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Views and Opinions.

Mass Production.

The present age is one of mass production. It is cheaper to make a thousand pairs of boots all alike than it is to leave the making of each pair to the fancy of the individual workman. From boots to motor-cars the same rule holds; and it must be admitted that to a very considerable extent the plan works. It is, after all, more important that everyone should have a good pair of boots than that the boots of some should be artistically diverse at the cost of many going without boots altogether. An objection might be raised that mass production destroys artistic craftsmanship and reduces the workman to a cog in the machine, but if life can be so arranged as to give scope in other directions for creative and individual effort no great harm will be done. Of course, there is a great deal of virtue in that "if."

But mass production in another direction is almost altogether bad. Partly unconsciously, partly consciously, we have gone in for the large scale production of what, for want of a better term, we dignify by the name of opinion. We begin with the school and standardize the instruction given. With rare exceptions, no matter what school we take, scholars are turned out much as we turn out cheap motor-cars. There are differences in superficialities, but both the cars and the scholars will be fundamentally alike. The children will be taught the same things in the same way, and they will be kept from knowing other things by the same methods, and when they go out into the world, the cerebral agitation which they mistake for thinking will lead them to voice stereotyped sentiments in identical terms. They will cheer the same things, condemn the same things, and will be fooled by the same things. Even such revolt as there is against this mass production does not take the form of an encouragement of individual thinking, but rather that of mass production on a smaller scale. We have group mass production, socialistic, conservative, communistic, or sectarian. The phono-

graphic output on the one side is met with the phonographic output on the other side. They are all aiming at instruction, not education.

* * *

Working the Oracle.

Unfortunately the manufacture, or at least, the perpetuating, of mass opinion does not stop with the school. The newspaper is notoriously a manipulator of this article. The most widely circulated of our papers spend their energies in creating mass opinion, from community singing to election cries. Again there is a most elaborate technique for telling a people what they ought to say, or what they ought not to say, and to prevent their knowing the truth about anything. Reading the report of the Prime Minister's speech at the Mansion House I discover from one paper that all he indicated was that tariffs must be imposed at once, and from another that all he said was that we must build up certain foreign countries without delay. In each report the other side is carefully left out. And each informs its readers that the country is determined to have this or that at once. Naturally, the human gramophones for whom the papers cater at once decide that they are the country, and that this is the thing they want. In this way mass opinion is first created, and then directed. The education would be useless without the direction, the direction would be impossible without the education.

In all these matters, and in the presence of actual events we are faced with the production of mass opinion as a desirable end in life. It is taken as an essential task of "leaders of opinion" to create it. Again the conviction is general. With the Church it has always been an obvious aim. To get the whole population to sing the praise of the blood of Jesus in the same words, to the same tune, and with the same meaning—or lack of meaning—is the religious ideal. To get the whole of the people acclaiming a blind support of "God and the King" is the ideal of the old-fashioned Conservative. And to suppress all opinions but one, and to unite all in the worship of certain economic theories in precisely the same language is the ideal of the genuine Communist. A Society in which all men and women shall say the same things, and profess belief in the same things marks the triumph of mass production in the world of intelligence, and it is a danger far graver than anything else that fronts us at present. We are killing religion in the churches only to resurrect it in social life.

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For Example.

We have recently had two supreme examples of the power of mass production in "opinion." The first is the general election, the second is the Armistice Day celebrations. Concerning the first, I take it for

granted that the candid historian of the near future will take it as an undeniable illustration of the influence of mass suggestion. In my own time I do not know an election in which this was so plain. No room was allowed for reasoning, no allowance was made for the possible need for intelligent consideration of possible issues. The electors did not go to the poll, they were driven there under the impetus of party cries, some of which were so obviously stupid, that those who created them are already beginning to disown them. In the case of the Labour Party its organization—from the point of view of a party vote the best organized of the lot—the customary cries were enough, and the other parties found it adequate to create a feeling of panic in the knowledge that it would induce the feeling with which a drowning man clutches at a straw. The results were what might have been anticipated. If we will standardize thought, whether it is standardized in groups, or in countries, we must not be surprised at what happens. In such circumstances people think like sheep and act like asses.

* * *

The Armistice.

In a way the Armistice commemoration is more serious. Proclaiming a day on which people are to mourn the killed in the war, might have been excused directly after the war had ceased. It has no intelligent excuse to-day. You can no more order a people to mourn at a certain moment year after year, than you can make them happy by threatening to punch their heads if they are not. To a rational being it is far more impressive to see a single person laying a flower at the foot of the cenotaph than it is to see lines of soldiers ordered to be present, a Bishop saying what one knows he will say, and a multitude assembled to take part in a spectacle. There is no indication here of genuine sorrow on the part of the multitude, there is no indication of real regret that the war took place, no indication of a determination that war shall cease; it is a spectacle illustrating the power of mass mentality.

And mass mentality directed to what is obviously a wrong end. The facts are that for centuries the policies of the nations of the world have made so inevitably for war that even now it is generally taken that wars every now and again must be. In no respect did the war of 1914-1918 differ from other wars, save in the number of killed, the cost of the campaign, and the savagery of the warfare. Nowhere is it generally recognized—certainly at none of the Armistice services or meetings—that warfare between nations is a measure of their degradation and of their lack of genuine civilization. Nowhere was it impressed upon the people that the millions who died in the war did so in beastly conditions, that they were victims to the stupidity and knavery of politicians, and that war at any time must lead to comparative degradation and retrogression with all engaged in it. Far from those who assembled round the monuments on Armistice Day being alive to these facts, if anyone had voiced them, or if he had even dared to speak aloud some of the normal consequences of war he would in all probability have been lynched by the crowd. Mass psychology does not often carry a people very far in the right direction, and never for any length of time.

* * *

The Situation.

Look at the situation. Gathered round the London Cenotaph on November 11 was a parade of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. There was also a good show of the clergy, and the whole proceedings bore the character of a religious service. There was no

official parade of civilians, of science, of literature, of anything that stood for the higher life of the nation. In all the services held on Armistice Sunday in the Churches there was nothing said about the causes of wars, the disgrace of wars, or the degradation, personal and national that enters into and follows all wars. What was dwelt on was our sorrow for the dead, the bravery of the dead, the nobility, the sacrifice of the dead, the fine character of the dead. There was no need to deny these qualities to the dead, fantastic as they might appear even the majority of the killed when closely and coldly analysed. But in the absence of the other side of war, what is the rising generation—which will be called upon to fight the next war when it comes—to make of it all? They cannot be impressed with the horrors of war, they have never experienced them. They cannot know the inevitable consequences—moral and social—that follow large scale wars—that is hidden from them. All they can feel is the glamour of militarism, the importance of militarism, and to be ready to emulate the bravery, the sacrifice of the dead whom the memorials commemorate, and to support the next war when it comes along. We are using the memorials to our dead to keep alive the very folly and stupidity that brought them to their end. And the mass intelligence of the people is such that they could see nothing humiliating in sending the blind and the maimed into the streets on November 11 to beg for the help that should have been given them all in generous measure as a first charge on the income of the nation. That this begging is done by proxy, does not matter in the least. The maimed survivors are still left to get by charity what should be theirs by right. Personally, I have never yet worn a poppy. I give on November 11, as I give on other occasions during the year. But I decline to be coerced by pressure to wear what I would not otherwise wear, or even if I should wear it, I decline to yield to this "white feather" kind of pressure. And when enough people adopt my plan, and when some energetic protest is made against using November 11 as a military parade, and utilize it as it might be utilised as both an act of memory for the dead and as a gigantic protest against war, we shall have taken a good stride towards killing the spirit of militarism.

In this respect we are only as are other nations. Every one of the countries in the war have their war memorials and day of remembrance, and it is put to no better use. The greatest military-minded nation in the world, France, adopts it. And they all turn from their homage to the dead, to make preparations for new wars whenever they think their interests demand it. One of the clauses in the Versailles Treaty stipulates that Germany should prohibit all military drill and military uniforms in all educational establishments. The avowed reason for this was that such drills help to foster militarism. I agree with that thoroughly. It was a wholly wise provision. But why restrict it to Germany? Why not adopt the same healthy rule in this country and in other countries? We have created a mass psychology which looks upon war as normal, and even healthy. Why not make an attempt to create an individual psychology that shall stamp militarism for what it is?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

He that doth good for goods sake seeks neither praise nor reward, though he gains some of both at last.
William Penn.

In a promise, what you thought, not what you said is always to be considered.—Cicero.

An Atheist Singer.

"Master, who crowned our unmelodious days
With gems of perfect speech."—*Watson.*

"Song was Swinburne's natural voice. He was the greatest of our lyrical poets—of the world's, I should say, considering what a language he had to wield."

Meredith.

WHEN Swinburne died, there was stilled a voice that had sung vigorously, melodiously, and with great freshness for half a century. His rare genius, indeed, dazzled so much, that his reputation has suffered to the extent of his being regarded rather as a singer than as a seer. But for his outspoken views about kingcraft and priestcraft, he must inevitably have succeeded Tennyson as Laureate. He was the last of the great English poets who dominated the imagination of his contemporaries.

With the publication of *Poems and Ballads* Swinburne "awoke one morning to find himself famous." No such tumult had taken place in literary circles since the appearance of Byron's *Don Juan*. The air resounded with clamour, and Swinburne's vogue became extraordinary. Henceforth, until his seventieth year, he was an acknowledged force not only in English, but in European literature. Men came to think of him, with Shelley, with Keats, with Wordsworth, as one of the singers who mark an era. For two generations he upheld that splendid tradition of liberty, and gave us poems, plays, and criticisms which breathed into our literature new harmonies and the new revolutionary spirit.

It is simple truth to say that, had not Swinburne lived, the world would have been largely ignorant of the infinite flexibility and potentialities of our language. He enlarged the frontiers of poetry, although men of rare genius had ransacked verse for centuries before he was born. Compared to Swinburne, Keats and Coleridge are poor of resource, limited in range, timid in execution. This is not to say that Swinburne has excelled them in ideas or melody, only that he was master in the use of a far wider choice of instruments.

One special quality of Swinburne's writing leaps to the eye of the dullest reader. It is his enthusiasm for Liberty. The love of Freedom has been a common possession of many poets expression to that feeling. have failed to give splendid expression to that feeling. But Swinburne has surpassed them all in the ardour of his devotion, and in the rapture of his praise:—

"The very thought in us how much we love thee
Makes the throat sob with love, and blinds the eyes."

No English poet since Shelley has sung more loftily, or with more fiery passion, or with finer thought, than Swinburne when he is arraigning priestcraft at the bar of Humanity. His "Hymn to Man" is frankly, even triumphantly, Atheistic:—

"Because man's soul is man's god still,
What wind soever waft his will,
Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led."

Swinburne regarded prayer as folly, and he vents his scorn in music:—

"Behold there is no grief like this;
The barren blossom of thy prayer,
Thou shalt find out how sweet it is
O fools and blind, what seek ye there,
High up in the air.
Ye must have gods, the friends of men,
Merciful gods, compassionate,
And these shall answer you again,
Will ye beat always at the gate,
Ye fools of fate."

In the "Hymn to Proserpine," he chants:—

"O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods,
Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all
knees bend;
I kneel not, neither adore you, but standing, look to the
end."

The reproach has often been levelled against our insular art that it is Philistine. The French artistic sense lifts itself out of that ruck. It may go to "the demnition bow-wows," but it is not Philistine. There is no risk that the bulk of our English writers will ever be Bohemian. Mr. John Masefield is so respectable, and Mr. Rudyard Kipling is a truculent Tory. Nowadays, with us, Swinburnes are conspicuous by their absence, but so is the talent of that great poet who blew everything to melody through the golden trumpet of his genius.

It comes to this in the end. The greatest poet of our time was an avowed Freethinker and unabashed Democrat. It is not so strange as it seems, for real poets have long since ceased to gain inspiration from convention. Byron was a thorough sceptic; Shelley a declared Atheist, Keats a perfect Pagan. Edward Fitzgerald was as Epicurean as old Omar himself. Tennyson was heterodox, and Matthew Arnold a Secularist. James Thomson was a militant Freethinker, and George Meredith and William Morris were both sceptics. Thomas Hardy was a Freethinker. As for French literature, it has ever been in the vanguard of Freedom. It is one blaze of splendid scepticism from Abelard to Anatole France. Christianity no longer attracts men of genius, and therein lies the seeds of its death. The genius of modern times is enkindled at the altar of Humanity, which was standing before any other was built, and will endure when every other has crumbled into nothingness.

Swinburne's lyrics are far more than merely beautiful examples of verbal artistry. In them we find magnificent expression of the claims of the indomitable human spirit which stands erect in the presence of adverse fortune and bids defiance to fate. There is no finer inspiration in a thousand years of English poetry. The leaders of the great French Revolution bequeathed the watchwords, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," as a legacy to the nineteenth century. Equally inspiring was the message which Swinburne brought to the twentieth as a gift. His first claim on posterity is genius, but he was so much more than a mere writer, for he fought in the Army of Human Liberation. He loved Liberty without misgiving, and Liberty, loving him in return, has crowned his grave with honour.

"Our glorious century gone
Beheld no head that shone
More clear across the storm, above the foam,
More steadfast in the fight,
Of warring night and light,
True to the truth whose star leads heroes home."

MIMNERMUS.

ON OATHS.

. . . What other oath
Than honesty to honesty engaged
That this shall be, or we will fall for it?
Swear priests, and cowards, and men cautelous,
Old feeble carrions, and such suffering souls
That welcome wrongs; unto bad causes swear
Such creatures as men doubt; but do not stain
The even virtue of our enterprise,
Nor the insuppressive metal of our spirits,
To think that or our cause or our performance
Did need an oath.

Shakespeare (Julius Cæsar Act iii. Sc. 1.)

Jesus the Miracle Worker.

THE Gospel Jesus was a perigrinating preacher and prophet who devoted a good deal of his time to what the writers of the Gospels considered wonderful miracles. Matthew, for instance, records that Jesus by merely laying his hands on Peter's mother-in-law, cured her of a fever. He also stilled the tempest by "rebuking the winds and the sea," and there immediately followed "a great calm." And when he got into the country of the Gaderines he met two persons possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs exceedingly fierce—which devils apparently knew Jesus, for they called out "Jesus thou Son of God, art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" But a good way off there was a herd of swine and the devils requested Jesus to send them into the swine, which Jesus accordingly did, and the poor swine "ran violently down a steep pit into the sea, and were drowned," but what became of the devils Matthew does not say. He however says that "the whole City came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him they were so unfavourably impressed with him that "they besought him that he would depart out of their coast," and the next verse informs us that he responded to their request. "And he entered into a ship and passed over and came into his own City." (Matthew viii. 29 to 32 : Matthew ix 1.)

The next miracle Jesus is alleged to have performed was that of curing a man "who was sick of the palsy? He began by urging the man "to be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee," but when the Scribes accused him of Blasphemy—he changed his tactics and called on the man "to take up thy bed and go unto thy house. And he arose and departed to his house. But when the multitude saw it they marvelled and glorified God which had given such power unto men." (Matt. ix. 6 to 9). Matthew also records the alleged miracle of Jesus feeding five thousand on five loaves and two small fishes, and the taking up in fragments after the repast twelve baskets full. It was undoubtedly a useful act under the circumstances if it was performed, but no rational person has ever tried the experiment since. It is also Matthew who tells us that after Jesus had taken a number of his disciples on to a ship the waves of the sea were buffeted about by the wind, but in the fourth watch of the night Jesus "went unto them walking on the sea" without Boyton Boots; but when the disciples saw him walking on the sea they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them saying "Be of good cheer. It is I; be not afraid." When, however, Peter tried the same experiment, he was smitten with fear and failed, and was about to sink until Jesus came to his aid, and saved him from a watery grave. (Matt xiv. 24 to 32.)

From Matthew also that we learn that Jesus made the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, and we have a second account of the feeding of a multitude of people who had followed Jesus and remained with him for three days and had nothing to eat. Jesus thought it was time they should have a meal, so he asked his disciples how many loaves had they and they answered "seven and a few little fishes." "And he took the seven loaves and the fishes and gave thanks and brake them and gave to his disciples and the multitude. And they did all eat and were filled and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full." (Matthew xv. 32 to 38.) In this case there were "four thousand men beside women and children." Further they appeared to have had a jolly good meal, a regular blow out—and they were satisfied. In Mark we have an account of Jesus turning an "unclean spirit" out of a man, but in this case Jesus merely rebuked the spirit, and called on

him to come out of the poor fellow, but it tore the body of the man before making its departure. (Mark i. 24 and 25.) In the same chapter Jesus cured a man with leprosy by merely putting forth his hand and touching him and exclaiming. "Be thou clean"—and the leprosy departed immediately (Mark i. 40-41.) He also cured a man who was sick of the palsy, informing him that his "sins were forgiven," but whether this was the same case as that mentioned in Matthew is doubtful, although he went through the same performance in each case (Mark ii. 5, 6, and 7). Another of his achievements was that of curing a man with a *withered hand*. This he is alleged to have accomplished on the Sabbath Day, which aroused the wrath of the Philistines who henceforth "took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy him." (Mark iii. 4, 5, 6.) A little later on Jesus stilled the tempest by merely "rebuking the wind," and saying, "Peace be still." (Mark v. 39.) There is also another account of Jesus turning a devil out of a man who in answer to a question from Jesus said his name was "Legion—for we are many." This gentleman had his devils sent into swine (about two thousand of them) and they ran furiously down a steep place into the sea and were choked (Mark v. 12-13.) The Gospel however does not inform us what the proprietors of these pigs thought of this miracle! Mark also tells us of Jesus feeding five thousand persons on five loaves and two small fishes, and also walking upon the sea, in slightly different language to Matthew. In Luke we have another story of Jesus turning out a devil from a man, and Jesus rebuked the devil and said "Hold thy peace and come out of him." And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him and hurt him not. (Luke iv. 34 and 35.)

In John there is the case of Jesus turning water into wine at a marriage feast of Cana and it says that when the disciples had drunk of this wine they believed in his miraculous power. (John ii. 10-11.) Also John records the greatest achievement of Jesus, viz., the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This alleged miracle is worthy of a little critical examination and comment. The story is that of two ladies who were on friendly terms with Jesus, named Martha and Mary, and one of whom, Mary, had anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, their brother was taken suddenly ill. The sisters came and besought Jesus to come and see their brother, for they thought that with his miraculous powers he might restore him to health. Jesus, however, remained two days away from the abode of his friends and waited till he knew Lazarus was dead. A few days later Jesus called to see Martha and Mary, and was informed of the death of Lazarus, Martha said unto Jesus, "Lord if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God—God will give it thee." Jesus said unto her "thy brother shall rise again." (John xi. 21 to 23.)

A little later Mary met Jesus again, and when Jesus saw her weeping "he groaned in the spirit and was troubled," and said, "where have you laid him?" And they said unto him, "Lord come and see." (John xi. 33 and 34.) Then we have what is called by some Christians the most pathetic scene in the life of Jesus, and the shortest verse in the Gospels, viz., "*Jesus wept*." But why should he weep? If he knew that he was capable of raising his friend from the dead this weeping at the graveside was merely a dramatic appeal to the large crowd that awaited his miraculous performance. We are told that some Jews in the crowd said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died." (v. 37.) But

Jesus came to the grave. "It was a cave and a stone lay upon it." And Jesus said, "take ye away the stone." But Martha speaking of her dead brother said: "Lord by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." But Jesus persisted and again commanded them to take away the stone. And when they had done so He cried "with a loud voice" but why with a loud voice? Can the dead hear a loud voice, better than a soft one? "Lazarus come forth." "And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin! And Jesus saith unto them, "Loose him and let him go." (Verse 44.) Poor Lazarus must have wriggled out of the grave before some of the crowd "Loosed him and let him go." What a spectacle! Some of the Jews were not convinced, but the majority were and they went to the Pharisees and tried to stir up trouble. No doubt the majority of people in those days believed in miracles and thought they were quite possible. But we must remember that Jesus was not the first miracle-worker mentioned in the Bible. Elijah is alleged to have raised a widow's child from the dead (Kings xvii. 21-22), and later after the death of Jesus Paul is alleged to have restored Eutychus to life after he had fallen from a window and was "taken up dead." (Acts xx. 9-10.) What are we to think of these alleged miracles? We know that miracles do not happen to-day and in the light of modern science we have good grounds for believing that they never have occurred. It therefore seems quite certain that Jesus, if he were a historical character, which is very doubtful, was self-deceived, and, with the aid of the Gospel writers and the great army of priests and parsons, has succeeded in deceiving the great mass of his credulous followers ever since.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Christianity and Humanitarianism

"The salvation of the soul is the fundamental idea, the main point in Christianity."—

Feuerbach. "Essence of Christianity," p. 160.

"We should find consolation in heartily despising this life and this world, and from our hearts sigh for and desire the future honour and glory of eternal life."—Luther. Cited by Feuerbach. "Essence of Christianity," p. 161.

"That strange and sickly world into which we are introduced by the Gospels—a world as if taken from a Russian novel in which the outcasts of society, nervous affections and childish idiotism, seem to have appointed a rendezvous."

Nietzsche. "The Antichrist," p. 284.

The following item of news—written before the parliamentary election—appeared in the *News-Chronicle* for October 22:—

There are fifty men living near Coalville, Leicestershire, who do not know an election is in progress, and unless they receive special permission cannot vote. They are the Cistercian silent monks at Mount St. Bernard Abbey. They live a life of solitude and prayer, and never see newspapers. They are on the voters' lists, but have not been known to vote for the last thirty years.

These men have obeyed the commandment of Christ, to forsake all and follow him. They have cut themselves off from the world, and the service of their fellow men, and devoted their lives to the saving of their miserable souls. They are the only genuine Christians, and there are multitudes of these monks—here and in other countries—engaged in the same occupation. What progress would mankind make if it depended upon men devoted to "a life of solitude and prayer?" What use are these men in

the world? Moreover, as they are all dedicated to a life of celibacy, the human race would become quite extinct within a hundred years, if all men followed their example. A consummation to which Tolstoy looked forward with equanimity, if not satisfaction.

The fact is, these monks are an encumbrance. Parasites living upon a society they do nothing to support. They renounce the world, and repudiate all their duties and responsibilities as men and citizens. They claim to be citizens, or candidates, of another world. What right has the Christian to deride the Indian Fakir for living the same kind of life?

We have previously shown, by the testimony of the great Christian leaders, that renunciation is the kernel of Christianity. As Dr. Scullard—who is a professor of Church History and Christian Ethics—in his book *The Ethics of the Gospel and the Ethics of Nature*, p. 79. (Published by the "Student Christian Movement,") observes:—

The attitude of the Christian to the world is one of detachment. There can be no doubt that this is the teaching of the New Testament. Christians should be quite prepared to accept the reproach of being "other-worldly." "They are not of the world," said Jesus, "even as I am not of the world." (John xv. 19; xvii. 16). . . . Attempts to secularize the Kingdom find no support in the New Testament.

"So," continues Dr. Scullard, "Jesus did not teach the poor that the first thing to be hoped for was improvement in their material conditions. . . . neither the mission of John the Baptist nor the mission of Jesus was concerned with economic conditions." (p. 83.)

In his latest book of Essays, Mr. Aldous Huxley—the most intellectual of our writers to-day—has an essay on Pascal the great French Catholic philosopher, known to Protestants chiefly as the author of the saying: "The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know." Which they always fall back upon when gravelled for a reason for his unreasonable beliefs. Of Pascal, Mr. Huxley says:—

How he hated the poets for having other rules than those of virtue and for behaving like men rather than good men! He felt all the Puritans disapproval of the theatre because it made people think about love, and because it gave them pleasure. Anything that gave pleasure was odious to this great hater. That section of the *Pensees* [*Thoughts*] which deals with worldly distractions is perhaps the most vigorous of the whole book; hatred improved his style. He loathed his fellows for being able to amuse themselves. He would have liked all men to be as he himself was—racked with incessant pain, sleepless, exhausted by illness. "Sickness," he affirmed, "is the Christian's natural state; for in sickness a man is as he ought always to be—in a state, that is to say, of suffering, of pain, of privation from all the pleasures of the senses, exempt from all passions." Such was the opinion of Pascal, the Christian dogmatist.¹

He even persuaded himself that he was grateful for his headaches and other pains: "And not only did he accept sickness for himself; he even tried to impose it on other people. He demanded that everyone should think and feel about the world at large as he did; he wanted to impose headaches, sleeplessness, and dyspepsia, with their accompanying psychological states, on all." (p. 284.)

Mr. Huxley further remarks: "The spectacle of so much malignity, so much hatred, is profoundly repulsive." This spirit of self-mortification caused him to have a spiked iron belt made for himself, which he wore whenever a visitor came to see him, so as to check any pleasure arising out of the conver-

¹ Aldous Huxley: *Do What You Will*. p. 282.

sation; later on he wore this instrument of torture continually: "Towards the end of his life this man of principles would not even permit himself the pleasure of being attached to his friends and relations, nor of being loved by them in return." Declaring: "If I make people love me, if I attract them to myself, I am guilty, for their lives and all their cares should be devoted to attaching themselves to God or to seeking Him." (p. 281.) Behold the ennobling effect of Christianity in social and domestic relations! Nietzsche was quite right when he declared that: "Christianity needs sickness, almost as Hellenism needs a surplus of healthfulness." And that "Christianity has as its basis the *rancune* [spite] of the sick, the instinct opposed to the healthy." *Anti-christ* pp. 323-325.)

Those Protestants who have given up the idea of eternal punishment, now pretend that Christianity is the Gospel of *Social Salvation*. Of salvation from poverty and distress here upon earth. Of course this is an impudent perversion of the Gospel teaching; there is nothing of the kind in the New Testament. Let them take Professor Clifford's warning: "That which you keep in your hearts, my brothers, is the slender remnant of a system which has made its red mark on history, and still lives to threaten mankind. . . . You have stretched out your hands to save the dregs of the sifted sediment of a residuum. Take heed lest you have given soil and shelter to the seed of that awful plague which has destroyed two civilizations, and but barely failed to slay such promise of good as is now struggling to live among men."²

W. MANN.

The Churches, the Clergy and the Crisis.

A SENTIMENTAL publicist, Mr. Hugh Redwood, is mainly responsible for a current discussion of the possibility of interdenominational services at St. Paul's Cathedral, and interchanges of pulpits between clergymen and ministers of other denominations. This "stunt," which is being run by the *News-Chronicle*, coincides with a general movement among Christian bodies and organs to exploit the present political and national "crisis" for pious ends. Unity is supposed to give strength, and these two efforts indicate that the churches realize how little what they stand for does count in political or personal life to-day, and is a characteristic example of their habitual method of attempting enterprise in moments of other peoples' emergency.

The fact is that the return of the "National" Government, and the causes thereof, were like the Prince of Wales's recent visit to Lourdes, (according to His Royal Highness's Private Secretary, in a letter to Mr. Ken-sit), "completely devoid of any religious significance." The *Church Times* notwithstanding, we are sure that the new Government is not counting on anything as a result "of the nation's prayers." In what the *Christian World* calls a "prophetic sermon," preached at Bishop-gate Chapel, Dr. R. F. Horton, depicting the "dire peril," in which he thinks civilization is to-day, affirms that "it is not likely that God will leave secularism triumphant or make Godlessness a success." And so, according to the Doctor, the collapse of the pound, the economic crisis of the nations, "the confusion and shock of the present financial strain," are all God's way of "thrusting man back on Him." He hedges up the way with thorns, and make the paths impossible "in order to make man realize that "all power is given to Christ, and that he can control those uncontrollable forces which baffle the wisest statesmen and economists!"

Another minister, Dr. Rufus Jones, "Vice President of the Council of the Churches of Christ in America,"

dealing with the situation in America, where, it seems, "wealth accumulates and men decay," says that secularism is responsible for life being aimless and hopeless to-day. "We seem to be a part of a machine, and are turned like the spoke in a wheel. We seem to have come from nowhere and to be going nowhere. The moral breakdown of lives, the paganizing of many areas of life, the weakening of family ties, and the threatened collapse of the social structure, are the natural fruit of such contracted views." By "contracted views," it is explained, is meant not expecting any help from "resources of a spiritual order."

To these and many other doleful predictions of the fate that awaits an increasingly intelligent and sceptical world we may reply with some words of Dr. Jones's own which, by an oversight perhaps, appear in the same issue of the *Christian World* as those above quoted. He says the clergy spend their Sundays "teasing people or whining at them." He declares that "the devout faith our ministers have Sunday after Sunday in just picking our beautiful bodiless words and aiming them at the supposedly beautiful bodiless thoughts and feelings their people are supposedly having of a Sunday morning constitutes (particularly for an age like this), the most amazing spectacle of waste religion that could be conceived." Yet we are asked to believe in this "waste" as a cure for international necessity!

ALAN HANDSACRE.

Acid Drops.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, according to the *Evening News* of November 9, is asking for information concerning a potential "saint" who was found dead in the street in June, 1925. There is a move at Rome to get him canonized. When found the man, Matt Talbot, was wearing heavy cart ropes and chains round his body, which he had been wearing for years. He slept for a few hours each night on a plank bed and prayed for long periods. The Archbishop says:—

This story of a man until recently in obscurity in our midst, whose spirit of prayer and penance seemed to belong to the ages of faith rather than to the materialistic world of to-day filled many minds with wonder. The present investigation is but the first step on the long road which the Church requires to be travelled before beatification or canonization is reached.

What is one to do with a Church which so trades upon the folly of mankind as this? We have no doubt that Matt Talbot is in line with a great many of the saints in the Church calendar, but when insanity and degradation is used by the Church as a means of establishing its power over the ignorant and the credulous it does give point to the question of how far a civilized country is justified in tolerating its presence.

From a paragraph we see that a lady in Adelaide has promised £10 for every Communist converted to Christianity. Up to the time of the announcement only one has been captured. We have no doubt that if the figure is raised high enough converts will come in more rapidly. But there will have to be a big jump before it reaches the cost of every Jewish convert to Christianity. That, we believe, amounts to several hundred pounds per head.

Since the war nearly a million and a half human beings have been killed or injured in road accidents in Great Britain. On the hypothesis that there is a God who in international wars gives a victory to one set of combatants, may one assume that there is a God giving a victory to the winners in this civil war, or does one assume that Our Heavenly Father just sits and looks on, doing nothing?

A writer says that the churches are languishing because they do not to a greater extent turn their activities to the non-churchgoing crowd. We hope the pious reader is not satisfied with this feeble explanation. The implication is that the Churches have only to reach out and they can gather in as many clients as they wish.

²Clifford: *Lectures and Essays*. p. 179.

Congregations in hundreds of churches are dwindling. If the churches are unable to discover the way to retain old clients, can they hope to attract new ones among the non-churchgoing element. When the old customers of a shop-keeper leave him because they have become dissatisfied with the deteriorated quality of the goods he now supplies, his only hope is to attract a fresh lot of customers who don't know him or his wares. Apparently it is a similar sort of hope which the aforesaid writer is working on.

Mr. Norman Birkett, K.C., recently gave an address to the Nottingham Brotherhood in Wesley Chapel. The address, we are told, made a deep impression on the large crowd present. From a report of the address we gather that the "famous K.C." presented a bundle of quite motheaten platitudes, such as hundreds of local preachers delight to edify yokels with almost any Sunday in the year. Nevertheless, the platitudes made a deep impression. They came, you see, from the lips of a famous King's Counsel!

A well-known politician says that the great need of the day is reflection. The reminder is good so far as it goes. Unfortunately, the politician and the priest are quite satisfied if people's thoughts are merely a reflection of the politician's and priest's ideas. We would prefer to say that the "great need" is independent thinking. It is a great need, because none of our national newspapers, or politicians, or parsons ever encourage it. A few may pay it "lip service," but this is only a way of introducing the suggestion that one should be independent-minded enough to come to the same conclusions as they have!

Another of the busy-bodies, one Spurgeon of the London United Temperance Council—there is, apparently no end to the numbers of these inquisitive councillors—met his match in Mr. Hay Halkett, the magistrate at Marylebone, who, when the former applied to him to prevent refreshments being provided at certain functions in the Portman Rooms, told him that "he (his worship) did not believe in restricting facilities to prevent people going to places of this sort to supper or dance. He had recently had a holiday in N. Spain, where the public houses are open all day, but there is no drunkenness." Turning to Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Hay Halkett (vide *Hampstead and Highgate Express*) added: "I don't entertain your objection. I think you had better go to a more sympathetic magistrate for you will not get any change out of me." Blunt, but not perhaps judicial. Nevertheless, in this, as in many matters, law and common-sense are not quite the same thing, and it is not always that the latter has the pre-eminence in the magisterial mind.

An interesting view of the Founder of Christianity emerges from the pages of *As a Jew Sees Jesus*, by Dr. E. R. Trattner (Scribners) just published. Here is evidence from a new angle of the real character of Jesus supposing, as this author does, that he was a real character. If so, he was essentially a Jew. His language "dripped with Jewish tradition and lore"; his quotations from the Old Testament were not verifications of prophecy but borrowings from Hebrew books. The most famous sayings of Jesus, according to Dr. Trattner, including the Beatitudes, were of rabbinical origin, and he interpreted the Torah in his own way. As "the most eminent Jew who ever lived," Jesus, Dr. Trattner says, may be progressively appreciated as such by his own people "in proportion as the Christian world turns its back on the whole abracadabra of medieval theology." Jesus was rejected by the Jews because he did not offer them a leader in revolt against Roman tyranny, but only an "apocalyptic vision" of his own in which "he believed implicitly." It is easy to see how this view may be used by Christian apologists; but how can the Pope of Rome or the Archbishop of a State Church in England claim succession to a Jewish visionary, and unbroken succession from his Jewish and mostly humble followers? If its "kingdom is not of this world," what right has Christianity to be part of

the constitution of this country or of the State anywhere? That when such Christian-State institutions have fallen a new Jesus may be enshrined in the Jewish world of the future is a far-fetched but harmless fancy.

In a religious weekly a parsonic reviewer captioned his column of book-reviews the other week with "David Hume—a study of an Atheist." Of course, David Hume has been dead some few years now, and it is thought sane to refer to the fact that he was an Atheist. What we should like to see is our religious weeklies mustering up courage enough to review at length the works of some living Atheists. Such reviews would at least help to persuade their more intelligent readers that the Churches and the theologians were not too timid to tackle modern Freethought criticism.

Miss Rebecca West, speaking of the Irish Free State censorship, said that theatre architects in Ireland must have a troublesome time designing theatres so that the audience can see stage or screen over each other's haloes. Films which deal with "any kind of promiscuous love making" are banned, and "prolonged kissing and embracing are forbidden," and must be "shortened" to pass the Censor. Posters also come under his eagle eye, and, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, a few weeks ago in a poster of the film "Resurrection," "the figure of Lupe Velez was completely obliterated, while John Boles was left looking very passionate while grasping a square of blank paper." This is worthy of the worst sort of clerical impudence, and when we observe the frequency with which females in scanty attire are used for advertising purposes we wonder how half the soaps and tobaccos and patent foods are advertised in Ireland.

From one of many sermons preached in connexion with Armistice Day celebrations we may remark on their fundamental futility. This particular sermon was at the Parish Church, Marlow, where there paraded sixty ex-service men under a Col. Wethered, the British Legion Colour Party, the Marlow Town Prize Band, the Marlow Fire Brigade, a number of other local officials, and the Boy and Girl Scouts and Guides. Mark what the preacher said to these people on this occasion, for it is typical. First, truth. "Nations had changed their outlook on life very considerably since 1914, and all of them had signed a solemn declaration to settle disputes peacefully." Second, futility. "He believed in disarmament, but it would not suffice if Great Britain should disarm if other countries increased their armaments. They had to face many unpleasant facts." The Rev. C. F. Spearing might have mentioned the "unpleasant fact" that "teaching everyone to overcome evil by good," which he said was "the only way of securing lasting peace" is what his religion did, with the aid of kings and soldiers, for about 1,000 years at least in the world, and that to this day its preachers are, as he is, quite prepared to see good overcome by evil if only people will believe that "the good" are the biggest battalions. The *Bucks Mail* significantly heads its report of this "religious" utterance "Vicar's Disarmament Warning"!

On Wednesday, November 11, between 10 and 11 in the morning, a solar miracle took place in London. The evidence is as clear as the evidence for any miracle that ever happened. A photograph reproduced the next day on the front page of the *Daily Mirror* shows a beam of sunlight playing on the Cenotaph from a point practically due West, whereas the normal position of the sun at such a time would be somewhere towards South East. Moreover a writer in the same paper, dealing with the period between 10 and 11 a.m., describes how "as time went on and the shadow of the Cenotaph lengthened on the cleared roadway, we became convinced that the bright spell would last for the ceremony." This is a distinct reversal of the usual habit of shadows, which shorten instead of lengthen during this period of the day. The amazing thing is that a nation that claims to accept the miracles of 2,000 years ago appears to have let this one pass unnoticed, and the *Freethinker* would be doing less than its duty if it did not draw attention to the matter for the benefit of the devout of a future age.

Mr. Compton Mackenzie says that "We worry ourselves about narcotic drugs, but we do not worry about the universal narcotic, the Cinema." But is there really any need to worry about a relatively harmless narcotic such as the cinema? In the Christian religion—especially the Roman Catholic brand of it—we have the most potent narcotic yet discovered in the West. It has been doping the Western races for nineteen centuries, yet these races have managed to survive. People that can survive that could survive anything. But as regards the cinema being a narcotic and the people's liking for it as such, we may point out that it is the Christian priests who have taught the people to rely on a mental narcotic and have inculcated a craving for such things. Presumably, the real objection to the cinema is that it provides an alternative narcotic to religion, and may therefore prove an undesirable rival to religion. If only the cinema could be made to help religion and the parsons, then there would probably be fewer objections lodged against it. Another objection to the cinema is that it puts new and different ideas before the people, many of which ideas may, from the priests' point of view, be harmful to religion and the priestly prestige, influence, and authority. Thence, the cinema comes into the same "dangerous" category as books; and hence arises the ever-recurring agitation for strict censorship of books and the cinema.

Now, sound exception might be taken against the cinema on the ground that the ideas and notions it disseminates are sloppy, crude, stupid, primitive, vulgar and uncultured. The cure for this, however, is not censorship but widely disseminated criticism, which would point out why the ideas and notions are regarded as defective in the direction we have stated. The most effective method of improving the cinema is that of improving public taste through informing and constructive criticism.

We shouldn't care to dispute the recent dictum of the Rev. Dr. Ryder Smith that "The Apostles were men who upset things; they were the people who turned the world upside down." Nor are we in the least surprised at the results which accrued from having the world turned upside down for nineteen hundred years. What we are truly grateful for is that, at long last, the world is gradually realizing that the upside-down way of thinking and of running its affairs is really not a very intelligent way. The present horrible mess in which the world is in may well serve to point a useful moral as to the danger of inverted thinking.

Apropos of Sir George Newman's annual report on "The Health of the School Child," a Methodist journal points out that the methods adopted by the Ministry of Health in connexion with schools have had a beneficial effect and have caused a marked decline in illness and death among school-children. Our contemporary ends in the following pious note: "The Ministry of Health, in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, is becoming an effective instrument for the Kingdom of God." We don't think so. The results achieved by the Ministry of Health are to be attributed entirely to scientific observation thinking, experiment, experience, and forethought. If human knowledge in respect to health and disease was withdrawn from the schools, the children would be left to the attack of God's disease germs. The "Kingdom of God" on earth would be one in which God's disease germs had undisputed sway over mankind. No, the Ministry of Health is certainly not "an instrument for the Kingdom of God."

When a "drink" licence for a hotel at Bangor was refused, 2,000 people sang the Doxology. We don't quite see where the connexion between the Christian religion and the prohibition of alcoholic drink comes in. Christ doesn't declare against such drink nor does the Bible. He might be construed as encouraging a temperate use of it, that's all; but there is nothing in the Bible to encourage the notion that preventing other people from drinking alcoholic liquor is a Christian virtue. Then why should the Doxology singers think they have won a glorious Christian victory at Bangor? One notices

that it is always other people's means of enjoyment which the pious seek to interfere with or prohibit. What a howl would go up if the clients of the pubs and hotels were to make a proposal suggesting that the pious should be prevented from enjoying their particular Sunday amusement in the churches! May we suggest that the parsons of Bangor might well preach a rousing sermon in all the churches on the Christian "Golden Rule." Some of their clients, to the number of 2,000, seem rather hazy as to its meaning and application.

There are, according to Sir Robert Perks, a dozen less Methodists in the new Parliament than in the last. Nineteen lost their seats, of whom fifteen were "all Wesleyan and Labour." In the new House there are also five Tory and seven Liberal Methodists, and "Sir Kingsley Wood remains the only Methodist Minister's son in the House of Commons. *This ought not to be.*" Why? The *Methodist Recorder* chuckles at the defeat of Mr. Ben Tillett (who was not what the last two letters of his name imply), and regrets the defeat of "many friends of the temperance movement." According to the Rev. Herbert Hilton, "more friends of the 'Trade' have been sent to Parliament than ever," and this gent. regrets that the national emergency was made a reason for not bothering all the candidates with the opportunities for dodging and lying about their usual questionnaire of about four foolscap pages. For our part we regard the £300 million which, according to Mr. Hilton, the nation spends on drink every year not as "aggravating" the financial situation, but, since reliable and impartial figures show that drunkenness is on the decline, as being likely, on the whole, to mitigate the terrors that await numerous citizens on January 1 next, and to save the nation from a too early recovery from their orgy on Polling Day.

Secularism is as feared as it is belittled in pious circles. Prompt on Dr. Horton's emotional affirmation that God will not allow godlessness to triumph—to which we referred recently—comes the Bishop of Manchester (Dr. Guy Warman) declaring that the nation's danger to-day is "that society shall be organized on a secularized basis with a foundation of what pleases itself to call economic science." So the Manchester Diocesan Conference, at which these words were spoken, proceeded to discuss "a new adventure of evangelism among the masses." The Church, it was said, has been too busy "organizing the devotions of a devout few"; and in some parishes "it was active in dances, whist, dramatic performances, anything and everything to amuse the young." Canon Keeling put his finger on the spot when he said: there was "a theological unrest and uncertainty about things that mattered," and "there was no more effective damper on evangelism than uncertainty." Truth will out, even at a Diocesan Conference. If the theological fishermen cannot navigate their boats in the storm of uncertainty it is not surprising that the passenger lists are shrinking; but it is not often that the reason is so freely stated and plainly admitted.

Fifty Years Ago.

My business was, and above everything is, to illumine the dark regions of religion with the torch of reason, that man at last may no longer be a sport to the hostile powers that hitherto and now avail themselves of the mystery of religion to oppress mankind. My aim has been to prove that the powers before which man crouches are creatures of his own limited, ignorant, uncultured, and timorous mind, to prove that in special the being whom man sets over against himself as a separate supernatural existence is his own being. The purpose of my writing is to make men anthropologists instead of theologians; man-lovers instead of God-lovers; self-reliant citizens of the earth instead of subservient and wily ministers of a celestial and terrestrial monarchy. My object is therefore anything but negative, destructive; it is positive. I deny in order to affirm. I deny the illusions of theology and religion that I may affirm the substantial being of man.

The "Freethinker," November 20, 1881.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—Mr. P. MacLachlan, £1; Mr. and Mrs. Minett, per R. H. Rosetti, 3s.; Mr. A. Mitchell, 1s. 9d.

B. LEE.—None save the most rabid of Christians appear to be satisfied with the policy of the B.B.C. It is an example of sheer abuse of power, and conducted with all the impudence of an established religion. I am quite certain that no reliance whatever can be placed upon its statements where religion is concerned, and not too much in connection with other matters.

B. FRANCIS.—Shall appear soon.

R. G. ADDEY.—Thanks for cuttings. These are always useful, even though they may not be used at the time. We are obliged to any of our readers who make us acquainted with anything they think may be of interest.

P. C. TACCHI.—Sorry, but we are afraid that your letter would involve a discussion as to the validity of Socialism, and that is rather beside the point at issue. We sympathize with your point of view, none the less.

KLERULO.—Yes, it is a strange sight to see a Labour paper printing lengthy and semi-eulogistic articles on the Salvation Army. You may quite rely upon our not trying to sell "the soul of the Freethought movement" to any political party, or allowing it to be dragged at the tail of any political movement. It has too great a work to do for that to occur. Will deal with the lies of General Booth's daughter next week.

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen had good meetings in Glasgow on Sunday last; the hall being quite crowded in the evening. Mr. McKeown occupied the chair and made a very strong appeal for more support from Glasgow Freethinkers. We hope the Branch will get it. Financially the Branch has felt the bad times, and local friends should see what they can do to supply it with the sinews of war. On Mr. Cohen's next visit—some time in the new year, it is probable that a larger hall will be taken, and special steps taken to fill it.

We are pleased to hear from Liverpool Branch that the last three meetings have been very successful ones. The lecturers were Dr. C. Carmichael, Mr. A. D. McLaren, who was paying his first lecturing visit, and evidently met with great appreciation, and Mr. Wollen. We are very pleased indeed to hear of the continued success of our Liverpool friends. They are working well, and deserve all the support that can be given them.

The Annual Dinner of the National Secular Society will take place in the Midland Grand Hotel, London, N.W., on Saturday, January 16, 1932, at 7.0 p.m. The number attending that interesting and enjoyable function is increasing, and it will help arrangements considerably if those intending to be present will make an early application for tickets. The price is as last year, 8s. each. Vegetarians will be catered for if they notify the General Secretary when applying for tickets.

Freethinkers desiring to send greetings to friends at home or abroad, can obtain a suitable Post Card, with a telling quotation from Thomas Hardy as follows:—

Peace upon earth! was said, We sing it,
And pay a million priests to bring it,
After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison-gas.

The Post Cards are published by the National Secular Society, and may be had at sixpence for twenty, post free, from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, or from the General Secretary, N.S.S., 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

In *Socialism and the Human Soul*, by Fred Hughes (Bale, Sons & Danielsson, p. 129. 6s.) the author professes "to find in the Socialist movement an expression of the eternal truth of the Catholic faith." It was inevitable that this title should recall another and very different work, Oscar Wilde's *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*. The virtue of Socialism, according to the latter, is that "it would relieve us of the sordid necessity of living for others"; but, according to Mr. Hughes—who we find it a little hard to "place" both in religion and in economics—it is the virtue of Socialism that nobody will live—for himself. In a sincere, but somewhat lazy book, Mr. Hughes, especially in his historical references, does not appear to realize that secular knowledge, scientific experiment and achievement, and a growing scepticism of supernatural sanctions form background of advances which he attributes to a conscious or unconscious Christian inspiration.

The wife of one of our contributors is in a mental home at York, where she finds herself lonely, and would be very pleased to receive visits from ladies who live in or near the city. She is a lady of taste and refinement, with a naturally fine intelligence. Friendly intercourse would go a long way towards relieving the painfulness of her situation, and no one who came to know her would regret having made her acquaintance. Particulars may be had from this office.

The Rationalist Press Annual for 1932 is well up to its usual standard of excellence. Professor Gilbert Murray leads off with "A Plea for Reason," and Professor Laski asks for a stronger offensive on the part of Rationalists. His article contains what appears to be a slip due to either the writer or the compositor in the statement that the R.P.A. has done more for "religious truth" than all the universities put together. Probably what is meant is "the truth about religion," and the two statements are certainly not synonymous. Many formally Christian bodies might make the first claim, but none could justly make the second. We hope that Professor Laski's statement that the times demand a Bradlaugh indicates his own opinion that a straightforward propaganda of Atheism is necessary. We should be delighted to see him set an example in this direction.

There is a good article by "Robert Arch," on "Your Belief and Mine," a report of a lecture delivered at Whitefield's Central Mission, which must have done good in such surroundings. We venture the prophecy that Mr. Arch will not be eagerly welcomed back by those responsible heads of the mission, however much some of the attendants might wish it. Rear-Admiral Beadnell writes in an interesting and instructive manner on "The Nature and Origin of a Kiss," and shows there is much more in that simple and wide-spread habit than many are likely to imagine. But to an evolutionist such things are pregnant with meaning, and often the commoner the occurrence the greater the significance. Professor Gregory discusses the origin of the caste system without arriving at any definite conclusion. It is probable that several of the theories he names combine to produce the existing result. Military conquest may easily have set the caste system going, and the priesthood served to sanctify it as it has sanctified so many social wrongs. Religion is always a dope for large numbers of people. The price of the Annual is, as usual, one shilling.

Masterpieces of Freethought.

X.

THE ORIGIN OF ALL WORSHIPS.

By DUPUIS.

II.

(Continued from page 724.)

THE real idea at the back of Dupuis' great work is that all religions, and particularly Christianity, are mere allegories showing the path of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. It seems extraordinary that any man would take such a simple looking thesis and work it out in the prodigious way Dupuis did in his enormous work. But the way in which it was done proves the author to be a genius, and genius is never content with short cuts. Dupuis set about his task calmly, slowly, methodically; gathering in on the way every writer of note he could refer to, ancient and modern, and though it would be true to say that, for the average reader, the author overwhelmed him with proofs and therefore missed his mark, yet, in the interests of truth, it was necessary to bring every gun to bear on the common enemy.

To understand Dupuis at all, one must know something about the twelve signs of the Zodiac. They have, for so long, formed the stock-in-trade of the astrologer—and form his stock-in-trade just as strongly now—that most people are disposed to raise an ignorant shriek of laughter at their very names. But a little reflection should show that as with the majority of our people such names as God, Christ, Jehovah and many others are uttered with every reverence, so were the names of "pagan" deities by their worshippers and equally so the twelve signs of the Zodiac. They were openly known as the base of the religious "mysteries," that is, the source of the marvellous "secrets" only known to the priest and the initiate. But though the "signs" are more or less known by name to the average well-informed reader, few people really understand their meaning now, or even what is meant by the "passage" of the sun through the signs. I think the following explanation is one of the clearest ever given; it is taken from *Natural Religion*, by F.J.B., published by the Pioneer Press some years back:—

Our solar system consists of the sun and his eight planets including the earth.

The Zodiac is a belt of constellation completely encircling our solar system. We are surrounded at all points by constellations, but the twelve which constitute the "Zodiac" have attracted particular attention; because during our annual revolution the sun appears to travel over these constellations or "signs" as they are termed. Let us imagine two circles with a common centre, one of much greater circumference than the other, and we may gain a sufficiently correct idea of the Zodiac. Let the centre of these two circles represent the sun; the inner, smaller circle the orbit of the earth; and the outer or larger circle, the Zodiac, divided into twelve parts. The central point (the sun) and also the outer circle (the Zodiac) remaining stationary, it will be seen that as the earth travels over the inner circle during the twelve months, the sun, as viewed from it, must be seen to cover a different division, *sign*, or constellation, every twelfth part of the year. When the sun is covering a particular constellation or sign it is said to be *in* that sign.

Until this explanation is grasped, the system of Dupuis, with its *Aries*, *Taurus* and other names, will seem like Chinese to most people. Moreover some knowledge of elementary astronomy at least is also needed, otherwise one has to stop and explain what

is meant by the terms, Summer Solstice, and Winter Solstice, etc. There is also that difficult movement to grasp called the *precession of the equinoxes*, which is the cause of the change in the worship of our ancestors from a bull, for example, to a Lamb. Let the reader think for a moment, is the worship of the Golden Calf and calling Jesus the Lamb of God pure accident?

There is one other point to be remembered. No one who makes a study of comparative mythology can fail to see the extraordinary ingenuity with which the stories of the Gods are worked out. Some of them, as Bacon clearly proves in his *Wisdom of the Ancients* are capable of rational explanation. They are not merely stories without any other purpose than to cause fear or amuse. They have a definite object in view. And the fact that so many stories of the Gods have been evoked different in detail, is proof enough of the story-telling capacity of the ancient writers, priests of "mysteries" though they may have been. We have to a great extent lost the key to these mysteries, our fiction writers have advanced to greater heights, and have left Hercules and Janus and Osiris and Krishna miles behind. But, after all, have we got away from the basic idea of ancient fiction? Does not the good almost invariably triumph over the evil even in our modern romantic masterpieces? When the hero after superhuman efforts eventually marries the heroine to the discomfiture of the villain, or the detective discovers who murdered some poor devil behind the golf links, or the "good" white soldier licks the "bad" black soldier, or the hunter kills some blood-savage tiger, what is it but the old story over again—the triumph of "good" summer over "black" winter, the defeat of "night" by "day"? Or, in other words, are we not simply repeating the old, old story of the passage of the sun through the signs of the Zodiac, giving us our seasons and the other movement of the earth's giving us night and day?

This is really the secret of Dupuis. He examined the story of the twelve labours of Hercules and saw at once it was simply the story of the sun. He took up the fable of Jason, the son of Æson, and his quest of the Golden Fleece. He analysed the famous poem recounting the expedition of the Argonauts and showed again it was merely an allegory of the journey of the sun. He says:—

The poem of Jason does not include the whole of the annual revolution of the sun; it relates only one of the events, one of the most famous, it is true, that in which the star, the conqueror of winter, reaches the equinoxial point of spring and enriches our hemisphere with all the beneficence of the spring vegetation. It is then that Jupiter, changed into a rain of gold gives birth to Perseus, of whom the image is placed in the celestial Ram, called the Ram with the Golden Fleece, the rich conquest of which is attributed to the sun, the victor over darkness, the regenerator of Nature. This is the astronomical fact sung in the poem of the Argonauts.

It is impossible in such an article as this to give the details which Dupuis analyses from the poem itself, for, as I have already said, he leaves nothing to chance and examines everything closely from all angles and at great length.

Dupuis identifies Osiris and Bacchus with the sun—"that beneficent star which by its heat calls at springtime all living beings to generation, which presides at the growth of plants and trees and ripens the fruit and pours into all seed that active sap which is the soul of vegetation. Here is the true character of the Egyptian Osiris and the Greek Bacchus. And it is especially at Springtime that his generative principle develops and circulates in all newly-born produce. It is the sun which by its heat gives life and fruitfulness."

These long chapters on the life and adventures of the Gods of antiquity are packed with valuable information and are extraordinarily interesting. The short notices one gets in our modern classical dictionaries rarely give any clue to the real history behind the Gods. Their editors know—must know—in their heart of hearts what are the implications any intelligent reader can deduce from the stories when comparing them with the story of the "one true religion" in the world, Christianity.

All that Dupuis did in analysing the history of pagan gods was, in a measure, preparatory to his analysis of Christianity. He knew its terrible history equally as well as the other. His contempt for the Christian priest was far greater than his contempt for the pagan varieties. And he could see nothing in the "sacred" story, from Genesis to Revelation, the greater part of which could not be resolved into the sun-myth equally with the pagan religions. "If you agree with me," he says, "that my explanation of the story of Bacchus, Hercules, Janus and other gods, is simply the story of the sun adored under a crowd of names by all peoples, you will admit also that the word Christ is only another name for the sun, no matter what is the opinion of the worshippers of Jesus as to his real existence."

The first two volumes of the unabridged work deals with paganism—so-called. The opening chapter of the third volume commences Dupuis' great attack on Christianity. His foreword says:—

We have arrived at last to that part of our work which the public is ardently waiting for, which should actually prove of the greatest interest, and should cause a revolution in the religious world as well as in the cult of so many great nations . . . Religion seizes man in his cradle, accompanies him all his life, and even follows him through hope or fear into his coffin.

This spectre, more terrible by its menaces than consoling by its promises has been up to the present an enigma—for those who made it a reality as well as for those who see in it only an imaginary phantom to hold in check credulous mortals . . . Docile to the voice of the priest who commands faith and forbids reason, they forget that the essence of truth is never clearer than when it is rigorously examined and studied to the fullest extent. Faith or credulity—these religious words are synonymous—is simply blind ignorance which deflects on to others the necessity for judging . . . which is why the priest says "Believe me," and the Wise Man, "Listen and reason."

It will be seen that even from this very short translation of Dupuis, his words are not unfamiliar—though many people will repeat the same ideas and imagine they are uttering some new truths for the present generation. As a matter of fact Dupuis, is *modern* up to the hilt as readers would find out if he were only read. Unfortunately no complete translation of his book has ever been made. It would be more than a labour of love to attempt to put into English his great work—it would be a Herculean task. Even the abridged version has never had a translator. The little work on *Natural Religion* already mentioned, gives only some of Dupuis' ideas in the writer's own way. J. E. Partridge published in 1877 an abridged translation of the chapter on Christianity from the larger work, and a very good translation was made for Thomas Scott about the same time of the same chapter, from the smaller work, under the title of *Christianity a Form of the Great Solar Myth*.

I shall try and summarize some of Dupuis' ideas on Christianity in the next article.

H. CUTNER.

(To be concluded.)

Scottish Presbyterianism Panic-Stricken.

IMMEDIATELY after the Union of the Established Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland, the leaders of the joint organization decided upon a missionary scheme to be called "The Forward Movement" of the Church of Scotland. There is much concern among the rank and file as to the shape which this missionary scheme is to take, and considerable apprehension is entertained about the support it is likely to get. Broadly speaking the main difficulty seems to be whether the Scottish Church is to fare forth single-handed girded with the "Sword of the Spirit" in an effort to save Christendom to enlarge its borders, and secure new adherents to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as understood and expounded by the Calvinists of Scotland, or whether, by a modification of dogma and doctrine, a co-operative method of world evangelization may be ensured between Scotch, English, European and American Missions. The latter would seem to be economically the wiser course, for at present many are appalled by evident overlapping and unnecessary expense. But when it comes to a question of modifying doctrine there is sure to be strenuous opposition from the "right wingers" of Presbyterianism who conceive that the "Higher Critics" have already got more of a show than they are entitled to.

Apparently some of the younger and more "modern" men of the Scotch Church are now realizing that interference by the Church in matters of communal interest, national politics, and secular government is a mistake. It is beginning to dawn upon some of them that the support given by the Church to militarists in the Great War, for instance, was a suicidal policy for the Church. General Crozier brutally averred that the clergy were great helpers of the Allies in the Great War as "feeders of the blood lust"; and no person of equal eminence has ever refuted that statement. How can a clergy which so intimately identified itself with the conduct of War now pose as the champions of Peace? It savours of the most intolerable impudence. Any impartial and detached thinker cannot fail to see the glaring inconsistency. Yet at Scottish Church doors are now to be seen placards entreating people to sign a Declaration in favour of Disarmament. If and when the next war comes along, it will be interesting to see if the Scotch clergy as a body have changed their skins again.

Many of the laity have been disillusioned not only in Britain, but throughout Europe, the Dominions and America; and have renounced all Church connexion being resolved to engage their efforts to other agencies and to utilize their talents for humanitarian and philanthropic work through other channels. An S.O.S.—in its terms bound to be very disturbing to the laity who are still adherents of the Scotch Church—has been broadcast by the Rev. David McQueen one of its "rising hopes" in the form of an "Open Letter" addressed to Dr. Donald Fraser, the leader of the Foreign Missionary Movement in the Church. Mr. McQueen is frankly alarmed by the possibility of "misunderstanding of motives and lack of comprehension of aims." He regrets "a widespread dubiety and vagueness" evidenced by the reply given to the query "What is this Forward Movement?" namely, "A Call to the Church," and when the question is put, "What is this call to the Church?" the reply is: "The Forward Movement." He implores his leader to make his observations on the points he raises and in "equally concrete terms," say what he (Dr. Fraser) as the pioneer and promoter

of it understands by "The Forward Movement." And he then adjures his leader to look at the map of the World and says: "Compared with the Empire of Faith, which the Early Church handed over to its successors, comprising the North of Africa, including Egypt, a large tract of the near East, and Asia Minor, modern Christendom is gravely shrunken. Also during the past ten to fifteen years, that area which could be claimed for Christendom has been once again largely reduced by the apostasy of Russia. Nor can it be even claimed that what is left of Christendom is any longer a sturdy stronghold of the faith. On the contrary it is sapped within by the apathy and indifference of its adherents, and is attacked from without by Atheism and Materialism and views of life which emanate from a hostile soil." Mr. McQueen then refers to the growth of the anti-God movement in Germany, which from 1918 to 1928 drew 1,500,000 Germans from the Christian faith to Atheism and hostility to the Christ, the Bible and the Church, and which is increasing its gains. He asserts that "the happenings in the Fatherland typify much of the real position of Christendom."

What is one man's food is another man's poison, and what to one is disappointment and cause of mourning is to another a source of satisfaction, promise and rejoicing. The whole explanation of the antipathy to Christianity as depicted by Mr. McQueen is that Christianity cannot bear the Light of Knowledge and Reason. In the world situation of to-day the Freethinker sees encouraging buds and blossoms of Hope. Mr. McQueen sees in it nothing but the Ashes of Despair. Unless Christianity can not only recapture its lost positions; but also penetrate, permeate and pervade the thoughts and aspirations of the teeming oriental millions who meanwhile are in danger of "boiling over and pushing that handful which is the Church into the sea."

Well, well, well! (or perhaps we should say Ill, ill, ill!) what really is all the pother about? Mr. McQueen consoles himself after contemplating the black world picture he has painted with a panegyric on the history of his native Scotland, of the gifted leadership of her Church. Self-praise is always justifiably regarded with some degree of suspicion by outsiders. Englishmen have been criticized for being too prone to self-depreciation and aversion to self-advertisement. We must not judge a man like Mr. McQueen perfervid Scot as he is, too harshly. But we are entitled to speak for many Scotsmen when we maintain that his method of self-adulation is repellent if not positively nauseating. Scotland has not a monopoly of wisdom, and wisdom will not die with her. Lovers of their country should not be so wall-eyed or fulsome as to completely ignore their country's faults and limitations. Scottish egoism is one of these, and it is unhappily fed and pandered to by many visitors. To magnify unduly our own good qualities and minimise our bad while minimising other peoples good points and magnifying their bad is bad taste. And it is typically Christian and more typically clerical.

Without presuming to anticipate what will happen, one feels that the "old guard" of the Church of Scotland will pounce upon Mr. McQueen's hysterical vaticinations. He without knowing it has given too much away to the enemy! This is bad tactics when one remembers that on Mr. McQueen's own showing the enemy is so well informed, so well entrenched, so wary, and vigilant. Reading between the lines, Mr. McQueen apparently regards some of his leaders as fossilized old dunderheads. He wants to spring into the arena and slash these dogs of infidels! But he should not so clearly let it be known that he has got the wind up!

IGNOTUS.

Why Lazarus Went to Heaven.

If you consult Whitaker's Almanack for terms of admission to various Museums and Exhibition Galleries, you will find you can either go in free, or on presentation of a visiting card, or by special permission of the secretary, etc. But terms of entry into heaven are not so clear. When, as a believing lad, I knelt in an Evangelical Church, I supposed a plunge in a fountain of Emmanuel's blood would pass me through the entrance hall. The Roman Catholic poet, Dante, had no fancy for this rather vulgar method. He pictured a gate in a grim wall across Purgatory Hill. It was guarded by an angel who, clad in grey, and holding a glittering sword, sat on a bench made of diamonds. Three broad steps led up to the gate. The lowest was of white marble, so smooth that you could see yourself and all your faults, as plainly as Robert Burns could wish in his prayer: "O wad some power!" The second was black and cracked, and signified a heart-breaking sorrow for crimes and unpaid bills and the rest. The third blushed fiery red, and encouraged the pilgrim to get hot in resolutions of piety and virtue. The angel used the sword-point to scratch the letter P (Peccatum=sin) seven times on the pilgrim's forehead, in token of seven sins (Pride, Envy, etc.), which must be purged by flame before heaven's door would open. And then the angel, using a silver key and a golden key, swung the gate back. The hill of seven terraces must be climbed, and seven furnaces must remove the seven P's, before the ten Heavens displayed their treasures. When I attended the village church in my youth, I never heard of Dante's elaborate scheme of examination and tests. I think I should have preferred it—as calling for more self-reliance and effort—to the bath.

But, if we turn for information to the gospel of Luke, the conditions of entry appear very different.

I have often wondered what sort of a man Luke was. I fancy he was a kind of John Bunyan or Nathaniel Hawthorne in temperament. He could write in Greek. He had a good deal of sympathy with Roman modes of political life and administration. Perhaps he acted as secretary (slave-secretary, perchance) to a Roman magistrate or provincial officer in Anatolia. I guess he was of humble birth. He had a marked fellow-feeling for beggars, ragged labourers, forlorn slaves, despised harlots, and for thieves and other offenders whom he regarded as "more sinned against" by society "than sinning." When the Matthew Gospel announced: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," the smug saying jarred on Luke, and his version ran: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God; Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied." His second-century book of parables and legends shows an acute conviction that the pain of material poverty on earth logically turned the gold key of the gate of heaven. You can read the doctrine clearly in the tale of Lazarus. A rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, dined splendidly. Lazarus, leprous of skin and empty-bellied, lay in the rich man's porch, and longed to devour scraps that dropped from the aristocrat's table. Lazarus died, and was borne away by the angels to heaven, where, leaning on father Abraham's bosom, he enjoyed feasts all the time. As Lazarus sat in happiness, he could see the rich man writhing in the fire of Hades. And Luke throws out a hint that the rich man's "five brothers" (perhaps the five social "classes" of Imperial Rome) deserved a like baking unless they behaved generously to the slaves and outcasts. Lazarus went to heaven just because he had had a bad and disgusting time on earth.

So far as Luke personally is concerned, I like his style and motives. If I had lived in the second century, and worked in the office of the *Antioch News*, or *Ephesus Gazette*, and copies of the Gospels had come in for review, I should have given higher praise to Luke than to Matthew, John, Mark, Thomas or James.

Yes, but Luke's second-century standard of economic ethics does not fit the mind of our twentieth century. Obviously, Luke and his comrades of that age could not hope, by public demonstrations, or organized agitation, to better the material conditions of the poorer classes.

Rome did not allow such movements. So the idealists built a heavenly home for wanderers and paupers. And their Utopian invention has been shrewdly exploited by (to speak symbolically) the "Rich Man," of many succeeding centuries. The Christian Rich Man, Catholic and Protestant, has demurely and piously assured the victims of hunger and slumdom that the Poor Man, if orthodox (a thing Luke would have scorned to say) would have a magnificent consolation in heaven. The result, in social history, has been that the Christian Church, as such, has never created effective machinery for the abolition of material poverty. The early Christians never attempted to construct the machinery; they dared not. The later Christians have not done it. I know very well that many Christians, compassionate after the manner of Vincent de Paul, have practised large charity; and I salute them. But the damnation can only be killed by human wit, human skill, human science, human system, human economic genius.

At this point we almost touch the threshold of politics, and so here I pause. The Columbus of our modern humanity has set out in the vital search, and perhaps, while looking for the economic triumph in some India, may, in the rough-and-tumble of the fates and accidents, discover it in quite another region and under a far different sky. With emphasis and certainty, I say that the region will not be Gospel-land, and the sky will not be Christian.

F. J. GOULD.

A Dialogue.

MAN: Come, tell me Nature; let me learn of thee
What proof hast thou of God's benevolence?

NATURE: Lift up my veil, man, seek thy Providence
And all his artful works. Behold and see
My bulky, biting brutes of bird and beast
By tooth and claw that crimson bloody stain
From flesh they draw, with agony and pain.
From mine own flesh they suck. 'Tis mine own feast.
My big fish feed on smaller fry, whose goal
Is still minuter animated things.
That live on whatsoever Fortune brings
Till Death, my servant, doth engulf the whole.

MAN: What Devil animates thee, cruel Pan
To manifest thyself in vicious hate?
Thou teachest me of what shall be my fate
When I am gone to dust: no longer man.

NATURE: No Devil, nor a God, doth give me life—
Omnipotent am I in Time and Space;
Mine own Devil and God, and to thy face
I daily show the round of constant strife.
If thou wilt call me Devil, then I send
A goodly harvest to confound thy sense,
And music in a running brooklet. Hence
If God thou name, then will I make thee bend
Beneath my torrent, hurricane, and storm,
And crush to dust thy weak, confiding form.

G. H. TAYLOR.

The organization of no two human beings is ever precisely similar at birth, nor can art subsequently form any two individuals from infancy to maturity, to be the same.—Robert Owen.

In all political affairs, drop the *pretexts* and strike at the *causes*. We may thus understand what the heads of parties may choose to conceal.—I. D'Israeli.

Liberty is the bread which nations ought to earn by the sweat of their brow.—Delamennais.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE TOC H MOVEMENT.

SIR,—“Alpha,” in his “Semper Idem” article, says that the average member of the Toc H Movement when it was re-formed was completely untroubled by its “spiritual” side and treated it as only a formal matter. I wonder whether this is true of the members in general?

Knowing something of the original Toc H in Belgium and the clients it then attracted, I'm inclined to be doubtful.

In Poperinge the first Toc H was very much a religious affair. It consisted of a canteen on the ground-floor for selling canned goods, cigarettes and weak tea; and above this was a reading room in which was a carpenter's bench used as an altar for “Holy Communion.” There were, I fancy, other religious amusements for the benefit of Protestant Christian soldiers, of all ranks. The difference between Toc H and a Y.M.C.A was very small, so far as I could see.

When the Toc H Movement was got going in England I was suspicious of it, knowing its origin. I thought then that its main purpose was to keep alive the feeling of vague religiosity held by many ex-service men who had had a pious upbringing, to prevent this feeling from dying out, and to deepen or strengthen it into something more serviceable for the parsons and the churches. I believed that Toc H was primarily intended to combat the indifference to religion which was well-known to be exceedingly prevalent among ex-service men. To this end, the astute padre-founders of Toc H foresaw that they could usefully manipulate the comradeship of the trenches sentiment and the natural urge to “service” for humanity.

From “Alpha's” article I gather that my suspicions were not unfounded and that the padres have got the kind of movement they wanted. They probably think that Toc H, as now constituted, is a success. The only drawback, however, appears to be that large numbers of genuine ex-service men will have nothing to do with Toc H. I am told that it is only kept going now by recruiting young men who know nothing about the war and the camaraderie it engendered. Perhaps “Alpha” can tell us something as regards this? I may add that his article was very interesting, and will prove useful.

D.P.S.

Obituary.

MRS. MARY JANE MINETT.

At Woking Crematorium the remains of Mary Jane Minett were cremated on Friday, November 13. Although not a member of the Freethought Movement, she lived an entirely secular life. Her great ambition was to be of service to her less fortunate fellow creatures. One of the first two women elected upon the Board of Guardians, she served for thirty-five years on the Board at Kingston-on-Thames, retaining the confidence and esteem of fellow citizens and colleagues, until the dissolution of all such Boards. The end came very suddenly. With every appearance of good health, she was suddenly seized with violent pains, hurried to hospital, where an operation was performed. There appeared little hope of recovery, and eventually death took place on November 11, at seventy-seven years of age. The Cremation took place in the presence of members and friends of the family, to whom we offer sincere sympathy. A Secular Service was conducted by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

Much depends upon when and where you read a book. In the five or six impatient minutes before the dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the Faerie Queen for a stop-gap, or a volume of Bishop Andrew's Sermons.—Lamb.

Society News.

THE Fulham and Chelsea Branch held a successful meeting last Sunday, to hear Mr. B. A. Le Maine lecture on "Religion the Enemy of Man." This Sunday our friend Mr. J. H. Van Biene will speak, and his subject will be "Ignoring the Obvious." We trust that there will be a good attendance.

Epigram.

BUT lest he languish in Thy lovely Garden,
And for some alien Hope his heart should break:
Man's many sins, Man's faults and errors pardon,
Man's fit forgiveness take!

J. M. STUART YOUNG.

Onitsha, Nigeria.

Rationalist Press Association (Glasgow District)

Grand Hall, Central Halls, 25 Bath Street,
Sunday, November 29th, at 3 p.m.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolids
Road, North End Road): Saturday, at 7.30, Messrs. E.
Bryant and C. Tuson.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—A meeting will be held at
White Stone Pond, Hampstead, near the Tube Station every
Sunday morning at 11.30 a.m. Speaker to-day Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr.
B. A. Le Maine; at 3.30 and 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Hyatt,
Tuson and Wood. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained
opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road,
during and after the meetings.

INDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (London Co-operative
Society's Hall, 249 Dawes Road, Fulham): 7.30, Mr. J. H.
Van Biene—"Ignoring the Obvious."

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59
Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station):
11.15, Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe—"The Challenge of Soviet
Russia."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion
Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson—"The
Snare of Optimism."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School,
Peckham Road): 7.0, Nellie Freeman and Carrie Hedges—
"Cowper: The Tortured Soul."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bed-
ford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, Hall No. 5, near Clapham
North Station, Underground): 7.30, Fr. Vincent McNabb,
O.P.—"Is Freedom Dying?"

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4):
Monday, November 23, at 8.0, Mr. H. C. Smith will open a
discussion on "What is Superstition?"

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion
Square, W.C.1): Tuesday, November 24, at 7.0, Mrs. Naomi
Mitchison—"The Pope and Jix."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City
of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, five
minutes from the Brecknock): 7.30, Mr. J. Turner—"The
Paradox of Political Economy."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall,
Argyle Street, entrance in Lorn Street): 7.0, Dr. C. H. Ross
Carmichael (Liverpool)—"Body and Soul," lantern lecture.

BURNLEY (St. James' Hall).—Sunday, November 22, at
11.0, Mr. J. Clayton—"Modern Miracles."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge
Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Religion of
Some Modern Scientists." Questions and discussion. All
welcome.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (City Hall, Albion Street, No. 2
Room): 6.30, Mr. R. Stevenson—"William Stewart Ross:
A Dynamic Thinker."

HENDON CO-OPERATIVE HALL, SUNDERLAND.—Sunday, at 7.0,
Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Build-
ings, 41 Islington, Liverpool, entrance Christian Street):
7.0, W. Ll. Owen (Liverpool)—"Some Snags." Current
Freethinkers and other literature on sale.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone
Gate): 6.30, Mr. Joseph McCabe—"The Spanish Revolution
and the Church."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake
Circus, Hall No. 5): 7.0, Mr. H. L. Darton—"Robert
Burns."

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, 5 Forbes Place):
7.30, Mr. Wm. McGurn—"Early Christianity and Modern
Socialism."

PERTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Independent Labour Party Hall,
Union Lane): 2.30, Debate, "Secularism v. Socialism." Mr.
J. Wingate and Mr. Chas. Forbes. Questions and discussion.

OUTDOOR.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (weather permitting).—Saturday, Novem-
ber 21, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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