

The

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## Views and Opinions.

1930—1931.

GENERALLY speaking it cannot be said that 1930 has been a joyous year. Unemployment has greatly extended, the aftermath of the Versailles Treaty is working itself out in the creation of a number of new danger spots in Europe, while in the world of politics the reign of mediocrity and chicanery is becoming so marked that it almost looks as though we are heading for a complete breakdown of constitutional government. We may muddle through this stage as we have muddled through others, but if we do it will be largely because there is no one above the horizon who is clear-headed enough or courageous enough to make a decisive bid for personal rule. If there were he might make the discovery that the vast majority of citizens—men and women—are not at all interested in political theories or even in forms of government. What they are interested in is getting through life with a moderate degree of comfort and a moderate sense of security. It would, perhaps, be better were it otherwise.

In the religious world the only pleasure that religious leaders can find in greeting 1931 is that 1930 is over, and even that pleasure will be damped by the perception that as 1930 was for them worse than 1929, so 1931 may well be worse for them than was 1930. For there is no questioning the decline of genuine religion in this country. Belief after belief is disowned by leaders of religion and quietly rejected by laymen. The latter is the cause of the former, for religious leaders never surrender their teachings till their congregations have given them up. The policy of the leaders is as always, resistance and then scuttle. They have seldom either the courage to face life with honesty or death with dignity.

## The Sabbatarian.

But there are several things which the old year has bequeathed to the churches which bids fair to give them considerable trouble. The chief of these is the Sunday question. It may safely be said that the Puritan Sunday has brought little but evil in its train. The picture of a people who in the main spent the "day of rest" in quiet and peaceful meditation and worship, from which they rose refreshed and strengthened to fight the battle of life during the remainder of the week is wholly imaginary. It never existed in fact. For a certain proportion of the people it meant indulgence in forms of religious worship of a peculiarly narrow and disagreeable character. For the majority it meant a day that was irksome to the extreme. The fact that laws had to be passed to prevent indulgence in amusements, and that complaints of the non-observance of the sabbath have been insistent are clear proofs of this. The forcible cessation of Sunday sports in the seventeenth century led the way to the drunkenness of the English people that in the eighteenth century became a bye-word. Complaints that the Puritan prohibition of the Sunday sports had led to an increase of drunkenness were made as early as the reign of Charles the First, and later there was noted by a variety of observers the fact that so long as multitudes were left without any opportunity for spending Sunday rationally and healthfully there was involved the deterioration of manners among the youth of both sexes. Those who care to consult Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*, will hardly need further proof of the truth of what has been said. To the young Sunday meant little more than a day of gloom and misery. There are few old people living to-day who spent their childhood in a strictly sabbatarian family, who will not tell you with what disgust they now look back upon the way in which their parents compelled them to spend the day of rest. All things considered, the British Sunday has done more to demoralise character than anything else connected with religious belief.

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## Secularizing Sunday.

Not the least valuable of the services which early nineteenth century Freethought conferred upon the people of this country was the breaking down of this harsh, intolerant, and demoralizing sabbatarianism; and by about the middle of the nineteenth century this influence had become so strong, and had so influenced thousands who would not avow themselves as opposed to the established religion, that Sunday lectures, Sunday excursions, Sunday entertainments became quite common. Many of these things were, and still are, as conducted, illegal, but the common sense of what was being done in providing educational gatherings, or other methods of advantageously spending the day of rest, was so obvious, that there



was shown considerable hesitancy in appealing to the law. And step by step with the breaking down of the Sabbath of the Puritan there went on an increasing improvement in the manners of the people. Other influences were, of course, at work, for it is no mean question as to the way in which the working classes of a country shall spend one-seventh of their lives, and nearly half of what could reasonably be called their leisure time.

So things went on, each decade seeing the religious Sabbath more and more ignored, and the day of rest being spent in a progressively healthier manner. Even the magistrates were compelled by force of public opinion to ignore the illegality of Sunday entertainments, and so much was this the case that many of them appear to have quite overlooked that in their taking to themselves the wholly fictitious power to permit or prohibit Sunday entertainments they were actually abetting others in breaking the laws it was their duty to enforce. The farcical nature of the situation has been made clear by a recent decision in the courts, and it is certain that we have not heard the last of it. It is quite impossible for the Sabbatarian to get the old Sunday laws enforced. Once a people have tasted freedom, particularly where their pleasures are concerned, it is difficult to take it away from them again. And if the law remains as it is, then whatever the courts decide, it is fairly certain that people will go on breaking it. Popular feeling has a way of repealing ridiculous laws by ignoring them, and you cannot summons half the population.

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#### Let us Prey.

Apart from certain Sabbatarian cranks, religious leaders appear to recognize that at least a compromise is inevitable, and also that the whole question of Sunday observance is in question. As usual the concern of the clergy is to safeguard their own vested interests. Sixteen bishops and a number of Non-conformist leaders have issued a manifesto deploring the increase of "obligatory labour" on Sunday, and stating that provided Christians pay due attention to the worship of God, the suitability of Sunday entertainments must be left "to the Christian conscience." The Rev. Henry Carter, Secretary of the Social Welfare Department of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, suggests that Parliament should empower Councils to settle for their own areas the Sunday opening of places of entertainment, that Parliament should also determine that there should be no opening on Sunday for profit, that entertainments should be outside Church hours, and that films shown on Sunday should not conflict with the "moral sense" of the community.

The *News-Chronicle* praises the "broad wisdom" of these suggestions. All we can see is the unashamed professionalism of the proposals. These suggestions for an improved Sunday are not in the nature of pioneer proposals. The old demoralising Sunday was upheld so long as it was possible, and now when public opinion has made that kind of a day impossible, the Churches and Chapels are gracious enough to put forward proposals in which they agree to a partly civilized Sunday, provided their own interests are safeguarded. Note the sheer impudence that entertainments are not to be permitted whenever the parson opens his place of business, and that no films should be permitted with which the moral sense (in practice the religious belief) of the community disagrees. The root objection to Sabbatarianism is having one standard for Sunday and another for the rest of the week. And it is sheer impudence to say that the men and women who are supplying enter-

tainment on Sunday for those who require them, shall be compelled to work for nothing. Why not demand that omnibus proprietors and publicans, shall also work for nothing on Sunday. For impudence and hypocrisy these proposals take the cake. Finally, it is not merely the question of Sunday entertainments that is before the public, it is the question of Sunday as a whole, and not alone that. If proper use is made of the agitation, it should bring the question of the domination of life by ancient religious taboos before the bar of enlightened opinion.

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#### Possibilities in 1931.

In all the cities and large towns in the kingdom the "Dictatorship of the Sabbatarian" has been for many years maintained by an active and well organized minority. On another question, that of religious teaching in State-supported school, to a very considerable extent, the same thing holds good. The exact strength of the party against religious teaching in the schools is not realized because so many are content to let things drift, and because so many do not care to let their neighbours know how little they believe in religion of any kind, and continue to permit their children to receive religious instruction in the schools. The action of the Government may again make this question a live political issue. The Government has passed a Bill for the raising of the school age. This means more expense to the voluntary schools, and apart from this the denominations are continually asking for more State help, and for more religious teaching in the Council Schools. Quite recently Parliament was informed that the Minister of Education is arranging for another conference of the churches and chapels, and is hopeful that some agreement may be reached. From the religious side this present Government is more squeezable than Governments have been for some time, and the spectacle of the Minister of Education enquiring what the different sects desire, and, if they can agree upon what they wish, arranging things so that they may be gratified, is enough to make one smile or swear. 1931 may see this question a live political issue, if all those who believe in Secular Education will do their part. There is not a district within the London area at least, in which, if every parent who did not believe in religious instruction were to withdraw his children from it, there would not be a sufficient number of scholars standing apart from the religious lesson large enough to put a quite different complexion on the situation. In this matter the sectarians gain strength from the inactivity of Freethinkers. It is push that moves politicians, not principles, and if those who have the principles show also that they have the push, the two questions of Sunday and Secular Education, may give the Churches and Chapels a greater shaking than they have received for some time.

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#### Ourselves.

There are other things on which I should like to say a word at the opening of the New Year, but want of space prevents. There is, however, one thing of infinite importance—to us and to all interested in the Freethought Movement. In May of this year the *Freethinker* will have achieved its jubilee. No other Freethinking paper in Europe has ever had so long a life, or has more determinedly stuck to its professed principles. And as I do not think it is likely to alter during the next few months, I think I may be a trifle prophetic and say that during its fifty years of existence it has never lowered its flag or faltered in its message for fear of offending, or—more demoralizing still—with any desire to please. It has held itself



independent alike of friends, half-friends, and enemies. Not that it thought less highly of the first or has underestimated the last. It could not have lived if it had not had devoted friends, and it would not have been worth living if it had not made implacable enemies. The existence of both have been highly complimentary, and it is not conceit that leads one to say that Freethought in this country would not be where it is to-day with no *Freethinker* in the field.

I have a great many suggestions already as to what might be done to celebrate our Jubilee. It is too early to say anything at present, but there is one thing that might be done now, and in which all might take a hand. All last year I was laying myself out, by spending money on advertising, and on arrangements for a larger display of the paper in the London area, to keep this paper well before the public. The paper has never before been so well displayed during the whole of its history. The results, while not sensational, and not returning the expenditure, have yet been satisfactory. They have not merely made good the loss that nearly all weekly journals have experienced owing to bad times, but have actually led to some increase in circulation. I am persisting on the same lines as far as means will permit during 1931.

What I want every interested reader of the paper to do is to take a hand in this circulation game. There are very few who are not able to secure an extra reader or two if they will only take the trouble to do so. There is always a possible reader round the corner if one will only look for him; and every new reader is a substantial gift to the Freethought Movement. All that can be done at this end is being done, it is not too much to ask readers to do what they can at their end. So, for the present I wish all the friends of the *Freethinker* a *pushful* new year, and if they make it that I am quite sure they will find it a happy one.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Two Infidel Graves.

"Rome is a city, as it were, of the dead, or rather of those who cannot die, and who survive the puny generations which inhabit and pass over the spot which they have made sacred to eternity."—*Shelley*.

"Death, not armed with any dart,  
But crowned with poppies."—*Julian Fane*.

AMONG the unnumbered wonders of Rome the tree-clad burial ground outside the Porta San Paola holds a place apart. Pilgrims come from remote corners of the earth to linger in the quiet corner where John Keats lies beside his friend, Joseph Severn, his gravestone bearing the bitter words: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Not far away rises the slope where the heart of Shelley lies buried beside the body of his friend Edward Trelawny. Even among the splendours of the Eternal City this spot is noteworthy, for the feet of Shelley had wandered by the grave of Keats, and the feet of many famous men and women, such as Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Mary Shelley had visited the grave of Shelley. So much romance clings to this spot that this last resting-place of two young English poets challenges comparison with the relics of the greatness of old-world Rome.

Leigh Hunt and Trelawny provided Shelley's epitaph which contains the beautiful inscription: "Cor Cordium" (Heart of Hearts), and the exquisite lines from Shakespeare's "Tempest."

"Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange."

Shelley's death was untimely. He was drowned in

the sea he lived so well, and whose praises he had so often sung. Three times he had narrow escapes from shipwrecks. His unhappy first wife, Harriet, sought the same mode of death, which at last overwhelmed the poet. Shelley prophesied his own end, though few have noticed it. In "Julian and Maddalo" he makes Byron ("Count Maddalo") address to him a jesting warning:—

"You were ever still,  
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,  
A wolf for the meek lambs."

And the warning concludes:—

"Beware if you can't swim."

What Shelley might have done had he lived longer, or whether he would have lived much longer if he had not been drowned, are idle questions. His friend, Trelawny, was of opinion that the poet would have lived to a good age, as his father did.

Shelley was the poet of revolution, and the poet and the French Revolution were contemporary. On Shelley's birthday, August 4, 1792, it was decreed by the French National Assembly that all religious houses should be sold for the benefit of the nation, and King Louis XVI was no longer recognized as Monarch of France. On this same day the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia declared war on the French Revolutionaries, and threatened Paris with "the most dreadful and terrible justice." Nor is this all, for Mary Wollstonecraft, the mother of Shelley's Mary, had just published her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. This was the world in which men were living on that day when the poet of revolt was born in that little room looking out on the peaceful Sussex pastures.

Talk of miracles! What marvel is like to real life? In that quiet country house, from a rough country squire, and from a mother who was nothing remarkable, sprang "Adonais," "Prometheus Unbound," and some of the loveliest lyrics of a thousand years of English literature. If, instead of Shelley, an infant Squire Western had been produced on that August day, everyone would have thought it natural. Instead of a bucolic squire, we have a master of poetical music, and a thinker a century ahead of his own time. His own generation hated him, persecuted him, but in exile he delivered his message in deathless song, which a few brave spirits heard and treasured, and which now commands a wider audience, and which will be hailed ultimately as the Gospel of Humanity.

Keats's grave is the older in this world-famous Roman cemetery. Shelley chanted his brother-poet's death-song in "Adonais," and coupled Keats's name with his own for ever. Both were infidels, but there was a striking difference between the two singers.

Keats is the most Pagan of the English poets. If there is a poet whose poetry was uninfluenced by religion, it is Keats. His correspondence shows quite plainly that it had little attraction for him. Writing after the death of his brother, he says: "I will not enter into any parsonic comments on death." In the last days of his own life he writes to Fanny Brawne, the woman whom he loved, that for her sake he would "wish to believe in immortality." In the midst of his poetic career he writes to a clergyman named Bailey, who afterwards became an archdeacon, and voices his complete scepticism, "You know my ideas about religion. I do not think myself more in the right than other people, and nothing in the world is provable." He even classes religion as a "mental pursuit." Like politics, Christianity played no part in his life. The only time he allowed his ideas concerning religion to assume metrical form was in his youthful days, and the sonnet entitled *Written on a Summer Evening* was not considered important enough to





be included in his first printed volume. In his brother's transcript of the poems this sonnet was called: *Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition*. As Keats grew in mental stature he consigned religion to the limbo of forgotten things, and his poetic confession of faith in the maturity of his powers was:—

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Because of these "infidel" graves generations of visitors to Rome make pilgrimage to the English cemetery. It is a public confession that these two great Freethought poets confer glory even upon the Eternal City, and that it is made more honourable and illustrious by their presence.

MIMNERMUS.

### The Liberating Influence of Science.

PROFESSOR EINSTEIN has given to the press a statement on the progress of science which is full of interest. In the course of this statement, he said, "The effect of the progress of science is to liberate human beings from sheer muscular effort, and thus to render possible the participation of everyone in the social and intellectual life of the human race." Under a system in which religious belief—in preference to scientific knowledge—has prevailed, we have seen mankind kept in ignorance and worn and degraded by the hardest and dirtiest kinds of manual toil, which the lucky minority exploited, and profited by. With the great majority, their lives were divided into periods of slaving, eating, drinking and sleeping; and until Science began to show the way they had no part in the finer things of life.

But it is significant that in our great seats of learning as well as in the primary schools, a higher standpoint has been reached and a wider horizon is being opened up. One now meets many labouring men who can intelligently discuss sociological problems, and who can enjoy and profit by the reading of good literature. A pot of beer and a pungent pipe are not the only solaces even of the unskilled worker nowadays. Science has shown him how to secure bodily and mental health by obedience to the great laws of nature and by teaching him to practise moderation and self-government. The result is that there is a greater gentleness and consideration for others—more magnanimity and generosity in our estimates of others. By these paths of secular advancement we have reached a higher ethical plane.

It is well to remind ourselves of these facts when the dismal Jimmies do dilatorily and drearily declaim. We are confronted with the astounding inconsistency in several men of wealth, who are closely identified with Church or Chapel, that when they speak in public on the social ills of the time they are wholly concerned with *material* prosperity; while one had thought that the first things for a prosperous life all round was that people should first seek "the Kingdom of God and his righteousness!" But apparently it is not possible to square practice with precept. Therefore knowledge is gradually elbowing out orthodox belief.

Here is an outstanding sample of the kind of inconsistency which baffles fundamentalist Christians and Freethinkers alike. An election of Lord Rector of Aberdeen University was made the other day—the heterodox eminent scientist, Sir Arthur Keith, being the successful candidate by a substantial majority over his orthodox eminent literary opponent, Colonel Buchan. The learned principal of the University, Sir

George Adam Smith, who is one of the outstanding theologians of his age, after declaring the result of the election, suggested that a telegram be sent to Sir Arthur Keith in the name of the whole body of students, assuring him of a most hearty welcome from the University. This suggestion was greeted with loud cheers. But the implications of this agreeable, courtly and spontaneous suggestion by the Principal—particularly after the very recent publication and discussion of Sir Arthur's views about life after death—are terrific! Sir Arthur Keith does not conceal the completeness of his rationalism. He is no half-baked Modernist, as many a Brutus is. Yet if Sir George Adam Smith—illustrious higher critic as he is—can reconcile his religious faith with being a party to assuring the new Rector "in the name of the *whole body of students*," of a most hearty welcome, perhaps no harm is done. Still one may "hae his doots." One would wish to know the attitude of the "Wee Free" students who are attending Aberdeen University to the issuing of this generously enthusiastic invitation. O perish the thought! Can it be that *Freethought* is beginning to find an entrance to the thoughts of the young people of the North of Scotland? It is a stark repellent name that "Freethought" to some lady-like minds! So it has to be camouflaged under some silkier and smoother title like "Liberal," "Modernist," or "Advanced," or "Higher Criticism." The University big-wigs have not yet been able to shake off the shackles of intellectual "side." But men like Einstein and Keith may help to dissipate the mists of obscurantism that befog some lordly minds! Some day it may not be punishable to frankly speak one's mind and utter one's opinions sincerely held!

IGNOTUS.

### Profits from Sins.

ALTHOUGH the business transacted over the counter by Holy Shop has plenty of variety, yet it also has a sameness. Nearly every article has some connexion with either sin or miracles, including in this last "answers" to prayer. We will here deal with the former.

Genuine Christianity (mostly included under the term Protestantism) has a moral code, which, though open to many objections, is yet fairly high. It inculcates virtues that, for private life, conduce to decent living. It stresses the virtues of love and charity and fair play, so as to make (*e.g.*) home life beautiful. Whatever the failings of the code, it is permeated by good intentions to everybody. At one time it had the great failing of attributing to a good God a torture department in the hereafter. And this was an inheritance from that vile religion Catholicism, and it has now been practically eliminated.

The terminology of Protestant morals may be incorrect in its implications, but the morals are good. Lying and thieving (*e.g.*) are wrong. If the Protestant says they are wrong because they are sins against God's laws, he puts the matter in a way that brings in incorrect anthropomorphic implications, but practically he gets the chief essence all right. And in deciding a particular instance the Protestant relies chiefly on common sense. Most virtues are virtues because common sense says so. The Protestant may think he gets his information from the Bible, but as a rule he (unconsciously) makes the Bible conform to his own common sense ideas. The right of private judgment is a principle of Protestantism, and works even when the man is not conscious of it.

Protestant practice may be summed up by saying that all practical matters are put to the testing ques-



tion, what, under any particular circumstances in debate, would a good and loving father wish his children to do? Within limits it is an ideal method. It is, of course, assumed that there is a God who is Good and is a Loving Father of his earthly children. This assumption or proposition is not a proved fact, but it has been a strong dynamic—perhaps the strongest dynamic in Christianity. But it is the peculiarity of a true proposition that if you build on it logically you never go wrong. If, however, the proposition is not true your logical deductions on it will bring ultimately to an obviously incorrect conclusion. Anthropomorphism in religion is a manifestation of human weakness. There is a temptation to carry it to ridiculous lengths that should by their very absurdity be their own reputation. But the basic Father-God idea is so conformable to humanity's wishes that superstructures built on it with a quasi-logic have to be extraordinarily absurd before they will be reluctantly condemned. It is on this fact that Holy Shop trades. Though Holy Shop is a nauseating *reductio ad absurdum*, it manages to do a big business. A God who is a Good Father seems a good idea. Yes, says humanity. Certainly, says Holy Shop. Such a Father's wishes would or should be laws to his children. Yes . . . Certainly (as before). Such a Father would not leave His children in ignorance of Him, nor without a means of being in communication with him?—No—certainly not. It sounds so logical that thousands of men and women, in all countries and at any time this last few thousands of years past, have thought that they have been the channels of communication. If they have believed it enough themselves, they have got others to believe in them. As a matter of course confidence tricksters have seen their chances. Holy Shop is just the biggest example of confidence trickery in existence. "We" (say the Vatican Gang) "are the only authorized agents of God. All others" (say the Gang) "are frauds." If the Gang can put this tale over, the rest is easy. In *Priestcraft* I have given some account of how the Gang got into the business, and how they continue in it, telling the tale and elaborating it in many weird ways. That little bit of anthropomorphism in the Protestant theory—which seems so simple and harmless, nay so good, is just what gives the Gang its chance. The "good and loving Father" part is in itself a basis of business, being useful in tapping the sentiments of love and pity and sympathy and philanthropy. But the sentiments of fear and selfishness are much more profitable to exploit, and so the loving Father's torture department for his dear children was invented. A loving Father with a torture department? Absurd. It is very strange, says Holy Shop with the "candour" of the trickster. But are not many things in this world strange?—We poor humans cannot fathom God's purposes, but be sure that in time all will be made plain, and His children, his good children, will find God's goodness triumphantly vindicated. In any case, Holy Shop cannot help itself, for the information about the torture department is straight from the horse's mouth (so to speak). God is Good—oh most certainly—but He is also terrible—and though the children ought to be good because their Father wishes them to be good, yet they had better be good because, hm, there is this place of punishment for the naughty ones. . . .

But what is good behaviour and what bad? Has the good child of God to trust to his own judgment like a benighted Protestant or a villainous Rationalist? No, shrieks the Shop. The only way is to consult God's own and only agents the old firm, Pope & Co., Vatican, Rome. Branches everywhere. (Terms: Cash.)

When a poor dupe does consult the Shop he finds that he can scarcely do anything right. Whatever he does (with some immoral exceptions) is almost sure to be a "sin," *i.e.*, an item in the dread account God has with him, and unless he pays the Shop, regularly in order to have his slate wiped he will let himself in for a warm time. The Shop, *i.e.*, the Vatican Gang, has no morals except some theoretic ones, for window dressing purposes. Nor is it anxious that its chattels should be a moral lot. How could it be, when it makes money out of "sins"? As long as the sins mean profits, the more there are, the greater the profits. In fact its system is a licensing system for "sinning." Any Roman Catholic talk about morality is bound to be nauseatingly hypocritical. The only unforgivable sins are those that interfere with the Shops business. To steal, to lie, to visit a brothel, to murder, are trivialities compared to reading an anti-Catholic book, listening to an agnostic lecture or going to a Protestant Church. Stealing, lying, murder, etc., may be very wicked—if the victims are Catholics. But if the victims happen to be opponents of the Shop it is quite different. The murderer of Henry IV of France was instigated to his deed by a promise of shadow goods (guaranteed safe passage to Paradise, etc.) but a promise of real goods (money and lands) was made by the then Chairman of Directors (Pope of Rome) to whoever would murder Queen Elizabeth. I have no doubt that the man who lately tried to murder Lord Strickland had every assurance from the Maltese priesthood that his deed was "to the glory of God and His Church." If he had been successful they would have given him a guaranteed pass-out check for Heaven. Where the Shop's business is concerned the entire management is absolutely unscrupulous and always has been. In fact it boasts about being always the same.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be continued.)

### Who Robs the Children of their Birthright?

It should be a matter of deep regret to all interested in education and to Freethinkers in particular, that, owing to undue pressure from the Churches the Bill for Raising the School Age is having a bad time in the House.

Both Anglicans and Catholics have been busy for weeks goading their followers into opposing the Bill by direct appeal to M.P.'s in the constituencies with the result that the most that can be hoped for is a postponement of the date when the Act shall come into force. In the meantime Messrs. Scurr, Oldfield, Logan, and Sir James Reynolds have further amendments, intended, of course, to ruin the Bill if possible. In the *Tablet*, November 29 (Catholic Education Notes) there appears a scathing criticism of the N.U. Teachers. While gloating upon the success of the Catholics in the past, *e.g.*, Catholics survived in spite of the N.U.T. (1) the Birrell Bill. (2) The McKenna Bill. (3) The Runciman Bill more than twenty years ago . . . Catholic Schools have already, too, survived two attempts at legislation by the present Government—the writer goes on to state: "The National Union and its President must remember that sheer force in these days settles nothing. It would be better for all concerned, and for the Union in particular, if its President did not interfere in a matter which can only be settled by the parents themselves, and as to which the teachers, the servants of the community as a whole, have no right to intervene."

This is a bit of subtle hypocrisy—and impudence. I suppose the N.U.T. numbers about 120,000, all of whom are entitled to exercise a vote, and most of them parents.

Now it would be interesting to know how many parents outside this body of Educationalists took any practical part in shaping the opposition to the Bill. I'll



wager anything that if a plebiscite were taken it would reveal an overwhelming majority in favour of the Bill in its original form; but such is the farce presented under the name of the people's Franchise, that the electors are mere puppets, and have no more share in legislating for the good of the Nation than the inhabitants of Samoa in the Pacific.

One can quite understand the attitude of the Churches. Short of funds, they envy the Chancellor of the Exchequer's power to dip into the pockets of the rich to Educate the poor. And further, every extension of facilities for enlightening the masses hastens their doom. Rather than lose their hold over the child mind in the Non-provided Schools, they are prepared to rob the children attending Provided Schools of an extended Education, and then they preach about the parent's right to decide such matters. What they want is a free hand to secure all the privileges of the Provided Schools, while at the same time retaining absolute control over teachers, pupils, and curriculum in their own schools.

Some few weeks back a Catholic teacher was seriously urging that Mass should be celebrated daily in the schools, and this is what Catholics think the Nation should contribute towards, while over two millions practically starve on the dole, and the Railway Directors and Mine Owners demand a reduction in wages.

When will sensible men and women demand the right to have their wishes respected by Politicians—when will they realize that their greatest enemy is a State Church and an envious and intriguing Papacy?

There is nothing more calculated to check Enlightenment and real National progress than the secret power exercised by the Churches over Parliament in Educational Legislation.

There are about 400,000 Catholic children attending London Schools, and to bring these schools up to date and into line with Provided Schools means an outlay of a million pounds at least. But the solution is simple. Hand these Schools over to the Nation and let the children be treated as those attending the schools of the Nation are treated, or—call upon rich Catholics to find the necessary. But no—they want the Nation to stomp up while they shout—"Hands off our Schools." A fair and impartial view of the situation reveals a glaring inconsistency on the part of the Catholic Church. It is one great boast of Catholics that the Pope can never be absorbed by the State.

Now one would think that such spiritual pride would forbid the Pope and his followers to touch even the hem of the garment of a State Chancellor of the Exchequer.

But it is the State Chancellor they would not only hobnob with, but fondly embrace, and any signs of aloofness on his part hurts their pride, and they cry out—"Shall the sponge not absorb the water?"

Again, the Catholic prides himself on the triumph of principle over force, and of moral influence over legal enactment. But surely it is putting the cart before the horse when principle is subordinated to immoral influence and force is disguised under the name of "rights of parents." Does it not appear extraordinary that soul saving should be left to the God Mammon. To be called upon to find £1,000,000 to save the souls of 400,000 London Catholic boys and girls is apparently asking too much—a paltry £2 10s. per head.

One would suppose that the Pope would order a three days fast each week for a few months rather than allow his children to handle the filthy lucre of a State. One might even believe that zealous Catholics would insist upon being allowed to make so splendid a sacrifice for the Faith. Is it not a degrading sight to see "labourers in the master's vineyard" demanding an increase of wages, when miners—most of them working like slaves for the rich—are asked to sacrifice still more and, having done so, to be told to go to the devil or become Catholics and book for Purgatory. It would seem that we are still surrounded by the canker which compelled Dante to castigate those who transgressed every law of God and man and strove to satisfy the insatiable maw of avarice.

There must be something radically wrong with the religion of Christendom when its votaries are not prepared to raise the price of a sixth rate cruiser to defray expenses, much less "sell all," and give to poor children longing for a religious atmosphere in the none too

sanitary conditions associated with not a few Non-Provided Schools. What an example it would be to Atheists to see Christians starving their bellies to feed the souls of Christians of tender years languishing in the out of date and dilapidated buildings which only escape demolition by the generosity of an over lenient Board of Education. Such zeal and self-sacrifice would cause even Freethinkers to think that perhaps after all there was really something honest and sincere in religion. Could one be asked to pay too much for the priceless pearl—the treasure in heaven—where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break in and steal? And then to discover that £2 10s. per head breaks the heart of even God's Vicar on Earth and causes his faithful emissaries to cry out—"Ruined!—by heretics robbed and derided."

The Nation undertakes to Educate the children and meet the expense by taxation, and along come the Churches and say—"But we want a special item inserted in the curriculum, over and above that which the Nation considers essential, and we demand that the Nation shall support us in this." The Nation agrees, then when it decides later to spend still more in extending Educational facilities, the Churches cry out again in further financial aid to give them a further extension of the *privileges* denied to children attending the State Schools. We must assume it is a privilege, or why do the Churches clamour so loudly for its retention. So far good. But if the preservation and retention of this inestimable privilege, known as "Religious atmosphere," calls upon them to make some extra sacrifice, bang goes all their enthusiasm, and their zeal for Christ's sake, and they squeal—"Injustice." After all it would seem they find it hard to serve God and Mammon. Why not decide once and for all between them.

"I gave myself for thee—what hast thou given for me"—must grate upon the ears of some Christians bent just now on crippling the Bill for Extending the School Age.

I wonder what would happen if Freethinkers were to demand secular instruction and a scientific Humanism for their children, and insist upon religious instruction being abolished in all State Schools. Would Catholics and Anglicans consider that an injustice? I wonder.

CULLWICK PERRINS.

### The Schoolboy Howler.

NINE times out of ten the existence of the schoolboy howler can be attributed to the faulty methods of teachers.

An indistinct statement or an incomplete story misleads a boy or girl, and so a howler is born.

One of the most industrious collectors of howlers is H. Cecil Hunt, who has just issued, through the Bodley Head, *The Book of Howlers*, which is a marvellous eighteenpennyworth of humour.

The first section is devoted to Biblical howlers, and every one is authentic.

Here are some gems from schoolboys' answers to questions:—

"A miracle is something mother doesn't understand."

"It is a very good thing to give to the Society for the Provocation of the Gospel, as it is a good thing for them to try to prove that the gospel is true."

"When the servants arrived at the house where Peter was staying he was on the roof braying."

"Paganism is a strict form of a Roman Catholic."

"The Apocrypha was written after the Bible, because it isn't in mine."

"What did David mean when he said he was glad to be a doorkeeper? He meant he was glad because he could walk about outside while the sermon was being preached."

There are many others, but it is hardly fair to quote too much.

Many of the howlers are pegs upon which to hang all sorts of disquisitions. What a lot could be said about the methods of teaching when a child who had frequently repeated the tenth commandment was asked to write it down, and who penned "Thou shalt not cumt thy



neighbour's house, thou shalt not comt thy neighbour's wife, morin' circus, morning 'oss mor anything that his is."

There is grim humour too in "The hardships of the Crusaders were so great that ever so many of them died from salvation," and more than a little truth in "The prevailing religion of England is Hypocrisy."

Freethinkers will chuckle over many of the howlers particularly:—

"In ancient times people must be the same religion as the king. If not they were killed. This was called religious toleration, but now it is not."

"In Japan most of the people are called confusions, and the religion is called confusionism. The smallest religion in the world is confusionism."

"Drops of water are generally spherical for reasons known only to the gracious providence who has formed them."

"The Salvation Army is mostly on the street. The women in it cover up all their hair with funny sorts of bonnets that stick out to keep the rain off their faces. Sometimes they have names on their hats like sailors. They make a good deal of noise, the worsed two is called captain and leftenant. They tell people about the Bible and make collections."

"Wild beasts used once to roam at will through the whole of England and Ireland, but now wild beasts are only to be found in theological gardens."

"Charles Darwen was the originator of the human species. He said a lot about it."

These are but a few selected from more than a thousand in the book, but whether they act as an indictment of our teachers or whether they are attributed to the school child's sense of humour is open to question.

"NECHELLS."

#### THE SUPERSESSION OF WAR.

In the past, wars and conquests have no doubt done much to accelerate human progress by breaking up tradition-systems that threatened to become rigid and facilitating the establishment of larger and more efficient unities; but that was a phase out of which we have passed, and there can be little question now of the biological disadvantage which rests upon our species through the present peroccupation with war and war organization.

War prefers the healthier and more vigorous males for possible destruction at an age when the chances are against their having produced offsprings; it misdirects and wastes a grave proportion of the none-too-ample directive and organizing ability of mankind, and its consumption of mankind resources even during that preparatory phase which we dignify with the name of "peace" is disastrous.

Inseparably associated with the habitual idea of war as a normal feature in life is the idea of the independent sovereign state.

The picture of the universe in the minds of a vast majority of men and women is distorted by this idea of a necessary hostility to foreigners, and the fear of any relaxation of the disciplines of the state to which they are devoted makes them obstruct every effort to release the new generation from its obsession with belligerent ideas. For many people who are adult and set, such ideas have become incurably a part of the mental structure. They cannot think of political and social questions except in patriotic forms. Yet the independent sovereign state tradition, which is really inseparable from, and in part identical with the war tradition, cripples education at the present time, limits human freedom, hinders the development of a sane conservation and exploitation of the economic resources of the world, and is altogether so patently evil that it is impossible to believe that it will maintain itself for many more generations against the accumulating commonsense of mankind. A great cultural effort is certainly necessary, and a thousand intricate problems of tactics and strategy must be solved before human education can be turned away from its traditional prejudices, but the experiment of the last hundred years of release and restatement give good grounds for confidence that the thing may be done.

—"The Science of Life," by H. G. Wells, J. Huxley, and G. R. Wells.

## Acid Drops.

What does the godly make of this kind of thing—all from the same issue of one paper. At a Wesleyan Church in Low Fell, Durham, a man collapsed and fell from a pew in which he was sitting. He died immediately. At Berwick, in St. Aldan's Church a man also died in his pew. At Lylesland Church, Paisley, a man was taken ill at the Communion service and died. What does it mean? Does it mean that the Lord mistook these Churches for Freethinking places of meeting, or was it that he was simply on the rampage and hitting out promiscuous like? But what have the godly to say on the subject?

*One and All* is, we believe, the national organ of the Adult School Movement, but its educational advantages will not be very great if its editor permits the appearance of many such letters as one from a person signing himself "Leonard Smith." The letter concerns Thomas Paine, in reply to another correspondent, who complained that in a sketch of American history no mention had been made of Paine. In reply "Leonard Smith" says that "history records Paine as a dirty drunken infidel," and "such a man's name is better left out of America's history." One doesn't argue with such hopeless blackguards as this evidently is, but we advise other readers of *One and All*, who wish to know the truth about Paine and his incalculable service to the American Revolution to consult an article in the December issue of the *American Mercury*, one of the leading American monthlies, or, better still to the classic life by Moncure Conway.

According to the Year Book for 1931, issued by the Church Assembly, there were 34,000 fewer communicants. This does not mean that there are 34,000 more Freethinkers, but the possibilities of that number, steering clear of theological bewilderment, may give a little hope for the future.

Coventry was one of the first towns to permit Sunday cinemas. But in view of the High Court decision in the L.C.C. case, Coventry Watch Committee has decided that Sunday opening of cinemas in the town shall not be permitted next year.

Someone having complained that she cannot understand the language of the Authorized Version, she is advised that the Bible has been rendered into modern English. It should prove useful, but we fear even this will fail with the younger generation. They will soon be asking for the Bible rendered in American slang such as is used at the "pitchers." And we hope the Bible Society will soon get busy translating the Holy Book into this strange new tongue. It would prove very entertaining, and it might save many a cinema "fan" from sin.

According to the Rev. John Clarredge, in a daily paper, it is quite the wrong way to read the Bible by starting at Genesis and reading through to Revelations. Undoubtedly. The right and proper way to read the Holy Bible is to start with Credulity and end at Belief. Any difficulties encountered by the way can always be solved by chucking one's intelligence under the sofa.

The Rev. Dr. Charles Brown reproachfully addressed some Manchester Wesleyans in this wise:—

We need to-day a recovery of a vivid sense of God's reality and nearness; the trouble is that so many of us are affected with spiritual opththalmia. We need to pray that our eyes may be opened until we see the reality and glory and power of the things which are spiritual; then will fear be banished from our hearts.

Whereupon, one may be permitted to wonder: What is the percentage of genuine believers among the thousands of people whom the parsons have drilled into the habit of church-going? From Dr. Brown's remarks one may



guess it is none too high. The suggestion to the unspiritual to pray for an "eye-opener" is quite good. But will they adopt it? So many of them, through infection from the scepticism of the age, have lost the one great fear—that of Hell-fire—upon which the Churches depend to engender a "sense of sin," and to create a feeling of the reality of a God with a neat scheme of "salvation."

To be "overwhelmed" by a fairy-tale is a very sad end for a man. But the Rev. A. E. Whitham, a Wesleyan minister, has suffered this fate:—

I had heard of God, of his dealings with men, of his power and judgment, his jealousy and moody treatment of men and nations, and I disliked him. He seemed a snob, a prig, arrogant and unlovable. Then I beheld his helplessness on the night of Bethlehem, I saw a tear on his cheek, I overheard him crying out in loneliness, trying to keep three ordinary men near him because he feared the loneliness, I saw him, not chasing the offending soul, but chased as a disreputable cur is chased by cruel lads through the streets of the city; I saw him hungry, tired, broken. It was strange court news, but I read on, and the God who could not capture my heart as he sat on a throne and held the sceptre of power, overwhelmed me for ever when he cried in a cradle and died on a cross.

It seems almost incredible that an intelligent person could be "overwhelmed" by a crude Eastern myth. But the rev. gent's evidence appears to prove that the Christian type of intelligence is born, not made.

Ignorance, says a royal personage, is the father of disease. True; it only remains to be added that "Our Heavenly Father" made man ignorant. And when one visualizes the appalling amount of suffering which is the consequence of that God-permitted ignorance, one can only exclaim: "What a nice God these Christians worship!"

A Methodist reporter thinks that the "snippy" paragraphs with which daily papers dismiss pious attempts to "save" the outsider are "simply deplorable." They, he asserts, "help nobody and give no fair picture of religious enterprise." Our friend may console himself with the thought that things might be worse. For instance, the Press might treat the Churches' enterprise in the same unfair way as it treats Freethought enterprise. For an honourable tradition in newspaperland is that it is wiser to be unfair to Freethinkers than to antagonize the Churches and parsons, which have wealth and influence.

The same Methodist reporter declares:—

I do not see how any sane person can be dull in Derby on Sunday. There are all sorts of interesting services . . . The cinemas do not open here on the Lord's Day. On Sunday nights there is a musical service at the Temperance Hall, and also a concert at the Central Hall [Methodist]. Up to ten o'clock at night, girls and boys were parading up and down the main streets aimlessly . . .

In Methodist eyes, it would appear, one can only be "sane" if one enjoys what the Methodist likes. This point of view, since it is accompanied by strenuous efforts to suppress anything which other people would like to enjoy on Sunday, may seem a trifle egotistic and even self-righteous. But this should be overlooked, as the Christian humility of the Methodist must have some way of manifesting itself. If he bottled it up he might burst.

Various religious organizations have organized protests against "Sabbath desecration," and a pious contemporary volunteers the following as an explanation:—

These are not the efforts of a few cranks, but the demand of a great body of the public (we believe the majority) that Sunday should be kept free from commercialism.

Yet, if all entertainments were permitted on Sunday with

safeguards against "commercialism," the protests against would be just as vocal and noisy. The cry of "commercialism" is mere clap-trap to gain the support of the unthinking. As is well known, it is the parsons who organize these protests. When they cease to take money for their performances on Sunday, then will be the time for them to object to other persons doing the same.

Writing about Sabbath observance, a reader of a daily paper says: "It is the plain duty of every Christian to place God first and to obey the Ten Commandments. But since the majority of Englishmen are not Christians, this matter does not concern them in the slightest." Exactly. As a free citizen the Christian exercises his choice of spending Sunday as he pleases. He chooses to obey his God's taboo and deprive himself of worldly enjoyment on Sunday so that he may ultimately draw pleasure at compound interest on the bank of everlasting bliss. That is his choice. But he hasn't the slightest right to deprive other free citizens of their privilege of choosing what they desire for Sunday, nor to restrict their opportunities. The Christian, however, makes himself a nuisance because he enjoys interfering with the liberty of others, and his vanity is flattered by compelling them to conform to his taboos.

Mr. Robert Lynd, in an article "In a Fog," in the *News-Chronicle*, writes some sound sense about his subject. We shall not be clever and state that it is an accident, although that is the rule with most of the material to be read in a newspaper. Mr. Lynd states that "most of our superstitions are due to a desire to find a reason for things." That is very true, but the joke is, that the perpetuation of superstition is in the hands of those who supply the wrong reason—to keep the ecclesiastical pot boiling.

It is remarkable how the marvellous operates on some minds. A correspondent to a newspaper has suddenly been flummoxed by the broadcast speech of Sir James Jeans, and it has so impressed him that he feels he is little removed from a caterpillar on a cabbage leaf. This state of mind is peculiarly Christian; it is one that mistakes words for things, speculation for facts, and silliness as inspiration. We do not know if Sir James claims this correspondent as a triumph for his side or his school of thought, but the extensive advertising of his theories go to prove that, so far as powerful religious interests are concerned, they are innocuous. What the village of London is waiting for is the ordinary man to come along and point out that if you make the foundations of it hollow, and put more weight on top, you get burst water mains and gas pipes. But that is just the sort of thing a Freethinker (ordinary man) would say at Christmas.

The province of Salta, in Argentina was shaken by an earthquake last week. Buildings were shattered, and twenty deaths are reported. The theory of Sir James Jeans that the universe shows evidence of a designing or controlling power is scarcely compatible with these facts. We excuse him on the ground that he was a scientist nodding—and writing as a theologian.

According to the newspaper the Pope is going to order two helicopters if tests are successful. Vatican City is too small to construct an aerodrome, so that in the event of necessity, these two machines will enable aeroplanes to ascend vertically. Where all the faith is supposed to be, there is a surprising lack of it. Mountains—and then helicopters. It is like a canto of Dante's Divine Comedy.

The *News-Chronicle* announces that "Wireless and the newspapers provide the medium for the greatest extension of true education in the history of mankind." The medium is there all right, but we have not noticed anything else; perhaps both are a bit late in getting off the mark.



## The National Secular Society.

MEMBERS of the National Secular Society are hereby informed that all membership subscriptions become due on January 1. Notice will be received by all members from the Secretary, and this may be taken as supplementary.

But we take the occasion to say one or two other things. First, the minimum subscription to the Society is purely nominal, and if all members restricted themselves to that it would be ridiculously inadequate to meet the Society's expenditure. It should, therefore, be the endeavour of every member to make his or her subscription as large as possible. Times are, financially bad, but this involves, if our propaganda is to be maintained, a larger expenditure from headquarters, and propaganda should be expanded, not curtailed.

Second, as all subscriptions date from January 1, the present is the time for all Freethinking readers of this paper who have not yet joined the Society to do so. A larger membership gives us a better method of doing what ought to be done, and in such cases as occurred when the Bill for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws was before Parliament, and as will be presented when the present Government makes its attempt further to subsidize the religious schools of the country, the degree to which we are able to get our views respected depends upon the extent to which we are able to get into touch with Freethinkers all over the country.

The Churches are tottering to their fall, but it would be stupid to regard them as beyond the possibility of recovery. The recovery need not be in the shape of a complete restoration of orthodox doctrines, but it may easily take a form of recovery which will give the Churches a new lease of life, and leave them as socially obstructive as they have always been.

On another page of this issue will be found a statement of the Principals and Objects of the Society, together with a form of membership. We advise all who agree with our propaganda to commence the New Year well by filling up the form and sending it along to the General Secretary with a subscription.

CHAPMAN COHEN,

*President, National Secular Society.*

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—Mr. M. Taylor, 45. 9d.

T. MOSLEY.—Pleased to know you are gratified with *Opinions*. It is a new line, but we may try another volume after the same pattern before 1931 is over. At present we have several other things on hand that must be finished first.

J. CLAYTON AND J. T. BARTRAM.—Arrived too late for insertion—probably due to the Christmas postal rush.

J. W. TURNER.—We are very glad to have your appreciative report of Mr. Clayton's debate. We believe he is doing very good work. We shall be speaking at Accrington towards the end of March.

H. SPENCER.—Sorry, but really not up to standard.

COLLA.—Pleased to learn that your experiment went off so well. We have no doubt but that some very useful work was done.

J. PETERSEN.—Mr. Cohen has written you.

G. W. STYRING.—It is good to know that our criticisms of some of the modern attempts to harmonize religion with science has helped you. By the end of January we hope to have on sale a book dealing with Professors Eddington, Jeans, and Huxley, and the general relations of science and religion.

F. HOBDAV.—Next week. Thanks for good wishes,

J. PEARSON.—We quite appreciate your opposition, but the difficulty is that although religion is the only reason for the existence of these non-provided schools, it is professedly not on account of religion that public money is given them. Education will never be what it ought to be while this dual system continues.

STEVEDORE.—We do not question that Roman Catholics would act towards Protestants in the terms of the alleged circular, just as we have no doubt that a great many Protestants would act in a similar way towards Roman Catholics. But on the face of it the circular looks much like a "fake." At any rate we should require evidence of its genuineness before publication. Do you know anything of the Irish Foresters?

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

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

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

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

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

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

*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.*

## Sugar Plums.

Arrangements for the Annual Dinner are proceeding and it will help considerably if those intending to be present will obtain their tickets as early as possible from the General Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street; The Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4; or of Mr. LeMaine, at the Sunday evening lectures of the West London Branch, at Conway Hall. There will be speeches and the usual high-class concert—always one of the features of these dinners.

Judging from reports there will be a goodly number of visitors from the provinces. Some of these who came for the first time last year left vowing it was going to be an annual pilgrimage, and they are bringing newcomers with them. This is as it should be. It is a good thing for Freethinkers from all parts of the country to meet each other. The only drawback to the Annual Dinner is that it cannot commence earlier and end later.

Liverpool Freethinkers will have an opportunity of hearing Mr. G. Whitehead, who lectures in the Transport Hall, 41 Islington, to-day (Sunday) at 7 p.m., on "The Psychological Basis of the Penny Dreadful." Admission is free, with reserved seats at one shilling. We hope the good work being done in Liverpool will continue to attract large audiences throughout 1931.

We really think we shall have to offer a prize for the most interesting "thought" of the week, given by some well-known man. Here, at any rate, is this week's "thought," as given by Mr. H. G. Wells, in the *Observer* for December 28:—

I think that the material universe is an objective reality. Nevertheless, I think that consciousness, in some form, was always present in the universe. I do not believe that it suddenly appeared out of nothing. But one must be careful in saying this. Consciousness, as we know it arises from inhibited reflexes. It could not exist in the absence of the physiological machinery. But some primitive form of it must always have existed. Consciousness is a developing thing, and it must have come from some rudimentary origin.

The italics are ours. But what we should like Mr. Wells to explain is—and it is quite an easy task for a scientific thinker—(1) What is consciousness in "some form" that is not consciousness? (2) If consciousness existed in some form that was not consciousness, is it correct to say,



that consciousness has always existed? (3) If consciousness could not exist in the absence of the physiological machinery, how could it have been always present in the universe, seeing that the physiological machinery was not always there? (4) If consciousness "must have come from some rudimentary form, how could it have always existed? (5) By what method does a thing that has never had a beginning develop? That is all, but the explanation of it by Mr. Wells should be quite a simple matter.

It is difficult for a Freethinker to review without bias, a book like *Institutional Christianity in England*, by the Rev. J. Gordon Hayes, M.A. (7s. 6d. net. The Richards Press, Ltd.) Almost at the commencement the author tells us "that Christians may be able to understand non-Christians, but the latter, being only natural men, cannot possibly understand either the spiritual nature of Christians or true Christianity, unless and until they are converted to belief in Christ" (!) Yet most "non-Christians" actually were Christians at one time. On page 38, however, Mr. Hayes tells us that "if we keep on terms of reality a very small proportion of Christians are scholars or even students of any kind." Presumably the large proportion of Christians who are neither scholars nor students are those whose spiritual nature we are so completely unable to understand. We are not surprised, therefore, to find, after all, on page 93, that "even Rationalists have admitted Christianity to be the best influence in the world." After all this, what can we say?

For the rest Mr. Hayes heartily attacks Roman Catholicism, pointing out how thoroughly it has gathered unto itself Pagan customs, myths and rites—though he seems never to have heard of old Conyers Middleton and his *Letter from Rome*, in which nearly 200 years ago, that Protestant (if he were one) did the same thing far more effectively than his modern prototype. Mr. Hayes seems to disagree with quite a number of things, for he says, it is a great assumption to call Christianity only a religion, or to say a Christian is necessarily religious. He thinks "Godliness rather than religion is the need of men," and so he indulges in the usual Christian adulation of Jesus, multiplied, and constantly quotes Prof. Gwatkin as if that eminent professor was really an authority on anything but his own Christian opinions. Mr. Hayes wants "non-institutional" Christianity—"the people," he says, "need Christ and his Gospel has never failed."

It will be heart-breaking for Mr. Hayes to realize it, but he will some day find—that "Christ" is just as much a failure as is "Christianity." The one is a *myth* and the other is not *true*, that is why we get such books as his. May he soon see *our* light!

Naturally, we do not publish anything unless we consider it worthy, and for that reason we dislike making "cuts." It is this that leads us to again impress upon those who write letters that they should be as brief as possible. We have this week, for example to decline several letters because of their inordinate length. Correspondents should bear in mind that a letter should be—just a letter, not an essay.

A New Year's card from one of our readers in France:—

Will you allow me to express my appreciation and thanks for the great work you are doing in the "best of Causes," and my earnest hope that 1931 will be to you a year of triumphal progress, good health and the best of everything. The *Freethinker* becomes more and more interesting and instructive, is eagerly looked for and "religiously" devoured, each week—almost a case of god-eating!

### Jeans and God.

The astronomer—scientist Jeans,  
Has been talking to wives and their weans,  
On the wireless so bright,  
When he turns all to "light."  
But God only knows what he means.—M.

## Sir Arthur Keith.

IN a recent letter I remarked that a certain competence in biology gave no authority for speaking of psychology, or philosophy in general; I may now add that it is evident, from the history of science, that biology does not afford a sufficient training for considering in a philosophic manner the facts of biology itself. Lamarck drew certain conclusions from his study of biology; Cuvier on the same data had a very different theory, and he used his immense authority to throw contempt on Lamarck and drive him to poverty. Cuvier is discredited in regard to these theories, for he ran counter to the doctrine of evolution and held views, based on orthodoxy, that now seem pitiful.

Owen, whose reputation in his lifetime was far higher than that of Darwin, poured ridicule on the theory of evolution, and he was supported by most of the biologists of the day. Even that little numskull, the Duke of Argyle, bulked more largely in the world of biologists than Darwin, because the Duke was the pet savant of Queen Victoria, and royal patronage has always been more valuable to men of science than the possession of wisdom. When Mendel had completed his now famous researches, he communicated the results to various noted biologists; only one replied and he disparaged the work. The weakest part of all Herbert Spencer's work was his volume on biology as a support to his philosophy; the biology itself is faulty, and the reasonings thereon are in many cases fallacious.

Amongst the physiologists, or the neurologists, and histologists, whose special field has been the brain, we find complete divergence of theory, as when Hughlings Jackson or Ferrier talked and Muensterberg disagreed, while not one has said anything useful towards the foundation of a scientific psychology. The famous authority on the nervous system, Sir William Gowers, in opposition to Westphal, Erb, and others, taught me that the cerebellum controlled the cerebrum; and, as I now see, taught me wrongly. I could write a volume on this to enforce my view that these sciences, though often indirectly helpful to thought, are absurdly insufficient to the working out of any deeply based, true and developable science of psychologists. I have, however, probably said enough to protect unwary against the common professorial bluff: I am a biologist; I have spent twenty years dissecting earthworms, and have always been devoted to the Church and State; therefore I can speak without study, but with authority, on psychology.

This preliminary has not been too far away from Sir Arthur. He is an excellent anthropologist; to be an anthropologist is excellent. On personal grounds I have nothing in his disfavour; I met him once and found him a courteous and agreeable man; but I am now considering his science, and not even because he is "one of us," as it may be said, will I allow my mind to be biased.

As President of the British Association he had a great opportunity, but he did not use it greatly. He discoursed on Evolution, but his address gave me the impression of a doctor of scientific divinity propounding by authority a theme of faith. I too am a follower of Darwin, with certain defined reserves, but it seemed to me that the sequence of Sir Arthur's story was simply historical, not causative; and that there were no signs of a clear comprehensive view of the whole problem of evolution, such as would define the function, with indication of its limits, of the Darwinian theory. Cuvier or Owen might well have accepted such an historical record without modifying their own theories.



Sir Arthur's paper excited little comment, even by way of opposition, for he had neutralized his heterodoxy, such as it was, by fulsome praise of the Prince of Wales as a man of science; and the sadness produced in my mind by this display of the servile spirit was intensified by the thought that his sycophancy had earned him more kudos than twenty years of good work in science.

Let me, in order to abbreviate, indicate two types of scientists. One is a man of fair intelligence, united with assiduous devotion to work along prescribed lines. He may, under certain conditions, become a professor, the conditions being a conventional habit of mind, and loyalty to the main shams of our political system. He is a time-server, a sycophant, and he is "on the make." He attracts the attention of the pundits, finally of Royalty; he gains a knighthood, and if to his scientific baggage he adds some philosophic Kantian metaphysics, meaningless but orthodox, he may become O.M. That is the type beloved especially by the British Association, which is becoming more and more saturated with a spirit of cliqueism, orthodoxy, sycophancy. Sir Arthur, in his presidency, tended to encourage rather than to break down this abominable spirit.

Let us take another type. I go back to the old Greeks, who, though ignorant of so many of the discoveries of science of which we are heirs, had an exalted feeling of the greatness of science, and felt that the pursuit of truth was nobler than the struggle for riches or social honours. I like that story of Diogenes, for instance, who when Antisthenes raised his stick to drive him away, cried: Strike me, Antisthenes, but teach me! To these men—and I have endeavoured all my life to find encouragement when necessary in their examples—Science was not a trade, a step to social advancement; not even merely a means of increasing man's physical comforts and power; it was rather the instrument to throw light on this habitation of the world in which we live, so that with fuller knowledge we might advance the frontiers of our understanding, and that the devotion to science, and the constant study it demanded, had the aspect of mounting step by step to points from which we might find a clearer vision of the whole scheme of existence; and, from the directives of Nature herself, gain ethical guides for the governance of our lives.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

Croon.

HUSH-A-BYE, Oh, hush-a-bye!  
Gently, gently creep,  
While I sing a lullaby  
At the gates of sleep!

Croon, oh croon, my little one!  
Birds are in the nest;  
Sleep, oh, sleep, my pretty one,  
'Gainst this tender breast.  
Croon! Croon!  
Seek your rest, your rest!  
Croon! Croon! Croon!  
Mother's sweet and best!

Lullaby, oh, lullaby!  
Softly stealing on  
To the starlit summer sky,  
Now the day is gone!

Croon, oh croon, my little one!  
Cows are in the byre!  
Sleep, oh, sleep, my pretty one,  
By the glowing fire.  
Croon! Croon!  
Love can never tire!  
Croon! Croon! Croon!  
Mother's heart's desire!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Onitsha, Nigeria.

More Construction, Please!

(A PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVEY.)

FOR some time, your speakers in Hyde Park have arrested my attention. Brilliant as are their words of wisdom, there seems something lacking in their exhortations.

The Freethinker's policy is destruction. And with him, I agree heartily. Away with the clergy! Away with that weakening and spine-less doctrine of anthropomorphism! Down with those over-fed, satisfied, conceited, pig-headed and self-satisfied clerics, who use humanity to fan and feed their egoism, while they dope their listeners mentally!

I agree heartily with the Freethinker's War Cry, "Away with the Clergy, their ceremonies and their cant!"

Yet I would be impertinent enough to criticize the methods of my well-meaning colleagues, in dealing with the minds of the people who are their listeners.

Let us turn to modern psychology for enlightenment! Human Nature—that is, our fundamental instincts and all the rest that psychology terms the Unconscious mind—was, like Rome, not built in a day. It is the result of the experiences of countless ages of generations of humanity as old as evolution itself. While young, it was and still is, under the influence of the force of suggestion. Man is a herd animal, not a solitary creature. Suggestive by nature, he is at the mercy of the opinion of the crowd. Imitative by nature, he lives and grows to a large extent on tradition—the traditions of his forefathers, who, as Voltaire discerned, made God in their own image since the beginnings of human existence. The practical handiwork of the lunatic, whose civilized repressions no longer hold sway, is sufficient proof that Voltaire was right. Of immense stature and strength is the god-effigy of the lunatic in the asylum. And upon this god—the conception of the human mind, sane or insane—does man become dependent for reward or punishment, for fear of a Being greater than himself, whose power makes him feel a victimized worm. No wonder that the Protestant Church propitiates the Father! Symbolic creation is the function of the unconscious mind of man.

Let us go farther! The individual human is parasitic by nature. Ushered into a cold world of reality after nine months of cosy comfort, dependent for sustenance and creature comforts on that Mother Maria, few of us even in adult age have ever progressed beyond the age of seven. Still fewer have been exorcised from that Mother Maria mentally. Our griefs, our fears, our hurts are still soothed and made whole by Mother Maria. Holy Mother of Jesu, have mercy upon us! Such is our cry! No wonder the Catholic Church holds such sway!

Shall we proceed still further? The human is parasitic by nature. Mental inertia is preferable to vital thought in the masses. That is why the churches hold sway, and offer to countless myriad of humanity their soothing balm "Cast your cares upon him for He careth for you."

Religion is nothing more or less than the transcendent Mother and Father Images. Created by the individual mentality and built up in the Race mind through the ages of time, it brings with it a dependence as crippling to-day as in the most unenlightened pages of history. This being so fundamentally, destruction of such ideas as mental props is imperative and essential.

Yet let my atheistic friends not overlook this fundamental fact that humanity is by nature parasitic and dependent! If destruction is necessary and vital, construction is equally necessary and vital. Con-



struction, in the majority of cases, does not spring out of destruction as the Atheist would have us believe. Humanity errs in being infantile. The average man does not indulge in deep thought. It makes him too unhappy to have his infantile beliefs disturbed. And it is the nature of every living organism to seek pleasure and avoid pain. The retention of old creeds and doctrines is preferable and more comfortable, even though they mean stagnation and dependence. Moreover, the parental obedience of youth manifests itself through adult life and makes us faithful unconsciously to those who have gone before.

Mental lethargy is now conducive to construction. It remains for the Atheist to supply a constructive policy just as much as Theism supplies its negative forms and ceremonies.

Freethinkers arise! Do not credit the man-in-the-street with your developed mentality! Destroy his anthropomorphism, but emphasize the fact that he is in possession of the will-to-create by individual effort, and become more powerful than the phantastic creation that he worships. Inspire him with confidence! Teach him to walk and help him to independent thought. Build up his value of HIMSELF as a unit. Set before him his position in this universe for his own happiness and the advancement of the community to which he belongs. Appeal to his Reason, but remember that average humanity is guided by the emotions. Desire is the motive force of the individual. Emphasize a constructive policy, for neither the world nor the individual can continue to exist on negativism!

Be as active in your construction as you are destructive, and remember that human nature is frail—and the human, parasitic by nature!

ESTELLE COLE.

[We publish Dr. Cole's article because it represents a point of view with those whose understanding and acquaintance with Freethought is but slight. Something more than a casual listening to a few open-air speeches is necessary to an understanding of Freethought, although even with this scanty outfit her assumption is unsound. The Freethinker's war cry is not down with the clergy, their ceremonies and their cant, as though that were the beginning and end of their endeavours. But even here the destructive policy in eliminating the clergy, their ceremonies and their cant, must, and does, take the line of constructive work, showing how and why they instruct social progress. The aim of Freethought is the rationalizing of life in terms of human freedom and happiness. I must assume that Miss Cole does not read the *Freethinker* regularly, otherwise she would hardly write as she does. And once again we must insist that it is a dangerous and a foolish policy for anyone to count themselves acquainted with Freethought, and neglect reading the one paper devoted to Freethought propaganda in this country.—EDITOR "FREETHINKER."]

### Some New Precepts.

For the benefit and edification of us moderns the Reverend D. Morse-Boycott has drawn up ten new commandments.

Here is number one: Thou shalt teach thy children self-control.

This is all very fine, but in spite of nearly two thousand years of Christianity, many parents do not yet know the meaning of self-control—especially when their religious beliefs are attacked—so how on earth are they going to teach it with any degree of success to their children? Another question. Seeing that the reverend gentleman believes in a God who it is alleged creates all children, can he explain why this same God does not implant the art of self-control in them and thereby save the parents a great deal of trouble?

In the second commandment we are ordered to teach our children "the marvels of sex."

Strictly speaking, it is a piece of impertinence for a Christian to come out with this without informing his

audience that Freethinkers have advocated it for years, and that we are very largely indebted to the Christian Churches for the depraved notions of sex that are still extant. However, as it very definitely shows that Freethought is making its presence felt, I don't see any need to pursue the matter further.

Third on the list comes: Thou shalt not attach thy house to a garage; but to a nursery.

Which translated means that it is sinful to shirk the responsibilities of parenthood in order to be at liberty to rush about the country in a motor-car. I am convinced that no normal person refrains deliberately from procreating unless they have very strong reasons, or else are extremely selfish. If the latter, then one ought not to regret that such people remain childless.

Fourthly, you are not to steal your neighbour's reputation.

This leaves you perfectly free to please yourself about slandering anybody who doesn't happen to come under this category. It also allows a Roman Catholic room to continue to vilify a Protestant or vice-versa, which, of course, is much more important—to them.

Then we are next directed to "use the gifts of God in moderation."

Assuming that there is a God, how can we use in moderation "gifts" bestowed on us by him if He decides that we shall utilize them immoderately?

"Thou shalt not live for notoriety," reads the sixth injunction.

The main reason why many people strive to become notorious (the chief offenders being members of "society," film-stars, and cranks) is that they are encouraged to do so by the "stunt press"—in the control of which, be it noted, Christians have quite a large say. Again, thanks to the press, notoriety is thrust at persons who really don't ask for it. So that the writer ought to level his commandment—guns would be infinitely better—at those who prescribe the printed dope which they hope some day will rob us of the capacity for clear thought.

Listen to this: Thou shalt go to Church.

That is what they would describe in boxing terminology as a knock-out. It has, in fact, made such an impression on the *Daily Herald*, that we are shown a picture of several people setting the example.

Precisely why we should go to church is not made too clear. For even to those who merely reject "Christianity"—whom the writer is addressing—he fails to submit a reasonable case. To argue that Christ created the Church as a means to reach men, women, and children through the ages, and that therefore no picture of Him is complete without the frame of the Church will not greatly help a man who has come to the conclusions that the parson or priest at the Church he once patronized is a fool, and his sermons, absolute rubbish (this fundamentally is what "Christianity" amounts to).

Having survived what looked very serious at first sight, let us proceed to the eighth which is an admonition. "Thou shalt not gild the lily," it runs.

In case you are a little mystified over this let me explain that the writer is referring to women who paint, powder, or in other ways attempt to make themselves attractive. To crave to be looked at, we learn, is a vanity that "expresses a distorted mind."

Well, I have read a few authoritative works on psychology, but I have certainly never struck anything which supports this statement, and I would welcome any information as to the source whence it is derived. If there is any truth in what the writer says, then there must be at least seventy per cent of the people in England who suffer from distorted minds—for men almost as much as woman, like to attract attention somehow. However, on reflection, a distorted mind is to be preferred to a mind which blindly accepts the Bible as the embodiment of truth simply because somebody else said that it was, and which steadfastly believes in a God which it cannot comprehend, explain, or find reasonable employment for.

Next comes a warning not to "give way to vain superstitions."

Only vain superstitions, mark you! Apparently there are some that are not vain—this is news. I was under the impression that all superstitions sprang from the soil of ignorance and were carefully kept preserved



through the ages by the efforts of the Christian Churches—we live and learn.

Lastly we are enjoined to control our speech.

This by the way was implied in the fourth commandment, *i.e.*, "Thou shalt not steal thy neighbour's reputation."

We sincerely hope that Mr. Morse-Boycott's new commandments will have given the readers of the *Daily Herald* the necessary "moral uplift." We shall not be surprised if it fails to do this, nor will, we expect, Mr. Morse-Boycott. For it is strongly borne in on us that very few parsons nowadays hope to show anyone the error of his ways, or to "uplift" anyone. Their aim seems to be two-fold. The one is to persuade their actual followers that they are a national force. The other to keep themselves in front of the general public. That a large part of this same general public smile at their antics does not matter. The Harlequinade which comes at the end of the Pantomime really has a religious origin.

TOM BLAKE.

### The World's Wierdest Books.

ALMOST in the shadow of the "Mother of Parliaments," and just over the way from Westminster Abbey, is a book-shop whose serriced rows of books seem eager to assail the gothic portals of British orthodox Christianity, hurl down the saints and symbols, and set up cabalistic fetishes in their shrines.

To the mystic all things are possible, except the reasoned conclusions of science; so here one finds books on spiritualism, vitalism, theosophy, reincarnation, avatars, pantheism, the Vedas, immortality, prophecy, divination, clairvoyance, crystal gazing, ghosts, haunted house, telepathy, astrology, phrenology, witchcraft, fairies, banshees, lunar influence, changelings, werewolfs, vampires, alchemy, dowsing, and symbolism. In glancing over these medieval books it is felt how necessary it is to protect mankind against itself.

I pick up a book on the vampire, and find proof positive, gleaned from all parts of the world, that there are creatures, seemingly dead, who slit from their graves in the form of bats to suck the blood of fair and virtuous youths until they pine away, in order that they themselves may live on for centuries until the "Master of Guile" claims them for his own.

The next book is on Atlantis, the lost continent, and it shows that a myth is as hard to lay as a ghost, for this myth is one of the very oldest in the world and was hoary when Plato bolstered it up. Religious anthropologists and pseudo-scientists who dislike the evolution theory have peopled the continent with a race of supermen contemporaneous with the dinosaur, have marched cultures westward from Europe, or eastward from the Americas to suit their fancies, and have even sunk the lost tribes of Israel under the mighty ocean that now covers all the early monuments.

There are books by Sir Oliver Lodge here, and I resent finding that great man in such questionable company; although I am sure he wont mind my opinion, even though his works on science are my constant companions. It is well known that highly intelligent people are often very credulous, and I was once able to prove to my entire satisfaction that Sir Oliver is no exception.

Three years ago I was riding in the "Underground" with my family, and reading a little yellow book of Sir Oliver's, just published by Benn, when, on approaching Sloane Square, going east, I chanced to look toward the other end of the nearly-empty car, where I saw Sir Oliver sitting with a lady. I felt that he was delivered into my hands, so, waiting until his eyes were turned my way, I looked about in a hazy manner as though I had sensed a presence. Sir Oliver seeing his book and my perturbation scented something psychic, so he immediately came the length of the car, sat on the edge of the seat opposite to me and regarded me as though eager to advise me. I could carry the deception no further, and went on reading my book; so Sir Oliver left the train at St. James' Park Station, and I lost a chance to earn a niche in history as a psychic subject.

In the window of this book shop are photos of spirits,

heads radiating aura, mouths oozing ectoplasm, and human forms projecting their astral bodies.

Connected with the shop is a psychic museum, and I feel that in it your familiar could be photoed. You could obtain samples of ectoplasm; or buy charms to bring good fortune, and armlets to ward off evil, together with magic wands, dowsing rods, crystal globes, philosophers stones, and love potions: some day I will visit it and satisfy my morbid curiosity.

HADAD.

### Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

BIRTH CONTROL AND ABORTION.

SIR,—May I crave the courtesy of your columns once again on the subject of birth control? Fire has been opened upon me from three sides at once, but I shall endeavour to cope with the fusilade as expeditiously as possible.

It is regrettable that my letter evidently sent Mrs. Hornibrook to her desk on a wave of indignation before she had given full attention to the text, or had time to ponder the implications of the argument. Had she noticed my phrase "setting aside for the moment all considerations of the actual risks of abortion to the expectant mother," she might have dispensed with the first part of her communication. My contention is that there are two sides to the problem of abortion; the surgical, which I did not discuss, and the moral, which I did. For Mrs. Hornibrook the moral side is apparently wrapt up in the surgical, for she gives us the definite, if hardly adequate, principle, "Self-inflicted abortion is anti-social because it is highly dangerous," and speaks of the precept that "Women should be in charge of the fertility of their own bodies." But surely she can see that this glib utterance fails to comprehend the depth and expansiveness of the ethical problem involved. The question is not *whether*, but *to what extent* women should have this right. And here Mr. Fraser assists us with the following: "The necessity for destroying . . . even the new-born child is a matter for calm and careful consideration by the best informed persons." Thus you see that the control over the fertility of one's own body takes us inevitably onwards to such a question even as this. And it is open to me to ask, "Why only *new-born*?" Perceiving the perilous extent to which this is merely a problem of degree, I begin to discuss the ethics of the matter by asking at what stage of development "moral associations" commence to cluster round the growing embryo; then Mrs. Hornibrook imputes to me the quite irrelevant idea of a "soul," as if the possession of this mystic entity were all that created moral problems for mankind, accusing me of sacerdotalism for attempting to draw a distinction, morally speaking, between the organic parts of the body involved in procreation and the actual procreated organism. This sort of talk is of course just what the priests want, who have always contended that moral facts cannot arise at any point out of the conditions of organic life, but must take their sanction from the supposed advent of a "soul." Veritably it is Mrs. Hornibrook who would unwittingly make the uterus "a piece of ecclesiastical furniture." But when she complains that I do not explain whether the vague beginnings of parental feeling are in the parents or in the embryo, I simply do not understand her; or is it that she does not understand me? Does one have to explain whether a man's feeling for his dog is in the man or the dog? As to the personal allusion contained in Mrs. Hornibrook's final paragraph, her "coup de grace," as we might call it, it cuts no ice and will bear ignoring.

Mr. Fraser grants my case "if one admits that sentiment is a useful adjunct to the solving of any given problem." When will people realize that the whole of morality rests upon feeling? It is the ultimate moral sanction whether we accept the supernatural or the natural interpretation of morals. It underlies all forms of mental refinement and artistic culture. The problem of abortion will turn ultimately on a sentiment. The question of destroying a new-born child may need "calm and careful consideration," but this will be, in the last



resort, the calm and careful consideration of basic feelings.

As to my missing the point of Miss Browne's letter, it was not quite so bad as that. I used her conclusions, without discussing them, to illustrate how much this is a problem of degree and of difficult distinctions.

Finally, sir, may I suggest that my critics, to be relevant and cogent in their arguments, should endeavour to show one of three things. Firstly, that the problem of abortion is wholly a surgical and not partly a moral problem (that the two overlap at points is admitted). Or, failing this, that "moral associations" clearly do not enter the field until immediately after the birth of the child. Or, failing this, that such associations, appearing at an earlier stage in development, and concerned as they would be with parental and social responsibility, are not such as to raise formidable objections to the type of legalized abortion outlined by your contributors.

MEDICUS.

#### THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH.

SIR,—In "Acid Drops" of the issue of December 21, 1930, occurs the following statement:—

But the history of the Church is what it is because the Church was founded on the whole Bible.

Roman Catholics do not believe the Church was so founded; and theirs is the only Church professing the Christian Faith that really does matter.

Last summer I was in Hyde Park and chanced to listen to an obviously trained and didactic type of speaker on the Papistic platform. (Here I must apologise to you, Sir, for assisting to invest a Christian Meeting with a counterfeit importance by swelling the ranks of the auditors). In answer to a question—which directly bears upon the above excerpt—the speaker stated that the Protestants base their religion entirely upon the Bible as the Word of God, but that the Roman Catholic Faith went far back into the dim recesses of Divine Tradition. He asserted that the Bible was merely a Scriptural incident suited only for the times in which it was written; that God's Laws were promulgated for the government of the Holy Roman Catholic Church an immeasurable period of time before the advent of the Bible, and that each successive Pope acts by direct divine guidance altogether irrespective of the Bible. In short, the proud and haughty State Church of England has placed the Biblical Cart before the Almighty Horse of Tradition.

It would appear, therefore, that although the Protestant Christian Church is what it is because that Church was founded on the whole Bible, the Roman Catholic Christian Church is what it is because it was founded on Tradition (another name for lies), and the spurious Vice-Godship of the Bishops of Bugaboo. You pays your money and takes your choice.

Owing to the progress of education and the inevitable evolution of all religions, the Roman Catholic Church is astute enough to wish to severely limit the authority of the Bible. Its many imbecilities are an insult to modern intelligence, and provide an indisputable reason for Atheism. Rome willingly would—and probably will at some future time if Secularism is ever allowed to become moribund—throw the Bible overboard altogether and substitute Papal "Divine Tradition" as the sole authority from Heaven upon earth. Thus would the world retrogress to another "Age of Faith." But it is the especial business of Freethinkers, by the spoken and the written word of Truth, to see that this Book with its immoralities is kept well chained round the neck of the entire Christian Church, and so hasten the day when that "Inspired" Relic of Devilry will have deservedly dragged the Church down into the everlasting mud.

ARTHUR HUGHES.

Truth and Justice are the immutable laws of social order.—Laplace.

Who ever knew truth put to the worst in a free and open encounter.—Milton.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

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FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road, opposite Walham Green Church): Every Saturday at 7.30.—Various speakers.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine; Every Wednesday at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tison; every Friday at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

#### INDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Workers Circle, Great Alie Street, Aldgate): 8.0, Mr. C. Burns—"The Conflict Between Science and Religion."

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (The Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, January 7, at 7.45, Mr. W. Nicholls—"The Power of the Banks."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The Few and the Many."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Mr. T. Archer—"Fighting the Dope Traffic."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road): 7.15, Annual General Meeting (members only).

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 7.0, Annual General Meeting and Social will take place on January 4. It is desirable that all members of the West London Branch should be present.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"Christianity and the Survival of the Fittest." Questions and Discussion. All welcome.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 47 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): Sunday, January 4, at 7.0, Mr. George Whitehead (London)—"The Psychological Basis of the Penny Dreadful." Admission Free. Reserved Seats, One Shilling. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

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LONDON FREETHINKERS'  
**34th ANNUAL DINNER**

(Under the Auspices of the National Secular Society)

AT THE

**MIDLAND GRAND HOTEL, N.W.**  
 (VENETIAN ROOM)

**On Saturday, January 17th, 1931.**

Chairman - Mr. Chapman Cohen.

*Reception at 6.30 p.m. Dinner at 7 p.m. prompt*

EVENING DRESS OPTIONAL

**TICKETS - - EIGHT SHILLINGS.**

Tickets may be obtained from either the office of the "Freethinker," 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4,  
 or from the National Secular Society, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

R. H. ROSETTI, Secretary.