

# MAN AND MORALS.

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

## Views and Opinions.

### Man and Morals.

THE question of the moral sanction has occupied a very large place in ethical speculation, and it may be taken as a fortunate circumstance that practical conduct has not had to wait for agreement in moral theory. Inability to agree in the direction of theory no more prevents the general maintenance of a working level of practice, than disputes as to the nutritive value of particular foods prevents the maintenance of a certain level of health. In the long run, what people shall eat is decided by taste; and taste is in turn determined, up to a certain point, by the operation of the survival of the fittest. The analogy goes a little further. Much of the anxiety as to what one shall or shall not eat, is motivated, in the first instance, by ill-health. And over-concern with conduct is just as frequently motivated by a weakness of moral fibre. At any rate conduct does not, and never has, waited upon theory. Normal humanity is no more conscious of the high moral theories it illustrates in its daily actions than a child is aware of the fact that by throwing a stone across the road it alters the centre of gravity of the universe. That is one reason why those who argue about the evils that may follow if a particular moral theory gains ground, are tilting at windmills. Those who have enough intelligence to take an interest in speculative theories of morals, have also enough intelligence and balance to prevent their speculations seriously affecting their practical life; while the less developed show neither appreciation nor interest in the points in dispute.

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### The Christian Sanction.

So far as what is called the Christian sanction of morals is concerned, its failure has been unmistakable. It has not merely failed with those who did not accept the religious theory on which it was

based, it has also failed with those who do. Its failure has been one of the stock themes with preachers from the early days of Christianity to now. It has not been for want of preaching or repetition, for Christian preachers have been over-insistent on that head. Yet the fact is there, and the reason for its existence is surely worthy of a little examination. And we may commence this with a dictum of Paley's, which although written over a century ago, is still pertinent. A man, says Paley, is obliged to do something "when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another," and he proceeds to argue that, as we should not be obliged to obey the laws unless rewards and punishments, pleasure or pain, depended upon our obedience, so neither should we, but for a similar reason, be obliged to obey the command of God. Therefore, he concludes, private happiness is the Christian's motive, and the will of God his rule. So far, Paley and his finding a reason for morality so largely in the imposition of an arbitrary rule, with its implied reduction of moral laws to so many examples of the criminal law, is a genuine theological conception, and may serve as a jumping-off point for the discussion. Paley, it may be noted, lived at a time when preachers of Christianity had not grown so thoroughly ashamed of their religion as they appear to be at present, and so stated his case in a genuinely Christian fashion.

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### Fact and Theory.

Now, it may be said with certainty, that if every Christian believed in God with the same definiteness that he believes in the existence of a policeman, or in heaven or hell in the same way that he believes in the reality of Paris or Berlin, the religious motive would then be "violent" enough to secure all that could reasonably be expected. But that is a pretty big "if," and it goes to the heart of the question. People believe in a God, true; they also believe in disease and the possibility of contracting it. But between the two there is a world of difference. The latter is constant, and part of the time active. The former, save in very rare cases, is fluctuating, and mostly dormant. Over the average man and woman the belief in God has no greater influence than has their belief in the existence of Julius Cæsar, or than their conviction that one day our coal supply may run out induces economy in attending to the kitchen fire. The overwhelming majority of folk require something of both a reasonable and concrete character if it is to exert a material influence on them. And if religion is to act as a moral force, it must present two characteristics that no religion can possess with a civilized people. It must be sufficiently strong to exert a constant force, never falling below a certain point, while the punishments

and rewards promised must be certain in their action.

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#### Taking Chances.

Now, the belief in God is one which, with even the most devout, assumes different degrees in intensity. Religious autobiographies are full of accounts of men whose minds have been constantly torn by doubt. The doubt is always likely, and it suggests itself to good and bad alike. In the most civilized times the doubt is suggested and strengthened in a thousand different ways, while there is little or nothing from which it can draw renewed strength. All is *not* right with the world, even though God may be in his heaven. Punishments and rewards do not follow in a manner they should follow if the religious theory be true. Instead of the religious basis of the moral sanction being strengthened by time and experience, its efficacy undergoes steady deterioration. And even if the belief in God never wavered in its intensity, the religious sanction would still be of very doubtful value. A slight punishment may deter, if it is inevitable; a much severer one will fail if its operation is doubtful. Remoteness of reward or punishment frustrates the purpose of both. A punishment that is certain to take place to-day or to-morrow may have some value as a deterrent. If it is to take place fifty years hence its value will not be great; while, if it is only likely to take place in the very distant future, it will be of no value at all. But the presumed sanctions of religion are neither near nor certain. All the probabilities are against such a sanction exerting a great and steady influence on human nature, and the facts support the probabilities. All that the power of religion seems able to do is to rouse particular feelings into a state of temporary activity, for them to become quiescent so soon as the exciting cause is withdrawn.

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#### Religion and Morals.

It follows, therefore, that Paley's incentive to virtue is neither constant enough nor certain enough for it to exert the continuous pressure essential to any force that is to be a formative influence in the shaping of character. And this fact alone serves to explain why among those who have been most susceptible to religious influences there has so often been such extreme variations in the conduct displayed. Religious autobiographies present us with the fairly constant feature of men at one moment carried up into the heights of rapture, and at another plunged into despair; or shunning the gratification of legitimate pleasures at one time, and at another plunging into the most sensual of gratifications. Christian apologists attempt to explain this away by saying that the moral life is necessarily one of struggle and resistance to temptation. But this is not true. What such extremes evidence, is an ill-balanced and badly trained character. The aim and the effect of a genuine moral education is to produce a steadiness of disposition, an absence of the feeling of being tempted, and the performance of desirable actions without any sense of effort whatever. Struggle is not the indication of a highly-developed nature, but the sure mark of an ill-balanced or undeveloped one. The genuine moral life is not one of struggle at all, but one in which it would require a struggle to do what the Christian teacher claims to be perilously easy. The real explanation of the facts is that religion offers no adequate explanation of the moral sense, and, in practice, is the worst of all moral educators. It is not primarily concerned

with conduct, but with belief, and the belief which it insists upon is of a kind that all knowledge tends to weaken and destroy.

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#### The Failure of Religion.

Finally, a very obvious comment upon the religious sanction is that it has most effect upon those who least need its influence. The brutal, the callous, the unthinking are not seriously affected by it. The kindly, the sensitive, the thoughtful are. It does not prevent the thief stealing, or the liar lying; but it does trouble those who are striving to do their best under its influence, and who consequently often develop a more or less morbid frame of mind. The biographies of the best men in Christian history offer many melancholy examples of the extent to which they have falsely accused themselves of sins during their "unconverted" state, and the manner in which harmless actions are magnified into deadly offences. Indeed, one of Christianity's chief offences is, not that it has enlisted the services of bad men, but that it has misdirected the energies of good ones. The state of society at any period during its history is adequate proof that Christianity has not succeeded in seriously diminishing the volume of vice and crime. But it has succeeded in influencing in a morbid and anti-social manner many who, left alone, might have developed a sanely-balanced intelligence, and have applied their energies to the work of profitable social development.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Christ and the World.

COLERIDGE speaks of "a wide and still widening Christendom," and Christendom signifies that part of the world in which the Christian religion is supposed to be supreme. Of course, the term is to a great extent a misnomer, because there is no country in which Christianity dominates the lives of its inhabitants. Less than two years ago we were told by a well-known Nonconformist minister that seventy-five per cent. of the population of this country have ceased to take any interest whatever in religion, and if that is true, it is sheer folly on the part of the pulpit to assert that Christ reigns. Everybody knows that he does nothing of the kind, although most preachers are loath to admit the fact in public. The Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Birmingham, declares, in a sermon published in the *Christian World Pulpit* of March 24, that "for fifty years before the Great War of 1914 the ambition of many men of science and philosophers appeared to be to 'depersonalize the universe,' as it has been expressed. The idea of a personal God was derided. . . Materialism reigned supreme." But the calamity of war, it is said, has proved the salvation of the world. "The minds of men have swung round to a spiritual conception of things. They are flinging off the old philosophic, materialistic tyranny." This is entirely false. The world has not fallen on its knees before God since the war. We remember that whilst men were killing one another by the million, Mr. Spurr turned prophet, assuring the public that when peace came there would occur the greatest religious revival conceivable, during which all anti-Christian institutions and organs would be swept from off the face of the earth. He confidently predicted that such vicious newspapers as the *Literary Guide* and the *Freethinker* would be no longer published because of the lack of readers. As a matter of fact, however, those two journals still appear as before, and Freethought lectures are more numerous attended than they

were in pre-war days. Surely such facts cannot be regarded as signs of the triumph of Christianity.

Mr. Spurr waxes eloquent in his description of the supernatural origin and power of the Christian religion. He tells us that people have always faced and tried to solve the riddle of the universe, but that every solution except the Christian has been a disastrous failure. The Christian solution, he claims, is a complete success in every respect. St. Paul declared that it became known to him by a special revelation from heaven. Then he had "a Master key, which he declared covered all the locks and opened every door." Mr. Spurr adds:—

The key is this: that there is a Divine purpose which, throughout the whole natural and human story, has been weaving all the threads of life into a final pattern in a perfect personality—that of Jesus Christ. He, says the apostle, is the final summary of the whole process. His person is the climax of all that has been, the summary of all that has gone before, and the starting-point for the final stage of the process which is the production, at last, of a complete humanity. . . . The unity we seek is not metaphysical, but humanly incarnate and active in a person who has lived within the limits of a human life. The thing we want, therefore, is not far off in mysterious space, it is at our doors. The Christ has trodden our planet in the days of his flesh. He is working in and for it now from beyond the veil. That is St. Paul's Master key.

The preacher supplies us, in that passage, with a wholly fantastic picture, behind which there is no reality whatever. The Christ he portrays never lived at all. Never yet has a woman given birth to such a person. Mr. Spurr knows as well as we do, that St. Paul's Master key does not cover all locks and open every door. In other words, the Christian religion has entirely failed to save mankind. It has answered no questions and solved no problems. To the Bishop of Durham this must be a most alarming and heart-breaking fact, but he is honest enough to admit it. The author of the discourse now before us cannot consistently acknowledge it.

Mr. Spurr moves on to speak of the inestimable value of Christian experience. What he says about it may be perfectly true. By experience he means the sense of fellowship with God in Christ. Now God is admittedly a being whom no one has ever seen and whose voice no one has ever heard, a being "without body, parts or passions." Therefore, no one can say that he knows God as he does his next-door neighbour or his bosom friend. Divine knowledge is an absolute impossibility. It by no means follows from this that religious experience is not real. Belief in God is often most sincere, but it utterly fails to prove his objective existence. Nevertheless it renders communion with him delightfully easy and enjoyable. Exactly the same thing is true of the Christ of theology. No one has ever seen him or heard his voice. His home is in another world than this, and that world, like himself, is an object of belief, not of knowledge. The important point here, however, is that those who believe in Christ, as defined in the creeds, enjoy a sense of communion with him. For them he is a really existing being. Mr. Spurr exclaims:—

Experience! Get hold of that, and do not stumble at it, as if it were an untrustworthy thing. All your knowledge begins in that way. If you did not commence with some experience of the world you would never go on to think about it at all. The highest philosophy has its beginning in a very modest, personal experience—of something. Something is given, something is received, before you go on to gain more. St. Paul's experience was of a Christ who had lived in history, and who was then living in him.

To Paul the life and teaching of Jesus possessed very slight importance. It was his death and resurrection that appealed to him, to both of which he attached interpretations peculiar to himself; which the orthodox Church accepted as true. Mr. Spurr seems to think that religious experience furnishes a conclusive evidence of the objective existence of Christ, and without a doubt the majority of Christians so regard it. But they are fundamentally mistaken. Their experience is in exact proportion to their faith. It is quite true that in "the earliest apostolic preaching Jesus was set forth as 'exalted,' as the 'prince of life,' as the 'Lord of all'"; but the preacher had no right to add: "They preached what they knew to be true." Unquestionably they preached what they sincerely believed to be true; but of the objective truth of their belief they had not the shadow of evidence. If the Christ of theology had really existed and been governed by a burning desire to regenerate humanity, the conditions of life would have been radically different from what they are to-day. The conclusion to which we are bound to come is not that Christ has failed, but that he never lived at all. Mr. Spurr cries out: "No! Christ has not failed, but the world has failed to understand him and to trust him, and not until it turns to him with all its heart will its wound be healed and its progress be assured." Christ has not failed, for he is a purely fictitious character, but the religion that bears his name is a gigantic failure.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Swinburne and Some Others.

Our glorious century gone,  
Beheld no head that shone  
More clear across the storm, above the foam,  
More steadfast in the fight  
Of warring night and light,  
True to the truth whose star leads heroes home.

Swinburne.

Few men achieved a really big reputation with such slender gifts as Theodore Watts-Dunton, and his *Life and Letters*, by Messrs. Thomas Hake and A. Compton-Rickett, is a perfect revelation of fortunate mediocrity. His life work, his *magnus opus*, must be looked for not in literature, nor any of the arts, but in friendship. And so we read his life, not for a portrait of Watts-Dunton himself, but for glimpses of such far greater figures as George Borrow, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Algernon Swinburne, William Morris, and so many others of that brilliant circle who made the later nineteenth century such a notable period in English Literature.

Theodore Watts-Dunton has no longer the reputation he had as a poet, a critic, or a romancer. His poems provoked George Meredith's caustic jest that Watts adopted a hyphenated name so that he should not be confused with the blameless Doctor Watts, the hymn-writer. As for Watts-Dunton's romance, *Aylwin*, it was a top-shelf book long before its author's death, and its brief success was one of the biggest advertising triumphs of the literary log-rollers who sought to return the sugary compliments of the old "Athenæum" days. Gratitude is so often a lively expectation of favours to come.

Among the outstanding personalities glimpsed in this book there are some delightful notes on old George Borrow, showing that extraordinary man's Protestant prejudices:—

"I see that you are still as fervid a no-Popery man as ever," I said; "as fervid as Fitz's brother John ever was." "I am still as good a Protestant as ever, Watts; as good a Church of England man as ever, and shall wage war against the abomina-

tions of Rome as long as I breathe! The only quarrel I ever had with Fitz's brother John was when he spoke slightingly of Norfolk ale. No good Protestant ought to say a word against Norfolk ale or good red wine. Fitz says 'John was as mad as a March hare,' but the only thing mad that I could ever see about him was his disparagement of ale."

"Fitz," of course, was Edward Fitzgerald, the genius who made *Omar Khayyam* one of the gems of English literature. There are also references to the robustious humour of Dante Rossetti, which the authors apologize for:—

"Topsy has the greatest capacity for producing and annexing dirt of any man I ever met," was, if humorous, somewhat relentless in the way of criticism upon William Morris's personal appearance. The same may be said of him when, on observing two camels belonging to a menagerie walking awkwardly down the street, he remarked: "Ruskin and Wordsworth out for a stroll!" Perhaps one of the best things he said was of Burne-Jones. On perceiving, when entering the studio, that there were no volumes on the shelf, he said: "Books are clearly of no use to a painter except to prop up models in difficult positions."

Curiously, in Watts-Dunton's *Life* the figure of Swinburne is the one we look for; but there is nothing new nor illuminating. Swinburne was one of the most brilliant talkers of his generation, and Watts-Dunton was for very many years one of his very closest friends; yet the book does not add to our knowledge in any way. It is inexplicable.

The nearest approach to the standard life of the great poet is Edmund Gosse's *Life of Algernon Swinburne*. In his pages the unique figure of Swinburne towers above the men who were his contemporaries. It is not the least wonderful phase of that amazing mind that, amid the drawbacks due to a deafness extending over thirty years, Swinburne could still pursue his ambitions and write his books, when other men would have found existence intolerable. Deafness was in his family on both sides, and his brother, eleven years his junior, was also afflicted. During later years Swinburne could hear nothing, unless it was said *tete-a-tete*, slowly and deliberately; and a story is told of a young journalist who met the poet on Putney Common, to whom Swinburne said: "I see you are speaking to me, but I can hear nothing."

Swinburne, like Milton and Browning, was born in London, and, after the publication of *Poems and Ballads*, was an acknowledged force in European literature, and men came to think of him, with Shelley, with Keats, with Wordsworth, as one of the poets who mark an era. For two generations he upheld the splendid tradition of Liberty, and gave us poems, plays, and criticisms, which breathed into our literature new harmonies and the new revolutionary spirit. It is the bare truth to say that, had not Swinburne lived, the world would have been largely ignorant of the infinite flexibility and potentialities of our language.

The last thirty years of Swinburne's life he lived at Putney with Watts-Dunton. So quietly did the years run that there are few good stories of a poet's life. One of the best known is an altercation with a greedy cabman who used bad language. "Come down from your perch," shouted Swinburne, "and hear how a poet can swear." One evening, Swinburne spent with Richard Burton, and the poet told a story of a dog in an Italian church swallowing the host. The priest was horrified, but got out of the difficulty by giving the animal an emetic. Before going away Swinburne told another story of Sheridan drunk outside the House of Commons, and of a policeman asking his name, which he gave as

"William Wilberforce." "I would rather," said Swinburne, "have returned that answer than have written 'Hamlet.' If a man could be so witty when drunk, what must he be when sober?" Speaking of an unreliable man, he said: "I wouldn't trust him with anything, not even a rotten egg."

Swinburne's extraordinary memory never showed itself to better effect than in table-talk on books and things. He quoted Dickens as readily as Shakespeare. He was a great admirer of Scott, and he revelled in lesser men's writings, such as Wilkie Collins, Eugene Sue, or Charles Reade. For the Border Ballads he had an especial liking, knowing them easily. Swinburne had no ear for music, but prided himself on his taste in words. Being asked at Jowett's one day which of the English poets had the best ear, he replied: "Shakespeare, without doubt; then Milton; then Shelley; then, I do not know what other people would do, but I should put myself." This was no vain boast, for there has been no such metrical inventor in the English language. He enlarged the frontiers of poetry; although men of rare genius had ransacked verse for centuries before he was born. Compared to Swinburne, Keats and Coleridge are poor of resource, limited in range, timid in execution. This is not to say that Swinburne has excelled them in ideas or melody, only that he was a master in the use of a far wider choice of instruments. Though all else perish, the golden song survives.

MIMNERMUS.

## The New Christian God.

A God who is not a person is no God at all.

—D'Holbach.

A GOOD deal has been written of late by various Christian writers with the object of showing that the old conceptions which the ordinary unsophisticated person formed of the existence and attributes of Deity were entirely wrong. That, as a matter of fact God is not a person in the sense that a human being is a person, but is something different altogether, although among his various attributes, personality is not excluded. Miss Maude Royden, the famous woman preacher, in one of her recent lay sermons in *Reynolds's Illustrated News*, has been telling her readers that "It is very much the fashion to-day to say that we must think of God as wholly impersonal. This is a natural reaction against the ideas of an older generation—ideas of God so suffocatingly narrow and personal as to give one a feeling that he is a sort of *huge clergyman* or *super-policeman*."

Very good; and she might have added: that the late Matthew Arnold, tilting against the same narrow anthropomorphic conception, likened the Christian conception of the Trinity to three Lord Shaftesbury's. But Miss Maude Royden does not tell her readers that this, what she calls "suffocatingly narrow conception," was the conception taught by Christian Divines in the Church, and by Nonconformist ministers of all denominations. And not only was it taught by the learned Clergy of the Church, but it was also a very fair and honest inference from the many and various narratives of the Old and New Testaments. Miss Royden admits that "ninety per cent. of the hymns still in use in the Churches" give expression to the same narrow view of the Christian Deity, against which she now rebels. She recalls the fact that she has seen on the walls in the rooms of some Christian families such texts as "Thou God seest me." "This text," she says, "is sometimes ornamented with a large and terrifying eye! The impression is, of course, of a God whose

attention is narrowly fixed upon oneself alone." "Perhaps," she continues, "the swing of the pendulum against such a conception cannot be helped, but it is a pity if it goes so far as to exclude from our religion the idea of a personal God altogether." But why? What is the use of retaining an old conception when it is discovered to be untrue?

Now we know that, as a matter of fact, the great masses of mankind cannot think in abstractions. They are bound to think of something that is concrete—otherwise they cannot form a conception at all. And, of God is infinite, how can finite man form any conception of him? Consequently you find that as soon as man was sufficiently intelligent to attribute the phenomena of the Universe to God or Gods—and it is far more natural in the uncivilized man to believe in a multitude of Gods than in one God—he made them exactly like himself, and gave them the qualities which he and his fellows possessed. Indeed, as Shelley said: "Barbarians and uncivilized nations have uniformly adored under various names, a God of which they themselves were the model—vengeful, bloodthirsty, grovelling and capricious. The idol of the savage is a demon that delights in carnage. The steam of slaughter, the dissonance of groans, the flames of a desolate land are the offerings which he deemed acceptable, and his innumerable votaries throughout the world have made it a point of duty to worship him to his taste."

And if Miss Royden will read some of the passages in the Old Testament, which I daresay she knows as well as I do, she will have to admit that the Hebrew writers have described their God Jahveh in the strong terms so vividly rendered in the language of the famous English poet.

Miss Royden, however, says rightly enough "that any human being who tries to get into touch with a God who is altogether impersonal will find his God receding further and further from him." But she adds, that would not matter providing the conception was true. But is it true? And then she asks: Is it not true "that God is the source of all created things?" and she answers her own question in the words, "if he is not that, He is not God."

Now, it is quite obvious that Miss Royden is here begging the whole question. What does she or anybody else know about "the source of all created things?" Science knows nothing about creation and does not dogmatise on the subject, but rather goes on the assumption that nature herself possesses the potential force by which all phenomena are produced, as the late Professor Tyndall said, "without the meddling of the Gods." Miss Royden does not tell her readers what she means by God—indeed, her God is an undefinable something about which she knows nothing. Notwithstanding this fact, she goes on boldly to declare that "if God is the source of all created things, he must be the source of personality, for personality exists, and is the most striking thing about us human beings. He, therefore, must be the source of personality, and how can he be that unless he possesses personality?" But what do we know about "personality" apart from organized beings? Why, even Miss Royden keeps talking about her God as *He* with a capital H, because she still retains a belief in an anthropomorphic conception of God, although she declares such a conception to be "suffocatingly narrow and personal." Also she says "that it is wrong to say that God is a person. That is what most of us have believed in the past, and that is where we went wrong; God is something infinitely 'more than a person.' But that God includes personality is self-evident, since he created it." Now, all this is pure assumption, for which Miss Royden never attempts to produce any

evidence. But if her God is the author of all phenomena, her God is the author of earthquakes, like those that have recently destroyed thousands of poor, defenceless people in Japan. Her God also is the cause of famines and disease. Indeed, "Nature," which is included in Miss Royden's conception of God, as John Stuart Mill said in his essay on that subject: "Impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian Martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or Domitian never surpassed." (*Essay on Nature*, page 29.) This is what Miss Royden's God, who is the source of all phenomena or "all created things," as she prefers to call them, is guilty of, and a great deal more. But, while she argues for an impersonal God, who nevertheless possesses personality, she offers up prayers to Him as her "Heavenly Father," with a capital H; but, as his personality is not the same as that of man's, there can be no evidence that he can either hear or answer such prayers.

In another essay, in the same journal, Miss Royden argues that God is Beauty and Love—which, again, are pure abstractions, and which have no existence outside the brain of man who conceives them. Neither beauty nor love are entities that exist by themselves and float about in the universe; they are merely characteristics of certain phenomena, and under changed conditions disappear even to the mind of man.

Let me conclude with another quotation from Shelley:—

"Infinity within,  
Infinity without belie creation;  
The exterminable Spirit it contains  
Is nature's only God; but human pride  
Is skilful to invent most serious names  
To hide its ignorance."—*Queen Mab* (page 33).

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## The Messianic Parables.

(Concluded from page 203.)

Thus Jesus may have defied the authorities for seven or eight days. If my view is right, his purpose was to be killed on the day when the Pascal Lambs were slain; and there is strong probability that this was the day of his death. Such a purpose would be the natural consequence of his fixed idea. Except a violent attack on the scribes and Pharisees,<sup>34</sup> none of his actions after the cleansing of the temple was of a nature to precipitate his end, whilst the fact that in the daytime he sought the company of friendly crowds, and at night retired to the lonely mount, proves that he wished to avoid arrest. The tendency to give natural events a supernatural interpretation could not be more aptly illustrated than it is in a passage where the Fourth Evangelist says of Jesus, a little prematurely, what might have been said of him at the period now in question: "He taught in the temple and no man took him because his hour was not yet come."<sup>35</sup>

On their part the authorities, whilst fully determined to suppress Jesus, were reluctant to proceed against him at the feast, because they feared that his popularity might occasion an uproar in case of his arrest. The three Synoptists describe a consultation of chief priests and scribes upon the subject; and Mark and Matthew agree that the result of those

<sup>34</sup> Matthew xxiii.

<sup>35</sup> viii. 20.

deliberations was the decision, "Not during the feast."<sup>36</sup> Had this been carried out, the plan of Jesus would have failed. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, most opportunely presented his services to the authorities, and agreed with them for a sum of money to betray his master into their hands in one of his secret haunts. A day or so later, as Jesus was taking his last meal, or supper, with his apostles, he is alleged, on the testimony of all four evangelists, to have announced to his companions the painful news that one of them was about to become a traitor. Mark and Luke do not say that Jesus gave any nearer indication, but Matthew makes him implicitly accuse Judas, and the Fourth Evangelist makes him do it explicitly by an unmistakable sign. All these accounts, especially the last two, are obviously false; but, strangely enough, the Fourth Evangelist, whose work abounds in untruths, preserves a very credible detail, for he says that Jesus, giving a sop to Judas, said, "That thou doest, do quickly"; and that Judas thereupon left the table without any surprise to the rest, who thought that Jesus was sending him to make purchases or to dispense charity.<sup>37</sup>

After that supper, Jesus, as the four evangelists say, went forth with his disciples unto the Mount of Olives, and there, according to the first three, he suffered terribly at the thought of his impending doom and prayed to God for strength to bear it. There is no reason to doubt this suffering and every reason to bow before it in sympathy and commiseration. At the end of the struggle, as Mark and Matthew report, Jesus, approaching his disciples, who had slept whilst he suffered, awoke them exclaiming, "The hour is come." Forthwith appeared Judas, attended, as all the evangelists say, by an armed band which the authorities had sent under his guidance to arrest Jesus. It must be remembered that the existing accounts of all those events were written after the passage of more than fifty years; and that the original traditions had then become corrupted by later teaching, which gave them a conventional and very false appearance. But still it is possible to get at the truth by scraping off these accretions. The story of Judas, for instance, contains so many contradictions and other incredibilities that it looks as if it were a pure myth; or, perhaps an invention designed to make the baseness of the other apostles appear less by comparison. But the fact may be that Judas simply did what Jesus told him to do; and that, having lost his faith, he committed suicide without telling his comrades the truth because he thought they would not believe it. There is no doubt that all the apostles like Peter and John, the most illustrious of their company "were unlearned and ignorant men"<sup>38</sup> and that emotion, not reason, was their predominant trait. Hence an imaginative, emotional and fervent leader, with a magnetic personality, would have but little trouble in persuading them that he was to have a brilliant future in which they would largely share—this including a kingdom for his possession, and twelve thrones for their occupation.<sup>39</sup> The history of projectors, whose ingenuity and honesty were equally incontestable, affords many a wilder scheme. The apostles with their narrow intelligence would not grasp the details of the plan, but only its object. The arrest of Jesus, to say nothing of his condemnation and crucifixion, threw them into despair, just as a nauseous medicine or a painful operation makes children lament, in spite of all the real trust that they have in the goodness and wisdom of those

from whom they suffer such grievous inflictions. But, when the horror and confusion were passed, and there was leisure to reflect upon the teaching of Jesus with respect to his Messianic destiny, then, as Paul says, Jesus "appeared unto Cephas";<sup>40</sup> and, under such circumstances, he could not but "appear" unto quite a large number of persons. The simple recollection of his words with the scriptural illustrations which inevitably occurred, became thenceforth for his disciples the plain signs of his spirit working within their hearts, and bringing all things to their remembrance.<sup>41</sup>

Taking into account the mental conditions then and there prevailing, the above facts, together with the peculiar erudition and creative genius of the Apostle Paul, seem to explain satisfactorily the origin of the Christian Faith. If this is true we are not justified in denying the authenticity of a Messianic parable because therein Jesus is represented as being the Messiah. But such an admission does not imply the belief that all the parables wherein Jesus thus appears are authentic; for each one must be judged on its own merits.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

### Acid Drops.

It was not to be expected that the newspapers would be either honest or informed in the matter of the death of the Spaxton Messiah, Smyth Piggot. The fondness of a Christian public for sniggering indecency forbade that. Moreover, the vulgar sensuality of the man was expressed in the name of Christianity, and to have said out plainly what the man was, might have been construed into a disrespectful allusion to it. For however great a rogue a man may be, some measure of protection is given him so long as rascality is exercised in the name of religion. Of that, every rogue may rest assured.

To the student of Christian history there was nothing either new or surprising in the history of the Abode of Love. Such things have been common with Christianity ever since the days of the New Testament. In one of the chapters in *Religion and Sex*, Mr. Cohen has compiled a number of instances of this, and the explanation is to be found in the very nature of the religious impulse. Mr. Hepworth Dixon, under the title of *Spiritual Wives*, filled two volumes with the same material. Religion and sensuality run very close together, and in a recent criminal case, the prisoner charged with a grave sexual offence had been confined in an asylum suffering from religious mania. And we believe we are correct in stating that these two things are always associated. Still, for papers to have shown some intelligence and some honesty in dealing with such a case would have outraged the traditions of the newspaper press, as laid down by Lord Northcliffe of blessed memory.

Streatham Congregational Church has granted to the Rev. Charter Piggott three months' leave of absence to visit the Holy Land, Egypt and Greece. It also presented him with a cheque for £250 towards expenses. Evidently, following in the footsteps of the Poor Carpenter of Nazareth has its compensations. That being the case, it seems odd that candidates for Holy Orders are so scarce. But perhaps the modern educated young man is a little particular how he earns his living.

Our God-given Day of Rest, which has helped to make the British Empire great, is to be destroyed, wails the Lord's Day Observance Society. Poor old British Empire, it's doom is sealed now that it no longer respects the Christian taboo day. And the Poet of Empire is preparing its Requiem.

<sup>36</sup> Mark xiv. 2; Matthew xxvi. 4.

<sup>37</sup> xiii. 27.

<sup>38</sup> Acts iv. 13.

<sup>39</sup> Matthew xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30.

<sup>40</sup> 1 Corinthians xv. 5.

<sup>41</sup> John xiv. 25.

God intended us to have fun in life, says Dr. J. H. Ritson, ex-President of the Wesleyan Conference. He is quite sure there will be fun and laughter in heaven. The rev. gentleman is more sure than we are. Gentle Jesus, the Apostles, the Calendar saints, and the patriarchs of the Bible were incapable of conjuring up a joke or a bit of wit while on earth. As these good people will be the bosses of the Celestial community, there seems small reason to hope they will encourage fun and laughter around the Throne of Grace.

According to the Rector of Ashprington, the Communion cup at his church is the oldest in regular use in any parish church in England. It dates from 1275. Succeeding generations of doctors in Ashprington should have good cause to bless this ancient chalice. It has undoubtedly distributed a goodly number of God's contagious germs during its long period of service, and the medical profession should have profited thereby.

Didsbury Theological College is sending, in July, a number of students on an evangelical campaign among the miners of the South Yorkshire coalfields. We hope the wicked miners will appreciate the compliment. No doubt some of the Freethought "saints" in the district will see that the evangelists are kept busy answering questions.

The Rev. E. Benson Perkins, at Tonypany Central Hall, spoke of the Christian religion as the religion of laughter. The laughter of fellowship, the laughter of humour, and the laughter of victory, he said, were typical of the life of Jesus. Poor Jesus! How his followers do change their conceptions of him! At one moment he is a solemn God soulfully calling upon men to repent. At another, he is a sort of Harry Lauder and the Bishop of London rolled into one.

The greatest discovery the world has ever made is that it has a Saviour, declares Dr. Dinsdale Young. The Doctor's information is hardly up to date. The world has made another greatest discovery since the other. And this is, that the "Fall" of man was merely a guess of primitive philosophers, and that therefore an atoning Saviour never was, is, or will be necessary to mankind. The discovery is a rather unfortunate one for the priests. It leaves them with nothing to do. Their alleged services to man are seen to be "purely fictitious." All that now remains for them to do is—to paraphrase a Biblical saying—to turn from their parasitic ways, and live.

The Rev. C. H. Hulbert wonders why and how it is that Wesleyans are not gathering the people into the churches as they did twenty years ago. What the people look for, he thinks, is a religion with a "thrill" in it. Everywhere people are wanting something that appeals to their emotional nature; and old-time Methodism had just that thrill. And to get hold of them a miracle has to be worked—the miracle of conversion. We are only too pleased to shed a little light on the "why" and "how" which puzzle Mr. Hulbert. People are losing the "conviction of sin." They don't care whether they are "saved" or not, and they have ceased to worry about their "immortal soul." Since they have become better educated and now have access to the accumulated knowledge of the world's thinkers, they have ceased to feel the "thrill" of fear which hell-fire doctrines once engendered. Again, as their emotional needs are now being satisfied apart from religion, the parsonic business of exploiting them in the interest of the churches has become more and more difficult. These are some of the reasons why the gathering-in process is less easy than it once was. We deeply regret we cannot help our Christian brother by suggesting a remedy.

Dr. Russell Maltby said that at the age of twelve he came under a master who really made him work and taught him how hard he could work. We presume the young Maltby had rather a sickening of work, which led him to decide to take up talking for a living. Our slave-driving schoolmasters have a lot to answer for.

The *Christian Herald* publishes *The History of Satan*, by the Rev. E. L. Langston. The sub-title ought to be—Sidelights on a Primitive Delusion. We don't quite see how Satan can have a history, seeing that so many good modernist parsons declare there is no Hell and no personal devil. Possibly the history of Satan is just about as authentic as the History of Jesus. Mankind has always had its story-tellers.

Thrilling news! The British and Foreign Bible Society has despatched an adequate supply of New Testaments to provide for the needs of British sailors and soldiers in China. Why not? The fighting man requires shaving paper as well as does his civilian brother safe at home. And the B. and F. Bible Society very thoughtfully puts it up in convenient form. All the same we fancy that if a vote had been taken a good majority would have voted in favour of cigarettes and tobacco.

The power of God has been manifested, says a pious paper. Bishop Auckland has been shaken from centre to circumference. Every night the Town Hall was packed to hear the Gospel message given by Pastor Stephen Jefferies. In other words, Christian inebriates have been having another spiritual debauch.

More than 200 delegates, we learn, were prevented by 'flu from attending the meetings at Birmingham Free Church Council. There's one thing we like about the Lord, he is splendidly impartial in the way he distributes his germs among godly and ungodly. And we'll wager he doesn't allow the praying godly to recover any quicker than the ungodly.

Jerusalem recently experienced severe snowstorms, which covered the Holy City in a white mantle. Considerable distress, says a contemporary, was suffered by the poor. Providence, which looks after sparrows, was evidently too busy to attend to the poor.

A representative of the Bible Society says that the Chinese took four million copies of the Bible last year. By the sound of that, the Chinese would appear to have an eagerness for the Glad Tidings. We suspect the truth of the matter is that the seekers after the One True Light find the covers of the Bible come in useful for making foot-wear.

My Lords Spiritual have finished their examination of the amendments to the draft of the "Composite" Prayer Book. They have added a prayer for the British Empire. This is a very wise addition. Had it been omitted, the Lord, in attending to the directing of the world, might have clean forgotten about the claims to his good offices of the godly British Empire. The lofty patriotism of the Bishops should compel the admiration of every thinking man. In peace or war it never fails the Empire upon which the Almighty graciously commands the sun never to set.

The Vicar of Bradford recently had the privilege of preaching at Buckingham Palace. According to the Vicar, one of the ladies there said afterwards: "You have come to a Christian home," and added that it was a rule of the King every day to spend some time with the Bible. The same rule has always been observed by the late Emperor of Germany.

Says the *Methodist Recorder*:—

Anglo-Catholics are very aggressive to-day, and the comparative silence of Evangelical Free Churchmen may easily be misunderstood. The silence does not mean that Evangelical truth is outworn, or that Evangelicals have no positive message to declare. It means that intolerance has been outgrown, and that there is an increasing distaste for controversy with fellow-Christians.

We like that bit about "comparative silence." It's a queer sort of silence that finds vent in Protestant Parsons' Pilgrimages, Albert Hall Protest Meetings, and Kensitite street-corner rantings. And we like that quaint piece about intolerance being outgrown. If the

Protestant is more tolerant to the Catholic and Anglo-Catholic it is only because he feels he must make some show of friendliness in answer to the outsider's ironical quoting: "How these Christians love one another!" The Protestant and the Catholic haven't outgrown intolerance. It is revealed as being in full flower as soon as they encounter the Freethinker. The only place in the world where completely tolerant Christians can be found is in a cemetery. And even here the believers of one sect prefer to be apart from believers of others.

The wisdom of minding our p's and q's varies with time and circumstances. A trinity of p's by the Protestant Parsons' Pilgrimage warns the inoffensive citizen as follows: "Your Church and Nation in Danger." We are not told the danger, and it is safe to assume that the promoter's nonsense will be demonstrated to be better than the other fellow's nonsense. But we may venture to think, that high heels and low heels in religion is an issue as dead as mutton to those who have no use for either.

*John O'London's Weekly*, in noticing a book, *British Preachers*, makes the assertion that general interest in religion is as vivid as ever. We may ask, general interest by whom? Advertisement rates for the booming of religion are a polite satire on the hunger and thirst for it by the man in the street, but this is a joke that cannot be seen by everybody.

The second reading of the Wild Birds' Protection Bill was agreed to without a division, and Mr. Hugh Martin, reporting in the *Daily News*, stated that the debate was a credit to the humanity of the House. There is no doubt there will be the usual exodus to the North in Autumn, when grouse shooting begins. Shot guns for shooting game are almost like using white-wash brushes to kill flies, and the gallant game shooters will be found in the meantime supporting Captain Holt's Bill, that is a direct subsidy to religion and a sign that Christianity needs the protection of the pulpit in the street.

The names of abuse, such as pro-Boer, pro-German, and Sinn Feiner, have died a natural death, and even Bolshevik is in a state of decline. In the old days it was, Jacobus, Chartist, or Radical. A new name is now making its appearance, and the man who now exercises his right by walking across a road is called by the gramophone press, a "joy walker." Foremost among the users of the term is the *Daily News*, which, with true journalistic ignorance, steps in with this poultice word, instead of suggesting that the common law on the right of road should be amended. This asinine attitude of a paper that does not know any better is also reflected in our general press that can rarely use the word Atheist without some ambiguous qualification; it is one of many popular myths that newspapers lead public opinion. If public opinion can be led from the rear the assumption is correct, but at present, our newspapers are no different in their insolence from the printing press than are the brave words from that coward's castle—the pulpit.

Dr. Barnes, in his speech at the birthplace of Sir Isaac Newton, shows that he is getting into strange territory. When asked if he thought that the progress of the last two centuries would continue, he replied:—

I do not know. There are many signs of the triumph of unreason among us. When I think of the extent and the violence of crazy superstitions I sometimes wonder whether we are not in for a period of decline such as was felt by classical civilization between the first and fourth centuries of the Christian era, during which period there was an immense decadence of the human mind.

By the triumph of unreason does he mean the mass advertisement of the Churches and the Seditious and Blasphemous Teaching to Children Bill? Does he mean the hallowing of cathedrals and religious processions in the streets? Does he mean the battle of the marion-

ettes over the prayer-book changes? If so, then the iron rations of Freethought writing and speaking await him.

The profound problems of the consequences of prayer-book revision is the cause of perplexity with the Home Secretary. Traffic statistics show that 1,020 people were killed in the streets last year, and 47,213 were injured. And can it be any cause for wonder that the ordinary man views, with polite amusement, the re-arrangement of archaic words in a book of incantations, when such serious matters are given third and fourth place to ecclesiastical cross-word puzzles?

As an illustration of great minds struggling with adversity, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, the Home Secretary, has addressed the following question to the Archbishop of Canterbury:—

What steps do the bishops propose to take in order to secure obedience to the provisions expressed or implied in the issue of this new Book? And this question may perhaps give us a clue to the deplorable mental state of our public men, who are determined, by their actions, that the human race shall not grow up.

Dr. T. R. Glover, in the *Daily News*, still manages to keep the ball of theology in the air. He has an article on "A Study of Syllables," in which, by implication, Greek and Latin are some mysterious languages that give him wide knowledge of his pet subject—theology. This is a favourite pose, and it impresses many, but, when it is remembered that the nationality of Jesus prevented him from speaking the language of the English pulpiteer, it is not surprising that the name of commentators, apologists, and expositors is legion. As the learned doctor appears to be gravelled for matter, we tentatively suggest that he gives a critical discourse on a few lines from that wicked man, Voltaire, and explain the esoteric meaning in the following account of that elusive female, Reason:—"It is pretended, that she has an infallible secret for untying the strings of a crown, which are entangled, nobody knows how, in those of a mitre, and for hindering the pallfrees from going any more to make a curtsy to the mules." When a divine is reduced to scratching about with long and short vowels in connection with religion, it is time that somebody came to the rescue, and for that reason the above suggestion is submitted.

From a newspaper report we learn that the Bishop of Pretoria has been cross with his audience of missionaries at Reading. "You are going to sleep," he said, "Please get up and shake yourselves." The subject matter of the Bishop's address is not given, so that it is impossible to know, with certainty, whether he or his audience were blameworthy.

Two contiguous headlines in a morning paper of March 21: "The May Meetings," "The Flat Season Commences." Believers in the Design Argument should find food for reflection here.

Obliquely in agreement with all that is stated and restated in the Freethinker, we find the *Times Literary Supplement* publishing an article on Newton, an extract from which is as follows:—

A sceptical outlook on religious and social matters would have disturbed his exquisite adjustment as a thinking machine. His general outlook we can interpret as an unconsciously formulated protective covering. Within its shelter he was able to pursue his proper business of dispassionate meditation. The repressive tendency in religion has much to answer for. If it had not been for the bigoted hand of the priest in the past, it is possible that nations would not now want to destroy each other by poison, bombs, and other choice products of destruction. It is also possible that the human race would have been nearer to manhood than it now is. Organized religion, when driven into last ditches, is still capable of doing in the twentieth century by roundabout methods that which it did openly when it had no opposition.



### 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.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—T. Orr, 5s.; Two E. W.'s, £1; T. Dobson, 5s.; W. J. Russell, 5s.; W. J. Lamb, £1 7s. 6d.; W. Kerslake, 14s.; B. M. E., per F. Rose (Bloomfontein), £1 10s.; F. Rose (Bloomfontein), £5 5s.; A. E. Powell, 15s.

H. S. S.—It is an evasion to say that the Church does not receive money from the public funds because there is no direct vote of money made by Parliament. The Church is relieved from payment of rates and taxes, and as that increases the sum paid by others by many millions, this virtually is a grant made from the public purse. Public servants would have no objection whatever, we take it, to have their salaries reduced by the amount they at present pay in rates and taxes, if they were relieved from payment in these directions. But no one would question that they were thus receiving public money.

J. KAVANAGH.—Thanks for the report of the sermon, but the subject has been dealt with at length in these columns several times of late, and we hardly feel warranted in writing again on it for some time.

S. L.—Glad you appreciate the "wonderful two shillings' worth" provided in Draper's *Conflict between Religion and Science*. We can think of no cheaper or more effective present for a Freethinker to make to a Christian friend.

W. LAING.—We cannot say what readers we have in Harrogate. We know we have many, but the paper is supplied by us to wholesale agents, who, in turn, supply retailers, who, in turn supply the buyers. You can order the *Freethinker* and all Pioneer Press publications through any newsagent, or from any of Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son's establishments. We can send the *Freethinker* direct from this office for 15s. annually. You would receive it by Thursday morning.

W. DAVIES.—Thanks, but not quite up to standard.

E. W.—We do appreciate very much the many friends our work for Freethought make for us in all parts of the world. You wonder how we manage to get so much work into each week. We suppose the answer is that it has to be done. We should have no objection to taking things easier if it were only possible. The difficulty is, of course, a financial one. The fact of the editor of the *Yorkshire Evening News* "not wanting an article on "the other side of the case" is not surprising. It would interfere with the advertising campaign of the Churches.

W. J. RUSSELL.—Thanks for further subscription to the Endowment Trust, also for securing new readers for the *Freethinker*. We hope you will be successful in getting the number of subscribers you have set out to secure.

MISS E. M. THORNTON.—We quite appreciate what you say, and you have our thanks for saying it. Will certainly bear the matter in mind. At the same time, you must bear in mind the fact that we are not aiming at building up a new church, but to bring Christians to see the error of their ways, and to divert their energies into more useful channels.

A. E. POWELL.—Glad you appreciate so much the "clean punch" of the *Freethinker*. Straight speaking never offends anyone whose opinion is worth having. Thanks for good wishes.

T. ORR.—It is very wrong of you to make public the fact that the *Freethinker* has acted as a tonic to you during your illness. That kind of influence is reserved for the parson, for the Bible, and for Jesus. We should not be surprised if "Jix" were to regard this as fresh material for legislation. Perhaps one day the *Freethinker* may be placed beyond the reach of financial worry. We live in hope, and we are doing what we can to bring it about. But it is a hard row to hoe.

B. G. ELIOT.—The mixture of salacity and piety is quite common in the history of Christianity, indeed, it is common with all forms of religion.

D. MORTON.—Thanks, we are keeping well, although we could do with a little more leisure if we could get it. I suppose we get through the work simply because we have to get through with it.

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

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

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.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd.," Clerkenwell Branch.

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.

We are glad to say there has been a very brisk demand for the wonderfully cheap edition of Draper's *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science*. This is not a cheap edition, in the customary sense of the word. It is printed on good paper, cloth bound, and quite unabridged. We ought to have a couple of thousand orders at least within the next two or three weeks.

To-day (April 3), Mr. Cohen will lecture on the Blasphemy Laws before the South London Ethical Society. The meeting is held in the Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, and commences at 7 o'clock. The lecture is by "special request," and should lead to a useful discussion.

There were improved audiences at Plymouth, on Sunday last, at both Mr. Cohen's meetings. The Gaiety Theatre was comfortably filled on both occasions, and there is evidently both a need and a desire for more sustained Freethought propaganda there. But helpers are required. It is not enough for people to merely attend lectures. Those who wish to see the lectures carried on must be prepared to take a share in the work and in the responsibility. This applies to other places beside Plymouth. Mr. McKenzie took the chair in the afternoon, and Mr. McCluskey, one of the oldest friends of the movement in the town, in the evening.

Next Sunday (April 10), Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Picton Hall, Liverpool. At the request of many, he is taking for his subject, "Does Modern Science Support Religion?" and in view of the haziness of mind which exists on this matter and the shilly-shallying methods of some of our prominent scientists, a straight talk on this subject will certainly not be out of place. Here, as at Plymouth, helpers are needed. Much can be done in advertising the meetings, and those who are willing to help in any capacity will kindly send their names and addresses to Mr. W. McKelvie, 29 Claremont Road, Seaforth. There are a number of reserved seats at one shilling each, and these may be obtained from Mr. McKelvie also.

We had hoped to have commenced this week a series of articles by Dr. G. H. Farmer on Beethoven, which we venture to say will prove of exceptional interest to Freethinkers. Unfortunately, other work has delayed Dr. Farmer, but they will not lose in value by being published a week or two later. They will present a point of view which the ordinary paper dare not publish. It would offend their masters—the parsons.

*The Rationalist*, Melbourne, reprints Mr. Cohen's "Views and Opinions" dealing with the Chinese question, with suitable acknowledgments. Mr. J. S. Langley is, we believe, the editor of the *Rationalist*, and he appears to be putting up a very gallant fight against the common enemy.

The West Ham Branch is holding one of its popular "Socials" on Saturday, April 2, in the Earlham Hall, Forest Gate. There will be the usual programme of songs, dances, etc., and admission is free to all Freethinkers and their friends. The proceedings commence at 7 o'clock.

## Lucretius.

EPICUREANISM is a philosophy that has anything but a favourable reputation wherewith to commend itself to public notice. To the average mind it is identified with a view of life that takes the pleasure of the moment as the end sought, and persistently ignores the higher pleasures of life in favour of the lower. The misunderstanding is not, perhaps, confined to average minds. Shakespeare calls Falstaff "a damned epicurean rascal," although this may have been the mere echoing of a vulgar prejudice without being an endorsement; and even such a generally heterodox writer as Draper seems to take epicureanism as synonymous with sensualism and selfishness. Dante's disposition of Epicurus in the after world, while in accordance with the religious punishment of heretics, is tolerably free from misconceptions of this character.

No conception of a man or of a teaching could be wider of the mark than this. All the actual knowledge we possess of Epicurus points to him as one simple in tastes and clear in ideas, who propounded a philosophy of life that, free of religious terrors on the one side, and political ambitions on the other, indicated the true path as consisting of a wise regulation of desires, the freeing of life from the all embracing evils of ignorance and superstition, and the welding of mankind into a commonwealth of mutual co-operation. The friendships he inspired were not such as it is the lot of sensualists to meet with; and this fact alone would be a strong *prima facie* disproof of such charges as those alluded to. His writings exist but in fragments—they were only known in quotation until a fortunate find in Herculaneum brought a large portion of his principal work to light.

The fullest exposition of the Epicurean philosophy is contained in the poem of Lucretius—"On the Nature of Things"—a work left in an unfinished, if not incomplete, state. Not that Lucretius is to be regarded as a mere expositor of the man whom he delights in calling master. In its general outline he remained faithful to the Epicurean teaching, but he brought to its study a far greater love of nature than Epicurus appears to have possessed, and also greater powers of observation. In Epicurus one recognizes the existence of a man who is a speculative thinker primarily, one whose interest in the application of his ideas is subsidiary. In Lucretius the position is reversed. Here there is a powerful intellect engaged in philosophic and scientific speculation *because* of their practical value. And the difference is principally that of the Greek and Roman intellect. Only with Lucretius the two blend. The practical, organizing instinct of the Roman seizes upon the thought of the Greek because it recognizes that this gives him the master weapon to destroy the chief evils under which human nature groans.

Of Lucretius as an individual little is known. His birth is placed at about B.C. 95, and there is a tradition that he committed suicide when about forty-four

years of age. As, however, it is a Christian writer that first mentions this last circumstance, the report may be dismissed as one created in accordance with pious belief as to how Freethinkers *ought* to die, rather than as a sober statement of fact. Contemporary notices of the poem are not numerous, nor is it likely that the readers were a very numerous class either. The unflinching Materialism and practical Atheism of the work, its repudiation of the cardinal dogmas of all religions, quite apart from the nature of the reasoning involved, would not have been likely to create us an army of admirers even under the comparatively enlightened and tolerant sway of ancient Paganism, still less in the Christian ages that followed. For many centuries the name of Lucretius was, indeed, anathema with all good believers. It was only in the seventeenth century that the new scientific spirit served to direct attention to his work. Since then there have been seven or eight translations of the *De Rerum Natura*, and a good number of editions. People have read him for his poetry, for his scientific insight, and for his uncompromising hostility to religion; and each class of readers has been well repaid for its trouble.

Apart from the question of pure literature, the last two aspects of the poem seem to make Lucretius almost one of the moderns. Or, to put it in another way, it is the fact that Lucretius is dealing with the eternal struggle between religion and science that helps to destroy the illusion of time, and shows us the underlying identity of the contest, whether it be in ancient or modern times. Looking around, Lucretius sees that the chief enemy of man consists of his own fears—fears of unknown terrors in this world and in the next. He sees also that man's fears rest largely, if not entirely, upon a basis of ignorance and superstition. Upon this all tyrants and all priesthoods build their power; and his aim is therefore to guard man against the ills of life by giving him a knowledge of natural law, thus banishing for ever the fears of the gods and of a future life. His admiration, often approaching worship, for Epicurus is based upon the conviction that his work leads to this end. Epicurus is "the true interpreter of nature," the "purifier of the human heart," the "guide out of the storms and darkness of life into clear light and perfect peace." It is Epicurus who is addressed in the following:—

When human life, a shame to human eyes,  
Lay sprawling in the mire in foul estate,  
A cowering thing without the strength to rise,  
Held down by fell religion's heavy weight—  
Religion scowling downward from the skies  
With hideous head and vigilant eyes of hate,  
First did a man of Greece presume to raise  
His brows, and give the monster gaze for gaze.

In vain his purpose heavenly wrath requires,  
His dauntless soul no sacred murmur moves.

Hence, stern religion, our dismay before,  
By him subjected, and our plague no more,  
Humbled in turn, beneath our feet is driven,  
And his brave victory equals us to heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Lucretius addresses the poem to his friend Memmius, and at the opening warns him against the religious teaching that the study of nature is in any way sinful, because it enters on the "unholy grounds of reason." On the contrary, he says, it is religion itself which often prompts to the vilest deeds. And he cites the sacrifice of Iphigenia—the Grecian analogue of the Biblical Jephthah and daughter story—pictures how "the thirsty poignard lurks in priestly hands" as an instance of how "great the evils to

<sup>1</sup> In general I follow Monroe's prose translation; but in some cases, as the present, where the idea is more forcibly expressed, I have taken others.

which religion prompts." And these evils have their source in the fear and ignorance of men.

Would mankind but dare,  
To see in Death the oblivion of their care,  
In vain the baffled priests might strive to awe,  
Their threats our laughter, and our reason law.

As it is, fear of "after death" holds people in thrall and this because "they see many operations go on in earth and heaven, the causes of which they can in no way understand, believing them therefore to be done by power divine." This "terror and darkness of mind" must be dispelled by a knowledge of nature and its workings, and then "Nature free at once, and rid of her haughty lords, is seen to do all things of herself, without the meddling of the gods."

SIMPLE SIMON.

(To be Continued.)

## The Voice of the Great Pyramid

I HAVE always had a sneaking regard for prophets; not, of course, the Jeremiahs who warn us of the troubles to come fifty years hence, but those gentlemen who tell of the immediate future with the full knowledge that they themselves, if they lie, can expect to be here to face the ignominy that should always be the lot of the false prophet.

End-of-the-world specialists command my admiration.

Nor am I without regard for the followers of the prophets. They check the "scientific" data which forms the basis of all true prophecy, and once convinced, yield nothing to anybody—not even to the prophet himself—in the measure of their courage when championing their convictions. Such a one is recalled by Sir Hiram Maxim in his Autobiography: a lady, who was prepared to climb to the top of her house and jump at the second, calculated not only to register the end of the world but to provide her with the wings with which to fly to heaven. Another example came to my notice in 1925. An employee with a four-figure salary asked for a year's leave of absence without pay. The end of the world was to arrive in March, 1926, and as the employee had heard that the people of a certain European country had not been made aware of this, he desired to spend the remaining time warning them to prepare for eternity. It was pointed out that as the end was due in just under twelve months from then, the request for a year's leave was not the logical course. Leave contemplated return; resignation was the proper course. This point of view had evidently not previously occurred to the employee, but directly it was brought to his notice, he resigned.

The 1926 prophecy was, no doubt, built on the usual lines—mathematical juggling with extraordinary interpretations of biblical texts. This has been done so often that there is excuse for its curt dismissal, but the prophecy that gives the title to this article is a far weightier matter. It is derived from the Great Pyramid itself. It depends not on an opinion as to the meaning of a particular text, but on true scientific data; on the measurement of the various parts of the pyramid and the significance of such measurements in regard to time. If you have any doubt about it all—and it will be agreed that this is the very basis of scientific method—you can go to Egypt and measure for yourself.

The author of the prophecy appears to be a Professor John Edgar, and the information for this article is derived from a folder issued gratis by the printers. The folder is obviously a scientific work. At every step, or shall I say, wherever possible, conclusions or premises are supported by the names of

well-known scientists: Sir John Herschel, Sir Robert Stawell Ball, "the astronomer R. A. Procter," Professor C. Piazzi Smith, Professor Flinders Petrie, Professor J. H. Poynting, and evidently a whole host of savants covered by the term "French scientists."

Professor Edgar states that all the evidence demonstrates that the real Architect of the Great Pyramid was God himself. It is admitted that the pyramid is now somewhat dilapidated in appearance, but it was once grandly beautiful, and then symbolized the Christ. The king's chamber within the pyramid is approached by various passages, the lengths of which in "pyramid-inches" mark prominent dates. The year 1914 is clearly marked. The Grand Gallery length agrees in inches with the duration of the Gospel Age, measuring from the gallery's lower end as indicating the hours on April 1, 33 A.D., when our Lord hung on the cross, the gallery's upper virtual floor-end marks November 5, 1914, when Great Britain declared war against the Turks, and began to expel these age-long oppressors from the Land of Promise. Thus the gallery's upper terminal marks 1914 as the year when the world-wide trouble was due to begin; and this fact was *recognized and published* in Vol. I. of *Great Pyramid Passages* in 1910, four years previously."

The end of the first low passage leading from the Grand Gallery marks November 11, 1918, and at that point commences the ante-chamber, which measures 116-26 pyramid inches and marks by its fateful date, May 30, 1928. Mark it well; "the crisis of the world-wide trouble looms ahead." The end of the world is at hand. But how shall we answer it? We can laugh at it. We can weep for those who accept it. We can wait and see.

Meanwhile readers are warned; but if any follower of the prophet wishes to sell for spot cash the, to him, worthless reversionary interests in his property as from May 31, 1928, he should write to

G. J. F.

## The Deluge and the Rainbow.

UNDER the heading of "Strange Tales," on page 91 of your issue of February 6, Mr. Alan Tyndal has made some remarks on the Deluge story, as narrated in the Bible, that the Deluge is an historical event, it is incumbent upon me to point out where the writer has gone astray.

At the outset it is necessary to have clear ideas regarding the meaning of the terms which are used in a discussion; and one must not, like many eminent writers on theology and mythology, explicitly state, in one paragraph, that certain things do not exist; and yet, in some subsequent paragraph implicitly assert their actual physical existence. Such methods lead enquirers on to the wrong path; and render their conclusions hopelessly invalid.

Mankind, as far as can be ascertained from his traditions, believed in two species of gods. 1. The visible gods: the sun, planets and fixed stars. These he worshipped and from some of them we derive the names of the days in our week. 2. The invisible gods: which were used to explain natural phenomena, such as the movement of the winds, thunder, lightning, etc.

The confused mixture of visible and invisible gods—to each of whom has been wrongly ascribed powers of thought, speech, and action—is the cause of all the theological misconceptions with which the mind of man is burdened to-day. The visible gods lived in heaven; but they were, and are still, merely masses of non-sentient matter. The invisible gods

were not definitely located; they were here, there and everywhere.

Now, in any claim of causation, if the invisible god is placed, by anyone, on a particular link, we can say, that this link is the dividing point between his knowledge and his ignorance. As knowledge increases, the invisible deity is pushed, link by link, further back in the chain of causation; and on no link, which he was assumed to have occupied, do we ever find any trace of his existence. From past experience we are therefore fully justified in asserting, without hesitation, that these invisible omnipotent and omniscient deities have no real existence; while physical science tells us that the visible gods, such as the sun, rule the lives of all of us; it, just as clearly, tells us that the invisible gods do not rule the universe or even the smallest part of it.

The truth, or falsity, of the Deluge myth must not be judged from the standpoint of the god idea. The reasons given in the Bible are merely the explanations of the priesthood, the scientific experts of the Dark Ages; and, as these explanations are, to us, obviously false, the truth of the tradition must be judged from the evidence obtained from Geology, Archæology, Mythology, and Astronomy.

Readers of this paper may remember I put forward the theory that about 5,400 years ago, the earth was removed farther from the sun. I had no doubt myself, that, given the physical conditions which are outlined in the myths of mankind, such a removal was possible, from the standpoint of celestial mechanics.

A short time ago, an opportunity offered itself to put a query, in the *English Mechanic*, on the subject. I gave a hypothetical set of conditions, based on mythology, and the results of my own calculations. The reply, of a brilliant mathematician—C. P. No. 1—to my query, was to the effect my new orbits were approximately correct; that is, the planets would be removed farther from the body around which they revolved. He said he was sorry for the planets; and I can only add that I am sorry for what happened to our own particular one. He made some objections on one or two points; but these objections had been previously considered by me; and due allowance made for them. He said, such an event as the collision was highly improbable. This statement is true, the odds against it are practically two hundred and fifty millions to one; on the other hand, the odds against holding thirteen trumps, in any one deal, are six hundred and thirty-five thousand millions to one; but this still more improbable event takes place about once in every eighteen years.

Among all the millions of stars in the universe, it is probable that collisions are of yearly, or of even daily occurrence; and if so, why, in the course of untold ages, should it not take place once at least in every planetary system? I must ask my readers, therefore, to consider that the removal of our planet farther from the sun (if a huge mass of matter from outside collided with another planet and both were destroyed) is scientifically demonstrable. Such being the case we can now deal with the rainbow myth.

The two interior planets, Mercury and Venus, have not yet had their times of rotation on their axes definitely ascertained. With respect to Mercury, it appears, like the moon, to present always the same face to the body around which it revolves. Venus is in a different class; its period of rotation is unknown, because it is always covered with clouds of water vapour, and its surface has, therefore, never been seen.

We may consequently say that, if our planet were twenty millions of miles nearer the sun than it is at present, the greater heat would produce much evaporation; and the dense clouds formed would cause its surface to be invisible to an astronomer on another planet.

As everyone knows, we have rainbows only when the sun shines through a clear sky on to falling rain. If our earth were covered by dense clouds we should have diffused light and no rainbow would be possible.

In a previous communication, I asserted that, at one time, our planet was 74 millions of miles from the sun; whereas it is now 93 millions of miles distant from this body. As the removal of the earth from the sun, and the Deluge, were synchronous events, the statement that there were no rainbows, prior to the Deluge, affords very strong evidence of the correctness of my theory. Owing to the intense heat it is probable, that comparatively little rain would fall during the day time; but there would be a heavy downpour at night.

Mr. Tyndal may say that modern and competent geologists do not believe in the Deluge; but the older school did think it was a fact. The moderns have been led astray by the physicists, who have confidently asserted that the Deluge was impossible. Their conclusions were drawn from insufficient data; they knew nothing of, or disregarded, the mythological evidence. This would have upset their cut-and-dried ideas.

The geologists, however, seem to be, instinctively, aware that they have been misled by the Astronomers; and that something happened in past times, the reason for which astronomical science is unable to supply an answer. Sir Archibald Geikie remarks:

The possibility of any serious displacement of the rotational axis, since a very early period in the earth's history, has been strenuously denied by the astronomers; and their arguments have been generally, but somewhat reluctantly, accepted by geologists.—Ency. Brit. Vol. 11, page 649.

This remark was made when referring to the presence of large coalfields near the North Pole. Why these coalfields are situated in such a cold region geologists are unable to answer; and astronomers can give, or have given, them no help towards a solution of the difficulty.

If we assume that the crust of the earth rests upon a liquid mass of lava, and this, upon a highly compressed and intensely hot gas, then the crust would be capable of large movements without altering, to any considerable extent, the direction of the axis of rotation.

The Deluge story of the Bible was most probably taken by the Jews, during their captivity, from the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh. The central idea, a large rainfall, is confirmed by all races of mankind; and may be accepted as literally correct.

The ages of the patriarchs are puzzling; but not more so than many other problems with which mankind is confronted. Suppose the "years" meant "seasons"; then, the age of Methusaleh was 242, computed in revolutions around the sun. I have already stated that, in those prehistoric times, there were 260 days in a year; accordingly, Methusaleh lived for a length of time equivalent to 173 of our present years. As man was, then, living under conditions to which he and his ancestors had been acclimatised for millions of years, such a length of life was highly probable.

Sir E. A. Wallis-Budge says that the Sumerians gave a list of their ancient kings, and that the length of their lives was incredible. The puzzle has still to be solved, and we must await further information before coming to a final decision. It is, to me, un-

believable that any race of man, ancient or modern, should engrave on plastic clay a whole string of lies, which they afterwards took the trouble to bake for a permanent record of events; especially in reference to terrestrial matters.

This statement is really a part of the Deluge tradition.

When we discover the meaning of the statements that Noah, and likewise Dionysus, planted vineyards; that, wine is the blood of the gods; that, wine is the nectar of the gods; that, vines are the entrails of Chokanipok; and that, Osiris is the Wheat-god; then we may be able to say what is the real meaning of the Eucharist. I do not agree either with the absurd explanations of current theology, or with those of current mythology.

WILLIAM CLARK.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE GLACIAL EPOCH.

SIR,—In his concluding article of an interesting series, "From Protoplasm to Man," the writer, "Ona Melton," has made some statements which are open to criticism. He says:—"During this period there were four glacial epochs. Four times the ice barrier crept southwards towards the equator until half the Northern hemisphere was covered in glacial ice, that piled up against the great mountain barriers of the Alps, Himalayas, and the Pyrenees."

The statement, that there were four glacial epochs, implies all controversy on the subject is at an end and all geologists favour this idea. Such is far from being the case. There are the mono-glacialists, who think there was only one glacial epoch. The poly-glacialists are subdivided into those who believe there were four or more, and those, who, from some astronomical hypothesis, deduce the conclusion that a glacial epoch takes place once in every period of several thousand years. Finally, there are geologists who think that there is not sufficient information available to enable them to express any dogmatic opinion. Again, one-half of the area of the Northern hemisphere lies between the equator and the 30th parallel, to which latitude the ice-sheets never penetrated. Taking north-eastern America and north-western Europe into consideration—the areas of intense glaciation—the ice, at practically sea-level, was, on an average, down to 45N. Between this latitude and the Pole there is only 29 per cent. of the hemisphere, and of this area one-third was subjected to ice action. Ona Melton's 50 per cent. is, therefore, on examination, whittled down to 10 per cent. There were no ice-sheets in France or Spain piled up against the Pyrenees, it is more correct to say they were on this mountain range.

The conclusion that the stagnation of China was due to the erection of the Great-wall does not appear to follow as a logical sequence. This wall is 1,500 miles long, and was placed only on the northern boundary to keep out the savage Nomadic races. One might as well assert that the wall of Hadrian prevented the inhabitants of Roman Britain from becoming civilized, whereas we know that civilization in England decayed when this wall was penetrated by races from the north. The main cause of the stagnation of China is due to an imperial edict, which prohibited the consumption of alcoholic liquors. A similar prohibition is the principal factor in the decay of Mohammedism as a world force. It is a very serious matter for any body of men, whether of the priestly caste or not, to interfere with food and drink—the essentials of life. It can easily be shown that Brewers of Beer have been the Saviours of civilization. Of course they do not know the reason why, any more than a butcher understands the metabolic changes in a piece of beef. Both are after the profits, and that is all they care about.

WILLIAM CLARK.

## A WEST LONDON BRANCH OF N.S.S.

SIR,—For some considerable time, Freethinkers in London have recognised the desirability of the formation of a West London Branch of the National Secular Society, and many have asked that the necessary steps should be taken to that end. Accordingly, at the last meeting of the Executive, on the application of some earnest workers, permission was granted, and a Certificate was issued.

The West London Branch is, therefore, legally constituted; and all those, who have talked about, and looked forward to, its establishment, have now the opportunity of giving practical proof of their sincere sympathy with the movement by becoming members, and so contributing the necessary intellectual, moral, and financial support towards the execution of a comprehensive programme.

The activities of the Branch will commence by holding Outdoor meetings in various parks during the coming summer. For this purpose platforms will be required, and considerable running expenses will be incurred.

The annual subscription has been fixed at a minimum of 5s., terminating March 31 in each year.

No maximum has been fixed either for subscriptions or donations, as the Committee would not presume to seem to place any limit to the enthusiastic liberality of London Freethinkers. Arrangements are also in progress for a series of Indoor meetings from next October to April, and the rent of the hall is no small consideration, especially as voluntary collections are rarely satisfactory.

Readers of this announcement will gather that an appeal is hereby being made to them for subscriptions and donations towards the accomplishment of the above-mentioned objects. Mr. Campbell Everden has been elected President, and Mr. B. A. LeMaine, Treasurer and Organiser, and offices at 62, Bryanstone Street, Marble Arch, W.1, have been taken.

Remittances may be addressed to the Treasurer, at the above address, and it is hoped that the resultant responses will be such as will keep him busy in acknowledging them.

B. A. LEMAINÉ.

## Society News.

### NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

A much improved audience attended the meeting at the St. Pancras Reform Club last Sunday to hear Messrs. Cutner, Rex Roberts and Ratcliffe tell them "How they Voted and Why." The speakers and the audience both seemed to enjoy themselves, and there was considerable discussion. Challenges were given to Mr. Roberts and Mr. Cutner to uphold their opinions at greater length on future occasions, and we hope to book them for our Autumn Session. We hope for a good audience for Mr. Leonard Ebury to-night, who will address us on "Hate." Unfortunately, our apostle of "Love," Mr. George Bedborough, is now in America, but we must hope for someone to take up the cudgels for the opposite side.—K. B. K.

### GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.

The last night of the winter session was—through the kindness of some friends—a night of music. Mr. J. Bell, violinist, Miss O'Neil, 'celloist, Miss Fletcher, Mrs. Deuchars and Mr. Jack Menson, vocalists, all under the leadership of our good friend, Mr. Handel Lancaster, gave the large and appreciative audience a programme that, for quantity and quality, will long be remembered. At the finish, we were so far orthodox as to indulge in community singing by singing "Auld Lang Syne." Mr. Falconer's remarks in moving the vote of thanks were apt and to the point, while Mr. Lancaster, in his reply, was his usual humorous self. And so ended another session, but, as we sung, "we'll meet again some ither nicht."—E. H.

## MANCHESTER BRANCH.

Our final meeting for this season was held last Sunday, when Mr. Whitehead gave two very interesting lectures. In the afternoon he spoke on "The New View of Organic Evolution," and dealt with the various Post Darwinian Factors. In the evening, his subject was, "Some Important Lessons from Evolution," in which he compared the conditions which led to the fall of Rome with the conditions prevailing to-day. He emphasized the necessity for individual effort rather than spoon-fed legislation, and his reference to the war and its after effects, to the "dole," and various other forms of State assistance to the indigent classes aroused a healthy and strenuous opposition, which manifested itself in an orderly manner at question time.

Mr. Monks occupied the chair in the afternoon, and Mr. Bayford in the evening. Will members note our Annual Branch Meeting, on Saturday 9, at 3 p.m., in the Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, All Saints'?—H. C.

## Obituary.

JOHN BAPTISTE PEETERS.

It is with most sincere regret that we record the death of John Baptiste Peeters, at the early age of 41 years. Mr. Peeters was an ardent Freethinker, who for several years had been troubled with ill-health, and when death was imminent he refused the ministrations of the clergyman who was in attendance at the hospital. The Secularist service was conducted at the interment, which took place at Nunhead Cemetery, on March 9, 1927. Mr. Peeters leaves behind him a very sincere mourner in the person of his young widow, to whom we extend the utmost possible sympathy in her bereavement.—G. H.

**YOU, TOO,** may have read our advertisements for years. Maybe, you have resolved that you will give us a trial in another year or two, but it is well to remember we can never do more than give you perfect satisfaction. This we can do now if you will only write for any of the following:—*Gents' A to D Patterns, suits from 55s.; Gents' E Patterns, suits all at 67s. 6d.; Gents' F to H Patterns, suits from 75s.; Gents' I to M Patterns, suits from 98s.; Gents' Overcoat Patterns, prices from 48s. 6d.; or Ladies' Fashion and Pattern Sets, costumes from 57s., coats from 53s.*—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on postcard.

## LONDON.

## INDOOR.

**NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.** (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Mr. Leonard Ebury, "Hate."

**SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Chapman Cohen, "The Immorality and Absurdity of the Blasphemy Laws."

**SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY** (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, Dr. Bernard Hollander, "Suggestion and Auto-Suggestion."

**THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY** (101 Tottenham Court Road): Mr. A. H. Hyatt, a Lecture. Thursday, April 7: 7.30, Mr. A. L. Jackson, a Lecture.

## OUTDOOR.

**THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY** (Hyde Park): 11.30 and 3.0, Speakers—Messrs. Botting and Hart.

## COUNTRY.

## INDOOR.

**SHOTTS BRANCH N.S.S.** (Public Hall): 7.0, Mr. E. Hale, "The Story of Man." Questions and discussion cordially invited. Collection.

**NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S.** (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.30, Members' Meeting.

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Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

*A Form of Bequest.*—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £—free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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