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Views and Opinions.

Looking for God.

THE series of broadcast talks on God, engineered by that great religious dope factory, the B.B.C., began with an address by the Archbishop of York, on January 15, and will be continued by five others on alternate Sundays until the people know all about God, or at least as much about God as the B.B.C. and its dope doctors know, or as much as they think it is good for the people to know, or as much as will stop the people wanting to know any more. For, true to its declared policy, the B.B.C. will not permit any speaker either in this series or in any other to broadcast anything against the belief in God. Little hints may occur in speeches which will tell the vigilant listener that the speaker does not place much reliance on God, but nothing will be permitted that will definitely open the eyes of listeners. The series, as the Bishop of Winchester told the Convocation of Canterbury, is intended to afford "a valuable opportunity of promoting adult education in religious knowledge," and religious education always and everywhere proceeds on the lines of not letting pupils know the other side of the subject, and therefore never permits them to understand it.

Since the series was announced a large number of letters have been sent into the B.B.C. protesting against this one-sided arrangement in a government created monopoly, a few of the mildest protests being published in the *Listener*. We hope these protests will be kept up; in time they are bound to have some effect, and in any case it may lead to some feeble protest being made in the House of Commons when, in 1936, the question of the renewal of the charter comes up. The protest may, again, end in the B.B.C. shielding itself behind the invitation to some very meek and mild disbeliever who will give the case away, or present a tearful indictment of Christian theism such as many a liberal parson might deliver. I admit that it would look strange for the B.B.C. while having over its doorway,

This temple of the arts and muses is dedicated to Almighty God

to permit a speaker to demonstrate that the idea of God is nothing more than a primitive delusion. That is the worst of starting with a lie: one has to be always on one's guard for fear the truth may slip in, or slip out, and persistent lying is just as difficult as is persistent truth-telling. Up to date, however, justice compels one to acknowledge the care the B.B.C. has taken to see that the truth about religion does not emerge, and the success that has crowned its efforts.

* * *

Mere Words.

The Archbishop of York's broadcast was eminently churchy. By that phrase I mean there was a spate of words without any localisable meaning. If the Archbishop admitted a thing in one sentence he took it back in another; most of the religiously comforting expressions were there, but none that would agitate. The discourse was entitled "What do we Know about God?" but there was never a glimpse of what was meant by God, how much we knew about Him or how we could get to know anything about Him. He does come near definiteness when he quotes Lord Balfour on Theism, but succeeds in misrepresenting him. Lord Balfour, he asserts, said that the vital difference was between those who believe and those who do not believe in a God to whom men can pray, thus making the difference consist in two conceptions of God. But if anyone will turn to the opening pages of Balfour's lectures on "Theism and Humanism," he will see that the writer's meaning is that the only God that is of any religious use is one that listens and takes sides, and that is the kind of a God that even educated believers to-day are shy of. On the whole there was nothing in the Archbishop's sermon that would have agitated the mental serenity of a jellyfish. It was, of its kind, a sermonistic classic.

* * *

The Vital Issue.

For fear he might be led to say something tangible, and perhaps wholly intelligible, the Archbishop of York told his hearers that it was not part of his purpose "to discuss the general question at issue between Theism and Atheism." But that being interpreted means that it was not part of his purpose to talk about the thing that really matters. What God is like might have been a pertinent question some three or four centuries ago when an Atheist was a rarity, and when gods were as common as cats, only with a far more varied number of specimens. But to-day, and for a long time past the vital question is not what God is like, but whether God exists. If that question is settled in the affirmative then Christianity can rest fairly secure, because it is not vital to religious belief whether God acts in this or that way,

but whether he, or it, acts at all. But it would obviously not have done for the Archbishop, by discussing Atheism, to have admitted its prevalence. Somehow or the other the delusion that all men have more or less a belief in God must be encouraged. The Agnostic who thinks there is something to know, but does not know what it is like may be tolerated; the man who "yearns" for something with which to enter into communion, or who admits with what regrets he has lost his childhood's beliefs, all these may be acknowledged freely, but it would never do to plainly admit that Atheism is prevalent anywhere but in Russia. And that is a long way off, and English people are so dreadfully ignorant about it, and it may be mixed up with tales of hardship, and slaughter and all sorts of horrible things. It is advisable to take the belief in God as something firmly established and then proceed to tell the world all about it.

But the Archbishop seems conscious that even here he is not on impregnable ground, so in asking "What do we Know of God?" he replies with another question, "What do we know of anything?" But suppose we do not know anything, or that we know anything very imperfectly, is that really a sufficient reason for believing in other things about which we also know nothing? Of course, if the imperfect knowledge of God is of the same order as our imperfect knowledge of the world, that is, if it is something that we cannot escape, and so have to get on with what we have in the best way we can, then we may have to be content and go on believing in a God although we can never offer full justification of our knowledge. But that is obviously not so. In the case of our non-theistic knowledge, imperfect as it is, it does enable us to get about the world with a tolerable degree of comfort and safety. And that portion of our knowledge that has been subjected to the stern test of verification stands the strain. In the case of God, anybody who will, can get on without it, and yet he feels no verifiable loss. The man who ignores God altogether is not more ignorant of the world than the one who recognizes him, he does not find his way about the world with less safety, while the man who "finds" God has admittedly to turn to non-religious studies to understand the world which he says God made and rules. The hypothesis of God is one that anyone can set aside without the slightest loss of knowledge, safety, or efficiency.

"Our knowledge of God," says the Archbishop, "always fall short of the ideal of knowledge, it never amounts to demonstrated certainty." From the high priest of a *revealed* religion that reads curiously. It looks like casting some doubt on the reliability of Jesus Christ, and carries with it the implied admission that the story of the god who was incarnate in man, who was born of a virgin and raised from the dead, may be a "fake." At any rate it falls short of demonstrated certainty. One would have thought that to an Archbishop nothing is less uncertain than the voice of God Almighty himself. To admit that the editor of the *Freethinker* may be as near the truth as the Archbishop of Canterbury reads *very* curiously. I do not wonder that these talks have been so arranged that no one shall have an opportunity of dealing with the speakers before the same audience. One might be astonished, if one were not so accustomed to the decencies of discussion and fair-play being so generally ignored where Christianity is concerned.

* * *

A Cowardly Creed.

But, the Archbishop went on, the fact that our knowledge of God does not amount to certainty need not disturb us when we remember that "This is also true in some degree concerning our knowledge of all

other things." "In some degree!" Well, that does show a dawn of caution, and the existence of a fear that some of the Archbishop's hearers may be capable of putting two and two together. Let us grant, then, that it is a question of degree. Our knowledge of things other than God falls short of demonstrated certainty. But our knowledge of God offers no certainty whatever. Of science we can at least say that some of our knowledge works so far as it goes, in other instances it works completely and infallibly, and while there is always a mountain of uncertainty in front, it is always leaving behind it a larger amount of completely demonstrated knowledge. The older the world grows the greater becomes our dependence on scientific knowledge. The older the world grows the less its dependence upon religious belief. And in the end even an Archbishop with a salary of £15,000, has to confess that he is not certain about the God he is paid to explain to us!

We may grant the Archbishop that a great many of the things we believe are not based upon "demonstrated certainty," and if the belief in God only fell short of a demonstrated certainty we might be less critical for the Archbishop and his trade. Nor can one escape the feeling that "demonstrated certainty" is used in order to induce the impression that if science can have its dubious beliefs, why not religion, and if we do not demand from science a demonstrated certainty in every case, why ask religion to give us what science cannot? Well, we do not ask of religion a demonstrated certainty; let it give us a reasonable certainty, something for which the evidence for is greater than the evidence against. Let religion do what science does, that is, ask us to beat with it in its speculations because they are in the line of its demonstrated truths, and because it is always ready to submit its speculations to any reasonable tests. But religious speculations are not in line with any ascertained truth. Its assumptions are all questioned, the very existence of the data upon which it builds is doubtful. And it is not ready to submit its teachings and theories to a reasonable test and abide the consequences. To-day it lacks even the courage to face the ordeal of public discussion in the shape of having the other side of the case presented. I am quite sure that if the B.B.C. had displayed the common honesty of having the reasons for and against God broadcast, the Archbishop would have refused to take part in the discussion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

[The poverty of the clergy is much spoken of as a reason against Disendowment to-day.]

There is a class of persons having taxes bestowed on them, they are the poor clergy. Not of the Church by law established, to be sure, you will say! Yes, gentlemen, even to the poor clergy of the Established Church. We know well how rich that Church is: we know well how many millions it annually receives: We know how opulent are the bishops, how rich they die: how rich, in short, a body it is. And yet fifteen hundred thousand pounds have within the same number of years been given out of the taxes, partly raised on the labourers, for the relief of the poor clergy of that Church, while it is notorious that the livings are given in numerous cases by twos and threes to the same person, and while a clamour, loud enough to make the sky ring, is made about what is given in the shape of relief to the labouring classes. Would it not be more natural to propose to get this money back from the Church than to squeeze so much out of the bones of the labourers?

William Cobbett in 1822.

Science and Materialism To-day.

(Continued from page 53.)

"When men were children they invented a loving father to whom they could fly as chickens do to a hen, and they invented life with all the unsatisfactory features of this one left out. Science set out to find proofs of the existence of this loving father and of the perpetual holiday after death; and it must be confessed that it has failed completely in its quest." (Prof. Langdon-Davies: *Man and His Universe*, p. 15.)

"Of one thing there is certainty, viz., that scientific knowledge can extend life and happiness by education and prevention of disease. . . Science relieves us of superstition and fear of punishment after death, and leads us to devote ourselves to the improvement of conditions on earth." (Sir Leonard Hill: *Philosophy of a Biologist*, p. 86.)

LET us see, by an actual examination of some of the latest scientific books, by well known scientists, what the position of Materialism is in the scientific world to-day, and whether we ought to be in mourning for its alleged decease. To begin with take the just published work *The Scientific Basis of Evolution*. (Faber and Faber, 15s.) by Prof. T. H. Morgan, who is a Professor of Biology. "Modern Biology," he observes, "rests its case on the assumption, sometimes amounting to a conviction as the result of wide experience, that the properties of living things are the outcome of their chemical and physical composition and configuration." (p. 236.) And further: "Aware of the enormous labour and thought that has gone into each advance science has made, the biologist is more than skeptical when philosophers explain away by fiat his difficulties, and he is not unaware that step by step the progress of science has forced magic and metaphysical speculations farther and farther out of his field." (pp. 239-40.)

Replying to Iddington, and other obscurantists and metaphysicians, in the concluding paragraph of his book, Prof. Morgan launches the following parhian arrow at the anti-materialists. The Mechanists, he says, do not pretend "to explain the universe," and concludes:—

Mechanists make no such claims. They do claim, however, that science has greatly profited by the use of the mechanistic approach in the widest sense, and they resent the boundaries set to their progress by metaphysicians. They even question the finality of the metaphysicians. The boldest spirits among the mechanists go further and claim that in time they hope to bring within reach of their methods a study of the lucubrations, hallucinations, and obsessions of the human mind which, masquerading under the illumination of introspective metaphysics and transcendental philosophy, pretend to solve all the riddles of the universe. (Prof. T. H. Morgan: *The Scientific Basis of Evolution*, p. 254.)

In other words, the Materialist claims that by a study of the mind of these mystics, he will be able to reveal the cause of their stubborn and perverse opposition to the mechanistic explanations of the scientific research worker. So far as we can see, it arises in nine cases out of ten, in religious prepossessions planted in childhood and sentimentally retained in manhood.

Another distinguished Biologist, Sir Leonard Hill, who was knighted for his services to science, is a Materialist who believes that mind and consciousness are due to "the physical and chemical state of neurons," of which the brain is composed. He declares:—

It is evident that the interaction of myriads of atoms, each with their electrons and waves accompanying electrons, in each of the fourteen thousand

million neurons computed to be in the great brain, suffice for the functions of mind and consciousness. There is no justification for calling into play "a spirit from the vasty deep, totemism, magic, witchcraft, polytheism, vitalism, free-will, human immortality and divine retribution, heaven and hell and the devil, a crowd of spectres with which man's wayward and fearful imagination has for ages oppressed him, cumbering his progress in true knowledge and in command over the forces of nature." (*Philosophy of a Biologist*, p. 73.)

Professor Lancelot Hogben, of the University of London, is another Biologist who holds that only by adopting the methods of the physicist and chemist can any progress in biological problems be made. He observes: "Whatever the future holds in store for further interpretation of heredity and variation on physico-chemical lines, the progress already achieved has at every stage involved elimination of holistic concepts by the ruthless application of mechanistic logic."³ And as he further remarks, if the mechanistic philosophy is not more popular it is because:—

The period in which we live is one of ferment and disintegration. In its impetuosity to settle the problems of human conduct, it will not be content to await the slow advance of science. Mechanistic philosophy cannot offer to the privileged a supernatural sanction for the things they value most. It cannot proffer to the unprivileged the shadowy compensation of a world into which the thought of science is unable to penetrate. A mechanistic philosophy might conceivably be popular in a society in which gross inequalities of possession did not exist. To-day it can only flourish among those who have leisure to study, when their privileges are not compromised by social unrest. He who has the temerity to defend the mechanistic position need not expect any laurels from his own generation.⁴

Replying to Dr. J. S. Haldane, who is an opponent of mechanistic views, the same writer observes: "In another place I have attempted to show that Dr. Haldane could find in modern genetics the clearest evidence that the biologist only progresses when he interprets his data in the same way as the physicist or chemist interprets his." And further: "Whatever Dr. Haldane may say on the platform he is as good a mechanist as anyone else in the laboratory." (p. 292.)

There are two Haldanes in the scientific field, there is Prof. J. S. Haldane, the Physiologist, and Prof. J. B. S. Haldane the Biochemist. The latter is the distinguished son of the former. They are often confused together, but J. S. Haldane is an opponent of Materialism, and J. B. S. Haldane is a defender of that philosophy. In his book (*Possible Worlds*, p. 30), he says: "It would appear, then, there is no need to postulate a directive agency at all resembling our own minds, behind evolution. The question now remains whether it can be explained by the so far known laws of nature." After several pages of discussion upon this point, he arrives at the conclusion that: "The history of an animal group shows no more evidence of planning than does that of a national literature. But both show orderly sequences which are already pretty capable of explanation." (p. 43.)

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

³ Prof. L. Hogben: *The Nature of Living Matter*, p. 79.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 243-4.

Human pride is skilful to invent
Most serious names to hide its ignorance.

Shelley.

The Army of The Lord.

"Priests, unlike other showmen, never lift the curtain."—*G. W. Foote.*

"Many people think they have religion when they have dyspepsia."—*Ingersoll.*

"You cannot judge a cigar by the picture on the box."—*J. K. Sykes.*

BRITAIN is supposed to be a democratic country, and politicians never tire of mouthing their admiration of the ideals of democracy. Yet there are in Britain forty thousand men, each bearing the title of "reverend," who form a caste apart from their fellow men. Who are these favourites of fortune? What do they do to enable them to be revered by other citizens? In what way are they superior to other men who are simple "misters"? These are questions which, in this serious crisis in the world's affairs, are worth the close consideration of democratic minds.

It may be contended that this reverence is paid to these men because they have chosen as their profession the supervision and direction of the religious habits of the people of this country. That is the politest of assumptions. In reality, these reverend gentlemen are medicine-men engaged in precisely similar work to their coloured and over-dressed prototypes in savage and uncivilized nations. They tell us of "gods" who get angry with us, of a dreadful "devil" who must be guarded against, of beautiful "angels" who fly from heaven to earth, of saints who can assist if supplicated. Forty thousand reverend gentlemen are engaged in this sorry business, to say nothing of their assistants and satellites. Their maintenance costs millions of money each year. Yet this peculiar profession is not more honest than fortune-telling, which is guarded against in the jurisprudence of this country. Many a poor, old woman has been sent to prison for taking money from a poor servant girl, after promising her a handsome husband and half a dozen children, but these reverend gentlemen are allowed to take large sums of money for promise of good fortune in the "beautiful land above."

Every one of the clergy subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Anglican Church. These Articles make the most curious reading in the twentieth century. They include the belief that a spirit can be at the same time a father and a son, and also proceed from itself as a ghost. They include the belief that "Adam" and "Eve" were the parents of the human race, and that they ate forbidden fruit, in consequence of which countless generations of humanity are condemned to eternal punishment. They teach also that Roman Catholic doctrine is a vain invention of rival religionists, that the Christian Bible is the sole word of "God," and that the monarch is the head of the Church of Christ. To these extraordinary articles of faith, among others equally startling, every Church of England minister subscribes in the most solemn manner. And we know that very large numbers of them do not believe in them, or observe them, and that their main reason for remaining in this Church is the salary and the enjoyment of an easy livelihood.

Seeing that little merit attaches to the clerical profession, are we to assume that reverence is due to the exemplary lives led by those belonging to this most favoured class of the community. Divorce Court proceedings and Police Court records show that these "men of God" in no wise differ from any other class. They may retort that there are black sheep in every fold. True, but people who are not professional religionists do not pretend to being a sacred caste apart. They do not ask to be known as reverend, or by any

other title implying special respect. Nor do they wear different clothing to mark themselves off from ordinary men. It is because of the airs and graces of these reverend gentlemen that we are compelled to compare their behaviour with their boastings. When they come down from their sacred pedestals we will make the same allowance for them that we make for ordinary men.

This sacred caste is an affront to the spirit of Democracy. The greater number of these priests are associated with the Anglican Church, which is the Established form of religion in this country. What is the best way of dealing with this problem? No reform of this Church of England is needed. It should be disestablished and disendowed, and then let it reform itself like any other society. And why has the disestablishment of this Parliament-made Church been dropped from the Democratic programme? This particular Church simply absorbs millions of money and so many offices and dignities. It is simply an ecclesiastical branch of the Civil Service, and not so harmless as other branches of the Bureaucracy.

Elsewhere one knows what a Church stands for. You say this obeys implicitly the Pope at Rome and the College of Cardinals; that is faithful to the Westminster Confession. Yet another yields homage to the Eastern Patriarchs. But ask what this Parliamentary Church of England stands for and who can tell you? One prelate points to the Thirty-Nine Articles, while another laughs in his dainty lawn sleeves at the simplicity of laymen.

This humbug concerns us all, for the legal fiction of this country makes us all parties to the constitution of this Church. If it were in the United States, or the British Colonies, where no such thing as a State Church exists, we need not care what humbug went on in a particular church. But the legislation of Parliament makes us all partners in this State Church, and compels us to be privy to its dishonesty.

For dishonesty is what it really amounts to. So long as the British Parliament permits the Anglican Church the use of property worth £100,000,000, and gives it State protection into the bargain, the Christian Superstition will be preached, defended, adapted, and believed by a semi-literate proletariat. The High Church type of intelligence, which plays the sedulous ape to Rome, is, probably, the lowest outside homes for mental defectives. And the High Church priests rule the roost in the Established Church. They also influence education, and are their power in the House of Lords.

In this country Christianity is so largely Churchianity. What that means is seen in a story told of Walter Bagehot. He visited a friend who had a church on his estate. "I like that," said Bagehot, smilingly, "it's well the tenants should not be quite sure that the landlord's power ends with this world."

MIMNERMUS.

TICKETS FOR HEAVEN.

A good story is told of the late Madame Albani. She was announced to sing in the Cathedral at Armagh. But the Dean would not allow her because she was a Roman Catholic. Some years later a friend of hers was attending the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester. An altercation was going on at the Cathedral door between a gentleman and a policeman. The gentleman had no ticket and the constable would not admit him. "I wonder," said the gentleman angrily, "shall we require tickets to get into Heaven?" "Possibly not Sir," said the policeman, "but you won't hear Madame Albani there!"

Fundamentalism—Dogma or Disease?

It seems to me we should not blame a man for being a Fundamentalist. We should pity him. Instead of condemning him we should study him in the scientific spirit. Just why any man should go sour on 97% of his own kind is a psychological puzzle and calls for an explanation. Just why he should disbelieve about everything the rest of the world holds true and hate the things that most sane people love—without being insane himself—ought to be an interesting problem if we could approach it without rancour and with the same attitude of wholesome curiosity a biologist maintains toward a problem in pathology. The treatment, I admit, might be baffling, but at present we are getting nowhere by our methods and I am convinced that the more we try to do for him the worse he gets.

It is a sad situation in any case to see this pestiferous individual—this apparently hopeless victim of unbelief—raving about in considerable numbers and actually making converts; but to be unable to do anything about it is exasperating in the extreme. One is reminded of the black plague of the middle ages and the hopelessness of the physicians at that time, because of their ignorance of those laws of health which are so familiar to us all to-day.

So the case of the Fundamentalist may not be as hopeless as it seems on the surface. Up to now our methods have been little better than their own. Fundamentalists have charged us with being in league with the devil, to be sure, but what have we done to them? Really, I have to suspect there may be some genuine Fundamentalists among ourselves, for my first observation is that Fundamentalism is not a theory but a state of mind—not a dogma but a disease. Thus it should be recognized by the symptoms, rather than by the queer ideas it seems so fond of propagating; and while an expert may at times make a snap diagnosis from these alone, I am convinced they are but surface indications and point to a deep-seated malady which we at present know very little about. Perhaps it's more autopsies we need. But that is to anticipate.

I am not much for "reading character at sight," and, even if I knew the principles, I believe I wouldn't say much about it (for my own "mug" isn't anything to brag about), but I may say that I have made quite a collection of portraits, cut from newspapers over a period of years, and it occurred to me to paste Fundamentalists and Liberals on opposite pages of my album, for comparison. While it is obviously unfair to say very much without showing specimens, yet I feel sure the method is of value and I recommend it to my friends. The features of Bryan, Borah, Straton, Canon, Winrod, Rily, Norris and Carry Nation would offer little difficulty to the novice, although Clarence True Wilson, like B. Shaw, would require to be barbered for accuracy.

"Shave the Shavian." Off with the whiskers—off with the disguise! What kind of a mouth have you? Are the lips flexible or tense? Do they run in straight lines or pleasant curves. Compare Cardinal Manning, for instance, with Ingersoll, Bryan with Lincoln, or Straton with Thomas Paine. Has the Fundamentalist a grievance? I'll say he has or I'm no reader of faces. And with all the faults of the Puritan and few of his graces, with anger in his heart, he plunges to the fray.

Here, it seems to me, we begin to see light. The trouble is not so much intellectual as emotional. Can it be that the whole difficulty starts with something

like an inferiority complex? A subconscious group of painful emotions built about a morbid fear of humiliation? A defence mechanism leading by over-compensation to an exaggerated egotism, resentment of differences, and delusion of persecution?

The Fundamentalist is apt to be a very good logician. Indeed, his logic is often perfect and unassailable. But he invariably lacks the scientific open-mindedness which enables one to examine—or re-examine—first premises. Once he chooses a premise he never goes back, but "marches on to war" like a good soldier. "Theirs not to reason why. Theirs but to do and die."

To "keep the faith" (whatever that may be) is the slogan and watchword of every Fundamentalist. Thus we may explain, it seems to me, his hopeless intolerance—his resentment against any and all who question the infallibility of his conclusions. Such things humiliate him and the one thing he can't stand is humility.

That is—not for long. It is an essential part of his dogma to "triumph over enemies." He may profess the "meek and lowly," but he has all the pride and lust of a conqueror. He professes love but he loves hate. He professes faith, but cross him in argument and see what you get. He denies reason, but he worships logic. He bows to the Nazarene, but he adores Jehovah. He prates of the Prince of Peace, but he longs for carnage. He prays for the millenium but his heart is set on Armageddon. He talks forgiveness of sins but his sensuous soul wallows in the blood and gore of the atonement. He preaches glad tidings of great joy but his sordid mind revels in the agonies of the damned. He professes to love your soul, but he'd see you rotting in hell rather than admit any truth whatsoever in your own pet premise.

For, whatever premise the true Fundamentalist adopts—and holds as a divine revelation—you may be sure of one thing: it is the premise which has in it the highest potentialities for damnation. Nine-tenths of the human race ought to be damned for not accepting what the other tenth preaches. Ergo: *they may be damned.*

This is the sorry hope and the pseudo-faith in the heart of every good Fundamentalist; his one source of spiritual consolation—his chief purpose in searching the Scriptures. And when he has to go about in a world where "the enemy" apparently is *not* damned he resents it as a personal affront.

That is why he is the man with a grievance—the man disappointed with the world, without any true faith, without hope, and, I well might add, without God. His is a god of failure, as disappointed as himself. But some day will come vengeance! "How long, O Lord, how long?" he cries from the dismal abysses of his darkened soul.

That is why the corners of his mouth sag—if not too stiff to sag—and that is why he is not only a preacher of hate and intolerance, but the world's greatest unbeliever. He not only disbelieves in evolution, in progress, in reason, in education, in moral training and even in the evidence of his own senses, but he disbelieves in his fellow men, because deep down in the unconscious processes of his own exaggerated ego is a disgust for himself. He doesn't know this, to be sure, for, by an intricate process of rationalization, he has found "his salvation," which expresses itself mainly in keeping up a constant warfare against all who differ.

Thus we have "An Appeal to Arms," a "War Cry," a "Defender," and "Onward Christian Soldiers, marching as to war." In the name of the Prince of Peace. Indeed!

Is it, then, a coincidence that so many of this class die of apoplexy? As a physician of thirty years experience I feel sure there is a close relation between Fundamentalism and high blood pressure; but this deserves an article by itself. Perhaps I've said enough—or enough at least, to convince the average Freethinker that we have before us a problem calling not only for the most careful and painstaking consideration, but for patience, charity and tolerance toward the most intolerant and really the most pathetic group of fellow-sufferers we are ever likely to know anything about. Let us cease from harsh judgments, knowing well, as we do, that the hand of the Lord—or dyspepsia, or constipation, or something of the sort—is upon them.

And let us remember that we cannot always judge by a man's face whether he is a moron or a minister; an Atheist or a Fundamentalist. He may be all in one. In a spirit of charity let us recall the story of the man who was accosted at the station with the query: "Are you our new minister?" And the indignant response of the stranger: "Hell! No. Dyspepsia makes me look that way." Selah.

WILLIAM W. HARVEY, M.D. (U.S.A.).

Atheism: A Call to Youth.

Few there are, at this stage in the world's history, who would deny, if we could only for a few minutes tie them down to brute fact, that the case for Atheism is a very strong one. Few there are who would gainsay us when we announce that religion, on the whole, has been an evil and a corrupting force in human history, almost always obstructive to true progress, always preserving the *status quo*, and preventing experiment.

Intelligent people would grant all this, and would agree when we put forward the treatment of Galileo, Bruno, and, in recent times, Charles Darwin as examples of what we believe to be the truth of the matter.

But if it be thus granted that we are right, that our reading of the situation is the just one, the fact remains: what are we going to do about it?

As a young man of twenty-five, with, I hope, the best part of my life before me, I am chiefly interested in addressing myself to youth. I recognize the great things which have been done in the past, the work which Holyoake and Foote, Bradlaugh and J. M. Robertson, and such doughty fighters as the present editor of the *Freethinker* have carried out. But to my generation, I feel that the important question is: what can we do here, and now to ensure that the ground which has been won by so much valiant effort in the past shall not be lost?

In the fight against organized religion, as in the fight against all vested interests, we cannot expect our opponents to fight fair. Every foul trick, every unfair practice which can be brought into play against us, will be so brought. More so now, perhaps than ever before, since Atheism, thanks to the popular press, is associated, in most people's minds, with Russian Bolshevism. And the papers have so dinned into the minds of the masses that the Bolshevik is an unruly ruffian, that Atheism is very likely to suffer from the connexion.

But, to come back to the question with which I started. What can young people who are definitely of the opinion that Atheism holds a hope for them, a hope which religion, that "dope" of the people, does not—what can they do?

First and foremost, to all young people, I would say; "propaganda." Atheism is denied its fair representation in the press; but the press cannot stop you from talking to your friends. And you will be very surprised to find how many people agree with you, come round to your opinion.

And write letters to the press. Usually they will be ignored, but, occasionally (probably by accident) one will slip in. Especially is this so when such questions as the Sunday Cinema problem come up for discussion.

And then again, support the anti-religious press with all your might and main. The N.S.S. and the R.P.A. deserve all the support that they can get.

But last of all, and, perhaps, most important of all, do not lose heart, because you sometimes feel submerged in a crowd of fools who will not think, who prefer to continue in a state of comfortable illusion and drowsy apathy on religious matters. Here and there are little groups of enthusiasts who are resolved to oppose the "church militant" by an equally militant Atheism. And (always remember this) we are winning! Wherever figures are published—and they are often suppressed—they show a progressive loss to the religious forces.

Slowly, but surely we are being emancipated from the force of blinding illusion and crude superstition. Free from the degrading thought that the bribe of a heaven on high is necessary to ensure decent behaviour here on earth, the youth of this generation has a chance to bring about greater changes, to see greater progress than any previous generation would have dreamed possible.

JOHN ROWLAND.

Acid Drops.

It is not often we find ourselves in agreement with an Archbishop. His Grace of York, speaking in that City recently, observed that during the years immediately ahead "there were bound to be substantial changes in a good deal of the ordering of society. We were bound to move either towards what was broadly speaking called Communism, whether through revolutionary processes or not, or towards a more equal distribution of private property and private holdings within the national wealth." If the rank and file of the clergy, not to mention the conservative political elements who are their main support, took this sane view of the prospects of change, and devoted less attention to the denunciation of its advocates they would be acting more wisely, even in their own interests. We fear, however, that the existing order is so unseparably bound up with its supposed theological sanctions, that the main body of the clergy will, in the future, as in the past, resist change to the last. Self-interest, in its narrower sense, has always been the inspiration of their conduct in all the social and industrial crises of the past.

Dr. Temple has also written an Essay on *The Genius of the Church of England*. There is one statement in it which has our unreserved concurrence. It is that the Church of England is "in some respects quite peculiar among the Churches of the world." Dr. Temple has such gifts of reasoning that we could have wished he had enlarged on this theme of the peculiarity of the Establishment. How a Church can be at one and the same time established and "free," Protestant and Catholic, Imperialistic and International—and all these claims are made for it—is much more difficult to understand than the opportunism of the Archbishop's view that the Church of England should "think more first in terms of the unity of our Empire, and secondly of the unity of mankind." If, as we have always understood, "God hath made of one blood every nation under heaven"; if, as we fancy, Jesus commanded that his followers should "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," what are we to think of an Archbishop who puts the British Empire first, humanity second, and God—in the cart? But, we can hardly press that question on the attention of an ecclesiastic who writes of his Church as "utterly, completely, provokingly, adorably English. Like the British Constitution it is the despair of systematizers!"

The Archdeacon of Canterbury was present at a service at St. Mark's, Norwood, held in the fashion that was customary in all English Churches 200 years ago. The vicar was robed in an old-fashioned bed-gown surplice (without cassock) and the Archdeacon preached in a black gown and bands. No organ was played, and there was no choir. A parish clerk gave out the hymns, and the

tunes were provided by a flute player. We do not know what was the object of this performance, but we note that the Archdeacon pointed out that the *ensemble* was wrong in one particular—the Churches of 200 years ago were not so comfortably warmed and lighted as the one he was in, and “their forefathers did not make feeble excuses for not going to Church.” “Cos why?” as the boy asked. “Cos they were compelled to go”—not by law then by convention and taboo.

The curate of Clirk (Denbighshire) has been displaced by the Archbishop of Wales. He has preached sermons in favour of disarmament. Lord Trevor, a local Peer, complained about this twelve months ago, and since then has not attended church. The Curate (Rev. L. E. Roberts) says he “never preached anything revolutionary” nor of a “political character.” He enlisted in the Army at sixteen, was seriously wounded at the battle of Arras, and emerged from the war a strong Pacifist. There is to be a protest meeting in the village; but it looks as if the old combination of ecclesiastical and social ostracism has proved in this case as strong as it ever was. The Church, like many of the politicians, prates about the Prince of Peace, but the value of these professions can be gauged by such an incident as this, and by the fact that in the fifteenth year after the great carnage the abolition of armaments has not yet been even discussed in any responsible quarter.

The prophet Daniel, or the book which bears his name, has been responsible for a turgid stream of attempted elucidation of his, or its, supposed prophecies. The latest exponent of the craft of which the late Profit Baxter was a distinguished ornament is the Rev. D. V. O'Meara, Vicar of Thame. In an Advent sermon, published in the *Thame Gazette*, this gentleman announces that Daniel, not only wrote history 2,500 years ago, but “what is much more startling,” Daniel deals with “the history of to-day.” According to Mr. O'Meara the King of England is one of his prophetic “ten kings,” and “his gracious Majesty will be a reigning monarch when the King of Kings comes to set up his indestructible millennial Kingdom, and he (King George V.) shall have the honour of placing his sceptre in His hands and laying his Crown at the Feet of King Jesus.” Whether this calls for the attention of Scotland Yard or Bedlam we know not. Mr. O'Meara will in all human probability live to be disillusioned.

The arguments of Spiritualists are often as crooked as the evidence by which they seek to make their case. We are glad to see the *Times Literary Supplement* “begging leave to question” a statement by Mr. Hereward Carrington in his newly published *Primer of Psychological Research*. He alleges that a statistical investigation has proved that there are more orthodox ministers of religion in asylums than Spiritualists. It is pointed out that ministers of religion are a numerous body but mediums—the only people who would describe Spiritualism as their profession—are few. Our contemporary might have reinforced this modest criticism by the observation that as all Christians are or should be Spiritualists, and some Spiritualists call themselves Christians, Spiritualism—or Spiritism—must contribute by far the largest proportion to the population of mental hospitals.

The joy of the Kensitites and the rage of the Anglo-Catholics over the decision of the Penzance Bench in the St. Hilary case leaves us cold. Let them get on with their sham fight. Some more serious matters do arise out of this result. We do not see how the magistrates could have decided otherwise. To do so would have been to pronounce the singing—by a group of Christians in a Christian Church—of “Stand up for Jesus”—brawling! If these persons had interrupted the service by singing, shall we say, “Take me back to dear old Dixie,” the result might not have been the same, although the actual offence would have been identical with that with which they were charged.

The clergyman who officiated on this occasion said, in evidence, that he did not accept the judgment of that Court or of any secular tribunal “in ecclesiastical matters.” But what is “brawling” but an ecclesiastical offence? It can only be committed during “divine worship.” This clergyman (as Anglo-Catholics in general) is prepared to set the Secular Courts to work to fine or imprison fellow churchmen or to collect the tax called tithe from impoverished farmers. The law is to defend their privileges, but they will not conform to it except when it pleases them.

Their attitude to the Secular Courts is exactly the same as their attitude to the Bishops as described in the old rhyme about the Ritualist:—

He talks about Authority,
But where the shoe doth pinch,
This most obedient dutious son
Will not give way an inch;
He is his own authority
On whatever is his whim,
And he's only for the Bishop
When the Bishop is for him.

One other point, and that more interesting to us, emerges from this case. It was argued, and apparently held by the magistrates, that the Christian religion in this country means the religion “by law established.” It may be, and has been, argued that blasphemy, like brawling, is an offence that can only be committed against the Church as by law established. The only religion that could ever have justified the now rejected judicial dictum that Christianity is part of the common law of England is the religion of the Church of England. The monstrous anomaly of this squabbling minority, with all the powers and privileges and emoluments of a State Church, being permitted openly to defy Parliament and the laws by which it exists, is so farcical as to be impossible in any country but this. It is enough to make cocks and hens—not to speak of the foreigner—cackle in derision.

An interesting and informative series of articles by Mr. J. L. Hodson in the *News-Chronicle* deal with unemployment in European countries in which the writer is making observations. Mr. Hodson's articles are happily free from the sloppy boosting of pious benevolence which is the real theme of much writing about the present depression. Thus in Vienna Dr. Tandler, who is in charge of the welfare work in that city, saying that they have had an increase of suicides owing to want of food, added that the state of things was “a catastrophe of the soul.” To which Mr. Hodson replied, “Of the soul maybe, but surely directly linked with economics.” He also notes that the streets are full of suppliants “their hands grasped as in prayer”—appealing to God? No. To “the passer by.”

The writer of the Saturday article on some pious theme in the *Times* dealt last week with “Mind and Religion.” It appears that “mental effort” will “enrich and strengthen faith.” Jesus, we are told, was “a master of dialectic, familiar with the scholar's method of logic and rejoinder, and with a mind that was disciplined, self-confident and keen.” The tendency of Church tradition “to accentuate the marvel and supernatural claims of Jesus by representing his human equipment as that of an uneducated peasant,” is said to be “flatly at variance with the Gospel records.”

The fact is that the Gospels tell us nothing of what Jesus was at from the time when, as a small boy, he was supposed to have gone down with his father and mother to Nazareth and “been subject unto them,” until he started his mission, nearly twenty years after. It is, indeed said that “he grew in stature and in wisdom,” but even uneducated peasants do that. We fear many pious old ladies who read the *Times* of a Saturday will get a

rare shock when they are told that Jesus was a learned man, who knew Hebrew and Aramaic, and was not above giving a smart retort in debate. By the time modern apologists have done with him, the "meek and lowly Jesus of Christian tradition will be as elusive as the Jesus of history already is.

A new work, *Studies in the Birth of the Lord*, deals with the Virgin Birth of Christ. The writer, Elwood Worcester, says that the "only testimony for the Virgin Birth, direct or indirect, contained in the New Testament, is found in the prelates to St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels, and for the rest, denial, or a death-like silence." It further appears that "as soon as the stories of the Virgin Birth became known to Jewish and heathen unbelievers, illegitimacy was the conclusion which they instantly deduced from them." The silence of the Gospels on the matter is naively explained by a pious reviewer. He thinks it is "sufficiently accounted for by the fact that "Joseph and Mary would naturally be reticent on a subject that would be so grossly misinterpreted by unbelieving minds." Mary, that is to say, having been the recipient of the Angelic salutation immortalized in the *Ave Maria*, behaved exactly as any girl "in trouble" might be supposed to behave to-day. For those who believe in miracles the Virgin Birth needs neither explanation or defence. To everyone else the story will rank with others that pre-date the science of biology, and prove that the writers of Gospels, and those of whom they wrote, shared the ignorance and credulity of the times.

In the Preface to his learned work on *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Dr. M. Rhodes James, has a passage which, although written of those books which were and are excluded from the accepted New Testament Canon, might be applied to the latter without the alteration of a word. The passage is as follows:—

If they (*i.e.*, the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Apocalypses) are not good sources of history in one sense they are in another. They record the imaginations, hopes and fears of the men who wrote them: they show what was acceptable to the unlearned Christians of the first ages, what interested them, what ideals of conduct they cherished for this life, and what they thought they would find in the next. As folk lore and romance they are precious to the lover and student of medieval literature and art. They reveal the source of no inconsiderable part of his material, and the solution of many a puzzle. *They have indeed exercised an influence (wholly disproportionate to their intrinsic merits) so great and so widespread that no one who cares for the history of Christian thought and Christian art can possibly afford to neglect them.* (p. xiii.) (Italics ours.)

Dr. Rhodes James thinks it was not "by accident or caprice" that these books were excluded from the Canon. But, if there is anything in the legendary records of the matter it may well have been "by accident or caprice"—or, according to one story by the casting of lots—that the books now in the New Testament were included.

The *Church Times* has a leader on "Experts in Religion." It argues that as in every department of secular knowledge we have increasingly to depend on men more qualified than ourselves, we must not exempt religion from this rule. "There are experts in things human, so also there are experts on things divine." The fallacy of this seemingly plausible contention is that all "divine" knowledge is of human origin. The men and women who, according to the *Church Times*, have from time to time "been endowed with an insight into things of the spirit not given to the generality of men" have all been abnormal men and women whose abnormality has been diagnosed with increasing certainty since the days when it was attributed to Divine or diabolical inspiration. The best experts on religion are Anthropologists, and alienists. Spiritual "insight" may produce a Joanna Southcott, a Saint Teresa; but ignorant credulity on the one hand, and neurotic ecstasy on the other have been left for Education and Secular Experts to assign to their proper places and values.

We cannot make head or tail of the arguments by which it is sought to prove that the way out of all our national and international difficulties is—God! The Rev. W. Wilson Cash, in the *Missionary Graphic*, says "the newspapers have interpreted the crisis in terms of finance and budgets, but *there are symptoms of much deeper trouble.*" What is it? We have been "trying to do without God!" Then the Rev. A. S. Roscamp, vicar of Wallasey, preaching on the George Arliss picture—*The Silent Witness*—in which he shuts a Bible with a bang and—having been deprived of his hearing and so of his life as a great musician asks—"How can that be"—*i.e.*, that "the hairs of our heads are all numbered" by our Heavenly Father. Says Mr. Roscamp, "all things (including apparently, blindness, deafness, insanity and cancer) work together for good to them that love God." The Vicar asks us to listen to "A silent voice?" How can he hear a silent voice?

In the *Times* (December 29) is a remarkable article on the date of the Crucifixion. This, says the writer, "is one of the most interesting and baffling of chronological problems." Remarking on the "comparative indifference of the evangelists to time," he thinks that the problem is "very difficult and perhaps insoluble." He hastens to add that "this will not affect the devotion which is not dependent on date." As to the date of Christ's birth, "this is so big a problem that the correlation need now be attempted." It is one of the odd things about the supposed life of Jesus that we know nothing whatever about him between his boyhood, and the beginning of his "mission," generally put at his thirtieth year. The length of his mission has been variously estimated as from one to ten, but usually assumed to be three years. If the latter is right the Crucifixion would be "astronomically impossible." Any year from A.D. 27 to 33 has its backers.

When the Pope fixed this year as the nineteen hundredth anniversary of the Crucifixion he no doubt had in mind the useful doctrine above enunciated that "devotion does not depend upon date." Neither does it depend upon the existence of its object. Since nobody in Christendom knows exactly when Christ was born, and there is a large body of learned opinion which questions, and in some cases denies, his historical existence, those who depend on him for "salvation" must be accurately defined, as they so often are in religious works and tracts, as "simple" believers.

Fifty Years Ago.

MR. OATES says that we are under the direct inspiration of the Devil. Well, there is no harm in that. We have read the Bible very carefully, and our deliberate opinion is that the Devil is the finest gentleman in it. He never lied or even stooped to deception; never robbed; never carried on a *liaison* with a betrothed young woman; never played the fool; never cursed like a madman; never made the innocent suffer for the guilty; never destroyed thousands of people by fiery serpents, famine, pestilence and earthquake; never drowned all the world's inhabitants at one fell swoop; never killed seventy thousand Jews because their king took a census, never hardened a ruler's heart in order to plague his people with dreadful calamities; never kept an army of favourite butchers who delighted in murder and outrage; never ordered the wholesale extermination of women and children; never handed over thousands of young virgins to the lust of a brutal soldiery, or accepted thirty-two of them as his own share of the spoil. No, all these things were done by his malignant rival. Mr. Oates is, we presume, under the inspiration of God; and according to his view, we are under the inspiration of the Devil. Very good; we are satisfied if he is, and we don't envy his fortune.

The "Freethinker," January 28, 1883.

Bradlaugh Centenary.

SEPTEMBER 26 of this year marks the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Charles Bradlaugh, one of the greatest reformers of the nineteenth century. There was no aspect of life that his multifarious work did not touch—Freethought, law, the equality of the sexes, birth control, legal reform, land reform, parliamentary reform, the right use of Sunday, the disestablishment of the Church, India, Ireland, and reform of the House of Lords. Into his fifty-seven years he indeed crowded the life of three men. It was one that only a giant—physically and mentally—could have maintained, and it should never be forgotten that the whole world has derived immense benefit from his herculean labours.

A Bradlaugh Centenary Committee has been formed, comprising many distinguished men and women. It is the aim of this Committee to make the Celebration worthy of the occasion. The plans contemplated include the publication of a special Centenary volume at a popular price, the erection of a plaque or similar memorial (subject to permission) in the House of Commons, the delivery of special lantern and other lectures in the chief towns and cities, the establishment of an Annual Memorial Lecture, the holding of meetings in London and the Provinces, and finally a Centenary Dinner—which is to take place on the anniversary of Bradlaugh's birth.

It is the aim of the Committee to place definitely the name of Bradlaugh before the British public as that of a great national reformer. The success with which this object can be achieved will be determined by the financial resources placed at the disposal of the Committee; but we are confident that admirers of Bradlaugh—who are to-day to be found in all classes of society—will see that ample monetary support is forthcoming. No similar opportunity has ever been afforded for honouring one to whom national recognition is long overdue.

It is estimated that a minimum sum of £1,500 will be required to carry out the programme the Committee has in view. Several subscriptions, varying in amount from £1 to £100, have already been promised, and it is hoped that the contributions will by their number demonstrate the extent of the appreciation in which the name of Bradlaugh is held by reformers of all shades of political and religious opinion.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Mr. F. C. C. Watts, Treasurer of the Bradlaugh Centenary Fund, 38 Cursitor Street, London, E.C.4, and crossed "Midland Bank Ltd., 6 Chancery Lane."

A list of subscriptions will be published from time to time in the *Freethinker* and in *The Literary Guide*.

CHAPMAN COHEN (National Secular Society).

J. P. GILMOUR (Rationalist Press Association).

A. D. HOWELL SMITH (The Ethical Union).

F. W. READ (South Place Ethical Society).

Men bear with accustomed vices and reprove those that are new.—*Publius Syrus*.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—F. BROWN, 2s. 9d.

F. C. MEERES (Canada).—The book you require is out of print, and can only be obtained second-hand. We have enquired at several of these dealers, and have the option of a copy at 4s. 6d. plus postage 9d. Shall we get it for you?

J. A. REID.—Glad to hear from you again. Many thanks for your keen interest in the paper.

J. L. MACCALLUM (Leith).—If, as you say, the Corporation of London has given £500 to Dr. Norwood's Fund for the City Temple, this only shows that Nonconformists, like Anglicans, are not above taking anything they can get from public funds.

P.T. (Hampstead).—We do not think so.

W. BEYNON (S. Africa).—Many thanks for cuttings, most useful.

G. BARFORD.—Obliged for cuttings. Will refer to the matter later.

A. G. MOSS.—Pleased you like the record. We fear you will not be successful, but the effort is worth the making.

M. D. MACLEAN.—There is no limit to absurdity where religion is in question, but divine visitations in the shape of sudden death are not so common. Perhaps the Lord is "weary in well doing."

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.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Sunday) Mr. Cohen will lecture at the Queen's Hall, Morley Street, Bradford. The subject is "The Psychology of Belief." The lecture is timed for 7 o'clock; Bradford and the neighbourhood has many "saints" who will, no doubt, be in evidence on this occasion with as many friends as they can muster.

In spite of a number of absences due to the prevailing epidemic the numbers at the N.S.S. Annual Dinner on Saturday last set up a new record. There was an increase in the number of provincial friends present—Perth, Plymouth, Bournemouth, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Grimsby, and other places being represented. We were specially pleased to see our old friend Mr. Alward, of Grimsby, present, who at over ninety years of age dared the pilgrimage to be with us. We hope

to see the number of provincial friends present increased in numbers next year. Owing to the large attendance we fancy that some little inconvenience was experienced by some, but that will be guarded against next year. Mr. Royle, as usual, provided a first-class concert, and the thanks of the Society is due to him for the time and trouble he takes year after year in this direction. He is no small contributor to the enjoyment of the evening. A report of the proceedings appears elsewhere in this issue.

One result of the good work being done by Mr. J. T. Brighton in the Durham area is the holding of periodic conferences between the N.S.S. Branches there. The experiment has been successful and has led to increased interest and enthusiasm in the Branches, and to wider publicity for the Freethought movement in the County. At the last Conference held on January 6, in Sunderland, South Shields, Newcastle, Seaham Harbour, Darlington, Ashington, Sunderland and Chester-le-Street were represented. A public demonstration was held in the Co-Operative Hall, Sunderland in the evening, and Messrs. Robson, Hutcheon, Raine and Brighton addressed a packed audience.

We wish to draw special attention to the statement which appears on another page concerning the Bradlaugh Centenary. The National Secular Society was founded by Charles Bradlaugh, and he remained its President until shortly before his death in 1891. But if the Centenary Commemoration is to be carried through in an adequate manner the Committee will require at least the £1,500 asked for. In spite of bad times the whole of this amount should be raised. We do not have such a centenary to celebrate every year, and if Bradlaugh is to assume the place he should have had long ago in the history of this country, Freethinkers must rise to the occasion. We hope that the first published list of subscribers will be a good one.

An official communication from the International Federation of Freethinkers reveals an alertness and activity in championing the rights of Freethinkers in foreign lands as the following incidents show. In the first case a vigorous protest has been made to the responsible committee of the "World's Fair" planned for 1933 in Chicago, for refusing participation to the Atheist Society of Chicago, while allotting space to the various religious organizations.

In another case, a pamphlet published by a Group of Freethinkers in Lettland was confiscated by a decision of the District Court of Riga in November last. The Group set to work and by energetic action inside and outside of Parliament, the attempt at confiscation was not only defeated but led also to the formation of new Groups of Freethinkers at Libau, Wondau, Modon Mitau, and Tukum. Fortunately for progressive movements tyrants throughout the ages never learn the very simple lesson, proved a thousand times in history, that persecution really advertises that which it tries to suppress.

Alan Handsacre (Mr. A. C. White) had a good and appreciative audience on Sunday last for his lecture to the Metropolitan Secular Society. There were numerous questions and an animated discussion. The subject of the Lecture was that of his book *The Revenues of Religion*. Mr. White has volunteered to speak for any Branch in or near London, which may desire a lecture on this increasingly topical subject.

Freethinkers in the Brighton area are informed that Mr. B. A. Le Maine will speak for the local Branch of the N.S.S. to-day (Sunday) on Christianity and the Church. We understand the lecture will be given in the Labour Institute, London Road, Brighton, Sussex, and will begin at 7.30 p.m. The South Coast is at present among the backward areas as far as Freethought is concerned, and local saints should support every effort to improve the situation.

The National Secular Society.

ANNUAL DINNER.

THE 36th Annual Dinner of the National Secular Society took place at the Imperial Hotel on January 21. In spite of many adverse circumstances the dinner brought together a larger number of Freethinkers than ever before in its history. Such numbers in such conditions indicated the growing strength of the N.S.S., and the enthusiasm of its members. There were visitors from as far North as Perth, and as far West as Plymouth. Many other towns were represented. The dinner gives a valued opportunity for Freethinkers meeting each other, exchanging opinions, and departing inspired by a fresh enthusiasm for the work. A striking feature of this, as of all Secular Society meetings, was the number of young people of both sexes. The large hall with its well decorated tables, the animated faces of the company, and the bright dresses of the ladies, made a pleasing spectacle. The guests included some well known writers, speakers and organizers, many of them associated with kindred movements. It was pleasing to note the presence of Mr. Alward of Grimsby, and Mr. A. B. Moss, whose joint ages would carry us back to the days of Voltaire and Thomas Paine. Both looked well and happy. Reviewing the year the Chairman said he was pleased to congratulate all concerned in the advance made since the last Annual Dinner. More lectures had been given than ever. The attendances were better than ever. Five or six new Branches of the Society had been established.

The Society continues to play its old part as a nursery for advanced ideas and causes. The power of organized religion was decreasing. Public men were showing greater courage in avowing their opinions, and we might look to the time when more of them be encouraged to lead those whom they now so tactfully follow. Calling attention to the Bradlaugh Centenary year the Chairman said we were peculiarly interested in this event. The N.S.S. was founded by Charles Bradlaugh. He was President until shortly before he died. The Society remained a living monument to his work and influence, and he (the Chairman) was glad to say it had remained true to the spirit of its great founder. In a very special sense Bradlaugh was ours and we were his. He hoped that Freethinkers all over the country would give the Centenary Committee which had been formed their fullest moral and financial support. Charles Bradlaugh should be given his rightful place as one of the foremost of English Reformers. In proposing the toast of the N.S.S. Surgeon Rear-Admiral C. N. Beadnell expressed his strong agreement with its policy, and said his love of breeziness as a sailor made him appreciate the breeziness of the *Freethinker*. He considered its Editor a loadstone, attracting his followers by his powers as a writer, lecturer and debater, and he was in a relationship with his readers that was absolutely unique in journalism. Dealing with the changes in orthodox opinion he dwelt upon the arguments that had been discarded to give place to others of no greater strength. We must, he said, pursue truth no matter what the consequences might be. Responding, Mr. F. A. Hornibrook said the N.S.S. had taught men not to fear, and one of its greatest services to the people had been that it had the banishment of fear from the lives of the young. The Churches and popular preachers by their apology and disclaimers of once held opinions were admitting the extent to which they had misled the people in the past.

Dr. Arthur Lynch, whose mental fearlessness equals his physical courage, and who does not hesitate to challenge established opinion no matter how lofty it may be, proposed the toast of Freethought at Home and Abroad. Owing to the length of the programme Dr. Lynch contented himself with a few excellent and autobiographical stories. He was followed by Mr. A. D. MacLaren, who, having lived abroad for many years, was well qualified to reply to this toast, which he did by an excellent review of Freethought in many countries.

The speeches were interspersed by an excellent concert organized by Mr. G. Royle. As usual the artistes were delightful. Miss Edith Faulkner's inimitable imitations of Cockney "lydies," though a little too cruel perhaps, caused roars of laughter. Miss Olive Tyson's powerful voice was heard at its best in her songs, and Mr. Will King's American account of *Hamlet* would have made Shakespeare's hair stand on end (if he had it, of course). Messrs. Kenneth and George Western were newcomers, but their duets were exceptionally witty. Finally Miss Emmy Joyce's reminiscences of some of the most delightful old musical comedy songs were joined by her audience who thus proved they had never forgotten the glamour of the old days. Altogether a fine concert for which Mr. Royle deserves our heartiest thanks.

A word on the work by the Secretary and others "behind the scenes." A big dinner does not run by itself, it has to be organized and every detail looked after and checked. The success of this Dinner is a tribute to their efforts which also deserve the thanks of everybody present. "And so," as the immortal Pepys said, "to bed."

H.C.

Some Christian Types.

V.—THE HALF-PARSON POLITICIAN.

DURING the last ten years this country has seen the election of Labour Governments pledged to protect the interests of the poor and needy classes they are supposed to represent. Even if they did not take office with full power but had to depend on the Liberals for support, they were at least in the position to make some striking gestures and utter some clarion calls on behalf of the Bottom Dogs about whose wrongs they had mouthed so long. What did we actually find? That the assumption of office, and the receipt of large salaries, in the case of the Labour Ministers proved sufficient to make the recipients neglectful, if not forgetful, of the claims of the very classes which brought them into power.

Why was this?

Unlike the Continental Socialists who are, in the main, definitely anti-clerical, the Labour Party in England is riddled with Christian adherents—quite a considerable proportion of the leaders are half-parson-politicians; mostly Nonconformist Radicals. The number of ordained persons who were Labour Members in the last Parliament proved this: nothing was more striking than the sudden uprush of budding statesmen from Little Bethel pulpits, all of them bursting with desire to save the public from saving itself.

Naturally we had, then, the contemptible spectacle of Labour Members, knowing the wretched cheerless conditions of many of the manufacturing towns, voting against the Sunday Cinema Bill—a Bill that might have granted some little joy and happiness to the hard-

working poorly-housed inhabitants of mean little back streets. Naturally, also, we had the painful trickery of the Rt. Honourable Mr. Clynes, Home Secretary, ruining the Blasphemy Bill—talking all sorts of misleading platitudes and specious falsities in order to retain the support of Christian voters. In the previous Labour Government the measure suggested for giving Birth Control information to overburdened and poverty-stricken women in the Welfare Centres was vetoed by the then Minister of Health. The excuse given was that Mr. Wheatley was a Roman Catholic, and it was against his principles to advocate or permit the teaching of Birth Control. Behind the politician stood the priest!

Almost every Saturday morning, in the *Daily Herald* Labour newspaper, we read that Mr. So-and-so, Labour M.P., was to speak at some Christian Brotherhood on the Socialism of Jesus Christ. Jesus was dragged in perpetually to prove that the speakers were really quite respectable members of society, would not do anything drastic, could be relied upon to follow in the steps of the meek and lowly Saviour, and thus were worthy of the support of all Christian voters.

Of course all the Labour politicians were not like this. There was always a strong leaven of Freethought, especially among the younger members—a leaven which is obviously working at the present time, and which one may hope will in the near future work sufficiently well to produce a type of man representative of the very real advances in Rationalism and Freethought which are manifest all over the world.

But perhaps nothing was more contemptible than to see the representatives of the Bottom Dog wasting money on obsolete Court finery. Fancy democratic representatives of the toilers in this twentieth century arraying themselves in knee-breeches, silk stockings, and tiny swords—practically turning themselves into mountebanks for the sole purpose of attending the functions at Buckingham Palace. No wonder they received, as indeed they earned, the well-merited contempt of the Tories. They had a precedent, if they wanted one, in the refusal of the American Ambassador, General Dawes, to wear Court dress, but they preferred to make themselves one with the ruling class—establishing their equality by similar slunkiness.

Surely it is time that the people realized that the teachings of Jesus are utterly inadequate to the needs of modern life. If they must have a religion, let them realize that their business is not to fortify sacerdotalism, but to establish scientific reform of social and economic conditions, and let them insist on their political representatives holding fast to improvements in life that are well within the range of practical politics for all of us.

CRITICUS.

WHAT IS LIFE?

"ONE touch of Nature makes the whole world kin!"

You'll find that life is nothing more than this!

No mystery or miracle herein!

Life is the simple act of Nature's kiss!

And yet, there's no such thing as Nature, so

How can we say that she does that or this!

Nature being nothing but a passing show!

Still, while she dallies she imprints a kiss.

Life is at most own sister to the kiss!

Love is at once the parent and the swain!

And thus through Nature's metamorphosis

By Love we live, and live to love again!

B. L. BOWERS.

The Black Pope and His Brethren.

EVERY Christian community in Western Europe participated in the unrest which culminated in the Reformation. The repudiation of Papal supremacy, and the proclamation of the right of private judgment by the laity had proved, or were shortly to prove, triumphant in Northern Europe. England, Scotland, Northern Germany, Holland and the Scandinavian countries were almost lost to the Roman Church. Switzerland was inclining more and more to the Protestant side. The Huguenots were powerful in France. A scholarly and sceptical spirit was widespread in Italy, and many thinkers had crossed the frontiers of the Catholic creed. Spain alone seemed in a state of mental slavery as a result of the satanic activities of the Inquisition. Elsewhere, however, the more thoughtful and intelligent members of the community were constrained to realize that the revival of scientific investigation; the study of ancient, and the composition of modern letters; the vastly extended knowledge of the world proceeding from recent geographical discovery arising from the voyages of the great navigators; were all certain to prove contributory factors in the ultimate overthrow of the orthodox creed.

Despite the unspeakable atrocities that had darkened their activities as Inquisitors, the Dominican and Franciscan friars had dismally failed in their mission. Outside the Iberian Peninsula, heresy had become ubiquitous, and unbelief was, at times, openly avowed. Now, indeed, was the accepted time for the advent of a new Order if Holy Church were to recover her lost territory or, for that matter, retain possession of much that was insecurely held.

At this critical juncture a grim and aggressive Spaniard, Ignatius Loyola, appeared on the scene, and in association with five assistants, after many adventures he at last succeeded in establishing the Jesuit Order. Loyola's colleagues included the famous Francis Xavier as well as James Lainez, who became General of the Order when Loyola passed away. After the founding of this secret and insidious Society, the Roman Church began to rally from the wounds inflicted by the Renaissance and the Catholic reaction made remarkable progress.

The scion of a Spanish noble, Loyola was born in 1491. He became a page in the household of the astute if fanatical King Ferdinand. Loyola's early days were dominated by the religion of romance, above all to its religion to military prowess and renown. The passage from this frame of emotion to that of fervid piety proved easy. Exceedingly imaginative, sexually excitable, romantically religious, while highly ambitious, Loyola had reached the age of thirty when his leg was shattered on the battle-field and, after enduring much agony, he found himself lamed for life.

During his illness and convalescence Loyola devoured such devotional books as his father's castle contained. Chivalry and the plumes of war were of little value to a cripple, but the alleged lives and exploits of saints and martyrs assured him that even the lame, the halt, and the blind were capable of useful and illustrious careers. When Ignatius arose from his bed of sickness, he attributed his recovery to the intercession of his patron Saint Peter, and solemnly vowed his future life to the service of Christ's Church.

Many were Loyola's hallucinations during his confinement, and his eager desire to enter the Church was coldly received by his relatives. Ever masterful, however, he contrived to escape from custody, and was soon immured in a Dominican convent near Barcelona. "Here," writes Addington Symonds, "he abandoned

himself to the cruellest self-discipline. Feeding upon bread and water, kneeling for seven hours together rapt in prayer, scourging his flesh thrice daily and reducing sleep to the barest minimum, Ignatius sought by austerity to snatch that crown of sainthood which he felt to be his due." But these acts of insanity, instead of conferring the halo of the blest, merely plunged the morbid penitent into the depths of despair. Naturally, a painful illness supervened, the patient was plagued with dreadful dreams sent by Satan until, after a long experience of mental and emotional strain, Loyola resolved to dedicate both body and soul to the service of the Saviour. All our physical powers are essential to man's successful conflict with Satan. Therefore, concluded Ignatius, asceticism stands condemned.

Loyola's subjective experiences led him to realize the far-reaching importance of discipline among those Companions of Jesus he was so anxious to create. And he was now fully convinced that the mystical element in his own nature must be subordinated to the more practical aspects of life.

Ignatius now gratified a long cherished desire to visit the scene of his Saviour's ministry and death. Here, those in authority treated his zeal as that of a youthful and inexperienced novice with much to learn. Decidedly crestfallen, Ignatius returned to Spain determined to put his theories to the test.

He returned to school, and at the age of thirty sat on the same bench with boys. Never a victim of an inferiority complex, his craving for leadership soon reasserted itself. He preached, gathered disciples around him, and instructed a group of devotees in true religion. A troublesome disturber of theological somnolence he angered the Inquisition and was charged with heresy. He was acquitted, it is true, but he was sentenced to four years' study of theology. Then, he might presume to preach. Ignatius consequently repaired to Paris, where he studied for several years at the University.

After this lengthy ordeal the Society or Company of Jesus was founded in 1534. The original ten members of the Society took the vows of poverty and chastity at Montmartre. Amid their many aspirations a declared fealty to the Catholic faith and the deepest devotion to the Papacy were pre-eminent. Their leading purpose, however, was so far undisclosed, and the part the Jesuits were destined to play in succeeding generations could scarcely have been imagined.

When again charged with heresy, Loyola found some difficulty in establishing his innocence. Then, a passion for missionary enterprise in heathen countries was succeeded by a desire to defend and sustain the Christian faith from within. Italy, he thought, offered the fairest field for this endeavour as Italian culture and enlightenment were the first in Europe.

The Jesuits began to preach in public in 1537. They went abroad in ragged garments, seemed pale with privation, and were animated with a zeal far exceeding that of any other preaching friars. They soon obtained a great reputation for piety and, crowned with success, the ten original members of the Company travelled by separate routes from Venice to Rome where definite plans for the future of the Society were prepared.

The Society of Jesus was formed on democratic lines, and in theory Ignatius was a member only. Ostensibly, the humble and obedient servants of their divine master, the Companions of Jesus soon pursued a militant policy. The purely punitive methods of the earlier priestly authorities when dealing with dissent were now relinquished in favour of a system of intellectual penetration of all the agencies hostile or indifferent to the claims of the Church.

Paul III. clearly foresaw the possibilities of the Jesuit Order, but the Curia and the higher Roman clergy regarded it adversely. Again accused of heresy, Ignatius was at first refused a public trial, but this was ultimately granted by the Pope, and Loyola was acquitted of the charge. This vindication provided an excellent advertisement for the Company, and led to their entry into the Roman schools.

Adherents now flocked to their standard, and Loyola and his colleagues decided that the moment had arrived to place their Order on firm foundations and, if possible, secure official sanction as a corporate body. To their original vows of poverty and chastity, that of obedience was then added. Now, this additional vow was momentous in its consequences. As Symonds cogently states: "Obedience had always been a prime virtue in monastic institutions; but Ignatius conceived it in a new and military spirit. The obedience of the Jesuits was to be absolute, extending even to the duty of committing sins at a superior's orders. The General, instead of holding office for a term of years, was to be elected for life, with unlimited command over the whole Order in its several degrees. He was to be regarded as Christ present and personified. This autocracy of the General might have seemed to menace the overlordship of the Holy See, but for a fourth vow which the Jesuits decided to adopt. It ran as follows: 'That the members will consecrate their lives to the continual service of Christ and the Popes, will fight under the banner of the cross and will serve the Lord and the Roman Pontiff as God's vicar upon earth, in such wise that they shall be bound to execute immediately and without hesitation or excuse all that the reigning Pope or his successors may enjoin upon them for the profit of souls or for the propagation of the faith.'"

On September 27, 1540, the Papal Bull *Regimini militantis Ecclesie* introduced the Jesuits, as a fully fledged corporation, armed with extensive powers, into an already wicked world. As one might have predicted, Ignatius was elected first General of the Society, a position he maintained until his death sixteen years later, and during this period all his energies were ceaselessly concentrated in the elaboration of the machinery and extension of the power of the secret organization he had himself evolved.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

"The British Weekly" and G.B.S.

A SCOTCH REMONSTRANCE.

OCHONE, George Bernard! What is this ye've dune?
I fear the hump tae hang yersel' ye've spun;
Ye've surely raised the *British Weekly's* ire
Your fate like Tam o' Shanter's is hell fire!
Losh, man, when tracin' this black lassie's search
Ye fair forgot Jock Hutton and his birch!
Ochone, Ochone! He liked ye weel enough
When o' Joan of Arc ye did yer stuff—
And Blanco Posnet had Jock's approbation;
But, by my Saul, ye're coortin' sell damnation;
By heardin' God and flypin' his record
You've fairly scunnered Jock upon my word!
Michty! Ye say the Christian tale is hope!
You've tint a' sense and noo ye canna hope
Tae blaw a trombone in the Heavenly Band!
Loard kens but what the Pope may tak ye neist in hand—
Or G.K.C. or Belloc! will ye ootlive their jibes?
An' brave the barbs o' orthodox's tribes?
Wae's me, ye Bletcherin' skate—ye donnert fule—
Tae earn Celyve an everlastin' dule!
Jock Hutton's but the first yer face tae claw:
There's mair tae come an' mak' an end o' Shaw!

IGNOTUS.

Drama and Dramatists.

IN spite of the vicious attempts at the suppression of free criticism, which is free speech and free thought, there comes frequently to the surface an examination and verdict of the conduct of a state. This appears in many forms. One outlet for such criticism is the music hall, where there is more commonsense to the square inch than there is to the square yard in the House of Commons. Another form of criticism emerges on the stage, and a recent visit to see *Bitter Sweet* was something like listening to a man who could afford the luxury of speaking the truth. The tentacles of religion—and in this I include all forms of belief in supernaturalism—have been too deeply embedded in national life to enable religion's representatives to disclaim responsibility for the state of affairs at present. For a generation soldiers and priests have been in the national picture where men of science could starve and scarcely be recognized. The example of the late Sir Ronald Ross will come readily to mind.

Bitter Sweet has a provocative overture with many pleasant surprises, and it is definitely original. It contains the unexpected, and it is not at all the straightforward stuff that is found in most present-day overtures. There is an ingenuity in the scoring of music that is fresh and tuneful, and at the same time it is enigmatical.

Mr. Noel Coward is comparatively a young man, and it is difficult to know what he is getting at; in any case it is not an acceptance of things as he finds them to-day. You begin to wonder if he is one of those young men who want to shatter the world to bits and mould it nearer to his heart's desire. The first act of *Bitter Sweet* left one of the spectators completely in the dark as to what it all meant, as though it mattered at all what it did really mean if it made the time stand still. However, the A from piano at the beginning of the second act drew us down to stern realities where nothing is real, not even the wine that the company was drinking. In this act Mr. Coward gets very near to grand opera. To the student he appears to be swimming about in the instinctive and emotional pool of life with just an occasional glimpse of something better. In a way he is like Shaw, who prefers to raise a laugh rather than push on to that point where illumination may be shared by the spectator as well as the author.

The dialogue is witty, ingenious, pungent, but there is no mistake about the author having a real grip of essentials of life. There is the flavour of bitter almonds in the sugary sweetness of parts of the play, and if he has instructed no-one, he has at least amused them; to me, however, the play is a very definite challenge of what one may call the "absolute values" of modern civilization. The principal character sums up the ramshackle machinery of to-day by describing it as "speed and noise," and a return at the end of the third act to the opening of the first is something to be remembered in stagecraft.

We cannot go back to the past. This fact in itself is enough to cause any thinking nation to jettison all the crude static ideas evolved from primitive thinking and foisted on a modern world. Human nature is plastic and can be moulded to any form, and what now confronts us is what Shaw describes as a "mess." The responsibility for this "mess" begins with politics that have barely had any relation to reality, or human life. The responsibility for this "mess" is at the door of the Church that condoned the last civil brawl in Europe known as the Great War. The responsibility for this "mess" is also at Fleet Street, where the output of printed trash is an insult even to schoolchildren. Mr. Noel Coward has very little illusion about any of these three sections of national life, and he accomplishes nobly what is most difficult; he has given the truth in an allegorical form so that the spectator may make his own particular picture from words wedded to sound.

C. DE-B.

A Burns Memory.

THE first man to give me, a Scot, a real insight into the genius of Robert Burns, was himself an Englishman; no less a person than G. W. Foote, whom I regarded as the greatest orator of his time; this also is an Immortal Memory! He used to lecture variously on various occasions on Milton, Burns, Shelley, etc., these poetic lovers of the devil. Milton was majestic in this, Burns was magnificent, Shelley was almost as great as Foote's beloved Shakespeare. These were the ingredients and the pot never failed to boil over in really magnificent perorations. Indeed, an immortal memory. He said that Burns did more for Scotland than five or six of her philosophers with the great David Hume at the head of them. Foote knew it to be a libel on Burns to say he was a drunkard. The Scottish poet in writing his poems and letters, had no time for this debauchery. Foote asked his audiences to try to write a beautiful poem when they were drunk; "try it," he said, "try it!" A more delicate matter was Burns' behaviour with the girls, human, all too human with these. See, for instance page 215 in Mrs Carswell's *Life of Burns*. We may say with Gray:—

No further seek his merits to disclose
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode—

Some lines in "My Love is like a Red, Red Rose," show the poet at his very highest even in this, only second to Shakespeare himself, who wrote the greatest love-letter of all time:—

Thou art mine and I as rich in having such a jewel
As twenty seas if all their sands were pearl,
Their waters nectar and their rocks pure gold!

Poet, lover, satirist, humorist rich and rare in that,
as when in "Death and Doctor Hornbrook":—

The rising mune began to glower
The distant Cunnock Hills oot ower,
To coont her horns wi' a' my po'er
A set ma sel',
But whether she had three or fower
A couldna tell.

But hillocks, stanes and bushes ken'd I
Frae ghaists and witches.

The "immaterial" materialized with the poet, even when he was "fou."

ANDREW MILLAR.

Obituary.

JOHN TURNER.

THERE passed away in Burnley last week after a short illness, John Turner, at the age of thirty-one years. He was very popular and was most highly respected among the local Freethinkers, and when there was work to be done he was always to be relied upon to give of his best. The interment took place at the Burnley Cemetery on Thursday, January 12. His relatives accorded him a Secular Funeral as he had desired, and the brief ceremony was conducted by his personal friend, Mr. Clayton; a good number of his Freethought friends being present to pay a last tribute of respect.

Fear not that tyrants shall rule for ever.—*Shelley*.

You will never have a quiet world until you knock patriotism out of the human race.—*G. B. Shaw*.

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INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, near Clapham North Station): 7.30, "The I.L.P.'s Approach to Socialism." A Member of the I.L.P.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, R. Dimsdale Stocker—"New Thought" the Principles and Applications."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"Is World Government Possible?"

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, January 30, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Oxford Group Movement."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 7.0, Tuesday, January 31, C. E. M. Joad—"The Religious Heresies of Eminent Physicists."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, N.): 6.45, Miss F. Pocock—"Dental Hygiene."

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Mitchell's Restaurant, High Road): 7.30, Mr. P. Victor Morris—"Wanted—A Rational Outlook on Marriage."

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, January 29, 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.

WOOLWICH (Lakedale Road): 8.0, Friday, January 27, Messrs. F. Dosssett and F. W. Smith: Sunday, January 29, Beresford Square. Speakers, Messrs. S. Burke, F. W. Dosssett and F. W. Smith.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Hall, Morley Street, Bradford): 7.0, Mr. Chapman Cohen—"The Psychology of Belief." Admission free. Reserved seats 1s.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Labour Institute, London Road, Brighton): 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"Christianity and the Church."

DARLINGTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Labour Hall, Gander Street, No. 2 Room): 7.0, A Lecture.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"The Archbishop's God in History."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Dr. Madeline Archibald—"A Woman Looks at Burns—The Man."

HANTS AND DORSET BRANCH N.S.S. (36 Victoria Road, Bournemouth): 6.30. A Meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. George Whitehead—"The Evolution of Life from Microbe to Man."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, Sunday, January 29, F. Edwin Monks (Manchester)—"Crime and the Criminal." Current *Freethinkers* and Mr. Chapman Cohen's Record on sale.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.0, Members Annual Meeting, Financial Statement etc.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): 7.0, Mr. J. McKenzie—"Is Secularism Essential to Human Progress?"

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.15, A Lecture. Speakers Class held every Monday at 8.0 p.m. in I.L.P. Rooms, Foyle Street.

"Sure I'm looking after Smizzlins
And gathering Paddock-Stalls."

ANYONE communicating source of above nonsense poem published 1920-3 book of poems will be rewarded.—Box J.D., FREETHINKER, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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