

# A CURIOUS CASE.

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## Views and Opinions.

### A Curious Case.

When, some time ago, the clergy set about organizing a spontaneous outburst of articles on religion in the newspapers, they had in mind, one may assume, the possibility of restoring to the Churches some of their lost power. So far, they do not appear to have achieved much. It is true that the papers saw to it that writers who were likely to say they had done with all religion, whether of the treacly or the brimstone brand, were not permitted to be heard, but the papers had their own game to play. The clergy were after more followers, the papers were after more readers. I cannot say whether the circulation of the papers was increased by the religious essays, but I am fairly certain that the clergy have gained neither in status nor in an increased number of followers. Newspapers wanted to advertise themselves, and to this end people with names were indispensable. Whether these writers knew anything about religion matters little. In this curious world of ours, a knowledge of religion is never thought necessary for one either to preach or write about it. Any kind of fool, one whose opinions on any other subject would not receive a moment's attention, may give an opinion on religion, and he will not be without listeners. The microcephalous curate and the dollar-hunting evangelist, the converted drunkard and the bemused "mystic" with a stock of "pipe-dreams," anyone and everyone may pose as an authority on religion—so long as he has not made a genuinely scientific study of it. In that case, he is treated as a mere scientist who has gone out of his way to talk about religion.

The papers wanted men who were known to the public. So they fell back, mainly, upon novelists. Not novelists of the rank of, say Hardy, or Meredith, or Conrad, because they were never sufficiently read by the army of newspaper readers for their names to have any great "pull," but upon second and third rate novelists who take themselves very, very seriously, and who are ready to give an opinion upon any

subject under the sun. But here, again, there was a little difficulty. The novelist has his public also, and he does not like to appear before it as a champion of hopelessly out-of-date religious opinions. So it happens that these newspaper writers on religion seek, by professing faith in some vague kind of religion, to avoid offending anyone, and save their own face by asserting that true religion (blessed phrase) is independent of both the Churches and the clergy—which is not quite what the clergy bargained for.

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### A Pilgrim's Progress.

Recently, the *Daily Express* published three articles by Mr. J. D. Beresford, the novelist, dealing with a new religion. The actual title of the articles was "Will Christ Come Again?"—to which question Mr. Beresford answers that he will, and by the end of the century. It is a pity that the date was not placed earlier; as it is, we shall not be able to see whether Mr. Beresford is mistaken or not. But as Mr. Beresford means by Christ coming again no more than that there will be an incarnation of "another great teacher," he appears to be in line with the critic who concluded that Hamlet was not written by William Shakespeare, but by someone else of the same name. The *Express* did its part by announcing that the articles were "thought compelling," that they would open up avenues of thought and experience hitherto unsuspected," and—in rather too much of a hurry—the morning after the first article appeared, announced that it had attracted the "widest possible attention" amongst its readers. Presumably, in order to give the *Express* time to make this announcement on a basis of fact, the readers were waiting on the office steps with letters already written when the first articles made their appearance. To a public reared on headlines and fattened on infantile paragraphs, we have no doubt such things are quite agreeable.

Mr. Beresford's articles describe what is called his thirty years' pilgrimage, and as a consequence, he has discovered that the dogmas of the Churches are not true, that their ritual is meaningless to-day, and that both are survivals of earlier forms of thought. The unsuspected depth of thought consists in the discovery that in the coming religion all sectarianism will be swept away, every human being will hold himself responsible for his own salvation, men will cultivate love instead of hatred, and this will be accompanied by an increase of self-consciousness and a development of personal powers. That seems to us a terrible amount of sack to a very little bread, particularly as it has taken Mr. Beresford thirty years to discover it, and it fills the *Express* with breathless astonishment. Except for some of the expressions used, and for the almost needless assurance that followers of the religion of the future will not indulge to

excess in food, or alcohol, or tobacco, there does not seem very much in Mr. Beresford's new religion that any man of fair intelligence might not have discovered for himself any time during the past century. What a pity Mr. Beresford has not been a regular reader of the *Freethinker*.

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#### What is Religion?

But in spite of his thirty years' mental travail, Mr. Beresford quite obviously has a great deal to learn about the nature of religion and the history of religion. He has reached the stage of discovering that the teachings of the orthodox Churches are not true. That really does not amount to much, at least in my eyes. I once remarked to my old friend, J. T. Lloyd, when he was marvelling at certain preachers who had thrown overboard certain Christian doctrines, that the difference between him and myself was that he was surprised to find that men did *not* believe these things, I was surprised when they did. But then, Lloyd had a very unfortunate bringing-up, and until middle life had the misfortune to be in the pulpit. An educated man or woman to-day cannot well believe in Christian doctrine. Mere environmental influence will secure their practical rejection. But to know why they are not true, and how and why people came to believe them to be true, are quite other questions. Mr. Beresford has read Sir James Frazer, but he gives that author a very curious interpretation. He says:—

Even in the simplest beginnings of Society we find the first promptings of the religious sense. Sir James Frazer's monumental work *The Golden Bough*, rightly read, is the history of the development of this religious sense, and of the evolution of the idea of God.

"Rightly read," *The Golden Bough* is nothing of the kind. That work is a history of the *creation* of religious belief, which is quite a different thing. Sir James Frazer shows, as do others, that religious beliefs are in the nature of hypotheses framed by early man to account for what is going on around him. If *The Golden Bough* teaches anything at all, it demonstrates that all religion is what Tylor called a "psychological blunder." There is no such thing as a religious sense, there is only an explanation of things in terms of religion, and it becomes such in opposition to the developing explanation in terms of positive science. The man who fights a disease by magic or by incantations, and the man who fights it by scientific methods are not using different senses, they are using the same senses—here in terms of primitive superstition, there in terms of acquired knowledge. In spite of the "thought compelling" nature of his articles, and the thirty years' reflection, Mr. Beresford has yet to understand the nature of religion.

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#### The Origin of Persecution.

This want of understanding of religious history is also responsible for the curious statement that religious persecution was due to the Christian feeling that desired to rescue men from eternal damnation. Again, nothing of the kind, and one may safely attribute the conclusion to Mr. Beresford's desire to find something fundamentally good about Christianity. It was only a Christian here and there who was animated by the desire to save another's soul from hell fire. Religious persecution rests upon the primitive belief that a man who acts in such a way as to arouse the ill-will of the gods, is as great a public danger as one who scatters plague germs in a crowded

city. The root of religious persecution is not the salvation of the heretic, but simply an act of self-preservation. If Mr. Beresford will rid his mind of the delusion that there is somewhere imbedded in Christianity a core of genuine human goodness, and that the Churches have somehow managed to bury this, he will probably realize that in the matter of religious persecution, as with other things, Christianity represented a distinct step backward. Greece and Rome had lifted themselves beyond the primitive view of heresy, but it was left for Christianity to revive and strengthen the primitive view of heresy, and practise persecution with a thoroughness and a calculated brutality such as the world had never known before, and is not very likely to see again. Mr. Beresford is beset by the myth of a "pure Christianity," and his long pilgrimage would have been shortened considerably could he have rid his mind of its pre-conceptions, and so have avoided putting into a religious form ideas and ideals which were born of the spirit of the time, and had nothing whatever to do with the religion in which he had been reared.

\* \* \*

#### Those Wasted Years!

One ought to bear in mind—I say it without the least desire of being offensive, or "smart"—Mr. Beresford's unfortunate ancestry. His father, he says, was a clergyman with strong evangelical leanings, and who believed in an orthodox hell. Honestly, a man with that kind of immediate ancestry has my deepest sympathy. Not because I believe his father to have been a "bad" man, but because he was likely to have been what is called a "good" Christian parent, one who believes in turning out his children as so many copies of himself. As a consequence, Mr. Beresford has never really outgrown that terrible handicap of his earlier years. Many influences have co-operated to lead to the rejection of a number of crude religious beliefs still held by men like Bishop Gore and the Archbishop of Canterbury, but Mr. Beresford has never sufficiently freed himself from the influence of his early training to realize that what he calls "religion," and regards as an expression of the "religious sense" is actually the outcome of his moving in a healthier social and intellectual environment than that which nursed Christianity to strength. He did not give up his early beliefs as a consequence of the demands of his religious sense, but simply because the development of human culture makes those beliefs increasingly impossible to all men and women of education and understanding.

The moral I draw from the case of Mr. Beresford is that parents should avoid giving their children religious instruction, as they would avoid inoculating them with a disease. It has taken Mr. Beresford thirty years to give up belief in a number of things that any educated man or woman ought to be ashamed to hold. Fancy a man confessing that it has taken him all those years to outgrow such stupidities as a literal hell, virgin birth, and the rest of the fantastic stupidities that go to the make-up of orthodox Christianity! And even now Mr. Beresford carries about with him the consequences of his wasted youth; that still prevents him looking at life with the clean and clear mentality with which he ought to be able to view it. All might have been different had Mr. Beresford been blessed with parents who had been able to give him a healthy start in life. Kingdon Clifford said that one lesson the history of Christianity taught was that if you wished your children to grow up good and useful men and women, keep them away from the priest. So I might also say: "If you wish your children to grow up with clean, healthy minds, ready to recognize truth wherever

found, and with a readiness to see things in their true light, if you wish to save them spending thirty years of their life in discovering the falsity of beliefs they should never have held, if you wish them to play the useful part they might play in the life of the race, keep them free from the teachings of religion."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Motors and Molluscs.

If present tendencies proceed unchecked for another ten or twenty years the custom of churchgoing may become merely a memory.—Rev. J. C. Hardwick.

ONE of the most noteworthy events in the modern history of religious opinion in this country is the rejection by a number of well-known clergymen and theologians of some of the most familiar stories in the Christian Bible. The clergy are, in so many instances, playing the sedulous ape to the pioneer Freethinkers, who, many years before, criticized such yarns as those of the Flood, Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Whale, the Virgin Birth, and others too numerous to mention. At a moment, however, when the literal historical accuracy of this particular Bible is challenged, both from the Christian and Freethought positions, it is decidedly interesting to hear of yet another solvent of religion.

The criticism loses nothing in value by coming from the pen of a clergyman. The Rev. J. C. Hardwick, formerly chaplain to Ripon College, Oxford, professes to find that motor-cars are injurious to religion, and, certainly, he makes out a very good case. His point is that the new mobility has tended to weaken the mollusc habits of our countrymen. A generation since, a citizen lived, worked, and took his recreation in one single locality, often the locality in which his parents had lived before him. These mollusc habits are going, and the transformation in habits is being reflected in a like transformation in the widening of ideas. A citizen sleeps in one place, works in another, and takes his recreation in many places. This, the Rev. J. C. Hardwick declares, is an entirely new thing, and fraught with disturbing possibilities to religion.

One of the disturbing possibilities is the transformation of the English Sunday, which has altered out of recognition in the course of one generation. Here are the Rev. J. C. Hardwick's remarks:—

The week-end habit, following upon the unsettlement of traditional ideas and customs caused by the war, has certainly reduced churchgoing to a minimum—Religion, of course, need not necessarily be identified with churchgoing, but probably the number of people who can retain a more or less religious outlook upon life without indulging in any sort of public worship is very small.

As far as it goes, this explanation is fair, but "the week-end habit" does not exhaust the list of present-day counter-attractions to religion. Sunday concerts, Sunday cinemas, music in the parks, wireless in the home, all these things help to make the Sunday of to-day a vastly different matter from the Sabbaths of yesteryear, which were weekly ordeals instead of weekly holidays. I can, at any rate, write about the old-fashioned Sunday with some knowledge, because my childhood and youth was spent in the Victorian era. I am like the old Frenchman who was asked by a girl what he did during the dreadful days of the Revolution, and replied, "My word, child, I lived through it."

So far as the leisured classes were concerned, it may have been different, but working people then "took their pleasures sadly." Indeed, they had little alternative. When Dickens wrote his *Sunday*

*Under Three Heads*, in which he pleaded for a brighter weekly holiday, the only choice lay between the gospel-shop and the gin palace. Freethinkers had not then started the Sunday League, with its concerts and excursions; and they had to face long and bitter opposition before they succeeded in putting the "sun" into Sunday. It took a whole generation to effect a change for the better, and even to-day the Englishman has nothing like the freedom of his continental brother.

From Moscow to Madrid people laugh on Sunday, play on Sunday, really enjoy themselves on Sunday. Here in England, thanks to clerical opposition, you may not see a play, or a circus. You are forbidden to drink during certain hours, and it is an offence even to buy cigarettes and tobacco after eight o'clock in the evening. In country towns and villages, shopkeepers are fined for selling sweets or newspapers during the day. Public opinion is actually opposed to some of these petty restrictions, but it appears not to be strong enough to throw them off. The trouble is that the clergy, and their satellites, are organized, and the general public is disorganized. At present the happiness of an entire nation is dependent on the possibly morbid sensibilities and trade jealousies of the bench of bishops, or even of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. For, in these matters the State Church can always rely on the support of its business rivals, the Roman Catholic priests, and Non-conformist clergymen. When it comes to a question of finance the agreement of the clergy is as wonderful as the fraternization of opposing oil and big-business magnates.

A State Church is by no means an unmixed blessing, and Englishmen have to pay for this institution in far other ways than mere money. The money may run into many millions annually, but the interference of priests in matters of personal liberty is incalculable. Fortunately, the Church of England is "by law established," and what Parliament can make it can also unmake. The goal of a statesman, as distinguished from a mere politician, should be "a minimum of law and a maximum of respect for the law," not the system of fussy and grandmotherly interference which appears to be a normal adjunct of the priestly mind.

The Rev. J. C. Hardwick refers to the after-effects of the war as being partly responsible for the lessening of respect for the clergy. Doubtless, it is a contributing factor. Millions of men had every reason to remember the compulsory church parades, and the "cushy" jobs filled by the clergy. At the outbreak of war, the clergy were exempted from military service. Those who wished to do so, served as army chaplains with officers' pay, whilst the others saw the boys off at the railway station, and returned to hold the girls' hands in brotherly sympathy. The whole sorry business was an object lesson in priestly tactics, "Heads I win, tails you lose."

The critical processes initiated by the war is by no means confined to dissatisfaction with the various Churches. The very existence of the war of embattled millions was a complete contradiction of the Christian's faith in a god of love. The fundamental article of the Christian creed was called in question in the most brutal fashion, and relegated to the land of dreams. The Rev. J. C. Hardwick, although a priest, anticipates history in his criticisms.

With a general election in sight, it is interesting to notice that the Black Army of priests is making love to the Labour Movement, and inviting Democrats to reconcile themselves with the Churches. It is too late. Christian priests have harnessed themselves to reaction, and have allowed the mastery of the democratic movement to pass to other forces. It is the

orthodox priestly attitude which is unchanged through the centuries, and which is the same in all nations, which causes the long-suffering Democrat to decline alliance with the priests, who are simply birds of prey in the body politic.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Dean of St. Paul's.

It has been our painful destiny to traverse many arid deserts of theology—from the childish, perfervid platitudes and futilities of the Bishop of London, to the triumphant solution of all religious problems by Canon Streeter. Triumphs, by the way, achieved by carefully side-stepping, or ignoring, all the real difficulties with which he meets. Of all the living theological writers of to-day, there is only one I can read with pleasure, or whose work I should care to read again, and that exception is Dean Inge, the Dean of St. Paul's.

No doubt the Dean would regard this tribute as a very dubious compliment, coming from an Atheist—if by chance it ever came to his notice—and his enemies, of which he has not a few in the Church, would probably cite it as damning testimony as to his popularity among the "Infidels." However that may be, we hold that Dean Inge is by far the best writer, and the greatest intellectual force in the Church of England to-day, besides being the most candid and out-spoken.

The Dean, though he is a mystic of the Platonic type, does not write like a mystic. His writing is plain, clear, good masculine English. There are no frills about it, or straining at "fine" writing. If not the equal, he is at least in the line of descent of Defoe, Swift, Paine, and Cobbett. To read his writing is like listening to very interesting and intimate conversation by some one who has something to say worth listening to.

Not that we agree with all that the Dean says; we certainly do not, either upon religion or politics, and we can only marvel that a mind of such intellectual power can hold the views, on some things, that he does. But we must remember that the remark has been made about Newton and Faraday. The lover of good literature can appreciate and enjoy the style of a good writer without agreeing with his views and opinions, just as he can enjoy poetry and the tales of the *Arabian Nights*, although he knows them to be untrue.

Because the Dean is not one of those who cry "Peace! peace!" when there is no peace, and does not prophesy smooth and soothing things, but points out many anomalies and evils in our civilization, he has been nick-named the "gloomy Dean," by the bright and flamboyant journalists of Fleet Street. It is easier to invent nicknames for a man than to answer his indictments.

But there is, indeed, much the reader can enjoy apart from politics and religion. For instance, in his latest work *Assessments and Anticipations*, just published by Cassell's, the Dean gives us some biographical details of his early life, although he declares emphatically: "No biography of me shall ever be written, if I can prevent it." We fancy the Bishop of London would not rest content with less than half-a-dozen, if the many photographs, some of them showing him dolled up like a November guy, are anything to judge by.

As samples of the Dean's humour, we may cite the following: "Sunday was a mitigated Puritan Sabbath. The only amusing book we were allowed to read was one by Neale on the Christian Martyrs,

whose ingenious tortures gave us much pleasure. But we were allowed to play a few games, only not the same that we played on week-days." And this: "Cousins of our own age were taught with us; one of them is now a Fellow and Tutor at Oxford. I once inadvertently locked him up in the rabbit-hutch when I went in to lunch." And again:—

I well remember the church harmonium, but I was too late for the barrel-organ which once refused to stop, and was carried out playing the Old Hundred down the churchyard.

On another occasion, while my father was preaching, the church door was thrown open, and a red face appeared at the entrance. "If you please, Mr. Inge," said the voice, "can you lend us your squunt (garden hose); there's a rick on fire."

We can quite corroborate his statement, that the mental troubles of nervous children were not so well understood then as they are now; and he mentions the terrible fright, when he was three or four years old, he received from suddenly seeing a distorted reflection of his face at the bottom of a sink. For many years, he says, he could not bear to look at himself in the glass for fear of seeing it again. This was painful no doubt, but it is a trifle compared with what was deliberately done to me at about the same age.

In those days, it must be borne in mind, it was held, in the evangelical circles to which we belonged; that children should be impressed with the uncertainty of life and the sickness and sorrows of this vale of tears, in contrast with, and to prepare us for our future heavenly home. With this end in view, we were taken visiting the sick poor. One day I was taken to a house to make my first acquaintance with death. We were taken upstairs, where I saw an ominous looking long black box standing on trestles—the poor, then, were always buried in common white wood coffins painted black—I was lifted up to view the contents. What I saw was the face of an old woman, who was ill-favoured enough in life, but with her white lips and bluish complexion, heightened by a sort of white ruff, in which the face was framed, was simply hideous. I have never forgotten that sight, it is the most vivid and the earliest of my recollections. I screamed, and had to be taken home. I think it was considered a great success, like a kind of mental vaccination. "I took."

Dean Inge does not rail at human nature and paint it as desperately wicked, as so many of the clergy do. He takes a humanist view. He says: "We must take human nature as it is, with all its absurdities, and try to divert them into comparatively harmless channels." We must eschew labels: "For example, in judging of a man's character, it is not fair to sum him up as a gambler, or a miser, or a wine-bibber. He may be what we call him; but he is many other things besides; the label is not descriptive of the man, but only of one corner of him." He also remarks that "respect is due to any honest conviction." And referring to Carlyle's complaint, that Voltaire intermeddled in religion without being himself religious, he observes: "This is not quite fair. Voltaire had a generous abhorrence of cruelty and bigotry, and attacked them with his own weapons. But such bitterness is no longer necessary."

That the office of a Dean is not always a bed of roses, may be gathered from the following:—

Dean Wace of Canterbury, a hot-tempered man, used to storm out of Chapter meetings breathing threatenings and slaughter against his colleagues. There is probably no Cathedral in which the Dean is more absolutely powerless than at St. Paul's. I soon discovered that my position was that of a

mouse, who, if he dares to poke his nose out of his hole, finds four cats watching him ready to pounce.

And he would not recommend any man who enjoys power, and likes to rule, to accept a Deanery, least of all that of St. Paul's. Although, as things go, he got on very well with his colleagues.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

## Masterpieces of Freethought.

### V.—SUPERNATURAL RELIGION.

By W. R. CASSELS.

#### I.

If I were asked to name one Freethought work which perhaps more profoundly influenced me than any other, I think I should say *Supernatural Religion*. It came to me very early in my sceptical career, a massive volume of nearly 1,000 pages of small print, packed with notes and quotations in Greek and Latin, as erudite-looking book as had ever appeared my way. So far I had mastered the *Age of Reason*, *God and My Neighbour*, and a few pamphlets. I picked up this new addition to my armoury with dismay. To be a Freethinker, was it necessary to read all this? Was it not all in, say, *God and My Neighbour*? I skimmed through a few passages here and there, and suddenly found myself fascinated. I commenced resolutely at the beginning, skipping nothing, and read and re-read. I had discovered a veritable masterpiece!

Cassels' book appeared anonymously in 1874-77, and caused a tremendous hubbub. Christianity had, of course, been attacked before, and pretty heavily too, but never with such an ironclad as this. So far the massive works proving the absolute truth of Christianity, packed with scholarly notes and references to hundreds of thousands of authorities—notes giving the actual Greek or Latin or Sanskrit or Hebrew, or Aramaic, or other languages, were as a rule the compilations of Christian professors and divines. Anti-Christian works like *The Age of Reason* or the *Diagnosis* were dismissed with a shrug of contempt. Bishop Watson settled the one, and the Rev. Pyc Smith obliterated the other, and if "unhappy" men like infidels still read the miserable works in the teeth of scholarly opposition—well, that was their look out. During the nineteenth century hundreds of books were written by eminent clerics on the canon, on the epistles, on the gospels, on everything remotely connected with the Bible, with a wealth of illustration and reading from the earliest Church Fathers, right down the ages to the latest, showing from every point of view how thoroughly credible was every word of the New Testament—a genuine undisputed and undisputable direct revelation from God Almighty himself to his blessed children.

When I read Burgon, and Westcott, and Lightfoot, and Scrivener, and Tregellas, (to say nothing of Newman, Wiseman and Manning (I admit with shame I have wasted precious time in reading a great deal of "apologetics")), I feel that all these people were quite sure they were speaking for God, that they were doing their little bit in fighting heresy and heretics by demonstrating with absolute certainty the truth of their beloved Scriptures. Of course, I am convinced they were sincere, and no one can deny their immense scholarship showed a thorough knowledge of every writer who has dealt with the origins of Christianity from Justin Martyr downwards to their own day. But here, like a bombshell, came a work from the other side. Here were notes and authorities, marshalled in prodigious numbers, from the same Christian fathers who were used to prove the truth

of Christianity, actually made to prove Christianity was *not* true. Here was all the evidence for the canon and the authenticity and credibility of the Gospels thoroughly sifted and shown to prove no authenticity or credibility, or a canon at all. And, worst of all, here was an infidel, actually quoting Greek and Latin, not just a line or two here and there, but whole slabs with a translation side by side so that if one knew these languages, one could follow the argument, which was, that before somewhere about 150 A.D., there was no record of our four gospels as we have them now, and that the evidence hitherto relied upon from Papias and Ignatius and Polycarp was no evidence whatever. And as for such things as Christian miracles, every scrap of investigation proved they were merely the result of childlike stupidity, credulity and invention.

It is difficult at this time of day to record the fright and dismay *Supernatural Religion* caused among the Christian community. It was not merely the arguments put forward so closely, so plainly, so decisively, but the scholarship. People like Dr. Lightfoot could forgive a great deal, but not the scholarship. It cut him to the quick that a man who knew the Church fathers and their modern critics, who knew almost all the books published in Germany on the Gospels and the New Testament generally, who could quote pages of Greek and Latin and translate them, should have the effrontery to be against Christianity, should actually deny the Dear Saviour and the Reality of Divine Revelation.

Most of the critics, also, who were not against the author, were amazed at his knowledge, and at the patient way in which he marshalled his arguments. They could see no answer. If the anonymous author was right—why, then, Christianity was not true, and Christianity not to be true was unthinkable.

Christianity depended on two things for its truth, miracles and revelation. Hume's short essay against miracles annihilated them once for all, but Christians would not read it and took for granted the countless replies were sufficient to discredit it. Cassels spent the first part of his book in an exhaustive inquiry into miracles, and I know of nothing finer in the discussion. Writing in the '70's of last century, when people were not so restless and hurried, he could afford to take time with his argument. Closely reasoned it is, but exceptionally clear and convincing for the beginner in Rationalism, as well as the hardened and seasoned Atheist. Every word is worth pondering over, and the reader will get in addition a good resumé of the principal arguments for miracles by famous Christian defenders. Mozely and Mansel, Newman and Trench, Butler and Paley, are all discussed. So also are Demons and Devils and Angels and Spirits and all the paraphernalia that go hand in hand with miracles.

These chapters were most annoying reading for Christians. They were quite unanswerable, and Dr. Lightfoot, who felt himself to be about the only St. George capable of fighting the terrible dragon, very valiantly decided to ignore the first part of *Supernatural Religion*. What would you have? Dr. Lightfoot knew that if only one could shout loud enough that he had replied to the book, the vast majority of people would believe he had replied also to the first part, and what did anything else matter? Thus, when I, in my first enthusiasm, used to quote *Supernatural Religion*, I was bluntly told it had been completely discredited and exploded by a far greater scholar than its author, who knew more in his little finger about the early history of Christianity than a thousand Cassels put together, and it was not until many years later, when I bought a complete copy of

Lightfoot's book, that I saw how thoroughly people had been gulled by its accomplishment. Lightfoot never touched the first part in argument, though he just mentions there was a first part—exceedingly plucky of him, too.

Part 2 of the work deals with the Synoptic Gospels; Part 3, with the Fourth Gospel; Part 4, with Acts; Part 5, with the Epistles, the Apocalypse and the evidence of Paul; and Part 6 deals in the most masterly manner with the Resurrection and the Ascension. There is no attempt, let me emphasize the point, at condensing the discussion. Cassels believes in no hurried slap-dash argument. Everything is done in a slow leisurely way. You get a thorough-going analysis of every point. You get pages of learned notes. You get opinions on both sides of the question, and you get the actual quotations with translations. There is no ephemeral journalese. This is not a pamphlet to be read in half an hour and then put on one side. If you are really desirous of learning something about the growth of Christian belief, you get in *Supernatural Religion* a précis of the reading of thousands of volumes with a wealth of destructive comment that made it, in my opinion, one of the most terrible works ever launched against the enemy.

No wonder Lightfoot could barely contain his anger. No wonder he started a campaign of personal belittlement which he thought sufficiently strong to divert the Christian reader from the real points at issue. This book was no mere *Age of Reason*, it was a Dreadnought, armed at all points with devilish cunning—the cunning which knows how to turn the tables in the most exasperating way. And it had, by fair means or foul, to be put down. We shall see how Dr. Lightfoot accomplished his task in another article.

H. CUTNER.

### We Seek the Truth.

WITHOUT the aid of prayer, and quite by chance, there has recently come into my possession a catalogue from the Edinburgh House Press, the publishers for the United Council for Missionary Education. So for the benefit of the readers of the *Freethinker* who, maybe, are not so lucky as myself, I decided to share my great find, and to advise them as to their future reading.

It commences with the Graded List of Publications and the Senior Grade heads the list for over eighteen. Seeing that these are written for Study Circles, and Bible Class Courses, etc., one can only come to the conclusion that the eighteen means years and not mental age. However, allow me to introduce a cheap book on *The Cost of a New World*. It must have been a vital problem on that day in 4004 B.C., when the First Person of the Undivided Trinity decided to try his hand at world making, and although no account is given of the costings department then operating in heaven, one may be entitled to presume that it involved a considerable amount of trouble on the staff of that department. If, however, God has informed the Council concerned that he is going to have another try at world making, we would suggest that he could save a considerable amount by refusing to create disease germs, poisonous insects and reptiles, and to use the amount saved in making the new world more suitable for man, instead of having so many regions that are practically useless for his occupation. The next book I would recommend is, *Christianity and the Race Problem*, in conjunction with the *Clash of Colour*. In view of the possibility of the new world being made, perhaps the racial problem could be solved more simply by having only one race and one colour, but that is probably too simple a solution for Omnipotent God, whose ways passeth all understanding. However, dealing with things as they are, Christians ought to be concerned with the colour problem. Their Jesus was of a different race, and, unless he was different from the other inhabitants of Palestine, of a different

colour. With that great desire for the Truth that so pervades the Christian, one would suppose that they would paint their Jesus in his right colour, and with his racial characteristics, and then he would probably be deported for not registering with the police under the Aliens Act. This naturally leads us into the problem of the Jews generally. Well we have the very thing here. *The Christian Approach to the Jew*, only 2s. 6d. Many Jews at the time when Europe was Christian would have thought the approach cheap at the price, and it would have saved many lives in the Jewish massacres of the past by the followers of that other Jew, Jesus, and possibly the payment of the 2s. 6d. would have led to more tolerance of that persecuted race.

We have a list of missionary biographies as well. One is described as *One of God's Gardeners*, another as *A Master Builder*. God evidently has changed his taste. He did not appear very favourable to gardeners in the days of Cain, and Jesus had to serve his apprenticeship as a mere carpenter, not as a master-builder. We have often wondered what he said in that carpenter's shop if he hit his finger nail instead of an iron one. These little personal details would be interesting to-day. Perhaps some Christian will oblige.

We now come to the Adolescent Grade (ages thirteen to eighteen) for public and secondary schoolboys and schoolgirls. If we were not conversant with the results of our wonderful educational system, we would think this was intended for a joke—but one does not look for humour from the followers of the Man of Sorrows. The "Youth" series are for young working men and women. The first on the list is *In the Furnace*. Well, Christians generally have been authorities on furnaces, particularly those where most of humanity will spend eternity. They were also authorities on open fires, where they burnt those who refused to believe they were authorities on anything at all, or else believed so much of the Christian Truth that they confessed themselves to be witches—and they did not give up their fires without a struggle. Even that so-called humanitarian, Wesley, shrieked that to give up the belief in witchcraft was to give up belief in the Bible.

The "Yarns" Series is written for Boys' Brigade Classes; Scout Patrols, etc., and heads the list with *Yarns of the Orient*. I have one on my bookshelf, only, in this case, they called it the Bible, and Christians have gone out of their way to assure me that the tales in my book are in the same category as those in this publisher's catalogue, that is, "true tales of other lands." They believed it from cover to cover, and were only sorry it did not contain many more tales to believe. To-day, in that earnest desire for the Truth that is the main characteristic of the Christian, they hasten to assure me that it does not mean what it says, but means what they interpret it to mean. When my interpretation is put forward, that it is the sublime ignorance of the primitive savage and the deliberate lies of a priesthood that has always been noted for the way it handles the Truth with great care (for fear it should all be used up), they wither up with pity at my lack of faith. Anyhow, the publishers have helped me out with their next lot, *The Witch Doctor*. Not having read the book, I presume it is going to give us the facts regarding the witch doctors of to-day, who are noted for the way they modestly conceal their virtues and hide their lights under bushels. Of course, we can always recognize them inasmuch as, like all witch doctors, they dress differently from the other members of the community, and use a language that is as archaic as their thoughts. Again, we treat our witch doctors differently from the poor savage of Africa. He pays his priest according to results, and no results mean death for the doctor. We being more civilized, and therefore supposedly more humanitarian, simply take pity on them for their lack of mental development, and let them carry on irrespective of results, and put the blame on God. If things go right "It's God's will," and if they go wrong, it's just the same. That is the advantage that our witch doctors have over other witch doctors.

Perhaps you are fond of games but not of reading. If so, here is a good card game entitled "What Next." It consists in the building up of the adventures of four missionaries, possibly again following out their Lord's

commands casting out devils, drinking solutions of potassium cyanide and such like works. Though why they do not do it home here instead of reserving their star performances for mere foreigners surpasses my understanding. It would fill the largest music hall in the country if a believer in the dear Lord was to cast out a few devils nightly—in two houses at 6.30 and 9 p.m.

I hope I have brought enough to your notice to whet your appetite for some serious reading, and allow me in conclusion to introduce the Nursery Series (ages three to five). It is the avowed policy of the Christian clergy to "Catch 'em young," and surely three is young enough. The great Lying Church is prepared to make sure of clients even before they are born, so they instituted the ceremony of pre-natal baptism, but we would probably agree that one cannot publish much literature to educate the younger generation before the age of three, and would therefore congratulate the Christian publishers on their tolerance in allowing a child to reach that great age before becoming steeped in the grossest superstition that ever befogged the brain of humanity. And it is for the United Council for Missionary "Education." Education of the Christian order, mark you, the organized cramping of young minds by people who have no conception of the word bar the manufacturing of young dupes for the clergy, ignorant of the simplest facts of modern science and a bar to all progress.

H.H.H.

### Acid Drops.

The Rev. F. W. Norwood says that he has never had one of his sermons given him by a miracle. Now that is what we call manly. We can recall very many cases in which preachers have thrown the responsibility upon God by saying that God had inspired them, or it was given them by some mysterious "intuition," or they were "moved" to preach this or that. But Mr. Norwood is made of sterner stuff. Boldly and without any circumlocution he says all his sermons are his own. This does not necessarily mean he has not picked bits here and there without acknowledgement, only that he did it all himself. Nearly everyone feels that when a man has done something wrong or said something silly, it is some compensation for him to acknowledge his fault. So we congratulate Mr. Norwood on his frank confession that all his sermons are his own. No one else is to be blamed for them.

"The whole globe," says Prof. Dr. Ernst Jackh, "is changing into one continent." And sad to relate, two thousand years of the religion of Jesus has had nothing to do with the change.

A pious journal reveals the fact that the Rev. Campbell Morgan, as a result of negotiations, has practically decided to spend six months in Australia next year on a "Bible Exposition Crusade." We trust the "negotiations" were not such as to enhance the rev. gent.'s bank balance, and thereby to unfit him at a future date for passing the "needle's eye" test.

People would be much better, says Prof. Leonard Hill, if they took exercise in the open air, either by playing games or walking, instead of sitting indoors and getting miserable. He might have added that there is no better day than Sunday for practising his advice and preventing that miserable feeling.

It is encouraging, says a Methodist writer, to write that men and women connected with shops are doing their utmost to resist general Sunday opening. He adds that one out of every eight workers in England have already lost their Sunday rest through Sunday employment, and that this number is increasing. All this is apropos of a plea to support the two measures before the House of Commons, with the specific end of Sunday closing. This concern for the workers is simply nauseatingly cant. The Churches' real reason for supporting the Bills is to save Sunday for the parsons by elimi-

nating secular competition. An amendment to the Bills guaranteeing for all workers a six-day week, and allowing any shopkeeper to open on Sunday so long as he closed once in seven days, would give the workers and shopkeepers all they are seeking, but it would get no support from any Church nor any parson. Such an amendment, or a Bill embodying its terms, would very nicely give the parson's canting game its death-blow. But our timid politicians are too time-serving to pass anything of that kind.

Not so very many years ago some of the Churches, such as the Methodist, used to condemn nearly all amusement, the view appearing to be that it took the godly man's attention off spiritual matters. Apparently the view still lingers, else why should the Rev. Benson Perkins get on his hind legs and assure the pious Council of the Evangelical Churches that there ought to be recognition of the place and value of amusement? Condemnation, he assured the Council, was both mistaken and futile. Quite so! No intelligent persons take any notice nowadays of the condemnation, and so the condemnation was "mistaken"! History thus repeats itself; the Churches have everlastingly to reverse their judgments. And in this modern time the Rev. Benson Perkins no doubt feels himself to be a very daring pioneer of new truth.

A writer in an educational journal says:—

One finds many opportunities for teaching the little child to be fair, just, and kind to his own companions, but it seems that these virtues are often neglected with regard to animals . . . Animals are so often regarded as being provided solely for the use of man, that such a thing as "animal rights" has never occurred to some people . . . The chief reason for this unkindness [to animals] is not innate cruelty, but total ignorance.

Not innate cruelty or "original sin," you note, but ignorance. And ignorance based on the erroneous notion—which the Bible has done much to foster—that everything on the earth (including animals) has been provided solely for man to do what he likes with.

Modern youth ignores the parson, and so the parson revenges the affront to his dignity by vilifying youth. The young people have a champion in Sir Charles Petrie. The whole tendency of the age, he says, is to be less formal and more natural, and the standard of manners reflects this. The modern young man and young woman, he declares, would be justified in claiming that in some respects the manners of to-day are not only different but better than those of yesterday. People are more considerate now than they have ever been. As Sir Charles says:—

No doubt the social conventions of the last two centuries were far stricter . . . but they were only observed by the upper-classes in their relations with one another, and certainly never governed their dealings with those whom they considered their inferiors.

Youth of to-day, he contends, has more regard for the decencies of life. We would go further than this. Modern youth in less prudish, less canting and hypocritical, and more frank and wholesome in every way. It has no use for traditions and dogmas and beliefs that cannot justify themselves at the court of reason. Its mind is more open to new truth and new theory, because it realizes that the open mind is the only way of true progress. This modern way of looking at life is, of course, not at all helpful to a religion like Christianity, with its moth-eaten dogmas and ready-made truths for blind assumption. And that helps to explain why the general run of parsons are eager to condemn the modern way and the modern young man and woman. We may as well add that we are not here claiming moderns to be perfect. They have, however, several perfectly sound virtues which parsons persist in dubbing bad.

A scholar has been pointing out that the word pagan originally meant merely countrified. A weekly paper asks how its meaning has changed so radically; and this is the explanation given:—

When the first Christian missionaries began to teach a finer religion they worked in the cities, which became centres of light while the horrible old ceremonies were still performed in country places. Thus countrified rites, or pagan rites, came to mean the rites of the old religions. To-day pagan means the opposite of Christian. Now, a statement unlikely to be disputed is that many of the first ideals and noblest thoughts and principles embedded in modern civilization have come from ancient Greece and Rome; that is, have been inherited from what the Christian calls pagan civilizations. Bearing this in mind, we suggest that the word pagan has become synonymous with unenlightened, unmoral, evil and wicked through slander of paganism by Christian bigots and ignoramuses.

A Kentish local newspaper prints the following, taken from an issue of twenty-five years ago:—

The vicar, in his sermon on Sunday, regretted that Good Friday was used by many professing Christians as a day of frivolity.

The Congregational minister asked amateur gardeners to leave the potatoes alone and spend an hour's devotion in church on that solemn day.

The successors of the vicar and the minister, no doubt would consider it sheer waste of breath to express a similar regret or request nowadays—the times have changed so lamentably.

The Rev. E. Shillitoe says: "We naturally fear death 'as children fear to walk in the dark,' but at the heart of our fear is the question not simply whether there is an after life, but of *what character it is.*" Well, no Christian need be in doubt about the character of the Christian after life. It is clearly indicated in the Bible and the works of the early Christian fathers. Men do not "naturally" fear death. It is a Christian-bred terror inculcated by priests to get people to appreciate the Christian message of salvation. Mr. Shillitoe blundered in pointing out that the Christian fear of death was akin to childish fear of the dark. Still, truth does sometimes slip out when parsons are not thinking of what they are saying.

The Free Church Council has issued an Election manifesto. Parliamentary candidates are to be badgered to state whether they support the Council's notions, and will be threatened with an adverse chapel vote if they dissent from them. The Council demands, as "social reform," Sunday closing, local option, and control of clubs and certain sports. In the sacred name of religious and "temperance" bigotry, the Council claims the right to interfere with or prohibit what the pious do not care for, and what other people like. Prohibition and interference are the key-notes in all pious "social reform." There is nothing unusual in Christian bigots claiming a lot of liberty for themselves and allowing very little liberty to other men. That has been a characteristic of Christian people for nineteen-hundred years. But there is no journal except the *Freethinker*—not even the specialists in "fearless truth"—that can muster the courage to say so.

In his book, *The Inquisition* (Benn's 6d. Library), Mr. C. G. Coulton points out that far worse than the martyrdoms for which the Inquisition was responsible was the general deadening of intellectual energy and freedom which it inevitably produced. "Those who laugh and cry with Mr. Shaw's *St. Joan* may yet feel that the spectacular martyrdom of a dozen such would have been less fatal to progress than that prosaic, unremitting, leaden, stupefying pressure upon the intellect—and, as many of us may feel, upon the soul itself—of the masses. It is just as well to mention that the "stupefying pressure" is still being applied in many ways. The Blasphemy Acts are unrepealed. The Press still boycotts criticism of the essential ideas of the Christian religion. Economic and social pressure is still brought to bear on unbelievers to prevent their saying what they believe about religion; and the B.B.C. continues to ban Free-thought discussion. The Inquisition is dead, but its soul goes marching on. We trust that, for the sake of truth, it has not achieved immortality.

Says Prof. Graham Kerr: "There is danger in teaching people to absorb rather than think." This sort of warning ought not to be broadcast. It may seriously hinder conversion to the one true faith.

The Rev. E. F. Braley, Principal of Bode College for Schoolmasters, Durham, will be getting himself disliked by his brother clerics. He told an annual meeting of the Durham Diocesan Society he rejoiced that cinemas were going to be opened on Sunday in Durham City, it would do the young people good and keep them off the streets. Another statement was that the reason why people did not go to Church was because they were not interested in what went on there. There is a very obvious truth, but it is one the clergy are usually very unwilling to admit.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has concluded his African tour and is, we believe, on his way home. Judging from the reports in some of the South African papers, his meetings appear to have supplied more amusement than anything else. And he has had the usual misfortune over some of his statements of alleged "fact." It appears that when Houdini died he left a code which he would use from the next world, if any world existed, and he could send a message.

To the *Rand Daily Mail*, Sir Arthur wrote he had received a cable that the code "word" had come through by the mediumship of Arthur Ford. But in a succeeding issue of the paper it was pointed out that what Houdini left was not a code word, but a ten-word message. No code was arranged for. Sir Arthur appears to be as unfortunate in this instance as he has been with his great psychic pictures, which were painted at his own suggestion. Well might Professor Richet (who has been so often cited by Spiritualists as being on their side) say, "We need not all be so credulous as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."

Mr. W. T. Ricketts reminds this land of the free that to travel on a Sunday is illegal. Like that, then, the majority of English people are law breakers. But they are not, we daresay, the least bit conscience-stricken about it. Instead of labouring to make people interested in religion, our newspapers could more usefully strive to get repealed various obsolete laws which are remnants of Christian faith and bigotry. The achievement of this might serve to warn modern bigots not to create more stupid restrictions on personal liberty.

According to a professor, the average working-man works six week a year to pay his drink bill. One gets a little weary of such fatuous statistics drawn up to point a solemn moral, and paraded by total abstainers who know nothing of temperance. The average man no doubt works many weeks to provide money for gassy tonics, tea and buns, tennis, kinemas, aspidistras, and various kinds of articles for personal adornment. All these things are necessary or unnecessary according to someone's point of view; and no doubt equally useful statistics, with an implied or stated moral, could be furnished. But only humourless persons with a puritan obsession would trouble to make them and to parade them.

"The truth is," says the *Church Times*, "and the sooner it is recognized the better, that England is no longer a Christian country." In one sense this is quite true. It is true if it means that the best intellect of the country lies outside the sphere of Christian conviction. but it is not true if it is to be taken in the sense that England has outgrown Christianity. When long-established beliefs have given up their hold on the intellect of man, they still maintain their influence in the existence of institutions, customs, and in numerous other directions from which they are only very gradually ousted. It will be a very long while before the world has completely outgrown the ill-consequences of the long reign of Christian superstition.



## 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.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—W. J. Lamb, £1; H. J. Templeman, £2.

R. DODD.—The Editor was responsible for the reply in last week's issue. We were not aware of any "temper"; certainly, we felt none. As we said, we did not think it advisable to start a correspondence on the respective merits of *Freethinker* writers. Some are certain to like one writer more than others, and there would be no end to the discussion. The remarks about brevity applied to all letter writers, not specifically to your own communication.

J. T. JONES.—Sorry to hear of your illness. Thanks for the rest of your letter.

H. J. TEMPLEMAN.—We appreciate very much your remarks.

J. IRE.—The humour of Jesus appears to have been of the unconscious variety—that often happens with characters that take themselves, or are made to take themselves, with quite undue gravity.

G. J. BURDON.—It is an unfortunate truth that the very best of customs tend to sink into empty formalities through sheer repetition. In that case we should agree that a protest against it, either to bring people to a consciousness of its real nature, or end it, serves a good purpose. The present anniversary of Armistice Day is a case in point. One has to judge in every case whether the time for such a protest has arrived.

A. RADLEY.—Of course the *Freethinker* would sell better if properly advertised. That is what we should like to do, but until income permits it, or some millionaire will finance it, we must do what we can to induce our friends to make it better known.

MARK MANN.—Thanks, but not quite up to the mark.

R. K. NOYES (Boston).—Much obliged for cuttings. We are not surprised at your wife's amusement at Sir Oliver Lodge's statement, as given in the newspaper, that after her death, his wife "met and welcomed by their beloved son and daughter, and was allowed to send a characteristic and evidential message before being taken away for rest and recuperation." Generations of Christian belief have well prepared people for such puerilities.

A. H. MILWARD.—The good wishes of sincere friends are never unwelcome. The other day we came across the following note we had made from a book by H. G. Wells—unfortunately we had not the exact reference—"The unfortunately Atheist stands alone upon his good will, without a reference, without a standard. A certain immodesty, a certain self-righteousness, hangs like a precipice above him. He has no one to whom he can give himself. He has no source of strength beyond his own amiable sentiments. He has no real and living link with other men of good will." That a man has gained a reputation as a thinker on social topics can write such adulterated nonsense fills one with amazement. The profound misunderstanding of the whole nature of social evolution expressed in such a passage is just staggering.

A. W. GAVTON.—Received and shall appear.

A. MATHEWS.—We quite appreciate the sentiments expressed, but the lines are hardly up to standard.

S. GODDARD.—However great one's personal grief, it is not made the less by sitting down and nursing it. That is a form of selfishness easy to indulge, and bad in its results. What you call our "superb courage" in keeping on with our work is only part of the philosophy of life which we have preached for so long, and have practised so far as we could. Talk of the emptiness of Atheism and the consolations of religion is little more than the chatter of fools and the timidity of cowards.

J. D. STEVENS.—We have made inquiries, and so far are satisfied as to its legitimacy. You must remember you are trenching on the privileges of one of the strongest trades unions in the world. We fully appreciate your motive in writing.

T. ARMSTRONG.—You are misinformed. It was not Mr. Cohen who backed out of a debate on Spiritualism with Mr. Hannan Swaffer, it was Mr. Swaffer who decided, either on his own initiative or on the advice of his friends, that it was impossible for him to find an evening during the whole of the winter for which he could meet Mr. Cohen in public discussion.

L.A. (Southport).—We fancy there are some people who, if

a petrified apple was dug up in Mesopotamia, would take that as a demonstration of the truth of the Garden of Eden story.

H. RICHARDS.—Our defence of free publication has nothing to do with our belief in what is written. If there were any attempts to suppress the Bible, we hope we should be strong enough to stand up in its defence. There is no principle necessarily involved in defending things with which we agree. A wrong opinion has as much right to be heard as a correct one.

A. E. POWEY (Johannesburg).—Thanks for your appreciation of our work. We are glad also to have your order for the *Freethinker* so long as you are this side of the grave. Further address would, we suppose, be too indefinite for the postal authorities.

J. R. HOLMES.—Is already in type, but crowded out. Will appear next week, if possible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

In our next issue we hope to be able to announce the place at which the Annual Conference will be held—all voting papers should be in by then. Meanwhile, we hope that Branches are getting on with the sending of resolutions for the Agenda, and also with the appointment of delegates. We hope to see, wherever the Conference is held, a good muster of both delegates and individual members.

This will be the last opportunity we shall have for calling attention to the coming discussion between Mr. Cohen and Mr. C. E. M. Joad, at the Caxton Hall, on Friday, April 12. Particulars will be found on the back page of this issue, but we advise all who intend being present to secure their tickets as early as possible.

At the opening of the summer season, we again venture to press the claims of this paper upon its friends. Our financial resources will not permit much in the way of expenditure on advertising, and we are therefore the more dependent upon advertising of a personal kind. Handing a spare copy of the paper to one who is not acquainted with it, is a very effective way of getting new readers, and it can be done with the minimum of trouble. We hope the hint will be taken very generally.

The new edition of Col. Ingersoll's *What is it Worth?* price one penny, is now ready. This is a very forceful examination of the Bible, and one of the most telling pamphlets that one can put into the hands of an inquiring Christian. We suggest that those of our friends who care to indulge in a little quiet propaganda should send for a few copies for distribution. Packets of twelve copies and upwards will be sent post free.

One of the latest volumes in Messrs. Routledge's "To-day and To-morrow" Series is *Religion in England* (price 2s. 6d.) by E. Powley. Mr. Powley writes with wit and force, and does not greatly mince matters. He estimates that four millions would be a generous estimate of the number of orthodox believers in the country to-day, although perhaps these may console themselves with the reflection that if they are "short" on orthodox believers they are "long" on prison inmates, since not less than a fifth of the inmates of prisons were members of the most orthodox Church in all—the Roman Catholic; and when we add the religion of the rest, religion can claim a very goodly percentage of the inhabitants of prisons. It is also noted that in 1830 the number of completely non-going church-goers equalled only a tenth of the community. To-day the ten per cent is represented by the church attendants. What will be the number in another century?

Mr. Powley traces the progressive decline of Christianity in England and holds that, so far as Christianity stands for what Christians have always believed it to be, the decline will go on to the end. He speaks with well merited scorn of the "fluffy pronouncements" of popular preachers, which cannot be well mistaken for worthy thoughts struggling for expression, and points out that the whole standard of worth has altered. We are nearer the Greeks to-day than the world has been at any time between them and ourselves:—

To the Greeks the bare idea "Christianity a complete philosophy of life" rang hollow with foolishness; with us too, it is a beaten banner. The contention, which it has been suggested forms the main objection of the twenty millions of our people to any form of the Christian claim, that the profession of Christianity shall not in the life of any individual man, contradict the rest, or any part, of his organized experience, is not to be gainsaid.

All that one need say is that a religion which submits to any and every change that advancing knowledge and changed needs may demand, ceases to be a religion in any genuine sense of the term. Certainly, no one in his senses can see the world supporting for ever an army of priests who have only to repeat over again all that science and philosophy has already told us.

Everyone who has noted the special pleading of Mr. Hilaire Belloc in defence of the Roman Catholic Church will know that his statements need carefully checking, and that his conclusions are usually open to grave doubt. In *Hilaire Belloc Keeps the Bridge* (Watts & Co., 1s.), Mr. J. W. Poynter administers a well-deserved drubbing to Mr. Belloc, although to the general reader the essay would have been more effective had Mr. Belloc's statements been set out at greater length. Still, the criticism is well done, and comes with the greater force because the writer was for many years a strong Roman Catholic, and a writer in defence of its claims. It is a pity that he has to avow himself as still religious. And also that his emancipation is not complete. It tends to remind one of the gentleman who announced that he had rejected the errors of the Church of Rome in order to embrace those of the Church of England. Still, it is not easy to eradicate from the system the poison of an early religious training.

We are asked to call the special attention of Manchester friends to the Annual General Meeting, which be held at Milton Hall, Broad Street, Pendleton, on Saturday, April 6, at 3 p.m. It is hoped that members will make a special effort to be present.

The West Ham Branch will be holding another of its popular Socials on Saturday, April 13, in the Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, E. There will be the usual varied entertainment of dancing, music and games; fancy dress is requested where possible. Admission is free to all Freethinkers and their friends. We presume this will be the last Social of the season.

## "Change of Heart."

THOSE of us who formerly attended religious meetings became familiar with this well-worn phrase; and we still hear, at League of Nations meetings and elsewhere, that a change of heart is necessary to bring about the abolition of war and other improvements in moral and social affairs.

On the other hand, it was pleasing to note in a newspaper review of a recently published book that the writer strongly deprecated the idea; and a year or two ago it was equally gratifying to hear a clergyman, at a peace meeting, adopt the same attitude, on the ground that the idea connotes a more or less mysterious, emotional change instead of the required "intellectual and moral conviction" of the desirability and the possibility of establishing permanent peace among the nations of the world. These instances indicate that some advance is being made from the old irrational position to one which is more in accordance with the general body of progressive thought of the present day.

It is, however, not only the idea that is wrong, but also the use in the phrase of the word "heart." As is well known to students of the history of thought, the erroneous notion that the organ in question was the seat of thought and feeling arose long ago, possibly in the Stone Age. The conclusion was a very natural one, in view of the obvious effect on the beating of the heart of fright, anger and other emotional excitement. As a result of the belief, the heart plays, or has played an important part in the folklore of most or all civilized and partly civilized communities.

We note, among a multitude of instances, the offering of the hearts of men or animals to gods, to the sun and moon, in order to secure help in hunting and other activities, safety from demons, the ghosts of the slain, and the like; the eating of the heart of the dead ruler by his successor, and the hearts of the fiercer and more wily animals, in order to gain desired attributes, such as wisdom, authority, courage, eloquence and the power of divination or prophecy; the use of charms or amulets (in the wide sense), including the depositing in totems of the hearts of ancestors, the wearing of the dried hearts of lions, wolves, birds of prey, etc., and then of objects made in the shape of a heart, as a protection against attacks of animals and other evils, including the "evil eye." The latter practice still persists among the more ignorant and superstitious people of Southern Europe.

In magic and witchery the heart was an important feature. The heart of a black cat dried, steeped in honey and worn at the waning of the moon, was supposed to render the wearer invisible; the hearts of diseased cattle were cut out and hung up as a remedy for plague; a bewitched animal was burnt or boiled, or was stuck full of pins and roasted, in order to compel the witch concerned to appear and confess; and so on.

Another phase of heart-lore was developed in ancient Egypt, where the heart was supposed to be weighed before the judgment seat of Osiris, in order to determine the fate of the deceased in the next world. And we are reminded of this by passages in the Bible, such as: "Tekel: Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting"; "Let me be weighed in an even balance."

The true view that the brain, and not the heart, is the seat of thought and feeling arose in ancient Greek times with Alcmaeon of Croton and Diogenes of Apollonia, and appeared in the Hippocratic medical works. But anything like full proof of the conclusion was then wanting, and Aristotle rejected it on mistaken

evidence. Galen then fixed what was practically the old view, and this held the field during the thousand years of mental darkness that ensued. Hence we get, in addition to the phrase which heads this article, "learning by heart," "affair of the heart," "kind-hearted," and the like; and we note also the names of medieval cults, such as "The Sacred Heart of Mary," and "The Sacred Heart of Jesus." Of course, the error has been corrected, and we know now that consciousness, including all thought and emotion, is a function of the brain, and that the heart has no more to do with these things than the liver or the stomach. The forms of speech quoted are therefore, survivals in language of old, abandoned ideas.

Coming over to Christianity from the Jews, we find also the idea of the clean "clean heart," or "pure heart," which originally and essentially meant (and still means among the Moslems) the heart free from the Devil or other demons that are constantly striving to enter it and to fill it with evil thoughts, desires, unbelief and the like.

With the development of Christianity "change of heart" came to mean conversion, which for a long period simply meant acceptance of the doctrine of and submission to the Church. But more recently, as a result of the Reformation and other heresy, conversion assumed a wider and more nebulous aspect, and we gather that religionists regard the process as an effect of the "contemporary activities of the Holy Ghost." These activities, presumably, cause the "jerks," the dancing, jumping, rolling and other acrobatic performances of persons who respond to the lower type of evangelism and undergo conversion.

Revivalist outbreaks of the kind just indicated have become fewer and feebler among the more forward communities of the world (except, perhaps, in the United States, where many crude cults have been imported), and may be expected to die out during the next few decades. But as education spreads among the more backward peoples, we may hear of new series of these events arising. One such case has already been reported by an anthropologist from an American Indian locality. The revival was not exclusively religious, but included the idea of driving the white men from the land and restoring the old status, customs, etc., of the Amerindians. The "evangelist" was evidently a man of much character and some education. He gained great prestige by pretending to predict an eclipse, information of which he obtained from an almanack in his possession, and also by disappearing, and then, on his return, pretending to have risen from the dead. He had been in contact with Roman Catholics (presumably missionaries) and evidently adopted or adapted some elements of their ritual. At the meetings he held, there were one or more circles of fantastically dressed Indians, who played drums or made other noises, while he went through a variety of performances, with the accompaniment of singing, chanting and praying. We are not told of the end of this interesting event. But we may reasonably surmise that, sooner or later, it suffered the general fate of such revivals—decline and fall.

J. REEVES.

#### HUMANE EDUCATION.

It is the awakening and fostering, particularly in the mind of the child, of those principles of justice, fairness, and kindness towards every form of life, human and sub-human, capable of suffering, without which there can be no character worthy of citizenship.

Francis Rowley.

## Is There Anything Like Independence in This World?

THE idea of independence is a product of civilization. Independence seems to get greater and greater prominence in Society, and we get a clearer and clearer conception of independence as the level of civilization rises higher and higher. But then, the clearer our idea of civilization and independence, the more we break through the complex web that surrounds independence, the more do we realize that there is nothing like independence in this world. It is all interdependence; there is nothing like independence—at any rate, we, the beings of this material world have not moved in a world where there is complete independence. Man has not been born by himself, he has not grown up by himself, and most probably he has not thought by himself; in a word he is hopelessly dependent. How is it then that as we get more and more civilized we hanker more and more after independence? How is it that our civilization drives us to seek something which we cannot attain, something which is beyond the reach of us poor human beings? Well, this is a digression; let me go back to my original theme.

Yes, there is nothing like independence in this world; it is all mutual dependence. The theory of Relativity is the greatest achievement of our scientific brains. It is the greatest achievement not only in the scientific world, but also in the philosophical world, in the social world, in the political world, nay whatever world we may consider the supreme theory—that of Relativity—applies with equal force. Search the Universe through and through, nowhere will you find isolation, nowhere will you find an individual, an animal, or even a plant, working by itself and for itself.

Just see. Here is this book. It is lying on the table. Remove the table and it will fall. Where will it descend? You will say, to the earth. But you know that if there had been a cavity instead of the solid earth, it would have descended still lower, until it would have come to the centre of the earth. But coming to the centre of the globe is an impossibility. However that may be, the book is not independent. It is dependent. Nay, it is not only a case of dependence only, but one of inter-dependence. The book is dependent upon something else, and most probably, that something else is dependent on the book. Independence is impossible for the book. It cannot say, "I am here now and I will be there alone." Because with the earth it is turning in an ellipse round the sun; and it is also turning on the earth's axis. Sometime it will be in the place where a book in America was, and sometimes it will find itself in the place occupied by a book in Africa. It is and will be in the place of everything else and everything else will be in its place. This is independence indeed! The poor book is moving every hour, every minute, nay, even every second, yet it thinks it is independent. Yet it thinks it is completely isolated. How queer!

Take another part of the Society. There is the Editor, his journal, and his subscribers. To get the money with which to start his magazine the Editor has to get the help of the shareholders. And the shareholders to raise the money are dependent on their own business. But leaving that aside, in the present-day world, we require the help of so many to start the journal. Let one of the shareholders or one of the directors think he is independent and act accordingly, trouble will arise. If one director thinks he is independent and shows his independence, I am sure the other director or directors will also show their independence. And in trying to

realize their supreme independence, there will be a tussel, a tussel that will result in the journal being stopped—if everyone continues to exert his independence. But let everyone think that he is inter-dependent; let one director think that the other is quite essential and let the other think that the first is also essential; in a word let them realize their inter-dependence and work harmoniously, by means of a give and take, yes, let them do this, and the journal will be a success. Again, the magazine is dependent on the public and the public in a way are dependent on the journal. The journal gets the money and the public get their information. Not even that, but the public mould the journal through their appreciation or depreciation of the matter published by it, the encouragement they give it; and the journal moulds the character of a nation and makes the English and the Americans what they are. In fact England owes its peculiar characteristics to its journals and papers—partly at least. The same thing holds good with America. It is also true that the English and American papers and journals owe their influence and their intellectuality, etc., to the tremendous encouragement given by the public. There is inter-dependence here also. If to-day the journal thinks it is independent, and the Editor cares not to give the public what they want—if it overlooks them as being outside his world—tomorrow his journal will be no more. He can rarely, in fact never, act according to his whims and fancies. The Editor, therefore, caters for the public, and the public pay for him and his journal. This is the rule. Inter-dependence is the law. Efface the rule and the consequences will be deadly.

Let us now see if the English and American political worlds are independent. There are the Prime Minister and the President. They come into the Parliament and the Congress because the people put them there. Each of them is not there merely because of his brains. His brains help him no doubt. But his people help him to get his seat, and he gives them the benefit of his brains to achieve their wants and desires. If to-day he acts independently of them, if he cares a jot for their wishes, tomorrow he will have to go back. So he is now in the Parliament or the Congress. His extraordinary brains make him the leader of his party. He gives his party the benefit of his extraordinary brains which none of them have got, and they give him the benefit of making him the leader. Thus and thus, he rises until he becomes the Prime Minister or the President. At every step there is inter-dependence. As Prime Minister or President he has to guard the interests of his nation. He must realize that he is in the Prime Minister's or President's chair on account of his nation; and work for the welfare of the citizens every minute almost. Here again the nation makes use of his statesmanly qualities and pays for the use by making him the Prime Minister or President. The Prime Minister or the President is a citizen, a supreme citizen, and he must act in that spirit if he wants to succeed. If, on the other hand, he exerts his independence and acts independently of his Cabinet, his Parliament or Congress—in a word, his nation—there will be no place for him at the head of his nation.

So runs the chain of inter-dependence. Inter-dependence is supreme. Our civilization is striving after ideal inter-dependence. Ideal inter-dependence is the goal, and when we reach the goal—of perfect, sweet, harmonious inter-dependence—we will have reached the goal of perfect, ideal civilization, and not till then. It seems to me, that we, the beings of this Universe, are so many beautiful pearls, and inter-dependence—sweet, harmonious, perfect inter-dependence—is the golden thread that runs through them

all. As thoughtful Coleridge says, we, the human beings of this Universe, are harps—say beads—diversely framed—we are diverse creatures—no one is like the other—yes, we are diversely framed beads, through which runs the thread of inter-dependence arising out of love—not the love of the flesh, but the "Supreme Love"—yes, it is this that binds us together into a harmonious whole. It is this ideal inter-dependence that exalts our civilization.

S. G. MANDRE.

Bangalore, S. India.

## Every Poet a Theologian?

I WAS reading a newspaper selection of "Sayings of the Week," and came across one amusing statement by a clergyman that "all poets are more or less theological."

Almost immediately I picked up the selection of the letters of Shelley in the Quill Library (John Lane the Bodley Head, 6s.) and the clergyman's remark kept running through my head.

This book should certainly be in every Freethinker's library, for it is a satisfactory and devastating reply to the statement that "all poets are more or less theological." That is, if the word theological be used in the dictionary meaning of "pertaining to the science of God and man's duty to God."

The book is also a revelation of that side of Shelley's life which is all too often ignored by biographers.

Mr. Brimley Johnson in his introduction tells us that as a boy the personality of Shelley impressed every beholder. Shelley had a short life but "he managed his own complicated affairs, and assisted others, with efficiency and sense; he read the signs of the times, and upheld many practical reforms of which the greater number have been carried out, universally recognized as just and wise."

This is a counterblast to the orthodox dismissal of Shelley's attacks on the established order as being the "idle visions of an unformed youth."

Again, as Mr. Johnson puts it, "it is no less certain, though frequently overlooked, that his political ideals were never abstract or utopian, however extravagant and dangerous they may have seemed to a generation of blind and obstinate reactionaries."

The reason for the misrepresentation of Shelley, which has been going on for so long, was that he openly defied the two pet idols of British respectability—the God of Hell and the Sanctity of the Home.

It was, of course, with the publication of the "Necessity of Atheism," that Shelley began to be known. For this he was expelled from Oxford, and the event was typical of the way Shelley was treated. He, and all those who question that which is, have to suffer, although later generations come to see that the martyrs were right, and those who defended orthodoxy were wrong.

But to come to the letters. They are chosen to show all aspects of Shelley's character. Some are descriptive of scenery, some are of people, some express Shelley's thoughts, and some narrate incidents in his life.

Writing to Hogg about marriage, he begs him to read the Marriage Service of the Church if he wants more arguments, and then to see whether he could allow "an amiable, beloved female to submit to such degradation." Yet soon after he married Harriet Westbrook, and his explanation of the reasons which prompted him to practise that which he condemned are given in one of his letters to Miss Kitchener.

An extremely interesting letter is the one which Shelley wrote to a certain Janetta Phillipps, who had apparently written to him after reading something he had published.

The letter begins—"I confess I was surprised, extremely surprised, at the receipt of your letter. Why are we here? What does man exist for? Surely not for his own happiness, but as a more perfect instrument of that of others. This, even common morality will tell, for this we do not want any theological system, not even the belief of a God, the anticipation of his kingdom."

Yet "every poet is more or less theological"?

The letter ends: "As you mention religion, I will say that my rejection of revealed proceeds from my perfect conviction of its insufficiency to the happiness of man, to this source I can trace murder, war, intolerance; my rejection of natural arises wholly from reason."

In a later letter he declared religion to be immoral, and he could not contemplate the gigantic piles of superstition without setting them down as retardations of the period when truth shall become omnipotent.

Shelley's father was what is known as a God-fearing man, and he seems to have been a Christian of the true brand, intolerant to all who did not share his views, and vindictive to unbelievers. The elder Shelley is described in the letter of introduction sent to William Godwin, and there we learn that the boy's father not only refused to have anything to do with him, but even tried to get him a commission in a distant regiment, so that he could prosecute the "Necessity of Atheism," and so outlaw Shelley.

We blame Shelley senior, but he had Biblical authority for his enmity towards his son—for Christ himself, according to Luke xiii. verse 53, said that having come to bring division on the earth "the father shall be divided against the son and the son against the father;" and are we not told that God the loving Father "spared not his own Son"?

Shelley had a true conception of the Biblical God, as we realize when we read one of his letters to Thomas Love Peacock: "a Christian prays to and praises his God, whom he knows to be the most remorseless, capricious and inflexible of tyrants."

Several of the letters to Peacock contain some powerful anti-Christian matter. There is the description of the penitent draped in white, with sandalled feet, and concealed face, who was making atonement for a crime. There is the description of the assassination in broad daylight of a youth in Naples. Shelley expressed his horror at the cold-blooded crime and a "Calabrian priest who travelled with me laughed heartily and attempted to quiz me as what the English call a flat." This same callous priest, a huge brawny fellow, had previously been hysterical on the road because he was terrified at the thought of robbers.

Christians tell us that an Atheist cannot feel any of the finer emotions; they assume with incredible self-sufficiency, that good deeds can come only from believers. Yet what Christian could have been so generous as Shelley?

What Christian would refer to some one who was inimical to himself and then add "added years only increase my admiration of his intellectual powers and the moral resources of his character."

What Christian would have forbearance enough to write of a man who, in a weak moment, had attempted to seduce his wife: "To know Hogg is to know something very unlike, and inexpressibly superior to, the great mass of men"?

And what Christian would have supported Keats against the critics as Shelley did, although Shelley

acknowledged "I am aware, indeed, in part that I am nourishing a rival who will far surpass me, and this is an additional motive, and will be an added pleasure"?

Apart, however, from the special interest in the selection of the letters, there are hosts of other things worthy of attention. The power over words, the graphic description and the humour of some of the incidents are all worth reading.

But over and above this, I would like to give every Christian a copy of this book and a Bible, and ask him to read both intelligently and carefully.

There would be fewer Christians when this pleasurable task was over.

NECHELLS.

### Defenders of the Faith.

NORTH-COUNTRY Christians may sleep soundly in their beds during the cold weather. There are several items of interest which will have the effect of allaying that uneasy feeling that all is not well in Zion. The timid ones will breathe more freely. May even hold their heads erect and expand the chest.

For one or two important pronouncements have been made in the newspapers. It is, of course, always a risky thing to place too much credence on newspaper reports. How often have our spiritualistic friends been "let down" by the nimble reporter, saying the things they ought not to have said, and leaving unsaid the things that ought to be proclaimed.

However, one must just have faith in the newsmonger. We cannot be in several places at once to test matters, not having that extraordinary qualification ascribed to Sir Boyle Roche's bird.

Three pieces of news in one day's issue calculated to hearten afresh the Christian apologist—those well-meaning gentlemen who are never weary in well-doing.

1. The New General of the Salvation Army has visited Tyneside and conferred with his officers. Now for more Blood and more Fire!

2. The Bishop of Newcastle is an optimist, and fills in his crosswords with a fountain pen.

Now we shall see what we shall see.

This is the policy that will ensure the right alternative.

3. Dr. Thornton, Professor of Electrical Engineering at Armstrong College, has emphatically declared that "science, with all its wonderful modern resources for investigation, has resulted only in convincing thinking people of the control of the universe, by the Creator, known as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit."

There! ye materialistic Freethinkers, who hugged the fond delusion that God was banished from the world he had made, just like any of our deposed generals during the Great War. What think ye of our Electric Professor? No humming or hawing, or whittling down, or reading new meanings into old phrases. Straight from the shoulder, before an audience of hard-headed students, with Miss Pollock in the chair, he affirmed that Christianity had a scientific probability in the light of modern knowledge.

The report goes on to say that his conclusions were "elaborately reasoned out," and one can well believe that a good deal of wordy argument would be advanced. Some of these learned gentlemen are adept in the art of mystifying their hearers with technical terms and long-winded parentheses. But when all is said, what are we to deduce from this pronouncement of the Electrical Professor?

He defended the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds. That, in itself, is a remarkable performance. How any man of science, engaged in the investigation of natural phenomena, accustomed to weigh evidence, and alive to the inevitable sequence of cause and effect, can bring his mind round to the defence of that nightmare of gibberish passes one's comprehension. How is it done? Is there anything about Electrical Engineering which saps the faculties, or demoralizes the intellect?

Personally, I know very little about Electricity, yet I

should like to ask this apologist for these musty creeds, how many volts would be required to raise, say, Lazarus from the dead. Or how many amperes would be necessary to project the Son of Man from—whichever mountain was the “jumping off” ground—to heaven. Or whether radium—of which we hear so much nowadays—is the essential metal in keeping the fires of hell burning at its proper temperature.

Of course, the Professor might say that we are judging hastily from a meagre report. He may not defend the literal acceptance of bygone fairy tales. He may give quite a new meaning to the terms “ascended into heaven,” and “descended into hell.” He might even agree that the world is round, and not as flat as they thought it was “down in Judee.” He might also assent to the proposition that it would be difficult for any well-organized being to “perish everlastingly,” and retain his memory of all past events. If so, it ought to have been made clear, even in a brief report.

The truth appears to be, these people are engaged in the thankless task of trying to put the new wine of science into the old bottles of a discomfited theology. Hanging on to the miserable shreds and tatters of an effete cosmology, they seek to bolster it up by pretending that modern science is reconcilable with it. But the Freethinker is too well-drilled nowadays to be caught with chaff of that kind. He has learned to call things by their proper names—though sometimes they are not fit for publication.

ALAN TYNDAL.

Correspondence.

SIR,—The following is an extract copy of an announcement taken from a blackboard in the window of a small gospel mission hall in the Maryhill district, Glasgow:—

We beg to announce that this Mission Hall will be closed after the 28th day of May. Although this is the case, it is not because the gospel has lost its power or that sinners will not come in, but because of the lack of support from professing Christians.

Our books are open for inspection, and we thank God we have served Him and not men. We intend to have kitchen meetings in some house, which will be announced later. Meantime we crave your support, and thank you for past help.—JOHN McLELLAN.

F.J.D.

Obituary.

MR. H. TOPP.

With deep regret, we have to report the death of Mr. H. Topp, of Edinburgh. The deceased died on Monday, March 25, after a prolonged illness. The funeral, which was private, was at Glasgow Crematorium, on Thursday, March 28. Mr. Topp was an ardent Secularist, and did all he could to propagate the “best of causes,” and his death at a comparatively early age is a great loss to the Movement for intellectual emancipation. We cannot write here of the loss suffered by his wife and family. Only those who knew him intimately can realize how terrible a blow his death has been, and we offer our most sincere sympathy to his wife and son and daughter.

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Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON.  
INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin—“The Solar Element in Christianity.” (Lantern Illustrations.)

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, Prof. T. E. Gregory, D.Sc.—“The Outlook for British Industry.”

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree Hotel, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Capt. Vincent—“Can Religion be Secularized?” Social and Dance at 101 Tottenham Court Road, on April 11, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s.

OUTDOOR.

PULHAM 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.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart, 3.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 7.0, Messrs. Hart and Le Maine. Every Wednesday at 7.30, Mr. James Hart. Every Friday at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The Freethinker is on sale outside the Park at all our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. A. H. Hyatt.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Annual General Meeting.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Milton Hall, Broad Street, Pendleton): Saturday, April 6, at 3 p.m. Annual Meeting of Branch. (Swinton, Pendlebury, and Walkden trams from Deansgate pass the Hall.)

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (4 Swilly Road, Devonport): Tuesday, April 9, at 7.30, Members' Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

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

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

BOOKS WANTED.

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