

# LETTING OUT THE CAT.

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## Views and Opinions.

### Letting Out the Cat.

So many clergymen have of late told their brother parsons that they must speak the truth about religion, it almost seems fitting that above every Church meeting should be erected the banner, "We are all liars." For when truth-speaking is general and habitual, the appeal to speak the truth is quite unnecessary. Granted that the appeal is a "sign of grace," the inference from it would appear to be inescapable. Here, for example, is the most recent exhortation to clergymen to tell the truth in the future. It is taken from the Presidential Address delivered by the Rev. Rhondda Williams, before the Congregational Union:—

I think the Church has a great deal to learn from scientists in regard to reverence for truth. In Church thinking and speaking, there is far too much prudence, tactical care, and worldly wisdom, too much playing for safety . . . "Safety first" is a good motto for motorists, but it is the damnation for the Christian ministry. If we were always willing to imperil our status, our prestige or our privileges, rather than imperil the truth, the ministry would be different in a short time. We must have the courage to think honestly and to speak frankly.

It might be in order—I am not so sure of its value—for a prison chaplain to address his congregation on the importance of their not stealing, or fighting. Their past invites it, and there would be no sense in his exhortation unless it did. And there is really no sense whatever in Mr. Rhondda Williams inviting his brother clergy to tell the truth, not to be afraid to look at scientists and learn from them reverence for truth, unless the history of the clergy up to date warrant the appeal. Put in another form, what Mr. Williams is saying is, "Let us clergymen have as much regard for the truth as scientists, let us think less of what we

may lose by telling the truth, and tell it. Let us get away from our past and try to be honest and tell our congregations what we believe, for up to the present we have believed one thing and said another." That is actually the gist of the address, and a more damning indictment of a body of men was never publicly made. The worst of it is that Mr. Rhondda Williams' own importance in the matter lies entirely in the fact that he has rounded on his "pals," and by turning King's evidence hopes to escape condemnation. And then some people tell me that I am too severe in my criticism of Christianity and its influence! All I can say is that I do not play for "Safety First."

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### An Indictment.

Take this further indictment of the quality of the clergy who have their mouths full of the cant of "Righteousness":—

I have maintained for at least thirty-five years that the framework of the old theology has gone to pieces, and I feel quite sure that whatever the religion of the future will be, it will not be traditional Christianity—i.e., a system of doctrine—though many valuable things in the tradition will, of course, be conserved. Indeed, traditional Christianity has already ceased to be the religion of a good many of our churches, and of a still larger number of our ministers.

If that is correct, and I do not question it, the only comment I need make is that the large number of ministers who do not believe in traditional Christianity have not openly and honestly told their congregation they have ceased to believe in traditional Christianity.

If they do not actually preach what they believe to be a lie, they act it—that is they encourage those who follow them to go on believing, because they think their minister believes. And whether one tells a lie or acts a lie is mainly a question of courage. Courage explains the first, cowardice the second. The brave man takes care that those who hear him shall not mistake his meaning; the coward salves his conscience by formally stating the truth, but in such a way that he knows his hearers will not tumble to his "reserved" meaning. In ordinary life there is no hesitation in calling this kind of thing dishonest. In Christian theology it is called "refined spiritual power," or "advanced theology," or "the expression of a deeply religious nature."

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### Christianity—True and False.

Naturally a great many of Mr. Rhondda Williams' clerical brethren will resent his placing them before the world as either ignorant or dishonest; and I can well imagine the retort some of them might make. They might say that if traditional—that is historic

Christianity is not true, then *Christianity* is not true, for Christianity means historic Christianity. What other Christianity is there? What is the "testimony" of the saints, the evidences that have been paraded of the power and truth of Christianity, but so many alleged proofs of the truth of historic Christianity? Mr. Williams says that without "using obsolete beliefs and theories which have become untenable, we are still in possession of a glorious gospel for the world." I have no desire at the moment to discuss that, but only to point out that however "glorious" that gospel may be, if it is not connected with Christianity then it is not Christianity, as people have always understood it. Mr. Williams may urge that he is giving a better interpretation of Christianity, and a truer one. Well, that may be, but it is not the point in dispute, which is that by Christianity the world of believers has always understood a certain set of doctrines held by this or that Church, or by all Churches in common. If Mr. Williams does not accept these doctrines, if he really wishes the Church to learn from scientists a reverence for truth, then let him act as they act, and when a doctrine is given up, say so, and not pretend that he is holding the same "truth" under another name. When scientists accepted Copernicanism they did not say that they held a new interpretation of the Ptolemaic theory, they said plainly it was untrue. When they gave up the belief in the special creation of species and accepted evolution, they did not say they held the same belief in a new form, they said species had not originated by special creation, and the world had been in error. The man who has a genuine reverence for truth, and wishes to inspire others to have it too, should be built of sterner stuff. Otherwise the method reminds one too much of the politician who held out one hand to the audience and said, "This hand has never accepted a bribe,"—but kept the other hand behind his back.

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#### A Bogus Claim.

Mr. Williams says that if he "no longer believes in the fall of Adam, I have still got to face the fact of sin in human life." I am afraid that Mr. Williams is not nearly so emancipated as he imagines—it is still a case of the one-eyed man being monarch in the kingdom of the blind. It is quite easy to poke fun at the use of the words "sin" and "sinners" in the mouths of Christians. As Mr. Williams says they are unreal. The Christian who tells you that he is a prince of sinners, would punch your head if you said his appearance bore the statement. The man who goes to church on Sunday and sings "False and full of sin, I am," will, on Monday, go after a job, produce vouchers as to his unimpeachable character, and would enter an action against any paper which said that he was false and full of sin. But if Mr. Williams gives up traditional Christian doctrine, he might just as well give up the notion of "sin" altogether, for "sin" is a purely theological conception, it has no necessary ethical implication, but stands for the action of man in relation to a God. The Westminster Confession is nearer the truth than is Mr. Williams, when it says that things may be virtuous in an ethical sense, and yet be of the nature of sin if they do not proceed from a right relation with God. If Mr. Williams still believes in theological sin, then he is not so free from traditional theology as he thinks. If he does not believe in theological sin, why not say so plainly, so that his meaning cannot be mistaken?

A sample of Mr. Williams' curious mental state may be found in his handling of the "Fall." He chides his brother ministers by saying that "If we

take the Genesis account of Adam and Eve to be a Legend, are we still to go on talking about the Fall of Man without explaining that we mean something different from what used to be meant by that phrase?" But if something different is meant, then the same thing is not meant, and if it is not the same thing why not use another term altogether? Mr. Williams does point out, with regard to the Fall, that it would be better to drop this phrase altogether. Why may it not be equally useful with all the other Christian phrases and symbols? Why continue to read into Christian teachings, meanings and implications that were never there, and shutting one's eyes to the fact that most of those who hear them and use them are having a false meaning of things perpetuated? Are we not dangerously near the position of either acting a lie, when we have not the courage to speak one?

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#### Indicting the Clergy.

Here is another passage worth citing:—

Men, to-day, want their religious teaching above board, as scientific teaching is, and until it is so, the Church will not win the confidence of men who have been influenced by the scientific temper and habit. And we must remember that multitudes, who know little or nothing of science, as such, are nevertheless living in an atmosphere created by it.

That, incidentally, is a complete reply to the old argument that the goodness of Freethinkers is to be accounted for by the fact that they are born of Christian parents and have grown up in a Christian environment. The truth is that improvement in both morals, and a love of truth belong to the scientific age and not to the religious one. Christianity in the whole of its history never seriously inculcated the love of truth. It talked a deal about the necessity of believing Christian truth, but that only meant accepting the Church teaching as the truth, and the evil of questioning it. But it understood nothing, and taught nothing of the scientific teaching that human life could only be made better by finding out what was the truth irrespective of the direction in which it might be found. No scientific teacher to-day would dare to stand up at a meeting of the British Association and tell its members that the time had come when they ought to tell the truth. It would rightly be taken as an insult, and the reply would be that the principle had always been taken for granted. But a parson can get up and tell his brethren that it is time they began to tell their followers the truth, and no one seems to take that as a reflection upon the clergy. All they discuss is whether they ought to do it, and whether a parson is acting loyally to his order when he offers such unusual advice.

Personally I do not mean that all clergymen are liars. I believe that large numbers of them are stupid enough to believe what they say. But I do believe (in some cases I know) that large numbers of them do not believe when they teach. I know also that there is no profession in the country where truth-speaking is so little regarded as among the clergy. No one expects a parson to tell the truth about religion, he is only expected to say certain things concerning it. I do not think that Mr. Rhondda Williams expects that his brother clergymen will even now speak the truth. He is only offering the advice that it is time they were more truthful than they have been. And they may reply that if a parson is to import into the pulpit the canons of truth-speaking current in science there will soon be no pulpits for them to occupy.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## "Bounded in a Nutshell."

"Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of thy mind, for the soul is dyed by the thought."—*Marcus Aurelius*.

"Christians are intellectually lazy folks. They put out their thinking as they do their washing.—*J. K. Sykes*.

THE REV. J. SCOTT LIDGETT is a Free Church veteran, and has been President of the National Free Church Council, and was leader of the Progressive Party in the London County Council for ten years. He is a hard-boiled Wesleyan, and his views on current religiosity, or the want of it, are of some little interest. Writing, recently, in a daily paper, on the subject of family religion he has some illuminating things to say.

According to this Wesleyan oracle, "there is enough in the state both of religion and of the family to awaken concern." These two great institutions threaten to start on the perilous road that leads to the "demnition bow-wows," as Mr. Mantalini called it. Unless, of course, the brave Wesleyan ministers stop the awful declension. This is news indeed, for it serves to show that there are still some Wesleyan pastors who are not standing for Parliament in the Socialist interest, and who are not fascinated by the prospect of £400 per annum, a free railway pass, and the letters "M.P." after their names.

Religion, which means in this country, the Christian Religion in its kaleidoscopic varieties, is no longer a matter of serious concern to the majority of people. It has some really terrible rivals, "ranging from the cinema, the club, and the sports, up to continued education and politics." These are Dr. Lidgett's own words, but one would hardly credit the sentence to an Englishman. "The sports" is a very Frenchy way of describing such things as cricket and football, racing, motoring and golf. And the expression "the club" almost suggests that Dr. Lidgett took his walks abroad on "the sweet, shady side of Pall Mall," and not in "London's central roar." Pubs, not clubs, used to be the alternative to places of worship, and sturdy old Nonconformists used to describe them as "the Devil's Churches." The pubs are still there, and are fuller than ever, which is more than can be said of the churches and chapels, and other abodes of the intellectually lost.

Dr. Lidgett is "bounded in a nutshell." Not only has he overlooked the "pubs," but he has forgotten the theatre, which has been the rival of religion for centuries, and was regarded by the Puritans as an enemy of the worst kind.

All these factors, including "continued education," combine to make the home "a mere feeding and sleeping place," and so bye-bye to family religion. There is, however, no reason for the dear clergy to resign their pastorates, and to begin studying Karl Marx's "Capital," and Smiles' "self help." There is still the school teacher, who, willy nilly, is regarded as the second line of defence when the Black Army is hard pressed. Delightful, is it not? Not for the school-teachers, but for the priests. For half a century the teachers in the national schools have been contented to be the priests' catspaws, ready to rake the chesnuts from the fire when necessary for their "pastors and masters."

The Christian home has given way to the "ramshackle Sunday," declares Dr. Lidgett. "With all its drawbacks, how beautiful the Christian home was." He recalls its principal features, including the daily family prayers, the hymn-singing, the reading aloud of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and other less fascinating devotional works. This interesting piece of autobiography shows that Dr. Lidgett was

reared in a sheltered home, and helps to explain his provinciality. Working-class folks have no leisure for these things, and most fathers would use fearful language if they had to give up reading *The Daily Trombone* in order to conduct family prayers. This is far too grave a demand upon a busy man's time, especially if he wishes to "spot the winner" before sprinting for the last workman's train.

The problem, according to Dr. Lidgett, is "how to get back such family religion." The ramshackle rush and disorder of many a home is fatal to Christianity. Of course it is; and it is fatal to so many things of so much more importance than religion. Owing to economic conditions millions of our fellow countrymen are living in a state that should cause sardines in a tin to go on strike. What sort of home, Christian or otherwise, is possible if folks live nineteen in a room with lodgers in the cupboards. This problem will only be solved on purely secularistic lines by the provision of houses at rents within easy reach of ordinary citizens. Working people often have to pay a third of their income in rent. And Dr. Lidgett, and thousands of other priests, pretend to find a solution of such a serious matter by quoting pietist and quietest nonsense from an ancient fetish-book. As a journalist, I once intervened an alleged centenarian. "Granny," I started, "they tell me you're a hundred years old." Yes, so I am, my boy, but I feel a thousand." Dr. Lidgett makes one feel a thousand years old by repeating the same old bluff that I heard when I was a small boy, and which has been applied by preists to every crisis, large or small, during the whole of my life.

The true solution is that people should be reminded "that religion should mean something, nay everything, and that it should be definitely Christian," says the sapient Dr. Lidgett. "Codlin's the friend, not Short." Let me assure Dr. Lidgett that folks are so reminded. Fifty thousand professional soul-savers in this country do nothing else, and there are as many half-timers and amateurs who do their worst in our open spaces with harmoniums and a few lady friends. The gospel message is sounded loudly enough and often enough. If people no longer heed, it is due to the unpleasant fact that the message itself is out of date, and that the gospel has been tried and found wanting.

For centuries the Christian religion meant everything in this country. The old cathedrals and old churches prove this beyond cavil and beyond dispute. Yet people were no better than they were under the Druid and other superstitions which preceded it. Men murdered each other in the name of religion. Catholic burnt Protestant, Protestant murdered Catholic, and both killed the heretic. Old women, the most helpless of their sex, were done to death as witches. Indeed, Christians only stopped the judicial murder of infidels when Freethinkers became too numerous for that special mark of Christian charity. They would resume the pleasant pastime to-morrow morning if they had sufficient power. Even in our time nineteen centuries of the religion of love never prevented Alfred Dreyfus being sent to Devil's Island as a convict, or Francesco Ferrer being shot like a rabbit at Barcelona. Dreyfus's crime was that he was a Jew, and Ferrer's chief offence that he started a school without the sanction of the priests.

This country is still priest-ridden. Even in the Socialist ranks there are far too many ex-Nonconformist ministers, which partially explains why Socialism is as innocuous to vested interests as the Boy Scouts, or the Girl Guides. Procrastination is not identical with progress, even advocated by professional spell-binders. It reminds me of a story of

an old lady who, wishing to have the tail of her fox-terrier docked, took the puppy to a veterinary surgeon, who also happened to be a blacksmith. "Will it hurt him?" she tearfully asked, "Not much, ma'am," said the vet. "Couldn't you take it off a bit at a time?" ventured the lady. Certainly, a series of painful episodes. It is such mistaken tenderness that is such an obstacle to the solution of so many problems affecting the well-being of the nation, and the happiness of millions. Priests, of all denominations, pretend to be wizards. They are nothing of the kind. They are simply conjurers with no rabbits and no hat. They lag superfluous upon the stage of our natural life.

MIMNERMUS.

## Early Man and His Art.

REPTILIAN life long reigned supreme upon our planet, in the lakes and streams as well as on land. But the sluggish and poor-brained reptiles were slowly eclipsed by the genesis and development of more active and intelligent mammalian organisms.

Terrestrial surroundings promoted air-breathing and blood of a higher temperature. The brain became relatively larger, and more complex and efficient. The oriparous or egg-laying reptile was challenged by creatures who displayed a tendency towards viviparous, and ultimately intra-uterine development of offspring.

This contest continued for untold ages, but the increased wariness, intelligence, and powers of locomotion of the mammals secured the victory. The evolution of the two main divisions of mammalian life—the herbivorous and the carnivorous—subsequently created a ruthless conflict among the mammals themselves.

Man's early ancestors were weak in comparison with the fierce and sanguinary beasts of prey, and were driven to the forest trees for safety from attack. The struggle for existence was still so keen that an ampler mental efficiency, and the adaptation of the fore-feet into organs of manipulation became imperative.

Apes and monkeys are arboreal animals all the world over. With the falling temperature which heralded the coming of the Glacial Period, the primates that once roamed through the forests of Europe were compelled either to migrate southwards, or adapt themselves to the more inclement conditions. In these harsh circumstances many perished from the earth. All that now survive are confined to the warmer regions of the globe, and even these are a rapidly dwindling race.

Old Stone Age humanity, when we first encounter it in Europe, was indifferently armed, and poorly protected against a bleak climate constantly worsening. Game and other provender was fairly abundant. But man in many respects remained an animal who hunted others, and was sometimes hunted himself. The sternness of life's battle compelled him to become both watchful and wary. The use of his hands, eyes, and ears was incessantly needful. His more varied experiences tended to strengthen his brain capacity. Observation and experiment treasured in memory, then, as now, proved indispensable aids to mental efficiency. The agile and sharp-witted were the winners in life's race.

With the every-day happenings of life he became familiar, and probably rudely interpreted them in terms of causation. Simple things might be, and were controlled. But countless phenomena were entirely beyond his understanding or control. All the higher animals manifest fear or curiosity when any-

thing strange occurs. With his developing powers of perception, primitive man must often have wondered, and even speculated concerning storm and sunshine, fire and flood, the inconstant moon, life and death, with innumerable other experiences.

Fear and wonder combined to create the first supernatural things. Magic and religion probably developed side by side. Charms to procure game and dances to secure rain or sunshine seem connected with sympathetic magic. The ritual in our Churches to-day is magical in its origin and observance.

It is practically certain that early savage art was associated with magical ceremonies. Most of the animals painted on the walls of Palæolithic caves are those hunted by primitive man. So far, very few representations of the human form have been discovered in early mural art. In what is, perhaps, a later Neolithic rock painting at Cogul, a bevy of females is shown who seem to be officiating in some magical or religious function. Amulets also occur.

Early man frequently chose rock shelters provided with a southern aspect as a domicile. Accumulations of kitchen-refuse sometimes mark the site of these rude habitations. Buried in these remains are to be found various examples of the *art mobilier* of the period. The artistic efforts of the savage were not restricted to the adornment of caves. Perforated teeth and shells, ivory plaques, bone tools and weapons—in fine, almost all articles of domestic utility proclaim the artistic powers of primitive man. Several sculptures and bas-reliefs bear traces of colour. Indeed, the Venus of Willendorf, and the Venus of Laussel show the marks of red ochre. This colouring substance may have possessed some magical significance as red ochre was used to colour the bones of the dead.

The outstanding stock of the Aurignacian Period of the Stone Age was the large-brained and artistically endowed Cro-Magnon race. They were a hardy hunting people, accustomed to an open-air existence, and success in the chase was essential to their survival.

Salomon Reinach and other archæologists contend that the cave paintings of Cro-Magnon times possess a magical significance. The animal forms portrayed in some of these pictures show the arrows of the hunter imbedded in their sides. This is thought to have formed part of the race's magic ritual intended to make certain their capture for food.

Now, many of these dark and dismal caves were certainly not the dwellings of the hunter and his companions. They carry the solemn and shadowy atmosphere to the sacred temple. In addition to the pictorial art, there is sometimes a series of signs and symbols, whose meaning we cannot do more than conjecture. Nor are all the objects represented things of beauty. Burkitt, who has very considerable experience of cave excavations and explorations, states in his *Prehistory*, that: "When the explorer examines the frieze of hands at Castello, and even more the mutilated hands at Gurgas, he will have difficulty in explaining them under the heading of *joie de vivre*, or of decoration, and when he comes to sit on the throne of Pasiega, which is partly natural, but partly artificial, on which an implement—a rough disc made of limestone, it is true, but still an implement—was found, and looks on the surrounding decorations, if he has any emotion in him he must feel the presence of the sorcerer who must have sat there in the dim ages past."

Moreover, although we possess abundant evidence of primitive man's dwellings near the entrances to caves, there is no sign of his having ever inhabited their black and dismal depths. Apart from the mournful surroundings the danger of being entrapped

by human enemies, as well as the risk of encountering predatory beasts, must have precluded their use as habitations. Even in the most inaccessible and incommensurable caverns the walls are adorned with symbols and drawings.

A capacious chamber in the cave of El Pendo has yielded proofs of human occupation through several centuries. Yet the cave walls are bare, while at the cave's extremity there is a labyrinth, and on groping along this in the darkness one reaches at last a small panel decorated with birds. The surroundings are stated to be more supernatural than secular, and there is not the slightest suggestion that this fissure was ever inhabited by man. It is certainly striking that palimpsests constantly occur in the decorated caverns, "Animals were painted and engraved over each other, no attention being paid to the species or the orientation of the figure underneath."

The theory of sympathetic magic best explains the facts. This conceded, it logically follows that the artistic faculty, whatever its genesis, was deepened and developed in the past by the economic or utilitarian factors of life.

The Cro-Magnon people were apparently the European successors of the much more brutal and primitive Neanderthal race. They were a tall and large brained stock, and appear to have migrated from the East.

The Cro-Magnon artists lived at least 20,000 years ago. As Professor Tyler states in his *New Stone Age in Northern Europe*, "In this remote time . . . there sprang up an art never since surpassed in its own field except, perhaps, by that of the Greeks. Their bone implements are adorned with the most lifelike carvings or sculptures . . . These people must have had a high and a keen appreciation of the beauty of form and proportion. All this artistic movement must have had its source in new ideas and conditions, springing from a thinking as well as a feeling and observing mind. They also frequently buried their death, decorated with strings of perforated shells, and surrounded by flints or sometimes by a layer of red earth or ore. With them were the bones of food animals, and the flint weapons needed for the journey into or use in the life beyond."

T. F. PALMER.

## Books and Life.

If an *Apologia* was needed for this series it would read on these lines—the best in thought found by the searcher was brought and crystallized in these columns for your delight. And then the querulous might say we do not wish to be delighted—find us something to eat. Again, those who were delighted might reply that they found subsistence in the objects of their delight, but, in any case, if the present writer has planted his flag too high, it were a good fault to have a high standard. *The Cutting of an Agate*, by W. B. Yeats, published in 1919 was read with enjoyment in the year 1920, when visions of the new world were about, and French and Belgian agriculturists were scratching their shins on countless miles of barked wire left in the boxing ring by Europe. This volume of short essays, frequently reaching the point of rumination with the author, contains some extremely fine thoughts, well expressed, and as far as a writer's art permits, they were carved in clear and beautiful prose. The memory of the book compelled a second reading—more critical than the first—but this test ratified our first impression. Mr. Yeats lives in more worlds than one in his copiously rich store of memories and experience, there is "attic salt" in nearly all that he writes, and one admirable sentence demonstrates that he has been hard on himself:—

"I have had to learn how hard, in one who lives where forms of expression and habits of thought have

been born, not for the pleasure of begetting, but for the public good, is that purification from insincerity, vanity, malignity, arrogance, which is the discovery of style." This, my young masters is for you; for you who are to carry on the tradition of the fair play of Freethought, and to receive your reward—a handful of dry oats. Is that all? Scarcely, for there are other rewards which are not in accordance with the world as it goes. And it is for you to discover them. There are many moods in this volume, there is occasional obscurity, profundity, diversity—but the reader will be richer for having given his eyes and ears to the melodious prose of Mr. W. B. Yeats in *The Cutting of an Agate*. The publishers are Macmillan & Co., Ltd., and as the author is writing as though for eternity, there is no doubt that copies of the book are still available.

Interlude. Two ticket-collectors at a certain big London terminus were talking over the heads and between the bodies of those who produce evidence that they have not travelled free. Here is the message picked up: He said to me: "What are you reading Alf?" and I said "The Forsyte Saga."

Flattening out all the corrugated iron in the world is a big job. In a somewhat lesser degree of magnitude, Mr. G. W. Russell, Editor of *The Irish Statesman*, with which is incorporated *The Irish Homestead*, is admirably doing his share to make Ireland an instrumentalist in the Concert of Europe. All men who, in various directions are striving to make the world less of a menagerie will give him their good wishes. In value for money, and in comparison with English weeklies, his paper will stand a rigid test. Our blue pencil has been busy in the issue for April 15, and there must be something in the Irish literary air for the editor's "Notes and Comments" sparkle with what to us should be every writer's aim—brilliant common sense. He writes:—

We must come to a stage in human evolution where all labour must be intellectualized by the application of science or invention, or we will have created a very dissatisfied humanity by educating everybody beyond their work.

Again:—

The spirit of snobbery is behind a great deal of emigration from rural Ireland.

Also again, it is pointed out that the United States and Germany have taken valuable orders from Russia, and that British exports have lost about twenty-five millions each year for four years. It is caustically added "It may be doubted whether Sir Joynson-Hicks' services as a statesman are worth that amount of money to his country." Well, at any rate, this gentleman has drawn attention to a book that has probably been provoked by the killing off of a million men; the subject matter is common knowledge to those of our academics. In the *Irish Statesman*, the correspondence columns are a sheer joy, and it is characterized with a breezy frankness; the book reviews are well done, and the verse contribution is on a high level. R. M. Fox, gives voice to carefully balanced views on negro poetry and the following extract may find favour with those who look on colour as accidental."

So detached are these negro writers, that not long ago several joined in announcing that they were not negro writers, but writers who happened to be negroes.

This gives them the right of entry to the Republic of Letters. Under the wise guidance of Mr. G. W. Russell, who is also known as *Æ*, the *Irish Statesman* is definitely standing for something, and thus escapes Dante's condemnation to the Inferno where there were the unhappy people, who never were alive—never awakened to take any part either in good or evil, or to care for anything but themselves.

A trifling coincidence made companions in travelling of a little blue book, *A Guide to Spinoza*, together with a copy of the *Times Literary Supplement* of March 28. These, with our issue of the *Freethinker*, March 31, were mental fare for the holidays. Under the heading of "Discipline and Standards," the writer in the *Times*

*Literary Supplement*, draws from Matthew Arnold's Notebook, and quite a good universal article is the result. As a shoemaker, and believing in leather, the following note from a letter of Arnolds evoked a Free-thinker's Amen:—

The importance of reading, not slight stuff to get through the time, but the best that has been written, forces itself upon me more and more every year I live: it is living in good company, the best company, and people are generally quite keen enough, or too keen, about doing that, yet they will not do it in the simplest and best manner by reading.

Our ticket-collector, then, may laugh at our *caste* system if he continues on his present course, and eventually grows out of Galsworthy with his collection of wooden-headed aristocrats, food, dress and property. The writer of the essay, "Discipline and Standard," mentions the "*Wisdom of Solomon*"; Mr. Chapman Cohen, in his weekly "Views and Opinions," remarks on the *wisdom* there was in reading an old book every time a new one came out, and in touching Spinoza one receives the impression that wisdom was the goal he reached. The late Prof. W. H. Hudson advised a reading of Omar Khayyám after one had read the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the old tentmaker has been in our pocket almost as much as it has been on the bookshelf. Wisdom, during Spinoza's time, was caught by him in a noose of light; he embraced it and left it for us in his works that influenced Goethe and Lessing. If anyone contends that all wisdom is oral, Spinoza refutes this. But, the apprehending of wisdom is perhaps not so easy as taking the Kingdom of Heaven by force—whatever that may mean. In Spinoza's words, "all excellent things are as difficult as they are rare."

WILLIAM REPTON.

### The Pioneer.

(DEDICATION OF "NATURAL GENESIS.")

At times I had to tread  
Where not a star was found  
To lead or light me, overhead;  
Nor footprint on the ground.  
I toiled among the sands  
And stumbled with my feet;  
Or crawled and climbed with knees and  
Some future path to beat. [hands,  
I had to feel the flow  
Of waters whelming me;  
No foothold to be touched below,  
No shore around to see.  
Yet, in my darkest night,  
And farthest drift from land,  
There dawned within the guiding-light;  
I felt the unseen hand.  
Year after year went by,  
And watchers wondered when  
The diver, to their welcoming cry  
Of joy, would rise again.  
And still rolled on Time's wave  
That whitened as it passed;  
The ground is getting toward the grave  
That I have reached at last.  
Child after Child would say—  
"Ah, when this work is done,  
Father will come with us and play—"  
'Tis done. And playtime's gone.  
A willing slave for years,  
I strove to set men free;  
Mine were the labours, hopes, and fears,  
Be theirs the victory.

—Gerald Massey.

When Casaubon, on his first visit to Paris, was shown over the great hall of the Sorbonne, he was told by his guide: "This is where the theologians have disputed for five hundred years." "Indeed!" was the reply; "and pray what have they settled?"

### Freethought Flashes.

Is the Bible the Word of God? Consider the solemn way in which that question has been asked and the equally solemn way in which it has been answered. But what, in the name of all that is reasonable, can be meant by it? I may be able to form an opinion whether a particular piece of writing has proceeded from the pen of Shakespeare or from that of Hail Caine—although the latter may have his doubts. But this opinion is based upon a notion that I have some appreciation of the style of Shakespeare and Caine. But what can anyone do with a question about God's authorship? We do not know anything he has written with which the Bible can be compared for style, or for matter. We cannot tell what a god's work is like, we cannot say how a god should write. The question and answer are both excellent examples in confusion. The believer says this is God's word because it is wonderful, the unbeliever says it is not God's work because it is not wonderful enough, or accurate enough, or original enough. But as he does not know whether a god's work is ever original, or wonderful, or accurate, the affirmation and the negation are equally futile and equally foolish. The truth is that the unbeliever is carrying into his criticism of the word of God, ideas which belong to the belief in God. He has not sufficiently liberated his mind from theological methods of reasoning to realize that the proper reply to the believer is "Don't talk nonsense."

I do not wonder that Christians do not like to see the other side state its case. Imagine what the Bible would read like if the Devil had been allowed to write one half and God the other half!

The man who thinks he has demonstrated the existence of thought without a brain has gone some distance towards proving the existence of a brain without thought.

Good advice is never wasted. Those who get it usually put it away very carefully lest they should diminish its value by use.

There are a few books published that one sets on one side to read and re-read. But the greater number one reads are set aside.

Merely to know the thoughts of great men is of no particular advantage to anyone. The important thing is to re-think them.

Celibacy has been defined as a practice of the clergy, by which they promise to be content with the wives of other people.

Treason is a political term for one who is loyal to an ideal different from our own.

If other people possessed just about half the virtues we give ourselves the world would be full of good men and women.

A truth is seldom wholly true when everyone accepts it.

Life is too full of tragedy to be taken very seriously.

"I cannot understand," said the vicar, "why so many of our congregation go straight from church to the public-house."

"Oh, sir," explained his none-too-serious curate, "that is what is known as 'the thirst after righteousness.'"

## Acid Drops.

For variegated silliness—the kind that can be stated in a sentence, but which takes a column to unravel—Mr. James Douglas is easily first. Here are two of his weekly nonsensicals, dated May 12. We can, he says, lose a leg or our hearing or our sight without losing our personality. One wonders whether he really thinks that a man can become blind or deaf without having his personality altered to some extent? If he does, we advise him to look about him for awhile, and take a little while off writing in order to do some thinking. For the rest, we would advise him of the man who tried to see how little his horse could live on by reducing the amount of his food a little each day. And just when he had got down to nothing at all the horse died. Mr. Douglas will surely see evidence in this, that food is quite unnecessary, if only one can break animals of the habit of eating.

Here is gem number two. He says he can think of a future state in which the brain, the heart, the stomach, the eyes, the ears, the hands, and the feet will be remembered as delightful jest and jokes. Therefore he can think of man living in an after world. Delightful. But we wonder what is left for Mr. Douglas to think about concerning a man when he has put on one side all the physical structure of man? Mr. Douglas has been reading about Lewis Carroll's Cheshire, which, it will be remembered faded slowly away until there was nothing left of it but a grin. I have not the slightest doubt but that Mr. Douglas can think of a number of people removing the Blackwall Tunnel and leaving nothing but the hole. How fortunate the readers of the *Sunday Express* are to have Mr. Douglas for a weekly treat.

A writer said recently that the English people are too reluctant to make changes; having slipped into a rut, they make a virtue of continuing in it. That, he said, is a mistake. No one need be surprised at this. The Christian Church dominated the English for a few hundred years. And the Church, as most of us know, encouraged people to cling to petrified beliefs. This bred a mental habit antagonistic to change and progress. But very few of our publicists have courage enough to say so.

The work of the Primitive Methodist Missionary Society in Africa has, says the Secretary, been very satisfactory. He has to record, however, one doleful circumstance, namely, that some churches have suffered through the activities of the Roman Catholics, "but the bulk of the members have remained wonderfully loyal." Jesus has a lot to answer for. If only he had made his teaching so clear that there could be but one interpretation of it, there would be no Roman Catholics pinching another sect's converts. There would be but one Church preaching exactly the same doctrines. If that had been the fact, the world might have been won for Christ centuries ago—perhaps. Be that as it may, Jesus certainly ought to come again, to clear up the unholy muddle his errors of omission are responsible for.

Writing about United Methodist Missionary problems in China, the Rev. W. H. Grist, says that trained Chinese preachers are too few, and the Chinese themselves are reluctant to take on the job. Hence, the immediate task is to train men and women for this work. But here, again, says Mr. Grist:—

Our middle schools are in the difficult position of registering, and so, having religious teaching excluded from the Government curriculum, or of having their pupils refused their certificates and admission to higher national institutions of culture. The Christian religion, if taught, will have to be outside the curriculum, and attendance at religious teaching will be optional. The missionary teachers themselves will be subordinate to Chinese principals.

It is, of course, very wrong and unfair of the Chinese Government to insist on real education being given in schools run by missionaries, and to make rules to ensure this being the fact. Still, there is some excuse for the Government. The Ministry of Education pre-

fers wholly educated Chinese to half-educated native Christians. The former are more valuable to the State. We commend this point of view to the British Board of Education.

Reviewing a recent book on Modernism, a writer in a pious weekly says: "Naturally it is controversial. For that reason it is stimulating. One may disagree with much of it and yet benefit from reading it." Controversial books and articles, then, are beneficial and stimulating. If the reviewer and his editor truly believe this is so, and have the courage of their convictions, why don't they openly support the repeal of the Blasphemy Acts? Why don't they recommend readers to delve into some Freethought literature? And why not agitate for the lifting of the boycott on Freethought writers in the general Press? The reply to these questions will arrive with the next blue moon.

We have received a circular advertising a book by the Rev. Ivor Macleod, *Old Views and New Visions*, which does really give us some interesting news about Jesus Christ. Mr. Macleod suggests that over the shop in which Jesus worked as a carpenter may have hung the sign:—

Jesus, Son of Joseph. All kinds of carpentry done here.

So far as the New Testament is concerned, we have always gathered that Jesus worked with his mother's husband, "Joseph," and in that case, assuming that Joseph was a smart advertiser, the notice may have read "Joseph, husband of the mother of Jesus. Carpentry done here; all planks that are not long enough, stretched by Jesus to the requisite size. No extra charge for miracles."

Having adopted the signboard, Mr. Macleod gives us the following information about Jesus. Jesus, he says, probably undertook the general work of carpentry:—

His methods were those of an able workman and a fair man. He did sound work and charged a fair price, but he never profited . . . His order book was always full . . . He met his liabilities promptly, and expected his own accounts to be met with equal honesty. Sometimes, when the day's work was done, He would call on some old neighbour and stop a leak in the roof, or drop in to inquire for some old woman, and incidentally mend a chair . . . It was never known that his workers went on strike . . . If they failed to do honest work he did not lose his temper. His shop was a centre of good-will or good-cheer . . . The atmosphere of the place was clean; the very smell of the shavings was fine.

We do not reprint these paragraphs in a scoffing spirit. We say with the utmost solemnity, that they are as near the truth as most of the stories of the life of Jesus we have read, and we commend them to the attention of our pious politicians during the elections. Trade unionists may object to Jesus doing odd-jobs after he had finished his day's work, without getting overtime rates, but as he never discharged a man for doing bad work, the one thing may be set against the other.

A pious reporter having visited Exeter on the Sabbath tells of what he saw and leaves you to draw your own conclusions. These will probably be different from his:—

Weclome rain fell all day. At from 8 to 8.30 in the evening, the winter band concerts being over and open-air meetings impossible, there was nothing to do after Church-time except go home, or hang about the streets. There is usually a gay but not disorderly promenade of young people in the High Street. To-day every doorway that afforded shelter was occupied by idlers. In the centre of the city quite a crowd of men and women were taking shelter. Suddenly they began to run in a body along the street, and curiously following, I found word had gone round that a political meeting was to be held in a hall. The latter was packed by men, women, and children in a jiffy. The speakers said they made no apology for holding the meeting on the Sabbath, because they were out for real Christianity and humanitarianism . . . Yet, if Labour can do this, ought so many Churches to be silent? Shall I often see a crowd scampering out of the wet to a united religious service?

Possibly, if all rational amusement is suppressed by the Churches, and the people are absolutely bored by an ideal Christian Sabbath.

In a recent sermon at Exeter, the Rev. J. H. Cartwright (Methodist) said:—

We get alarmed about modifications and changes in thought. Thank God, there are some elemental things that never change. It is still true that God hears prayer. It is still true that God blesses faith. It is still true that God gives power.

And it is still true that parsons are fed, clothed, and housed by alms, although the Bible does not authorize the practice. But, thank God, more and more people are less inclined to give their hard-earned pence for that purpose. This, however, is one of the changes which we are not alarmed about, although it deeply disturbs the parsons. Prayer has not prevented or altered the change. And the parsons may console themselves with the thought that God always gives petitioners what he thinks is best for them, and ignores requests having an underlying selfish motive.

The Age of Marriage Bill has been passed, and henceforth marriage between children under sixteen years will be illegal. The former legal age—twelve years for a girl and fourteen years for a boy—has been in force for many centuries in Christian England. But, so far as we are aware, the Christian Churches have made no protest against it, nor attempted to get it raised. A fact worth noting is that the reform has occurred at a time when the influence of the Churches is at its lowest, and the people are least influenced by religion. This seems odd, but quite a lot of improvements have been inaugurated in recent years under the same circumstances. Christians seem unable to discover an adequate explanation.

A writer in a religious journal says that minds as well as homes need an occasional "spring clean." There are, he affirms, folk who are not prepared to receive new truth, but stick to worn-out creeds and mouldy platitudes. How true that is! Especially so of the folk who read our contemporary. The most thorough-going mental "spring-clean" for them would be to read the *Freethinker*. This might more than merely dust their old beliefs; it might push them into the dustbin. A result such as that would achieve the most hygiene spring-clean the minds of believers have ever had.

One of the Free Churches is preparing for an open-air mission on Derby Day (June 5), at Epsom. We doubt whether the move is a good one. After painfully realizing the unreliability of tipsters' "certs," many race-goers may be in too suspicious a mood to accept the pious tipsters' certain tip concerning their noble favourite, "Everlasting Bliss."

Mr. Bernard Shaw has sent to the *East End Star*, General Election Housing Number, a special Message. "In a reasonably organized society our houses would be what we should make them. In our very unreasonably organized society we are what our houses make us. Woe to us, therefore, if our houses are not decent and healthy." Noting the type of person produced by the houses of God, we suggest more money be voted to houses for men and less for houses of God. These latter cannot be decent and healthy, since they breed stunted minds that manifest themselves in Sabbatarian prohibitions and Puritan condemnations.

Some readers of *Radio Times* complain of that "Mondayish" feeling, and request some more cheerful items to combat it. Why not attempt to remove the cause? A less dreary Sunday programme would help matters. No one could help feeling depressed on Monday, after a large dose of wireless sermon and a final nightcap of Epilogue.

The Rev. G. E. Thorn, Peckham, is much distressed over the decline of Sabbatarianism. The reason for this is not far to seek. He says that in the last few years the Churches have lost nearly a million and a half Sun-

day school scholars. No wonder the poor man laments. Would not tobaccoists lament if they lost a million and a half of customers, or brewers if they lost a similar number of drinkers? Why should these men sneer at the poor parson? He is as warranted in lamenting when he sees his customers diminishing in numbers, as the others are when their customers decline in numbers. The only distinction is that publicans do not ask the State to help make people drink, nor tobaccoists ask for help to make them smoke. They would, of course, if they had the impudence of the clergy, but that is another question.

Sir Oliver Lodge says he does not expect that things in the next world will be much different from things here. We do not see how they can be if there is another world, and if we are to fit it. But if that is so there does not seem much use in making the change. It seems an awful lot of trouble, and nothing coming from it. Let's hope it won't happen.

A Chester listener-in is deeply grateful for the daily religious service on the wireless. She appreciates the fact that "no one is forgotten in the beautiful prayers." This is very affecting, but what one would like to see would be the comments of the majority of licence-holders on these beautiful prayers. Generally speaking, the man who requires to be continually told what he ought to do is considered something of a nuisance. But where God is concerned no one seems to think it odd that he needs constantly reminding of the job he is supposed to carry out.

Thanksgiving Day for the recovery of the King has not yet been fixed; it has to depend upon when the doctor's will give permission. Until then God has to wait for a vote of thanks to be passed. In any case, we beg to very humbly suggest to the Archbishop, who will, we presume, draw up the prayers, the following skeleton outline of a general prayer:—

O Lord, who in thy infinite wisdom did ignore our prayers for the maintenance of the King's health, but in thy inscrutable planning did inflict him with a grievous illness, so that thou couldst manifest thy power in curing him afterwards, and who in thy gracious wisdom didst permit doctors and nurses to attend the King, so that the wicked might imagine that they effected the cure, we thank thee that thou didst not longer keep the King ill for the purpose of manifesting thy almighty power. We also beseech thee that thou wilt so control our minds that none of us shall think that it might have been better never to have sent him this illness at all, or to give vent to the wicked suggestion that all is not well with thy workings; for we know that all things good and bad come from thee, that nothing can happen against thy will, and therefore we pray that thou wilt fill our hearts with thankfulness, and dull our minds to criticism, so that our praise of thee may continue for ever and ever. Amen.

Another woman has been discovered who for years had passed muster as a man. This one had worked as a labourer, and was known as the husband of another woman. The "wife" explained that she never knew her "husband" was a woman, but had always regarded "him" as the father of her two children. Now that throws new light on the New Testament story. Here are two children who came into the world without a male parent. In the New Testament tale there is only one. But if this can happen in the year 1929, what might not have happened a couple of thousand years ago! We offer the item to Christian evidence writers for their use. I defy any one to prove the wife's story is not true.

A politician says that: "No one has ever yet succeeded in controlling or disciplining the English people." We are not so sure about that. The Church succeeded in doing something remarkably like it. But, we haste to add, the result was by no means beneficial to the physical or mental health of the English. It nearly extinguished free speech and love of mental adventure. A legacy of the Church's control is the intellectual cowardice from which so many of the nation suffer today.



## National Secular Society.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

### 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.

L. WOODFIELD.—We are afraid your desire will not be gratified. Mr. Cohen has neither the desire nor the time to go in for ordinary journalism. Had it been so he would have followed that line years ago. And, generally speaking it requires neither genuine ability, sound knowledge, nor unwearied industry to make oneself a success in that direction. We are glad you like the *Everyman* articles.

L. MERRIFIELD.—We intend dealing with Einstein and his belief in "Spinoza's God" next week. It will be none the worse for the delay.

J. BRIESE.—Thanks. You will see we have dealt with the subject. The speech was a vindication of our position and an impeachment of the clergy.

S. C. JONES.—You will find what you seek in *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviourist*, by J. B. Watson, Lippincot, 10s. 6d.

ALAN TYNDAL.—You will see we had already dealt with the subject. Thanks, all the same.

P. V. MORRIS.—Some people never get rid of their fear of the conventional. Still, we have to take people as we find them, and be as kind as we can to our "weaker brethren."

R. BROWN.—We realize that it is quite useless expecting the B.B.C. to act justly where religion is concerned, but if all Freethinkers were as persistent as you are, concessions might be made to numbers, if not to principle.

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

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. F. Mann, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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.

To-day (May 10) the National Secular Society will hold its Annual Conference in Manchester. The business meetings, morning at 10.30, and afternoon at 2.30, will be held in the Victoria Hotel, Deansgate. The evening demonstration will be held in the Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints, at 7. Luncheon will be provided at the Victoria Hotel at 1 o'clock, and there will be an excursion to Bakewell on Monday, full particulars of which will be announced at the meetings on Sunday. We hope to see a good gathering of members and friends.

Those who are taking our advice with regard to questioning candidates will find two publications that will assist them. The first is Mr. Chapman Cohen's *Blasphemy*, price 3d., where will be found a full statement of the case against the Blasphemy Laws; the other is the excellent *Case for Secular Education*, prepared by Mr. Harry Snell, M.P. The two will be sent post free for 9d. To these we may add, for use on the drink question, Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer*, 2d. This will be found full of information on the relation of Christianity to the drink question. Twelve of these will also be sent post free, and we are glad to see that numbers of our friends are taking dozens for distribution. It is two shillings well invested.

In another part of this paper will be found an advertisement, which aims at forming a Branch of the N.S.S. at Bradford. We hope that Freethinkers in and around Bradford will take the proposal seriously. If there is any response, Mr. Chapman Cohen has promised to go to Bradford in the early autumn and address a couple of meetings.

The General Election is only about a fortnight away, and we earnestly hope that all readers of this paper will get busy asking the proposed questions, and let us know the result without delay. Whether the questions are answered or not, we should be informed.

We said a week or two ago that religion, avowed or unavowed, would play a large part in this general election, and events show we were right. The coquetting of the Labour Party with the Nonconformists has been going on for a long time, and the Liberals have also an eye to the same vote. The Roman Catholic Church is in the field to get concessions with regard to the full maintenance of their schools by the State, with themselves still in complete control. Only the other day the retiring government issued a document which stated its opinion that "the time is ripe" for a settlement of the religious question in the schools on the basis of "a recognition of the vital importance of religious instruction"—which means an end to the present arrangement, the Home Secretary appeals to the Churches and Chapels to help him to retain the Sunday his mother taught him. (What a nuisance some mothers are to their unfortunate sons!) And Mr. Baldwin writes a special article for the *Christian World*, asking for the support of Nonconformists. We do not think that any Prime Minister up to now would have ever done that, but politics seems to get less and less responsible, and anything now seems proper if it will secure power. Unless those who believe that the State should hold aloof from religion busy themselves, we are likely to see a great many things for which we have battled either lost or gravely endangered.

The Failsworth Secular Sunday School is holding a bazaar on October 12, 14 and 15, in aid of its propagandist funds. Donations or gifts from sympathizers will be welcome. These should be sent to Mr. A. Jones, 8 Andrew Street, Failsworth, nr., Manchester.

## Religion: Folkways and Experience.

(Continued from page 301.)

### II.

#### RELIGION IN THE MORES.

RELIGION is a set of folkways and mores working in with the rest of them. This lesser group of mores is under the control of the gross sum of mores yet reacts on them.

Religion is a special system of more. This special system is part of the entire system of mores from which it derives. "The morality of a group at any time is the sum of the taboos and prescriptions in the folkways by which right conduct is defined. Therefore morals can never be intuitive. They are historical, institutional, and empirical." It is the same with religion. "World philosophy, life policy, right, rights, and morality," like religion, "are all products of the folkways. They are reflections on, and generalizations from the experience of pleasure and pain which is won in efforts to carry on the struggle for existence under actual life conditions. The generalizations are very crude and vague in their germinal forms. They are all embodied in folklore, and all our philosophy and science have been developed out of them."<sup>10</sup> Religion has foregone this further development, but has always remained merely part of the mores in actual practice.

Yet religion has a curious place in the mores. "Religion is tradition. It is a product of history, and it is embodied in ritual, institutions, and officials, which are historical. From time to time it is observed that the religious generalizations do not hold true; experience does not verify them. At last scepticism arises and new efforts of philosophy are required to re-establish the religious dogmas or make new compromises. Philosophy appears as a force of revision and revolution . . . This operation may be found in the history of any religion; and it is often repeated. The institutional and traditional religion stands like an inherited and established product; the philosophy appears like a new and destructive element which claims to be reformatory, and may turn out to be such, but which begins by destruction."<sup>11</sup> The mores evolve in the actual society. They change as the society changes. They tend to be part and parcel of actual societal happenings, though they lag behind with an inherent inertia. Religion comes from these mores. Religion is dominated by these mores. Religion must follow these mores. The mores will control religion as they have done hitherto, and as they do now. They have forced an abandonment of ritual and dogma.

"However, the case which is really important, and which always presents itself in the second stage, is that logical inferences as to what men ought to do are constructed upon a world-philosophy."<sup>12</sup> The religion arises as part of the mores. It is thus a special world-view and life-policy derived from the mores. It then becomes by itself a special department of the mores. And thereupon it returns upon these original mores and pretends to control them. The part assumes a spurious dominance over the whole. "Out of the experience arises the world philosophy including religion. Thus there is a constant alteration of

action of experience and thought. So far so well, but then the deductions from the world-philosophy begin, and they are metaphysical. They turn into dogmas which are logical or speculative or fantastic. There is not a sequence of experience, reflection, action, but the sequence is experience, reflection, deduction—perhaps repeated logical deduction, resulting in dogmas as an arbitrary injunction—and the new action . . . Next, these dogmatic products are brought back to the world of experience and action as imperative rules of conduct."<sup>13</sup> The religious mores are formulated, and this formula is brought back to the society whence it arose to regulate it. This is all religion has to do with morals. Religion can only circle from morals as they are in the society back to these original or further evolved morals by way of its irrelevant dogmas. Religion is then no guide and upholder of morals, but a muddler and distorter. Religion, "philosophy and ethics are products of the folkways. They are taken out of the mores, but are never original and creative; they are secondary and derived. They often interfere in the second stage of the sequence, . . . act, thought, act. Then they produce harm, but some ground is furnished for the claim that they are creative or at least regulative."<sup>14</sup> Bringing these mores at second hand to bear upon the mores at first hand is immoral. It distorts, perverts, and befuddles the real mores. As a moral force religion is only disruptive and impeding. "All religions are creations of fantasy. They come out of the realm of the metaphysics. They come down into this world of sense with authority. The moral ideas come out of the mores, which move, and they are used to criticize the religious traditions which remain stereotyped. Religious . . . aim to supersede experience, knowledge and reason by labours and injunctions."<sup>15</sup> As the mores and the religion react on each other, the mores keep the lead.

For in the end religion exerts only an incomplete, deceptive, and transitory effect. "Every people . . . takes out of its religion or out of the religion which is brought to it just what suits its tastes and its ways. No religion of those which we call world-religions, and which have a complete system, is ever put in practice as a whole; the people always take out of it what suits their tastes and ideas, and that means especially their mores."<sup>16</sup> Although the influence of religion upon the mores is limited, it still exists though impotently. The textual Christian ethic and the historical teaching of Jesus<sup>17</sup> as well as accordingly entirely irrelevant and useless as applied to contemporary morals in the manner of the usual religious preachment. Institutional and expounded Christianity is entirely besides the mark when it approaches our mores. While these very mores sanction its supposed standing, they, at the same time in

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 134.)

<sup>14</sup> Sumner: *Folkways.* (p. 37.)

<sup>15</sup> Sumner: *War and Other Essays.* (p. 135.)

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 136.)

<sup>17</sup> Which remains as the record of his acts and sayings still in the text, when the traditional influences and propagandistic forgeries are deleted; see Shirley Jackson Case, *The Historicity of Jesus, A Criticism of the Contentions that Jesus Never Lived, A Statement of the Evidence for His Existence, An Estimate of His Relation to Christianity.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1912), the historical Jesus (pp. 1-31), and his individual religious experience (pp. 281-303); *Jesus, A New Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), the religion Jesus lived (pp. 326-327, 359-361, 377-387), and the religion Jesus taught (pp. 388-391, 417-441); which is interesting as an outstanding account of a life, a character, and a religious experience, but not any more significant than the account of another life, character, and religious experience.

<sup>10</sup> Sumner: *Folkways.* p. 29.)

<sup>11</sup> William Graham Sumner: "Religion and the Mores," *War and Other Essays.* (Yale University Press, 1911). (p. 131.)

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 133.)

practice, totally down it and keep it ineffectual. But the mere fact that it is brought to the mores to influence them at all, means that they are being perverted and distorted.

Religion and the mores, in this way, play upon one another. "The religion comes out of the mores and is controlled by them. The religion, however, sums up the most general and philosophical elements of the mores and inculcates them as religious dogmas. It also forms precepts on them . . . They were imposed on modern religion by the mores. They then came from the religion to the modern world as religious ideas and duties, with religious and ecclesiastical sanctions. This is the usual interplay of the mores and religion."<sup>18</sup> When the mores return upon themselves in the guise of religious precepts, they have meanwhile been altered in such a way, that they are totally removed from the actual stream of developing mores. The formula withdrawn from the mores and arbitrarily altered, is brought back to control the mores which have themselves meanwhile developed in their own necessary way. Religion merely tends to cause transient irregularities in the natural evolution of the mores. It is not a conservator of moral values, but merely a moral artefact.

Their favoured standing in the folkways and mores gives religious belief no biological, experimental or rational sanction whatsoever. There is plenty of "folkways due to false inference. Furthermore, folkways have been formed by accident, that is, by irrational and incongruous action, based on pseudo-knowledge."<sup>19</sup> Religious folkways can be formed in no other way. "There are folkways which are positively harmful."<sup>20</sup> "These are most often folkways which have been perverted by religion.

Suggestion brings about the duplication of one's mental habits in others. It is by means of suggestion that folkways are produced, elaborated, and maintained.<sup>21</sup> In any society there are numerous means of suggestions: myths, legends and Bibles, symbols and effigies, watchwords and catchwords, epithets, phrases, and pathos.<sup>22</sup> Religion is built up through their utilization.

CURTIS BRUEN.

(To be continued.)

## Living the Christlike Life.

"Why do strong arms fatigue themselves with frivolous dumb bells?  
To dig a vineyard is a worthier exercise for men."

*Martial Epigrams, Bk. XLV.*

"Yes rather plunge me back in pagan night,  
And take my chance with Socrates for bliss  
Than be a Christian of a faith like this."

*Moore "Intolerance."*

"The greatest vicissitude of things amongst men is  
the vicissitude of sects and religions."

*Bacon "Of Vicissitude of Things."*

I HAVE often heard it said that religion fits a man for life as does no other thing in the world.

It follows that religion is therefore greater than education, greater than perseverance, greater than experience.

This statement regarding the value of religion is made, of course, by priests and by those who wish to say just that which one expects them to say.

<sup>18</sup> Sumner: *War and Other Essays.* (p. 146.)

<sup>19</sup> Sumner: *Folkways.* (pp. 24-26.)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* (pp. 26-27.)

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* (pp. 19-24.)

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* (pp. 174-181) with running commentary on religion.

The Soviet has decided that religion is of no more importance than quackery and charlatanism, and the Rev. J. H. Rushbrooke has announced that "the decree against religion must fail in the long run because religion is an inalienable element of the human spirit."

Yet there are thousands of Freethinkers who have rid themselves of this "inalienable element," so that there is something wrong somewhere. One is reminded of the old brain twister, "What will happen when an irresistible force meets an immovable object?"

What happens when a Freethinker gets rid of an inalienable element?

It is easy to see what the doctor means. He means that religion, like fear, and cruelty, and lust, and greed are inherent in the majority of us. But what the doctor does not choose to see is that the highly civilized man can learn to crush his impulses to be frightened, to be cruel, to lust, to be greedy, and to be religious.

Now to return to the beginning, we are often told by priests eager to keep their jobs, by politicians with their eyes on their majorities, and by writers anxious to maintain their respectability that without religion a man is handicapped; with religion he can succeed in any walk of life.

Now, in the first place, let us assume that we have a perfect Christian—there is no space to deal with the perfect Mohammedan, the perfect Buddhist, the perfect Zoroastrian, and all the rest of them. Neither is there space to deal with any of the many one and only brands of Christian—the Roman Catholic, the Mormon, the Plymouth Brother, or the Theosophist and so on.

Let us take someone who tries to follow the example of Christ as laid down in the four gospels, for obviously, the only true Christian is one who believes that Christ was the great ideal and attempts to emulate him.

The Christian in business would be a perfect scream. He would talk to customers about their immortal souls and would take no thought of the morrow. Selling all he had and giving it to the poor would occupy all his mornings, while standing at street corners and talking about the kingdom of heaven would take up most of the rest of his spare time. He would enter Church Congresses and dispute with the wise men, and the doctor would find himself elbowed out of his way by this perfect Christian anxious to raise someone from the dead. Bakers and grocers would have to go out of business for this perfect Christian would feed the multitudes with loaves and fishes.

He would, of course, not be in business long, for he would soon be bankrupt. The problem would then arise of dealing with all those who would suffer when he failed. The perfect Christian could do nothing for all his substance would have been given away.

He could explain to his creditors that earthly riches corrupt, and that their treasure awaited them in heaven, but as most of them would have families to keep in this world, this would be poor comfort.

Being out of business our perfect Christian would either have to work for a living or else wander about preaching. Filled with religion he would have to preach, and if he had no wish to found a church, he would constantly be arrested for causing obstructions, and breaking the peace. If he went into Church bazaars and Church whist drives, and Church dances, and Church sales of work, and Church garden parties, he would cause trouble by flogging the money changers and those who did business.

With his many promises to various disciples he

would gather together a band of men who left their work to follow him, and by thus making all these men's families chargeable to the rates he would be a thorough nuisance.

He would have no use for sport, of course, because he would be counselling men to think about nothing but the future world.

One shudders to think of the consequences of his preaching, supposing it became powerful. Suppose all men became Christlike!

We should never want to read books, never want to see a play by Shakespeare, take no joy in a holiday, for all these things would seem to us to be of the earth, earthy. All our thoughts would be of heaven.

This perfect Christian would, of course, have to seek a method of committing suicide. Christ, who was all-powerful, could have saved himself if he had liked, so we are told, and as he did not he committed suicide. How to follow his example would be difficult, for in a perfect world we should not take anyone's life, and in even this imperfect world, we have become much more human since the power of the church has declined. We execute people in times of peace, for murder only, and unless the perfect Christian hired professional murderers to crucify him, he would have to wait until he was killed in a road accident or until he died of old age.

And if he found a way out of this difficulty, what about rising from the dead!

All modern scientists who know so many secrets of nature, which were unknown two thousand years ago in Nazareth, tell us that no one can rise, in body at any rate, after death, so our perfect Christian would be up against it.

But if a Christian reads this he will say, "All this is nonsense. Times are changed, and no one can live exactly as Christ lived, but one can try to live as near to him as possible."

All right. Christ did not marry, Christ took no interest in politics except to utter the extremely reactionary "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's"; Christ trusted to luck for his night's lodging and his next meal.

None of these things is practicable to-day. Therefore the Christlike man is an anachronism.

The essence of Christ's teaching is contained in the Sermon on the Mount, in which are catalogued the blessed attributes.

The perfect Christian would have to be poor in spirit, there would be no room for aviators, and scientists, and explorers, and inventors, and all those whose spirits are brave and enterprising.

He would have to be miserable and mourn, be meek, and be anxious to be righteous, and above all would have to be reviled and persecuted.

Even this, the would-be Christian says is too idealistic, and all that can be done is to try to live up to some of Christ's teaching.

But which? How much? And what kind of a religion do you get when each man is allowed to interpret the written word, and to decide for himself which parts of the teaching are applicable to himself, and which parts he can leave out as too idealistic?

Is not the Soviet going in the right direction to civilize Russia by curtailing some of the liberties of the Church? At any rate the Soviet is doing right by not giving its sanction to religion which bewilders, weakens, befogs, and misleads mankind.

"NECHELIS."

Oh what makes a den of thieves?

A Dean, a Chapter and Lawn Sleeves.

Hudibras.

## A Tramp in The Woods.

POLITICS, Religion, Freethought, it may be supposed, do not trouble the fraternity over much: they have more immediate needs and clamant concerns: these satisfied for the moment, your tramp royal, may muse on many things—say in a green woodland, by a copious stream, surveying the firstlings of the Spring in Nature's ancient, charming process of which he is a part. The wind, the water music, the motion of the plants and sprays, the dewy quiver of the grasses in wandering gusts of air, solitude and reverie, even regret, remorse and shame, a gentle morbidity, all combine in a harmony seldom kings and statesmen know. Quite often the gentler tramp may be godly, but in an accommodating way—unlike last Sunday's preacher, I recall, whose utterance runs through my ramble like a divine accompaniment! His subject was the awful crime of Sunday Tennis—or Sunday anything—but the exhortations of God's chosen in the House of Gloom and Doom, blissfully and blatantly assured it was the sole preserver of the Sunday and morality.

"Come!" said those "spiritual Bolsheviks" of the West End Tennis Club, "Come! we have a lovely set of tennis courts, and we would like you to enjoy them on this glorious day." But, no, a better reason was, "It is my pleasure, I want to do what I like." Alas! it is only too true, more and more people want more freedom; to do what they like; and more people are deciding they do not like the Church. But this poor, pathetic, Auld Kirk parson, with his special education, and total ignorance of the science of life and morals, that life refines religion, not religion life, is he not also doing what he likes?

To end the digression and the discord in having dragged the parson in, let me cast him out again, a loathsome creature, for this he attributes to the non-church-goer: "Oh, yes, I shall keep nine of the Commandments, but there is one I don't want to keep, 'I want to commit adultery.'"

And there is sanctuary in the pulpit and the pew, they are public places, where man, not God, is the inhibitor; and even a parson, in the "convenience snug" of an empty church (save for himself and some object of desire: parsons, it is said, are intensely human, a reaction, perhaps, from being intensely divine) might behave himself unseemly. His fear of God may wrestle but feebly with a storm of passion, the visitation of nature, the calamity of his creation, of his God! It is a credit to average church-shy humanity, that its various Sunday outings are sought for health of body, mind and spirit, and not in vain. Calamities of the flesh may dog their footsteps—alas, we poor mortals!—accidents have happened to lay and cleric alike, all proceeding from the primary impress, the original "act of God"; but the impulse and the aim are wholesome, and as our currency used to advise us, *Honi soit que mal y pense*. One would refer the parson to Cor. xiii., but having found the man of God at his inspired basest, better, perhaps, to leave him there, to waddle out as best he may, while I return to his "poor earth-born companion and fellow-mortal," the Tramp in the woods. He is not clothed in holiness and fine linen, even as the parson is; he may be ragged as Jesus was, and as ignorant. He also (for he is I and you) may sigh for immortality, but of the here and now, especially in the opening Spring! not outcast, one with all nature; and what a glory doth the world put on!—That limpid stream that dins and hymns to cloud and azure sky, reflecting the sunlight in a million gems of spray; that green, sweet bank of luscious sward, the timbered steep beyond, with last year's withered grasses just half hidden by the new, and fern and leaf and flowers to come; that tranquil air and solitude: surely this is paradise, that other but a banal caricature. Yet is he a little wistful and perturbed; why not for ever? past and future cloud the present; must his, too, in a short time be gone with those old familiar faces, knowing this pleasing, anxious being no more? In this happy valley Winter has been, and will be again, and Spring when he is gone. The stream will

murmur on, the seasons come and go, delighting, satisfying others as they have pleased him, with a little pain! The philosophy is not perfect, yet it is complete; whatever is, is right; and he is fain to be content to share the fate of all that have been born. Every day he has seen the myriad children, happy, irresponsible, more numerous every year. What vast eternity can hold all these when the sun is complete—from man's beginnings 500,000 years ago! They little know of books who only the Bible know; or of life who only know religious life. Your priest sees not these things, but, like your lunatic, sees more devils than vast hell can hold. There be many priesthoods, of politics, philosophy, medicine, religion; that the great moral, mental and social questions will one day be solved, he only is the hopeless pessimist who denies—and he is the Christian) but until war, superstition, ignorance and poverty are banished from the world, even the beneficent priesthood of medicine will be the gospel of despair.

ANDREW MILLAR.

### Knowledge.

It has been suggested by a French savant, that if all the permutations and combinations of alphabetical letters are taken, we should have all knowledge available. The volume of books he computed would be several times the volume of the known universe, so that we are not likely to get very far this way. A lot of the books would be condemned by the present powers that be. Obviously if our French friend is right, the human race has quite a little way to go, and is a "babe" (Jesus).

Anyway the idea is a sound one, and leads to an interesting discussion as to human origins and activities. Knowledge of anything exists, and is present in the universe for the finding. If such knowledge exists now, it must always have existed.

Given these books anyone could predict the future history of the universe, and incidentally of himself with exactitude. Our religious brethren would have a proper revelation of God. If everything that could be said or written of God were contained in these books, we should really know God himself. It is a pity that so far we have not been supplied with the books dealing with this special study.

From the Christian standpoint, instead of an avalanche of books descending on him, Moses had a couple of bricks thrown at him. I sometimes think it a pity for the world that the bricks did not hit him. Theoretically all the Creator need do is to create a number of letters which could build up into words, sentences and languages, and tell these letters to get on with it. The Creator is at once omniscient. This fantasy is, of course, only a play on words. Knowledge is only gained by experience, and experience is a function of a brain.

Professor Eddington may be right, and there may be an unsolvable part of the universe; only unsolvable in as far as human brains can have no experience of the unsolvable part, I think we can rightly consider this unsolvable part as non-existent. When we are told that we can never know God, it is true. We cannot know of which we can have no experience. Religious people, no doubt, experience feelings which they blame on God. However, as our books, are unfolded, the numbers of these people diminishes (this can be said definitely of Freethought books.)

As regards free will, obviously no one has a right to speak unless he has read all our mythical books. A man has a right, however, to speak from his own experience. It would be well for Freethinkers to encourage their own literature as far as possible. Also to be suspicious of authority in whatever sphere. Our great men only find out something which already exists. When their data are published we can add to an experience and form judgments for ourselves.

E.

### Society News.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S second week in London was marred by the unfavourable weather. The meeting announced for Regent's Park was completely rained off. The other meetings held during the week at West Ham, were successful with one exception, when the cold, and other attractions indoors prevented a large attendance. The crowds were very attentive and apparently sympathetic. Mr. Rosetti and several other members of the local Branch assisted at the meetings, which passed off without any untoward incidents.

On Thursday and Friday, May 16 and 17, Mr. Whitehead will be at Longworthy Road, Salford, Manchester, and on Tuesday, May 21, will commence a series in the Chester-le-Street district.

### Obituary.

MRS. JOSEPHINE MAY HINLEY.

At the West Norton Crematorium, on May 10, a Secular Service was conducted in connexion with Mrs. Josephine May Hinley, who died, aged fifty-four years, on her birthday, May 6, 1929. The deceased suffered from a very painful form of heart disease, a complaint from which her husband had previously died some ten years ago. Mrs. Hinley had been a most uncompromising Freethinker for twenty years, a member of the N.S.S., and a devoted reader of the *Freethinker*, whose principles and opinions she very definitely enunciated at all times. She requested that no mourning should be worn, that no flowers should embellish her coffin and that a member of the society should read the secular service as a precaution against any Christian burial, and that her ashes should be interred with those of her husband, who was also a Freethinker. All her wishes were adhered to by her relations, who with the exception of a brother are orthodox believers. To all relations and friends we extend the sympathy of the Movement.—G.W.

MRS. ADA ELENA WARWICK.

It falls on me to announce the passing of a Manchester Freethinker in the person of Mrs. Ada Elena Warwick, of 87 Crofton Street, Rusholme, at the age of fifty-four, which took place on Sunday, May 5.

Deceased was an adherent to secular principles throughout life, and belonged to a family which does not accept the conventional formulas and ceremonies which surround death, her mother having been a Freethinker, also her grandfather. She remained steadfast to her convictions during her long illness.

The interment took place at Southern Cemetery, on Thursday, May 9, when Mr. Bayford said a few appropriate words at the graveside in the presence of the bereaved husband, sons, relatives and several friends, the latter being ample testimony to the respect in which Mrs. Warwick was held.

Her loss is keenly felt and the family are assured of our deep sympathy with them in the grief created.

F.F.M.

## Proposed Bradford Secular Society.

FREETHINKERS in BRADFORD AND DISTRICT who are desirous of forming a Branch of the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY in Bradford are invited to communicate with "SCRIBENDI," care of this office.

If sufficient support is offered, a meeting will be arranged, and a Branch formed. As it is hoped to arrange a visit to Bradford by Mr. Chapman Cohen, early replies would be appreciated in order that arrangement for Mr. Chapman Cohen's meeting may be put in hand in time to secure a hall.

Bradford's Freethought activities in the past warrant the belief that a N.S.S. Branch would have a bright and useful future! Please rally round!

## A Sestina on Pain and Joy.

HEAR the brief legend of the life of Man,  
And marvel at the mystery of life:  
Man enters on life's journey with much pain,  
But, if the Fates be kind, he meets his love;  
Secures some fleeting dalliance with joy;  
Then falls into the ambushade of Death.

For down the road of life lurks footpad Death,  
Waiting to trap that hapless traveller Man,  
To trip him up and rob him of his joy:  
This journey deathward would appear all life  
Were it not that we are accorded love  
In some small measure to relieve life's pain.

We may not solve the problem hard of pain  
(Life's servant maybe, but the friend of Death);  
But Eros, cynic god, why gav'st thou love  
Unto this puny creeping thing called Man?  
That he beget another fumbling life,  
The warp and woof of which are pain and joy?

Marvel it is that life's small sum of joy,  
Which like a mirage in the desert, Pain,  
Draws us across the burning sands of life  
To that eternal shadow-kingdom, Death,  
Should be the only heritage of Man;  
His guerdon from the little god of love.

Or can it be this precious gift of love,  
This sweet delight of two, this transient joy,  
Is the sufficient recompense of Man;  
That, though a sad, sick world cry out for pain;  
That, though all life must end in certain death;  
Love is the aim and meaning of our life?

Must we hold, too, the sorrows of Man's life  
From the dark frame to life's fair picture, Love;  
And, lest love satiate, kind watchful Death  
Doth intervene to filch from us our joy?  
Thus, while each single life is shot with pain,  
Love dwells eternal in the heart of Man.

### Envoi.

Fantastic world! Man, with his fleeting life  
Full-charged with pain, but tempered still by love,  
Snatches at joy beneath the feet of Death.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

## Failsworth Secular Society.

# A BAZAAR

IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF THE

## Failsworth Secular Sunday School

WILL BE HELD IN

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ON

October 12th, 14th & 15th.

Gifts of Articles for Sale, and Donations will be  
gladly received on behalf of the  
propaganda of the Society.

All communications to MR. A. JONES, 8 Andrew  
Street, Failsworth, Manchester.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School,  
Peckham Road, S.E.): Free Sunday Lecture, 7.0, A. D.  
Howell-Smith, B.A.—"John Bunyan—the Man and the  
Writer."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY  
(The Orange Tree Hotel, Euston Road, N.W.1): Thursday,  
May 23, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, 7.30 to 11.30, Dance.  
Admission 1s.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—No Service.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE.—No Meeting.

#### OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Messrs.  
J. Hart and R. L. Lennard. 3.30, Messrs. E. Betts and B. A.  
Le Maine. 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt and B. A. Le Maine.  
Freethought meetings every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs.  
J. Hart and R. G. Lennard. Every Friday, at 7.30, Mr.  
B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* can be obtained outside  
Hyde Park during our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Ham-  
mersmith): No Meeting.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30,  
Mr. S. Hanson; 6.30, Brockwell Park, Mr. S. Hanson; Wed-  
nesday, 8.0, Clapham Old Town, Mr. F. P. Corrigan;  
Friday, 8.0, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Mr. L.  
Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting.

### COUNTRY.

#### OUTDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of High Park Street  
and Park Road): Thursday, May 23, at 7.30, Mr. J. V.  
Shortt. A Lecture. Members and friends will greatly help  
by attending these meetings whenever possible.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble from Helensburgh to  
Glen Frim. Meet at Queen Street Station at 11 o'clock  
prompt. Train leaves at 11.22.

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

OFFERS WANTED!—Several bound volumes of *Free-  
thinker*. Also old issue of *Freethinker*, 3 vols., from  
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J. FARMER, Los Angeles.

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(Dr. Grun in the King's Bench Division.)

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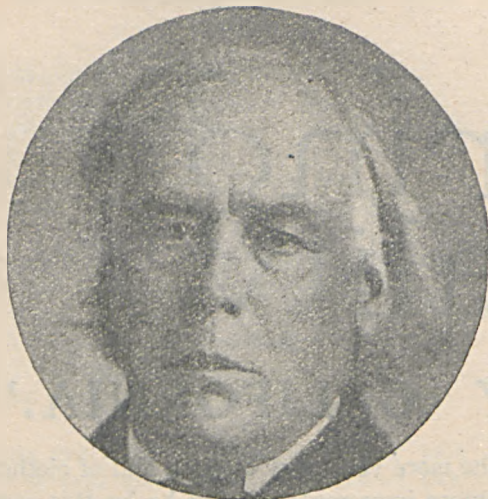
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