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Views and Opinions.

Gabble about Gambling.

As an example of muddled thinking, religious humbug, and British hypocrisy the controversy over the Irish Sweepstake presents an example too attractive to pass without comment. We have now had a series of these sweepstakes, each one larger than the last, and in the case of each there has been a first-rate exhibition of the qualities named. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald had his lately acquired Presbyterian conscience moved to tears over the terrible prospect of men and women investing their shillings in so depraving a venture, Church and Chapel gatherings have passed numerous resolutions over the growing demoralization of the British public, even the Ethical Union, apparently desirous of showing that it has not ceased to be Christian because it does not believe in specific Christian doctrines, passes a resolution lamenting the "large sum" subscribed, and testifying its profound belief that "the exploitation of luck or pure chance . . . is directly opposed to the scientific method of living." On the other hand, taking note of the growing sums subscribed to these sweepstakes, quite a number of newspapers have now come to the conclusion that these affairs should be permitted in this country. In their judgment it is, apparently the money lost to the country that makes all the difference between right and wrong. If it were only a matter of a few thousands that went out of the country, then the papers would agree with the Chapels that the pastime was wholly vicious and ought not to be tolerated. But when it is a question of several millions, the subject is lifted to a higher sphere. There is a world of difference between a big financier, where huge sums are concerned, and the man who works the three-card trick, where the gain only amounts to a few pounds. It is true that we must all begin somewhere, nevertheless, the beginner

who tries after single pounds cannot hope to receive the same consideration as the old hand who juggles with millions.

* * *

A Distinction and a Difference.

Something like six millions of tickets were sold for the last sweepstake. It would be fair to say that about nine millions were concerned with the purchases of the tickets. And judging from the addresses of prize winners, probably half the money subscribed came from this country. And considering the obstacles placed in the way of the British people buying tickets—including threats of confiscation, etc.—there does seem to be a wide-spread desire to purchase. Some of these threats are, I believe, to use an Americanism, poppycock. I do not believe that the law can prevent any one here buying a ticket, and receiving it in the ordinary course through the post. There is a law against running lotteries in this country, but there is no law of which I am aware that can prevent a British citizen buying a ticket in a foreign lottery and having it sent him in the ordinary way. I am surprised that this matter has not been tested in the courts—the decisions of magistrates on the matter count for very little until they are properly tested.

Not being a member of a chapel, nor even of an Ethical Society, and having no great fear of being thought disreputable, or of being looked down on by my Christian neighbours, I am not concerned with whether the amount spent on the Irish Sweepstake runs to millions, or amounts to but a few thousands. I remain obstinately attached to the belief that the man who by the confidence trick gets from the public a few shillings is as good, or as bad, as the man who prints circulars and obtains a million—by way of "business." It is a question of training and opportunity. Nor do I see any difference between the gambling that takes place in connexion with a sweepstake or in backing horses and the gambling that takes place on the Stock Exchange. If I deal in "options" on 'change I am betting my stockbroker that by a given date certain shares will rise in value. He bets me that by that date they will fall, and one of us pays as "luck" turns out. But the money I win or lose has nothing to do with increasing or diminishing the capital of the business with which my bet is concerned. That remains absolutely unaffected by it. In the case of buying some of the issue of shares by a commercial enterprise the case may be different. But in the case of buying and selling shares already subscribed, there is very little difference between the man who buys and sells these and the man who backs a horse for the Grand National or the Derby. In either case he may be after money, or he may be gambling. *The two things are quite distinct,* although none of our very moral guides appears to have noticed the fact.

What is Gambling?

The distinction between gambling and mere money getting is vital. As with most other things the two may be combined, just as a man may act from mixed motives in other directions, but it is important to bear in mind that they are distinct. In this Christian country money getting is urged, honoured, and is as rife in Church and Chapel as anywhere, and nowhere is the successful money-getter more revered than in Church or chapel. Indeed, most of the denunciations of gambling from religious circles, when boiled down, come finally to the brutal fact that gambling is bad because men lose money at it. But the man who is merely after money is not wedded to gambling—he cannot properly be called a gambler. He will use marked cards, play with amateurs, and refrain from playing with those whose skill or knowledge of the game equals his own. Prove to him that he can get money in other directions and he will not be averse to getting it. He plays cards, or backs horses, or buys a ticket in a sweepstake, because he thinks it is the easiest, or quickest way of making money, or because he has not the opportunities of getting it in any other way. He is after the money, and is on exactly the same level as the man who does not back horses, or play cards, or buy a sweep ticket because in his judgment it is very uncertain whether he will get anything by it. But the mere money getter is not a gambler. The gambler is one who delights in "taking chances," it is the uncertainty of the game, the risks of the game that form its chief attraction. The man who sweeps a river for fish with a net is not a sportsman, he is a tradesman. The man who will stand for hours with a rod and line, getting an occasional fish, is not a tradesman, he is a sportsman. It is the uncertainty of the game that attracts him, and very often its risks.

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In Quest of Adventure.

We may leave the money getter—as plentiful in Church and Chapel and very moral circles as anywhere, and more revered—on one side. Let us restrict our attention to the gambler proper. A man puts his money, on horses, or cards, or bets in some other way, delighting in the "chances" or the "luck" of the game, and loses his cash. Or he may gamble with his life, in big game hunting, mountain climbing, exploring unknown territory, pitting his skill or strength against the risks of the game, and losing the stake. In the one case, our puritans, horrified at the loss of so much money, will denounce him as immoral, in the other case he may be called reckless or adventurous, but he will generally be admired. What vital distinction is there in the two cases? A gambler who is not a mere swindler or money getter will find no interest in playing a game with one who does not understand it. He will not, as he may say, take money from children. My mountaineering friends smile at my getting to the top of a Swiss mountain by train. They insist that the right way is to go by some road that offers two or three chances of breaking my neck, or if there is one that offers four chances they prefer that. A man who plays a game of cards because he loves the game, and for stakes, simply will not keep on playing with one from whom he always wins. He loses all interest in it. He may not be able to afford to lose, but the money lost is incidental, the gain is only an added pleasure. It is the risk of the game that invites.

The gambling spirit is, thus, only one example of the spirit of adventure, the delight in taking risks. The phrase "exploitation of luck or pure chance" is mere "jargon," which looks scientific only because it

is expressed in pompous language. Every adventure is an exploitation of luck and chance, since it is a trial against incalculable forces that may be with or against one. The gambling spirit is more generally manifest because it is the most easily indulged in. Betting can be done anywhere, everywhere, and for any amount. You may be able to kill it, but it can only be done by killing the thing of which it is a part. You may make life quite safe, but only at the price of making it stale, flat and unprofitable.

* * *

Substitutes for Gambling.

Admittedly gambling has its dangers, but to talk of the demoralization of character, and the ruin that is brought by taking a part of a ten-shilling ticket in a sweepstake is a piece of nonsensical humbug. The pleasures of anticipation, the visions of what one will do when the prize is won is worth the expenditure. And if the disappointment comes with the "draw," well, it is part of the adventurous spirit not to be deterred from another attempt because of the failure of the previous one. Admittedly the gambler—the true gambler—may push his "dissipation" to the neglect, wholly or partial, of domestic or social duties. But that may be done with other things. How many men have neglected their social and domestic calls because of the risks they would take in research, in exploration, in propaganda. The world owes much to this type. Of course, if all did this, life would be impossible, but the number of this type is never likely to be sufficiently large to threaten social security.

Admittedly it is not right for the gambler—the pure gambler—to abuse either his opportunities or his duties in other directions. Gambling may assume unhealthy forms as may any bodily or mental quality. But the cure for this is to create checks and counter attractions of a healthier kind. The love of adventure, the delight in taking risks, of "chancing one's luck," may be gratified in other directions besides that of gambling. But if we have a population the education of the majority of which is such as not to provide an alternative we must expect that the available opportunities will be abused. The craving for objective entertainments, the degree to which the mass of the people are dependent upon spectacles—football, the cinema, the craving to witness games, the intellectual vacuity of masses of the people—among both the upper and the lower classes—are all illustrations of the emptiness of the lives of modern men and women. Gambling is simply the easiest form of adventure. The man who can, in anticipation, spend some part of the sweepstake money, or his winnings on a "dead cert," is experiencing an adventure. Admittedly these are not adventures of a very high order, but they are such as his opportunities permit, and are intellectually on the level of a crowd waiting for hours to see a procession of men and women enter Buckingham Palace for a royal garden party. If we wish to reduce gambling to harmless proportions it can only be done by creating an appetite for things of a different order. But to achieve that requires an intelligence of a much higher kind than that of which our puritanical moralists appear to be capable.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

We often accompany our alms with such hardness towards the unfortunate object in holding out the hand of succour; we show them a countenance so harsh and stern, that a simple refusal would have been less heart-rending to them than charity so withering and savage; for pity which seems to sympathize with their sorrows, consoles almost as much as the liberality which is their succour.—*Massillon*.

The Errors of Ma Eddy.

"The creed of Christendom is gradually melting away like a northern iceberg floating into summer seas."
G. W. Foote.

"So far as a man thinks, he is free."—Emerson.

"What damn'd error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text."
Shakespeare.

SCIENCE and religion have ever been enemies. Scientific teaching and investigation, or, indeed, any form of intellectual liberty, has always been incompatible with the dogmas of religion. The entire organization of priestcraft has ever been arrayed against science on the ground that it is a powerful solvent of faith. This resistance of the various Christian Churches to the prevalent opinions of scientists is highly instructive. The system of Copernicus, the discoveries of Galileo, the law of gravitation of Newton, and the Darwinian theory were all in turn opposed by priests. Even the humane use of chloroform in child-bed was opposed on the ground that it was contrary to the priestly teaching of the primal curse on woman.

Chemistry was opposed as an impious prying into the secrets of "God," and the early chemists were regarded as agents of the "devil," and treated accordingly. Physiology and medicine were opposed on similar grounds. Geology and biology equally excited suspicion in priestly circles. The tyrannical clergy resented all inquiry, all questioning, and insisted on explaining natural phenomena by their own mythological invention.

At long last, a woman attempted to build a bridge between religion and science. As this person hailed from U.S.A., the new evangel was not hid under a bushel. It was spread abroad in the approved methods of patent medicine advertising, and the gospel of Ma Eddy is to-day a rival to the far older Christian superstition.

Christian Science, as the new evangel is called, has made amazing progress in sixty years. In the number of Christian Science practitioners, London, with 251, already eclipses Boston, U.S.A. The churches and societies altogether number 2,386, and over 4,000 lectures were delivered last year, with an attendance of nearly 3,000,000. This is an extraordinary record, for "A Key to the Scriptures," the Bible of the Christian Science Movement, first appeared in 1866, and this evangel is therefore but a child compared with the hoary Christian Superstition which it rivals and attempts to supersede. Even in England, Christian Science nursing-homes are exempted from ordinary regulations which require the supervision of a qualified doctor or trained nurse, and are granted privileges similar to nunneries and monasteries.

The Christian Science evangel teaches that physical evils are unreal, and therefore not to be feared, or provided against. The high-priestess of the new faith charged three hundred dollars for a dozen lessons explaining the faith. No American gangster, no provision profiteer, ever kept a keener eye or a tighter fist on money, which, incidentally is the only material thing in existence which Christian Science allows to be real. In short, Ma Eddy was a religious "boss," like Brigham Young, Johanna Southcott, William Booth, or Ludovic Muggleton.

Such are the frailties of human nature that believers have actually overlooked this purely business side of religion. Indeed, this short-sightedness has invariably been an important element in the success of all superstitions. The same simplicity which is so easily imposed upon by sheer verbosity and clever charlatan-

ism, is equally unable to discriminate when it is exploited financially.

Verbosity was the secret of Ma Eddy's success. Her pomp of court and her priesthood were mere words. There are five hundred pages of polysyllables in her book, *A Key to the Scriptures*. To a reader familiar with the sober use of scientific terms, her definitions and explanations are delicious jargon. They are the bastard offspring of a riotous imagination playing, in the light of half-grasped ideas from scientists, upon resonant and high-sounding words. The new evangel has been received by tens of thousands of half-educated men and women, bereft of learning, quite unable to recognize it from its adulterated imitation. And Ma Eddy, as keen as a patent-medicine seller, or a race-course tipster, was equipped admirably by a nodding acquaintance with theology, metaphysics, and pseudo-scientific vocabulary, and a tenacious memory, to give them the thing they longed for.

For example, here is a Christian Science definition, not a cross-word puzzle:—

Matter, mythology, mortality; another name for mortal mind; illusion, intelligence, substance, and life in non-intelligence and mortality; life resulting in death, and death in life; sensation in the sensationless; mind originating in matter; the opposite of truth; the opposite of God; that of which immortal mind takes no cognisance; that which mortal mind sees, feels, tastes, and smells in belief.

The author of this glib nonsense, this tongue-in-the-cheek theology, has been hailed as "second only to" Christ. It is only proper, therefore, that she should regard matter, mythology, and mortality as synonymous. It is not for the common-or-garden Christian who reads in his own "Bible" that the whale is a "fish" to rebuke the disciple of Ma Eddy. It is for the historian of superstitions to note the dismal occurrence.

The Christian Science religion is a dilettanté evangel, chiefly appealing to the rich and the well-to-do. It has its biggest vogue at Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., one of the healthiest, most beautiful and sunniest places in the World. What can Christian Science say to the sick pauper in a London slum? It will tell him that his pain is a delusion, his illness an error, and his dreadful surroundings a phantasmagoria.

Indeed, a country directed on Christian Scientist lines would soon be one vast cemetery. The cities would be undrained, doctors driven out of practice, there would be no isolation for infectious diseases. Typhoid, cholera, small-pox, fevers, would rage unchecked. The mortality of mothers in child-bed would be multiplied so as to imperil the very existence of the rising generation. Why pursue the matter? If any country were governed on the principle that physical evils are unreal, and therefore not to be provided against, "chaos is come again."

We set out in a spirit of inquiry to make a serious examination of the Eddy evangel. But this nonsensical system makes us impatient; for, of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books emanating from the half-crazy brains of religious fanatics, this book stands out as one of the crudest. It is more incoherent than the meanderings of Emanuel Swedenborg; less readable than the outpourings of Joanna Southcott. Beside it Joe Smith's *Book of Mormon* is a plain, unvarnished tale. The "Forty Coming Wonders" of old-man Baxter is modestly itself compared with the impudence of Ma Eddy. This Yankee Bible is more incoherent than the "Revelation of St. John the Divine." It takes the breath away and makes the head swim. No other less collo-

qual phrase can so aptly describe the effects of Ma Eddy's reams of sheer verbosity. One reels back from the insane heights of "Christian Science" to the simplicity of ordered knowledge, suited to the requirements of the age, and freed from the aberrations of gross ignorance. That such a piece of charlatanism as "Christian Science" should be hailed as a new religion is an astonishing criticism, not only of the value of present-day education, but of our boasted civilization. It is the merest humbug with a veneer of holiness, and ought not to deceive a schoolboy.

MIMNERMUS.

(To be concluded.)

A Pioneer Study in Anthropology

JOSEPH MAZZINI WHEELER, personally one of the shyest and most modest of men, G. W. Foote's great friend, still lives in the fine work which he has bequeathed to us. He may be but a name to the present generation, but the books he published, and the hundreds of articles he contributed to the pages of this journal prove him to have been a scholar in many fields, and a whole-hearted champion of militant Freethought. The edition of *Footsteps of the Past** just issued by the Secular Society, Ltd., is a reprint of the book published by Wheeler in 1895, and is beautifully printed and bound. It deals almost wholly with anthropology, and as Mr. Victor Neuburg says in his Biographical Note, this work "makes it clear that Wheeler was no mere popularizer, but a pioneer in anthropology."

The ten essays in the volume make extraordinarily fascinating reading. They deal with the customs, rites, and sacrifices of mankind from early times, but always in conjunction with their bearing on religion. How do Animism and Fetishism and Scapegoats and Dancing explain religion? Have they any connection? Why is it all over the world, among savage tribes and civilized nations we find certain religious ceremonies which, in their essence, show almost the same characteristics? What exactly is the difference between an English Christian priest, supposedly civilized, "blessing" some fishing boats and some savage black witch-doctor "blessing" a wheat field or performing something distinctly analogous to Mass, or raising the Host in a church or praying for rain?

Very patiently and very fully Wheeler collects a great number of facts scattered through hundreds of volumes, brings them together in a masterful way, and explains their significance in understanding say, such a religion as Christianity. Wheeler, of course, believed in evolution, but by the word he embraced the whole domain of man's physical and mental activity. "In the supreme domain of the mental and moral development of humanity," he points out "the doctrine of evolution finds its most interesting and complete verification. The undesigned coincidence of independent testimony, in all ages and nations, enable us to trace the course of men's faiths, and institutions no less than of his arts and weapons." Wheeler made this his text, and elaborated in his essays his conclusions, but not in a "dry-as-dust" fashion. On the contrary, I have rarely come across such an intensely interesting work. "Animism" may sound quite a high-brow title, but this chapter holds the average reader like a thrilling detective story. Our Jewish friends will not exactly like "Were the Jews Savages?" but gentle-hearted

Wheeler would not have hurt the susceptibilities of a fly. "Holding that all have descended from savage ancestors," he says, "I merely contend that Jews must be put in a common category with Gentiles, and that those great Jewish institutions which have so profoundly influenced the world are the product not of abnormal conditions or of supernatural contrivance, but have followed the usual course of human evolution."

Any new reader coming across this essay for the first time will be rather staggered not only at the knowledge of the Old Testament Wheeler shows, but at his explanation of the various passages he cites. We know now that the narratives have been edited and re-edited in the interests of morality, and that our English translation hides a great deal of the grossness of the original. But it was not possible to cover up everything, and, in spite of the editors, the truth has come out here and there, and a sorry picture it makes of ethics and morality according to the humanistic standard prevailing to-day.

Wheeler was always fascinated by the occult, and his chapter on "Sympathetic Magic" adds tremendously to one's knowledge of that subject. The part played by the "sacred" name of the Deity and the difficulties of anybody else but true believers getting hold of the correct pronunciation are fully described with all sorts of curious and out-of-the-way information. Wheeler was a past master of hunting out the unusual and the hidden lore of ancient faiths, and *Footsteps of the Past* gives a mine of information on subjects only a few specialized writers have tackled. I have said enough, I hope, to induce everybody who can buy the book to get it at once. It will be treasured by all Freethinkers, and no better gift to a friend could be given.

J. M. Wheeler deserves well of our generation. His memory should be kept alive by us all.

C.H.

Poor Old Job in Ballet.

MOST of my friends assure me that I am very versatile in my tastes for things theatrical, when I inform them that I not only love to see the plays of Shakespeare performed by the talented young actors and actresses at "The Old Vic"; but I am just as keenly interested in the great operas of Mozart, Wagner, Puccini, Bizet, Verdi and others, as I am of great plays, and for a change I like to see a good Ballet. Well, a week or two ago, on Saturday afternoon, October 24, to be exact, I managed to get in by early doors to the gallery of the "Old Vic" to see among other Ballets, one founded upon the story of "Job," the fine old patient philosopher of the Bible. Most of the readers of the *Freethinker* will remember the story of how Jehovah, the God of the Bible, allowed Satan to inflict sore boils upon Job, and later to take away all his possessions and kill his sons and daughters in order to test his faith. Well, all this comes out in the Ballet, which is founded upon "Blake's Vision of the Book of Job," with music by R. Vaughan Williams.

But in the Ballet it is explained that when the *Godhead* appears, it is not Jehovah himself, but merely Job's "spiritual self," and it is this which "consents that his moral nature be tested in the furnace of temptation." Of course it is a great ordeal for Job even in Ballet. Satan appears, and after a triumphal dance takes possession of the throne. In the next scene we see Job's sons and daughters feasting and dancing, when of a sudden Satan appears and instantly destroys them. Job's faith is not yet dis-

* "FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST." *Essays on Human Evolution*, by J. M. Wheeler. 3s. 6d. net. The Pioneer Press. 1931.

turbed, but Satan terrifies him by sending horrible visions of war, pestilence and famine. Still Job remains firm. Then appear Job's comforters, who are described as "three wily hypocrites," and these argue with him, and persuade him to curse God and die. Their dance at first stimulates compassion, but this gradually changes and Job rebels and exclaims, "Let the day perish wherein I was born." Later Job's vision of the Godhead again appears and the heaven opens and reveals Satan upon the throne. At this Job and his friends shrink in terror and depart. In the next scene Elihu appears. He is young and beautiful. He says, "Ye are old and I am very young"; whereupon we are told that "Job perceives his sin." Then the Heavens open and Job's spiritual self again appears enthroned. In the end, of course, Job gains the victory and the last scene shows Job "sitting as a humbled man in the sunrise of restored prosperity surrounded by his family, upon whom he bestows his blessing." All this is duly set down in the programme which renders the Ballet easily understood by the audience. When I say that the part of Satan was performed by the distinguished Ballet dancer, Anton Dolin, and that all the other dancers, ladies and gentlemen, were highly trained under the direction of Ninette de Valors, my readers can imagine what great delight they afforded to a crowded and most enthusiastic audience. It may also be said that as a Ballet the sufferings of poor old Job can be better understood when we realize that it is only his spiritual self or conscience that has consented to undergo this ordeal in order to demonstrate the steadfastness of his faith in God. But the dancing is the thing, and the young people who had flocked to see it were so delighted with the performance that they called M. Anton Dolin before the curtain again and again in their frantic enthusiasm. So far I have seen Elijah done in opera, Job in Ballet, and recently "Splinters" in a scene from "The Garden of Eden," which was decidedly burlesque. So we are getting on, and one of these days perhaps we shall have other characters from the Biblical dramas appearing in musical comedy or even in Revue for the edification and amusement of the rising generation of playgoers. And why not?

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Freedom's Lying Foe.

It is a remarkable fact that when the recent financial crisis had to be faced by the nation, and while cuts were made in even the subsistence allowance of the poorest of the poor, there was no suggestion to reduce the bloated emoluments of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England. It is another proof of the extent to which the secular Government of Britain has become deferentially subservient to the prelates and is a lamentable sign of retrogression. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners must be a very tame body. Sacrifice!

Yet though no cuts were proposed for the Bishops, they had to have their say in dictating to the general body of the people what its duty was. Some of them had the shameless presumption to speak as political partisans, which is a plain dereliction of duty, because they are legally the paid servants of the community, and prohibited from taking sides in political controversies. The Archbishop of Canterbury went out of his way to give a fulsome testimonial to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald; and throughout the country lesser lights of the clerical firmament were found echoing what their bosses said, making waspish attacks on men in the

Labour movement who declined to be identified with the new National Government, and whose shoe-laces the clerical wasps are not worthy to unloose. These attacks, however, no doubt furnished many votes for the National Government from people who do not know and do not think.

It is not a question of which section of politicians is in the right, and which is in the wrong. The continuance of a clerical profession—especially one enjoying State countenance and patronage is a curse and obstruction to human progress. There is even no biblical authority for a clerical profession though the clerics have distorted the text to make such authority apparent. Sects like the Quakers and the Plymouth Brethren take a simple and straightforward method of construing the Scriptures which clerics never do; and they have no parsons presiding over their services or deliberations.

And let no one be in any way deceived. Give a cleric an inch and he will take an ell. Power is his object and aim. Though he sees sources from which he formerly drew power drying up he is ever on the search for new ones; and to further his schemes he intrigues and clamours for help from the secular Government and too often succeeds. Presbyter is but Priest writ large, and every cleric even of the tiniest tin Bethel is a Pope at heart. As the present writer has contended in these columns before if a Protestant were shut up to choice between Atheism and Roman Catholicism, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he would prefer the latter to the former. The emancipators of men's minds have a tremendous obstruction to tackle. But the justification for the militant Freethought Movement lies in the fact that men will not make themselves and their conditions free till their minds are free—till their thinking apparatus is permitted to work without the clogs of religious traditionalism. It is not until every one can think freely and independently that we shall see any drastic reform in social and economic conditions.

It is amazing that in the twentieth century so many people are to be found who bow to the "superior" opinions of the supernaturalists. Why is it that so many things are taken for granted without personal enquiry or examination? The only reason one can suggest is that by working up a false sentimentality and bastard emotionalism the clerics have wormed themselves into the affairs of so many human beings in their most intimate and private relationships, so that the *ipse dixit* of the "spiritual adviser" becomes the voice of the Almighty.

One thing, however, ought to inspire Freethinkers with confidence, and that is that among the most eminent authors, artists, philosophers and scientists, orthodox believers are now in a minority, and those of us who move about amongst various sections of the ordinary lower middle class and working class folks realize how the bonds of religiosity are weakening day by day. It is profoundly true, and the fact cannot be too much emphasized that in the case of professional and business men in the vast majority of instances, their connexion with the Church is attributable in very large measure to social and business reasons. The shopkeeper, the lawyer, or the doctor has to have a "church connexion," however tenuous, to keep his customers, clients or patients. Clericalism as it was instituted by and is founded on falsehoods is a system that not merely condones but encourages dishonesty, cant and hypocrisy.

IGNOTUS.

There is no such thing as real happiness in life. The greatest definition that was ever given of it was "a tranquil acquiescence under an agreeable delusion."—I forget where.—*Sterne*.

Acid Drops.

That caravanserai of the microcephalous, the Christian Evidence Society, has been sending round its usual circular asking a number of "scientists" whether they believe in God and creation. Of course, the scientists are not asked to say what they mean by God and what they mean by creation, and so the majority of the selected scientists have replied in the affirmative. We have no doubt but that this will cheer up a number of half-wits, and having got a testimonial for God, the Christian Evidence Society will feel that it has justified its existence. We can add, as a testimonial, that it is running true to form. We will not say what its form is.

Sir Anne pu Patro, a delegate to the Round Table Conference, recently described the aims and achievements of the Justice Movement in Southern India. The aim of the movement is the destruction of the caste system. Now, in Christian Europe some form of the caste system has been in existence during the nineteen centuries of Christian teaching. It has begun to weaken only since the Christian religion weakened its hold. The "lower orders" were told that God ordered the "estate" in which each man found himself. Such a state of affairs being a fact of history, we would suggest that the peoples of India needn't believe any missionary tales about the value of the religion of Jesus as a dissolvent of class or caste distinctions. Why, even to-day in Britain nine out of every ten parsons believe they belong to the upper-middle class and have a right to the standard of living of that class. They still preach that Jesus came to break down class barriers.

A Protestant missionary, the Rev. W. T. Platt, affirms that there are splendid opportunities for Christian missions in Africa. He specially stressed the point that the religion offered to the natives should not be "watered down." Quite so; the diluted variety is the kind that will serve with Europeans, but the red-hot Gospel is the only kind which can be made to appeal to peoples of a lower culture. They are, of course, more near to the mental level of the first Christians, and only the "pure" variety of Christianity is likely to produce conversions. There is food for thought in that, for the philosophically minded.

The same missionary declares that Rome has Africa all portioned out into centres for missionary enterprise and is preparing to send men and to build churches. Our missionary friend is rather alarmed at the prospect, and urges his brethren to help the Protestant missionaries, of his particular sect (of course) to get there first. A most laudable desire, that. How sad it would be if the "heathen" should fail to get to Heaven, through having become the wrong kind of Christians!

A woman writer in a Nonconformist journal says that most religionists expect their children to join the same denomination as themselves, and this is what usually happens. But, she says, they should allow, and be glad to allow, freedom of decision to everyone, "for in no other way can strong, independent, responsible manhood and womanhood be developed." She adds:—

Certainly the day is gone when we expect, or ought to expect, young people to accept any religion on authority of parent or priest. That would stultify all progressive development in true religion. The great virtue we should seek to build up in our children is sincerity, the great fundamental virtue, without which no noble character can be erected. We should help our children to the extreme of our powers, nor should

we, I think, hide from them our deepest convictions. But in the end it is a lone way they have to travel, and granted their lives are founded in sincerity, I do not think we need greatly fear.

We daresay most Nonconformists and other religionists would give their assent to all the above statements—in theory. But if the young people should, in all sincerity, decide that they could not join any church or sect, and even go a step further, and become Freethinkers—in that case, we are very much afraid that the pious parents and their friends would be the first to condemn the decision and to cast doubts on the sincerity of the young people, as well as fear for them. We agree that the only way in which strong, independent, and responsible manhood and womanhood can be developed is by allowing everyone freedom of decision in matters concerning religion. But how few parsons and laymen there are who allow this principle to be their guide! Most of their efforts are concerned with concealing from young people what can be said against religion and with inculcating a bias towards religion, and especially towards the beliefs of a particular sect. There is precious little opportunity for young people to exercise independent decision in such circumstances. And there is further discouragement in the form of the slander, disparagement and lies with which the pious delight to bespatter the character and motives of those who break away from the churches and religion. After all, it is hard for Christians to believe in the sincerity of those who differ from them. In that, they are seemingly "Christ-like." For the Great Exemplar, one remembers, invariably disparaged, denounced and cursed all those who dared to differ from him and to be independent enough to have opinions of their own.

"Nothing of the Christian hope," declared Canon R. J. Campbell, "appears in Shaw, Arnold Bennett, and perhaps Galsworthy; their message is a distinct pessimism." In our opinion the first part of the canon's statement is a good compliment to the intelligence of the authors mentioned. For the "Christian hope" is, after all, but a puerile conjecture erected on the material foundation of priest-created fear. That any author should ignore it does at least suggest that he has taken a few steps forward along the road to mental progress. And as for the message of Shaw, Bennett, and Galsworthy being distinct pessimism, that sort of assertion is quite usual from parsons who imagine that authors ought to give the Christian religion a lift.

"The Cinema Problem from the Moral Point of View," was the subject discussed at a recent meeting of the Hampstead Council of Social Welfare. A reference was made by Mr. Howard M. Tyrer to some confabulations that seem to have been going on between Mr. Shortt, the Film Censor, and "religious and social workers and societies." This is, we presume, propaganda for the idea of an unofficial censorship committee to keep the Censor well up to Puritan scratch, and it is an unnecessary, and we hope will prove an unworkable attempt at interference. Not only does the present Censor function at least without fear or favour, but the law as it is now means that every local licencing authority has the power to enforce whatever conditions it likes, and to prohibit exhibition under certain conditions. What strikes us as being wanted in the British film world is not more morality but more imagination. A little in the way of departure from stock film "types"—vamps, villains, American slang, and from the cafe chantant that seems to be necessary to such a large proportion of films, might bring about an increased demand for the best pictures. We fear that the brains of the film world will not be much recruited from the ranks of "religious and social councils" who are more concerned with poking their pious noses into their neighbours pleasures than with the improvement thereof.

It is no doubt the case that the breathing space for Sunday Cinemas afforded by the recent measure was obtained partly by the plea that charities would be deprived of revenue. We agree with the Exhibitors Association's Vice-President who, in *To-day's Cinema* says, "Sunday opening is either good or bad. If it is bad, cinemas should not be allowed to open; if good, there is no reason why they should not make profits the same as anyone else who trades on Sunday." In a leader the same paper says this money for charity "is not a charitable payment but a tax, a weird tax with no parallel in ordinary legislation." The last observation is not quite accurate, for Tithe, the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the Chaplain's Department of the War Office, and hordes of others all mean taxes to an amount compared with which the contribution of cinemas to charity is insignificant. A few farmers kick now and then, and the only M.P. who helped them recently in Kent—he happened to be a dissenting minister—lost his seat by doing so at the General Election. We are hard up, dreading January 1, but we would not think of "economising" or "relieving the burdens on industry" at the expense of our established religion. This is still a Christian country.

The portraits of some thirty new Methodist Mayors are shown in a Wesleyan journal. As a sample of what Methodism produces, the pictures are not very inspiring, and we think a clear case is made out for a special day of intercession on behalf of the municipalities.

Our contemporary, the *Christian World*, prints in its last two issues an address by Mr. Bernard Manning, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, to the Protestant Dissenting deputies at the Memorial Hall. Its theme was "The Free Churches, the State, and the Established Church—some present Dangers and Opportunities." This remarkable address is convincing evidence of the common fear of Christians of the loss of those advantages which they at present enjoy as a result of the power and influence of religion in politics. Mr. Manning fears Rome, not because it will make Englishmen good Catholics (he would not mind that) what he fears is that "they will do here what they have done everywhere else, make half the people Roman Catholic and half anti-Christian." "If evangelical religion is destroyed the people here, like those on the continent, will have no choice but clerical religion and anti-clerical materialism." In short, a case is sought to be made to strengthen those secular influences and connections of Protestant religion in order to resist the increasing inroads of knowledge and the resultant depletion of "those who profess and call themselves Christians." We intend to reply to this case in so far as it is a case against Freethought and Secularism.

We have travelled far from the days when ideas as to the relations between religion and the State were the subject of a notable duel, between Mr. Gladstone and Macaulay. The latter's style often leaves us a little out of breath, but there can be no question that, whatever its merits as such, Macaulay's *History* is uncommonly readable, even to-day. So is a good deal more of his, including the duel mentioned above. To see Macaulay bearing down with his tank-like rhetoric on the barbed wire entanglements of Mr. Gladstone's complicated defences is, like a tank at work, if not beautiful, at least impressive. To the argument that "the powers that dwell in individuals acting as a Government, as well as those that dwell in individuals acting for themselves, can only be secured for right uses by applying them to a religion," Macaulay replied in words that are not unworthy of attention in some quarters at present. "All the general reasonings on which this theory rests," he says, "lead to sanguinary persecu-

tion. If the propagation of religious truth be a proper end of Government . . . persecution is justifiable." The same reasonings, we may add, justify also that partiality of the State for religion which still inflicts disabilities on unbelievers, directly and indirectly, from which Christians are exempt. Ostracism and boycott are longer and not less painful processes than burning, although less noticeable. That is their virtue to God's elect.

While we do not agree with Kipling's tag that "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet" we are a little doubtful as to whether Mr. Gandhi, who during his stay in London, stayed in the East End, was wise to go into the West, for when he did go, to "a very smart evening gathering," the "sight of some of the evening gowns caused him to lower his eyes and keep them lowered." We do not doubt that the wearers of those gowns did not lower their eyes at the unusual spectacle of a gentleman clad only apparently in a blanket and a pair of glasses. According to Mr. Gandhi, the religious woman in India is not much wiser than her pious sisters in the West. "If anyone tried to prohibit the Indian woman going to the temples she would resist to death . . . In the same way nothing could prevent her going to bathe in the Ganges. Tell her she may get rheumatism or malaria if she goes and she will say What is that to me? I must go." The *Manchester Guardian's* special correspondent, who extracted these observations from the Mahatma thinks the interview "might seem absurd, and yet it was worth while." Well he has given us another and a topical illustration of the evils of religion, and English women "half nude in the street"—to quote his headline—are at least a less pathetic object than poor women bathing for the good of their souls in the stricken waters of the Ganges.

The Rev. A. E. Whitham suggests that there should be some limits to preaching. Apparently he has been seeing the preacher as others see him. He says:—

How we talk, and talk, and still talk! What weariness at times it all must cause to our patient people . . . We preach, then print, then preach again. It is so easy, carried away by the emotion of the moment when facing the crowd, to speak beyond one's experience, to assert what is questionable, to appear to be competently dealing with the problem, and yet evading the one teasing question of the problem. And the indulgence of such talk is as intoxicating, as exhilarating as wine, and some of us at least will have been drunk with words on Temperance Sunday.

And we persuade ourselves of our own importance

How true all that is! Our parsons ought to be humbly grateful that there is a *Freethinker* to point out the stupidities, etc., in their deluge of words, and to persuade their Christian listeners of the parson's unimportance.

The *Methodist Recorder* issues the following solemn warning:—

We are all infected with the current talk—cant might be a better word—of the futility of self-repression and the uselessness of prohibitions. We laugh at the "Victorian taboos"—what an excellent word "taboo" is for its purpose; and we smile at the old rules for the daily Bible reading and private and family prayer. We pride ourselves at having got rid of that old gloomy Sunday." But we have not yet given up priding ourselves also on our sturdy Nonconformist conscience, the resolve that there were some things that we would not stand, and certain things that we would not do. God, we knew, was love; but to enjoy that love we had to abide in His commandments. That stern "Thou shalt not"—we forget it at our peril.

We rather fancy, however, that the famous Nonconformist conscience is getting a little frayed at the edges in these days. Once upon a time it sternly objected to the theatre and music-hall, card-playing and dancing.

All these amusements are enjoyed by a very large number of Nonconformists to-day. Once upon a time, also there was nothing but hymn-tunes played in chapel homes on Sunday. To-day the secular music of the B.B.C. sounds in most of them. We beg leave to prophesy that the Nonconformist conscience will become considerably delapidated in another ten years time. But the Nonconformist will not then be any the worse as a citizen, but rather better.

"Truth will out" even in reviewing theology, and the writer who deals in the *Times Literary Supplement* with two books, one on the Fourth Gospel, and one on the Historic Jesus, makes the pleasant confession that the author of the former (Dr. W. F. Howard) has formed conclusions "as of conservative a nature as possible in our age whose real life is most clearly discerned in the work of theological reconstruction." We trust our theological confrere will pardon us if we translate this admission into "language understood by the people," who do not read his journal. What he means is that the main concern of theology in these days, after a century of yielding up one position after another to criticism and learning, is to rescue as much as is left and present it in the most credible possible form. Only so would it have even a chance of acceptance to-day. This work of reconstruction has, so the reviewer says, made Dr. Howard come to the conclusion that "we shall never know who was the real author of the Fourth Gospel," yet its value "is the same as if it were of directly apostolic origin." With regard to the historic Jesus, the other author, Dr. R. H. Strachan, in the same way, concludes that "a revaluation of the historic Jesus" is necessary, but we are still to retain "unshakable confidence" in the Jesus of theology. It would seem that in the realm of theology at least it is possible, contrary to the proverb, to eat one's cake and still have it.

Il faut que tout le monde vive—everybody must live somehow, as the French have it. That a surprising number of persons (apart from the big organizations that exist for that purpose) live by looking after the souls of other people at home or abroad is shown by the following particulars which a curious reader has extracted from the London Post Office Directory as to minor evangelistic missions with offices in London. For the sake of convenience they are set out in alphabetical order. Anchorage Mission: Barbican Mission to the Jews: Bible Flower Mission: East London Mission to the Jews: Egypt General Mission: European Christian Mission: Fox and Knot and Fox Court Mission: Gospel Sky-Signs Mission: Hebrew Christian Mission for Israel: Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics: London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews: London Domestic Missionary Society: New England Mission for the Conversion of the Indians of British North America: Railway Mission: Ranyard Mission: Regions Beyond Missionary Union: Seventh Day Adventist Mission Board: St. Andrews Waterside Church Mission: South America Mission: Sudan United Missionary Corporation: Tram and Omnibus Scripture Text Mission: Zambesi Inland Mission. All these appear under the section headed "TRADES," sub-section "Societies—Religious!"

It is not often in these days that the religious idea that health of mind and body are small matters as compared with the welfare of the "soul" is stated bluntly. In a selection from the writings of the late Margaret Douglas, recently published, we find that lady referred to the modern concern for infant welfare as "a new game invented for the amusement of leisured women," and declared that "only after we have squandered many thousands of pounds and a vast amount of human energy shall we discover that the quest of physical fitness, as an end, is the essence of Prussianism, and that it profits the State nothing if its babies gain two pounds a week and have lost their souls." It is, we presume, a minor

consideration, that if the babies lost two pounds a week for long they would lose their bodies. Margaret Douglas was oddly enough, a woman who spent her life and her all in acting on exactly the opposite principle than that which her religion required her to preach. But Christianity, which was opposed to her labours on principle, did not prevent her actions, as it has not prevented many other Christians from being not only better than, but contrary to their creed.

A reader sends us an effective reference to the new school of Anglicans who "want all the advantages of State Establishment and none of the disadvantages." It was the late Sir Alfred Mond (Lord Melchett) who, speaking in the House of Commons (May 5, 1912) used these words:—

"Disestablishment and disendowment go hand in hand . . . To leave a disestablished church, a non-State institution, in control of State funds is an unthinkable proposition . . . Queen Anne's Bounty was not an endowment; it was the alienation of Crown property to the Church of England. Queen Anne had no right to alienate that property; it was the property of the Crown and of the nation. It is admitted that from the time of Henry VIII. to Queen Anne this property had been Crown property. We have a much better right to re-alienate that property than Queen Anne ever had to alienate Crown property to particular churches . . . I have the eminent authority of Mr. Justice Phillimore for that statement, who said: 'there was no 'giving' of tithe except by some early Saxons during their lives. All subsequent tithe is a tax imposed by the State for the benefit, in the first instance, of the Church.' Caxton, Coke and Seldon all agree that tithes were essentially a tax, and the Statute Book of this country is full of statutes from the times of Edward VI. to 1836 dealing with this matter."

This was said on behalf of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, but every word of it applies exactly to the Established Church of this country. In fact, the Welsh Church under a compromise settlement got more than it was entitled to, and so will the Church of England if the case for its dis-establishment, and disendowment is dealt with, as it may have to be soon, from the standpoint of Christian instead of national necessity. To-day some Anglicans advocate dis-establishment, and some Nonconformists oppose it. The first want freedom from State control of religion; the second want national recognition for Christianity. Just as Secular Education is the only logical and just way of getting rid of Christian obstacles to progress in that matter, so, in the larger domain of the relations between religion and the State as a whole, there is no rational or fair alternative to complete secularization.

From *The Passing Show*:—

Striking evidence of the unshakable dignity of the British Army:—

"Rex, the regimental goat of the 1st Battalion Welsh Regiment, wearing a new gold embroidered coat which cost £73, has attended his first church parade."

It might also be regarded as striking evidence of the natural instinct of goats for religion.

Fifty Years Ago.

A MYSTERY.

SKIFFUL a thesis to maintain,
A student in divinity,
Asked me in triumph to explain
The mystery of the Trinity.
Quoth I, my friend, I think I can,
The doctrine may seem odd;
But as nine tailors make a man
Three persons make a God.

The "Freethinker," November 27, 1881.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. A. R. READY.—Glad to know of the satisfactory progress of Mr. McKelvie junior. Hope he will soon be quite well again.

W. M. MCPHERSON.—Papers are always useful. Many thanks.

PLEBIAN.—Pleased you so enjoyed our article on "Mass Production," and that you derived so much pleasure from your visit to Durham. We cannot say when we may be lecturing in Newcastle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Next Sunday (December 6) Mr. Cohen will lecture at the Town Hall, Stratford, on "The Disease that Kills Religion." The chair will be taken at 7, and those who can help with the advertising of the meeting should write for a supply of advertising slips, which they could circulate. Stratford Town Hall may be reached easily by buses and trams from all parts of London. Buses and trams stop outside the doors of the Town Hall.

Mr. Cohen's new work, *Selected Heresies* will be published on December 4. It is a selection from his writings, books, pamphlets, and articles, and takes the form of compressed arguments on ethics, science, sociology and religion. It should prove valuable to both speakers and writers, and is eminently suitable for presentation to either Christian or Freethinker. It makes an ideal Christmas or New Year's gift, and will, although on different lines, form a companion volume to the same author's *Opinions* published about a year ago. The work extends to about 200 pages, and is published at the price of 3s. 6d. Orders received before the date of publication will be sent post free.

The Secular Society, Limited will also shortly issue a reprint of Colonel Ingersoll's *Rome or Reason*, with an introduction by Mr. H. Cutner. This makes a sixty-four page booklet, and is issued at the low price of

threepence. This is a marvellous threepennyworth, and we hope to sell many thousands of this issue, and many friends would do well to take extra copies for distribution. We know of no more powerful reply to the claims of the Roman Church, and in present circumstances it is well that everyone should know just what the claims of the Church are and what reply is pertinent. The case for was stated by one of the keenest of English Roman Catholics, and the case against by one of the most brilliant of Freethought advocates.

Another booklet that is to be issued shortly is a report of the speech made by G. W. Foote before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge on the occasion of his epoch-making trial for blasphemy. We claim for this that not merely was the trial one of the most important in the history of blasphemy trials, but that the speech was one of the best, if not the best, ever made in defence. We have had many requests for a reprint of the speech, and we anticipate a large sale. With its publication Mr. Cohen will deal with a peculiarly filthy story that has got about concerning this prosecution. The story in itself is not worthy of notice, but as Mr. Cohen has been questioned from three different quarters about it, the truth of the matter may as well be stated.

The *New York Herald* (Paris edition) of November 16 announces that the American Freethought Book Club has chosen for its December selection Mr. Cohen's *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*. Evidently some people are waking up. We are pleased to hear there has been a brisk demand for this new edition of *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture twice to-day (Sunday) for the Brighton Branch, N.S.S., in the I.L.P. Hall, 164 Elm Grove, Brighton. At 3.0 p.m. the subject will be "The Churches and the Next War," and at 7.30 p.m., "Is Christianity in Harmony with the Teachings of Science?" The local Branch is one worthy of support, and no doubt the saints within the area will take full advantage of the visit of a speaker from London.

Birmingham Freethinkers are reminded that Mr. B. A. Le Maine lectures for the local Branch of the N.S.S. in the Bristol Street Schools to-day (Sunday) at 7.0 p.m., on "Religion the Enemy of Man." This appears to be the last lecture of a series of four arranged by the Birmingham Branch N.S.S., and we hope the response will justify another series.

In accordance with the motion passed at the Annual Conference of the N.S.S., the place for holding the Conference for 1932 must be decided four months before Whit-Sunday. Branch secretaries will receive full details of what is required from those Branches desirous of inviting the Annual Conference to be held in their area. Invitations must reach the General Secretary not later than January 2, 1932.

We are asked to announce that a lecture on "Freethought and Socialism" will be delivered by Mr. A. Kohn, at 42 Great Dover Street, S.E.1, at 7.30 this evening (November 29). The lecture is given under the auspices of the S.P.G.B.

In his new book *Impassioned Clay* (Longmans, 6s.) Mr. Llewelyn Powys moves, according to one of the reviewers, "quite beyond that midway position of withheld judgment, which is most truly termed agnostic." This is to say in a round-a-bout way, and without mentioning that fact, that Mr. Powys is a Freethinker. And if anyone wants to find out how much truth there is in the common taunt that Freethinkers are joyless and tiresome controversial people, and not capable of enjoying life, he should read this boisterous, brainy and blasphemous philosopher.

Masterpieces of Freethought.

X.

THE ORIGIN OF ALL WORSHIPS.

By DUPUIS.

III.

(Concluded from page 747.)

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the centre of Christianity is the figure of Jesus Christ. Paul may or may not have been the real founder of the religion; Peter may or may not have been the first Pope, and there may or may not have been twelve gallant apostles. The fact remains that it is Jesus or "the Christ" who is adored and worshipped, and whose name is on the tongue of hundreds of millions of people every day—though perhaps a few are merely "blaspheming."

Now, it is not Jesus of Nazareth who is the God but Jesus Christ. The vast majority of religious believers believe in a God, not a man. The real Christian is a *real* Christian, because he believes in a supernatural being, a God, the Son of the Living God who is, at the same time, the same Living God. The martyrs of Christianity, the Monks and Popes and Cardinals and Archbishops down to the humblest peasant would never have worshipped and adored "Jesus of Nazareth." It is not an obscure Jew called Jesus that is worshipped, but a God; and from this one can see that the life story of an ordinary man would never have interested religious believers in the way they were expected to be interested. But there was no need to go to such a life story. There were hundreds dealing with Gods floating about in every known part of the world 2,000 years ago. Some of them were obviously fictitious easy to disentangle from the myths and symbols in which they were veiled. Some were far more involved and contradicted other stories purporting to be of the same Gods or humans. Some were clear romances of the Sun, the planets, the Zodiac, and others were easily seen to be fanciful allegories of a host of adventures dealing with stars and the supposed figures the stars made in the heavens. Some of these stories were obviously built round the time when the sun at the Spring equinox was in the sign of the Bull, Taurus, as it was called. Others, owing to the precession of the equinoxes, were more or less mixed with the Bull and the Ram.

It required the genius of a man like Dupuis to disentangle one story from another, and to prove how, at the back of them all, could be traced, however hidden in reality, the story of our Sun going through the Stars, day and night, through summer, winter, spring and autumn. With what infinite variety of romance has the imagination of the pagan clothed this astronomical fact! What Gods and Goddesses and other beings has he bequeathed to posterity, so indelibly and with such vividness that their very names are sufficient to embrace the chief characteristics of the whole of humanity! If you mention Mars, you think of war. If you mention Venus, you think of everything meant by the word sex and so on. No one more than Dupuis has succeeded in explaining these marvellous stories which have reached us from the remotest time in history. And he could see, on examination that the story of "the Christ" was on a par with, and could be explained just as easily as, the stories of pagan gods. He says:—

We shall not enter upon the question whether the Christian religion is a revealed religion or not. Philosophy has made too great advance in our day to require us to argue about any other communica-

tions from God to man than such as are provided by the light of reason and the contemplation of nature. We shall not even at present examine into the question of the actual existence of a philosopher, or impostor, named Christ, the founder of the religion known by the name of Christianity. For even if we were to concede this point, Christians would not be satisfied unless we were to acknowledge Christ as an inspired man, a Son of God, nay, himself a God, crucified for our sins. They require a God who once took food upon earth and is now the food of his people. Now we are far from granting as much as this, but we invite all who are content to regard him as a human philosopher, to enter upon this question, when we have analysed the religion of Christians, independently of its possible founder or founders. . . . we believe the chief point is thoroughly to investigate the nature of Christian worship, whoever its author may have been. We shall be able to show it is the worship of nature and the sun; and that the hero of the legends known by the name of the Gospels, is the same who has been celebrated with far more genius in the poems written in honour of Bacchus, Osiris, Hercules, Adonis and others. We have here the pretended story of a God born of a virgin at the winter solstice, and rising again at Easter or the vernal equinox. A God who takes about with him a retinue of twelve apostles whose leader has the attributes of Janus. A God who vanquishes the Prince of Darkness, introduces mankind into the realm of light and remedies the ills of nature. When we shall have shown that this is a solar myth like the rest, it will be almost as unnecessary to enquire whether a man named Christ ever lived as whether there was a real chieftain called Hercules.

If the reader then had the patience to go carefully through the detailed explanation of the chief characteristics of Christianity as given with wonderful detail by Dupuis, he would have very little difficulty in agreeing in the main with the conclusions so ably summed up by the great Frenchman. If I started quoting I should be unable to stop, and it is a very great pity that it is almost impossible to obtain even the short translations of the chapter on Christianity which have been published in England. Of course, Dupuis may have fallen into some error in attributing to the whole of Christianity a sun-myth origin. Other things went to the making of the religion and for the later knowledge and modern scholarship, one must read Mr. John M. Robertson, Sir James Frazer, Professor Arthur Drews and W. B. Smith. But in the main he found the key to and the explanation of "true" Christianity.

Everything in Christianity, contended Dupuis, was borrowed. "The fiction of Paradise on earth, and the introduction of evil by the serpent, is taken from Zoroaster. The Redeemer from evil and the conqueror of darkness is the sun of Easter. The legends of Christ's death and resurrection resemble all the legends and ancient poems about the personification of the sun; and their mysterious rites are the same as those of Osiris, Bacchus, Adonis, and above all of Mithra. The doctrinal system is far older than Christianity. It is found in the Platonists, Plotinus in Macrobius and other writers, strangers to Christianity and imbued with Platonism centuries before its existence." Thus Dupuis and it is a pity I cannot quote further.

But, after all, the great question in his day, even among infidels, was, did Jesus ever exist? And Dupuis took up the question of the silence of history and the supposed references in Tacitus and Suetonius and showed how useless they were. Tacitus simply repeated what he was told about the legend (if he did write the particular passage) and it is not certain to whom Suetonius was referring when he spoke about the disturbances in Rome headed by Chrestos.

Says Dupuis:—

If the question be whether Christ, the object of Christian worship, is a real or ideal Being, he is evidently a real Being since we have proved that he is the sun. Nothing can be more real than the orb that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; he was, and is, and is to be. But if the question is, whether there ever was a man called Christ, imposter or not, who established, under the name of Christianity, the ancient mysteries of Adonis and Mithra, it matters little to our work whether he did or did not exist. Nevertheless, we believe he did not, and we think that as the worshippers of Hercules were wrong in believing in the existence as a man of the hero of the twelve labours, simply because he was the sun; so the worshippers of Christ are wrong in ascribing existence as man to the personification of the sun in their legend . . . are we not naturally driven to believe that the worshippers of the Sun-Christ have created for him a historical existence, just as the worshippers of the same sun, under the names of Adonis, Bacchus, Hercules and Osiris have done, though the teachers of these religions well knew their gods were nothing more than personifications of the Sun-God?

Dupuis was "replied" to by many writers, particularly, but their works are just dead. No one knows of them or reads them. I came across one reply, written a year or two after the publication of the *Origin of All Worships*, by a Roman Catholic priest, on an old bookstall in Paris, but five minutes' glance through its pages were sufficient to show its worthlessness. The editor of the Garnier edition of the abridgement gets quite angry in some of his notes at Dupuis, for daring to assert that Christ had no real existence. "We feel in his work," he says, "the influence of the revolutionary spirit of his time." And he coolly points out that, after all, what Dupuis has to say of the existence of Christ are simply "the author's own opinions." Of course they were, but they also had the benefit of being opinions based on a long and arduous study of ancient history and mythology by one of the most brilliant and learned men of his time. They were "opinions" worth having. "Nothing," says the editor, B. Saint Marc, "can destroy the witness of Tacitus," and he proceeds to quote the sufferings of the early Christians under Nero—a piece of "history" almost as much in dispute as the existence of Jesus. Most of his notes show simply a hatred of Dupuis' ideas, not only on Christianity in particular, but on the supposed benefits of religion in general. B. Saint Marc is obviously a good Catholic, and had no business whatever to edit Dupuis.

But my space has given out, and though I could quote reams from Dupuis' masterpiece, I must close with a word or two only. While it is really a matter of indifference to Freethought whether a man called Jesus ever existed, it is a question of life or death for Christianity. It is to the credit of this great Frenchman that he proved as well as it was possible in his day to prove, that Christ, like so many pagan gods, was a sun-myth, pure and simple. That carried the war into the very heart of Christianity, and inflicted a blow from which that religion never recovered. Let us salute the name of this splendid leader of our cause; and let us never forget his memory as a supreme fighter for Freethought.

H. CUTNER.

The Life and Times of Robert Owen.

ROBERT OWEN is a permanent personality to social reformer and secularist alike. The evangelist of secular education; a pioneer of co-operation, and of rationalism in religion, his career was illumined by a noble humanitarianism far in advance of his age. He was born in 1771, and he lived till 1858, and his long life of eighty-seven years witnessed stupendous changes, in several of which he played a conspicuous part. Some of the reforms for which he and his followers fought, and for the success of which they were primarily responsible have been attributed by conventional historians to other men.

Owen's birthplace was in remote Wales. He was a son of a shopkeeper in Newtown, he received the extremely elementary instruction imparted in the village school, until, at the early age of nine he was sent into the world to work. A year later he departed from home and sought fame and fortune in mighty London, where the streets were notoriously paved with gold. As tradesman's assistant he served for a pittance in Stamford, London, and Manchester until his eighteenth year. Then with borrowed capital in the sum of £100 he became a manufacturer of machinery utilized in the textile trades. The times, quite unlike those in which we exist, proved propitious, and when he was twenty-nine years old he was appointed manager of important cotton mills at New Lanark, in Scotland, already famous for their magnitude and equipment throughout the British Isles.

The New Lanark mills had been established in 1784 by Dale and Arkwright, and the site was favoured by the water power furnished by the falls of the Clyde. 2,000 workers were employed, 500 of whom were little children, the majority of whom were supplied at the tender ages of five or six, by the pauper-houses and charitable institutions of Edinburgh and Glasgow. When Owen was installed as manager he did not employ his remarkable business ability to amass a private fortune and found a family with a stake in the country. An idealist resembling Ruskin, he devoted his wealth to the service of the operatives engaged in his factories. His conscience revolted against the inhumane practices then prevalent in industrial life. The intolerably long hours of labour, the insanitary conditions of the mills, as well as the child slavery, he regarded as both unnecessary and unjust. He claimed that the degradation and drudgery incidental to industrial operations could be abolished without depriving the capitalist and employer of the rent of ability.

With the acquisition of the cotton mills in New Lanark, Owen's career as a reformer really began. There were other enlightened and considerate employers—Dale, Owen's father-in-law among them—but Owen unquestionably outshone them all in public and private benevolence. Owen's administrative ability was displayed in many directions, and the first consignments of cotton from the United States were used in his factory.

As a rigid determinist Owen was firmly persuaded that men are the mere creatures of their surroundings and circumstances. Their character and conduct are consequently the direct result of the environment in which their lot is cast. He apparently ignored the powerful influences of heredity in moulding men's mental and moral constitutions. Yet, so far as improved material surroundings were capable of promoting the betterment of the working community Owen was desirous of using them in every practical way. He attached great importance to education, for he was convinced that the growing years of

When a King creates an office Providence creates immediately a fool to buy it.—*Colbert*.

Age is a tyrant who forbids at the penalty of life, all the pleasures of youth.—*La Rochefoucauld*.

Power acquired by guilt was never used for a good purpose.—*Tacitus*.

childhood constitute the main moulding period in human life, and that if the community is to be permanently benefited by better surroundings the seed must be sown and germinated in childhood's days.

The conditions of urban life were then appalling. Vice and crime were widespread. One-room tenements for families, large and small, abounded. Owen improved the housing conditions, and was surprisingly successful in inculcating order and cleanliness where turmoil and dirt had previously reigned. A store was established where the people were provided with commodities of good quality at a fraction above wholesale prices, while the sale of intoxicating beverages was strictly supervised.

Owen's brilliant achievements attracted great attention and his supporters included many influential men. He had a good press, and both the *Times* and the *Morning Post* encouraged his endeavours to abolish the blight of pauperism so widely prevalent. Yet, Owen was no Worldly Wiseman for, placing principle before prudence, he openly assailed the vested interests of theology. In his then notorious and now celebrated address delivered in 1817, Owen accused the clergy of all the various denominations of preaching mischievous and misleading doctrines. These doctrines, he asserted, promoted beliefs largely responsible for the misery and helplessness of the people. The promise of reward, and the menace of punishment in the next world failed to make men moral. The only way to secure ethical improvement is that which provides favourable mental and moral surroundings. The community would then instinctively respond to its better environment. But, on the other hand, the Christian teaching of salvation or damnation in a life after death renders ethical progress impossible. Aristocratic Tories and courtly prelates who had smiled on Owen's schemes of social reform now deserted him. Perhaps it was thought—and the thought was quite reasonable and just—that the reformer's plan would lessen the burden of taxation intensified by the Speenhamland system of poor relief which by encouraging the indigent to multiply had magnified the evil it was intended to alleviate. Now, it was sorrowfully realized that the supposed philanthropic manufacturer and moral evangelist was no better than a shameless infidel whose real aim and ambition was the destruction of both Church and State.

The reformer remained undaunted by the storm he had created. A co-operative colony was established at Orbiston, near Glasgow, under the direction of Abram Combe, one of Owen's disciples, while Owen himself went to America to test the practicability of his plan of co-operative village communities. As Cole puts it in his interesting biography "Robert Owen." "By chance, the occasion offered to buy in the United States the entire lands and buildings of one of those religious, semi-Communitistic societies which had sought religious freedom and the moral life through colonization. Owen bought Harmony from the Rappites. Leaving behind him little societies of disciples in England, Scotland and Ireland, he passed over to America, there to launch, as a private venture on the grand scale, the first Co-operative Community based on his principles. New Harmony was to be for the world a stirring example of the new social system at work."

The agitation and unrest that accompanied and succeeded the Napoleonic Wars became accentuated by the trade stagnation and distress that darkened the years following the Peace. A disciple of Godwin's, Thomas Hodgskin, and William Thompson, who expounded Owen's theories in terms of economics, and in some measure anticipated Marx, both championed the cause of labour with a demand for a

more equitable return for its productive services to the community. The spirit of revolt pervaded the working classes, and many were the visionary schemes propounded plainly reminiscent of the aspirations of past Cromwellian Levellers and the still earlier dreams of John Ball.

The impassioned prose and verse of Shelley are redolent with the doctrines of Godwin, Owen, and Paine. *The Masque of Anarchy* and the *Address to the Men of England* immediately recur to the memory. The mystical artist and poet, William Blake, in his vision of the New Jerusalem was inspired by social idealism. Blake's scathing reference to the "dark Satanic mills" makes clear his repugnance to the new industrial epoch. And then the splendid lines that succeed:—

Bring me my bow of burning gold;
Bring me my arrows of desire;
Bring me my spear: O clouds, unfold;
Bring me my chariot of fire.
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

Finding themselves forsaken by the proud and powerful the masses decided to act alone. Small co-operative societies and stores arose which were intended to serve as the foundation of future large and important communities. But little was accomplished, as, at this time, the more Radical section of the people became immersed in the struggle for Parliamentary Reform which culminated in the very moderate Act of 1832.

Owen's faith in Parliamentary action was strictly limited, for he was convinced that the social and industrial evils everywhere around him were mainly economic in character. In consequence of this truth the tinkering of Westminster were utterly worthless.

The Reform measure of 1832 placed the middle class in power, at least in the Lower Chamber, while the industrial community was left in the cold. When all the shouting and excitement subsided, as it soon did when the Radicals discovered that they had been ditched by the Whigs, the more thoughtful section of the reformers began to acclaim co-operation as the channel through which they might obtain sight, or even enter the Promised Land. Voluntary associations of producers formed guilds and manufacturing societies which were expected to become powerful enough to dislodge the employing class from the realms of industry, and with their dismissal would automatically disappear the exploitation of the toilers for private advantage.

Owen was now the acknowledged leader both in co-operative effort and in a firmer foundation of Trade Unionism. High hopes were entertained for the impending triumph of the people. But cold experience soon clouded the promising picture. In their conflict with capital the co-operative societies and the trade unions were completely crushed. Some ten years later the Rochdale pioneers restarted the co-operative movement on independent lines, but although Owen took no personal share in its later remarkable development, to him and to his disciples co-operation distinctly owes its inception. Trade Unionism was also revived to pursue a highly successful career, but Owen played no part in its later evolution.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

A man, who can, in cold blood, hunt and torture a poor, innocent animal, cannot feel much compassion for the distress of his own species.—*Frederick the Great.*

Faith—and Morals.

Just as, in the proverb, cleanliness comes *next* to godliness, so, in the order of theological precedence, morals come *after* faith. To Christians faith is the thing that matters. The supposed difference between Catholics and Protestants as to the priority of faith over works proves, upon examination, to be superficial. According to the Holy Roman Church a baptized Christian who dies in mortal sin and without (a) confession and absolution, or (b) a conscious act of complete contrition, is damned. A mortal sin, it is to be observed, may be anything from having eaten meat on a Friday to murder. On the other hand it is undoubtedly Catholic doctrine that for the baptized Christian "good works," generally speaking, are, in addition to faith, necessary to salvation. According to the Protestant faith salvation is by faith alone, and "all their righteousness is as filthy rags" for the purpose of salvation. Salvation is, according to some the special gift of free grace to those predestinate to eternal life; according to others it is the free gift of God in exchange for nothing more than an act of faith, *i.e.*, an expression of belief in the particular idea about salvation that applies to the case in hand. It comes to this that Catholic and Protestant alike put faith first; and, in so far as morals are a matter of conduct, they come second. This is why the trend of opinion is, and has for generations been steadily against Christianity. Jowett (of Oxford, not Birmingham) said so long ago as 1893, "To me it appears one of the most hopeful signs of the present day that we are coming back to the old old doctrine, 'he can't be wrong whose life is in the right.'" This was the year after the death of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the inventor of "honest doubt." That somewhat anæmic quality was, to judge by some of its converts of his period, rarely productive of:—

"The faith the vigour bold to dwell,
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen through wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell."

Nor is this surprising, for Tennyson's much praised honest doubt was not, it is to be feared, a doubt of the essentials of the matter, for he could not restrain from the unsatisfactory conclusion that:—

"... we know not anything,
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far-off—at last, to all
And every winter change to spring."

How incomparably braver and truer are Swinburne's lines:—

"We thank with high thanksgiving whatever gods there be,
That no life lives for ever, that dead men rise up never,
That even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea."

There is, however, another phase of the doctrine of faith which deserves attention. *Bona fides*? The church has its own notion as to what it is to be in good faith. It holds, for example, that an apostate, as one who rejects its teaching is pleasantly called, cannot be in good faith. This, like many other appalling dogmas, is not peculiar to the Catholic brand of Christianity. Perhaps the reader, who has almost certainly heard of Mrs. Humphrey Ward's famous *Robert Elsmere* (published in 1888) has not heard by what that remarkable book as inspired. We will tell him in the words of its author herself. In 1881 the famous Bampton lectures at Oxford were delivered by John Wordsworth, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury. The theme was "the present unsettlement in religion." The moral causes of unbelief were, said Dr. Wordsworth (1) prejudice (2) the severe claims or religion (3) intellectual faults, especially indolence, coldness, recklessness, pride, and avarice." Mrs. Humphrey Ward says when she heard this, "her heart was hot within her." She thought of all the good and learned men she knew that were dubbed evil livers or dishonest scholars. She wrote a pamphlet, *Sin and Unbelief*. It sold like hot cakes in the High Street, Oxford. "Then an incident, quite unforeseen by its author, slit its little life. A well known clergyman walked into the shop and asked for the pamphlet. He turned it over, and at once pointed out that it had no

printers name! Pains and penalties were threatened, and the timid booksellers withdrew the booklet—and that "was really the germ" of Robert Elsmere.

If an example is wanted of what "good faith" may mean when it is a question of defending *the* faith, there is an excellent one in some words the late Lord Acton—he lived and died a Catholic, yet he fought the Roman Curia and advocated truth in history. These words were written by him in attacking an Anglican writer who has applied the epithets "tolerant and enlightened" to the later medieval Popes.

"These men (*i.e.*, the Popes of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) instituted a system of persecution. . . . The person who authorizes the act shares the guilt of the person who commits it. . . . Now the Liberals think persecution worse than adultery, and the acts done by Nimenes (through the Agency of the Spanish Inquisition) considerably worse than the entertainment of Roman courtesans by Alexander VI."

Lord Acton's conscience was his own affair, but implicit in this statement is the indictment by a man of undoubted integrity of *both* the Catholic and the Protestant doctrines regarding faith in the only sense in which, in theology, that word has any meaning. We will close those observations upon the faith by quoting Thomas H. Huxley's opinion that "philosophies or religion turn out mostly to be only religions of philosophers—quite another business. It is my business to the best of my ability to fight for scientific clearness—that is what the world lacks. *Feeling, Christian or other, is superabundant.*"

ALAN HANDSACRE.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

FREETHOUGHT AND POLITICS.

SIR,—The *Freethinker*, during the War, refused to be pacifist or "patriotic," although many Freethinkers of both views urged you to act against your better judgment. I am glad to see that you have resisted the politicians, much as it would please me, in fervidly impetuous moods, to see my own sociological ideas expressed in your columns! I willingly forego this privilege, because I realize how frail an infant "Reason" is in the human family, and how easily we call that "rational" which is merely hereditary or environmental bias. At this stage we are not justified in claiming for any political theory the sanction of intellectual impartiality.

There is an attitude towards social problems which the *Freethinker* can best foster amongst its readers by continuing on present lines. *When* a powerful and influential section of the people is rid of superstition and the cant of social observances hypocritically conducted we shall find ourselves a long way on the road to the discovery of a rational political ethic. The moral is obvious.

ERIC A. McDONALD.

Society News.

THE political field to-day is in a state of chaos. With one party intoxicated and reckless with success, another humiliated by the diminution of its strength in the House of Commons, while others with feeble voices can only join in the medley of warnings and forebodings from their respective standpoints, it seems that, trouble, and plenty of it at home and abroad, is the only prediction with any prospect of success. The violent fluctuations in the fortune of the parties, arise from the generally accepted code of political activity. And as long as there is a "Gentleman's agreement" that politics shall be a dirty game, then Blue and Red will continue to score off each other, and experience the joys of Boom, and the bitterness of Slump, periodically.

The Freethought Movement does not suffer from such fluctuations. With us, it is a forward march. The steps

may not always be regular, but always they are forward. The reason is plain and simple. We are not dependent upon the general public as our public. Our hope is with the thinking men and women, always in a minority among the people. Our work will only appeal to thinking men and women. The type that will herd in dense masses to cheer royalty, to view the Lord Mayor's Show, or attend an orgy thinly disguised as an Armistice Service, may be splendid material for the political trickster, but is of no use whatever to the Freethought Movement. By keeping our Cause clean, it remains healthy. On the other hand look at the Churches. Of what avail has the centuries of bloodshed, lies, persecution, boycott, tyranny, in the interest of the churches, been to them? To-day they are struggling against extinction. Gradually they are being left with the C3 intellects, and finally the Lord's army will consist of M.D.'s.

Although the N.S.S. continues to go forward, it is by no means as strong as it should be. There must be at least a quarter of a million unattached Freethinkers in this country. They enjoy the benefits which the N.S.S. has helped to win. They are good Freethinkers, and many will respond to appeals for help, but the point is, spread over the country, unattached, they are lost sight of, but a quarter of a million new members to the N.S.S. would lift our movement into a position of prominence which could not be easily ignored or boycotted. Our members are steadily increasing in numbers, 1930 showed a substantial increase over the previous year, and for 1931 the numbers are well ahead of 1930. Careful readers of the *Freethinker* will have noted that during the past few months new branches of the N.S.S. have been formed at Ashington, Birkenhead, Brighton, Hants and Dorset, Sunderland, and Wembley.

Other Branches are in process of formation, but there should be many more, there can be more if our unattached comrades will join up, so please let me have your application for a membership form, and join the organization which cannot be bought, sold, or frightened.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds 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.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15 Miss N. Freeman—"Cowper: A Tortured Soul."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Michael Farberman—"The International Significance of the Five Years' Plan."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The Challenge of Soviet Russia."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, Hall No. 5, near Clapham North Station, Underground): 7.30, Miss Stella Browne—"Three Possibilities of Social Evolution."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 4: Monday, November 30, at 8.0, Mr. A. D. McLaren will open a discussion on "Religion and Ethics."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): Tuesday, December 1, at 7.0, George Ives, M.A. (Howard League of Penal Reform)—"Crimes and Punishments."

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. E. C. Botting—"Some Christian Stupidities."

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Zealley's Cafe, 100 High Road, Wembley): 7.30, Mr. H. Stewart Wishart—"Non-Political Atheism and Non-Religious Socialism."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, entrance in Lorn Street): 7.0, Sam Cohen (Manchester)—"Atheism and Christianity."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Council Schools): 7.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"Religion the Enemy of Man."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Members' Meeting. Business—Election of Officers, Balance Sheet, etc.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (I.L.P. Hall, 164 Elm Grove, Brighton): 3.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"The Churches and the Next War." 7.30, "Is Christianity in Harmony with the Teachings of Science?"

BURNLEY (Labour Club, Grey Street): Tuesday, December 1, at 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Woman."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. T. L. Peers, of the Bury Stage Society—"A Materialist's View of G. B. Shaw."

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (City Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room): 6.30, Rev. T. Lyons, B.A. (Oxon), B.D., D.Th.—"Science and the Bible."

RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION (Glasgow District), Grand Hall, Central Halls, 25 Bath Street): 3.0, Professor H. Levy, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.E.—"Is the Universe Mysterious?"

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Buildings, 41 Islington, Liverpool, entrance Christian Street): 7.0, J. A. Brewin (Manchester)—"Socialism and Human Nature." Current *Freethinkers* and other literature on sale.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. D. S. Mirski (Reader in Russian Literature, King's College, London). A Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester): Mr. Bonar Thompson (London) will lecture at 3.0, on "Shakespeare"; at 6.30, on "What is Wrong with Modern Civilization?"

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Arcade Pilgrim Street): 3.0, Members' Meeting.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, Hall No. 5): 7.0, Mr. J. Matthews—"That Great Evil—Religion."

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, 5 Forbes Place): 7.30, Mr. E. Ross-Griffiths—"Theosophy: The Divine Wisdom."

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Co-operative Hall)—At 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Spiritualism and Mediums."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Coach and Horses Hotel, High Street, W.): Mr. Hidson—A Lecture. Members and inquirers.

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