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## Views and Opinions.

Truth and the Church.  
 DR. G. G. COULTON has for long been a thorn in the side of Roman Catholics in England, and hardly less so in that of the extreme section of the English Church. And this happens from a very simple, almost a single cause. Most writers are content to accept the statements of those of their craft who have gained a reputation for scholarship. In this way they repeat old errors, old omissions, and old falsifications. Dr. Coulton has chosen to go direct to the original documents, and in doing so he has discovered that many of these accepted "authorities" are, sometimes wildly, untrustworthy. The facts are often the direct reverse of the statements made, the picture quite untrue to the situation. In this respect none suffers more than Cardinal Gasquet, whom Dr. Coulton shows over and over again to have deliberately falsified the truth in the interests of the Church he serves. A subsidiary reason for the perpetuation of the myths and legends it has been Dr. Coulton's task to dispel, is one that a great many non-Catholic writers have realized—more clearly than has Dr. Coulton, that in these days it does not pay to publicly expose the real state of affairs under the Roman Church during the whole of its history. To dwell upon its corruption at the period of the Reformation is one thing. That serves to bolster up the superstition of a Protestantism inspired by lofty ideals both religious and moral. But publicly to announce that so far as we can trace things were never much better, is quite another thing. A consciousness of this cannot but, with many, give rise to the reflection as to where one is to look for the alleged benefits given the world by the Christian religion? Both reasons have combined to perpetuate what Dr. Coulton calls "the Monastic legend." Catholics have perpetuated it for obvious

reasons; and Protestants have leaned to some Golden Age of Christian life because without it the historical justification of the Christian Church disappears.

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### Priests and People.

The obvious absurdity of the Roman Catholic claims, and the extent to which Roman Catholic writers will go in the direction of suppression and falsification, have been made clear in the two volumes of Dr. Coulton's *Five Centuries of Religious History*, and *The Medieval Village*. To these volumes he has now added a new edition of his *Ten Medieval Studies*. (Cambridge University Press, 12s. 6d.) Each of these works is thoroughly documented—the appendices of illustrative citations from original records almost equal the text in bulk—and constitute a series of works that no careful student can afford to be without. In the books mentioned the monastic legend is pursued through the fields of morals, religion, and social life, and in every direction is shown to be thoroughly untrustworthy, a sheer fabrication built up by the interested falsification of religious writers. Readers of such classics as H. C. Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, will recall that the author makes clear how century by century moral corruption dogged the progress of Christianity. Dr. Coulton follows the same path, but casts his net wider. He depicts a lower clergy so ignorant that with Latin as the language of religious services, as late as the thirteenth century, warnings had to be issued that priests must be at least able to pronounce the formula of consecration and that of baptism—the whole comprising about a dozen words. Monks are everywhere a byword for sloth, ignorance, rapacity, and lechery. "The clergy," he says, and proves from known figures which do not exhaust the cases, "formed perhaps only one-fiftieth, at most only one twenty-fifth of the total adult population; yet they supplied one-fifth of the prosecutions for incontinence; or, in other words, they appear in these records as from five to ten times less respectable than their parishioners."

Of the higher clergy it may be said that they often enough combined all the faults of the lower with extra ones that developed out of their position. The picture of Abbot, Prior and Bishop as the friend of the poor, watching over them in their need, ministering to them in their sickness, and helping them in their distress is grotesquely untrue. So soon as we meet the Christian Church as the holders of property we find it claiming all the rights and privileges of the medieval lord, but even less careful of the duties of property than he was. The Bishop or Abbot was, in fact, a feudal lord, and while here and there one might be found whose humanity stood out from that of his fellows, this was equally true of the secular lord, with the distinction that while the secular lord

might give full rein to any generous impulses he had, and give freedom to his serfs, the Churchman was forbidden in the name of the Church to give freedom to either serf or slave without getting express permission, which was not very readily granted. For the Church bought and sold both slaves and serfs, and the property of the Church was sacred. It claimed all the dues from the peasant that the secular lord claimed, and exacted them rigorously. Even the hated death duty by which the lord was empowered to take that which in value might amount to nearly ten shillings in the pound was enforced by the clergy, and wherever these dues did not exist it was because they had been commuted at their full value, for the strict law of the Church made it an offence to diminish the possessions of the Church whether they were goods or human flesh and blood. The monks were rack renting landlords, usurers, and feudal lords. Dr. Coulton makes all these things perfectly clear. They were definitely on the side of the secular lord in his claims because these were identical with their own. A proof of this is that the numerous peasant revolts that took place aimed at the monks no less than at the lords. Even in the case of the dispensing of alms by the Church, which has formed the theme of so much sentimentalizing, the Church was giving back only a very small portion of what was first of all exacted. As Dr. Coulton says, "The peasants knew the monk mainly as a lord not very different from other lords. Alms were given at the Abbey gate, but far less than is commonly supposed; and if these had been multiplied fourfold they would not have equalled what the monks drew from their rights, hallowed by custom and law."

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#### Christian Truth!

There is very little left of the Monastic Legend by the time that Dr. Coulton has finished with it. But he builds better than he knows, or rather the implications of what he says goes farther than he probably perceives. For the Monastic Legend is but a carrying on of what one may call the pre-monastic legend. Just as the Roman Catholic directs attention to a purely mythical golden age when the world basked happily in the beneficence of the fatherly government of the Church, so Protestants ask us to visualize a golden age, preceding the rise of the Roman Church, when Christians dwelt in a holy brotherhood, preaching a pure religion, and practicing good deeds one to another, and drawing the world to them by the purity of their lives. I should not be surprised if Dr. Coulton himself subscribes to this legend. And yet it is even less credible than is the golden rule of the monk. The first clear glimpse that we get of Christians is a crowd of quarrelsome people, obsessed with a number of superstitions, and attracting the attention of others, not by their kindness and brotherhood, but by their fanatical hatreds, and devotion to religious beliefs that were even then looked down upon by the educated world. We should get along but ill with a society of medieval monks, but I am quite certain that these would not fill us with the same disgust that a society of the most primitive Christians would. The nearest we could get to it today would be a blend of the most ignorant type of a Salvation Army ranter and a poor specimen of the Hindoo fakir. Dr. Coulton is doing good work in stripping the veil from medieval Christianity, he would do still greater good if he were as mercilessly to bare original Christianity to the world. He cites the melancholy confession of Cardinal Newman when asked to found a Catholic Historical Review, that "unless one doctored all one's facts one would be

considered a bad Catholic." The truth that has finally to be faced is that the whole of the accepted history of Christianity is made up of "doctored" facts.

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#### Christianity and Civilization.

But even as the case stands I am not sure that Dr. Coulton fully appreciates its repercussion on Christian claims in general. The period covered by the four volumes of Dr. Coulton's is between four and five hundred years. It is dominated by a Church which claims to be the oldest of all Christian Churches, and which has the strongest claim to rank as historic Christianity. This Christian Church did not come into existence among an uncivilized people. An outsider may claim that Christianity flourished best amongst the most ignorant peoples, but this is a statement that will not be admitted by Christians. And the fact is that even though Christian teachings appealed to the most ignorant of the population it did arise amongst the most civilized people in the Western world. Had it possessed any native impulse in the direction of a genuine culture it would have availed itself of the elaborate jurisprudence and social developments of the Roman world, it would have seized the philosophy and science of Greece, and upon these would have built a still better civilization.

What are the facts? Well, the facts are that there was not a single direction in which the world did not sink steadily backward. Life became more violent, philosophy degenerated into the senseless theology of the Eastern and Western Churches, science died out, manners became coarser, morals lower, and life harder. Dr. Coulton makes this true of the period covered by his books, and Professor Dill, in his authoritative *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, and *Roman Society in the Last Days of the Western Empire*, shows us this process of degeneration proceeding step by step with the growth of the Christian Church. What are we to make of historic claims in the light of these indisputable facts? What did the world gain by the rule of Christianity? Life could not have been worse from, say, the fifth to the fourteenth century had Christianity never been heard of. It might conceivably have been much better. But this was the religion that was to transfigure the world, to lift to a higher level. When? Where? Certainly it did not transpire in the period covered by Dr. Coulton's works. There is ample evidence to prove that it did not take place before that period. If Dr. Coulton proves anything at all he shows that every possible vice and evil flourished under the direct rule of the Church; while his books are mainly a necessary correction of the deliberate lying of Roman Catholic writers in defence of the oldest and largest Church in Christendom. I agree with Dr. Coulton that it is time the Monastic Legend was killed. But I assert that the Monastic Legend is only part of the larger Christian Legend of the beneficial civilizing influence of Christianity. Dr. Coulton has received the thanks of Protestants for killing the smaller of the two legends. As a Freethinker I beg to tender him my thanks for having done so much towards killing the much larger legend.

As a commentary on what has been said I may note that a Sunday Paper of March 22 points out that while taking the census was a regular feature of the civilization of antiquity, and that a carefully defined organization had grown up in Rome, census taking was entirely dropped during the Middle Ages. It is the same lesson whichever way we turn. Everything that is characteristic of civilized life either dies out or grows weaker under

the reign of the Christian Church. That Church grew strong with the decay of ancient civilization. It loses influence the moment it comes into contact with a higher civilization which reaches it from the Mohammedan world. The growth of civilization from the sixteenth century onward has been accompanied by the steady decay of religious belief. There is the glaring fact, borne out by the researches of Dr. Coulton for one period and by other historians for the rest of the Christian era. That is the real lesson one may draw from the books above noted. That is why we say that Dr. Coulton builds better than he knows. He has certainly destroyed the "Monastic Legend," but in doing so he has gone a long way towards destroying the Christian legend also.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## The Gentle Art of Ridicule.

"Laughter is the property of man."—Rabelais.

"A good laugh is a mighty good thing."

Herman Melville.

"All that is human must retrograde if it does not advance."—Gibbon.

BYRON, who was himself a master of the lash, said that "ridicule is the only weapon the English climate cannot rust." Yet it is not popular in this country, and irony has many enemies. Simple folk, who must be literal or nothing, dislike it. Women, more often than not, do not care for it at all. Those other wearers of petticoats, the clergy, whose professional gravity prompts them, look askance at it as being something unseemly.

"Without it is based on seriousness," said Heine, "wit is only a sneeze of the reason." Every great wit in literature has been a man of serious aims, and the greatest writers have been the greatest wits from the far-off days of Aristophanes to those of Bernard Shaw. Some of the best masters of irony have been earnest soldiers of progress. Perhaps the most perfect examples of irony are to be found in Voltaire's *Candide*, the wittiest book in the world. Here is a passage taken at random, when *Candide* was to be punished as a military deserter:—

He was asked which he would like the best, to be whipped six and thirty times through all the regiment, or to receive at once twelve bullets in his brain. He vainly said that human will is free, and that he chose neither the one nor the other. He was forced to make a choice. He determined, in virtue of that gift of God called liberty, to run the gauntlet six and thirty times.

After Voltaire, Heine is perhaps the most brilliant ironist. For seven years prior to his death he lay sick and solitary on his "mattress-grave," his back twisted, his legs paralysed, his hands powerless, his sight failing. "God's satire weighs heavily upon me," he said:—

The great Author of the Universe, the Aristophanes of Heaven, was bent on demonstrating with crushing force to me, the little so-called German Aristophanes, how my weightiest sarcasms are only pitiful attempts at jesting in comparison with His, and how miserably I am beneath Him in humour, is colossal mockery.

The untameable humorist kept his most wonderful jest for the last. Reproached by his friends for his levity in religion, he said: "God will forgive me. It is His trade."

Gibbon is one of the greatest of all historians, but he was a master of irony. A splendid example of sustained ridicule is to be found in the famous

fifteenth chapter of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, sketching with matchless skill the rise of the Christian superstition. We all realize Gibbon's position. He was pretending to give an account of the early Christians from the orthodox standpoint, so as to hoodwink the pious. This is how he does it:—

But how shall we excuse the supine inattention of the Pagan and philosophic world to those evidences which were presented by the hand of Omnipotence, not to their reason but to their senses? During the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their first disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alteration in the moral and physical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth, or at least a celebrated province of the Roman Empire was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, curiosity, and devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history.

Gibbon is ostensibly censuring the sages and historians for overlooking the miracles of the New Testament. In reality, he is actually denying their occurrence by slyly pointing out that there is no contemporary record of them from disinterested sources. How masterly is Gibbon's command of language! Listen to this ironic picture of the Christian Knight-errant who:—

As the champion of God and the ladies (I blush to unite such discordant names) devoted himself to speak the truth, maintain the right, and protect the distressed.

A more genial satirist was Anatole France, who in *My Friend's Book*, describes Pierre Noziere's childish passion towards the religious life with inimitable grace and irony:—

My sole idea was to live the life of an ascetic. In order to lose no time in putting my ideas in operation, I refused to eat my breakfast. My mother, who knew nothing of my new vocation, thought I was ill, and looked at me with an anxiety that it pained me to behold. Nevertheless, I persevered with my fasting, and then, remembering the example of Saint Simeon Stylites, who spent his life on a pillar, I climbed up on to the kitchen cistern, but it was impossible to live there, for Julie, our cook, promptly dislodged me. I next decided to imitate Saint Nicholas of Patras, who gave all his riches to the poor. My father's study window looked out on to the quay, and from it I proceeded to fling down a dozen coppers or so which had been presented to me because they were new and bright. These I followed up with marbles, humming-tops, whip-tops, and eel-skin whip.

"The child is crazy," exclaimed my father, as he shut the window.

I felt angry and mortified at hearing this judgment passed upon me, but I remembered that my father, not being a saint like myself, would not share with me in the glories of the blessed, a reflection from which I derived great consolation."

Ingersoll was a master of irony, and few of his pages are without barbed sentences which provoke a chuckle. For example: "Baptism is an excellent thing, with the addition of a little soap." Here is a sly hit at the clergy:—

Had the Presbytery of Chicago been present at the burning of Servetus, these gentlemen would have turned their backs on the awful sight, divided their coat-tails, and enjoyed the comfortable radiance.

Swift, like Voltaire, was also a superb ironist. Voltaire recommended *The Tale of a Tub* as a masterly satire against religion in general, and Thackeray denied Swift's belief in that Christian religion which he had defended so ironically in his deadly and venomous, *Arguments Against Abolishing Christianity*. Irony will also be found in Fielding's *History of Jonathan Wild the Great*, in the acidulated pages of Flaubert, and under the polite sentences of Renan. It also lurks in the robust humour of Rabelais, and in the suggestive pages of Denis Diderot. Matthew Arnold has shown himself a master of ridicule on many a page. His description of the Christian Trinity as "the three Lord Shaftesburys" is a case in point, and his frank apology that he "had no wish to give pain to a distinguished philanthropist," is as saucy as Bernard Shaw at his frankest. Thomas Hardy has shown himself a master of irony, particularly in the concluding chapter of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, in which he makes play with "The President of the Immortals."

But the dictionary definition of irony must be altered. It is not nearly enough to say it is:—

A mode of speech expressing a sense contrary to that which the speaker intends to convey.

It may be true of the simple, elementary irony of the Cockney street-boy who called after a red-nosed hawker, "Hullo! Rudolph Valentino!" but it by no means defines the more complex irony of literature. We much prefer George Meredith's definition:—

If instead of falling foul of the ridiculous person with a satiric rod to make him writhe and shriek aloud, you prefer to sting him with a semi-caress, by which he shall in his anguish be rendered dubious whether, indeed, anything has hurt him, you are an engine of irony.

This is superbly said by one of the greatest masters of the last in our language.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Three Trials of George William Foote.

(Continued from page 180.)

### IV.

FOR the first time in their lives, though they had not been convicted, and until found guilty were presumably innocent, Foote and his two companions passed the days between the first two trials in prison. It need hardly be said that Newgate fifty years ago, was not exactly a home from home. Although every effort by humanists and reformers generally was made in those days and for many years previously, to call attention to the outrageous sentences passed for petty crimes, to the almost unbelievable vindictiveness of many magistrates, and the total lack of sympathy shown to many unfortunates, prison then was really prison. Foote records almost with surprise, that certain officials and warders tried to behave decently towards him—and this proves that after all, men were better than the machine in which they were held. Wheeler, Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant all came to see him, but the former was only given a half hour to help Foote who complained bitterly that he was not allowed more time in consultation, especially as he had to conduct his own defence. The cell into which he was placed was an awful hole, and the less said about the sanitary accommodation the better. Foote asked to have another cell, and this was worse than the first. "The

confinement was beginning to tell on me," he wrote afterwards. "My life had been exceptionally active, physically and mentally, and this prison life was as stagnant as the cell. Thus 'cabin'd, cribbed and confined,' I felt all my vital functions half arrested. Dejection I did not experience; my spirits were light and fresh; but the body revolted against its ill-treatment, and recorded its protest on the conscious brain. How grateful was the brief hour's exercise on the Sunday morning . . ."

He accepted the invitation to go to the chapel and was disgusted at the service. "It was a ghastly mockery," is his comment, "a blasphemous farce, a satire on Christianity infinitely more sardonic than anything I ever wrote or published!" And it must have been with real relief that at last on the Monday following, he and Kemp and Ramsey once again faced the judge and jury, on trial for publishing a "blasphemous libel."

Foote at once challenged a member of the jury who had expressed an opinion "adverse" to the defendants and Judge North and Sir Hardinge Giffard both "assumed a wonderful air of impartiality." Judge North said, "Sir Hardinge, is it not better to withdraw this jurymen at once? Whatever the verdict of the jury, I should be sorry to have a man among them who had expressed himself as prejudiced." And the gallant Sir Hardinge amiably assented. It was very good of them, of course, to agree, but as Foote pointed out, they had to agree, they had no other choice. But as the jury had been carefully chosen, and Foote knew it only too well, the exit of one who admitted his prejudice made no difference.

It is true that four of them subsequently were shocked at the sentence, and signed a memorial for the prisoner's release, but the others were particularly sorry specimens of genuine bigots.

One of them thought "two years wouldn't have been too much." On this second trial, Mr. Clier looked after the legal points for both Foote and Ramsey, and Mr. Avory acted for Kemp. Both did their difficult task admirably in the face of the judge's insults, but North had made up his mind and showed his contempt for justice by even setting the rules of procedure at defiance.

Foote's speech for the defence again was a masterpiece, far better than the first one. He did nothing to conciliate the judge. He knew that was hopeless. "Nobody in this country," he cried, "whatever his religion, is called upon to respect the feelings of anybody else. It is only the Freethinker who is told to respect the feelings of people from whom he differs, and to respect them how? Not when he enters their place of worship, not when he stands side by side with them in the business and pleasures of life, but when he reads what is written for Freethinkers without knowing that a pair of Christian eyes will ever scan the page."

The whole speech is a masterly piece of vindication, backed by fine logic, learning and scholarship. He quoted again the "respectable Freethinkers," whose "blasphemy" passed without prosecution because the books they wrote were expensive, and he even tried sentiment on the jury. Finally, "I ask you," he cried in his eloquent peroration, "not to permit the serpent of religious persecution to rear its head. It has lain dormant for fifty years, and some of us hoped for the credit of humanity, that it was dead. But bigotry has warmed it into life again, and now, gentlemen, it is for you to place your heel upon it and crush it for ever."

One would think even a jury of bigots would have been keenly interested in such a speech for the defence, but the Christian atmosphere in which they

were brought up, and which still surrounded them, proved an impossible barrier for common sense, let alone justice to penetrate. As Foote pointed out, the trial lasted six hours and the jury did not even retire to consider their verdict. They had all settled the question beforehand.

Judge North's summing up Foote calls "a fraudulent performance," and reading it afresh, I quite agree with him. It was not the kind delivered in the best traditions of English justice. That last word the judge seemed to know nothing about. There is no need to go into it in detail. He constantly referred to the "libels." "Are they not," he asked, "profane scoffing?" With horror, he pointed to one of the names in "Answers to Correspondents," given as "Holy Gh—t," and the reference to "long-faced Christians," and there was an answer he did not like to "Happy Sal." "Is it or is it not a contumelious scoffing," he cried, "against Holy Scripture and the Christian religion?" The jury, he told them, were bound to take their law from him, and to say whether these things were "blasphemous libels" or not.

The whole summing-up reeks with malice and vindictiveness, and the result, arrived at in a minute or so by the jury, was, of course, "guilty." Mr. Avory tried his best for Kemp without effect, and the judge then turned to Foote and said:—

George William Foote, you have been found guilty by the jury of publishing these blasphemous libels. The trial has been to me a very painful one. I regret extremely to find a person of your undoubted intelligence, a man gifted by God with such great ability, should have chosen to prostitute his talents to the service of the Devil. I consider this paper totally different from any of the works you have brought before me in every way, and the sentence I now pass upon you is one of imprisonment for twelve months.

There was a fine row in the gallery at this, and a good many people with one accord burst into "hissing, groaning and derisive cries." Foote turned to the judge and cried, "My Lord, I thank you; the sentence is worthy of your creed!" after which there were cries of "Christians indeed, Judge Jeffries!"

The police had difficulty in coping with the crowd, but eventually cleared out that portion which was noisiest, and Judge North then sentenced Ramsey to nine months and Kemp to three months imprisonment.

Foote knew, of course, and expected that he would have to suffer a term of imprisonment, but certainly not such a savage sentence as twelve months; and he afterwards humorously pointed out that one theory was that Judge North "punished us according to the amount of time we occupied. I made a long speech and got twelve months. Mr. Ramsey made a short speech and got nine months; Mr. Kemp made no speech and got three months." After passing the night in Newgate the "prisoners" were taken to Holloway Gaol in a "Black Maria." The Governor was Colonel Milman, who turned out to be a gentleman, and treated Foote with "unvarying kindness"—as indeed, he did the other prisoners in that forbidding establishment.

The details of the imprisonment make painful reading and can be passed over, but the reply sent to the Governor by Sir William Harcourt to Foote's petition—a document very carefully prepared, and giving lengthy reasons why Foote considered the sentences atrocious—deserves recording:—

The Home Secretary requests Colonel Milman to inform Foote and Ramsey that he sees no reason for acceding to their request.

That was all ever sent to Holloway Gaol, but Sir

William Harcourt actually had the audacity to have paragraphs published in the daily press, that "orders were given for our being granted every indulgence consistent with our safe custody." "That," says Foote, "was a brazen lie," and it was not the only lie circulated by the pious humbug.

Foote found the life in prison dreadfully dreary, and little could be done to vary the monotony. He read the Bible through over and over again and still remained an "impenitent Freethinker!" His encounters with various inmates—including "Parson Plaford" make amusing reading nowadays, but Foote was terribly sad and weary of it all long before his sentence was finished. Two months after his incarceration Bradlaugh came to see him about the first indictment. And the new chapter which ensued should prove of engrossing interest.

H. CUTNER.

(To be concluded.)

## Christian Hypocrisy.

MOST Christians are either conscious or unconscious hypocrites. They pretend to believe many things, as part of their faith, which they certainly do not and cannot believe, if they exercise their reason. Take the learned Bishops of the English Church. They pretend to believe that the authorized version of the Bible is the inspired and infallible word of "the living, and Almighty God." Many of them must have read Bishop Colenso's "Examination of the Pentateuch and Book of Joshua," in which he proves to demonstration that the alleged books of Moses were not written by Moses but by later writers, and that they are neither scientifically, historically, or even morally true, and yet these Bishops go on pretending that nothing that Colenso, or other critical commentators have said, has in any way invalidated the truthfulness of the alleged events, or narratives, of the Pentateuch. Only one Bishop, as far as I know has had the honesty to confess that the alleged story of the "Fall of Man" in the Garden of Eden is not true, and also the courage to announce that the doctrine of Evolution that man has come up from the lower animals, and that his nearest ancestors are the anthropoid apes, is now accepted by all leading men of Science; but Dr. Barnes for his frank and honest statement is now treated by his brother prelates as a wicked heretic, although he is still allowed to retain his position in the Church. But that is not all. The whole Bible Story of Creation, is known to be absolutely unscientific; so also is the Story of the Flood, The Story of the Tower of Babel, and The Confusion of Tongues, and many others. It is absurd to believe that God made man out of dust and woman out of one of the ribs of man; but whatever men of Science say on the subject the majority of the Bishops continue to allow the clergy to go on teaching the old stories of the Bible as true in substance and in fact.

Whatever revisions, or alterations have been made in the Bible since Colenso demonstrated its many errors, contradictions and immoral teachings, the old stories remain the same. They have not had the story of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt with its many absurdities and contradictions removed from the Bible, nor the story of Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt for being like most other women naturally inquisitive, nor the story of Jacob having a wrestling bout with God, nor of Moses wielding a rod in his hand that turned into a serpent and gobbled up all the little serpents of the Egyptian magicians. So, all these stories still appear in the Holy Bible, which the Bible Society boasts to be

printed in many languages, and circulated in millions throughout the world. And what about the moral aspect of some of the teachings of the Bible? Take the question of slavery. Exodus xxi. 4, says "If the master (of a Hebrew servant) have given him a wife and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and the children shall be her master's, and he shall go out free by himself."

But a little further down it says: "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding if he continue a day or two he shall not be punished; for he is his money." Exodus xxi. 20-21. Bishop Colenso tells in his work with what a feeling of revulsion the very intelligent Christian native with whose help he was translating these things into the Zulu tongue first heard these words, said to be uttered by the Great and Gracious Being whom I was teaching him to trust in and adore. His whole soul revolted against the notion that the great and merciful God, the merciful Father of all mankind, would speak of a servant or maid as mere "money" and allow a horrible crime to go unpunished because the victim of the brutal usage had survived a few hours."

I think it is worth while reviving this story of the feelings of the intelligent Zulu native, because the rising generations of Christians have probably never heard of it. And how do they treat such a story today? Do we ever hear them denounce the Hebrew God for his unspeakable cruelty? On the contrary, they treat such stories, as though their God knew best what to do under the circumstances. I have known some Christian controversialists to maintain that this God did not institute slavery, but merely formulated rules and conditions under which the Jews might become slave-holders. What do, present-day Christians think of the following passage?

"Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have shall be of the heathen that are round about you, of them shall ye buy and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever." A nice sort of regulations for a good, kind God to make for the benefit of the Jews; and yet he is called a just and beneficent God by Christians to this day! Do Christians really believe this story? or do they humbug themselves into the belief that they believe it, not knowing what belief really is?

Passing over the moral questions involved in this matter. I now proceed to point out that other books beside those of the Pentateuch contain a number of absurd and ridiculous stories. For instance, in the book of Judges you have the story of Samson slaying a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass (Judges xv. 15). We have also the story of Jonah converting a whale's stomach into "lodgings for a single gentleman" for three days and three nights, and paying no rent (Jonah i. 15-17); of course, every Good Christian believes in these stories, or what's the good of their great capacity for gullibility? or is it sheer hypocrisy?

And then we come to the New Testament. The majority of Christians still hold to the story of the alleged Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden; and if Jesus had to atone for the sins of mankind, he naturally had to be born somehow, somewhere, in order to become the real saviour of the world. And so we have the story of the Virgin Birth in the Gospels to account for the miraculous birth of a man-God. I have in my possession a work by the late Dr. Herbert Junius Hardwicke, presented to me by the author, entitled, *Evolution and Creation*, contain-

ing pictures of a large number of alleged virgin mothers with their babies, The Vedic Virgin, Indraneel; The Hindu God Vishnu, nursed by his Virgin Wife Mother, Lakshmi.

Devaki and Krishna; the Hindu God Siva, nursed by his virgin wife-mother— Parvati; The Assyrian Virgin Ishtar; Isis and Horus, the Egyptian Virgin and Saviour God; and others. Most Christians never heard of these alleged Virgins who gave birth to Gods; but no doubt if they were asked, they would swear that the Virgin Mary was the only genuine Virgin who ever gave birth to a child that became a God-man. But how can they know unless they make some enquiries into the claims of the others? I hope to go through the alleged life and doings of Jesus in another article later on, but for the present I must content myself with saying that the majority of Christians act as though they did not believe in the Bible stories, nor in the scheme of salvation upon which the Christian religion rests. In fact the only real believers are the Fundamentalists and the members of the Salvation Army, who are for the most part, too ignorant to understand what belief really means.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## Blessings.

(A TRUE STORY.)

I was called one evening to an address in a slum quarter and found there a patient obviously very ill. He was lying on a dirty bed in a dilapidated upper room, into which the dim rays of the evening sun struggled with difficulty through those portions of cracked window-pane that were not darkened with brown paper, used to stop up the holes in the glass. Furniture there was none, with the solitary exception of a cane chair serving as a bed-table to hold a candle and a packet of Woodbines. My patient, a man of about forty, had apparently been taken ill the day before, having caught a chill, as he put it, while waiting an unusually long time in the rain outside the Labour Bureau. He told me his history of misfortune. He had fallen out of employment the previous year, since when he had not succeeded in obtaining work. Only a fortnight before the present illness his wife had died in childbirth, leaving him with an infant to add to the cares of a family already consisting of five children. Poverty had compelled him to part with one article after another from the home, until he had reached the condition of penury in which I found him. I examined him and saw that I was dealing with a case of pneumonia; he was indeed in a sorry plight. When it came to the writing of a prescription I found it necessary to have more light, so I put a match to the candle beside the bed. It was then I noticed for the first time that the walls were not entirely bare. Above his head hung a text. He had not sold that. I gazed spell-bound at the words, standing out boldly in a framework of flowers:—

*He daily loadeth us with blessings.*

My thoughts were interrupted by the patient.

"Will I be able to go down to the Labour Exchange on Friday?" he asked.

"You must settle your mind to at least a fortnight in bed," I said.

"Very well, I will do as you say."

"Then I have every hope that you will soon be well again," I told him.

And he answered, "I believe I shall, with God's help."

The nine days following were spent in the stormy waters between the shores of life and death. We were blown to and fro, hither and thither, sometimes beating against the wind a league or so towards the haven of safety, sometimes driven back again towards the reefs of disaster. All I could do was to stoke with might and main to keep the engine of his heart still throbbing.

On the ninth day came the crisis. The storm abated and we were still afloat. I came to him in the morning and a glance was sufficient to tell me all was well. He lay at ease in the bed and in his eyes was the expression that every doctor knows so well. It will tell you without any other sign that the crisis of pneumonia has passed.

"The worst is over," I said. "You have turned the corner."

He looked up at me with tired but grateful eyes, and his head sank restfully upon the pillow.

"God be thanked!" he answered.

MEDICUS.

## Acid Drops.

In the preface to his *War, Civilisation and the Churches*, Mr. Cohen wrote concerning the press during the war period:—

It was nothing new for Press and Government to attempt to influence public opinion in a particular direction . . . But the new feature was that for the first time propaganda became a set policy, with a definite government department for its conduct, and unlimited funds for its maintenance. The Defence of the Realm regulations made criticism difficult and dangerous. The popular press, already suffering the degradation initiated by the Northcliffe regime, became a ready tool in the "doping" of the public. Journalists were bought or bribed; the pulpit was enlisted in works of war-propaganda, and standardized articles and sermons became the rule.

Now we have Mr. Baldwin, in his speech at the Queen's Hall, on March 17, telling the world that "if there was one beastly thing in the war it was propaganda. Propaganda was poison gas that poisoned men's souls." But Mr. Baldwin has been a very long time finding this out. We dwelt upon it at the beginning of the war and right through the war. Mr. Baldwin is a trifle late in his discovery—or ought we to say in his speech? We paid for that propaganda at the Peace, and we are still paying for it in the state of the world. Mr. Baldwin should read the *Freethinker* regularly.

Motorists will feel deeply grateful to the Vicar of Brockenhurst, whether his suggestion is carried into effect or not. He advises that, if the Church wishes to keep a hold on the younger generation, Church services should start earlier on Sunday mornings so that motorists may attend before leaving for a run. For our part we feel that the Vicar's advice provides an explanation for something that has often puzzled us. Often we have noted the strained and worried look on the faces of car-owners getting their machines ready on Sunday mornings. In our innocence we attributed this to fear lest some part of the mechanism should not be in running order, or to suspicion as to weak tyres. But now we realize that it was due to having to miss Church service, and that it would be some time before the gloom would disappear from their faces. Now if the Vicar's advice is followed, and if the good, and truthful St. John Reith, who is snowed under by the letters thanking him for his Sunday religious services, could only provide motorists with a service *en route* everything would be joyful. What about erecting loud speakers at cross roads with special services for motorists? Of course, it would require a special police force to prevent motorists lingering too long at these points, but perhaps volunteers might be found. And if Sir John Reith provides the service he is certain to report shoals of letters thanking him for what he has done.

Journalism, we learn, has no patron saint. And St. Paul is suggested as a possible candidate for the honour. We rather fancy that a certain section of the press, specializing in the lie by omission, by implication, and by distortion, have already adopted St. Ananias as patron saint.

"Spring-cleaning" fever is now infecting many people. What is surprising is that so few of the pious ever think of spring-cleaning their intelligence with the cleansing materials of Freethought. Year after year they allow their brains to be littered with cobwebs spun in ancient Judea. They need reminding that there is no advantage to be derived from the possession of an insanitary mind.

"When we are civilized," said a speaker, the other day, "it will be as sacred to build a factory as a church." On the contrary, we imagine that when the nation becomes really civilized, no buildings will be regarded as "sacred." But, at the same time, the buildings in which men and women have to labour six days a week will be thought worthy of being made beautiful. And there will probably be more money available for that purpose when people cease to regard churches as "sacred," and to lavish money on their embellishment.

The wife of a well known politician says that when she was a girl nobody ever talked of babies. Quite so. In those days, Christian piety laid its unwholesome taboos on anything connected with sex or procreation. The taboos have gone or are fading, and the public mind is so much the cleaner. Social observers, however, are still too timid to tell the world that the improvement is largely due to Freethought criticism and ridicule.

The following is by "H.M." of the *Methodist Recorder*:—

"The art of loving," wrote Aldous Huxley in the *Hibbert Journal*, "is an art very difficult to acquire, and the successes of its Christian and democratic teachers have not been considerable. Most people do not love their fellows . . . At ordinary times the feelings of most of us towards the damned of earth are practically non-existent. Scientific psychology may succeed where Christianity and the political religions have failed. Let us hope so." And the rest of it. I put down the magazine with a sigh, for we are the people who preach Christian love—and I have just been in a Christian community where the folk did not even seem to love each other. "I can't bear that man"; "I can't stand that woman." You hear that in a Church. How many are really practising the art of loving people they don't like?

Really, things are not so bad as all that! A large number of chapel-goers pretend to love those they don't like or have no regard for. This fact is responsible for the oily affability which the sincere person outside the chapels finds so very repulsive.

From the *Methodist Times*:—

Plymouth City Council have, by a majority, refused to sanction a motion put before them at their last meeting, to the following effect: (1) Licensed places of amusement may be opened on Sundays. (2) No persons shall be liable to any penalty for keeping such places open on Sunday, or taking part in or managing the entertainment.

Similar applications are being made to Town or Borough Councils, etc., all over the country, and possibly their hands may be strengthened by the decision given at Plymouth . . .

The thanks of all who value the sanctity of the Sabbath are due to Alderman A. G. Crowle, a prominent Plymouth Wesleyan, who moved the disapproval of the measure in the City Council. His fellow Methodists everywhere, who have a voice in deciding the policy of governing bodies, should not hesitate, at this critical juncture, to follow, his courageous example.

A writer in the *New Chronicle of Christian Education* remarks:—

I see that the *Islamic Review* says that Christians believe either in Three Gods or in a Third of a God, not in a God . . . That same aggressive foreign missionary publication says that one of the sayings of Jesus, and only one, has been literally and splendidly fulfilled, viz., "I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword."

Our Christian friend wants to know what can be said to that statement. The best thing to say is that it is literally true, and that Christians deserve praise for so loyally fulfilling the prophecy of their Master! They have nothing to reproach themselves for in that particular direction.

In a godly contemporary, a writer takes several columns to explain what Sunday schools are for. The answer could be set out more briefly. The purpose of Sunday schools is to manufacture clients for the parsons. To achieve that aim, the schools set out: (1) to supply the immature and uncritical mind of the child with ideas and alleged facts that develop belief in an ancient and superstitious (or pre-scientific) interpretation of the facts of life and of the universe; (2) to furnish youth with a distorted or inaccurate conception of the real nature of certain mental states, feelings and instincts; and (3) to teach some ethical notions which, although some are socially valuable, yet are rendered largely useless by reason of their being irrationally based. Besides this, there is imparted a knowledge of religious traditions, customs and exercises. It may be added that all this "knowledge" is mere lumber for the growing mind, and exceedingly harmful to the development of a logical intelligence.

The "Come to Britain" advertising campaign is in full swing. Intending visitors might, we think, like to know that, in Britain, most pleasure resorts have their pleasures available only on week-days. On Sundays, too, nearly all art galleries and museums are closed, as also are the theatres. Besides these, objects of historical interest under control of the National Trust cannot be inspected on Sunday. If, we may add, the organizers of the "Come to Britain" campaign object to our advertising the above facts, then our reply is that they should do something to get the Sunday taboo removed. They would then have a more attractive Britain to offer to visitors.

In the opinion of the Rev. J. A. Patten, present-day Christianity is not good enough to attract and hold the new generation. Religion needs "toning up," he thinks. Well, it certainly is merely a shadow of its former glory. The Big Bogey or Terrible Chief in the skies has disappeared. The Devil as a personal entity is no more, and is only a name for a mental state. Hell-fire has become unthinkable. In short, all the best of its former conversion-compelling features are missing, and what is left is too anæmic to frighten the new generation into the arms of Jesus. Present-day Christianity doesn't want a tonic, but a burial service.

Good Friday, declares the Bishop of Wakefield, is better spent in necessary business than as a day of holiday making. We appreciate the bishop's point of view. If people cease to regard Good Friday and other religious days as "sacred," there is grave danger of their forgetting that bishops and other pets of God Almighty need providing for in the way of clothes, houses, food and salaries. Good Friday, we agree, ought certainly not to be regarded as a holiday. It commemorates the occasion when Jesus died that parsons might be spared from socially productive labour.

The radio, says the *Daily Sketch*, has brought entertainment to thousands of homes, but it can scarcely be said to make any strenuous demand upon the mind of listeners; it demands no more than a very moderate degree of receptivity. Well, if that is the case, one can appreciate how inevitably religion comes into the programmes, and why Freethought criticism of it is left out—such criticism might compel the listener to use his mental apparatus. And if he were tempted to do that in one direction, he might be dangerously inclined to do the same in other directions—an innovation which would, from the viewpoint of our vendors of "safe" and respectable opinions, be highly undesirable.

One can hardly expect a paper devoted to Spiritualism to have a lively sense of humour, but there is something unconsciously funny in a recent utterance of the *Two Worlds* that:—

Freethought is not what it was. There are not the same Freethinkers now as in the early days of Spiritualism. The Freethought Movement has fought and lost.

Much comment would spoil so delicious a passage. And the worst of it is that Freethinkers have been persuading themselves that they were winning all along the line. But some very funny things come from the *Spirit World*. One wonders what would happen if Spiritualists were suddenly overcome with the capacity for good healthy laughter!

Hardly less humorous in its way is another paragraph in the same passage to the effect that the success of the Queen's Hall meetings have warranted their extension for another year. The extended work has been made possible because "three members of our Association have guaranteed an overdraft at our bankers," and because of "our co-operating with the spirit world." We quite sympathize with the financial difficulties that accompany most forms of propaganda, but it does strike us that the co-operation with the spirit world might have ensured Spiritualists providing the funds, without descending to so matter-of-fact an expedient as a guaranteed overdraft at the bank. Evidently "our friends" in the next world do not count humour as a constituent of spiritual health.

The Rev. W. Paxton, of Liverpool, is the kind of man we have been seeking for a long while. We have no hesitation in saying that he is one of the most remarkable men of his generation, if not of all time. According to the *Bradford Telegraph*, he says he has evidence for the existence of God "that would be accepted in a court of law." That is why we say he is the most remarkable man of his generation. Of course, something might depend upon the character of the court and the kind of judge who was presiding.

A villain in human disguise was summoned at Pudsey for conduct that might easily lead to the break up of the British Empire. Worse, he was actually himself a magistrate. But a police constable gave evidence that on a certain Sunday evening he saw a young man served with sweets by the defendant himself. Naturally, Pudsey cannot have its morals undermined in this vile manner, and the scoundrel who struck so vile a blow at the moral character of the British nation was promptly fined five shillings and costs. He ought to have been burned alive.

One of the smallest countries in the world, by a vote of seventy-seven to sixty-four, has decided to disarm. Denmark the mouse, has so far decided to take its chance with the Christian lions of Europe, and in the interests of sanity, it is to be hoped that the example will be followed.

In connexion with the above, War Grave statistics give the information that on the old battlefields in France and Belgium, as a result of agricultural and building operations 31,163 dead have been found during the last eleven years. 'Twas a famous victory.

The Rev. John A. Patten, M.C., stated at the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches a significant fact, put in such a way, that the reader might forget the intensely religious character of the Great War. He said:—

The returned soldier was hopeless from a religious point of view. But we were encouraged to look forward to the post-war generation and attempt to capture it for Christ and the Church.

This is pathetic in the extreme. Religion broke down under the strain of war's realities; the soldier who had been through the horrible business had finished with the supernatural—he was hopeless as a prey for the religious word spinners. We can only trust that the post-war generation will turn to its war-parents for guidance and advice when it is cajoled to join up in the movement of Christ and the Church.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. TURNER.—Thanks for hints. You are right in your presentation of Berkeley's statements, but his position was not that bricks and mortar had no existence outside a man's mind, but that while for us they must be perceived to exist they actually exist as "ejects" of the mind of God. "Gadfly"—who evidently knows nothing about Berkeley was just repeating the foolishness of someone who did not understand either. As a matter of fact, Berkeley's position is that of the majority of philosophical theists to-day. To have criticised Berkeley on informed lines, however, would have been to have criticised the belief in God, and in the *Daily Herald* that is not permissible.

R. JACKSON.—We have read your letter with great interest, but it would take up too much space to deal with here. You will, however, find a fuller statement of the position in *Materialism Re-stated*.

G. BENNETT.—Mr. Cohen's *Christianity and Slavery* has been out of print for some little time. A new edition—the third—revised and enlarged is in the press, and we hope to publish in the course of a month. Other things are on the way.

A. B. MOSS.—Please convey our regards to our mutual friend when you again see him. Pleased to have your congratulations on *God and the Universe*.

F. ROSE (Blomfontein).—Sorry to hear you have been unwell. Hope you will soon be quite well again. Always pleased to hear from you.

C. S. FRASER.—Capital! Mr. Cohen will be writing you.

A. C. RICHARDS.—The statements concerning the relief of chapels from rates and taxes can easily be verified by consulting the local Council's accounts. The other statements are self-evident. Every building registered as a place of worship, and used exclusively for religious purposes is free of taxation. Every chapel-goer knows this—or should know it. Our shop manager will order the pamphlet for you.

J. R. DUNCAN.—Mr. Cohen has written, but will write further on the new material in your letter.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 29) Mr. Cohen will lecture at Burnley, 28 Bridge Street, at 2.30, on "Things Christians Ought to Know," and at Accrington at 6.30, in the King's Hall, on "Freethought and Freethinking." We are not certain that Mr. Cohen has ever spoken in these towns before, but if he has it must be many years ago. Anyway, we are told that his visit to both places is attracting considerable notice, and good audiences are expected. We hope the anticipations will be realized.

We are in need of volumes of the *Freethinker* for 1881-2-3-4, bound or unbound, for office purposes, and shall be pleased to hear from anyone who has them for disposal. If they form part of a longer run we would take the whole. Address editor of this paper, stating price.

On May 4 the *Freethinker* will have completed fifty years of publication. We are not able to manipulate the almanac so as to make a Sunday fall this year on May 5, so we have decided to make the one for the 10th to be the Jubilee number. This will be a double number, thirty-two instead of sixteen pages, the supplement will consist of a facimile reprint of No. 1 of the *Freethinker*, with a sketch of the history of the paper.

We do not propose making any extra charge for this, but we are suggesting that each reader might help to pay for the double number by taking two copies instead of one, and giving the extra number to a friend who is not at present a subscriber. But to do this they must order their extra copies well in advance, so that we may know what size to make our printing order for that week. Newsagents have to order their copies from the wholesale agents at least a week in advance, and orders should be lodged for the extra copies at latest by April 20. Don't forget the date of the Jubilee issue—May 10.

There was a very fine meeting in the Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday last, one of the largest of recent years. Unfortunately, owing to the serious railway accident, Mr. Cohen was not able to reach Birmingham until 7.30, after being on the road since just after one o'clock. But he had advised the meeting of the delay, and the audience was kept interested by Mr. F. Willis and Mr. C. S. Smith until he arrived. Mr. Willis occupied the chair with his usual ability, and we were pleased to see him once again taking an active part in the meetings. There was, we understand, an unusually brisk sale of literature, every copy of the *Freethinker* being sold.

We have received the Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Manchester Branch, and are pleased to find that despite the state of trade in Lancashire, the year closes with a small balance in hand. The Branch has held twenty special meetings during the winter, in addition to providing lecturing visits to other societies. Mr. J. E. Addy, 33 Ruskin Avenue, Moss Side, has been elected Secretary, and Mr. W. Blaney was re-elected President.

The *Birkenhead Advertiser* of March 21 continues its discussion of Atheism, and two lengthy and able letters from Mr. Ready and "Atheist," with a shorter one from "Modern Youth," are published. We congratulate the editor on his liberality in publishing this correspondence. It is a good example; but we dare not hope that other editors will follow so excellent an example.

Worthy of record is an amendment moved in the House of Commons by Mr. Simmons (Birmingham, Erdington, Lab.). It was to reduce the vote for the Royal Army Chaplains Department, as a protest against "mixing up religion with war," and the holding of compulsory church parades. The amendment was negatived. The bulk of the members of the Labour Party have a good instinct of the kind of vote that put them in Parliament.

Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture in the Picture House, Thornton Road, Bradford, to-day (Sunday) at 7 p.m., on "The Case for Sunday Freedom." The Bradford Branch is an energetic one, the subject is a topical one, and Mr. Whitehead did some good work in Bradford last summer; the combination should result in a very successful meeting.

Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe brings the course of lectures at Streatham to a close to-day (Sunday), his subject is "Why I am not a Christian." Local saints willing to co-operate in future efforts should notify those in charge at Sunday's meeting. Mr. G. Whitehead was the lec-

turer on Sunday last, but we have received no report of the meeting.

A new trinity now appears in the *New Statesman and Nation*, incorporating the *Athenæum*. It is at present a very bulky weekly, covering politics, literature and art, with ample space for advertisements. Regret will be felt at the passing of the *Nation*, for there cannot be too many papers of its type, although one may not subscribe to its views. Under the heading of "Plays and Pictures," the well-known personality of Charlie Chaplin is discussed. He shot like a bolt from the blue into England, and immediately the titled members of society fell over themselves for his company at dinner. Charlie Chaplin was and is the poor children's hero; society is indulging in body snatching. At a time, when owing to newspaper and cinema influences, false values are being let loose in society, Charlie Chaplin came along, and did for those values, perhaps what Cervantes did for false ideas of chivalry. Society ideas were getting so "nice" as to almost be beyond humanity; in the picture papers *Lady This* and *Lord That* appeared; the babbling writers in the same papers filled columns about the stupidities of the same class; the screen pictures, a good bulk of them, showed the life of a rich class always enjoying themselves among the clutter of the usual accessories. And then Charlie Chaplin comes along, and in the words of the writer on the *New Statesman and Nation*, "Never in the history of art can there have been a greater enemy of shams." It did not need the visit of this celebrity to provoke in the pages of the *Freethinker* some weeks ago, a similar criticism. Charlie Chaplin will be well remembered in the film "The Kid," and "The Pilgrim," which disturbed the clerics but amused the children; as Charlie Chaplin he will be remembered by the younger generation, long after a sick and valueless society has forgotten him as a "specimen." If the powers that be wish to submerge him, we suggest that they make him a peer—but, as we believe him to be intensely human, he will perhaps live forever in the affections of the dispossessed as Charlie Chaplin.

## Professor Hogben and Mechanistic Biology.

(Concluded from page 183.)

**Vitalism.**—In 1928, when Mr. Chapman Cohen and Mr. Joad were making their arrangements for debating on Materialism, the latter suggested, "Would Materialism Explain the Universe?" Mr. Cohen naturally declined, and it is a remarkable thing that at a time when science is almost daily finding more and more problems to tackle, the Vitalist comes along and demands from the Materialist a complete circle of knowledge. Failing this, we are to suppose that Materialism is as dead as the Dodo. Prof. Hogben appreciates the point:—

"The controversy between writers of the Mechanist and Vitalist schools has too often focussed attention on whether a complete solution of the nature of life can be found within the mechanistic framework."

In the fact that all questions cannot be answered lies the false security of the Vitalist.

"We have not to disprove that a thunderstorm comes when a blue unicorn sneezes on Uranus, but to show that other ways of treatment gives more useful conclusions."

The last resort of the vitalist obscurantist is to the magnitude of our ignorance. But mechanistic science is not stayed. Johannes Muller, in 1845, ridiculed as "theoretical absurdity," what is now common knowledge. It would seem that so soon as behaviour is brought within the range of scientific prediction it cease to be called "conscious." And so "Vitalists in fifty years' time may be assuring their opponents

that they have never regarded learning, attention and sensory discrimination as characteristics of the conscious state."

With regard, then, to terms like "vital force," "elan vital," "entelechy," "It is doubtful whether we shall see a recrudescence of such frankly animistic devices as these. As biology becomes more and more exact an aptitude for rehabilitating oriental mysticism in somewhat unusual verbiage will be regarded as an insufficient equipment for entering the field of biological controversy."

**Holism.**—General Smuts, who, by the way, is to be the next President of the British Association, championed this concept five years ago, and is now warmly supported by Dr. Haldane. According to Holism, new properties emerge at various levels of existence (e.g., matter, life, mind) "which could never have been predicted from a knowledge merely of the parts" (Smuts). Haldane takes this as evidence that branches of science are independent.

The mechanist, no less than the holist, recognizes that certain emergents cannot as yet be deduced from a knowledge of simpler systems. On the other hand, a great many can, and the holist takes on himself the onus of proving that certain "wholes" are permanently incapable of analysis. Meanwhile the mechanist sees no need to depart from the only method which has rewarded investigation. The "holistic factor" of Smuts is not required.

"Scientific generalizations are attempts to show how the characteristics of complex systems can be inferred from the properties of their constituent parts."

Dr. Haldane's Gifford Lectures (1928) present the case for holism, and indicate at the same time a pathetic misunderstanding of the materialist position, and one which unfortunately is conveyed to Millikan in the U.S.A. Haldane is still flogging the "bile and liver" theory, and

"The fact that no reference to the conditioned reflex is contained in Dr. Haldane's Gifford Lectures may in part account for the fact that he can so easily dispose of the mechanistic position."

**Monadism.**—Carr's *Cogitans Cogitata* probably sums up the case for this re-hash of the Leibnitzian philosophy. He contends that "each living being is an indivisible whole not constituted of parts." On the contrary, says Prof. Hogben, "the physiologist takes the living machine to pieces and studies the properties of its several parts. The experimental embryologist can put it together again."

Prof. Carr, whose book is a mass of inconsistency, says the parts cannot persist without the whole. On the contrary, says Prof. Hogben,

"The whole development of physiology bears witness to the conclusion that the separated constituents of a living whole do not at any level of complexity behave differently from the way in which they behave as parts of a more complex order.

"... A new school of physiologists has come into being with the express object of making psychology" investigable by that method of inquiry—determinism, or mechanism—adopted with success in physics, chemistry and biology, thus "relieving man, the celestial pilgrim, of his burden of soul."

**Kantianism.**—The neo-Kantian movements still moves (albeit backwards) in Germany, and still boasts a journal, *Kantstudien*. Kant, as is well known, posited the basal concepts of space, time and causality as purely mental constructions. They constituted a sort of bag, in which the mind caught the external world. Such views, however, were circumscribed by the biological limitations of Kant's period. His physiology was restricted to the five senses which were most obvious, affording experience

of light, sound, chemical stimuli, mechanical pressure and temperature.

But modern physiology recognizes ten or eleven distinct types of receptor elements in the human body. Two are eminently significant to the Kantian position, and were not studied till the nineteenth century. In 1828 Flourens showed that animals are receptive to the influence of gravity. In our bodies the receptive area is located in that part of the internal ear known as the labyrinthine organ. Just as the removal of an eye prevents the fish from making a colour-response to a changing background, so will the destruction of the labyrinthine organs abolish its characteristic orientation in space when swimming. We do not say that a cat falls on all fours because it has a *a priori* knowledge of space-relations, but because the orientation of its body as a whole is recorded by the labyrinthine, and the appropriate muscles are brought into play by reflex action. If Kant had been familiar with this organ "he would not have argued with the same cogency that the concept of space was fundamentally different from that of weight."

So with time. Sherrington's work on the proprioceptor organs shows us special structures in the tendons and muscles which respond to muscle-stretching.

"By virtue of those muscular rhythms which Galileo employed as his standard of reference in devising the first clock, the human body is a self-recording timepiece."

Pavlov's time-conditioned reflexes are intelligible to modern physiology without recourse to the *a priori* cognition of Kant.

**Subjectivism.**—This is a purely private affair of each individual, and so can have no public interest for science, which looks, not for private values, but for laws having social applications. Up to a point we pool our experiences and construct a public world; but our curiosity exceeds our information. Man is pre-eminently interested in himself, and as long as science cannot satisfy his curiosity his private values assume a far greater importance than scientific hypotheses. "His egoism prompts him to demand some supernatural sanction for the vagaries of his own conduct."

"The influence of Christianity has tended to make the impersonal detachment of science repugnant to most people."

However, "For three centuries traditional philosophy has been haunted by the possibility that science might in the end succeed in satisfying man's curiosity about his own nature."

In direct opposition to this subjectivist attitude we teach the author's own position.

**The Publicist Standpoint.**—The first task of philosophy is to "show how problems can be divided into their public and private components."

Compare this with *Materialism Re-stated*. Mr. Cohen says (p. 51): "One of the earliest and plainest divisions of the world is into that of an outside and an inside, a me and a not me, an objective and a subjective existence."

The "not-me" is social and persistent, while that which belongs to "me" is personal and transitory. One is public, the other private. The table persists when I take my eyes from it. We all agree that the orchestra is playing, though our opinions as to the merit of its performances may differ considerably. What is required in science, for the purpose of discourse, says Prof. Hogben, is the public component. Science profits on the communal, not the individual, view.

"The most important characteristic of scientific beliefs is their communicability, or publicity."

Or in Mr. Chapman Cohen's terminology, "Bring a dozen people into the same relation to the room in which I sit, and they will feel about it much the same as I do. These things persist in a way that my feelings do not persist. The distinguishing quality of objective existence, therefore, is that of persistence." (p. 52.)

The term "reality," in Prof. Hogben's view, is equivocal. To the introvert the private, subjective world will be real; to the extrovert "reality" will apply to the public, objective world. Therefore, he suggests, let us substitute for the concept of "reality" that of publicity. We must operate with the public element and treat it as real. Instead of chasing the black cat of Scholastic Metaphysics, says Mr. Cohen, let us confine ourselves to the "world of experience," the world we know, the world which science can tackle. Philosophy, says Prof. Hogben, instead of wasting time disputing over "reality," "must discuss what characteristics of scientific belief their communicability or publicity."

Science must deal, not with "my" propositions, but with those best equipped to gain common assent.

"In our relation to other human beings the nearest approach to what the universe is really like is found in the schematization of our common experiences.

"What is fundamental is behaviour . . . Only propositions that deal with behaviour in its more extended sense have the property of publicity or social reality."

This gives us a neutral ground for the study of both living and non-living matter.

"Biological progress has annexed the study of conscious behaviour from the province of the private worlds."

Publicism "sees no necessity for the introduction of Teleology into the study of the evolution or behaviour of living beings," and conceives the breaking down of the barrier between voluntary and reflex action. It endorses the unity of scientific method and the principle of mechanism.

**Science and Ethics.**—Further, it does not promise to present us with a view of the universe harmonious with any scheme of ethics.

"The physicist has abandoned teleology in his own sphere. He has banished the spiritual values from the domain of his inquiries and now looks to the biologist to shoulder the task of proving that the universe is consonant with our notions of ethical propriety (but) modern biology gives no justification for the belief that such a compromise is possible."

Science is ethically neutral, and not specially calculated to give a rational sanction to private values.

"Those who declare that Materialism is an exploded fallacy are usually those who deplore the judicial separation of science and moral philosophy."

\* \* \*

It should be stated, in conclusion, that the deterministic procedure is purely analytical. The exponent of materialistic philosophy has always to express himself with the utmost care. He has ceased to expect intelligent co-operation on the part of his opponents in understanding what he means. He must say, as lucidly as possible, that analysis is not description. In reducing a fact to the conditions of its existence he is not describing the nature of that fact. The emphasis laid on this in *Materialism Re-stated* was, in the writer's opinion, a particularly fine feature. Nor is Prof. Hogben found wanting.

"The Modern mechanist does not say that thought and love and heroism do not exist. He says, show me behaviour to which you apply the adjectives thoughtful or loving or heroic, and we will, one fine day, endeavour to arrive at predictable conclusions

with reference to it by following the only method which we have learned by experience to trust." So that as for Dr. Haldane, who takes great pains to disprove of the theory that thought is a secretion of the brain as the bile is of the liver,

"I can only respectfully suggest he is flogging a dead horse, while the living ones are getting out of the Vitalistic stables."

However, no matter what "Dr. Haldane may say on the platform he is as good a mechanist as anyone else in the laboratory," which just about sums up the case of all the opponents of mechanism.

Prof. Hogben is an uncompromising Freethinker on matters like Sunday Observance, Secular Education, etc., and fails to see any connexion between materialism and immorality. As for the future of religion, "It is doubtful whether there was ever a time in the history of Western Europe when a secular outlook was more widespread, and when the hope of finding a rational basis for a universal religion was less forlorn."

Much as we should like to dwell longer on Prof. Hogben's qualities as a historian, as an educationist, as a philosopher, we must close. We see in him yet another representative of the twentieth century Materialism. He fully realizes the unpopularity of that philosophy; it can only flourish among those who have the leisure to study. It has not passed for ever, but on the contrary, *pour mieux sauter*.

G. H. TAYLOR.

## Dogmatic Atheism.

### A FANTASY.

BACKED by the nebulous creeds of Agnostics and the unscientific theorisings of religious scientists, there has been great rejoicing in the Theistic camp over an imagined rout of Atheism. Huzzahs and Hallelujahs ring forth; for God Almighty, who was at one time in imminent danger of collapse from an acute attack of galloping anæmia, now appears to have been revived by blood-transfusion; and his champions have once more sallied forth into the arena.

Curb your smiles, oh ye Atheists! For the battle is to the strong, and ye are face to face with that most fearful of all antagonists—the Scientific (?) Prelate. Shake in your shoes, and tremble in your trousers; for the Very Reverend Dean Inge hath spoken! On guard!

"Dogmatic Atheism—the position of a man who says, 'Whatever you mean by God, I don't believe in him'—is an unusual attitude except in Bolshevist Russia." Thus saith the Dean, as with one mighty swipe he sweeps (or tries to sweep) the doddering remnant of Atheism's rabble forces into the scrap-heap . . .

Yet—what strange miracle is this? Do I dream dreams, or is visions about? The mighty swipe seems to have swept nothing. The doddering remnant is neither doddering, nor a remnant. It stands as strongly as before and its numbers increase every minute. The "rabble" forms an unbroken front from whichever point it is attacked. Something in the Dean's scheme of attack seems to have slipped on a banana skin. What can it be? The matter calls for investigation. Bring hither the microscope!

"Dogmatic Atheism is an unusual attitude except in Bolshevist Russia," saith the Dean. Astonishing! Staggering! Can it be true? Where has the reverend gentleman hidden himself all these years? Has he never heard of the National Secular Society? Is

he unaware of the Atheistic Societies in Europe, not to mention those in the other hemisphere? Or does he mean that his long residence in Bolshevist Russia—from which, presumably, he has recently returned—and his intimate knowledge of dogmatically Atheistic Bolshevists, have led him to regard British, American, French and other Atheists as hopelessly undogmatic and, therefore, unworthy to be called Atheists?

Yes; that must be the explanation. But wait! A little bird has just whispered in my ear. What did you say, little bird? Tut, tut! The little bird says that this fellow Inge has never been to Bolshevist Russia, and that he is just making it all up. Well, I never! What blasphemy! Evidently this naughty little bird is no respecter of parsons. I will not listen to him. The Very Reverend Dean must have been to Bolshevist Russia—if not in person, then in spirit. Avaunt! Get thee behind me—little bird!

The first round of the contest is over. But was it fair? A little bird intervened and there was no referee to turn him out of the arena. What is the decision? Did the Dean win it on points, or has he merely been thrashing the air? It looks mighty like the latter, but we must leave it to the public to decide. Meanwhile, on with the battle!

"Whatever you mean by God," saith the Dean, straight from the shoulder—or should one say, straight from the horse's mouth. But who is "you"? Does the Dean indicate himself by this pronoun? Surely not. For who has yet been able to discover what he means by "God"? His heterodox statements in print have been so jumbled by his orthodoxies in the pulpit that no one can make head or tail of either of them. However—if the Dean is in fact referring to himself, let him tell us exactly what he does mean by the term "God." Perchance he hath some bombshell of a definition up his sleeve which will shatter all disbelief for ever. But let him be careful! Theological bombs are tricky things, and apt either to expire in a mild "fizz," or else to blow the inventor out of his own position of fancied security into—who knows where?

Come along then, my doughty Dean! Have faith in your weapons. Out with the safety-pin of ambiguity and sling the bomb across! . . . Hullo! Here's that darned little bird again. What have you to say this time, eh? Oh, I see. "You" is just a *façon de parler*, is it. But as I don't understand Greek, kindly explain who or what that may be. Ah, thank you. A *façon de parler* is anyone who believes in God—anyone, that is to say, except the Dean. So the bomb was a dud after all. How disappointing . . .

But, halt! The battle is not yet over. Here comes one of the Dean's "yous"—General Mystic—directing a fierce gas attack upon the whole Atheistic front. "God is the One Great Mystery behind Creation! How can you doubt His existence!" Thus does the ghastly gas hiss from the spouts of his sprayers.

Ah, me! The Atheist ranks waver. They turn this way and that. Their eyes roam up to the sky and down to the earth and all around. Are they about to collapse in a faint? No, it seemeth not. For their eyes return with direct, unwavering gaze upon the great General Mystic, and with one volley there comes the reply: "But why *one*? Why *great*? Why *behind*? There are dozens of mysteries, great, small and medium-sized, here under our very noses. We do not merely believe in them—by which we mean 'are aware of them'—but we expect to solve them sooner or later, even as we have solved thousands of others. Yet, why call 'em 'God,' when in

fact they are nothing more than 'our ignorance.' Would you have us kneel and worship *Mystery* because it is a prettier word than *Ignorance*?"

By this time the gas seems to have vanished into that abstract realm from which it came—behind Creation. And, sure enough, here comes that little bird again! What is it now, you imp? Ah; the Dean repudiates the General, does he? He will not admit that God is a synonym for what we don't know. Well, never mind; anyone else will do. Let 'em all come! . . .

Ha! Who is this, clad in all the panoply of the Seasons? 'Tis General Pantheo of the World's Own Artillery. He aims his largest gun at us. He fires. Bang! A monstrous shell comes hurtling over. Here it is: "God is Nature—you must believe in Him!"

The ranks of Atheism crowd round the shell in curiosity. What folly! What rashness! What dare-devilry! Surely they are doomed to extinction. Yet, strange to say, the shell does not burst. They pull it to pieces. Some smile, some laugh, some scowl at the bits they hold. "Why, sure!" they all exclaim, "we believe in it—but why call it God? Isn't the word *nature* good enough? Anyway, as a god it isn't much of a god, is it? Bits of it are all right for some of us; and bits of it are all wrong for some of us. Which is the bit we've all got to worship, please?"

General Pantheo looks a trifle puzzled. "It was all One Vast Oneness when I shot it out of the gun," he says. "So it is," answer the Atheists, "when you put the bits together. But even as a Oneness it has its unpleasant aspects, hasn't it?" General Pantheo scratches his head. "Isn't that because *we* can only know its parts and not know it as a whole? "Then," reply the Atheists, "why worship what we don't know as a whole? Or, alternatively, why worship part of a whole which is palpably imperfect?" General Pantheo shakes his head sadly. "It isn't Nature that's at fault; it's US—er—We, I mean. It's WE who are blind." "But," query the Atheists, "aren't US—er—We a part of Nature too?"

At this point the General asked for time to retire and consider the question—since when he has not returned. But our friend the bird, like the proverbial bad penny, returned in his place. This time he whispered that although the Dean had formerly put considerable reliance upon General Pantheo's tactics, he had now come to the conclusion that he was not a genuine, out and out, hard and fast, last-ditcher ally of God.

No sooner had this regrettable piece of information been conveyed, than there came the sound as of a tornado approaching. A huge dusky fellow, in a costume which (even including the beads and feathers) could only be described as "minus fort-teens," advanced by leaps and bounds, brandishing a fearsome-looking spear in one hand and a small black shiny object in the other. It was General Ju-Ju, commander-in-chief of the Great Idol Army.

"Whoopee! Wallah-wallah!" bawled the General cheerfully, shaking hands vigorously with every private in Atheistic ranks. "I knock you all down with my spear if you no believe my God exist. Him terrible powerful little big God. Here him be!" And, suiting his actions to his words, he held aloft for all to see an exquisitely carved piece of polished ebony, which resembled nothing so much as the bastard offspring of a cat and a canary.

For a moment there was an abashed silence amongst the Atheists. Then in solemn earnestness their leader stepped forward. "Speaking on behalf of my fellow Atheists," he said in a clear voice, "we cannot deny the existence of your God." There was

a general murmur of acquiescence. "Your God," continued the speaker, "is the only *real* God we have had the pleasure of meeting." The face of General Ju-Ju expanded into a broad grin of delight. "The only thing we are doubtful about," added the Atheist's leader, is whether what *you* mean by God is what the Dean . . ."

Krr-r-r-rump! BOOM!! . . . A deafening explosion drowned the speaker's last words. The assembled company stood momentarily stunned. Then a little bird, somewhat ruffled as to his feathers, flew down and perched upon the head of General Ju-Ju. And much to everyone's surprise he began to recite:—

"The Dean stood on the burning field  
Whence all but he had fled,  
For when his words were analysed  
His arguments were dead.

There was a sound of thunder riven—  
The Dean, ah! where was he?  
The bomb he meant to hurl at you  
Has just exploded—see!  
Hee! Hee! Hee!"

C. S. FRASER.

## Your Gramophone.

To abuse a gramophone is not only to spoil the instrument, but also means that the other members of the family will be antagonised by the music.

I have heard many gramophones which have made me shudder, all because they were placed in the wrong position.

First of all a powerful gramophone should not be placed in the same room as the listeners unless the room is very large.

In the modern small house, the gramophone in one room and the listeners in another with the door open between is an ideal arrangement.

Secondly, the gramophone is usually more effective if placed in a corner of a room with the sound outlets pointing to the middle.

Thirdly, the gramophone must be placed on a firm table. A table which is shaky is bound to vibrate, and so the quality of the music is affected.

### SOME GOOD RECORDS.

One of the jolliest of new records is undoubtedly Columbia CB 197. Jack Payne and his B.B.C. Orchestra in "Sitting on a Five Barred Gate." This has a rousing rhythm, the words are distinct and the singing is minus the bleating so often associated with modern songs. On the other side is "I'm gonna be young."

Of a different character but equally rousing is the Grenadier's rendering of the Post Horn Gallop and the Bullfighters' March. This also is a Columbia DB 364, price 3s.

Columbia DX 200, costing 4s. 6d., is a dramatisation of two popular ballads. "My Ain Folk" is introduced by a storm at a Canadian lumber camp, and "Caller Herrin," by a storm at a fishing port.

Columbia LX 108 is of Thommaso Alcaide singing in Italian La Favorita and Pearl Fishers. As Thommaso is known as the "Amazing Alcaide," and the "greatest voice in the world," no one will object to paying 6s. 6d. for this record.

Mention of ballads is a reminder that the Parlophone Record E 3785 includes Margaret Duncan's exquisite singing of the peculiar old Ballad "Touch Not the Nettle," which I first heard broadcast quite recently. Another good Parlophone record is "The Mill in the Black Forest," played by the Seiber Choir.

Among the recent H.M.V. releases which I can fully recommend are Percy Granger's "Handel in the Strand," C 8002; Niedzielski's marvellous pianoforte playing of four of Chopin's Mazurkas H.M.V. C2009; and the Covent Garden Royal Opera Orchestra's playing of a selection from Rossini's "La Boutique Fantasque."

A Decca Record which I very much liked was "The Skippers of St. Ives," very well sung appropriately by the Cornish baritone Jack Collins. F2160.

Of recent Piccadilly records I like best of all the pot pourri from Schubert's "Lilac Time," played by the Athenæum Symphony Orchestra, No. 5121; and what must surely be a remarkable achievement proving that good music is entering the homes of those who can only afford a medium-priced record is the playing of the Grand Opera Company under Stanley Chapple of the gems from "I Pagliacci."

This is on two records, Broadcast Twelve Nos. 5209 and 5210, and one of the merits of the singing is, as one musician has said, "there is a Canio who makes you understand what he is weeping about."

BAY.

## Correspondence.

### TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I hope that Mr. Forbes' letter in your issue of February 22, will not create the impression in the minds of your readers that American youth is to any appreciable extent a follower of such clowns as the Rev. W. A. (Billy) Sunday. American young people, especially university students, are tending generally toward rationalism or atheism.

I am not familiar with the incident referred to at the University of Pennsylvania, but believe it must have occurred some time ago. Mr. Sunday has been a nationally known evangelist for twenty years or more.

While the writer was a student at Ohio State University three or four years ago, Mr. Clarence Darrow, the infidel lawyer who defended Scopes in the Tennessee evolution trial, spoke there to a crowded hall. All the professors at this institution whom the writer heard express an opinion on the subject were Freethinkers, and this seems to be the situation in most of the large universities in this country.

H. A. DAVIS.

## Society News.

### FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S.

OUR last indoor meeting for this winter took the form of a Social, and was well supported by our Freethought friends. Mr. A. Hyatt was very amusing in his well known style with recitations and stories. Mr. J. Clare gave pianoforte solos, and the West London Orchestra added to the gaiety of the evening. Mr. C. Tuson admirably filled the office of M.C.

### WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

THE small Conway Hall was nearly full last Sunday night, when Mr. A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., gave an address on "The Evolution of Religion in Japan." The developments of Shintoism, of Buddhism and its various sects, the part played by an organized hierarchy, and the rationalization, by educated Japanese, of doctrines and beliefs completely discredited by modern culture, were all ably dealt with by the speaker, who drew some instructive parallels between the evolution of religion in the East and in the West. The interest taken in Mr. Howell-Smith's address was well shown by the many questions and the discussion which it elicited.—A.D.M.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

### LONDON.

#### OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 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.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorlands Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Saturday, 7.30, Messrs. G. Haskell, F. Day and E. Bryant.

#### INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. R. Dimsdale Stocker—"Straight and Crooked Thinking."

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, April 1, at 7.45, Mr. W. Elson—"Evolution and Revolution."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Mrs. Rama Rau—"Aspects of the Work of Indian Women."

STREATHAM (Labour Hall, Eastwood Street, Mitcham Lane): 7.0, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe—"Why I am not a Christian."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Winter Garden, 37 High Street, Clapham, near Clapham North Underground Station): 7.15, Mr. C. Tuson (W. London Branch)—"That Freethinkers should Organize and Use their Votes for the Attainment of the 'Aims and Objects.'"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John Katz, B.A.—"Religion and the Decay of Civilization."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Town, N.W.7, facing The Brecknock): 7.30, Mr. W. A. Greatwood—"Some Candid Views on Woman."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"Freethought in the Church."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Picture House, Thornton Road, Bradford): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead—"The Case for Sunday Freedom." Admission free. Collection.

ACCINGTON.—King's Hall, at 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (President N.S.S., Editor of the *Freethinker*)—"Freethought and Freethinking."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (New Room, above Burdon's Shop, bottom of Front Street): 6.30, Mr. T. Brown—"Evolution." Suitable lantern slides will be shown by Mr. T. W. Raine. Members and friends please note.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (President N.S.S., Editor of the *Freethinker*)—"Things Christians Ought to Know."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—City (Albion Street) Hall, at 6.30, Mr. David Weir—"Freethought and Politics."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 41 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): 7.0, Mr. D. Robinson (Liverpool)—"God and Evolution." Current *Freethinkers* on sale. This will be the last indoor meeting for the public this session. Announcements re Outdoor Meetings will be made later.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A Dramatic Performance of the Secular Players, of "The Servant in the House" (Kennedy).

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.0, Members Meeting.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Bakers Hall, 5 Forbes Place): 7.0, Mr. McMillan—"The Evolution of Man."

PERTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Secular Room, 122 Canal Street): 2.0, Mr. Alec S. McRae, on "Psycho-Analysis." Questions and discussion. Evening Social and Whist 7.15. Independent Labour Party Hall, Union Lane.

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