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

Views and Opinions.

On Censors and Censorships.

An institution such as a Censorship is bound to give rise to many curious situations and to many injustices. One recent illustration, in both directions, has occurred in connexion with a play by Mr. Eden Phillpotts. Some twenty years ago Mr. Phillpotts wrote a book called *The Secret Woman*. The book was one of the most powerful that author has written. The story was dramatized and would have been publicly performed but for the Censor. He decided that the play would not be in the interests of public morals. Then the play was privately presented—which meant that it was played in an ordinary theatre but the general public could not obtain entrance by payment at the doors. A number of performances were given before crowded competent and appreciative audiences. Through the courtesy of Mr. Phillpotts I saw the play, and there was certainly nothing in it that could have shocked any decent-minded man or woman, whatever effect it might have had on some of our morbidly sex-mad parsons. Nothing is clean to that type. With that class faith and filth, piety and pornography run together.

Now after the lapse of about twenty years the Censor has given his gracious permission for the public performance of *The Secret Woman*. Why? No one knows. What has happened between now and twenty years ago to make this dangerous play innocuous? Is the public purer in mind than it was twenty years ago, or is it so bad now that nothing can make it worse? In either case what has been the influence of the censorship? No one can say what kind of reasoning governs what the Censor is pleased to call his mind. He acts as he sees fit, and exalts his prejudices into the rank of law. He sits higher than a Judge and may be without any of the qualifications that a Judge must possess. The Censor is a dictator in a region where sheer prejudice is certain to operate.

I am not now arguing the desirability or the undesirability of regulations concerning either plays or books. The questions of Censorship and that of regulations are quite distinct although they are most often confused. I am concerned with a Censorship which rests in the hands of an individual who is appointed to judge the drama, not because of his dramatic or literary ability, but merely because he is selected by someone else, who may be as destitute of literary or dramatic ability as he is. One consequence of this absurd position is that the more finicky, the more fussy the Censor is the more satisfaction he is likely to give to those who appoint him. A Censor who never condemns would demonstrate his uselessness. His utility is shown only by his activity—just as the need of a large army or navy is shown by the creation of situations (material or psychological) which brings them before the public. A regulation may be wise or unwise, good or bad, but if the ruling of those who enforce the regulation may be challenged and they can be compelled to justify their action before a competent tribunal, one may reasonably submit. But a Censor who merely censors, no one knows why, and whose arbitrary decision cannot be upset, represents a form of tyranny to which no public that understands the meaning of liberty should willingly submit.

* * *

Our Farcical Film Censor.

The stage Censorship has all the force of a legal decision, since a play cannot be publicly performed without licence. But there is another Censorship which, while lacking the power of legal enforcement still exerts considerable influence. Of this form of censorship the Board of Film Censors is a good example. Mr. Edward Shortt, K.C., is chairman of this body; he is a good Christian, and to a meeting of the London Diocesan Conference he recently explained his office. He said that many films were rejected, and many more were cut. This quite satisfied those with a mania for suppression, but as Mr. Shortt did not say why these films were condemned, or what was cut out, the information was not very enlightening. Mr. Shortt is nominated to his office by the Government, but he selects his own Board. At present the Board numbers four. These, he told the Conference consists of two ex-colonels, one missionary lady, and an "ex-politician." Mr. Shortt did not give the names, but they have been published since, not however by Mr. Shortt. The Board receives fees from the trade, which last year amounted to £8,000, not bad for these ex-colonels, the missionary lady, and an unemployed politician. The names of the four are Colonel Cousens, Colonel Hannay, Miss Hussey, and a Mr. Crilley. It is said that the average age of the four is about sixty. No claim is made on their behalf for the possession of either literary or dramatic ability. They are just censors.

To a church gathering a collection of tame ex-colonels, a missionary lady, and an "ex-politician" is quite satisfactory. If the decisions of this brilliant combination of talents are not satisfactory the film folk may protest to Mr. Shortt, but it is said he seldom goes against them. Why should he?

But Mr. Shortt talks too much, and an office such as his, if it is to impress that many-headed jackass the general public, should be veiled in silence from which decisions should unexpectedly issue like a peal of thunder on a clear day. He explained to the church gathering that the principle on which he worked was, "Any film which is objectionable to and shocks a reasonable number of reasonably-minded people ought not to be allowed." But who are the reasonably-minded people, and what is a reasonable number of them? Mr. Shortt has selected four, but does he really think that his miscellaneous collection of ex-colonels, missionary women and out-of-work politicians represents the higher aspects of British life? Or does Mr. Shortt really believe that this odd collection is a reasonably-minded tribunal? If he does, it can only be because they agree with him. But if they had been likely to differ from him, would he have selected them? I think most of us could get the verdict we require—if we were allowed to select the Jury. When the South African trouble was on, Mr. Dooley advised President Kruger to give the Outlanders the vote but to do the counting himself. Mr. Shortt is a great believer in Dooley. Mr. Shortt will never disagree with his Board, the Board will never disagree with Mr. Shortt. But Mr. Shortt was once Home Secretary, and he can hardly be so stupid as his remarks make him appear.

Consider this example which Mr. Shortt—probably with his tongue in his cheek—gave his clerical audience as proof of the uprightness and strength of his judgment. Some time ago a film was submitted to him in which the preaching of a religious mission was presented in a way that seemed to him revolting. Two local authorities disagreed with him. They could not, therefore, be reasonable either in number or in reasoning, so the very upright Mr. Shortt took other advice. He consulted the Bishop of London, Cardinal Bourne and some Nonconformist ministers. Marvellous to relate, this body of reasonably-minded men agreed with Mr. Shortt and the collection of the two ex-colonels, the retired politician and the missionary lady, who condescend to stand guardians over the morality of the British public at a charge of from 30s. to £7 per film. I am quite sure that if a larger Board had been required, many of Mr. Shortt's listeners would be glad to act—on the same terms.

Seriously, could any situation be more fatuous? On either religion or morals there is no body of men so completely barred by natural capacity, by training and by self-interest from expressing a responsible opinion on either morals or religion as are the clergy. It would almost seem as though Mr. Shortt imagines he is living in the sixteenth century when all questions affecting morals and religion fell under Church law. Suppose that the film brought before Mr. Shortt's bundle of odds and ends had dealt with Atheism would Mr. Shortt have asked the opinion of, say, the President of the N.S.S. as to whether he thought the film reasonable? Not at all. He would decide at once that a film dealing with Freethought could not be good unless it were very bad. If I were in Mr. Shortt's position I do not think I would offer any more explanations of the methods adopted, unless I made sure that the talk would be of a strictly confidential character. To act like a fool or a bigot is bad enough, but to advertise that one is so acting is quite inexcusable.

The Functions of a Censor.

It may also be noted that both the Censorship of films and the licencing of plays proceed mainly on the lines of protecting established ideas from being too severely criticized. They are not concerned with a genuine artistic elevation of either the screen or the stage, nor are they appointed for that purpose. *The Secret Woman* dealt with established sex relations in a perfectly clean and intelligent manner. There was not a coarse expression or a suggestive situation in the play, but it was suppressed. But hundreds of suggestive scenes in comic operas and burlesques were passed without difficulty. The Board of Film Censors will, as Mr. Shortt explained, object to anything that would be displeasing to the Bishop of London, or Cardinal Bourne, or Nonconformist ministers, but when it comes to distorting history in the interests of the Christian Church, or depicting a Freethinker as being ruined because of his rejection of Christianity, or depicting the grossest of historic lies, or sallacious scenes of various kinds, the utmost licence prevails. It is not with artistic merit that these censors are concerned, but with the protection of established beliefs. Royalty, the Church, etc., all these have to be presented in a stereotyped way, because if they were presented as they should appear to a modern mind the result would be fatal to their maintenance. What, for instance, would happen to a film which placed side by side the ceremonies of a Christian Church with their exact parallels in savage religions. Or a court ceremonial in London, with one in Ashantee or some other uncivilized country? Mr. Shortt would be shocked, the two ex-colonels would be shocked, the unemployed politician would be horrified, the missionary lady would be disgusted. These Censors are not selected for their impartiality of judgment, or for their taste, or for their ability in any particular direction. They are appointed solely because they can be trusted to suppress what certain people or a certain class wish to be suppressed. They are placed in a position of influence because they are really unfitted to be there. It is not a question, I repeat, of seeing that things do not pass beyond what may be called the bounds of public decency. It is the submission of the people to a form of control which is a direct denial of a right of redress against a mere official order. Perhaps one day we may master the lesson that there is no greater certainty of freedom in a formal democracy than there is in an actual autocracy. If laws are to be made by the people for the people, it should be seen that the right of every citizen to legal protection against the unjust operation of the law should always be present.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

ON OATHS.

Where oaths are made a test of religious belief, for the purpose of excluding any class of our fellow-subjects from their civil rights, oaths, being equally opposed to Christianity, policy and justice, ought to be totally and finally abolished. He who first devised the oath of abjuration, profligately boasted that he had framed a test which should "damn one half of the nation and starve the other" . . . "Oaths," said Paley, "make the Deity a party to all the trivial and vulgar impertinences of human life. Let the law continue its own functions, if they be thought requisite; but let it spare the solemnity of an oath, and, where it is necessary, from the want of something better to depend upon, to accept a man's word or own account, let it annex to prevarication penalties proportionate to the public consequence of the offence."—From "*The Tin Trumpet*," by Horace Smith, 1835.

The Bishops and the Bogeys.

"What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, clad in complete steel,
Revisitest thus the glimpses of the moon."

Shakespeare.

The recent law-case in which a spirit medium brought an action against a London newspaper has given a fresh advertisement to Spiritualism of which the astute dabblers in the occult have taken full advantage. Yet professional spiritualists are not by any means the only folks who ask us to believe that they have dealings with the alleged "supernatural." The clergy, of whom there are 40,000 in this country alone, are as much interested, professionally, in "spooks" as the mediums themselves. This is true, although the Archbishop of Canterbury gets £15,000 a year, and two palaces, and a seat in the House of Lords, and the ordinary medium gets but a handful of silver for a seance.

The clergy of all denominations tell us of a three-headed "god," who gets angry with us poor citizens; of "devils" who must be guarded against; of umpteen numbers of "angels" who fly from heaven to earth. The Christian Bible is a spook book from cover to cover, and belief in spirits is an integral part of the Christian Religion. The great Christian Churches, the Roman Catholic, and the Anglican, to say nothing of their Free Church rivals, are engaged always in this spook business. Yet the spirit-world of these priests is no more real than the bogey Blunderland of the Spiritualists. The clergy, however, make millions of money where the mediums make only thousands. Priests have been at this sorry business so much longer, and they are so much more astute. They have learned their lesson better and can present their case the more convincingly. They know that if a showman never lifts the curtain, it does not matter whether he has anything or nothing on the other side.

There is a Society for Psychical Research which was founded in 1882, and during its many years of existence, it discussed many strange and weird legends of the alleged supernatural current in this country, and abroad, some of which were so silly that the evidence would hardly satisfy a jury of Kindergarten scholars. Yet, had these dabblers in the occult but admitted it, the strangest of all strange ghost stories is that associated with the Christian Faith, which is the State Religion of this country. Its accuracy is vouched for by archbishops, bishops, deans, canons, and thousands of straight-faced clergymen, whose solemnity would wrinkle the face of a funeral-horse with smiles. Not only do these so-called "men-of-God" protest the truth of this particular ghost-story, but hundreds of thousands of their followers express their approbation in the pews on Sundays, even if they are quiet on the remaining days of the week. It is therefore fitting to recount the chief points of this very remarkable story.

It is said to have happened two thousand years ago. In the year nought B.C., or A.D. nought, a child with a ghost for its father is alleged to have been born at Bethlehem, in Judæa. This particular infant was considered to be of such extreme importance that a wholesale massacre of children was said to have been carried out in the hope of getting rid of the prodigy. Curiously, profane historians did not consider this massacre worth attention, not even a footnote. The subsequent life of this ghost-child is one long string of marvellous happenings, quite as extraordinary as the adventures of Ali Baba or Sinbad the Sailor.

This ghost's son is said to have restored blind people to sight, and brought the dead back to life. He is alleged to have fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes, and to have turned water into wine. At his death it is said a three-days' darkness overspread the whole earth, although no contemporary astronomer noticed the startling occurrence. After death he is said to have made a come-back in ghostly form, and he finally left the earth like an aeroplane and has never been seen since. For ought the clergy know, he may be "looping the loop," or "nose-diving" in the ether to-day. The rest is silence. There has never been so astonishing a career. Yet, outside of the Christian Scriptures there is no corroboration of this most popular of all ghost stories. Only the loud asseverations of tens of thousands of priests and their congregations who all live twenty centuries after the events narrated.

This Oriental ghost-story has all the characteristics of a wild Eastern legend. Yet thousands of priests make millions of money out of this bogey-business, and hiss at the intellectuals who would free their fellow countrymen from superstition and the chains of ancient ignorance. In spite of the clergy and the mediums, the riddle remains unanswered, the sphinx is still silent. The new Spiritualism gives no better answer than the older creeds, and the later messages from the alleged next world are as unconvincing as the earlier. The poor savage dreams of his happy hunting grounds; the Mohammedan peoples his paradise with beautiful women; the prosaic Christian looks for the golden streets of a New Jerusalem; and Sir Oliver Lodge believes in cigar-smoking spirits making whoopee. Roman Catholic priests are so much more modest. They believe that all people who do not contribute to their capacious alms-dishes will be burnt for ever, world without end; whilst the contributors will play golden harps. Indeed, the oracles contradict one another so loudly that some of us are sceptical as to the value of these sweeping assertions and fanciful post-mortem pictures.

The plain truth is that both the clergy and the mediums pretend to possess knowledge which neither they nor other people possess. The whole troublous tribe of dabblers in the alleged super-natural are no more to be trusted than the gipsy women who ask you to cross their palms with silver. Fortune-telling to-day means fines and imprisonment for poor vagrants, but priests, by the simple expedient of using the jargon of the Christian religion, can impose their nonsense on innocent and uneducated people without let or hindrance.

The clergy themselves regard the growth of Modern Spiritualism as being a proof that their own "Devil" is working overtime. More sober critics interpret the movement as the harbinger of a new age of superstition. Yet it can be regarded equally well as a manifestation of revolt against all the churches of Christendom, and the substitution of private judgment, however ill-informed, against priestly authority. Priests tell their flocks in awed accents to beware of the Occult, and of the "Devil" and all his works. And the congregations are beginning to disregard the advice of their "pastors and masters," and to examine the matter for themselves. This is a healthier and, in the proper sense, a manlier attitude than tame acquiescence in the priests' saucy demands. Mere investigation is a step forward. Thousands who leave the churches will never trouble the pew openers again. Hence the very success of modern Spiritualism must help to hasten the disintegration of the Christian Superstition.

The Genesis of Man.

CHARLES DARWIN never suggested that man has descended from any extant species of ape or monkey, but that he and they have evolved from one common ancestral stock. This was the great naturalist's conclusion after long and patient investigation. Darwin traced man's origin to the remote past, and the conclusions published in his *Descent of Man*, in 1871, have been triumphantly vindicated by the various discoveries of the succeeding sixty years.

Darwin and Huxley stressed the striking resemblances in their bony framework which men, apes and monkeys, alike display. Their kinship is likewise manifested in the veritable museum of vestigial or rudimentary organs retained in their anatomical structures. Also, the embryological development of the ape, monkey, or babe is so closely identical in all its features that no other explanation than that of their near affinity and common descent has ever been advanced. Moreover, men, monkeys and apes are the victims of the same parasites and are subject to the same diseases, while the harmonious blending of their blood clearly announces their kinship.

Evidences concerning humanity's natural genesis have vastly increased since Darwin's death, and the world of science now universally assents to the truth of the great biologist's claim that, "man, with all his noble qualities, with sympathy which feels for the most debased, with benevolence which extends not only to other men, but to the humblest living creature, with his god-like intellect, which has penetrated into the movements and constitution of the solar system—with all these exalted powers—man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin."

The antagonism of the pious towards evolution is easily understood. Logically considered, its teachings are positively fatal to all theological pretensions. Evolution and creation are utterly opposed. No real reconciliation is possible. Natural causes are now assigned for every organic phenomenon that in pre-scientific centuries was attributed to supernatural agency. That this is apparent to that section of the religious public which has been driven to accept the evolutionary principle, is plainly shown by the eagerness with which, even the broadest Christians, welcome any story, however improbable or absurd, which seems to discredit the natural genesis and development of the living world.

Also, those there are, and among them incipient Rationalists not a few, who regard with feelings of repugnance the theory of man's affinity with the Simian race. Wise men were they who arranged the chimpanzees' tea parties in the Gardens in Regent's Park. The children and adults who witness and enjoy them must be immensely impressed by the spectacle and are thereby broadened in their sympathies and viewpoint.

Man and ape diverged from a common stem of Simian life at least a million years ago, and much may happen in a million years. Yet, a friend of the writer's who, as a medical man, is naturally familiar with the general outlines of biological science, and who has long abandoned the current religious creed, steadfastly refuses to admit that the emotions and intellect of civilized mankind can conceivably have arisen among creatures descended from the beasts that perish. He, unfortunately, is one only of a multitude. Another educated acquaintance is fond of citing Shakespeare's "What a piece of work is man!" as a cogent illustration of the deep chasm that divides superior man from the inferior brutes. And this, despite the passage with which the poet concludes, when he reminds us that man is still "the

paragon of animals." For Hamlet speaks as follows: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"

Verily, it is frequently forgotten by those who piously proclaim the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man that the naked savage and the emancipated Negro are members of the human family. One can easily imagine the attitude of the average religious Philistine when in contact with peoples of a lower grade of culture. If he looks upon these with lofty disdain then, quite naturally, the mere suggestion of his kinship with apes must seem an outrageous insult. Still, when the problem is dispassionately studied it becomes obvious that the differences which divide us from our uncivilized relatives, or our hairy cousins, are differences of degree, and not of kind. Moreover, many recent studies of ape psychology revealing as they do, very high reasoning power in apes, are educating the public mind in marked measure. Apart from Fundamentalists and other hopeless people, traditional prejudice and aversion are slowly receding as science advances towards its goal.

In Oligocene Times, millions of years ago, the apes branched off from the Old World monkey group. These newly-evolved animals soon spread far and wide throughout the three great continents of the Eastern hemisphere. In the later Miocene Period a further divergence occurred and the ancestors of ancient and modern man emerged. They then separated from the ape branch and pursued an independent path, leaving the larger apes to evolve along other lines which led to the appearance of the great tailless manlike apes—the gorilla, the orang and chimpanzee—as they exist to-day. On the other hand, the Simian ancestors of humanity were constrained to travel a long and trying road before modern man emerged. Various fossil remains have been recovered that favour the belief that a succession of tentative animals of lowly human type appeared on the stage of life for a short period, only to succumb to an uncongenial environment. And this is much what the evolutionist expects. Further fossil remains of these transitory types are eagerly awaited. When they are found, as they doubtless will be, important links will be added to the already powerful chain of testimony concerning the pedigree of man.

The Piltdown and Java fossils manifest unequivocal affinities with apes, although their original possessors had advanced far beyond the Simian stage in a distinctly human direction. Another *Hominid*, as these ape-men are termed, has been discovered by Prof. Raymond Dart at Taungs in Bechuanaland. This African fossil seems to have had a more erect carriage than any of the surviving man-like apes. Its brain was more massive, and its more striking cranial characters clearly foreshadow a coming human form. For the forehead of the Taungs hominid is non-receding; its eyebrow ridges are less fierce and prominent; while the lower part of the face is distinctly prophetic of a truly human posterity. In any case, the Taungs skull provides a powerful connecting link between men and apes.

The precise relationship of other recently acquired remains is still under discussion. But the most ancient species of fully-formed man so far determined is that of Heidelberg. Next in order of time stands the Rhodesian man, while at a much later date the Neanderthal race appeared on the scene. The Neanderthal stock was widespread in Europe at least, but ultimately in company with the Heidelberg, Rhodesian

and other species, it perished, and has left no known descendants.

And then, at long last appeared the progenitors of modern man—*Homo sapiens*. A brainy biped had now arrived to claim his kingdom. He proved himself well qualified to cope with the imperious requirements of Nature. With varying success he established his settlements in every habitable area. Variations in climate, food and function, gradually evolved pronounced differences in form of skull, pigmentation, stature, hair and other features, with the result that several distinctly different races arose which persist to this day. No need to mention more than the outstanding human stocks to demonstrate the diversity of living humanity. The Australian stocks, the Negro peoples, the Mongolian races, and last, but not least important, the three leading European types, the Nordic, the Mediterranean, and the Alpine all serve to illustrate Nature's tendency towards the evolution of an almost infinite variety.

T. F. PALMER.

Criticism and the Bible.

(Concluded from page 412.)

In the ninth chapter of the third Book of Moses, we read that also among the Hebrews the smearing of the altar-stone and of the places in which the god lodged, was customary. The sin-offering which was conducted by Aaron, is described as follows:—

And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him; and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar:

But the fat, and the kidneys, and the caul above the liver of the sin offering, he burnt upon the altar; as the Lord commanded Moses.⁷

II.

Notwithstanding whatever pains were taken by those who undertook the revising and trimming of the text, they left in the Old Testament many passages which indicate that the old Hebrews offered human sacrifices as blood offerings to their tribal god. There is not only the legend in which it is told how Abraham prepared to offer up, at the command of Elohim, his first-born son Isaac.⁸ There is also the record of an actual human sacrifice in honour of Yahwe, in the story of Jephthah, who offered up his daughter and only child.⁹ But there are also other passages in which the one-time custom of human sacrifice is still more clearly indicated, passages in which are exhibited the direct demands of Yahwe for human offerings, and the directions of Yahwe as to the conditions under which the human offering is to be eventually substituted by an animal offering or, in the official language of the text, "redeemed." We recall the words from the ninth chapter of the first Book of Moses: "And surely your blood of your lives will I require." There is a passage in the second Book of Moses which shows still more clearly what this means:—

Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

That thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the Lord's.

And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck; and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.¹⁰

There can be no doubt that here human offerings are plainly demanded. The narrator admits—the passage received its current rendering only at a later time—the commutation of child-offerings and ass-offerings¹¹ into lamb-offerings.

But not all the passages which refer to the commutation of human offerings, show the same broad-minded and warm-hearted attitude. Here is another passage in which it is directly laid down that what has been consecrated to the god, either children or slaves, must not be replaced by animal offerings:—

Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord.

None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death.¹²

Nevertheless, as with other peoples, human sacrifices, in the course of further evolution, were more and more limited among the Hebrews. In the long run, the idea gained currency that the offering-up of children was a barbaric custom, which had only been taken over by the Israelites from the heathen after the former had settled down in Palestine. The prophets declaimed against the offering-up of children as sin and burnt offerings, and sought with all sorts of sophistries to falsify the sense of the old claims of the Hebrew Elohim to the first-born. A good example of this perverted interpretation is offered by Ezekiel, who belongs to the sixth century before our era, and who knew the old law too well to venture to dispute the divine demand for human offerings. According to him, Yahwe had truly required from the Hebrews human sacrifices, but only as a punishment for their sins!

Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.

And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord.¹³

The affected and garrulous Micah pretends, in opposition to the old code of rites, that Yahwe did not really demand the first-born but only love of God, justice and humility:—

... Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?¹⁴

Nevertheless, in all this combating of the sacrifice of children, there is involved the open admission that up until the seventh and, apparently, even until the sixth century of our era, this form of sacrifice was practised among the Israelites. If that were not so, why then all this declamation? One does not as a rule denounce something which does not exist!

As is the case with almost all peoples who have progressed to the stage of ancestor-worship, we find also among the old Hebrews, beside the worship of the tribal deity, also the worship of totem-group gods (the gods of the gentes), and family or household gods. In the Old Testament, there are passages which clearly exhibit the worship of the ancestor-gods of

¹⁰ Exodus xiii. 2-13.

¹¹ The ass was too valuable and indispensable a household animal for man to readily part with it.

¹² Leviticus xxvii. 28, 29.

¹³ Ezekiel xx. 25, 26.

¹⁴ Micah. vi. 7, 8.

⁷ Leviticus ix. 9, 10.

⁸ Genesis xxii.

⁹ Judges xi. 30-39.

the Hebrew totem organizations or gentes (the Hebrew word is "Mispacha") and, bound up with this "teraphim" cult, the worship of trees and of columns of stone and wood in which it was supposed the god lodged. There is an interesting episode in the life of Jacob, which exemplifies this kind of worship. It is related that Rachel, when she ran away with Jacob from her father, Laban, stole the images (teraphim) "that were her father's." Laban with his brethren set off in pursuit and, overtaking Jacob, asked him: "Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods."¹⁵ "Since Jacob was unaware of Rachel's theft, he allowed Laban to search through his packs; but Laban did not find the missing gods.¹⁶ Rachel had earlier taken the images, hid them in the saddle of the camel and sat thereon, pretending to her father that she could not rise up, because of menstruation.¹⁷

At another time, Jacob excludes the foreign gods from his household in favour of Elohim, for whom he built an altar at Bethel or El-beth-el, meaning, the house of El.¹⁸

A further example is furnished in the Book of Judges, where Micah, a pious Ephraimite, made for himself the image of a teraphim which was, nevertheless, stolen from him by the Danites, and that they took with them to Dan for the service of the god of the Danites.¹⁹

The teraphim are again mentioned in the first Book of Samuel. When David was persecuted by Saul, Michal, the wife of David, took the teraphim and laid it in David's bed, and sought to make it appear as if her husband slept in the bed.²⁰

After the Yahwe-cult had risen in importance, its propagandists, the prophets, began a vigorous crusade against the teraphim-cult which was, in their opinion, detrimental to the authority of Yahwe. But the worship of the teraphim was so deeply rooted, that it still persisted for a long time. Hosea (first half of the eighth century B.C.) threatens the Israelites that if they do not obey Yahwe's commands, they "shall abide many days without a king, and without an ephod and without teraphim."²¹ A threat of this kind would be meaningless if the worship of the teraphim had not been very widespread at this time. Indeed, it is certain that the teraphim-cult continued in Judah up to the time of the exile. Even Zechariah (after the exile) reports that the teraphim were consulted as oracle-gods.²² Still this statement cannot be considered as reliable evidence for the prevalence of the cult after the return from Babylon, since the greater part of the hymn, in which the expression occurs, is much older than the first eight chapters of the book attributed to Zechariah.

It is not possible to say how the teraphim-cult was constituted in detail. But what does stand out clearly is the fact that the teraphim were worshipped as the ancestor-gods and founders of the gentes (or mispacha), and were invoked as the progenitors and god-fathers of the members of those groups. Jeremiah says:—

As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets.

¹⁵ Genesis xxxi. 19.

¹⁶ Genesis xxxi. 30.

¹⁷ Genesis xxxi. 34, 35.

¹⁸ Genesis xxxv. 2, 3, 4, 7.

¹⁹ Judges xvii and xviii.

²⁰ 1 Samuel xix. 12-17. The image must have assumed the proportions of a man in order to produce the necessary illusion.

²¹ Hosea iii. 4.

²² Zechariah x. 1, 2.

Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth; for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face; but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise and save us.²³

The over-zealous Jeremiah makes the same mistake as the simple-minded Protestant who, in a somewhat similar way, accuses the Catholics of worshipping their images, or of the hymn-writer who in his thoughtless self-complacency wrote:—

"The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone."

The hymnlist evidently took his cue from Jeremiah! It is nonsense to assert that the Israelites, or any other people, worshipped stones, stocks or poles. These were really regarded not as the gods themselves but as representations of those gods, and in fact objects in which the gods often took up their residence.

W. CRAIK.

²³ Jeremiah ii. 26, 27.

TARNISH AND VARNISH.

[The following is given as a true bill, made by an artist, for repairs and retouchings to a gallery of paintings of an English lord in the year 1865.]

- To filling up a chink in the Red Sea, and repairing the damages of Pharaoh's host.
- To cleaning six of the Apostles and adding a new Judas Iscariot.
- To a pair of new hands for Daniel in the lion's den and a set of teeth for the lioness.
- To an alteration in the Belief, mending the Commandments, and making a new Lord's Prayer.
- To new varnishing Moses's rod.
- To repairing Nebuchadnezzar's beard.
- To mending the pitcher of Rebecca.
- To a pair of ears for Balaam and a new tongue for the Ass.
- To renewing the picture of Samson in the character of a fox-hunter and substituting a whip for the fire-brand.
- To a new broom and bonnet for the Witch of Endor.
- To a sheet-anchor, a jury mast and a boat for Noah's Ark.
- To painting twenty-one new steps to Jacob's ladder and to mending the pillow stone.
- To adding some Scotch cattle to Pharaoh's lean kine.
- To cleansing Judith's hands.
- To giving a blush to the cheeks of Eve when presenting Adam with the apple.
- To painting Jezebel in the character of a huntsman taking a flying leap from the walls of Jericho.
- To planting a new city in the land of Nod.
- To painting a shoulder of mutton and a shin of beef in the mouths of the two ravens who fed Elijah.
- To repairing Solomon's nose and making a new nail for his middle finger.
- To an exact representation of Noah in the character of a General reviewing his troops prior to their march with the Dove dressed as an aide-de-camp.
- To painting Noah dressed in an Admiral's uniform.
- To painting Samson making a present of his jaw-bone to the proprietors of the British Museum.

(From Walsh's "Handy Book of Literary Curiosities." Lippincott, 1931.)

Acid Drops.

We often wonder if the heavenly recording staff ever threatens to strike for more pay and fewer hours, and what it thinks of the selfishness of pious human nature in giving the staff so much work to do. Deptford Central Hall recently had a "day of intercession" calculated to make the angels "all hot and bothered." From 8 a.m. until 10 p.m., an unbroken chain of intercession ascended to the Throne of Grace. Every human trouble and difficulty, both local and national, was mentioned—continuously. What a funny God these Deptford Christians believe in! An ordinary human father would not require to be incessantly asked to do something to help his off-spring. But apparently the only way to induce Our Heavenly Father to help his human children is by a perpetual bombardment of requests. The worst that might be said of such a God is that he is as intelligent as those who believe in him. Anyway, we hope the Deptford religionists will have another go at God. They ought not to expect a God with that kind of intelligence to be moved by a single bombardment.

A few weeks ago statistics were published showing what a poor price the average church-goer puts on the services of the clergy. Now we have evidence that the finance of the National Assembly itself suffers from a similar stinginess. Only twelve out of forty-three Dioceses have paid their quota for last year. Eight have not paid enough for the pensions of their own clergy. Twenty-one have not paid their full share for education, and of this number, eight have paid nothing. Twenty-eight Dioceses "have not paid a penny" to aid their impecunious fellows. Neither London, Liverpool, St. Albans, Manchester, Newcastle or Wakefield, have paid up in full. No doubt this will be attributed to the economic "crisis," but the Church is about the only business organization in the country that has not been called upon to "tighten its belt." The benevolent Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty are still distraining on impoverished farmers, and Mr. Baldwin declares in Parliament, not only that "the Government can hold out no prospect of legislation on this subject" (because it has given a secret pledge to the Church) but that he "cannot too strongly condemn acts of violence on the part of the payers in resisting the operation of the law." At a protest meeting in Kent the other day one of the farmer speakers observed that:—

"Tithe like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all our cash away;"

An apt, if not, perhaps, an exact parody.

At the Islington Clerical Meeting the Rev. R. Mercer Wilson declared that "modern criticism cannot touch our spirit-breathed conviction that the Scriptures are the Word of God." The breakdown of belief is, according to this gentleman, due, "not to the findings of science, but to the modern philosophy of man's self-sufficiency," hence, he contends, "the struggle is not between belief and science, but between belief and unbelief." Surely this is a distinction without a difference. At the same meeting another clergyman said "there need be no hesitation in accepting the assured results of investigation and enquiry." Galileo, he said, answered the inquisitors that "my Bible tells me how to go to heaven, but not how the heavens go." If Galileo said this, and if he lived today, and if he "accepted the assured results of investigation" he would be as doubtful about the spiritual geography of the Bible as he was about its actual astronomy.

A Christian gentleman, coming straight from Holy Communion in his Church was greeted by his dog and made to stumble slightly. The gallant Christian tied the dog up to a post and proceeded to hack the life out of it with an axe with the most revolting cruelty. He was given six week's hard (it should have been six years) and proudly boasted not only that he had often killed dogs in the same way, but was a great lover of mercy and justice.

Another gallant (Roman Catholic) Christian, the Rev. Father O'Dwyer, occupying the responsible position of magistrate in Sunderland had before him three small boys who had "stolen" six pennyworth of ginger beer between them. Being presumably also a lover of mercy and justice, he ordered these three hardened ruffians of ten and eleven years old, *six strokes of the birch each*.

What is the moral? Well, supposing in the one case it was a Freethinker who foully killed a dog, or in the other a Freethought magistrate who was guilty of such a damnable sentence on three frightened children, what would our Christian friends have said?

Mr. Beverley Nichols, the author, hates "seaside prudes," which is his description of seaside councillors of the puritan type who ban sun-bathing. They are, he says, trying to poison other people with their own nasty minds. He concludes:—

And until you can prove to me that the British people, as a whole, are nasty-minded, I shall continue to hope that we shall eventually be allowed to undress without feeling that God is looking the other way, in case he should see the body he gave us.

Of course, it is up to our prudes and puritans to explain that, as man was made in God's own image, this is sufficient reason why man should be ashamed.

A pious journal details the number of chaplains Primitive Methodism has in connexion with the country's armed forces. What we should like explained is why the professed followers of a pacific Christ can conscientiously accept public money allotted to war purposes, and wear the uniform of war. Of course such service certainly allows the chaplains a unique opportunity of teaching young soldiers and sailors the Christian duty of "turning the other cheek" to the aggressor. But we have never heard of the grand opportunity being taken advantage of by the chaplains.

John Bull calls the Isle of Skye the isle of gloom. "If you want to enjoy yourself on Sunday, don't go to the Isle of Skye. Most boarding-houses there keep the blinds drawn, some even exhibit notices warning visitors not to walk out on the Sabbath, except to church." Seemingly there is at least one portion of the British Isles which the Lord's Dayers can claim as a Christian Paradise on Sunday. Of course, if the citizens of Skye believe that the wish to enjoy oneself and be happy on Sunday is sinful, then they may proudly claim to be really true Christians. But this, of course, is their misfortune; at which it is wrong to jeer.

Miss Diana Bourbon, a young visitor here from America, where the privacy of the individual is not much regarded, has discovered what is the Englishman's "true religion"—namely, privacy. She also declares that the English are snobs. So the truth emerges—as seen from an impartial standpoint, and that the complete "true religion" of the English is snobbery and love of privacy. This ought to prove helpful to the theologians in their struggles to define true religion.

The art of defamation is one in which the Puritan is supreme. Nor is the present-day practitioner of it less reckless than his predecessors of the seventeenth century. In the current issue of the *Methodist Times*, which is running a "clean up the films" stunt is an article thus entitled in the best style of Billingsgate: "Five nights in Hell. My Experiences as a Cinema Attendant. By a Girl who knows." It is to be hoped the writer is not accurately thus described. Of the young people who attended the Cinema concerned she reports that a fellow attendant told her "A large proportion of young boys have here just brought girls they have picked up in the streets. Many have not seen each other before. The girl expects the boy to act as the villain in the screen, and not as the hero. Thus it is that acts which constitute a disgrace to a public place like the cinema are transferred from the shadows of the

screen to the reality of the back seat." This lady carefully abstains from disclosing her own identity, that of the cinema, or the title of the films she mentions, and had she not made that omission no doubt the editor of our pious contemporary would have remedied her lack of caution. Defamation of boys and girls can be done without risk, but "the fine traditions of cleanliness of mind and body," in which the writer says she was "brought up" do not appear to have included a tradition generally associated in such circles with the ninth commandment.

One thing brings up another, and a writer in the *Manchester Guardian*, who starts out to deal with a well known Scottish divine (Dr. Norman Maclean) who recently protested against the proposal to admit women to the ministry, ends up by giving us a new reason for the survival of Christianity. Dr. Maclean argued that this idea was contrary to "a deep-rooted tradition." Dr. Maclean's contention, says the writer, "would put Paul himself in the wrong." Thus:—

He was the arch-traditionalist. "Except," said his opponents in the most vital controversy of his life, "except ye be circumcized after the custom of Moses ye cannot be saved." There is the authentic voice of tradition; if it had been listened to Christianity would have been smothered in its cradle. But Paul refused to give ear to it; he tore off the Jewish swaddling bands from the infant faith and left it free to grow.

The writer adds what in view of his own admission is an extraordinary assertion. He says: "It is not too much to say that Christianity was saved for the world because one man dared to brave tradition." The "bravery" however proves on examination to be of a diplomatic character. Just as is the process by which even now, and according to this article, Christianity continues to survive by similar tactics. "Tradition laid it down that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and David most of the Psalms, and Isaiah the sixty-six chapters of the book which bears his name. Where is that tradition to-day?" It is "crumbled in the dust." Yes, not because of the bravery of Christians in daring tradition, but because, like Paul, at every fresh evidence of the baselessness of what were once fundamental beliefs, they realize that Christianity can only survive by the surrender by instalments as occasion demands of manifest superstitions and errors. How much must go before all is gone that history knows as the Christian religion? According to some Protestant divines at least—everything, if necessary, only it will still be the Christian religion! And each fresh surrender to science must be acclaimed as a triumph of Christian learning and valour.

The Rev. J. A. Thomson, of Dewsbury, has been advertising his services by walking the streets as a sandwichman. The *Methodist Times*, which must have its little joke, says "he received no pay, but he was always sure of his 'board.'" On the board were these words. "God is everywhere but U must begin to know him somewhere. Come and hear J.A.T. this Sunday." Mr. Thompson's conceit of himself must be hefty. Another board, this time outside a mission at Uxbridge, bears this haunting question: "If God treated you as you treat him?" Surely an infelicitous query, for most of the people who read it if they answer it truthfully would say—"he would not bother with me at all." The Dewsbury sandwichman appears to have had a hot time when the wind blew his board into a waiting cinema queue, and, as he heard a good deal of language on his parades that "suffered from blood pressure," the *Methodist Times* opines that "life in a town crowd on a Saturday night is only another name for death." It is to be hoped our pious contemporary is not read in Dewsbury, or it might occasion more of the language before mentioned. Mr. Thomson preached "last Sunday evening in sultry weather on 'findings in Dewsbury streets.'" The weather was appropriate to the text.

The candour of the modern Christian as to the plight of his faith is astonishing. Thus a writer in the *Christian World* (Dr. Painter) says: "There was a time when, with a wider interest in theology, it seemed im-

portant to most people that they should make their peace with God, and 'accept Christ.' . . . To-day nearly all the immediacy has dropped out of the matter . . . We give men much to reflect upon, but nothing to shake the foundations of their lives. Our message is interesting, not pressing." To-day, men "are more aware of futility than of sinfulness." Then, this writer, apparently realizing that he has given the game away, drops back into the stales of all Christian diagnosis of unbelief, and declares: "It is easier to discuss the moral standards than to be unselfish, it is easier to argue about God, than to submit life to Him." The exact opposite of the truth. When people "submitted life to God" they did not "discuss" moral standards, they accepted them; they did not argue about God, they took Him for granted. To say that argument is easier than credulity a typical theological fallacy. "Ye cannot by searching find out God" is no doubt true, but that ye can by searching find out that ye cannot find Him is precisely that part of what they call "modern indifference" which the ministers and clergymen never take into their reckoning. The "sinfulness" of the searcher, not the disillusion of the quest, is their invariable resource.

The Rev. Arthur Pringle says that "in these unsettled and questioning days, those of us who stand for Christianity must not be afraid of arguing with those who differ from us." This shows how far the world has moved since the glorious Age of Faith, when Christians believed that the only way to argue with the unbeliever was by imprisoning, or torturing, or murdering him. The new Christian way of arguing may, of course, be more civilized, but it is far from helpful to the Church. For very often the believer gets made "unsettled" by the unbeliever.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE world has been sympathizing with Job for two thousand years, and pitying his sufferings and tribulations; but hardly a thought seems to have been taken of Mrs. Job and her trials, which must have been of no ordinary nature. True, she didn't have any boils, her husband, with true masculine selfishness, appropriating them all to himself; but she had to wait on him and listen to his complainings day and night. It would have tried the patience of a saint to have been compelled to live in the same house with a man burdened with such a wealth of afflictions as Job was, and it is hardly to be wondered at that, goaded to desperation, his wife one day advised him to throw up the game and pass in his checks.

There seems to have been a constant stream of people coming to see Job, to condole with him. Not only did the neighbours drop in continually to see how he was getting along, each one with a different remedy for boils, but relatives came from long distances, and of course they had to be entertained and fed. This made a great deal of work for Mrs. Job, who, on account of her husband's extraordinary losses, couldn't afford to keep a hired girl. What with cooking meals for the guests and poultices for Job, she had hardly a minute to herself. Had she not been a remarkable woman she never could have gone through with it.

Job's case was discussed a great deal in the papers, and scientific men came from all parts of the country to study it. Job stood this with that patience that became proverbial, and was never out of humour as long as the boils lasted. All these people boarded at the Job mansion, and any one who has observed scientific men eat knows what appetites they have, and can understand how busy the woman of the house must have been cooking for them.

The trials of the man of Uz were certainly very great, and if we of to-day were subjected to the like of them, there is probably not a man of Uz who could go through the programme without kicking; yet sympathy for Job should not blind us entirely to the sufferings of his heroic wife.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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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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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 must ask the indulgence of correspondents this week. The action which the N.S.S. is bringing against the Clerk of the Justices at Birkenhead is down for hearing there on the day we go to press, and Mr. Cohen is bound to be present. For that reason there are a number of letters that cannot be dealt with until his return. Correspondents will excuse the delay.

We know there are a number of unattached Freethinkers in the Streatham district, and an attempt is being made to form a Branch of the N.S.S. there. Will all those willing to help in the formation communicate with Mr. J. Scabert, 19 Gairloah Road, Camberwell, London, S.E.5.

Mr. G. Whitehead reports splendid meetings at Sunderland throughout the week. That was almost to be expected as the local Branch N.S.S. consists of a number of keen Freethinkers, to whom hard work for the Cause is a pleasure, as well as a duty. Unattached Freethinkers with a similar urge should lose no time in communicating with the local Secretary, Mr. F. Bradford, 58 Norman Street, Hendon, Sunderland.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch N.S.S. has been holding some very well attended open-air meetings, and the prospects for a successful week's mission for Mr. G. Whitehead are particularly good. Mr. Whitehead will address all the meetings during the week, beginning to-day (Sunday). Details will be found in the Lecture Notice column. The local N.S.S. Branch will, of course, co-operate at all the meetings.

The intimate connexion between Phallicism in its various forms and religion is well known to all students, an intimacy of which many illustrations may be found in Church ornaments, ceremonies, dress, etc. Mr. E. C. Saphin has brought together a number of these illustrations of phallic-worship in a pamphlet, *The Natural Ori-*

gin of the Supernatural, which he is issuing through the Pioneer Press. There are a number of illustrations, the significance of which is obvious. The price is 6d. post free.

There is a good example of monomania in our hysterical contemporary *The Facist*. De Groot, "a facist of Irish extraction, made a scene at the opening of the new Sydney harbour bridge by severing the ribbon before the Prime Minister, and shouting, "I declare this bridge open in the name of the King and all decent people." He was removed to a mental hospital by "the usual Jewish plan of hinting at mental instability in the case of anyone who exposes the Jew menace!"

The Maniac, by "Q" (Watts, 7s. 6d.) first appeared with a medical publisher, in 1909. It is an account written down during the months immediately after five weeks of acute mental illness. The writer is, or was, a woman journalist, and the book is good "copy." As a serious contribution to the grim problem of our appalling statistics of mental deficiency and disorder it has the obvious disadvantages of the author's naturally vivid imagination and practised pen. Moreover, while she claims that "to enscribe the entire account, verbatim, has been but the smallest effort of memory on my part," it is clear that much depends on the accurate memory and observation of other persons—nurses, doctors, and real or imaginary friends, from whom much of the "verbatim" report had to come, since the author records matters of which she has no "conscious" memory herself. There is much spiritualistic and theological jargon—some of it showing the average journalistic unfamiliarity with psychological and ecclesiastical detail.

Truth is stranger than fiction, and, whether *The Maniac* is truth or fiction, it has an air of convincing verisimilitude. The reader who begins, will go on to the end, and, as he progresses, his sympathy and horror will struggle for predominance. If he should have personal or professional experience of insanity it may occur to him that the writer has a better notion of a story than most of the all too few who make permanent recovery from that condition. That she has many harsh words for mental doctors and nurses (but admits her debt to the doctor mainly in charge of her case); that she puts forward her own views on so vast and comparatively unexplored a territory as that of "consciousness," and asserts that those who are devoting themselves to its exploration are "all at sea," compels us to wish that a rattling good tale was not told without the somewhat pretentious suggestion of its scientific utility. It is in the pathological laboratory and not in reminiscence, however lurid, that the real struggle for light on this dark and menacing phenomena is being carried on—with very stingy assistance from a parsimonious State.

Punch, which in other days, especially those of Leech, was very critical of religious extravagances, is now painfully orthodox. One of its brightest lights however, Mr. A. P. Herbert, letting himself go elsewhere, has provided several quotable items of late. The last (which we borrow from the *Observer* is the following:—

I cannot, at the moment, think of a single human activity outside religious worship which has not recently been condemned by some indignant prelate or belligerent Church council.

Apology: as great a peacemaker as the word "if." In all cases, it is an excuse rather than an exculpation, and, if adroitly managed, may be made to confirm what it seems to recall, and to aggravate the offence which it pretends to extenuate. A man who had accused his neighbour of falsehood, was called on for an apology, which he gave in the following amphibological terms: I called you a liar—it is true. You spoke the truth: I have told a lie.

(From "The Tin Trumpet," 1836.)

The Psychology of Censorship.

It is not generally realized that in the exercise of a censorship we have the survival, in a vitiated form, of a primitive tribal function—that of restraint and often coercion of the individual member in the interests of the tribe.

The welfare of the primitive tribe had to be maintained, even if it were at the expense of the rebel and innovator; and often by means which we now consider to be regrettable. Danger presented itself with every idea of trying to carry on the social life in a way that was not according to usage that had been handed down from the past. Hence the development of a conservative mentality which expressed itself in the consensus of opinion by which custom and tradition were enforced; and from this very few dared to break away. Censorship of new ideas was comparatively easy, and the adoption of new ways of life, as changing conditions made them essential, would be the more difficult, as those who were quick enough to see the needed change would not have free scope to teach the others. While, with the adoption of new habits there would go on the retention of old beliefs, and so progress in the understanding of things would be retarded, as the mysterious forces surrounding early man would be found good enough to account for the new ways of life as for the old.

Whether the establishment of social continuity was worth the price paid in conservatism and tribal censorship by primitive man on his own behalf is an interesting question; but there is no doubt that the price paid by subsequent generations has been excessive. Some measure of conservation is still necessary if social development is to be sound, but it should be the result of intelligent retention of what is of value, and not the outcome of a habit of mind that would retain whatever has been handed down to us just because it has been handed down. This applies to ideas and our various modes of giving expression to them, as well as to anything else in modern life.

In early society almost every action would seem to be closely connected with the well-being of all members of the tribe. Consequently, when the health and prosperity of a tribe depended upon doing everything in the way it had always been done, any breach of the accepted method, or any idea suggesting such a breach, would be looked upon as likely to jeopardise the tribe, especially with regard to its relationship to the unseen forces with which it was believed to be surrounded; whether spirits, or gods, or something more vague still.

Hence, the offender who wished to depart from normal ways would have to be brought to his senses.

In time, the power of bringing the offender to boot, or exercising a censorship over his actions and his opinions, passed into the hands of the medicine-man, as far as many things were concerned. Or, they acted very largely for the rulers of the tribe in the interest of tribal stability—which, all too soon, came to be the interest of the "powers that be."

Later, the conception behind the exercise of censorship and coercion in the interest of the tribe became more and more narrowed until enforcing what was held to be for the good of the tribe equalled enforcing what was in the interest of a religious sect, or a political body.

On the religious side, the extent of the sect did not alter the narrowness of the conception, as it meant woe unto those who did not conform to doctrine and practice. As witness the Roman Catholic Church, and the Puritans.

The former has wielded the censorship in the form

of, the Inquisition, the Confessional, and the Index; while the latter have exercised it in the form of looking askance at anyone who expressed an opinion or did an action not in conformity with a narrow ethic, dominated by a narrow theology.

In these cases, as in others, every means of social and economic pressure has been used in the interest of a sect. In the history of religion we find that most religious bodies have used the censorship with regard to theology and morals, in one form or another. Not in the interest of society at large, although often under that guise, but in the interest of a sect. Thus, a tribal function that was at one time useful and is sometimes even useful now as a national function, has been turned into a sectarian function; and is in this latter form foisted upon the nation. The psychology of early man, which was the outcome of a blundering interpretation of things, according to which society was related to mysterious forces, is continued in modern society in the psychology of the censorship, which sees a nation going to pieces unless we adjust our lives to the moral teachings of a religious sect, or sects that have combined for a particular issue. While the ethic put forward is tuned into the concept of a mysterious other world, peopled with beings as shadowy as those of the savage psychology.

The danger lies not in the handing down into modern life of the idea of "society protecting itself," but in the transfer into the moral sphere of the primitive idea of the forces against which society shall protect itself, and into a complex social structure where it cannot possibly work for the ultimate good of all concerned.

Many ideas and institutions can be traced back to primitive times, but, whenever they are of value in modern society, it is due to their having been modified in form or altered in application as social life has evolved, and to a corresponding mentality having also been developed.

When the idea of a censorship is put forward in modern society it is due to no such adjustment, but to the persistence of a primitive type of mentality. One which seeks to make all members of society conform to the traditions, habits, and customs of a body of people within society. This mentality is out of place in such spheres of modern life as those of art, literature, ethics, and the drama with its modern "film" mode of expression.

In the censorship, the place of the tribe is taken by the sect, or combined sects, and an attempt is made to force upon every citizen in the nation certain ideas as to what he shall read, and not read, in literature and science, or see in art, in the drama, or on the film; while the fact of the complex nature of the psychological make-up of modern society is ignored. No notice is taken of the different stages of culture that are now to be found in society; and, consequently all members are treated as if they were on the same intellectual level.

They must not read or see what the sectarians declare to be taboo, any more than a member of a primitive tribe might act or speak in any manner that was taboo.

Even when the censorship carries with it the appearance of extreme egotism, as when an individual advocating moral purification expresses himself in terms which imply that no books shall be read, or films seen, other than those of which he approves, we have before us the social mentality of the primitive tribe seeking to defend itself against mysterious harmful powers. The egotism of such an individual lies in the fact of his believing himself to be of sufficient importance to speak for the whole. His censorship is social in origin, even if he acts as one self-appointed,

as he believes he would be, or should be, backed up by it. No individual is of any use as a censor unless he stands for a body of opinion as to what should and should not be done. Whether self-elected or appointed by a sect, or combination of sects, or an apparently non-sectarian body acting under the pressure of organized religious opinion, the censor is a social product. He stands for one of the traits of early society that have come down to us in harmful form. His existence depends upon lack of intellectual activity on the one hand, and on the other hand intellectual activity working at a low level.

It is because a censorship is of social origin and acts upon and through mass psychology that it is dangerous; and this gives us the key to its abolition. It will only be abolished for good, by widespread education of a kind that will create a psychological atmosphere in which the idea of such a thing cannot exist.

Instead of education as a means to bringing about a saner attitude towards sex questions the censor uses the methods of taboo and magic. He acts as if the preventing people seeing sex-scenes on the film will set up some magic influence by means of which the sex impulses of those persons will be exorcised into quietude. In spite of the fact that apart from the "film" there are many things in modern life by which sex feelings are unduly aroused; and, also, that one need not go to literature, art, or drama for sex excitement, censorship too easily assumes that, if all these were freed from ideas of sex, all would be well. It leaves out of consideration the need for a better understanding of the relationship between man and woman; the falsity that has invaded a goodly part of the sphere of married life; and the stress of modern life in general which makes excitement an easy form of relief to many after the daily routine.

As is usual with attempts at moral reform which are either religious or have their roots in religion when they appear to be non-religious, censorship works on the surface and parades its moral betterment objective as a substitute for an attempt to reorganize society on lines that would make for the well being of all, and make it possible for men and women of every type to have a reasonable opportunity for self-development on moral and intellectual lines, with a fair share of recreation.

Rooted in a primitive psychology as the idea of censorship is, it attempts a fixity of ideas and conduct in a world of changing moral ideas and relationships; thus treating the whole sphere of human conduct as if it were entirely independent of the development of society. Its method is that of the medicine-man with his taboo as the expression of his authority, and his reliance on magic for the bringing about of a "new heart and a clean life."

That a recognized censor is now-a-days appointed to work in the sphere of morals may disguise the religious nature of the idea of censorship in this connexion, but it does not alter the fact. If in England, the churches were powerful enough to establish their own censorship, and force submission to it, they would do so. That would at least be honest; but not being so powerful, the churches seek to wield an influence in the interest of religious suppression of thought, speech and conduct, under cover of moral reform done in the name of the State, or a board of film censors.

This is one of the ways in which the religionists see to it that religious habits of thought persist; and the work of the Freethinker in this direction is that of creating a mental atmosphere, which will make possible the free discussion of ways and means for bringing about a better state of society.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Medieval Faith and Fable.*

I.—CHRISTIANITY'S BLACK RECORD.

In the Middle Ages, which, comprehensively, means from the sixth to the fifteenth century, "the Catholic Church and the Catholic Faith were the predominant influence," says Dr. MacCulloch. Then as now, however, there were heretics and sceptics, and "extraordinary superstition and credulity flourished." The learned writer, like Dr. Wallis Budge, to whom the Editor referred recently, has only one defect. His religious belief, or the taboo which it exercises, does not allow him to boldly state the logical conclusion of the facts which his studies compel him to admit. "The old idea of the Middle Ages as the Dark Ages has long been discredited." Discredited by whom? By Cardinal Gasquet and Mr. Belloc, no doubt; but not by Dr. Coulton and a whole host of other scholars who have worked over the ground of medieval exploration. While, therefore, we warmly agree with Sir J. G. Frazer, who writes a Foreword, that Dr. MacCulloch has "sound and wide learning and literary grace," we are not so sure about what is called his "delicate sympathy with those earlier faiths" here dealt with. Its real significance is that Dr. MacCulloch is, after all, in the Lowland parish where he ministers, an exponent of a creed which, in the last analysis, belongs, as does his sacred function itself, to the same category as "medieval faiths and fables."

At the very outset of his book the Canon says, "Paganism had no martyrs . . . there was no organized rebellion against triumphant Christianity." Could there be a more convincing proof of the nature of the early "triumph" of the "faith"? But Roman, Celt and Teuton, like the Britons to whom St. Augustine came, adopted a "conglomerate" religion (as Mr. Clodd aptly called it) in which they were allowed to embody as much as was necessary of the old beliefs. Dr. MacCulloch himself admits that "tens of thousands of those in the Empire or among the Germanic tribes who accepted Christianity understood it imperfectly, if at all, or adopted it conventionally, out of necessity or for temporal advantage." And "Paganism was certainly not driven out of their hearts." Many "kept a foot in both camps," for "there was a spice of adventure in disobeying the commands of the Church." In so far as those commands were obeyed it was because they also involved offering incense and flowers to the new God and kissing images as aforetime. The explanation, the only explanation, of "the retention of minor pagan rites and customs and the resort to magic by the Christian populations of Europe for centuries, and the continued belief in lesser dieties and spirits in their own or altered forms—as fairies and elves for example—was that there was a widespread incomplete or half acceptance of the Faith, especially where whole tribes were baptized at the command of their chiefs." Moreover, the Christian Faith added to the darkness and terror of beliefs already held. "Most superstitions . . . grew darker as the Devil"—that is, the Christian Devil—was more and more seen to be behind them *e.g.*, "the werwolf and vampire beliefs, the fairy creed, and the conceptions of the *incubus* and *sucuba*." The worship of the Virgin, like the existence of the Devil, had its earlier counterparts that survived alongside it. "Groups of goddesses, represented as three in number were popular in the Celtic area, whence their cult passed to the Teutons—the *Deæ Matres*, or *Matronæ*, and others mainly connected with fertility . . . they were later transformed into *fees* of romance and folk-belief—the *domine*, *bonnes dames*, *dames blanches*, *bonnes pucelles*." These were regarded by the Church as demons, but their long continuance is not hard to understand if one has any acquaintance with the literature of Christian "sanctity" and "mysticism."

In his chapter on "Heretics" the writer makes a significant admission. After the "practical extinction of the Arian and other heresies . . . the Church enjoyed comparative freedom for centuries from the vagaries of widespread heretical opinions," for "the stagnation of thought" then prevalent "was not favourable to in-

dependent views on doctrinal matters." There was a notable heretic in the twelfth century, one Peter of Bruys, priest of an Alpine village. He began a crusade against "the Roman idolatry," which went on for twenty years and found many followers, especially in Toulouse. He rejected most Christian and Catholic doctrines. His followers were re-baptized, crosses were burned, priests were scourged, monks were imprisoned and forced to marry. On one Good Friday many crosses were collected at Peter's order and burned, and meat roasted on the fire thus made was eaten. "Sacraments, priesthood and symbolism" were all equally abhorrent to Peter and his adherents. His end was inevitable. "At last, in 1125, at Saint-Gilles, in Languedoc, the monks stirred up the mob who burned Peter at the stake." In the same century there were communistic heresies, which, says the writer, were "based on strictly Apostolic principles," but "went to great extremes," *i.e.*, they thought the "apostolic principles" meant what they said. It was left for a modern commentator to affirm that they mean the opposite of what they say and can be best obeyed by *not* doing what they recommend. "Renouncing Holy Communion and reverence to the cross and images of our Lord," they gave up all worldly goods, ate no flesh, and drank little or nothing but water. Wives left husbands and husbands left wives to join them. In 1163, at Cologne, as several heretics were being led to the stake a beautiful girl was withdrawn from the fire and offered the choice of a husband or a nunnery if she would recant. When the heretics were burned she said "show me where my seducer is." When his place in the fire was shown to her "she rushed into the flames with him, or, in the words of Cæsarius, "with him went down to the everlasting fires of hell."

Dealing with the main heresy of this period, Catharism, Dr. MacCulloch says its ethics were in fact "an ideal which admittedly could not be practised except by a few. Hence the inevitable compromise. Let the few practise the ideal. All others may do as they like, provided they accept Catharism as a faith and promise to receive its one sacrament before death." This "compromise" certainly did not cease to exist in the twelfth century. There is much of its spirit in the Canon's "delicate sympathy" with heretics. He says "the instinct of self-preservation which exists in society, as in the individual, and which saw in all heresy that which would overthrow the Church and the State alike, drove men to exterminate heretics wherever they appeared." They only remained unchecked in areas where "the Church was so corrupt itself that men regarded it with good natured contempt!"

A further notice will follow in which something shall be said about the medieval sceptics and other subjects herein treated.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

* By Canon J. A. MacCulloch. Harrap, 15s. net.

(To be concluded.)

GOING AWAY AND ARRIVING.

Going away and arriving—how closely the whole of existence fits itself between those two adventures. When you stand in the mid-sea of life, far away from its beginnings,* and apparently far from its ending, you realize how many things you have gone away from, and how comparatively few you seem to have arrived at. Yet I like to think that they are but the two halves of one whole, and that if Going Away is the chief joy of youthful life, Arriving is the special pleasure and privilege of age; and that even though the horizons of youth are grown dim and misty in the distance, for people who have grown old wisely the land they are approaching grows more clearly defined, and from being a strange and unknown, becomes a familiar and welcoming country; on whose soft shore they look forward to lying down for a long rest, with the noise of the waters over which they have passed lulling them to a pleasant and dreamless sleep.

Filson Young in "Letters from Solitude."

RIDICULE.

RIGHTLY employed ridicule is perhaps the most destructive weapon of controversy that we know, in the hands of a skillful exponent there can be nothing quite so devastating and deadly. It has even been urged against it that it is too severe to be used by anyone no matter what may be the subject of attack, but underlying this contention there is probably a deeply-rooted apprehension of having one's own pet beliefs exposed to the acid test of ridicule, and one may answer it in the words of Winwood Reade: "Ridicule is a destructive instrument, and it is my intention to destroy. If a man is cutting down a tree it is useless asking him not to strike so hard." After all there can be no disputing the fact that ridicule is a perfectly legitimate form of argument, and to refrain from using it because of the incisiveness of its thrusts is almost criminal neglect of our duty to strive to eradicate the foolish and sometimes noxious views which abound.

There are a few persons who object to ridicule on the grounds that it is the stock-in-trade of the uncouth street orator. This is untrue, for it is to be found in the speeches of most of the great orators and in the works of the great writers. As. G. W. Foote remarks: "To take ridicule from our literature you would have to go through such a winnowing and pruning process that you would destroy it. Eliminate from Byron his ridicule, eliminate from other great masters their ridicule and what a loss there would be! Ridicule is a weapon which has been used by so many great emancipators of mankind; if we have used it, even in a coarser manner than they, it is the same weapon. If ridicule is a legal weapon, the mere style or manner cannot render it illegal."

Even Biblical stalwarts such as Jesus, Elijah, and Isaiah were not averse from pouring ridicule upon ideas which did not coincide with their own, while the modern Christian, though he objects very strongly to the ridiculing of his own beliefs, is inconsistent enough to attempt to hold up to derision the beliefs of others.

But no doubt the real or basic trouble with many otherwise clear-sighted people who decry ridicule is that they attribute to it functions which are altogether outside its sphere. For instance, it is often taken for granted that to satirize the habits of men and women, to rouse mirth at their misfortunes, to excite laughter at their physical defects constitutes the essence of ridicule. Again there are some who are convinced that its essence lies in the mere abuse of people and their opinions. Neither view is correct. The first is brutal and the other emanates from ignorance and intolerance. Ridicule, the rapier of polemics, is a clean, wholesome weapon. It may be severe, but it is never brutal; it may be merciless in indictment, but it is never abusive. It does not evoke mirth at the expense of natural misfortune or the idiosyncrasies of mankind; it does not concern itself with foul epithets or abusive language. Its aim is to extirpate hypocrisy, humbug, affectation, ostentation, and bigotry. It assails everything that is false or absurd. Behind it there is no deliberate intention to hurt the feelings of anyone. It is a cleansing process, and every sound opinion is the better for being subjected to it.

To lay stress upon the harm ridicule does, and the hostility it arouses is to lose sight of the fact that its utility in combating shams completely overshadows the mere wounding of a man's vanity. It is, of course, regrettable that natural vanity and pride which are weaknesses common to all men and women should receive hurt, but until people learn to differentiate between an attack on their opinions and an attack on their characters this state of affairs is likely to continue.

That the rapier must be used with discretion on occasions is undeniable for reasons to be found above, not to do so would spell trouble and perhaps martyrdom. Albeit this is not a sufficient justification for prohibiting its entrance into the realm of controversial discussion, and attaching to it a label bearing the inscription "Dangerous; please do not touch." After all it must not be forgotten that Freethought has survived in the

face of the bitterest sarcasm and the most caustic shafts of ridicule; it has even thrived on them, and therein lies a supreme virtue. An opinion, a theory, a philosophy must be able to withstand the test of ridicule or else it is not worth holding.

At the back of much of the opposition and a large percentage of the outcries raised against ridicule is religion. Religion hates humour, particularly when it assails dogmas that are vital to its very existence. "For God's sake," say the champions of religion, in effect, "if you cannot possibly accept its teachings, at least treat them seriously." Why? Because laughter will eventually kill them, and ridicule by exposing their inherent absurdities and fallacies creates a highly effective antitoxin.

In a world such as ours steeped as it still is in ignorance, credulity, and superstition, and with the number of knaves ready to trade on these weak spots in man it would be sheer foolishness to deprive ourselves of an implement such as ridicule; it would simply mean granting a new lease of life to fraud, and it would be indeed a boon to religion. We can ill afford to give imposture or religion any advantages. The fight for freedom, liberty, and justice is hard enough without the additional handicap of the loss of ridicule. If we wish to maintain the progress we have made here we must not permit a valuable aid to be taken from us. Ridicule is a dire necessity, and, though its stings may cause people to suffer at times, were it not there to war with the evils that beset us everywhere we turn, the world would, in the end, suffer much more intensely.

TOM BLAKE.

A Common Story.

In noting the birth of a new comet, the clash of empires, the death of Kings and Emperors, the making of clothes from wood, the change in colour of lipstick, and a thousand other phenomena that scarcely equal the importance of a shower of rain, I have been attracted almost imperceptibly to chronicle the part of a woman's life that presented itself to me. There is no moral to be drawn from the picture that I sketch; the colours are grey, but in places there are gleams of eternal human sunshine that nature gives to life irrespective of rank in what is foolishly known as the social order. In the comedy of life it would sometimes seem that a demand from humble folk would shake the foundations of heaven and even dislocate the necks of angels with astonishment. Humble folk possess certain qualities of animals, but do not make hasty conclusions on reading this assertion. Ewes when separated from their lambs will break through fences and hedges to get back to them and find them in the dark. A cow will bring up five or six successive calves not her own. An old hen in the farm-yard will strut between two fighting cockerels and give one a peck and send them both off about the business of growing up. These incidents can be observed without looking for them. Humble folk demand nothing. They simply travel the earth and poke the smouldering fires of Providence. The high and mighty would give their ears for information of where these fires could be found.

She was an old woman on whose hands were hard knots made by scrubbing floors, cleaning brass taps, turning the mangle, and carrying numberless buckets of water up countless stairs. She would be about sixty years of age, but her eyes were bright and her cheeks still carried the bloom of health. Curious eyes they were—they seemed to be the eyes of a child who was happy, and nearly always they twinkled as though the scenes taking place in front of them were perennially fresh. Deafness had almost cut her off from the world of sound, but as there is only stupidity behind most of the noise made by human beings this was not altogether a disadvantage. She had a husband who was too old and enfeebled to work, a daughter, two sons who were out of work, and at sixty years of age she was doing odd jobs of charing. In addition, one of her duties was to read the betting news to her husband, who displayed

much temper at her pronunciation of the horses' names. With her usual cheerfulness she told a neighbour of a little win on the "Grand Natural."

Physical labour she had intimately known all her life, yet there was never heard a grumble at her lot. She was closely wedged in by a set of circumstances that made me wonder how she could hold the priceless secret of content, for happiness was not the word to describe her condition.

One day, a severe cold made her take to her bed, and pneumonia developed, but a sound and sturdy constitution prevented the worst from happening. A note from her, written in pencil, enables us to peep behind the veil of a personality:—

"Dear Mrs —,

Thank you so much for my money. I will never be out of debt, also for Primroses which always bring back to my mind happy days. I am feeling much better today. I am very thankful for hoping you will excuse the writing with my best respects, thanks,

Yours gratefully,"

In the old woman's mind something had been gently stirred by the sight and fragrance of a few flowers. Neither Time nor this narration will tell; but the serenity in her eyes was the gift of some compassionate God who had remembered woman. Her illness kept her away from work, and door-knobs, taps, windows, and linoleum took a vacation. Another letter came, the significant part may be seen in the phrase "if you will have me." I suppose, in my limited knowledge of the subject, that it is a near neighbour to the meek inheriting the earth:—

"Dear Mrs. —

I was ever so sorry you was out this morning. I have missed you three times. It was nearly eleven o'clock when I got back from the doctor, he said he did not think anything very serious, only what the medicine would clear off. I hope to see you Tuesday, if you will have me, trusting you are all well with many thanks for all past kindness,

Yours faithfully,"

My last news of her was that she fractured her wrist during her endless hours of cleaning; she had gone home after the accident and prepared the tea for her daughter and two sons.

It would seem in looking over the above review that there is nothing dramatic, nothing vitally interesting, perhaps nothing even worth the record. The sentient world has no appetite for such jog-trot stuff. "Let us have," we can hear it hawling, "some high chronicle of court life, some great story of intrigue between kings, some throbbing tale of the private life of a famous film actress." The world can have it, and so much more remote from normal life it moves until it becomes a strip of film itself.

I have recorded a living woman's epitaph, imperfectly perhaps, and as roughly as the cave-man scrawled on the wall of his under-ground dwelling. But this is not the first or last word on woman. If we cease to think of woman without something beyond reverence—for this is a poor word, then the closing of the book of life begins. But my intimate knowledge of an unrecognized heroine tells me that her life can be multiplied by thousands, and in that lies our hope.

C.DE-B.

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN.

"'Twould ring the bells of Heaven
The wildest peal for years,
If Parson lost his senses
And people came to theirs,
And he and they together,
Knelt down with angry prayers
For tamed and shabby tigers,
And dancing dogs and bears,
And wretched, blind pit ponies,
And little hunted hares."

(From Poems by Ralph Hodgson.)

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."
PRESS AND ELECTION ACTIVITY.

SIR,—By a happy coincidence Mr. Victor Morris's paper, with its excellent reference to the use to be made of local newspapers, appears in the same issue as Mr. G. F. Green's report of the activities of Freethinkers at Dulwich by-election. Both newspapers and elections—especially by-elections—are likely fields for Freethinkers to cultivate. May I, as one who has had some experience in both, congratulate Mr. Morris and Mr. Green on their respective efforts, and add a word as to how best others can follow their example.

Local papers, and indeed all newspapers, are simply flooded with propaganda "dope," much of it mere advertising disguised as "news" or controversy. The average editor has neither time, nor inclination, and in any case there is rarely space, for this kind of thing. But a short, relevant, and accurate description of a local event or meeting, or a letter on some matter of local interest, similarly framed will, in most reputable journals, be used, and in many cases be welcomed.

The great thing from the Editor's point of view is brevity—the last thing, it is to be feared, in which enthusiasts specialize, whether Freethinkers or Christians. It is also important that such letters should effuse light rather than heat.

"Outside organizations," as they are called in political quarters, cannot legally *officially* take part in by-elections, and if a friendly candidate accepted aid in the form of leaflets issued on his behalf by such an organization or its helpers he would have to return its cost in his election expenses. Thus, it will be seen that the line taken by Mr. Green and those who helped him is much the best, viz., distribution of literature which is *not* identified with a candidate, and questions at meetings, or by letter to all candidates. I agree with both our friends that there is great scope in these directions.

ALBERT C. WHITE.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JUNE 24, 1932.

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

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Hornibrook, Rosetti (A. C.), Moss, Clifton, Wood, Le Maine, Silvester, Easterbrook, (W. J. W.), Ebury, Preece, McLaren, Sandys, Easterbrook (L.M.W.), Mrs. Quinton, Jun., Mrs. Venton, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. The monthly Financial Statement presented. New members were admitted as follows: Swansea, Wembley, N. London, W. London Branches, and the Parent Society. Under correspondence, matters concerning Birmingham, Stockport, Birkenhead, Bloemfontein, N. London, and reports from Messrs. Whitehead, Brighton and Clayton, were noted and dealt with. The meeting re-affirmed the motion passed at the March meeting, that the President represents the N.S.S. in the Beecheroff Settlement Case. The Secretary reported progress in enquiries concerning a Gramophone Record of a speech from the President. After some discussion, Mr. A. C. Rosetti was asked, and agreed to make further trade enquiries in co-operation with the Secretary. The President reported the wide distribution of the leaflet on *The Rule of the Sabbatarian*, and a large reprint was provisionally approved.

The meeting then closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

YOUNG married couple, scientific Atheists, recently arrived from New Zealand would welcome opportunity to get into touch with fellow unbelievers of either sex (age 25-35) interested in discussing books and questions of the day, living in Lewisham, Catford, Crofton Park, Forest Hill or Nunhead area. Reply to G.C., PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON,

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. H. S. Wishart.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road): 7.30, Saturday, July 2, Messrs. Barnes, Tuson and Bryant. *Freethinkers* on sale.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, July 3, Mr. C. Tuson. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, July 4, A Debate between Rev. J. Chalmers Lyon and Mr. L. Ebury. Subject—"Christianity or Secularism. Which is the better Philosophy of Life." Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Thursday, July 7. Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.30, Sunday, July 3, Mr. C. Tuson. Wednesday, July 6, Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. Friday, July 8, Wren Road, Camberwell Green, 8.0, Mrs. E. Grout.

WEST HAM BRANCH.—Outing to Kew Gardens. Train 9.30 a.m., from Bow Road Underground. Cheap day ticket 1s. return. Lunch to be carried, tea arranged at the "Rose and Crown," Kew Green for 4 p.m. All Freethinkers and friends cordially invited.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): Wednesday, June 29, at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Wood. Thursday, June 30, at 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin. Friday, July 1, at 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine. Sunday, July 3, at 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Bryant and Wood; Platform No. 2, Messrs. B. A. Le Maine and Tuson. 6.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Wood, Tuson and Bryant; Platform No. 2, Messrs. Hyatt and Saphin.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Ship," Plumstead Common): 7.45, Friday, July 1, Mr. S. Burke. (Beresford Square, Woolwich): 7.45, Sunday, July 3, Mr. S. Burke will speak.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Professor J. C. Flugel, D.Sc.—"The Psychology of Happiness."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

ACCRINGTON: 8.0, Sunday, July 3, Mr. J. Clayton.

BURNLEY MARKET: 3.15, Sunday, July 3, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End): 8.0, Friday, July 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

DURHAM (Market Place): 7.30, Tuesday, July 5, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Messrs. H. Little and J. V. Shortt. Tuesday, July 5, Edge Hill Lamp, 8.0, Messrs. H. Little and P. Sherwin. Thursday, July 7, corner of High Park Street and Park Park, 8.0, Messrs. A. Jackson, P. Robinson and S. Wollen. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at all meetings.

MERSEYSIDE FREETHINKERS.—Sunday, July 3, Outing to Freshfield. Meet Exchange Station, Liverpool, 2.25 (for 2.35 train) or outside Freshfield Station about 3 p.m.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.30, Sunday, July 3, Mr. G. Whitehead. Also Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Tuesday, Durham Market Place.

READ: 7.30, Friday, July 1, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 8.0, Saturday, July 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND (Lambton Street): 7.0, Sunday, July 3, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

TODMORDEN: 8.0, Thursday, July 7, Mr. J. Clayton.

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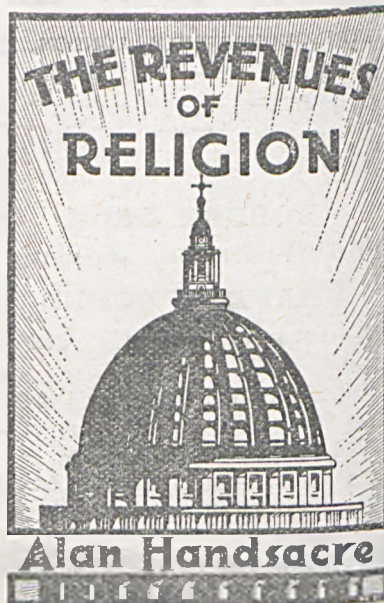
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