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

Views and Opinions.

Newspaper Religion.

WHERE religion is concerned there are quite evidently large bodies of people who never learn anything sensible and never forget anything that is silly. For example. Every now and again a newspaper on the look out for a "stunt" institutes what it calls a symposium on religion. A number of people are invited to express their opinions on the truth of religion, or the value of religion, or the present state of religious belief. But in almost every instance those selected as writers are quite "safe." They are men and women who while they may depart from strict orthodoxy may be trusted to express belief in some sort of a religion. It is quite probable that many of these writers do not mean all they say, and certainly they do not say all they mean. But they are mostly people who write for a religious public, and act accordingly. Seldom indeed is any one invited to write who would offer a straightforward attack on religion. And yet there are numbers of men and women in this country who, both by ability and position, are entitled to be heard on the anti-religious side.

The latest "stunt" of the kind named is being run by the *Daily Herald*. It is publishing a series of articles on "The God I Believe In," and the first three writers are Mr. G. K. Chesterton, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, and Mr. Paul Robeson, the negro singer. The framing of the question is unconsciously suggestive. It is apparently no longer a question of whether a person believes in God, but what kind of a God he believes in. The question is on a level with "What kind of nightshirt I wear?" or "What is my favourite dissipation?" The question of belief in God has become a matter of personal idiosyncrasy, or pathology, or the kind of mental aberration that troubles one. But it is no longer a question of believing in an actual verifiable existence. If it were otherwise the question would naturally be, "Do I

believe in God?" And "God" would mean something precise and definite.

* * *

Political Religion.

Of the three articles, that by Mr. Robeson is simple, Mr. Chesterton's is pert and true to form, and Miss Wilkinson's manages to say nothing definite—except in those parts where she is quite wrong. Mr. Robeson starts off with the remark that he is a black man and all black men are religious (not all, for I happen to know one or two that are not) and that Africa gave religion to the world. That is not quite the case, but it may be taken as an expression of the historical truth that Christianity is largely African. But the deeper truth is, I imagine, far from the mind of Mr. Robeson. This is that it is in the depths of uncivilized Africa that one finds the purest forms of religion, and also samples of the raw material of all religion. As the expression of a mere personal attitude, of no value whatever save to those who wish to know what Mr. Robeson thinks about God—or anything else—the article gives us the very customary sugar-water religion, with a complete unconsciousness of the fact that genuine religion is anything but sugar-water.

On the sentimental side Miss Wilkinson appears to think that anything she likes is true religion, and anything she dislikes is not, and that everyone must be in favour of true religion. That I think is a fair sample of the silly sentimentalism of Miss Wilkinson, which she imagines is a religion. She tells us she believes in truth, as though there is anyone who does not. But, alas! the profession of belief in truth neither tells us what *is* truth, or enables us to find out whether we have it, and as a politician, Miss Wilkinson must know that to believe in truth does not prevent people telling some really first-class lies.

On the non-sentimental side we are told that the revolt of modern youth is not against the idea of God. But as it is indisputable that the revolt is against some conception of God, what is that but revolting against God? And on Atheism Miss Wilkinson is really funny. Thus:—

In the storm and stress of the revolutionary period of the war and after, no one worked harder to be a thorough-going Atheist than I did, but as with Dr. Johnson's philosopher friend "Cheerfulness would keep breaking through." It is very difficult for a really happy person to be an Atheist.

I wonder what on earth Miss Wilkinson thinks Atheism is, or how she thinks anyone becomes an Atheist. Imagine anyone working hard to become an Atheist and failing because they could not get miserable enough. You really cannot become an Atheist by trying to be one; mental positions are not reached in that way. Atheism is the product of conviction, and conviction is the outcome of reflection, of reason, of

experience. No man or woman ever becomes an Atheist save in terms of mental growth. Perhaps this explains why Miss Wilkinson did not become an Atheist during the war. She probably went down on her knees to ask God to make her an Atheist, for the duration of the war, so that she need not be led to ask him why in the name of common decency he did not prevent its occurrence. If she did that, it would be on the level of the statement quoted. And Miss Wilkinson is a prominent Labour politician! And the *Herald* stands for the education of the working classes! Ye gods! twice.

* * *

Refugees from Atheism.

Mr. Chesterton says he never was an Atheist. He did not even try to be an Atheist for the duration of the war. He said he came direct to Christianity from Paganism, "I was first of all enraptured with the glory of the world; and then I came to thank God for it." But Paganism does not mean being enraptured with the world, unless you define the word to mean anything outside Christianity, whether it is religious or not. There is plenty of God in Paganism, and plenty of praise to God for the world. Mr. Chesterton's statement implies either that Paganism is without a recognition of God as the author of the world, in which case he really was an Atheist, or if it does not imply that, then he had no need to leave Paganism in order to find a God to thank for having brought the world into existence. Probably he does not mean anything at all. He is only writing an article.

Mr. Chesterton says he was never an Atheist because he always saw behind nature "a Face." And because the face he saw was a friendly face, he was not disturbed by what is called the problem of evil. As though he has quite removed the difficulty before him he says:—

If a loving father can permit a child to have toothache, He can permit men to make war.

I agree, thoroughly. If God can permit one evil why not another? The earlier Christians, and the more stupid modern ones, met the situation by saying that God does as he pleases, and it is perhaps all for our good. Even that did not answer the essential question, but it did act as a drug. The modern Christian will not take the drug, and he will not face even the immediate issue. The god who permits one man to be killed unjustly is neither better nor worse when he permits a few millions to be killed in war. Nothing happens in war more horrible than happens in nature, without the interference and ill-doing of man. If you can accept the universe and evil, and God, it is stupid to complain because God does in a particular place, and for a few years, what he has been doing for millions of years and in all places. Mr. Chesterton says he was never an Atheist because he thinks there is a face behind nature. Miss Wilkinson says she was saved from Atheism because she read Eddington, and Haldane, and Bertrand Russell, and Whitehead, and found they had "poked their fingers" through matter and found there was something on the other side. I wonder what these gentlemen think of this presentation of their teachings. It is only fair to Miss Wilkinson to say that she confesses she found much in the writers cited that she did not understand. But, so far as I am concerned, I do not find it difficult to realize why neither Miss Wilkinson nor Mr. Chesterton ever became an Atheist. One is reminded of Coleridge's statement that not one man in a thousand has either goodness of heart or strength of mind to become an Atheist.

Fooling the People.

Mr. Chesterton says that one can't argue with people who have a bundle of ideas which bear no logical relation to each other. Again, I agree, but it is just that difficulty which fronts one when dealing with Mr. Chesterton. For his article bristles with statements that are misleading in form, and which bear no relation to the question at issue. He says that the God he believes in is the God of Freedom, and assumes that God and Freedom are convertible terms. He does not realize that the most rigid systems of determinism have been derived by Christian theologians from the existence of God. He talks of the belief in God removing the "Problem of Evil," whereas the question only arises when one believes in God. There is no such thing to an Atheist as the problem of evil. Good and evil are to an Atheist phases of sentient existence, and the one presents no more of a problem than does the other. It is theology by postulating an all-wise, all-powerful, all-good God that creates what is called the problem of evil. Mr. Chesterton also writes as though the Atheist denies freedom of choice. That is a very stupid, and a very vulgar misunderstanding. Freedom of choice is obvious and its existence is manifested whenever a man is permitted to act as his choice dictates. The problem is not whether man's choice of whisky or ginger beer is free—that much is manifested the moment I offer him the two things and permit him to take which he likes most. The real question is why does he choose whisky rather than ginger beer. It is the determination of choice which is in dispute. Mr. Chesterton really ought to try and get accurate ideas about the things whereof he writes.

But, perhaps, in these newspaper articles knowledge of a subject, and exactitude of thought are not considered necessary. It is quite certain that the editor of the *Daily Herald*, who has shown such tenderness and such hospitality towards religious "slush" has taken little care to see that his readers get the truth about religion. His symposia, up to date has been as much "bunkum" as any of the other symposia that have appeared. Ostensibly the *Daily Herald* stands for democracy, actually it plays the same game as do other members of the stunt press. It is really a pity that we have not in this country a paper which should make the education of the democracy its real work. It is also a pity that it is not recognized that on no subject does the democracy need educating more than on this question of religion. While the intellectual appetite of masses of the electorate can be satisfied with empty chatter of the kind exhibited in these articles, they must remain pretty hopeless for useful political or social action. You really cannot keep people mentally infantile in one direction without it acting like children in other directions. Intelligence and honesty with regard to religion might easily lead to greater intelligence and honesty with regard to other subjects.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A ray of imagination or of wisdom may enlighten the universe and flow into remotest centuries.—*Berkeley*.

Those who never retract their opinions, love themselves more than they love truth.—*Joubert*.

We think very few people sensible except those who are of our opinion.—*La Rochefoucauld*.

The people murder one another, and princes embrace one another.—*Italian Proverb*.

The Errors of Ma Eddy.

II.

(Concluded from page 756.)

"The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies."

Lucretius.

"Learning is good, but common sense is better."

G. W. Foote.

"The best of prophets of the future is the past."

Byron.

The topsy-turvy nature of this new evangel of Christian Science is shown by the simple statement that it is neither definitely Christian nor scientific. "Stop," says the Christian Scientist, "believing in the reality of your sin and the sin will vanish." The Christian Religion gives no countenance to the idea that sin is unreal. Its teaching for two thousand years is the exact opposite. "Cease to believe in the reality of your broken leg, and the broken leg is non-existent" should be the natural outcome of Christian Science teaching, "which," as old Euclid says, "is absurd."

Christian Scientists have more dangerous ideas than most members of fancy religions. If a man worships a stuffed snake in the quietude of his own back room, he is, in all probability, harmless enough otherwise. But Christian Scientists are mischievous, and only exist because they live in a society regulated by strictly utilitarian ideas. The modern State is governed on the principle that physical evils are real, and therefore to be provided against. The house in which the Christian Scientist lives is drained as a deliberate precaution against disease. Even in the street, where he walks, traffic is regulated from fear of accidents. Laws prohibit any adulteration of his food. Saner precautions everywhere are constantly being taken on his behalf instead of relying on metaphysical moonshine.

This is not too strong an expression in criticizing this so-called Christian Science. Here is another quotation from this latest divine revelation:—

The metaphysics of Christian Science prove the rule by inversion.

For example:—

There is no pain in truth, and there is no truth in pain.

Yet Ma Eddy herself, with pain, regrets that ontology receives less attention than physiology, and actually relates the following improving anecdote, worthy of the saucy and audacious Baron Munchausen:—

It is related that a father, anxious to try such an experiment, plunged his infant babe, only a few hours old, into water for several minutes, and repeated this operation daily, until the child could remain under water twenty minutes, moving and playing without harm like a fish. Parents should remember this, and so learn how to develop their children properly on dry land.

What, in the name of common-sense did the lady-saviour suppose ontology to mean? The frowns of the medical profession cannot constitute the most severe criticism of such awful nonsense. That it should be received with acclamation in the half-educated and uncultured atmosphere of the United States is highly credible, but that it should have been received with composure in England is the severest of all criticisms of the mentality of believers in general. That Christian Science converts are almost invariably drawn from the ranks of existing religious bodies is not exactly a compliment.

Fortunately, the high-priestess of the newest and most successful form of religious crazes did not escape ridicule. Mark Twain, the most humane of jesters, with that characteristic twinkle in his eye, that irre-

sistible drawl in his voice, that assumed gravity of manner, tried to convince the lady-saviour's devotees that they might conceivably think that in this matter they might be somewhat mistaken. This is the way that Mark Twain burlesqued the Eddy Abracadabra:—

There is an account of the restoration to perfect health, in a single night, of a fatally injured horse, by the application of Christian Science. I can stand a good deal, but I recognize that the ice is getting thin here. If that horse had as many as fifty clams; how could he demonstrate over them? Could he do the All Good, Good, Good, Good Gracious, Liver, Bones, Truth, all down but nine, set them up on the other alley? Could he intone the scientific Statement of Being? Now, could he? Wouldn't it give him a relapse? Let us draw the line at horses. Horses and furniture.

This is genuine fun, and more instructive than reams of prosaic argument, but it never effected the enormous popularity of Ma Eddy's evangel. For when a person joins the Christian Science temple, he must leave his brains at home. He must leave them locked up in an iron safe, or else have them removed by a skilled surgeon. If he should forget himself, and think but once, the results are terrible. The bye-laws provide that he shall be expelled, instantly, for ever, no return ticket, just a rank outsider.

The real reason for the popularity of such a purely fancy religion as Christian Science is that Christianity itself is crumbling. To the student of history there are few things more interesting and pathetic than the craving of semi-literate man for knowledge, and the audacity of the charlatan in supplying an adulterated article. It was the novelty, the paradox, and the clever showmanship of Ma Eddy that deceived the Bostonian, then the American, and finally the British religious circles. A little knowledge mixed with a great amount of impudence and charlatanism, has a knack of imposing upon thousands of credulous and half-educated people. Half-educated people always consider everything they cannot understand to be cleverer than the things they can. It is precisely because religious charlatans are so expert in giving spurious glamour to what is mischievous that this sorriest of sorry trades is such a menace. Such is one of the unhealthiest influences in our national life.

MIMNERMUS.

New Gods for Old.

"The scientist is as likely to abandon the idea of a deterministic universe because of the Heisenberg theory as he is to refuse to sit on a chair because Rutherford demonstrated the gaps in the atoms, and the laymen had better not make the mistake of trying to rediscover free-will through physics, remembering as he should that natural theology always lets its friends down in the long run. (Langdon-Davies: *Science and Common Sense*. p. 137.)

THERE have been many names invented for God. When Newton discovered the laws of gravitation, he became "The Great Lawgiver." With the advent of Paley he became sarcastically named the "Carpenter God." At various times he has been the "Great Architect," the "Great Organizer," and many others. To be in the latest theological fashion to-day, you should do obeisance to the "Mathematical God." It seems according to this new cult, that we, and indeed the whole universe, only exist as problems in the mind of the "Great Mathematician."

We very much doubt whether Christians will be prepared to pray "Our Father which art in Heaven," to this mathematical marvel. But perhaps they will keep the heavenly father for private use at home, and

fall back upon the Mathematician for confounding the sceptic. This will be attempted, not by mathematical reasoning, but by citing the names of great Mathematicians who have just provided them with this new idol. For our part, we cannot see why the religious should object so strenuously to Materialism and mechanism, and yet be ready to bow the knee to mathematics.

Most people, like myself, are soon out of their depth in mathematics, and as for the higher branches which the masters have evolved, and in which they work out cosmical problems, there are exceedingly few who can discuss them, or understand them. Moreover: "it may be safely stated," says an authority, "that no mathematician is an expert in all its higher branches, but only in a very few of them."¹

We were amused when, about a year ago, it was said that Einstein, as the result of some years of mental activity, had produced a formula reconciling the Planck Quantum with the theory of Relativity. In due course the formula appeared; the papers printed it in full—it occupied no more space than a post-card—Of course nobody understood it, but the amusing part was that when the newspaper men appealed to the mathematicians for their opinions, they all declared that it would require careful consideration. It struck us that the formula was so new that they were stumped, and required time to get the hang of it themselves. For, it must be borne in mind that mathematics had its origin in arithmetic and geometry, and as Langdon-Davies points out: "By varying the postulates of Euclid, the mathematician can invent as many new geometries as he likes."²

Bertrand Russell (now Earl Russell, although he is not using the title) in his recently issued book *The Scientific Outlook* (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.) has a chapter on "Science and Religion," in which he deals very effectively with this new cult. Bertrand Russell has a European reputation as a mathematician. He can meet the greatest of them on their own ground as an equal. He commences the chapter by observing that some scientists have claimed "that recent advances in science have disproved the older materialism, and have tended to re-establish the truths of religion." To which he rejoins:—

The statements of the scientists have as a rule been somewhat tentative and indefinite, but the theologians have seized upon them and extended them, while the newspapers in turn have reported the more sensational accounts of the theologians, so that the general public has derived the impression that physics confirms practically the whole Book of Genesis. I do not myself think that the moral to be drawn from modern science is at all what the general public has thus been led to suppose. In the first place, the men of science have not said nearly as much as they are thought to have said, and in the second place what they have said in the way of support for traditional religious beliefs has been said by them not in their cautious, scientific capacity, but rather in their capacity of good citizens, anxious to defend virtue and property. The War, and the Russian Revolution, have made all timid men conservative, and professors are usually temperamentally timid. Such considerations, however, are beside the point. (pp. 105-106.)

As he further observes, it is only the fundamentalists and the Catholics who defend the old positions now. All the others are "appealing to the heart instead of the head, maintaining that our feelings can demonstrate the falsity of a conclusion to which our reason has been driven." They take their text from Tennyson:—

¹ *Everyman Encyclopædia*: Article, Mathematics.

² Langdon-Davies: *Science and Common Sense*. p. 91.

"And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered I have felt."

One of the most remarkable developments in religious apologetics, is the attempt to rescue free will in man by means of ignorance as to the behaviour of atoms. Eddington, in his book on the *Nature of the Physical World*, has made great play with this. I am surprised, says Bertrand Russell:—

That Eddington should have appealed to this principle in connexion with the question of free will, for the principle does nothing whatever to show that the course of nature is not determined. It shows merely that the old space-time apparatus is not quite adequate to the needs of modern physics, which, in any case, is known on other grounds . . . modern quantum mechanics has made it evident that a more fundamental reconstruction is necessary. The principle of Indeterminacy is merely an illustration of this necessity, not of the failure of physical laws to determine the course of nature. (p. 109.)

And he thinks "the Principle of Indeterminacy" has been seized on by clergymen—chiefly, I think, on account of its name—as something capable of giving them an "escape from thralldom to mathematical laws" (p. 108); and concludes that Eddington's view: "is at the mercy of the experimental physicists, who may at any moment discover laws regulating the behaviour of individual atoms. It is very rash to erect a theological superstructure upon a piece of ignorance which may be only momentary. And the effects of this procedure, so far as it has any, are necessarily bad, since they make men hope that new discoveries will not be made." (pp. 110-111.)

But if, continues Bertrand Russell: "Sir Arthur Eddington deduces religion from the fact that atoms do not obey the laws of mathematics, Sir James Jeans deduces it from the fact that they do. Both these arguments have been accepted with equal enthusiasm by the theologians, who hold, apparently, that the demand for consistency belongs to the cold reason and must not interfere with our deeper religious feelings." (p. 113.) Sir James compares the universe to a soap-bubble:—

The last chapter of the book is concerned to argue that this soap-bubble has been blown by a mathematical Deity because of His interest in its mathematical properties. This part has pleased the theologians. Theologians have grown grateful for small mercies, and they do not much care what sort of God the man of science gives them so long as he gives them one at all. Sir James Jeans' God, like Plato's, is one who has a passion for doing sums, but being a pure mathematician, is quite indifferent as to what the sums are about. (p. 115.)

Consequently, such a God would be quite indifferent to us. Therefore, prayer and praise, would be as much wasted upon him as upon any heathen idol.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

The less power a man has, the more he likes to use it.—*J. Petit-Sense*.

Our ideas like pictures are made up of lights and shadows.—*Joubert*.

Nothing can have duration which is not based upon reason.—*Q. Curtius*.

To be a Christian is to obey Christ no matter how you feel.—*H. W. Beecher*.

The obscurity of a writer is generally in proportion to his incapacity.—*Quintillian*.

"Selected Heresies."

A REVIEW.

If you wish to test the merit of a musical work, an acknowledged method is to listen to it over and over again. In the opus of mediocre quality you will soon hear all there is to be heard, and with further repetition the interest will flag and the music begin to pall. But in a great work you will find that the composer has, so to speak, displayed only a portion of the goods in the shop window. The wealth of musical ideas, the melodic development and contrapuntal ingenuity, are only partly revealed at the first hearing, and with each successive performance you penetrate further into a region of undiscovered delights, combining all the time the pleasures of the aesthete with the thrills of the explorer.

Precisely the same thing may be said of literature, and of Mr. Cohen's *Selected Heresies* in particular. All that is in this work has been written before by the author at one time or another, yet it gains instead of losing by repetition. What the book does is to gather together into one volume of handy dimensions a singularly happy collection of excerpts from Mr. Cohen's past writings, displaying alike his wide range of knowledge, his profound and searching philosophy and his irrepressible wit, bubbling through every page.

I confess I thought I knew something of the author's versatility, but I am left amazed on seeing it focussed between the covers of a single book. It is obvious to the reader even of moderate intellect that this is the product of a fertile mind, and, for those who are accustomed to put something *into* a book as well as to get something *out* of it, the work is stimulating in the extreme. When I say that the author is a man of few words it is not to use the expression in the popular sense of a laconic person from whose lips fall occasional, if telling, monosyllables, but rather in the relative sense of one whose words are economical in the highest degree when compared to the vast amount of thought they imply. That is why Mr. Cohen is above all things a suggestive writer, and why his books, like all great works, improve with repetition. At this moment I feel I could read *Selected Heresies* again, confident that I should see twice as much in it as before. But that is by no means its only attraction. When I first took up the book I wondered whether, the time at my disposal being short, it would be possible to make an adequate review without going through every excerpt. But when I commenced I found the matter was taken out of my hands. Each passage was so full of interest, with the change of theme so constant, that I was irresistibly curious to see what the next section would be about. Thus I could not bring myself to omit a page without first reading it to make sure it could be left out. And now I want to read it all again.

Selected Heresies has one advantage over the *Opinions* of last year, and to me it seems a very great advantage. The separate passages, each with its sub-title, are considerably longer than in the *Opinions*, of which the essential character was aphoristic. In the *Heresies* we are presented always with a complete argument, or a thought *in extenso*, and this has the happiest effect upon the reader; for, instead of merely enjoying Mr. Cohen as a conversationalist, we are introduced to him as a lecturer, since each passage has that body, that comprehensive structure, that logical development and rounded character which make of it a lecture in miniature. The consequence is that its effect does not end with mere stimulation, nor yet with entertainment alone; there is at

all times the additional merit of instruction. Thus the book is acceptable alike to the literateur and to the aspirant to religious controversy on or off the Free-thought platform.

Still further interests await the reader. A certain number of passages are taken from writings about the period of the Great War, and in all of them we see one striking feature: They foreshadowed, in temper and outlook, sentiments and opinions that are only beginning to emerge, at all events on any appreciable scale, at the present time. It is not of course surprising that the leader of a progressive movement should thus have been thinking ahead, but it is a source of interest, no less than of gratification, that he should have broken the particular trail which, out of many that were possible, was the one destined to receive the footprints of Time.

Of all the features that combine to make Mr. Cohen a fascinating author, and *Selected Heresies* in particular a fascinating book, perhaps that which strikes me most forcibly is the strong and consistent vein of originality running through his work. Subjects are treated from angles so new and at times so very divergent from the customary line of approach, that one is fearful, at the commencement, as to the substantial validity of what is to follow. It looks almost as if truth were going to be sacrificed in the interests of a daring presentation; but it is not so. And when Mr. Cohen finally makes his point, it is found actually to gain in cogency by the very contrast of an original setting. The author has said himself that there is nothing new under the sun, except of course new knowledge, and that originality consists in the novel presentation of old ideas, new forms of old things, a modern context to classical thoughts. He certainly lives up to his definition, and, if this ingredient be an acceptable diet for book-lovers, *Selected Heresies* may be counted a tabloid possessing it in concentrated form. The book is one over which one cannot help but enthuse.

It would be churlish to omit acknowledgment of the service performed by the anonymous collector of the published passages. In a brief and entertaining foreword Mr. Cohen tells the story of how the work came into being. It is the outcome of a friend's remark to the effect that selected passages from the author's writings would make a happy publication. Mr. Cohen, fearful that a laborious task was to be added to his already excessive duties, fobbed off his friend with the playful suggestion that the latter should do the selection, only to discover to his surprise, some time later, that he had been taken at his word. With characteristic wit, therefore, he claims in his foreword not to be the author of the book. Be that as it may, we must offer our best thanks to this anonymous friend, who has not only put himself about to collect the material for *Selected Heresies*, but has done it with a discrimination so successful that we are provided with perhaps one of the nicest Christmas presents we have had from Mr. Cohen for many years.

MEDICUS.

Ignorance is not so damnable as humbug; but when it prescribes pills, it may happen to do more harm.

George Eliot.

There are few, very few, that will own themselves in a mistake.—Swift.

Let them obey that know not how to rule.

Shakespeare.

The tongue strikes deeper than the lance.

French Proverb.

A Poor Listener's Pleasant Sunday Afternoon.

ON Sunday afternoon last (November 22) there was broadcast by the B.B.C. (London Regional Programme 5.30 p.m.) an address by Mr. Christopher Dawson, entitled "The Modern Dilemma." It turned out to be a sustained criticism of secularism, and an assertion of the necessity of "spiritual" or religious belief to the welfare of men and States. It contained some monstrous statements as, for example, that human and practical motives could not possibly inspire the highest achievements in thought or action. Comparing John Morley's "Atheism dressed in the top hat and frock coat of Victorian respectability," with the tendencies of to-day Mr. Dawson said that the latter tended to break not only with religious, but with moral and ethical standards, without which, he said, no State could survive. We actually had an apology for the pre-democratic condition of life in this country, as to which Mr. Dawson said that improved industrial and social conditions had brought moral and spiritual unrest, whereas in the ages of faith men were materially much worse off were yet content. It is idle, we presume, to protest against this kind of rubbish being broadcast by a Corporation supported by national funds, and supposed to scrupulously avoid controversial topics unless they are such as allow of a hearing to be given to both, or all, sides. The defence of the B.B.C. to this charge will probably be that advanced thinkers and scientists have been allowed to broadcast as well as Christian apologists. That, however is to evade the issue. Mr. Christopher Dawson is not a scientist of note, but a layman preaching a sermon in the guise of a talk, and a sermon not expository of religion, but ignorantly and violently attacking opinions which are held by a section of the community which has as much right to attack Christianity through the B.B.C., as Mr. Dawson has to defend it. The Sunday Programme of the B.B.C. is already unusable for hours to thousands of subscribers because of its preoccupations with religion. If we are to have more of it, afternoon as well as morning and evening, camouflaged as "talk," it will be time to consider whether some steps cannot be taken to make effective the disgust and indignation aroused by such a paper as Mr. Dawson's—most mechanically and drearily read in a monotonous drawl—on which, we should be inclined to think, few listeners wasted their "juice." We found it hard to listen ourselves long enough to hear what has inspired this comment. And no B.B.C. Announcer ever says: "Sorry you have been troubled!"

A.H.

Acid Drops.

The *Church Times* hopes that Christians will not permit the increased income tax to diminish their contributions to religion and charity. But why not? Christians have been taught for so long that the only reason for being charitable, or religious is that they are getting a good dividend out of it, that they are most likely to regard giving from the ethically materialist—which is the Christian—point of view. It is the New Testament reason for giving that the Lord repays tenfold, and if there is no after life then there is no reason for decency. It was a wise Mohammedan who said, "All I had I spent. All I saved I lost. All I gave I have." That is a philosophy and an ethic of which the New Testament is simply incapable.

As to religion. Why should Christians with an increased income-tax strain themselves to give to that? God will surely know when they are hard up, or how hard the income-tax hits them. And he will surely not withhold sixpennyworth of his grace because he gets sixpennyworth less of adulation! One would think that a decent kind of God would give most to those who need it most quite independent of their subscriptions. But,

apparently, God looks down the subscription lists and inmeasures out his gifts in accordance with the sums given. What a religion! What a God! What worshippers!

Another thing about which the *Church Times* is alarmed is the recent massing of Salvationists in Canterbury Cathedral. It says that the account of the Salvation Army services will be read "by the majority of Churchmen with sorrow and shame . . . And it was here that the Dean, standing within a few yards of the spot where St. Thomas was martyred, prayed that the purposes of God might be fulfilled through the love and devotion of the members of the Salvation Army." But what is the poor Dean to do? The Church has swallowed so much that it formerly disliked in its attempts to keep going, that it may well swallow the Salvation Army. Besides, the Salvation Army is probably as near a picture of the original Christian body as one could get. It is more intellectual—silly as it is, better behaved—eccentric as it is, a little more tolerant, narrow as it is, and in many ways much cleaner. But it holds the same relation to the more sophisticated religion of to-day that the early Christians bore to the more intellectual phases of religion of their day. Besides, ever since King Edward was induced by his advisers to pat the Army on the back it has been getting more fashionable. And you cannot have servility in the one direction unless you get it in others—and other things as well.

A newspaper gives a picture of the Rev. J. Courtney, a Peckham parson, who is depicted as frequenting a public house in the hope of gaining converts. We feel certain that if he stands enough drinks he will get them, and if the supply of drinks is kept up, he might get a crowded church.

In the "local preachers'" column of a pious weekly, a parson complains that preachers nowadays do not preach as Wesley did on such topics as "Sin," "The Great Assize," "Heaven," "Hell," or "Immortality." It is no wonder, he ejaculates, that the multitude has lost faith in these Christian doctrines. He adds that "they are only half believed by the preachers themselves, and are therefore wholly negative in their public ministrations. Certainly, no man should ever preach his doubts." For our part we would prefer to assume charitably that these negative parsons and half-believers are doing their best in a trying situation. Their congregation is slightly of a higher educational standard, and consequently the parson knows that the old "certainties" about Heaven, Hell, Immortality, The Great Assize, etc., would be sceptically received if he dared to serve them up. And so he has to fall back on short doses of platitude, a la Wayside Pulpit posters. The modern parson has so many uncertainties nowadays that, if he is really sincere, he has only a small collection of negative ideas he can ring the changes on for sermons. It would seem that if the multitude is to recover its lost faith, what the parsons should pray for is that the Lord should inflict a plague of ignorance and credulity upon the people, such as so well served the Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century. If only he would, what noble eloquence there would be in the pulpit on such fearsome themes as Sin, The Great Assize, Heaven, Hell, or Immortality! Hallelujah!

Yet more new discoveries of Biblical Papyri are said to have "established the text of the Old and New Testament." It is not to belittle those responsible for the discoveries to observe that, according to Mr. H. Idris Bell, of the British Museum, who is, with Sir Frederick Kenyon, editing the new papyri: "All the Mss. are written in Greek, between the second and fifth centuries A.D." Even if, as it said "they take back our knowledge of parts of the New Testament more than a century earlier than any other text, and for portions of the Old Testament as much as two centuries," these discoveries are of a literary but not of a theological value.

If, as the late Dean Burgon said, the Bible, every word of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High, supreme, unflinching, unerring, then it is incredible that it should have been left to literary scholars in the twentieth century to "establish the text" of divine revelation. And, as it has not yet been established any nearer to the date of its supposed origin than is now stated, by what process of reasoning has it been expounded for 2,000 years as "the direct utterance of the Most High."

The Bi-centenary of William Cowper was celebrated with great doings attended by Dean Inge and Mr. John Masfield in June last, and was noticed here at the time. Now, for it seems Cowper was born 200 years ago on November 26, a whole batch of articles have appeared with great books on Cowper, and incidentally an ample supply of falsehood about English history and the evangelical revival of the Eighteenth century, in particular. Thus Sir Alfred Hopkinson, in the *Evening Standard*, in an article entitled, "Go into the Cowper country," repeats an old fable about Wilberforce and slavery and Lord Shaftesbury and reform, and also, not being particularly original, has to prove that Calvinism and John Newton had nothing to do with Cowper's insanity. Sir Alfred says we do not find in the most popular hymns of Cowper and Newton that their religion was Calvinism. Is not Cowper's most popular hymn by the common consent of his pious admirers "God moves in a mysterious way?" If in the verse of this hymn which runs as follows does not appear Calvinistic doctrine, where is it to be found?

"Deep in unfathomable minds
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will."

As to "going to the Cowper country"—it is as flat as most of Cowper's poetry, and all that needs to be said about both, and the influence of one upon the other, were said by Hazlitt many years ago.

It is a common delusion that "simple Bible teaching," which we owe to the Cowper Temple amendment to the Education Act of 1870, was a triumph. It was in fact a surrender. Sir Charles Dilke, who at that time was associated with Joseph Chamberlain in an Education League advocated free and secular education. In a letter to Dilke, which is a superb example of the insincerity of politics, Sir William Harcourt wrote as follows:—

We must always seem to win, even though we do not get what we want. That is what up to this point we have accomplished. But we must not allow ourselves to be precipitated upon destruction by men who may be philosophers, but who are no politicians . . . We must now retire to the second line of defence. What is that to be? I lay down that the first thing to be resisted is denominationalism. If it can be got rid of altogether—best; but if not, then to the greatest degree—next best. Now, as a politician (not as a philosopher) I am quite satisfied that neither in the House of Commons nor in the country can we beat denominationalism by secularism. If we attempt to meet the flood by this dyke it will come over our heads. We must break the force of the wave by a slope, and deal with its diminished weight afterwards as best we can. (*Life of Dilke*, by Gwynn & Trickwell, Vol. I., p. 98.)

Dilke was in favour of the logical course and opposed to a solution which he said would provide "only religion of the direct and baldest kind, and such as would hardly be worthy of the name," and, at the same time "would do injustice to large classes of the community." Sixty years ago, and in 1930, with a Labour Government in office, it does not produce even one successor to Dilke brave enough to protest, when it did not attempt even "to break the force of the wave of clerical opposition," but surrendered to it, sacrificed its Minister of Education, and scrapped its Bill. Evidently Harcourt's cynical dictum that "we should give our republic not the best possible laws, but the best they will bear," is still current corn in politics. And when we think of the Sunday Performances fiasco we must add that it is amazing what (in 1931) they will bear!

The Secretary of the publishing company known as the Religious Tract Society, declares that the books and magazines it publishes were never more needed than now, in view of the lamentable deficiency of the religious element in other books and publications. In modern literature, he says, religion is not so much decried as ignored. He thinks that our writers are unaware that religion is natural to men and women, and therefore these writers are supplying the wrong kind of books. He asserts that "the demand for books and magazines in which religion, without being sentimental or in any way obtruded, is much more than either writers or publishers imagine." We doubt it; the pious publishers are catering fully for such demand as there is. Of course, if one assumes that "religion is natural to men and women," it is easy for one to imagine that the demand for religious publications is larger than it is. But if religion is natural to men and women, how is it that the parsons have to work so hard to keep it alive, and why does so much wealth have to be poured out in advertisement and propaganda? The writers of to-day are ignoring religion because they have no interest in it, and they know that a very large proportion of the public are not interested in it either.

The art of getting a thing believed on little or no evidence is to assert it positively and keep on asserting it. The Rev. Dr. Scott Lidgett appears to have mastered the art, and also to have gauged the mental calibre of the average Methodist. He asserts (as reported) that "Wesley left a permanent mark on the character of the people. The faith, morals, spirituality, and character of the Empire was his creating." We are very glad it isn't true. Wesley left a mark on the character of only some of the British people—a section of the people embodying the least educated, the least cultured, and the least intelligent. And we may, we think, safely say that the "mark" did little or nothing to improve their education, or culture, or intelligence. Such people are hardly likely to have contributed anything of real value to the British Empire. What Wesley did create in the character of these people was prudery, killjoyism, and narrow-mindedness, as well as an itch for interference with and censorship and repression of everything which their narrow minds did not agree.

A man who claimed to have been recently "converted" has been sent to prison for collecting money for a bogus "mission." His mistake was in being too avaricious. What he could have safely done was to start a new sect, a new church, and get religious mugs to pay him a good salary and feed, house, and clothe him. This would have been more in line with the orthodox practice of earning a living which it adopted in priests and ministers, and permitted by the laws of the country. There is only one legal method in this country of obtaining money by false pretences, and that is by preaching "Salvation."

At Birmingham recently, some Anglican clergy and Free Church ministers met together to discuss "the Church and the Ministry," apparently with the notion of discovering a formula by which the various Churches can be brought in union. A reporter of the discussion says that "hardly any subject has been the occasion of more serious division in Christianity than the Church and the ministry." The Anglican affirmed that "the threefold order of bishops, priests, and deacons was necessary for the well-being of the Church." The Free Church ministers were not convinced on this point. But we have no doubt that both parties were entirely in sweet accord as regards one essential; namely, that the people's delusion that they must have parsons to rule and guide them is necessary for the well-being of the parsons. That is the one religious subject on which priests and ministers never disagree.

The bane of the Church, declares the Rev. George Hopper, is the half-hearted. He is referring to the luke-warm clients of the churches. If these are in large numbers, as we believe they are, the parsons will need to devote most of their attention, not to capturing the "outsider," but to converting their own customers. Really,

that is what those evangelical missions for reaching the non-churchgoer, are doing. A very large proportion of the "saved" at these missions belong to some church or other. Getting "saved" and signing a "decision card" is quite a habit with many of them. They merely crave for cheap emotional disturbance, and the dope of the Saviour provides it.

Says a worthy dean, "Nothing can save this country except ten years of drastic economy and hard work." We gather that the people can save themselves only by their own thrift and industry, and so there is no need to send up petitions to God for help. In any case, it is the people who must work hard. The clergy will not help in this direction. They are non-producers.

From a religious weekly we learn that the Bishop of Southwark's Commission concerning Sunday-schools has come to some valuable conclusions. Among them are: that (1) The decline in Sunday-school attendance is not mainly due to the decline in the birth-rate; (2) the leakage of children of the adolescent age is rapidly increasing; (3) there is a growing difficulty in securing teachers, especially men; (4) the problem of the Sunday-school is one aspect of the problem of Sunday Observance. May we suggest a quite reasonable explanation of this state of affairs—that somehow or other the children of the last few generations have not been born with their proper does of "natural instinct" for religion?

The Rev. J. C. Mantripp, writing in a pious weekly, says that "the religious value of Christmas may be said to have been discovered by Charles Dickens. Thackeray, Washington, Irving, and others helped. The discovery was in the realm of the spirit, although the essence of the proclamation was in terms of jollity, human sympathy, and social service." This quaint theory is all very well, but what Dickens really did was to revive the old Anglo-Saxon pagan notion of a day of feasting and drinking, and being merry in connexion with a nature festival at the close of the year. The spirit of the Dicken's Christmas is very similar to that of the Anglo-Saxon festival, which the Christian religion had almost entirely suppressed.

All is grist that comes to the church mill. Canterbury Cathedral has been filled with Salvationists. The home fires of superstition must somehow or other be kept burning.

Dr. Downey, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, has been telling the world what he would do if he were dictator. He would make every fit man work. In an age, when automatic ticket machines have displaced labour, and this example can be multiplied by a thousand, one would have thought that the Archbishop would have gone all out for all men to have the same leisure as monks and priests, but this, point of view, clear even to an aborigine, could not be seen by a medieval-minded gentleman.

It is reported that a bright boy of sixteen, has written a letter which was read at Liverpool Diocesan Conference. "When," he asks, "are the youth of England going to learn the meaning of religion and Christianity?" The remedy is in his own hands. For a few shillings judiciously spent on Freethought literature he may find a true answer to his question.

In the *News-Chronicle*, Professor Julian Huxley records his "Impressions of the New Russia." A significant statement, given herewith, puts a different complexion on the mental development of a country that is the enigma of the world:—

As a scientist my great ideal is freedom of thought, a

thing which in present Russia is entirely absent. Already adjustments are being made in the dogmatic Soviet creed. As time goes on the demands for liberty of thought will become stronger and more insistent. On this issue, above all others, I believe, the future of Russia depends.

The *New Statesman and Nation* is worth sixpence alone for its comments on certain newspapers:—

The *Daily Mail*, which always loves war as a fly loves carrion, has also started to retail unsubstantiated stories of Chinese atrocities. In the Beaverbrook Press, which personifies the religion of nationalism in its maddest form, there is open rejoicing that the League is impotent.

And these be the gods of a nation that has just celebrated Armistice Day!

The working man has again been caught falling from grace, neglecting his duty, and generally messing things up. The consumption of beer has declined 22½% in the month of October this year compared with the same month of last year. And, as purchasing power has declined or wages have decreased, and beer is remaining in a state of tranquility, the situation can only be met by a day of national prayer. We pass the suggestion on for what it is worth to the large and intelligent class of beings who would blame the working classes for a green sunrise.

Fifty Years Ago.

MR. GORE LANGTON, M.P., has been imposing a monstrous fable on the natives of Yeovil district. He stated at a public meeting that "if Mr. Bradlaugh had come to the table in the usual way no question would have been asked him; but what they objected to was having Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions thrust down their throat." As a matter of fact Mr. Bradlaugh has never made any statement of his views on religion in the House of Commons; and after his re-election he *did* go to the table in the usual way, but was stopped by the Tories. But this is not all. Mr. Gore Langton not only utters a glaring untruth, but he advises the practice of the vilest hypocrisy. While there were two forms open, Mr. Bradlaugh was conscientiously bound to use the one without an imprecation. But Mr. Gore Langton says "No, he should have sworn." Which means that if Mr. Bradlaugh had played the hypocrite the pious Tories would have allowed him to "profane the name of God." Why does the Almighty allow such men to speak for him, who, as Hood says, "might sit for Hell and represent the Devil."

Mr. Foote's lecture a few weeks ago at the Hall of Science on "Hebrew Old Clothes," brought him a letter from a gentleman of the Jewish persuasion who had not heard the lecture himself but had received a muddled account of it from a friend. In reply to that letter a long note appeared in "Answers to Correspondents," to which the writer was referred. Not satisfied, he wrote again, and Mr. Foote declined to continue the correspondence; first, because he had no time; secondly, because the Jewish gentleman did not hear the lecture; and thirdly, because he imputed base motives. Still unsatisfied, the irascible Hebrew writes to ease his mind. "You are," he says, "a cowardly and contemptible slanderer; you are a contemptible scoundrel; you are a defender of thieves and murderers." With these few remarks he remains, etc., Holy Moses! All this comes of criticising a people who have been buried some thousands of years, and a God of theirs who ought to have been buried at the same time. Petticoat Lane's in arms. We shall require a cordon of police round our office, and never go abroad without a mail shirt.

The "Freethinker," December 4, 1881.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. R. HAMMERTON.—We have dealt so often with the point that the *Tit-Bits* article calls for no further mention than the one that this class of paper finds it profitable to exploit the superstitions of the ordinary person.

E. HENRY.—Naturally, we appreciate the advice to read our books. Dean Inge's remark that the universe must have had someone to wind it up if it is running down, fits the kind of theological nonsense that is being traded by some of our scientists. Forms of existence are always "running down" and always being "wound up." This is only saying that there is endless change going on. The way it is stated however, makes a scientific truism sheer nonsense.

W. MCKELVIE.—Glad to hear the better news.

R. TURNEY.—We saw the reference to the *Freethinker*. Perhaps, one of these days papers will freely name the *Freethinker* instead of finding it a paper that is "damned good to steal from." We saw the book advertised, and should like it, but it is a very big price. Must wait for a second-hand copy.

WE have often paid our tribute to the vitality of the religious lie, and to the unbeatable impudence of the religious liar. This time we have to add to the lengthy, illustrious, and greatly honoured list the name of a woman Commander Evangeline Booth, head of the Salvation Army in America. A reader sends us a copy of a recent issue of the *Daily Herald*, which seems out to exploit the more ignorant body of Christians, which contains a front page column on a Salvation Army meeting recently held in the Albert Hall. To the audience she gave an account of how Voltaire "standing on one of France's Boulevards" used all his "eloquence and genius" to denounce his maker. He asked for a Bible, and an old man in the crowd gave him one. Then Voltaire tore the book into half and scattered its pages. And, says the *Herald*, "ten thousand people shouted hallelujah," then she said "the great scientist died with the words 'O thou just and indulgent God' on his lips." The *Herald* is a Labour paper, Mrs. Booth is head of the Salvation Army in America. She deserves to be Pope of Rome, and if she were, might well make the *Herald* her favourite organ.

R. G. FORSTER.—We fancy that a Christian minister will find the subject of Phallic Worship rather too dangerous to make it the subject of a public discussion. It will be much safer for him to trust that his followers will know nothing about it.

H.G.R. (Johannesburg).—We could not supply a single copy of the paper for the date named. Our only copies for that year are in volume form. One of these could be supplied if required.

BLEWITT.—The Shroud of Christ belongs to the same class of "fakes" as the pieces of the true cross, and the bottle of the darkness that overspread Egypt. They are interesting examples of the power of human credulity.

D.P.S.—The question you raise appears to turn upon the question of reciprocity, and that operates largely in all ethical questions. And as we pointed out, one must discriminate between the true gambler—the one who delights in taking chances, and the man who is merely after "easy money."

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

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

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

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.

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (December 6) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Town Hall, Stratford, at 7.0, on "The Disease that Kills Religion." Trams and buses stop at the doors of the hall, and the L. & N.E.R. Station—Stratford is only five minutes walk from the Town Hall.

Some time ago Mr. Cohen accepted an invitation to lecture before the Worker's Circle Friendly Society, which meets at Circle House, Great Alic Street, Aldgate, E. The meeting will take place on Friday, December 11, at 8.30. The meeting is on the side of being late, but presumably it suits the members best. The subject will be "Some Implications of Evolution." Admission is free, and is open to the general public.

The National Secular Society's Annual Dinner will take place on January 16, at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras. There will be no falling off this year in quality, and we feel sure that the same may be said of quantity. We make the announcement thus early in order to remind Freethinkers in good time. In answer to an enquiry we may add that the function is not restricted to members of the Society. Outsiders are welcomed, and many staunch members of the N.S.S. first came into contact with the movement at this annual gathering. The price of the tickets, as on previous years will be 8s.

The Secular Society, Limited issues this week Mr. Cohen's new work *Selected Heresies*. The book extends to nearly 200 pages, and consists of selected arguments from Mr. Cohen's writings. As there were about 2,000 articles besides books, from which to select dealing with all kinds of questions, the task of selection was not an easy one, but it has been done. How it was done is explained in a "foreword." All we need say is that the book is very "meaty," and provides a very suitable Christmas or New Year's present for either Christian or Freethinker. The work is well printed on good paper, and bound in cloth with gilt lettering. The price is 3s. 6d. Postage 3d. extra.

We have had with us for the past ten days Mr. Joseph Lewis, of New York, with his wife. Mr. Lewis is a very "live wire" where Freethought is concerned, and has proven himself a thorn in the sides of the Christians in America. He has had many legal fights, waged in order to limit the extent to which the religious parties may use the State schools for the teaching of religion, and has secured a surprising amount of press publicity. This would be impossible in this country, where religious humbug is more strongly entrenched and more carefully guarded. He has also done a good work in the circulation of Freethinking books in the United States, and as he is still a young man we may look forward to still more useful work from him. We were very pleased to meet him and his wife, and spent some very pleasant hours in their company.

Good meetings were held last week at Brighton, especially in the evening. Mr. Rosetti's lectures were well received, and drew a steady flow of questions. The local Branch is working well, but if Freethinkers in the district would join up, a more centrally situated hall might be obtained, and the advertising developed, to the advantage of the movement in Brighton.

The West Ham Branch will hold a Social in the Metropolitan Academy, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, London, E., on Saturday evening, December 12. The local Branch knows how to provide an enjoyable programme, and all Freethinkers and their friends desiring a happy evening are heartily invited. Admission is free, and the proceedings will commence at 7.0 prompt.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti will be in Plymouth this week-end, and lectures twice to-day (Sunday) at Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, at 3.0 p.m., the subject will be "The Churches and the Next War"; at 7.0 p.m. "Anthropology—Christianity v. Science." The lectures will be held in Hall No. 1. There is variety in the subjects, and of a nature that should induce the more intelligent local Christians to attend.

The *Times* reports (November 24) that Dr. T. E. Lawson, in a lecture at Caxton Hall on the previous evening, "gave a chemical analysis of the average human body of 10st. This was composed of enough water to fill ten 10-gallon barrels, enough fat for seven bars of soap, enough carbon for 9,000 lead pencils, enough phosphorus to make 2,000 matchheads, sufficient magnesium for one dose of salts, enough iron to make one medium-sized nail, sufficient lime to white-wash a chicken-coop, and enough sulphur to rid one dog of fleas. The whole at present prices could be purchased for 5s., and it was much the same whatever the body in question was a village idiot or an Einstein." We hope this will catch the eye of our pious contemporaries.

Clericalism

"CLERICALISM, that is the enemy!" exclaimed Gambetta on a memorable occasion, and he gave expression to an indictment which still applies to the political tactics not only of the Roman Catholic Church but of all forms of organized Christianity without distinction. For several months I have been reading regularly some of the continental Freethought journals, and there is hardly a number which does not report instances of the encroachments of prelate and pastor on the domain of the civil government, and call for action to combat their influence on public life. Though the term "clerical party," as used by our continental friends, designates the political representatives of the Catholic Church, clericalism denotes a spirit which is inseparable from any authoritative religious system, a spirit which of necessity regards any criticism of its authority as an "attack" on the Church, and is therefore always ready to invoke the aid of the State to consolidate powers and claims which, without this aid, would never survive in the struggle against free thought.

The word *clericalism* has only recently been naturalized in our language, but the idea which it represents—the ascendancy in the State of a professional class claiming divine authority—has, historically, played as sinister a part here as anywhere else, and is still the mainstay of supernatural claims that are incompatible with liberty of thought. Clericalism assumes different forms in different countries. To us no doubt it appears in a very unattractive form in predominantly Roman Catholic countries where the clergy participate actively and openly in parliamentary elections, or where a definite political party, acting on the principle of "support in return for concessions," is pledged to advance the interests of the Vatican. Hence the organized anti-clericalism of the continent, where a man is usually for or against Christianity, a member of a religious communion or outside it and antagonistic to it. Our Anglican clericalism is not so openly militant. It reflects the policy and temporal interests of the Establishment, which is not in any honest sense of the word a people's Church, which has no wonder-working saints, and is dependent on past or present political favours for its very existence. The attitude of our so-called Free Churches to other religious bodies and to political ecclesiasticism is interesting in a high degree. They claim to be entirely free from the spirit of clericalism. I have recently been reading Fogazzaro's fine story, *The Saint*, in which he portrays a reformed evangelical type of Catholicism freed from all taint of professional Christianity, from all temptation to contaminate the spiritual life with worldly ambition. That is the kind of Christianity which our English Nonconformists like to associate with their own saintly lives. Are their official spokesmen, the paid

expounders of the inspired word of God, oblivious of the fact that this claim in itself fosters the spirit of clericalism in one of its worst forms? Their interference in politics is notorious, and they have done more than any other religious section in the community to fasten the Puritan Sunday on this country and to retain denominationalism in the State-subsidized schools.

This last statement brings us directly to a question on which there is no difference, in principle, between ourselves and our friends on the continent. In every country in Europe the effort of the priest to control primary education has provoked the most intense opposition to the political claims of the Church. In France and Belgium it was found necessary to meet organization by organization, and, admitting that much sectional rancour was shown on both sides, we must remember that the aggressive attitude of the Church made conflict inevitable. In Protestant England and Prussia the same determination to make the school a nursery for the Church is a standing menace to educational progress and does more than anything else to delay the secularization of the State. Only with this result—the complete separation of the school and every other secular institution from the influence of the Church—will come the end of the fight against political clericalism. But the questions at issue are many. Some things the Church has simply agreed to condemn, such as birth-control, divorce, cremation; in others it is backed by the strong arm of the law, which secures for it endowments, tithes, payment of a compulsory tax, exemption from rates, and protection by blasphemy laws.

It is often asserted with considerable emphasis that clericalism is only an expression of the professionalism associated with the economic interests of any particular group of men, and that abuses are never regarded as abuses by those who profit by them. No one disputes the element of truth in this assertion; but there is a difference between clericalism and all other forms of professionalism, and it is a difference that affects the whole outlook on life and the sense of values. For centuries the last word in the personal vilification of an opponent "for the greater glory of God" was summed up in the words *odium theologicum*, and this spirit, fostered by the official defenders of the faith, still actuates the rank-and-file of all Christians that take their religion seriously. No other profession claims to be more than human, no other has so interwoven its interests with the whole social life, or so constantly urges an alliance against a common foe. In the case of the doctor, lawyer, architect and engineer, criticism or even ridicule, whether resented or not, is often forthcoming and no one dreams of suppressing it by law. The priest's view of his office is entirely different. It invests him with a factitious importance that has no relationship either to his ability or to his character. In regard to some professions the State actually requires a certain minimum of training and scholarship for practitioners; but nothing of the kind is demanded of the clergy despite the great privileges which they enjoy at the expense of the community. Here is the opinion of a Regius Professor of Theology, expressed only last year:—

It is one of the blessings of ordination, that it gives assurance of their position to those who can claim no overwhelming inward call and no remarkable gifts.

This is indeed a blessing, especially at a time when the general level of intelligence among the laity is said to be steadily rising.

It is not difficult to account for the mentality of the cleric or for his attitude to political and social questions. He is in "holy orders," proclaims "truths of

salvation," and wears a distinctive garb even in public. The Nonconformist minister repudiates external authority, but he, too, is addressed as "Reverend," and the goal of his ambition seems to be to put the letters D.D. after his name. These "honours" often emanate from an American degree-factory. As an expounder of the faith the soul-saver requires no knowledge of science or Comparative Religion, it is enough that he should bear a message from God and assume that his hearers are in agreement with him. He has not to convince anyone of anything, except the awful reality of death and the need to be on the safe side in regard to what will come afterwards. His platitudes and repetitions are not meant to appeal to the intelligence of his hearers. As far as the Anglican defenders of the faith are concerned, the questions on which most of their controversies now turn have reference to vestments, candles and the reservation of the sacrament. This is partly the reason why the clerical profession to-day stands comparatively low in the intellectual scale, but it will descend still lower as science and historical criticism further discredit the system. There is now hardly any competition for the priestly office to stimulate exertion and select ability, while a high standard of veracity is not expected from the clergy even by their own flock.

Another influence that has a practical bearing on the relations between the civil and the ecclesiastical power follows naturally from the vast wealth which the Catholic Church everywhere, and the Anglican Church here, have accumulated, some of it by means which to-day would not commend themselves to ordinary worldly-minded individuals. Quite recently in Spain, one of the loudest complaints of the Church was that the draft constitution of the new Republic nationalized the property of the religious orders. Here in England the average clergyman of the Establishment will tell you that tithes, patronage and settled endowments, however they may have originated, work admirably in practice.

The way to combat the Christian system and its countless ramifications is not to talk about humanizing it, but to free from its deadly sway all the factors that really constitute civilization. When this life is well worth living for its own sake the next will hardly be worth speculating about, and certainly few will pay to be shown the way to it. Clericalism is very old and so is the effort to emancipate the human mind from its influence. At one time practically every question was a clerical question, and what is passing in the religious world to-day is but the harbinger of the dissolution of that hierarchic system which for more than a thousand years has striven, with a disastrous measure of success, to suppress free thought, free criticism and all other freedoms in order to enforce conformity to one ecclesiastical type.

It is said by adherents of advanced political parties, who would fain emancipate the world from many kinds of oppression, that they have nothing to do with theological dogmas and only attack the Church when it encroaches on the secular domain. But where would be the power of Church and priest without dogma, and what motive would there be to encroach? It is useless to urge that the priest must be confined to his proper sphere unless we are told what that sphere is. Nor is religion by any means exploited only by a small privileged class. How far the Catholic or any other Church is supported by this or that political party on other than religious grounds, is a question with which I am not here concerned; but my mind is clear as to the need of a specific, cultural, Freethought movement to combat all forms of priestly rule. When we get rid of "divine truth" we shall get rid of the accredited exponents of it.

A. D. McLAREN.

The Life and Times of Robert Owen.

(Concluded from page 764.)

As the years rolled on the interest of the working community was largely deflected into other channels. Many of Owen's supporters threw their energies into the abortive Chartist agitation. Owen and his immediate adherents lent no aid to Chartism. Yet, Owenism, though less in the public eye, continued to exercise considerable influence. The Owenite Associations soon recovered much of their lost territory. Another, and a final endeavour to establish a model community was made at New Harmony at Queenwood in Hampshire, where the famous Professor Tyndall taught in his younger days. This well-meant experiment broke down after a chequered career extending from 1839 to 1846.

As the seasons sped on, and Owen was sixty-three when his co-operative societies and trade unions collapsed, the reformer's thoughts turned more and more towards rationalism in religion. He saw clearly, as many wise observers have seen since, that unless the people are rationalized and humanized, there is small scope for permanent progress. While retaining their faith in social improvement, the Owenites increasingly stressed the primary importance of constructive Secularism. The Owenite Associations became the *Society of Rational Religionists* and were the progenitors of the more recent Ethical and Secular Societies.

The advent of the New Moral World was predicted, and many hailed Robert Owen as its Messiah. Sadly enough, Owen now tended to deteriorate into a mere preacher, until at last, in his eighty-second year, he was converted to spiritualism, and in that dreadful delusion he died. Now that the quondam Rationalist had sunk into senility the inherited influences of racial superstition asserted themselves. Owen died at the advanced age of eighty-seven, and the last five years of his life were desecrated by the contagion of spiritualistic mediums and materializers.

Owen was a lofty idealist who sometimes mistook his ideals for realities. And when he was unusually obsessed with the epoch-making importance of his labours, his sense of humour forsook him. When he was subpoenaed as a witness in a blasphemy case by that fine fighter, Richard Carlile, Owen, the great social and religious reformer, treated the matter as of little moment, for, as Wickmar notes in his excellent "Struggle for the Freedom of the Press," on this occasion, "Owen characterically excused himself with the plea that 'he could not at present leave New Lanark without causing an essential injury to the great object on which he was engaged, on which the existence and well-being of millions depended.'"

Again, Owen's signal success as a manufacturer who conducted his undertaking on noble humanitarian principles has led to a widespread belief in his high financial and commercial ability. That he was a splendid manager and organizer is indisputable, and he was deservedly popular and respected by all who worked under him. But even that eminent Collectivist, G. D. H. Cole, notes that Owen proved unpractical where money was concerned. "He was a great spender," he remarks, "but he could never pause to count the cost of his experiments, or find patience to analyse their financial results. New Lanark paid but, as long as he could lay his hands on money to go on with it, Owen would not have cared, or perhaps even realized, how much it might lose. Money simply did not interest him; his interest was in his plans for the speedy regeneration

of the human race. And, therefore, when he had to work with the scanty resources collected by his followers, he always overspent and got into difficulties. The millennium was, for him, just round the next corner. He was running so fast towards it that he had no time to notice the pitfalls in the way." (*Robert Owen*, pp. 27, 27.)

Owen ranks very high in the array of pioneer educationalists. Despite the sectarian proclivities of the National Schools founded by Dr. Bell, Robert Owen subscribed the sum of £500 for their support. Although he was not really a rich man, Owen also gave Lancaster one thousand pounds, at that time a large sum, towards the maintenance of the latter's recently established British and Foreign Schools Society. This princely support came from a man who was far from satisfied with the adequacy of the methods employed by either protagonist of popular instruction. Still, he considered that both Bell and Lancaster were hewing a path for the erection of a scientific system of teaching and training, and thus deserved every encouragement.

Owen attached for-reaching importance to the school as a training ground for character and conduct. While precept and example might serve to fashion the mind and character of the child at an early age, formal instruction should not begin until the age of five. In Owen's schools at New Lanark games and other forms of recreation were provided for pupils of all ages. No horse-play was permitted in the playground, as every scholar must regard it as his duty to contribute his share to the general happiness.

In the class-room itself, the developing faculties of the child were not to be overstrained. And although memory constitutes, as Alexander Bain once put it, "the sole basis of intellect," Owen early realized the danger of allowing mere retentiveness to supply the place of observation and reflection. The eye as well as the ear must play its part in education. The soulless drudgery still so prevalent in educational centres Owen endeavoured to replace in summer time with rambles in the country where Nature study was possible. Within doors, charts, maps, and other illustrations brought the visual powers into operation. Nor must the immature mind be overtaxed by long-continued application. And not alone must the learner be taught to read, but also to grasp the meaning of what is read. Worthless indeed is the mechanical repetition of lessons unless the things taught are truly understood. Purely mental instruction must be supplemented by dancing and singing, for these too play their part in rational education.

At a time when child labour was almost universal Owen firmly refused to employ any children under the age of ten. A tireless advocate of legal restriction of the hours of labour in factories and workshops, Owen warned those parents who deliberately encouraged infant labour that: "For every penny ground by parents from the premature labour of their offspring, they sacrifice not only future pounds, but also the future health, comfort, and good conduct of their children." Owen's protest against prejudiced and pessimistic Puritanism is likewise noteworthy. For he truly asserted that "it has been and ever will be found far more easy to lead mankind to virtue, or to rational conduct, by providing them with well-regulated, innocent amusements and recreations than by forcing them to submit to useless restraints that tend often to create disgust, and often to connect such feelings even with that which is excellent in itself, merely because it has been so injudiciously associated."

Hone, Hunt, Cobbett and several other Radical reformers were hostile to Owen's schemes. The famous Utilitarian Radical Jeremy Bentham, gave

Owen monetary support. Owen lived on terms of friendship with William Godwin, Francis Place, and Allen. Cobbett, however, saw little in Owen's communistic settlements save a return to monasticism in its worst form. Cobbett survives as a racy writer of English prose, but his political and social theories are obsolete. Owen's fame permanently reposes on his pioneer work in co-operation, popular education, and the alleviation of labour's unremitting round of toil.

That Robert Owen was a great and good man, and that the humanitarian spirit of later days is deeply indebted to his teaching and example, is indisputable. Like the rest of the world he had his limitations. One of his frailties was an imperviousness to new views of life. A Socialist in theory, in common with all outstanding Collectivists, he was a firm Individualist when confronted with the practical affairs of life.

T. F. PALMER.

What of the Hero?

It appears to be a custom for disciples to develop into sheer hero-worship; consequently there is always a danger of attributing to their master charms which he did not possess, wisdom which he sadly lacked, benevolence which he did not share.

The nearer these disciples are to illiteracy, ignorance or credulity, the more likelihood arises of the master whom they follow being placed on a pedestal, raised in a niche, venerated as a paragon, worshipped as god. The Pantheon was peopled with a mixed lot of divinities.

Another element also disturbs these people and keeps them in a state of restless emotionalism which is much to be deplored: it is that they conjure up pious and pseudo-ideal imaginings and believe that these emanations have proceeded from the mouth of the cherished teacher. They are infected with a believe-all desire which robs them of any inclination to criticize or reflect on the tales which they have heard. They search the language for superlatives of praise and attach them all to the oracle which they have set up.

As time speeds on and generation succeeds generation these hallucinations may become invested with so much of belief the sayings of the frail creature who has been as much a creature of circumstance as they. Despite the fact that these sayings can never be put to proof, in order to satisfy the critical unemotional observer the believer-worshipper hugs them to his bosom with unreasoning tenacity, and ferocious intolerance is generated for all who attempt to examine the credentials of the hero.

The hero-worshipper, like the young man in love, is not inclined to cry "Stinking fish" about the adored one, and becomes very impatient if another hints at anything which is neither meritorious nor victorious in the conduct of his idol. He readily falls into the habit of memorizing the "good deeds" of his master, and pays little or no heed to actions which would belittle the master in any eyes but those of the devotee.

This mental attitude leads to a narrow sectarianism, and silly partisanship, which effectively closes the reflective and reasoning chambers of the mental apparatus of the individual; consequently we are introduced to a variety of individuals who have done all manner of contradictory and unreasonable things, and because these senseless acts have attracted the same characteristics of mediocrity in many individuals in society heroes and hero-worship have resulted. There is nothing more nonsensical than praying to a God, unless it be the making of a Super-man. Neither exist outside the vapid, insane imaginings of those who need call upon a god to help the super-man, to enable them to act neighbourly.

Society has been badly served by the heroes and badly mauled by their neophytes. Is it not high time that admiration for another's actions was kept much better under control in order to ensure that society will be able to check future excesses,

Another danger arises to society from this stunt of hero-worship. The emphasis is placed upon the hero as if, forsooth, he were better than his fellows. Let us remember this. No man does anything of, or by, himself. A million and one antecedent and contributory cause have led up to every act or volition with which we are acquainted. No man, humble or great, as he may be called by the unthinking, has been able to determine his birth, nor is able to compass his death; between these points heredity gives him shape and environment determines his manner of re-action.

The Hero, as a rule, obtains a good press. The national hero is placed on a pinnacle. He is given an importance to which he is not entitled. Subsequent history may easily prove that the god had feet of clay. It may easily show that the hero was a very common or garden variety of the human species. Many of them have been really very little men to whom circumstance has given a big stick, and they have commenced to belabour all and sundry.

The truth is that though there is much of the hero-worship in our make up there is little or nothing to be heroic about, and seeing that we all act, sometimes from blind impulse, but most time from self-interest, there is no logic in giving to any of the sons of men a laurel wreath or a rope's end.

Of course the present state of things is very pleasant for the "Heroes," and so long as the devotees are silly and loose thinking they have a fitting recompense.

B. FRANCIS.

The Troubles of Noah in Music.

I HAVE often wondered what sort of music old Noah played when he watched the animals go in two by two, but now I know.

The music can only have been The Carnival of Animals by Saint Saens. True, Saint Saens died only ten years ago, but that doesn't matter for Christians and Bible readers never were strong on chronology.

Let us suppose that you are sitting before your gramophone ready to play The Carnival of Animals, which has now been issued on H.M.V. D. 1992-1994. You start off by hearing the royal march of the lion, and you may be excused from imagining how Shem, Ham and Japheth, not to mention Mrs. Noah, must have enjoyed seeing father coaxing the royal lion into the ark.

At any rate on the record you hear the lion roaring and growling, and then you hear the hens and the cocks being escorted, and there follow some brilliant piano passages depicting the wild caperings of the mules. How Noah's sons' wives must have laughed at the pantomime.

Doubtless Noah left the task of getting in the tortoises to some one else, for Saint Saens depicts them wandering very very slowly. Those who think music solemn may be interested to know that the march of the tortoises is represented by the very slow playing of an extremely rapid passage from Offenbach's Orpheus in Hades.

Following the tortoises come the elephants, and they are portrayed by the playing of the dance of the sylphs from Berlioz's Damnation of Faust. The kangaroos skip gaily up and down two pianos, and then in rapid succession we get the shimmering of water in the aquarium (how did Noah manage with sharks and minnows, and how on earth did he catch them, and why is it that with so much water outside Noah was commanded to take two of "every living thing of all flesh." Surely fish would not drown in a flood).

Saint Saens makes even the braying of donkeys musical, and has a passage devoted to fossils, in which he uses his own Skeleton Dance.

The Carnival is played by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, and is played as well as it can be. Why not get the records and provide yourself and friends with many hours of pure enjoyment?

BAY.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

AS TO GAMBLING.

SIR,—I have a contempt for gambling and for the Stock Exchange shuffles that amount to gambling. But I hate the idea of suppressing gambling by law and police; and I put no value on Church, Chapel, or Ethical Society resolutions that condemn the habit. I say this as a member of three Ethical Societies, and a worker in the Movement during forty years. Hence I agree with the general spirit of your comments in the *Freethinker* of November 29, and cordially support your educational principle of "creating an appetite for things of a different order." The anti-gamble method should not be a Puritan scolding, but guidance of youth in appreciation of (as Socrates would say) the Fair and Noble.

F. J. GOULD.

THE GREAT LYING CHRURCH.

SIR,—This week's Roman Catholic weekly *The Universe*, contains, in its last page, an important announcement, which may be of interest to those who have been unlucky in the Irish Sweep Stake. Two horses have been drawn at the intercession of St. Anthony. Horses have also been drawn with the help of "Infant of Prague," St. Patrick, Good Shepherd, and Our Lady of La Salette. It is interesting to note that there is a shrine in England for the miracle-working Madonna of La Salette. Numerous favours are obtainable through her intercession. Recently there was an advertisement in the same paper, that requests for favours should be forwarded to the priests in charge of the shrine, accompanied, of course, with offerings, *i.e.*, money. "Infant of Prague" is an image of an infant Jesus, with wonderful powers for working miracles, like the notorious Santissimo Bambino of Rome. St. Anthony, in this letter is the patron Saint of Padua. He is also a great miracle-worker. He is the patron saint also of brute creation. That may be the reason why his clients draw horses in Sweepstakes. St. Anthony, being also the keeper of God's lost-property office, his help is often asked by Roman Catholics, to recover lost fortunes and goods stolen by burglars. Not long ago burglars entered the Roman Catholic Church in Soho, and took away the money-box at the foot of the image of St. Anthony. After this incident the money-box is now built in the wall behind the image. It is strange that the images are deaf and dumb, when their help is really needed, as when churches, with their water-gods are destroyed and burnt by earthquakes, as those that recently occurred in New Zealand and other parts of the world.

J. M. PARISH.

"HONEST DOUBT."

SIR,—I would like to express an appreciation of Mr. Alan Handsaere's excellent article entitled "Faith—and Morals," in the edition of the *Freethinker* dated November 29, 1931.

It seems to me however, that the author unnecessarily belittles the position of Lord Tennyson in the matter of what he terms "honest doubt." After all, an author or poet must express himself as he thinks and sees, else he is insincere. Then where can we find a better example of honest doubt openly and fearlessly expressed than in those lines of Tennyson's:—

"What if the souls of men
Were immortal, as men have been told?
The lecher would cleave to his lusts;
The miser would cling to his gold!
And thus there were Hell forever:
But were there a God as you say,
His love would have power over Hell
'til it utterly vanished away."

Cpl. A. STEWART, R.A.S.C.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 27, 1931.

THE President, Mr. C. Cohen in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Moss, Clifton, Wood, Easterbrook, Le Maine, Ebury, Preece, McLaren, Sandys, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, Miss Kough and the Secretary. Several apologies for unavoidable absence was read. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and adopted, and the monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Bradford, N. London, Birkenhead, Wembley, Glasgow, Liverpool, Sunderland, and the Parent Society. Permission was given for the formation of a Branch of the Society at Sunderland, to be known as the Sunderland Branch N.S.S. Reports of lectures in Sunderland, Liverpool, and from Mr. J. T. Brighton were noted. Correspondence was dealt with from Liverpool, S. London, the International Federation, E. London, Bradford, St. Albans, and Brighton. Details connected with the Annual Conference for 1932, and the Annual Dinner was arranged.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for January 15, 1932.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

Obituary.

ANNIE HOLT.

ON Thursday, November 26, the remains of Annie Holt were interred in the City of London Cemetery, Manor Park, London, E. Although not a member of the N.S.S., her sympathies were with the movement, and for many years she and her husband regularly attended the lectures of the West Ham Branch N.S.S. With every appearance of being in good health, death came with startling suddenness at the age of fifty-four years. A large number of relatives and friends gathered at the graveside, where a Secular address was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

A Ramble.

THE Manchester Branch N.S.S. has arranged a ramble round the Goyt Valley to-day (Sunday). Will all those wishing to take part meet at London Road Station at 8.45 a.m. prompt. All members and friends are welcome, and the party will travel by train from London Road Station. The Branch is drawing good audiences at its meetings in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, and all Manchester Freethinkers not in possession of a syllabus, are invited to write to the local secretary, Mr. W. A. Atkinson, 40 Montford Street, Howard Street, Salford.

Rationalist Press Association (Glasgow District)

Grand Hall, Central Halls, 25 Bath Street,
Sunday, December 13th, at 3 p.m.

Lecturer:—Dr. NORMAN HAIRE (London),
Subject:—"SEX AND SOCIETY."

Violinist—Miss May Russell.

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"THE END OF ST PETERSBURG."

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"TWO TIMID SOULS."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road): 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. I. Ebury.

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

INDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (London Co-operative Society's Hall, 249 Dawes Road, Fulham): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"Lying for the Glory of God."

STRATFORD TOWN HALL, E.—Mr. Chapman Cohen, President of the N.S.S. and Editor of the *Freethinker*, will lecture on Sunday Evening at 7.0, doors open 6.30. Subject—"The Disease that Kills Religion."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John Hobson, M.A.—"The Recording Angel."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Mr. Whitehead—"Psycho-Analysis Explained."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, Hall No. 5, near Clapham Road Station, Underground): 7.30, Mr. C. Tuson, West London Branch—"Deified Names."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): Monday, December 7, at 8.0, Mr. McLaren will open a discussion on "Religion and Ethics."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): Tuesday, December 8, at 7.30, F. W. Read (Director R.P.A.)—"The Egyptian Book of the Dead and How it Was Made."

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. Newton—"The Case Against Freewill."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, entrance in Lorn Street): 7.0, E. Biddle (Chester)—"Religious Psychology."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Freethought and the Poets." Questions and discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (City Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room): 6.30, Mr. H. Watson—"Behaviourism—Bah!"

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Buildings, 41 Islington, Liverpool, entrance Christian Street): 7.0, S. Wollen (Liverpool)—"The Story of Iden." Current *Freethinkers* and other literature on sale.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. B. J. Boothroyd (Yaffle, of the *New Leader*.)

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble round Goyt Valley. Meet London Road Station, 8.45 a.m. prompt. All Freethinkers and friends invited.

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY.—Sunday, December 6, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Why I am an Atheist."

PERTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Independent Labour Party Hall, 6.30.—Challenge Debate—"Socialism or Secularism. Which is the Most Important?" Socialism: (Nominee from Perth I.L.P.; Secularism: Mr. Jas. Wingate, Perth N.S.S. Questions and discussion. Regular attenders come early.

BURNLEY (Co-operative Rooms, Stonyholme): 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Birth of the Soul."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, Hall No. 1): 3.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"The Churches and the Next War"; 7.0, "Anthropology—Christianity v. Science." Admission free.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, 5 Forbes Place): 7.30, Mr. Wm. Kent.—A Lecture.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Coach and Horses Hotel, Members and sympathisers.

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