

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN · COHEN · · · EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G · W · FOOTE

VOL. LII.—No. 48

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1932

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

War—And Peace.

ANOTHER Disarmament Conference is in being and the certain thing about it is that the one subject that will not be discussed is disarmament. The discussions will revolve round the question of a limitation of armaments, the decreased size of guns, the restriction of tanks to a certain size, of battleships to a certain tonnage, of building up only "defensive" implements of war, of abolishing submarines for war purposes, or of banning poison gas. And all the time each party in the conference will be considering by what means he can gain an advantage over others when the war they are all there to prevent breaks out. Meanwhile to all who can see beyond their noses it is tolerably clear that unless civilization ends war, war will end civilization. For a full century it has been clear that one could not exist without injuring the other, now it is getting obvious that the two cannot exist together.

For my own part I quite fail to see, save from the standpoint of cost and danger, what difference there is between two nations fighting with guns of a specified size—even though such an improbable thing occurred as nations keeping their pledges in a time of war—and having a war in a go-as-you-please fashion. Why a gun that can only shoot a mile is a weapon of defence, while one that can shoot ten miles is a weapon of attack, I do not know. Why a submarine that threatens merchant vessels carrying food to a country at war should be prohibited, while a top-water vessel which blockades a country and prevents food reaching it is to be allowed, is, again, a distinction that leaves me puzzled. Neither do I see a very cogent reason for calling those who drop bombs "baby-killers," while refusing the title to those who starve a country and so force the strong to surrender through the starvation of babies, the aged and the sick. I should have imagined that one method is quite as bad as the other, and that most men would rather see their children meet a quick death than see them die a

lingering one owing to the absence of food or the presence of disease. Really, the sooner we face the fact that modern war is directed against babies and the aged quite as much as against strong, fighting men, the better for our intelligence and our humanity. Finally, I am dull enough not to be able to distinguish between a war that kills a hundred thousand and one that kills a million, or one that costs a million a day and one that costs a million a year. War is war, whether on a small scale or a big one, and the sooner we cease to fog our minds with distinctions that will certainly be less recognized in the next war than they were in the last, the better for the future of humanity. When a uniform is regarded as something of which one ought to be ashamed and a battlefield as a degradation we shall see the end of war.

* * *

Making War Easier.

A friendly reader asks, having regard to some recent notes on Armistice Day, whether I am an advocate of complete disarmament. Frankly, I do not know. It would be taking a great risk, and it is a risk that might end in disaster or in a striking revolution that would close the era of militarism. My fixed convictions are that none of the present movements make for an end to war, except incidentally, and so far as they accustom the general mind to the possibility of settling international disputes by an appeal to a recognized tribunal. But I am quite sure that partial disarmament, which appears to mean no more than having wars that are not completely ruinous from the point of view of expenditure, and relatively less dangerous, to an unimaginative world, because there are fewer killed, are not steps of very great importance. Money can always be found for war, and all that war does financially seems to be to direct money, in different proportions, into various channels. Until war can eat up next year's harvest and destroy minerals that are not yet mined, I do not see that war makes the world less wealthy. There is a loss of good human material in every war, but the chief influence here is the type of character that is thrown up during a war, and which retains a prominent place for some time after war has ceased. The last war, for instance, here and elsewhere, has certainly not placed in control a type of character in which future generations will find much to admire.

My fixed opinion is that the only way to end war is to make the idea of war objectionable and contemptible to all. That involves making militarism obnoxious, and divesting the profession of the soldier of the fictitious greatness and nobility and sense of value that now surrounds it. So long as the soldier is required he should be treated as an evil necessity, and so long as standing armies are required they should be treated as blots—however difficult their removal—upon civilization. If we really believe that warfare is degrading, that militarism is demoralizing to the

higher life of a people, and that wars breed greater evils than they remove, we should act accordingly. Youth responds to the dominant ideals of its environment, and the environment is at present preparing for war—on a cheaper and slightly less dangerous scale than the last one.

* * *

A Real Day of Remembrance.

It was because I hold this opinion that I said what I did with regard to Armistice Day. And I think I have as much right to say it as anyone in this country. For during the war the *Freethinker* did not hesitate to point out that the systematic propaganda that went on during the war would end in disaster, and the disaster would be the more assured if a decisive victory was achieved by either side. The state of the world to-day justifies what was then said. The world might have easily recovered from the war; it was ruined by the peace, and we are all—victor and vanquished—doing what can be done to keep the idea of militarism alive. So without asking for one nation to take the risk of setting the example of disbanding its army I have suggested from time to time methods by which we might kill the idea of war. And I now summarise these suggestions, with full permission for other papers to copy—as usual without acknowledgment.

Take first of all the use made of Armistice Day. I am pleased to note that many papers are now following our lead and suggesting—timidly—that we should make it a Peace Day. That might easily be done. To begin with there is no reason—save lack of imagination—why we should commemorate the dead of the last war any more than the dead of previous wars. In every war those killed were the sons, or the brothers, or the husbands of someone. There was no greater sorrow because a man was killed between 1914 and 1918 than because of one killed in 1900 or earlier. Whatever there was heroic in a soldier's life was present in previous wars as well as in the last one. So if we must have a day on which the nation pays homage to the soldiers who have died in battle, why not have a day that commemorates the deaths of all those who have fallen in war, whatever be the date or the occasion?

Why stop here? If we do, we are proclaiming to the rising generation the fact that the only person to whose memory the nation pays this universal homage is the soldier. That at once lifts him above all other sections of the community. But the battlefield, obviously, does not create courage and loyalty and the capacity for self sacrifice. It merely exploits these qualities. Nor is the battle field the only place in which they are exhibited. There is the loyalty and courage and self-sacrifice manifested by the miner, the sailor, the doctor fighting disease, the mother who is ready to give her life for her children, the reformer sacrificing all, even the respect of his fellows, and the thousand and one acts of quiet and unrecorded heroism that does so much to raise our respect for human nature. Why not, then, turn our Day of Remembrance for the "heroes" of the last war into a Day of Remembrance for the heroic dead? That would be something to which everyone could give his unrestricted adherence; and it would be giving a lesson at once helpful and elevating to the younger generation. Of course, it has the drawback of not concentrating attention on the soldier, and one must remember that when some years ago it was suggested that the soldiers at the cenotaph ceremony should parade without guns, the idea was promptly crushed by the authorities.

But this Day of Remembrance should not be a military display. Soldiers, so long as we have an army, should be represented, but so should every

other section of the community. Art, science, industry, all should be there. It should be a people's day, not a soldier's parade. It should be a real Peace Day. As it is, it is little short of a disgrace to civilization that the nation should be represented by the soldier alone. And the disgrace becomes an act of national hypocrisy when those responsible for this display prate of the horrors of war and their hatred of militarism.

* * *

A Few Suggestions.

My other suggestions for making war improbable are very simple, but less easy of execution. Some I gave last week, but I will here summarise them, adding the others.

First, all military drill should be forbidden in every educational establishment in the country. One of the clauses in the treaty of Versailles expressly prohibited military drill in schools and universities in Germany on the ground that it led directly to militarism. If that is so in Germany why is it not so in Britain, France, Italy and elsewhere?

Second, military displays and parades should be discontinued in public, as well as military guards and escorts in civic ceremonies. If guards are necessary for order the police are there, and they will manage much better than regiments of soldiers. Military "tattoos" and spectacular reviews should also cease. None of these things have any value save as an advertisement of the high efficiency of the army and the fighting forces. It is either crass stupidity or gross hypocrisy for people to shed tears over the menace of militarism while passing without protest public displays that have none other than a recruiting value.

Third, when a nation goes to war flags should be flown at half mast, not flaunted as though we were entering on something possessing, what the Bishop of London said of the last war, "a moral uplift." If Ruskin's advice were followed and all women wore black during the duration of the war, that would be so much to the good. These things would be at least an indication that the nation recognized that for the time being it was being dragged to a lower culture level. The ancient Romans, when war was on, closed the temples of peace. We are Christian, and we use our temples of peace to excite blood-lust, to serve as recruiting stations, to proclaim that our national God is on our side, and when the war is over we decorate our Churches with battle flags as a Red Indian decorates his wigwam with the scalps of his enemies.

Now there is nothing in these suggestions that could not be put into operation here and abroad, if men and women would get intelligently to work. It is the idea of war we have to kill, not merely to aim at making it cheap and a little less dangerous. War will never be stopped by either of these plans. It is to the credit of human nature that danger does not detract, it attracts. The task of the future is to lift the warfare of life to a higher level than is exemplified by the barbaric conflicts of armies or navies, the war against ignorance, against disease, against poverty, against the limitations of space and time, is always with us and calls into play a nobler use of the best qualities displayed on the field of battle.

The choice before man is not really the choice between war and peace, the choice to-day is between different kinds of warfare. We have to choose between the war of brute force that meets us in every battlefield, and the war that strives to subdue the dangers that front mankind from both its organic and inorganic enemies.

The Bishop Sums Up.

"You do not believe, you only believe that you believe."—*Coleridge*.

"Speedy end to superstition, a gentle one if you can contrive it, but an end."—*Carlyle*.

"Solemnity is of the essence of imposture."

Shaftesbury.

THE Bishop of London during his time has played many parts, but he has almost invariably shouted at the top note of his voice. Hence it is somewhat surprising to find his lordship in the role of a judge, speaking, for once, with bated breath, if not whispering humbleness. The case he dealt with did not concern a backsliding parson in a barrel, but a much more serious matter. The bishop had the pleasing duty of adjudicating on the merits of a newspaper published, many will regret to hear, on a Sunday. The subject for discussion was "The Lord's Prayer," and the contributors were a very miscellaneous collection of notorieties and nobodies, including a magistrate, a minor poet, an actor and actress, a novelist, and so forth. Indeed, on the principle that the voice of the people means the voice of truth, the editor should have included both the office-boy and his two grandmothers. Their opinions would not have been less valuable than the screeds actually published.

To wear the heart upon the sleeve for every day to peck at is not usually an English characteristic. But the way these contributors screwed up their courage and risked their intellectual reputations amid the gins and pitfalls of theology, should entitle each of them to the Military Medal or the Victoria Cross, especially the lady novelist who actually suggested an added literary flourish at the end of the "Lord's Prayer." This was the most original of all the contributions, for it foreshadowed a combination of "Our Father" and "Rule Britannia," and almost made one think that the papa in question was a quarter-master-sergeant or peppery colonel on the retired list.

The poet was really poetic, for he said the "Lord's Prayer" went far beyond the bounds of any Church, but he did not state definitely how many feet that actually meant. Indeed, the rest of the contributors were so cloudy and chaotic that the bishop in his summing-up remarked on the inarticulateness of truth, and said that this ought not to be mistaken for unbelief. But the converse might also have its truth. The peroxide lady who remarks "My God, what a hat!" might not actually be a communicant at the neighbouring church. Nor is that lady more intellectual than Herbert Spencer, who, in the course of a life's study, found no proof of deity in the universe.

In his summing-up the Bishop confessed that he was impressed by the reverence of the numerous contributors. In my mind's eye, Horatio, I can see that naughty editor smiling at the simplicity of bishops. Fleet Street is but a stone's throw from Farringdon Street, but an editor never rings up the *Freethinker* office for a Freethought expression of opinion. If he printed such a thing that same editor would face a firing party of newspaper directors the next morning and be seen no more. And he knows that solemn truth and acts accordingly.

The dear Bishop criticizes the contributors, but he lays himself open to criticism in his turn. Rebuking those who lay more stress on the Christian Bible than the Christian Church, he says emphatically that the Church wrote this Bible. If so, the priests are actually responsible for their Scripture from the first mistake in "Genesis" to the last error in "Revelation." And this disposes at one fell blow of the wide-spread belief in the actual "Word of God." Accuracy is not the bishop's strong point. Apologizing for the

frauds and follies of the Church, the bishop protests that Omnipotence works through men and women, who are themselves imperfect. Tut! Tut! The polite snake in the Garden of Eden was not a human being. And the loquacious donkey of the prophet Balaam was not even Simian. Nor were the ravens who fed Elisha vicars in mufti.

We have no desire to be too unkind to the Bishop of London. He is not by any means the worst of the present-day ecclesiastics. He has done something towards keeping the really serious question of the existence of Freethought in the public eye. Unlike his Romish colleagues, the bishop knows that Victoria Park, East London, and Hyde Park, are not situated in Moscow, and that the Freethought leaders in this country are not all Russians. He should not, however, allow himself to be led too easily by the nose by publicity-loving newspaper editors. Press symposiums are farcical, to say nothing harsher. To commission articles on theological subjects from a carefully selected list of notorieties is not quite the same as a pitiless popular judgment.

Such symposiums are conducted in a balloon, remote from the actual world and real people. The articles printed are simply plausible excuses for the retention of the Christian Religion, which is a vested interest. Thus to take refuge behind subterfuge reveals a lack of real courage. Nor is much intelligence suggested by the ridiculous notion that "Omnipotence" needs such bolstering and blustering.

This blustering is not confined to the editor. The Bishop of London himself pretends that he is a descendant of the apostles who started the infant Christian Church, and of which the founder is quoted as having said:—

On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Leaving aside the Infernal Regions, what has this Bishop's Church done in this England of ours? This particular church has a score of representatives in the House of Lords, and the recorded votes of these lawn-sleeved ecclesiastics are sufficient to rouse the hostility of all right-thinking persons, and to show how far removed from democratic ideals this Church of Christ. Bishops voted against admitting Nonconformist to University degrees, and against removing the civil disabilities of Roman Catholics, Jews, and Freethinkers. They opposed the introduction of free education, and voted against admitting women as members of London Borough Councils. None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public. They opposed the provision of seats for the use of tired shop-assistants. Scores of measures for the bettering of the condition of the working classes have been opposed by these bishops. To put forward the absurd claim that civilization itself derives its impetus from priests' abracadabra would be laughable if it were not pitiful. Civilization is not the product of half-wits, and never has been so bankrupt of intellectual resources as to rely on witch-doctors for guidance. For priests and witch-doctors are as much alike as the upper and lower jaws of a crocodile.

MIMNERMUS.

AUTUMN.

Ash and elm and beech and oak,
Clad in Autumn's patch-work cloak;
Torn by wind and soaked by rain,
In the wood and in the lane.

A.C.W.

Bogey, Bogey!

THE Spiritualists have succeeded in landing a big fish in the person of an ex-moderator of the Kirk of Scotland—the very Reverend Norman Maclean, D.D.—Senior Minister of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, and one of the King's Chaplains! Wherefore the Spook Raisers rejoice and are exceeding glad and have pulled off a big spiritualistic demonstration in the great Usher Hall, Edinburgh, with Dr. Maclean presiding and an exponent of "the Ætheric" giving the address.

It is significant that a meeting of this kind should have been so well attended in Edinburgh of all places—the citadel of Presbyterianism. The Anglicans look to Canterbury as their spiritual home—the Roman Catholics to Rome—and Presbyterians the world over to Edinburgh. Shades of Chalmers, Begg, Rainy and Whyte, what is this that has come upon us!

Faith is evidently to be no longer the substance of things hoped for—or the evidence of things not seen. For the spiritualists offer demonstration in place of faith: they declare that they possess evidence of communications between denizens of this world and denizens of a world beyond the grave.

A Congregational parson, the Rev. Dr. Rees Griffiths, of Edinburgh, in an article in the Scotch issue of the *Daily Express* shrewdly attacks the position of those Christians who have chosen to embrace Spiritualism as being agreeable to and in consonance with the fundamental teaching of Christianity. He even boldly beards Sir Oliver Lodge, who like the lecturer in the Usher Hall, finds eternal life and the answer to the riddle of the Universe in the blessed ether. "Ether!" in effect says Dr. Griffiths, "What is ether but matter refined?" Consequently, it does not cease to be matter. And science has shown us that it can gauge and follow the movements of atoms, electrons and protons. They are all really just *matter*. What the true Christian believes in is something which is the antithesis of all matter and materialism, namely the Spirit of God and its manifestation in the souls of believers according to Christ's teaching. It is not only a matter of bringing the faith into contempt; putting forward pretended proof as a substitute for it; but in the end of the day Spiritualism reveals itself as a misnomer. There is no spirit or spiritualism about it. It is concerned only with matter—however refined and rarefied—but nevertheless *matter*.

As an Old Freethinker one is glad to have this clerical recognition of an argument which has been used by Freethinkers for many years. What is the Spiritualistic game any way? Is it anything else but the establishment of a rival cult to dish Christianity? The Spiritualist (falsely so-called according to Dr. Griffiths' argument) says Christianity after 2,000 years has failed to save humanity—not because its teaching is false, but because its teaching has been wrongly interpreted. We have spoken incorrectly and foolishly of that bourne from which no traveller returns; while in very fact there are frequent visits to us of those of our relatives and acquaintances who have died, and who are even now anxiously desiring to have a chat with us; but we are gross and have not spiritual hearing, sight and penetration. We may however (if we are not sceptical) get into touch with our departed friends—even see and hear them—through the help of certain highly psychic personalities called mediums—on terms. These individuals realize that close to us and all about us are inhabitants of the unseen world. Indeed, the unseen world is so close to us that we have just to put out a hand to touch it.

No doubt one reason for the following that spirit-

ualists have secured is due to the decline of the Faith. As time goes on it becomes less and less possible to recapture the tribal spirit of fierce fanaticism, with which Jehovah was worshipped. Increase of knowledge, greater intercourse between nations and cultural cosmopolitan developments have been largely responsible for the ebbing of enthusiasms in religion. Here then, say the necromancers, wizards and sorcerers is *our* opportunity. Man gets no answer from his God—he even sees no promise of relief from the Beyond—he is getting impatient, if not disgusted—he is on the point of giving his God the sack—*here* do we come in!

Spiritualism is just one of the great evils that found possibilities of growth because of the Great War. It is in fact one of its most sinister results. For its methods are not militant—they are insinuating. In approaching the Church it disclaims any disagreement with Christian doctrines. On the contrary, it only professes to amplify, interpret and fulfil them in the light of experience. This insidious propaganda has secured the patronage of titles and influential names; and the *hoi polloi* are still greatly at the mercy of titles and their "betters." Therefore it is not so difficult to fill even such a building as the Edinburgh Usher Hall with an expectant throng of people who have never done an atom of thinking for themselves.

Old-fashioned Christians, for whom Dr. Griffiths speaks, of course, take the same view of the "other world" that spiritualists pretend to represent, as we Freethinkers do of any alleged supernaturally-controlled state of existence. They regard any communications from or with the world beyond as diabolically inspired and directed. In other words the vasty deep from which messengers appear at seances is simply and solely Hell—the nether half of the world beyond. If, looking at the present state of humanity, one could still believe in the government of an almighty intelligence, how could he regard that intelligence as other than diabolical? If there be a God, he is anything but justice—anything but love. The imagined glories of Heaven are the phantasms of delirium, neurosis, hysteria, or drugs.

There is another aspect of the growth of Spiritualism which is of disturbing interest to all Protestants—who in all conscience have not their troubles to seek in these days. The organization of Spiritualism means further disruption in the ranks of Protestantism. While in front are the opposing forces of Rome and on the right flank the persistent *franc tireurs* of Rationalism, there now appears on the left flank the distracting battalions of the Spookists with their treasonable propaganda, which has already led to partial mutiny! The shifts and devices Protestants resort to for the purpose of minimising their distress would be comic if they were not tragic. They had a short way with witches once. They are finding modern wizards a tougher proposition.

IGNORUS.

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O! how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wrackful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

O! none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

Shakespeare.

Mr. Lunn and Evolution.

"My own attitude," says Mr. Lunn, "is one of complete agnosticism so far as the *modus operandi* of evolution is concerned." (*Flight from Reason*.)

But surely this is an admission of the significance of which Mr. Lunn seems to be quite oblivious. He suggests four ways in which evolution is conceivable, and in every one he employs God. He will not hear of evolution without God. He accepts God's hand behind evolution, and says he is not sure of the manner in which it works. But if he is in doubt as to the manner of evolution how can he assert with any degree of confidence that there is a God behind it? Surely we judge whether there is purpose or not from the way in which the process works. It will not do even to look at the fruits unless we have evidence of intention in the first place. And it is grossly unscientific to assume purpose, before you have satisfied yourself that the manner of the process is indicative of purpose (let alone knowing nothing of an intention). It is putting the cart before the horse, the generalization before the details and particulars.

Mr. Lunn, in effect says, "I know there is a process, but I cannot understand how it works. So I suppose there must be a purpose in it. This purpose is God's." I cannot fathom the behaviour of Jones, so I expect he is honest.

Mr. Lunn is postulating unverifiable final causes; he is exalting Plato at the expense of Aristotle. His logic is espoused to the "vestal virgin." It will bear no fruit.

Now on the other hand the modern Materialist is one who has arrived at his theory of godless evolution after studying the process, *i.e.*, after gleaning sufficient knowledge to dispose of the God-hypothesis.

Dysteological facts alone are a damning blow to Mr. Lunn's theory. "You speak of useless organs," he says to the Materialist, "but are they useless? Look at the thyroid." Mr. Lunn has indeed set himself an ambitious task. Let us ask him to explain the utility of these: appendix, ear and scalp muscles, unused hog's toes, hermaphroditic futilities. A longer list is in waiting.

* * *

The main contention of Mr. Lunn against materialistic evolution concerns "stability of type." "There are fixed, well-defined species."¹ he says, in effect, "You cannot show me intermediate forms. You cannot show how, when, and where reptiles changed into birds; I see a sudden jump from no wing to wings; where are the half-wings, the rudimentary wings? I accept succession, but why should it be genetic succession? James I. succeeded Elizabeth, but he was not descended from her. Fish—reptiles—birds—mammals—and then man. Yes, I accept the order of succession, but *it is so in Genesis*. Can you show me links between one species and another? No. Then why shouldn't I prefer the Genesis explanation of succession?"

Before considering whether the existence of species is capable of explanation without recourse to Genesis, I suggest to Mr. Lunn that while there is in the hypothesis of genetic evolution a self-evident reason for succession, there is no such in Genesis. According to the former, the complex is dependent on the simple, and must therefore follow it. An almighty Evolver would not have to experiment for millions of years on simples, and might also be expected to display some more than elementary ability to learn from mistakes and failures.

Let us see, however, whether the fixity of species is quite what Mr. Lunn thinks, and whether such stability will admit of naturalistic explanation. I am mainly basing my remarks on material from the numerous biological sections (by Huxley, Thomson and Keith) in the *Outline of Science*, and from Hogben's lecture on *The Origin of Species*.

In the first place, the sharp classifying of animals into categories is embarrassed by the existence of anomalous intermediate forms like the Australian duck-billed platypus and the worm-like anthropod, *Peripatus*. Thus (following the work of Johannes Muller and Cuvier) comparative anatomy turned attention to the possibility of a *process of species forming* through the ages. It gradually became apparent, as more was known about the succession of animal forms, that the divergent forms which exist to-day were preceded by forms of a more and more generalized type in the past. The further we go back in the history of any group the less do we find the same pronounced differences that exist in the contemporary members of that group.

In other words, the differentiation into definite species is a comparatively late and continuous event in the evolutionary process. There was once a time when there were no species, *i.e.*, when life had not had long enough to vary itself. Species have arisen in the process. They were not created *ex nihilo*, one after another, by God, as Mr. Lunn implies.

This is no new theory. It was enunciated years ago by Wallace.

Species, then, evolve *during* the process of evolution. We have seen, moreover, that they evolve in *connexion with* the process.

But do they arise in connexion with anything else, other than the process, with something, or somebody, that uses the process to get a foothold (like Lodge's *Life*), or as material for operation?

To answer this we must enquire, what reason, if any, is there to believe that the evolutionary material is itself capable of manifesting succession of species, or is there here some gap in our knowledge which leaves open any possibility of there having been additional factors at work (Vital Force, God, etc.). In three words, what causes variation?

Can variation be placed in the causal scheme of determinism, or is it essentially the work of an independent force. If the former, species are the natural outcome of genetic evolution. If the latter, there is room for Mr. Lunn's hypothesis. It is a perfectly clear issue.

The desire to avoid a tangent necessitates here the adoption of a somewhat dogmatic and final note,² but according to the accepted principle of genetic variation, it is an experimental fact that new and transmissible (hereditary) properties come into being in the causal process of natural generation. (For example, a controllable agency, exposure of parents to X-rays, has produced mutants in the case of the fruit-fly *Drosophila*). I add Prof. Hogben's conclusion:—

"The existing divergence of specific characteristics is the outcome of a natural process of generation operating over long periods of geological time."

What does this mean? Simply that there is no need for the intervention of God: there is no room for the Divine Hand in the creation of species. Let us now take our argument a step further:—

Species arise not only during, and in connexion with, but *out of* the everlasting process.

But Mr. Lunn clamours for transitional forms between one species and another. There ought to be more transitionals than species, he remarks. The

¹ I am keeping to Mr. Lunn's usage of the word species, in the sense of classes (birds, mammals, etc.).

² It is hoped in a later article to deal more fully with variation.

emptiness of this is apparent when one pauses to consider that in that case there would merely be a re-adjustment of our already arbitrary landmarks. Mr. Lunn will not have Archæopteryx (the bird with definitely reptilian characters, now extinct), at any price, so we must offer him the Echidna and the duck-bill (which lay eggs and yet suckle their young), the flying fish which stays in the air for perhaps 300 feet, the climbing perch of India which goes on land and climbs trees. The whale's ancestor had four legs and walked on land, while certain snakes have traces of feet. And as Thomas Huxley observes: "Certain questionable forms of sea life belong to a sort of biological no-man's land."

Finally, it is unscientific to expect interfertility of the various groups, or to infer distinct creation from the sterility of hybrids. Various determinable physical factors are at work. In one of his lectures Morgan remarks:—

There is no one problem of the infertility of species or . . . the sterility of hybrids, but many problems, each due to differences that have arisen in the germinal material (which) may affect the mechanism of fertilization or the process of development, producing some incompatibility.

Or, in Hogben's words:—

There is no mysterious wholeness about the species³ barrier.

The barrier may arise (*e.g.*), through some anatomical differences in the structures associated with the copulative act. (In two strains, Barbadoes and Rumpfries, the male of the latter cannot successfully tread the females of the former, owing to the respective absence of neck hackles and tail feathers: each is, however, interfertile with other breeds of domestic fowls.)

In the better known case of the donkey and horse, it is actually possible to identify the "sterility factors," which pertain to the structure of the chromosomes. Differences of shape and size prevent the chromosomes from pairing in the reduction division,⁴ the result being that no ripe sperm is formed in the testis of the mule. Other cases are discussed in Crew's *Animal Genetics*. In the light of modern research:—

There is no reason to regard the origin of species barriers as an essentially different problem from the origin of varieties. (Hogben.)

* * *

In conclusion, Mr. Lunn declares himself ready to affirm, even if he were convinced that man's body had come by descent, that his mind was born of another source.

The main lesson of evolution is that it is not confined to this or that aspect of existence. Evolution is a key to many problems. It explains the existence, not only of Mr. Lunn's body, but even of a certain belief of his that there is a benevolent and powerful deity, who watches eagles descend on lambs, and is indifferent to the smothering of robins in snow.

G. H. TAYLOR.

³ The word species is here used in the Linnæan sense, denoting groups whose members breed readily with one another.

⁴ Huxley is lucid on this matter in his popular work, *What Dare I Think?*

Sunday to the godly is a day of low tones, its minutes go muffled by; to the children of the godly it is an eternity. To the ungodly it is a day jeopardized by an interest in barometers that is almost too poignant. To one man it is an interruption of the week, to another it is the week itself, and all the rest of the days are but preparations for it.—E. V. Lucas.

An Incident and a Moral.

IN Sydney (N.S.W., Australia) we are witnessing, just now, a spectacle that must further degrade the church in whatever hold it continues to have on the community. The annual Anglican synod is being held, presided over by the Archbishop of Sydney. Among the matters respecting which a ruling was sought was the filling of a pulpit in one of the parishes. To this the Archbishop had appointed one cleric, greatly to the dissatisfaction of a number of the members of the parish, who had in view for the position some other cleric. The complaint by these was that the Archbishop had exceeded his powers.

Come, now, to the jest of the whole proceedings.

The matter was duly mentioned; but it was unanimously decided that before discussing it there should be fifteen minutes' prayer, with a view to inducing a befitting atmosphere, and avoiding even the appearance of passion and anger!

Then the discussion began. It extended over the better part of two whole evenings. What effect had the prayer?

Heated words were frequently exchanged. Indeed, at times these suggested a common political brawl. Finally, a vote was taken, the decision being in favour of the Archbishop, with such pleasing and Christianly results that—in the words of one of the Sydney daily newspaper reports—the members of the defeated party refused to accept the proffered hands of the victors!

Sydney, in common with so many other parts of the world, is in the grip of a terrible depression. Reports are that pretty well a third of the population are subsisting on the slender relief given by the Government—known as the dole. Side by side with this a disastrous general strike is threatened. Therefore, most paltry in comparison was the squabble before the synod.

Yet those professing a belief in prayer had, in effect, the selfishness and audacity to seek to divert the attention of the Almighty from the deep, common sufferings of the community, and bestow it exclusively on the subject as to whether the one or the other of two clerics should occupy a miserable parish pulpit!

There remains, too, the fact—as clear to the members of the synod as to everyone else—that their prayers were distinctly not answered.

The calm they sought was absent from the gathering.

In this way, the members of the synod are faced with one of two alternatives—either they were insincere in the prayer in which they engaged, or the result proved, even to them, the futility of prayer.

At any rate, the whole proceedings must have a generally beneficial effect, so far as regards the public, in clearing away the cobwebs of superstition from the minds of many where they still lingered.

F. HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W.

FEARS AVAUNT.

Let no lamenting cries, nor doleful tears,
Be heard all night within nor yet without:
Nor let false whispers, breeding hidden fears,
Break gentle sleep with misconceived fears,
Let no deluding dreams, nor dreadful sights
Make sudden sad affrights;
Nor let house fires, nor lightning's helpless harms
Nor let the Puck, nor other evil sprites
Nor let mischievous witches with their charms,
Nor let hobgoblins, names whose sense we see not,
Fray us with things that be not.
Let not the screech owl nor the stork be heard;
Nor the night raven that still deadly yells,
Nor damned ghost called up by mighty spells
Nor grisly vultures make us once afear'd:
Nor let the unpleasant choir of frogs still croaking
Make us to wish their choking.
Let none of these their dreary accents sing;
Nor let the woods them answer, nor their echo ring.

(From Edmund Spenser's "Epithalamium, 1595.")

Acid Drops

Lord Ponsonby, writing in the *Listener*, says that the B.B.C. outlook has so broadened of late years that a series of six talks on a future life "from individual and divergent points of view" are to be delivered. We have heard this kind of thing before. All it means is that probably five out of the six will be delivered by people who believe in some sort of a future life, and a sixth by some one who can be trusted not to make a direct attack on the Christian conception of a future, and who will pay due tribute to the beauty of the belief and express regret that he cannot share it. How can it be otherwise when the address will have to be submitted to the censorship of a body that has publicly announced its intention of doing what it can to prevent the decay of Christianity. Men who can be trusted to represent points of view should be trusted to say what they think to be proper, and should decline to be censored by such a body as the B.B.C.

There are three reasons, among others why a man goes to Church. One is because his wife takes him, another is because he wants a wife to take him, the third is because some other man's wife takes him. The pastor in charge of the Coalfields Methodist Mission, South Kirkby, advertises for those who have no sweetheart to come to his mission as that "is not a bad place to find a sweetheart." He explains that courting is much cosier done in his mission than in the streets. All he need have to secure crowded meetings are very dim lights or private compartments with accommodation for two.

The *English Churchman* is wrath with Dr. Barnes for his speculations as to the origin and future of the world and of mankind. "As the testimony of a Christian Bishop to the origin and destiny of man we cannot hesitate to describe this address as deplorable." The "vague and extraordinary inventions of speculative science" are we are informed, "transcended in sublimity and force" by "the answer of divine revelation" to these questions. We should prefer to say that the most unlikely speculations of science are more probable than God's first garden party, not to say more sublime.

A good sample of what passes for controversial courage in spiritualistic circles is to be found in a leader on the Armistice Day celebrations in *Two Worlds*. The writer tells of a mother whose boy was "posted missing" during the war. She went to a seance at which he spoke to her, told her he had met his father "elsewhere," and that they were both waiting for her. To the present day the War Office has not been able to give any information about that boy; "but his mother knew within a few weeks of his 'passing over' that he was intensely alive." Now comes the amazing courage of the teller of this tale. "Suppose," he asks, "the boy is not dead, and that he turned up somewhere?" What would the narrator do? "We would go on every platform on which we have related the story and admit the facts." It is a long time since we have come across such a reckless promise. The boy has only been "missing" (at least) fourteen years. He may turn up at any moment!

The audacity of the Churches in claiming credit for secular improvements in social and industrial conditions knows no bounds. A good example comes from a sermon by the Bishop of Blackburn at the induction of a new Vicar at Nelson. Referring to the "development of philanthropy in a hundred forms by Government, municipal and private generosity during the recent past the Bishop declared that "there was no lack of a spirit of social service," but "there is a very real danger that it may be divorced from the spirit of religion." To begin with, "philanthropy" is hardly the name for social reform which is paid for by the community. Such reform

has done much to wipe out the humiliating and patronizing "philanthropy" that characterized the eighteenth century, and which was very much informed with "the spirit of religion." Soup and blankets as a substitute for decent wages and conditions showed the "religious spirit" at its worst. Since the Bishop admits that "there is no lack of a spirit of social service," it is clear, that his fears are justified, and that this spirit has grown up by the progress of education and humane ideas, and, so far from its owing anything to religion, its most stubborn enemies have been of the household of faith.

There are some good Samaritans in Pineville (U.S.A.) called the Associated Charities. They got up a scheme to help the unemployed. Men from needy families had to work eight hours a day before they got one dollar of relief. Then one of the mines shut down and the miners came to the Associated Charities for relief. These benefactors made arrangements with the mine owners to permit those who received relief to work in the closed mine. They got 25 cents for loading five cars a day (each car holds about a ton and 200 lbs.) For up to nine cars they got 50 cents, and for ten or over one dollar—from the Associated Charities. The mine-owners got the labour for nothing. Such is Christian charity in Pineville, Kentucky.

The University of Pretoria, South Africa, is going in for what it calls a 100 per cent Afrikaner policy. It is not yet definitely settled (The latest paper we have seen is dated October 18), but the proposals are to give the University a definitely religious character, and to compel Professors and the staff generally, to attend at least one service every Sunday. Of course, there will be a religious test for all appointments. Pretoria appears to be going back to the Middle Ages. But it is time that the Freethinkers in the whole of South Africa became a little more active and venturesome than they have been. There is only one way to stop these religious backwoodsmen, and that is by hitting back. Appeals to decency and justice, where religion is strong, are as useless now as ever.

We read the other day that American undergraduates are very dissatisfied with and shocked at the amount of "irreligion" in English Universities. They intend sending a body of educated and thoroughly religious young men to "put over" Christianity on our own unhappy infidels, and they are actually optimistic of a glorious revival. We suggest that one of the happy ones lets these Christ-like missionaries know of the existence of the N.S.S., so that they could try and convert some of our members first. What heavenly rejoicings there would be if half the N.S.S. were converted! What about the "Oxford Group"—who are really an offshoot of some American revivalist—having a "feeler" first?

A Glasgow Christian has written to the Glasgow press complaining bitterly that the Public Libraries have not been supplied with "Revival" Literature. One feels sure that the Secularists of the "Second City" will cordially support him in his complaint. But they may fairly suggest to him a reasonable corollary—or *quid pro quo*—as what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Will this gentleman equally support the claim of the Secularists for more Rationalistic Literature in the Public Libraries; and that these Libraries should be open on Sundays for the convenience of readers and students who cannot visit them on other days? Come awa' noo, Sir—Fair Hornie—Eecksie—Pecksie!

Christianity has its funny sides. We read recently of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, who is an eminent Presbyterian, having, along with a Presbyterian cleric, attended the opening of a Synagogue. His Lordship

also appeared at the ceremonial opening of a Roman Catholic school. Is the Christian Mission for the Conversion of the Jews really a serious proposition? And when the Chief Magistrate of such a Protestant Citadel as Edinburgh assists at the opening of the Roman Catholic school, it looks precious like an olive branch held out to Papa of Rome! But Protestants need be under no illusion. If Christendom is ever united Protestantism will figure in the union as "the young lady of Niger!"

Necessity makes bad bed-fellows, and that the forthcoming celebrations of the centenary of the Oxford Movement should be lauded at a meeting of the Protestant Dissenting Deputies is on a par with the general tendency among Christian bodies at this time to scratch each others backs. Mr. Bernard Manning, a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, who did this laudation, pointed out that the early leaders of the Oxford Movement, like the dissenters, "stood for the Crown rights of the Lord Jesus and for the impropriety of control of the Church by a secular body like Parliament." Mr. Manning omitted to mention, however, that the Dissenting bodies, like the Anglo-Catholics, are quite prepared to have the State's privileges and protection although they resent its interference. According to Mr. Manning "supernatural religion and liberty" are both in jeopardy, but he admits that "in some countries the struggle for freedom is in the hands of the enemies of supernatural religion. Nothing could be more obvious than that the latter development has arisen because in all countries supernatural religion and liberty have been foes and not comrades. His hope that "neither liberty nor religion" may perish "in an age which seems unfriendly to both" has no chance of fulfilment. Servitude to God and liberty for man are and always must be irreconcilable both in men and in nations.

An old Methodist says that "Evangelize or perish" is the cry of the new Methodist Church, but it must begin with us members." Things must have come to a pretty pass when there are so few real believers among Church adherents that this suggestion seems a happy one—namely, that the present customers of the Church need converting to Christianity! By the look of things, the kind of members the Church has is hardly the material to bring about a "revival" among the irreligious.

A London reader of a religious weekly thinks that the policy of "making the Church attractive to the young people" is a failure. He suggests that providing games and other amusements has proved inadequate for keeping the young people in the churches. He explains this on the following grounds—"The days are past when the Church was the only centre for respectable entertainment and recreation." Apparently the young people have discovered that they have been deceived. The elders of the churches used to tell them that "outside" amusement would lead them into bad company and ungodly habits. And the young people have discovered that their "protection" were merely piously prejudiced and narrow-minded. A most unfortunate discovery for the churches!

Writing to a daily paper, the Rev. M. de B. Scott, of Swanage, avers that the Christian religion is the happiest and most helpful thing in the world, but only when one realizes the need for repentance and the certainty of forgiveness. The Christian religion, one gathers, resembles the nostrums sold by quacks. These will cure anybody, but only when he can be made to realize—by the gentle persuasion of advertisement—that he is in real need of the nostrum. The first step is important—convincing people that they need the remedy. The loss of business among Christians quacks to-day is due to the fact that people nowadays are so difficult to convince that they stand in need of repentance. This doesn't give the

Christian quacks a fair chance. The good Lord should be asked to inflict on the world an epidemic of credulity.

From *Psychic News* :—

"Fight the Anti-God Campaign with God's Weapon—Prayer," and "Send Donations Large and Small for the 'City of Prayer Fund.'" This is from an advertisement published by The Seekers, Queen's Gate.

Now, why must money be mixed up with prayer? We have heard of prayers for money, but never—except in the Roman Catholic Church—money for prayers.

A possible explanation of why money is thus mixed up with prayer is that the main quest of The Seekers is money, and that they know something about the art of separating pious fools from that commodity.

"Remembrance Day" is now over. And all the parsons may certainly congratulate themselves on how splendidly they kept religion in the picture, and how cleverly they exploited a nation's sorrow. At this juncture, they will probably be willing to admit, among themselves, that the war had its advantages—for them.

The Rev. F. Brompton Harvey says: "In the beginning, God.' It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of these first words in the Bible." Their only fault is that they don't tell us anything about how God "began." If everything must have a First Cause, why is God exempt?

A religious contemporary remarks that :—

R. H. Hutton observes of George Eliot's loss of faith "The remarkable point is that George Eliot felt herself relieved of a burden rather than robbed of a great spiritual mainstay."

The point is really not remarkable in the light of the fact that George Eliot was a very intelligent woman. It is in the nature of the religious ass to believe that the burden on his back is what keeps him from falling down.

It was rather thoughtless of a reader of a daily paper to mention the Sunday broadcast service and then to ask: "Cannot we be cheered up a bit on Sunday?" If he were a real Christian he would appreciate that it is sinful to wish to be "cheered upon Sunday." Sunday is the day when Christians reflect upon their immortal souls and their ultimate destination, and upon the "wrath to come." These are hardly cheerful topics. And so the Christian has a pious remedy for cheering himself up—he congratulates God on his cleverness in selecting *him* for everlasting life. He doesn't put it quite like that. But it is the substance of all the praise he sends up aloft on Sundays.

Fifty Years Ago.

M. DUCLERC, the French Premier, is going to present a Bill ratifying the treaties concluded by M. De Brazza with the natives on the Congo River. This is a fine instance of the exploitation of "savages" by Christian nations. A free and independent explorer goes out somewhere, gives away a few pounds of beads, and gets the native chief to make a mark on a piece of rag. This is said to be a treaty, and the free and independent explorer makes it say what he likes. By and by traders come, claiming certain privileges on the strength of the marked rag, with gun-boats to back them. Quarrels ensue, and the gun-boats nearly depopulate the district. When three-fourths of the natives are dead, the report reaches Europe that all is quiet. This is called civilizing the heathen, and it certainly is a very pretty process, but not for the heathen.

The "Freethinker," November 26, 1882.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. G. GOSLING (Fortis Green).—Thanks for your appreciation. Publicly-owned services are hardly in the same position as trading organizations competing with individual traders. A recent campaign to deprive co-operators of certain advantages re taxation failed, and our reference was to the attacked, and still existing, exemptions. The paragraph attacked not Co-operation but the Established Church.

F. GRAYSON.—It is a pure advertisement so far as the paper is concerned. The Bible is quite safe from the kind of attack you indicate, but if particular passages were printed and sent through the post the sender could be legally indicted.

C. TUSON.—As you suggest, the wreck of the Mission ship during a storm, which is legally an act of God, after all the prayers said for its safety, is good evidence of the value of prayer.

P.F. (Streatham).—The "Monkeyville" Trial was in 1925.

F.S. (Watford) says that we seem to forget "that parsons are men after all." They so seldom remind us of it.

F. C. WYKE.—Thanks, but the incident is rather too far removed from date as an item of news.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 27) Mr. Cohen will visit Glasgow and will lecture in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, at 6.30, on "A World Without God." Admission will be free, but there will be a collection and a number of reserved seats at one shilling each. We hope that Glasgow friends will make it a point to bring along a Christian friend.

Mr. Cohen will not be speaking much in London this season, but he will be at the Stratford Town Hall on December 4. His subject will be "The Psychology of Belief." There are a number of lecture slips printed, and the Secretary of the N.S.S. will be glad to hear from East London Friends who are willing to assist in their distribution. Trams and omnibuses from all parts of London stop outside the Town Hall doors on Stratford Broadway.

A meeting of those interested in the celebration of the Bradlaugh Centenary was held on Thursday, November 17, and an Executive Committee elected. The meeting

was called under the joint auspices of the National Secular Society and the Rationalist Press Association, and every endeavour will be made to see that the centenary celebrations are worthy of the man and the cause. The actual date will not arrive until September, 1933, but there is none too much time to do what the Committee has in view. The aim is to make the celebration a nation-wide one, and to secure appreciation of Bradlaugh's many-sided activity.

Meanwhile we shall be glad to hear from anyone who has in his or her possession cartoons, or other pictorial matter, or old press notices illustrating the life of Bradlaugh. Every care will be taken of these and they will be returned when done with. There was a very rich crop of cartoons and notices—mainly abusive, during the height of the Bradlaugh struggle, and someone might have made a collection and kept it. Its use would be invaluable just now.

We are glad to learn from Mr. J. T. Brighton that the campaign carried on during the summer months was highly successful. A meeting of Branches and representatives and friends in the Tyneside and Wearside districts is to be held in the Welfare Hall, 1 Front Street, Chester-le-Street, to-day (November 27) at 7. There will be several speakers, and it is hoped to be able to draw up plans for continuous meetings during the remainder of the winter season. Mr. Cohen hopes to be able to pay a visit to the North some time in the New Year.

With reference to the gramophone record of a speech by Mr. Cohen. The subject is "The Meaning and Value of Freethought." It is a double-side record, and is expected to be ready for sale by December 10. The price will be two shillings, or by post, carefully packed, two shillings and sixpence. The record will make a very nice present to a Christian friend.

Our valued contributor, Mr. C. S. Fraser, recently sent the following letter to the *News-Chronicle* on the question of Sunday films:—

Sir,—The Bishop of Croydon's scheme to set up an independent committee to censor films which are to be shown on Sundays is to be commended on religious grounds for several reasons. First, it will relieve the Board of Film Censors of most of their work by eliminating all undesirable films. For obviously if a film is not fit to be shown on Sundays, it is not fit to be shown on Mondays or Tuesdays. Secondly, it will ensure the showing of films on Sundays which no one will be tempted to pay for admission to see, and will thus induce parents to dispose of their children by sending them to Sunday School, even if it does not induce the parents themselves to go to church. Thirdly, it will probably in the end compel most cinemas to close altogether on Sundays, and this will surely result in persuading the public to put into the collection plates the money which they would otherwise spend upon entertainment. It is possible, of course, that some of this money might be spent in public-houses—but even so that would be good for trade, wouldn't it?

A TASTE OF MR. DOOLEY.

The Simple Life: No, Sir, they aint any simple life. There's on'y life. It's a kind iv an' obsticle race. Sinnin'. repentin', sinnin', repentin'. Some can jump high: some can't jump at all. Them that jumps highest hev furthest to fall. Those that go farthest are warned off fr' foulin'. A man's no more thin a man, an' he has as many things in him, any wan iv them li'ble to go wrong without a moment's notice, as all th' injines, tools, lamps, an' other hardware figures iv speech in a prize pome. He has to make his clumsy repairs while undher full headway. Lucky man if he staggers into port without havin' caused too many shipwrecks on the way over.

"Powder and Shot."

SOME crumbs of comfort are offered for the delectation of Freethinkers by a French priest, Father P. Doncoeur. He says that a decline of suitable aspirants for the priesthood continues to grow year by year. If the same rate of decline continues, he estimates that the sacerdotal body of France would disappear by the end of the present century. He says that from 1903-30 the number of curates has diminished by 7,200, and those of parish priests by 4,415, and this in spite of an increase of population of 2,834,000.

If the Catholics are so sure as they have said they are, that the French Government has learned to come to heel and not snap at the Catholic Hierarchy, it should not be difficult to settle the migrating Spanish in France to overcome the apparent shortage.

* * *

The Spanish Minister of Justice has placed before the Cortes a Bill to regulate the position of the State in regard to religious societies. It is designed to guarantee absolute freedom of conscience and permits individual religions to be practised in the Churches, Religious meetings, processions, denominations, etc., are only to be allowed outside the Churches after the sanction of the appropriate Governmental authority has been obtained. All Church officials must be Spanish citizens, and everything appertaining to Catholic culture, the Churches, seats of the Bishops, seminaries, convents and other buildings, together with all other things used in the practice of that religion is to be declared the property of the Nation. It is however to be put at the disposal of the Church for religious usage only. Individual property is only to be allowed if it serves purely religious ends; and only then if it is proved to be indispensable. Religious societies are not to be allowed to interfere in politics. They are to be forbidden to teach or to deal directly or indirectly in commerce, industry or agriculture, and members of religious societies who wish to suspend such activities are guaranteed the protection of the State.

Our German contemporary *Der Funke* (October 10, 1932), comments upon the Bill as being:—

An orderly document which limits the Catholic Church to these sources of strength which officially it proclaims as being all-important; to the fire of the sacrament and the preaching of its message. The carrying out of such legislation would go to prove how much of the power of the Church springs from these religious factors, and how much exists thanks to the political and economic influence which the Church has gained for itself, and to its domination over the schools. We are convinced that the Church will stand on very weak props indeed if the suggest limitations are carried out.

It is to be hoped that this Bill will escape the mangling which its predecessor received at the hands of citizen Zamara's Ministry.

* * *

After such a recital of the growing influence of secularism in some countries, it would be as well to show with what powers the secular movement has still to contend. In Düsseldorf the police are the guardians of the peoples' morals. A public meeting was organized by the League for the Protection of Mothers at Neuss to be addressed by Frau Maria Hodann, on the "Tragedy of the unwanted child." Although this meeting was not of a political character, the promoters thought it would be better to acquaint police headquarters of their intention to hold a meeting to make sure that it would not be disturbed. After great delay the police graciously gave their sanction but on condition that Frau Hodann was not allowed

to speak. This naturally brought protests from the League, but their consequent appeal to the Government President at Düsseldorf lay unattended for three days. At noon on the very day of the meeting a decision was received to the effect that the meeting had been forbidden altogether. No doubt the decision was made on the principle that "he who protesteth overmuch shall receive such treatment as will make him forget this habit." The refusal to allow the meeting to be held was made on the merest suspicion that it might grossly violate the susceptibilities of the population of Neuss. Actually, as the Director of Police at Neuss let slip, "In Berlin Frau Hodann can speak of course. The people there are broad-minded. But here in Neuss they are too narrow." "They" is the Catholic Church and the Centre (Catholic) Party who predominate in that district. The priests do not desire the people to talk on sexual matters. In Neuss the police do everything to hinder the work and progress of the League. Hardly a meeting is held which is not threatened to be banned at the last minute, while the police make use of clauses 200 years old to vindicate their decisions. Under one paragraph they can forbid the exhibition of "unchaste" things. or this reason the League never recommends or exhibits in its public meetings birth-control appliances, as German law regards these things as "unchaste." But to speak on the fact that unwanted children do exist, that tremendous poverty abounds and that prevention is better than procuring abortion has not, up till now, been prevented by any law. As for protecting "the moral feelings of the population of Neusse," could not those who felt that their feelings might be outraged stay at home? Frau Hodann has spoken at many places in the Rhineland on similar subjects, and there has never been any sign of complaint on the part of the population regarding the possible hurt to the susceptibilities of its moral feelings.

* * *

Father Owen Dudley, reporting in the *Catholic Herald* (October 10, 1932) said:—

Bolshevism in Russia is a system maintained by compulsion and force . . . In 1918 the Red Terror began . . . Under it atrocities were practised . . . against all reported guilty of counter-revolutionary acts or talk . . . Priests were buried alive, thrown into quicklime, cut to pieces, frozen under ice, crucified.

Well, Father Dudley must not take it amiss if we cast doubt upon these statements. We have heard similar yarns before, namely in the early months of the World War, when nationalist feeling was being manufactured night and day by the machines of the capitalist Press. But let us even give Father Dudley the benefit of the doubt, and just for the sake of argument assume that these crude stories of revolutionary atrocities in Russia have some morsel of truth in them. Then we would like to draw Father Dudley's attention to the following.

The *Daily Worker* (November 10, 1932) quotes the following from a deed of A.D. 964 granting land in Hampshire to Winchester Cathedral:—

If, however, any bold and presumptuous person should attempt, from desire of profit, to violate or reduce (this grant of land) let his name be expunged from the Book of Life and let him be thrust forth from from the gates of Paradise by the authority of Blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles and janitor of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let him be consumed by the eternal fires of the pit; let him be suffocated in the stinking hat river of Acharon (a river of pitch); let him be justly damned by God and all the saints to eternal punishment and to miserable slavery; unless he shall make good that which he has presumed to take from the possessions of Christ."

According to the story of the Catholic priest, the Bolsheviks' political power has been used in precisely the same way as "God" is going to use his power when they present themselves "at the gates of Paradise." Catholics can have no doubt that the Almighty has the power to do the things he says he will do. The whole structure of the Catholic Church would be shattered by such a doubt. Therefore quite frankly we fail to see what Catholics have to squeal about when their own tactics are used against them. Or is it that they think the God Almighty has given them yet another monopoly besides the one of "truth"?

G.F.G.

Christianity and Pleasure.

It is not without significance when a priest of the Roman Catholic Church preaches a sermon in which he inveighs against pleasure and the enjoyment, in large measure, of the good things of life, by the general body of people. This is a serious business question as far as his Church is concerned. The Roman Catholic Church appeals to the senses by her festivals and ceremonial performances; and any counter attraction that takes hold of the masses to a great extent is seen to be dangerous. Dangerous, that is, until the Church can obtain control of the means to pleasure, and then if the pleasures are taken sadly, and the sorrows of life are taken joyfully, the good son or daughter of the Church need have no fear. An occasional visit to mass, and regular contributions to the coffers of the Holy Father will work wonders.

It would be foolish to imagine that the average priest desires to eliminate all pleasure from the world. He has been brought up in a Church that is wise enough to know the needs of what she so often calls frail humanity. The priest knows that some form of relaxation must be indulged in by human beings, while for the majority it must be in the form of excitement; and for many the form of pleasure is of the worst kind. He knows also how easy it is for the theologians to invent all kinds of sins in connexion with the pleasure seeking of their fellow-men, who are so prone to excess. If there were no sins to be committed in pleasure-seeking; if men and women always took their enjoyment with restraint, this side of life would not greatly concern the clergy.

As it is the priest can always issue his warnings of the danger in pleasure-seeking; and, if the various sources of pleasure appear to be developing out of hand as far as his Church is concerned, he can fulminate his denunciations all the more. Not because he is so greatly concerned about the morality of the world, and the ruination that is to follow pleasure-seeking; but because it is sinful to enjoy life except in ways provided for or permitted by the Church.

If all the Cinemas in Europe belonged to the Catholic Church, there would be no sermons preached against the films. In fact, they would be instruments in the hands of Divine Power.

It is when an institution of pleasure-making is a counter-attraction to the services of the Church that it is attacked as a place of evil. A good Catholic may even Yo-Yo, provided he does not become so devoted a Yo-Yo-ist as to neglect the mass and the contribution box. One wonders whether His Holiness ever has a game of Yo-Yo.

In the *Boottle Times* for August 26, 1932, there is reported a sermon of Father H. V. O'Neill, which was delivered at a local Roman Catholic Church. The Rev. Father speaks of to-day's abandonment of

Christian principles of morality and the way in which the world is reverting to the old pagan ideal of pleasure, and pleasure alone, as the ultimate object of the individual. He says, "anything that tends to interfere with material, sensual happiness must be cut out," according to a large percentage of people to-day.

As is not infrequent in sermons the Rev. gentleman refers to ancient pagan morality as if it consisted of one complete body of teaching, followed by, as its natural outcome, one form of living, and that of the most sensual kind. He wishes his hearers and readers to infer that in both Greece and Rome, prior to the appearance of Christianity, morality was at a very low ebb everywhere. That there was neither light nor leading to be had from any philosophy or religion; and that hardly any men and women of good moral living were to be found. A position about as foolish as that of anyone who might say to-day there is scarcely a good-living Christian man or woman to be found because there is so much immorality reported by the newspapers throughout the Christian world.

That there is a great deal of immorality in the world to-day, just as there was in the old pagan world at certain periods, is quite true; but this is no justification for denouncing pleasure-seeking as a means to happiness as if it were the only way in which immoral living can be brought about.

Admitting that many forms of pleasure lend themselves to the development of immoral tendencies, it would be very difficult to prove that pleasure-seeking is the supreme cause of wrong doing, or that it is the only breeding-ground for ill-spent lives. It should not be necessary to press home the fact at this time of the day, that the business world is as vast a field for the indulgence of immoral activities. Many a hard-headed business man, who in his eagerness to "get on," spends little time in pleasure, is as immoral as any inveterate seeker of pleasure in the most, so-called, worldly sense possible.

If the Rev. Father desires to improve the morality of the world, he should take life as a whole and not select the sphere of pleasure-seeking as if that were the only part of man's life in which he could go astray. He should try to educate people in the way of living more balanced lives; teach them to cultivate the satisfying of their desires in a rational and restrained manner; teach them also to conduct business with reason and as a means to a better social life. This, however, is more than his Church has ever dared to attempt as her main objective. She has ever sought to establish and maintain herself as an institution in a position to control the lives of the people for her own ends. She knows full well that if she were to succeed in training men and women to live reasonable lives with regard to business and pleasure; if as the result of her teaching they came to enjoy happiness, in rightful measure, by every possible means, whether of art, science, literature, or any other way, after the conduct of the days' industry and commerce, they would cease to need her as a church. Indeed, she would out-grow herself as an organization for exploiting the many in the interest of the comparative few.

The Catholic Church dare not attempt to solve a fundamental social problem in thoroughgoing manner. It is safer to attack pleasure-seeking as a reversion to pagan morality; or, if the wrongs of the business world are touched upon, they must be dealt with as sins in the sight of the Lord; which can be atoned for by due attention to the behests of the Church.

Like most Christian priests and ministers, the Rev. Father O'Neill fails to draw the conclusion that the irrational pleasure-seeking which goes on amidst Christian people is no compliment to Christian training.

Had Christianity been all that it has been repre-

mented to be, it ought long ago to have trained the Christian world in the way of right living, in every sphere of activity. Its own failure to accomplish something worth while, and of permanent social value, is but reiterated every time a priest bewails the moral degradation of Christian people, and castigates them for their wickedness.

This, however, is done by Father O'Neill with a sense of self-righteousness on behalf of himself and fellow Catholics, by asking what we can expect when so great a part of the non-Catholic world would divorce religion and morality. As if the lives of Catholic men and women were at all times examples, of high moral living, to their fellow men.

Doubtless, this is the regulation way in which a priest dopes his faithful flock. Telling them by implication that the world would long ago have gone to ruin had it not been for such people as themselves; although the majority, if not all, of his listeners must have confessed their own sins that very morning.

There is nothing like telling a wrong-doer that the man who lives next door to him is sure to be a bigger sinner, because he believes in a different religion. It has the tendency to endear the man who listens to such helpful words to his church for life.

Possibly Father O'Neill knew that hardly anyone of his flock would take the trouble to examine the history of the Catholic Church for the purpose of checking his implication concerning the moral beauty of a Catholic life. The rev. Father can, himself, hardly be ignorant of the moral depravity of many of the Popes and higher ecclesiastics. Nor can he have failed to make himself acquainted with the fact of many of the clergy, throughout Europe, having from time to time lived in degradation and a life of pleasures of the worst kind. While, if he would but draw a lesson from his own experiences as a priest it should not be difficult for him to realize that cant, humbug, lying, thieving, misconduct in matters of sex, and numerous other wrong doings are rife in all grades of Roman Catholic society. Otherwise, how does he explain the continued existence and popularity of the Confessional?

After retailing the old, old story about trying to please God being the true criterion of conduct, and Jesus having come to reveal the new or Christian law, Father O'Neill goes on to ask, "Fuller excitement, newer sensations, flaunted liberty, rejection of all restraint—are not all these becoming more manifest as the tendency of the day?"

That this is true no serious observer of modern life, I think, will deny as far as a large section of the community is concerned; but this is not the first period in history in which pleasure-seeking has been overdone by many. Nor is this the first period in which the Catholic Church has failed to offer a lasting solution of the problem of training people to take their pleasures in moderation.

The solution is to be found in a widespread reconstruction of social life that will make it possible for men and women to find happiness, instead of drudgery, in industry and commerce, so that pleasure-seeking will become but a different means to the attainment of a happy life. As it is, the stress and, too frequently, oppression of the business world produce jaded nerves which are revived by many in brief hours of excitement, and suppressed desires which others try out of despair to relieve vicariously in spells of dissipation.

A better ordered society would make possible the attainment of many a cherished ambition, and would open the way to thousands whose happiness could be increased if at the end of a not over strenuous day in industry or commerce they found themselves fresh enough to cultivate a corner in the garden of art, music, literature, drama, science, or some form of

recreation.

Man has a right to happiness, which is essential to the cultivation of the best type of manhood and womanhood, and the realization of a high form of civilization; but it must be attained as the result of rational conduct if it is to be of lasting social value. This involves a reorganization of society that will not only remove much of the stress from the lives of many, but will also eliminate those who seek the worst forms of pleasure as a relief from the vacuity of their comparatively unoccupied existence.

Everyone should try to get the best that is possible out of life, with due consideration for his fellow-men, and this is not to be accomplished by asking, with the Rev. Father O'Neill, "Is it not true that the Laws of God should be remembered?"

As with other things, the pleasures of life are not wrong of themselves, but only to the extent of their misuse; and the priest-ridden would do well to ponder the words of Anatole France.

"You will sometimes hear moralists descanting on the vanity of the pleasures of life. Do not heed them. A long religious tradition, the burden of which is still heavy upon us, teaches us that privation, suffering and pain are things to be desired, and that voluntary privation is specially meritorious. What an imposture! It has been by proclaiming to the masses that they must suffer in this world if they would be happy in the next, that an abject acquiescence in all manner of injustice and oppression has been brought about. Let us turn a deaf ear to the priests who would impress upon us that suffering is an excellent thing. It is happiness that is good for us." *The Unrisen Dawn*, p. 13.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

On an Old Prayer Book.

THE rejection of the proposals for a revision of the Book of Common Prayer by a small, but sufficient, majority in the House of Commons on December 18, 1928, may have suggested that no change can be made in that book without Parliamentary sanction. This is far from being the case. In 1928 we were supposed to witness the unusual spectacle of Parliament moved by the loftiest emotions, stirred to its depths, and, for once in a while, acting from honest conviction. As a matter of fact the arguments were mostly irrelevant, and the whole performance a mere conflagration of the inflammable tinder of bigotry which still smoulders about the green benches at Westminster. In a very different atmosphere there was introduced into the House of Lords in 1861 another motion for the revision of the Prayer Book. In October of that year, on the 200th anniversary of the Act of Uniformity, the Lord Ebury of that day presented a petition praying for a relaxation of the terms of subscription to the formularies of the Church. That measure was a measure to broaden the Church; not, like the last measure, an attempt to narrow it. The Bishop of London of that day, who has a worthy successor in the present occupant of that See, declared that such changes were "only proposed at periods of great revolution" and, on his motion, the House proceeded to its next business—adjournment!

Although measures to revise the Prayer Book have been defeated in Parliament, you have only to get a reasonably old copy of that book to discover that, if the alterations be only by way of omissions, quite a lot can be done without kicking up any dust. A distant relative bequeathed to us a Prayer Book published in 1832. It may be of interest, and not without utility, to compare it with the present issue.

For every person who is reminded annually by a grubby urchin of the Gunpowder Plot, how many simultaneously recall, and with adequate gratitude, the landing of William of Orange on the same day eighty years later? With an economy rarely witnessed in thanksgivings both these events are provided for in *one com-*

memoration in this old Prayer Book. "A Form of Prayer with Thanksgiving to be used yearly on the Fifth of November for the Happy Delivery of King James 1st and the Three Estates of England from the most traitorous and bloody-minded Massacre by Gunpowder; and also for the Happy Arrival of His Majesty King William on this Day for the Deliverance of our Church and Nation."

If we think of this latter blessing now it is only because our attention is called to it by the newspapers, not on November 5 (when The Gunpowder Plot still puts many a copper into schoolboys' pockets and provides a few good pictures for the illustrated journals), but on July 12—when there is generally a riot in Belfast! Such is the healing influence of Christianity that in Ireland the Battle of the Boyne might have been fought, and the Treaty of Limerick might have been signed and broken, yesterday! Both the November 5 celebrations have been quietly taken out of the Prayer Book, and, as a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse, the pious public goes on its way entirely forgetful of the impartial bounty of the Deity in saving alike the Stuart James and the Dutch William and, in both cases, "delivering" this ungrateful Nation and its Church.

Another service not now found in most Prayer Books, albeit some attempts have been made to smuggle it back, is that for January 30. This is "A Form of Prayer with Fasting," to be used annually on that day "Being the Day of the Martyrdom of the Blessed King Charles the First; to implore the mercy of God, that neither the guilt of that Sacred and innocent blood, nor those other sins by which God was provoked to deliver up both us and our King into the hands of cruel and unreasonable men, may at any time hereafter be visited upon us or our posterity."

In these days when the Church pretends to be democratic it is well to remember that the doctrine of authority which is here implied is still the teaching of the State religion. It is, indeed, more offensively insisted upon in the Homilies "appointed to be," but never now, "read in Churches," than in the shrewd pronouncements of Roman Catholic authorities who, of course, hold the same doctrine *per fas et nefas*. One of the latter says: "The power of the State is from God, the author of Nature, in whatever particular form of Government that power may be exercised. But supreme though it be, it is the servant rather than the lord of each and all. Man comes first, and, impelled by his sense of many wants, he sets up a State to supply them." Was ever the musty doctrine *vox populi, vox Dei* tricked out in such specious terms? The author, Rt. Rev. Mgr. Parkinson, in his *Primer of Social Science*, is writing with his tongue in his cheek, but with his ear well to the ground. There is none of this nonsense about "man coming first" in the "Homily on the Peril of Idolatry," nor in that on "Lawful Obedience"—which includes not only kings and magistrates, but masters and "all those" who, to quote the pleasant words of the Catechism, "are put in authority over us." In one thing the most reactionary opponents of disestablishment are right. The whole theory of sovereignty in democracy is involved in the retention of an established religion, one of the last props of effete institutions. Nobody pretends that Government in modern civilized communities can be other than "by consent," not excluding monarchical government. So long, however, as these exploded and servile professions are a part of the Constitution, no one need be under any misapprehension, but that, for what they are worth to the privileged, the biased, and the ignorant, they will be defended to the last ditch. Do not then judge the Church of England by Dr. Barnes or Dr. Henson. Judge it by its past and present hostility to knowledge and to freedom, and be certain that these old services, now omitted, have been discarded only because to parade them to-day would be but to hasten the inevitable end of the privileges and powers of established religion.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

CONGREGATION—a public assemblage in a spiritual theatre, where all the performers are professors, but few of the professors are performers.—*Horace Smith*.

Freethought or Freethinking—Which?

THE case and facility with which certain "rationalists" dismiss Modern Spiritualism and Psychic Research afford just cause for wonder. Time and again we have the spectacle of the Freethought enthusiast, his mind made up past all hope of revision, rushing into prominence with unqualified denunciations of mediums and their investigations generally.

Is this a rational attitude? Or does it betray want of experience and real critical acumen on the part of the fallible Freethinker?

Even our worthy friend, Mr. Chapman Cohen, errs occasionally, though if *all* rationalists were as thoughtful and as considerate as he, there would be less need for complaint. But we have recently had the case of Mr. Cohen, spurred on by exposures of certain reputed mediums, attacking the full domain of psychic investigation, as though the whole field were implicated and there were no genuine mediums or reliable researchers still left at large.

An analysis of this popular "rational" attitude towards demonstrated survival shows that it is due, in the main, to two pertinent causes. Perhaps it may be deserving here to review them.

There is something in many "rationalist" utterances concerning Spiritualistic phenomena which betrays a feeling tantamount to intellectual jealousy: that is to say, it is as though the Freethinker, not being able to accept psychic evidences himself, would deny any others the satisfaction that may come in the process. It is the old story of the "sour grapes" being retold. Their scepticism arises, not so much out of an incomplete examination of the evidence, as from the *inability to believe* even were it proved infallibly that human survival was so. The self-styled "science" of Phrenology, if it has any factual basis, should not fail to produce corroborative evidence of the lack of this faculty, by way of an analysis of the head of the sceptic!

But a more vigorous and lively cause is the satisfaction and whole-hearted enthusiasm which certain rationalists have for the Freethought movement. They are not exactly concerned with psychic evidences, and certainly do not wish to understand them. Their chief interest is to maintain the Freethought outlook, which is not always the attitude of Free-thinking. They have, in short, discovered some element of satisfaction in their particular philosophy and, humanly enough, wish to maintain it. Anything which tends to negative or upset their cherished outlook on life is by its very nature taboo.

It is hardly a rational attitude, but it is nevertheless the attitude of many rationalists, and even the most ardent Freethinker has to admit that this condition unfortunately does exist.

Well, for a period of over half-a-century investigators of the alleged facts of Spiritualism have been accumulating a huge mass of material—and there has come into being a literature of thousands of volumes exclusively devoted to psychic matters. It is a literature which incorporates the investigations of many men of transparent honesty and undoubted scientific ability. I think it is a safe reflection to say that few present-day rationalists are acquainted with it: if a great many were, there would be less confusion in the statements generally made concerning the subject. To dismiss in a clever piece of phraseology this vast literature, and the immeasurable amount of scientific experiment and examination which it represents, is surely childish and futile. And yet this is the common attitude of rationalists. Is it a *rational* attitude?

I maintain that some practical knowledge of a subject is essential, before it can be accepted or rejected. In the case of psychical research, that knowledge can be acquired in a variety of ways, the two most common being (1) by personal investigation and (2) by studying its literature. Opinions based up on mere prejudice are utterly worthless. Professor J. H. Hyslop once said "I regard the existence of discarnate spirits as scientifically proved, and I no longer refer to the sceptic as having any right to speak on the subject." To-day we should hardly go so far as that, but the Spiritualist and Psychic

Researcher would be justified if they did not concede to the ignorant opponent the right to express himself on the subject. His very lack of any practical knowledge prohibits him from contributing anything of importance to the discussion.

There is room in the study of psychic phenomena for both Rationalist and Spiritualist, and indeed it is not unlikely that the future will see some closer co-operation between the two. Such a development would, I believe, be in the best interests of both sides, for it is important that the subject should be studied and observed from every possible point of view. It is a fact that some of the most brilliant investigators of psychic phenomena have been men who were committed to a rationalist belief. Some few, in the process of the investigation, changed their position and became active Spiritualists, but a great number considered the evidence inadequate to warrant such a step, and remained sceptical to the end. Nevertheless, their contributions to the study of the phenomena have been invaluable, and have survived their decease.

In rejecting the whole domain of mediumistic phenomena, an error is committed which deprives the individual of an opportunity of collecting much information of importance. It was the inquiring spirit which led to the birth of Freethought. The movement formed, it is the inquiring spirit which should continue to guide it. Even though he cannot agree with a great deal that is voiced in the name of Freethought, the present writer should be amongst the last to hope for its transition, for it has always been a very steadying factor in everyday life.

But freethinking should characterize the organization. And to condemn psychic investigation as "modern superstition" does no credit to the shades of Bradlaugh, Foote and other critical intellects, who rendered so great a service to rational thought and religion.

JAMES LEIGH.

[We insert Mr. Leigh's article, although it does not meet the real issues. Mr. Cohen will reply to Mr. Leigh next week.—Ed.]

Continual Man.

Here moves continual man
through the street's abrupt fantasies—
slowly, unconscious of plan,
beaten to his knees,

indistinct as a question-mark
traced by a demon hand
at the turn of the tide, in the dark,
on a threatened sand.

His hands are tentacles
reaching before and behind—
he can almost hear the cells
building up his mind.

He has the shape of a cloud,
of a fish, of a beast,
he is an awestruck crowd
hearing a mad priest.

All these that pass—their creed,
their sight, their scent, their sounds—
are the hare in him, or, at need,
the eager hounds.

His soft step is under their feet,
his shadow behind their eyes—
he is the foe they must meet,
or the friend that flies.

Who can shackle the drifting smoke
in steel round the wrist?
Who can furrow the branched oak
with a reed in the mist?

That can he—this groping shade—
that can he—this ghost, this breath.
That can he—since he has made
life out of death.

Humbert Wolfe (from "New English Poems.")

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, near Clapham North Station): 7.30, Miss Stella Browne—"The Message of Three Modern Writers."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Sunday, November 27, Eustace Miles—"Fitness for Everything: How to get it."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0. Prof. F. Aveling, D. Lit.—"Recent Psychology and Recent Ethics."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, November 28, Mr. P. Goldman—"Freethought and the Child."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W. C.1): 7.0, Tuesday, November 29, Prof. L. P. Jacks—"Leisure, Recreation, and Art."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, N.): 6.30, George Whitehead—"The Need for Public Economy."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S. ("Queen's Arms," lecture hall, Burrage Road): 7.30, Mr. J. Read—"Benefits of Freethought."

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead), 11.30, Sunday, November 27, Mr. C. Tuson.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, November 27, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.0, Messrs. Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson and Wood. The *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature can be obtained during and after the meetings, of Mr. Dunn, outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

IRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Price Street, Birkenhead, near Hamilton Square): 7.0, Sunday, November 27, S. Cohen (Manchester)—"Why the Belief in God is Demoralising."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (36 Oswald Street, Blackburn): 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Birth of the Soul."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): Sunday, November 27, Business Meeting.

BURNLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (59 Westgate, Burnley): 8.0, Thursday, December 1, Mr. J. Clayton—"Some Current Superstitions."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Branch Rooms, Front Street): 2.30, Sunday, November 27, A Conference of North East Branches. Sunday evening, 7.30 (Welfare Hall, Chester-le-Street). Mr. A. Flanders and Mr. J. T. Brighton. Chairman: Mr. T. W. Raine.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Sunday, November 27, Mr. Jack Clayton—"The Meaning of Determinism." Questions and Discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (McLellan Galleries, 270 Sauchiehall Street): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (President of the National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker*).—"A World Without God." Admission Free. Donation Tickets.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Sunday, November 27, Mr. J. P. Gilmour—"Sunday—Past and Present."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, Sunday, November 27, R. Dighton Stafford (Bootle)—"The Civilization of Christianity."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): 7.0, Sunday, November 27, Mr. A. Holland—"Man in Society."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Buildings, Green Street): 7.30, Messrs Hutcheon and Bradford.

COUNTRY.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—A Ramble around Chinley, Derbyshire, has been arranged by the Branch on Sunday, November 27. Trains: Central Station, Manchester, 10.15 a.m. Return fare 2s. 1d. Tiviot Dale, Stockport, 10.33 a.m. Return fare 1s. 6d. Non-members are specially invited. Please bring two meals.

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