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Views and Opinions.

(Concluded from page 675.)

Man and the Universe.

READERS of my criticism of Professor Eddington's work (*Freethinker*, August 11, 18, 25, and September 1 and 8) will remember that the author's defence of a certain type of religion was based upon the position that there existed a material world adequately covered by scientific "law," and a "spiritual" world to which scientific law does not apply. This world is a world of truth, of value, a world where the word "ought" applies, thus introducing a sense of value which is not present in the physical sphere. Professor Eddington does not so much prove these statements as assert them, or if he can be said to prove them, it is only by using phrases in a sense that is either wrong or a begging of the question. I may best bring out my position, and show my differences with Professor Eddington by following his example and restate the essential problem in my own way.

The universe around us, says the Professor, "is a physical universe." That is either sheer tautology or it is wrong, demonstrably wrong. If by universe is meant the physical aspect of things, the statement is tautological. It is only saying that physical things are physical. But if universe is meant to include everything, then it is plainly wrong since no one has ever denied that there are other aspects of the universe than the physical one. I agree that if we are to identify the whole of the universe with physics, and physical law with scientific law, then my case goes. But to say that the universe is all matter is just as scientifically and philosophically wrong as it is to say that it is all mind.

* * *

The Stuff Our World is Made Of.

The universe around us, the one in which we live and of which we are a part is fundamentally neither mind nor matter. Our universe—and I am not dealing with any other—is fundamentally a universe of

experience. This is the raw material of all our thinking, and whether we give our experience the label of matter, or life, or mind, or "ought," we are not in the slightest degree traversing this fundamental fact. In all our scientific studies we are dealing with experience—studying, arranging, classifying it. To call one part of this experience more "real" than another, in an ultimate sense, is meaningless. Each in its own category, a dream is as real a rock, a perfume as real as a steamship. Our scientific laws, whether they be called physical, chemical, biological, or psychological are all so many behaviouristic descriptions of what experience provides. The mythical materialist who is made to say that nothing exists but matter, and the man who says nothing exists but mind, are equally wrong. Professor Eddington has simply stepped outside his science and joined in this Walpurgis-night hunt for an ultimate reality which is beyond experience. As a Materialist, and one who tries to keep a hold on science, I can say with strict accuracy that "matter" is as real as "mind," mind is as real as matter, and that both are class names for different aspects of experience.

This will, I hope, explain why, as a very convinced and thorough-going Materialist, I hold that Materialism does not claim to explain the phenomena of life and mind in terms of physics and chemistry. A scientific "law" is devised to cover a certain class of phenomena, and a certain class only. No scientist imagines that when framing a law to cover physical phenomena, he is describing the behaviour of living things. Newton did not think that when formulating a "law" that would describe the behaviour of the planets and the falling of a stone, he was describing the behaviour of ants and elephants. But if biological laws are framed because laws of physics will not suffice, and laws of psychology because laws of physics and biology will not suffice, why should the Materialist be called upon to explain everything in terms of physics and chemistry? The answer is that if that can be done, why have biological laws? I quite agree with Professor Eddington, that you cannot explain mental phenomena in terms of physics and chemistry. To use his own language, his agreement with me is almost embarrassing—and I may add, as between an eminent scientist and a mere layman, very flattering. But I do not agree that this agreement demolishes Materialism. It does so only to those who have mistaken the nature of the subject.

* * *

Materialism and Religion.

Professor Eddington may now, perhaps, see why, holding the views I do, I call myself a Materialist. I do so because I am more concerned with the meaning of Materialism than I am with the precise form in which it happens to be cast. The fundamental principle of Materialism, from the days of Democritus on-

ward, has been that all phenomena may be ultimately expressed in terms of scientific law—not in terms of one scientific law, but in terms of law, in other words, to be able to state the conditions in which things occur in such a way that given these conditions the resulting phenomena “emerge.” But it does not follow that because physical and chemical conditions may *explain* the origin of life that we may describe life in terms of physics and chemistry. The emergence of a wholly new phenomenon requires a new formula that shall adequately describe it.

It is true that physics supplied science with the mechanistic or deterministic conception. This is because mankind first began to frame “laws” that covered the simpler world of physics. But I do not think I need press upon Professor Eddington the danger of mistaking a mere historical accident for the essential nature of the process of mental development. But as science is impossible, save as embodying a search for the conditions from which given phenomena emerge, and the formulation of “laws” which adequately express their behaviour, and as the essence of the Mechanistic conception is that such conditions are discoverable, and such laws possible, I think my statement that, “wherever science rules the mechanistic conception rules” is quite justifiable.

I see no justification whatever for drawing the line at “religious experience.” I do not say that “the domain of experience which is outside physical science is nevertheless within the sphere of *other sciences*”; what I say is that religious experience is explainable by *science*, which is not saying exactly the same thing. And I claim that every aspect of religious experience, from the ecstasy of the savage or of the medieval monk, obviously brought on by the cultivation of abnormal states of mind, to the experiences of communication with “spiritual” forces in prayer, etc., may be affiliated to those sciences that have to deal with the meaning of physiological and psychological states. To state that this cannot be done is to say that there are certain aspects of experience that cannot be related to other aspects of experience, and so would lose all value to human beings. I need not dilate upon this, but simply ask for some phase of religious experience that does not admit of scientific interpretation, or which cannot be related to other experiences, and so have no connexion with phenomena that are admittedly non-religious in character. Educated Freethought has got far beyond the point of merely denying the truth of religion, it is able to explain it out of existence as a sheer irrelevancy.

* * *

Mental and Physical Machines.

Now let us come to the alleged distinction between an assumed “ought” in nature, and the “ought” in morals and mind. In the one case, Professor Eddington says, nature always does what it ought, in the other case man does not always do what he ought or think as he ought; we have a sense of what ought to be that cannot be derived from natural science. This sense of truth and of value does not derive from the physical machinery, it precedes it; and he gives the illustration that when we feed a physical machine it chaws up what is given it in terms of the machine, when we feed the human machine it does not.

Again, protesting against the use of the phrase “physical machine,” as though a Materialist believes that “ought” comes from a physical structure as sausages from a machine, I must assert as strongly as I can, that with the mental machine as with the physical what it is fed with is chawed up exactly in terms of the machine. Put a schoolboy of to-day in

front of a wireless set, he will, if he is permitted, begin to play about with its parts to get what he wants. Place a savage before it and he will picture a spirit inside the box. Professor Eddington's book has filled parsons with rapture because they found a number of expressions there which were to them marvels of logic and deeply religious. Reading the same book I find these religious expressions often mere verbalisms, and see science distorted to bolster them up. How are we to explain these differences save in terms of the fact that each mental machine, that of the schoolboy and that of the savage, that of the parson and that of myself, is each chawing up the food given us in terms of the machine. Unless it is so, all communication with human beings would be quite impossible.

* * *

From the Concrete to the Abstract.

Professor Eddington gets his result, first by applying the term “ought” to a sphere in which it has no application, and, next, by ignoring the growth and social implications of the term. “Ought” implies an alternative, but in nature as distinguished from human, or at least animal, nature there is no such thing as ought. There is only an “is.” We can say that a man ought to do this or that because we are asking him in view of several conceivable ends to take one. But to say that natural forces, physical forces, do what they ought to do is meaningless. It is language borrowed from another sphere, and while this may be permissible as a mere figure of speech, it is not permissible to take a figure for a concrete fact. Natural forces simply act, and all we can do is to note and record the mode of their action. That is why I said “ought” takes us outside chemistry and physics; it belongs to the world of conscious action where alternatives are conceivable and possible.

To take, as does Professor Eddington, the feeling of what *ought* to be, or the sense of truth, or the desire for truth in man in its present developed state and attempt to understand it without reference to its history and function, is hopeless. It is equal to trying to understand the full meaning of the human structure without a knowledge of its animal origin and history. It is a method that belongs to pre-evolutionary times and is fatally mischievous. When we say that a man *ought* to act in this or that manner, what is it but the social conscience saying that man should act in accordance with what is deemed to be the welfare of the group; and what is this but the developed state of the primitive gregariousness upon which all group life depends, and which may be found in the life of even the wolfpack. I do not say that classification is the answer to the problem of “ought,” but I do say that an understanding of its evolution and significance in group life at once demolishes the mystery of it, and leaves us only with the problem of understanding the various stages of its development. The classification necessary for “ought” is to bear in mind that it belongs to social development, and that we must look to sociology for its understanding.

So, again, with the sense of truth. On its ethical side the need for truth, the value of truth, is part of the need for co-operation and the development of the sense of trust between members of the same group. The search for truth is part of the method by which man adjusts himself to his environment, since it is only by finding out the truths of relationship that he can hope to conquer it. This, also, can be seen in its beginnings in the pre-human world. That men have come to search for truth without regard to consequences, or to do what they regard as right with immediate reference to only their own sense of right and wrong are facts that students of

evolution should expect. Means become ends if the ends are followed, with sufficient persistence. There is no conscious reference to the perpetuation of the race in the desire of men and women for offspring, but who doubts that it is rare perpetuation which is at the bottom of the whole thing. When the desire for children becomes sufficiently weak the race will decline—so will many other things.

Elaborate argument on these heads would be almost an insult to a man of Professor Eddington's calibre. I merely remind him of things he has overlooked. Nor do I think they would have been overlooked but for the prepossession on behalf of religion; and whenever that is permitted to becloud a man's mind, the genuinely scientific atmosphere is vitiated. Otherwise it would seem almost a common place to say that with regard to religious belief we have only two courses before us. The one is quietly to assume from the outset that we have in it something of transcendent importance, something which defies analysis and declines affiliation to the whole body of human experience. The other is to take the whole of the phenomena called religious, prayer, miracle, the belief in intercourse with some power other than the transformations and permutations of natural forces, the sense of exaltation which is felt by the person under the stress of certain feelings or the pressure of certain states of mind, to analyse them and place them in their place along with similar states that are admittedly not religious. When that is done it is soon seen that a very large part of this religious experience is explained out of existence. And what remains unexplained is so only because our ignorance in certain directions is still very great.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Book ALL should Read.

MATERIALISM RESTATED

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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Religion and Realities.

"Without halting, without rest,
Lifting better up to best."—Emerson.

"Gentleness, virtue, wisdom, and endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over destruction's strength."
Shelley.

PRESENT-DAY religion is out of touch with reality, and dignitaries of the various Christian Churches habitually display an ignorance of modern thought and modern conditions which is simply amazing. Their attitude towards science, which, be it remembered, is simply in the last analysis, ordered knowledge, is that of veiled hostility in the case of the more educated, and flat enmity on the part of the less instructed. Their sermons and public utterances prove this opposition beyond all cavil and dispute. This clerical ignorance does not stop at scientific matters, but is equally apparent when they are dealing with social questions.

The most pressing problems in this country of ours at present are housing and unemployment, which affect seriously eighty-per-cent of the population. Yet the clergy are not concerned with such things, but reserve their attentions for the aristo-

cratic twenty-per-cent of the population who hold the dollars and can assist them materially in feathering their nests. The consequence of this is that too many of the higher clergy remind one of the little Bourbon Prince, who, seeing a procession of starving people, remarked: "If they can't get bread, why don't they eat cake?"

The bulk of the clergy who get reported in the newspapers talk the language of parsons with incomes above that of £500 yearly. For example, Prebendary Gough has been deploring the immense expenditure on housing schemes that he considers have been failures because the houses have been built without garages. Dean Inge, a popular preacher and voluminous writer, is always assuming that there is no brains, character, physique, or anything worth mentioning, below the ranks of the middle class. So, one might go on quoting statements which prove that the organized State religion in this country has little to do with realities, and that this Church panders to the upper classes.

The very existence of widespread overcrowding is intolerable and a reproach to any country pretending to civilization. What sense is there in insisting, for example, that a child must have so many feet of air space in the school, and condemning that same child to sleep at home in conditions resembling a sardine in a tin. There are hundred of thousands of families waiting for two, three, or four rooms at rents equal to one third of their wages. They do not expect accommodation for motor-cars. Many would be happy to live in garages or even stables rendered fit for use. The higher clergy are indifferent to this. The Archbishop of Canterbury, with an income of £300 weekly, has a sum sufficient to keep two score working-class families. The bachelor Bishop of London, with £200 weekly, and two residences, is well above the poverty line. The Bench of Bishops, receiving between them, £182,000 yearly, and palatial residences, are in no danger of having the brokers call. England to these men is not a nation of shopkeepers, or working-people, but an endless vista of drawing-rooms, dinners, golf-courses, and car-drives. For them it is "roses all the way."

Nor is this all, for the huge properties of the Anglican State Church are managed on the most strictly business-like lines, as its tenants have only too good reasons to know. It was the purely secular London County Council which developed the huge housing estates at Becontree and Downham, and not the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who have contented themselves with taking their rents like any other landlords. Overcrowding brings many evils in its train. It is a fruitful cause of drunkenness, and immorality. Lambeth Palace, with its library and its lawns, is an interesting historical relic, but it does not compensate for the thousands of unfortunate citizens who vegetate in dirty underground rooms in the richest city in the world. Nor does Fulham Palace atone for the stunted lives of little children cheated of their freedom.

To say truth, there ought by now to be no housing problem at all. It should never have taken ten years to make up for the shortage which arose in four years of war, and a good deal of this delay has been due to the extraordinary selfishness of builders' merchants and workmen alike to exploit the demand for houses to the uttermost. The cost of materials has been advanced to meet State and Municipal subsidies, and workmen have taken far too much time in erecting houses. The average workman sings a lullaby to each brick as he places it in position, forgetful that he is monkeying with the happiness of men, women and children, and limiting his own means of livelihood. For it is no secret that in

several places housing schemes have already failed in so far as it has proved impossible to obtain economic rents for the houses that have been built.

As for employment, the Anglican State Church, although far richer than any of its rivals, has reduced the number of its priests by some thousands during the post-war period. Except for the higher ecclesiastics, this Church was never a model employer, as organists, choristers, vergers, and church-cleaners know only too well. The most importunate of beggars, this Church hated parting with money. Some time since the announcement was made that the curates had been attempting to form a trade union, or a guild of employment. They had noticed the "loaves and fishes" in possession of their ecclesiastical superiors. Perhaps it was only natural that they should wake up and find that in a time of industrial revolution they were as much "on the shelf" as the most elderly spinsters of their congregations. Prayers are said to move even mountains, but, apparently, it takes dynamite to move the hearts of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Lords Spiritual. Truly, it must be galling for the curates to see men of not superior ability living in palaces, lolling in the House of Lords, and drawing incomes varying from £2,000 to £15,000 yearly, whilst they themselves do the donkey-work of their sorry profession.

So long as the clergy are educated only in the patter of their trade, and so long as they pander to the upper circles of society, they will have few qualifications to enter serious economic controversy. Religion covers a multitude of shortcomings, as the snappy warning outside a London place of worship shows: "Everyone who enters this church is not respectable. Please watch your handbags."

MIMNERMUS.

Masterpieces of Freethought.

VIII.—THE PROPHET OF NAZARETH.

By EVAN POWELL MEREDITH.

II.

(Concluded from page 677.)

It has been said that the truth of Christianity rests upon the truth of the miracles recorded in Holy Writ, and I should be the last person on earth to contest the claim. Granted the God put forward by Christians, why should anyone disbelieve in miracles? Obviously one cannot have miracles from anybody else but a God or a Divine Person, who either is God or a Being endowed by God. Even the Roman Catholic Church claims that those of her saints who have performed miracles have been able to do so only because the Church is a divinely inspired institution. Among the miracles which have astonished the world and perhaps influenced so many people to believe in Christianity are Christ's prophecies of coming events, mostly, it may be pointed out, prophecies of woe. This is a curious fact worth pondering over. All prophets get their reputation because they predict a dreadful time coming; rarely, if ever, do they prophecy lots of ready cash, motor cars for all, plenty to eat and drink and no work. Christ was no exception. He prophesied horrible things for Jerusalem, and if he actually said what he is recorded to have said in A.D. 30 or thereabouts, we had better admit Christians have a very strong case.

What Meredith did in the first part of his big book was to put forward the strongest arguments known to Christianity in proof that Jesus did actually prophecy before A.D. 70, the destruction of Jeru-

salem in the clearest terms. These arguments are set forward very fully and clearly. They were part and parcel of that Evangelical Christianity which was never stronger than during the middle of last century. Anybody browsing over second-hand books, and particularly theological ones, will find hundreds devoted to this topic. The same old arguments are used by many sections of the Christian Church to this day. They positively gloat over the fact that Christ distinctly prophesied the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish race, who fully deserved all they got because of their stiff-necked unbelief in their own special Messiah. Meredith's *précis* is admirably done and fully documented. Indeed, I am sure it has never been better done by anybody else. He never skips Christian difficulties, and proves himself a past-master of those solutions, always confidently given by the great Christian Apologists, which depend on a discussion as to what this or that Greek word meant, so long as it never means that which occasions the difficulty. It is so easy to show that the word translated "so-and-so" in our "accepted" version really means "this-and-that," especially when Greek type is used.

Meredith also devotes a chapter to show "the erroneousness of the notion that Christ in these predictions foretold the near approach of the end of the world and the final judgment." This was very necessary, as lots of people will, even to this day, read in Christ's prophecies, a prediction of the near end of the world. As this has been, so far, utterly falsified, it was particularly imperative to show Jesus meant no such thing, for how can God or His Son make a mistake? Meredith's chapter, written from the Christian standpoint, is a veritable masterpiece.

Meredith shows also that the events predicted by Jesus were meant not only to happen within the lifetime of his hearers, but within a very short time, and that he (Jesus) "represented himself as the judge of all mankind, who, as such, was shortly to make his appearance in the clouds." And if the reader has the time, the very full notes given will well bear perusal and study, for they deal with renderings and translations of words very vital to the full Christian presentation of the case. Such expressions as *Kingdom of Heaven*, *Eternal Life*, and *Eternal Happiness* are very carefully and thoroughly analysed. After weighing the pros and cons of the evidence, Meredith then gives his conclusions which again are very fully documented with notes treating on all sorts of side-issues and yet absolutely relevant to a complete understanding of the subject. Take, for example, this note:—

It is a most remarkable fact that in none of the Epistles is there any mention made of the various wonderful things narrated in the Gospels, as having been said and done by Christ. Indeed, there is scarcely an allusion made in them to those astounding details with which every page of the Gospels is replete. No mention is made in them of what the Gospels state that Christ declared regarding the *Day of Judgment*. Nothing about Christ's preternatural birth, his baptisms, his Satanic temptation, his denunciation of the different existing sects, his precepts, his parables, his intimate acquaintance with publicans, with Magdalene, with Mary, with other women. Not one of his miracles is detailed, and nothing is said of the marvellous circumstances which attended his crucifixion and death, such as the sun darkening, the earth quaking, the temple rending, rocks cleaving assunder, graves opening, the dead rising and walking the streets of Jerusalem.

The note is much longer, but I transcribe this part particularly because one of the strongest arguments of Christians and of those reverent Rationalists who

believe in the actual historicity of Jesus, is that we have an early witness in Paul! It must be obvious that whatever Jesus Paul wrote about, it could not have been the Gospel Jesus. The above passage should—in my opinion—be memorized by Freethinkers. Meredith asks a most pertinent question at the end of the note, whether the churches to which the Epistles were addressed were not much older than the date of the Gospels, and even than the *time* at which the Christ of the Gospels was born? The *Prophet of Nazareth* is full of such acute and stimulating questionings.

When Meredith comes to reply to his own (or to the Christian) statements, he brings forward such a wealth of destructive argument that I simply cannot give even the briefest summary. Page after page calmly and methodically pulverizes the best of Christian apologetics. The doctrine of the approaching end of the age is minutely discussed and dismissed as hopeless credulity. The early Christian community of goods, the Christian agape and the pagan origin of Christianity are all carefully considered. In fact, the very long note on the "love-feasts" of the Early Christians forms a long and instructive essay by itself. Meredith even compares Christianity with Mormonism, as a proof that the early success of the former is no proof of its divine origin.

The truth of the Resurrection still forms the basic rock of Christianity, and Meredith naturally discusses the question, both from the Christian and anti-Christian standpoint. Again, I feel it hopeless to indicate how magnificently Meredith does his work. Not even Cassels in *Supernatural Religion* shows greater argumentative powers, or has a more superb knowledge of the whole subject. There is an intensely interesting note dealing with "the opinions and theories regarding the origin of the tale of Christ's resurrection," a note that should be mastered by all of us who wage war against Christianity. Meredith says that if the reader comes to the conclusion that the resurrection is a fable, he will see no reason to believe that Christ was even crucified—and he said that in 1864. I have met very few Rationalists—of the reverent variety, I mean—who have in this year 1929 yet reached this conclusion. They disbelieve in the resurrection, of course, but wild horses would not compel them to give up the crucifixion. The Jews—hateful people—*must* have crucified him.

Meredith deals with some of the minor prophecies as he advances with his work. I advise the reader to turn to the chapter on the lady who poured upon Jesus a box of ointment. She poured it upon his devoted head when he sat at meat much to the indignation of the gallant apostles. Jesus reproved them and said: "Verily I say unto you *Wheresoever* this Gospel shall be preached in the *whole world*, there shall also *this* that the woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Nothing could be clearer and nothing has been more utterly falsified. Millions of sermons are preached every year, and the lady and her box of ointment are very rarely mentioned. Neither Peter anywhere nor Paul, nor any of the other apostles ever so much as notice her, and I myself, forced as I have been to listen to many dreary sermons, cannot recall a single instance where her wonderful act ever received the slightest remembrance or even recognition. The whole story, of course, is a joke.

But it was in another direction that Meredith's work reaches such an original and unique place in Freethought literature. Very few Freethinkers, however much they disbelieved in the whole story of Christianity, ever dared to attack what is known as

the "moral character" of Jesus. Both Francis Newman and Charles Voysey showed more pluck in this way than did many complete unbelievers and they were Theists. Jesus may have been mistaken in believing he was Divine or the Son of God or the Messiah. His miracles never happened, of course, but from the purely human standpoint he was "the greatest of the sons of men." The Gospels, written by unlettered fishermen, could not have invented the marvellous sayings of Jesus. No one but somebody who was *almost* divine, could have shown such love, such mercy, such sweetness, such insight into guilty human nature—and so on, *ad nauseum*. Professed Rationalists have talked like this, written like this, lectured like this; and they have not hesitated to describe Jesus as the greatest master of their own pet beliefs. Hats off to Jesus, the Communist or Abolitionist, or Prohibitionist or Medium!

It is not too much to say that the chapters in Meredith's *Prophet of Nazareth*, dealing with "The moral and intellectual character of the *Prophet of Nazareth* as exemplified in his precepts, his discourses, his actions and his social intercourse" are the finest that have ever been written on the subject from the anti-Christian standpoint. I want to quote not one passage but hundreds. I should like to devote a complete number of this paper to excerpts and then some more. I should like to see how the priests and bishops and laymen who never cease to mouth beautiful phrases about "Our Lord," or "Our Saviour" would answer Meredith's slashing criticisms.

Meredith did not want to wound unnecessarily the feelings of Christians, but he felt certain that few of them could stand his searching analysis, and so advised them to skip the chapters. He mentions two professed Christians (I think Gregg always claimed to be one), W. R. Gregg, the author of *The Creed of Christendom*, and Dr. Giles, the author of *Hebrew and Christian Records*, both pronouncing "a vast number of acts and expressions attributed to Christ and the Gospels," as being immoral, absurd and contradictory." But Meredith goes far more deeply into his subject, and I claim no Freethinker is really equipped to battle against the faith unless he has read these fine chapters. His comments on that awful teaching, "If any man come unto me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," are, to my mind, unanswerable. "Than this doctrine," he says, "nothing can be more revolting to human feeling and human reason—nothing more impracticable. . . . It is lamentable to find a book considered to be divine, fraught with precepts which not only teach injustice, cruelty and revenge, but enjoin us to hate our nearest relations, and even our own lives; and these precepts delivered by a personage held up to us as a model of moral perfection, whom we are to imitate in word and deed if we wish to escape eternal punishment."

I have no more space for quotations, but I want every reader to get *The Prophet of Nazareth*, if at all possible, and to master the arguments of these particular chapters. The modern educated clergyman tries to lay as little stress upon the miracles and Godship of Jesus as possible. It is upon his wonderful life of love and mercy that he concentrates. Very well, meet him upon his own ground. Take a dozen extracts from the teachings of Jesus and show—from Meredith—how silly, how puerile, how revolting they are. There is no need to go outside the A.V. No need to go to Paul or Peter or John. Stick to Jesus. The boast nowadays is that it is not Jesus but the Church which is to blame.

Well, Meredith took those who boosted up Jesus at

their word. Let us examine, he said, the sayings of Jesus himself as reported by the inspired writers, and the result of his keen criticism was annihilating to the absurd claims of the Jesuites. For my part, I am absolutely convinced that one of the reasons why *The Prophet of Nazareth* failed to achieve either the popularity or the success it deserved among even Freethinkers was because Meredith had the audacity to differ from them on the moral superiority of Jesus. His book could never be used by Christians against Freethinkers as the works of Strauss and Renan and Mill are used.

I wish it were possible to reprint it, if not in its entirety, in an abridged form. It would surprise many modern Rationalists—and particularly because Meredith cannot be reckoned any more than Thomas Paine as one of us. He was a Deist, though as broad-minded as his more famous fellow believer.

His patience in analysis, his research, his scholarship, his fearlessness and his originality have all been given to the greatest of all causes—and without any hope of reward. It is for us in these more enlightened days, never to forget it.

H. CUTNER.

Books and Life.

GLANCING over some book reviews, we found an extract from a novel, *Wolf Solent*, by John Cowper Powys (Jonathan Cape. 15s. net). This extract set a train of thought going that called on the spirit of clarity for help. The reviewer projects the following sketch made by Mr. Powys, of one of the characters in *Wolf Solent* :—

He was a man who hid, deep down in his being, a contempt that was actually *malicious* in its pride for all the human phenomena of worldly success . . . as if he had been a changeling from a different planet, a planet where the issues of life—the great dualistic struggles between life and death—never emerged from the charmed circle of the individual's private consciousness.

Now, what precisely does all this mean—that the man had a malicious contempt for worldly success? The author takes some time in saying it—if that is his meaning. And in taking this view of worldly success, in what way would the author—who creates the character—regard success? There was as much pride in St. Francis of Assisi as there was in Lord Reading's pronouncement over the wireless that he had once in his life cleaned out a pig's sty. We must transfer the epithet "priggish" from Mr. Gerald Bullets pen when writing of Marcus Aurelius, and place it against this character created by Mr. Powys. Now, the choice of quotation by the reviewer is equalled by the muddiness of his own comments. What in the name of Mike are we to make of the following Irish Stew which follows the *Hors d'œuvres*? :—

He was indeed what has been defined as a pagan mystic, temporarily aware of his unity with all imprisoned life, but never, as is the Christian mystic, anxious to separate himself from the prison.

And this is all bunkum, because the Christian mystic has all the apparatus for making his exit from life as speedily as possible—but he does not use them; these methods are more frequently used by the outcasts of society groaning under an idiotic monetary system that grinned like some colossal fool at the Hague Conference—the victors in a civil war are out of pocket, and are in such a bad way that they cannot accept payment in kind from the vanquished. Mr. Powys' point for worldly success? When poverty will pay the rent and give full access to creative ability, it will be safe to throw the illegitimate children of a novel into the world, one of whom has, with many trimmings—a contempt for worldly success. One of the crimes of the Pharisees and Sadducees was that they had money.

Interlude. On an evening when you could just detect the first faint signs of Autumn ("season of mists and mellow fruitfulness") with the sky streaked with mare's tails, a little mother, aged about seven years, with a tiny baby in a push-cart was vigorously making her way for home. With her, in bare feet, dirty from paddling in a dirty stream, was her younger brother, and, in a voice sounding of threat and hurry, she was heard to say: "She'll drag you in with a cane." This to the boy who was keeping at a safe distance from the Fury. It speaks well for our language that seven words could describe an action, a threat, a warning, and convey a very vivid picture to the one who had broken the pie-crust laws of boyhood. If only our philosophers could tell us what they mean in so few words.

With one eye on eternity, and the other on the fact that there is a day after to-morrow, we took a leisurely saunter through the *Essays* of Sir William Temple, in a rather nice and cheap volume published by Blackie & Son, Ltd., London. The first is entitled *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*, and the reader will find that the friend of Swift has a great respect for the language, using it with care, taking long sweeps, yet steadily painting a clear picture that breathes repose and common sense. His summary of Stoicism, after winding round his subjects expressed as follows: "That a man, to be wise, should not be a man." He is more kindly disposed towards Epicurus. Temple takes in his survey of Epicurianism the friendly counsel of Horace and engenders no heat; words are words and we may, or may not, allow them to govern us according to their fitness and careful selection in describing anything. But he was writing about things of the earth, tree, fruit, flowers and the taking of life as a gift, sweetened by the wisdom of a life not altogether spent in the cloister of solitude. He was not like Luther, of whom Richter wrote: "His words are half-battles." Persistence, sincerity, enthusiasm—these are admirable gifts and Luther had them, but even these qualities do not give the stamp of truth to the metaphysics of theology. And as one turns to blow out the candle on concluding the reading of *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*, the end takes one pleasantly into dream-land; "and this is all I think of necessary and useful to be known upon this subject."

WILLIAM REPTON.

"We Were Meant to Pray"

"We were meant to pray," says the Rev. W. B. Ashby in one of his recent Plain Man's Sermons, which appear week by week in the *Morning Post*. "The ability to pray is one of the chief things which distinguish mankind from the brute creation, and go to prove that we really are made in the image of God; for unless we had some real affinity with Him, communion between Him and us would not be possible."

YET curiously enough, in spite of this "real affinity," people, we are told, find prayer "dreadfully difficult." One such difficulty is duration—the mere expenditure of time which the would-be petitioner is called upon to make—and another, the form in which appeals should be cast, presumably in order to obtain maximum results.

We are reminded that by the clock, "five minutes is quite a long time," and yet one would have thought that the devout believer would be regardless of time when communing with His Maker. Who would not spend hours—why haggle about minutes—if convinced that prayers *were* being heard and possibly granted? What indeed are five minutes of any day of your life compared to the chances of realizing your hearts desire and getting what you want?

If we are to believe the Rev. Ashby, however, the true factor does discourage praying, because apparently time passes heavily with those so occupied. "Little and good" is the rule to be followed, but recollections of the long-winded and formal prayers which occupy no small part of every Church Service, make it "dreadfully difficult" to reconcile the good rector's opinions with those established by practice. And the Litany

God does not want "elaborate language, He loves simplicity"—we read. Really the good rector ought to be more circumspect. The controversial din that raged for months around the Revised Prayer Book is still ringing in our ears, and yet here is the rector of Dickleburgh blandly informing us that God loves simplicity of language. The Bishops would be annoyed, angry even, if they knew. It is evident that although God loves simplicity of language, the Bishop's tastes are of another order.

During the recent indisposition of the King, special prayers were offered week after week, but at the same time every possible effort was made to mobilise the best scientific brains and the most expert nursing on his behalf. To what extent his recovery would have been influenced if the prayers had been omitted is a problem not difficult to solve if you care to use a little common-sense. Faith, they say, can move mountains; but Science must be capable of shifting whole ranges.

Prayer did not prevent nor stop the War of 1914-1918; nor has it prevented mutual intolerance and oppression amongst prayer-mongers themselves. To pray raptuously for Peace without attempting to understand its causes, and endeavouring to remove them is about as intelligent a proceeding as asking on bended knee for fine weather on hearing the first rumble of thunder in a threatening sky.

If prayers were answered, the results might be rather remarkable. All wars in progress at the time would, of course, have to be terminated in a "draw," future wars would be an impossibility, and the League of Nations could be scrapped.

Monarch, Kings, Queens and sundry Royal Families would surpass all records in physical fitness and longevity—until someone mercifully founded a movement to popularise "anti-preservation prayers."

Religious conversions would take place with astonishing rapidity and bewildering variety. From ascetic Materialism to full-blooded Roman Catholicism, one would experience such conflicting views and emotional crises, that any hardy lunatic asylum would be a welcome refuge.

It would, however, spell decay to the Freethought Movement because Atheists and others not being of a prayerful disposition, would be disinclined to sacrifice reason for supplication, or substitute petitionary effort for real effort. Consequently no one would be converted to Atheism, and the unbeliever would be faced with the alternatives of either downing tools or taking to his knees.

In the latter case, God might consider this an affront to His dignity and turn a deaf ear to all terrestrial appeals, which, of course, is equivalent to saying that the position would revert to that which we find confronting us at the present time.

W. COLVIN.

Nebula.

Who knows yon star that blinks at us
May have gone out these hundred years,
And yet it shone on Darius
As he stood in his wood of spears.

Mayhap a lonely man looked out
From his snowcabin in the North,
And like light snowflakes shed his doubt,
And girt his shoes and hurried forth.

Who knows but it is similar
With those that have a faith in God,
And he is but a blind bright star
Whose heat would not burn up a sod.

JOHN H. HEWITT.

Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.—Emerson.

Acid Drops.

John Bull condemns boxing matches held on the Sabbath. The reasons put forward by our contemporary appears to be: (1) the promoters substantially benefit financially; (2) "there is a certain elementary decency that should be preserved even in the pursuit of enjoyment" on Sunday. (3) Watching boxing matches "is not a reasonable way of spending any part of the Sabbath." And it goes out of its way to remind the Chief Constable of West Bromwich and the Home Secretary, that the Sunday Observance Act, and the Lord's Day Observance Act of 1780, give police officials powers to prohibit public entertainment of that kind. For the benefit of *John Bull* we point out that all entertainments on Sunday are illegal so long as there is a charge for admission. Boxing matches on Sunday are not illegal if there is no charge for admission. They would not be illegal if run by a club and admission was by member's ticket. In its desire to gain the good will of Sabbatarians *John Bull* should not forget exactitude.

The Rev. W. F. Lofthouse, D D., has been giving a religious weekly a little information about some living British philosophers. Of Prof. C. D. Broad, of Cambridge, "one of the foremost philosophical thinkers in England," and Prof. L. J. Russell, of Birmingham, he says:—

Neither could be said, by their more orthodox critics, to take up a definite Christian position. Broad, indeed, is less positive than either of his colleagues, Prof. Whitehead, now in America, and Prof. Eddington, Scrupulously and unrestingly fair, the tendency of his work is critical or even negative. Mr. Russell's position is rather that of his predecessor in the Birmingham Chair of Philosophy, Prof. Muirhead, one of friendly independence to the distinctively Christian tenets.

What the reverend gentleman is cautiously trying to convey is that the philosophical views of the men mentioned are too negative to be of use to the Christian religion and the Churches.

The Bishop of Bristol seems to have been insinuating that his diocesan assistants are behind the times, and hence the falling off in Church membership. He gravely remarks that leadership implies that the leaders are in advance of the followers. But if the shepherd went before his flock, and they followed, he must obviously not be out of sight, or even too far ahead. For our part, we daresay that in theological matters the shepherd could quite easily be lost by being too far ahead. But in the world of progressive thought, which is outside theology, the danger of losing the shepherd through his pushing ahead is quite unlikely. All his energy is expended in trying to catch up with the more advanced ideas of his time.

Sheila Kaye-Smith, the novelist, and her husband, the Rev. Penrose Fry, have decided that they prefer the inbecilities of the Roman Catholic Church to the stupidities of the Anglican. The Roman Catholic press bureau, always anxious to advertise the mental aberrations of well-known persons, has let all the newspapers know of Miss Kaye-Smith's decision. The *Daily Express* also prints a list of other well-known people who have been converted to Romanism, a list probably supplied from the same bureau. These names are no doubt meant to impress the mob. We daresay they will. Keener wits will note that none of the persons named are particularly notable in the realm of progressive thought.

A pious gent has been announcing triumphantly that the Bible is the leading "best seller" among books. This must have cheered the faithful immensely, until they heard the Rev. H. C. Mackenzie, of Belfast, lugubriously admitting that: "The Bible is the most widely

circulated and the least read book in the land." Further depression would settle on their chests when they heard Mr. Ernest H. Hayes quoting from a letter from a London Wesleyan minister: "I wish you could persuade the British and Foreign Bible Society to give the Bible as good a chance of being read as his publishers give Edgar Wallace." After all, a best "best seller" that scarcely anyone will trouble to read, despite the vast amount of paid and unpaid boosting it gets, is hardly a thing to brag about.

Canon W. H. Elliott, of St. Paul's, is strongly in favour of the Armistice Day ceremony not being dropped. His reasons seem a trifle professional, but that's to be expected. According to him, the Christian Churches can do much to help to create an atmosphere favourable to permanent peace; and it is for them, on each succeeding Armistice Day, to "sound the note of Christian faith and hope." Also, let the Armistice Day "become more and more an assertion of our faith in immortality." For those who died in the war are not dead. "They are alive, remembering us, caring for us, helping us in all that task which is committed to our anxious hands." Conversely, we presume the Canon wouldn't care a tuppenny damn for Armistice Day, if parsons were not permitted to perform their antic and were given no chance to mouth the sibboleth of their creed. Exploiting human sorrow is typical of the ghoulish ethics of Christian priests.

The Rev. Dr. R. J. Campbell attributes to John Galsworthy the statement that very many people who pursue pleasure nowadays do so because they are no longer sure of the future, either in this world or in any other; their philosophy being summed as: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Mr. Campbell agrees with this summing up of the situation. He adds:—

The chief trouble to-day is that most people are no longer able to take for granted as easily as their forefathers did the existence of God or the devil, heaven or hell. They seldom deny, but many would hesitate to affirm that such beliefs are beyond doubt.

Mr. Campbell thinks that the attitude of concentrating one's interest in this world alone matters very much, because "loss of faith in God and immortality robs our ideals of a certain amount of driving force." We are inclined to agree with Mr. Campbell on this point. But we are not enamoured of the kind of ideals which the peculiar "driving force" he has in mind operates on. For the driving force is fear—fear of a policeman God and hell-torment. To our mind, people who do right, behave decently, and act justly simply because they fear being punished severely after death if they don't, are people whose ideals are as ethically low as any could be. As Dr. Campbell specializes in "homely wisdom"—Christian brand—we don't suppose he can appreciate this point of view. We gather that the New Theology cannot dispense with a policeman God, and a real hell any more than the old theology could, and its ideals are just as low.

Mr. Henry Dawson, President of the Wesleyan Local Preachers' Association, claims to know the working-men of Lancashire and Yorkshire. And he declares that they are sick of the "arrogant Materialism" of to-day; what they want is what Christ came to give—peace of soul. We are inclined to fancy that what the majority of working-men in the counties mentioned are really sick of is—being told they are "sinners" and being implored to "seek salvation."

The Chairman of the Congregational Union declares: "I am against the next war, whatever it is about." If all parsons make the same resolution, what the deuce will happen to the British Empire? For in the past,

Britain has always won a war because (as every good citizen knows) her parsons have loyally guided the nation's prayers for help into the ears of God. And if all the parsons refuse to execute their Christian duty to the State, Britain will never win another war, not even if it is a righteous one.

A Cabinet Minister asserts that nothing is worse than an ignorant democracy. Hear, Hear! It is so easily exploited by politicians, priests, parsons, and popular newspapers.

On October 13, we commented on a letter in *Everyman*, from "K.T.," who styled himself an Agnostic, but who seemed to be qualifying as a Salvation Army convert. *Everyman* now prints a letter from "W.K.," a Rationalist, as follows:—

I am sorry "K.T." is so sad a sceptic. He writes as if he had just arrived at Agnosticism, and was more sensitive to the cold than stimulated by the breeze. May I urge that he should take the advice of a hymn he may formerly have sung, and count his blessing? 1. He has cast out fear of facing facts in this life and of penalties in an hypothetical life to come. 2. He is no longer burdened with the mental agony of trying to justify the ways of God with man. He can enjoy nature without worrying about its cruelties; no longer compelled to find a Christian synthesis for all phenomena, he can visualize a tiger without being perturbed by Blake's creed-shattering question—"Did He who made the lamb make thee?" 3. He has lost his pin-prick view of the universe, and he can enjoy the freedom of the whole world's literature as he could never have done before. For me Shakespeare was a sealed book, because he brought no grist to my theologizing and moralizing mills, until I was twenty-five, and I cannot believe that a Christian can enjoy Hardy as we Agnostics do.

Perhaps this will persuade "K.T." and others of the kind to dry their tears.

The Rev. A. E. Whitham (Wesleyan) is terribly puzzled over what he calls the modern "lust for liberty." This liberty craving always has been a sore trouble to priests. Claiming to have God's authority to lead people in the way God wants them to go—which in practice means the way of the priests—priests have always have branded the desire and demand for liberty as suspect. Self-preservation operates very actively with men of God. So Mr. Whitham feels it his duty signally to serve this present generation by putting emphasis on strait. He perhaps realizes that people who demand liberty have been doing their own thinking and wish to do more of the same kind of thinking. And that is, of course, not in the best interests of any priesthood—conformist or Nonconformist.

Equanimity.

To stay the hand of ruthless time;
To make the sun stand still;
Needs but a confidence sublime
And adamant will.

To make the mighty seas roll back;
The mountains to remove;
Just calls for something that I lack,
As you can quickly prove.

To seize the reins of sovereign power;
To govern lawless men;
Requires much more than my poor dower,
Than my weak voice and pen.

Since I am not a superman,
Such power I cannot get;
I'll have to do the best I can;
But, bless you, I don't fret.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

Testimonial to Mr. Chapman Cohen.

Committee:—Messrs. C. BUSH (Weston), H. JESSOP (Leeds), F. E. MONKS (Manchester), J. NEATE, C. G. QUINTON (London), and T. ROBERTSON (Glasgow).

Hon. Sec.:—Mr. W. J. W. EASTERBROOK, "Hillfield," Burraton, Saltash, Cornwall, to whom all communications and donations should be sent. Cheques and Money Orders should be crossed National Provincial Bank. Acknowledgments of all subscriptions will be made in the *Freethinker*.

Below will be found a list of subscriptions received up to October 28. I am afraid to encroach too much on the space of the *Freethinker*, and so must be satisfied with a quotation here and there from the many letters received. It gladdens my heart to read the expressions of admiration and respect for, and devotion to, our leader, which I receive by every post: but as our Editor is one who runs away from praise, it is not much use my trying "to get it in"! If I were Editor of the *Freethinker* readers would be able to peruse all I have received. Some are beautifully phrased; some most striking in their rugged but forceful simplicity: all show the natural mind untrammelled by superstition and fear. There is indeed a wealth of intelligence and talent in our movement. To all, many thanks for appreciation of our efforts.

Mr. E. Adams writes: "I am very glad there is an opportunity for Freethinkers and others to show to Mr. Cohen their appreciation and admiration of his long, valuable, and unselfish work."

"Never," says Mr. James Ralston, "was a testimonial more richly deserved. For many years Mr. Cohen has given of his best (and what a best it is!) to the "best of causes."

From Chicago, Mr. G. Bedborough writes: "I should greatly deplore being left out of this opportunity to express what so many of us feel—that Mr. Chapman Cohen is worthy of infinitely more than the most we can do for him."

From Mr. John Breese: "It was Mr. Cohen's tact and kindly letter, sent to me nearly twenty years ago that brought me over to Freethought."

Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, enclosing cheque for herself and son: "We both appreciate Mr. Cohen's long and able service to the Freethought cause."

Mr. H. Silvester says: "I was but a lad of seventeen when Mr. Cohen and G. W. Foote attracted me to our Cause. Mr. Cohen's brilliance as a speaker, his wide knowledge, ready wit, never failing humour, and readiness to instruct and advise the young inquirer, made the severance from my early religious life easy and complete."

C. E. Fernando writes: "I consider it a privilege and a rare good fortune to be called upon to send in a cheque for the Editor of a paper, which has for its name the shortest definition of the true gentleman, and that definition a truthful description of the Editor himself."

Arthur Fox writes: "For his influence on me during my early twenties, through hearing him lecture and debate at Derby some thirty-six years ago—Many thanks."

P. Victor Morris: "If I had Henry Ford's millions, I could not repay Mr. Chapman Cohen for the benefits I have had from listening to him and

reading his works. That is the opinion of one who is not given to blind adoration of men or Movements. I congratulate you and your Committee on organizing this Fund."

A final word from Mr. E. D. Skidd: "If ability and learning with strenuous hard work and self-sacrifice are worth recognition, then here is the opportunity. With him we are a host, without him we are scattered units."

W. J. W. EASTERBROOK.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS—THIRD LIST.

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"Be weak, be water, be characterless, be cheaply persuadable," was, he said, the first command the Deity ever issued to a human being on this planet, the only command Adam would never be able to disobey.

The Ordeal of Mark Twain.

Separated from its foster-mother, the State, the Church of Penguin withered like a plucked flower.

Penguin Island.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

L. THORLEY.—The only difference between marriage in a Church and marriage before a registry office, lies in the religious ceremonies that accompany the entering into the marriage contract. The religious ceremonies in church, Chapel, or synagogue form no essential part of a legal marriage. A marriage to be legal must be performed by a parson licensed by the State to perform it, and in a place licensed for that purpose.

D. CAPPER.—Hope to publish next week.

T.H.—Mr. Cohen's dates are well filled, but if you will write him nearer Christmas he will see what can be done in the New Year. Is the man named in the newspaper cutting the one who was identified with a so-called spirit telephone which no one was able to get hold of?

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks for congratulations. We are feeling quite well, but have a very busy season before us.

F. HALE.—We cannot control the price charged by wholesale newsagents, but the case cited certainly seems hard. Will see if anything can be done, but are doubtful.

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 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. R. H. Rosetti, 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."

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 (November 3) Mr. Cohen will give the first of a course of four lectures in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. The lecture commences at 6.30—subject, "The Meaning of Materialism."

The Liverpool Branch made a fine opening with its Sunday meetings on Sunday last. The fine Picton Hall was comfortably filled, and Mr. Cohen's lecture was well received, both the applause and the laughter being frequent. Mr. Egerton Stafford occupied the chair. We believe there was also a good sale of literature. There was also a brisk demand for tickets for the debate on November 18, between Mr. Cohen and the Rev. Mr. Pugh, which is to take place in the same hall.

The *Sunday Dispatch* has commenced a series of articles embodying an interview with Professor Einstein. The first instalment illustrates again the folly of asking a man who is an authority upon a special subject, or upon special subjects his opinions upon anything and everything. Of course, it may be that some of the things are to be credited to their reporter and not to Einstein. Mr. Cohen hopes to comment upon the interviews shortly. There is no immediate hurry, and other things are in the way.

But these journalists! Oh, these journalists! In informing its readers who Einstein is the *Dispatch* after pointing out how great a man Einstein is ends with these wonderful comments:—

It is not impossible that in the evolution of human thought Einstein's discovery may play a greater part than the Great War. His fame may outlive that of Foch, Ludendorff, and Clemenceau.

Not to mention Douglas Fairbanks, the Bishop of London, Hannen Swaffer, and Edgar Wallace. Oh, these journalists!

"Does Man Survive Death?"

MR. SHAW DESMOND, unlike Mr. Hannen Swaffer, managed to find time for his debate with Mr. Chapman Cohen. It had been well advertised, with the result that last Friday evening, Caxton Hall, Westminster, was packed to overflowing. Many people stood through the whole of the evening. Whether it was the fame of the two disputants or the subject which attracted so large an audience, I must confess I am not able to settle, but the speeches were listened to with breathless attention, punctuated here and there with laughter as some humorous comment or witty phrase enlivened the subject.

The debate itself was to some extent disappointing from the fact that Mr. Desmond, who led off, confined himself almost exclusively to Spiritualism—while Mr. Cohen was hoping he would deal with the broad aspect of survival in general. Mr. Desmond felt he had absolutely proved survival after death by citing a long catalogue of "psychic" marvels, which he might just as well have read out *ad lib* from such a compendium as Campbell Holm's *Facts and Science of Psychic Phenomena*. A very fluent speaker, he rattled on at top speed, merely pausing to get breath, and it was obvious that he not only was cocksure he had an impregnable case, but being an Irishman, he felt he could heartily enjoy his own jokes—which he did.

Mr. Desmond's method of "proving" his case was by asserting it. For example, he dealt with the well known experiments with the medium, Margery's brother Walter, who was killed and who returned—through his sister—to imprint his thumb-mark exactly like the imprint he left on his razor before he died. The whole thing was absolutely impossible to explain, except on the "fact" of Walter's survival. Mr. Cohen gently hinted that there was no proof that the thumb imprint on the razor was Walter's, but this did not disturb Mr. Desmond. Anybody who disbelieved it was in the "last ditch," be he Mr. Cohen or a scientist. In fact, everybody who didn't believe exactly as Mr. Desmond in various other matters, was in the "last ditch." Mr. Cohen pointed out it might be the last ditch facing the enemy, but away went Mr. Desmond at a hurricane pace with dozens of other similar proofs. Everything connected with Margery, it seemed, was unanswerable and unexplainable except on the basis of genuine survival. Mr. Cohen pointed out how easily anyone out to establish a case, embellished the picture heightened a colour here and there for the purpose of arousing conviction, and he showed this applied to Mr. Desmond himself during the debate. No one, declared Mr. Desmond, who had sat with Margery, doubted for a moment the genuineness of the phenomena. Everything happened exactly as related by Mr. Desmond—or more so, and Sceptics were absolutely annihilated. I wondered whether Mr. Desmond would whisper the name of Houdini, that formidable opponent of "psychic," humbug and fraud. Needless to say he did not, and those present, who were impressed by Margery's marvellous experiments might find Houdini's book *Margery*, written a short while before his untimely death, a very healthy corrective of boastful assertions!

Mr. Chapman Cohen was in splendid form and was not to be rushed off "swopping names." As Mr. Desmond insisted on Spiritualism, he got Spiritualism, but not quite in the way he expected. What he would have liked was a discussion on "fraud," but Mr. Cohen had studied the subject for too many years to be tracked off on these lines. The question of

fraud could be ruled out for the time—what about the odd one or two per cent of genuine phenomena? Mr. Cohen took his stand on abnormal psychology, and no amount of pooh-poohing could get away from the deadly facts elucidated by the great psychologists in their laboratories. Mr. Desmond, as might be expected, knew them all; he had read about them ten, twenty, thirty years ago—he knew everything and everybody, and some of us wondered whether it would not have been easier to tell us what he *hadn't* read or whom he hadn't seen, or where he hadn't been. It might have saved time for more weighty matters. What the audience enjoyed and appreciated was Mr. Cohen's happy knack—it really amounts to genius—of humorous comments and witty epigrams. Over and over again he caused roars of laughter by a neat term of phrase which completely answered his opponent, and was far more deadly than a serious reply. Not even a verbatim report can do justice to the effectiveness of such a method of disposing solemn nonsense, whether religious or spiritualistic; it has to be heard "in the flesh."

For the rest, the debate was a study in psychology in itself. Both disputants were thoroughly in earnest and were more concerned at getting at the truth than scoring debating points. The scientific precision of Mr. Cohen's mind worked out often in that bantering vein which did not conceal its fine reasoning, while Mr. Desmond could have gone on all night retailing with gusto "psychic" facts utterly unexplainable except as from ghosts or spirits.

Dr. Bernard Hollander occupied the chair, the audience, through their perfect order and good humour, giving him nothing to do. He introduced the speakers with a few remarks of his own.

Mr. Shaw Desmond then opened the debate by remarking that he felt like an amateur meeting a veteran of a hundred psychic fights in Mr. Cohen. He himself liked to fight in hot blood, but he had met Mr. Cohen and found him too courteous. It was necessary for them both to occupy some common ground, and Mr. Cohen's mentality was so entirely different from his own. For this reason, he would read from Mr. Cohen's book *The Other Side of Death*, certain passages such as, "Fraud should be taken for granted in all cases of professional mediumship"—passages which show Mr. Cohen's mentality. Mr. Desmond did not think much of the scientific mind which was too narrow, and Mr. Cohen was a Materialist who was fighting in the last ditch. At one time it was the priest who was in that ditch, now it was the Materialist. Mr. Cohen's book proves he does not know his case—how can he explain the poetry of Patience Worth or *The Script of Cleophas*, which were done by automatic writing—does Mr. Cohen think they were not worth while?

Mr. Desmond did not think much of dragging in names of eminent men who were thorough believers in spiritualism, so he would draw them from all ranks of life, and quote Sir W. Barrett, Sir O. Lodge, Prof. Larkin, Prof. Eliot, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, Dr. W. Brown, Prof. McDougal and the Bishop of London (whose name caused a roar of laughter from the audience). The balance of evidence was in favour of survival. What with tables moving about a room untouched by hands and instruments playing with no visible players, and the further testimony of Lombroso and Prof. Crawford, who, completely sceptic, was brought over to the Spiritualist position, it was obvious Materialism was fighting in the last ditch—which really was a last ditch. Mr. Cohen admits the phenomena, but he says the interpretation is wrong.

Millions now regularly speak to the dead. Where one did ten years ago ten do now. It is always cul-

tured people who become Spiritualists—not the Irish peasant, but men like George Russell or W. B. Yeats. The imprint of an ectoplasmatic hand used to be laughed at, but it is now photographed by people who are not professional mediums.

Finally, how could Mr. Cohen explain the Direct Voice speaking all sorts of dead languages or the *Script of Cleophas*, full of Greek and Hebrew words, though the authoress knew neither of these languages? (Loud applause.)

Mr. Chapman Cohen, who was received with applause, said he had listened with great attention to Mr. Desmond's lively and witty speech, but there was not much information in it. All he said was "half an hour." As an old debater, he could not complain about the way in which Mr. Desmond opened, but there were other phases of the question of a future life than the Spiritualistic one. He was not going to bother about fraud as he felt it was good Spiritualistic propaganda to go about saying it was *all* fraud. He was also not going into a long catalogue of cases—millions were not stronger than one. One genuine case was all that was required. In presenting the case for spirits, you painted a picture—not always consciously—and you ended by producing something not like the original. Eminent scientists do not agree that the phenomena came from spirits. The word "psychic" was a godsend to Spiritualists—but it was a bastard word—a dishonest word. All scientific evidence can be tested, but Spiritualism admitted of no genuinely scientific tests; and those who go to seances expecting to find spirits are fine subjects for self-deception. People like Mr. Robert Blatchford, who had lost his wife and wanted to speak to her, were already half-way to being believers. Sitting with lowered lights, singing hymns, and with a strong expectation of something happening, opened the way to hallucination. What are we to make of automatic writing? Mr. Desmond had stressed the fact that those who wrote automatic messages did not know what they were writing, but the whole feature of automatic writing was that they should not know. Could you say straight away whom you passed on your way to this hall? Yet perhaps to-morrow or next week, a question might suddenly make you remember that you did pass a well known friend, and then had forgotten all about it. He had sat in hundreds of seances, and while many felt ghostly touches or cold winds, nothing had ever touched him. The best thing for the dead was to stop dead. He believed in the value of death as a civilizing factor in life. What happens in the other world?

All sorts of grossly contradictory stories about the spirit world are told us by these returned spirits. We are told they all have bodies and they have not bodies. They have a vocal apparatus and they have not. They require food and they do not. They agree only in one thing and that is in explaining the next world in terms of their present environment. But if spirits can be mistaken as to how they travel, how they talk, how they eat, and how they are clothed, it is just possible they may be mistaken in thinking they exist. This is not all. Mr. Desmond had spoken of the number of people who believed in a future life, and regarded himself as one of the guard of a conquering army. But let us look at the facts. Death is a very old thing, it is true there were the same opportunities for communication between the dead and the living throughout all time. Surely by this time if survival be a fact, and a fact of human nature it should by this time be accepted by all as true. But that is not the case. Fewer and fewer people believe in it. All our converts are captured from the other side. All that Mr. Desmond can say of those who believe in it, they haven't yet lost them.

Mr. Desmond was not the advance guard of a conquering army, he was one of an army in full retreat, the numbers of which were being eaten away by disintegration and desertion. It is idle talking of people investigating Spiritualism. The whole point is whether they possess the proper equipment for investigating, and few people are more ignorant of the tricks that may be played them by their own minds, or by the abnormal conditions of other minds than are Spiritualists. Investigate with the proper equipment and you will leave the seance room much as you entered it.

Mr. Shaw Desmond said he was again in a difficulty as Mr. Cohen never attempted to deal with his case and the cause of phenomena. It was the first time in hundreds of debates this had happened to him. Mr. Cohen was still talking as he would have done twenty years ago. He (Mr. Desmond) never said you could go to a seance and get a spirit at once, or all scientists were in agreement. Professor Richet was another "last ditcher." They were not all committed to the various kind of spiritual interpretations. He agreed that the *Freethinker* was a good paper, and that Liberal Christians owed a great deal to it, and the R.P.A. He also knew he was not leading a victorious army as they were in a state of flux. Belief in survival is taking new and scientific forms. Mr. Blatchford was a convinced Materialist who had been converted, but Mr. Cohen could not be touched. He looks like having a hell of a time in the next world. Take Margery Crandon—no scientific investigation has shaken her case—the one which will shatter Rationalism. Her brother Walter, after being killed, came back and talked with the direct voice in front of a crowd of sceptics. Never have they explained this, or has she ever failed in a test case. His thumb imprint, exactly like the one on his razor, was repeated time after time. Such facts should never be debated. Margery wrote Chinese characters without knowing a word of Chinese, and Dr. Wymant has told us he recognized the Analects of Confucius, Basque and many other languages. (Applause.)

Mr. Chapman Cohen, in his second speech, said he hoped the audience would see why he didn't swop cases with Mr. Desmond. He had dealt with his cases, although not in the way Mr. Desmond would have liked. He declined to take the statements as an absolute picture of what had occurred. If the proof is so overwhelming, everybody present should have been convinced, but that is never the case. Some present believed others did not. What was the proof, for example, that the imprint on the razor was Walters'? There was such things as impostures for the sake of notoriety, and there is some capacity for lying in human nature. The statement of Mr. Oliver Baldwin about spirits telling him to move from a certain spot during the war and thus saving his life was of this order, and one of thousands of similar statements. One tale brings another to cap it.

Murderers come back from beyond, philosophers come back, but when Shakespeare comes back he talks like Hall Caine, and Plato talks like the Bishop of London. There were hundreds of books with such cases, and they proved the will to believe. He watched Mr. Desmond as a student of psychology, and could see how even he heightened the colours and stressed certain things to carry conviction. He objected to people saying spirits were at work—was wireless "psychic"? In most people the capacity for delusion and self hallucination was immense. Simple knocks on the table were the methods of communication in the early history of Spiritualism, but we have the direct voice in 1929—a growth of more complex means. Some mediums had informed him that spirits guided him in writing his *Freethinker*

articles and even *The Other Side of Death*—to prove they didn't exist. Mr. Cohen concluded with some well known cases of multiple personality, and abnormal psychology recorded by authorities on the subject. (Applause.)

Mr. Shaw Desmond then said that again Mr. Cohen had not touched his cases.

There are forces, said Mr. Cohen, which we do not know. He (Mr. Desmond) did not deny the cases mentioned—he had read them twenty or thirty years ago, but secondary consciousness did not explain his phenomena. He did not think Mr. Oliver Baldwin was a liar, but he ought to mention that his fellow Rationalists never claimed William Archer as a Spiritualist, which he was. People do not go to a seance to be convinced—look at Dr. Wymant, a thorough sceptic, now a convinced believer. The direct voice was used in 1840, but it fell into disfavour, and has now been taken up again. He had read Frazer in connection with primitive beliefs, but Frazer, though able to collect facts, was hopeless to evaluate them. (Loud applause.)

Mr. Chapman Cohen, in his final speech, said that he had met Mr. Desmond's cases, but naturally he did not discuss every detail—some of which were there merely to carry conviction. And how easy it is to invent details! Look at the Angels of Mons and the Bishop of London. Witness can be brought to prove anything, and that was why he didn't swop cases. Frazer pointed out how primitive peoples believed in survival, and was thoroughly capable of evaluating evidence.

In sober truth one does not need to examine Spiritualism to realize the gross absurdity, even the impossibility of a future life. Consider what a world in which there is no death would be like. A world in which there is no death would be a world in which there is no birth, no children, no family life, a world in which such words as honesty, truth, loyalty, love of country, duty, have no place and no meaning. Death is not the terror that religion has made it, it is not the thing to be dreaded that Spiritualists believe. Death and birth are two sides of the same thing, and the joy we find in the cradle is born of the grief we feel at the grave side. Man is made for life here, and life elsewhere with his present qualities and nature is an absurdity.

After a vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. Desmond and seconded by Mr. Cohen, the chairman, Dr. Bernard Hollander, with a few felicitous phrases concluded a spirited debate.

H. CUTNER.

Savage Religion and Sexual Taboo.

IN Europe and Europeanized America woman is notorious as the religious animal. In Continental churches and cathedrals, the overwhelming majority of devotees are members of the female sex. And not only in Catholic countries, but in Protestant also, the women are manipulated by the priests. Even within families where the husband, father, or brothers favour the Freethought evangel, the womenfolk are apt to cling to the customary creed.

That women are naturally emotional and dependent is the current explanation of this sad truth. Whatever the causes may be, it is the woman who usually succumbs to the wiles of the modern medicine-man. Yet, throughout Christendom until quite recent days, woman was enjoined to suffer and obey in silence; to play a subordinate part, while exercising acts of charity; and ever refused all positions of authority either as teacher or administrator in sacerdotal affairs.

That a woman should ever be suffered to teach or hold high office in the Roman Catholic Church is regarded as a species of impiety. Still, strange to say, the story of Pope Joan was for centuries received without a question. This celebrated lady was supposed to have occupied the Papal chair as John VIII for some three years after the decease of Leo IV, in 855 A.D. When she arrived in Rome her outstanding ability secured her in rapid succession the office of notary to the Curia, a cardinal's hat, and the position of supreme Pontiff. All went well "until her sex was discovered by the premature and public birth of a child during a solemn procession." For at least two centuries, this realistic story was universally accepted throughout Italy. From 1400 to 1600, it is recorded in all the chronicles, and as late as 1550 it appeared in the popular guide to foreigners visiting Rome. And so universal was the belief in the woman Pope, that in the early fifteenth century the bust of Joan was placed in Sienna Cathedral with those of the other Pontiffs, where it remained unquestioned till 1600, when Clement VIII arranged the metamorphosis of Pope Joan into Pope Zacharias.

The tale of Joan, though long fostered by the Dominicans, seems to have been first disputed by the Calvinist, David Blondel, in 1647. The average Catholic now denounces the story as a wicked invention of heretics and infidels who are only too pleased to smirch the 'scutcheon of the Holy Church. Nevertheless, there may be some truth in the story. Even in our inquisitive age, to note only such cases as those recently reported in the public press, it is still possible for women to successfully masquerade as men.

When we turn to peoples of the lower culture, we constantly discover that women are not only excluded from office, but are apparently denied all participation in religious rites and ceremonies. In New Guinea, Melanesia, and in savage Australia the death penalty is imposed on women who witness the ceremonies of initiation.

Whether in these and other races women are completely barred from sharing in the sacred ceremonies is an open question. In some savage tribes medicine-women predominate. Dr. Lowie has dwelt with the Crow Indians, and studied their religious practices at first hand, and found that few sacred functions were monopolized by the male sex. The meaning of many savage customs remains obscure, and the excellent suggestion has been made that several problems so far unsolved by male observers might yield to the penetrative powers of female anthropologists.

In any case, women appear as much at the mercy of superstition as men throughout the savage world. Wise women are sometimes proficient in the magic art. Dr. Benedict tells us that even in New Guinea, while the men conduct the leading ceremonies, the women call up the spirits of the dead. Again, they "direct many ceremonial details, and are often called into consultation with the old men; they exercise a general supervision over the religious behaviour of the young people."

There are numerous instances of religious inferiority where women are concerned. The view is advanced by Dr. Lowie, that this very largely results from uncivilized man's dread of the menstrual discharge. Much evidence is available that menstruant women are regarded apprehensively. In his recently published volume, *Primitive Religion*, Dr. Lowie presents part of the testimony which provides the basis for his theory. These evidences are drawn from many regions in savage Africa, Oceania, America, Australia and Asia.

The Bantu of Rhodesia regard women as dangerous during their periodic illness, and it is deemed

necessary to segregate them from their neighbours. A man who shared a meal with a menstruant would become sterile, and the sick would suffer from her presence. While she remains in this unclean state her touch proves baneful to the hearth-fire, the domestic utensils, the food and drink. "In Central Australia a menstruating woman is carefully avoided, while in Queensland she is secluded and must not even walk in a man's tracks. In the Torres Straits Islands investigations have found an intense fear of the deleterious and infective powers of the menstrual fluid; and various taboos are imposed on the menstruant, who must live in seclusion, shun the daylight, and abstain from sea-food. Her Marshall Island sister dwells in a special menstrual hut, is limited to a prescribed diet, and is believed to exert an inauspicious influence." (*Primitive Religion*, p. 212.)

The facts furnished by America are equally striking. A menstruant who handles food among the Choctaw pollutes it. With the native Indians of Wisconsin, the touch of a menstruant proves fatal to plants, dogs and children. During this period of impurity she must not even scratch herself, save with a special stick. Some decline hospitality in Christian houses lest they become weakly through eating food "prepared by a woman undergoing her monthly terms." In some races the sacred vessels themselves are deprived of their powers by a menstruant's touch. Others assert that the menstrual flow is the most deadly of liquids, for even the spirits have succumbed to its sinister potency.

Throughout Western America the same superstition prevails. Among the Blackfoot Indians contact with a menstruant proves seriously detrimental to holy vessels and the sick. Dr. Lowie has himself witnessed the seclusion and privation imposed on Indian women in Idaho. And in Nevada and North-Central California severe restrictions are deemed essential where menstruants are concerned.

Many observers, past and present, have noted the several strange customs to which the catamenial phenomena have given rise. With some hunting tribes a menstrual woman's proximity to the men's personal possessions or the instruments employed in the chase would render the hunt abortive owing to the indignation of the animals thus insulted. Menstrual females among the Chipewyan were strictly secluded in a hovel and kept away from nets and hunting tracks to prevent ill luck in the chase. In Alaska similar safeguards were employed.

The mysterious process of puberty and catamenia appear responsible for numerous superstitions in South America. In one form or another the menstruant is placed under taboo across the Continent. Protective devices are requisitioned by the native communities of Southern Central America, Guiana, Brazil, Peru, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego. All the available evidence denotes a long-established and persistent horror of female menstruation.

The customs of the lower peoples vary in different lands, but everywhere appears a repugnance to what has long become a natural happening in the eyes of civilized humanity. The Andamanese, for instance, are gravely concerned with the noxious effects of catamenia on the woman herself. The African Bushmen confine the menstrual adolescent in a rude hut in the custody of her mother. When she walks abroad her gaze must be riveted on the ground lest her glance should scare the springbok. With reference to the Palæo-Siberians, we are informed that "the Maritime Chukchi do not allow a menstruating woman to approach her husband; even her breath is impure and might contaminate him, destroying his luck as sea-hunter, nay causing him to be drowned. Under similar circumstances, her Koryak sister must

not tamper with her husband's hunting and fishing apparatus or sit on his sledge, while among the Yukaghi she is forbidden to touch the sacred drum."

Dr. Lowie claims that his provisional theory that the disabilities imposed upon women result from the fears generated by the monthly discharges is sustained by several curious facts. He contends that where the menstrual taboos are slight or, as sometimes happens, absent, woman's standing is more exalted. Menstrual restrictions remain unknown among the Bagobo, and their women participate in the sacred ceremonies, almost on an equality with the men. With other races of lowly culture, whose menstrual observances are unimportant, the woman's rank is relatively high. And it is certainly suggestive that among those peoples whose sexual discrimination is strongly pronounced, this tends to disappear after the period of menstrual life has passed. In New Guinea the elderly ladies are granted privileges that are never conceded to their younger and more comely daughters. One observer states that: "At a feast . . . the old women, who have passed their climacteric, sit right next the men, because they are considered the same as men, as they have no menstrual flow any more." It seems that despite the fretfulness and despondency which so frequently characterize later life among women, the sexes draw nearer together when the weird menstrual appearances have ended. Dr. Lowie pertinently inquires why the Chukchi "who close the highest grade of shamanism to women, fail to bar male inverters who in every way dress and act as women? Obviously because in their case the sentiments produced by the thought of menstruation are eliminated."

Many phenomena are associated with the rise and progress of religion. Among these must be ranked the erotic emotions and desires. The period of adolescence, is commonly that of religious conversion, and other facts are equally significant. As the great George Meredith once said, the sexual passion is unique in being inseparable from the channel of life itself.

T. F. PALMER.

Society News.

THE last week of Mr. G. Whitehead's outdoor campaign for this season was spent at Liverpool. In spite of some rain during the daytime, all the advertised meetings were held in various parts of the city. He managed to attract good audiences, and except for an odd interruption or so at one of the meetings, all of them were attended by sympathetic crowds, and there is nothing of an excitable nature to report. This absence of hostility in a hot-bed of Catholic and Protestant bigotry is partly due to the incessant outdoor work carried on by Messrs. Sherwin and Shortt, assisted by Mr. Jackson, who also carried the platform and acted as showman at Mr. Whitehead's meetings. On the whole it may be said that the season of 1929 throughout the country, as far as Mr. Whitehead's lectures have been concerned, has met with more general sympathy than any he has previously conducted. We are indebted to all those who have helped to make the season so successful.

THE half-dozen lectures given by Mr. Clayton this week have been favoured by exceptional weather conditions. At four places visited the crowds were well up to the summer level in numbers. At Hapton, in fact, it was perhaps bigger than we have had there previously. The Great Harwood meeting was very successful as usual, on such a good pitch; whilst the Sunday meetings on Burnley Market, in spite of a lower temperature, drew fair crowds, and in the afternoon particularly a good deal of opposition was encountered.—J.C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.5, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1). Social and Dance on Thursday, November 7, at 101 Tottenham Court Road. Admission 1s. 7.30 to 11.30.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (361 Brixton Road, near Gresham Road, S.W.): 7.30, Debate—"Is Belief in God Reasonable?" *Affir.*: Mr. H. Hewitt. *Neg.*: Mr. F. P. Corrigan (President, South London Branch N.S.S.).

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"The Arts and the People."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): Free Sunday Lectures—November 3, 7.0, Mr. R. Dimsdale Stocker—"The Good of Human Forgiveness."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30—Debate: "Is Evolution a Failure?" *Affir.*: Rev. M. Morris; *Neg.*: Mr. Botting.

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Friday, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Mr. James Hart; 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. C. Tuson and J. Hart; every Friday at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* may be obtained during our meetings outside the Park Gates, Bayswater Road.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.30, Mr. Charles Tuson.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Club Room, Middle Chase): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton will lecture on "Heredity." Chairman—Mr. F. Phillips.

LIVERPOOL, (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Top Room, Royal Buildings, 18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): Sunday, November 3, Mr. J. Arnold Sharpley (Liverpool), 7.30, "Is this Life Enough?"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (Editor of the *Freethinker* and President of the National Secular Society) will lecture on—"Materialism Its Meaning and Its Critics."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester): Sunday, November 3, Mr. Will Kent (London) Member Dickens Fellowship—3.0, "The Religious Influences of Dickens's Youth"; 6.30, "Was Dickens a Christian?"

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The Trust may be benefited by donations of cash, or shares already held, or by bequests. All contributions will be acknowledged in the columns of this journal, and may be sent to either the Editor, or to the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. H. Jessop, Hollyshaw, Whitkirk, Nr. Leeds. Any further information concerning the Trust will be supplied on application.

There is no need to say more about the *Freethinker* itself, than that its invaluable service to the Free-thought Cause is recognized and acknowledged by all. It is the mouthpiece of militant Freethought in this country, and places its columns, without charge, at the service of the Movement.

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