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

**Views and Opinions.**

**God and the World.**

It is the specific claim of Christianity that in the person of Jesus Christ God revealed himself to the world, and that the sole purpose of the appearance of Jesus, with his miraculous ending and his unbelievable beginning, was to make the message of the revelation sun-clear to all men. Some nineteen hundred years after this alleged revelation the Archbishop of York, one of the principal representatives of this same deity, leads off a series of broadcast talks on "What does man know about God?" and informs the world that our knowledge of God is very uncertain. It can lay claim to no greater certainty than can the most questionable speculations of science. That looks like a fairly comprehensive failure. The original purpose of the revelation appears to have been quite unrealized. With the aid of a virgin birth, a series of miracles, the crucifixion of a God, and his resurrection from the dead, Christianity has found out no more than that God exists. But other religions have found out this, or thought that they had, in just the ordinary religious way. God's trouble in getting born, murdered and resurrected seems to have been a sheer waste of time. Certainly the B.B.C. is wise in its generation, and very considerate of the Archbishop of York in taking care that he shall be well protected from criticism. But, as God Almighty with his special revelation has not prevented the disintegration of the Christian Church, it is just possible that even the B.B.C. may ultimately have to register a failure.

**Scientific Certainties.**

Last week I pointed out that the Archbishop of York was very anxious to make it plain that science suffered under the same disability as religion, inasmuch as what it told us about the world fell short of a "demonstrated certainty." The Archbishop of York is as weak in his science as he is nebulous in his theology. It is not true that all that science tells

us about the world falls short of certainty. This is true of certain speculations only, but at the back of these speculations there is a mass of demonstrated certainties upon which our active lives are based. The knowledge which has given man so great a command over the forces of nature, and which has enabled even the Archbishop and his regiment of black-coated runaways to speak to millions at the same moment, this knowledge is just about as certain as knowledge can possibly be. The uncertainties of science are the uncertainties that accompany all explorations into unknown territory, but the very explorations are in terms of the sound knowledge that has already been acquired. Every one of the speculations of Einstein, Eddington, Jeans and others would have been impossible without the mass of demonstrated and verifiable knowledge which science has given us. It is downright ignorance or a self-conscious charlatanism which pretends that the formulation of new scientific theories proves the uncertainty of science. It is the established certainties that make the new speculations possible.

But with religion there is no certainty in any direction. There is no advance in religion from a demonstrated truth to a new truth or a wider truth. Advance in religion consists in giving up. A parson talking about the advance of religion is equal to a commercial undertaking boasting of the advance made by dissipating its capital. Thus the many gods of primitive religion were not reduced to a few because man got to know more about gods, but because a more precise knowledge showed these discarded gods to be pure illusion. The direct control by the gods of the weather, or the crops, or disease was not taken out of their hands because of greater certainty in religion, but because science showed us the causation of these things. The doctrine of eternal damnation was not rejected because we knew more of religion, but because of the humanizing of man. There is not a single item of religion that all the centuries of development has shown to be even probably true. The fundamentals of religion are to-day, not merely as uncertain as ever, they are decisively rejected by millions of men and women all over the civilized world.

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**What is Superstition?**

Where religion is concerned it is almost impossible for its professors to be straightforward. "Philosophy," we are told, "is invaluable as a discipline purging religion of superstition." What is the distinction between religion and superstition? According to the Archbishop of York's religion—or at least according to the religion he is paid to preach, and which he has promised to teach—it is sound religion to pray to God to send rain. But if John Jones prays to God to send rain on his back garden, and if he believes that God will do so, that is superstition. It

is good religion to pray for a man to be cured of an illness, but it is just as certainly superstition to pray for a leg that has been cut off by machinery to be stuck on again. It is good religion, says Bishop Barnes to believe that the bread and the wine, when blessed by the priest are the vehicles through which Jesus Christ comes to worshippers. But it is superstition to believe that the consecration of the bread and wine can cause the presence of Christ to be in them. And so on. What is the distinction in the two sets of cases. They are all accepted by numbers of people as sound religion. If I am religious when I believe that God will send rain on my asking for it in a general way, why is it superstition to believe that when he sends it the rain will fall on a particular spot? After all, it is some particular spot that people have in mind when they pray. However general the petition, if it is answered at all, it must be applied in particular instances. What is the distinction between religion and superstition? The answer comes truly in a slight change in the words of Hobbes. The superstition in which I believe is religion. The religion in which I do not believe is superstition. There are not two things, religion and superstition, there is only one. There is first of all a welter of religious beliefs, then less and less particularity and precision as common-sense tests are applied to these beliefs, with a final residuum consisting of a vague belief that the gods do something, but no one knows how, or why, or where, and that it is blasphemy to enquire. Philosophy does not purge religion of superstition, it reduces religion to a condition of masterly inutility. In sound philosophy religion is as useless as is an Archbishop in a civilized country.

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#### Ringing the Changes.

We are still as far off as ever from finding out what man knows of God. It is true that the Archbishop says we have a religious experience, but that is obviously not the case. We have an experience which some people call religious, and some experience must lie at the bottom of what people call religion. But this is not saying we have a religious experience. Everything, the real and the false, ultimately rests on experience; what we obviously need is some rule by which we can distinguish an experience of the real from an experience of the illusory, and also some experience that cannot be described otherwise than in terms of religion. But the Archbishop does not give us the slightest help in any of these directions. He does say that our religious experience "acquires its special tone and colour from the idea of God which we already hold," and just as we are beginning to hope that we have got something helpful we are pulled up with the remark that "our experience of God is affected by our previous belief about God." That is really very satisfying, to the B.B.C. It is almost enough to make one believe that the Archbishop really was "called" by God to his work. No human being would be likely to select him for a defender.

Consider. Our idea of God is affected by our religious experience; on the other hand our religious experience is affected by our idea of God. We accept A because of B. But we accept B because of A. If we had not believed in God we should not accept our experience as religious. But if we did not accept our experience as religious we should not believe in God. It is W. S. Gilbert at his best and expressed in terms of Christian theology.

And the joke of it all is that it is quite true, although it knocks the bottom out of religion. The Christian may have visions of Jesus, but Jesus never appears to the Mohammedan, or to the Hindoo.

Visions of the Virgin never appear to a Freethinker, although they do appear to sexually-starved Christian believers. Neither does the Virgin ever appear to Protestants, who do not believe in the power of the Mother of God. Spirits never communicate in the office of the *Freethinker*, where their appearance would create a genuine sensation, and where they would receive a hearty welcome; but they do appear to the frequenters of the office of a Spiritualist paper. Miracles always happen to those who believe in them, never to those who do not. The Archbishop is dead right. What you will believe about God will depend upon your religious experience (education) and what you get from your religious experience will depend upon what you already believe about God. The teaching is as old as Jesus. He could do no miracles where people did not believe; neither can I. He could perform miracles where people believed hard enough; so can I. That is the way in which religions are established, and it is the way in which they are perpetuated. The only drawback is that it reduces religion to pure illusion. I do not wonder that the protecting arm of Sir John Reith is thrown around the Archbishop of York. He needs it. God help him on an open platform where he would have nothing but God to rely on.

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#### Clotted Nonsense.

By sheer bluff the Archbishop provides an answer to the question with which he set out. The Christian, he says, "is ready with his answer to the question, What does man know about God?" But he tells us not what the Christian *knows*, but what he believes. It is a statement of faith only. He believes in:—

The Christian doctrine of divine Fatherhood . . . expressed as the assertion that Holy Love has absolute sway over the universe. The love is universal and indiscriminating; the holiness is absolute and uncompromising, the control of this love is all-pervasive. Not a sparrow falls to the ground apart from it; the very hairs of our head are numbered. From the watchful care of that holy love there is no escape.

All that we already knew, but it scarcely required a special course of lectures to give it to the public. The professed faith of the Christian everyone knows; but it is terribly untrue, and so against everyday experience that its falsity has driven many thousands to take the first step that led them to direct Atheism. Holy love controls all! It controlled the world during the European War, it controls when a human being is slowly tortured to death in the clutches of proliferating cancer cells, it stands by while the child is being choked to death with croup, or poisoned with diphtheria; it is unceasing in its watchfulness while one half the animal world lives by slaughtering the other half; it stands by while men, women and children die deaths of torture, starvation or disease: nothing happens apart from it, everything is calculated; it is all part of the Divine Plan: it is all an expression of Holy Love, universal and indiscriminating!

Well, well, the Archbishop may believe it, other Christians may believe it, but it is at least to the credit of human nature that many millions do not. We may not be able to prevent torture or wrong, we may have to submit to injustice and to the ravages of disease, but at least it is something to decline to worship or praise a being who has made all this part of his Divine Plan, and who knowing all, with the power to prevent all, yet permits all.

But the Archbishop is quite safe. His job is assured, and his broadcast pulpit is well guarded. No one will be permitted to contradict him. The B.B.C.

will see that nothing happens, so far as it can control things, to expose his pompous stupidity. Cowardly as ever the Christian makes assertions in circumstances where men with any sense of intellectual integrity would be ashamed to speak.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Spitting at Liberty.

"I have discovered how abusive and unintelligent some Christians can be."—*Bishop of Croydon.*

"Great influences do not work from the top downwards, but from the bottom upwards. Co-operation and Secularism are both working-class movements, but they proceed from the very flower of the industrial class."

*J. K. Sykes.*

"In an age where all tends to the triumph of the logical, absolute reason, we neither courageously have thrown ourselves into the movement, nor yet have driven our feet into the solid ground."—*Matthew Arnold.*

The famous Kautswill election, immortalized by Charles Dickens, was a tame affair compared with the recent Sunday Cinema contests in so many boroughs. There was a great deal at stake in these contests, so both sides poured lavish resources into the fight. In most cases the outlay was far more than the wealthiest Parliamentary candidate is allowed by law to employ. The Sabbatarians "out-Heroded Herod." They spent large sums on handbills and placards. Every church, chapel, tin-tabernacle, and mission-hut, was a hive of industry on the side of reaction. Yet, in spite of the unrivalled powers of organization possessed by the various churches, despite the most generous expenditure, and the appeals to fanaticism, the initial victory lay with the reformers. If ever there was an issue that was opened to a pitiless popular judgment, the question of Sunday freedom is surely that issue.

The Sunday Cinemas Act itself was a piece of foolishness, and the people of this country are going to pay for it dearly in all sorts of vexation and waste of time. As a settlement of Sabbatarianism it is worse than folly, for this fatuous piece of legislation, framed ostensibly to assist the movement for a free Sunday, actually ends by imposing unjustifiable restrictions on the liberty of the people. If the public wants cinemas, it will frequent them; if it does not, it will present the managers with a beggarly array of empty benches.

Although this Act is now law, the clergy are already tilting at it. "We are not," says the Bishop of Croydon, "in favour of the unrestricted opening of cinemas on Sundays." What this right-reverend Father-in-God actually means is that he wants the clergy to censor the films shown on the only weekly holiday. In spite of a brand-new Act of Parliament, priests are still attempting interference with the freedom of the people, a form of oppression from which we are now but slowly emerging.

The clergy are past-masters at camouflage. Like crabs, when they seem to be going they are coming, and *vice versa*. The recent debate at the Lower House of Convocation at Westminster, is a case in point, and is quite typical of the priestly type of mind, fanatical and intolerant. Discussing the question of Sunday Cinemas, these reverend gentlemen passed a resolution that the rights of labour should be maintained on that day, that Sunday rest should be safeguarded, and that the exploitation of Sunday for private gain should be resisted.

The world has progressed since the days when the priest shouted his commands, "Thus saith the Lord," and the ordinary citizen obeyed, or took the unpleas-

ant consequences. Nowadays, the clergy no longer thunder their anathema, nor hand heretics to the secular power, but, cooing like doves, they attempt to win the working-man from allegiance to his own class. Using the vocabulary of Democracy, these priests seek to re-impose their power, and, incidentally, to feather their own nests.

They are, forsooth, the champions of the rights of labour. The clergy are themselves the greatest employers of labour on Sundays. Their sudden love for the workers is more apparent than real, for church organists, choristers, vergers, and church-cleaners are notoriously underpaid and overworked. Thus it has ever been. Many years ago, Lord Shaftesbury said: "I can scarcely remember an instance in which a clergyman has been found to maintain the cause of labourers in the face of pew-holders." The votes of the bishops in the House of Lords concerning the factory legislation of the nineteenth century is a further proof of the selfishness of the clergy. Indeed the voting of the bishops in the Upper House is a demonstration that to be called "right-reverend," and to wear clerical dress, does not make a man prudent or sagacious. It does not qualify him to control or assist the House of Commons or to vote, otherwise than as an ordinary citizen, for persons to whom these duties are to be entrusted. The vital thing is that more and more people are taking these truths for granted, and see no reason why such conditions should continue indefinitely.

The clergy's plea for "wholesome" films on Sunday would be laughable if it were not the veriest blather. Apparently, the dear clergy do not care a straw whether films are wholesome or unwholesome during the other six days of the week. Sex, crime, and gangster films may be shown to crowded houses from Monday to Saturday, but on the blessed Sabbath the plain citizen is to be regaled with stories of converted policemen, and, perhaps, a news-reel of the Bishop of Houndsditch in all the glory of eleventh-century costume, crozier and all.

The dear clergy seem to have been conducting their debate in a vacuum or in a world of make-believe. They do apparently feel that some reasons, however silly, for their own nose-parkerism should be advanced. They therefore put forward the excuse that one of their desires is to see that films are "wholesome." They never trouble to inquire if their own fetish-book is wholesome or unwholesome, although they know full well that its pages cannot be read in their entirety before a mixed audience. Thus to take refuge behind a blatant piece of hypocrisy reveals a lack of courage which is certainly unequal to the task of coercing the working-man of to-day. Nor is much intelligence suggested by the bare notion that the ordinary citizen needs such dragooning in the interests of a dying superstition. Prattle from priests is never very helpful. In matters concerning his personal freedom the plain man can be trusted to know his own mind. Sunday is the weekly holiday. That it should be honeycombed with restrictions and taboos is a matter intimately concerning the liberty of each one of us. The clergy are too fond of imitating the villain of the old-time melodrama, who used to hiss, "Love me, curse you!" Such melodramas are no longer in the fashion, and to-day evoke far more laughter than tears.

MIMNERMUS.

Ninepence a day fer killin' folks comes kind o' low for murder.—*Lowell.*

Satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own.—*Swift.*

## Science and Materialism To-day.

(Concluded from page 67.)

"All Scientists are Materialists when they are getting on with their Job. Eddington is an idealist when he is delivering lectures in support of religion." (Prof. L. Hogben: *The Labour Monthly*, January, 1933, 6. 41.)

"Lawrence Henderson says, 'teleology dwells in another world which the scientific man as such can never enter.' For Mechanism and Materialism lie at the foundation of scientific thought." (Prof. J. Needham: *Man A Machine*, p. 96.)

BIOCHEMISTRY, which is living chemistry, an investigation of the chemical changes and products which are the result of the living processes of plant and animal life, is one of the latest of sciences, and one of the most flourishing. Prof. J. B. S. Haldane, who is a Biochemist, observes: "Certain critics of evolution have admitted the possibility of fairly structural or functional changes, but not of such a profound change as the origin of consciousness or reason. I sympathise with their attitude, but cannot share it, because it seems to me to rest on a refusal to face certain perfectly amazing facts of everyday life."<sup>5</sup> Referring to the various supernatural systems:—

which hold the distinction between different minds, or between mind and matter, is irreducible, my objection to them is just that they proclaim certain problems to be insoluble merely because three thousand years of thought by a few members of a species which may have many thousand million years ahead of it has not yet solved them. (J. B. S. Haldane: *The Causes of Evolution*. p. 155.)

Another distinguished biologist, Professor Julian S. Huxley, a grandson of Thomas Huxley, also goes all the way with the Materialists in attributing the origin of consciousness and thought to physics and chemistry. He says:—

The processes of conduction, excitation, inhibition, and passage of synapses which the physiologist finds occurring in the brain when a man thinks or feels, and which he rightly hopes and expects to analyse in physico-chemical terms, these same processes are, to the brain in which they occur, experienced as consciousness. The material and the mental are inseparable. I know of no other hypothesis which not only satisfies the biological and physiological facts, but yet does not unnecessarily go beyond them.<sup>6</sup>

It cannot be said, in this case, that the author is animated by enmity to religion. For, while he has no belief in a God, or of rewards and punishments in a future life, ideas which, he says survive from childhood and might be "left to die a natural death, if they did not require to be attacked as the too frequent cause of unfortunate practical effects, such as causing believers to pay money to priests for the supposed benefit of souls in the other world."<sup>7</sup> Yet Prof. Huxley advocates a religion without revelation, without a Bible, a God, or belief in a future life. Well, Positivism is just such a religion, and if the ritualism is more than he can stomach, there is the Ethical Church, which as Miss Macaulay wittily remarked, has a Chapel "where they meet together to worship good behaviour." Although Prof. Huxley's book was published six years ago, it is needless to say that this peculiar religion has not yet founded a Church.

Prof. McDowall, who is Professor of Physiology at the University of London, edited the volume to which Prof. Huxley contributed the article on Biology, from which we quoted. Prof. McDowall also contri-

butes the article dealing with Physiology, in which he avows the same materialistic views. He says:—

To a physiologist, whose vocation it is to study the nature of the functions of living tissue, the problem of the mind is essentially a material one concerning the functions of certain parts of the body. To him the process of thought by which the mind expresses itself is a function of the nervous system, and as such is not appreciably different from any other part of the nervous system, except that it is more elaborate. Now the position of a physiologist is briefly this. He believes that thought, as known to the ordinary man, depends on the brain... According to this view "thought" is a response of the nervous system brought about by nervous impulses passing along certain pathways determined by the past environments and heredity of the individual. (Prof. R. J. S. McDowall. *The Mind*. pp. 51-52.)

Another convinced Materialist is Dr. Peter McBride who observes that physiology shows that the images produced in the mind are the result of impressions conveyed by the nerves to the brain; and concludes that "Facts such as these lead the Materialist to the—to him—inevitable conclusion that without a brain there can be no thought and as a corollary he deduces that the brain is the only organ of thought, and that therefore of necessity when it ceases to act, there must be an end of thinking so far as the individual is concerned." (*The Riddle of Personality: Mechanism or Mystery?* p. 10).

Further on, replying to the parrot-cry of the death of Materialism, Dr. McBride retorts:—

If we look through the literature of to-day we find many references to the overthrow of the Materialism of last century, but when we come to seek definite arguments leading logically to this conclusion, it is found difficult to discover them. Thus it is sometimes stated that any theory which attempts to explain the physical basis of mind is old-fashioned, but the question is not exactly one of fashion. It is rather what hypothesis is best adapted to appeal to intelligent people who rely more upon common sense than upon dialectic? (pp. 181-182.)

The most strenuous of the scientific opponents—usually influenced by religious ideas implanted during early life—sadly admit the power and influence of Materialism to-day. Prof. McDougall, one of its most indefatigable opponents, admits that:—

Modern Materialism is the assumption that mechanistic science can in principle achieve a complete and satisfactory account of the world and of man, his nature, origin and destiny. The assumption is widely accepted both by men of science and by philosophers; and the question whether it is well founded is the most important and burning question that confronts the mind of man at the present time. (Prof. W. McDougall: *Modern Materialism and Emergent Evolution*. p. 12.)

As he further laments: "the mechanistic assumption is incompatible with all those religious beliefs which to the plain man are of the very essence of religion." (p. 13.) Nor can the Physicists give any help:—

Clearly, it is of little use to turn to the physical scientists. A Newton, an Oliver, a Lodge, may tell us impressively of his religious and moral convictions; but these convictions are not the conclusions to which he is led by his physical researches; they concern a sphere of which his branch of science has no knowledge, a sphere in which his lifelong studies in another sphere bring home no special competence, his profound erudition and eminence no authority. (p. 14.)

And yet the pulpits resound with the cry that Materialism is dead! But it is not altogether deliberate lying. It is deliberate ignorance. Ignorance that does not wish to know the truth.

W. MANN.

<sup>5</sup> J. B. S. Haldane: *The Causes of Evolution*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> *The Mind*. (By various scientific authors). Edited by R. J. S. McDowall, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> J. S. Huxley: *Religion Without Revelation*. p. 31.

## "Die-Hardism."

*Being the reply to a letter from a member of the older generation.*

MY DEAR X,—Your last letter concludes with the hope that in my "maturer" years I may become, like you, "a Conservative both in politics and religion." Before explaining why I do not share this hope, I would just like to deal with two implications—unconscious though they may have been on your part—which are contained in it, and which tend to beg the issue.

The first is that you imply a certain larger measure of "maturity" in judgment as being a usual parallel to "maturity" in years. Admittedly a man of seventy-five should be in a better position than a man of forty-five to have acquired a larger knowledge of facts upon which to base his religious and political opinions. At the same time, apart from the obviously "immature" both in age and experience, there is no evidence, either medical or psychological, which supports the view that, given a normal intelligence and an ability to observe essentials, a man of forty-five is in any worse position to come to rational and correct conclusions than one of seventy-five. I think you will agree that after the age of thirty-five, or thereabouts, maturity in years is not, of itself, any sure guarantee of increased capacity to form competent judgments. Opportunity, inclination, study and experience may all vary to such an extent as to render an advantage in years of little account.

The second implication is that the Conservative attitude is as sound in politics as in religion, if not in all other spheres of thought and activity. This is an extremely questionable generalization which might be supported by faith, but certainly not by fact. If there were any guarantee that the Conservative attitude always tended to conserve only that which is best, then I would agree with a generalization of this sort. But the evidence is utterly to the contrary. The Conservative in politics, as in religion, tends to conserve the worst equally with the best. Admittedly what is worst and what is best in anything is, at any specific moment of time, always a matter for debate. But history provides ample evidence of the fact that Conservatism, as such, in addition to conserving what is effete and harmful, tends to a mental attitude which is in opposition to the natural and necessary changes of this everchanging existence.

The tendency to veer towards a conservative attitude is a well-known phenomenon of advancing years. Hitherto this has largely been taken as a self-evident proof of its superiority over other attitudes. But this is another assumption which has repeatedly been proved false. Most of the great men of the past were, for their time, neither old in years nor conservative in views. "The Liberal of yesterday," you say, "is often the Conservative of to-day and to-morrow, and often quite rightly so." The first part of this sentence is, of course, true; and it emphasizes the common inability to keep up with progress as one's years increase. But when you add the words "and often quite rightly so," I would counter with "and more often quite wrongly so." It is the unsatisfied, oppressed and younger elements of society which usually go to make up the progressive political parties, as well as the "Protestant" religious sects. The unfortunate thing is that when the wants of an individual have been satisfied, he is apt to forget the larger cause for which he stood at first and to abandon his original principles in favour of maintaining those conditions which support his newly-found comfort or power.

But I think that this phenomenon is more noticeable among politicians and priests whose time-serving propensities are a matter for public jest, than in other spheres of activity. The mature scientist does not revert to older theories; the ageing business-man does not adopt antiquated methods of book-keeping and office routine; manufacturers do not decline new inventions or improved methods of production as they grow older. Or if they do—there is generally some board of directors, containing younger men, which sees to it that they are superannuated. In politics and religion, unfortunately, there are at present no efficient systems by which the older and more "die-hard" individuals can be sacked when the need should arise. The result is—a permanently laggard and reactionary parliament, as well as a permanently obsolete hierarchy, whose main interest appears to be to keep in power.

I quite realize that when you called yourself an "unbudgeable die-hard" you were doing so in jest. The fact that you would not apply such a title to yourself in earnest is proof that you regard it as undesirable. Yet both you and I know that it is applicable in fact to many persons, and that it is most applicable to those who maintain the conservative attitude at all costs. This in itself is an admission of the undesirable quality in that attitude, whether it be in politics or religion. There is one aspect of this, however, which seems to have escaped you. Those who, with advancing years, veer gradually from a relatively progressive to a definitely conservative attitude, generally end up by meriting the very title you dislike. This, therefore, is one reason why I hope that, if any change of view occurs with my own advance in years, it may not be towards the conservative attitude. As you yourself admit, the world does not stand still—much less go backward. And for me to become a Conservative, after my present views, would be equivalent to a reversal of gears which would probably involve a complete break-up of my intellectual mechanisms. As it is, my views, measured by the usual standards, are ahead of their time—at any rate for this country. But even if they become generally adopted, I shall still hope to be amongst those who look forward, rather than stay as I am, or look back. I have little use for the mentality which constantly refers to "my young days" or "the good old times" as unailing criteria for the present or the future.

It is naturally a pleasure to me to hear you reiterate that you are always ready to consider both sides of a question. And I readily admit that I am not the only person who has honestly read and tried to understand every question from both sides. But the willingness to consider all sides is not invariably found in conjunction with a readiness to admit the truth when it is made clear. There is such a thing as knowing you are wrong, yet being unwilling to admit the fact. And this "die-hardism" is well illustrated in a letter which I received from someone with whom I had a discussion not so long ago. While admitting that he was defending an "untenable position," he declared that he was prepared "to die in the last ditch" when he came to it. As a fine example of how analogy can be used to pervert an argument, this takes a lot of beating. "Dying in the last ditch" is clearly a courageous act in war, when one is ordered to defend a position at all costs, whether it be adjudged tenable or not. But in controversy the honest, and generally the most courageous, thing to do is to abandon a position as soon as one knows it to be false. The fact that one person can openly confess to "die-hardism" of this sort (and apparently take pride in it), leads to the inference that there are probably many others who assume the same attitude without even admitting that they are doing so. For my part,

I would as soon defend a position that I knew to be untenable as I would attack a position that I knew to be logical. Both attitudes, at best, are a waste of time and a slur upon the intelligence.

In addition to the foregoing, there is also that "die-hardism" which makes pretence of studying all aspects of a question, but which sedulously avoids reading or listening to any exposition of it by a representative of the opposite camp. There is such a thing as making up your mind beforehand to discount every expression of opinion that does not coincide with your own, and to listen only to such expositions of an opposite view as emanate from those who hold your own views. The Pope, for example, has his *Index Expurgatorius* for such of the faithful as are simple-minded or bigoted enough to heed its rulings. And there are many who will not study the Atheist, Rationalist or Freethought points of view from original sources, but take their information mainly from those who do not hold these views. How such people can ever hope to get at the truth of anything, it puzzles me to understand. Personally, if I wish to investigate the rights and wrongs of any subject, I make it a point not only to consult those who believe it to be wrong, but also those who hold that it is right. *A propos* of this you write: "If you say Russia is not ruined, even temporarily, then all I can say is 'I am sorry for you and must beg to differ.'" In fact I do not say, and never have said, anything of the sort because I am in no position to judge. I have read every available book on Russian conditions, both by those who hold no brief for Bolshevism as well as by Bolsheviks themselves, and I frankly confess that to me the evidence is inadequate to the formation of any definite conclusions. If you have better sources of information than myself, you are naturally in a better position to come to a conclusion. But why be sorry for *me*? The only people one should be sorry for is the Russians themselves—if they are ruined. For myself, I cannot help feeling sorry for any nation that is ruined, whether I agree or disagree with the policy of its rulers. And as to Russia in particular—is it not perhaps in many cases the wish that it should be ruined that is father to the thought? (By the way—why not cast your eye upon Spain for a change?)

Your quotation of Tennyson's lines "Freedom broadens slowly down from precedent to precedent," with the emphasis on "slowly," is really not a convincing argument either in favour of the conservative attitude or against the progressive. Tennyson, for all his virtues as a poet, was not omniscient. And a clever aphorism is not necessarily an eternal truth. Besides, what some call slow, others call fast—and *vice versa*. One thing is certain, and it is this. Humanity is capable of enduring a lot of suffering and oppression. But when the oppression and suffering become intolerable, it rises *en masse* in an effort to better its conditions, or at any rate to rid itself of its burdens. Whether the rising is successful or not; whether it becomes a revolution or not; and whether conditions afterwards are better or not—all these things depend upon varying circumstances. The fact remains, however, that if the broadening process is too slow in the opinion of the masses, the masses will inevitably rise in protest. And it is, as a rule, the conservative and "die-hard" attitudes which are the primary causes of a too tardy social progress. This is another reason why I hope never to revert to these attitudes in any sphere of life.

Finally, you write that "the point in which some fairminded and at the same time intellectual men differ from others, equally fairminded and intellectual, is not so much in their appreciation of the end in view as of the most effective methods of attain-

ing that end." This, of course, is true to a certain degree. But it is as often the end in view which is the bone of contention; and this naturally leads to a divergence as to methods as well. And as long as the world is divided into two camps, one of which regards an indefinite eternity as more important than the definite present, so long will there be fundamental disagreement both as to methods and ends on that vital point alone, and upon many others which are directly influenced by it.

Grant, as we both do, that existence is a continuous change (in which even religions take part), the logical consequence of a conservative attitude towards life is the development of a mentality which is constantly lagging behind and out of touch with the times—a mentality which, in extreme cases, becomes a dangerous dam to the forces of natural progress. The logical consequence of a progressive attitude towards life is the development of a mentality which is always prepared to adjust itself to the needs of the times and to keep itself open to consider and adopt changes which those needs demand. In extreme cases it is true, the progressive mentality may tend to move ahead of its time—but it is seldom, if ever, that such mentalities acquire sufficient power to put their ideas into force. They are generally adopted by subsequent generations. The "die-hard," on the contrary, is almost invariably already in power and for that reason "unbudgeable." Of the two mentalities, therefore, I would prefer to possess the progressive rather than the conservative.

Years ago I made a vow that I would never allow my mind to stagnate, and that I would always do my best to keep abreast of every advance in knowledge, even in subjects that did not particularly interest me. If I have ever been conservatively inclined, that inclination has long since withered as a result of the knowledge which I have acquired. So I think it highly improbable, if my views alter with increasing age, that they are likely to alter in the direction which you hope for. In politics I was a Liberal. I have since passed from that, through Labour, to Socialism. In religion I was a Presbyterian. I passed from that to a wholly unsectarian Christianity, and thence, through Agnosticism, to Atheism. And from the evidence of history, both past and present, humanity as a whole is slowly but surely advancing along the same paths.

Yours, etc., M.N.

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## Acid Drops.

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Once again the materializing medium, Mrs. Victoria Duncan, has been the subject of an exposure. This time it was in Edinburgh. According to the account in the *Daily Express*, the seance took place in the home of Miss Esson Maule. Towards the end of the sitting a grab was made for the materialized spirit and a struggle took place to get hold of the material which formed the spiritual body. Finally the police had to be called in—the Edinburgh police, not, as one might have expected, a detachment of materialized "coppers," who had passed on to the Summerland. Miss Maule says that she felt the material of the spirit body. It was soft, stretching material, and she felt her fingers go through it. This is in line with a previous exposure of the same lady when she was found to be using something of a soft cheese cloth material. And in an affidavit from a girl who had been in the employ of Mrs. Duncan, the purchase of the material for Mrs. Duncan was substantiated.

The extraordinary thing is the way in which these mediums can go on time after time, and the fanatical credulity with which they are championed by Spiritualists. Photo-fakirs are exposed time after time, but the

sale of spirit photographs still goes on. One materializing medium after another is shown up, but not merely other fakirs, but the same ones continue to pursue the trade. In the present instance Mrs. Duncan protests her innocence, and we shall expect to see that she will be upheld in the Spiritualist papers, and those who exposed her will be denounced for their daring to break the "laws" of spiritual intercourse by grabbing a portion of the materialized body, and so giving a serious shock to the medium. And all such action does shock the medium. With that we quite agree.

As we predicted the next session of the Church Assembly will set out on its attempt to acquire special privileges for clerical offenders in the matter of press reports of cases in which they are concerned. A motion to amend the Clergy Discipline Act, 1892, and meanwhile, to appoint a Committee "to consider what legal charges, if any, are desirable in connexion with the publicity given to cases affecting morality heard in Ecclesiastical Courts." Nothing could be clearer. What the Church Assembly wants to get rid of is not the reporting of cases affecting morality, but only the reporting of such cases when "heard in an Ecclesiastical Court." Since a large proportion of the clergy will not obey even the Ecclesiastical Courts—which, in the last analysis are Secular Courts—why not abolish Ecclesiastical Courts altogether except for purely Ecclesiastical matters? As it is, if a parson offends against the common or criminal law his position is just the same as that of a layman.

The Churches, always stupid, were never more stupid than in their association with the anti-Communist propaganda which is, as to a large part of it, Christian apologetics under another name. The Communists, says the Rev. J. J. R. Armitage (of Liverpool) "recognize the Church of God as the mainstay of the present civilization." Yet it is only the other day (as mentioned in our last issue) that the Archbishop of York predicted inevitable changes in the present civilization, the evils of which are admitted, and the wrongs and injustices of which—and Christianity as the "mainstay" of them in many cases—make more Communists than all the communist propaganda in the world. There never was a constructive change of any dimension that was not denounced and opposed by Christians as revolutionary.

Mr. Nathaniel Micklem, a distinguished Nonconformist layman, writes in the *British Weekly* on the preacher's authority. "Men desire to know, not what ministers opine, but what God has done." If, however, a minister, in these days, deals only with "what God has done" as reported in God's Book, and in the language of the latter, he must inevitably express his own (or his favourite commentator's opinion as to the meaning thereof. The great trouble about "What God has done" is that the average intelligent person cannot now believe in a God who has so done. In truth, the preacher's lot like the policeman's, is not a happy one." Even Mr. Micklem says "a minister needs a sense of humour lest he should become incredibly important and run the risk of a nervous breakdown." This is only another way of saying that when a person insists that what he says is God inspired, he is advised to consult a mental specialist! Preaching is only a healthy and tolerable profession to those who take care not to practise what their Trust Deeds may compel them to preach.

The *Sunday Chronicle* says that "unless the authorities intervene" there is this year to be a vigorous anti-religious campaign commencing about Easter. The *Sunday Chronicle* is a little behind with the news. The N.S.S. has conducted an anti-religious campaign for the last seventy years, and it goes on all the year round. But what is meant by "unless the authorities intervene?" Is it in hopes that the authorities will attempt to stop anti-religious propaganda? We hardly think they will attempt anything so foolish. At any rate we invite them to have a try. Perhaps the *Chronicle* thinks there is circulation behind the pose of a defender of the faith.

As the defences of Christian orthodoxy fall, or are held only by ill-equipped and inconsiderable forces, its main army may be observed preparing to retreat, in as good order as possible, to the last line of defence, namely belief in God. Even that line has not survived without severe losses; and the work of re-inforcing it is engaging the anxious attention of the general staff. Negotiations, so far unsuccessful, have been in progress to establish unity of command. In its absence it is possible that agreement may be reached as to a common objective and plan of campaign. Whether such agreement is reached or not, competent observers are convinced that future operations will be so conducted by all as not to injure its chances of attainment. There is a significant uniformity of tone and plan in recent Command Orders from the Headquarters at Rome, Canterbury, and the Memorial Hall (London).

In the Rev. Basil G. Bourchier, Rector of St. Anne's, Soho, the theatrical profession, of which his late cousin was an ornament, has lost a great showman. Until, fairly lately, he went to Soho, he was known far and wide as of St. Jude's, Hampstead Garden Suburb, where he was patronized by Royalty, from Her Majesty the Queen downwards; and where he built and preached in an edifice in which low and high churchmen alike were puzzled by the lavish but strangely garish decorations. A crucifix, with electric bulbs to light it up from within, is no doubt in tune with the tendencies of modern advertising, but hardly in keeping with Christian sentiment. Mr. Bourchier belongs to no party in the Church. He recognizes that promotion cometh neither from the North nor from the South nor from the East nor from the West—but from the Leader of the Government for the time being. Hence he has been successively Imperialistic, Lloyd Georgian, and Labour, for while Governments—and statesmen—may come and go, their ecclesiastical preferments have to be dispensed all the time.

Shortly after Mr. Bourchier got to Soho, the Vicar of the Church of St. Mary's—a well known feature in the Charing Cross Road—having failed in his fight against the Bishop of London's despoiling hand, had to vacate that living as St. Mary's is coming down. Mr. Bourchier prints in his own Parish Magazine a letter to himself from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners which is an illuminating indication of his own mentality and of procedure in these matters.

The letter is in the following terms:—

[Copy.]

Re St. Anne, Soho, and St. Mary, Charing Cross Road.  
Proposed Union of Benefices.

On behalf of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, I transmit to you herewith a print of the *London Gazette* of the 16th instant, containing a copy of an Order of His Majesty in Council for effecting the above proposed union of Benefices.

The *Gazette* should, for future reference, be deposited in the Chest belonging to the Church of St. Anne, Soho.

As the Benefice of St. Mary, Charing Cross Road, has been vacated by the Rev. C. C. Shute, you have the option under the provision of Clause 3 of the Order in Council, of becoming the first Incumbent of the United Benefice of Westminster, St. Anne, Soho, I assume that you will inform the Bishop of London and also this Office if you are prepared to consent to become the first Incumbent of such United Benefice.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J. S. Downing.

December 20th, 1932.

This Magazine has an unsigned article headed "The Rector," that is Mr. Bourchier. "Mr. Bourchier whose health alas, seems wholly unequal to the sunless conditions of Soho Square, is ordered abroad shortly after the New Year. Accordingly, he expects to leave for St. Moritz on January 5."

Another item in the Magazine is entitled "Parochialia." In this "space only permits notice of the most outstanding engagements of Mr. Bouchier during December. Here they are:—

(a) The presentation to the Primate of his portrait (by Mr. de Laszlo) at Westminster by Lord Selborne on November 29. (b) On Tuesday, December 6, he attended the marriage of Miss Standish Barry at Holy Trinity, Brompton. (c) December 13 saw him at the Mansion House to meet at dinner H.R.H. the Duke of York and Princess Helena Victoria. (d) Previously, Mr. Bouchier had attended a Select Committee at the House of Commons to urge the abolition of the penalty of Capital Punishment, which he abhors. (e) On Wednesday, November 30, the Rector dined with Sir Abe Bailey, Bart., prior to taking part next day with Canon Carnegie in marrying his son (Mr. J. M. Bailey) to Diana, the eldest daughter of the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, at St. Margaret's, Westminster. (f) *Let us now pass to St. Anne's*

On December 4, Mr. Bouchier broadcasts, and prints letters from B.B.C. Headquarters, from a Duchess and other titled persons, from an M.P., and from "an anonymous listener-in," the tone of which may be judged by one sentence from the latter. The writer says he has kept "a mental note of the comparative merits of broadcast services"—not a hard matter—and Bouchier "surpassed anything I have ever heard for perfection and religious fervour." The Parish Magazine also advertises two books by Mr. Bouchier, and publishes his photograph rigged out for the marriage of Sir Abe Bailey's son to Mr. Churchill's daughter at St. Margaret's. Bouchier's snobbishness extends even to the altar servers, and he notes in a paragraph about them that "St. Anne's is exceptionally fortunate in that its servers include the only son of a Countess, and the son of an Overseas Judge." From first to last this Parish Magazine is Bouchier boosting himself. He has been at it for years, and no doubt when he comes back from St. Moritz, he will have health and strength enough to continue his unflagging attentions to himself in the Parish Magazine and in such organs of public opinion as are not tired of his "copy" or short of space.

H.H. the Aga Khan was allowed recently to say what he thought of "You Christians" in the *Daily Sketch*. Of course, it was not too drastic, but he said sufficient to show he believed his own Islam religion to be really superior to Christianity—exactly like a Christian insisting on Christianity being superior to Islam. What a farce this religious business is! The Aga Khan would like some "well-known Englishman to found a mosque in London." So would we. What a spectacle it would be if only we could get one of the holy Islamites to call all the faithful to prayer from the top of a tower and see them drop on their knees in Piccadilly and other beauty spots of London, like a flash. Perhaps the Aga Khan would lead the way.

Not only mosques but Buddhist temples and other Hindu shrines should be built in London, and a contingent of Fakers—we mean Fakirs—would add just that touch of picturesqueness which holiness—and filth—requires of a genuine religion. A few African witch-doctors and negro medicine-men, together with some thoroughly converted Christian negroes from America could fill up any gaps. It's about time we got some real religion in London as it looks that but for the petticoated priests leading "Mass" processions, we rarely get any in the world's greatest city.

The Catholic Teachers' Federation discussed the censorship of films the other day, and are by no means satisfied that it is strict enough. Poor little Catholic children are regularly allowed to see films which are not good for them to see. On the other hand, when films "likely to offend religious susceptibilities" are censored, "important scenes in missionary films" are deleted and good Catholics prevented from seeing the administration of "the last Sacrament." This last is a terrible deprivation, and shows that censorship

should really be put into Catholic hands. Altogether Catholics have our sympathy as, censorship or no censorship, they seem to have a rotten time. The best thing would be not to abolish the censorship but the cinema, and compel everybody to go to Catholic schools or Mass instead. A sad, sad world, my masters.

The world is lost, according to Mgr. McNulty of Nottingham, unless England immediately becomes Christian, *i.e.*, Roman Catholic. If she does, then "England can save the world." The Catholic Church can speak with authority, he continued, for during 1900 years, "she has been the historic enlightenment of the human intellect." No doubt. She has also given the world all the great artists, authors, musicians, poets, and philanthropists and is no doubt responsible for all the great inventions—transport, aviation, wireless, etc.—which we are now enjoying. She has also encouraged education, the printing press, freedom of speech and thought, and has never—well, hardly ever—done anything wrong during the whole 1900 years. We hope we have missed nothing vital out of the blessings conferred upon mankind by the Roman Catholic Church, but it does seem a pity no historian yet can be found to record these wonderful things. Can they be products of a too fertile imagination?

While "G.B.S." proceeds on his world tour any number of parsons, who have enough conceit to think he might reply to them if he was in England, are busy denouncing his recent book. A typical harangue from the Rev. S. Maurice Watts is reported in the *Midland Daily Telegraph*. Mr. Watts, like another clerical critic we tackled lately—gone to Coventry. From thence he warns his hearers not to be "menaced by a reputation for cleverness." Surely *his* hearers are in no such danger. Mr. Watts has "never had any love for Shaw" who, according to him, "does all his tricks standing on his head"; but they are tricks which Mr. Watts would find it hard to produce on his feet. In one sentence in this anti-Shaw sermon there is a notable admission. Mr. Watts said:—

Rome is definitely at spiritual war with the Soviet and its anti-God campaign, and we shall all be in that on one side or the other before long.

Mr. Watts seems to regret that, unlike the Church of Rome, he cannot "stop our people reading this book"—so he gives it a free advertisement in the pulpit so as to "guide their thoughts about it." And, if they have half-a-crown to spare, he suggests they buy another book by another Shaw—Mabel the missionary of that ilk—who, it seems in a work entitled *God's Candlelights* can tell us "what really does happen to the black girls in Africa!"

## Fifty Years Ago.

### UNITARIANISM.

It was trying to hold on to the Christian fairy-tales after destroying the faith on which they rested. It clung to the rosy visions of a theologic heaven, whose evidences it invalidated by repudiating its equal revelation of visions not rosy. It was able to give no reason for its surviving faith in God or immortality; and when Abner Kneeland denied these, and was shut up in prison, Unitarianism mingled with its petition for mercy to its abhorred child a cry of helplessness. It was then shown, also, that temples sprinkled with Unitarian holy water were not only prepared to imprison the human mind, but might be made buttresses of the national inhumanity based upon the Bible. What, then, was Unitarianism? Christianity made easy. New England theology with none of its crosses, but all of its comforts, adapted by scholars to suit spiritual epicures. Between the Unitariversalists, who believed God too good to damn them, and the Unitarians, who believed they were too good to be damned, respectability was able to make itself quite comfortable. But how was it with the real heart and intellect of the country?

*The "Free Thinker," February 4, 1883.*



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL :

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. B. YENDOLL.—Many thanks for addresses, paper being sent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen, who had contracted a severe cold which kept him in bed for two days, was in consequence unable to keep his engagement in Bradford. As it was found advisable for him not to travel on Saturday, Mr. Rosetti kindly deputised. Acting as a substitute lecturer is not the pleasantest of tasks, and Mr. Cohen is the more indebted to Mr. Rosetti on that account. There was a good attendance and Mr. Rosetti's lecture was much appreciated.

Next week we hope to publish the first list of responses to the appeal of the Bradlaugh Centenary Committee for funds to carry out its programme. We trust the response will be a heartening one, in spite of the bad times. If the Committee is to do justice to the work of Bradlaugh the full sum of £1,500 will be required, and it must be forthcoming. Properly managed this Centenary celebration should pay honour to Bradlaugh in the way that Bradlaugh would have liked—that is by materially advancing the Freethought Cause. Wide as Bradlaugh's interests were, he was before all things the militant Freethinker. It was because of his avowed Atheism that he gained the whole-hearted devotion of his friends and the hearty hatred of his enemies. We must see to it that full advantage is taken of the present occasion. Subscriptions should be sent to Mr. F. C. C. Watts, Treasurer Bradlaugh Centenary Fund, 38 Curator Street, London, E.C. 4.

As previously announced the Committee is arranging lectures all over the country—or at least where it is possible to do so. As many as can be should be given before the present lecture season closes. A skeleton lecture has been prepared for the use of speakers, which gives an outline of the Life of Bradlaugh for all who care to use it. Where possible the Committee will provide lecturers,

together with lantern slides. On this matter also, we beg Freethinkers to get to work at once. There are scores of local debating societies in which such addresses might be given, apart from set lectures. But those interested must get to work at once.

As this is the centenary year of the birth of Charles Bradlaugh the holding of the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society in London this year should meet with general approval. Although Whit-Sunday, June 4 is a fair way ahead, Branch officials should begin to take steps to see that their respective branches are well represented, and that the Conference shall meet the great occasion.

The Liverpool Branch is arranging its first Annual Dinner on Saturday, February 18, at the St. George's Restaurant. There will be the usual toasts and concert, and Mr. Cohen hopes to be present. The price of the tickets is 5s. 6d. A Vegetarian menu will be provided for those who require it. Application for tickets should be made without delay to the Secretary, Mr. S. R. A. Ready, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Lancs. We hope that this effort of the Branch will be triumphantly successful.

Liverpool saints are reminded that Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak for the local Branch N.S.S. to-day (Sunday) in the Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool. The subject will be "Humanity, Religion, and Science." Admission is free, with reserved seats at one shilling each. The lecture begins at 7 p.m. As the Liverpool Branch is regularly drawing good audiences an early arrival is advisable in order to secure a seat.

We do not know whether Sir John Foster Fraser reads this paper regularly, but at any rate we are pleased to find him following our lead, and protesting against the censorship exercised, not merely on certain forms of opinion, but also on those speakers who are "honoured" by being invited to speak before the microphone. Our readers will recognize this, from Sir John Fraser as a re-statement of what we have been saying for years :—

The existing censorship at Broadcasting House should be abolished. It must be a nuisance to a man of character and originality to prepare a written treatise knowing the possibility of its being blue-pencilled by some unknown person mentally inferior to himself. Gentlemen addressing a mixed audience of a couple of million are not likely to abuse their temporary position. Besides men who are sufficiently known to broadcast should not have their writing scrutinized as at boarding schools when the children have indited their Sunday letters home.

The B.B.C. will pursue its censorship until public men who are asked to speak, either in their personal capacity or as representative of particular movements have enough self-respect, and enough concern for the dignity for the movements they represent to decline co-operation in any such censorship. The suggestion that what a man shall say in public must first of all meet with the approval of Sir John Reith, a mere nobody in the intellectual world, and his committees of mediocrities is an insult. It is asking him to co-operate in the maintenance of a censorship of thought, and it is idle to protest against a censorship if one falls into line with it when asked to do so. We repeat, no man with self-respect should have anything to do with speaking at the microphone if he is asked to submit to the censorship of Sir John Reith and Co. After all, a Freethinker would be permitted to speak in many a Church, a Communist to address a gathering of Conservatives, provided what he had to say was first of all carefully revised and approved beforehand. Co-operation with such a policy enables the B.B.C. to pretend to permit all sides to be heard, while carefully selecting what is to be said.

Isk an International Socialist Quarterly (price 3d) contains in the January issue, an interesting article by Mr. G. F. Green, "Capture of the British Labour Movement by the Roman Catholic Church." He selects as a particular illustration the way in which the Roman Church has

managed to get the vote in favour of Secular education removed from the programme of the Trades Union Congress, and also the way in which it is forced into the background in the Labour Movement generally. Of course, the secret of all this is the organization of the Church. Where religious issues are in question the majority of Roman Catholics vote as they are told to vote; and it is the power of the organized vote that today rules politicians of all classes, whether labour or otherwise.

Point to what Mr. Green has to say is given by the recent speech of the President of the Board of Education, Lord Irwin, at Harrogate. He spoke as "one who believes that religion is vital to the welfare and prosperity of any State or Society," and he was determined to see that "the religious teaching in our schools should be as thorough and as efficient as our existing statutory provisions admit." He also said that the State—by which he meant himself and the present Government—"is likely to be sympathetic to the encouragement of religious teaching throughout our educational system." That means there is very likely to be a move towards doing something in the way of satisfying the religious sects before this Government leaves office.

Lord Irwin says there is "much evidence that goes to show that public opinion is moving steadily away from the secular solution." Politicians see what they wish others to see and say what suits their particular game, so that one is not likely to take Lord Irwin's assurance seriously. Politicians, from the Prime Minister downwards also assured us that there was no demand for Sunday entertainments, and also that there was no demand from the public for sweepstakes. In the case of Sunday entertainments, an appeal to the vote has given an overwhelming vote in favour of them. Why not leave Secular education to the same general vote and note the result? Why, the advocates of religious instruction in the schools will not agree to making the school-time commence *after* the religious lesson. And they will not do this because they confess that if this were so, very few would send their children in time for religious teaching. The parsons want religion in the schools, because they know that they must "dope" the child to get the adult; the politician is afraid to admit the justice of secular education because he wants the religious vote, and what is a child's welfare to a politician when the capture of votes is in question?

But Freethinkers are also to blame. There are many thousands of Freethinkers who do not withdraw their children from religious instruction. It is this fact that permits the parson and men like Lord Irwin to say there is no great demand for the secular solution. It is idle to say that the children are not withdrawn because of persecution. In ninety per cent of the cases where the children of non-Christians are still receiving religious instruction, this is not true. As we have so often said, the parents are hiding behind the children. They do not want their neighbours to know that they are opposed to religion, and if they withdrew their children it would make this fact plain. Every Freethinker in the country who values his Freethought should make plain his opposition to religious instruction in the schools by withdrawing his children at once. A simple note to the head teacher is enough. Children should not be sacrificed to the timidity of their parents. If this were done there would be less chance for the rule of the parson than there is, and Freethinkers would be rearing a stronger and mentally sturdier type of children.

Birmingham Freethinkers are asked to note that the local N.S.S. Branch will hold its Sunday evening lectures in the Bristol Street Schools, and that Mr. A. D. McLaren (London) will speak there to-day (Sunday) at 7 p.m., on "Does Civilization Need Religion?" Those who have heard Mr. McLaren before are sure to be present on this occasion, most likely accompanied by one or two Christian friends.

We are very pleased to be able to announce that the New York *Truthseeker* is to be continued as a monthly, in a reduced form, pending, we hope the return to its previous size. Immediately on receiving the news of the intended suspension of the *Truthseeker* we wrote Mr. Macdonald offering to put space in this journal by which he could reach our many readers in the United States and so hasten the re-appearance of America's famous paper. That is not now necessary, but we do impress upon those Freethinkers in the States who read this paper the duty of keeping the *Truthseeker* in being, and in a healthy state of being. The annual subscription to the *Truthseeker* is one dollar twenty-five cents, including postage, annually, or five cents per single copy. Address, *Truthseeker* Co., 49 Vesey Street, New York, U.S.A.

While writing on this topic, we take the opportunity of thanking all those who have recently sent us suggestions for increasing our own circulation. The chief objection to most of them is that they involve an expenditure that is beyond us. We are trying different "dodges" all the time, but in the main we still have to rely upon the kindly efforts of our friends for new subscribers. We owe everything to personal recommendation, and a great deal can be done in this way by those who are genuinely interested.

The Bethnal Green Branch is holding a course of three Tuesday evening meetings in the hall of the Bethnal Green Public Library, Cambridge Road, E.2. The General Secretary of the N.S.S. will open the course on Tuesday, February 7, at 8 p.m., and by special request will lecture on "Spiritualism v. Commonsense." The local saints are working hard to improve the vitality of the Branch and deserve the support of all Freethinkers in the district.

## "Powder and Shot."

It will be remembered that at Mottingham in Kent, the Roman Catholics had great difficulty in persuading the Commissioners for Crown Lands to permit them to ring the bells of a new church they have built on Crown land. They have now wrung a reluctantly given consent to perform between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., from those very impersonal Commissioners. A veritable triumph is thus registered for Catholicism in England.

Bell-ringing certainly constitutes a public nuisance at any time, and few will consider that it adds to the amenities of "desirable residences." But when at Christmas certain good citizens became tired of the enthusiasm of certain other citizens (who rang bells throughout Christmas-day in jubilant commemoration of their Lord and Master and rang in the New Year as tirelessly, in anticipation no doubt that it might prove more profitable than the last) the tables were neatly turned. The first-mentioned citizens attended divine worship in their automobiles and provided a sufficient assortment of noises with open exhausts and klaxon horns to drown the combined efforts of officiating parson, choir, congregation and organist to make themselves heard in Christ's Kingdom.

This public-spirited action in the interests of a "quiet Sunday" for the people reflects great credit on the persons who were responsible for it, and is in striking contrast to the compromising attitude of the officials who had the legal right to enforce the covenant that no bells shall be pulled on the Crown lands. It has also the merit of impressing upon the pious in no uncertain fashion the fact that the general public appreciates neither the brassy *pot pourri* provided by the Salvation Army nor the "tintinabulation of bells, bells, bells, bells" from morn till night.

We would point out to the Government, however,

that bell-ringing can be converted into a source of revenue. In some parts of Spain it is forbidden to ring church bells at all. But at Seville the Local Authorities did not refuse sanction for bell-ringing but taxed it 10-100 pesetas per funeral, and for every tinkle at Holy Mass one peseta is charged. In Escorial this scale of taxation is thought to be favourable to the taxpayers. There the churches can toll bells at eventide for 250 pesetas but not for a longer period than three minutes. Funerals also cost more in proportion to the richness of the furnishings and for a really first-class funeral one has to pay a special super-tax of 100 pesetas to have the bells tolled. Second-class funerals are charged a super-tax of 50 pesetas. (*Ecclesiastica*, December 17 1932.)

Our experience of this noisy advertising of God's houses leads us to believe that the Government would find a graduated tax on the pastime, a most profitable enterprise if only they would have the temerity to apply it.

\* \* \*

The *Manchester Guardian* (January 23, 1933), tells us that the revenues of Manchester Cathedral amount to £81,000. A portion of this sum is used to keep parts of the Cathedral in repair, and the rest is divided amongst the 150 parishes in parsons' stipends. If this sum were not in any way augmented by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners we would not be harsh in suggesting that the clergy in Manchester enjoy a reasonably comfortable standard of life. We might almost say that it compares very favourably with the wages of the cotton operatives on half-time, which we understand are often less than £2 per week. We also think that the Manchester unemployed would not be entirely unjustified in demanding that church property in Manchester be assessed as factory premises to augment the rates and thus ensure a more equitable distribution of "relief" in that town.

\* \* \*

In Yorkshire, according to the same issue of the *Manchester Guardian*, the Archbishop of York is campaigning to raise a quarter of a million pounds that will be spent in building new Churches and Parish Halls. What do our Yorkshire friends think about this? Has there been a consensus of opinion taken in that county to warrant such wasteful expenditure? At a time of severe and widespread distress in a hard winter, we might have thought that the Established Church would perhaps have given us a practical interpretation of its creed. But no, it is its customary greed, that prevails "as it was in the beginning and ever shall be." Nevertheless a quarter of a million pounds would be a useful sum with which to settle Yorkshire's unemployed on the land which is now a source of revenue to the Established Church. We do not, however, expect the Archbishop to shake off his head with approbation at our suggestion.

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America has often been referred to as "God's own country." Not content with having raised most money for propaganda purposes, American Catholics were anxious to set up a new record for their country. So they counted all the prayers which had been said for the "cause of the Holy Father" in 1927. According to the *Catholic News* (September 8, 1928), America topped the list with 522,260,904. Canada delivered 138,753,384 and Holy Italy was a bad third with "only" 22,465,337. Assuming that American prayers lasted a minute each, then this record praying achievement lasted 8,704,348 hours, or, on the basis of an 8-hour day, 1,088,043 working days. If we reckon that there are 300 working days in the year, then no less than 3,627 working years have been lost through this one particular sort of prayer. Or to put it another

way, 3,627 people have been praying for a year instead of working.

\* \* \*

The growth of Catholicism in America in a century and a half is both astonishing and menacing. Hundred and fifty years ago there were six churches and 20,000 Catholics in the U.S.A. In 1931 the figures had risen to 18,000 Catholic Churches and 20,000,000 followers. In one city, Chicago, where there was a population of 50,000 there was not a single Catholic priest. Now there are more than a thousand. Out of a population of 3½ millions, 1½ millions are Roman Catholics for whom there exists 253 churches. Ninety years ago there was but one Bishopric in the U.S.A. (Baltimore), but in 1931 there were fifteen. Although more recent figures are to be found in earlier numbers of the *Freethinker*, the following facts are interesting for purposes of comparison.

In 1931 the American Catholics owned 8,000 elementary schools in which 60,000 teachers taught 2,300,000 scholars. There were 2,400 high schools with 14,000 professors and 240,000 scholars, and 160 colleges and universities with 7,000 professors teaching 100,000 students. *Muenchener Neueste Nachrichten*, April 13, 1931.)

According to the *Baverischer Kurier* (March 15, 1932) the 20 million American Catholics had 310 newspapers in 1931, having a total circulation of 7,308,456 copies. Religious monthlies, and the special magazines of Catholic Societies and Unions are of course not included in this estimate. Thus the stunting of Catholic children's mental growth is assured in the schools whilst that of the adults is frozen by a Catholic "yellow" press, in the interests of a worldwide clerical organization.

G.F.G.

## Some Christian Types.

### VI.—THE MAN OF GOD.

WHEN Charles Dickens gave us his wonderful characterizations of the Stigginses, the Chadbands and the Pecksniffs of the world he portrayed a type of social, or rather antisocial, organism extremely common in his day. Unfortunately not all of these organisms have yet been brought under The Vermin Act; and in patches and pockets of an otherwise healthy civilized society they continue to live what they are pleased to call their lives, and in the absence of effective measures for their extermination they even reproduce their own kind—to the detriment of society as a whole.

The Stigginses of the world are not to be found in the ranks of the fox-hunting, cricket-playing, ex-public-school-boy Anglicans, keen on military parades and War Memorials and medals, vociferous for God-King-Country class-consciousness, expert in the arts of arrogant dominance and suave insolence, and claiming not so much to support the authorities as themselves to be the authorities. No, the Stigginses are to be found in the lower middle-class and trading strata of society, beneath the governing classes they serve to uphold, and mostly among the Nonconformists. What passes as their brain is a horrid mixture of slimy snobbery, servile worship, humble self-assurance, respectability, obedience, civility and other slave virtues.

Always the Stigginses are keen on texts and proverbs, half-truths and copy-book morality generally. "Be good, Sweet Maid, and let who will be clever," effectively damps down the ambitions of the youthful female mentality. "Honesty is the best policy," serves to hide the innate dishonesty of the male

Stiggins offspring. "A penny saved is a penny gained," encourages what is regarded as the leading economic virtue—Thrift; and the Stigginses will hotly combat as heresy the argument that thrift is often merely a petty method of depriving yourself of enjoyment and many other people of employment until such time as the Government of the day announces blatantly and authoritatively that, not unwise hoarding but wise spending, is required to give itself a better chance of survival. Being drawn mainly from the shop-keeping classes and their advisers and suppliers, this sounds like sense to the Stigginses; after all, they say, it will be good for business—their business—if the community buys more goods; and being constitutionally opposed to changes of Government, or any other changes for that matter, the Stigginses naturally stand up for the Powers that Be—at any rate while they be in power.

For themselves they aver that they want no worldly power, and that they have no earthly pride. Worship is their strong suit. Thus when their sons, after obtaining at the Sunday School suitably inscribed and suitably selected books as rewards for what it prettily described as "Bible Knowledge," subsequently announce that they feel they have had a Call to the Ministry, Father Stiggins and Mother Stiggins become suffused with a sublimated form of parental self-congratulation, and a complacent phosphorescent glow pervades the whole Family Circle, but there is nought of the white-hot natural flame of human pride in achievement. This is simple to understand, as climbing into a pulpit is distinctly easier than climbing to the top of a profession.

Anyhow all young Stigginses are taught that life is a low-gear sort of effort, and that the more inconvenient one's religious beliefs prove, the more sacred they are. Until quite recently the Stigginses frowned on dancing, frowned on singing, ranked Sacred Music as the highest form of sound (especially when played on an American organ), selected particular books as the only ones suitable for Sunday reading, and generally exercised a low-brow literary censorship; they prohibited Sunday games for their flocks, condemned bands and swings in public parks, kept picture galleries and even museums closed on Sundays, and even still bitterly oppose the opening of cinemas on Sundays.

With what object is all this done? Just to show generally that social life is something to be smudged, demeaned, degraded and restricted: this earth is but a vale of tears—heaven is our home. Things that are right and proper on the first six days of the week become to the Stigginses quite wrong and improper on the seventh. Surf-bathing on the Saturday half-holiday may be more or less harmless, but on Sundays—and especially during the hours for Worship—it is wicked and sinful. Mixed bathing is always and at all times looked upon with a cold glint of suspicion in the eye of the Stigginses, for they are incorrigibly dirty-minded. They cannot observe young men and women bathing together and gathering up health and vitality sunning themselves on the beaches, without seeing evil where none exists.

That is why the Stigginses are so dangerous when they turn towards the banning of books and plays. The ordinary intelligent public, aided by the ordinary police, are perfectly capable of putting down real cases of obscenity and immorality—in print and on the stage. Human beings enraged and unbalanced by that morbid growth termed The Nonconformist Conscience, are quite unqualified to act as impartial censors. In their opinion any book which doubts the authenticity of the Gospels should be banned, and the writer permanently prevented from expressing

his Unbelief. As a Man of God every Rev. Stiggins claims to know exactly what the Dear Lord desires. They are God's megaphones, proclaiming the way of salvation and urging humanity to flee from the wrath to come.

But always they are All Things to All Men—that is, to men of means: otherwise how could their conventicles be erected? And it is such a little they want! Why should churches be made beautiful? Theirs certainly are not. Their chapels are as stark and awkward and ungainly as the people who worship in them. They never ask for Money, which they term filthy lucre: all they want is Funds—Memorial Funds, Missionary Funds, Stipend Funds and so forth. Pew rents are not charged in chapels: all the seats in the House of God must be free; but every seat may be numbered, and neat little envelopes about two-inches square, and bearing the same numbers are placed on the hymn-book racks every Sunday by the deacons, and in them the flock puts its voluntary contributions.

If the Stigginses confined themselves to worshipping in their own barns, their presence in a free community would not matter very much—in the long slow course of Evolution the Unfit do become eliminated; and nobody objects to the Stigginses expounding The Word for their own benefit at their own gatherings. What one objects to is that these gatherings desire to impose their habits on the ordinary sane members of society. For example, as a family the Stigginses are heavy tea-drinkers; they drink strong, hot, sweet tea at all hours of the day, especially at gatherings. But if an ordinary man prefers a glass of cold clean wholesome malted ale, the Stigginses want to stop him having it, pour down his throat their tannin-decoctions or let him go thirsty.

One cannot help wondering, if heaven is their home, why they don't hurry up and go there, instead of getting themselves or members of their faithful flock, elected on Borough Councils and other mundane bodies. One cannot help suspecting that this is done not so much for the purpose of improving the sanitary system of the community as for the purpose of blocking up the channels of Freethought and free speech, and above all for the purpose of stopping progress in spreading wholesome and cheap means of enjoyment for the people. Of course, once the public demand for some particular benefit becomes sufficiently strong and insistent—for example, the demand for Sunday cinemas, bands in the parks, development of sport, abolition of child-labour, decrease in working hours and increase of holidays, then immediately the Stigginses somersault into the Front Line, waving banners and holding processions in favour of these very things, claiming to have believed in them all along—as soon as the People were ready to receive them and use them for their own benefit and for the glory of God.

All this, of course, is very exasperating at times, but Freethinkers to-day are having the joy of seeing that their long and hard fight for a rational Sunday is being crowned with success, and further victories will certainly come even in the course of our comparatively short lives. Everywhere there is really less and less interference with happy healthy natural human pleasures. If we Freethinkers are still in a big minority, what does it matter? Ecclesiastical authority has been definitely undermined, and the power and prestige of priestcraft have been definitely reduced, and the community in time will learn to whom it owes its liberty and its happiness—to the Freethinkers of the Past, the Present and the Future.

## The Black Pope and His Brethren.

(Concluded from page 77.)

SOME historians assume that the artfulness and duplicity which have made Jesuitry synonymous with everything evil were later departures from the designs of Ignatius Loyola himself. His successors, Lainez and Salmeron, are thought to have introduced the perfidies and other repugnant features of the Company which made honest men recoil from contact with so equivocal a fraternity. It is true that Lainez enlarged the Constitutions and reduced Loyola's principles to a systematized plan. But these later developments were all in embryo in Loyola's original scheme. And although Lainez may have strengthened its secular character, especially in its secret intermeddling in State affairs, these were lying latent in the polity contemplated by the Founder.

At first the Pope restricted the membership of the Society to sixty. A few able, if unscrupulous men, might work wonders. The Papal limitation, however, was withdrawn in 1543, and although adherents then became numerous, those in authority remained numerically small. These last, who were the missionaries of the Order, were directed to pursue their calling in Italy, or elsewhere, as the General of the Company—the Black Pope—decreed.

The headquarters of the Society were centred in Rome, and from that City Ignatius directed the movements of his myrmidons in other lands. Their pliancy was applauded and their unresting and devious activities approved. Monkish ignorance, and even asceticism, Ignatius now regarded with contemptuous disdain. Turveydrop himself never evinced a greater appreciation of polish and deportment as essentials in social intercourse than the shrewd Ignatius. Not princesses only, but powerful princes themselves could be captivated by judicious flattery and cleverly simulated admiration. "Prudence of an exquisite quality," declared the General, "combined with average sanctity, is more valuable than eminent sanctity and less prudence." Pious nonentities were of little use to Loyola. The Jesuits needed men "less marked by pure goodness than by firmness of character and ability in the conduct of affairs, since men who are not apt for public business do not suit the requirements of the Company."

However repugnant they might appear to the moral sense, any means might be employed to counteract the influences of the detested Reformation. The chosen motto of the Jesuits, *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* (Unto the greater glory of God) might mean anything. For, to add to divine glory it seems justifiable to adopt dubious means. The tactful Jesuit father must make concessions to the frailties of humankind. This above all. He must secure neophytes of sound intellect, agreeable manners and prepossessing appearance as these were most likely to increase the influence of the Order. And when confessing nervous penitents the fathers must appear like "good fishers of souls, passing over many things in silence as though these had not been observed, until the time came when the will was gained, and the character could be directed as they thought best." In his *Renaissance in Italy*, Addington Symonds thus summarises the position. "The end in view," he writes, "was to serve the Church by penetrating European society, taking possession of its leaders in rank and hereditary influence, directing education, assuming the control of the confessional, and preaching the faith in forms adapted to the foibles and fancies of the age."

Anything taught by the Church, even if it is opposed to the evidence of the senses must be accepted with avidity. For, it was said, nothing could be com-

pared with the peril of Europe blindly rushing to ruin in this world with eternal damnation in the next. Yet this catastrophe might be averted if the Jesuit Order proved successful in restoring errant souls to the bosom of Mother Church. That Loyola sincerely believed these things there is no reason to doubt, and he regarded corrupt practices as perfectly justifiable when, in preserving sinners from heresy and endless suffering, the Jesuits also promoted the greater glory of God.

While Ignatius resided in Rome the Jesuits flourished. The Company's emissaries were active in every European land. The Inquisition had failed in its fight with heresy, while the milder and more insinuating policy of the Jesuits was more successful. Popes became eager to confer privileges on a fraternity so serviceable to orthodoxy. Loyola played the courtier with matchless ease and won golden opinions from princes and prelates. And, with an eye on endowments, both the Duke of Bavaria and the Spanish King were persuaded to suppress convents whose revenues were then divided between the Company of Jesus and the Crown.

At that time the most civilized land in Europe, Italy was soon dominated by the Jesuits. In other countries they were viewed with suspicion. In Spain, Charles V. considered they were too deeply pledged to the Papacy, while the reigning Dominicans regarded them as rivals. With the conversion of the Duke of Gandia, however, their triumph was assured. The Jesuits obtained control of the Universities and their softer and more insinuating methods soon estranged the people from the harsh heresy-hunting Dominicans. Portugal was easily seduced by the Jesuits, and in 1541, a leading Father, Rodriguez, became the real ruler of the country. The French were less amenable to the wiles of Jesuitry, and despite the later erection of Jesuit Colleges at Donai, Reims and St. Omer, the Order never obtained a firm footing in France. They were not permanently successful in the Netherlands although they were the authors of much mischief, while those parts of Germany that are now Catholic largely owe their Romanism to the activities of the Jesuits during the counter Reformation.

When princes were willing to promote Jesuit priests to lucrative positions in the Church, Ignatius protested that this would deprive the Society of its most useful members. Moreover, their vows of poverty and obedience precluded their acceptance of high office in the Church. As a result it was declared a mortal sin for a Jesuit to occupy a position of opulence and honour. All the world might marvel at the self-sacrificing character of these holy men. Here at last was a Society whose brethren had risen above worldly rewards, whose lives were dedicated in poverty and obscurity to the service of the true faith.

Every member of the Order remained at the mercy of the autocracy established by Loyola, and the administration of the Society has been reserved to comparatively few hands. Complete subjection to the will of the General has ever been inculcated as a cardinal virtue. For, "In our Company the person who commands must never be regarded in his own capacity, but as Jesus Christ in him."

From the lowest to the highest every candidate surrendered his property when entering the Order. Moreover, he might be dismissed by the General without any compensation whatever. All the machinery still remains in the hands of the General whose election is for life. But even he was subject to espionage, for five spies were sworn to see that the Superior never departed from his vows. In framing his rules Ignatius displayed his anxiety that the constitution of the Society should remain unchanged.

As one might have surmised, the vow of poverty proved illusory. Even in its founder's lifetime the Society of Jesus acquired considerable wealth, while later it owned very extensive estates in Europe. But, while no individual Jesuit could *own* property, he enjoyed all the advantages of its use, and was consequently ever secure from real want.

The evils of the confessional as conducted by the ordinary Catholic priest are manifest enough. Yet, great as they are they sink into insignificance when compared with the terrible evils wrought by Jesuit confessors. These men found every excuse conceivable for crimes of the deepest dye when the social eminence of the penitent required their charity or their casuistry. Blaise Pascal, an austere thinker, was appalled when he discovered the turpitude of Jesuit moral theology, and in his famous *Provincial Letters* most eloquently denounces both the Fathers and their system. W. F. Cobb justly states that: "Since Pascal's tremendous indictment of ecclesiastical ethics, that science has passed more and more into lay hands, and Pascal may be said to have done for morality what Luther did for religion—freed it from the perversity of experts and made it the business of everybody."

Nor can one seriously question the judgment of the historian of the Renaissance when he declares that: "It is contrary to good government that a sacerdotal class, by means of confession and direction should be placed in a position of deciding upon conduct. It is revolting to human dignity that this same class, without national allegiance and without domestic ties, should have the opportunity of infecting young minds by unhealthy questions and dishonourable suggestions. But this wrong which is inherent in the modern Catholic system, becomes an atrocity, when it is employed as the Jesuits employed it, as an instrument for moulding and controlling society in their own interest."

T. F. PALMER.

#### THE ASCETIC AND SEX.

The average religious person is apt to imagine that things which are hidden do not exist, and whenever there is publicity given to immorality or to what the world considers sin, then the religious person is thankful that such conditions are rare and abnormal.

Basil Tozer's *Story of a Terrible Life* (Laurie, 3s. 6d.) shows us the other side of the story, for Messaline the notorious procuress openly told Tozer all he wanted to know about the White Slave Traffic.

The book is an indictment of society, and as one might expect the clergy and religious persons come in for their fair share of exposure.

Messaline stated definitely that her experience of clients all over Europe and her wide reading proved that the most immoral men have always been the ascetics.

"Why is it," she once said, "that celibate priests express such intense indignation if woman's fashions in dress lead to their clothing themselves more scantily than formerly? Simply because the sight of women so clothed does sexually excite men who all their lives have largely abstained from sexual intercourse, and consequently they believe that every man who looks upon women dressed like that must feel just as they do."

Much that Messaline told Mr. Tozer ought to be printed for the benefit of young and middle aged persons, but it cannot be until "our law-makers are less hypocritical."

The revelations about the workings of the White Slave Traffic and the manner in which girls are smuggled and kidnapped will make the comfortable armchair philosopher sit up and wonder whether after all, "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world."

C.H.L.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Bethnal Green Public Library, Cambridge Road, E.2) : 8.0, Tuesday, February 7. Mr. R. H. Rosetti (General Secretary N.S.S.)—"Spiritualism v. Common Sense."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, near Clapham North Station) : 7.30, Mr. A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A.,—"Religious Reaction and Freethinkers' Responsibilities."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road) : 7.0, Dr. C. W. Saleely—"The Economic Future of Music, Machine and Mind."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4) : 8.0, Monday, February 6, Mr. P. Goldman—"Freethought and Civics."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, W.C.) : 7.0, Tuesday, January 7, Dr. Prynns Hopkins—"Has the World's Next Religion been Born in Russia?"

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.) : 7.0, F. A. Ridley and L. Ebury—"The Historicity of Jesus."

#### OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.0, Sunday, February 5, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.0, Messrs. Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tason and Wood. The *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature can be obtained during and after the meetings, of Mr. Dunn, outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

ASHINGTON AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S., Wednesday, February 8, Mr. J. O'Donnell—"The French Revolution."

IRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Price Street, Birkenhead, near Hamilton Square) : 7.0, E. S. Wollen (Liverpool)—"Christianity and Intolerance."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools) : 7.0, Mr. A. D. McLaren (London)—"Does Civilization Need Religion?"

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street) : Bradford : 6.30, Members' Meeting. 7.30, Mr. Townend—"Secularism and War Prevention."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : 2.30, Jack Pickford—"Religion as a Bar to Progress."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street) : 6.30, Mr. W. Reid—"Taxation of Land Values."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mr. Harry B. Lowerison—"Bobbie Burns, Rebel."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street) : 7.0, R. H. Rosetti (General Secretary N.S.S.)—"Humanity, Religion and Science." Current *Freethinkers* on Sale and Mr. Cohen's Record.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) Freethinkers' First Annual Dinner, Saturday, February 18, at 7.0, St. George's Restaurant, Redcross Street (off South Castle Street), Liverpool. Tickets 5s. 6d each. Apply on or before February 13, to S. R. A. Ready, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool. Application should state if Vegetarian.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester) : Mr. George Whitehead (London)—3.0, "The Life and Fights of Charles Bradlaugh." 6.30, "What is or should be the Purpose of Life."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus) : 7.0, Mr. A. E. Knowles—"My Gain from Unbelief."

RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, Glasgow District (Grand Hall, Central Hall, 25 Bath Street) : 3.0, Dr. D. Stark Murray, B.Sc., M.B., Ch.B. (Author of "Man's Microbic Enemies.")—"Disease—Its Cause and Implications."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Central Hall) : 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Science and God."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street) : 7.15, A Lecture. Speakers' Class and Study Circle every Monday evening at 8.0, at the I.L.P. Rooms, Foyles Street.

# THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President:

**CHAPMAN COHEN.**

Secretary:

R. H. ROSETTI, 62 Farringdon Street, London.

E.C.4.

## PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

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