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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,  
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

**Views and Opinions.**

**Education and Religion.**

ON January 13—the day on which this issue of the *Freethinker* goes to press—the Minister of Education is to meet a number of representatives of the Churches to consider what terms he can make with them with regard to the settlement of what is facetiously called the Education question. Of course, it is not education in any genuine sense that is in question, but only religion. And the question here is, on the part of the Churches, to what extent can they make the State a partner in the game of forcing upon children religious doctrines which are largely repudiated by adults, and which are not wholly believed in even by those who wish to have them taught to children. And on the side of the government, the question is how far must they go in making arrangements which many of its members know to be illogical and unjust in order to retain the votes of certain sections of the religious world. Chief among these sections of the religious world is the Roman Catholic Church, which commands the most ignorant and the most docile vote in the country. Its followers are told from the pulpit how they must vote, they are catechised as to how they act through the confessional and in other ways. In general, they think like sheep and vote like asses—two of the animals that are particularly and favourably displayed in the New Testament. I must leave it to those interested in psychological and historical studies to determine whether the prominence of these two members of the zoological kingdom was suggestive or prophetic. In any case Church history has justified the prophecy, if prophecy it was, or illustrated the power of suggestion, if it must come under that head. Where religious interests are concerned Christians have usually acted with the coherence of the sheep and have resisted change with the stubbornness of the ass.

**Religion and the State.**

Still it is disquieting to find the Minister of Education inviting representatives of the Churches to meet him with a statement of their claims, and intimating that if they can come to an agreement among themselves, he will endeavour to satisfy them. For there is no mistaking the fact the interests of the modern State and those of the Churches are not identical—they are not even complimentary. The sole interest of the State should be the training of the young so that they will become useful and desirable citizens. The interest of the Churches is to train the young so that—theoretically—they will make desirable members of the New Jerusalem, but actually so that they will grow up loyal members of this or that Church, regardless of all other claims. In the fact of the admission to every office in the State of members of every religion and those of no religion at all there is involved the principle that so far as the State is concerned religion does not matter. The only exception is that of the King, and the religion of the King is selected for him, not because that form of religion is believed to be of any particular use in the discharge of his functions, but only to prevent his belonging to another which is held to be a national danger. God lingers in many of our ceremonies, it is true, but he is there only as the rudimentary appendix lingers in the human organism. We cannot quite rid ourselves of either without what is regarded as a rather severe operation.

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**Why?**

The inculcation of religion being thus practically ruled out of the State, why is it maintained in the State schools, and supported in schools which are maintained by State funds? It is certainly not there because the State holds religious instruction to be essential to the building of good citizens. That reason is negatived by parents being permitted to withdraw their children from religious instruction. It is not there in the interests of the child, not even in its religious interest. For there is no disputing the fact that a great deal of what the child learns as religion in the schools it has to unlearn in later days. Religion might be in the schools in the supposed interests of the parents, but that can only be granted on the assumption that parents so little understand their duty to their children that they feel justified in forcing upon them ready made opinions upon subjects that are at best speculative, and endeavouring to turn out their children as mere copies of themselves so far as that is possible.

It is certainly not in the interests of the teachers. A very large proportion of teachers, on one ground or another, would gladly see the time allotted to the religious lesson put to a different use. And there is no question that so long as religion remains in the



schools, religious tests, avowed or unavowed, are inescapable. If teachers are not, as in some schools, openly rejected on religious grounds, their appointment is often enough decided on that basis. And all over the country an open avowal of disbelief in religion would be fatal to promotion. If ministers of religion are not managers of schools, they still use their influence through their followers on the Councils. It is a situation that can operate to the benefit of neither teacher nor pupil. On the one it imposes hypocrisy, to the other it prevents being taught that independence of thought which a genuine education should inculcate. These things are plain and indisputable. They are well known to all educationalists. Many lament their existence; yet few are courageous enough to openly denounce the main cause of their existence.

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#### The Fight for the Child.

Religious instruction in the schools is maintained in the interests of religious leaders and of religious organizations alone. It is not a child's question, it is not a parent's question, it is not a national question. It is entirely a parson's question. It is they who are behind the parents. So clearly is the claim put forward in the name of the parents a cover for the demand of the clergy, that on several occasions it has been attempted to insert in Education Bills a clause making school time commence *after* the religious lesson. This has been resisted by the clergy on the avowed grounds that if this were done the vast majority of parents would not send their children to school in time to get the religious lesson. Yet the parents whom it is feared will not bother to send their children to school in time for the religious lesson, are the ones who are said to be clamouring to keep religion in the schools!

The Pope has just declared that for Roman Catholics—numbering at least half the Christians in the world—the chief and primary purpose of marriage is fertility. Breed as many as possible and as rapidly as possible without regard to other considerations. That is the contribution of the Roman Church to the sociological problem. The advocacy is understandable on the part of that Church. Keeping as it does a very close hold on its followers, from their rising up till their lying down, it can count upon retaining authority over a larger proportion of those born than is possible with any other Church. And everywhere it insists upon the necessity of having its own schools, with its religious teaching absolutely free from outside interference. But whether in these schools, or with other non-provided schools, or with religion in the provided schools, the aim is in every case the same. It is that of breeding clients to satisfy the purveyors of religion. Eliminate religion from the schools and the supply of clients is cut off at the source. That is one reason for the deadly enmity of all the Churches to the Russian experiment. For if the present form of government maintains itself long enough to see even the majority of the Russian youth grow up without religion, Christianity in that country will suffer a blow from which it can never recover. The failure of the experiment on the political or the social side, will not seriously affect this issue. Mature men and women may be brought back by one means or another to the religion of their childhood, but what is to be done with a people who have no early traditions of that kind, and who have during their childhood never undergone the paralysing influence of early religious training? The Churches must fight for the control of the child; otherwise they lose having any voice in the direction of civilization.

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#### A Fight for Civilization.

Still we have to face the fact of the Minister for

Education attending a representation of the parsonic interest in order to discover whether he can effect a bargain with them. The Roman Catholics threaten a solid vote of about forty members against the government unless their demands are met, and outside the united Catholic vote is threatened against any party which refuses to come to heel. And the Roman Catholic voters will act as they are directed. They will be shepherded to the poll, and afterwards catechised as to their voting in the confessional. Moreover the Roman Church says it has not been treated according to the bargain struck at the last election, and that there was some sort of a bargain made, although not necessarily a formal one, there seems very good reason to believe. Of course, this threat on the part of the Roman Catholics could be negated by Protestants if they cared to do so. But they also have their demands. They wish to keep religion, or what they call the Bible in the schools. And in making this demand they can hardly avoid admitting a certain measure of reason in the Catholic claim.

So the game goes on. None of the religious parties dares trust religion to the educated mature intelligence. They dare not even trust it the length of the adolescent intelligence. For all of them it is the child or damnation. Once upon a time, and not so long ago, the social environment was such that the clergy could well afford to leave the child alone. The general state of public opinion was then such that the weight was on the side of the religious tradition. To-day it is not so. The living thought of to-day is non-religious, when it is not anti-religious. The clergy must capture the child if they are to get the support of adult men and women. It is ultimately a fight for the direction of civilization, and politics has become such that our politicians are ready to sell even this in order to gain a temporary party advantage.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Voltaire of America.

"The infidels of one age have been the aureoled saints of the next."—*Ingersoll*.

"What good is like to this  
To do worthy the writing, and to write  
Worthy the reading and the world's delight."

*S. Daniel.*

An advanced movement like our own can have no better champion than a humorist. No human emotion is so readily awakened as that of which laughter is the sign. If the cause be a great one, and if the arguments, barbed by wit and winged by laughter, have any real worth, they strike the deeper because of the pleasant nature of their presentation.

In a theological discussion a laugh is a blessing, and a humorist like Robert Ingersoll was genuinely our benefactor. The artificial solemnity of the subject makes a joke more jocund, as the arms of a dusky maid give a double beauty to her pearls. The defenders of the Christian Superstition have lost themselves in trackless deserts of so-called evidence, and almost smothered the subject in heaps of verbiage. But Ingersoll, the Voltaire of his day, challenged the defenders of Orthodoxy with smiles. There was no point of real importance upon which he did not touch wittily. There were few fallacies in that enormous tissue of falsehoods which he did not laughingly expose. Nowhere is he so happy as when he describes how religions grew out of a misinterpretation of natural phenomena. That was the real reason why Ingersoll had such bitter enemies among the priests and their satellites. They knew too well that it is ridicule that kills. Gravity was what they wanted,



for they realized that opponents who treat Superstition too seriously play their game for them.

In America Robert Ingersoll occupied the position as a militant Freethought orator, which Charles Bradlaugh filled in this country. Both were big men physically and intellectually; both could sway audiences of thousands; but here the resemblance ends. Bradlaugh sought to beat down superstition by sheer force of logic and law. His speeches read like the summing-up of a judge. But Ingersoll's orations were all compact of brilliance and sparkle. America dearly loves rhetoric, and Pagan Bob as an orator had no equal in all the length and breadth of America. He dealt rhetorically with elemental emotions, and he enjoyed the fame of being an apostle of liberty. Expressing the simple feelings of ordinary men, he made a wide appeal. "Give me liberty, or give me death!" That was the kind of thing; a sonorous and impassioned phrase flung out to thrill the hearts and flush the cheeks of thousands. Phrase after phrase has this special quality, and reads like poetry, grandiose and sweeping.

Liberty, a word without which all other words are vain.

You can almost see the outstretched arm, hear the thrilling, resonant voice. There is music in it, but there is more. The trumpets sing to battle.

Ingersoll wrote, too, quite as brilliant and delightful a style as his spoken words. He was "answered" over and over again by priests of all denominations. He even drew Cardinal Manning and Gladstone into the controversial arena. Taunted by the English statesman with riding a wild horse without a bridle, Ingersoll retorted crushingly that this was better than "sitting on a dead horse in a reverential calm." Professor Huxley, indeed, claimed the victory for Ingersoll. "Gladstone's attack on you," he wrote, "is one of the best things he has written. I don't think there is more than fifty per cent more verbiage than is necessary, nor any sentence with more than two meanings."

Ingersoll's masterpiece, *The Mistakes of Moses*, is a Freethought classic, and still commands a circulation wherever the English language is spoken. A generation after his death his lectures are still read and even discussed. Such literary vitality is the surest test of his power, for it is rare that controversial matter is endowed so richly as to survive the fugitive purposes of the moment.

It is good to find that Ingersoll is still read so many years after his death, for there are few Freethinkers whom it is more necessary to remember. He was of the race of the Sun-Treader, whom Browning once worshipped this side idolatry. Ingersoll was the mouthpiece of liberty and fraternity, believing, as he did, that freedom is the very breath of brotherhood. He was the clarion of Freethought, with that all-embracing appeal which the mere rhetorician never succeeds in attaining.

Ingersoll possessed a genius in which intellectual liberty appeared as beautiful a thing as a flower, a bird, or a star. At heart a poet, he found the world a place of ethical ideals, and he was no less exalted when he spoke of the golden hopes of a rejuvenated humanity than when he described the exquisite beauty of a little child's laugh:—

Strike with hand of fire, O weird musician, thy harp strung with Apoll's golden hair, fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft toucher of the organ keys; blow, bugler, blow, till thy silver notes touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm lovers wandering amid vineclad hills. But know your sweetest strains are discords all, compared with childhood's happy laugh, the laugh that fills the eyes with light, and every heart with joy.

Imagination and humour were the qualities in which Ingersoll surpassed the orators of his time. His oration at the tomb of Napoleon is a scathing denunciation of militarism. A thorough humanitarian, Ingersoll's work is full of a fine and noble indignation, directed against all that is cruel and despicable. From thousands of minds he lifted the awful belief in eternal torment, and banished those degrading conceptions of deity which oppressed his countrymen.

The Ingersoll we treasure in our hearts was a keen-eyed warrior, as well as a very noble man, who fought in the Army of Human Liberation, and who never wavered in holding aloft the standard of Freethought against all the gods in the Pantheon. In his life he made good the splendid boast of Swinburne concerning Liberty:—

"I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion,  
Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy breath:  
The graves of souls born worms and creeds grown carrion,  
Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death.

Thou art the player whose organ-keys are thunders,  
And I beneath thy foot the pedal prest;  
Thou art the ray whereat the rent night sunders,  
And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast.

I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,  
As haze in sunrise on the red sea line,  
But thou from dawn to sunset shall cherish  
The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine."

MIMNERMUS.

## Scotland and Freethought.

ONE is glad to see the "moving of the waters" in such a central and important town as Perth. In these days of economic stress it is often dangerous and difficult for professional and business men who have personally acquired the Freethinking point of view to avow themselves Freethinkers. This is very largely the reason why in Scotland there are comparatively so few societies for the propagation of the principles of the greatest of causes. The Scottish Churches have a very large control of social life in Scotland—on the surface, at any rate—and any one in trade who has no Kirk connexion may expect to be boycotted. But the non-existence of actual rationalistic organizations in various parts of Scotland does not prove that Freethought is not permeating large sections of the community. There is a much greater consumption of Rationalistic literature than there was thirty years since, although the managers of many of the public reading rooms have not the inclination—or courage—to admit such an outspoken journal as the *Freethinker*. They would—some of them—as readily introduce an infernal machine. This is especially true of Edinburgh, which cannot boast of very many active and open minds. There are more lively and energetic thinkers in Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen. Dundee has always had advanced thinkers—even from the time of the French Revolution, and I have heard an old lady who belonged to that historic city recite in French, a verse from a song of the revolutionaries which her father taught her, and which she said she was, when a child, dared to say above her breath in company. The *Freethinker* has been on the table of the Dundee Public Reading Room for many years.

The Edinburgh Press has refused to insert letters to the Editors, suggesting that Edinburgh should follow the example of Dundee in this regard. One does not expect the Managers of a Public Reading Room to be familiar with the contents of every weekly and monthly journal; but by a strange inconsistency, while the *Freethinker* is rigidly and frigidly kept out of the largest Edinburgh Public Reading



Room the monthly journal, the *Literary Guide* can be perused there at all times.

Probably if a courteous suggestion were made by the publishers of the *Freethinker* to the Edinburgh Free Library Committee, it might yet have some effect. *Verb. Sap!* The Committee ought not to make fish of one and flesh of another. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

It is more refreshing to breathe the invigorating intellectual atmosphere of the Freethinking circles of Glasgow and Paisley than the intellectual fogginess of Modern Athens. It has to be remembered, of course, that Edinburgh contains many retired people whose orthodox minds are closed for ever. The atmosphere of Edinburgh is bracing—sometimes too bracing—for the body—but it is relaxing for the mind!

There is one method whereby I believe the activities of Freethinkers might be more effectively employed and directed in some Scotch towns, and that is by the formation of circles for informal meetings, talks and readings in private residences or in small halls which could be hired at moderate cost, which the hat could be passed round to defray. Since the War, Edinburgh, for instance, has undergone many changes; and while it is boomed by the Kirks as the citadel and centre of orthodoxy, there is no doubt that the city now contains a substantial number of Freethinkers, whom it would be a great advantage to bring into corporate association.

Sometimes a great public question will give an observer an opportunity of seeing evidences of Freethinkers in Scotland. When the Kirks (Catholic and Protestant and Jewish) organized a public meeting in Edinburgh, to protest against the "treatment" of clerics in Russia, they were disagreeably surprised to find how many dissentients attended and put pertinent and intelligent questions as to the reliability of the news we had been receiving from Russia. But the presence at a similar meeting of protest in Glasgow of similar dissentients was much more marked and much more effective. And the questioners were not at pains to hide their personal opinions.

The type of Christian who feels some poor people on Christmas day and lets them go hang for the rest of the year is common in Scotland. And that type takes the opportunity of lecturing the poor folk at the feast, and the effusions are faithfully and prominently reproduced in the local press. Our Scottish newspapers have been commenting upon the growing celebration of Christmas in Scotland, which fifty years since most Presbyterians regarded as a Popish festival. Says one Editor: "But now Christmas services are held in many Presbyterian Churches. Banks, offices, and shops are closed, and the publication of newspapers is suspended . . . slowly but surely the predominant partner unconsciously elbows out our old Scottish habits." But despite this fact there are still slums in our Scottish towns. And what is the real significance of this observance in Scotland of the Christmas festival? If Presbyterians can fall in with Anglicans and Roman Catholics in wars and holiday-making, what is to prevent them from falling in with them in such matters as sacred books, creeds, liturgies and ritual? It is surprising that so many religionists profess to be blind to the advancing power of Secularism; but it may be shrewdly suggested that their leaders are not so blind; and some inkling of the growing strength of Freethought is the real dictator of ecclesiastical unions. Nobody with any claim to average intelligence can ignore or misread the letters in the Edinburgh papers from Freethinkers on the proposed opening of Edinburgh Cinemas on Sunday in aid of the Royal Infirmary Funds, for example. He who has ears can hear the fluttering of wings in the Dovecotes of Divinity!

IGNORUS.

## Professor Jeans and the Universe.

It is encouraging to find that 40,000 of Professor Jean's larger book *The Universe Around Us* have been sold, and that the work is being translated into all the important European tongues: and it is still more encouraging to learn that the smaller work *The Mysterious Universe*, is a best seller for Christmas, some 60,000 having already been sold in four weeks from publication. But we wonder how far the word "mysterious" has aided the sales, for to the extent that a Wallace thriller or a spiritualist exposition was expected, so will there be disappointment. The religious press and Dean Inge have boomed the book because they think it an attack on determinism: but we hope they will read the book carefully and inwardly digest it, for if it attempts to discomfort the determinists it certainly gives very shrewd knocks at the orthodox conception of the Great Architect, as Jeans himself calls him: and to the usual notion of creation!

The Professor opens with a disclaimer of being a philosopher, and the way he fluctuates between determinism and its opposite is a very clear indication of his unsettled attitude. There is an obvious attempt to conciliate the orthodox by assuming a Great Architect, and by the final summing up of radiation and matter:—

These concepts (radiation and matter) reduce the whole universe to a world of light potential and existent, so that the whole story of its creation can be told with perfect accuracy and completeness in six words: "God said, 'Let there be light.'" (p. 78.)

Elsewhere he sums up the universe as "bottled and unbottled radiation." How the theologians will grasp at this restoration of Genesis to scientific and prophetic accuracy: but before they reach this delectable mountain they have had to encounter from Sir James some very unpleasant obstacles to complacency. "Into such a universe we have stumbled if not exactly by mistake, at least as the result of what may properly be described as an accident." (p. 4.) "It seems incredible that the universe can have been designed primarily to produce life like our own: had it been so we might have expected a better proportion between the magnitude of the mechanism and the amount of the product." (p. 5.) Such a ridiculous little mouse for the mountain's labour. But not bad for an "emergent" God, such as Professor Alexander gave us on the wireless a week or two ago. Or we might excuse the Great Architect's bungle on the principle of the servant-girl who excused her "accident" by saying it was only a little one.

And Sir James casts overboard quite definitely "Vitalism" to explain life "It is becoming increasingly likely that what specially distinguishes the matter of living bodies is the presence not of a vital force, but of the quite commonplace element carbon always in conjunction with other atoms with which it forms exceptionally large molecules." (p. 8.) We give just one more example of the kind of blow administered to orthodoxy before pointing out some of Sir James's own difficulties which he creates by leaving the mechanistic philosophy.

"Chemistry can only tell us to place life in the same category as magnetism and radio-activity. The universe is built so as to operate according to certain laws. As a consequence of these laws, atoms having certain definite numbers of electrons, 6, 26 to 28, and 83 to 92 have certain special properties which show themselves in the phenomena of life, magnetism, and



radio-activity respectively." And "An omnipotent creator, subject to no limitations whatever, would not have been restricted to the laws which prevail in the present universe: he might have elected to build the universe to conform to any one of innumerable other sets of laws." (p. 9.) "... Chemistry suggests, that like magnetism and radio-activity, life may be merely an accidental consequence of the special set of laws by which the present universe is governed." (p. 10.) Sir James, while giving this *coupe de grâce* to orthodoxy does not realize that he still is possessed by the anthropomorphic idea of matter without qualities and a god who imposes on matter (or the universe) certain laws by which it runs or works.

And still less does he realize that the laws of which he speaks are merely our expression of the way certain aspects of experience appeal to us: and to this misconception of the "determinist" position by Sir James we shall have occasion to refer again when dealing with his treatment of free will.

We classify our items of experience. Some we call matter, some energy, others mind. We proceed to relate some experiences to others, and starting from universal "spirits" of every variety and capacity to explain phenomena, we finally arrive at a conception of causation and laws of relation or connexion between items of experience. While we express relations, usually by mathematical formulæ, and keep to that we are safe; but when we begin to change the "how" of operation into "why," we enter the bog of metaphysics unless we keep clearly before us that these "laws of nature" and "forces of nature" are merely handy compact expressions for observed relations between items of experience.

It is forgetfulness of this that leads Prof. Jeans to speak of "inexorable dynamic laws," which are driving the earth ever further away from the sun into the outer cold and darkness.

And again, "the second law of thermodynamic predicts that there can be but one end to the universe—a 'heat-death,' in which the total energy of the universe is uniformly distributed, and all the substance of the universe is at the same temperature." (p. 13.) And so the universe will be "run down," and nothing more will happen—unless, of course, God winds it up again.

So "the quantum theory marked the end of the mechanical age in science, and the opening of a new era." (p. 19.) But how if Planck's constant should be proved *not* to hold everywhere in the universe. How does Jeans *know* that it is true for the furthest nebulae? He answers this question himself by saying, "history may of course repeat itself, and once again an apparent capriciousness in nature, may be found in the light of fuller knowledge, to arise out of the inevitable operation of the law of cause and effect." (pp. 21-22.)

Exactly. We were told after Newton's great gravitation theory had established itself, that the atoms of the gases of the furthest stars obeyed the same laws as the great bodies like the Earth or Jupiter—and that electricity and light were forms of energy and not matter. Now we can determine how much *weight* is added to a photographic plate after exposure to sunlight, and similarly with a solution of hydrogen peroxide. (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>.)

Because at present physics cannot explain, say, how an electron can change from one orbit (in its atom) to another in apparently no time: is not sufficient reason for assuming that the law of cause and effect has ceased to operate. All Professor Jeans's grounds and arguments by which he arrives at this apparent exception have been derived from the basic

assumption of cause and effect, *i.e.*, by determinism. And if an anomalous result is obtained the proper thing to do is to revise either the original assumption or every step in the reasoning.

MEPHISTO.

(To be continued.)

## God's Modern Defenders.

FOR the last thousand years or more—since about the days of John Scotus Erigena—there have appeared from time to time "philosophical" treatises to prove the existence of God. What has characterized them has not been the spirit of honest inquiry, but an express desire to justify at any cost a pre-existent conclusion which has not only served as a potent weapon for priestcraft, but which is supposed to afford comfort to a certain type of mentality.

The plain average Theist is exempt from such qualms. He inherits his Theism with as much unconcern as he inherits his surname. But the half-educated believer, with his smattering of logic, is fated forever to be tormented by doubt, racked with fear. Such is the price of a little knowledge. It hurts.

This may account for the publication of two recent volumes, *Philosophical Theology* (2 hefty vols.) by Tennant, and *God in Christian Thought and Experience* (also 1930) by the King's Chaplain, W. R. Mathews. The latter tells us he is leaning on Gore, Webb, Taylor, Inge and Rashdall, and knowing that we can predict much of what will inevitably follow. Mathews makes a show of hard-hitting, here and there, especially when he froths over Joad's Vital Principle, which he smashes with a righteous indignation, which is amusing when one considers how much superior is his own superstition to that of Mr. Joad. Russia, too, comes under his battering-ram, and he spurns the "dogmatic Atheism of the Bolsheviki who appear to persecute impartially all Theists."

It is our aim here to consider how far these two modern representative theologians excel St. Thomas Aquinas and Abelard. Let us observe how great has been the intellectual advance in Theology since Wm. of Occam or even Butler. Let us see how, in face of these conclusive theological reasonings, the *Freethinker* might as well shut up shop.

Several well-worn propositions may serve as illustrations:—

I. BELIEF IN GOD. According to Tennant, this is simple, and presents no difficulty. Belief in God is on a par with belief in others.

With Mathews, however, the solution is given in Prof. Otto's *Idea of the Holy*. Readers of Otto will recollect how he held "religious consciousness" to be a quite distinct emotion, rooted in what he termed the "numinous," appearing rudimentarily as "a shuddering sense of the uncanny," and ending in "a sense of the Transcendental other," a mysterious entity separated from all that is "creaturely." God, then, is that other which "completes the human spirit." (Mathews), and to which access can only be gained by prayer, "the touchstone of religious insight." So "man's natural impulse is to seek after God," and, he contends with Schliermacher, "there are no true Atheists."

II. WHAT IS GOD LIKE? A promising line of inquiry, this; a game which can be played by all and sundry, from the lordly Archbishop to the humble choir-boy. The spectacle of two modern theologians grappling with it through numerous pages of profound argument, which bespeaks a prolonged philosophical meditation, bears testimony to the noble way in which



civilized man is tackling the problems of existence.

"From the very imperfect unities which we ourselves present we are led to form the conception of a personal life in which these imperfections have vanished," is Mathews' conclusion, or rather, his little recitation, and God is "a being whom we can only know in a mirror, in a riddle." He can be angry, pleased, etc., and can also suffer, "but not enough to make him unhappy."

Tennant's God has no body. Theology, he asserts, cannot decide whether God is a person or a society of persons, but he is certainly one or the other. Net result: "God" stands for either (a) bodiless people or (b) a bodiless person. Which, we fancy, might be carried further:  $(a) = (b) = 0$ .

III. CREATION. Mathews: "Perhaps the conception of creation as the work of imagination and the creator as the Poet whose works are universes may take us further into the mystery than any other guide," a capital example of the theological mind hunting for "mysteries" in which to wallow. Our other friend, Tennant, says, with a lucky shot at truth, "the notion of Creation is not derivable from experience," and then concludes, "The ultimate mystery of the Creation confronts all theories alike," which is true with one qualification; he should have said, "all theories which hold it." It reminds one of the schoolboy who asked a riddle which his friends had to give up. Whereupon the boy said he didn't know the answer himself. And when his friends had finished laughing at his discomfiture he retorted indignantly, "You needn't laugh. You don't know the answer yourselves."

IV. FREE WILL. The difficulty here in each case is to reconcile free will with divine foreknowledge, and it is the latter which has to go. God cannot tell how we are going to use our gift. He may even, says Mathews, be astonished, but such is his self-confidence to deal with the unexpected that he can always "turn it to the advantage of his plan," "so we may hold that there can be no thread however dark, which God cannot weave into the pattern of his vast tapestry; there can be no note, however discordant, which cannot be taken up with the divine harmony."

So that no matter what crimes may occur, no matter what inhumanities may prevail, God's answer, apparently, will always be, "That suits me nicely."

V. DESIGN. Mathews has heard of Emergence and he tells us, on the authority of a theologian, that "mechanism can give no plausible account of the coming into existence of really new qualities." This proves to him that emergent novelties are God's designed creations—bacteria, cancers, theologians, etc., etc.

The earth, according to Tennant, is an "ordered fragment" in the universe; a bit of cosmos in the lot of chaos, as it were; and "it is because the desert is what it is that the oasis is what it is," which is merely arguing that a vast universe cannot possibly contain occasional pockets in which the conditions for life obtain, without deliberate design somewhere. One might ask, furthermore, what is the relevance of the desert to God's intention?

Design he argues from (a) adaptability of mind-processes to matter, (b) of parts to wholes, (c) of matter to the use of mind, (d) the beauty and sublimity of nature and (e) the moral order. These facts, he contends, point to God as intelligent ruler. It does seem a pity, however, that the omnipotent intelligence could not have made the mind of primitive man capable of understanding material processes. But in that case there might never have been any Gods—another fact which we present to our Theist friends as indicating God's almighty wisdom.

Matter, too, is beautifully designed to the use of mind; any earthquake or avalanche will prove that Beautiful, too, is the order of nature. Pity 'tis that we cannot get poor cock robin, who is buried under the snow, to share our opinion.

But this brings us to that veritable bugbear of Theologians,

VI. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL. After talking round the problem in the approved style, Mathews concludes "If the Theist cannot account for Evil the Atheist cannot account for Good" which makes one wonder when Theists will ever take the trouble to understand the Atheist's position before criticizing it. When they do that many of them cease to be Theists. The intelligence required ought not to be so very greatly out of the reach of a King's Chaplain. Mathews' observation would be quite in order as against Diabolism, a (hypothetical) belief that the universe is the work of Satan. But the Atheist is not a Diabolist.

A wonderful discovery comes from Tennant. He is "certain that evil exists," and "all attempts to call it negative are merely idle verbiage." In fact, "it is knowable with much more immediacy and certainty than is the being of God." People who said things like that several centuries ago were burned at the stake by Christianity. To-day the same religion hails them as progressive thinkers, and sometimes makes them Bishops.

We must disappoint those who expect any new light on the problem of evil from Tennant. The world is a training-ground for character, so God "tolerates pain as an inevitable collateral consequence of the only conditions under which free agents can exercise their virtues and develop their moral values." So that in order to train for a Summerland in which there will be peace, perfect peace, we must get ready by learning the gentle art of warfare here below; and for the purpose of meandering in the air strumming harps, we must go through our apprenticeship of mining and farming. We are told that suffering on earth makes us acquire fortitude, but surely no one would be foolish enough to suppose that anyone can possibly acquire sufficient fortitude to enable him to endure the Christian heaven for more than a week.

VII. IMMORTALITY. It is admitted that there is no independent evidence for immortality, but inasmuch as "the world cannot safely be regarded as realizing a divine purpose unless man's life continues after the grave" (Tennant), the best we can do is to "rely on God's love."

In one direction modern theology may be said to have widened its scope, namely, in pseudo-scientific arguments. Anything will do—emergence, holism, home and mune—if God can only be worked in somehow.

Wholes do condition parts, but not before parts have conditioned wholes. Otto's theory of the "numinous" scarcely now interests the competent psychologist. Creation does not appertain to substance, but only to its arrangements. Belief in God, belief in others, belief in matter, have only one thing in common, viz., belief. There the analogy stops. Two of those beliefs work, and the other doesn't. Two correspond to known existents; the other doesn't. The question in emergence is not why? but how? Science tells *how* they emerge; language says *what* they are; and the explanation *why* they emerged is only relevant when they have been produced for a purpose, as, for example, when the chemist tutor combines H<sub>2</sub> and O. for demonstration purposes.

That, then, is as far as Theology has got at the end of 1930. Tennant and Mathews have eased their conscience and proved (to themselves) that God exists, incidentally refuting each other in many ways. We



can now confidently anticipate that some of their colleagues, most unkindly and with great disrespect, will, in 1931, produce books to prove the existence of God.

G. H. TAYLOR.

### Acid Drops.

There were prayers before the coal stoppage began. But the strike eventuated. Then there were prayers that the strike would stop, but up to the present the strike goes on, although we have no doubt that the prayer will be answered one day. Lastly, as the senior deacon of the Horeb Baptist Church was saying a prayer for peace in the coalfields, he fell forward and died. It looks as though the Lord lost his temper at being told what he might do, or what he ought to do. And it does seem an impertinence of any man to tell God Almighty what he should do. Fancy the impudence of reminding God that there is a coal strike on in Wales, as though he doesn't know it!

The Pope has issued an encyclical on the question of marriage, divorce, and birth control. He will have nothing to do with birth control, and his decision is, of course, binding on all Roman Catholics. He does not care what kind of children are born so long as they are born in sufficient numbers to give the Church a crop sufficiently large to keep the Roman Church, numerically, on top. He does not care how unhappy or disastrous marriages are—unless they are contracted by people in high position whom it will profit the church to accommodate—and there can be no divorce. And he will have no mixed marriages because that tends to weaken the power of the Church over the children. These are the real meanings of the message with all its ponderous and foolish talk about the laws of God.

We have now in this country two and a half millions unemployed, and a much larger number of dependants upon those who are unemployed. What a golden opportunity for Jesus Christ to come on earth again and repeat in multiple fashion the Biblical miracle of feeding the 5,000 with a few loaves and fishes! It would be an immense advertisement for the Old Firm, and might pull business round again. Unfortunately for the Old Firm, however, miracles depend for their very existence on the hazy antiquity of misty mythology. Miracles cannot happen to-day. They never did happen to-day!

Dr. S. W. Hughes, of the Baptist denomination, declares that, "The Bible, which is the Charter of our liberty, must also become the text-book of our democracy." We should say that if the nation accepts the Bible as its text-book, the nation will not be a democracy. It will be a collection of people guided and ruled by a horde of priests and parsons who declared they have been divinely sent to interpret the "text-book." A true democracy cannot be based on *that* kind of foundation.

A reader of the *Daily Sketch* suggests that obsolete Sunday observance laws and present-day restrictions are foolish methods to enliven people's conscience. No doubt they are. But the laws are not revived, nor the restrictions imposed, for such a purpose. They are to enable the pious to force other people to conform to what the pious believe in.

A Nonconformist parson thinks that the Churches are not in so serious a plight as some people declare, although he admits the plight is bad enough. These parsons are amusing. First one gets up and mournfully announces that "all is lost." Then another tries to cheer him up by saying that things are not so bad as they seem. But neither the pessimist nor the optimist is able to make any improvement in the sad situation. The reason is that they have only a superficial understanding of the causes of the "plight."

In a religious weekly, a young leader of a Bible class

asks for advice. The class consists of young men aged seventeen to twenty years. Their leader complains that there is a tendency for the class to break away from the lessons and towards debates and open discussions. The advice given is that this tendency is not reprehensible. It should be encouraged, "provided that the discussion is kept to main issues and along the right lines." Reading between the lines, one suspects that the class are inclined to raise, in their discussions, awkward questions such as are common in this sceptical age. And the leader really desires to know how to prevent this. He is advised, by our contemporary to draw up definite questions for discussion, so as to direct the activity of the class along the proper lines. In other words, by drawing up "safe" questions for the class to discuss, the leader will be able to prevent awkward questions being raised. This may save the situation in the schoolroom. But if the young men are intelligent they will seek for answers to their questions from outside sources, and the Church will probably lose a few more clients.

The Secretary of the National Sunday School Union says that there are "countless hosts of young people who are defiant [of the Christian religion], and despise parsons and the churches." His explanation of this unpalatable fact is:—

I believe this is partly because our profession of Christianity has been a travesty of the religion of Jesus.

What an ignominious confession! It is not likely to improve the situation. And the young rebels may well remark that the inspiration or guidance of God must be rather over-rated, if it cannot prevent parsons and other believers from properly carrying out the teachings of the religion they adhere to.

Reviewing Dean Inge's *The Social Teaching of the Church*, a writer says:—

The first challenging statement is that there is no Christian economics, but only a Christian and an un-Christian way of looking at questions. Christ and his disciples were not proletarians, they bore no resemblance to the Communist Party. Christ's gospel was spiritual redemption not social reform. Whenever Christ dealt with worldly affairs we see that his attitude was determined by a quite distinctive standard of values. Christ sat lightly to the paraphernalia of life, he regarded them as a clog and a hindrance to the spiritual life and worth very little in themselves. A scheme of socialism never occurred to Jesus.

This will be second-hand news to many Freethinkers, who will probably make a shrewd guess that the Dean has read a certain "vulgar" Atheistic pamphlet with considerable profit. We may perhaps be permitted to suggest that the Dean's Christian readers will receive, on this particular point, more illumination from the original pamphlet than from the Dean.

Jack Hobbs, the cricketer, recently refused to play cricket on Sunday at Madras. Whereupon, the Lord's Day Observance Society sent him a cablegram of thanks:—

Bravo Jack! Britishers do not usually like the word "Strike," but your strike against Sunday cricket-playing is simply splendid. You have made many scores in your time, but never a better than on New Year's Sunday, when you made a great moral score in favour of the traditional, quiet British Sabbath.

Every respect should be accorded to a man who makes a stand for a principle he believes in. But we were under the impression that the average sportsman is adverse to having his "moral splendour" subject to advertisement. As the Lord's Day Society appears to have sent a copy of its cablegram for publicity purposes to the religious newspapers, one may presume that the Society is completely ignorant of the true nature of the average sportsman.

Mrs. Lily Watson, in the *Woman's Magazine* (an R.T.S. publication) writes on "The Need for Tolerance," especially in regard to religious matters. She mentions that:—

St. Francis de Sales, when he failed to win the Calvinists by his preaching, urged that they might be converted by the "crack of muskets," and by banishment. Yet St. Francis was a devoted follower of Our Lord.



It is startling to mark the history of religious persecution all through the centuries. Needless to say, its days are over in our land. But the spirit of hostility to those who differ from us on matters we deem important is by no means extinct.

Later, she adds that the need for religious tolerance was never more needed than it is to-day. And perhaps never were the dangers of intolerance more real. Her explanation of the cause of this intolerance is that the matters of religion are of intense importance to the one who hold them. Quite so. Added to this is the conviction that each believer thinks he possesses the only true version of his religion, and that anyone with a different version must be wrong—and "sinfully" wrong at that. This point of view, fostered by most of the Churches during the Christian era, is the antithesis of tolerance, and a first-class producer of intolerance. No wonder the history of religious persecution is startling! Christians are more tolerant to-day because the old certainties are not quite so certain. When a man comes to the conclusion that the other fellow may possibly be right, tolerance has a chance to get a footing in his understanding.

The Rev. T. Hunt, of Old Brompton, thinks it will not be challenged that there has been a grave lowering of tone within the Church as well as in the life of people outside. And he suggests that the principle of "accommodation" is being carried too far—that is, accommodation to the spirit of the age. Well, something had to be done; parsons must live; and any desperate expedient is better than no followers at all. The self-preservation instinct is as much alive in parsons as in men who are not the special pets of God Almighty.

One of the few signs of undeniable progress in our time, says the *Daily Mirror*, is the change of attitude manifested towards the young:—

Contrast the new solicitude, for a moment, with the educational atmosphere illustrated by Victorian novels. The theme is familiar, and the thing, we hope has largely disappeared; we mean, the pious view that children ought to be periodically punished for having been born.

When people are committed to the Christian theory of "Original Sin," quite naturally they embrace the notion that beating a child may help to subdue the original wickedness. Meanwhile, a little praise is surely due to the outspoken who undermined the Christian theory and enabled the child to be viewed in more wholesome perspective.

A serious fire recently broke out at Leek, in the Methodist Institute. A report of the incident in a religious journal says: "By what may well be called a 'providence,' the bedroom immediately adjoining the Institute was occupied that night by Mr. Pate's (the minister's) eldest daughter, home for the Christmas vacation." She was aroused by the fire (or "Providence") and gave the alarm. Now that is exactly the kind of thing "Providence" is always doing. Instead of putting out the fire, it waited until the minister's family was endangered and then aroused them. Truly, the ways of Providence are hard to understand—they seem so stupid. But no matter how stupid they are, they never fail to excite the admiration and gratitude of the pious. This fact speaks well for the narcotizing power of religion.

With warehouses bulging out with goods for which there are no purchasers because there is no money to buy them, Dean Inge gives the counsel of noodledum. In a sermon at St. Paul's, he advises the remedy of hard work and thrift for the present trade depression. And after this the Dean ought to shut his mouth for ever on subjects dealing with facts.

The Roman Catholic will affirm or deny most things as it suits his purpose. Quite recently the Roman Catholic Bishop of Liverpool denied that priests were telling their followers that the children of mixed marriages were illegitimate. The other day at Holywood, Belfast, a woman informed the magistrate, in the course of hear-

ing a case, that a priest had told her that having married a Protestant her child was illegitimate. We have no doubt this will again be met with the usual denial.

If all the pieces of the crown of thorns that are said to have been round the head of Jesus, which are treasured in various parts of the world, are genuine, he must have had a head that equalled in size that of a mastodon. At any rate if there is any one who wishes to acquire a piece of the thorn, there is, we learn from an American paper, one in New York that is at present in the vaults of the Provident Loan Society, New York, a piece of the crown of thorns which was lodged as security for a loan. It is surprising that something of a miracle did not occur to the sacreligious person who put so sacred a treasure to so base a use. But the Lord is strangely careless in such matters.

The Bishop of Southwell recently arranged to visit the prison at Bagworth for the purpose of holding a confirmation service. There are a dozen inmates waiting for confirmation. We are not surprised. A prison is the place where we should expect to find Christianity singularly attractive to many of the inmates.

The Bible has a wonderful influence on some people. At Spandau, Germany, an assessor's secretary cut the throat of his eighteen months old son. He then went to the police station and said, "I am Abraham. My mission is fulfilled. I have sacrificed my son." The man was removed to an asylum. Query, what would have happened to Abraham had he lived in 1931 and tried to offer up his son in sacrifice? But then the whole of the Gospel story would have taken on a different complexion had the disciples, with Jesus, been born in different times.

An admirable example of the quality of Mr. Agate's thinking. He draws this conclusion from the theory that the world is running down. "Were these things true, then indeed I see no reason why we should not all eat, drink, and sin ourselves silly." Mr. Agate's power of seeing is very limited. He must also speak for himself only; this hoary chestnut of Christian reasoning is an insult to nine-tenths of the world—the other tenth being used to it as a result of the mentally mad dervishes known as priests.

The *Daily Express* advises its readers to write the B.B.C. concerning a better Sunday programme than the one that is served up at present. It says the B.B.C. would probably like to know. But the B.B.C. knows quite well concerning the wide-spread dissatisfaction with its Sunday programme. The real obstacle is the religious bigotry of Sir John Reith and his mob of clerical advisers. They mean to dose listeners with as much religion as possible.

A "Layman" writing to the newspapers, suggests that a way out of the "clergy shortage" problem would be for a not inconsiderable number of clergymen schoolmasters to leave the teaching of mathematics, etc., and return to the work for which they were ordained. This is a curious side-light on the great religious revival—the great hunger and thirst for the sustenance that only the Church can provide.

The Rev. A. E. Whitham says:—

If we wish to understand Christianity the one who can tell us most of its meanings will be Christ himself, and it is safe to turn from all modern explanations, re-statements, accommodations, to the thought of the age, and let Christ expound the Good News.

This author overlooks the fact that the modern explanations, re-statements, and accommodations were found necessary because former interpretations of what Christ said or meant were believed to be wrong.

The same reverend gentleman declares that Christianity is not just a way of being nice, kind, and friendly to people, with occasional acts of self-sacrifice, a mild altruism within, of course, the limits of circumstance and our imperfect nature. There is, he says, quite a lot of that in nature and in the habits of birds and animals.



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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. MCKAY (Sydney)—The passage was but a quotation. It is, owing to distance, rather too late now to make a correspondence of the opinion expressed profitable.

H. MAYFIELD.—Our criticism of Sir James Jeans will appear in the book we hope to publish in the course of a few weeks.

W. KENT.—Perhaps it was rather bitter, but these men often invite a sharp retort—and human nature has its limits.

N. R. EDWARDS.—Hardly worth pursuing the subject further, but we agree with what you say. Shall be pleased to see you at the dinner.

W. R. E. JACQUES.—Many thanks for your good wishes, your appreciation of *Megalomania* is as good as any other when one wishes to leave a brick. It reminds one of Daniel O'Connell who reduced the slanging Orange woman to tears by calling her an isosceles triangle.

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

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## Sugar Plums.

It is gratifying to be able to say that, although writing the paragraph four days before the Annual Dinner, the number present will be well above the average. The guests will please note that a plan of the tables will be

hung in the reception room, showing each guest his or her place. If visitors will be good enough to see where they are to be seated before entering the dining hall, possible confusion will be avoided. The reception will be at 6.30, and dinner will be served at 7.0 sharp.

On Sunday next (January 25) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Socialist Church, Mottram Road, Hyde, on "Free-thought and Freethinking." The lecture will commence at 6.30. The meeting place can, we presume, be easily reached by tramcar from any part of Manchester and district.

At the invitation of the Sussex Federation of the Independent Labour Party, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will address a meeting at Salford House, Grand Parade, Brighton, on "Do We Need Religion?" at 2.30 p.m., to-day, Sunday, January 18, followed by questions and discussion. Admission is free. Tea will be provided at a nominal charge of sixpence per head for those coming from a distance. There are a number of Freethinkers in the Brighton district, and we have no doubt they will take the opportunity of being present at the meeting.

The Manchester and Salford Sunday Games and Freedom League brought an action against Councillor Cox for not attending Church on Sunday. The case was heard before Mr. Boardman, a Justice of the Peace, and Mr. F. H. Monks acted as solicitor in the case. The object was, of course, to raise the whole case of Sunday observance, and we hope it will achieve its purpose. The magistrate said that in this case there had certainly been a breach of the law, but he had only the power to "admonish" the offender, or bind him over to be of better behaviour, which would mean in this case, to go to church. There the case ended, but we imagine that other cases will be tried. We presume that if a magistrate binds a man over to be of different—we will not say better—behaviour, he has the power in case of no alteration taking place, of committing him to prison for contempt of court. We beg to suggest to the League the consideration of taking out summonses against the Manchester Corporation for Sunday trading by charging for rides on the trams. This might be raised by someone taking a ride and refusing to pay on the ground that the Corporation was doing something distinctly illegal. Other methods of bringing the question before the public might also be raised.

We see that application was made to the Chief Constable of Manchester for permission to apply for a summons. But why ask his permission? So far as we understand the law, while one may ask the police to act in certain instances, and in default of their acting take action oneself, it is absurd to apply to a policeman for permission to do what is within the power of any citizen to do. The truth is that we are so accustomed to obey officials, that directly someone in a uniform issues an order we obey without question. The result is that all over the country the police are taking to themselves authority and powers that have no real basis in law. We have had to pull up the police more than once in their endeavour to control public meetings both indoors and outdoors, and we should much like to see some society formed which would make it its business to watch the conduct of the police and of bureaucrats generally. It is sadly needed.

Manchester had a day of ceaseless rain last Sunday, yet quite large meetings can be recorded. Mr. R. H. Rosetti's lectures were well received and prompted a number of questions. Mr. H. Bayford occupied the chair in the afternoon, and the Branch President, Mr. Blaney, officiated in the evening. Mr. Greenall's bookstall was the centre of much attraction, and we believe business was brisk.

Plunge boldly into the thick of life! each lives it, not to many is it known; and seize it where you will, it is interesting.—*Goethe*.



## Murderers I Have Met.

ABOUT a quarter of a mile away from my house, a breakwater is being built, barring back the Pacific Ocean. And to-day, as I stand for a moment upon my glassed-in verandah, watching the full force of an October gale leap clean over that breakwater, half-drowning the patient toilers, who labour there, with its spray, I am reminded of a set of coral insects—workers who similarly struggle, in order to raise a coral island above the surface of the sea.

I know, indeed, that it is a great pity that Messrs. G. K. Chesterton, H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw & Co., are not employed upon that breakwater, feeling the savage punch of the Pacific, as it roars defiance against mere man, and smashes home upon those rocks. Literary men, upon the whole, I believe, would "act the goat" a little bit less, if occasionally, and for bare existence-wages, they went through that sort of drill. If we do not get anywhere, to-day, as an English-speaking race; and if the Russians, instead, have captured the ball, and are making good play with it, I know that it is because the sole ambition of our "successful" writers, such as Mr. Arnold Bennett, is to "push in," among a lot of swells; and to get as far away from the iron facts of life as possible.

Now I am a writer of another sort. To-day, at half past ten o'clock, I had a business talk with the chairman and directors of the Bank of New South Wales.

What I wanted to see old Tom Buckland about is neither here or there. But, as I came out of the vast new pile of offices, recently erected by this Bank, in Pitt Street—it is busily engaged in re-building an infinitely more huge, and even more expensive, head office in George Street—I saw a little, alert looking, young-oldish-seeming man go past: a person who might have been either thirty years of age or sixty, so timeless was his face.

"Great Gringegalgona!" I said to myself. "That's Kelly." So I am after him, with my long Mosaic whiskers streaming bounteously in the breeze, and I seized his arm. "Hello, Kelly," I said, "How are you? Stop a minute and talk. Or, better still, let's go and have a drink."

So we had a drink. In fact, we had three drinks. And then we shook hands again and went upon our several ways, feeling a damned sight better—at least I know that I did—than before. Now the facts about Mr. Kelly are these. He committed a murder once—shot a woman, in short; being a seaman who came home unexpectedly, from a long voyage, and found himself supplanted—was sentenced to be hanged, and actually spent some sixteen or seventeen years in gaol. I knew him there, to be explicit, as a fellow-prisoner in that place. Now Kelly could not read. And he was too sensitive, into the bargain, about that serious educational shortcoming, ever to be willing to allow any body to teach him. "No," he said to me, in prison, once, after I had made a tentative offer in that direction, "my ignorance is my own, at any rate, and I reckon that I will stick to it. I dance a lot in my cell, alone, you know, at night, in my stockinged feet, and that helps to pass away the time. When I cannot think of anything else to do, I polish my chain."

Do you know what that meant? Well, Mr. Kelly's humble wooden stool in his cell, like mine, was fastened to the wall with a long iron chain. Our stools, in that precious Christian penitentiary, were all similarly chained-up, of course, in order that we might not lie in wait, with the stool uplifted like a club, and use it in order to bash some unsuspecting prison warder on the head.

Now Kelly's chain was polished so that it shone and sparkled like the rarest silver. His cell, in that gaol, was known as the Jeweller's Shop. His tin night-bucket, his wash-basin, his water-jug, his dust-pan, his fork and spoon—every metallic object, including the aforesaid stool-chain, within that cell, glittered and flashed in the most amazing fashion. All solemnly respectable visitors to the prison were officially led, very carefully, to that particular place, and gaped at little Kelly and his Jeweller's Shop with awe. "Fifteen years he's been there, polishing that chain and shining up all the rest of those things," the warder would explain to the visitors, afterwards, as they turned away. "Yes. He's doing a life sentence here, for murder." Their jaws would drop. "Gosh!" they would ejaculate. "Murder! I thought he was a bank-embezzler, or something. He doesn't look a bit like a murderer. Only the boss of some big bank, like the Bank of England, or the Bank of New South Wales, would ever keep all the things in his cell polished up like that."

That is Kelly's story. He was released from prison about ten years ago; and he tells me now, quietly, that even yet he cannot read. "No. I reckon I'll live and die without bothering to read any damned newspapers," he said to me, to-day, "and from all that I can hear, most of them are not worth reading. But I still dance a lot every night, you know, the same as I used to do in my old "Peter." It keeps a fellow young and cheerful, hopping about. Look at you, John—I'll bet that you never dance, but put in all your spare time reading, the same as you used to do in prison. And yet, where are you? You look about fifteen years older than I do, while I am really the much older man."

Kelly is right. I am writing this article to celebrate my fiftieth birthday; and I happen to know, now, from his own statement, that Kelly is sixty-five. Yet it is I, who have read thousands upon thousands of books, and who have written some millions of words, who look as old and as moss-grown and as seaweed-draped as the rocks along the roaring verges of the Pacific; whilst it is Mr. Kelly—a man who has never read or written even one consecutive page—who looks as young and as active as the most festive-minded kitten.

What is the explanation of it? Why, mind, as C. E. M. Joad has remarked, in his fine little study of the life and ideas of Samuel Butler—mind is an outside passenger across a fundamentally hostile environment. The possession of mind, above all, in a country populated with super-morons like Australia, is the supreme crime. Anything else can be forgiven. But to possess even the rudiments of an effective mind, as I do; and to use it, relentlessly, exposing this miserable failure of a snobs' commonwealth—that is an offence which, in the nostrils of the elect, stinks to heaven; and so, before his time, worn out with the struggle to provide a clot of brain-power for this mentally paralysed population of a continent, a man grows old.

That, at all events, is why I look older than Joshua or Jehu, the gentleman who drave so furiously in Holy Writ. And why are "low-brows" popular? And why is the possession of mind a crime so hateful, even in many an allegedly civilized land? Well, as G. K. Chesterton himself, in a sudden flash of complete sanity, expresses it, "men need hardly be considered where they conflict with ideas." That, and that alone, is the real reason why the true individual diamond, or literary genius, so often starves; and why an ignorant and shameless brute of a Scotch reviewer could be permitted, in England, a century ago, to club and beat a sensitive genius like John Keats or Chatterton to death.

JOHN McCRAHAN.

(To be concluded.)



## Profits from Sins.

(Continued from page 28.)

IMAGINE the following comic opera:—

"In those times" (says Muratori), "when a Christian wished to confess his sins to God and his ministers, he came to the tribunal of penitence. The priest produced his Penitential, then ink and paper, and set down by the side of every sin the punishment according to the book. Then adding up, he saw how many days, months or years of penance the offender ought to endure"—and it might easily amount to 100, 200, even 300 years!—which, as old Euclid would say, was absurd.

As a lunatic humorist Holy Church takes the bun! From sources at least as authentic as the "stained and mutilated copy of the *Roman Daily Battle Axe* of A.D. 67," which Mark Twain found in the Coliseum, we have gathered the following items of tittle tattle:—

Scene—St. Thingum Villa, Mugwumpione—Breakfast time.

"No eggs and bacon for me this morning, my love. My stomach is a little out of order. Just bread and water, please."

"Rudolfio, what does this mean?"

"Er . . . doctors orders, my love."

"Rudolfio, I insist on knowing." (Curtain.)

Scene—Main Street, Mugwumpione (afternoon.)

"How lovely to meet you Isobellina, dear. Do let us go and have a cup of tea and some cakes."

"Don't mention it Charlottina love. I am on a diet. I have been getting atrociously fat, and the doctor . . . ugh! . . . it has to be bread and water for weeks."

Isobellina, you naughty girl, what *have* you been doing? etc., etc.

Scene—Station Road, Mugwumpione (evening.)

"Hello, Rudolfio, Whither away?"

"Hello, Jackassio Tomassio\*—oh—Villa Smedli—Matlockia, y'know—little hydropathic treatment—bit out of sorts y'know."

"Bit out o'—naughty, naughty Rudolfio. Tell me now—what's the lovely Isobellina off to Harrogate for?—yes, just seen her off—poor girl—she's off to drink the waters . . . to drink the waters, Rudolfio—and eat bread—bread and the Old Spa Well, Rudolfio—we shudder in sympathy eh?"—you old hypocrite—you and your hydropathic treatment—internal, what? . . . Been any observations from the Missis, Rudolfio?—what a shudder *that* was . . . nerves a bit upset, old man?—my sympathy and all that. Ta-ta! There's a wall fountain in the station. So long!"

Scene—Town Hall, Mugwumpione. Mayor's banquet—but this scene is too harrowing. We refrain.

Something had got to be done to get out of the silly mess, which the Holy Lunatics had landed in.

Penances consisting of bread accompanied by absorption of unholy spirit (chemical formula H<sub>2</sub>O.) were really too much of a good thing. So they were commuted, wholly or in part, into alms to the poor. But this also was unsatisfactory—to Holy Church. Holy Church knew of a far more deserving object of charity, and had no superfluity of modesty to prevent it from mentioning that object, to wit, itself, but with the low cunning that has generally characterized it, the flow of money was diverted in stages. Penances were let off—a fourth part, a third part, a half, in exchange for alms. Or they would let off a stated period, a year, 100 years, 1,000 years, many thousands of years. These commutations were the

original *indulgences*. They brought millions of money to the priests, and it may be considered that they were the chief thing that turned the Church into a shop. It seems that at first the Papacy rather lagged behind the other bishops in the business. But Romish greed altered that. One Pope severely curtailed the amount of commutation that other Bishops could grant, and confined big business to the Papacy. Every means were taken that it should be very big business indeed. The Papacy went in for mass production, until at last the scandal led to the Reformation.

### PAPAL INDULGENCES.

Instead of giving absurd penances and then remitting them for cash, the Popes went in for selling forgiveness for sins and licences for sinning. The unpopular bread and water business was gradually dropped. Dislike of such cooling diet was switched on to something far more potent—fear of purgatory. Release from this was granted for money or service—this latter being, in the Dark and Middle Ages, very important, for it included soldiering. The followers of the Prince of Peace were always fighting amongst themselves. The Popes, though they claimed to be the Prince of Peace's understudy, were always the most cantankerous and quarrelsome of the lot. There was a centuries-long quarrel between the Popes and the Emperors. It was always smouldering except when it was flaring up. It was a frequent thing for the Emperor to march on Rome, and for the Pope to scuttle out of it, a usual issue being a new Pope, nominee of the Emperor. One of the earliest large scale operations in indulgences was in connexion with one of these Emperor v. Pope scraps. The Pope (Gregory VII.) promised full forgiveness of sins to whoever would desert the Emperor and go over to the Pope. (Incidentally this shows that the Pope was not quite the little tin god then that he is now. It is a fact that I have mentioned before—modern Catholics grovel to the Pope more than medieval Catholics did—in those days the Pope was not considered either infallible or particularly sacred. The Papacy was often a matter of contention between Kings and Emperors, and even Dukes and other mere nobles, the Pope being treated as a pawn in a game. The ruling (military) castes had no illusions about Popes. Such offers as the one just mentioned had little effect on them. If the Emperor wanted another Pope, he set about arranging it.)

The Crusades formed the first great occasions for wholesale offering of indulgences. Whoever would undertake the journey to Palestine, that journey should be reckoned to him instead of all repentance for sin. If anyone (said the Pope) dies on the road or in battle for the Church, he shall be reckoned amongst the martyrs and be absolved from all his sins. Hundreds of thousands joined up and set off. On the strength of the indulgence they considered they could do as they liked (and get to heaven alright afterwards) so they thieved and murdered and raped at every opportunity—even in Catholic countries, where in revenge the population rounded on them and killed scores of thousands. Most of the Crusades were failures (and well they might be), but one of them conquered Palestine and a Catholic kingdom was set up. As the conquerors still had the idea that whatever they did they were right for heaven, their new country was soon a hell on earth—a perfect sample in fact of Catholic Culture.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be concluded.)

Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone.—Emerson.

\* ? Dago for John Thomas.



## Christianity and Humour.

I SUPPOSE it is part and parcel of the mental aspect of custom that when we get used to a thing we accept it without so much as a questioning thought; take it entirely for granted, becoming at length incapable of seeing an odd side to it even when pointed out to us. Custom, though it has its part in the maintenance of social stability, has thus a stultifying effect upon the play of the intellect.

"Custom lies upon him like a weight  
Heavy as frost and deep almost as life."

It is doubtless for this reason that few of us notice the quite striking absence of laughter from our national religion and even those who do fail to see anything peculiar in the fact. There is probably not a single churchgoer in the country who would not feel it a violation of sanctity were a congregation to burst suddenly into peals of laughter at a humorous sally from the pulpit. And if anyone were to draw an imaginary picture of Jesus, standing among a crowd of laughing disciples, enjoying the downright merriment of a good joke, he would be accused of sacrilege. Yet most people, even the devout, acknowledge that the long-faced man without a quip in his quiver is at best a tedious fellow, and probably has a defect in his nervous system. Why then the horror at the idea of laughter from an incarnation of the deity? It is not undignified; for there is no dignity in the world who is thought never to have laughed. There is nothing unwholesome about it, nothing wrongful. We repeat, why? I hope I am not unfair in saying that the Holy Bible takes us from cover to cover without a jest, and I know I am not unfair in saying that a Christian sees nothing anomalous in the fact. But the same Christian will tell you with assurance that God sent humour into the world. It may be so, but it rather recalls Zangwill's description of a certain poet as a man who never wrote comic verse intentionally.

Now the interesting thing is this: that the man who would be shocked at the idea of a Bible which one could lay down from time to time, of a Sunday afternoon, as one would Mark Twain or Leacock, to indulge in a momentary chuckle, will nevertheless tell you that between the covers of the Holy Book you will find a complete philosophy of life, and in religion see the expression of all that is best in human nature. But how can this be without a solitary laugh throughout the story? The truth is that the average religionist simply does not understand the significance of humour. I should go so far as to say that humour has a function on the mental side analogous to the function, on the physiological side, of certain bodies called leucocytes, which circulate in the blood stream, repelling the invading armies of ill-health by devouring the germs of disease. Humour is the leucocyte of the mind. It descends with pseudopodia unsheathed upon trouble, upon discontent, upon despondency, upon egoism, upon illusion, upon all the ills that mind is heir to, and rescues humanity from what were else an intolerable existence. When Mr. Cohen said: "Life is too solemn to be taken seriously," he went deeper than a mere *bon mot*. Think then, if you can bear to think, what life would be like in the company of those responsible for the authorship and teaching of the Bible. They offer us a philosophy without a laugh; a remedy for sorrow that will not bring a smile through the tears. Life with them would be terrible enough, but life everlasting indescribable.

One's thoughts turn in sheer desperation to Avernus, and one's eyes look hopefully across the Styx. There broods the awful Satanic presence, terrifying in the dark majesty of his evil power; yet for all that, if pictorial accounts be anything to found on, not without a smile, though it be only the sardonic movement of a sinister countenance.

One feels that here, at all events, are the germs of something that might conceivably be educated towards better forms; here is hope. Humour is perverted, if you will, into shapes malignant, but it is not entirely absent. On the other hand, in the Realms of Light all is beatitude and love, which are beautiful enough in themselves; but even these require their tincture of fun. Beatitude

would develop into a sort of ecstatic catalepsy if it were not served with a little friendly teasing, and love is certainly the better of an occasional dig in the ribs. Not all beatitude, not all the love, not all the goodness nor all the beauty in this or any other world can remain entirely healthy and wholly agreeable without a little frolicking. And the basic truth underlying this fact is staring us all in the face from every angle. The social scientist, the moral philosopher, the novelist, the journalist, the man in the street alike feel it, if some do not understand it. Why then has not religion embraced this universal fact? God can love. He can hate. He can be angry, jealous, kind or vengeful. He can share our emotions and personalities in such a way that we can commune with Him. Why, in the name of Creation, can He not laugh? This is why; because if He laughed, we should laugh. And then we should have ceased to be afraid of Him. Religion is rooted in fear, and its topmost branches still draw the sap from the base.

What people call reverence is really an attenuated form of fear. Humour and reverence therefore cannot live together. The bowed head, the grave face, the half-closed eyes, the hushed voice—in short the mentality of the very small schoolboy threading his way nervously towards the august chamber in which the Head awaits him—all vanish as if by the stroke of magic when the first joke is cracked.

Humour then, if it gained the upper hand, would kill fear, and with it reverence, and with this the whole stock-in-trade of religion. Respect is not enough on which to found a church; nor is love. The first will give you friendship, the second mating; but to have religion you must have fear. It is not for nothing that we speak of the devout religionist as a God-fearing man. The Church, then, cannot afford to embrace humour, and even the simpler forms of light enjoyment she must touch with the utmost caution, reserving them strictly for the social side of her activities and excluding them with rigour from her ceremonial. Thus she is doomed to continue, with her long robe and her long face, preaching an outworn philosophy that cannot raise a solitary smile, except perhaps it be the smile of derision.

MFDICUS.

## A Woman of Undying Faith.

WHEN grandmother was a little girl her reading was confined chiefly to the Bible, and to pathetic little stories of heavenly little children who lived lives of exemplary goodness, and who died at the age of seven or eight, sighing with their last breaths, "Mamma, I am going to heaven."

The average child of to-day wants something truer to life and more full of meat, but from time to time the early Victorian method of writing appears.

Lida Rose McCabe in her *Ardent Adrienne*, published by Appleton's, at 12s. 6d., has produced a true story, which has for its heroine a marvellous woman who kept herself going by means of doping herself with religion.

To the Freethinker it is obvious that Madame de La Fayette, who is *Ardent Adrienne*, would have lived exactly the same kind of life without religion, for she was possessed of courage and endurance.

Unfortunately, *Adrienne* was devotedly religious, and so she deceived herself into thinking that her courage was not her own, but was founded on her beliefs.

One of *Adrienne's* relations was a religious woman, who used to find it difficult to leave religious relics alone. She stole the arm of St. Genevieve, powdered it and dissolved it in a medicine to cure an infant of scarlet fever. She also corresponded with the Virgin Mary posting her letters in a dove cote. The chaplain used to answer her letters, whereupon she used to exclaim, "With what familiarity the little bourgeoisie of Nazareth addresses me . . . after all she does come of the royal house of David."

Miss McCabe rather slyly tells us that in the home where *Adrienne* was brought up "Fairy tales were taboo." "Had they not the Lives of the Saints?"

The book tells the story of how *Adrienne* married La Fayette who had done so much for America, and of how



she and he fell from favour, and were in danger of their lives during the French Revolution. What the aristocratic Adrienne went through must have been almost too much for the gentle lady, but she kept her courage even when her husband treated her in a manner which the modern world would call disgraceful.

Her relatives were butchered during the Revolution and later Adrienne hears, without apparently losing her faith, that a chain of prayer for the safety of these very people had been sent up to God every day.

Adrienne seems to have been the perfect type of a believer. Even in her worst moments she turned to prayer and the psalms, and tried to realize that it was God's will. One would have thought, therefore, that God would have showered blessings upon this faithful servant. But God's ways are not our ways, and so Adrienne began to suffer until at last her whole body erupted in blisters and running sores. The end came soon, and her last words were refreshingly human, for with her hand in La Fayette's she breathed, "I am yours."

I should strongly recommend Freethinkers to buy this book, for it is an excellent proof of the futility of religion in real life.

NECHELLS.

### Echoes of Christmas.

(Being extracts from an answer to a Christian letter.)

MY DEAR B.,

Several days before Christmas I sat down to write to you, but the thought occurred to me that you would be sending me a line, and I may as well wait to reply to some of your usual provoking challenges.

And it was so.

You ask if I am still anti-Christ, anti-God, anti-Church and anti-Christmas?

I've never been anti-Christ. Of course, I don't look upon him in the way the priests say I ought to. To me he is a reformer who lived before his time and who, if the gospel accounts are true, synthesized the teachings of many earlier philosophers.

Am I still anti-God?

You might as well ask if I have stopped thrashing my wife. I don't know anything about God, so cannot very well be anti-something I am not acquainted with.

And anti-Church?

Well, I don't support the Church because I believe the people who control it teach doctrines which, in many cases, they know to be untrue. If saying that is being anti-Church you can write me down as such.

Anti-Christmas?

Just what do you mean here? Can anyone be anti-Christmas? Is it anti-Christmas to point out that at Christmas-time people make themselves bad through eating and drinking too much? Or to mention that the celebration of Christmas is an adaptation by Christians of an earlier Pagan festival?

Living as we do in a community where it is the custom to make holiday, and to give presents (often useless to the recipients), and to have a few extra dainties on the table, we naturally join in and do pretty much the same as those around us, that is, in moderation. But I hardly think this commits us to a belief in such tales as the Virgin Birth, or Jonah and the Whale, or Noah and his menagerie, or Joshua and his tricks with the heavenly bodies.

You say Christ's message would not mix with my Christmas pudding. I don't quite follow you. If you mean: "Do unto others, etc.," that is what I try in my little tinpot way to act and teach although I don't know that I need go to the Christian Bible for instruction on that subject.

You ask, "Has my love for Russia cooled during the past twelve months?" No! not at all. Nor my love for India, or China, or France, or Germany, or Italy or any other country. I am still very interested in the experiment which is being attempted in Russia, in the face of great odds, to try to run a great nation for the benefit of those who do the work of the country. I think they will succeed, but may be mistaken, and in any case the

rest of the world will no doubt learn some valuable lessons even if the present attempt ends in failure.

In the meantime I am reserving judgment until we get more reliable information. One section of the press paints Russia as seething with revolt against a gang of murderous tyrants, another gives us a picture of a band of self-sacrificing idealists trying to put their ideals into practice, but hampered by the inertia of a mass of ignorance and superstition, while the Communist press tells us that Russia is a paradise for the workers.

I suspect the truth is somewhere between the extremes.

Well, here's wishing you all you'd wish yourself, and plenty of opportunities for useful service in 1931.

FRED HOBDAV.

### The World of Atoms.

Just as wonderful and incomprehensible as is the microcosmos, the world of the big, so imposing and wonderful is the microcosmos, the world of the very small, of the molecule and the atom. The atom is the smallest part of Matter, undividable and of infinite smallness, yet the fundamental stone of the universal construction. All things in the end are reduced to this invisible unit, so small—suns, planets, iron and stone, man, animals and plants. The atom is so small that no microscope in the world can bring it before the eye. However, by indirect means, by experiments in the laboratory, it is possible to indicate its existence. How big, or really how small, such an atom, especially the Hydrogen atom (the unit atom in science) really is, we can picture from the examples given by the prominent Norwegian scientist, Prof. Störmer, as a result of his research.

The diameter of the Hydrogen atom amounts to about one millionth part of a millimetre, that is, then million atoms have the length of one millimetre if put in a row. The Hydrogen *molecule* consists of two Hydrogen atoms, which are located in a similar manner as double stars. At normal pressure, at temperature of 0 Celsius, one cubic centimetre of Hydrogen holds the almost unbelievable number of 27 trillions of molecules or in figures 27,000,000,000,000,000,000. The number of *atoms* in one cubic centimetre of Hydrogen gas is thus double. All these atoms have the same size, and as the weight of a cubic centimetre of Hydrogen gas is known, we can therefore calculate how much an Hydrogen atom weighs. It is very light, so small, that about 600,000 trillions or 600,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 of these atoms weigh one gramme! If we lay all the Hydrogen atoms from one gramme of Hydrogen gas in a straight line (which is a modern method of demonstrating things American) they would reach seven hundred times as far as from the Earth to the Sun, that is, about 60 milliard kilometres, and that although 10 millions of them go to each millimetre. (That has all American lengths beaten.)

Let us take another example to help us picture the smallness of the atom. Let us imagine that we ourselves and our measuring apparatus remain at our normal size, but the world about us, and all objects increase to a size where the atom is sufficiently large to handle. We take a hundredfold enlargement. Men are then giants, standing half as high as Eiffel Tower. A wasp is a frightful wild beast with the corporal size of an ox, and a hair of man's head is a rope of one centimetre thickness.

Let us take the world again and multiply one hundred times. Thus we shall be ten thousand times smaller. Men will be giants of 15 to 20 kilometres in height, the wasp with a few hundred metres of length (bigger than any from America ever) and the hair from man's head will be one metre thick, and the small bacteria, in reality only one thousandth part of a millimetre in size, will be one centimetre long.

Again one hundred times multiply the last conception, that is, one million times the original and we will have: the man's hair is now one hundred metres thick, the bacteria are one metre long, but the atom which we are looking for is only just visible.

Well, again let us multiply by one hundred, the world about us will be one hundred million times larger than



we are. At last the Hydrogen atom is available but only in one centimetre size. The man's hair is a tow of ten kilometres thick (a tale for the marines, American variety) and the bacteria are frightfully unpleasant at one hundred metres length. The child's ball is now as big as the earth's ordinary size!

Hats off to the human brain, by whose tireless endeavours the complicated wonders of the world are brought a little nearer to our understanding.

L. CORINNA.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### ABORTION.

SIR,—Does "Medicus" approve of doctors doing abortions on medical grounds, as they now frequently do? They do them on fairly wide medical grounds—*i.e.*, not solely to save the very life of a woman. So there would seem to be no "moral" reason why they should not be permitted also to do them merely if the woman desired. But "Medicus" further holds that if this freedom were given, the sense of parental responsibility would be weakened. I regret that he did not indicate how this weakening would show itself.

B. DUNLOP, M.B.

## Society News.

Two most interesting, amusing and edifying lectures were delivered by Mr. B. A. LeMaine, on Sunday, January 11, at the Co-operative Hall, Frankfort Street, Plymouth.

The subjects were "The Bible and the Church," and "Christ and Krishna." Both meetings were attentively followed by sincere and earnest audiences.

Judging by the questions and the discussion that followed both lectures, and the general desire for a return visit from the lecturer, we feel sure that it may result in the succession of a number of new members.

The chair was ably occupied by Mr. R. Knowles. There was also a good sale of literature.—J.McK.

## Miscellaneous Advertisements.

OFFERED FOR SALE—Hanney's *Rise, Decline and Fall of the Roman Religion*, work now out of print. Published at 15s. Best price accepted. Box P.F., FREETHINKER, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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## 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.

#### OUTDOOR.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. A. D. McLaren; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; 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. F. Corrigan—"Rome *versus* Reason."

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. J. H. Wicksteed, M.A.—"All Deities Reside in the Human Breast."

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, January 21, at 7.45, Mr. E. Bernan—"My Views of Life."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Dr. Bernard Hollander—"The Prolongation of Life and Youthfulness."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Winter Garden, 37 High Street, Clapham, near Clapham North Underground Station): 7.15, Mr. Bonar Thompson—"The Greatness of Bernard Shaw."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Mr. Kitson—"Our Present Economic Conditions."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, facing The Brecknock): Mr. R. Arch—"Wagner. Artist and Freethinker."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 7.30, Dr. Estelle M. Cole—"The New Psychology in Education."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BURNLEY (The Labour Club, Holyoake Street): 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton—"Some Things Citizens Ought to Know."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Mr. George Malton—"Marriage."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—On Sunday, January 18, at 8 p.m.—A Special Meeting will be held in new premises (above Mr. Burdon's shop at bottom of Front Street). After business a Lecture by Mr. J. T. Brighton. Chairman Mr. T. Brown.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Religion and Delusion." Questions and Discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—City (Albion Street) Hall, 6.30, Mr. Queen—"Sex Passion and Human Happiness."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe—"Christianity *v.* Secularism."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Tslington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): 7.0, Mr. F. C. Moore—"Religion and the Workers." Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Bakers Hall, 5 Forbes Place): 7.0, Mr. P. Christie—"Karl Marx."

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Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

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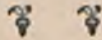
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