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

## Views and Opinions.

### The Ghost of Religion.

THE very worst thing about religion is that long after it is formally dead it declines to be buried. Its ghost continues to haunt the scene of its former activities, and behaves very much like those spiritualistic ridiculousities so dear to men like the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Thus when a man has been done to death by dagger, or poison, the darned fool takes into his empty head to celebrate the anniversary of his death by wandering about the scene of his demise, groaning, or rattling furniture and scaring the wits out of old women and children. Or if he has committed a murder then the idiot has to return repeating the performance, even to the extent of providing himself with a cargo of "ectoplasm" to manufacture an old-fashioned dress or even a suit of armour. The stupidity of the ordinary ghost is matched only by the credulity of the average believer in him.

It is much the same with religion. Long after it is doctrinally, theologically and properly dead its ghost goes polluting the air, disturbing thought, and generally fouling everything it touches. It haunts language, modes of thought, laws and customs, and perpetuates ancient taboos. I am not here thinking of those people to whom religion is still objectively alive, but of those who do realize that there is little life in real religion, and who even pride themselves that their thinking is free from religious influence. These remind me very much of Robert Blatchford who, having no belief in a future life, very soon after the death of his wife felt that she must still be somewhere, and went to a Spiritualistic medium to see if he could get into touch with her in double-quick time. Many of the people I have in mind do not present quite so obvious and so crude a type as Blatchford, but their state of mind illustrates the same general principle.

### Matter—and Other Matter.

Here is an example of what I have in mind. In the *Observer* for December 27, Sir W. Beach Thomas writes a two-column review of a recent life of Bishop Berkeley. I do not know what qualifications Sir W. Beach Thomas has for writing on Berkeley, but the article offers no evidence of his ever having read the Bishop of Cloyne, and offers positive proof that he does not understand him if he has. James Douglas, or any of the *Herald* or *Daily Mail* hacks could have done review as well, if not better. After heading his review "The Enemy of Matter," he proceeds:—

Matter to him was a dark lady of such evil influence that being of a lusty faith he denied its existence. "To be is to be perceived," and he denied that matter could be perceived.

Now that completely illustrates two things. First, the prevalence of the ghost of religion, and, second, a complete misunderstanding of what Berkeley taught, a misunderstanding that has an important and direct bearing upon the meaning of Materialism. To take the second point first. Berkeley did not deny the existence of matter. Nothing but ignorance of his meaning and of the history of philosophical speculation could be responsible for a statement of that kind. I admit that the opinion is very common, common from the time that the bombastic Samuel Johnson imagined he disproved Berkeley by kicking a stone. All the same, Berkeley affirmed the existence of "matter" as clearly and as strongly as the most thorough-going Materialist.

There is really no excuse for a misunderstanding of Berkeley. He is the most limpid of writers, and confusion can only result either from inability to understand, or obsession with other ideas. Even then it is difficult to understand anyone accusing Berkeley of denying that matter exists. He affirms its existence over and over again in language as clear and as definite as it is possible to use. He says, if you mean by matter that which can be measured, weighed, tasted, touched, seen or smelled, then I say that matter exists, and exists because it is perceived. He says, I firmly believe in matter, in this sense, and in so doing I agree with the vulgar—that is, with the ordinary man—and not with those philosophers who argue that apart from the things we know, and which to me constitute matter, there is something else which we do not know, but only infer. And he asks what is that matter which cannot be apprehended by any of the senses? It is the very kernel of his reasoning that matter exists exactly as we see it, and in no other way. He did not question the testimony of the senses, he relied upon their absolute authority. He affirmed "matter" in what he took to be the only intelligible sense of the word, as connoting a synthesis of things perceived. When he was told that the matter we know through our senses was not the real matter,

which was something unseen, unfelt, unsmellable and unweighable, he asked, How do you know? and what is the use of this matter which is unknown to the senses? In the second of his three dialogues, he asks his opponent whether this kind of "matter" does not really answer to "nothing," since it exists only after an abstraction of all positive and knowable qualities? When, he says, you tell me that the table exists, that it has colour, and shape and weight and form, I agree, and assert that this is the real table. What I deny is that apart from the table I know there is another table about which I know nothing, and can know nothing, but which you assert is the real one. That to me is a figment of the imagination.

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#### Mind and Matter.

What Berkeley was giving the world was a new analysis, and a new conception of matter. What he denied was the metaphysical "matter" which others had claimed underlay the world of phenomena. He based his denial upon the fact that when he had abstracted from our knowledge of any-thing, all that could be expressed in terms of sensation and its derivatives, what we had left was nothing—that is, no-thing. I will come to the motive that led Berkeley to this conclusion later. At present I want to note two things. First, that had Berkeley stopped at the point reached above he would have been in an unassailable position. But he wanted a God, and that led him beyond his text, and brought disaster.

The second point is that the position reached by Berkeley, and which annihilated a metaphysical "matter," is exactly the position taken up by Hume in his annihilation of a metaphysical "mind." Berkeley denied the existence of an underlying, unknown "matter," because when he had abstracted from any object all that was due to sensation and its derivatives, what was left was nothing. But he talked of "mind" as something in itself, and which paved the way for belief in a God. Hume, accepting the analysis of matter, applied the same rule to "mind," and found that when he examined mental phenomena, and abstracted from any phenomenon all that was due to impressions and their derivatives, what was left was just nothing. "Matter" was as much an abstraction as "mind"; "mind" was as much an abstraction as "Matter." If the Materialist was thus prevented from using matter as a "refuge for Atheism," the Idealist was equally prevented from using mind as a refuge for theism. Hume did not question the reality of "mind" so long as the term was used without metaphysical implications, Berkeley did not question the reality of "matter" provided the same qualification was observed. To Hume "Mind," and to Berkeley "Matter" stood as a synthesis of a particular group of experiences. So far the analysis was complete, and it has never been successfully challenged. Both were re-defining terms in the interests of clarity. Berkeley and Hume are really complementary to this issue. To accept one is to accept both. Had they proceeded to lay down a philosophy of scientific method on these lines a great deal of the confusion that to-day obtains among our leading writers when dealing with the relations of science and religion would not exist.

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#### Matter and Materialism.

Now this belief in an underlying substance which is the real world, as distinct from the world we actually know, is a good illustration of the way in which the ghost of religion is permitted to walk the earth long after the real thing is dead. Readers will find a lengthy discussion of this point in my *Materialism Re-*

*stated*, and an explanation of the way in which even professed Materialists have played into the enemy's hands by adopting an attitude with regard to "matter" no more scientifically defensible than that taken up by the idealist with regard to "mind." Each has, one consciously, the other unconsciously, paid homage to the ghost of religion. In each instance it has been religion that has fouled the nest. If Berkeley had not been a theologian as well as a philosopher he would have stopped short with his analysis of knowledge, and his position would have been impregnable. But he was a bishop, and so he went beyond his text, and in order to destroy Atheism he created a God who kept the world in being by a perpetual series of recurring sensations. And in the same way we have Sir W. Beach Thomas, a couple of centuries later writing such nonsense as "Materialism is dead, and the victors have poured through the breach enlarged, if not opened by the Bishop of Cloyne," when Materialism is, now as ever, the ruling attitude in all genuinely scientific thinking.

The statement that Berkeley destroyed matter is exactly in line with the nonsense written about the new physics destroying matter. The nature of matter has been a subject of speculation for at least two thousand years. The first solid step was taken when it was suggested that it was ultimately a small indestructible and indivisible atom, never actually seen but always assumed, as a good working hypothesis. That conception governed until modern times. The present dominating conception of matter is that of an atom which is made up of protons—an elementary positive charge of electricity and electrons—elementary charges of negative electricity. But this is not to destroy either the atom or matter, it is merely to revise our conception of both in the light of a fuller and more accurate knowledge of the facts. One might as well argue that any change in our conception of the nature of light would leave the world without light altogether. Once the position of science in such matters is understood there is really no room here for argument, it is a statement of elementary scientific philosophy. The man who questions it is so obsessed by the ghost of religion as to be almost inhibited from sane thinking. And that, as I said at the beginning, is the greatest evil influence of religion. Religion has bitten very deeply into human history and human nature. It held almost unquestioned supremacy for many millenniums, while the period during which scientific thinking has been even possible is but of yesterday. The consequence is that completely non-religious thinking is still very rare. In modern life it acts much as the vermiform appendix acts, doing no good, but all the time serving as a threat to the health of the organism. We are still haunted by the ghost of religion, and even though many have ceased to believe in it, we all need to be on our guard lest we are unconsciously influenced by it.

I must put off an explanation of the way in which this ghost of religion is imported into science and philosophy until next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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The glory of a people and of an age, is always the work of a small number of great men.—Baron de Grimm.

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To endeavour to work on the vulgar with fine sense, is like attempting to hew blocks with a razor.—Pope.

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Education begins the gentleman, but reading, good company, and reflection, must finish him.—Locke.

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The ancestor of every action is a thought.—Emerson.

## And the Clergy Smile.

"The man who feels that he has truth on his side must step firmly. Truth is not to be dallied with."

*Goethe.*

"We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions."—*G. W. Foote.*

WHEN the World-War started in 1914 by the murder of an Austrian princeling, the clergy hailed the awful event as the happy harbinger of a spiritual awakening on the part of the peoples destined to be decimated. Subsequent events have discounted the fond hopes of the clerical caste. The World-War, which shook the thrones of Europe, and tested so many men and institutions, has not spared the Christian churches. Indeed, it brought out strongly the unselfish devotion and sacrifice of hundreds of thousands who were utterly indifferent to all the churches of Christendom, but it also revealed, on the part of the priestly caste and its leaders, a spirit of cant, compromise, and cowardice that tended to lessen what influence the clergy possessed with the mass of ordinary citizens.

Freethinkers more than any other body of men realize that this clerical influence is diminishing, and has long been a slowly vanishing quantity. And the clergy themselves have not been slow to perceive the waning allegiance of their flocks, and the contempt of people who do not often trouble the pew-openers. A wail from the Right-Reverend Father-in-God, the Bishop of Liverpool, shows which way the wind is blowing, and is likely to provoke discussion on a question which cannot be reckoned as of small importance. The Bishop says that the number of the State Church clergy has shrunk from 20,000 in 1914 to 16,000 in 1929, and that this serious reduction is a menace to religion in this country. A very curious commentary on the Prelate's figures is that, during the same period, the number of Church of England bishops has been largely increased, and that these higher church dignitaries now number no less than four hundred. As the income of the average Father-in-God is £2,000 and a residence, and the stipend of the common, or garden, clergyman £5 weekly, it will be seen that the lack of candidates for holy orders is not so much due to financial embarrassment as to the unwillingness of young men to join the ranks of the soothsayers.

This mass-production of right-reverend Fathers-in-God requires a little explanation. Realizing the growing disfavour of the clerical profession among the young men of to-day, and the anachronism of medieval prelates in a professedly democratic country, the astute Church of England authorities seek to restore their Church's balance of power by the creation of £2,000 a year jobs in preference to the more modest emoluments of an ordinary parson. The present Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords is to be retained to safeguard the political position of the State-patronized religion, but the newer class of bishops is intended, primarily, to attract new blood to the Anglican Church, and also to increase that Church's hold on what they politely term "the masses."

The very attitude of the Church of England authorities shows how far removed that church is from democratic hopes and ideals. In the terrible anxieties of a World-War the anachronism of a priestly caste in our midst passed almost unnoticed, but a retrospective glance is worth making. All can recall the fervent appeals to patriotism made by these skin-careful priests, coupled with the fact that they were themselves exempted from military service, and trod the primrose path of dalliance. Even those priests who carried a portable communion service at a safe distance from the fighting front received officers' pay instead of the wages of a private soldier. Is it strange

that there should rise a note, not so much of remonstrance as of revolt, which suggests that the nation is getting a little dissatisfied with the behaviour of the clergy, from the wealthy occupants of Fulham and Lambeth Palaces to the tenant of Lower Sloppington Vicarage, who have equally proved themselves out of touch with the general life and aspirations of a great nation. At a time when the civilized world is in financial convulsions, at a time when agriculture is suffering from the deepest depression known for many generations, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have found time to prosecute and sell-up farmers for non-payment of a tax of one tenth of their produce in support of a two-thousand years' old superstition. But on the great issues of the present day, on unemployment, on housing, on national well-being, they have shown a complete and shameless indifference.

Remember that the State-aided Anglican Church is the wealthiest church in the whole of Christendom. Its income is that of a small State, and the value of its properties, particularly in the City of London, has quadrupled in value during the past few years. It owns vast tracts of land all over the country, it is one of the largest owners of colliery royalties, and its income runs into millions of pounds yearly. In addition, it has a score of representatives in the House of Lords, where its bishops consistently and of set purpose oppose and obstruct all democratic legislation. A glance at the "Church of England Year Book" will give some idea of the ramifications of this most-highly organized religious body, which exists, primarily, for the furtherance of superstition and the perpetuation of Priestcraft.

Figures such as are revealed in this business-like "Year Book" should make any Freethinker pause and reflect that Freethought propaganda has to make headway not only against gross ignorance and superstition, but against a most heavily endowed religious system. The so-called Church of England is but one of many Christian Churches in this country, but it is of more importance than the others because it has State aid and protection. It largely controls education, and, in conjunction with the priests of other denominations, ensures that the millions of children in the schools shall be brought up to respect the mumbo-jumbo of their sorry profession. Against all this Freethought propaganda is most severely handicapped. Its publications are boycotted in public and private libraries, and few booksellers have the courage to stock them. In spite of it all, however, the "intellectuals" are making headway. If Freethinkers would support systematically their own institutions there would soon be an alteration for the better, and the heavy struggle would be carried on under more favourable conditions. Every Freethought book, every Freethought pamphlet, and every copy of the *Freethinker*, is an ambassador for reason against one of the grossest forms of superstition that ever clouded the mind of an otherwise civilized country. Scatter them "like leaves in Vallambrosa."

MIMNERMUS.

There is something satisfactory in accounts of the follies of the wise; they give a natural aid to the picture and reconcile us to our own.—*Goldsmith.*

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

Faith consists in believing things because they are impossible.—*Voltaire.*

We always hate those whom we have injured.

*Tacitus.*

## A Dying God.

All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire shall ye pass and be past.

Ye are Gods, and behold, ye shall die, and the waves be upon you at last.

*Swinburne. "Hymn to Proserpine."*

IN the early part of the year, when the Press and the Pulpit announced, with a fanfare of trumpets, the advent of Sir James Jeans' brand-new Mathematical God, and the absolutely final defeat—for the thousandth time—of Materialism as described by Sir Arthur Eddington; we remarked that the general public would be more likely to be staggered by the revelations, also made, as to the utter insignificance of mankind in the universe, than in the alleged existence of this transcendental Mathematician.

Sir James Jeans himself, after describing our earth, in relation to the universe, as a "microscopic fragment of sand," observes:—

Our first impression is something akin to terror. We find the universe terrifying because of its vast meaningless distances, terrifying because of its inconceivably long vistas of time which dwarf human history to the twinkling of an eye, terrifying because of our extreme loneliness, and because of the material insignificance of our home in space—a millionth part of a grain of sand out of all the sea—sand in the world. But above all else, we find the universe terrifying because it appears to be indifferent to life like our own; emotion, ambition and achievement, art and religion all seem equally foreign to its plan. Perhaps indeed we ought to say it appears to be actively hostile to life like our own. (Sir J. Jeans: *The Mysterious Universe*. p. 3.)

Empty space is too cold to support life, and most of the matter in space is too hot for it to appear. And if this is the impression a survey of the universe produces upon the mind of a scientist who is familiar with it, how much more it is likely to shock those to whom it comes with all the novelty of newness!

The clergy are now beginning to realize the truth of what we predicted at the time. The victorious trumpet peals die fitfully away and merge into a melancholy realization that the impression created by the new revelation is quite different from what was expected and required. In fact, quite the opposite to that desired.

The first-fruits of this chastened spirit, is the appearance of a symposium entitled *God and the Universe: the Christian Position*, edited, with an "Introduction," by Mr. J. Lewis May. It consists of three parts contributed by the following clergymen: The Rev. S. C. Carpenter, Chaplain to the King; Father M. C. D'Arcy, the Jesuit, M.A. of Oxford; and the Rev. Bertram Lee Woolf. Representing successively, the Church of England, the Church of Rome, and the Free, or Nonconformist Church. Mr. May, in his "Introduction," explaining the object of the book, observes, that lately, the scientists have brought home to us the immensity of the universe, with a wealth of illustration and exuberance, in marked contrast to the usual austere and arid style of scientific treatises. And further:—

In these more recent productions the cold and dispassionate figures of mathematics have been reinforced by luxuriant figures of speech, and embellished by a profusion of imagery, calculated not merely to impress, but to overwhelm, the imagination of the popular audience to whom they are addressed. World upon world, system upon system, universe upon universe—the mind reels and loses itself in the endeavour to form even the most shadowy and tentative notion of the ineffable panorama thus presented to its contemplation. (*God and the Universe*. p. 3.)

Fresh from their explorations, "and fired with a

very proper enthusiasm for the marvels they have there beheld, they have come back, like the ghost at Elsinore, to tell us tales that shall harrow up our souls and freeze our very blood." (p. 4.) Mr. May goes on to speak of the dizziness and inebriation which such a revelation may excite in unseasoned minds, and when the sensation of wonder has somewhat subsided, he may ask himself:—

"What becomes of religion; what becomes of Christianity, if these things be true?" Though no overt or formal attack be made on his beliefs, he may yet question, not without a sinking of the heart, how far the fact that this planet is but a grain of dust in the immeasurable universe, is compatible with a religion which would tell him that mankind is the noblest of created beings and the object of God's special and merciful solicitude. If, as Science seems to allege, conscious life on this planet be but an accident, or at most a *parergon* (by product) in the general scheme of things, how shall such doctrines as those of the Atonement and the Redemption continue to claim allegiance from informed and thinking men? (p. 7.)

Aye, there's the rub. Is it conceivable that God sent his only son down to this utterly insignificant planet, to suffer a hideous death as a sacrifice to placate his own father for the transgressions of mankind? It is not conceivable by any intelligent mind that has not been doped with religion. For the new Mathematical God, whose advent was received with such enthusiasm, Mr. May has nothing but contempt; he observes: "Some of our Scientists, in an attempt to fill the void they deem themselves to have created, have endeavoured to set up a God of their own invention. But what manner of God is it for whom they would ask our allegiance? In their resolute attempt to avoid anything so primitive as anthropomorphism, they have imagined a deity even more nebulous than Matthew Arnold's 'Something not ourselves that makes for righteousness,' and would feed the hungry soul with an abstraction, an idea, a mere formula." (p. 11.)

When this new God was first announced, the general public, seeing the enthusiasm with which the religious world received him, never stopped to inquire as to how the new deity would fit into the framework of Christianity. He does not fit in at all. To do him justice, Sir James Jeans, his inventor and High Priest, never claimed that he did; for he does not mention the Bible, Christianity, Jesus Christ, or even refer to a future life in the whole of his book, *The Mysterious Universe*, and the Rev. S. C. Carpenter, in the first essay in this symposium, treats Sir James, to use a legal phrase, as "a hostile witness," and observes: "When Sir James Jeans says that the Great Architect of the universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician, he knows as well as anybody that no one can be a pure mathematician, and nothing else." He couples it with "Professor Eddington's defence of mystical religion," and "calls attention to the fact that accomplished physicists have dissected the universe and have found a skeleton, or rather a diagram." (pp. 39-40.)

Thus earthly glory passeth away. Considering the ovation with which the new god of mathematics was received, he must have had the shortest reign on record. For the rest, and considering that the three writers of this symposium have been selected for their abilities, these essays are about the thinnest and most elementary defences of Christianity, it has ever been our misfortune to read. The Rev. S. C. Carpenter offers a defence of the Trinity. Father D'Arcy directs us to "God's Word, which is unchanging and unchangeable." The Rev. B. L. Woolf completely ignores the subject Mr. May engaged him to write about, and advises reliance on Jesus Christ.

Scarecrows for Dissenters.

II.—THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH AND THE STATE.

(Concluded from page 6.)

WHAT Mr. Manning has to say about Nonconformist relations with the Established Church need not long detain us. He begins by knocking the current cant about re-union, even within the restricted area of Protestant Christianity, out of the ring. Episcopal "orders" are, he says, "a new circumcision." "It would be so 'nice' if" Nonconformists and Anglicans "could all receive the Sacrament together," but "'niceness' is not a main object of the Christian religion." As the Anglican Church is now so largely "Anglo-Catholic"—by the way even the difference between them and evangelical anglicans is entirely ridiculous because Anglican "orders" are as historically preposterous as the whole Catholic theory of apostolic succession itself—all talk about re-union between it and the dissenters is all my eye. Secondly Mr. Manning says "politically the Established Church is a national institution, religiously it is an episcopalian sect." In recent and present times it is the latter character that has been emphasized, and "it is morally certain" that Anglicans will press for a "re-adjustment of relations with the State on the lines of the settlement with the Church of Scotland." Here, Mr. Manning observes that disestablishment and disendowment go together, and that "when in the sixteenth century Englishmen ceased to be of one mind about religion, it was monstrous that one sect should grab what had been national property." We agree, but Mr. Manning, like the Anglo-Catholics, wants Christianity freed from State control, but he, not less than they, does not want the State free from Christian control. There is no more logic or justice in giving money left before the Reformation for masses to the Baptists to-day, than there was for giving it to a body in which it was illegal to say mass in the sixteenth century. There is only one rightful owner of monies that were collected as taxes, and for monies left for national education, and that is the State. Nor can such monies be diverted to useful purposes without involving also the diversion to secular national objects of monies hitherto given to the State Church before the Reformation for religious purposes which its own formularies, and the law of the land, now forbid it to fulfil. Nothing could be worse for the interests of freedom, liberty and justice, than a State Church sharing the spoils with other churches and using them to avert their common dread of the secularization of the State.

We come now to the third of Mr. Manning's main arguments and to that part of his case which really matters to us. We desire to ask him a question. Why does he use the term "communism" and "anti-clericalism"—both of which are still somewhat strange sounding in this country—instead of the word Freethought when, what he is obviously dreading is not the conversion of religious Englishmen to Romanism, not the capture of the British Government by Communists, but the much more real and possible revolution that will be accomplished (with as little violence in all probability as preceding revolutions in this country) by the increasing decline of religious belief and the consequent removal of the whole machinery by which Christianity in this country is bolstered up? It can so divert the obvious desire of the nation as to force even a Labour Government to abandon a good Minister of Education and a legislative measure of its own devising rather than stand up to the organized clamour of catholic, dissenting, and episcopal religionists.

The "Nonconformist conscience," which is just as ready to make Freethinkers pay for "simple Bible teaching" as the Anglicans and Catholics are to make dissenters pay for "positive religious instruction," may be, in practise, a worse hindrance than its ecclesiastical comrades in arms. Priests and parsons cannot sit in Parliament, but dissenting ministers can and do. The Labour Party, which, when it was not in danger of Office, had secular education in its programme, was as weak and flabby as a jelly-fish in dealing not only with education,

but with the Sunday Performances Bill. And does anyone think that the present Parliament, elected in a panic, will step in where its predecessor feared to tread, or that it would get the smallest aid from the Dissenting Deputies and those they represent if it did?

Mr. Manning refers to the necessity for "doing the right thing in these mundane affairs so intimately connected with the workings of the Spirit and the free course of the Word of God." This, he says, "is the peculiar function of the dissenting deputies." So now we know where we are; namely that all Christians, Nonconformists as well as the others, are quite ready—to quote Mr. Manning again—to secure a so-called Christian majority in the assembly that directs our mundane political affairs because modern conditions "will make it increasingly easy for such a majority once in the saddle to perpetuate itself." That is what Christianity in this country has been doing since the Reformation. There is one thing it fears, as was suggested in the Editor's article on Mass Production in these columns on November 22, namely, that to get Christianity out of the saddle of the State we must "create an individual psychology" that shall stamp out all the enemies of truth and freedom.

It is clear that the "dangers" and "opportunities" of dissenters are other than those with which Mr. Manning is concerned. Their danger they share in common with all the Churches, and from Mr. Manning's address we see that (unlike Dr. Horton), they would rather be divided and beaten than seek a united defence in some sort of compound of Catholic and Protestant theology bound by the single, and doubtless awkward, tie of hostility to Freethought. As to their "opposites," they realize that the "aid" of the law for Sabbatarians and other repressions may pass away, and that a generation is growing up which, if it knows less than is desirable about religion, is well acquainted with, and contemptuous of, its "Dont's." Happiness is their proper aim and utility their moral guide. Secularism is indeed the danger for the Dissenters; not Communism, not Romanism; but the fact that a growing majority of men and women do, often without realizing it, conduct their lives without reference to those "sanctions," divine and ecclesiastical, which are dear to the so-called "Free" Churches.

Scarecrows are set up to keep destructive birds from the crops. Grotesque figures of men, they frighten the parasitic birds, but they do not scare the farmer. Mr. Manning's scarecrows of Communism and anti-clericalism may scare those who, competing with other parasites, seek to get the first fruits from the soil of the mind, and to prevent the full fruits of thinking going to the producer both singly and as a community. But they will not scare anyone who has had a few elementary lessons in reasoning from a recognition that Christianity is the enemy of cultivation. Mr. Manning, might with profit reflect upon some lines of Prior's:—

"Who fastest walks, but walks astray,  
Is only farthest from his way."

It is not "opportunity" but direction that is the need of to-day. Hustle is everywhere. Neither hustle nor opportunism must hinder the slow, steady permeation of those ideas and that knowledge which alone can bring in "the age of reason" and secure "the rights of man."

ALAN HANDSACRE.

They have stormed the stars with their passion-cry  
For hope or mercy or justice here,  
Plead that their darlings should never die—  
Plead with many a sob and tear.

Folly! for never an answer came,  
And never an arrow was turned away;  
It sped to its beautiful mark the same,  
Whether they prayed or scorned to pray.

—KENNETH LAMAR

## Christianity is Not True.

We are living in the twentieth century. The wonders of Science and the achievements of human knowledge have introduced us to the marvels of a material universe which is becoming more and more explained in the terms of human progress.

Standing beside us as we study phenomena we see the dark forbidding sinister figure of the Man of God. The Christian example differs not in essentials from any of the long list of mis-leaders of their fellows who have disgraced the barbaric and civilized states in the past. Religion is based on error and thrives on ignorance.

It is the practice of Christians in speaking of their religion and of its founder to take for granted that Christ existed and that Christianity is true. I have read much Christian literature; heard Christian ministers in Church and over the wireless, and argued with many professors of Christian belief; one and all have spoken as though they were in possession of irrefutable facts.

Strangest of all to me is the fact that not one of the "Fundamentals" can be substantiated. No Christian can give proof that Christ ever existed, nor point to any word or teaching of the Saviour and say with definiteness that word or that teaching is the teaching of the greatest figure in history.

If the evidence which is brought forward by the Christian apologist were submitted to an unbiased but critical examination it would be rejected and the case of Christianity dismissed. That there are millions of people who will persist in believing tradition and superstition is no reason why we should admit that there is truth in them.

The falseness of the Christian economy has been proved by the reasoned dispassionate argument of secularists and the progressive march of knowledge plus comprehensive studies in comparative religion. Christianity was launched upon the world when the people were, for the most part, credulous and ignorant of natural phenomena.

In the *New Commentary of the Scriptures*, Gore and others, S.P.C.K. 1928 edition, the whole range of Christian tenets and beliefs are taken under review. Nowhere can the respective writers prove the things which they set out to discuss. They are thrown back to the expedience of postulate and question begging; to say that the Christian religion is the true religion because it is the religion of the true may sound nice issuing from a pulpit, but it is meaningless when submitted to impartial examination. The Secularist is quite impartial; his desire is to know therefore he cannot be satisfied with mere belief. Gore and his friends jettison the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the Immaculate conception, the Virgin Birth, the Miracles and throw doubt upon other outstanding doctrines of Christianity. The Roman Catholic Church upholds all of these things. They cannot both be right.

Christianity, like any other religion, has held its place and power only for so long as it has not been found out. With the advent of the Roman Church to power under Constantine, a great darkness fell upon the whole of Europe. Gibbon tells us that the Church maintained by violence that which she had obtained by fraud. Human knowledge and reason were discounted and retarded. Every effort was made by a priestly caste to dominate the lives and actions of men: instead of truth there was circulated a vast horde of silly superstitions and lying statements regarding Christ and the Saints. When one thousand years of this priestly despotism had passed over and science and critical examination began to peep forth, they were ruthlessly attacked and the torch bearers of knowledge were diabolically treated to rack and thumbscrew.

When Christians of the present day speak of their religion they conveniently forget or cover up its hellish past.

No Christian minister ever gets up to tell his sheep-like listeners the horrors for which Christ has stood throughout the ages. No, he bases his appeal upon his Wonderful Saviour.

If Christ ever existed, what has he done to place himself above the teachers and moralists of the past? Noth-

ing whatever. The beatitudes are not a monopoly of the Christian Church; common or garden men and women were practicing Altruism and giving of the milk of human kindness centuries before Christ was ever heard of.

In view of the fact that the creed tells us that Christ was Very God of Very God, some of his alleged acts were very misleading and disconcerting. Imagine God Almighty being tempted of the devil. Notice Very God cursing the barren fig tree; not because of any moral lapse, but because the material conditions for bearing fruit were not there. Notice God the Son praying to himself as God the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. What a farce the whole gamut of the Christian scheme of atonement becomes when subjected to reason and common-sense.

If the Christian is to tell us of the love of Jesus he must also realize that this same loving Saviour has burdened the world with Hell-fire. *The Catechism of Christian Doctrine* 1931 edition, tells me that Jesus will say: "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." I am also informed by these kindly Christian people that there is a real fire in hell, and that the damned will suffer *material* torments for ever and ever. These abominable lies are still taught in the Catechism and religious encyclopedias of the day. A man may commit any crime against his fellows from burglary to rape, incest, and murder; if he calls in a maudlin priest before he ends his days, and if he is shriven, he passes through the felicity of Paradise. Christ to the thief said: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Let me close by saying again, Christianity is not true, and let who will examine my claim and take up the challenge.

B. FRANCIS.

## Acid Drops.

There seems to be only one industry in the country that is short of labour. There are not enough parsons—not enough, that is, for the Church, there appears to be plenty for the people, because we have not heard anyone complaining about the shortage. The Church of England, alone, is short of some 15,000 men. And every year there seems to be about 200 short of the number required to keep the Church up to its proper strength. This is sad, but the worst of it is no one asks a question in Parliament as to what the Government intends to do about it. Even Mr. Ramsay Macdonald does not trouble to have himself photographed visiting the Archbishop of Canterbury in order to discuss the shortage of parsons.

It is officially declared that the shortage is due not to lack of willing men to serve, but to lack of funds to equip them and to pay them. We are sorry to read that statement. To make so sacred a calling a matter of money is to reduce it to the level of an ordinary trade. It makes the "call of God" to service dependent upon the amount of solid cash available. If God calls men to a £150 a year job he cannot expect a very generous response. But if he will call them to a £1,000 a year job, he will find his "call" attracting much greater attention. But we do not like such a calling to depend upon mere money. It makes the parson no better than a dustman, and the "call of God's service" no different from that of a city firm advertising for office boys.

Meanwhile, as a contribution towards the education of the world, the Bishop of Exeter discoursed to his congregation at Exeter Cathedral on the burning question of whether Christians should believe in angels? After viewing the question from the North and from the South and from the East and from the West the Bishop solemnly decided that Christians must believe in angels, in fact, belief in them stood upon the same ground as belief in survival after death. Somehow the Bishop thinks this will bring great comfort to those in distress at the present time, for God, through the angelic host, is working out his purpose on earth. That is "frightfully" good news, although we fancy that most of his congregation, even the Bishop himself, would have felt greater delight to

have got a shilling off the income tax. But it is good to find these worthy men wrestling with so pressing a problem as whether we ought to believe in angels or not. The subject is so important, we feel sure if it were brought to the notice of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald he would at once appoint a Committee to consider it. With only £2,800 a year we feel that the Bishop of Exeter is scandalously underpaid. There has been no "cut" in his salary, however.

"Figures," it is said, "can prove anything"; but that two and two make four is beyond the reach of statistical manipulation. The *Official Year Book of the Church of England* (1932), just published, contains an orgy of statistics of which we will give only a few. It is claimed that "adult regular worshippers" in Anglican Churches in 1930 numbered 6,500,000. There are two Archbishops 41 Bishops, 47 Assistant and Suffragan Bishops, 12,807 Incumbents, and 4,135 Curates. These (which omit Deans, Archdeacons and other extra-parochial clergy) total 17,032. If we take the "adult regular worshippers"—the exact total is 2,401,635, based on the most favourable period for the Church, Easter—and compare them with the seating accommodation provided by Churches and Mission Halls, viz., 6,258,672, it is clear that less than half of it is regularly occupied. There is one parson for, roughly, every 450 worshippers, but how many parsons minister to that number regularly is questionable, clearly not the majority of them. The total worshippers at Catholic and Dissenting Churches are said to number 13,000,000. These Anglican figures are for England (excluding Wales and Monmouth), and, if they are even nearly right, it appears that of a population of 37,354,917. (Census 1931) 15,000,000 is the most that can be claimed for religion of any kind. In fact none of these figures from religious sources can be relied upon.

How, for example, does the Church of England *Official Year Book* get its figures? Thus: "The Form of Inquiry is issued in nearly all cases through the agency of the Rural Deans," and "these figures," while "they do not claim to be an exhaustive statement of the matters with which they specifically deal," are obtained "from the Parochial Clergy, and the tables embrace the returns of over ninety-nine per cent." Is it credible that every one who goes to church is counted; that every communicant is taken note of: that occasional worshippers are identified as distinct from regular worshippers, and that, in short, it is somebody's business in every parish to act as a census officer? Moreover the *Year Book* says explicitly that it contains only "such particulars as it might be thought desirable to publish"; and, in regard to finance, it specially points out that "all grants from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Queen Anne's Bounty, or anything in the nature of Government aid have all been carefully excluded." Why? If the voluntary offerings can be published—it is claimed that for 1930 they total £19,751,592. (p. 392-393)—why have we (on pages 396-7) a statement of Income and Outgoings drawn up with cash columns to look like a Balance Sheet, but with the columns empty—not a single figure is to be found in them? According to a Table (p. 255) Ecclesiastical Commissioners "Grants" alone in 1930 amounted to £591,007: but of the main sources of the Church's Revenue we are left in the dark.

Sir W. Clark Hall, the London Police Court Magistrate, who is in charge of the Children's Courts has written an interesting book about them (Allen & Unwin). He makes a vigorous protest against the Church of England's exploitation of those who work with the magistrate in the interests of Police Court "cases." All of them are required to be communicating members of the Church of England. Sir W. Clark Hall says:—

Such a test applied to men and women assisting in the administering of justice, and paid largely, and to be paid still more largely, out of public funds, savours of the seventeenth rather than the twentieth century. I am an earnest supporter of the splendid work done by this Society, and its very sincere well wisher, but it has come now to the parting of the ways. The authorities responsible for it must determine whether they will place the organization which they have created at the public

service, or whether they will continue to regard it as a mere annexe to their own particular Church to be used for its propaganda.

We raise our hat to Sir William Clark Hall.

A godly contemporary tells its readers that there is cause for thankfulness and an assurance of Peace (in addition to others mentioned by our friend) in the fact that the Dictator in Roman Catholic Italy not long ago, with a copy of the New Testament in his hand, made the following public declaration to a vast concourse of his countrymen: "The New Testament is the best book I know of in the world." We regret to state that, for our part, we can see nothing in this incident as a cause for thankfulness and an assurance of Peace. Throughout the Christian era there has been no lack of war-mongers—Kings and statesmen and priests, many of them—who have regarded the New Testament as the best book in the world. There is little evidence to show that this admiration ever did anything towards preventing war. It certainly did nothing to stop the last war.

An item of news from a pious weekly is that, "Times are bad and money is scarce, but despite this, the Methodist people have raised £55,795 for Home Missions." One might innocently wonder whether, when times are bad, so large a sum of money might not be better employed. But we should remember that all good Methodists appreciate the advantage of purchasing a seat in heaven.

According to Canon Hannay, "We need a man like Isaiah to drive us back to the old simplicities." What he really means is that there is needed a man who can convert the people into the superstitions simpletons of former days. It is the parsons' last hope.

The tone of the average newspaper, declares Mr. Bertram Clump, is higher than that of the average conversation. Not much, since the average newspaper is determined to cater for the lowest common denominator of intelligence. That is the price which has to be paid for a circulation around the million mark.

Here is a handful of long words from the Rev. Dr. Donald Soper: "The preciseness in which in the past Christian communities have delineated the structure and constitution of the next world has often been the index to the measure of their failure to formulate Christian plans for this." Our translation of this would run thus: Christians in the past so firmly fixed their attention on the next world and its concerns, that they neglected to train themselves to be decent citizens of this world or to help make this world fit to be lived in. If that is what Dr. Soper means, then we heartily agree with what he says, and we merely add that one could hardly expect any other result from the New Testament and the Christian religion.

Dr. Soper also suggests that Methodists should train their more intellectual youth to be competent apologists for the faith, "that they may meet the facile exponents of Materialism and irreverent Agnosticism with culture and logic." Does he really think that such an innovation would be wise?

The Rev. Dr. Norwood, of the City Temple, has been asked by a pious journal for a "message" in regard to Disarmament. From this we annex the following:—

The world's agitated concern has shifted from the military to the economic realm. Without united action there will be world-wide catastrophe.

Armaments are the biggest drain upon our common resources. They are produced by fear and create more fear. The existing burden is crushing, and in actual war would be suicidal. Either faith or finance will yet drive us to reduction or abolition of armaments. Faith will bring us towards the goal with enriched powers; financial catastrophe will drive us there in rags and tatters. Let us have faith!

We may as well point out that the "faith" advocated by Dr. Norwood is based on fear—fear of world-wide catastrophe. But, of course, he is appealing to Christians, who can only be taught to trust, or have faith in, one another through fear. More rational folk will find better reasons for disarmament and the abolition of war.

There is a kind of inspiration which men get on the "morning after the night before." We are reminded of it by the Rev. Herbert Dunnico, who says that "We must either give up war or give up civilization." In 1914-16, when our parsons were intoxicated with the moral exaltation of a righteous war, and were earning the proud title of the nation's best recruiting sergeants—that was the "night before." Of course, it is quite right to save civilization by giving up war. But it seems suspiciously like ingratitude to God "our help in ages past" to deprive him of such glorious opportunities for service to the nation, and of the pleasure of receiving heartfelt thanks for services rendered. It is all very well for the parsons to be anxious to save civilization by renouncing war. But are they quite sure that God wants civilization to be saved? One cannot help being doubtful on that point, for God was—according to the parsons—very active in the last war. And we have no reason to suspect that he would be less active in the next war, which may destroy civilization.

Those readers who remember the terrible murders committed by "Jack the Ripper," will also, we think, remember that the murderer was never caught or identified. At least, if he has been, so far no authentic details of his identity have leaked out anywhere. Our contemporary, the *Two Worlds*, in an obituary notice of the late Mr. R. J. Lees, claims, however, it was due to his mediumship that the Ripper was traced, and "a long series of atrocious crimes put to an end."

This is most interesting, and we hesitate to ask—is it true? We suggest, however, if mediums can so easily trace mysterious murderers, there are plenty on hand to get on with. Isn't it marvellous how successful the spirits always have been in the past, giving winning numbers in lotteries, naming Derby winners, tracing murderers, solving all sorts of baffling mysteries, yet completely failing to do any of these things now? By the way, who was Jack the Ripper?

The rush to pay homage to St. Francis Xavier at the Church of Bom Jesus, in Goa, Portuguese India, was so great that soldiers had to level bayonets to restrain the enthusiastic pilgrims. On the first day alone, we are told in the *Universe*, 30,000 pilgrims kissed the feet of the saints. This means about twenty-five every minute for twenty-four hours. Phew! It looks suspiciously like another miracle. But, heaven be praised, the Faith is bound to carry everything before it with such a remarkable demonstration.

A film entitled *The Miracle Woman* has been banned by the London County Council. The reason is that the film depicts Evangelism as being exploited for money, and the L.C.C. will not have that on a film. Of the film, in real life, anyone who knows anything about professional evangelism knows quite well that it is a mere business, and is exploited for money. But it is quite in line with British religion to encourage the thing in practice and vigorously deny its existence in theory. On the other hand the Middlesex County Council has passed the film, so that there is a chance of seeing money-making by the Gospel being shown on one side of the road, and it being sternly suppressed on the other side.

Says a *News-Chronicle* reviewer:—

There is no reason to think that if Mithraism, for example, had prevailed, as it nearly did, there would have been less bloodshed in the world than there has been; and where Mohammedanism did prevail there was sometimes as much persecuting fanaticism. The Christians, in fact, behaved like human beings, that is, they were of their time and place.

That is the most fat-headed and nicest defence of Christianity we have seen for some time. The plea that Mohammedanism was sometimes as bad as Christianity, where persecution was concerned, is very fine. The defence is, in the bulk, that Christianity made no difference. The world behaved as it would have behaved had it never heard of Christianity. And we had always thought it was claimed that Christianity made the world so much better than it would otherwise have been!

But the world has really learned something from Christianity, and in our own time the Pagan East has learned a good deal from the Christian West. Look, for example, at the nice New Year's gift Japan has given the League of Nations! We are so familiar with the game in Europe that we know every move. First, get some treaty rights, then find that they are infringed, then send an expedition in the interests of order and civilization, and finally shoulder the *burden*—in this case it is the Yellow man's burden—by annexing a province of a country. Then any of the natives who object become brigands, or irregulars, or traitors. The West can hardly object at the East paying it the sincerest compliment of all. And when the League of Nations gets its deputation there in about a month's time it will merely have to report that the Japanese are in possession, order is restored, and everything is in order. Then the League can quietly settle down to discover whether wars in the future cannot be fought with fewer guns and smaller battleships.

The *Daily Express*, which some time ago tried a stunt to the effect that trade was booming everywhere, to be followed by another stunt that everything was going to the dogs unless a new Government were elected, then tried an economy stunt, which was altered to encourage everyone to buy as much as he could—we fancy that the threats of big advertisers to withdraw advertisements had something to do with this—last tried another stunt of a great revival of religion in Britain. But the *Church Times*, which ought to know as much of the state of religion in this country as the *Express*, takes a different view. It says:—

All England continues to keep Christmas. Religion has, for the time being, lost its hold on the majority of the people. The truths of the faith and the claims of God are forgotten or ignored. Sundays have lost their sanctity in the thoughts of the populace, and churches are almost everywhere poorly attended, compared with thirty years ago. The ideas of Lent are abolished. If it were not for the coming Bank Holidays, Easter and Whitsuntide would never be heard of by thousands of people, and it is a fact that, in the East End of London, a man in casual conversation spoke of our Lord as having been born on Good Friday.

Luckily for the stunt press the vast majority of their readers forget to-morrow what they have read to-day, so all is well—in Noddledum and Graftland.

## Fifty Years Ago.

MR WHITELEY, M.P. for Liverpool, a few days ago, took part in a pious tea-fight, and made a long speech to the other old ladies present on "Religious Education and Atheism." Those who have ever visited a missionary meeting will be able to remember nearly everything Mr. Whiteley said. But there were two points which he made out of his own head, as the nigger said of his wooden doll. First, he cited, as an instance of Republican Tyranny, the recent decree of the French Government forbidding public schoolmasters to ring the church-bell for the parish priest, and recommending all the municipalities and communes to make good any little income the schoolmasters might thus lose. There is no tyranny in this at all, for the Republic has a right to insist on maintaining the dignity of those who educate the young; and Mr. Whiteley only made it look a grievance by using the word *private* instead of public, and so deluding his ignorant audience. Secondly, he dreaded the coming attempt to admit an Atheist in the House of Commons; and he warned his countrymen that such an outrage against the majesty of God would surely provoke his "judgment." As for Mr. Bradlaugh, he sincerely pitied him; and then by way of showing his pity he went on to say that Mr. Bradlaugh's "works polluted the youthful mind," while his efforts were directed against "those domestic blessings we enjoy." Poor old Whiteley! We don't think he means wrong; he's only a soft-headed old gentleman, who would make an excellent churchwarden, but who has unfortunately become a member of Parliament and an easy dope of the young bloods of Toryism.

The "Freethinker," January 8, 1882.



TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—N. A. Stiles, £2.

F. C. MEERES (Winnipeg).—We are always pleased to send parcels of specimen copies for distribution wherever we know they will be appreciated. Pleased you find the *Freethinker* so great a mine of information.

CONCERNING our notes of last week, Mr. T. L. Lumley writes suggesting that small committees might be formed in various centres who would make it their business to take whatever steps were necessary to make the *Freethinker* better known in their locality. We should be very pleased to do whatever we can to help such efforts.

C.R.—Shall hope to see you at the dinner. Please make yourself known.

C. H. & J. MACKINSON.—Next week.

N. A. STILES.—We greatly appreciate the feeling of yourself and your husband towards this journal.

WILL Mr. C. E. Smith send his address to his sister, who is now a widow.

R. B. YEWDALE.—Thanks for suggestion. We fully recognize the need for advertising the *Freethinker*. The only objection we have is that of expense. What we can do to make the paper better known is being done. For the rest, action must wait on opportunity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

This is the last opportunity we shall have of reminding readers of the National Secular Society's Annual Dinner, which will take place on Saturday, January 16, at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras. There are few Society dinners that pass as smoothly and as comfortably as this one, and we have no doubt but that there will be the usual good company there to enjoy the evening. There are certain to be some excellent speeches, and a first rate concert. We also anticipate a good number of friends from the provinces, whom we shall be more than usually pleased to meet. There will be a reception at 6.30. The dinner will be served at 7.0 sharp. We hope everyone will make it a point to be there in good time.

Those requiring hotel accommodation over the evening should write without delay to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, stating their exact requirements. There will also be a vegetarian menu provided for those who require it, and here, again, notice is necessary in order for effective provision to be made. Any tickets that are out and which are not returned by the date mentioned thereon will be considered sold.

On Sunday, January 24, Mr. Cohen will deliver a special lecture in the Battersea Town Hall, on the "Benefits of Unbelief." We would like the assistance

of Freethinkers in the locality to do what they can towards making this meeting as largely known as possible. A good supply of slips advertising the meeting have been prepared, and all who can undertake their judicious distribution should write or call for a supply. London is a very difficult place in which to advertise a single meeting, and for this reason the help of friends is more than usually appreciated.

Newspaper obituaries of newspaper men usually contain so large a measure of "log-rolling"—that one welcomes the deserved praise of the late C. P. Scott, for so long associated with the *Manchester Guardian*. While other papers, particularly the London Press, spent so large a part of its energies, and cash, in exploiting whatever form of ignorance or prejudice prevailed, Scott never forgot that the primary function of the newspaper was to provide the public with reliable news. Under his guidance the *Guardian* became easily the first of all English newspapers, although it never achieved a fifth of the circulation of the London Yellow Press. During the war, and since the war, one turned to its columns to find informed and reliable articles on subjects which were strictly taboo in other English newspapers. He remained an editor at a time when to be an editor meant in most cases one who did exactly what he was told by the proprietor. If other leading English papers had as their head a man who, instead of acting on the principle of giving the public what it wants, insisted on giving the public what it needed, the country might not be in the state it is to-day. Naturally, the *Guardian* followed the usual line of not permitting drastic criticisms of religion, but apart from that, we readily join in the tribute paid to one of the last of the great English Editors.

Apropos of what has just been said, we note in the general press a number of complaints concerning the elevation of Mr. Clifford Allen to the peerage. During the war Mr. Allen was a conscientious objector, and one of the scribblers in the *Sunday Express*, Viscount Castlerosse, objects to the promotion (?) because he was a conscientious objector, and remarks that "the meanest poor private soldier" did more for his country than did Mr. Allen.

Now we do not wish to discuss the war, nor whether conscientious objectors ought to have objected to the war. All we wish to point out is Viscount Castlerosse's curiously, but quite *Sunday Express*-ish sense of value. To what man, save one of these Sunday scribblers, would it ever dawn that the mere fighting strength of an individual was of greater value to a nation than the conscientious conviction of any one of its citizens? The latter may be right or wrong, but its superior value can be of no question to anyone but a fool or a knave. Even a Christian might have bethought himself whether the value of the conscientious convictions of Jesus was greater or less than that of the soldier on guard at his execution. Quite apart from their rightness or wrongness, the intellectual convictions of citizens are among a nation's most valuable possessions. Thirteen years of armistice ought to have at least taught us this.

Mr. H. H. Merry writes:—

I must congratulate you on the wisdom of the gentleman who is responsible for the selection made in *Selected Heresies*. It is a completely representative selection from the writings of our editor, and should have the effect of sending one back to another reading of the books from which the selections are taken. The most useful portion of the book, is in my opinion, those citations from the *Freethinker* itself, for, for most of us, it is impossible to retrieve these in any other form. For a Christian friend I can think of no better book by which to give an idea of the scope of Freethought.

Mr. B. A. Le Maine will speak twice to-day (Sunday) in Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, Plymouth, for the local Branch N.S.S. The lecture will be held in Hall No. 1, at 3.0 and 7.0 p.m. The afternoon subject will be "What the Catholic Church Claims." And for the

evening, "Freethought in the Churches." The hall is a comfortable one, easy of access, and we hope to hear of two good meetings.

South London saints are reminded that Mr. R. H. Rosetti speaks in the New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, at 7.30 p.m. to-day (Sunday) on "The God Men of Science Believe In." The lecture is under the auspices of the South London Branch N.S.S., and the local Secretary, Mr. J. Scabert, 18 Gairloch Road, London, S.E.5, will be pleased to hear from unattached Freethinkers in the area.

The Ashington and District Branch of the N.S.S. is planning an active future, and the local Secretary, Mr. J. H. English, 7 Railway Row, North Seaton Colliery, near Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Northumberland, is anxious to get in touch with any local Freethinkers willing to help.

Leicester Freethinkers will have an opportunity of hearing Mr. A. D. McLaren, who will speak for the Leicester Secular Society to-day (Sunday) at 6.30 p.m., on "A Freethinker Looks at the World." The lecture will be given in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, and is certain to be interesting and informative.

The readers of the *Freethinker* who live in Stockport and District are asked to attend a meeting at the Central Hall, Lower Hillgate, at 7.45, on Thursday, January 14. The object of the meeting is to form a Branch of the N.S.S. in Stockport, with a view to conducting an active propaganda in the town. Those who cannot attend but would like to assist, should write Mr. G. Burgess, 98 Athens Street, Stockport.

## Criticism and the Bible.

### I.—TEXT.

FOR some time now it has been established by modern biblical criticism that the old reports which the so-called Books of Moses have handed down concerning the history and religion of the Hebrews, are not the work of a single author and, above all, not the work of that legendary personality who figures in those reports as the liberator, legislator and religious teacher of the tribes of Israel—Moses. The Books of Moses are the work of different authors whose writings were worked up by the Jewish priests into the Torah, the present five Books of Moses, only after the return from exile in Babylon, *i.e.*, in the fifth century B.C. But even those literary "sources" which serve as the basis of the Books of Moses, are not themselves original works. Their unknown authors, in composing their narratives, utilized not only oral traditions, old Hebrew folk-lore and war-songs, but, in part, also collections of songs and legends which had already been set down in writing. With the exception of a few book-titles, nothing of this legend-literature remained known in after-time. Thus, for example, one of those so-called original authorities, whom Biblical criticism has designated as a Yahwe-worshipper, or Yahwist, made quite a liberal use of the collection of war-songs of old Judah, entitled, the Book of the Wars of Yahwe, as well as of another collection of sayings, entitled, the Book of Jasher. However, not only have those oldest and original writings completely disappeared, but the later narratives, based upon those earlier accounts and which, in turn, served as sources for the composition of the Torah or Books of Moses, had ceased, when the Jewish priests (after the return from the Babylonian exile) began to collect and elaborate the old historical and religious writings. Since the time when they were first written, those "books," in the course of the inter-

vening centuries, had frequently been transcribed. And the transcribers did not pursue their work of transcription "for its own sake!" By no means did they transcribe "word for word" from the text which lay before them. Those passages which appeared to them to offend their religious views and moral conceptions, were either deleted or given a more favourable interpretation by altering the words or adding other words. They had, furthermore, no hesitation in enlarging the reports which they transcribed by means of all sorts of local variations of legends and historical traditions, and by making wholesale additions where it appeared to them necessary for the completion of their narratives.

When, later on, the priestly compilers and editors addressed themselves to their labours, they found before them a many-coloured mosaic of mutually contradictory accounts and statements, which they, as far as it appeared to serve their purpose, amalgamated in the modern Torah. A careful examination of this work shows that its compilers were animated by considerations other than those of a mere editorial character—by propagandist considerations in favour of the claims of their own religion and priestly office. They sought to extol the earlier history of the Hebrew people, and, especially that of Judah—they were themselves men of Judah—and to invest it with the halo of a glorious past. *The past was glorified in order to justify present claims.* Those priestly writers regarded it as their foremost task to purify belief. This work of purification consisted in identifying pure religion with *their* religion, in establishing their religion, that is to say, the Yahwe-cult of Judah, as the oldest religion of the entire Hebrew people; and in demonstrating that those rites and prescriptions of the Yahwe-cult which had only arisen during the past two or three hundred years, were actually the old rites which the Israelites many centuries ago had brought with them out of the wilderness, and which they had received from Yahwe himself as his holy commandments and ordinances.

From this nature of the Biblical text, it follows that mere philological word-criticism can only lead to one-sided results. This kind of criticism, which is characteristic of the advanced Protestant critics, is limited to an inquiry as to which of the so-called original authors, the individual chapters and verses of the modern Pentateuch are to be assigned; and into the question of how far the statements of the original author are to be explained from his tribal associations and from the religious movements of his time. The consequence is, that those ideas and precepts which first found their way into the Torah through the later and highly tendentious, priestly work of compilation, and which are in reality only to be explained out of the political relations of the newly-arisen kingdom of Judah, are represented as those of the old Hebrew people, who therefore must have been already monotheists, worshippers of one god, before they penetrated into Canaan. Quite apart from the very important fact that there is no parallel to be found for such an assumption in the development of other peoples, this assumption is sharply contradicted by other and most decidedly older passages in the Books of Moses, as well as in the Books of the Judges and Samuel.

There is another important point which must not be overlooked in connexion with the priestly, post-exilic compilation of the Torah. The original composition is no longer extant. It, too, was more than once transcribed. If the later transcribers went about their work with a greater appearance of piety than their predecessors, there were, nevertheless, again a number of varying compositions in circulation. Many of those were lost during the wars of the Maccabees, and were

replaced by new but not less faulty editions. For a time there were in the later Palestine actually two Torah editions, which diverged considerably from one another—a Judaic and a Samaritan Pentateuch. When, in the third century B.C., the five Books of Moses together with other Old Testament writings were translated into the Greek, a third official version was brought out—the Septuagint. In this version, also, whole parts were very incorrectly translated, and frequently passages were left out because they appeared objectionable to the scribes.

After the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) and the collapse of the kingdom of Judah, the Hebrew manuscripts were scattered throughout the world. Later on, these were again collected by the Masorites, the Judaic-Babylonian school, who by means of a careful comparison of what remained of the corrupted Hebrew texts with one another and with the Greek translations of the original texts of the Old Testament writings, as far as that was possible, attempted the work of restoration. This work was only completed in the eleventh century A.D.

The texts of the Books of Moses are therefore very much corrupted, and that is true also of most of the other books of the Old Testament. In comparing those books with what remains of the religious records of other civilized and semi-civilized peoples, the former have suffered much more in the way of mutilation than the latter. Therefore the claim that here or there in the Old Testament this or that statement stands good, has very little value for the history of religion. From the historical standpoint, only those accounts can be appraised as facts which are supported by historical documents from other quarters, or which are confirmed and corrected as a result of observations which have been made among other peoples in approximately the same stage of evolution as the people of the Old Testament.

W. CRAIK.

(To be continued.)

## The Vatican Gang in Mexico.

It is a curious phenomenon that the Government of Protestant countries stand more humbug from Catholic priests than do those of many so-called Catholic countries. More than one reason goes to the explanation of this. Latin peoples are rather more apt to carry things to a logical conclusion than we are. In the matter of religion, *e.g.*, there is really no logical standing ground between belief and agnosticism. The Nordic races with a genius for compromise halted at the halfway house of Protestantism. At the Reformation the Latin peoples were not ripe enough to go the whole way to agnosticism, and so they continued Catholic. The world, however, has gone on progressing and in Roman Catholic countries the stage is being reached where a majority of the people is quite free of the Romish superstition, and in fact are beginning to look down on it as a Stone Age cult. When these people get a majority in their Parliament they are likely to deal with the ju-ju men in strictly logical fashion.

In Roman Catholic countries there is no tradition of toleration. The Romish Church is *non-tolerant*. Its Canon Law definitely inculcates persecution of heretics and other non-Catholics. When and where Roman Catholic priests are in power non-Catholics have no rights, no toleration whatever. When the chance comes to non-Catholic Latins to take over the Government of their country they are likely to be stern and drastic—and with every excuse.

It must be remembered that in Roman Catholic countries the Catholic question is bigger and more serious than among Protestants. In the latter case, although the Roman Catholics may be noisy and cheeky, yet after all they are but a small portion of the nation. The Government can therefore stand a good deal of impudence from them without worrying overmuch. But in a Catholic country the situation is very different. A large portion of the population will be mere chattels of the priests. Most of the women, will look up to the priests as little tin Gods. Whatever personal influence the priests have is used for political purposes; and used with utter unscrupulousness. Most decidedly they do not confine themselves to purely religious matters. Their influence besides is far more than merely personal. They are the greediest people under the sun. Money and power are their great aims. They are always getting their chattels to build new Churches, etc., and to endow them. They go in for trade also. And cadging!—they are always cadging. They visit death-beds and pass the dying sinner into Heaven—at a price. The poor chattel must leave money or land to “the Church” in order to escape Hell or Purgatory. He must pay for masses in order to get deceased friends and relatives out of the same booby trap. Pay, pay, pay; money ever money. And think of this going on for centuries. In the result the Church becomes an appalling vested interest. In Mexico, President Calles has stated that of the wealth of the Mexicans sixty per cent was owned by the Church. Think what power that meant. And also remember all that wealth had to pay a dividend to Rome. Something more than a mere nuisance that, eh? To Mexico, and to all Roman countries Rome has been a vampire sucking the financial life blood. No wonder the people are beginning to take drastic measures. And no wonder, when we think of those dividends, the Pope squeals. But our sympathy is with the people and not the traitor priests and their robber chief in Rome.

Obviously a priesthood that is so wealthy, and has chattels that will vote like automatons, is a great power in a democratic country. And if the priests' activities are as much political as religious, if all their objects are absolutely selfish, if they have no patriotism, if in all they do they act under orders from a foreigner, and are engaged in remitting as much money as possible to that foreigner (without giving any value whatever), if they are in a conspiracy against the sovereignty of the State of which they are ostensibly citizens—then the only safe way is to reduce them to impotence.

President Calles and the Mexican Government have tackled the Romish Church as Mexican patriots. When and where that Church does not identify itself with Mexican patriotism, they have decided it must be brought to heel. We had a precisely similar problem in the Middle Ages, and finally in the time of Henry the Eighth we solved it by throwing the Pope out neck and crop. So long as the Pope claims to be Infallible, and God's Vice-Regent on earth, superior to all States and Governments, the absolute arbiter not only of religious but of secular affairs, with a claim to interfere in everything and to dispose of all things (and the Papacy does make such claims) there is only one logical way of dealing with such a person and organization, and that is as an enemy.

If you do not know that the Papacy has got a swelled head to such a diseased extent read the following quotation:—

“That Law (Canon Law), amongst other things, declares that the Pope is the Lord of all kings and all peoples; that the Church can use force in carrying out her discipline; that her clergy are exempt from the

civil tribunals of the land, that all laws contrary to Canon Law are void; that all education must be under the control of the Bishops; that the Pope can depose all heretical sovereigns (e.g., King George); that he can release from oaths and prisons; that the priests have the power to direct the people in their political duties; and that heresy is to be punished with death . . . that the constitutions of princes are not superior to ecclesiastical constitutions but *subordinate*" (e.g., the King and Parliament of England are subordinate to the Roman Catholic Church) "that the Pope as Vicar of Christ has power of judging and disposing of all the temporal goods of all Christians" (which means that the Pope can "lift" anything and have it taken to Rome.)

Pope Leo XIII. announced "Every Roman Catholic must render as perfect submission and obedience of will to the Church and the Holy Pontiff as to God himself!" The swelled-head might as well have declared all men are mere chattels of the Church and be done with it.

For three hundred years our forefathers did not consider Roman Catholics fit for citizen rights. Then we gave them freedom without taking adequate safeguards, though, of course, the Roman Catholics gave plenty of promises. They very quickly abused our tolerance. The Pope decreed the re-establishment of the hierarchy in England according to the Canon Law. Cardinal Manning expressed the matter thus: "The Royal Supremacy has perished, and the supremacy of the Vicar of Christ re-enters England full of life . . . the right of deposing kings is inherent in the supreme sovereignty which the Popes receive over all nations.

And, mind you, when the Cardinal used those words the Roman Catholics were only about one per cent of the population of England. The *Tablet*, the chief Roman Catholic journal, said: "Neither in England nor in Ireland will the Roman Catholics obey the law of Parliament . . . as between the Parliament law and Canon Law, one is the law of God, the other is no law at all. It is not a law but a lie. The law of God, that is, the Popes' command, will be, or rather has been, and is being carried into effect; the parliamentary law we will spit on and trample under foot." Another Roman Catholic paper said, "Rather than our loyalty to the apostolic see be in the least degree tarnished let 10,000 kings and queens perish." All this in a Protestant country! What are they likely to be in a nominally Roman Catholic country?

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be concluded.)

## The Book Shop.

*Aphrodite in Aulis*, the last novel written by Mr. George Moore, is a story in a Greek setting. I read it carefully from the first page to the last. He has taken one of the Platonic virtues, "Beauty," and, in a long narrative, carefully woven a theme that may please many of his admirers, but it will be caviare to the multitude. A striking phrase, describing Egyptian figures sitting with their hands on their knees is set down in the course of a dialogue—"Attitudes," he said, "that represent eternity." Mr. Moore, who takes art criticism in his stride pleasantly and easily, emphasizes arts dependence on labour in a speech by a father to his son. Sophocles and Phidias move in the pages of this swan song by a writer who will be remembered with gratitude for his independence of thought and free expression of opinion with the classic restraint of an artist. I like his other novels better than *Aphrodite in Aulis*, but Mr. Moore has

been wise in his time. He has not an immense number of novels to his name, but they are all significant.

A friend of mine, whose letters are a delight to receive inquiries about the fourth dimension. When I ventured, in my youth, to ask Mr. Bertrand Russell to test the truth of three dimensions by walking in front of a moving tram-car, he replied that in philosophy there were more than a hundred. That may be, and life is much too short to haggle about it, but there are individuals who believe that time is a fourth dimension. In browsing through the late Robert Bridges' Poetical Works I came across the following, which is given for your delight, but not guaranteed to lift any fog from the issue:—

"Truest-hearted of early friends, that Eton  
Long since gave to me,—Ah! 'tis all a life-time,—  
With my faithfully festive auspication  
Of Christmas merriment, this idle item.

Plato truly believ'd his archetypal  
Ideas to possess the fourth dimensions:  
For since our solid is triple, but always  
Its shade only double, solids as *unbrae*  
Must lack equally one dimension also.  
Could Plato have avoided or denied it?

So Saint Paul, when in argument opposing  
To our earthly bodies, bodies celestial,  
Meant just those pretty Greek aforesaid abstracts  
Of four Platonical divine dimensions.

If this be not a holy consolation  
More than plum-pudding and a turkey roasted,  
Whereto you but address a third dimension,  
Try it, pray, as a pill to aid digestion:  
I can't find anything better to send you."

The fourth dimensionists must not be confused with a very select body of thinkers who believe that it is possible to make a left-handed glove fit the right hand perfectly.

A small booklet entitled *A Poet's Pocketful*, by S. Fisher, has found its way to a bookreader's table, and although slight in number of pages, it is good reading. The author takes very simple subjects and adorns them. Although there is no excess of light, the writer has many a good phrase, arresting in its form, and bearing the mark of sound craftsmanship. One verse, in answer to "Is there a Life?" is as follows:—

"O hungry souls, we picture what we crave,  
Lending a form to shapeless destiny,  
Giving the glow of thought to dreamless night;  
Yet, ever groping blindly, to the grave.  
We come, and pass into its mystery,  
Knowing not whether it be dark or bright."

The first line, which bears the stamp of excellence, might have been the high road to a clear day if the fog of mystery was not made to intrude. The price of the booklet is one shilling, and it bears the imprimatur of the Friary Press, Friar Lane, Nottingham.

Some time ago, I praised *The Wind on the Heath*, a Gipsy Anthology, chosen by the late Dr. John Sampson. The ashes of the famous Romany scholar have been scattered on Foel Goch Mountain Llangwn, Denbighshire, and the ceremony was attended by Mr. Augustus John, and many gypsies from the various tribes in Wales. Glancing again at the volume, published by Chatto and Windus, an extract from Robert Bridges made a particular appeal:—

"But now will the Orientals make Westward pilgrimage, like the Magi of old, and flock to gape at our unsightly novelties, factories, machines, and scientific tricks—they have seen the electric light in the West, and come to worship."

Western life is in great danger of being bossed by machinery, and other things that are chiefly encumbrances to the human race. In this respect it is encouraging to note that there are the records of such men as Robert Bridges and Dr. John Sampson, made with wide-open eyes. Their testimony is the opposite of whole-hearted approval of many things that mesmerise the multitude, and they herald the beginning of a revulsion of the intensified crucifixion of man. This minority move-

ment has begun; it may be summarized in the preference of quality instead of quantity. The Hiking movement, all vested interests apart, may even produce an attitude of mind in which leisure and space will say no to many of the gee-gaws of society that are of little concern to human life.

C-DE-B.

### What is Reason?

Is reason a sense, a series of senses, or a faculty? Also, what further is reason? Whatever it is, it is not common; not in a reasonable degree.

My Oxford dictionary says it is the faculty by which we arrive at conclusions; and there is, indeed, some sense to that. But what I want to know is whether reason is a sense or a faculty; a faculty being a personally developed special sort of power as distinguished from a sense, such as sight—which is as impersonal as the accidental colour of your skin.

The reason that I want to know which of these reason is, is so that it may be known whether reality can be known through reason; or whether reality can only be known through the ordinary five senses. If reason is a sense, we can know reality thereby; if only a faculty, possessed in widely differing degrees by the few who possess it at all, or in any degree worthy of recognition, reality cannot be known to the consciousness through its mediumship.

And in the latter case I am going to be quite dejected; because there are a number of existing and operating phenomena that I am familiarly aware of that I cannot see, feel, taste, hear nor smell. I cannot detect by any one of those five, nor by all of them, the reality of thought, for example. Yet I am dejectedly aware that thought is a reality, that it exists, that it is not nothing, and, worst of all, that it is the only thing of any real importance to us whatever. Queer, as to that: A fat and complaisant man sits enjoying, apparently without anything dignifiable as thought, a fat repast. Yet, how would he know that he is enjoying it without such thought (such as it is) as tells him so? And the quality of his thought measures the quantity of his reason; which latter, in his case, conspicuously appears to be in the nature of a "sense" (or, more likely, of all five senses.)

What I seem to be arriving at here is that specially developed faculties are actually special senses, senses that everybody else has not got. Mother is a painter of pictures; she has a sense of colour that father is dismayed to find he does not possess. Also, she is a musician, and has a sense of musical harmony, a sense of rhythm, a sense of melody (and the *sensibilities* thereof), that her brother, an accountant, *wishes* he had, and has not. However, mother has no sense of figures; and, according to her, "figures lie!"—especially with regard to out-of-date cheque-book stubs.

If personal faculties are special senses, they are, after all, senses; and equal, as such, to consideration with the ordinary five common faculties ordinarily referred to as *the* five senses. Accordingly, it may be concluded; reason is a sense, a developed sense, a sense developed in differing degrees according to the inherited mental faculties, and to the experience of its possessors. Which, gratifyingly, lifts me out of the dejection of supposing that I could not know reality excepting sensually—as the fat man knows his chops.

#### REALITY VIA REASON.

The five common senses do not discover to our consciousness anything definite about the bases of material structure. We know of the atom through the mathematics of physics, and of its positive and negative contents through still higher and similar methods of conclusion. The limits of mathematical skill take us to the etheric content, both positive and negative, of the protonic and electronic bases of the atom; and for searching beyond these material foundations, for concluding their source, we are obliged to resort to the use of the highest of our developed senses—to our reason, such as it is or may individually be within us.

Such as my own faculty happens accidentally to be, it

gropes out the reality beyond the bases of materiality according to this simple process; simple because a more complex reasoning machine would, of course, turn out conclusions in a far more complex and involved fashion. Positivity and negativity are necessarily opposites in characteristic. When making up material structure they never touch. Coming together, or too near one another, they *clash* and repel, never mixing, always separate.

Opposites; come to think of it, all things go in opposites. And, jumping to the other end of my groping, to such ends of everything that the uttermost of existence can be, I find the opposites of somethingness and nothingness, of allness surrounded by its opposite, nothingness—within which latter condition may be wheeling other universes, other "all possibilities," similar necessarily to our own, whirling forever into such magnificences as they can attain to. And other "religion" I cannot entertain, with such poor reason as has accumulated in my one little round head, than that to assist so far as I can toward furthering such objective of increasing magnificence is my highest objective power, and the only excuse I have for existence in this totality of existence at all.

Ignoring, then, the nothingness oppositional quality, what is the reality of the everlasting somethingness condition? Itself must also be constructed of basic opposites; and these, my reason finds, are special positivity and negativity—"Gods," incidentally, who are howling for no worship; other than, perhaps, understanding of them, recognition of them, that we may the better assist toward their most worthy showing in the material stage wherein we are the highest developed feature upon this point of their mutually operating existence.

And if this is not the best guess that my reason can entertain as to the uttermost of universal reality, why will not some better reasoner aid me thereto? May I further ask here, in conclusion, that some educated friends of knowledge may have the kindness to do so—for, as misfortune go, the precarious conditions of this life prevented me from so much as finishing the common schools, in "richest America."

CHAS. A. SEVERANCE.

### Correspondence.

#### TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER." FREETHOUGHT AND SOCIALISM.

SIR,— "Not in accordance with the facts" is Mr. H. G. Holt's comment on my letter dealing with his resignation from the Wembley Branch of the N.S.S. after joining the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Then why does he not state the true facts in his letter of reply?

He contents himself with calling my version "a gross misconstruction," and says that the suggestion that he has submitted to dictation at the hands of the S.P.G.B. is rubbish. Possibly he may fail to see that this is not argument.

Then he attacks the Branch because they never asked him to appear before them and give an explanation, but accepted their Secretary's intimation that he had resigned. As if his contributions to our discussions at previous meetings had not shown members quite plainly that he looked upon Freethought as something quite subsidiary to propagating his particular form of Socialism!

He thinks it would have been better if I had accepted his offer to set forth his reasons in writing, but I haven't refused to do so, nor can I. He gave me the names of certain N.S.S. speakers who, he said, carried on anti-Socialist propaganda. I called that his "evidence." He told me that Freethinking employers were just as opposed to the emancipation of the workers as religious ones. Obviously, these considerations did not affect him when he joined the N.S.S. three months previously, and real Freethinkers will fail to see in them any adequate reason for resigning. Mr. Holt does not deny that his resignation arises out of his having joined the S.P.G.B. Like the Roman Catholic, however, who

does everything the priest wants him to do, Mr. Holt indignantly denies that he has submitted to dictation.

One other statement in his letter calls for comment. He says he was the "prime mover" in the formation of the Branch. I give him full credit for writing to me last August saying he would like to join a local Branch. But he did not approach the Executive of the N.S.S., he did not advertise the preliminary meeting in the *Freethinker* and local Press, he did not engage and pay for the room where that preliminary meeting was held, he did not preside at the first meeting, and he did not introduce more than a small proportion of our members. He was the first to approach me, but his calling himself the "prime mover" may have given some of your readers a wrong impression of the part he played.

P. VICTOR MORRIS.

## Obituary.

WILLIAM STILES.

At Manor Park Cemetery, London, E., the remains of William Stiles were interred on Wednesday, December 30. Death followed an operation for internal ulcers. Seventy-seven years of age at death, he was a life-long Freethinker, and admirer of the late Charles Bradlaugh, and G. W. Foote, also of the present President of the N.S.S. Fearless in his advocacy of Freethought, his views on religion were soon known to all who came in contact with him. Besides the relatives, many friends gathered round the grave, where a Secular Service was read by R. H. Rosetti.

## Rationalist Press Association (Glasgow District)

Grand Hall, Central Halls, 25 Bath Street,  
Sunday, January 17, at 3 p.m.

Mr. ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI, Translator of Nietzsche's Works,  
and Author of "Who is to be Master of the World?"  
"Lysistrata," etc.

Subject:—"CHRISTIANITY AND WOMEN."  
Violinist—Senor Manuel Luna.

Questions and Discussion. Silver Collection.

## ACADEMY CINEMA, Oxford Street

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolde Road, North End Road): 7.30, Messrs. F. Day and C. Tuson.

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

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

INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. John Murphy—"Albert Schweitzer—An Apostle of Pity."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Lord Snell, C.B.E.—"The United States of India."

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, Hall No. 5, near Clapham North Station, Underground): 7.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"The God Men of Science Believe In."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): Monday, January 11, at 8.0, Mr. R. F. Turner will open a discussion on "Emergent Materialism."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): Tuesday, January 12, at 7.0, Debate—"Hell: An Irrational and Immoral Doctrine." *Affir.*: A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A.; *Neg.*: Fr. Hugh Pope, O.P. (Blackfriars, Oxford).

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, five minutes from the Brecknock): 7.20, Mr. J. W. Newton will open a Debate on "Knowledge v. Understanding." Mr. A. Rose in the chair.

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Zealley's Cafe, 100 High Road, Wembley): 7.30, Annual General Meeting.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, entrance Lorn Street): 7.0, Otto Baier (Temple of Humanity, Liverpool)—"A Modern's 'I Believe . . .'"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (City Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, J. Pickford, Esq.—"Science of Sex." Room): 6.30, Mr. A. Russell—"Life and Religion." Questions and discussion. Silver collection.

HATTON (Co-operative Guild)—Tuesday, January 12, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Birth of the Soul."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Buildings, 41 Islington, Liverpool, entrance Christian Street): 7.0, Mr. Jack Clayton (Burnley)—"Are We Civilized?" Current *Freethinkers* and other literature on sale.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"A Freethinker Looks at the World."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester): 3.0, Mr. Geo. Whitehead—"What Rights have Animals?"; 6.30, "Bernard Shaw's 'Man and Superman.'" "

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, Hall No. 1): 3.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"What the Catholic Church Claims"; 7.0, "Freethought in the Churches."

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, 5 Forbes Place): 7.30, Mr. John McMillan—"Science or Religion?"

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