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Views and Opinions.

Science and Superstition.

THE Conway Memorial Lecture was delivered this year by Professor J. B. S. Haldane.* The lecture is a capital one, and contains many shrewd comments, which prove that the study of science destroys neither the sense of humour nor prevents cultivation of a healthy sense of scepticism concerning much that is put forward in the name of science. There is, for example, a useful hint in the following, with its suggestion that certain types of mind are not of necessity freed from superstition because they have given up belief in its established forms:—

So much nonsense is put about in the name of hygiene . . . For hygiene has furnished a new weapon to the numerous persons who desire either to interfere with the lives of their fellows or to exploit their fears. As religion declines, the man who would have sold relics in the past, turns his attention to pills, and the belief in the danger of Sabbath-breaking is replaced by that in the danger of bad smells, although tanners and glue boilers are healthier than the average of the population.

This is only one of many shrewd thrusts of the same quality, and those who get Professor Haldane's lecture may rest assured of not suffering boredom in the reading.

* * *

Agnosticism.

So, if I spend time in criticizing some passages in the lecture before me, it is not to find fault with it as a whole, but only because some expressions used serve as a text on which to hang a sermon in the interests of intellectual clarity, an aim which I doubt not the lecturer would be the first to approve. For example, I note that Professor Haldane describes himself as an Agnostic, and defines Agnosticism as "a refusal to make up one's mind." Surely there is some error here? A refusal to make up one's mind implies that evidence for or against is so evenly balanced that it is impossible to come to a decision. A jury may be unable to render a verdict because the evidence offered by the prosecution is not strong enough to warrant a conviction, or the rebutting evi-

dence may be such that it counterbalances that offered by the prosecution. Or the evidence may be of such a nature as to just fall short of commanding assent, as, say, in the opinion of some would be the case with Einstein's theory. In each of these cases the thing to be proved is quite clear, quite realizable; it is simply a case of there not being enough evidence to warrant definite proof or disproof. Does Professor Haldane ask us to believe that this is the position of the Agnostic with regard to the belief in the existence of "God"? If I understand the position of Agnostic, it is surely that it is impossible to prove the existence of a "God," which is not a refusal to make up one's mind about the subject of discussion, but the assertion of a very positive frame of mind, namely, that having examined the case, it is decided that the case does not admit of proof or disproof. This can hardly be called a refusal to make up one's mind.

On Professor Haldane's definition one would like to know whether he is actually in the position of one who cannot make up his mind about the existence of "God." I should be surprised if this is the case. If "God" is taken as referring to the gods of any of the religions of the world, then he must be as well aware as I am that to say one cannot make up one's mind concerning these, is just about equal to saying that one cannot make up one's mind as to the existence of witches or of the polychromatic zoological visitors of a dipsomaniac. In either case, when the thing believed in is reduced to an understanding of the conditions which gave it birth, the enquiry as to its actuality is at an end. And this must certainly apply to the gods that people have, and do, believe in. To a genuinely scientific understanding there is really nothing left about which one can possibly be in a state of mental indecision.

On the other hand, if by a quite illegitimate transference of "God," it is taken to stand for some cosmic intelligence which created and governs the world, the case is equally clear. "Mind," "intelligence" stands, so long as language is used with regard to precision, for certain qualities that are only conceivable in relation to an organic structure. I do not say that I am in doubt as to whether there exists a mind apart from organic structure; I say that if it is separated from such, the term loses all meaning. And I say this because, if words when used of "God" do not mean what they mean when they are used in connexion with man, then they do not mean anything at all. Mind must be mind as we know it. To say that it may connote something different is only another way of saying that it is not mind at all. I am quite sure that it is not on this point that Professor Haldane cannot make up his mind. So I am left wondering what his Agnosticism really is.

* *Science and Ethics*, by J. B. S. Haldane. Watts & Co.

Religion and Society.

There is another expression of Professor Haldane's which makes me open my eyes. It is this:—

Anthropologists are generally agreed that the magic and religion are essential parts of their social systems and hold that missionaries destroy the very foundations of society when they introduce Christianity or Islam.

I do not think this is true of anthropologists, and if it were, it would not make the view a correct one. One of the main purposes of science is to separate essentials from non-essentials, and if this is done in this instance, the truth is somewhat different than would appear from the passage cited. It is quite true that in primitive societies every social usage and every social custom is more or less entangled with some form of religion. A savage would not dream of sowing seed unless he accompanied the act with certain acts with reference to the tribal deities—for that matter we have many such performances among ourselves. If the savage did neglect these acts he would expect the harvest to be a poor one. And the same thing holds true of every social custom. But it does not follow that neglect of this would destroy the social system; still less that it would destroy the foundations of society. Here the task is to separate the essential from the non-essential. Developing knowledge shows that it is other things, and not the incantation that is responsible for good health, for a good harvest, for success in hunting or in warfare, and far from an attack on religious beliefs endangering the success of those activities, it is the elimination of religion that makes success more certain, makes them of greater use to society. What anthropologists show is that religion is everywhere entangled with early social customs. What the scientific sociologist proves is that the secular needs of society have more to do with determining the modifications that take place in religion than religion has to do with social preservation.

* * *

A Question of Causation.

The following passage, again, calls for criticism:—

The doctrine of emergence, which is widely held to-day, is that aggregates may have qualities, such as life or consciousness, which are quite foreign to their parts. This doctrine may conceivably be true, but it is radically opposed to the spirit of science, which has always attempted to explain the complex in terms of the simple, and has on the whole succeeded. We do not find obvious evidence of life or mind in so-called inert matter, and we naturally study them most easily where they are most completely manifested; but if the scientific point of view is correct, we shall ultimately find them, at least in rudimentary forms, all through the universe.

Now, to begin with, I am just a little surprised at finding Professor Haldane referring to "emergence" as something that could reasonably be questioned. For my own part I have been teaching that for the last forty years, and, although I may lay myself open to the charge of being conceited, the fact that it has ever been called in question is evidence of the truth that a great many scientific workers have but a poor appreciation of the essentials of scientific method. What does emergence mean? Only that aggregates have qualities which are not present, as such, in the parts. But surely that is the great, the central fact, of causation? The qualities of a compound are not the mere sum of the qualities of the parts, but of their interaction. I have devoted a whole chapter to this in my little book on *Materialism*, and I cannot conceive anyone who has a genuine understand-

ing of causation or of scientific method questioning it. Wetness is not in either oxygen or hydrogen, it is the product, an emergence due to their interaction.

The passage cited is, in my opinion, so confused, that I am almost inclined to believe that Professor Haldane has been incorrectly reported, and has not noticed the misrepresentation. In what way does the theory of emergence contradict the scientific method of explaining the complex by the simple? In doing this, all that is done is to separate a result into its factors, and then by recombining reproduce the result. This does not contradict "emergence," it supports it. And why should we expect to find life and consciousness in rudimentary forms all through the universe? Does Professor Haldane wish us to believe that it is sound science to believe that life and consciousness are distinct things, which in a rudimentary form are associated with matter throughout the universe, and with a more complex grouping of material elements also assume the more complex form of life and consciousness as we find it in human beings? If so, that is a dualism which, I venture to say, receives no support whatever from modern science, however much it may be favoured by theological philosophers. It brings us back to the ridiculous theory of a "life force" with which so many theologians and would-be philosophers are amusing themselves to-day, and which has as its chief attraction its elusive and shadowy character. We should no more expect to find life and consciousness in a rudimentary form through the universe because we find it in connexion with developed animal organisms, than we should expect to find wetness all through the universe because it is associated with certain physical conditions.

But these are mere asides to Professor Haldane's excellent and suggestive lecture. As I have said, I have used it as a text to say things which cannot be said too often, because I believe that anything which tends to encourage careful and accurate thinking makes for the higher and more permanent good of humanity.

CHAPMAN COHRN.

The Exploitation of Death.

"Let's talk of graves."—*Shakespeare*.

"Death is conducive to the good of the universe which subsists by change."—*Marcus Aurelius*.

"Into the breast that gives the rose
Shall I with shuddering fall?"

George Meredith.

EDITORS of newspapers do strange things in their frantic endeavour to increase the huge circulations of their publications. Some insure their readers against accidents; other start discussions on controversial subjects. A few rely on beauty competitions; but one daring editor tried recently to make a sensation by starting a debate on "Where are the Dead?" and inviting a number of more or less well-known people to contribute their views on the subject.

To speak frankly, it is a chilly subject for the warm weather. Perhaps that accounted for the inconclusive nature of the discussion. Another factor was the absence of a strong editor as chairman. This is a serious matter, and I have known a debate on the existence of a god degenerate into a wrangle as to whether the tomato is a fruit or a vegetable, for want of supervision from the chair.

Moreover, the contributors never got to grips with the subject. Orthodox folk aired orthodox views; Nonconformists voiced Nonconformist opinions. A few fancy-religionists put forward the quaintest ideas. But there was an air of unreality all through. So timid were the contributors, that

even the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George was almost unrecognisable as a hard-shell Baptist. A little more common sense and some humour might have helped things considerably. I remember once that a parson tried to corner George Foote, after a lecture, by asking: "Will the speaker tell me plainly what will happen to me after my death." Foote smiled and answered: "Without being unduly dogmatic I should say a funeral."

It would do the readers of that particular newspaper good to have a few home-truths put before them. This harping on death, this gloating on hell, is simply a very artful manoeuvre on the part of priests, of whom there are 50,000 in this country alone. To feather their own nests, they teach their followers that death is the most dreadful evil. All the terrors that theology could gather from savage nations have been added to increase the horrors, and they invariably tried to paralyse reason with the clutch of fear.

These appeals to fear and to imagination have made a terror of what should be accepted with serenity. The clergy may be charlatans, but they know their sorry business. Old Doctor Samuel Johnson was not a fool, but he was tormented by the fear of death. The gentle William Cowper was driven mad by the horrors of the Christian Religion. Charles Spurgeon, the most popular preacher of the nineteenth century, preached and wrote that the majority of the human race was destined to everlasting torture in full view of their deity. To-day the Roman Catholic Church, the most powerful and reactionary Church in all Christendom, has not damped one little spark of its fiery damnation; and the Salvation Army actually works the same threat into its trademark, "Blood and Fire." And this barbarism pays even in the twentieth century, for the tambourines of its devotees are full of money, and the "Army" receives the applause of the Royal Family.

The teaching of the Christian Religion is the cause of this terror of death. Never has death been the cause of such craven timidity as in the Christian world. To visionaries like Catherine of Siena or Emanuel Swedenborg, it may have been different, but to the uncultured masses death has been, and is, the King of Terrors, from whose approach they cower in an agony which Epictetus and Socrates would have scorned with lifted eyebrows. Notice how the grand old Pagans look death in the face without flinching. Epictetus says, proudly, "Why should we fear death? For where death is, there are we not; and where we are, there death is not." No less emphatic is Marcus Aurelius, who bids us regard death as "the mere work of Nature," and who reminds us, further, that "it is childish folly to be afraid of what is natural."

These great Pagans invested death with dignity, but Christians fear death as children fear the dark. In Bacon's famous essay on death, it is remarkable that all the instances he gives of its being borne with equanimity are taken from the Pagan world. For the Christian Religion added a fresh terror to death in the thought of being cut off in sin. Even to-day the Church of England Prayer Book has a prayer against sudden death, which the old-world Pagans regarded as best. And the Church of England is the form of faith patronized by the Government of this country, and whose upkeep costs millions of money annually.

The clergy have found it very profitable to invest death with horrors. They promise the docile believer a harp after death; but their own share ranges from the pale young curate's £250 yearly to the £180,000 netted annually by the Bench of Bishops. Despite clerical nonsense, most people die as un-

consciously as they are born. Doctors notice that fear of death departs with the dying. And it is here that science comes to the rescue of mankind with its anodynes and anæsthetics. The clergy, who opposed the introduction of chloroform in child-bed, because they said it interfered with their god's primal curse upon woman, are fond of pointing the feeble finger of scorn at scientists. Did the whole of the millions of the clergy of Europe ever do so much for humanity as Lister and Simpson? The doctors fought all their lives against the horrid shapes that follow wounds and disease. The clergy, for their own sorry ends, made death more awful and gruesome, but science has robbed death of half its terrors. As a result of the discoveries of the scientists, death comes as a tender nurse to patients who had otherwise died in cruel suffering.

For many many centuries priests have chanted the old, sad, disheartening refrain of death as an enemy, but the Freethinker listens to other and better strains. The contemplation of death as a deliverer, dis severed from the terrors of the imagination, comforts him. The verdict of the jury of the entire civilized and educated world is now dead against the savage idea of Satan and his flaming abode. This is a verdict that brings relief and delectation to all except the clergy and their dupes, who still desire to use the lever of fear with which to exploit their less-educated brethren. The terror of death is passing away because the Christian Religion is decaying fast.

Even believers in a pleasant post-mortem existence are getting shy of expressing their views with exactitude. Like the famous actor, who, after supping gloriously, mistook an ordinary taxi for his own motor. Throwing himself on the cushions, he murmured: "Home, Charles!" The taxi-man grinned, and said: "And where do you live, sir." The actor looked at him, reproachfully, and gurgled: "Low fellow! Do you imagine I am going to tell you where my beautiful home is?" Christians are like that player, for they like to keep such information to themselves. Their spiritual home may be in a golden street, with golden lamp-posts, but the gilt is getting tarnished, and tawdry. Perhaps they are shy because they are getting ashamed of it. Really, the idea is far too suggestive of a garden-city in the suburbs of London. MIMNERMUS.

Two Philosophies.

MILTON—SHAKESPEARE.

"They also serve who only stand and wait"—
How true
For me and you,
Who stumble onward blindly to our fate;
And know not where the Gate:
The why,
The whence,
And whither faring;
But only try
To cross each fence
With skill, and—maybe!—daring.

"Ripeness is all"—Acceptance of this truth,
So clear,
And newly-near,
Is all man needs for age that follows youth:
When rest succeeds on ruth,
And peace
At last
Assuages living—
A glad release
From terrors past,
E'en Death itself forgiving!

Nigeria.

J. STUART-YOUNG.

"Soul" and "Spirit."

THESE two words date back to man's early attempts at speculative theorizing concerning the mysterious phenomena which encompass him. As he was not in possession of a scrap of real or scientific knowledge of Nature, all his efforts were of necessity only metaphysical guess-work. For many thousand years, even before bodily flying became a possibility, man has indulged in mental aviation. The stunts he has performed amid the dizzy heights of cloudland, dwarf those of the R.A.F. to insignificance. "Soul" and "Spirit" represent his efforts to explain the basic phenomena of life and mind.

It is a misfortune that the English Bible obscures the origin of the idea as well as its metamorphoses from its chrysalis stage to the fully developed imago. The terms "soul" and "spirit" do not revive the original meanings of the Greek terms translated by them.

The etymology of the English word "soul" is not known, but it is obvious that it was fully developed when used in the English Bible; for it was believed to be a substantial entity existing in each person. It was that which lives, feels, thinks, and wills, and which after death, had an imperfect existence, as a ghost resembling its former host in size and form.

Now, this is the term invariably used in the Bible to translate the Greek word *psuche* which meant *breath* as the sign of life and mind. This physical origin is entirely obscured by the word "soul."

The term "spirit" is not an English word, but an adaptation of the Latin word, *spiritus*, which, in the original, signified air or wind. Before it was acclimatized in English it underwent a radical change. From being a physical word denoting *air* at rest or in motion, it became a metaphysical term denoting an incorporeal entity. With this new meaning, it is used to render the Greek word *pneuma* meaning air or wind. But the term "spirit" as used in English would never suggest that, though the original term whence it was derived meant it. Thus, both "soul" and "spirit" obscure the original meaning of the words they translate. It will be noted, in passing, that the root idea of both terms is identical—viz., air.

When this air, in the form of breath, was conceived as an entity and endowed with metaphysico-vital powers as that which in every person lives, feels, thinks and wills—the riddle of life and mind was considered as solved by all semi-civilized people. That it was the crudest guess-work of primitive ignorance is too obvious to need any lucidatory remarks. But the crudity of the guess is possibly made more arrant by the diversity—wide as the poles asunder—of the opinions, respecting the nature of this breath entity, which were held by the famous intellectuals who flourished in Greece during its golden age of speculative thought. For example, Anaximander and Diogenes of Apollonia thought it was air; Heraclitus said it was fire; Empedocles considered it to be blood diffused about the heart; or, according to Aristotle, Empedocles is credited with maintaining that each of the four elements (earth, air, water, and fire) contributed its quota to its make-up; Dicæarchus and other Pythagoreans declared it was harmony; physicians said it was the "Complexions" (constitutional temperaments); Democritus and the atomists said that the soul was a swarm of atoms; other Pythagoreans maintained that a "general soul filled with brain," while the Stoics denied its existence.

Can any evidence be more complete or convincing that the idea of soul or deified breath was about the most erratic piece of guess-work ever propounded by man? It was the offspring of the impulse of the

awakening intellect to *understand* phenomena—i.e., to connect them casually, and the total destitution of all knowledge necessary to do so. This is the penalty of being self-conscious—a fact that has duplicated man's universe. As a result of this higher awakening the *relations* existing between the phenomena of the external world became elements of cognition, and an inner world of ideas (as these neutral elements are called) came into being. Among these ideas the paramount are those of existence, likeness, and causality.

As this cognition is characteristically human knowledge which man possesses over and above the instinctive knowledge of recognition possessed by all animals, it calls for special notice. Ideas are mental states that are necessarily transient; they are as evanescent and fleeting as dimples on the surface of water and vanish as soon as formed. Had not man developed the capacity of speech as means of embodying them, he would have made little headway as a self-conscious being. When, however, the idea is attached to a particular vocal sound or word it becomes a semi-materialized entity, and acquires fixity and permanence that increase with the development of language. That is why speech has had such a dominant effect upon the persistence and life history of ideas. Under its magic power imaginary non-existences and metaphysical nothings became entities and were treated as real as soon as they were labelled. Myriads of abstract ideas owe whatever discrete existence they have to the names given to them.

Two thousand years ago man's knowledge of natural energy—both physical and chemical—as a source of power was nil. The only source of power he knew was that exerted by the muscles of living creatures. He could scarcely conceive an *inanimate* substance or object exerting force. So wherever he witnessed an effect a deity was called into being to account for it. Æolus gave force to the winds, Neptune to the sea, and Jupiter to the rain and thunder. More unthinkable still would it be to credit the air, considered as an inanimate substance, with power to support life and mind. How could those to whom earth, air, and water were elements, and fire an elemental substance, ever conceive the chemical function of breathing? Besides, all matter was then considered to be essentially inert and impotent, so breath which kept life in the body could not possibly be matter. They were thus driven perforce to regard it as a substantial entity possessing supernatural powers. Moreover, air, not only as breath but as a whole, was then regarded as immaterial. And no wonder, when we remember the task that the pioneers of physical science, from Galileo to Pascal, had to prove that it was material and had weight like a piece of stone. Indeed, it is the Latin name of air, *spiritus*, that gave birth and being to that inanity called spirit—a bogey that has ever since obsessed mankind. All they knew was that breathing and life were indissoluble—that breathing was indispensable to living and thinking. Their unavoidable ignorance palliates the fatuity of their guess and exonerates them of all blame. The disgrace is ours—that we, who are in the full glare of the Twentieth Century, should consider the dreams of primitive ignorance as rational topics to argue about. Contrast the psyche or soul speculation with another piece of primitive guess-work. They called the blue vault that spreads domelike from horizon to horizon, the *Firmament*. The blue sky is an optical effect; and its apparent solidity and firmness is a pure illusion. Everybody now knows that it is not a solid dome with the stars set therein; and the word is retained only as a poetical term. Why then should there be such a persistency to retain the words, soul and spirit, which are essentially of the same order,

the guess-work of primitive ignorance? Was the flood of scientific light less revolutionary on the soul notion than it was on the firmament idea? Quite the reverse. The sciences of physics and chemistry have made a complete topsy-turvydom of all that the ancients assumed to be true in respect of the material universe as well as of the nature of matter itself. Instead of being a substance absolutely inert and sterile, it is now known to be the receptacle of countless potentialities and powers. The sciences of anatomy and physiology have made the soul myth a childish caricature, by showing the animal body to be an organization of infinite complexity with myriads of devices for dealing with and utilizing energy, molecular and radiant, so as to enable the bodily machine to do its work of living and thinking efficiently. The ceaseless flow of simultaneous reactions occurring within the organism ever releasing, absorbing, or transmitting energy for the upkeep of the life-mill, was ascribed by pre-scientific ignorance to that metaphysical bogus—the soul. And the Christian Church exerts every sinew to keep up the superstition that this embalmed Mummy is still alive! No generalization is better established than that the mind is the function of the brain, just as movement is the function of muscle or chemical change that of the liver.

Only ultimate processes remain unexplained; for example, the *How* the metabolic changes in the brain protoplasm results in awakening sensation and thought. This and the like will possibly remain permanent mysteries, due to the intrinsic limitations of the act or power of "understanding" or the process of "explanation." Transitions from the material to the immaterial are difficult to follow, even when the law of the conservation of Energy is quite fulfilled. *How* a hot body got cold in air or in vacuo was always a mystery. The electric constitution of the atom is now beginning to shed light on it.

Why then should there be such dogged persistency to retain the words "soul" and "spirit," the fossils of barbaric ignorance, as if they were living realities? Just because the Christian cult made these ignorant guesses, which were the current beliefs at the time, basic tenets of its Creed. Not only did it adopt the soul-myth in its barbaric form as the basis of its creed, but made it infinitely more grotesque by declaring that this soul entity, though stripped of its sentient body could still feel the agonies of which living flesh alone is capable; and so could agonize for all eternity in hell. This conception is not only the most fiendish that has ever entered the heart of man, but a falsity so unmitigated as to outrage the rational faculty. When man abandons himself to the metaphysics of a religious creed, he seems to lose his reason altogether.

Now, no structure can remain standing if its foundation is demolished; and the vaster the edifice the more catastrophic the fall. If the myth of soul and spirit were taken away, the Christian superstition would inevitably collapse. The zeal displayed in the efforts to underpin the foundation is inspired by the vastness of the superstructure. During the two thousand years of its existence the cult became widely established and well entrenched in gold—hence the strenuous activities throughout Christendom to keep the superstition alive. *Endow* a solid firmament or flat earth religion and it is immortal.

The priesthood will never cease spinning and weaving metaphysical cobwebs to hide from the masses the truth—that the ideas of soul and spirit were the arrant guesses of the human mind groping in the darkness when the pall of ignorance was universal and absolute.

Books and Life.

PUBLISHED on the first day of the month of roses is an interesting book entitled *Our Vanishing Wildflowers*, by Henry S. Salt. The price is 3s. 6d. net, and the book is sponsored by Messrs. Watts & Co. The author makes a strong appeal for the protection and preservation of rare wild flowers that pattern the earth's overcoat, but he comes in contact with a real problem as to the methods to be adopted. There does not appear to be much hope from the State, and perhaps it would be undesirable in a matter that whittles itself down to a question of good taste. The great organs of public opinion that can get a cross in a particular place cannot induce a public to assist in keeping commons and open spaces free from litter. This, perhaps, is the first thing to be put right, and efforts might be made in schools to induce habits of tidiness, so that the young could instruct the old that the proper place for newspapers is the fire-grate, or in bales to be pulped eventually into something useful. Mr. Salt knows his subject, and writes delightfully; he draws copiously on the wise, and plucks his intellectual flowers from all quarters, and is so much in love with his object that we should not have forgiven him if he had omitted to quote one of his own verses—a memorable line of which we would give our ears to have written:—

"The true Museum is the mind."

He records a habit of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who, on his return home, used to gravely raise his hat to the trees in his park, and a passage that strikes home to us is a true indication that Mr. Salt is under no illusion about what we might call, in a spirit of ribaldry, a "Charlie Chaplin" civilization: "A contempt for Nature, and for all that is natural, as contrasted with the 'belongings' of artificial life, is one of the most disagreeable characteristics of the modern uncivilized man—the man who imagines himself civilized, but is still in the primitive Vandal state." On a hot summer day, the most natural thing to be noted in Charing Cross Road, by the writer, was a man loosening the earth round the foot of the trees; we gravely raise our own hat to that abstraction—Municipal Authority—and may they, or it, in time induce suburban blockheads not to cement and tar the foot of those delightful and beautiful adornments of earth. An afterword, by Sir Maurice Abbot Anderson, invites co-operation in the aims of Mr. Salt. Those interested are asked to write to 78 Portland Place, London, W.1, marking their envelope "League." We must thank the author for his contribution towards making a heaven of the only world we know, and after carefully reading his book, we feel absolved for picking a sprig of milk-wort and cutting five wild roses within sound of Big Ben; his description, and search for the Spider Orchis on Sussex Downs interested and impressed us more than the traffic problem over the North Pole.

A little book, brought to light by the Old Royalty Book Publishers, John Street, Adelphi, has for the authors, David and Helen Roeder, been a labour of love, and claims our attention for that reason alone. Entitled *Smoke Drift*, it is dedicated "To Our Mothers in Gratitude for Life and Liberty." In the preface, a wish is expressed that the contents may stimulate the desire to think; this is very modest, but when anyone has jettisoned the useless cargo of "evil" and "original sin," and other verbal vapourings, most of our troubles are traceable to want of thought. The collection is a record of a father's after dinner conversations—thinking aloud—and we do not read very far before we become aware of an independent mind at work. The "old man" is disgruntled over State taxation on entertainments, and "lets fly," as we say in the country: "The only entertainments which appear to meet with the entire approval of the State seem to be the purchase of War Saving Certificates, and the procreation of children. The latter makes the former almost impossible." Later on we again come across a verbal flash that proves the "old man" to be in no uncertain frame of mind about liberty. "When once we have, through our own in-

dependent thought, developed an individuality, we are entitled to claim liberty for it, but without individuality and freedom of thought the word liberty is a mockery." This is in line with Milton; it is also a broadside for those who wish to deal with Freethought in the same manner as American slave dealers dealt with some of their slaves. Again, the "old man" touches the spot—"We are lazy, and on the whole easily persuaded to allow anyone to relieve us of the duty of thinking and preserving our personality as long as they are fairly plausible, and others appear satisfied to trust them." It might also have been added that people exist who would transfer the onus of breathing to others if it were possible, and it is this lethargy that provides an opening for silly beliefs capable of mistaking a white monkey for a black cat. The price of *Smoke Drift* is 3s. 6d. net; it is nicely bound and printed, it shows the "old man" saturated with sound ideas, a wide knowledge of the best in literature, and a charming method of exposition about fundamental facts of biology. It is as direct and simple as a picture by Constable, and justifies its right to be called a book.

There are so many good books in the world's library that time is wisely begrudged in sieving the wind. As a personal preference Tolstoy is unattractive, although some time has been given to him; he had the religious obsession which, for the mentally grown-up, ceases to have any interest. In other words, we resist the invitation to step into the other person's fog to enjoy the sensation of being lost. A booklet, however, containing an essay by Tolstoy on Guy de Maupassant, was found to be shot with commonsense, and, the Russian, that mixture of autocrat and democrat, takes the French author to task for his slandering of the peasant: "Lack of understanding of the life and interests of the working people, and the representation of them as semi-brutes moved only by sensuality, spite, and greed, constitute two of the greatest and most serious deficiencies of most of the latest French authors, and, in their number, of Maupassant, who, not only in this story (*Histoire d'une Fille du Ferme*) but in all those others in which he treats of the people, always describes them as coarse, dull animals at whom one can only laugh." It is ancient history that the poor have no monopoly of vice or virtue for society cannot be divided in those matters into compartments. With Tolstoy's essay in mind, we read and enjoyed the *Selected Stories of Guy de Maupassant*, in the International Library, with a really good preface by Mr. Holbrook Jackson. We cocked our ears in *Boule de Suif*, at the following passage: "The Garde Nationale, who for the last two months had been carrying out some very cautious reconnaissances in the neighbouring woods, sometimes shooting their own sentries, and preparing for action every time a rabbit stirred in the bushes, had gone back to the bosom of their families." This story is a record of the heroic life of a *demi-mondaine*, does not deserve Tolstoy's censure, and leaves the impression in the reader's mind that real life is faithfully portrayed in this story of the cads who saved their precious skins through the woman scapegoat. Yes, life is just like that, and it is the Christian virtues that shimmer through that brief army saying: "Blow you Jack; I'm allright." We have had some, and *Boule de Suif* reminds us of what decency would forget, and at the same time hardens our distrust of Tolstoy's judgment on De Maupassant as applied to this particular story.

WILLIAM REPTON.

BRUTE FORCE.

In the end that which lives lives by delicate sensitiveness. If it were a question of brute force, not a single human baby would survive for a fortnight.

It is the grass of the field, most frail of all things, that supports all life all the time. But for the green grass no empire would rise, no man would eat bread, for grain is grass.

Brute force crushes many plants, yet the plants rise again. The pyramids will not last a moment compared with the daisy.—D. H. Lawrence.

Freethought Flashes.

It makes all the difference in the world whether you believe a thing to be true because it gives you pleasure, or whether you get pleasure from it because you believe it to be true.

No man need feel ashamed of submitting to brute force openly applied. He can do so with no sense of degradation, with no loss of self-respect, and with a strong contempt for those who use it. But to submit because it means a loss of social standing or a loss in money is a submission that inevitably lowers a man in his own estimation, for he knows that the cause of his submission is of such a nature that he cannot avow it without sinking in the estimation of all around him.

Many people think they are original when in truth they are only different from others. So might one acclaim a lunatic as an original character. Certainly lunatics have a greater claim to originality than have normal men and women.

The complaint that Christians do not agree on anything is too sweeping. From 1914 to 1918 Christians, here, in Germany, in France, and elsewhere were in absolute agreement as to the desirability of killing each other as speedily as possible.

To prove pessimism is to disprove it. So soon as we establish the proposition that all things are bad, we are certainly establishing the existence of an ideal perception that things might be better, since it is only in relation to the possibly better that bad is recognized. But the existence of a sense of better is inimical to the statement that things are irretrievably bad, since the first step towards betterment has been taken.

It would be laughable, were it not so pitiable, to find a book like the New Testament taken seriously by otherwise intelligent people as a guide to life. Consider what the New Testament does *not* teach:—

There is nothing there about art.
There is nothing about literature.
There is nothing about science.
There is no philosophy of the State.
There is no teaching concerning the family.
There is nothing about education.

The list might be made longer, but—the pity of it!—that one of the emptiest of the world's "great" books should be so solemnly proclaimed as giving man a guide to life. Fortunately, none but half-mad monks have ever acted upon it.

Christians will voluntarily tolerate differences in religion only when they have ceased to believe in the religion they profess.

Those who talk of the morality of nature should reflect that the same processes which habituate the performance of good actions, likewise habituate the performance of bad ones. Constant practise of good deeds leads to a delight being found in them, with a shrinking from their opposites. But constant performance of bad deeds leads to a delight being found in them, until no pleasure whatever is found in the performance of their opposites. The process of adjustment is the same in both cases, and nature is quite insensible to the moral valuation that we place upon them. A bad man is just as "natural" as a good one. The indifference of nature to our standards of valuation is the plainest of scientific facts.

Acid Drops.

The Church of England, says Dean Inge, is neither a sect nor a trade union. The Dean is running away with himself. Even if we were to take the Church of England as representing the whole of the population, it is still a sect in relation to the whole body of Christian believers. And if we take the actual state of affairs in England, the large number of Christian churches and chapels, with also the large number of people who are outside all the churches, it is manifestly a sect so far as this country is concerned. And why is it not a trade union? It has the two outstanding features of all trade unions—striving for bigger pay, and a resolve to keep unauthorized practitioners out of the game. And in addition, it asks and gets the State to take action so that its aims may not be interfered with more than is inevitable. The only feature it lacks here is the readiness to strike. But the situation is not identical with that of working men. The working man strikes because he thinks the community cannot get on without his labour. The parson dare not strike for fear the community will realize that it does not need him at all.

"The Padre" (in *Methodist Times*) says he believes there is far less sanctimonious lumbag talked nowadays. For the most part Christians are alive to the dangers of what used to be called "the language of Zion"—an advance for which they cannot be too thankful. Clap-trap, he says, now and again gets a longish innings but it never makes a really good substitute for thought. Hear, hear! We feel sure our padre friend will not mind our mentioning that this Christian reform was a reform from without. It was the ridicule of Freethinkers which brought it about. But such is the ingratitude of Christians that they never think of tendering thanks for services rendered. 'Twas ever thus!

A *Daily Express* tonic thought is:—

Tell the truth . . . there are four fundamental reasons which it is advisable. It saves the nerves. It encourages respect and self-respect. It maintains friendships. It pays.

Strictly between ourselves, we fear some of these fundamental reasons will cut no ice with outspoken Freethinkers. For, from bitter experience, they have learned that to tell the truth about the Christian religion, often severs friendships, and it certainly does not "pay." But it encourages self-respect, and the respect of the better type of Christian. Freethinkers will be satisfied if it does that.

But the Christian religion aside, the *Express* advice could have been better grounded. The chief fundamental reason for telling the truth is that it creates mutual trust among the individuals comprising the social whole, and that the community can work and live together and progress only so long as mutual trust is established and maintained.

Dr. T. R. Glover thinks there is a good deal of difference between the nonsense of the trained mind and of the untrained, between the absurdities of those who recognize absurdity when they speak it, and of those who do not. This sets us wondering in which category to place the learned doctor's friends, the parsons. They, it may be admitted, have trained minds of a sort. But, judging by the average sermon, we fancy they must be trained not to recognize absurdity when they speak it. No doubt that is essential in order to retain the more intelligent men in the profession. But we are willing to be charitable and to assume that the talent is not acquired but inborn.

A Yorkshire Methodist, the Rev. C. Ashlin West, laments that youth is drifting away in the villages. The cause is, he thinks, the difficulty of getting pulpit "supplies," also the bad presentation of the Gospel. He suggests that use should be made of gramophones and wireless. The day is rapidly approaching, he believes, when

it will be possible for great organizations to hire broadcasting stations for propagandist purposes. Then the Methodist Church will be one of the first to broadcast a service to village chapels. When Mr. West talks of hiring broadcasting stations, we think he is not sufficiently appreciative of the Christian efforts of the B.B.C. to prevent the decay of Christianity. There's no pleasing some people—even when they get something for nothing.

We have it on the authority of Dr. T. R. Glover, that Julius Caesar was a Freethinker. Caesar has evidently been dead long enough for Christians to venture on telling the truth about him.

Judge Cluer, at Whitechapel County Court, is reported to have said:—

If people, instead of talking about overcrowding, would talk about overbreeding, it would be more sensible.

We wonder if our Roman Catholic friends will pull the wool out of their ears to listen to this!

A lord temporal, Lord Lonsdale, at the Royal Horse Show danced and exchanged hats with a woman connected with the costermongers' turn-out. This Lord occupies a genuine place of affection with those vendors of goods in the street and, at a venture, loses none of his dignity as a human being through the association. We wonder how many Lords Spiritual would dare to chance enjoying themselves in a similar manner, and while we pause for a reply, we offer our congratulations to Lord Lonsdale upon his golden wedding.

Daily News writers do not take the paper's discussion as seriously as the readers. C. J. A. records the following:—

A true story. Man, feeling for a penny to buy the *Daily News*: "Half-a-mo—we must see where the dead are this morning."

It is the snowball idea again. A newspaper starts a discussion on its own, then carefully supervises the letters and this is translated to mean public interest. As a result, pulpit references are made to the discussion, and the game of pretence goes on; the penny sermon has been supplanted by the penny newspapers, and judging by the nonsense delivered as sermons, this press publicity must be a godsend to overworked parsons and pastors. They are so busy that they dare not stop doing what they are doing, as nothing of any importance would happen if they all "downed tools."

Apropos of the Commons' rejection of the revised Prayer Book, the *English Churchman* says: "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." After that, we would advise the Bishops to stop messing about with the Lord, lest he get angry and visit some terrible calamity upon the nation—such as reducing bishops' salaries.

On the grounds that it would be "commercializing the Sabbath," Ramsey Town Council (Isle of Man) refused to sanction the flying of flags on the promenade on Sundays. For the parsons' sakes, we sincerely hope that this righteously sensitive Council will not prohibit money-taking in the churches on Sunday, on the grounds that it commercializes the Sabbath.

According to military experts, a mechanical army of 60,000 men with 3,000 tanks will suffice to decide the "next war." These experts are a materialistic gang. They are leaving God ("our help in ages past!") and the parsons entirely out of their calculations. Yet everyone knows it was God, plus the parson, who gave Britain the victory in the last war. After that, no one can say that God is an unknown factor in warfare. And if the experts really knew their job they should include the possibility of celestial aid in their schemes. It is up to the Chaplain-General to remind them of the fact.

In the Synod of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, held in Edinburgh, the other day, 93 clergy and 150 laymen presented a petition, asking that Charles the First should be put in the Church Calendar. The proposal was defeated by 16 votes to 15. This important problem disposed of, there seems every prospect of the Synod being able to grapple with lesser national problems, such as unemployment and housing.

We are indebted to the *Methodist Recorder* for the following, stated as actually overheard:—

"I've been to church. T' parson talked about where are t' dead. Very interesting too. But some young folk walked out and went on t' promenade. They weren't botherin' about t' dead."

The young folk evidently believed in dealing with one world at a time.

Another good cleric going with the stream is the Rev. T. B. Buron, of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Enfield. He has started Sunday "Sportsmen's services." He has invited his congregation and others to attend in plus fours or flannels, and to bring their clubs or racquets with them. A weekly paper commends the rev. gent. as a broad-minded cleric. The correct description is far-seeing. We would prefer to call him a good fisherman, though we have our doubts as to the efficacy of the bait.

Mr. John Middleton Murry, in his essay, "Things to Come," states that "the church has done its work: it is no longer adequate to the religious consciousness of modern times." In another place, he writes, "a modern man will more quickly and more truly find what the Kingdom of Heaven means from Shakespeare than he will from the New Testament itself." Mr. Murry is progressing—but so was Mr. Lloyd George, who is only fourteen years behind the *Freethinker*. Both must hurry up to share our popularity in the task of making the unready mind recognize the obvious.

The *Times Literary Supplement* has a very well written article, entitled "Asia in Travail." There is the characteristic restraint associated with this weekly, and although the writer concludes on the high note of optimism, there will be many country parsons who will not be pleased to read the following extract:—

Even for the more thoughtful the Great War, into which the East itself was drawn, is the story of an appalling and, in its eyes, fratricidal struggle between the great Christian Powers of the world, which has gravely shaken the belief of many in the moral superiority of Christianity and of the civilization with which it stands identified.

When religion has been handed over to the publicity agents of the Press to-day, it is a sign that it has not recovered from the blow it received in 1914-1918, and there are indications that it never will.

Whilst our religious backwoodmen are tinkering about with acts to prevent Sunday trading, they might, at the same time, take up the question of aeroplanes humming on the Lord's Day. If it is wrong to sell a packet of chocolate on Sunday, it cannot be right for an aeroplane to be consuming good petrol on the same day.

In God's own country, and in case you don't recognize the place, we mean America, it is to be noted that satire raises its voice through Mr. Charles Merz, in a novel entitled *Bigger and Better Murders*. The religious census of Chicago, we suppose, precludes that city from honourable mention.

The *Daily News*, that is concerned over the whereabouts of the dead, has, with characteristic modesty, or shall we say with reverential good taste (you will see, we are groping for the right word), inserted an advertisement following an account of twenty-five deaths in the recent railway disaster at Darlington. The advertisement in question offers £2,000 if a registered reader and his wife are killed by an accident when travelling by train. There is no moral to this, except that everything seems all right with both worlds, according to the paper's impartial enquiry and its business arrangements.

The Rev. F. C. Byan, preaching at Down's Chapel, Clapham, thinks that the old answer to the question: "Where are the Dead?" cannot be bettered—"At home with the Lord." Presumably, Mr. Byan's logic runs thus: The Bible says so; and the Bible is the infallible Word of God. Therefore the answer is the only possible and true one, and it is true because the Bible says so. Having traversed this neat circle, who could doubt the answer? Apparently the chapelites cannot dispense with an infallible Book. But, after all, an infallible Book and an infallible answer are of use only to believers. The non-Christian man-in-the-street, if interested in the question, has no use for the one and rejects the other.

From *John Bull* we snip the following:—

Morbid Methodism. Speaking at the Primitive Methodist Conference at Southport, the Rev. W. E. Farndale condemned the Roman Catholic conception of the Sabbath—early Mass, sport and pleasure—as "bargain-making." What an impudent statement is a free country where everyone is permitted to hold and voice his own opinions!

If our journalistic friend is keen on exposing impudent statements, it should publish a few of those always being made by Christian preachers of every sect about Freethinkers. And if it really believes that all opinions ought to be voiced, it should open its columns to a statement of the Freethought case by a reputed Freethinking advocate, instead of allowing its readers to hear only the Christian side. At present *John Bull* is an open platform only strong enough to stand the weight of Christian feet.

A journalistic fashion just now is to deplore the irreligion of the time, and to pretend that the world would be so very much better if only people could be persuaded to go to church. Therefore we commend Mr. John English, of the *Daily Mirror*, for having the courage to defy fashion, and declare that "Science is the hope of the world." Whatever may be said against the age, he adds, we can congratulate ourselves for being at least inquisitive. There is an enthusiasm for knowledge and truth nowadays that was almost impossible at any other time. No ban is put upon the enquiring mind; no torture awaits the man who discovers something contrary to the approved dogma of priestcraft.

Mr. English adds that it is science we have to thank for winning the battle of thought against the mythologists. The fundamental difference between science and creed is that the former is always moving, whereas the latter strives to be static. And since nothing in the universe is immune from the law of change, the very stars themselves not excepted, science has the opportunity to approach the truth all of us seek. More and more, with better education (says Mr. English), will science take the place of dogma; and the time may come again when knowledge will be revered for its own sake as it was during the Italian Renaissance. Those persons, adds Mr. English, who are afraid of science because of its destructive powers, must blame the brute in human nature, and not knowledge, which is the only key to progress. The foregoing remarks, though not new to Freethinkers, probably surprised the average newspaper reader. If he or she should be set seeking further information on similar lines, Mr. English will deserve the thanks to Freethinkers. We suggest he might enlarge on this theme in the future, for the enlightenment of his readers.

TO THE BACKWARD.

The National Secular Society is the only national organization for the dissemination and advancement of Freethought. Are you a member? If not, why not?

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THOSE SUBSCRIBERS WHO RECEIVE THEIR COPY OF THE "FREETHINKER" IN A GREEN WRAPPER WILL PLEASE TAKE IT THAT A 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.

M. OLIVER.—We do not know what truth there is in the statement that Sir J. Y. Simpson, the discoverer of the use of chloroform as an anæsthetic, said that the greatest discovery he ever made was that of Jesus Christ. On the face of it, he might have said so, and on the face of it, it is safer to conclude that such stories are not true than that they are. In any case it does not really matter. There is not an absurdity that has ever existed that has not been backed up by some well known person or the other.

H. G. CUTMORE.—You are getting sadly mixed in your illustrations. The existence of a difference in tastes is evident to all, and is known to all. And that constitutes proof of their existence. The existence of a soul is pure hypothesis, and no one has ever brought forward proof of its truth.

W. WELTMAN.—Very sorry to hear of the death of Alderman Lofthouse.

FRANKLIN STEINER.—Thanks for letter. The information therein does not in the least surprise us. Ignorance concerning the Freethought Movement in this country may have been partly responsible for what was said.

R. GERRARD.—Stray copies of the *Freethinker* disposed of in the way you have adopted often do much good. Glad to have your high opinion of the *Essays in Freethinking*.

E. WHITE.—We did not retain the cutting concerning the statement made by Sir Oliver Lodge regarding the brain as an instrument, but it was taken from one of the papers published immediately after the address by Sir Arthur Keith at Manchester. It appeared in quite a number of papers, and should be easily found.

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

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

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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 appear to have stung the *Daily News* into some sense of responsibility with regard to its management of the discussion on "Where are the Dead?" In its issue for July 3, it writes of the "extraordinary charge" made by the *Freethinker*, that it made certain no straightforward *Freethinker* was invited to take part in the discussion, that it dare not allow "a complete statement of the case against Christian superstition." In reply, it says:—

The *Daily News*, of course, takes up the challenge, and will print on Thursday an article by the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson, one of the outstanding exponents of Freethought, who was formerly associated with Mr. Bradlaugh.

We are glad to note that we have done this much, although the *Daily News* rather accentuates the truth of

what we said by doing under pressure what it should have done at the outset. And permitting a *Freethinker* to write something on a Future Life, after twenty-one believers have had their say, is not really the equivalent of admitting to its columns a straightforward statement of the case against the Christian superstition. Still, a little evidence of reform is acceptable.

Mr. Cohen had intended to put off dealing with the *Daily News* articles until they were reprinted in book form. He has now decided to commence his criticism in the next issue of the *Freethinker*. The *Daily News* and others will then be able to see how a *Freethinker* would have dealt with the compound of attitude, latitude, and platitude that made up most of the *Daily News* articles. When Christians see this they may perhaps feel that the *Daily News* acted wisely in confining the discussions to believers or mere questioners.

And we want our readers to take a hand in these articles, or at least in their distribution. We shall print a much larger number than usual, and we are going to spend money on their distribution. We intend sending a large number of these issues by post to all whom we think will be interested, to as great an extent as our financial resources will allow. If we could, we would flood the country with them. What we want is that each of our readers, who is interested, should take an extra copy and hand it to a friend. This may make a convert, or lead to the making of one. A letter to the office, with three stamps, will bring a copy post free, or it can be ordered through a newsagent in the usual way.

"The Son of Man."

I ONCE calculated that 58,863 lives of Jesus had been written. I hope no expert bibliographer will take me literally, for I willingly concede I ought to add, "more or less." Lives of Jesus have always been written, and will continue to be written for many centuries hence, I am certain. The picture of a "reformer" who sets out with "infinite love" for the human race and dies for his opinions has always proved a fascinating theme for the imagination of writers, and will continue to be so.

In this particular instance, the biographer has what are known as "official" documents to draw upon. They are four in number, and contain—so it is alleged—all the details of the life of a certain Jesus of Nazareth, Man and God, known on this earth. Now, I must protest at the outset, for, though the four documents in question are "canonical," I find there are many others which are known as "apocryphal." These were, at some time and in some places, also considered quite authentic, and I fail to see any reason why they should not be considered so now. What is the difference between the "canonical" and the "apocryphal" gospels? I am told the "puerile" stories and bad style of the latter are in no way comparable with the lofty "facts" and dignified grace of the former, but here is something that has not been altogether proven. When Jesus "stretches" a wooden door made too short, or causes mud birds to fly, is he more puerile than when he curses a fig tree and causes it to wither? And does "style" really matter in the presentation of facts?

There are three aspects, under one of which a life of Jesus must be considered. There is the orthodox view, that here we have the genuine Messiah, a veritable God and Man, able to work miracles. There is the Unitarian view, that Jesus was a Great Man—the Greatest that ever trod the Earth—but he performed no miracles except those of "love."

There is the thoroughly sceptical view that Jesus was a pure myth, and the whole of the "official" documents as well as the others are mere works of

imagination. Within these three broad aspects are many shades of opinion, and altogether the conflict, if fierce, is, to the unbiassed onlooker, very interesting. Most people with any education and knowledge of history feel very inclined to accept the second view, though they may belong to a highly orthodox church. They don't like to be pressed too hard about the miracles, feel that the Virgin Birth is rather dubious and futile, but that a genuine Jesus, a "Son of Man," requires very little explanation, and can be accepted without parting with the findings of modern science. Thus the modern biographer, say like Herr Emil Ludwig, takes up his "official" narratives and builds upon them a modern view of the "Son of Man," that is, of a man "even as you and I," a little better perhaps, but still just a man. To do this is not particularly difficult. It has been done very often before, and I think I am right in saying that not many readers of this paper will have read Eugene Sue's famous story entitled *La Croix d'Argent* (The Silver Cross), which is about as near the kind of thing Herr Ludwig has given us as I have ever read. It forms part of a long work entitled *The Legends of the People*, and shows Eugene Sue at his best. But almost any writer with imagination can enlarge upon the data given in the four gospels, accepting this or rejecting that, according to his own particular idiosyncracies. The Communist invariably insists that Jesus was a Communist, the Spiritualist, a Medium, and so on, and Herr Ludwig's portrait looks rather like a German-Jew getting angry when people start disagreeing with him.

But there is one fundamental error in all these "Son of Man" biographies. The Gospel Jesus is not a Man (with a capital M or not) at all. He is a God. He is a genuine God. He is a God in all the four Gospels as well as the apocryphal gospels. He never was meant to be anything else. It is true that the term "Son of Man" can be made out to mean son of a man, but the gospel writers never meant Jesus to be the son of a man at all. The only rational explanation of the rise of the Christian Church lies in the fact of the belief in a "Son of God," who was in reality God Himself. It is true that this God spoke like a man, looked like a man, ate like a man, but that is because there was no other way for Him to show Himself. Although He was symbolized later as a Fish or a Lamb, it was only as symbols. Jesus could not possibly have made any impression on the hearts of a people had He wandered about Palestine in the shape of a fish, talked like a fish or even gamboled like a lamb. Thus my sympathies are all with the Rev. J. Campbell, who in his article, "Will Christ be called Divine?" in the current number of *Nash's Magazine*, puts the matter quite clearly, and in my opinion, irrefutably:—

It has sometimes been said that the Christ of the first three Gospels is a simple human figure standing in plain contrast with the supernatural figure of the fourth Gospel and the epistles. That is not so. Whether we like it or not, criticism is forced to admit that the Jesus of Matthew, Mark and Luke is no more like an ordinary human being than the Jesus of John or Paul. . . . Whether the Church be right or wrong, it is undeniable that she has all along believed in and proclaimed to the world a Christ who is much more than a Galilean artisan with a spiritual flair. The stupendous claim is made that in so far as Almighty God could manifest himself in human nature, He did so in Jesus of Nazareth.

Hear, hear! I agree with the whole of that extract. There are no two sides to the question at all. Jesus is God or—there never was a Jesus. There you have the crux of the matter. All that remains

for people like Mr. Campbell is to prove the existence of God. We will then take the rest for granted—the Virgin Birth, the miracles and everything else.

Thus it seems to me absolutely futile to criticize seriously Herr Ludwig's latest biography of God when he assumes that God is not really God, but the "Son of Man." His book has no more value than Leo Taxil's famous *Vie de Jesus*. Jesus might have spoken like a German-Jew or like a Parisian cockney, of course—being God. But I doubt it, and I do not see how a knowledge of biblical criticism, as far advanced as you like, could have made any difference to such a work of imagination.

The pity of it is that Herr Ludwig may be judged by this silly book. Give him a *man*—a real man—to write about and he produces a work of singular power and interest. For example, take his study of Rembrandt. What a magnificent picture of this great painter he gives us! His work, his struggles, his hopes and fears, his wives, the beloved Saskia, and almost equally beloved Hendrickja, his adored son Titus—all are described with that touch of humanity, that sympathy, which marks the difference between the love of man for man and the love of God by man. Ludwig's heart went out to the painter and etcher, the incomparable delineator of simple men and women, who, even in Bible pictures, painted his contemporaries, the man who gave us beggars and merchants, tramps and soldiers, homely landscapes and dwelling homes, the inhabitants around him in all the simplicity of their daily work—just Rembrandt, in fact, the man, thank heaven, but no God! Salvation—if there is such a thing—lies with no god. Not with Jesus, but with those splendid men and women, the Rembrandts, the Dickenses, the Nightingales, the Bradlaughs, the long line of illustrious people who were, "even as you and I," just sons and daughters of men and women. And the philosophy of that we call *Secularism*.

H. CUTNER.

Ludwig's Lyrics.

EMIL LUDWIG is a courageous man. He has just written another life of Christ at the price of 15s. One might have thought there were plenty of biographies about this person, for there never has been a lack of scribes all possessed of first-hand information.

Ludwig is not anxious to shake the believer's faith. Anyone determined to make a god of the Man of Nazareth will find no opposition from Emil. Neither does he meddle with theology or supernatural occurrences.

Some of us think that if these are omitted from the famous carpenter's life, there will not be much left. The old Israelites lodged a strong protest when they were asked to produce bricks without straw. Yet Ludwig, with an airy imagination, can produce the finished article without either clay or straw.

And, in spite of this handicap, Emil has produced a straw Christ.

Our biographer admits he gives free rein to his imagination, while claiming to be able to give chapter and verse for any sayings attributed to Jesus. He asserts that he who would ascribe imaginary sayings to his hero, should be a person equal to that hero in intuitive power. Well, in my opinion, Ludwig might have risked it.

Quite a lot of people have been equal to Jesus in intuitive power. Ludwig himself might be considered "in the running."

The man who can provide us with a 15s. biography of someone who never lived, is surely not deficient in intuitive power.

Recently the *Daily Express* has been publishing instalments of this great masterpiece. It seems a pity to spend 15s. when you can take this out in penny numbers—or buy outright an original, authorized version for fourpence. But the fourpenny is a mere skeleton. Ludwig clothes this outline with picturesque details:—

Green and clear are the waters of the Sea of Galilee, shimmering in the light of the afternoon sun, nestling under the mountain's side.

Capernaum lies in a bay, well protected from the wind; a bay containing several towns and villages, all of which can be seen from this northern vantage-ground.

Jesus does not see these things superficially, as most people do. He has a poet's vision, and therefore an eye for hidden resemblances. The hills and the rocks, the river and the castle, the catastrophies of nature and the flower-clad slopes that surround Him where grapes and melons are ripening, though April is not yet over—all breathe a meaning to Him, all give Him food for thought.

Here we see the poet at work. Christ has his eye on the grapes and the melons, and that sickly fig-tree that demanded cursing. He watches the patches of unmelted snow on the spurs of Hermon. He is enthralled even as Wordsworth at the sight of the setting sun.

Ludwig apparently believes in some of the miracles of this wonder-worker. He casts out devils in quite orthodox fashion, and Simon's mother-in-law was cured of a fever in quick time. (One wonders what Simon thought about it). Yet, later, when the crowd of afflicted persons became a nuisance, our author limits the power of Omnipotence by saying "He does what He can." Evidently the panel became too weighty.

Any wonder-worker who could cure Simon's mother-in-law, cast out devils, give sight to the blind, and remove boils instantaneously, ought to resent the limitation "He does what He can." There can be no tiring of the arm of omnipotence. The magician who could feed 5,000 hungry mortals with one plateful ought to cure wholesale. There shouldn't have been a case of toothache in all Palestine.

Jesus is a cheerful companion, enjoys good food and good wine, and does not tell them to shun the company of women. Youth, the spirit of adventure, the pleasing personality of the man who brings glad tidings, superstition, the hope of reward in heaven—such are the lures that induce these young people to follow the new prophet in his wanderings.

Altogether, it is a very pleasing picture that Ludwig draws of "The Son of Man." Quite a jovial hail-fellow-well-met character. One might even rank him with Sir John Falstaff. His crowning delight is to linger with his disciples at board, doubtless telling funny stories, setting the table in a roar, nudging the sides of Simon Peter—that impregnable rock on which a famous church is to be built.

Ludwig will not be the last of these versatile biographers. As long as there is money in it, wielders of the pen will produce "lives" to order. All that is wanted is a few old-world solar myths, a map of Syria, a tiny seasoning of history, a riotous imagination, and a crop of credulous readers.

These last, like the poor, we have always with us. If evidence be wanted there are the buyers of Emil Ludwig's book, at the price of 15s.

ALAN TYNDAL.

The River.

I.

It issued from one of the great mountains as a tiny freshet. A low and obscure cavern, little more than a dark hole under some rocks vented oozily a dribble of water that percolated erratically among loose stones and through muddy ground.

Mosses, tufts of coarse grass and humble weeds grew sporadically along the margin of the winding marshy strip which marked the earliest course of the small rivulet.

Yet to find the real beginnings of this little river one had to go farther back. It rose low down one of the mountains of the gigantic range, whose lower slopes had been only partially explored by man, and whose higher peaks had never been scaled.

Mostly bare, but not barren, tree-clad only on parts of their less steep sides, and in more sheltered and watered valleys, the mountains rose solemn and austere, magnificent and inspiring, raising the thoughts of all who saw them to reflections of sublimity. At times their heights were in the clouds, and on occasions capped with snow, making them appear more loftily remote than usual.

Often the many jags and points of the mountain-tops stood clean-cut against the deep blue of the sky, or with a more striking and startling beauty their gloomy precipices and crags were illumined by the darting lightning, while the thunder rattled and rolled among them followed by rumbling echoes.

Sunrise drew golden and rosy fingers across the sierras; the mid-day glare of the sun at its zenith burned them to a shadowless brazenness, while the parting rays of sunset cast long quivering shafts of crimson and scarlet athwart the towering heights, the richer hues gradually fading to pink and lemon, after which the mountain tops became faintly wrapped in an amethystine glow deepening to purple, romantic and tender as night advanced.

Seen by moonlight, the mountains seemed calmly asleep, dreaming peacefully of the long ages through which they had watched the vast spreading plains, and witnessed the endless changes of the world, and the petty fruition or frittering of man's activities.

On these huge mountains many creatures, wild, domesticated and human found shelter and sustenance. Noble minds had drawn help and inspiration from their ever-varied beauty and yet constant immutability.

II.

As though disdaining all that was best about the mountains, the nascent river crept out of the base of a lesser one and turned toward the lower land. Yet such volume as it had it drew from the mountains. The dews that nightly drenched the rocks and bespangled the grass that gleamed and glistened under the early morning sun as after a copious but light rainfall; the rains that swept down causing brief but rushing torrents; the snows on the higher peaks, and the inward accumulations of water that made the mountain recesses vast though untapped reservoirs: from all of these the newly-born river drew slight and almost imperceptible supplies, but enough to keep it flowing oozily, never drying up even in the hottest weather.

As the river got farther down the slope toward the plains it became less subterranean. Emerging into a definite course, it was joined by many tributaries, some of which might have become themselves leading streams had not their waters been drawn into its own body by the one river they fed.

This main river now became marked by certain characteristics. As it gathered volume and strength it shaped its course more determinedly. In places it undermined the soft earth of the banks till masses of soil fell with mighty splashes into the current, to be softened to mud and carried along in brown turbidity.

At other points the river made huge curves round, leaving long beach-like spits of sand strewn thickly with pebbles.

Against the bases of rocks and crags the river foamed and fretted continually as though desirous of eating away the hardest material, and bringing the upstanding cliffs down as it did the softer shores. Failing this the action of the river caused the rocks to assume a convex face, caving inward where the waters constantly laved.

III.

ALONG the margins flowers and grass, shrubbery and trees began to make an appearance till the river flowed through a well-wooded tract of fertile country. Birds built in the trees and sang from the overhanging branches, darting down to sip from the waters of the stream. Aquatic birds and other wild life frequented it. Animals large and small came from long distances to drink and wallow. Fish swam and frolicked in the depths or sunned themselves in the shallows.

Farther down on the more level land mankind appreciated the invigorating value of the river. Farms and gardens spread along its banks, which were channelled and canalized till broad areas of cultivation bore witness to its fertilizing effect on the earth.

Human beings drank of it, bathed and swam in it, boated on its surface, drove mills by its flow, caught fish in it, and the time came when many worshipped it. To have dipped into it was an act of sanctification.

From this deification of the river arose much dissension, dispute and bitterness. At times the controversy reached the acuteness of hatred, and was the cause of persecution and bloodshed. Some held that the river itself was God; others that it contained the essence of God; others yet again contended that the river neither was God nor contained God, but merely flowed from God, or was created by God and then left untouched, or was a continuous new outflow of the Godhead.

For all these diverse opinions and doctrines many sects warred with tongue and pen, and, when they could move the civil authorities, with sword and persecution, while torture and the stake pursued their grim way.

Only once would the various types of river worshippers unite: that was when a few rare and daring thinkers postulated that the river was merely a river and not a person or a deity, showing rationally that this river, like all others, had a natural and normal beginning and course. This reasonable view always stung the riverians, the river-metaphysicians, to fury. They reviled and blasphemed the naturalistic exponents of the river with the extreme of detestation, wherever possible hounding them to death.

IV.

LEAVING the sylvan and agricultural country the river lost much of its beauty, but gained in nobility and grandeur and importance. Villages and towns appeared on its banks, and lower down great cities.

The canoes and rafts of the upper reaches gave way to large boats and finally tall ships. Those who lived by the river and did business on it boasted thereof. Especially the many who made great wealth by exploiting the commercial possibilities of it.

Yet even there all was not well. As in its upper reaches the river sometimes gave signs of the jealousy and spitefulness of a sentient being, as though to justify those of its worshippers whose adoration was mingled with much awe and not a little fear.

The river seemed to be perpetually changing its course. Never a season passed but what great lengths of bank went crashing and splashing into the depths, having been undermined by the long persistent sapping of the waves. Muddy flats, shoals, sandbanks and piles of debris marked where the river had formerly flowed full and deep.

Occasionally it flooded, spreading destruction and death and layers of offensive germ-breeding mud over large expanses of smiling champaign, leaving stagnant pools and shallow lakes.

As well as fish living in it, and birds and beasts on or about it, swarms of noxious insects bred by the river. Reptiles and saurians, some small and venacious, others large and predatory troubled the lives of the riverine dwellers. Periods of inundation made the towns unpleasant or miserable, and occasionally plague-stricken.

Strange to relate, there was no bridge across the river. It acted more as a division than a link between the peoples living on its opposite banks. Consequently the dwellers on the left bank were often at variance with those on the right. Hostility and enmity were rife. At times open warfare was waged between the two sects of riverside residents. At the best they were suspicious and distrustful each of the other. They carried on communications across the river by means of boats and ferries, which could soon and easily be withdrawn or severed when relations got strained or broken.

V.

FLOWING on toward the great ocean the river should have become a wide and magnificent estuary, but it did not.

Long before it reached the sea it had split up into innumerable channels. Not a great delta like some rivers, itself the support of teeming life, but an enormous expanse scarcely better than mud and waste. Little grew there but reeds and marsh plants, stunted bushes and green scum. As far as the eye could see stretched the brown and barren levels of sand and mud. The green sparsity was itself more grey than emerald. Greasy-looking slimy water crept or stagnated in pools or long sinuous passages with no flow, merely a sluggish creep.

No one outlet could be regarded as the chief of the many. They were constantly changing direction and size, filling up with detritus and shrinking to mere runlets, or overflowing wearily to make fresh streams or swell others.

A few black and grey birds flapped heavily across the flats. Animals were scarce, mainly water-loving creatures, reptiles, and in the stunted growths serpents. Worms and molluscs, live things that crawled or burrowed or lay inert were the chief signs of life.

The few human beings who ventured there out of curiosity shuddered and withdrew, never to go again. None resided there, for life under such conditions was insupportable. Fierce howling gales carried clouds of sand and dust, or dreary puffs of erratic wind sent the particles eddying, then died down to the customary breathless suspension of sound or movement.

Vast fogs, masses of curling rolling vapors, miasmas that would blind and choke any wanderer unfortunate enough to lose his way in them, were nightly features.

So the great river ended its course, sinking useless, disregarded and unadmired into a slowly receding ocean of outspent religions.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

Come Let Us Sing.

I AM but a mere humble Christian—a meek and mild Brownian movement in this vast ocean that the Almighty Mercifulness has been gracious enough to bestow upon us. Yet when I come to contemplate this questioning of popular religious beliefs, my soul is filled with vague misgivings. I feel somehow that something ought to be done, and done quickly, to stem the tide of the entirely misguided inquisitiveness that is insidiously creeping into the modern outlook.

My Heavenly Father has revealed in His Book all that He considered it needful for me to know about this world and the next. He has revealed to me how He fashioned Heaven and earth in six days, and I, as a true Christian, am perfectly content to accept this account of how the world was made. Now please do not imagine that I deny the fact of the world as being established by a process of evolution—on the contrary. Though I must admit that, when first confronted with the theory, it occurred to me that my Faith was somehow not quite all it should be. However, a little extra prayer and worship was soon efficacious in restoring evolution to its proper proportions in the light of Christianity. For I recognized that the finite mind can never comprehend the Infinite; and, as our eminent bishops put it, science need therefore have no terrors for us if we remember that, after all, it is only the human eye at the end of the telescope.

Now it saith in the Scriptures that whosoever shall strike thee on thy right cheek, turn unto him the other also. This principle we tentatively applied to the

scientists—with such remarkable success that they promptly established the antiquity of the world to be at least a million years! Once more, therefore, we were compelled to pray a little harder than usual. But the wisest of us realized at the time that there must be some awful mistake; for the Bible distinctly tells us that the world is only 6,000 years old. How could this be reconciled with geology? That was the problem before the Christian clergy; and they solved it, as everyone knows, in a manner that fully justified the confidence that we had placed in them; for long and arduous research on their part has now definitely established the fact that evolution and geology are merely God's methods of testing our Faith. This is a remarkable piece of work, and demonstrates conclusively the ability and intelligence of those who carried it through.

Now, probably you are aware of a rumour in Buddhist circles to the effect that four millions is the correct figure for the age of the earth; but it would be unwise, I think, to lend credence to a fact that comes from such notoriously prejudiced people as Buddhists. It is the same with Mohammedans. I don't know what figure they give; but whatever it is, it is immaterial, for they are notoriously prejudiced. We Christians have been expressly assured by the Almighty God that ours is the True Religion, and therefore, for men to entertain any other is simply and utterly foolish. Of course, Buddhists and Mohammedans and Jews have been told exactly the same thing in regard to their respective religions; but then, as I say, they are all notoriously prejudiced. When an angel told Mohammed that the Koran had been written in Heaven, we have, with all due respect to this gentleman, only his word for it; and no man who values his reputation for sanity would ever dream of basing his whole creed simply on the testimony of one solitary man. Of course there are stupid people who, in reply to this, say that we have only Joseph's word for it, when an angel came to him in a dream and confessed to a certain indiscretion on the part of the Holy Ghost. But these people, and also those who claim that Joseph's dream has quite a simple Freudian interpretation, overlook the obvious fact that on the dream rests the whole structure of Christianity. Since Christianity is certainly the True Religion, Joseph's dream was, therefore, no ordinary dream.

Next week I hope to be able to deal with more difficulties that are frequently encountered in endeavouring to obtain a true idea of the Gospel of truth, brotherhood, and love, which is embodied in Christianity. In the meantime, if there are those who are in need of spiritual guidance, or feel somehow that in the midst of suffering and sorrow they are not dwelling in the consciousness of Spirit—Life, Truth, and Love—I shall, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope, be pleased to offer my services.

B. L. WILKINSON.

The Magi in Kilts.

"In the church, dedicated to St. Gregory, in the village of Kirknewton, near the Scottish Border, was found a carved representation of the Virgin and the Magi. In this pictorial representation the author has habilitated these ancient Magi in kilts."—*Guide book to Wooler.*

You have read of the birth of the babe in the manger, in Bethlehem's city, way down in Judee; and the story of Mary that this little stranger was the prank of some ghost on her vir-gin-i-tie. And of how there appeared, by a star safely guided, some very wise men from a land far away; who, to Mary, the Virgin, their wonder confided, that a God should be born on—a bundle of hay. Presenting their gifts to the child and the mother, the mysterious Magi depart on their way; but where they had come from, or where they returned to, the learn'd commentators could never quite say. But that these men were Scotsmen who hailed from the Northland, has now, beyond doubt, been proved up to the hilt; because they were found at the church in Kirknewton, and lo! and behold! they were wearing the kilt.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Correspondence.

THAT "GREAT DEBATE."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Many thinking people have boggled at the *Daily News* quest for the dead. The quaint theories put forward by some of the contributors have caused Mr. Whataboutit to say, "Surely there must be two sides to questions of this sort, what about the other side?" and he has thus been led naturally to your paper with its sane outlook, and become in consequence a better and a happier citizen.

Hats off to the *Daily News*.

R. BAMFORD.

SIR,—The *Daily News* articles as to the present whereabouts of the dead, in a non-physical sense, remind one of the old questions: "When did time commence?" and "Where does space end?" Such questions being illegitimate until the "Silly Season" comes in.

Professor H. J. Spooner appears to be the worst delinquent; for he asserts that, with increased knowledge, Freethinkers have renounced unbelief and become Christians; the exact reverse of the truth. He also submits the fallacious and long-exploded theory that, but for religion there must be an increase of crime. The last published returns showed that some fifty-two thousand imprisoned criminals all had a religious creed. There was not one Freethinker on the whole list! Was there ever a more convincing reply?

E. G. ELIOT.

THE LOTTERY.

SIR,—In my notice of "The Lottery," it would appear that I had led Mr. H. Irving to think that the play had not been printed. Your correspondent is fortunate in possessing a 1771 edition of Fielding's works in which this amusing comedy appears, but, before writing my notice I had searched all my available references, and the only one I could find was in the "Everyman" edition of *The Adventures of Joseph Andrews*, which gives the date 1732. As chronology goes this is not too bad; a friend has very kindly sent me a cutting from a Sunday newspaper in which it states that 1748 was the date of writing it. However, bibliography shall receive its due; if available, as I believe it is, I will inspect the manuscript, and also, if possible, get a copy of the play-bill announcing the performance at Drury Lane.

"The Lottery" has just concluded a run at the "Q" Theatre, Kew, and it is a thousand pities that no London or Provincial manager will take it over for the delight and enjoyment of all those playgoers who can appreciate, and will pay for, sweet music and pure fun. As a monetary speculation, I am in no doubt about it; as a sample of English comedy having racial roots it is as good as any, and it would be a pleasure for playgoers in the country to have a chance of seeing it. London audiences don't know what they want until the breaking point appears with good plays, and then they can't have it. There are high rents, "fat" parts, and other technical difficulties to overcome before the playgoer can sit down and be demoralized with plays of horror, or with plays with titles suggesting inanity. I await in certainty of the appearance of "Cut yourself a slice of cake, Bill," playing (*vide newspapers*) to crowded houses; in the interim there is an opportunity for any man of taste and discernment to perform a miracle and give the public what it wants, which is good wholesome English comedy, and he will be—if he values such things—on the high road for a knighthood. A good start could be made with "The Lottery."

WILLIAM REPTON.

THE DYING AGNOSTIC.

SIR,—There is no point whatever in Mr. Sheppard's dying agnostic. I have been present at many deathbeds, and have often been struck by the fact that the dying person, just before and during unconsciousness, talks about his earlier experiences in life. His brain

obviously picks up the permanent impressions received in childhood. With failing vitality there is bound to be a mental reversion, and it is quite a common experience to see men, who, when young and strong, and in full possession of their faculties, were splendidly independent, later groping blindly for help and comfort.

As a boy, I was a high-church chorister, and attended divine service several times each week. It is a very long time since I took part in a church service, but the ritual is so firmly fixed in my mind, that I can, to-day, readily repeat every word of the services, creeds, collects and hymns, and yet I find it difficult to memorize a few stanzas of Omar. When I dream, I nearly always go through experiences of my youth, with people I have not seen for very many years.

As we are all born in sin, we are all born Christians, and thoroughly soaked in Christian traditions during our most impressionable days. I have no doubt that when my mentality weakens, I shall return again to the "childish treble," and on my death-bed it is quite probable that my friends will be filled with joy and amazement to hear a life-long materialist singing "Rock of ages cleft for me," or repeating the Nicene Creed, but I shall not have found Jesus Christ.

H. I. S.

THOREAU.

SIR,—In the *Freethinker*, of June 17, there appeared an interesting article on "Thoreau," by H. B. Dodds, in which he says, "Thoreau made no great discoveries in natural history, but he never perpetrated anything like the blunders that distinguish the *Natural History of Selborne*." Being an admirer of Gilbert White, I would be more than obliged if the writer of the article would make some reference to the alleged blunders.

R. F. TURNEY.

The National Secular Society.

EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 28, 1928.

The President, Mr. Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Miss Kough, Mrs. Quinton, Messrs. Clifton, Corrigan, Easterbrook, Moss, Quinton, Rosetti, Samuels, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

An apology for unavoidable absence was received from Mr. Silvester. Miss Vance was absent through illness.

New Members were received for the Bethnal Green, Chester-le-Street, Liverpool, Plymouth, South London, Swansea, West Ham, and West London Branches, and for the Parent Society.

Correspondence was received and the Secretary instructed. Reports from various Branches regarding propagandist activity in the coming winter season were received, and details of projected meetings discussed.

Matters remitted to the Executive from the Annual Conference were dealt with. The Propagandist and Benevolent Fund Committees were elected. The following were co-opted to the Executive: Miss E. M. Vance, Mr. E. Coles, and Mr. F. A. Hornibrook.

F. MANN,
General Secretary.

SOME PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS:

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THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, Rennie Smith, M.P.—"Anglo-American Co-operation for Peace."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. F. Mann—"Gods and Men."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Every Saturday at 8 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Bryant, Mathie and others.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. Mann—"Historic Christianity." (Brockwell Park): 6.0, Mr. F. Mann—"The Growth of Freethought." Wednesday—(Clapham Old Town): 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Thursday (Cooks Road, Kennington): 8.0, Mr. F. Mann—"More Nonsense from the Universe."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Sunday, 3.0 and 7 p.m.; Thursday, 7.30 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Botting, Hanson and Baker. Thursday, July 12, at 7.30 p.m.: Dance at 101 Tottenham Court Road. Admission 1s.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mrs. E. Venton—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart.—A Lecture. 3.30 p.m., Messrs. Hyatt and Campbell-Everden. 6.30 p.m., Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Maurice Maubrey. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday, at 7.30 p.m.—Lecturers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Hart, Darby, Le Maine and others.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Meetings held in the Bull Ring on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 7 p.m.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH (Houghton-le-Spring): Tuesday, July 10, 7.15, Mr. Brown and Mr. Brighton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead until July 15. Weekdays, West Regent Street, at 7.30. Sundays, Alexandra Park, 6.30.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Every Monday, at Islington Square—Mr. P. Sherwin; every Tuesday at Beaumont Street—Messrs. Shortt and Sherwin; every Thursday, at High Park Street—Mr. J. V. Shortt; and at Edge Hill Lamp—Mr. P. Sherwin. All meetings at 8 p.m.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road Entrance): 7.0, A Lecture.

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“Who’s your tailor?”

THE question seemed to astonish Arnold. “Aren’t you a Freethinker?” he asked, in a surprised tone. “You know I am,” retorted Richmond. “I believed you were; and you know I am an Atheist,” answered Arnold. “Why then, this question about who’s my tailor? Of course it is meant as a compliment to myself and my tailor because my clothes are cut properly and fit well! That is obvious; but it is equally well known that there is a firm advertising in the *Freethinker* who claim to cut clothes properly and make them fit well. Surely those are the people from whom Freethinkers should buy their clothes?

“I did not know for certain that they could satisfactorily substantiate their claims. I knew they were Freethinkers, and I am always willing to accept a Freethinker’s word. They gave me references to other two Freethinkers, who are regular customers of theirs, but I did not write to either of them. I trusted them, and you see the result. If you want good clothes at a moderate cost, go to Macconnell & Mabe. If you want to deal with genuine Freethinkers, go to the same firm. If you want to support those who support the *Freethinker*, same thing. My idea is that this is merely what Freethinkers should do, and that no Freethinker should have any need to ask another Freethinker, who’s your tailor?”

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