats both principles interchangeable, though they are not—as food, or example for a moral lesson on both subjects.

Does population outstrip food production? Does it? I rather doubt it, notwithstanding Mr. Cutner's implication that it does. And as for that proposition never having been seriously questioned leads me to the belief that Mr. Cutner reads but one side of the argument. It is only "small men"—like Socialists, eh?—who question that affirmation, or assertion. Only "great men"—like Dr. Eden Paul—of the company of small men admit the truth (*sic*) of the assertion that population outstrips food production. And that any "ism" depends upon birth control is too funny to miss. I wonder if "Atheism" does?

But to Mr. Cutner a middle-class doctor's opinion on any subject is worth all the weighty evidence of working-class nobody's. I wonder if Mr. Cutner has ever met a real live lord—and kept a level head. His apparent condition of mind seems to suggest that he has met a few, so unsettled is it.
A. MOLE.

TRUTH IN BOOKS.

Truth, latent in the mind, is hidden wisdom, and invisible treasure; but the truth which illuminates books desires to manifest itself to every disciplinable sense, to the sight when read, to the hearing when heard: it, moreover, in a manner commends itself to the touch; when submitting to be transcribed, collated, corrected, and preserved. Truth confined to the mind, though it may be the possession of a noble soul, while it wants a companion, and is not judged of, either by the sight or by the hearing, appears to be inconsistent with pleasure. But the truth of the voice is open to hearing only, and latent to the sight (which shows as many differences of things fixed upon by a most subtle motion, beginning and ending as it were simultaneously). But the truth written in a book, being not fluctuating but permanent, shows itself openly to the sight passing through the spiritual ways of the eyes, as the porches and halls of common sense and imagination; it enters the chamber of intellect, reposes itself upon the couch of memory, and there congenerates the eternal truth of the mind.—*Richard de Bury*.

"God himself cannot subsist without wise men," said Luther, and with good reason; but "God can still less subsist without unwise men"—good Luther did not say that.—*Nietzsche*.

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