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

Views and Opinions.

Futility in High Places.

In dealing with the articles on "Religion and Science," by the Rev. S. C. Carpenter, I said that they contained little about religion and nothing at all about science. The articles were, indeed, extraordinarily thin, and but for their appearing where they did, and being written by Dr. Carpenter, would not have been worthy of notice. But they appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, and had for their author the Master of the Temple, a man who has a reputation for scholarship. They could, therefore, be taken as examples of the quality of those who nowadays attain eminence in the Church, and also of the way in which religious "dope" is served out to the public.

Ordinarily a thesis may be accepted as sound when its main statements are verifiable. Now it is one of the main statements of the Christian religion, so far as the Bible is concerned, that the leading events therein narrated happened through the direct action of God in his efforts to educate, punish or reward the Jewish people. If this is not true, then the main thesis of the Christian religion is not true. It is of no value whatever to prove that there was somewhere a "great flood," or that the Jewish people were once captives in Egypt, or that the Jews once captured a town called Jericho; the whole religious value of these stories is that the things narrated were brought about by the direct action of God. Of course, Dr. Carpenter does not prove this—he does not even state it. All he says is that there may have been a flood somewhere, or that the Jews may have captured a city. But on that line of reasoning the belief that God led the Mohammedans is also true, for we know that they believed this. Or we may say that when an African Medicine-man, or Jesus, said that certain diseases were sent by God or by devils that was quite true because there is evidence that these diseases existed and still exist. It is on these lines that some have

proved that the devil once appeared to Luther who threw an ink-pot at him from the fact that the mark of the ink remained on the wall. The truth is, of course, that the religious significance of an event lies not in its occurrence, but in its causation. Most religious stories rest upon some event, even though the event may be pure hallucination. If the conversion of St. Paul occurred in the manner described in the pages of the New Testament its significance depends altogether upon whether we regard it as due to the action of God, or as a mere case of sunstroke acting upon a super-charged religious mind. This ought to be plain to even a raw university curate.

* * *

More "Dope."

I continue with one or two other examples from Dr. Carpenter's articles, to which the editor of the *Telegraph* will permit no adequate reply:—

The Old Testament is a book of true religion. It is sure about things which matter most. The vital truth about Creation is contained in its four opening words "In the beginning God." The vital truth about morals is contained in another famous sentence "God spake these words and said."

But if we are to give a rational meaning to these "vital truths," then every religious belief the world has ever had, from the most savage to the most recent are all true, for all of them have said that Gods were there in the beginning, and all of them have said the gods spoke to man. Creation legends exist by the score, and accounts of Gods speaking to men by the thousand. But Dr. Carpenter would never for a moment admit that all those who believe in creation Gods, or who believed that "God spake these words" were men who were, as he says of the Bible characters, "mysteriously, surprisingly, but undeniably in touch with the true God." For in the case of the Bible as with the other religious legends *what* "God spake" was not always true in any sense, nor was it always admirable. When the Bible-God spoke about the creation or about the origin of man, or about the origin of languages it was not truth. And he was not admirable when he told the Jews to stone men for breaking the Sabbath, to kill men for introducing strange gods, or to kill them for witchcraft and similar things. All this argument (?) is, to use very plain language, just so much balderdash. It is hardly worthy of a third-rate street corner evangelist. Even "Jimmie" Douglas could have done better. He simply could not have done worse.

One other illustration to the same end. Many people, Dr. Carpenter explained, have given up Christian belief because in the Bible "God is represented as sanctioning or enjoining barbarous things." How is that to be explained? We must remember that the people who set these things down were "mysteriously, surprisingly, but undeniably in touch with the true God." How, then, can we account for

what they report as having been told them by God? Dr. Carpenter's explanation, given under the protecting cloak of the *Telegraph* is quite simple. We must not believe that God ordered things of which even Christians are now ashamed. For :—

The fact is that God was never like that. If it be true that God is Love, then God is always Love, and never revengeful or capricious. *Only they thought God was like that.*

Excellent! Its truth cannot be disputed—in the *Daily Telegraph*. The Bible characters were “undeniably in touch with the true God,” but when they report that God told them to burn witches, to stone men for Sabbath-breaking or for worshipping strange Gods, etc., then they were mistaken, it was not the true God that told them. They had suddenly got connected with the wrong number, and there was no means of ringing off. They could not tell the true God from a false God, and how the deuce Dr. Carpenter knows when they were in touch with a true god or a false one does not appear, except by saying that if God was of one sort then he could not be of another sort. I do not wonder the clergy fight shy of debate nowadays, or that they admire the B.B.C. which arranges for them to fight Atheism while denying the Atheist the right to reply. The Christian creed is worthy of its defenders; the defenders do honour to their creed.

* * *

Science and Religion.

One cannot deal in detail with Dr. Carpenter's treatment of religion and science because there is nothing substantial to handle. There is just a spate of words about as empty of meaning as a drawing of a beef steak is of nutriment. There *are* ways in which science—real science, and not the mere statements of religious scientists who, to borrow Mr. Shaw's illustration, have forgotten to throw away the dirty water of legend when they acquired the clean water of verifiable knowledge, answers religion—but to these ways Dr. Carpenter is too wary to draw the attention of his religious readers. For instance, he speaks of the experience of religion that “prophets, saints, heroes and mystics” have had, and adds, “It may have been an illusion, but they are very sure of it.” But if it may have been an illusion, what is the value of their assurance that it was not? In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred an illusion is real to those who suffer from it. What can one make of a man who offers as one of the certain proofs of religion the experience of saints and mystics, and then adds that it may have been all an illusion? It looks almost too hopelessly stupid to be real.

Now let me offer Dr. Carpenter a test. I challenge him to produce a single genuine case of what is called religious experience that cannot be explained adequately without religion. For that is really one way in which science—real science—attacks religion. It takes every one of the so-called religious emotions, or religious ideas, and shows that they can be equated with ideas and emotions that have nothing whatever to do with religion. There is to-day a very large literature dealing with this aspect of the subject, nor do I think that Dr. Carpenter is ignorant of its existence. And it is a well-known scientific maxim that unknown causes must not be invoked to explain phenomena when known causes suffice. For the ten thousandth time I ask—although I have never in more than forty years received an answer—for some features of religious experience that will distinguish them from experiences that are admittedly non-religious. And if Dr. Carpenter will supply the answer in the *Daily Telegraph* so much the better. If not, the *Freethinker* is open. And Dr. Carpenter, if he is

really anxious to bring people back to religion, should welcome the opportunity.

That is one way in which modern science explains religion. It shows that the conflict between religion and science is a conflict of rival interpretations of the same set of facts. And if anyone will ask himself the question of whether in life we are guided by the interpretation given by science or by those given by religious seers, or sacred books, or established churches, he will not be long in giving a decisive answer. It is not one science that gives religion the lie, that comes from the whole of science. The one thing against which religion is ultimately powerless is the gradual development of human culture.

* * *

The Great Illusion.

The second answer comes from a knowledge of religious origins, to which Dr. Carpenter makes no allusion whatever. He writes as all religious apologists write, as though we were living in the seventeenth century instead of in the twentieth. Take the great question of the existence of God, without a religion in which there can be no religion, with Atheism as the only logical alternative. Dr. Carpenter knows, and admits, that the present God in whom advanced Christians believe is not the one in which earlier generations of Christians believed. But the present one is as surely derived from the earlier one as the higher forms of animal life are derived from the lower ones, and without which the higher ones would never have existed. And the earlier form of the god-idea is derived from a still earlier one; and so we work backwards until we reach a stage of thought—still existing—in which we can actually watch the god-idea coming into existence. Then we find, what? Why that the earliest forms of the belief in God are no more than a mistaken interpretation of easily detected states of mind. It is one of the most certain of scientific facts that the belief in gods begins in a mistaken interpretation of subjective and objective facts of experience. But so soon as the mistake is admitted, the interpretation should be dismissed. It is done in every other direction, why is it not done in connexion with religion? And why do religious apologists never, never touch this very plain fact? They cannot plead ignorance of it; that is as impossible as pleading ignorance of evolution. They do not touch it because it is fatal to their case. It offers a demonstrated truth that the god-idea is an illusion. Every Church, every Synagogue, every Mosque, every Temple is engaged in the perpetuation of a primitive psychological blunder—and most of the educated clergy know it.

There is also an explanation of why the ordinary man or woman does not know this. Referring to certain things connected with Christianity which are well known among scholars, Dr. Carpenter says, “The man in the street has never heard of most of this. He is in this matter about fifty years behind his time.” True, but whose fault is this? What parson is there who in his pulpit ever attempts to let his congregation, that congregation which looks to him for guidance, know what are the facts connected with the study of religion? Where is the last place that the truth about biblical criticism or about Christian origins is heard? In the pulpit. Who is it that warn their flocks against reading literature that does try to put modern views about their religion? The clergy. Who is it that use the weapons of concealment and misrepresentation and boycott against scientific studies of religion so long as they can? Again, the clergy. And who but the clergy are behind this newspaper doping and the B.B.C. doping of the public? I agree, the man in the street does not know, but he is finding out. In higher matters as in

lower ones he does not know how to use rightly the knowledge that science has given him. But he will find out, and when he does the newspapers who now convert their columns into a "coward's castle," will be less kindly disposed towards "The Great Illusion."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Seventy Sweated Saints.

"How quickly nature falls into revolt
When gold becomes her object."—*Shakespeare.*

A CLERICAL humourist once dubbed the Bishop of London "the Sunny Jim of the State Church." The jest had its barbed point, but "Londoniensis" is not always joyous. There are moments, indeed, when he challenges comparison with the gloomy Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral. Or, perhaps, with the fat boy in *Pickwick*, that morbid juvenile who tried to make folks' flesh creep. The bishop can heap horror on horror's head, but, curiously, he is most moved to pitiful exclamation by financial, rather than purely theological, matters.

Most preachers, from Roman Catholic bishops to Salvation Army converts, like to pile up the agony regarding an alleged red-hot-poker department for departed sinners. The Bishop of London wears his rue with a difference. He can be horrific, terrifying, even pathetically eloquent, in discussing the purely business side of religion. Figures fascinate him, a balance-sheet draws him like a magnet. His imagination plays round it, until the prosaic details become a thing of romance, if not of beauty.

This is no holiday mood with the Bishop. Years ago, replying to the suggestion that some ecclesiastics were plutocrats, his lordship gravely assured an astonished and bewildered congregation that, whilst it was true that his earthly reward was £10,000 yearly, he found from bitter experience that the longer he drew this amount the deeper he got into debt. The congregation nearly burst into tears. Such an awful experience must have convinced them once and for all of the truth of the blessings of poverty and the dreadful woes of the rich.

It is, however, when he pleads for others, and not for himself, that the Bishop is at the height of his very remarkable powers. Recently, he pleaded for three score and ten London clergymen who were in the deepest distress, so deep that they could not sleep at night. Providence was looking sideways at these poor saints. They were not afflicted with the ten plagues of Egypt, they had not a tithe of the troubles of old Job, but they had not the wherewithal to buy themselves and their families a Christmas dinner. "We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us," as Shakespeare says. These sons of God earned about £250 a year, so they had the means to buy an ordinary dinner, say of beef and two "vegs."; but they could not reach the dizzy heights of an honest-to-goodness Christmas pudding, with a sprig of holly or mistletoe, to say nothing of a few walnuts and a glass of wine afterwards. The Diocesan Fund, to which these poor saints are accustomed to look for financial help, was £5,000 short of money to make the necessary grants, hence the shortage of innocent merriment and the lack of the sound of the canikin in seventy rectories and vicarages in Christian England.

What makes this story more lamentable is that these stranded saints had been buoyed up by the assurance of the Bishop of London that the stipend of £250 would be raised to £380 per annum, which, of

course, would cover the cost of a Yuletide festival, and might, even include a few bon-bons and a little limejuice. The dear bishop saw this, and issued his touching appeal. Nebuchadnezzar and Bernard Shaw might both eat grass, but the soldiers of the cross must have the roast beef of Old England. The bishop's first appeal only realized £200, and this meant that the Christmas pudding would have to be purchased at a multiple-shop for twenty pence. Hence a more fervid appeal for £5,000, which ought to ensure a pudding as large as the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral; and which, if shared by seventy parsons, ought to prevent them preaching for a week or two.

The Rev. A. M. Bashford added to the bishop's tales of terror. Many of these £250 a-year-men-of-God cannot afford a verger, and one unfortunate parson has to ring his own church bell, stoke the furnace, and dust his own pulpit. Presumably, he has to blow his own nose. Thus have the once mighty fallen. But a surer index is the amount of the Sunday collection, which Brother Bashford sorrowfully admits, "hardly exceeds fifteen shillings a week," an errand-boy's stipend.

The Bishop of London makes this appeal for his poorer brethren annually, and each year his stories of their sufferings are sufficient to make the angels weep, and to make soft-hearted persons with banking accounts write cheques. That they do write these cheques is demonstrable, for, a few years back, a similar appeal produced no less than £37,000, which sum should have been sufficient to safeguard the Christmas dinners for the rest of their lives. Their appetites must be healthy, for the dear Bishop is once again pressing their claims for food. Food, mark you, with a budget of five pounds weekly. Working people with such incomes do not beg for their Christmas dinners, they buy them. The bishop considers that £250 a year, with a house thrown in, is a beggarly stipend. Compared with his own modest £10,000, a palace and a town house, it may be, but millions of his fellow-citizens have to live on far less.

Why does not his lordship's heart bleed for the real unemployed, or for the railway employees, whom greedily plutocrats wish to force down to the poverty line. His boast is that he is a shepherd of souls, but he champions parsons in full and easy employment. The clergy he pleads for are actually in comfortable positions, and if they are near bankruptcy it is owing to gross mismanagement on their own part. It almost appears as if these stories of clerical distress are disseminated with the idea of melting the hearts and opening the cheque books of the people in the pews. In other words, the bishop is engaged in the pleasing occupation of greasing an already fat sow.

The Anglican Church is the wealthiest religious organization in the world. The capitalized value of its properties is £100,000,000, and it also enjoys State support. The Bench of Bishops absorbs £250,000 yearly, and has seats in the House of Lords, where it holds the fort for Toryism. Yet this is the Church which the Bishop of London cadges for with tearful tales of Christmas dinners for poor parsons. Such an attempt at making the ridiculous sublime deserves to be rescued from oblivion.

The clergy of this wealthy State Church, 16,000 in number, are not so near the poverty-line as millions of their countrymen. The higher ecclesiastics are no more in danger of sinking than bankers or book-makers. It is not honest to pretend otherwise. The seventy beneficed clergy, to whom the bishop pointed as terrible examples of clerical poverty, were not in need of food or shelter, but were alleged to be in want of a Christmas dinner. "Give me the luxuries of

life, I can dispense with the necessities," said a witty French aristocrat of the Ancien Regime. The clergy are like that selfish nobleman. Even the bishop's philanthropy has an aroma with it. His "starving" clergy are no more starving than pigs in clover. The amount he raises is far more than sufficient to meet their needs for a decade of Christmas dinners. In plain English his Yuletide appeal is a piece of harlequinade. Like the festival of Christmas itself, it is a make-believe, so humorous that it might well raise a guffaw under the ribs of death, for it celebrates alleged events that never happened.

MIMNERMUS.

The Academic Mind.

MR. JOHN BUCHAN, M.P., is a gentleman whose activities are employed in the sphere of imagination. He is hailed as a great modern Scottish author, and for the most part writing men and pedagogues have been found to be unsafe guides in the region of practical reform. Mr. Buchan it was who at a Dinner given to the present Prime Minister shortly after last General Election described Mr. Ramsay Macdonald as "the undisputed leader of the whole nation." The extravagance was probably understandable in the atmosphere of a feast. The natures of Mr. Macdonald and Mr. Buchan are congenial to one another. One is a poetic dreamer who in expressing himself is something of a compound of Chadband and Pecksniff, while the other as an imaginative writer, careful to conciliate the conventional Scottish bourgeoisie is a useful spokesman for the Unionists, who, of course, predominate in the House of Commons, and have effectually closed all means of outlet for the enthusiasms which the Prime Minister cherished in earlier days. Both are Scotsmen steeped in the traditional Presbyterianism which they have found a helpful ally in their ambitious careers.

Scotland has not been benefited by her "lads o' pairs." They, on the other hand, have been largely benefited by her. But how many successful Scotsmen have sacrificed themselves and their fortunes to provide equal opportunities for their less fortunate fellow countrymen?

Mr. Buchan has been addressing an Edinburgh gathering of young men and women who have passed through Ashridge, an educational institution in England supported by the Unionist Party. He began by saying that political problems to-day were very different from the politics of their fathers and grandfathers. "They were not academic questions like Home Rule and Disestablishment and that kind of thing." Mr. Buchan must have read history very superficially if he has formed the opinion that, in the eighties of last century for example, Disestablishment was for its advocates merely an academic question. On the contrary it was a tremendously practical question. It was so practical that the Anglican Church in Ireland was disestablished so that a precedent was furnished for following the same course with other established churches.

In Britain the old advocates of disestablishment have all disappeared or become quiescent and hopeless and have identified themselves more and more closely with big ecclesiastical corporations and widened the gulf between them and the people.

The imaginative writer and the poetical dreamer have not the capacity to appreciate the relevance of hard facts—or, if they have, they do not exhibit the capacity in their public addresses. Mr. Buchan refers to "present urgent practical questions"; but he fails

to specify what they are. He mouths a lot of platitudes about long-range policies in preference to short cuts—the necessity for patience—the necessity for a background of knowledge—the necessity for individual thought! He declares (bold man!) that he is not in the least afraid of Socialism, thereby showing himself a bigger man than Herbert Spencer, who said that he was—believing that it would be in the nature of a military despotism. Mr. Buchan thinks "there are many cases where the use of the corporate power of the State was desirable; but he was afraid of moral deterioration." Alas we have according to him "been too much inclined in recent years to improve the material surroundings of the citizens at the expense of their character."

The average orthodox politician is a great stickler for "character" and "moral improvement." And when he protests against "improvement in material surroundings," he is using "material" in a restricted and sinister sense—implying that there is undue pandering to and gratification of sensuous and sensual appetite among the poorer classes. The remarkable fact to which Mr. Buchan and his political colleagues never address themselves is that there is a superabundance of wealth and useful commodities, while there are millions who cannot avail themselves of these, but live in wretched conditions the victims of unemployment, privation and bad housing. Wealth is still power and power must be respected. Mr. Buchan speaks disparagingly of foreign countries which have placed themselves under dictators. Does he ever reflect upon the monied and undesirable dictators who seem to be ruling the destinies of Britain to-day? Of course many of these owe their present powerful positions to the war. As the Editor recently put it: "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."

Our immunity from riots and other public disorders proves that all through our common people are sound at the core. They have had much to endure and much to suffer. They are slow to make sweeping or extravagant demands because all their instincts rebel against a social upheaval which might wipe out the measure of freedom we at present enjoy. But they are determined that something authoritative must be put *above* international financiers, money-lenders and usurers. The earth is the people's and the fulness thereof.

IGNOTUS.

Chance has had much to do with our greatest inventions. The inventive man is one with a rich imagination and active intelligence, who makes ten thousand hypotheses of which one or two turn out to be fruitful.

George Tyrrell.

Each unbeliever in turn disbelieves the doctrine which contradicts him. The Christian speaks of the "unbelieving Moslem," and the Moslem speaks of the "infidel Christian."—J. M. Robertson.

Whatever gives freedom and variety to thought and earnestness to men's interest in the world, must contribute to a good end.—John (Lord) Morley.

To be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false—that is the mark and character of intelligence.—R. W. Emerson.

"Powder and Shot."

In a broad sense there is a striking similarity between conditions in modern times and those of rather more than one hundred years ago.

During the last decade of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth, the mass of the people were concerned with such questions as a legal minimum wage, their rights to associate in trade unions and to a voice in the government. The economic system and the general conspiracy (in which the Churches played a most despicable part) to keep things as they were had roused numerous social reformers to vigorous action against the ruling classes.

In 1817, the year of the ill-starred march of the Blanketeers, Castlereagh and Sidmouth answered the growing political factions, which were expressive of the widespread discontent, by suspending *Habeas Corpus* for one year, and by passing the six Acts. Two years later, significantly enough, the Government voted one million pounds to be spent in the building of churches.

The ruling classes had discovered in Christianity the very qualities which if they were widely adopted by the working classes would still the tongues of the strident critics of the social system. Meekness and submissiveness under the violation of their natural rights were recommended to the poor as being the highest and most praiseworthy way of comporting themselves in the face of all their adversities. The numerous societies for the propagation of Christian knowledge that had sprung up offered as a panacea for all kinds of social ills the outworn and repellent theory that the "Lord chasteneth those whom he loveth."

During 1932 we have experienced the not too successful Hunger March of the Unemployed, and various protests in important towns against the Means Test, which is the summation of the misery of the Unemployed. The same laws that were passed in 1817 have been invoked in 1932 to imprison Tom Mann, an old man of seventy-six, for no offence apart from being a possible "danger to the peace." Now, as then, the ruling classes have discovered a valuable weapon for suppressing those elements in society which might, if they had the power, break down their monopolies. There is the same conspiracy on the part of the press, the Clergy and the Government to popularize religion, a persistent anachronism to which the mass of the people have shown themselves increasingly indifferent. Similarly, despite the great poverty of the people, a great deal of money is being spent in unproductive directions like church-building, although the latter may not be mainly financed by the State. The Bishop of London, for instance, in June, 1932, issued an appeal for money with which to build forty-five churches in the Home Counties.

The striking admission of Roger W. Babson, a well-known American financial expert and adviser, reveals a good deal of the purpose behind the attempt which is being made to revive the interest of the people in religion. He has said:—

The value of our investments depends not on the strength of our banks but rather upon the strength of our Churches. The underpaid preachers of the nation are the men upon whom we really are dependent, rather than the well-paid lawyers, bankers and brokers. The religion of the community is really the bulwark of our investments. And when we consider that only 15 per cent of the people hold securities of any kind, and less than 3 per cent hold enough to pay an income tax, the importance of the Churches becomes even more evident. For our sake, for our children's sake, for the nation's sake, let us

business men get behind the Churches and their preachers.

But there is another more fundamental reason for the conspiracy which is afoot than that recorded by Mr. Babson. There are roughly twenty million people in the world who are unable to find work and who, in the Parliamentary language of the Prime Minister, are so much "scrap." There are no charity organizations which could maintain that vast army of the unemployed. The churches are impotent to touch even the fringe of the problem. It is the nightmare of governments whose only "logical" way of banishing it, as in previous similar crises, is by means of war. Yet the peoples of neighbouring nations will not war without strong reasons, and it is doubtful whether any government to-day would be willing to lend money to finance war on a grand scale even if the credit of the intending warring countries were good. The present war debts and reparations impasse is, economically, a deterrent against war in the immediate future. But supposing Atheism is made the reason with which to gloss over any economic incentive there may be for war? Supposing Russia, Spain and Mexico become the future cock-pits for war? If religious prejudices between nations can still be roused sufficiently to blind people to the economic consequences of war, then war at the present time is by no means out of the question. The leaders of religion have for many years been carrying on a wordy warfare against those countries where Atheism has been gaining ground, and have we not experienced in the past how quickly the "war-minded" can be rallied for battle. The South African War was largely engineered by the press, and the same is true of the World War. Those who have forgotten the appeal which was made with so much success to the English people's religious feelings would do well to consult the files of the daily papers for the first few months of the World War to remind themselves of the extravagant lengths to which the leaders of religion went in justifying England's participating in it. With all this as a background, we can examine the better this dispensation of religious propaganda that is going on about us. Almost every popular newspaper which we care to take up has in it a new version of Christian teaching. The *Morning Post*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Herald*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *News-Chronicle* regularly peddle this form of dope. The B.B.C. have arranged fortnightly lectures during 1933 on the subject of religion, and the Pope has announced that a Holy Year will commence on April 2. Only in very grievously troubled times is the latter course taken and the intention is to divert the minds of the people from material to spiritual things. There never was such a united clerical front as at the present time. This massing of manufactured public opinion on the subject of religion is formidable enough, but at a time of great economic distress such blatant advocacy is full of warning. It spells an attempt either to keep the people quiescent in these troublous times or to unleash "the dogs of war." In these circumstances we would do well to examine what forces are likely to resist such an event.

The pens and personal services of Freethinkers can be relied upon to do as much against war in the future as they have done in the past, but we cannot ignore how vastly more effectively the working classes themselves are to prevent war if they have a mind to. It is the working classes who contributed the greatest number of dead in the World War. It is the working classes who bear the brunt of the burden involved in discharging the debts incurred during the war. It is the working classes who manufacture the means whereby the war was made practicable. Therefore it

is as much the responsibility of the working classes, in their own interests, to see that future wars are made impracticable. They will not do that by following the will o' the wisp of Christian philosophy; its agents have always been put at the service of the warmongers. The workers must not overlook those elementary facts. Their leaders have long since overlooked them. Mr. Lansbury, the leader of the Labour Opposition in the House of Commons, writes appealingly in the *Times*, *John Bull* and the *Daily Herald* for a practical application of Christianity. We commend to him these words of Bradlaugh to show the impossibility of his realizing any such hopes:—

What did he (Jesus Christ) teach? Mainly self-reliant resistance of wrong, and practice of right? No; the key-stone of his whole teaching may be found in the text: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." . . . When men are poor in spirit then the proud and haughty in spirit oppress them. When men are true in spirit and determined (as true men should be) to resist, and as far as possible to prevent wrong, then is there greater opportunity for present happiness. . . . Jesus teaches that the poor, the hungry, and the wretched shall be blessed. But blessing only comes when they cease to become poor, hungry, and wretched. Contentment under poverty, hunger, and misery, is high treason, not to yourself alone but to your fellows.

The T.U.C. recommends to the working classes as their own paper, the *Daily Herald*. The *Daily Herald* in a full-page advertisement in aid of Charing Cross Hospital recommends to them the Bible. The Bible recommends, in the words of Charles Bradlaugh:—

. . . the poor to remain content in this life with the want and misery of their wretched state in the hope of higher recompense in some future life.

The *Daily Herald* urges its readers to buy this book which is "vital to every home" on the grounds that "a home without a Bible is like a house without a window." In its anxiety to assist the hospital for bodily ills the *Daily Herald* puts the working classes in contact with something which Col. Ingersoll would more accurately describe as assisting them to "contract diseases of the mind—the leprosy of the soul." And, in order to impress its serious intentions on the minds of the working classes the *Daily Herald* fills its centre page, not with a deep and detailed examination of some aspect of the problems which are harassing working class minds, but with Mr. Lansbury's views on Christianity. Unless Christian influence is seen in its proper light the world will find itself in the grip of war fever, and it will be too late for the workers to withdraw their organized support of war when the clergy turn again to curse the "enemy."

G.F.G.

NIGHT FANCY.

The moon wore once a jewelled crown,
But her gems she threw away;
And now the stars, night's scimitars,
Go, each a separate way.

The nightingale by moonlight sings
His love-song to the rose;
And still the night owns star-delight,
As every true love knows!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Onitsha, Nigeria.

Acid Drops.

Most people will have listened to the King's speech that was broadcast on Christmas Day. We have nothing to say in criticism of this. It was just an ordinary sensible and pleasant Christmas greeting. But some of the newspaper comments on it made the whole thing ridiculous. To take a striking example, the *Observer* breaks out in a style that challenges the most sloppy, stupid sentimentality of James Douglas. In its issue for December 25 it says:—

Nothing is more resonant than the thought of "The King." It symbolizes all we have, and are, and all we hope. That name of power awakens the most solemn music of emotion known to mankind. It welds in imagination our whole moral universe. It raises our sense of community to a higher plane. It touches with sanctity the spread of life's common incident.

One can imagine a Shakespeare worshipper using this language of his idol. One can imagine a Christian using it of Jesus; or a Theist using it of God Almighty. But this is said of George the Fifth! We are not making the King responsible for this unspeakable rubbish, but those who use it are surely trusting over much to the stupidity of their readers in their haste to get back to the primitive notion of the divinity of Kings. In doing so they present a very strong reason for the complete abolition of the institution of hereditary royalty.

The *Church Times* combines foolishness with misrepresentation by saying that:—

The supreme significance of the King's Christmas message to his people was the fact that it was spoken by a man celebrating the feast with his children and grandchildren. The institution of the family is threatened by the exponents of the new morality.

We do not know whether we are to conclude that it is unusual for men to celebrate Christmas with his children and grandchildren, or whether we are to take it as unusual that a King should behave in so human a manner. As to the "new morality" destroying the family, that is just an exhibition of the difficulty of a religious advocate sparkling with truth or justice where his religion is concerned. Otherwise it would be quite plain that a different form of family life is not quite the same thing as destroying the family. As a matter of fact no other institution came so near destroying the family as did the Christian Church when it was at the height of its power.

After foretelling a revival in religion in 1920, '21, '22, '23, and so on up to 1932, Mr. James Douglas definitely fixes the date of the revival for 1933. Not to be outdone in this game of "spoofing the mugs," the literary editor of the *Express* follows it up with the publication of an article in which he makes the solemn resolution to read the Bible regularly in 1933. Somewhere in the New Testament there is a text which remarks, "if the truth of God hath not more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner." But we do really believe that before writing his stuff for the *Express*, the literary editor will solemnly read a chapter of the Bible, while Mr. Douglas will provide his readers with a day by day report on the progress made by the revival.

Dr. David, the Bishop of Liverpool, is very much concerned about the growth of "cellar clubs" in Liverpool, in which Communism is being preached. The good Bishop appears to be far more concerned over the preaching of Communism than he is over the existence of the Cellar clubs. And there are also cellar dwellings in the Bishop's Diocese—not so many as there were, but they still exist, and what vile places these are Liverpool folk well know. The Church has built a great Cathedral in Liverpool, but the slums are still there.

Somehow the Bishop, along with many others, appears to have got two things confused. Slums are things that ought not to exist, and ought to be rigorously suppressed.

Communism may be right or wrong, but it should have the same right of expression that every other form of opinion is entitled to. And there is too great a marked tendency with the lower magistracy, the general press, and with too many of the public to take the profession of Communism as a synonym for all that is bad, and an excuse for the perpetration of all sorts of injustices. This kind of thing is bad enough, under a dictatorship or an established aristocracy, but it is ten times worse in a state of society which claims to be democratic. Communism is a sociological theory and must be taken as such and considered as such. And Freethinkers, above all, have suffered too much from the sheer vilification of established opinion not to protest against it when it is used against others.

The Rev. Scott Lidgett has been made a Companion of Honour of the British Empire. We have nothing to say against Mr. Scott Lidgett, as parsons go he may be good enough, earning distinction in a field where distinction cannot bring any great proof of ability or usefulness. Our only reason for noting his name in the New Year's list of honours is that the honour is conferred because he is the head of the Methodist Churches. And that is a qualification against which every lover of justice ought to protest. At least if the qualification does exist it should rule in the case of every opinion, and every organization in the country should have a claim to figure in the list of honours through a selected representative. As these "honours" are distributed the best plan would be to have them on purchase at some public office, the charges nicely graded from an O.B.E. to a Duke. A very nice sum would certainly be netted in this way.

The pious *News-Chronicle* thinks that Dr. Scott Lidgett's decoration is disappointing. He ought to have been given a peerage and a place in the House of Lords. Why? Again, only because he is the head of a religious organization. But the *News-Chronicle* stands for the non-interference of the State in matters of religion. Why then advocate that a man should have a place in the legislature merely because of his position in a Church? Why object to the Bench of Bishops? The truth is, as we have so often said, the Nonconformists have no objection whatever to the State endowing religion, or patronizing religion, so long as they get a good share of what is going. It is envy that animates the Nonconformists, not principle.

The inhabitants near St. Leonard's Parish Church (near Swindon) have made many protests against the noise of the Church bells, but without avail. On New Year's eve the protestors tried to "get their own back." So they arranged a counter demonstration. Motor car engines were run near the Church, horns were blown, whistles and trumpets did what they could to add to the noise. The noise began with the service in the Church, and neither the service, the sermon nor the choir could be heard. Legal redress has been refused the protestors, and this was the only course left. We advise that it be kept up. There are plenty of ways in which the Vicar can be made to realize that there are others on earth beside himself and his devoted followers.

But in making themselves a public nuisance religious organizations are licenced libertines. The Salvation Army, for example, will worry people with their house to house begging in a way that would not be tolerated with any secular body. Its meetings will spread themselves over the roadway, obstructing traffic, without any interference on the part of the police, their bands will come outside private houses blaring away to the glory of God, and protest on the part of the public is without avail. We hardly know what can be done in this way as there does not seem any method of making magistrates enforce the law without regard to whether one belongs to a religious organization or not. Church bells offer only one illustration of the arrogance, amounting to a public nuisance, which religion always assumes when it is unchecked.

The new Mayor of West Hartlepool is a Roman Catholic and so went "in State" to his own church on Mayor's Sunday. The Aldermen and Councillors who accompanied him, and the non-Catholic citizens of the town, had their liberality repaid by a sermon in which the preacher, Canon Byrne, made an attack on Jews, who, as the *Jewish Chronicle* points out, "are in many ways in a similar position to Roman Catholics." "Atheistic Jews" according to the Canon, are at the back of all the trouble in the world. This allegation was supported by an "authority," the Vicomte de Poncins, who is so accurate in allegation that he describes Sir John Simon and Mr. Montague Norman as Jews! If the *Jewish Chronicle*, in its comments on this outrageous sermon, had not been more anxious to rebut the charge of "Atheism" than to deal faithfully with Canon Byrne, it might have pointed out that the Church of which the rev. gentleman is an ornament has ever been the instigator and fomentor of anti-semitism, and the persecutor of the Jews wherever and as long as it had the chance to persecute them.

A recent broadcast sermon by the Vicar of St. Saviours, Chelsea, is printed in extenso in the Parish Magazine of that Parish. The preacher, Prebendary Osborne, makes a strong attack on "those worldly pleasures which cause waste of leisure, waste of mind, waste of body and waste of soul . . . For what youth calls life we want seriousness; for what society calls a good time we should profit by contrition and heaviness of heart." In this woeful state of things we are surprised to find in the Parish Magazine an advertisement for a Hotel with "the best French cuisine," not to mention "numerous self-contained suites" and a large ball room. We fear we cannot agree with a contributor to the magazine who thinks that "generations to come" will be interested in the broadcast from this parish which utterance in fact is a very good sample of the impertinence of the clergy, and the pliability of the B.B.C. to their sanctimonious claptrap. Who else but a clergyman would be allowed to lecture people about their "lollies and wanderings" *ad nauseam*?

Two Church newspapers, the *English Churchman* and the *Guardian*, are at logger-heads on the nice point as to how far Christians may go in support of disarmament. The latter journal thinks that this country should still further disarm, and "put less trust in the weapons of war and more trust in the God of Gideon." It suggests, somewhat irreverently as it seems to us, that that risk is "well worth while." The *English Churchman*, to the credit of its candour, does not forget what sort of person the God of Gideon was. "We cannot," it says, "have too much trust in God, but this does not necessitate such a reduction of armaments as would deprive us of the means of rightful defence." It goes on, triumphantly, to say: "Gideon's battle cry was not merely 'the sword of the Lord,' but 'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.'" Gideon, like Cromwell, and all Christian soldiers, might "trust in God," but he kept his powder dry. For, as the last mentioned journal naively adds, "it is true there are numerous instances in Scripture of the limitation of armies by the direct command of God, but equally there are instances of the opposite!" So "national defence is a sacred duty"—no matter what God thinks about it.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, like Sir Thomas Inskip, seems to have got himself into a nasty mess over the Sunday cinema business. The Bishop of Croydon, in the recent battle there, declared that His Grace "wished us (*i.e.*, the Sunday openers) all success." Nor was this an unreasonable statement for, in the House of Lords, he gave his support to that cause, at least so far as it is involved in that humbugging measure, the Sunday Entertainments Act. The keen nose of the Secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society scented out this Croydon "coupon" from Fulham Palace in favour of Sunday opening, and asked the Archbishop what about it? To which the Archbishop has replied that he "certainly never had any wish whatever to influence people to vote in favour of the Sunday opening of cinemas."

The Croydon result seems to indicate that there was no fear of His Grace exercising any such influence even if he had meant to, but that does not in the least diminish the patent opportunism which marks alike his vote in the House of Lords and his apologia to the L.D.O.S.

The process of attrition which proceeds apace in modern theological circles, and the pose of welcoming revisions compelled by science, are in sharp contrast to the orthodox attitude of the last century. A subtle and once much read Christian apologist, Isaac Taylor, writing in his *Natural History of Enthusiasm* (1843) says:—

Christianity, being as it is, a religion of documents and of interpretation must utterly exclude from its precincts the adventurous spirit of innovation. Theology offers no field to men fond of intellectual enterprise: the Church has no work for them; or none until they have renounced the characteristic propensity of their mental conformation.

He goes on to assert that it is "fruitless and pernicious" to attempt to give the faith given to man "in a finished form" so much as "a single touch of amendment." Poor old Isaac's bones would stir uneasily if he could hear a sermon of, say Dr. Barnes!

Something ought to be done to the inhabitants of Horsham and Windsor. In one of these places the public houses were open all day on Boxing Day, and in the other all day on December 24. That might have been overlooked, but the unforgivable offence is that in neither place was there any reported cases of drunkenness. But if this sort of thing is to be permitted, and if there is no striking outbreak of misbehaviour, if in short men and women are to be permitted to eat what they please and drink what they like and go to entertainments when they like, and spend their money when and how they like, what is to become of the army of officials who depend upon overlooking us from our uprising to our going to be? And in what way is a government to reward its faithful supporters if there are not hosts of Inspectorships, and departments for keeping us all in order? We suggest that another Commission should be set up to investigate and report to a Committee which should report to tribunal, etc., etc., etc.

In *Everybody's Weekly*, Mr. Norton Lang says of broadcasting:—

We want less "uplift," less schoolmastering, and more catering for the popular taste. Above all, the parsonian element must be kept in check. Next month, a course of twenty-five Sunday lectures on "God and the World Through Christian Eyes" is to begin. Broadcasting House is full of enthusiasm about them, I wonder how many listeners will tune in to Radio-Paris.

If non-pious listeners—which are a majority of the licence-holders—would but appreciate that the B.B.C. has decided to function as a branch office of the S.P.C.K., they might understand why they have thrust upon them so much that is impalatable. The attitude of the B.B.C. to such listeners—"take it or leave it"—and its refusal to provide popular alternatives to the pious items should serve as a useful reminder of one of the effects produced by the Christian religion—namely, it dulls the sensibility to fair-play and to the rights of the non-pious. It is all very well for listeners to resort to Radio-Paris, but if every exasperated listener would forward a protest against the B.B.C.'s attitude, the Corporation might in time acquire a less Christian conscience, a better notion of fair-play, and more consideration for the non-pious listener.

The Rev. A. E. Whitham has been discussing Religion and Life, and in particular "The Modern Temper." His first question is, "Is the modern temper favourable to religion?" Being a truthful man he appears to find no answer possible to his question but a "No." Nevertheless he thinks "there are many hopeful signs." These, we gather, may be summed up as a pious hope that the ungodly will some time get tired of "frivolity," and sophistication, and "despair"—the ungodly are always assumed to be in despair because they return to

the superstition of their forefathers. The reverend gentleman doesn't appear to appreciate that "The Modern Temper" is not the result of a mere desire for pleasure and of a revolt against narrow Christian restrictions. The real causes of it go much deeper than these things. But they are not likely to be discerned by those who peer at life through the pages of a Holy Book.

There is one particular statement by Mr. Whitham that may be commented on. He says:—

Life to have the elements of religion must neither be frivolous nor despairing, it must be treated neither as a joke nor a hoax. Let us "eat, drink, and be merry," for to-morrow we die—there is no religion in that . . . On the other hand, the idea, not that we are laughing at the gods, but that the gods are laughing at us; that the powers that rule our destiny are working us, having Æschglean sport with us poor mortals; that life is a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing—this attitude of despair is not religious.

It is true that these two attitudes are not religious. Nevertheless they would appear to be the products of religion. Men who have been taught a religious interpretation fall back on one or the other alternative with which religion has (negatively) made them acquainted. These three alternatives, however, are not the only possible attitudes. There is a Secularist philosophy of life which predisposes man to neither frivolity nor despair, but gives him courage to face the facts of life, and a happiness derived from his being released from the fears of religion.

The vicar of a Hertfordshire village advocates the compulsory production of health certificates by couples contemplating marriage. This, he thinks, would produce a first-class nation and would eventually obviate the expense of mental homes and sanatoria. At this juncture, it is worth recalling that it is the Christian Church which is responsible for popular ignorance of wholesome information in regard to marriage and sex matters. It is a Christian taboo which has prevented such knowledge from being general. A Church which asserts that marriage "was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication" quite naturally has had nothing useful to impart in the shape of knowledge and advice which would encourage the production of a first-class nation and reduce the need for mental homes and sanatoria. From which it follows that although the vicar's advocacy may be commendable yet his views are assuredly not Christian. He appears to have allowed himself to be infected by the "new paganism" which his Church is always warning men against.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE DIMENSIONS OF HEAVEN.

"And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousands furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal."—*Rev.* xxi. 16.

TWELVE thousands furlongs, 7,920,000 feet, which being cubed, is 496,793,088,000,000,000,000 cubic feet. Reserving, half of this space for the Throne and Court of Heaven, and half the balance for streets, we have the remainder of 124,198,272,000,000,000,000 cubic feet. Divide this by 4,096, the cubical feet in a room sixteen feet square, and there will be 30,321,843,750,000,000 rooms. We will now suppose the world always did and always will contain 990,000,000 inhabitants, and that a generation lasts for 33½ years, making in all 2,970,000,000,000 every century; and that the world will stand 100,000,000 years, or 1,000 centuries, making in all 2,970,000,000,000 inhabitants. Then suppose there were 100 worlds equal to this in number of inhabitants and duration of years, making a total of 297,000,000,000,000 persons, and there would be more than a hundred rooms sixteen feet square for each person. If these are the dimensions of heaven, what are the dimensions of hell?

The "Freethinker," January 7, 1833.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- R. LEE (Wolverton).—The answer is in the negative. Thanks for enquiry.
- W.R. AND C-DE-B.—We regret the inadvertence re proofs.
- E. HENDERSON.—Many thanks for addresses, we are sending the paper for six weeks in each case.
- W. WILLIAMS.—Thanks. Christian evangelistic stupidity is the same all over the world. It either finds a man a fool or leaves him one.
- E. A. KEMP.—Your opinion of the Record "The Meaning and Value of Freethought," appears to be shared by all from whom we have heard. We hope it will do good in setting Christians along the right road.
- MR. C. CLAYTON DOVE writes advocating that Freethinkers everywhere should take advantage of the present situation to educate and organize public opinion on the question of Sunday entertainments. We are glad to know that this is being done in many parts of the country, and we hope the advice will be followed wherever possible. The Sunday question would not be where it is but for the work of Freethinkers in the past.
- H. S. MILLEN.—You appear to be under the curious but common delusion that unless the *Freethinker* advocates everything in which you believe it is falling short of its duty. People combine on points of agreement, not on points of disagreement, and the very widest disagreement exists among readers of the *Freethinker*, and also among members of the N.S.S. on political questions. So far as Communism, or any other 'ism makes for the destruction of religious beliefs, it has our sympathy, but we are not called upon to decide whether it is true or not. We are only concerned to see that all forms of opinion shall have the same legal rights and the same right to public expression. We should think this a very valuable principle in itself, without reference to the accuracy of any opinion.
- MR. L. MUSKETT writes advising all Freethinkers to pay particular attention to the Government decontrol of rent Bill. The evil of the Bill has been dwelt on very strongly by Mr. Holford Knight, K.C., M.P.
- "CINE CRE."—It is part of the irony of life that Dean Inge should write "Two of the great faults of our nation were clap-trap and intellectual insincerity." If these two qualities were banished from the Churches the pulpits would be empty. Certainly these two qualities are strongest with what are called "advanced" Christians. An orthodox religionist may be clear-minded. An "advanced" one is certain to be muddled.
- E. A. MACDONALD.—Thanks for season's greetings, which we reciprocate. Your account of Freethought in Africa is very interesting, the newspaper controversy carried on by yourself and others cannot but have done good.
- G. BYANS.—Thanks.—May find a corner for it as space permits.
- SPENCER M. DE GOLIER.—Thanks for greetings and the name of new subscriber. The chief difference between Protestant and Roman Catholic countries is that in the latter the rule of the priest is more open and more avowed than in the former. But priesthood in any of its forms is always a disaster, wherever it exists.
- W. M. HARVEY (BOSTON).—We are pleased to receive your subscription to the *Freethinker*. As you suggest it is no light task to keep a Freethought journal going in these times. But it never was easy at any time. Hardship is the badge of the tribe.
- TED SMITH.—A simple explanation of the evangelist's tale is that he is just telling lies. Wherever religion is concerned some people seem ready to swallow the most extravagant yarns without the slightest examination.
- 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.

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.

We went to press with the last issue of the *Freethinker* on December 23, so that this is the first opportunity we have had to thank all those who have sent us the season's greetings and good wishes for the new year. We do so now, and we do it most heartily. The relation between the *Freethinker* and its readers has always been of an intimate character, and no journal ever had a more devoted body of supporters. We are glad to note that time does not weaken the strength of this attachment, and we hope it will never be weaker than it is at present. We cannot acknowledge all the greetings we have received in any other way than this, but we beg to assure all that we value highly the messages received, and reciprocate them most sincerely.

On Sunday morning next, at 11 o'clock, Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on "The Menace of Mass Opinion." This will be the only lecture Mr. Cohen will deliver in London this season, although he will be very busy in the provinces. Red Lion Square can be easily reached by bus or tram, from Oxford Street, or Theobalds Road, from any part of London.

We again call attention to the Society's Annual Dinner, which this year takes place at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, on Saturday, January 21. May we ask those who intend being present to write without delay for their tickets. The sooner we get to know the number who will attend the better for those who have the arrangements in hand. The Dinner will certainly be well up to previous years, and when we say that those who have been with us on previous years will know what to expect. There will be good speeches, a first-class concert, and an excellent dinner. The price of the tickets will be 8s. each.

As the Dinner is on a Saturday provincial friends will be able to take advantage of week-end tickets. If hotel accommodation is wanted, information, stating exact requirements should be sent to the General Secretary at once. He will be glad to do all that is possible in the matter.

Those who prefer a vegetarian menu must write early. A separate menu will be arranged, but it is very important that it should be known beforehand the number who are to be catered for.

The Bradlaugh Centenary Committee is now pushing forward its arrangements, and although the actual date is September 26, the meetings and other functions in connexion therewith will extend over several months. One thing the Committee has in view is the holding of a

number of meetings over the country, with probably, lantern illustrations. To do this effectively will require the co-operation of local sympathisers, and the Committee will be pleased to hear from those willing to help. All letters should be addressed The Secretary, Bradlaugh Centenary Committee, 38 Cursitor Street, London, E.C.

The Montreal Blasphemy case, for the defence of which the N.S.S. contributed, has now reached what promises to be a final stage. The defendant Gaudry has been liberated from the asylum in which he was confined, and an order has been made for a new trial on January 12. The case originally took seventy-five days of hearing before the late Mr. Justice Patterson, whose judgment was in course of preparation when his death took place.

The *Sunderland Echo* notes in a leading article that it was from the local Branch of the N.S.S. that the suggestion that Sunderland should have Sunday entertainments first came. We know that the Branch has been very active in this direction, but that is part of the normal work of the N.S.S. When Sunderland does get Sunday entertainments, however long delayed, it should be remembered how much the Freethought Movement has done all over the country to educate public opinion. We congratulate the Sunderland Branch on its activities.

The Act under which Tom Mann and his colleague were imprisoned provided for action against any attempt to alter the established constitution in Church or State. The present "National" Government seems to give an even narrower interpretation to the term sedition—it is inclusive enough in all conscience—than has sometimes been given to it in the past. The following passage from a judgment by Mr. Justice Stephen (*Digest of Criminal Law, 6th Edition Arts. 96-98*) shows a sinister light on the recent proceedings at Bow Street. Mr. Justice Stephen said:—

An intention to show that Her Majesty has been misled or mistaken in her measures, or to point out errors or defects in the Government or Constitution as by law established, with a view to their reformation, or to excite Her Majesty's subjects to attempt by lawful means the alteration of any matter in Church or State as by law established, or to point out, in order to their removal, matters which are producing, or have a tendency to produce feelings of hatred and ill-will between classes of her subjects is not a seditious intention.

Yet it was in view of a prospective effort that comes within these terms that Mr. Tom Mann and his co-prisoner were arrested, charged and committed to prison under a Seditious Meeting Act of 1817. If the purpose was not seditious how could the meeting, even if it was held, be held to be so?

Manchester Freethinkers are informed that Mr. R. H. Rosetti lectures twice to-day (Sunday) for the local Branch N.S.S. in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester. At 3.0 p.m. the subject will be "The Troubles of a God," and at 6.30 p.m., "Humanity, Religion, and Science." It will be the opening event of the 1933 session, which, if names and subjects count for anything, should provide capital intellectual fare until the end.

The Ashington and District Branch N.S.S. is to be congratulated on the businesslike manner in which the Branch Library is being developed. A catalogue of books available to members has been printed, and the library should be a feature as well as an attraction to all saints in the district not already members of the Branch.

Owing to local circumstances the Paisley Branch N.S.S. has suspended operations for the time being. The Branch books and cash in hand have been forwarded to Headquarters, and will be held there until the Branch renews active work again.

Some Christian Types.

IV.—THE SOCIAL CLIMBER.

THE social climber, like the poor, we have always with us: the man whose main object is his own advancement—the hungerer after empty titles and the thirster after futile decorations. His love of lime-light is insatiable, and to keep in the eye of the public he is for ever preaching to or rather preaching at other folk. Such a man readily finds that one of the best ladders upon which to hoist himself is some "Movement" of which orthodox Christians approve.

The first essential is that such a Movement must not be unpopular, and the second is that it will not upset anything that already exists: nothing is acceptable to the social climber except what has already been accepted. The Movement must start with a flourish of trumpets—it must reform some unending evil: the job must be a permanent one, of course, and not more than ten per cent of it must be cured: the Movement must be one that lasts well. If the object is to abolish slums, then the appeal must be to the landlord to wipe out these dreadful homes, so-called, but if that be impossible then do please re-paint them; improve them somehow. The social climber is nothing if not artful, and so he points out to the landlords that such improvements—any improvements—must necessarily add to the value of the property: hence it is impossible for the landlords to make the tenants more comfortable without at the same time making themselves more prosperous—ultimately more rent can be charged; therefore it is only reasonable that landlords should be asked to support such worthy supporters of themselves as the Social Climbers.

If the Movement chosen is more daring—say for Race Improvement—then on no account let it be mixed-up with such practical details as the Sterilization of the Unfit. That would at once raise a storm of Christian protest. The best method of improving the race is to issue well-written nicely-printed pamphlets to all the feeble-minded and unfit, and ask them politely not to reproduce themselves. On the grounds of patriotism they can be requested to abstain altogether from the objectionable habit of sex. The unfit should be told quite simply and directly that it is their duty not to bring feeble-minded or feeble-bodied children into the world, but they should not be enlightened in practical methods of birth control because they might misuse such knowledge, and in any case the unfit would not be at all likely to make use of such methods; therefore why disturb the respectable Christians when you can't benefit the unfit by teaching practical methods?

Among people who are afraid to swim but specialize in paddling in dangerous waters, thereby earning a reputation for broad-mindedness and courage, the Social Climber is essentially at home. Bishops are his strong suit, because they never see through him and always accept him as a disinterested and fearless thinker. The kind of treacle His Lordship of the Gaiters pours over Mr. Social Climber is somewhat like this—

"In presiding over this wonderful meeting of earnest Christian citizens to-night, it gives me great pleasure to see on my right our splendid secretary, Mr. S. Climber: we all know him as a man of courage, integrity, and intelligence—a man who desires to be known as always on the right side and never daring to be wrong; a man who is sufficiently fearless to champion any cause no matter how completely popular it may already be (applause). Mr. Social Climber has," continued His Lordship of the Gaiters, "always been in the forefront of every fight the Church desires to wage, and although at times" (here the Bishop

smiled unctuously and half-reproachfully) "I have had to check his ardent zeal somewhat, nevertheless I have always recognized that he is made of the stuff that true Christian reformers are made of—namely thoroughgoing respectability. (Loud and Prolonged Applause)."

Mr. Social Climber, being then called upon to say a few words, said modestly that it must indeed be a very few, for he felt himself completely overwhelmed by the flattering remarks of His Lordship. He must deprecate all praise or reward, and give his assurance which he knew would be absolutely accepted that his service in the great and marvellous Movement had been entirely a labour of love as well as a simple human duty. Every Christian—whether Man or Woman—owed a duty to his fellows, and that duty must be performed, no matter how difficult it might be, and even if at times there came some misunderstanding. Christian principles were worth fighting for: in the end they were bound to bring prosperity. At a recent meeting, one of his most valued supporters, Her Grace the Duchess of Nowhere-in-Particular, said tersely and aptly that wherever evil existed it must be fought (hear, hear), and he thought he could not end his remarks better than by emphasizing what Her Grace had expressed so well. Here Mr. Social Climber subsided into his chair, filled with cherished memories of the dear Duchess and wallowing in the rounds of applause that were as sweet music in his rather largish ears. The meeting concluded with a benediction from the Bishop, and Mr. Social Climber, after shaking hands with at least half the audience—his slickness in sliding down to the front door just in time for this was a feat in which practice ensured perfection—wended his homeward way dreaming of the next New Year's Honours List in which his name appeared as a full-blown Knight of the Garter "For Social Services." Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth!

CRITICUS.

Giordano Bruno in England.

(Concluded from page 12.)

It is probable (remembering Bruno's temper, which often caused him to enter into opposition from the desire to stir up his intellectual opponents), that these truths were placed in a light very objectionable to the Oxford doctors. His lectures by their contents alone would have succeeded in arousing dispute; and the acrimonious spirit which they evoked was the cause of his quitting the town. He said that he was near coming to blows with the pedagogues who were slenderly endowed with reasoning, and his arguments were ill-received. After about three months his career at Oxford was over.

The house of Castelnau was his home, and he seems to have looked to the circle of friends in London for appreciation—the chief of these being Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville.

Prevented from continuing his public lectures in the halls of Oxford, Bruno, whose fame was now widespread, commenced to discourse in private. Many attended, desirous of hearing him and taking part in the debates. One of the most noteworthy of these discussions is that which was held on Ash Wednesday, in 1584, at a sumptuous banquet at the house of Fulke Greville. This discussion forms the argument of the dialogues of the "Supper of the Ashes," where the subject of the movement of the earth, the plurality of the suns, the question of stars rotating about the suns, the habitableness of the stars and suns, and other similar theories were debated.

The observations and reasoning that Galileo gives in several places in his works are all in entire conformity with those of Bruno's *Cena delle Ceneri* (Supper of the Ashes). From this it appears that Galileo drew much from Bruno, although he dared not quote his name, which marked the difference between Galileo and Kepler who, with praiseworthy candour, declared not only his affection for, but his great admiration of, Bruno.

More interesting, perhaps, than these dialogues are the others, *De la causa, principia et uno*, some of which are more especially designed to clear the ground of weeds and prepare it, while others were to sow it with good seed. The scope fixed by the Nolano was that of philosophic renewal to which he had consecrated his talents and life.

Almost contemporaneous with the dialogues just mentioned, he published the book *De l'infinito, universo et mondi*, which he considered the most important of his writings of that period. In this book he expounds his doctrine of the infinite on a more ample scale, and with more vigour of demonstration than in any other work.

The idea of the infinite is here set out in a unique manner, embracing all the variety and truth of his conceptions. The infinite is God, the ruler whose complete infinite kingdom is an infinite court of beings, by which he would be glorified; not by one sun, but by innumerable suns; not by the one world but by an infinity of worlds. Man passes through the infinite vicissitudes of living creatures, and because there is no evil that he does not leave behind, there is no good that finally he will not follow. There is no death for man or any substance since nothing is substantially destroyed or diminished, but all, passing through infinite space, changes in form and aspect.

Who cannot see in these principles the theories of Galileo and of evolution in an embryo form?

The printer Vautrollier of Black Friars, London, gave Bruno the opportunity of explaining his philosophy in print. For this action he had to flee to Edinburgh, where he taught the Scots the way of good printing. Here, in quick succession, Bruno's Italian works were printed.

Hardly had Bruno finished the dialogues *De la causa, principia et uno*, than, without loss of time, he commenced work on *Lo spaccio della bestia trionfante* (The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast). This new work, which appeared to be a confutation of paganism, is nothing less than a critical work, the negation of all dogmatic religions and the proclamation of natural religion. Neither the philosophic literature of Italy nor of any other country has a more imaginative composition, or one richer in ideas, more abundant in observation. Bruno put into one bundle Paganism, Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism. He brought all these religions before the bar of reason, and he accuses, condemns and repudiates them all. Both seriously and with a smile he makes himself a preacher of polygamy, giving power to every male to possess, in conformity with the natural law, as many wives as he can support. This book has few peers among those printed in that century; something similar, from one point of view, can be found in *Citta del sole* by Tommaso Campanella.

From its pages comes a deep voice that proclaims the fall of all religions and the cessation of all cults. The heavens must be freed of decadent and old Gods. Truth does not grow old. Truth alone is immortal, and if sometimes it seems to falter or sink it rises again supported by philosophy. These dying Gods can stay their fall only by transforming and raising altars themselves before the universal deity, Reason.

Reason judges, compares, modifies and transforms religions, until the day dawns when Reason takes

their place, and gathers them all to her bosom, depriving them of individual names and forms with which mankind has dressed them in the long course of centuries.

Such is the principle on which is based and turns *the Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, a simple folk story of The Three Rings taken and transformed by Bruno into a theme of profound philosophic thought.

Other works of minor importance, composed during his stay in London, were the *Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo*, with the addition of *Asino Cillenio*, and *De Gli Heroici Furori*. The first book has as its theme piety which takes undue advantage of certain passages in the Scriptures, and sets itself up to be better than Science, but falls a prey to the dull idleness and ignorance of the Ass. The second work contains a number of beautiful sonnets and dialogues.

The period passed by Giordano Bruno in London not only resulted in the production of these philosophic and literary works, but also enabled him to meet the most significant personages of that time, amongst whom probably was Bacon. Bruno was able to frequent as a *persona grata* the Court of Elizabeth, and to be known, at least by name, to the immortal Shakespeare who, in his Hamlet, according to some commentators, gives evidence of not a few traces of phrases and thoughts corresponding to those of the works of Bruno, more especially *The Supper of Ashes*.

In the last months of 1585, after two years of busy working days, Bruno crossed over to France with the hospitable family of Castelnau. Already the Church was preparing the long persecution that culminated in his sacrifice in the Campo dei Fiori fifteen years later.

L. CORINNA.

Secularians.

I.

Being the Epistle of St. Scribe, son of A-Gun, to the Freethinkers.

GREETING! And to the cross-grained evidences, peace.

Forasmuch as the powers of superstition and darkness prevail, yet a little while and the light of reason shall illuminate.

Grieve not, brethren, that the Anglobites, the Catholites, the Dissentrians, the Spookists and other Bedlamites deny the Truth.

Rejecting the word in fear of Mammon's wrath, and making sacrifice of Innocence and Ignorance to their Pluto;

Threatening the brethren who despise their Spirits, Holiwaters, Drugs, Fires, and Blood-washings.

Invoking their Gods like unto the fox who lost his tail: Yes, that we should all be blinded even as they.

Who call their blindness The Light, and their ceremonial Dance of Death, Love?

Do not their prophets go about to destroy all joy in life with the promise of a Barmecide Feast hereafter?

Who themselves do thrust and grab upon the luxuries and pleasures of the world which they condemn.

II.

To what end, brethren, is our sojourn in the Land of Eng, but that we turn the inhabitants thereof from false Gods.

Even the Gods with feet of clay, and mouths of mud, from whence issue defilement of mankind.

Also the lies and slanders proclaiming our damnation even from the womb.

Whereon the priests and hypocrites wax portly in flesh, fat in idleness, and rich in treasure.

Whereas the multitude wanes for lack of that which it has given in the congregations, in taxation, and in tithes under duress.

Oh, that we may save the fearful from the bogeys set up by the wicked before man, in order to keep him servile in all subjection.

Scarce hath the stork departed, ere fire and brimstone threaten the cradle, and motherhood is polluted in the churchings.

Thenceforward, to maturity and the grave, is man deprived of his birthright, bartered for a confidence-trickster's purse.

Verily, the temples of Prelates and Priests are dedicated to the Gods of Flatulent Finance, Faltering Politics, and Perverted Press.

Behold, how the con-men go forth in strange garments, being not as other men who expose the Adam's-apple from a divided front of linen.

Inasmuch as they speak (Thus it is written in the Book of Slang) "Through the back of their neck," their linen yoke divideth at the nape.

Some go aboard in pinafore of funereal black, under the coat, instead of as an ulster garment, to which end it was first fashioned for women and young females.

These archpriests do also encase their legs in cloth, laced and buttoned to the knees; and their whole shape is as a tun perambulating upon two maul-sticks.

Moreover, in the covering of the head there are curious strings or laces, doubtless for the shoes should the lachets thereof be broken.

III.

For there be still those, named clerics, who poke into the houses of strangers, breaking into laic confidences, and privacies of home.

Notwithstanding, brethren, let your hearts rejoice that the peoples now discern the goats in sheep's clothing.

Which maketh the gathering of shekels almost a labour for the weary-willies in oily orders.

Now, may ye, brethren, their cries of "Anti-God!" But the cries shall fade away before the thunderous shouts of the people, "No Pro-Thieves! No Pro-Idlers! No Pro-Hypocrites!"

Yea, though Da-da of Fati-can strike his episcopal breast with a stick of Roman rock, proclaiming: "By my church I found this rock ('tis some sucking infant's mock)."

Rejoice ye. Though Roman, Anglican, and the Slangese Pie-can conspire against us, Truth shall prevail.

Though the legions of Water-sprinklers, Spirit-throbbers, Fire-breathers, and Blood-bathers assail ye, Truth shall prevail.

Though Christian benignity prepare rack, thumb-screw, rope, stake and saw: drawing, quartering, maiming, and vivisection of the brethren, with the touch of expert training, yet shall Truth prevail.

And the Truth is Life—to-day and here.

Again I say "Rejoice!" For have ye not heard how that the High Priest Can-Tor in his palace of Lamb-Eth saw a writing on the wall?

Or how that his mitre-mate E-Bor, beheld likewise in his palace of Bish-Ophthorpe?

To each of whom came one to interpret.

Who read:—

"Mene, mena, mina, mo;
Tickle the parson with your toe;
Cry 'Up, parson! Out you go!
Mene, mena, mina, mo!"¹

Peace and ease between the brethren and the cistern.

Selah.²

MOMUS.

¹ A papyrus discovered at Putney has the following anticipation of the well-known incident. "La belle Jazzer, one of the Fulham Follies, danced at the feast of Belchassis; and, while the company was sleeping off its potations, wrote upon Adams' ceiling "Mene, mena, mina, mo; Tekel upharson vertigo; Yard-arm Swing, with a yo-heave-ho, that's how pirate-parsons go." She afterwards confessed, pleading that she "detested prevers." The King was so pleased by her wit that he ordered all Easter offerings to be devoted to a Hostel for Fallen Revue Angels and Non-stop Terpsichoreans.

² This word is the Psalmist's call for Trumps. St. Scribe here uses it as a challenge to the dark world of superstition.

The Death of Religion.

SUPPOSE religion were to cease to be! What would happen? This is a question often asked by the believer, and usually answered with little regard to either facts or probabilities. Certainly with no regard to the reply that would be made by the non-religious.

I have no desire to enter into competition with astrologers, palmists, theologians or tea-cup readers, and prophesying is always a more or less dangerous occupation; but in this instance one may safely attempt an answer to the question without running the risk of being graded along with the ancient if not honourable profession of fortune-tellers.

Suppose then, we were living in a world without religion. What then? The world would still revolve on its axis, it would still give man of its products, the flowers would bloom, the birds would sing, the sun would shine, the rain would fall, nature would remain as it was before.

But man? To what extent would the disappearance of religion affect life? We should have to work to live, and there would exist the same desire for life that obtains at present. There would be the same need for study and for perseverance if we desired to get on in the world, and we should not lose the desire for enjoyment. On this last point it is one of the expressed fears of the religious world that without religion we should think of nothing but enjoyment. There would then be the same desire for happiness that exists now. The main question would seem to be whether the removal of religion would remove things that made a decent and enjoyable life possible. It would certainly not get rid of all our troubles or solve all our problems. These would remain, and the real question is how far would the removal of religion pave the way for a general bettering of life.

There is no question that the passing of religion would remove many foolish taboos and make less easy the practice of certain things that do hamper progress at present. To begin with we should get rid of the Sunday taboo, and instead of time and energy being spent on debating whether what is permissible on six days of the week should be allowable on the seventh day, we should be able to pursue in an unrestricted manner any form of healthy enjoyment, or recreation, or education in which we cared to indulge.

The censorship would not immediately disappear, but it would be much weakened. The censor would not be able to arm himself with the authority of God, and would ultimately have to justify his function by the way it helped to further human happiness in this life. And that does at least provide a very tangible check on the exercise of a censorship. We should also obtain a better education for the rising generation. Children would grow up with freer minds, and by the growth of a generation with a sounder education science would have a better qualified, more intelligent audience to which it delivers its message.

Would, even then, happiness be within our grasp? My answer is, yes.

With the complete withdrawal of religion from the schools, and with the disappearance of the religious sects we should have abolished the most efficient and the strongest hate-making machine that exists. It is as impossible to calculate as it is to question the degree to which the rivalries and the antipathies of religious sects act as grit in the social machinery. They are always more or less of a threat to individual liberty, and in a thousand and one ways they frustrate the development of social, political and educational reforms. Human society has never, thanks very largely to religious influences, created or maintained intellectual freedom, but we expect with its development that problems of every description will be better appreciated and more readily solved than is the case at present.

I do not think we need have any fear as to what will happen to society if religion goes. We actually see religion *going* and without any of the evil consequences prophesied. No one can deny that there is to-day a livelier sense of social justice, a larger sense of social responsibility, and a more intelligent interest taken in social affairs than was the case a century since. The standard of living has been raised, education is more widely spread, and the agitations and unrests about which so much is said are themselves evidence of the improvement that has taken place. Men do not suffer in silence. The demand for a share in the good things of life is common, and the refusal to grant that share is less determined than it was.

Only those who fail to understand the part that religion has played, and that Freethinking does play in life will view with misgivings the decline of religious belief. It is of more importance to them what can be done to free life altogether from religious control. That the decline of religion will continue may be taken for granted, but its rate will depend upon what each one of us is inclined to do to hasten that end. We can all do something and every little helps. With many things to avoid in Christianity we can at least learn from it persistence in propaganda, and if we practice that we shall reap ample reward.

TOM BLAKE.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

MR. ARNOLD LUNN'S REPLY.

SIR,—I am unimpressed by Mr. Taylor's reply. A few weeks ago you were good enough to describe me as "a courteous and agreeable opponent." Courteous and agreeable controversy is only possible between those who are prepared to express regret when convicted of travestying an argument, or of attributing to an opponent words which he never used. I have convicted Mr. Taylor of travestying Eddington. I have convicted him of attributing to me words which I quoted from Charles Darwin. He expresses no regret, but attempts to saddle me with an argument which I quoted as a preface to demolishing it. "Mr. Lunn uses the argument" (Darwin's) "and should stand by it." Really this is too artless. By parity of reasoning I might quote some foolish utterance by a Bishop, father this utterance on Mr. Cohen, and then urge Mr. Cohen to "stand by it." I quoted this passage from Darwin as an example of loose reasoning. Darwin's reason led him to accept Theism, "But then with me," he adds, "the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust the convictions of a monkey's mind and are there convictions in such a mind?"

On this I commented, "A profound thinker would never have been guilty of such inconsistent reasoning. If Darwin was not prepared to trust his mind when it drew the 'grand conclusion' that God existed, why was

he prepared to trust it when it drew the depressing conclusion that a mind of such bestial origin could not be trusted to draw any conclusion at all?"

I have an open mind on the subject of evolution, and should not be in the least depressed to discover that my mind was descended from a simian mind.

As Mr. Taylor has now twice demolished an argument which I never used, I offer him once again the opportunity of expressing his regret; if he fails to take advantage of this opportunity I do not propose to cross swords with him again. Mr. Taylor complains that I ignored nine-tenths of his article. Of course I did. I had already taken up far too much space in exposing Mr. Taylor's inaccuracies.

The Aquinas proofs of the existence of God cannot be adequately dealt with in a few paragraphs. Meanwhile I should like to thank Medicus for his interesting letter on this subject.

As Mr. Taylor advises me to read modern evolutionary literature, I may perhaps be allowed to point out that the introduction to the second edition of my book, *The Flight from Reason*, is largely taken up with the discussion of two modern works on evolution.

I apologise to Mr. Cohen for the misprint "Freethinker" in the first edition, but Mr. Taylor's sense of proportion has deserted him if he can really compare this trivial slip with his glorious howler, *Summum Bonum Theologica*. I wonder how he would translate that imposing title.

ARNOLD LUNN.

P.S.—In a recent issue of the *Freethinker*, Mr. Cohen remarked that I had stated that several Christians were anxious to challenge Mr. Cohen to debate. Mr. Cohen misunderstood me. What I said was that I had challenged two leading Freethinkers to an open debate, without success.

As to my second round with Mr. Cohen, it should not be at all difficult for Mr. Cohen to frame a motion attacking my belief in miracles. When last we met we debated the proposition, *That Materialism Involves the Suicide of Thought*; next time we might debate the proposition *That a Belief in Miracles is Fatal to Scientific Progress*. The form of words I leave to Mr. Cohen, but I hope that he will not evade this definite challenge to debate miracles with me some time next autumn. A.L.

[Mr. Lunn's recollection and ours as to what was said with regard to Christians and their readiness to debate differs, and there is not much use in reaffirmations—on either side. With regard to Mr. Cohen taking part in other debates—he can only open a discussion where a definite affirmation is possible, and the general question of miracles does not provide this, so far as he is concerned.—Ed.]

A NEW YEAR'S OUTRAGE.

SIR.—Surely Mr. Stobart's "Grand Good-night" talk—presumably prepared for him by the B.B.C.—was an outrage. That it was given by a sick man from his bed was no doubt calculated to secure for it immunity from criticism. In this case Mr. Stobart was the voice of the B.B.C. Except *ex-officio*, he would not command the listening ears of millions. To say, at this time, and in these circumstances, that "the world has not tried the Christian religion," and that that religion is the only remedy for personal, national and international troubles, is an outrage on truth, and not less a cynical and provocative assault on poor and suffering men and women. A more indecent violation of its privileges that this deluge of pious pessimism on a multitude waiting for a message of hope and cheer could not have been conceived. The B.B.C. is plainly a mere tool of the Churches. Last Sunday we had the World Evangelical patter, the Archbishop's sermon, and an appeal for money for a pious "mission" by the Archdeacon of London—all in rapid succession—and all sounding the same note. And in forthcoming months we are to have an endless flood of the same dope. *Ab uno disce omnes*.

A LONDON LISTENER.

For most men (till by losing rendered sager)
Will back their own opinions by a wager.

Byron.

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, Mr. E. C. Botting—"Ancient Ghosts and Modern Spirits."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, School, Peckham Road): 7.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"Hopes and Tasks for 1933."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Mrs. Mary Agnes Hamilton—"The Challenge of U.S.A."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, January 9, Mr. A. H. Millward will speak on D. H. Lawrence's "Apocalypse."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 7.0, Tuesday, January 10, William Kent—"Odds and Ends of Old London." (Lantern Lecture).

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, N.): 6.45, Mr. J. T. Waddell, B.A.—"What Is Man."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Metropolitan Music Academy, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, London, E., Large Hall): 7.0-11.0: Social, Dances, Games, etc. Admission free. All Freethinkers and their friends invited.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Speakers: S. Burke, J. Dossett and F. W. Smith.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, January 8, 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.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Sunday, January 8, Business Meeting (Important).

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Price Street, Birkenhead, near Hamilton Square): 7.0, E. Egerton Stafford (Bootle)—"The Mythology of Christianity."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Sunday, January 8, Jack Clayton, "Some Things Citizens Ought to Know."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. A. Copland—"Signs and Wonders." Questions and discussion. Silver collection.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, G. Whitehead (London)—"A Rational Explanation of Spiritualism."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester): Mr. R. H. Rosetti, 3.0, "The Troubles of a God." 6.30, "Humanity, Religion and Science."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Chambers): 7.0, Sunday, January 8, Mr. E. Lynden, Junior—"The Great Lying Church."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Unity Hall): 7.0, Saturday, January 7—"Does Death End All?"

SUNDERLAND (I.L.P. Rooms): 2.30, Sunday, January 8, Conference of Northern Branches. Evening, 7.0 p.m. in Co-op. Hall, Green Street, Mr. J. T. Brighton and others.

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