

The  
**FREETHINKER**

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN    ■    EDITOR 1881-1915 · G. W. FOOTE

Vol. XLVIII.—No. 48

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1928

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

**Testing the Power of Prayer.**

SOME years ago a well known London physician, Sir Henry Thompson, suggested that a practical test should be made of the power of prayer. He proposed that two wards should be set aside in one of the London hospitals. The wards were to be filled with the sufferers from some selected disease, the average mortality from which was fairly well known. In one ward the treatment should be restricted to the prayers of the whole body of the faithful. In the other there was to be no prayer, but the usual medical treatment was to be supplied. Then, at the end of a given period, the results would be compared.

That was a perfectly good suggestion, and it is the plan adopted whenever we are really desirous of arriving at a dependable conclusion. In any ordinary matter, whether in science or in politics, not only would there be no objection to such a plan, but everyone would agree that it is the only plan by which we ought to be guided. But the proposal, instead of being accepted with thankfulness by the religious world, evoked so much abuse that Sir Henry was moved to publicly protest against the treatment he received. Every Christian professed profound faith in the efficacy of prayer, but none could be found who would put that faith to the test of actual experience. All were willing to trust the Lord, provided a doctor stood by in case of accident. Yet one of the plainest of statements in the New Testament is that the “prayer of faith shall save the sick,” and the Church of England Prayer Book has elaborate and official prayers for the cure of the sick, with the added information that whatever be the nature of the complaint, the one certain thing is that it is the “Lord’s visitation.” And if the Lord is credited with the power of sending disease it does not appear extravagant to believe that he is the proper person to be asked to take it away again.

**Trust in the Lord.**

All that Sir Henry Thompson asked was that the matter should be brought to the test of experience, and, by eliminating all other factors, to make sure that the Lord has raised up the sick man. It was a test in the direction of honesty of belief and public economy. If the test turned out in favour of the Lord, it would save the country many millions of pounds that are spent on the upkeep of hospitals. If it did not, then it might save a large sum of money that is being spent on the upkeep of the clergy. In either case it would at least give the Christian nations of the world more money to spend on battleships and poison-gas. But the test was indignantly rejected, although it must be noted that it was the doctors who were willing to put their belief to the test of fact, the parsons who objected to the experiment being tried. They denounced it as experimenting with God. But what are the clergy doing every time they ask God to cure a fever, send a good harvest, or help us win a war? Every time they advise their congregations to pray to the Lord, they are suggesting an experiment. The chief thing is that they mix the medicines. It is a “Trust-in-the-Lord-but-keep-your-powder-dry” piece of advice. The clergy do not object to experimenting with the Lord, what they do object to is an experiment that shall be precise and decisive.

\* \* \*

**The Test of Statistics.**

About the same time, Sir Francis Galton, the founder of the science of Eugenics, also made an attempt to put this question of the use of prayer to a practical test. He took various classes of the community, some of a reputedly prayerful disposition, some on whose behalf prayers were regularly offered, and compared them with others. He found little or no difference in their freedom from disease, or in their life values. The Church of England, for instance, regularly offers up prayers that our legislators may be blessed with wisdom and understanding, and there is a special chaplain appointed to the House of Commons who prays in the same vein. I do not think that anyone will accept the results as conspicuously convincing evidence of the power of prayer. Nor will anyone say that our legislators are all so well equipped with wisdom and understanding that any greater endowment in that direction would be burdensome. Again, every royal family in Europe has prayers constantly offered up on their behalf. They certainly do not show greater wisdom than ordinary mortals, nor are they freer from disease than simpler folk. In some directions there is notoriously greater liability to particular diseases than is the case with ordinary mortals.

Yet, again, if there is one body of experts that is more concerned than others with noting every factor

that affects health and longevity it is those connected with the business of life insurance. Yet among the many questions asked applicants for insurance, that of whether the applicant is of a prayerful disposition is completely ignored. People are asked whether they drink, have they had any serious disease, what did their father and mother die from, their occupation is demanded, but no company asks whether the applicant comes from a prayerful family, or if they indulge in nightly prayers. Some insurance companies will ask a lower premium if the insured is a total abstainer, but none if prayers are said every night. This surely cannot be because the companies are unaware that some people do pray. It must be because these experts are quite satisfied that no traceable results can be observed. This list of examples might be indefinitely prolonged, but one would not meet with any different results. Whatever is the professed belief, no one seems prepared to rely upon prayer if reliance means dispensing with other agencies. To paraphrase Falstaff, the average man or woman says, "Will prayer mend a broken arm? No. Will prayer mend a broken leg? No. Prayer hath no skill in surgery. A fig, then, for prayer; I'll none on 't."

\* \* \*

#### Newspaper Religion.

The articles in the *Daily Express* dealing with the subject are even worse than I had expected them to be. The first three articles by Mr. J. D. Beresford, Sir Harry Lauder, and Admiral Sir G. King-Hall, are incredibly silly—no other expression will fit them, and even then one is putting it in very polite language. What on earth one would expect on such a subject from Sir Harry Lauder that would be worth reading it is puzzling to see. The main reason for their selection appears to be that they are names which the newspaper reader knows, and they serve to advertise the *Daily Express*. Thus Mr. Beresford is introduced as one of the most distinguished of present-day novelists, Sir Harry Lauder's article as a fine, challenging, uplifting contribution, and Mr. Godfrey Gilbey as an Idealist—which he would need to be seeing that his main business in life is to give winners for horse races—and Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith as one of the foremost of English women novelists. All this is obviously part of the game to impress unreflecting readers with the idea that they are really getting first-hand information on the subject. Whether the studies of these writers qualify them for speaking on prayer at all is a matter which never troubles the *Daily Express*. And, of course, this will act as a guide to those parsons who will talk about the articles—in the hopes of seeing their names in Monday's issue of the paper. They will be able to talk of the galaxy of distinguished men and women who all believe in prayer, and so long as those who do not are kept out of the paper, the vote will be quite unanimous. The *Express* carries the game out by publishing the information that the articles are being discussed all over the kingdom. I do not remember a newspaper "fake" of this kind of which a similar statement was not made, and with equal truth. Finally, one need only note that the articles are illustrated by a series of pictures of just about the intellectual quality that adorn the cheaper kind of cinema play. What a fine contempt the editor of the *Express* must have for the mentality of his religious readers! It is difficult to believe that he is himself so simple as not to see through the whole game.

#### Clotted Bosh.

Some of my readers may think that in calling these articles incredibly silly I am exaggerating. In self-

defence I append one or two samples from the three who lead off in this fantasia. One of the most distinguished of our novelists, Mr. Beresford, gives two instances "from my own experience of what I regard as true prayer, in both of which cases the prayer was definitely answered." Instance No. 1: A friend's daughter was "desperately ill," and the doctors had given up hope. Her father spent the whole of the night praying incessantly, and towards morning he realized that his prayer was answered. His daughter made an absolute recovery. Instance No. 2: A relative of Mr. Beresford was staying with his family. She was a confirmed hypochondriac and thought of nothing but her own ailments. Mr. Beresford's father was a "clergyman of the old school," and one morning he uttered a special prayer on behalf of this relative. Result, the woman said to them "I am afraid I have been a great trouble to you, but I'm determined to do better in future . . . I felt as though some good man was praying for me." One would, of course, like greater details, but any revival meeting, and any parson would be able to supply us with many such instances, and equally trustworthy. Mr. Beresford's faith in the verdict of doctors is quite touching. He credits them with an infallibility which most doctors would strongly repudiate. I have heard of doctors making mistakes in their judgment. Mr. Beresford, apparently, never has—at least he makes no allowance for them.

Sir Harry Lauder is quite sure that prayers are answered, mainly because all great Scotchmen have believed in prayer—John Knox, Sir Walter Scott, Professor Blackie, etc., and if you do not believe in prayer it is equivalent to not believing in a God. Altogether one does not like to be hard on the comedian, but one feels that he would have done well to stop with his opening remark that writing on this subject "is not exactly in my line of business." Sir Admiral King-Hall believes in prayer, because if a man does not pray his soul gets "atrophied, and selfish, and, worst of all, material." He gives us the following striking proof of answer to prayer. A ship's captain was sailing in dangerous waters. He went to bed, but could not rest. Someone seemed to speak to him, and finally he went on deck again and ordered that all sail be taken in except just enough to keep the vessel under way. At six o'clock next morning the ship was found to be in dangerous proximity to a reef. Thanks to his precaution he was able to get the ship clear. But this Captain had prayed every evening for the safety of his passengers, and "surely we can say his prayer was heard and answered." All one can say is that if disbelief in prayer leads to a hardening of the heart, belief in it appears to lead a softening of another part of the anatomy.

One is left wondering at the mentality of those who write such unadulterated nonsense, and of that to whom such writing appeals. And this appears in a newspaper which boasts of a daily circulation of over a million and a half! What a comment it all is on our boasted culture! Need we be surprised that our newspapers on the look-out for big circulations, and careless of how they are obtained, are tempted by the mass of sheer superstition current, and the obvious inability of the majority of people to conduct the most elementary of reasoning processes? Of course, some of the writers do attempt an argument that has a superficial air of rationality, and with these I will deal next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

And I honour the man who is willing to sink  
Half his present repute for the freedom to think.

Russell Lowell.

## A Cockney Conversation.

"The mystery of vending spiritual gifts is nothing but a trade."—*Swift*.

"We think our civilization near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star."—*Emerson*.

To the superficial observer, not skilled to penetrate beneath the surface of things, there is, probably, but one thing more solemn than a funeral; and that is the Christian religion. Short of death itself, nothing seems more awful than the Christian scheme of salvation. Only think of it! To Mr. John Smith, Non-conformist and shopkeeper, simply the most stupendous thought that can engage the attention of the watery custard which he is pleased to consider as representing the human intellect. For it is not only the weal or woe of all living human beings, including Mr. Smith himself, Mrs. Smith and the children, but also of generations of Smiths unborn, that will be involved in the tremendous issue.

The very perpetuity of the scheme, in a vanishing world where all things pass away, seems to impart awe to the dwarfed perception of the average believer. To an uneducated person all this must seem most solemn and impressive. Appearances, however, are sometimes deceptive, and it is foolish to look at any question with only one eye, as is said to be the habit of birds. A more philosophic view of the matter would lead to another conclusion. So far from religion being what priests pretend, it is simply a business, just like selling coal, or rum-running. An elaborate and expensive business it may be, but none the less a trade. You cannot tell what the religious circus is like by looking at the highly-coloured posters on the walls. For in all nations priests have invested their business with an air of mystery. So it was in the twilight of history; so it is now, even in the byways and burrows of the great metropolis.

John Smith's conversion means extra gate-money to the pastor of the church he attends; but it means far more to the Smith family. They know that when pa's conversion becomes a certainty his countenance will exhibit the expression of a tired funeral-horse, and that his every word, look, and action, will eclipse the gaiety of the spectators.

Mr. John Smith, junior, is compelled to check his youthful laughter with a sigh. Miss Henrietta Smith, his sister, finds pa's condition clouds the delights of courtship, and overshadows the glories of her new costume. Like Banquo's ghost at the feast, the melancholy convert overawes the flow of domestic happiness. "Finding Jesus" is, in itself, an upheaval, but how dire are the after effects. Resplendant in his best clothes, Mr. Smith conveys his family to the nearest jerry-built chapel, or tin-tabernacle. If he has the disease badly this will become the rule every Sunday in the year. He is under the priest's thumb, and as proud of it as a sailor with two fresh girls. Master Jack Smith can hardly contain himself as he finds that his Sunday fishing excursions are no longer tolerated. Envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness are his portion as he passes his young pals with rods and bait-cans on their way to the nearest river. Miss Henrietta, who is neither so blind as a bat, nor as deaf as an adder, envies 'Arry and 'Arriet treading the primrose path. As for Mrs. Smith, she is firmly convinced that all this piety springs from her husband's desire to be considered "respectable," and, incidentally, to extend his business. In one of her confidential chats over the tea-table with her bosom friend, Mrs. Jones, she expresses her private opinion with a powerful metaphor: "Find Jesus, my dear! I had as soon go to sea in a ship afire."

What does Mr. John Smith himself gain by his conversion? It costs him money, which the priest pockets. In return Mr. Smith gets the Christian Bible. He reads it often, and his verbal knowledge is good; but what he apprehends is limited by an imperfect education. For, like millions of others, he left school at fourteen years of age. What can a half-educated man get from this Bible?

The literature of Israel is intensely local. There are passages where the perfumes of Sharon and Lebanon, the atmosphere of the hills about Jerusalem, the beauty of the daughters of Judea, are so caught and rendered that, in a distant age, an alien speech, a remote land, they affect the cultured reader. But John Smith is uncultured, and is hampered by a limited vocabulary and dwarfed perceptions. To him the word "publican" suggests a licensed victualler; and the expression "divers diseases" conjures up ideas of water on the brain. Thus he is forced to rely on a purblind pastor's conception of what is written. John Smith cannot usefully adopt Gospel ethics with his ordinary business, and keep out of the way of the relieving officer. He cannot, with any success, apply Christian principles to his everyday life, if he is to escape Earlswood or Colney Hatch. Hence his admiration for the sleek pastor who shepherds the flock at his chapel, and shears them well into the bargain.

The pastor instructs poor Smith as if the Christian Bible were written yesterday, and the legends but the facts of every-day journalism. The pastor tells him that his Bible is true from title to colophon, from cover to cover. He says that the Almighty Maker of all Things put a man and a woman in a garden, and for a crime of petty larceny punished them with death, and visited their small misdemeanor on all mankind, whose everlasting fate will be determined at a universal Judgment Day. Poor Smith is also instructed that mankind became so wicked that the same Almighty drowned them all, except eight persons, like kittens in a pail. Afterwards, this same Almighty became the War Lord of the Jews, who were his chosen people, although he could not always help them to victory against their powerful enemies. And so on, through the bloodthirsty records, until the climax when the Almighty is put to death to appease himself. At no stage of this instruction does the pastor point out what a level of barbarism must the people have had who could thus conceive of their deity. Hence the delight of the pastor and the limitations of poor Smith, who becomes a self-opinionated Christian, a figure at which educated people raise their eyebrows, politely smile, and pass on.

MIMNERMUS.

### DOUBTING IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM.

THOUGH Truth and Falsehood be  
Near twins, yet Truth, a little elder is.  
Be busy to seek her; believe me this,  
He's not of none, nor worst, that seeks the best.  
To adore or scorn an image, or protest,  
May all be bad. Doubt wisely; in strange way,  
To stand inquiring right, is not to stray;  
To sleep, or run wrong, is. On a huge hill,  
Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will  
Reach her, about must and about must go,  
And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so.  
Yet strive so, that before age, death's twilight,  
Thy soul rest, for none can work in that night.

JOHN DONNE, 1573-1631.

Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue  
freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

John Milton.

## "The Logical Refutation."

OF Materialism, that is. Mr. C. E. M. Joad does it on page 19 of *The Meaning of Life*, one of the volumes in the Forum Series, and although Mr. Joad's philosophy seems generally to be based on a mixture of wonder and verbal exuberance, on this occasion he is conciseness itself, and gets through his task in about a couple of hundred words. "If Materialism is correct," he says, "the mind is part of (or a function of) the brain." It must be either one or the other. The function of an organ although always seen in conjunction with it, can hardly be said to be the same thing. But Mr. Joad is generous in giving anyone a choice in the matter. In the next line our thoughts have become "movements in the brain," and we think them, "not because they are true, but because our brain passes through certain cerebral states." No one will deny the cerebral states; that seems to be fairly well established, and the truth of our thoughts is a matter for subsequent observation and experience. But Mr. Joad will have it that "truth is an inadmissible concept" in the light of his conception of Materialism, and again one may feel inclined to agree with him. He is not adverse to the idea that truth is little short of a mystery—he said as much in his debate with Mr. Cohen—his attitude being the logical consequence of a philosophy rooted in other spheres than this mundane one of ours. But there is no mystery about his "Logical Refutation." It is open, palpable comedy.

"Now," he goes on, "if Materialism is right our thoughts can—indeed, they must—be chemically sound, since they must reflect the working of our brain; but they cannot be logically sound. To say of a Materialist's thought that it is logically correct would be like affirming of a gland or a nerve cell that it was logically correct." That is stated to be a link "of a brief chain of pure reasoning, unspotted by fact." Personally, I prefer my reasoning slightly adulterated. The perfectability of man as an ideal has been entertained by philosophers with gratifying results, but surely there is a limit to the refinement of logic of the unspotted variety! Mr. Joad is following the lead of Sir Oliver Lodge and the other scientists who seek to set up life or mind as something independent of the laws of causation. He is seeking, or rather asking the Materialist to explain a psychological phenomenon in terms of chemistry. He is doomed to disappointment. Materialists have over and over again—it was done to the verge of weariness in the book Mr. Joad obviously had in mind when writing his "Refutation"—protested that seeking to explain any particular kind of experience in terms of another, distinct in its manifestation, leads to nowhere. No one, in fact, does it unless he be seeking to establish some justification for a latent superstition; to excuse the possession of some microbe of the god idea. The two things in question belong to different categories of experience; one being comparatively simple, concrete, known almost from beginning to end; the other is a happening of which much remains to be discovered, abstract, but no fact known of either disproves the theory of causation; no fact in connexion with them supports Mr. Joad's contention that mind is an entity outside natural law.

"Hence," the Refutation proceeds, "if Materialism is right, our thoughts cannot be true. Now, the theory of Materialism is itself a structure of thought; consequently it follows that what it asserts cannot be true. Hence Materialism is not true." It is agreed that if Materialism is as Mr. Joad conceives it to be,

there is no truth in it; it is a helpless imbecile, incapable of even affirming its own existence. The only gleam of hope in the situation is that it may be chemically correct, reacting, however feebly, to the prods of the Vitalist. But where did ever the Materialist father a runt such as Mr. Joad might have smuggled out of some home or other for waifs and strays? Nowhere but in the pages of Mr. Joad and his brethren. Our author has written sixty pages of more or less Berkleyan metaphysic to demolish a guy of his own making. Yet there is something to be said for the process. He writes of Materialism for the Man in the Street, which reminds me of Mr. Bernard Shaw expounding the mysteries of "spare money" and banking to the Intelligent Woman. Both of these kindred literary performances prompt one to the hope that in the future the supplying of pen and ink to the Joads and the Shaws-in-their-old-age will be made a penal offence.

H. B. DODDS.

## Christianity and Freethought.

SINCE the rise of modern socialism many attempts have been made to foist a socialistic interpretation upon the utterances of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the New Testament. The title of the pamphlet *Jesus the Socialist* is only one of the numerous instances of the same claim. The very phrase "Christian Socialism" implies a belief that these teachings can at least be construed so as not to conflict with modern socialistic ideas; and, indeed, the further claim has often been made that they are the basis and the inspiration of the modern struggle towards a better ordered condition of social life and economic adjustment. But all such attempts are only part of that wider movement of compromise which seeks to reconcile Christianity with the results of modern knowledge and social aspirations. Nothing seems more evident than that the Christian ethic is purely individualistic in its application and intention. The supreme value of the individual soul was always claimed to be the distinguishing feature of the Christian religion; the emphasis of its teaching being always directed towards the essential regeneration of the individual's heart and life. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" represents the essence of its appeal, which until quite recent years was never questioned.

It may surprise some readers if I suggest that Freethought advocacy, so far as its methods and immediate aims are concerned, follows the lines of the Christian evangel; the difference being that while one appeals to the heart and to the emotions, the other appeals to the intellect and the reason. But in both cases the appeal is to the individual. And just as the purpose of Christianity is, first of all, to make Christians, so it has often been said, as a justification of Freethought methods, that our first and principal object is to make Freethinkers. Of course, the acceptance of Freethought or Christianity need not necessarily limit the activities of either Christians or Freethinkers in any social direction that appeals to them; but there is just a danger of making these philosophies responsible for the activities of their adherents outside the legitimate sphere of their particular propaganda. For instance, Church of England parsons, like Kingsley and Maurice, were quite within their rights, as citizens, in advocating what they called Christian Socialism, and also in supporting the Co-operative movement; but their mistake lay in claiming for these movements a Christian sanction. And the fact that Christian Socialism is now as dead

as a door nail is sufficient evidence that the Christian public did not approve of such an interpretation of their religious creed.

It may justly be claimed that many social and labour movements, particularly Socialism and Co-operation, were brought into being by the efforts of pioneers whose convictions were not only anti-Christian, but definitely atheistic. But this fact, of itself, does not give these, or any similar movements, what we might call a Freethought duration, or bring them under the wing of Freethought protection or patronage. The past and present relations of these movements to Freethought, like the relation of Christian Socialism to Christian ethics, may be a matter of individual interpretation, but does not warrant any dogmatic pronouncement. If we grant their Freethought origin, we have only to look at these movements in their later developments to realize that they have sold their Freethought birth-right for a mess of pottage. Born of Freethought travail, suckled and nourished on Freethought sustenance, they have, under Christian domination and influence, developed into nondescript, characterless institutions that are anything but a credit to their parents. But the most lamentable thing in connexion with them is, that the parents themselves are very largely to blame for the degeneracy of their offspring. Afraid, apparently, of the virile individualism of Bradlaugh, these social Utopians sank their own personal atheistic convictions to the propagandist exigencies of their particular social views. And thus it has come about that the sins of the fathers have been visited upon the children to the third and fourth, and probably all succeeding, generations. Instead of faithfully warning these children, as any thoughtful parent would have done, of the pitfalls of superstition that lay in their pathway, they left them to the mercy of any religious windbag who cared to tickle their ears.

I might observe that in these matters the Christian, in his generation, has been wiser than the children of Freethought. Instead of building these institutions, as they might have done, on a purely secular and helpful basis, they have allowed the Christian so to tamper with them that they have become valueless as a Freethought asset. The one object of the Christian worker, whether his efforts be evangelistic, or medical, or social, is to Christianize his patient; and, if his impress on these two movements is not visibly apparent, he has at all events succeeded in innoculating them to such an extent with Christian sentiment and sympathy, as to be no longer a danger to his religion. But the Freethinker, after all his social labours, has left no such impress on these movements; his footprints on the social sands of time have been entirely obliterated. The modern Co-operator and the Socialist appear to care as much about the principle of secular education and the repeal of the blasphemy laws, as a Solomon Islander.

Let it not be thought that I am decrying social effort in any shape or form; I am only trying to estimate the results to Freethought of all these past excursions of many of its known advocates into the social realm of labour and economics. And if we strike a profit and loss account, and place on one side the social labours of Freethinkers, and on the other the resultant gains to Freethought, I imagine the balance is on the wrong side. A gentleman of my acquaintance, who once had a good business of his own, said to me recently: "If I had only confined my efforts to my own legitimate line of business, and left outside speculation alone, I would not have been in the unfortunate position I am to-day." And it appears to me that the "outside speculations"

of Freethinkers have been anything but profitable to the Freethought cause. The profit of all their labours has mostly gone into the coffers of a rival firm. The platitudes of a Co-operative platform and the drivel of a Labour leader at a brotherhood meeting are certainly not results that any Freethinker has reason to be proud of.

These thoughts have been prompted by a painful recognition of the stupendous obstacles that Freethought propaganda is still faced with, which is, in part, the result of dissipated energies in the past. The Freethinker has still a good deal to learn from the Christian.

JOSEPH BRUCE.

### Acid Drops.

The first round of the fight over *The Well of Loneliness* has ended with a victory in favour of I-stick-to-my-mother's-knee Joynson-Hicks, and the *Daily Express*. Perhaps Lord Beaverbrook decided that the book would not meet with the approval of the big drapers, to whom he defers when he is in doubt about the policy of the paper. But we sincerely hope that it will be only the first round of the fight. In a magistrate's court, one may count, in such cases, on the verdict going with the established authorities. The verdict in the police court should only be the means of clearing the stage for the real fight; otherwise it was almost folly to take it there.

Sir Chartres Biron declined to listen to the opinion of well known men and women in literature and science, but was content to listen to that of a policeman. And, in the main, he followed the policeman. For all we know, this particular policeman might have been quite a good judge of literature, but we think that some of the lesser lights who were there might have had a chance to express their opinions. He also declined to consider the purpose of the writer of the book, which is certainly a matter of considerable importance. On the contrary, he admitted that the book was well written, and even cleanly written, but that, too, availed nothing. One wonders what Sir Chartres Biron would have done had he lived long ago, and Fielding's *Tom Jones*, or Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* had been brought before him. A press censorship is a hateful thing at best, but when the word of a policeman is taken, and the opinion of experts rejected, one feels the law is inviting deliberate defiance. At any rate, it is the way to get it.

Sir Charles Biron appears to have taken exception to two things. One is that the writer introduced the name of the Deity into the book to support her plea, the other that she did not hold up certain forms of abnormal sexual conduct to "condemnation." The reference to the Deity is that the authoress makes one of her characters say they are made by God, and they demand fair treatment and proper recognition. Well, if there is no God, the language is idle. If there is a God, then these people are God's handiwork, and have a right to demand consideration at the hands of their creator. The other point is that the writer asked that these people should be treated with toleration and sympathy. Why not? Science does not condemn, it teaches us to understand, and enlightened understanding brings toleration and sympathy. The overwhelming mass of cultured opinion would be in favour of extending sympathy to people who were cursed in the way these people are cursed. Condemnation is quite out of place. One might as reasonably condemn a man for being born with some inherited disease.

The magistrate talked about people being influenced by the reading of the book in the direction of practising "this horrible vice"—which leads one to ask: How does or how can abnormality become a vice? A man who deliberately lays plans to murder others for the sake of gain, has vice. But the homicidal maniac has no vice in killing, he is suffering from a disease. We should much like to know how this magistrate thinks

that reading about an abnormality can lead to vice. It might throw light on some aspects of the judgment. We are not expressing an opinion of whether such subjects should be made the subject of a novel. That is a matter of pure taste. But we have a very strong objection to men of the type of our present Home Secretary, and a journalist of the type of Mr. James Douglas being set up as a press consorship—even though backed by the law. Such a law can only command the respect and the support of enlightened men and women so long as it is administered in a wise and liberal spirit. As it is, the book and the subject has been made the subject of discussion to a far greater extent than it would otherwise have been.

We see it reported that the solicitors for the defence asserted that they had no copies of the book now, as all had been taken by the police. We do not quite understand this. So far as we are aware, while the law may prohibit anyone publishing or trafficking in certain books, there is no law to prevent anyone *owning* a book, no matter what its character. Unless there has been an alteration of the law of late years—and we are not aware of it—anyone who has a copy of the book may keep it with perfect safety.

By the way, and apropos of *The Well of Loneliness*, Mr. James Douglas is gratified by the suppression of the book because, if such books are permitted, he has heard some of his journalistic friends say that in order to meet the market they will be compelled to follow suit. Excellent! Mr. Douglas knows his journalist friends, although we know there are others outside the ranks of his acquaintance. But what a light it throws upon the articles on prayer, and similar stunts. It bears out exactly what we have said. It is the duty of the editor to find what is saleable, and sell it. If the fools want one thing, give it. If they want the other, give them that. Mr. Douglas apparently cannot conceive writers who will write what they think the public ought to know, and not what it wishes to know. And it is this type of man who sets himself up as a literary censor! These men who prate of their duty to the public, and who never in the whole of their lives lift a hand in help of a friendless cause, or give a shilling's worth of their ability in aid of an unpopular movement!

The Bishop of Southwark is sorely distressed because "the great majority of the population of London is completely out of touch with any sort or kind of religion." A weekly journal, also worried, comments: "Then something is very wrong with the sort or kind of religion presented." But this is not necessarily the cause of trouble. May not the fact that Londoners are nowadays better educated have something to do with it?

Dr. R. J. Campbell thinks there are too many "don'ts"—too many unnecessary legal restrictions or prohibitions. Still, nobody need be surprised at that in a country where noisy religious bigots rule the roost, because people in authoritative positions are not courageous enough to oppose them or to voice contrary opinions.

In the *Methodist Times* a clerical writer recently quoted Mr. Bruce Barton (*The Church Nobody Knows*) as charging the Church with having "less regard for honesty than is found in secular institutions"—"there is hardly a church membership roll anywhere that does not carry as active members a large percentage of people who are no longer active. Some have ceased to attend; some have moved away; some have been lost from sight entirely. Yet their names continue to be carried and go to swell the misleading totals that the Church is gaining, or at least holding its own." The *Methodist Times* does not deny the charge. It invites readers to suggest means of altering such a state of affairs. Correspondents who have written all admit the charge, either explicitly or implicitly.

The following is a report of an address at Sheffield by the Rev. Dr. Lineham (United Methodist), on Methodist re-union:—

Speaking of the subtle mental influences of the new evolutionary teaching affecting so markedly the Christian Church to-day, he urged that it was impossible to exaggerate the change in the climate. The natural and biological worlds were startlingly revolutionary, and movement was the very essence of their law. Methodism must recognize this same essential law of life and growth, and only as it moved should we find souls for our ministry and seats for our hire.

All that this flowery phrasing boils down to is—that Methodists must bring their creed in line with modern thought and discovery, otherwise better educated Methodists will leave the Church, and the Church will find it deuced hard to attract intellectual men into the ministry. Of course it is easy enough to advise "change," but the Fundamentalist is probably in the majority. Attempts to force a change will split the Methodists into two sections. Then there will have to be a further attempt at re-union in years to come. By the look of things, Christians will always be splitting and re-joining as long as there is a Christian creed and believers in it.

Any kind of blither seems good enough to pass muster if written by a parson. The Rev. P. B. Clayton, M.C., has an article entitled "Our Creditors," in the *Daily News*, and here is a sample from bulk:—

In the presence of God, and in union with our whole race dispersed throughout the world, we are about to give thanks once more for our deliverance, and to render homage to the brave and blessed dead.

We are interested chiefly in that phrase, "give thanks." Is there any meaning in it? Is there any sense in it? It was the Duke of Wellington who, when asked what was worse than defeat, replied "A Victory." It was Bismarck, after the Franco-Prussian War, who stated that the next time he defeated France he would insist on paying an indemnity, and, if Germany now pays us reparations in goods we shall be ruined. The clergy must work in their own particular piece of leather, and from the above case it would appear, even in speaking of the dead, that the wrong thing is said by instinct, and a God who permitted the slaughter should be pensioned off.

One may look closely for anything new in the final message of the Archbishop of York, marking his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. He stated:—

A church with a new vision of the Gospel, a church every member of which accepted that gospel as a solemn and personal trust; a church which was filled with a spirit of fellowship, was a church which alone could answer the world's call, which alone could give the sense of joy which was the condition of power.

Translate the "new vision" to adaptation to environment, and the rest is theological fustian and impertinence, showing a blatant disregard of the millions in the world with other religions and the vast number who can get on without religion of any kind.

An evening paper reports that to the singing of "Abide with Me," in a Church in the Chiswick High Road, Edward Turner was killed by a motor car, not far from the Church door. We commend the incident to some of our religious dailies as an argument in favour of the belief that God watches over the affairs of this world, and guides the steps of those who truly love him. The man's wife, who was with him at the time, was also knocked down and lies in hospital. The driver of the car was exonerated by the coroner's jury. Nothing was said about the friend who sits on high.

The British and Foreign Bible Society always reports the distribution of an increasing number of Bibles. On the other hand, Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, told the Society, at its annual gathering, that the most serious feature of to-day was the decline in Bible read-

ing. But we are afraid the Canon cannot always be depended on. Thus, he says that thirty years ago, old people, if they read anything, read the Scriptures, and the younger ones read books of devotion. We don't know where Canon Green lived thirty years ago, but we certainly never met the place where the old people read nothing but the scriptures, and the young read books of devotion. But one does not expect accuracy at Bible meetings.

*Overseas* is a journal devoted to binding together English folk in various parts of the world. In a recent issue, Sir Evelyn Wrench made some of the usual fatuous comments on Sir Arthur Keith's statement that the soul went out like the flame of a candle. Sir Evelyn said the universe would be "a hideous thing," if Sir Arthur's view was correct, etc., etc. It is very silly, but as it was said in a journal which claims to have no religious bias, Mr. R. A. D. Forest, of Hong Kong, promptly wrote as follows:—

It is with much regret that I write to take exception to the comments in your July issue on Sir Arthur Keith's views. I shall not deal with your comments in themselves except so far as to say that many who share the views in question do not find the universe hideous; but I wish to insist that such comments are out of place in the organ of a League which aims at binding together loyal citizens of any or no creed. Surely such a journal should be as admirably neutral in religious as in political matters, and recognize that Freethinkers may be loyal Britons as well as believers.

I feel so strongly on this point that, unless my protest is given the same publicity as the original note, I see no way but to resign from the League, however much I should regret that course.

Sir Evelyn replies that he is quite unrepentant. But that is beside the issue. The real point is that in a journal which pretends to be non-religious, he criticizes views which he thinks make against religion. It is quite certain that if anyone had written attacking religion the letter would have been excluded. But unsectarian or non-religious, means in practice, where Christianity is concerned, not saying anything against Christianity. You may say what you please in its favour. We see how this operates in the case of the Labour Party in this country.

Mr. C. F. Andrews, who was once "reverend," and who claims to be a friend of Tagore and Ghandi, says that the Western people have only recently begun to realize how insular they are. They have been in the habit of ignoring the vast hemisphere of human thought in India, China, and Japan. That more than half the human race had lived for millenniums in a highly civilized state, says Mr. Andrews, had not reached the imagination and intelligence of the West. An Indian friend, says Mr. Andrews, objected to a statement in a book called *The History of Philosophy*, which is part of a popular series of volumes published here. The statement was: "The history of philosophy begins with Greece." The Indian pointed out that the ideas in the earlier Greek philosophers, such as Pythagoras, seem strikingly akin to Eastern thoughts of a much earlier date. And whether they came from the East or not, the Easterns were thinking those very thoughts long before Greece was born. Mr. Andrews adds that Max Müller did something, fifty years ago, to shake Western insularity. But the average man in Britain is still almost blankly unaware of the age-long thoughts of half mankind. British people imagine that the whole human race revolves around Europe, and that Europe is the sole centre of the universe of human thought.

What Mr. Andrews says is true enough. A study of Christian history will supply him with an explanation of this insularity. For hundreds of years the Christian Church, regarding Biblical philosophy and teaching as all-sufficient, anathematized Eastern religion and philosophy, and discouraged the study of it as being "heathen." And to-day, what Christian Church advises or encourages its adherents to study Eastern

thought? Would they welcome any attempt to popularize the main teachings of Confucius and Buddha?

Trading on his hearers' ignorance, or airing his own, the Rev. Melville Dinwiddie broadcasts this piece of "Christian truth" from Aberdeen:—

It was within the Church, in the spirit of Christ who would have all men know the truth, that education began to make its influence felt in the history of the Western hemisphere, increasing its importance until it became, in comparatively recent years, a State institution. Let us remember that it was within the Church, based on the example of Christ, the great Physician, that hospitals for the care and cure of the sick were set up, carried on by the voluntary gifts of those who had the cause of Christ deeply at heart.

Eruptions and earthquakes in Sicily, with villages and towns wiped out, wild gales in England with loss of life and immense damage to property, and seventeen men drowned in a capsized lifeboat. Altogether God Almighty has been letting things rip lately, and we commend these occurrences to the spool writers on prayer in the *Daily Express*. Nearly every one of these writers have told stories more or less accurate, more or less truthful, and all of them irredeemably silly, of particular answers to prayers they have come across. Well, here was seventeen brave men whose sole aim was to save the lives of others. There was nothing in the nature of self-seeking, and they would have received no special thanks were they alive to-day. And praying for their safety were their wives and sisters, and children, and sweethearts. If there was an occasion for prayer it was here. But God did nothing. Perhaps he was busy looking over the *Daily Express*, and congratulating himself on the fact that while thousands of people could be fooled in this way, he would never be without followers. And with this we cordially agree.

Addressing a Methodist audience at Manchester, the Rev. A. E. Whitham said:—

We are being told, on all hands, by those who assume a right to pass judgment on such matters, that the Christian creed is crumbling and no longer tenable by thinking men. Such statements are often made with astonishing light-heartedness, as if a man's loss of faith were a matter of no concern. But surely they should consider the value and power and beauty of that view of God and the world, of man and immortality, that Jesus taught, and which has become embodied in the doctrines of the Catholic Church; so that, if we had to follow them to their funeral, the obsequies might, at least, be conducted with reverence and with tears. . . . When Christ came a great light broke upon the world, and if that light should fail, the darkness will fall again, as of frozen midnight.

Man has dumped many creeds and superstitions in his time, and he has done so with rejoicing, at getting rid of an incubus. For the same reason he is not likely to consider that burial of the Christian creed calls for tears and regrets. He will leave these things, as he has left them before, to the priests who exploited his credulity and ignorance.

A writer in a pious weekly reminds local preachers that an infinite disservice has been done to the cause of Christianity by the clerical whine, the pulpit twang, the oily, sanctimonious voice. He might also have told them that the reason why these things have largely disappeared is that Freethought ridicule has sharpened the Christian's sense of the ludicrous. That's another blessing the pious owe to Freethinkers.

Speaking at the Albert Hall on Armistice Day, the Deputy-Chaplain-General said: "Remember how in the hour of our great tribulation God brought us out of the darkness." What a God! He, according to this parson, could so arrange matters as to give us a victory, but he couldn't or wouldn't ensure a victory in 1914, so

as to avoid all the colossal suffering and death experienced by the victorious nations through a prolonged war. This Christian God of Love must be as intelligent as the Deputy-Chaplain-General.

According to the Rev. Dr. S. W. Hughes, "Clever and intellectual people go on without God, but ultimately they come to see that the higher reaches are not intellectual. Then they become conscious of need for a power beyond themselves, and out of the depths they cry for God." It seems very odd that so many of these intellectuals should manage to live and die without patronizing places where God hangs out.

On the authority of a Methodist parson, the Rev. H. J. Taylor, we learn that the "leaders of literature and science are urging that the world needs what Christianity stands for." Perhaps a few leaders in these fields may be doing so. If only many other leaders who don't believe the world needs Christianity would have the courage to voice their true opinions, Mr. Taylor's assertion would not go down with the ignorant.

Some of our religious leaders appear to be making a remarkable discovery—remarkable, that is, for them. The Rev. R. J. Campbell writes in the *Evening Standard* that Anti-Romanists are on the wrong track. "It is not Romanism, but Secularism that is the most dangerous enemy of true religion to-day." We agree. The quarrels between Roman Catholics and Protestants are mere matters of internal friction. One may gain at the expense of the other, but there is an enemy that saps the strength of both. The essential fight is between the party that takes this world and this life as the ultimate consideration, with the principle of social utility as a guide, and the principle that this life is to be subordinated to the presumed requirements of an alleged other world. For many years the Christian leaders have tried what could be done by pretending that Secularism did not count, meanwhile, seeing what could be done by a policy of strict boycott. Now some of them are beginning to realize that the Freethought attack must be met somehow. And whenever some of these protagonists care to come into the open we are quite ready for them. When they summon up courage enough to meet accredited representatives of uncompromising Freethought, men like Dean Inge, Bishop Barnes, and Mr. Campbell will find they have their work cut out, and the general world will be able to judge what they are worth. It will not be quite so easy a task as writing flatulent articles for the bemusement of the unthinking.

The *Methodist Times* reveals a startling fact to a wondering world. This year, it says, Armistice Day was observed by more people than ever, and the commemoration was everywhere associated with religious observances. From this, our pious friend draws comforting conclusions. It is "a most encouraging witness to the response which the nation makes to a moral and spiritual appeal." And, although much has been said about decline in church attendance, "yet the fact is that an immensely greater number of people in our land are influenced by religious services than at any previous period in our history." Our contemporary has, however, to express its regret that the diversity of religious expression is not "in the direction of regular church services." Our Methodist friend's final conclusion is that the Churches must recognize the situation and remodel their methods, because "people respond to appropriate and adequate appeal."

We think the *Methodist Times'* conclusions are not warranted by the *real* facts concerning Armistice Day. What the Churches have done is to exploit the nation's sentiment and sorrow as far as possible. But because the parson is well in the picture and the commemoration has a religious flavour, it doesn't follow that the people in general are interested in and desire the flavour.

The fact is that most people would attend public commemorations to the same extent if there was no religious service, no hymns, and no priestly platitudes. What must strike our pious friends as odd is, that though there has been at least eight years of Armistice Day commemorative services all over the country, there are no signs of extra patronage of Christian praying-sheds.

Christian organizations are never lacking in impudence—otherwise they would not be Christian organizations. But the limit is about reached when one of our contributors receives a circular inviting contributions to the Young Women's Christian Association, and addressed care of *Freethinker* Office!

The Bournemouth *Echo* calls Sir Berkeley Moynham, the eminent surgeon, to task for having said something unflattering to Christian theology. It points out that a man's eminence in one direction does not warrant his being taken as an authority in others. We quite agree with this, but what a pity it is that this rule is not applied to eminent actors, novelists, journalists and other odds and ends with a name known to the public, before their opinion is asked in favour of religion. We presume the answer is that whereas a man ought to know a lot about religion before he expresses an opinion *against* it, the most complete ignorance is no bar to his expressing an opinion *for* it.

The following, from *The Colvins and Their Friends*, is a portion of a letter sent to Sir Sidney Colvin by the wife of Robert Louis Stevenson, after she became a widow:—

I have read over the *Varlimo Letters* again and again. I am glad they were published. There is so much of Louis in them. He said to me several times, "Colvin sees me in an atmosphere of his own; when I am dead don't let him mark me out a damned angel." Well, the letters show all that was of the worst in him, and anyone worth caring for will love him the better for that worst. I have had a little worry with Aunt Maggie [Louis' mother] about the inscription on his tomb. We propose his own verses in English on the one side of the high chief tomb, and the verse from "Ruth," "Thy country shall be my country," in Samoan on the other. Aunt Maggie wants the usual texts, "In my Father's house are many mansions," and several others of the same sort. It is very difficult not to offend her . . . I know what she really wants, poor soul. She was always doubtful of Louis' belief in what are called the truths of religion, and so wishes to convince the world at the sacrifice of his own sincerity.

Of a recent address by Dr. Scott Lidgett, at Sheffield, a reporter says it was as "spiritually logical" as it was idealistic. "Spiritually logical"! That seems queer stuff. To mix the logical with the spiritual would be about as easy as mixing oil and water.

"Pastor" John Penrose has recently been sentenced at Elgin to three months' imprisonment, for misappropriating money collected for charitable purposes. It transpired that out of every £1 he collected, ten shillings went into his own purse. The Sheriff remarked that the Northern Evangelistic Association and the City and Central Mission of Aberdeen were run purely as business undertakings.

The following is a portion of what a pious editor of a children's paper suggests as "A Boy Scout's Prayer":—

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose grace Thy servants are enabled to fight the good fight of faith, we humbly beseech Thee to inspire in Scouts that we may yield our hearts to obedience and exercise our wills on Thy behalf.

This conglomeration of words couched in wierd and wonderful Prayer Book English would appeal to the average Scout very much—we don't think. The most fitting time to recite it would be after the Scout had been reading the blood and thunder exploits of some cut-throat British "hero."



## 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.

T.C.—Thanks for the silly pamphlet by Mr. C. T. Studd, on his conversion. It is quite clear that one may be quite a good cricketer without being overburdened with intelligence. We are surprised that the publishers did not advise him to leave his portrait off the covers. To anyone versed in physiognomy, that portrait further discounts the pamphlet. It is a fitting preface to a silly production.

L. MARCAN.—The wearing of black at a funeral appears to have originated in the desire of the savage to gain protection from the ghost of the dead man. It was a form of disguise. You will find a full statement by E. S. Hartland in his *Ritual and Belief*. (Williams & Norgate, 1914.)

S. SODDY.—If we are ever in Paris we shall not fail to remember and act on your invitation. Shall also be very glad to see you when you come to London.

V. MARTIN.—It is not of much use wasting time over quite unpromising material. After all, some degree of intelligence is required to be a Freethinker, and appealing to the intelligence of a sincere devotee of revivalistic meetings means a devil of a lot of work for very small, and very doubtful returns. It is a hard thing to say of anyone, but there are some people who are doomed by nature to be genuine Christians to the end of their lives.

R. ATHERTON.—The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool was following the example of his Protestant brother in making what capital he could out of Armistice Day. But if he is correct in what he says, no small portion of those who were formally mourned on Armistice Day are at present in Hell. That is really his message to the survivors.

CINE CERE.—Thanks for information contained in letter. It is interesting and useful. But the example given is not the only one of its kind.

G. BARTLETT.—Pleased to know that you have derived so much benefit from the three lectures Mr. Cohen delivered at Leicester. We do not expect that any of the clergy in Leicester would be likely to meet Mr. Cohen in a set debate, but he would have no objection if a suitable person could be found.

KERIDON.—We agree with your estimate of the writer named. Many people gain a reputation on very little, and if one backs up current prejudices it is not a very difficult task. As you will see, the report of the debate between Mr. Joad and Mr. Cohen is now published.

S. PULMAN.—Received. Hope to hear from you as well and active for many years yet. Best wishes.

J. T. BRIGHTON.—Glad to see you are carrying on so vigorous a correspondence in the local press. It will do much good. Mr. Cohen may be able to visit Chester-le-Street some time in the New Year. Shall be glad to see you at Gateshead.

A. E. BURGESS.—Sorry to hear of the illness of Mr. Burgess. Our best wishes for his speedy recovery. Your request was sent on as desired.

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

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One year, 15/-; half year 7/6; three months, 3/9.

## Sugar Plums.

There was another capital audience in the Leicester Secular Hall on Sunday, for the third of Mr. Cohen's course of lectures. The fourth and last will be delivered to-day (November 25). The subject will be "Free-thought and Morals." It was suggested to Mr. Cohen that the course should be published. He may act on the suggestion when he has time to put them into shape for the press.

The Parks Committee of the Leicester Town Council recently passed a resolution in favour of permitting golf in the Council's parks on Sundays. This has alarmed the Churches who are passing resolutions against the time the matter comes before the general Council. At the close of Mr. Cohen's lecture, a resolution was moved from the chair in support of the Parks Committee, and carried with two or three dissentient votes.

Messrs. Watts & Co. have added two more volumes to their useful Forum series (1s. each). One of these is on *What is Eugenics?* by Major Leonard Darwin. This little book is full of good stuff, and is written with courage. But we think that the advocacy of the sterilization of criminals and paupers as tending to purify the race, is advice that needs very serious qualification. Both may result from causes other than congenital ones. So again when dealing with the present social worth of various "classes," not enough attention is paid to the purely environmental influences which give these social classes their existing values. An alteration in the economic environment, for example, might have a very profound effect on the evils that Major Darwin depicts. Breeding a better race is a mixture of nature and nurture, and it is well not to forget the fact. Still, Major Darwin's book is simply and clearly written, and will set people thinking about a topic that is of great importance.

The second of the two books is by Mr. C. E. M. Joad, on *The Meaning of Life*. Much of this is a criticism of Mr. Cohen and of Materialism. And it has all the usual confusions of Mr. Joad. He still repeats that Materialism seeks to explain everything in terms of physics, and that Materialists believe there is nothing but matter, presumably because if Materialism does not say this, his case against it goes by the board, and as he must have a case against it, in order to bolster up his own nebulous Vitalism, Materialism must be made to mean what he says whether it does so or not. It would take a volume much larger than his own to completely disentangle Mr. Joad's confusions. When he asks why, if Materialism is true, does life develop (presumably he means why does life *change*, which is not quite the same proposition), one would suggest that the answer may be found in the consideration that two things cannot occupy the same place at once. When he informs his readers that Materialism holds that "a complete account of an entity can always be given in terms of its antecedent conditions," one wonders whether visions are about, and what kind of Materialists Mr. Joad has been consorting with. He dismisses the atom as not being a scientific fact (chemists will open their eyes at this piece of information), and accepts the electron as though that were more of a "fact" than the atom. And he is quite cheered up that even though we could find out all about the electron there would still be things we do not know and may never know, and so, *Vive le Vitalisme!*

We venture the suggestion to Mr. Joad that he should settle down to discover the precise significance of the doctrine of "emergence," which he seems to believe is something quite new in the history of philosophy. In this he has probably been misled by confining his attention to recent text-books. The statement reminds one of the old Christian Evidence wheeze that the Greeks could have had no conception of humanity because they did not use the *Latin Humanitas*. Swift also found Homer intensely ignorant, because he showed no

acquaintance whatever with the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England. And we also suggest to Mr. Joad that when certain factors in combination showing more in the product than can be discerned in the factors does not mean that "something can come out of nothing." "Emergence" means nothing of the kind; it is not an addendum to the Athanasian Creed. It would seem that Mr. Joad suffers from the disadvantage of not having achieved the art of making himself so verbose as to disguise his confusions. When he has achieved this, and can expand a sentence to a paragraph, a paragraph to a page, a page to a chapter, and a couple of chapters to a volume, his confusions may not be quite so apparent to a critical reader. As it stands, *The Meaning of Life* is quite an interesting little book for dissection.

It is some time since Mr. Cohen lectured on Tyne-side, but next Sunday (December 2) he is paying a visit to Gateshead, where he will deliver two lectures in the Co-operative Hall.

The new volume (the third) of Mr. Cohen's *Essays in Freethinking* is now in the hands of the binder, and will be on sale almost immediately. These volumes contain some of the best of Mr. Cohen's writings, and range over a wide variety of subjects. The new volume will be sent post free for 2s. 8½d., or the three volumes for 7s. 6d.

A correspondent informs us that a recent issue of the *Hull Evening News* referred to the *Freethinker* as "a crime-causing Atheist journal." We feel flattered at the description.

One of our contributors, Dr. J. A. Russell, writes complaining that the lengthy letter which we published in last week's issue, was sent in as an article. He feels somewhat aggrieved, and so we feel that the complaint deserves publicity. The subject dealt with was a little outside the scope of the paper, and that being so, as we had every desire to publish Dr. Russell's contribution, its proper place fell within the scope of correspondence, under which head a little more latitude could be given than with ordinary articles. We are sorry that Dr. Russell feels aggrieved, but we do not see that we ought to have acted differently.

A group of Freethinkers have for some time been carrying on propaganda in the Market Square at Woolwich, with the object of forming a Branch of the National Secular Society in the District. Mr. F. Mann, Secretary of the N.S.S., will address a meeting in the Square each Thursday until further notice. We hope Freethinkers in the district will give what assistance they can to this attempt to extend Freethought activity.

Mr. F. Mann lectures to-day (November 25), in the Broughton Town Hall, Salford, at 3.0 and 6.30. In the afternoon he will lecture on "Religion, the Enemy of Progress," and in the evening on "Science, Religion and Life." Broughton Town Hall can be easily reached from all parts of Manchester, and we hope that local friends will do their best to see that the hall is well filled.

The Plymouth Branch holds the next of its course of lectures to-day (November 25). Mr. Whitehead will be the speaker. He will speak twice in the Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street, and the times of the lectures are 3 and 7 o'clock.

We are glad to have from Birmingham a very good account of Mr. Saphin's lecture to the local Branch, delivered on Sunday last. There was a very lively discussion at the close of the lecture, which may be taken as evidence of the interest in what had been said.

From American papers to hand, we see that Charles Smith, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, has been fined twenty-five dollars for distributing evolution literature in Little Rock, Arkansas. He refused to pay the fine and has been sent to prison. During the hearing, Mr. Smith wished to give evidence on his own behalf, but was not permitted because he refused to take a religious oath. Some of these States in America must be quite delightful places in which to live if a man happens to be burdened with brains. You may shoot a man or lynch a negro and "get away with it," but to say that Genesis is wrong cannot be tolerated for a moment. Some parts of the States never seem to get away from the dreadful fact that it has descended from the Pilgrim Fathers. It dogs them like an inherited disease.

The West Ham Branch of the National Secular Society is having a Social on Saturday, December 1, in Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, London, E. The programme will consist of songs, dances, games, etc., and refreshments will be provided at a low cost. The Social will commence at 7 p.m., and we are asked to extend, on behalf of the Branch, an invitation to all Freethinkers and friends. From our knowledge of past Socials held by the West Ham Branch, we are sure that those who are present will spend a most enjoyable evening.

## A Heathen's Thoughts on Christianity.

(Continued from page 731.)

### THE ISRAELITES AND THE MOSAIC LAW.

CONTINUING our reading of the Old Testament, we find our estimate of this god, Jehovah, the tribal god of the Israelites, as a brutal tyrant, more than justified. He takes delight in the filthy stench of burning flesh and fat. His altar streams with the clotted blood of slaughtered victims, the air reeks with the smell of it. The whole narrative nauseates the Buhhist, whose religion forbids all cruelty to animals. Incidentally, we find nowhere in the Bible any injunction against such cruelty; and there is none, so far as I am aware, in Christian teaching. This is, perhaps, why Christians have always been remarkable for their cruelty, as they are in Roman Catholic countries to-day. In those countries where civilization has advanced under purely secular influences, there is an improvement in this respect. Consider the story of the Flood, which we know, and even some Christians now admit, to be a fiction. What had the poor animals done that they should be destroyed, even if mankind deserved it?

Taking the Old Testament as history, we find that the Israelites were just such a people as would possess such a tribal god. They were a cruel, bigoted, greedy and bloodthirsty race. Their history condemns them as a horde of treacherous savages. We are told that they were "God's Chosen People." Indeed they were, for this god and this people are akin to each other! Fortunate, the people who were not "chosen" by such a god!

There is not one of those who are described as men specially approved by the god as "after his own heart," who is even an ordinarily decent character. If there were a man to-day like those Israelitish kings, among the ruling princes or chiefs of India, he would speedily be deposed by the British Raj. Perhaps the Afghans, the Afridis, the Pathans, may resemble the ancient Israelites. If ten tribes really were "lost," they are probably there on the North-West Frontier. Indeed, these have a strongly Jewish appearance, and the Afghans actually style themselves "Beni Israel"—"Children of Israel." They would behave as such were the British to with-

draw from India, a fact which our Indian Nationalist friends ought to bear well in mind.

I fail to see what there is in the Old Testament to so excite the enthusiasm of English readers, that we should be called upon specially to admire it. As a history it is not true, as we shall see presently. There are many things in it shocking both to humane feelings and to morality. As a literature there is a much higher standard set by the sacred books of the East, by the Buddhist Scriptures, by the writings of Confucius. The works of the English Shakespeare surpass it in every way from a literary point of view.

We are referred to the Mosaic Law as a masterpiece of legislation. Is it? Those who make such a claim as this have, obviously, no knowledge of anything else. There is the Indian Code of Manu, for instance, far older than that of Moses. There are the laws of the Chinese, and of the ancient Babylonians, also much older. We find, on examination, that the Mosaic Law is just what we might expect, a code suited to barbarians. The brutality of the English law down to recent times was undoubtedly due to nothing else than the Mosaic influence. That it has been improved in modern times is solely the result of the advance of *secular civilization*, wholly apart from Christianity which has apposed legal reform at every step.

The so-called Mosaic Law we now know to have been framed upon the code of King Khammurabi of Babylon, by the Jewish priests long after the time of Moses—if Moses ever lived. The Khammurabi code was drawn up about 2160 B.C.E., some 400 years before Moses was born. This, in turn, was derived from the old Sumerian laws that went back to 3800 B.C.E., or 204 years after the supposed "creation." A copy of this code was discovered, in 1901, carved upon a column of black diorite. Thus we see where the Jewish priests got the idea of the "tables of stone." We find the origin of the Mosaic Law here, though this is much better, more just, less barbarous, and it indicated a far higher level of civilization.

Do my Christian friends know this? They do not! I have never met any Heathen in the East who were so ignorant of their religion, and its origins, as the Christians invariably are of Christianity. Among the many amazing things in the West, this is the greatest amazement of all to the educated Oriental when he becomes aware of it.

#### BIBLE INSPIRATION.

To the supposed prophetic aspect of the Old Testament I shall refer later. Let us first consider another, but not a unique, claim made for the Bible. It is that it is the inspired Word of God. Well, we might imagine it to be so, considering much of its contents, and the kind of god supposed to have inspired it.

What is meant by "divine inspiration"? Did the god indicate the Bible by word of mouth to those who wrote it? If so, what evidence is there for this preposterous claim? Much of it would be regarded as wholly reprehensible if coming from a man. Indeed, there are passages in the Bible which would secure the prompt suppression of any other book. Yet these are at the disposal of children! They are urged to read the book, and they are certain to encounter these gross indecencies if they do. What other result can there be but that they obtain their first ideas of immorality from this source? I have been told by many people that such was the case when they were young, and I can well believe it.

Why do Christians suppose that the Bible was "inspired" by some supernatural or superhuman influence? The book itself does not say so. The priests of the Roman Catholic and the Anglican and

the Greek Churches, and the clergy and ministers of the Protestant sects, say so, and that is another matter altogether. How do they know? The priests say that the Church Councils which put the documents together were inspired to do so. How do they know this? Being acquainted with priests and with priestcraft, we are not disposed to take their word for it. When we consider the time when those Councils were held, and the then state of knowledge, we are inclined strongly to doubt it. When we consider the violent quarrels between the advocates of rival documents before the "canon" was established, we are justified in rejecting the claim altogether.

The Hindus believe that the Sacred Vedas were divinely inspired, and with much better reason, since no one knows their origin, or how they were put together. But the Buddhists do not believe it, and the Christians will agree.

The Koran is claimed by the Mohammedans to have been divinely inspired. They, too, have better grounds than have the Christians in respect of the Bible. But both Buddhists and Christians deny this of the Koran.

In more modern times, one, Joseph Smith, wrote the Book of Mormon, and announced that it had been divinely communicated to him. It is not denied that Smith did write the book, nor that several contemporary witnesses were associated with Smith. Yet no one except the Mormons believed it. Christians will agree with Buddhists in the view that the Book of Mormon was a gross forgery.

Why should my Christian friends agree with me when I deny the inspiration of the Vedas, the Koran and the Book of Mormon, yet become angry when I deny the inspiration of the Bible? Is there anything to choose between them in this respect, and if so, what?

It may be said: What of your Buddhist Scriptures? The Buddha was not a god, nor a superhuman being, and he never pretended to be. He was the greatest human genius that the world has ever known. The Buddhists do not regard their Scriptures as divinely inspired. The sermons of the Buddha, and the other books, were not written by him nor by any of his immediate disciples.

We believe, nay, we know by reason of its logical consistency that the substance of the Buddha's teaching has been accurately preserved in the Pitakas, as the books are called. But we also know, and admit, that much has been added to them in the way of poetic legend, allegory, literary embroidery, and comment by subsequent copyists zealous to add, as they thought, to their beauty or to their consistency. We make the fullest allowances for this. Reason, not blind faith, is the guide of the Buddhist in all matters concerning his own or other religions.

With the Bible it is different. In the opinion of some Christians every line, nay, every word of it is divinely inspired and infallible. Others admit that there may be errors and discrepancies arising from mistranslation, that some narratives may be, as in the case of the Buddhist books, in the nature of legend or allegory. But, making these allowances, and taking it as a whole, it is a genuine history of actual events, it contains *the only* revelation of divine truth, and it is overshadowed throughout by divine influence. In this respect it is unique. They refer to what they call "internal evidence" for support of this view.

All that one whose mind has not been "warped," as it were, by early training, and who has a knowledge of other, similar literature for which the same claim is made, can say to this is that he fails to find

the internal evidence. On the contrary, the Bible throughout is a very human book, and an unbiassed perusal leads to this conclusion.

What divine truth is there in the ridiculous creation story? Or in statements which are admittedly contradictory, false and unhistorical? If the Bible were laid before us as an ordinary book, a translation of ancient documents relating to certain peoples of Asia Minor, composed a long time after by unknown authors, we should know what to make of it, and where to place it. It would remain a compilation of the greatest interest, and we could discriminate between that which appears to be more or less accurate history, and that which is obviously mythical, or due to exaggeration. But Christians, unfortunately, will neither read their Bible rationally themselves, nor allow others to do so if they can help it.

E. UPASAKA.

(To be continued.)

## Science v. Spiritualism and Other Occultry.

It is clear that attempts are being made to utilize the great and growing prestige of science in support of spiritism and alleged beliefs and practices. We are familiar with Sir A. Conan Doyle's citation of men of science who are, or were, Spiritualists. Perhaps believers in telepathy and clairvoyance appeal to the authority of a certain professor of zoology who, in his review of a book, in a rationalist periodical, coolly and confidently assumed that these things are real, and even suggested that *plants* have a faculty of clairvoyance. Many references have appeared in the press—in educational and other reputable journals—to the writings of a botanical investigator (an ingenious experimenter, I believe) whose interpretations and conclusions appear to support occult belief.

The last-mentioned point recalls a recent and very peculiar occurrence in the course of recent science. A book written by the investigator referred to, received wide and appreciative notice in the general and educational press, but was not reviewed, or even commented upon, so far as I could find, in either of two of the principal general scientific periodicals, and in a third, the book was reviewed by a *zoologist*, the professor mentioned above. This was, I think, an unparalleled event in the modern scientific world, and plainly indicated that there was something wrong. Pursuing the matter further, I put the point to two well-known botanists at a British Association meeting, and afterwards to one of our most eminent university professors of the subject, and all agreed that his work, or books, or both, were ignored in the botanical world.

As regards Spiritualism, it is to be hoped that many who are not scientists have read some interesting matter which appeared in *Nature* last year. A reviewer stated that the formation of "ectoplasm" (the substance of materialized spirits) is an established fact of experience. A correspondent protested that this is no more proved than any other psychical phenomenon, and added that the proportion of competent persons holding the reviewer's opinion must be very small. An editorial then referred to the latter view as the "general scientific attitude"; and in the same issue of the paper appeared an article on "Telekinesis ["movement of objects at a distance without normal means"] and Materialization," by Dr. Fournier d'Albe, a distinguished physicist who has long and systematically investigated occult claims, and whose unprejudiced attitude may be

gathered from his remark that he once had great hopes of the mediums, Eva C. and Miss Goligher, thinking that they would furnish the groundwork of a new science. The Doctor, who examined many cases of supposed spirit manifestation, remarked, incidentally, that practically all the well known mediums have been detected in fraud at one time or other; and he then expressed the following unqualified (and italicized) conclusion: "*The alleged phenomena of telekinesis and ectoplasm are all spurious, and are due to faulty observations or faulty conditions.*"

The extraordinary difficulty of the conditions of a materialization seance were referred to—darkness, the illumination being about 1/100 of a candle power, and "usually overstated"; hours of strained attention while nothing happens, many sittings being completely barren; then, later, some relaxation of evidential conditions, and then—"phenomena."

In view of all this, it is fairly obvious that only thoroughly competent and matured men of science are capable of investigating the question of Spiritualism; and it remains for others to avoid such seances, and to base their judgment on the reports of competent investigators. Fortunately, there are already to hand definitely adverse reports from eminent scientists who are at least equal in number to those of Sir A. Conan Doyle's list. Rationalists will, therefore, probably rest content in the conviction that modern spiritism is but a continuation of the old, and will advise people in general to refrain from all attempts to investigate the matter for themselves.

It is not easy to realize the difficulty of relinquishing beliefs that have been long, widely and intensely held. Many of the early modern scientists were half magicians, astrologers, believers in witchcraft, and the like. Tycho Brahe said, "To deny the influence of the stars is to deny the Providence of God"; and another of the early astronomers actually believed that a certain conjunction and appearance of stars and planets brought about the Reformation! Sir Thomas Browne, a physician as well as a great writer, firmly believed in witchery and testified to its reality in a court of law. In the latter part of the seventeenth century, the members of the Royal Society, at a meeting of that body, discussed the "tormenting of a person by the sympathy powder." Sir Christopher Wren—a scientist of note, as well as a great architect—told of the following alleged occurrences in the house of a kinsman: A servant girl had "grievously cut" her finger; a rag was rubbed on the wound, dressed with the powder ("calcined vitriol") and placed in the girl's bosom; that a rapid cure was effected; that at an early stage the rag was abstracted and heated to remove the powder, whereupon the girl, though sweeping in another room, threw down her broom, cried out with the pain of her finger, while the wound became "fiery"; and that she was not relieved until the rag had been cooled, again dressed with the powder, and restored to her bosom. Boyle, the great physical discoverer, perhaps had some doubt on the matter, as he undertook to repeat the experiment on a dog. Lord Bacon, in discussing the common and similar (magical) beliefs of his time, that a sword wound could be cured by anointing the weapon, did not, as we might have expected, ridicule the notion, but was apparently not prepared to go further than to say that he was "not fully inclined to believe it."

Of course, persons who were non-scientific, and more especially theologians, retained such beliefs much longer. John Wesley, well on in the eighteenth century, protested against giving up the be-

belief in witchcraft, saying that it was equivalent to giving up the belief in the Bible. And the last of many serious suggestions that there is something in witchcraft—or in magic, or in the reality of the furniture-rattling Poltergeist—that I have encountered in a newspaper, appropriately came from a clergyman.

J. REEVES.

We are Seven.

(Another Version)

—A charming girl  
That bothers her dear brains  
With metaphysics—"Hush, Jane! hush!  
It isn't worth the pains."

I met a dainty village lass  
(She was more than seven, she said):  
Her eye twinkled with many a sly  
Thought working in her head.

Fair, in the open sunlight, shone  
Her crown of nature's gold.  
Some virgin mirth dimpled her cheeks.  
Her joyance made me bold.

"Yourself and sisters, my fair maid,  
How many may you be?"  
"How many think you, sir?" she said,  
And archly smiled at me.

"Well, as you will, my gracious belle!"  
—She, sweetening: "We are seven:  
Five virgins wise with lamps well trimm'd,  
Waiting; and two in heaven."

"In heaven! Then where's your seven?" I laughed:  
"You're juggling, girl alive!  
A child with no arithmetic  
Knows, two from seven leaves five."

"Ah! but," she said, "our dear old Aunt  
Reads Wordsworth; and she says  
Those sister souls are risen, and walk  
With us our village ways.

"And Aunt is rich, and an old maid."  
—Said I: "That's well enough;  
But surely, girl, you don't believe  
Such Parson-says-so stuff?"

"Maud Aunt loved most," she said, "but Maud  
Went like a fading rose;  
And still at times you'll see the tear  
Trickle down Auntie's nose.

"Soon, too, to leave for angel joys—  
To flirt an angel fan,  
And kiss the darling angel boys—  
Was our ungriddled Anne.

"In winter, when the ways were all  
Unsure with snow and slide,  
Down came our ten-stone lassie, crash!  
And (rest her soul!) she died.

"Their graves are yon; and sometimes there  
(Girls have their moody day)  
I muse: 'Two rival belles the less  
Winging the golden way.'

"And sometimes, when a tall hat comes  
Here, and the night is fair,  
And he is in the milky mood,  
We go a-cooing there."

"Joy of your churchyard walks!" I said,  
"And all your wishes thrive!  
But—let old Wordsworth practise sums—  
Your number now is five."

She mumbled of "another world,"  
And "meeting souls in heaven."  
She knew it was all moonshine; still,  
The girls were in their dear Aunt's will,  
And SHE said, they were seven.

H. BARBER.

Correspondence.

PRAY FOR IT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—One night a man went home to his wife and found her in a very distressed condition because the latest addition to the family cried unceasingly. The wife had looked everywhere for the child's "comforter," but in vain. Whereupon, the husband who was a profoundly religious man, fell upon his knees and asked God to rally to the search. No sooner had the man ceased praying, when, lo, there at his feet was the "comforter."

You don't believe it? You are hard to please! That tale was told the writer by that profoundly religious man. Surely that is good enough? Perhaps under analysis it will be more enlightening. Let us try.

We know it is against all hygienic principles for babies to have "comforters"; we know that they cause wind; and probably that was why the baby cried unceasingly. God knew that the beastly old "comforter" had caused the baby to have the wind, so he hid the "comforter." Then, in a weak moment, he put it on the floor (a bad place for a "comforter") at the feet of the religious man, thus doing three good things in one. (1) Answering the prayer. (2) Calming the babe. (3) Saving the man the cost of a new "comforter," and the trouble of going out to get it.

The extraordinary thing about these Christians who are ever ready with an artful little prayer on their lips, is that they cannot differentiate between answered prayer and a slice of good luck. If they get what they want, as they think, through ardent prayer, they immediately proclaim: "My prayer is answered." But, if, on the other hand, they fail to get what they want, they do not hesitate in thinking themselves unlucky. Of course, they don't say that. Instead, they say, "It is all for the best," or, "God's ways are not our ways." They certainly are not.

Somebody once said, "God must have been fond of the poor, common people. He made so many of them." Quite right. He's so fond of them he doesn't even allow them the brains or the wherewithal to get partly educated in order to write articles on prayer for the newspapers, and so make a lot of money. But, perhaps, these poor, common folks don't know how to pray for the wherewithal, so instead of them becoming rich, Christian editors and journalists, they have to be poor dustmen or busmen and buy the newspapers and learn all about prayer.

But perhaps these rich, Christian editors and journalists will be unbiassed and run a series of articles in their papers on "Unanswered Prayer," and then—one never knows—lots of Christians will get sensible and will even be able to do a kind action without praying to be able to do it, and even the "Most Rev." gentleman in the pulpit will cease chanting in painful monotones, "Let us pray"; and say in a straightforward manner, "Let us try." A YOUNG GIRL.

Men will be more moral when they learn that morality does not rest for its authority upon arbitrary edicts thundered from the skies, but that its foundation is the experience of mankind as to what is best for man.

Robert C. Adams.

Do not read, as the children read, to amuse yourself, nor as ambitious people read, to get instruction. No! Read to live! Make an intellectual atmosphere for your soul, which shall be composed of the emanation of all great minds.—*Flaubert.*

## Society News.

## NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

MR. REX ROBERTS, the prospective Liberal Candidate for one of the divisions of Lewisham, gave an interesting address at the St. Pancras Reform Club, last Sunday. His subject, "The Ten Years Since the Armistice," gave ample scope for discussion and debate, which continued beyond the usual closing time.

To-night (November 25), Mr. F. Verinder will give an address on "The Woman Voter and the Land Question."

## WEST LONDON BRANCH.

THE lecture delivered on Sunday at the Eclipse Hall, by Mr. F. Mann, was very much appreciated by a well attended audience, and created a great deal of interesting discussion. A general desire for an early return of the lecturer was expressed.

At Ravenscourt Park, a large number of people have attended the lecture of Mr. Campbell-Everden long before the announced time, and have listened most attentively to him. It seems as if our opponents were anxious to increase the popularity of Secularism in that locality. They certainly have not gained much by their intolerance and interruption.—B.A.L.E.M.

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## 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.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8): 11.15, Mr. H. Snell, M.P.—"The British Empire and Her Subject Peoples."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. F. Verinder—"The Woman Voter and the Land Question."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. J. H. Van Biene—"Corn Plasters for Cancer."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The New Church Crisis."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY ("The Orange Tree" Hotel, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Debate—"That the League of Nations has Justified its Existence." Affir.: Mr. Archer. Neg.: Mr. Manne. Questions and Discussion.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Social Evening at the Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, London, E., December 1, at 7 p.m. Songs, dances, games, etc. All Freethinkers and friends welcome.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Eclipse Restaurant, 4 Mill Street, Conduit Street, W.1): 7.30, Mrs. M. L. Seaton-Tiedeman—"Christianity in its Effect on Marriage."

## OUTDOOR.

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.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart; 3.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30. Various lecturers. The *Freethinker* is on sale outside Hyde Park during our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. W. P. Campbell-Everden.

## COUNTRY.

## INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Stills' Restaurant, Bristol Street, opposite Council Schools): 7.0, Mr. Dobson (paper)—"Incidents of Secular Progress."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall): 6.30, Mr. Robert Stevenson—"Esperanto and Freethought." (83 Ingram Street): Thursday, November 22, at 7.30. Discussion Circle. Debate on—"Should the Secular Movement be Political?" Affir.: Mr. Maclean. Neg.: Mr. D. Weir.

HOUGHTON (Proposed Branch)—Lecture in Club Room, High Hill Top, every Tuesday, at 7 p.m.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen—"Freethought and Morals." Admission free. Collection. Questions and discussion.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Dr. C. Carmichael—"Why are We Moral?" Admission free. Questions and discussion.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Broughton Town Hall, Salford): 3.0 and 6.30, Mr. F. Mann. Subjects: "Religion—the Enemy of Progress," and "Science, Religion and Life." Questions and discussion.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.0, Members' Meeting re Mr. Cohen's visit.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street): 3.0 and 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead—Two Lectures.

## OUTDOOR.

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

THE late Mr. Lloyd's books to be sold. Lists on application.—MISS PERKINS, 132 Caerleon Road, Newport, Mon.



# PROCLAIMS THE MAN

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