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Views and Opinions.

Humbug in High Places.

By a majority of eighteen the House of Commons on April 13—the majority was thirty less than on the last occasion—gave its assent to the second reading of the Sunday Performances Bill. For my own part I find nothing to rejoice over, and should have liked to have seen the Bill contemptuously thrown out. As I said last week, it is a bad Bill framed by men without the courage that comes from high conviction; by men who think more of their seats than their souls, and who in their haste not to offend an organized minority of bigots are ready to place new fetters upon the liberty of the people. Only 455 members voted, not because the abstainers were without opinions on the matter, but, in the main, because they were terrified of offending the organized chapel vote. It is said that nearly half a million postcards, already printed, were sent out protesting against the Bill, and of this number about 200,000 were delivered at the House of Commons. Sir Thomas Inskip, Attorney-General, and President of the Lord's Day Observance Society, said in defence of this postcard campaign, that it was proper constituents should let their representatives know their opinions on the matter. But Sir Thomas Inskip can hardly be so ignorant of the situation not to know that large numbers of these cards are signed by people who do not live in the constituencies from which they pretend to have written, and in other cases they are signed by names that appear to have been taken from a printed list. Several letters of protest against this dishonest method of intimidating members appeared in the press on the occasion of the Bill produced about a year ago; but exposure of a lie told in the interest of religion never prevented it reviving again when needed. Those who are skilled in parliamentary matters say the Bill is as good as dead. I hope their prophecy will not be falsified by events. What was needed was a Bill that would repeal the old Sunday law respecting entertainments and meetings. What is given is a Bill that gives Sabbatarianism and religious bigotry a new legal sanction.

What the Act Means.

Let me again summarize what this Bill actually proposes:—

(1) For the first time this Bill places all entertainments, musical and otherwise, and debates, whether there is a charge for admission or not, under licence. Under the existing law there is no bar to doing any of these things so long as a charge is not made for admission. There are scores of concerts run on Sunday, and which have been outside the operations of a Sunday Observance Act because they have had admission free, with a charge for reserved seats. In practice this has meant that a hall holding about two or three thousand people might admit, say, about fifty, and then charge for the remainder as reserved seat-holders. If this Bill passes every one of these concerts must obtain a licence.

(2) Debates on Sunday have also been legal, again provided there is no charge for admission. Under the Bill a Council must agree that there is a substantial demand for it before a licence would be granted. Last week I cited a letter from the Home Secretary, in which he said that the Bill would not apply to meetings such as are held by the National Secular Society. In reply, I said that this was nonsense, and Sir Herbert Samuel's assurance was not worth the paper it was written on. The printed Bill and the discussion in the House makes it quite clear that I was right. "Debate" means in this Bill what it meant in the 1780 Act. Indeed it was because of this Act that all over the country proprietors of halls have constantly refused to let their halls be used for Sunday meetings unless they were free. I have been threatened with summonses more than once when a charge was made. The Bill offers an interference with freedom of speech that no Government of recent times has ever dared to attempt.

(3) These licences are to be issued by local Councils who must first advertise for opposition to the proposed licence, and must convince themselves that there is a substantial demand for the meeting or entertainment. How are they going to do this? Sir Thomas Inskip, in the course of a speech which was the very incarnation of religious mediocrity, rightly laughed at this as an absurdity. He asked, how were Councils going to determine this? If they wished to have a place open on Sunday they would be convinced there was a demand for it. If they did not wish it they would feel the other way about. How many Councils in the country would feel there was a substantial demand for a lecture on Freethought, or some advanced social theory, or on birth control? Particularly when every chapel would be agitating against it. Sir Thomas Inskip rightly called this "a mere face-saving provision." Mr. Russell, who moved the rejection of the Bill, said there was no evidence of any demand for Sunday entertainments. No evidence, when, in both London and the provinces, wherever places are opened for the people they are crowded as

they are seldom crowded during the week. Other opponents of the Bill took the same position, and one wonders what amount of evidence would men of that stamp require to prove that there existed a demand for anything that threatened their miserable Sabbatarianism? The Bill would inspire local bigotry to renewed activity instead of curbing its influence.

(4) For the first time the Bill lays it down that a man pursuing a legitimate occupation, and his usual occupation, shall reap no financial advantage from his labours. His books must be open to inspection, he must only open under such conditions as the Council choose to impose, and any profit that may accrue must go to some selected charity. The parson may reap profit from his preaching on Sunday, the Council may reap profit from its Sunday trams, the Church organist may receive profit from his playing, the Sunday papers may get profit from their columns of variegated rubbish, the ship-owner may get profit from his ships that are working on Sunday, and which are regularly cleared out of port by Saturday so that this profit may not be lost, all sorts of people may get profit on Sunday from all kinds of things—the provider of an entertainment alone must take on this labour of love. Taxation of profits is not an unknown thing, but in English law, for the first time, we have provision made for the confiscation of profits made from a legitimate occupation. This Bill appears to have taken every possible bad practice in connexion with Sunday and given them a perfect legal standing.

(5) The Bill sanctions the iniquitous principle of legislation based upon sectarian religious considerations. There is no other issue raised by the Bill but a religious one. The talk about a seven day's working week is so much rubbish, an example of that elaborate hypocrisy for which our House of Commons has such an unenviable reputation. The Saturday half-holiday was not gained by religion, the decrease in the hours of labour, or the improvement in wages and the conditions of labour had nothing to do with religion. And on the continent, where Sunday may be spent in a reasonable manner, there have been corresponding improvements in the conditions of labour. The concessions made by the Bill were made because of religion. Otherwise there would have been no need to say that profit made on Sunday from entertainments could not be permitted, and to allow a number of County Councillors to say whether entertainments, other than the Church and the public house should be open on Sunday.

The arguments against the Bill were entirely religious. The Attorney-General in a speech almost wholly foolish (it sounded like a lawyer's speech delivered to please a stupid client), said he was not one who believed in the demand for a brighter Sunday. He also said that if we let go of the "Lord's Day," we should "lose one of the few glimpses vouchsafed to us of the Heavenly City." England on Sunday! It is impossible. The Attorney-General simply cannot be so silly as he sounds. Mr. Gordon Macdonald declared that our morality was the highest in the world, and this was largely due to the English Sunday. Major Owen informed the House that Britain is a Christian country, and "we as members of this House are the guardians and trustees of that religion," Sir John Haslam said that "this country more than any other country has been anchored to God's word," and begged the House not to destroy any of its teachings, and quoted "Whosoever shall offend in one point of the law and keep the rest is guilty of breaking the whole," quite oblivious of the fact that the Bible Sabbath is Saturday and not Sunday. Mr. Magnay warned the House that writers to-day were flouting "the Churches and their conventions," and

that Moses was "the greatest statesman the world would ever see," and was so because "of the ten commandments which he had from God." Mr. Rhys Davies assured the House that "at the very beginning of time Sunday was a day of rest, not for religious purposes, but for the culture and edification of the people." So the debate went on from stupidity to stupidity, an amazing corruscation of mediocrities airing the most primitive crudities from the vantage ground of a legislative chamber. It is a sober truth that the only gleams of common-sense came from the supporters of the Bill, and they ought to have joined the others in throwing out a measure which is an outrage on justice, and the embodiment of principles that are altogether out of date.

* * *

A Word of Council.

The latest news concerning the Bill is that it may be dropped and a new one introduced. The Government lacks the courage and principle to bring in a straightforward measure to repeal the 1780 Act and deal with the question as it should be dealt with; and there is no hope of passing this Parson's Protection Bill without seriously offending the well-organized Sabbatarians. On the other hand, the Sabbatarians realize that it is useless seeking to perpetuate the 1780 Act as it stands. So it is suggested that a new Bill may be introduced which will carry into law all the bad features of the present Bill, but for London only. If any other town or city requires Sunday entertainment it will have to proceed by way of a private member's Bill. The Government is thus helping to make the very narrowest and most ignorant form of Christian fanaticism a burning issue in all provincial municipal life. And this is 1932!

And here again I venture to proffer a word of counsel to promoters of concerts and other Sunday entertainments. In spite of the temporary Bill introduced by the Government, the 1780 Act remains in force, with the single exception that Councils in such places where Sunday entertainments have been in existence may continue to licence them. But in all places entertainments and meetings to which no charge for admission is made remain perfectly legal. And there is no charge for admission if a limited number are permitted to enter free. The rest will pay for a reserved seat. My advice therefore to all cinema proprietors and others is that they should work along these lines. Let them boldly open their houses and they will be safe from legal attack. They can then reduce the Act to such an absurdity that its repeal becomes a matter of course. The Cinema Associations can act as a body, and with public feeling behind them, need have no fear as to their licences for the remainder of the week. Any attempt to penalize them would be checked for two reasons. First, because public opinion would be behind them; second, because there is always an appeal to a higher court if a licence is withdrawn on insufficient grounds. And they would be acting within their strict legal rights. But it is high time that even Cinema proprietors should show some little courage and common sense in the matter. And the iniquitous principle of a compulsory payment of profits to designated charities would disappear. Blackmail in other directions is strictly forbidden by law.

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The Future.

There are two things prophesied in connexion with the future of the Bill. One is that a compromise may be effected which will enable London to issue licences

under the Act, but not places outside the Metropolitan area. The other is that the construction of the Committee, which will be in accordance with the voting on the second reading will bring matters to a standstill. Things will then remain as they are, with the exception that the present temporary measure, remaining in force till October, will only permit Sunday performances to go in places where they have been taking place. The compromise will mean that any place outside London where it is thought desirable to have concerts or debates, or entertainments on Sunday will have to get a Bill through Parliament to permit them to do so. Which means they will not have them. The other, it is said involves chaos, because the old Sunday Act remains in force. But in that case it is possible for entertainments to go on, with admission free and reserved seats, and if entertainers and other take advantage of the opportunity that will render the 1780 a dead letter.

For my own part, and for the reasons already given, I hope the compromise will not be effected, and that the opponents of the Bill will be strong enough to kill the Bill. It is not likely that people will submit to being again deprived of all kinds of entertainments. There is a limit to what even English people will submit to in the name of religion. Where entertainments have been the rule they will continue, and even such places as the Lancashire factory towns, where life is dull and drab enough at the best of times, and is perfectly horrifying on Sunday, will want what London has. Laws may be repealed by Parliament; they may also be repealed by people ignoring them. And if those who are interested take their courage in both hands they can break down this absurd Sunday law as they have broken down other things.

Advocates of a real day of rest must demand the abolition of these religious laws. Regulations concerning hours of labour, and the conduct of entertainments may be made which will safely guard against any real evils, but Parliament should have done with protecting the ignorant prejudices of such men as the Attorney-General, and Mr. Magnay and Major Owen. And there should be no distinction between one class of entertainments and another on Sunday. If one kind is permitted, so should be another. If there is a legitimate objection to a particular form of entertainment, the disability should run over the whole week. It is not the business of Parliament—at least, it should not be its business—to protect the interests of parsons who are afraid of the competition of rival "shows," or to guard against some primitive religious prejudice being offended.

And for Freethinkers there is again the lesson of how much work lies before us in the shape of humanizing Christians and rationalizing life. I would advise all who think that our work is done to spend sixpence on a copy of Hansard containing a report of the discussion on the second reading of the Sunday Bill. It may be a revelation to them of the amount of crude superstition cherished by many of those who have the making of the laws under which we all have to live. It is quite evident, as is shown by this discussion on the Sunday question that the amount of crude superstition abroad is still sufficiently strong to make itself felt in the moulding of our laws and in the shaping of our lives. We have advanced very far in the past couple of centuries, but it may reasonably be questioned whether we have advanced far enough to be reasonably secure against a reversion to a lower type of social life. CHAPMAN COHEN.

Be not diverted from your duty by any idle reflections the silly world may make upon you, for their censures are not in your power, and consequently should not be any part of your concern.—*Epictetus*.

Keeping Hell Alight.

Within yourselves deliverance must be sought,
Each man his prison makes."—*Edwin Arnold*.
"If all religions but one are certainly wrong, what is the chance of one being certainly right?"—*G. W. Foote*.
"Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind."—*Emerson*.

CHRISTIANS are like the Bourbons; they learn nothing and forget nothing. Professing unselfishness, they have an extraordinary passion for greedy monopoly with regard to their own superstition. To associate with them is like dining with a man who has all the pudding and two spoons. In the late war they did their best to transform the battle-fields into mission-fields, and, in the post-war era they still sigh, like Alexander the Great, for more worlds to conquer. Bible societies distribute sufficient copies of the Christian Scriptures to build a garden city, the British and Foreign Bible Society advertising openly a distribution of millions of copies. Tracts by the hundred tons are circulated. Hundreds of pious laymen and women hand out tea and tracts to the unemployed. Quotations from their Bible are displayed (at the customary advertising rates) side by side with theatre notices in the trams, buses, and railways.

Nor is this all. With the object of winning the general public the clerical pill has been well covered with sugar. Orchestras, soloists, tame Labour Members of Parliament, returned missionaries, converted burglars and policemen, are used as lures for this religion of the Man of Sorrows. There is, however, a fly in the ointment. Despite all these gay blandishments, Mr. and Mrs. Everyman do not display any great anxiety for their eternal welfare. Even films of the life of Christ and the adventures in Africa of Livingstone have failed to penetrate the cheerful stoicism of the man in the street, and churches still display a beggarly array of empty benches.

Finding that their camouflage of cheerfulness has produced but barren results, Christians have sought to mend matters by resorting to the leverage of fear. To this end tracts have been published, all bearing a strong family likeness. Here is a specimen, which bears the arresting title, "What is there after Death?" and it preaches a hell of literal fire. A sample passage will show how far present-day religion is in harmony with civilization and humanism:—

I wonder if you die unsaved whether you will see your believing wife after death? She, afar off, and happy with her Saviour; and you with the curse of unforgiven sin upon you in hell. And some of your children are in heaven, and others are on their way. And when you die your Christless death, will you for a moment see afar off your little ones with the light of heaven on their faces, and the peace of God upon their heads? Oh! these eternal separations! Families broken up for all eternity. Some in light and some in darkness.

In a booklet, bearing the imprint of Mowbray & Co., and entitled, *The Blessed Sacrament, Drawn from the Writings of the Saints*, the old barbaric views are again presented with frank realism. This publication, it should be borne in mind, is used for young people who are preparing for their first communion, and these savage ideas are forced upon them at the most impressionable time of their lives. This is the kind of thing the clergy still teach privately, while, in public, they bamboozle the "intellectuals" by a pretended retreat—

When they who have led lives of pleasure, of covetousness, or self-will sin, when such, I say, come to be upon their death-beds, they may perhaps feel that awful, impossible wish that they could pass into nothing; for to be nothing were better than to be in the strong grip of Satan, and the intolerable heats of hell—the living in fire, the feeding on fire, the

breathing fire, the being clothed in fire, the thirsting for cool water where all is fire, above, beneath, on this side, on that side, a far-stretching country of burning fire.

These publications, which are selected at random from a large collection, raises once more the important question, not only of the value of the alleged spiritual and moral culture of the Christian religion, but also of the conduct of Christians themselves. These tracts voice most emphatically very different ideas to those apologetic and invertebrate views put forward by artful defenders of Christianity in their contests with Freethinkers. In controversy it is the fashion for the champions of Orthodoxy to explain, smilingly, that in attacking the barbaric doctrine of hell-fire the "intellectuals" are but flogging a dead horse. That horse, however, has a Biblical habit of "resurrection," and that there is plenty of kick left in that ancient animal is demonstrated by the literature issued for the benefit of the ordinary citizen, and for the moral instruction of the unsuspecting young.

Freethinkers who imagine that one of the oldest and most barbarous religious dogmas is losing its hold on the national mind because the priests resort to polite camouflage will do well to remember that fear is the priest's most potent weapon. These damnable dogmas are still taught throughout the whole of Christendom, but the protests of the humanitarians are rigorously boycotted. Wherever the Christian clergy retain their power they still preach a hell of literal fire. In the United States of America leather-lunged evangelists flame the fires of hell over a continent. Roman Catholics, the world over, have never damped one solitary spark of their fiery damnation. The Greek Church also believes in the roasting of sinners. The Church of England, particularly the High Churchmen, who form sixty per cent of that body, hold fast to brimstone, and the Salvation Army, which caters for the least-educated of the population, includes hell in its business trade-mark, "Blood and Fire." How small, mean, and contemptible such a medieval creed as Christianity appears in the fuller light of the twentieth century. It is unworthy of the citizens of a civilized country, but it is very worthy of the followers of an Eastern superstition, who, outraging the spirit of the age still pray for rain, and for individual members of a Royal Family, bless regimental flags, and christen battleships. Christians are still far too much like the inhabitants of the Cannibal Islands, and still require conversion to real civilization and culture.

MIMNERMUS.

"I Believe."

LET us hope that on some happy day in the not-too-distant future credulity will come to be generally recognized as a vice. At present it seems to be regarded as little less than a virtue. It is sedulously encouraged by that supposed source of all virtues, religion; and it is lavishly pandered to by that self-styled source of correct opinion, the daily press. Furthermore, it suffers no check at the hands of our educationists, who have not yet arrived at any scheme for the instruction of the young in the proper use of speech and language, apart from mere grammar and pronunciation.

There are few people who realize that the word "belief" should have two distinct meanings. And by "should have" I mean that, although there are actually two distinct meanings to the word, careless

usage has combined them into a bastard unity which is the cause of much false thinking and illogical argument. A simple analysis will show this to be the case. When we say, "I believe," we either mean, "I am certain of the truth of," as in the sentence, "I believe every word he says"; or we mean "I think it may or may not be true that," as in the sentence, "I believe Mr. Jones is forty years old." Consequently a belief can be either something about whose truth we are certain, or else something about whose truth we are not certain. The blend of these two meanings has resulted in the word being generally used in the bastard sense of "something whose truth we have the right to assert without feeling called upon to prove."

So prevalent is this usage that we often find persons who are otherwise logical in their reasoning, declaring that it is useless to ask for evidence of one's beliefs—as though it were a matter of no importance that we should be able to explain, even to ourselves, why we believe anything. In this way the dogmatist feels conveniently free to assert his credulities without feeling any necessity to provide himself or others with verifiable evidence in support of them. In this way, too, those who are afraid or too lazy to investigate the reasons for their beliefs are supplied with a convenient escape from the painful process of thinking for themselves. Yet, did these people but realize it, they are merely brewing trouble for themselves. For if there is one vice which has caused more needless misery to mankind than any other it is precisely this vice of credulity, of glibly asserting and dogmatically insisting that things are true on no other grounds than that we think or have been told they are so.

Everyone believes all sorts of things. But few people take the trouble to find out whether their beliefs are supported by good or bad evidence. Yet a little quiet thought on their part would soon show them that beliefs can be separated into two distinct categories; those which we can prove the truth of, and those whose truth we cannot prove. And this matter of proof is by no means the profoundly difficult thing which philosophers and priests often pretend it to be. The difficulty does not lie, as a rule, in the proof so much as in the unwillingness of many to admit frankly that they do not know. People have a childish dislike of being thought ignorant and, like many an old-fashioned schoolmaster, they get annoyed if doubt is cast upon their knowledge. So they fall back upon dogmatic assertion. And if that fails to convince, they revert to the popular excuse that it is impossible to prove any beliefs whatever. In other words, being unwilling to learn or to investigate for themselves, they find convenient shelter in credulity.

Fortunately for humanity in the average, proof is the one thing it insists upon having when it deals with matters of fact. In matters of opinion it is, unfortunately, less insistent. There would be little harm in this if most persons were capable of clearly distinguishing in their own minds between matters of fact and matters of opinion—or, in other words, between beliefs for which conclusive proof can be produced and beliefs for which they have little or no evidence other than hearsay. But it is just this lack of critical ability which accounts for credulity. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the clergy the world over foster this credulous spirit, since the authority and revenues of religion depend upon an acceptance of assertions without proof and beliefs unsupported by verifiable evidence.

A further source of mental confusion arises from the use of the verb "to believe," in conjunction with the adverb "in." Literally "to believe in" means "to have confidence in," or, more simply, "to

trust"; as, for example, in the sentence, "I believe in Dr. Smith." By extension it has also come to mean, "to have confidence in the efficacy of," as in the sentences, "I believe in gymnastics," or "I believe in mascots." As a consequence of this usage we get the familiar religious equation: Belief = Faith. Yet the meanings of these two words should be as different as chalk is from cheese. For, whereas a belief may or may not depend on verifiable evidence, faith or trust must always depend on experience which has been personally verified. It is only in the realm of religious belief that a human being is expected to have faith or trust in something without any proof of its trustworthiness. This is borne out by the frequent assertion that salvation is impossible or that prayer to God is without efficacy unless we begin by believing in him. Less equivocally stated it amounts to this: that faith (or belief) is not faith (or belief) unless it is blind—another form of credulity.

Priests and pastors are fond of encouraging uncritical faith by romancing about the trust that children have in their parents. That is how we should trust God, they say. The assumption is that children begin life with an absolutely blind faith in the trustworthiness of their parents, and that they accept the latter's ruling on all matters without question, even though there may be no semblance of fairness or logicity about the ruling. Now there is no doubt that if this were a fact, there would be a strong case in favour of the kind of faith we are expected to exercise towards God. Unfortunately for the romantic clergy the facts are utterly different. No one denies that children are more easily hoodwinked than some adults. But this is on account of their ignorance, not of their faith in parents as parents. The fact is that children do not begin with an unquestioning faith in their parents, or anyone else—they begin with perfectly open minds. And the amount of faith they grow up to have depends wholly upon the degree of trustworthiness which their parents (or others) have shown. It is just as easy for a child to grow up in distrust as in trust of its parents. The kind of faith which the clergy extol, therefore, is not childlike faith at all—it is a brand of their own, invented not for themselves, but for the use of their sheep-like flocks. Credulity is its name; but, of course, "faith" or "belief" are ever so much more euphemistic.

Lastly we come to the phrase "to believe in," used as an abbreviation for the longer phrase, "to believe in the existence of." Thus, "I believe in God," or "I believe in Santa Claus" means, "I think that God (or Santa Claus) exists." If no more than this were implied by such a statement, we might take it to mean, "I think it may or may not be true that God (or Santa Claus) exists." But this is seldom the real implication when this particular use of the verb "to believe" is made. What generally lies at the back of a person's mind when he says, "I believe in God" is some sort of chaotic jumble of the popular bastard meaning of "belief" with the religious meaning of "faith." Thus we arrive at that superlatively credulous, yet essentially religious, attitude of mind which is adopted by the faithful towards the first two words of the Christian creed. "I believe" comes to mean, "I am utterly convinced of the truth of something for which I positively decline to produce any verifiable evidence; moreover I refuse to admit the right of anyone to call my belief in question, since the one conclusive proof of its truth is the fact that I have no doubt about it myself." Here we have all the elements which go to distinguish religious belief from any other kind. In a nutshell they are—dogmatism and credulity.

C. S. FRASER.

Time.

Now that Einstein is reputed to have taken up Spiritualism, it may be permitted to speculate on what he has added to general knowledge as is understood by the man in the street, and apart from his contributions to the special Sciences of Mathematics and Astronomy. If the newspaper stories from America are true even this great man has brought himself within the range of criticism by any of us.

Generally after a lot of abstruse reasoning Einstein proves, what after all is commonsense, that Time is intimately linked up with matter and force. Generally the concept Time is used as if Time were an entity in itself. We talk glibly of past, present and future as if such things existed, when really such terms only represent our ideas of the varying relationship of things in general.

One law of Nature, which is of universal application, is the law of Conservation of Energy: in plain terms anything which exists and is never destroyed. I cannot but think that the difficulty which is found in following Einstein in his speculations is due to a misuse of the word time. Certainly certain Astronomers in this country have indulged in a sort of dog-fight of metaphysical speculations based on a totally improper use of the word time. Taking the law of the Conservation of Energy as true, time does not mean anything but our way of adjusting or expressing ideas of things in general. We are assured that the weight of matter in the universe can be calculated, together with the total amount of energy. If this be true these figures are constant and unalterable. Energy may be changed into matter and vice-versa, but the total will remain the same. In this special case, taking the universe as a whole and neglecting for a moment the internal changes taking place, time ceases to exist. All we can say of the total, is that this combination exists, we cannot say that it was, or will be, only that it is. It is difficult to put in words what I mean. Perhaps an instance will explain better what I am trying to get at. We are assured, for instance, that a Time will come when the universe has run down, the implication being that there was a time when the universe was built up, or in plain words, a special creation.

But if the law of the Conservation of Energy is true (and all our science is dependent on the validity of this) when the universe has "run down," apart from certain re-adjustments of forces, the total universe remains as always. The composition of forces which we know as the Universe, and which composition of forces we know only by our sense impressions, is the same yesterday, to-day and to-morrow, and taken as a whole is unalterable. The use of the word Time with regard to the totality of the universe is unnecessary. On this argument eternity is simply is. But by a misuse of the word Time as used by us usually to indicate the varying relationship of known forces we are led to believe that the universe will cease to exist. And then perhaps some time it will be re-created. What could exist between the two universes beats me, the old one as we know it and the new one as it will be created. When all the matter in the universe has been annihilated and all energy has been dissipated we are left with two ideas, space and time. Perhaps the Astronomers do not quite go as far as this, but they certainly imply a beginning and an ending to things as they are, and the implication is that Abstract Time exists in certain minds as an entity divorced from things as we find them.

Einstein's original statement of things was that we could not describe an event (taking an event to mean any thing as we know it, and which is the only way things exist to us—as we know them) was to say, when, as well as where. We cannot describe things correctly, leaving the time element out of consideration. Science is knowledge, and Einstein's Theory is generally held to be a better description of things as they are than any previous description. This addition to our knowledge of things should simplify things for us, that is give us a better idea of things. But to use a Theory which should simplify our ideas of causality to prove, as Professor Eddington tries, that causality does not hold is surely the most ridiculous idea that has ever emanated from a

human brain. The thing explains itself now. Einstein's adventure with the Spiritualist is an equivalent to Eddington discourses on the spiritual, and no doubt are similar psychological phenomena, and will no doubt be clear as our knowledge of such mental phenomena gets more exact.

My own idea is that just as living organisms struggle to live, so certain minds cannot adjust themselves to the idea of being blotted out, and develop a form of megalomania which extends the desire to live which we observe in all living organisms, to a desire to continue existence on a higher plane. So here we are at Spiritualism again, and I expect the basis of all religions.

Anyhow, the plain man would do well to remember that when a "Scientist" gets off his subject his views on things in general are worth just as any ones and no more. Exact knowledge based on observation is knowledge, in exact speculation on things as we would wish them to be is just so much more rubbish, and should be regarded as such. Our ideas of time are clouded by an early religious education which impresses us with the idea that time is only referable to this life, and after that comes eternity. The child asks how long is an hour, and an hour is a long time to a hungry child. The Priest answers, "Don't worry about your stomach my little lad, an hour is only a short step to eternal bliss. when hungry stomachs will be no more." As the child grows up this aphorism is extended to don't worry about a lifetime, it is only a similar step, and this idea of times lasts with many of us to the great pleasure and profit of the Church. The Materialist Mother says, "Are you hungry my dear, well here is a biscuit to go on with," and funnily enough the hour does not seem so long. This idea also lasts and the average man's ideas of time are bounded by time for bed, time to eat and time to go to Church, until it is time to go to his funeral. Whether he can be said to "live" during this period is open to question.

W.L.E.

Is Fear Beneficial?

SINCE Sir Harry Lauder reached the top of his fame and success as a comedian, he has added to his activities that of the homely philosopher and preacher, and finds his pulpit in several weekly journals. No doubt the Presbyterian ministry welcome this music-hall celebrity as a valuable ally, because his loyalty to the prevailing Scottish Calvinism, as one sprung from humble and obscure surroundings, is something in the nature of a "set off" to the indifference and growing antagonism of so many working class people in Scotland to the Christian tradition.

In the *Sunday Post* of March 27, Sir Harry discourses on the subject: "We've A' Something We're Feared O'." However his article may be regarded as a journalistic performance, a number of his comments show that he regards fear as something to be subdued—as a malign force to be fought against and not yielded to. But, in religion, fear necessarily must have a place; for the simple reason that religion cannot continue to exist without it. The Bible enjoins "the faithful" to "fear God and honour the King." In former times man as husband, father or magistrate used this text as his authority to rule as sub-God and sub-King. The patriarchal system of family life became firmly established in Europe, woman was a mere chattel and children in minority were regarded as possessing no individuality or liberty of self-expression except in so far as this was in consonance with the edicts of the patriarchal authority—copied and enlarged upon from the Holy Bible.

This conception of life, as it will not fit in with modern ideas, is one of the chief causes of debate and dissension in the Christian Churches themselves. In the old days the mass of the people feared more things and persons than they do in these days, and they feared them more intensely. Ignorance is the mother of fear. The medieval Church always took care to

see that courageous lovers of liberty and knowledge were soon stamped out; but their message was still preserved by a small minority, who taught that the greater part of the people's fears were unfounded, unnecessary and positively harmful and productive of evil, and ultimately by their oft-defeated but invincible efforts there appeared that engine of the devil—the Printing Press. This was the first great blow at the priestly authority; it furnished opportunities for examining the origins of ecclesiasticism; and it took away several causes of that abject and slavish fear which made the ecclesiastical and patriarchal systems of the middle ages possible.

Sir Harry Lauder, in his article, is considering various causes and effects of fear in the individual alone. But, of course, one recognizes that fear, like courage, is communicable. Fear is a mental disease or defect. In Victorian times the damnable policy of punishment by methods of fear was frequently employed by pious parents. As the parents stood in fear of bigger bogeys, they put their offspring, when they were angry with them—justifiably or not—in fear of themselves or other smaller bogeys. When a child of ability rebelled and perhaps ran away, the average respectable opinion to the extent of 99 per cent decided without enquiry in favour of the parent. This was the herd instinct which told its members that singularity and originality were diabolical agencies.

Sir Harry does not touch upon the Calvinistic methods of punishment to any extent, though it is refreshing to find him for once casting aside sentimentality in his citation of the opinion of modern doctors and in reprobating the action of parents who punish a child by, for example, locking it in a darkened room; or threatening it with "the polis." People with parental incapacity resort frequently to insane methods of punishment. But the causes and roots of fear have often to be looked for and digged for far deeper down than Sir Harry evidently imagines. He thinks a cheerful spirit is "a grand thing for chasing your fears away." But one knows by observation and experience that an outer cheerfulness is no proof of an inner and calm intrepidity. In any event there is no call to manufacture or invent new causes of fear. There are plenty of these already awaiting eradication. Perhaps we have not found the means of eradicating or banishing them all; but we are moving on with the good work. Fear, the child of ignorance and misconception always flourishes best in the soil of a bad heredity or a bad environment. I remember reading about a wise Scottish journalist—a successful editor and politician in the best sense, who had risen from very humble beginnings; who embraced an opportunity of removing from the mind of his little boy the fear of policemen (stupidly inoculated by a servant no doubt) by making him present a rose to a policeman who was on duty outside the house, and afterwards give the policeman sandwiches for lunch. The result was that the boy was soon chatting in a friendly way with the officer, and when he went off duty the father told his son as simply as he could what purpose the police served and what their duties were. Does not Macaulay tell us, as illustrating the power of Warren Hastings in India, that Hindu mothers would threaten their fretful children by saying they would bring the Sahib Hastings to them?

Fear can in no circumstances be beneficial. It is something to be killed—not merely scotched. It is a lurking menace to progress. It paralyses the efforts of the pioneers. Just because at the core of religion there is Fear, so it is the task of Freethinkers to burn together both husk and core!

IGNOTUS.

Acid Drops.

To the *Evening News* of April 15, Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson contributes an article on "Religion in the House of Commons." If the sub-editor who handled the article had not been as ill-informed as the writer it would have undergone drastic alteration, even if the fact of a man being so ignorant on easily ascertained facts had not sent the article back. Here are two blunders right off the reel, all within the compass of about twenty lines. These two statements are (1) Bradlaugh had stood up in a hall in the Midlands with a watch open in his hand and had given God sixty seconds in which to kill him. At the end of that time "the packed audience watched him return the time-piece to his pocket with a chuckle. (2) "By the same token he refused to take the oath, and insisted upon affirmation instead. Now Bradlaugh never did take out his watch and challenge God to strike him dead. That was one of the pious lies emanating from men of the same beliefs as Commander Locker-Lampson. Bradlaugh never refused to take the oath. It was the House of Commons which refused either to let him take the oath or affirm. Here are two statements, each of which is untrue. Of course a member of Parliament is not expected to know anything in particular, and in matters where a defence of religion is concerned he may say pretty much what he pleases. Still, it is a pity that the Birmingham M.P. did not ask someone better informed than himself about these things.

In the light of Commander Locker-Lampson's reliability one need pay very little attention to his statement that the House of Commons is more religious now than ever it was. He says Lord Balfour went to Church. Exactly, but Balfour's belief in orthodox religion was never of a robust character. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's religion is also vouched for. And as we have vouched for this ourselves—ever since he has been Prime Minister—we need not seriously dispute it. But Commander Locker-Lampson's only evidence is that in the Highlands the Prime Minister can be seen "stealing off to one of those kirks to which the kilted shepherd brings his dogs." We can hardly imagine Mr. Macdonald "stealing" away while there was a photographer in the neighbourhood, but we believe he does go to Church. But surely not even Commander Locker-Lampson can take this as absolute proof that a man believes in the Church he attends—particularly when he is a prominent politician with a liking for photographers. Can Commander Locker-Lampson be innocent enough to assume that every public man who goes to Church does so because he believes in the religion preached therein?

This is the way the *Daily Express* exhibits its unshaken consequence in its readers. It is taken from one of its leaderettes—journalese for telling unintelligent people what they ought to think they are thinking. Sir Herbert Samuel had said that an increase in certain kinds of crime was largely due to unemployment and the demoralization following the war. So, says the *Express*, we offer him our explanation. "The failure to catch the criminal." There is the *Express* philosophy of crime in a nutshell. There are no social or other causes for crime, it just happens. The war has nothing to do with it, lack of proper employment for young men has nothing to do with it. Social conditions have nothing to do with it. It just happens. All you have to do is to catch the criminal. "Catch 'em and whack 'em." That is all there is in the problem of crime! And the Beaverbrook press aims at controlling English politics.

The Dean of Exeter (Dr. Matthews), being invited to preach at the annual assembly of the Devon Congregationalists, accepted the invitation. This "arrangement," hitherto unknown in the history of Congregationalism, enabled the Dean to say a word in season to the dis-senters on the subject of—worship! It is the particular

characteristic of this denomination to concentrate on preaching. Its members describe themselves as "sitting under" the minster, but the Dean seems to have thought him a proper person to sit upon. The Church, he said, "existed for many purposes, but it existed above all for one thing, the worship of Almighty God." The world, it seems, "has largely lost the habit of worship, and is rapidly losing the understanding of what worship means." So far as "the world" is concerned it is the exact opposite that is taking place, it *does* understand what worship means, a costly waste of time and effort. And so little is worship valued by those who still for some reason attend places of "worship," that they have to provide other "attractions." One thing the Dean said was wise, if not complimentary to his hearers, namely, that what they needed was "to discover that they were really human beings."

Christians seem to be "getting it in the neck" from the clergy these days. Canon S. L. Ollard strives to stir up "reverence and obedience to Authority," and to that end advocates "fasting communion." The poor Canon is so hard put to it to get the faithful to go without their breakfasts of a Sunday or Saints Day that he actually has to set before them the example of—George IV! "He was not a good man," said the Canon, but, "on the rare occasions when he received Holy Communion, he received it fasting!" 1837 seems a long time ago to have to go back to find an example of this pious practice in high quarters.

We observe that the Attorney-General has been asked if he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation in order that similar provisions to those contained in the Judicial Proceedings (Regulations of Reports) Act 1925, as applying to divorce cases, shall apply to the proceedings of Consistory Courts. Sir John Haslam, who asked this question, might have held it up until a certain case, now *sub judice* had ended, but taking advantage of Parliamentary privilege, he chose to ignore that circumstance. The answer to the question was in the negative, no doubt rightly so. We are so anxious to be fair to the clergy that we must point out, not only the inopportunity of this question, but also that it implies that the proceedings of Consistory Courts are usually and inevitably concerned with matters not fit for publication. Surely that is not the case.

At the invitation of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, the Rev. Dr. Scott Lidgett is to occupy the pulpit at the Abbey on the first Sunday in May. We have no doubt that Dr. Lidgett, whose academical, literary and administrative distinctions are innumerable, will give no offence in what he may say on this occasion. He is a master of profound and rotund obscurity and, whatever may be his private opinion about persons who will regard his presence as an outrage, and himself as a schismatic interloper, it will not appear. He has himself said (in his *Reminiscences*) that the "external comprehensiveness" of the Church of England is "precarious," and only hides "grave antagonisms of doctrine, principle and temper." Not to be outdone in politeness the *Church Times* affirms that Anglican truck with Nonconformists is "an hypocrisy, a sham and a snare"! But under the soporiferous influence of a prosy and prolix preacher even Christians may have as little disposition to controversy as Dr. Lidgett has to see the funny side of a situation.

Some useful information on the teaching of religion in State-aided schools is being circulated by the Secular Education League. It is not generally recognized that the Church Schools, 11,169 in number, with 1,831,957 scholars, and which are the only elementary schools in 7,218 areas, are mainly under clerical control, and, with the exception of the cost of the buildings and their maintenance, are supported by Public Funds. Many are in a deplorable condition. The process, now going

on, of taking over non-provided schools by the State, is the subject around which such education controversy as there is at present mainly centres. The Churches demand that there shall still be denominational teaching, and, at the same time, that the whole cost of these Church Schools should be borne by the State. The rapacity of clericalism was never better illustrated, and until the State is absolutely neutral in matters of religion—not only in the schools but throughout—it is hard to see how it can be restrained or prevented.

The present position of the Church of England, is, says the *Church Times*, "politically dangerous, doctrinally illogical, and practically subversive of the moral authority of religion. The Church, which speaks in the Holy Name of God, but allows His message to be censored by Presbyterians from the Clyde, and Parsees from the Ganges, does not impress the general public." There is, however, no doubt, in the opinion of our pious contemporary, that Parliament will not give the Church what it wants, namely, freedom from State control, and all the cash and privilege that attaches to the connexion. It therefore advocates "piecemeal" methods. The Church must "initiate a process of gradual but ruthless penetration." What it will not face is a straight fight on the issue of its anomalous position as the only State established religion in the British Commonwealth of nations. "The idea of a single glorious victory must be abandoned." This is only another way of saying that what cannot be had by honest means may be got by a careful exploitation of the opportunism of politicians, and the smuggling through of a series of apparently trifling and non-controversial instalments of self-government. If we had any genuine Radicals in British politics to-day, such a course would be as hopeless as the "glorious victory" aforesaid. The only thing in which we agree with the *Church Times* is in its estimate of politicians. As a famous man among them once said, in a moment of candour, "it is ours, whether in Office or in Opposition, to safeguard the interests of our friends," and, he might have added, "our own" interests.

Mr. Charles B. Cochran, apropos of some discussion on the production of *The Miracle*, observes that "the Theatre as such is not concerned with creeds, although it will no more wish to offend by running counter to any one of them than it will have any interest in instilling any of them by propaganda." Why, if this is the case, should Mr. Cochran have gone to "a great deal of trouble to consult at the rehearsals the opinion of clerics of different churches?" Is there any reason why "the Theatre should repay the debt it owes to religion out of which it originally sprang"? The truth is that while "miracle plays" sprang out of the Christian religion—many of them, by the way, would never pass the Censor now-a-days—the classic dramas, alike of antiquity and of later times, did not. Shakespeare saw mankind struggling with fate, and said:—

"As flies to wanton boys are we to gods,
They kill us for their sport."

He was no Christian. "The religious strife of his time passed by him like the scuffling of kites and crows," to quote G. W. Foote. Mr. Cochran would not have been drawn into doubtful assertions about the drama and religion if the *News-Chronicle* had not set one of its star writers to beat up a little more propaganda for Christianity.

Some of the evidence given in support of the truth of Spiritualism in the *Morris v. Daily Mail* case offers fine proof in support of spirit intercourse. Lady Doyle was impressed by the fact that some spirit told her about two years ago there would be trouble between China and Japan. No exact date was, of course given. But if Lady Doyle had read newspapers any time since the Russo-Chinese War she would come across the same opinion hundreds of times. Sir Oliver Lodge gravely informed the court his son told him that men who "came over" straight from the war and asked for whisky—got it.

Then they lost all desire for it. This does not say much for the quality of the whisky dispensed in the spirit world. Presumably, if any spirit asked for a copy of the *Freethinker* that also would be supplied. That would prove there is some little sense left in the spirit world. We have read some hundreds of these spirit communications and have never yet discovered anything but the most appalling stupidity such as the most terrible collection of commonplaces that even the average parson would be ashamed to preach them.

One piece of Sir Oliver's evidence is worth recording. Replying to Mr. Birket he said that "Power's" sermons were good as sermons go. They were as good as many sermons he had heard. That is excellent in its way, but if after being "translated" one can only develop the intelligence of the average sermon, it hardly seems worth the trouble of living on.

Apropos of our recent "Views and Opinions" dealing with witch-craft in West Africa, one of our readers sends us a newspaper recording an interview with Mr. W. H. Paynter, of Gallington, Cornwall. Mr. Paynter appears to be an authority on witchcraft, and has just been given by the Cornish Gorsedd (College of Bards) the title of "Searcher out of witchcraft." Mr. Paynter does not appear to have searched for witchcraft, he has it thrust upon him. He says that by almost every post he receives letters from men and women who say that they are victims of witchcraft and asking his advice on the matter. A Kentish woman writes telling him of an evil spirit who had cast a spell on her family, leading to loss of property and other misfortunes. Another writes for instruction in preparing "Dragon's blood" to gain the love of a man in a good position. A Cornish woman tells him that she has been bewitched for many years, and asks for help. Mr. Paynter says he gets letters from all parts of the British Isles asking for help. Every form of superstition is represented in these letters, and they are all irrefutable evidence how very Christian large numbers of people still are, despite the advances made. The serious thing is that it is this type of mind, more or less modified, which our glorious Government proposes placing in a position that shall enable them to say how more civilized people shall spend their Sundays.

The secret of Mr. James Douglas' religiosity is out. "As a boy," he tells us, "I was intended for the Church," and he had the choice of being either a Methodist parson, or a Presbyterian minister or an Episcopalian clergyman. Faced with such a dazzling choice, he rebelled. The Thirty-Nine articles unsettled his young mind—one would never believe it—and he was nearly bamboozled—again this is difficult to believe—by "an extraordinary charlatan who conducted orgies of faith-healing revivalism." The path of a would-be Christian is indeed hard.

Fifty Years Ago.

If I were a young man endowed with literary powers, and about to begin my career, I should adopt as the work of my life *The Diffusion of Doubt*, for doubt dissipates superstition, and softens the rancour of religious life. Without doubt there can be no tolerance, and the history of tolerance is the history of doubt. The scepticism spread by Voltaire humanized the dogmas of the Roman Church; and we ourselves are passing through a silent, gradual, but momentous doubting revolution. What is it that has made the clergymen of all denominations in these later days so temperate in their views, so considerate for the opinions of others? It is doubt arising from discoveries in science, and from numberless works in which religious topics have been treated with freedom of spirit.

The "Freethinker," April 30, 1882.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. G. GREEN (Dulwich).—Thanks. Your memory is right; but exemption under the Act mentioned is conditional on no charge for admission or profit being made.

F. MUGGLESTON (Leicester).—Next week.

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

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

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

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

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.

We are less than three weeks from the N.S.S. Annual Conference at Manchester on Whit-Sunday. The business meetings will be held at the Victoria Hotel, Deansgate, morning and afternoon. There will be an excursion on Whit-Monday. We hope that many Freethinkers will take this opportunity for social meeting and useful exchange of views. The General Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, will be glad to have early notice from intending visitors and members as to their requirements in regard to hotel accommodation, etc.

The Sunderland Branch N.S.S. formed in November last concludes its first season's syllabus to-day (Sunday) with a lecture by Mr. J. T. Brighton. A course of Sunday lectures, including five debates, has been held. Audiences have gradually increased. The Branch has a good secretary and committee, but there is plenty of room for more members. Mr. P. Bradford, 58 Norman Street, Hendon, Sunderland, will be pleased to receive applications for membership, and offers of help.

The fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Manchester Branch was held in the Engineers Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, on April 9. The President, Mr. R. Macqueen, took the chair at the opening, but on retiring was succeeded by Mr. Collins. Reports were presented and accepted. The following Officers were elected: President, Mr. Collins; Secretary, Mr. Atkinson, 40 Montford Street, Howard Street, Salford; Literature Secretary, Executive Committee, Social Committee and Auditor. The accounts revealed a deficit which would be cleared by the receipt of unpaid subscriptions. Will members in arrears kindly note and remit to the Secretary as early as possible. The rules were revised and the new rules will be circulated. Members kindly note the date of the next meeting is Saturday, April 30, at 3 p.m., in the Engineers Hall.

The new Branch of the N.S.S. at Birkenhead has had an exciting and busy season. Local hostility reached the usual Christian level, with the result that Freethinkers in the district have been stirred to keen activity. In Messrs. Standfast and Porter, the Branch has two very energetic workers, as President and Secretary respectively. Supported by an active committee much useful work has been accomplished with slender financial resources. Plans for future work are being made.

The Fifth Annual Meeting of the Liverpool Branch was held on Sunday, April 3, at Transport Buildings, seventy per cent of the members being present. The President reported on the season's results, and referred to the excellent work of the past year, during which over ninety outdoor and twenty-five indoor meetings had been arranged, including a successful Annual Conference. He called attention to some trouble at one of the open-air pitches, and a slight hitch in connexion with the Picton Hall, as instances of the urgent need for increasing efforts in the coming year. The financial statement was presented. There is a good stock of literature, and it is hoped that the debt will soon be cleared. One gratifying feature of this report was that literature sales had amounted to over £37. The officers and committee elected for 1932-33 were as follows: President, Mr. J. V. Shortt; Vice-Presidents, Mrs. M. A. Stafford, Mr. C. J. Harrison, Mr. A. Jackson, Mr. W. McKelvie; Committee, Mrs. Little, Mrs. Ready, Mrs. Shortt, Mr. Little, Mr. McKelvie, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Robinson; Secretary, Mr. S. R. A. Ready, 39 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool. Mr. Murphy and Mr. Owen were elected auditors. A code of standing orders and some alterations in the general rules were passed. Provisional arrangements were made for the Summer activities, which will include an out-door campaign and frequent rambles.

At a Flectwood Council by-election a minister, supported by the Sunday Observance Society, fought for a seat in opposition to Sunday games. He polled 504 votes against 2,583 for the advocates of Sunday freedom. But, and this is less satisfactory, only 29.8 of the electors took the trouble to vote. That is the danger of "local option."

We wish Mr. G. Hughes every success. He is a young man who has been away from England and has returned to what he hoped was a free country, to discover that "Free England" is a thing of the past. Mr. Hughes has run into so many restrictions that he has risen in revolt. He was aware that these regulations, generally summarized under the name of Dora existed, but, as he says, living on the Continent he did not feel them. Now he has returned home, and has formed a society which aims at removing the restriction under which we live, and among these to legalize sweepstakes, to open all places of amusement on Sunday, to relax the licensing laws, etc. His Society is called The Liberty League and the membership is half a crown a year.

We hope that Mr. Hughes will make his Society a real Liberty League. But it will be worth very little unless he makes it comprehensive enough to arouse revolt against the officialdom that is active all over the country, and which asserts itself sometimes by methods created by the law, sometimes by bluffing those who do not know what their legal rights are. What is needed is an organization that will challenge officialdom whenever it attacks the legitimate liberty of the individual in speech, publication, or action. The things against which Mr. Hughes specially revolts are symptoms of a general disease that we should attack.

The only real safeguard against tyranny is the creation of a type of mind to which it is detestable and intolerable, and which can never rest comfortably in its presence.—Chapman Cohen.

An Appeal to Authority.

(Concluded from page 252.)

HERE is a selection of scientific thinkers, a selection based on modern publications, who all endorse Atheism: Prof. G. E. Moore (Cambridge),¹ Prof. C. D. Broad (Cambridge),² Earl Russell³ (formerly of Cambridge), the late Bernard Bosanquet,⁴ E. B. Bax,⁵ the late Prof. McTaggart,⁶ Prof. De W. Parker (U.S.A.),⁷ Prof. J. Dewey (U.S.A.),⁸ B. Croce⁹ (Italy), Prof. G. Santayana (U.S.A.),¹⁰ Prof. L. Hogben (London Un.),¹¹ Prof. J. S. Huxley,¹² and the majority of the Russian academicians, not to mention lay writers like McCabe.

So much for the Atheism in present-day thought. Here are some who discredit the theory of personal survival (and again the list might be extended): Prof. C. D. Broad, Prof. Hickson,¹³ Prof. S. Alexander (M'ter Un.),¹⁴ Earl Russell, the physiologist Prof. Sir A. V. Hill, the biologist Prof. L. Hogben, the anatomist Sir Arthur Keith,¹⁵ B. Bosanquet, B. Croce, Prof. G. Gentile (Italy),¹⁶ Prof. R. H. Dotterer¹⁷ (U.S.A.), Prof. J. Dewey, Prof. G. Santayana, Dr. R. A. Millikan,¹⁸ Schultz (Germany),¹⁹ Prof. A. N. Whitehead,²⁰ Prof. J. S. Huxley, Prof. Sir L. Hill,²¹ the biologist Sir E. R. Lankester, the logician Prof. Moore, McCabe, etc.

The same might be instanced in other directions, e.g., as regards Determinism. Einstein says that if he thought determinism was untrue he would give up science altogether. Of the three chief scientists who are to-day endeavouring to champion Indeterminacy (Jeans, Eddington and McDougal), one, McDougal, says,²² "science must hold fast to causation," even if it be not the deterministic type; another, Eddington, remarks,²³ "I have been unable to form a satisfactory conception of any kind of law or causal sequence which shall be other than deterministic." In short, they cancel one another out, while the third, Jeans, is forced to admit over and over again,²⁴ that "the probability is that where causation is not yet discerned, future investigation will reveal it."

The fact which arises from these few references, is that *there is a strong body of thought holding Atheism and Determinism, and rejecting the doctrine of survival, and consequently the entire Christian scheme, not one tenth of which is ever brought to the notice of the average layman, though it should be if he is to form any proportionate estimate of the trend of modern thought, and any proportionate estimate of the relations between religion, and science and philosophy.*

This, then, is our second point, and we now see how the notion that present-day thought is compatible with religion begins to fail when examined. How, then, did it first commend itself to journalists? In other words, what *are* the sops thrown to religion, and here comes our third point; namely, the present belief in God is characterized chiefly by the fact that it is not the Christian God that is believed in. The present belief in Immortality is characterized chiefly

by the fact that it is not the Christian form of that belief.

First, what sort of a God is believed in nowadays? We find that God is Nature (Millikan), Substratum, or Ground (Seth, Carr) Principle of Concretion (Whitehead), Spencerian Unknowable (Hill), square root of minus one (Jeans), Noumenon (Eddington), Laws (Ziehen), Substance (Einstein), Force "X" (Low), the universe (Maeterlinck), Good Will (Dotterer), "persons united by love" (Hobhouse), impersonal mind (Gentile), the Infinite (Vis. Haldane), Directive Activity (L. Morgan), "whatever we worship" (Alexander), etc., etc.

It is the custom of our press to present such men to us as Christians, as though all you had to do to merit that title was to use the term "God," irrespective of what is denoted. "Christianity rests, not on a deification of metaphysical terms, but on a set of doctrines peculiar to the Christian religion. From that point of view Eddington and Jeans are no more Christians than they are Mohammedans or Hindus" (C. Cohen).

Again, Sir Oliver Lodge is constantly being held up to us. Yet in the *Hibbert Journal* he has advocated an entire re-interpretation of the Christian scheme, surrendering such vital doctrines as the Virgin Birth, and the Fall and Atonement, and it would be difficult to identify his God with him of the Bible. Such men cannot truly be called Christians. And just as present day Theism is not Christian Theism, similarly the contemporary belief in survival is not based on the Christian scheme. In the case of Fawcett, McTaggart and Bosanquet, for example, it is based on metaphysical considerations, and we need not extend the examples.

CONCLUSIONS.

Let us now see, retrospectively, what happens to the proposition that science and religion are now becoming compatible. First, the idea has arisen from the overtures made to religion by individual scientists, and we have to discriminate between the observed facts of science and the private opinions of scientists. If some of the latter are favourable to religion it does not follow that science, as a structure of impersonal knowledge, is pro-religious. On the contrary, nothing can negative the fact that the established knowledge of science does conflict with the religious interpretation of the world on the question of a flat earth, on the relations between the sun and the earth, on questions of medicine and the causes of disease, on meteorology, on the origin of man and the divinity of Jesus, while the entire Christian foundation of the Fall and Redemption is shattered by the facts of zoology, biology, geology and anthropology. This much was admitted quite recently by Gen. Smuts in his Presidential Address (Brit. Ass., 1931). "The story of creation, so intimate to the groundwork of most religions," he said, "has thus come to be re-written. And man has had to come down from his privileged position . . . and take his place in the universe as part of the order of nature."

In the second place, we find the press making its own selection of thinkers; they need neither be the most representative, or the most eminent. And when it puts a question, it so frames it as to leave little or no room for straightforward disbelief (e.g., the recent *Daily Herald* symposium; "The God I Believe in"). One of the best examples of question-framing that has ever come to my notice is the substance of a recent Benn publication, *The Religion of Scientists*, a questionnaire to 200 F.R.S.'s.

And thirdly, when we come to examine the views of these authorities who are used to prop up a dying faith, we find that many of them are definitely anti-

¹ *Ethics*, and articles. ² See Articles in "Mind," etc. ³ *Why I Am Not a Christian*, etc. ⁴ *Meeting of Extremes*, etc. ⁵ *Reminiscences and Reflections*. ⁶ *Nature of Existence*. ⁷ *Self and Nature*. ⁸ Articles in "Forum," etc. ⁹ *Conduct of Life*; articles. ¹⁰ *Realms of Being*. ¹¹ *Nature of Living Matter*. ¹² *Science, Religion and Human Nature*. ¹³ *Rationalist Annual*; articles. ¹⁴ *Space, Time and Deity*. ¹⁵ Books on *Darwinism* (R.P.A.). ¹⁶ *Theory of Mind as Pure Act*. ¹⁷ *Philosophy by Way of the Sciences*. ¹⁸ *Science and the New Civilization*. ¹⁹ *Machine Theory of Life*. ²⁰ *Science and Human Nature*. ²¹ *Philosophy of a Biologist*. ²² *Homie Psychology*. ²³ *Nature of the Physical World*. ²⁴ *Mysterious Universe*.

Christian. They say, "let us dispense with the theological God, and let us prepare a definition of God that may meet with better support." Or, "let us cease to regard Jesus as a Divine Saviour, and look on him as our dear brother." And so forth.

The present way of scepticism is the most potent in history. It is not confined to scientists and philosophers. To an extraordinary extent it has made its way into our literature; rampant in everyday life, it touches the Churches themselves.

Meanwhile, the general public remain oblivious of the fact that their own implied scepticism is reflected in the seats of high learning. It would not be too much to say that many of the eminent men mentioned in this article, to judge from their own writings, are eligible for membership of the National Secular Society.

G. H. TAYLOR.

Thomas Paine.

(Continued from page 246.)

TRUE to his principles Paine shouldered his musket and joined the ill-equipped, partially-trained army valiantly struggling and fighting with more reverses than successes under Washington. In November, 1776, that army had retreated to Newark after the defeat at Fort Lee. It was thoroughly disheartened, half-clothed, short of supplies of every sort. It contained one soldier, however, who wielded a weapon much mightier than his musket. When his military labours for the day had ended, Paine was busily engaged in writing his first *Crisis*. This was read to the troops, by the order of their general, a few weeks later, on the eve of their attack on Trenton, which had been fixed for Christmas Day, an hour before dawn. It is only possible to quote the opening words of this momentous document which inspired the Americans with fresh determination, courage and hope, resulting in the capture of Trenton and the trained Hessian troops which were defending the place. The opening words became a sort of battle-cry:

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

By the time the War of Independence ended in 1783, Paine had published thirteen more papers with the same title, with the signature "Common Sense," all of which had great effect and were of immense service to the cause. He was appointed by Congress as Secretary in the department of Foreign Affairs, but was deprived of this office through what was considered a breach of confidence. France came to the assistance of the colonists early in the struggle; not openly at first, as she was not at war with England then. A large sum of money for America had been sanctioned by the French Court under cover of a mercantile transaction, the two persons entrusted to carry out the transaction being Beaumarchais for France and Silas Deane for America. Paine had good reasons to know that collusion between these two had resulted in a substantial diminution of the sum originally provided, and when a controversy arose about it he made the facts publicly known. This seemed likely to cause great embarrassment to France, the only ally of the States, and Paine had to go. Perhaps, in any case he was hardly the kind of man successfully to fill the post of a subordinate official.

Finding himself practically penniless at the end of the War, he appealed to Washington to use his influence with the States to make him some recompense for his services. His pamphlet *Common Sense*, had been sold at 2s. per copy and 120,000 copies had been disposed of within three months of publication. In the end this number had reached nearly half a million, from which Paine did not derive a single penny, as he had given the copyright to the cause of Independence. In fact his publisher finally presented him with an account for £29 12s. 1d. in respect of this production. Washington fully acknowledged the important services Paine had rendered and appealed to the several States for their favourable consideration. Two responded, New York granting him a forfeited estate of 277 acres, and Pennsylvania a sum of £500. Settled happily at Bordentown, Paine occupied himself in quite a new line of activity, bridge-building. He made a model of an iron bridge of an entirely new design. It was devised to span a river with a single arch, thus doing away with the obstruction to the channel and bed of a river by sinking several piers. The model was looked upon favourably by Dr. Franklin and the Council, but made no practical headway, and in 1787 Paine took it with him to Europe. He had been desirous for some years of revisiting England and his old home where his parents were still living. He visited Paris first, where he came into contact with many of the foremost men in political, literary and philosophical circles. He had opportunities of observing the change which was even then taking place in the minds of the French people, and which was to culminate only two years later in the French Revolution. He proceeded to London and went straight on to Thetford. His father had died the year before, but his mother, who was in her ninety-first year, was there to welcome him. Paine had sent his parents money from time to time and now settled on his mother an allowance of 9s. per week. She lived to be ninety-four. He spent a good deal of time and money in getting his bridge constructed, which was done by an engineering firm at Rotherham. He became a "lion" in English society, spent a week with Edmund Burke, was entertained by the Duke of Portland at his country seat and by Lord Fitzwilliam at Wentworth House. Fox and Lord Lansdowne consulted him about public affairs.

The iron bridge, 110 feet long, with a single arch, had not been completed on July 14, 1780, when the Bastille fell in Paris. The news of this to Paine was like a clarion call to action and he was quickly on the scene. During this visit to the French capital, the Marquis La Fayette, who had fought with the colonists in the War of Independence, entrusted Paine with the key of the Bastille to forward to George Washington who safely received it at Mount Vernon, where it still remains as an historical heirloom of great interest.

Back in England, Paine proceeded with his bridge, which was at length completed and brought to London, where it was set up for exhibition. In the meantime events were proceeding rapidly in France and causing a good deal of excitement and uneasiness in Government circles in England. The excesses of the Parisian mob quite naturally aroused indignation here and Edmund Burke, who had been the friend of the American colonists, came out as one of the chief antagonists of the French revolutionists. It was largely in answer to Burke that Paine wrote his famous pamphlet *Rights of Man*, published in two parts, the first part appearing in March, 1791. Part the Second came out early in the following year. The book made a great impression, but it contained political doctrines which were extremely bold and ad-

vanced for the eighteenth century. There was a direct and vigorous attack against monarchy, especially the hereditary form of it, but few would quarrel nowadays with the following definition of government:—

Government is the organization of the aggregate of those natural rights which individuals are not competent to secure individually, and therefore surrender to the control of society in exchange for the protection of all rights.

The Government directed a prosecution after the publication of Part 2, and Paine was summoned to appear at the Court of Kings Bench on June 8, 1792. The Information laid against him covered forty-one pages and contained extracts from the book to demonstrate the nature of the offence. It commenced:—

Thomas Paine, gentleman, being a wicked, malicious, seditious, and ill-disposed person, and being greatly disaffected to our said Sovereign Lord the King, and to the happy constitution and government of this kingdom, did write and publish a certain false, scandalous, malicious and seditious libel entitled *Rights of Man*, Part the Second.

And here is one extract from the book which shows at once the nature of the crime and the style of the author:—

All hereditary government is in its nature tyranny. An heritable crown, or an heritable throne, or by what other fanciful name such things may be called, have no other significant explanation than that mankind are heritable property. To inherit a government is to inherit the people, as if they were flocks and herds. The time is not very distant when England will laugh at itself for sending to Holland, Hanover, Zell, or Brunswick, for men at the expense of a million a year, who understood neither her laws, her language nor her interest, and whose capacities would scarcely have fitted them for the office of a parish constable. If Government could be trusted to such hands, it must be some easy and simple thing indeed; and materials fit for all the purposes may be found in every town and village in England.

On June 8, Paine presented himself to answer the charge, when it was decided to postpone the trial to December. In spite of the fact that this trial was pending, a proclamation was issued forbidding the sale of the book which nevertheless reached an issue of 200,000 copies by the following year, at 3s. per copy. It was translated into French, and, it is stated, found a place in every French home. In America there was also a wide circulation, but it did not meet with universal approval there. There was a strong aristocratic element in the composition of the early governments of the States.

Although not strictly relevant perhaps it may be permitted here to refer to the facts of another book in Paris at this time. When the King's palace was being mobbed by the Marseillaise and a number of them had been killed by the Swiss Guards, a book was hurled from a window of the Palace. It was entitled *The Thirteen Constitutions* (of the United States) a copy of which was presented to each of the Kings of Europe in 1783 by order of Congress. Appropriately enough, the volume struck an American spectator, Robert Gilmor, and knocked him down. He had the consolation of securing the book, however, and taking it back to America. In 1909 this book was in the collection of Dr. Emmet of New York.

Before the date of the postponed trial, Paine was elected a member of the new French National Convention, by three different departments. After some hesitation he accepted the constituency of Pas de Calais. This was on September 6, and on the 12th Paine attended a meeting of the newly-formed Friends of Liberty, where he made a speech, the purport of which he informed his friend William Blake at the

latter's house next day. Blake felt certain that an arrest would follow, and persuaded Paine not to return home but to make straight for Dover. He did so and got away on the boat for Calais twenty minutes before the order arrived at Dover for his arrest.

He was welcomed at Calais with every mark of honour, civic and military, and also at Paris, where he took his seat in due course in the Convention. He was elected a member of the special committee formed a month after his arrival to draw up a constitution. The famous Danton was one of his fellow-members.

Paine was found guilty at the trial in December in London and outlawed, after a very able defence by the great lawyer, who was afterwards made Lord Erskine. The general public both inside the Court and out, by no means sympathized with the verdict. Erskine's carriage was drawn away by the crowd, who removed the horses.

The most strenuous steps were taken all over England to suppress the *Rights of Man*, and all other books and writings of the outlaw. Many persons were prosecuted, fined and imprisoned for selling or distributing copies and one man, Thomas Muir, received a sentence of fourteen years transportation for merely advising persons to read the works "of that wretched outcast Paine," the latter description being used by the Lord Advocate. The judge ordered the usher to arrest persons in Court who were hissing this savage sentence. He replied, "My Lord, they're all hissing."

From Bolton it is recorded that the Town Crier, who had been directed to search the town for copies of the proscribed writings, reported that he had been all round the place but had failed to find either the *Rights of Man* or *Common Sense* anywhere.

In France the great drama of the Revolution developed in intensity, the attempted flight of the Royal Family precipitated the fate of the unhappy monarch who, by the accident of birth was called upon to occupy the throne of France at a period when the fortunes of that country were at a low ebb, largely through the misgovernment of his predecessors. In personal character he was perhaps the most worthy of his family, but in the qualities of statemanship and kingly authority he was sadly lacking, totally unequipped to steer safely through the storm which had long been brewing. Paine did his very best to save him from the death penalty, but when the party of the Mountain at length obtained an ascendancy over the other great faction in the Convention, called the Gironde, the case was hopeless.

F. M. READ.

(To be continued.)

Farewell to Dr. Orchard.

[Dr. Orchard preached for the last time at Kings Weigh House Church on Sunday. His (theological) destination is unknown. Meanwhile he is going to Rome—for a holiday.—*Vide Press.*]

Roman rite and modern thought,
Sceptical religion,
Peace of mind and discontent,
Unity, division.

Kings Weigh House and rich dissent,
Science, superstition,
Doubt and faith, dissent, assent,
In Juxtaposition.

Dr. Orchard fares away
Seeking clearer vision;
Will a Roman holiday
Cure his indecision?

A.H.

Freethought in Fiction.

ANATOLE FRANCE.

ANATOLE FRANCE, his name was Thibault, but the pseudonym which he adopted had its origin in his book-selling and book-loving father's habit of signing himself "France, libraire." When he died, aged eighty, in 1924, his country and Europe lost one of their greatest writers, and modern literature its supreme master of ironic prose. In him Freethought had an exponent armed with weapons which, often at its service, have rarely been used with such exquisite dexterity. It is seen at its best in *The Sign of the Reine Pedagogue*, wherein the adventures of the Abbé Jerome Coignard, his learning, his theological rectitude marching unflinchingly with his Rabelesian laxity of life, provide an unforgettable panorama of the insidious power and intellectual fatuity of religion. In a simple and sterner mood is *the Procurator of Judea*, surely one of the very greatest short stories ever written. (An early English translation of it, by George Underwood, appeared in these columns).

In a most thorough and sympathetic study of *The Skepticism of Anatole France*, Miss Helen B. Smith, an American writer, brings out the positive, constructive and evolutionary character of his Freethinking. He is "the rational, analytical thinker. He believes in progress, in the evolution of society towards a state of peace and social justice, but no zealous dogmatism blinds his calm glance, no fierce enthusiasm disturbs his tranquil realization of the slow march of evolution. There is strength in this clear, unmoved fearless facing of reality. A certain grandeur, too. Looking steadily through these glasses of rational thought beyond the narrow horizon of emotional actualities, man is relieved of the petty confining bonds of partizanship."

Although his fame derives mainly from his novels and short stories, France, like our Hardy, began with poetry, but, unlike the latter, did not seriously return to it. Two volumes of verse (1873 and 1876) were the prelude to the prose which is after all the natural medium for depth of feeling disciplined by a critical mind. It is noted by most writers who have dealt with his work that France struck almost at once the chords which sound harmoniously through all his works. *The Crime of Silvestre Bonnard* (1861) his first novel, has all the sombre clarity of style and outlook that we meet with almost everywhere in his pages. In satire he had no equal while he lived. Swift? but without the savagery; or if we must mention a contemporary F. P. Dunne (Mr. Dooley) minus the comedian. The late W. L. George, writing of Anatole France as a theologian and philosopher, observed, not without truth, that "like many sceptics, he was more interested in religion than are most believers." As he makes Père Coignard say: "I will show to you the Almighty ruling over the reason of mankind: I will show you Him in Pagan philosophy, and even in the speeches of the impious. Yes, monsieur, I will make you recognize that you profess Him in spite of yourself, even while you pretend that he does not exist." This is part of an argument that takes place in a scene of vinous revelry in which the only lady present strips off her wine-soaked chemise!

We owe to Messrs. John Lane (The Bodley Head) translations of Anatole France's works, which are as good as translations can be, and modestly priced withal. In *Anatole France and Mrs. Grundy* (The Cayme Press) Mr. John Pollock has published the hitherto unpublished passages from M. J. J. Brousson's *Anatole France Himself*. (Butterworth, 1925). M. Brousson was for some years France's secretary and companion. When translated for publication here his book had to be pruned, presumably to avoid prosecution. Mr. Pollock observes that "no historian has ever been bold enough to publish the conversation of James I. of England as recorded by a foreign ambassador at his Court"; and that if a book is of such importance as to merit translation, passages should not be cut out which, in effect, make the English version incorrect. In this case, while literal translation of the

French might be impossible or unpleasant, a translation that is free from any reasonable objection has been produced by Mr. Pollock. Mrs. Grundy's objections, however, are never reasonable.

"Great wits are oft" to goodness, as to madness, "close allied"; but not always. Anatole France is credited with saying that "biography adds a new terror to death." While we do not agree that "talent should always be judged at its best and character at its worst," it is as well to say, in dealing with this distinguished Freethinker, that, in our view, his life stands in exactly the same relation to his work as does the life of every Christian artist to *his work*. That however is not the Christian's view, for he invariably indicts Freethought for the sins or follies of its advocates or adherents and acquits Christianity of all responsibility for the crimes of its professors.

In conclusion we will transcribe the inimitable finale of *The Procurator of Judea** (Pontius Pilate). Lucilius Lamia, exiled from Rome, had travelled in Armenia, Syria, and Palestine, and made a long sojourn in Jerusalem at the time of Pilate's rule there. He meets the latter on his return to Rome, Pilate now enjoying a tranquil retirement on the sea-shore near that city. They talk of the past, and after supping together, Lamia refers to some amorous adventures of his with Jewish women, and is upbraided for his too liberal living. But the exile was not to be silenced, and, "having tossed off his cup of Falernian, he was smiling at some image visible to his eye alone." After a moment's silence he resumed in a very deep voice, which rose in pitch by little and little—"With what languorous grace they dance, those Syrian women! I knew a Jewess who used to dance in a poky little room, on a thread-bare carpet, by the light of one smoky little lamp, waving her arms as she clanged the cymbals. Her loins arched, her head thrown back, and, as it were, dragged down by the weight of her heavy red hair, her eyes swimming with voluptuousness, eager, languishing, compliant, she would have made Cleopatra herself grow pale with envy. I was in love with her barbaric dances, her voice—a little raucous and yet so sweet—her atmosphere of incense, the semi-somnolescent state in which she seemed to live. I followed her everywhere. I mixed with the vile rabble of soldiers, conjurers, and extortioners with which she was surrounded. One day, however, she disappeared, and I saw her no more. Long did I seek her in disreputable alleys and taverns. It was more difficult to do without her than to lose the taste for Greek wine. Some months after I lost sight of her, I learned by chance that she had attached herself to a small company of men and women who were followers of a young Galilean thaumaturgist. His name was Jesus: he came from Nazareth, and he was crucified for some crime, I don't quite know what. Pontius, do you remember anything about the man?" Pontius Pilate contracted his brows, and his hand rose to his forehead in the attitude of one who probes the deeps of memory. Then after a silence of some seconds—"Jesus?" he murmured. "Jesus—of Nazareth? I cannot call him to mind."

ALAN HANDSACRE.

*"The Procurator of Judea" from *Mother of Pearl* (pp. 25-26) Bodley Head).

We promise according to our hopes and perform according to our fears.—*La Rochefoucauld*.

Nothing is certain but death and taxes.—*B. Franklin*.
Fine words! I wonder where you stole them.—*Swift*.

Some for renown on scraps of learning dote,
And think they grow immortal as they quote.

Young.

Silence, the great Empire of Silence: higher than all others, deeper than the Kingdom of Death! It alone is great; all else is small.—*Carlyle*.

Sin is disease, deformity and weakness.—*Plato*.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

IRELAND AND THE OATH.

SIR,—It is true, as you state, that the objection to the Oath is not theological. The Oath is, however, incidental to the real conflict which is between abstract and practical ideals of nationalism. Can the idea of undiluted nationalism prevail against the more practical idea of a commonwealth of nations, or, in the last analysis, can the latter prevail against the brotherhood of man? In a tiny State in a world in which the telephone, the motor, the monoplane and the wireless hold sway, retreat for the pure idealist is inevitable. This, however, makes the Irish conflict somewhat romantic. Fiana Fail, it is to be mentioned, has a strong, but non-aggressive Catholic backing that, in Ireland, may be more valuable, for the moment than material advantages. But, as poor Tom Kettle said, Ireland, which has the oldest history in Europe, except Rome and Greece, must "learn to be European" if it is to maintain its place and influence in the world.

DUBLINER.

Samuel Pulman.

AN APPRECIATION.

MANY of Mr. Pulman's friends in Manchester will have noted with regret the passing of this Freethought stalwart, as recently recorded in the *Freethinker*. Notwithstanding the ripeness of his years, the movement can ill afford to lose such enthusiastic workers as he.

I first became acquainted with him in the winter of 1915, when efforts were being made to revive the Manchester Branch, and in my capacity as Secretary of the new organization, it was my duty to hunt up all old members—and from the first day I met Mr. Pulman, his help and advice were always forthcoming when needed. With the distraction of this war period it was no easy matter to collect the Freethought supporters in Manchester, and it was mainly due to his efforts that we were able to get our organization together and make a new start with our first meeting on a Sunday in March, 1917, at a small Picture House in Swan Street, which packed to its full capacity. As chairman on that occasion I remember the difficulties of the meeting—no platform available—and Mr. Cohen, who opened our campaign, had to address the audience from the screen end of the Hall with a sloping floor in front. On this occasion, Mr. Gott (the last prisoner for blasphemy) caused some sensation by turning up with his famous "Rib Ticklers," and placard-portrait of himself in goal uniform. It seems more like fifty than fifteen years ago.

From there we obtained a small room across the way in the Bakers Hall, where Pulman was invariably chairman at our Sunday night meetings, where one or other of the new members would do their best in presenting papers for discussion. I often think we younger Freethinkers must have been great trials to our old Veteran Pulman, who had been in the thick of the fighting in the strenuous periods associated with Bradlaugh and Foote, but he was ever kindly and courteous, and it was with pardonable pride he and his wife worked along with us through the subsequent progressive and prosperous days to Downing Street Hall.

He was the first to suggest to me the proposal for advertising the *Freethinker* in 1917 by engaging a "Sandwich" man to parade the principal streets in our city with a poster on each side and a quire of *Freethinkers* for sale, but as in those war-stricken days we rarely sold twenty a week by this method, we soon had to call our man in on grounds of economy. Nowadays, at the Kiosk in Cannon Street, we have achieved a regular circulation of twenty-five to thirty weekly by the showing of a poster, notwithstanding the efforts of rival paper men to stick their posters over ours.

The N.S.S. has lost a good worker for the "best of causes." He fought hard and cleanly for his principles and leaves behind him a happy memory of necessary and arduous work well done.

H. BLACK.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

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

INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. George F. Holland—"A Rose Without a Thorn."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road), 7.0, John Katz, B. A.—"What Shall We Live For?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"The Standard of Living and Economic Nationalism."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7, five minutes from the Brecknock): 7.20, Rev. Fr. V. McNabb v. Mr. T. F. Palmer—"Is There a Future Life?"

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): Next Monday, April 24, Mr. F. P. Corrigan will open a discussion on "Freethought and Sociology."

COUNTRY.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street) 3.0, Members Meeting.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.0, Final indoor meeting of the season. Mr. J. T. Brighton—"The Progress of Secularism."

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S.—Owing to a clashing of dates the A.G.M. called for April 14 has been postponed to Thursday, April 28, in the Bakers Hall, 5 Forbes Place at 7.30 p.m. Business Important.

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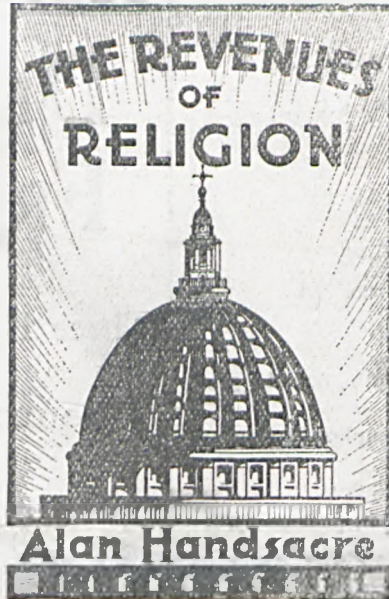
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