

THE FREETHINKER

▪ EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN ▪

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Views and Opinions.

Again—The Bible.

THERE are two conditions that seriously undermine the value of any writer or speaker. One is to address one's probable audience with a strong desire to please; the other is to be dominated by a fear of giving offence. I hardly know which is the worse of the two, but in most cases I fancy the first will be found to be the more demoralizing; still, both of them lead inevitably to either a suppression of at least some part of what one believes to be true, or to saying openly or by implication what one knows to be false. No writer or speaker who works under such conditions can do himself justice, or his audience all the good he might do them. If he removes one falsity he introduces another, and the falsity he introduces is the more strongly entrenched because it is established in the name of common sense.

Both these dangers are present when laymen of standing, and of a certain type, are dealing with the Bible. The evil is not so great in the case of a parson, because, to a very considerable extent the more intelligent section of the public is on its guard. The parson is obviously a special pleader, and his apologies are accepted with considerable qualifications. The only surprise expressed in the case of the parson is that he should say anything at all reasonably modern and sensible where the Bible is concerned. That is why the newspapers find it "good copy" when a clergyman of any standing proclaims that the Bible story of creation, or of the origin of languages, or of the story of the virgin birth, or of the resurrection is not true. Every educated and intelligent layman knows these stories are not true, but he is a little surprised when a parson both knows and admits as much. Hence the news value of the discovery.

In the case of the average journalist or man of science who possesses what one may call a Bible complex, the case is different, and the harm done is much greater. The plan generally adopted takes the

form of accompanying every criticism of the Bible with a qualification that robs it of nearly all value. The Bible is not good enough to retain as a teacher of morals, or of science, or of history, or even of religion, but it is a book we must still treasure, and to which we must still give a foremost place in our consideration. The net result is that this class of writer is able to pose with complete safety as a fearless and advanced thinker. He gets all the credit of a reformer without running the risks usually faced in attaining such a position, while the bibliolator is still able to treasure his precious book, and to perpetuate his old superstitions under a veneer of rationalism.

* * *

The Huxleys and the Bible.

Some of my readers may remember that when the Education Act of 1870 was passed, Professor T. H. Huxley was one of the candidates for the first elected School Board. Just before the election Huxley sent to the editor of the *Contemporary Review* an article dealing with the School Boards. In the ordinary way the article would not have appeared until after the election, but the editor took from the article some passages in which the advocates of Secular Education were rebuked and a very fallacious, and even untrue picture of the Bible and its value drawn, and circulated them with the obvious desire to prejudice votes in favour of retaining the Bible in the schools. This kind of thing appears to be inherited by Professor Julian Huxley, who repeats the essentials of his grandfathers' article—considerably more muddled in its thought—in the *News-Chronicle* for November 14. Professor Julian Huxley agrees with Lord Raglan, with whom this present discussion commenced, that a great deal of the Bible is unfit for children to read, that Paul held a low and even a degrading view of marriage, that the "unintelligent" use of the Bible in religious teaching is "fraught with the gravest possibilities of harm"; that it is as bad to set up a book for worship as it is to worship graven images, and that the teaching which children receive stands in the way of their acquiring sound knowledge as they grow up. All this is so well understood that, unless the proper moral is drawn, it hardly needed saying, save to rank bibliolators.

But true to his grandfather's example Professor Huxley finds that "some of the Books of the Bible are magnificent literature," they assert the idea that "change is the inevitable fate of all human ideas and institutions"; the Bible can be used to illustrate the fact of "religious and moral progress," and gives us "for a space of more than three thousand years," a picture of such a development. With the exception of championing the literal inspiration and scientific infallibility of the Bible, Professor Huxley has managed to compress into a few sentences all the more fallacious, and even the more stupid, claims set up for the Bible. It will not offend the old-fashioned re-

ligionist very much. He will say that it is as much as one can expect from a man who is not a *true* Christian, and even *he* is not able to deny the extreme, the paramount value of the Bible. And it will please what is called the advanced believer because he will be able to congratulate himself on holding quite an enlightened opinion about the Bible, without running the risk of seriously offending anyone. Professor Julian Huxley is in the position of an arbitrator who awards equal damages to both sides, or who always backs both Oxford and Cambridge in the boat-race—with equal stakes. Some people might call this running with the hare and keeping in with the hounds. I daresay Professor Huxley calls it impartiality.

* * *

A Mixed Medley.

We may, I think, put on one side the claim to perpetuate the teaching of the Bible to children on the ground that it contains "magnificent literature," seeing that there are not five per cent of believers who read it for that reason, and also that if other "sacred" books went through the same process that the Bible has gone through, they also would be magnificent literature. To that we may add that the only justification for boosting the Bible under existing conditions would be if no other magnificent literature were available. But English literature is hardly so poor as to be dependent upon the Bible. Nor can I seriously entertain the idea that Professor Huxley believes that the Bible as it stands contains a record of the religious and moral development of a people for more than three thousand years. He probably means that it contains a record which pretends to cover three thousand years of a people's history, and that is a very different thing. Perhaps we had better take the claim to perpetuate the Bible on the grounds of magnificent literature as an example of writing under fear of giving offence, and the three thousand years' record as an example of writing to please. In both cases, as I have said, very bad habits.

Neither side can find fault wholly with Professor Huxley—he has really lacked both sides—because he does lay down a quite sound principle concerning the Bible, although he ignores it altogether afterwards. He says:—

It is not the mere fact of reading a book that matters, but how you read it—what background you bring to it, what is the framework of ideas in which your teachers and elders set it for you.

Now I endorse that thoroughly. I do so first because I do not believe in this extreme care about what children should read. So far as possible, children should always have books around them, the very best of books. And having these books around them they should be left free to select which books they will read during their leisure-time. Mark, I mean by the best books, not merely what are called good books, but the best writings of the world. There are very few bad books for children, but there may be many such, *when the unclean minds of their elders* have labelled certain books as bad, religiously bad, or morally bad, and by their prohibitions and verbal innuendos and sly looks, made them bad for both children and adults. Young girls and young boys have really no taste for indecent books until their elders have created the indecency for them. At any rate such exceptions as there may be to this rule come under the head of pathology, and can no more be taken as rules for other children than the restraint placed upon a homicidal maniac can be taken as applicable to normal men and women.

But the passage I have cited with, I repeat, very warm approval, completely answers, and annihilates,

Professor Huxley's plea for the Bible. What is the present background of the Bible? It is the fetish book of the established religion. It is used in courts of law as a method of securing that Christians shall be induced to speak the truth. It is cited on all hands as the supreme authority in matters of religion, and thousands of parsons are engaged in impressing its value upon the people. There are millions of people in this country who still accept it as infallibly true, even though they may indulge in conflicting interpretations to make it appear so. Thousands of parents forbid their children to disbelieve the Bible, and there are wealthy organizations which spend their money on placing the "Holy" Bible in as many hands as will take it. It is accepted by millions, without the least knowledge of its history, or origin, or actual worth as the one authority that matters in religion and morals, and these millions are taught and believe that religion is the most important thing in life.

Now that is the background, the framework of ideas in which the Bible is handled and read. Assume that the Bible is all that Professor Huxley says it is, does he seriously imagine that it is the kind of background that will enable the rising generation to form a fair, a just, even an intelligent idea of the Bible as literature, as a lesson in the evolution of morals and religion, or as giving a lesson in the truth that change is the inevitable fate of human ideas and institutions? Professor Huxley may "rationalize" his own unwillingness to wholeheartedly attack the *religious Bible*, but he will hardly get anyone who realizes the situation to follow him in that rationalization. The Bible can only be studied as offering a lesson in the history of human *illusion*—for that is really what Professor Huxley ought to mean, unless he is playing fast and loose with terms—when it ceases to be believed in as the foundation of an established religion. The Freethinker, the outspoken Freethinker, the Freethinker who is not living in fear lest his Christian neighbours find out that he is not religious, is not to blame that the Bible cannot be placed in the hands of children, as Grimm's fairy tales, or the religious stories of Greece or Rome, or Egypt are placed. It is the Christian who is to blame for this. It is he who insists that the Bible is not as other books, that the people who give up the Bible as a religious book suffer for doing so; and until that idea is killed, until the Bible is disestablished, it must be treated as a book apart from other books. It is the Christian who has so decided; the Freethinker is only pressing home the consequences of that decision.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Your gods are as avaricious as old age could make them. Every religion that starts up, beyond Persia, takes only as much truth to stand upon as will raise her safely to men's purses. The Egyptian priests have extensive lands; Attica is poorer in soil: there is requisite to have oracles too and sacrifices, gold and cattle, oil and milk, wax and honey. If this religion should be succeeded by another, as it must be when the fraud is laid open, the populace will follow those enthusiasts who threw down the images of the gods, and will help them the next morning to raise up others in the same places, or even those elsewhere, differing but in name. Pride will at first put on the garment of Humility; and soon afterward will Humility raise up her sordid baldness out of Pride's. Change in rituals is made purely for lucre, and under the name of Reformation comes only to break up a virgin turf or to pierce into an unexplored mine. Religion with you began in veneration for those who delivered you from robbers; it will end in the discovery that your temples have ever been the dens of them.—Landor, "Cyrus to Xenophon."

Those Empty City Churches.

"By the irresistible maturing of the general mind, the Christian traditions have lost their hold."—*Emerson*.

"The brains are out of Christianity, which is now living on its inherited spiritual capital."—*G. W. Foote*.

THERE are forty-seven derelict churches in the heart of the City of London, and these lonesome places of worship have been in much the same condition for several generations. Over sixty years ago, Charles Dickens wrote of the "forgotten old churches in the City," and added that they resembled "the tombs of the old citizens who lie beneath them." Three generations later a proposal is to be made to the State Church Assembly to close these churches on Sundays, and the bare suggestion has roused the ire of some of the faithful sons and daughters of the Established Church.

The fact is that these forty-seven churches have long outlasted their sphere of usefulness, and have become derelict. The residential population of the City has not only shrunk but has altered in character. It is now composed of Jewish people, who do not attend any Christian places of worship, and caretakers and storekeepers, whose duties prevent them from leaving their work on Sundays. These forty-seven churches no longer matter, except to the paid priests, paid choirs, and paid vergers, who actually play the part of the absent congregations.

The situation is one of complete irony. The endowments of these City churches, producing about £50,000 yearly, were provided to fill the needs of a resident population which no longer exists in the City. For over sixty years there have been no congregations, except a few caretakers or their wives. An effort was made on a recent Sunday by the Rev. H. M. Sanders, Vicar of All Hallows-in-the-Wall, to attract a larger congregation by inviting questions and then giving answers from the pulpit. He says, "my effort was a total failure. There were only four adults in the congregation, and I do not know what can be done to bring about an interest in these services in the City." A London newspaper's representative found congregations totalling ten persons in three churches.

To close forty-seven churches on Sunday is tantamount to shutting them up altogether. Probably, this is the actual intention of the State Church Authorities, and the suggested Sabbath closing is but our old friend, the thin edge of the wedge. Even ecclesiastics are not entirely indifferent to financial considerations. Ground values have quadrupled in the City during the past few years, and the site-values of these derelict churches must now be worth four or five millions of money, to say nothing of the actual increase in the ancient endowments themselves. To realize these properties in the immediate future would not only be excellent business, but would remove the objections likely to be raised by the continued ministrations of well-paid priests to non-existent congregations in deserted churches.

That one religious body out of a hundred should possess so much property, running into millions of money, in the heart of the City of London, is a state of affairs that few people realize. As may be seen, the City no longer needs the ministrations of these half-hundred priests. The clergy have control of these vast revenues, and, willy nilly, will use them to their own advantage. If all the City churches were sold to-morrow morning the ecclesiastical authorities would use the millions of money raised to perpetuate Priestcraft elsewhere. By selling on a rising market the ecclesiastics would be doing big business, worthy of Lombard Street itself.

This question of the City's unwanted churches is not a paltry issue. It will serve to focus attention on

the purely business side of religion, a matter upon which priests are unusually modest and retiring. These City churches belong to the so-called Church of England, an ecclesiastical body which possesses property to the value of at least £100,000,000. The matter of the derelict churches of London is not an isolated example of clerical chicanery. There is so much waste of man-power in this Church of England, that it may truly be said to be the church of priests rather than that of people. It possesses 300 bishops with four-figure salaries, and 16,000 clergy. There are no less than 1,877 parishes with a population under 200; and 4,802 with a population under 500. The vast resources of this particular church are looked after by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty. Their huge revenues, equal to that of a small nation, are derived from a ten-per-cent tax on agriculture, coal royalties, ground-rents, and the income from vast areas all over England. This present church is Protestant, but it still draws from ancient endowments originally left to its Roman Catholic predecessors many centuries ago.

This Anglican Church is but one of a hundred sects, but it has Parliamentary sanction and support. Its bishops sit in the House of Lords, and usurp a position in the body politic utterly out of all proportion to their merits. By virtue of an ancient constitution they ape the manners of the Church Militant of the Ages of Faith. Yet this Church remains an affront to the spirit of Democracy, in so far as it arbitrarily sorts the world into "sheep" and "goats," "believers" and "unbelievers"; and claims for its paid priests that they are a sacred caste apart. Unless a man accepts them and their preposterous dogmas, without doubt he shall be damned everlastingly.

What the man in the street does not realize is that these thousands of priests are entrenched behind mountains of money-bags, and, so long as their huge revenues exist, so long will men tumble over one another to join the sorriest of all the professions. In money, and money alone, lies the power of the clergy. Take that gold away and they are just men, very ordinary men. What is most important to understand is the complete stranglehold the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Queen Anne's Bounty have got upon a basic industry such as agriculture, in the shape of tithe, and other sources of national property. It is a principle bad in essence to ask people to pay, and to pay heavily in the shape of tithes and church rates, for the cost of priestly services no longer required, or even desired.

It is worth remembering that this so-called Church of England, which no longer represents the nation, is a creation of Parliament, and that it can be disestablished by its creator. Indeed, the process has begun. During my lifetime the Irish Church and the Welsh Church, both daughters of the English State Church, have been disestablished. Whilst it is a truism that all things are possible by constitutional means, the present time is not inopportune to remind younger Democrats that disestablishment without disendowment is but to scotch the ecclesiastical snake, and not to kill it. To remove State support from a particular reactionary religious body, and to leave it with a hundred millions of money, and the power of collecting tithe and church rates, is simply to play into the hands of the priests. It is the kind of advice to be expected only of the enemies of Democracy.

That is a matter which should not be overlooked. Our Young Democrats must clean out the Augean stable of Clericalism, and they must not relax their efforts until this consummation is achieved. For Priestcraft is the worst enemy of Democracy, the arch-enemy of modern civilization.

MIMNERMUS.

The Story of the Unitarians.

UNITARIANISM has been termed a feather-bed to catch a falling Christian. Logically, indeed, those who have so far abandoned orthodox Christianity as to reject the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the triune divinity, and the deity of Christ, as well as the miracles recorded in Holy Writ, should take the further step towards untrammelled Freethought. Still, despite this hesitation, the Unitarian Church has always included among its adherents a large number of distinguished and good-living men.

The oneness of God is the fundamental tenet of Unitarianism. In ancient Greece and Rome, as well as with the Arian heretics of later Christendom, the concept of monotheism had evolved. This idea re-appeared with the Renaissance when thoughtful men became sceptical concerning the Trinitarian mystery of Roman Catholicism.

Modern Unitarians are therefore the heirs of a great tradition, from which neither Paine nor Voltaire ever departed. One of the earliest martyrs of Unitarianism was the celebrated physician, Michael Servetus, who was slowly burnt to death in Calvinist Geneva in 1553. As a result of the missionary activities of the two Socini and other teachers, the doctrine of the divine unity became widely accepted on the Continent. It made marked headway in Italy and Poland, only to be extirpated by the persecution and martyrdom which disgraced the Catholic re-action. In Transylvania, however, it firmly entrenched itself, and it even now numbers many adherents. In 1914 there were over 100 Unitarian congregations with a bishop at their head in that region.

In England, during the reign of Edward VI., John Aslton, or Assheton, was accused before Archbishop Crammer with the enormity of denying the divinity and atonement of Jesus, when he recanted his heresy and his life was spared. During the early Stuart period, however, the Socinian heresy, as it was termed, made many converts, and Bartholomew Legate's name survives as that of the last of a long line of Smithfield martyrs. It was in the year of grace, 1612, that Legate was roasted alive for daring to assert that Christ was a mere man and not a god. Still, in the closing decades of the seventeenth century, sufficient progress had been made to permit the publication of those Unitarian tracts of which Thomas Firmin was the principal inspirer, while in the eighteenth century the scientific humanist and philosopher, Joseph Priestley, became the leading representative of Unitarian thought.

The institution of Unitarian chapels was foreshadowed in 1773, when Theophilus Lindsey resigned his living at Catterick, and in the succeeding year the first conventicle was opened in Essex Street, Strand, on the site of, or near, the well-known Essex Hall.

Latter-day Unitarians derive their descent from the Presbyterian ministers who subsequently to the Stuart Restoration were driven from the Anglican Establishment by the Act of Uniformity of 1662. So elastic were the opinions of these dissenters that the trust-deeds of their meeting-houses seldom prescribed any rigid doctrines. At last, in 1813, the cruel penal laws under which the Unitarians suffered were repealed, and their principles were more freely enunciated. Then, in 1825, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association was founded. Even then no special confession of faith was formulated or, for that matter, at any time since. To their honour and their glory so far as any form of theological frailty ever permits, the most enlightened Unitarians have consistently upheld

the right, and even the duty, of private judgment undeterred by the fear of theological tests.

In these circumstances Unitarians differ widely in outlook. The more conservative section may be regarded as monotheistic Christians—who mainly adhere to the doctrines of the early members of the cult. Pioneer Unitarians, as a rule, based their belief upon the Bible which, when correctly interpreted, was thought to testify to the divinity of Jahveh alone, Jesus being subordinated to the position of an emanation of the Lord God, the first created being superior to the angels, or as a splendid human exemplar who became both Christ and Lord through his resurrection from the grave. The verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures they never acknowledged, although they originally accepted numerous Biblical legends now largely, if not completely, abandoned. And in addition to their theism the Unitarians were sentimentally inclined to an unbounded reverence for Christ.

In the early nineteenth century Channing was the protagonist of the orthodox section, but the true light of Unitarianism at that time was Theodore Parker of Boston. This fearless thinker completely discarded the supposed supernatural powers of Jesus and was branded as an infidel by his more orthodox brethren. In his youth, James Martineau, the brother of the eminent Freethought reformer, Harriet Martineau, sternly assailed Parker's advanced views. For many years the venerated leader of English Unitarianism, Dr. Martineau, in later life, embraced Parker's opinions. In his scholarly work, *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, Martineau went even further than Parker in his criticism of the character and teachings of Christ.

During recent decades the discoveries of evolutionary science have been welcomed by the cream of the Unitarians. They now unhesitatingly reject the legend of man's fall, the atonement and everlasting damnation. Some, as the writer knows from experience, when driven to define their terms turn out to be little more than hazy, if wistful, Agnostics. But the vast majority of the persuasion still incline towards pure theism, with Christ, perhaps, as its loftiest exponent.

Lancashire is the stronghold of English Unitarianism. Boston continues its chief centre in the States, where it was long the most numerous sect. In Northern Ireland various earlier Presbyterian foundations have passed into their hands.

A scholarly Unitarian, Dr. J. E. Carpenter, claims that: "As in England, so also in America, Unitarianism has been an important influence in religious thought. It represents a mode of approach to the great problems of human life and destiny in which it is closely allied to the time spirit. Its looseness of denominational organization makes its advance, over so great an area, slow and hesitating, but its churches steadily increase. . . . The Divinity School at Harvard University gradually broadened out under the administration of Chas. W. Eliot (1869-1909) into a school of scientific theology and independent research." Whether the Unitarians are increasing in number or declining in membership seems doubtful. Many originally Unitarian families such as that of Darwin have undoubtedly travelled further towards Freethought. On the whole, the Unitarian movement may perhaps be regarded as stationary.

Another leading exponent of the Unitarian Broad School, Dr. H. W. Crosskey, tells us that: "Science, with no uncertain voice, declares that the world was not made in six days; that the serpent went upon the ground long before man's appearance; that death came into the world before a sin was committed; that weeds are no sign of a ruined soil; that a flood of waters never covered all the earth at one time; that madness

is not caused by the entrance of ' devils ' into the soul." Again, while proclaiming his unflinching faith in a spiritual power pervading the Universe, Dr. Crosskey cites with approval the following passage from the great Freethinking scientist and philosopher, Humboldt: " Nature . . . is a unity in diversity of phenomena; a harmony, blending together all created things, however dissimilar in form and attributes. . . . The most important result of a rational inquiry into Nature is, therefore, to establish the unity and harmony of this stupendous mass of force and matter, to determine with impartial justice what is due to the discoveries of the past, and to those of the present. . . . Thus and thus alone is it permitted to man, while mindful of the high destiny of his race, to comprehend nature, to lift the veil that shrouds her phenomena, and, as it were, submit the results of observation to the test of reason and intellect."

Freedom of expression has never gone further within any religious body than among the Unitarians. Dr. Crosskey claims that every Unitarian, whether in the pulpit or the press, speaks for himself alone. Untrammelled by authority, the preacher who can hold a congregation, so long as he remains a theist, enjoys full liberty of utterance. There are no Articles and there is no dogmatic creed. That a cult so enlightened might be brought within the wider range of Freethought, pure and simple, is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

T. F. PALMER.

Rationalists and Religious Apologists.

FREETHINKERS who deny the possibility of formulating any sentient power, ethical, mathematical or otherwise, at the back of the Universe, are happily freed from the obligation, weighing heavily on the religious apologist, of reconciling a sea of opposing forces and conflicting testimonies. The effort to shift the religious base from superstition to Science leads to intellectual capers that make little appeal to what Surgeon Rear-Admiral C. M. Beadnell—writing in the *Literary Guide* for August last, on " Sir James Jean's New Outlook "—describes as " the man of common-sense." Professor Einstein, so we read in this article, " has facetiously termed " these scientific excursions into metaphysics as " extracting one incomprehensible out of another incomprehensible."

But however brilliant the performance, it is hard, very hard, to believe that the performers always believe in themselves, any more than in the case of the conjurer whose quickness of the ' and deceives the h'eye. In any case, it is no longer possible to palm off mental legerdemain under the keen scrutiny of erudite rationalism—such as we find in the works of the late Right Hon. J. M. Robertson—or of intellectual Freethought generally.

The majority of religious believers, whatever the religion, probably never experience the necessity of " apologizing " for anything in which they believe. It is with them a matter of mass-belief, which is commonest of all in matters of thought. When the practical aspects of life are in question quite different faculties are brought into play, and often display an acumen which is *deliberately* turned aside from religion.

But " the better educated, the more intellectual believer, such as Dean Inge or Bishop Barnes " is, as Mr. Chapman Cohen as pointed out, in quite a different position, and the following are some of the questions which sooner or later will have to be faced

by those apologists who are seeking in metaphysical subtleties a way of escape from the acknowledged crudities, contradictions and falsehoods of the religion which they continue to preach from their pulpits.

Where asks the Freethinker, can the line be drawn between " revealed " religion, and the religion which is the work of men's hands? Where, in short, does paganism end and religion begin, and the symbol supplant the idol? In what essential respect, for instance, does the Christian devotee whose worship calls for the material paraphernalia provided by many churches, differ from " the heathen," who, as the old hymn says, " in his blindness bows down to wood and stone?" In both cases much of the material used is the same.

In an article, " Freethinkers and Superhuman Sanctions,"¹ I drew attention to the *rapprochement* to Freethought shown by the Churchmen who desire to take up the cudgels in company with the adherents of other religions in order to present a united front against those who reject the claims of any of them to speak with the tongues of angels. The Christian apologist is therefore now faced with a new departure in the case of his own religion (which at one time was considered as exclusive of all the rest), and it remains to be seen how he will meet it. It is certainly one which is calculated, in so far as it touches tonsured heads, to make " each particular hair to stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine."

And, on the other hand, the Freethinker is left in doubt as to the exact point at which Freethought may be indulged in, not only with impunity, but in company with pillars of the Church.

MAUD SIMON.

¹ The *Freethinker*, May 7, 1933.

Crumbs for Christians.

" You cannot conceive the empire the clergy still wield over the masses of the foolish.—*Anatole France.*"

THE wide prevalence of that form of mental degradation called superstition is clearly indicated by a perusal of the daily and weekly Press, wherein is recorded with every circumstance of emphasis, religious proceedings, spiritual phenomena, Mumbo Jumbo, and what not, for the good of those who profess and call themselves Christians. I am saddened and disheartened to see displayed before my eyes such evidence of chicanery on the part of a Press whose service is perfect freedom, but is nevertheless determined to use its power to support priestcraft in its corruption of the minds of the gullible multitude. No occurrence is too fantastic, no event too improbable, no affair too incondite for publication, provided it be in the interests of revealed religion and the holy verities, but with a wilful perversity exceeding that of the mule in his time of perversity, no space is allotted to any subject which tends to bring into disrepute any form of established religion, on the principle, no doubt, that evil communications corrupt good manners.

The *Daily Telegraph*, in a well meant and pious effort to feed the spiritually hungry with good things, publishes each Saturday an article or sermon contributed by Dr. C. A. Alington, formerly headmaster of one of our mental mausoleums, now Dean of Durham. His erudite and instructive discourses range over a variety of sacred subjects such as, the efficacy of prayer, the mysterious beauty and wisdom concealed in the collect for the next day, the antithesis between the letter which killeth and the spirit which giveth life as drawn by St. Paul, and other soul-refreshing

matters tending to spiritual uplift, all of them inviting the query, *Cui bono?* And yet it must be admitted that such a waste of printer's ink has fascination for certain minds given to the study of theology, that nebulous subject, the pursuit of which has been compared with the efforts of a blind man to find, in a dark room, a black cat which is not there!

The activities of a body known as the Elin Four Square Gospel Alliance occupy a prominent position in our daily papers. They appear to be achieving results comparable to those claimed for the sacred grotto of Lourdes and the Holy Coat of Treves, which suggests that the Roman Confession must look to its laurels. Their method of salvation is that of baptism by immersion, which, as Ingersoll remarked, is to be commended when carried out with soap as an adjunct. I have before me an account of a recent gathering at the Crystal Palace of this remarkable Alliance and its passive dupes; the glad tidings are announced beneath the caption "Hysterical Scenes at Healing Service," and much space is occupied with a description of the orgy of prayer and hysteria, together with details of miraculous cures of the lame, the blind, the deaf and the cancerous, all effected by the prayerful advocacy of Pastor Jefferys and the laying on of his hands. The meeting concluded with the baptismal immersion of a large number of men and women—the simple, the bewildered, and the credulous—hypnotised into a state of emotional receptivity by this modern Tiresias. It is a saddening reflection on our boasted civilization, and compels those among us who have not renounced the faculty of thought to despair of the ultimate triumph of Reason.

Side by side with this startling news is the announcement that prayers are being offered for rain in several churches! Is it possible that the fundamental imbecility of mankind can be further extended? These bishops, priests, and congregations committed to their care are so devoid of a sense of humour in matters spiritual, that they fail to realize they are suggesting to their deity that he neglects his duty! A truly sobering reflection!

The daily crumbs for Christians, which are scattered with lavish profusion on the front pages of the *Times*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Daily Telegraph* in the form of biblical texts, are surely an indication that the gods are athirst for those orisons and supplications which are their prerogative, but the question which arouses my curiosity is, Who pays? I have not yet discovered that the Press allows its religious convictions to become involved with its financial profession of faith, and I therefore assume that the total of groats and guineas expended per annum in advertising the properties of the Bread of Life must be considerable. Providence appears to provide crumbs for its pious sparrows in a mysterious manner, and even in times of drought the Living Water always flows with crystal clarity in God's full river!

A little while ago there sailed from the port of London a small motor vessel named "Southern Cross," the sixth of that name to bear the glad tidings of great joy to the heathen of the South Seas. Prior to her departure she received the benediction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and surely no ship ever put out to sea under more favourable circumstances, but despite the blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost (not forgetting His Grace of Canterbury) this little ship, overwhelmed with incantatory gibberish, came to grief and was lost on an unsuspected isle in far-off seas, to whose inhabitants she was conveying the Bread of Heaven. It was not reported, so far as I know, that those hungry savages suffered undue hardships owing to that depri-

vation, but I feel sure that they will rejoice and blow the froth from the cup of sorrow, when they learn that another "Southern Cross" (Mark vii.), will soon be speeding towards their palm-fringed, coral shores, laden with manna for the refreshment of their souls, and a full complement of soothsayers who will spill the treasures of their minds before them.

The *Daily Telegraph* has been bemusing its pious readers of late with a series of articles under the delusive and insidious caption "The Truth of the Bible." To those who read those articles with an informed and disinterested mind, the falsity of the description becomes obvious, and "we are amused!" Nevertheless, the means justified the end, for many letters to the editor have been published expressing appreciation, and joyously acclaiming yet another victory over the impious! *Populus vult decipi: decipiatur.* Time, Tide, and Space are no obstacles to the dissemination of the beauties of revealed religion, for I have before me a copy of a journal which reaches me week by week from a land of which I preserve many memories; it is the *Auckland (N.Z.) Weekly News*, and the two excerpts from its pages which follow will bear out my contention relative to Time, etc. :—

The Attorney-General, Sir Thomas Inskip, speaking at a meeting of the Colonial and Continental Church Society at Westminster, let fall, *inter alia*, this gem of wisdom: "We have a great deal to be thankful for: we have a Royal Family unique in their influence and power of public service, and unique in the place they hold in the affections of their people. We have the tradition of a thousand years of settled government, but when all is said and done we have not fully discovered the strength and source of our stability if we do not recognize that it has been built up during the last three hundred years in which the nation has been trained in the study of, and obedience to, God's Word."

This fulgent pronouncement from the mouth of the Crown's principal law officer was considered worthy of transmission to the Antipodes, for has not the liquor of life the same savour to all Christians? The other crumb for Christians which was deemed worthy of cabling across the world comes from the mouth of our Mr. Baldwin:—

Speaking at a Primrose League gathering, Mr. Baldwin observed, "In the shattered years after the war they had seen their ancient Monarchy preserved when crowns had toppled over or had been flung down in half the ancient kingdoms of Europe. True to-day was the preservation of national morality by the connexion of State with a pure religion. They had seen what happened to countries when national morality failed. They knew the attacks made in certain quarters on revealed religion, and why they were being made, because until the beliefs of the people in revealed religion were sapped, undermined, and overthrown, there was no ground for that diabolical hate without which Communist triumph could not be achieved."

In the General Epistle of James, chapter 3 verse 8, will be found these appropriate words: "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

I will conclude this brief essay with one final crumb which I commend to Christians: it is the definition of war expressed by the learned author of *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, but it will serve equally as a definition of the Christian religion:—

The head of it is a rainbow and the face of it is flattery; its words are charius, and all its stories are false; its body is a shadow and its hands do knit spider's webs; it is an image and a noise.

F. G. COOPER.

Acid Drops.

The annual service for footballers was held at St. Paul's Church, Kingston. Football jerseys hung over the ends of the pews. Other adaptations of Revealed Religion to suit the occasion were made by the Rev. A. Wellesley Orr in his address. "Religion is virile and manly," he said. "I say to any man who says I am not a man because I preach religion that I am open to give him a sock on the jaw, which will make him count ten before he says it again." Dr. Orr explained that "sportsmanship was the spirit of God." "The sock on the jaw" is, we suppose the spirit of God making itself manifest.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* informs us that their Bishop Kirkby recently bewailed in the following terms:—

The time-honoured custom of a father and mother attending church every Sunday together with members of the family, is something we should all admire. Unfortunately the custom is not so regularly followed as in the past. People have told me many times that rather than sit in a stuffy church on Sundays, they prefer driving in their cars to the open spaces, and honouring God there. I have travelled much in the bush, and the so-called open spaces, and never have I seen one of these picnic-party worshippers bending their knees unless it was to light a fire to boil the billy. We are losers of much if we show a tendency to neglect our regular attendance at church. "We are losers of much," says the Bishop pensively. He is probably thinking of the Church Funds, for in their totals, "Oh what a fall is there, my countrymen!"

We are inclined to fancy that the Rev. A. E. Whitham is regarded as an "enfant terrible" by his brethren of the Methodist ministry. He said recently:—

I have often judged that a good deal of the so-called religious interest that gathered about our churches and schools in the last century, which interest we seem so completely to have lost in wide Northern districts, was not religious in the strict yet important sense of the word, but rather social. I am thinking of great churches and extensive premises in Lancashire and Yorkshire which are now empty shells, or with but a handful of people attending. . . . I am tempted to believe that a great part of the interest of those days in the Church was social, and the attraction largely sociability.

What Mr. Whitham says is equally true of the Churches to-day. One of the reasons why people left the churches, and are leaving the churches, is that their desire for sociability can be satisfied as well or better outside the Christian pens. The fact, however reveals how weak the religious ("in the strict yet important sense of the word") interest really is.

Mr. Whitham expresses himself further:—

I do sometimes feel rather sorry that the only times when the Christian Churches seem to be united or to thrust themselves forward for the attention of the world is when they are trying to stop something—Sunday games or cinemas, or excessive drinking or gambling.

There can, of course, be no objection to the straightforward advocacy of any line of action which implies the "stoppage" of something or other, as long as the stoppage is brought about with the consent of the person concerned, and the methods used are persuasive. The stoppage of Sunday Games or Cinemas, however, is not to be brought about by this method, but by the coercive power of the State, which is, of course, plain tyranny.

There are many things that we have been calling upon Christians for some time now to stop for the common good. We would like them to stop pretending that they have any special sources of information which are denied to non-Christians; to stop worshipping a being who cannot need it and shouldn't desire it; to stop thrusting their unverifiable beliefs into the minds of little children in the

public schools; to stop pretending they have special "spirituality" and to stop bothering about the fate of their "souls." There are many other things we require Christians to stop, but these are enough to be going on with.

The recent resignation of Lord Halifax from the English Church Union, and his appeal for unity in the Christian ranks—that is, the Anglo-Catholic ranks—is another indication that all is not well with God's Precious Church, that is, if it is God's Precious Church; for, of course, a considerable body of Christians are quite convinced that the only Church which can be so named is the Roman Catholic one. Anyway, some attempts are now being made to bring the Anglo-Catholic Congress Committee and the English Church Union together, so that they can strengthen each other both in finance and doctrine, or cash and true religion, whichever terms are preferred. But what a farce it all is! Christians have always wangled throughout history. The precious word "unity" never has had any meaning for them. Even the Roman Catholic Church has been split over and over again over mere words and many doctrines, and its unity is only apparent, and Lord Halifax is only baying to the moon.

The week's great deed (taken from the *News-Chronicle*):—

The Duchess of Rutland and her eldest daughter, who were accompanied by the Duke of Rutland, arrived at the wedding of Miss Laura Charteris and Lord Long of Wraxall without their gloves on. And it was a cold day, too.

Truly the world moves.

Messrs. Methuen are issuing a new *Life of Christ* by Vaughan Stock. This makes the numbers of Lives of Christ in all languages 2,347,651, and should do a little to make the Man Nobody Knows (*pace* Mr. Bruce Barton) a little better known than he is. We are sure Mr. Stock's biography is quite as good as any of the others, indeed it may contain a picture of Jesus from a new angle not found in the official biographies. It must be a great comfort to the Christian consciousness to realize how the British public are gasping for new lives of the Saviour, and how quickly and easily the want is satisfied. What a source of wealth Jesus has been to churches, publishers, authors and artists!

Theological brevities from *Punch*:—

COOLER DEVOTIONS.

"8.0—Shirt service, conducted by Dean Inge."—*South-Country Paper*.

"A learned biologist may be quite at sea with such a book as the Fourth Gospel of the Epistle to the Romans."—*West Indian Paper*.
But then so might many theologians.

SWEET THOUGHT FOR SINNERS.

"HELL BELOW . . .
Always comfortably cool."

Theatrical Poster.

Another Doctor of Divinity, this time hailing from St. John's Seminary, Womersley, near Guildford, finds value in the cursing psalms:—

The recitation of these psalms can be a salutary exercise for the Christian since they induce feelings of high fear, and suggest the offering of a fervent prayer lest he himself be a castaway.

The Roman Catholics know the value of injections of high fear. David himself could not have equalled the performance of the Rev. Fr. Pinnamonti, S.J., in *Hell Open to Christians*.

Someone sends us the *Manchester Irish News Echo*, a Catholic sheet with mental and moral enormities exud-

ing from almost every line. Speaking of the Irish Famine, nearly a hundred years ago, it is stated:—

God was not responsible for that famine—in fact there was no famine. It has been proved since then—from statistics of exports sent out of Ireland during that period—that it was a land of plenty. There was simply a failure of the potato crop.

God evidently had nothing to do with the potato crop. No self-respecting God would bother himself about spuds.

This frenzied friend of the Roman Catholic God proceeds:—

Take no heed, then, of these orange-box orators or false leaders. God never caused famines. The road is clear to the Irish, who follow and adhere to their own teachings and beliefs. Read and study St. Thomas Aquinas or the Pope's Encyclical. There never was such a thing in this world yet as over-population; as I have already explained, God provides for every child on this earth. It is ludicrous to hear people who profess to be learned trying to solve the unemployment problem by advocating birth-control and other ideas not fit for insertion in these columns. We intend to provide clean literature. We cannot write more on this subject, but we appeal to our people to keep clear of all these individuals who preach or advocate such filth. God still provides the loaves and the fishes.

It is clean and alert-minded people like this writer who are forbidden by the Roman Church to practise birth-control. Into the category he goes amidst hurrahs, as a good Roman Catholic, and his reproductive potentialities are seen to be hurrying on the reign of God on earth and confusion to his enemies. Yet there are some social reformers who can look upon such plain facts which threaten to paralyse any attempts at sane and ordered social progress, and still think they can afford to "leave religion alone."

From the *New York Truthseeker*:—

A month or two ago a Catholic priest in Ottawa, Ohio, offered prayer to his god "for rain and for the relief of mortals and animals from the excessive heat." Further West, the Hopi Indians put up the same petition to their fetich. The Catholic priest is Christian, the Hopi medicine-man pagan. In Lancaster, Pa., a Christian community, action was taken by the authorities on September 15 to suppress the practice of witchcraft, and two alleged practitioners were arrested. Dated on the 26th of the same month, a dispatch from Tanganyika, East Africa, related that two women of an isolated village, accused of witchcraft, were so badly mistreated by the other inhabitants that they died. There is but one religion, and its manifestations are as dark on Christian as on heathen ground.

One can always depend upon Quebec, that God-stricken province, to be there when an opportunity arises to show how truly religious is their sentiment. The City Council thought it possible that some of the Jews expelled from Germany might gravitate in their direction, so a resolution was quickly moved and approved that it was in the interest of the "two mother Christian races of this country to prevent the entry of non-Christian persons." We are always being told that Christians are quite liberal creatures nowadays and need not be attacked. But the real Christian, such as you meet in Roman-Catholic Quebec, is always definitely a social danger. The Ethiopian does not change his skin, nor the leopard his spots.

We learn from the *Sunday Times*, that at the Countess Poulett's Dance at the Ritz recently that:—

Husbands and wives dancing together were frequent. These old customs die hard.

The Bishop of Chichester has just written a long letter to the Reichsbishop Ludwig Muller, the Nazi head of the

German Protestant Church, in which he protests against the persecution of the Jews. At the same time, the Bishop takes the opportunity of putting in a good word for the "spiritual uplift" of the dear Nazis. "I should like," he writes, "to say with what profound sympathy I personally have watched the great awakening in the life of the German people and the new hope, faith and enthusiasm with which multitudes of your fellow-countrymen, not least the young, have been and are inspired." The way in which the splendid young Nazis, knowing quite well they could not be hit back, brutally attacked, robbed and murdered men, women and children living peaceably in their midst, has excited the admiration of the Bishop of Chichester because at the same time they are becoming "religious." We often wonder whether the genuine Christian cares two hoots about any persecution so long as it is not directed against his own creed. "With what perfect equanimity can we bear the misfortunes of others!"

But what is the Bishop of Chichester going to say to the 100,000 Nazis reported to be in favour of throwing overboard Christianity as being Jewish, and "therefore not fit to be the holy writ for Citizen's of Hitler's Aryan Third Reich?" Are they also full of "spiritual uplift"? What they actually want is a return to the good old German Gods, Thor, Odin, Baldur, Freya and any others that may be re-discovered. In any case, these deities are not really much better or worse than the Christian deities. What precisely is the difference between Odin and the Holy Ghost, or Freyer and the Virgin, or Baldur and Jesus? And as for Anti-Semitism, it is just as rampant in certain sections of Christianity as it ever could be in Paganism. How beautiful are these God-like beliefs!

Fifty Years Ago.

ACID DROPS.

THIS is what Martin Luther wrote about the story of Jonah: "It is more incredible than any poet's fable. If it were not in the Bible I should laugh at it. He was three days in the belly of a great fish! Why the fish would have digested him in three hours, and converted him into his own flesh and blood. The miracle of the Red Sea was nothing to this. The sequel too, is so foolish. When he is released he begins to rave and expostulate and make himself miserable about a gourd. It is a great mystery."

Apropos of the Luther Commemoration, a writer in a clerical organ calls to mind the fact that not only was Luther a firm believer in the real presence, but that he called the deniers of that doctrine "a set of deviled, be-deviled, per-deviled, and super-deviled wretches."

A Catholic clergyman, the Rev. W. Laughlan, who writes on Luther in the Roman Catholic organ, the *Month*, thus tries to emulate the abuse of Martin—"Go to, then, Doctor Martin Luther, blasphemous and hypocrite, thou lustful monk and sacrilegious priest, without faith in God or hope in the redeemer, even in the convent; take thyself off, begone out of sight, fly away into space. Papist or Protestant, we will have none of thee, for with all our sins and weaknesses, yet are we men, and thou art of the earth, earthy, of the flesh, fleshy, of the Devil, devilish!"

Good news from America! At the Fifteenth Annual Session of the Congregational Association, held in New York recently, the Rev. J. Cunningham stated that while formerly New York State had 600 Congregational Churches, now it has only 260. We wish we could hear the like report from the other bodies.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL :

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. DAVEY.—There cannot be any real freedom of thought in religion with an absence of freedom of thought in politics. Freedom of thought means freedom all round. Establishing the right to criticize religion does not mean freethought unless the same right of criticism is given to religion itself. Unless there is a broadening all round, freethought cannot exist.

F. H. HAMPSON.—We have heard nothing from Colonel Wedgwood, nor do we expect to hear anything. The Colonel shows that he at least appreciates the virtues of silence. We must take precautions that on any similar occasion no such betrayal takes place.

D. KNIGHT.—As a matter of fact the Atheist does relieve "God" of the responsibility for the ills of life. It is the Theist who insists upon his responsibility.

F. GOODWIN.—Letter shall appear next week.

R. W. HAMILTON.—Mr. Cohen will write you in the course of a few days.

CINE CERE.—It is a crying shame in the present state of affairs that huge sums should be collected for the purpose of building new churches. But so long as religious stupidity exists such things will continue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 26) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Metropole, Hull, at 7.30. Judging from Mr. Cohen's recent meeting in Hull, there should be a very successful gathering. We hope so for the sake of the band of very earnest Freethinkers who are engaged in the work. Admission will be free, but there will be some reserved seats at 6d. and 1s. each.

Reports to hand of some of last Sunday's lectures are very encouraging. At Glasgow Mr. Rosetti had a very good audience at the McClellan Galleries, and the audience had a very good lecture. Both sides were quite pleased with the day. At Leicester, Dr. Carmichael had a full house to listen to his lantern lecture on "Body and Soul." There were questions after the lecture, which were a tribute to the character of the audience. We hardly needed the information that the lecture was of a very interesting nature. That was bound to be the case. Finally, Mr. Cohen, at Derby, found a very large, and a very handsome hall much nearer being filled than he

had anticipated. The Derby Branch is in its infancy, but we have every hope of its future. Mr. Mosley, of Nottingham, filled the chair ably and usefully.

In the *North China Daily News*, a paper published in Shanghai, appeared the following notice:—

September 26th, 1833

In commemoration of the Centenary of the birth of CHARLES BRADLAUGH

Atheist and idealist, and one of the bravest soldiers who ever fought in the forefront rank of the army of human emancipation.

The speeches that were delivered at the Bradlaugh Centenary Meeting and Dinner in London are being reprinted by the Bradlaugh Centenary Committee, and will be issued early in December. All the speeches are given in full, and extend to 128 pages. They will be published at sixpence. Those who have bought the Bradlaugh Centenary Volume will certainly want a copy of this pamphlet in order to have a complete record of what were two notable gatherings.

Mr. Cohen has now completed his enlargement of his sketches of Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, and it will be on sale not later than December 15. The full title is *Bradlaugh and Ingersoll. A Centenary Appreciation of Two Great Reformers*. The work extends to more than 200 pages, it contains about a dozen plates, and will be published, cloth bound, at 2s. 6d. We do not know of a better introduction to the study of Freethought than this work. It should excite interest, and we are hoping for a large and quick sale. Those who are thinking of Christmas presents for their friends—Christian or Freethinking, but particularly the former—should find this a very suitable and useful present.

The stock of the six-shilling edition of the works of Ingersoll is, for the present, at least, exhausted. We are hoping to get another supply, but cannot make sure for some days. Meanwhile, we advise those who wish for copies of one of the greatest bargains in the way of Freethought literature to book their orders at once. If copies are available orders will be discharged as they are received. If enough copies are not available the money will be returned.

Manchester friends will regret to hear that Mr. W. A. Atkinson, the Branch Secretary, is in hospital. He has undergone an operation, but we are glad to hear that he is making favourable progress.

Very little appears in the press about the progress that has been made in Turkey. Perhaps this is because it is not sufficiently warlike and has managed to modernize itself, and in many degrees improve itself as a republic with an entire absence of religion. A rather interesting article appears in the *Sphere* of November 11, in which the writer, Mr. Kenneth Williams, is very emphatic on the subject of religion:—

Gone, then, is the attempt of an earlier generation of Muslim reformers to make Islam conform to the needs of the present age. Such a compromise has been spurned by the Turks. That is the real point of religious reform in Turkey: intermediate stages have been overleapt, and the young Turks now stand on the bank opposite to religion.

He also states:—

Finally, a word on freedom of thought and expression in modern Turkey. It does not exist. But at least this may be said: that there is no desire on the part of the majority that it should exist.

This is, of course, to be regretted, but we do not imagine that the repression of thought is greater than in religious Turkey, and it is to be hoped that if Turkey follows a line of peaceful development, Freethought will follow as a matter of course.

Diffusion of Culture.*

PROFESSOR ELLIOT SMITH has now published in popular form his study of the diffusion of culture from *one* originating centre. Some eighteen years ago there appeared his work *The Migrations of Early Culture* (Manchester University Press, 1915) in which he explained "the significance of the geographical distribution of the practice of mummification as evidence of the migration of peoples and the spread of certain customs and beliefs."

This book was suited to the anthropologist; but it was too compressed and unattractive in style for the average untechnical reader. The new book, however, covers a very much wider field, treating of many forms of social institutions, and is expressed in simple vigorous language.

It clarifies the issue between his school of thought and that of rival schools. He is pure diffusionist. One older school considers that all resemblances in customs or beliefs in peoples widely separated in space are due to the similar working of the human mind under like conditions.

This is largely the school of two generations ago, who based themselves on Herbert Spencer and Edward B. Tylor. Another accepts a limited diffusionism from several centres—Egypt, Babylonia, India, China (in the old world) and Central America and Peru (in the New World). Some, like Prof. Breasted, the great Egyptologist, accept *one* centre in the Old world—but demand a separate centre for the New. Others, like Dr. Imbelloni, accept diffusion from Oceania into America, but cannot tolerate diffusion in the Old World. It is delightful to see how Prof. Elliot Smith uses these opponents to cancel out each other: and how he deals with the Babylonian school who can accept diffusion from the Caucasus or Mesopotamia into Egypt, but not in the reverse direction. These schools have the same relationship to Elliot Smith's pure diffusionism that the special creationists had to Darwin. And indeed our Professor has a mind Darwinian in its reach and massiveness, and in this book he marshals with superb skill his evidence for diffusion from a single centre. That is *not* to say that *everything* originated there: but there was one centre where civilization began; and then it spread over the world modifying its expression according to the genius of the people who borrowed the new knowledge. For example, the earliest and most magnificent temples and portrait statues in stone are found in Egypt: and when this culture takes root in Greece we get the perfect proportions of the Partheon and the matchless portrayal of the beauty of human form. Similarly the step-pyramid of Sakkara develops in Egypt to the marvellous perfection of the Great Pyramids of Gizeh: but it appears in Babylonia as the Ziggurat: and in that form it traverses India and Indonesia, and reappears on the other side of the Pacific, in Central America, with slight variations.

But all these things were only possible after civilization *began*; and for its beginning Agriculture had to be discovered. This book therefore shows that in Egypt were the ideal conditions for that discovery—its plant endowment (wild barley and millet); the annual overflow of the Nile, and the yearly object lesson of the seeding, germination, growth and maturity of barley during the winter season of Egypt; its freedom from attack; its long-settled history going back nearly sixty centuries; *i.e.*, all the botanic, geographic, climatic and historic factors favoured this one spot on the earth's surface for the beginning of agriculture. The hoarding of the grain till the

next season gave rise to pottery: and then religious beliefs give rise to mummification and the quest for "life-givers," gold, pearlshell, jade. And hence the spread of agriculture over Eurasia and Northern Africa.

It is impossible to give more than this outline of Elliot Smith's theory, or rather the diffusionist theory which began with Humboldt and owed much to Edward B. Tylor who, though he reverted to the older theory of similarity of mind-activity, has yet afforded in proof of diffusion much valuable material to Prof. Elliot Smith and his co-adjutor, Dr. W. J. Perry.

The book contains some illuminating maps, showing various distributions of human institutions, or products, such as origin and spread of the alphabet; the distribution of the boomerang; the spread and survival of the *ocular* on boats; the distribution of the practice of ear-mutilation; and of the artificial deformation of the head; together with maps of the distribution of other human activities. This book, taken in conjunction with Dr. Perry's *Gods and Men*† will furnish readers of this journal with the required evidence of the natural origin and spread of fundamental religious beliefs, and will form a splendid introduction to a more detailed study of that fascinating branch of science, Cultural Anthropology.

ULYSSES.

† *Gods and Men.* (Gerald Howe, 2s. 6d.)

A Tribute to Ebon C. Ingersoll.

BY HIS BROTHER COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL.

[This was spoken in the house of death on June 2, 1879. The regard in which Ingersoll held his brother can be well gauged by the dedication to his lecture on "The Ghosts," published in 1878. It ran: "To Ebon C. Ingersoll, my brother, from whose lips I heard the first applause, and with whose name I wish my own associated until both are forgotten, this volume is dedicated."]

DEAR FRIENDS,—I am going to do that which the dead oft promised he would do for me.

The loved and loving brother, husband, father, friend, died where manhood's morning almost touches noon, and while the shadows still were falling towards the west.

He had not passed on life's highway the stone that marks the highest point; but, being weary for a moment, he lay down by the wayside, and, using his burden for a pillow, fell into that dreamless sleep that kisses down his eyelids still. While yet in love with life and raptured with the world, he passed to silence and pathetic dust.

Yet, after all, it may be best, just in the happiest, sunniest hour of all the voyage, while eager winds are kissing every sail, to dash against the unseen rock, and in an instant hear the billows roar above a sunken ship. For, whether in mid sea or 'mong the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck at last must mark the end of each and all. And every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love and every moment jewelled with a joy, will at its close, become a tragedy as sad and deep and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death.

This brave and tender man in every storm of life was oak and rock; but in the sunshine he was vine and flower. He was the friend of all heroic souls. He climbed the heights, and left all superstitions far below, while on his forehead fell the golden dawning of the grander day.

He loved the beautiful, and was with colour, form, and music touched to tears. He sided with the weak, the poor, and wronged, and lovingly gave alms. With loyal heart and with the purest hands he faithfully discharged all public trusts.

* *The Diffusion of Culture.* Prof. G. Elliot Smith. (Watts & Co., 7s. 6d.)

He was a worshipper of liberty, a friend of the oppressed. A thousand times I have heard him quote these words: "*For Justice all place a temple, and all season, summer.*" He believed that happiness is the only good, reason the only torch, justice the only worship, humanity the only religion, and love the only priest. He added to the sum of human joy; and, were every one to whom he did some loving service to bring a blossom to his grave, he would sleep to-night beneath a wilderness of flowers.

Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing.

He who sleeps here, when dying, mistaking the approach of death for the return of health, whispered with his latest breath, "I am better now." Let us believe, in spite of doubts and dogmas, of fears and tears, that these dear words are true of all the countless dead.

The record of a generous life runs like a vine around the memory of our dead, and every sweet, unselfish act is now a perfumed flower.

And now, to you, who have been chosen, from among the many men he loved, to do the last sad office for the dead, we give his sacred dust.

Speech cannot contain our love. There was, there is, no gentler, stronger, manlier man.

"Powder and Shot."

In the early months of 1933 Ealing Corporation proposed to establish a Birth Control Clinic. As was to be expected, the proposal met the united opposition of the clerical bodies of the Borough. At the protest meeting held under the joint auspices of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches at the Ealing Town Hall, the platform was crowded with the clerical, medical and lay opponents of Birth-Control.

The Anglican Bishop of St. Albans, Bishop Furse, said:—

He opposed the practice because it was contrary to the laws of God and nature, because it was unhealthy, because it was immoral . . .

G. K. Chesterton said:—

To those who urged that birth prevention was necessary on economic grounds, . . . the contention was more absurd at the moment than ever before. There was, in fact, so much produce heaped up all over the world, that it was having to be destroyed, while exponents of prevention looked "blue" at the prospects of a few more babies to the population, who would consume a certain measure of supplies.

And the Rev. Eustace Hill, Resurrection College, said:—

. . . it was a poor tribute to the lads who died in France in 1914-18, that we might live, and to those boys who came from the Dominions to fight for and save England, that we to-day, who then called the enemy "babykillers," should be advocating a brutal systematic killing of the unborn at the rate of half a million per annum. He said that if all the babies which should be born were allowed to arrive the activity of providing for their needs would greatly help to relieve the present unemployment. The baby was no competitor in the labour market but was, in fact, an important consumer.—(Quotations from the *London Catholic Herald*, February 11, 1933.)

In September there appeared an unexpected ally for the above-mentioned gentlemen in the person of Prof. Hersch of Geneva University. He had been studying

the economic consequences of the fall of the birthrate, and had concluded that the falling birthrate must be an important factor in producing permanent economic depression, and cannot be a remedy for unemployment.

In Northern and West Central Europe the birthrate is all but the same as the death-rate, and may shortly fall below it. That is to say, that the Western populations tend to be stationary.

Hence:—

. . . there must be a diminution of consumers in the population in relation to producers, for the part of the population which is economically active consists almost entirely of young and mature adults. Children are consumers and not producers, and the decline in the number of children exceeds the increase in the number of the aged. This steady decrease of the consuming population in relation to the producing population must, all other things being equal, bring about growing unemployment. (*Universe*, September 22, 1933.)

Let us then examine these "weighty" arguments of the clerical opponents of birth-control in greater detail. Bishop Furse thinks the practice is contrary to the laws of God and nature. Since most of the saner habits of civilized men have at one time or another been declared contrary to the laws of God, we can take the Bishop's statement about birth-control as being axiomatic in this particular. But that the practice is contrary to the laws of nature; is unhealthy and immoral is simply not true. When a law of nature has been discovered it is then possible for mankind to say *if* a thing is allowed to happen then such and such *will* be the result. Hence when a semi-starved mother is made pregnant by her drunken husband, who beats her while she is pregnant, we are in a position to say, by applying our knowledge of the natural laws we have already discovered, that she will probably die in childbirth, and that if her child lives it will be sub-normal. Will the Bishop deny that the responsibility for these terrible results rests with the husband or with society as a whole for allowing such brutality? And, despite having fixed the responsibility, would the Bishop persist in saying that, although it was in conformity with laws of nature that these results were produced, the natural laws were to blame? For we know that if the mother had been well nourished, and the husband had been a just and considerate man, those same laws of nature which produced a sub-normal child would now produce a healthy one. If, however, the conditions were yet again changed in the example, so that the parents abstained from sexual intercourse or practised birth-control, then those same laws of nature which would otherwise govern the embryological development of their children would not operate, any more than they do in the case of the celibate nun or priest. But because these laws do not operate does that mean also that they are contradicted? We know that water, if allowed to run freely, will in accordance with laws of nature always run downhill. But should there be an obstruction which it cannot get round it will cease to run, this allowing other natural laws to operate which cause it to pile up with an increasing force against the obstruction. Similarly in the case of birth-control, it can be shown that its effects are always in conformity with, and not contrary to, the laws of nature. Next we ask in all humility whether birth-control can really be opposed on the grounds that it is unhealthy and immoral. Suppose that the physical effects of co-habitation with the use of contraceptives really had a harmful effect on the parties using them, who can say whether those effects would be worse than the totality of the effects on the minds of husband, wife and child (a) when the husband does

not want the child because he cannot afford to have it, and (b) when the wife fears to have the child on any grounds whatever; or (c) when both of them desiring to have children proceed to bring them into the world, knowing full well that the children won't have a dog's chance in life while the present state of society is maintained? Whilst it would be difficult perhaps to make an exact comparison in this case, we need have no such difficulty in making a judgment concerning the healthiness of incidents which have the following character :—

A scream, the thud of a blow, and a woman, in labour, came tumbling down the stairs, head over heels, like a shot rabbit. . . . Rearing herself upright by the iron railing, the woman screamed, was delivered of a baby boy, and collapsed at my feet. . . . Gone grey in the face, the woman lay still on the filthy stone landing. . . . Her enraged husband had kicked her down the stairs with the flat of his boot in the small of her back. She wore a blouse and skirt. Nothing else. The boy-child was syphilitic from its head to its heels. Opening her eyes in the mask of agony which was her face, the mother was delivered of the afterbirth." (*The Naked Truth*. Joan Conquest, page 73.)

So far as the immorality of birth-control is concerned, the above incident again calls the opinion of the Bishop in question. For, the immorality lies in the fact that, because she had not been taught how to protect herself, the mother referred to in the incident quoted was subjected to such brutal treatment. There can be no question as to the morality of giving birth-control knowledge to women when such things are possible. It is their right to have such knowledge. As for the question of unborn children, it is difficult to see how one can consider the rights of things which do not exist. Children only have rights when they come into the world, and the fact that in the present system most children are denied equal opportunity to develop without having their minds impaired by clerical institutions, and their bodies ruined by malnutrition, constitutes an infringement of their rights sufficient to indict the whole of society. The advocates of birth-control simply state that it is better to have no children than expose them to the mercilessness of an immoral society. But the Churches oppose that view; for they have debased women for centuries, so that their feelings have been subordinated to the sexual interests of the men who owned them. Has not sex education, too, been taboo in the schools ever since the Churches commandeered education? And have not the Churches always fattened on the spoils they have gained from exploiting the ignorance and credulity of whole masses of men and women with their false stories of Creation?

Mr. Chesterton's remarks were no less casuistic than those of the clericals on the same platform at Baling Town Hall. As a Roman Catholic, he must have even given up more than his right to reason on moral matters, if he really believes that the only grounds on which advocates of birth-control take their stand are that the world is over-populated. He is not alone in recognizing the crisis as one of under-consumption. Advocates of birth-control recognize the fact too. But whereas Mr. Chesterton wants the consumers increased by increasing the number of babies, the advocates of birth-control realize the madness of bringing more babies into families too poor even to maintain the existing numbers with the ordinary necessities of life. In those families every new-comer means one more consumer for the same amount of food, clothing and house room. Therefore every new arrival in working-class families represents a little more poverty; a little more misery to be borne by the class as a whole, whilst those consumers have no power to satisfy their wants.

It is true that Mr. Chesterton has a sort of reply for

the above-mentioned situation, in as much as he says that food and houses should be demanded when there is a shortage. But have the people never demanded bread and houses, and the right to work from Governments and Kings; and what has that availed them? Every fresh failure of world economic conferences, every fresh advance made by Fascism, shows the futility of depending on mere demands alone. Have not prayers enough been offered up to God to the same end? Why, the very power and wealth of the Roman Catholic Church, for whom Mr. Chesterton speaks, is an indication of that pathetic belief which people have that God can, indeed, satisfy their demands. But God answers them in his characteristic fashion, through his ministers, by denying to them the knowledge whereby they can limit their families in order to limit their poverty. It cannot be presumed that Mr. Chesterton intends the poor to revolt against the revolting conditions in which they live and bring unwanted children into the world. For, the Pope wants the "peaceful collaboration of the classes," and the Roman Catholic Church has, in fact, done all it can to damn every revolutionary urge of the working-classes which has had as its immediate objective more bread, better houses, and the wherewithal to rear their children decently.

That the Rev. Hill's little contribution should coincide with the conclusions of the Geneva University professor is no compliment to the latter. However much a falling birth-rate may tend to limit employment, the most striking fact to-day seems to be that the falling birth-rate is probably due to the further fact that there are at least 30 million unemployed in the industrialized countries of the world who have not the means that would allow them to go on having children. This inability of the unemployed to buy the food, clothing and shelter they need, and the inability of those who are employed to buy back the goods they have produced, are stronger reasons for the economic crisis than a fall in the birth-rate. This is the problem Prof. Hersch ought to be studying. How to restore to the mass of the people those products of their labour of which they have been mulcted; and so long as this problem is unsolved we have the duty to assist the victims in every way we can. In this respect, with the spreading of birth-control knowledge, we can say so many lives have been saved, so many mothers spared unnecessary pain, so much less degradation of a sex, and so much greater recognition given to the right of women to determine the course of their own lives. Moreover, in fighting for the rights of women on the question of birth-control, we assist them to recognize the Churches as being one of their greatest enemies. Then it is easier, and needs but a few short steps, once this recognition is made, for women to take the course which will deliver them from the hands of the Churches for the rest of their lives.

G.F.G.

Parsons Must Live.

"HEAVEN is Here," I once heard a preacher assert, placing his hand where millionaires carry their wallets. "Great Heaven," the thought struck me. God is in very reduced circumstances. Perhaps the Vatican is now a Vat, and the Pope emulating Diogenes!" But I had got the Big Idea all wrong. My idea wouldn't hold water for a minute. I don't know how it came to entertain me.

The Big Idea is that "Parsons Must Live." It is not so entertaining, but I got it straight from an ass's mouth a few days ago. From his words I was invited to gather that Parsons conceive their value along with their energy. True, elemental Nature never apologizes,

but it only conserves Energy. Conserving value is the parsons job, and if they are just a little apologetic about conserving it in hard cash, that only conserves their energy.

If you don't believe it, it is plain that the rich and ample page of *Ethics* has ne'er been unrolled before you. "Get it out of your Public Library," the ass said, and in it you will find the answer to your crude questions of "Why have Parsons no immediate need to perspire or expire; why they breathe more freely in a manse in the suburbs than they could in a mansion in the skies; and why the addition to themselves of all that used to be infinite, conserves their time and energy in this finite world."

"You don't recognize Goodness when you see it in concrete situations," he expostulated. "Go to the Salvation Army meetings," he directed; "there you will see and hear the testimony of men who go down to the coal mines in shifts, to the fact of God's power to better conditions on less wages; that will lighten your darkness. You will see the idea clothed in flesh and blood." "But miners conserve their value as energy only at the risk of their lives," I objected. "You are a cold egg," he remonstrated. "Life is Eternal!" "Is that what you infer when you rend the Heavens, split God into smithereens, and say, "Parsons must live," I asked.

"You've said a mouthful," the ass replied.

"Well, I said, it is not clear to me whether "Parsons must live" is a threat, supplication, or a formulated expression and embodiment of Spiritual Religion.

Whatever it is, on your own arguments it ought not to be addressed to economic experts; that would be blasphemous impudence. If God is within them, the mouth, means, and end of "Jesus" is well within their compass. If they are human, let them submit to the limitations of their own BEING."

J.W.W.

Some Funereal Rhyme.

In the North of England, where it is still the custom among the masses to have a ham tea after funerals, there is a large volume of memorial "verse." This circulates daily in the industrial towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire through the medium of the local evening papers. Many of these newspapers carry as much as a column "in memoriam" notices every day, and the majority of the notices are embellished with a few lines of verse.

This practice of publicly displaying grief for the departed is largely fostered by a spirit of rivalry between members of the family, who seek to outdo each other in the sickliness of their sentiments and the amount of money they spend on recalling their loss at a shilling a line. Some of the more enterprising newspaper proprietors encourage this valuable source of revenue by providing specimens of suitable verse for selection by intending advertisers.

An anthology of this funereal rhyme, compiled over a period of years from papers published in an area extending from Liverpool to Hull, and from Leeds to Newcastle, throws some curious sidelights on the religious faith of the people of the North. For example it is evident that North country people are definite acquisitions to Heaven; vide the following:—

He is gone. Oh! how we miss him,
None but aching hearts can tell,
Earth has lost him, Heaven has gained him.
Jesus has done all things well.

Or again:—

God chose the purest thing he knew,
The fairest flower that ever grew;
Only one God whose Fatherhood
Gave that sweet gift and understood.

Of a nine-year-old girl her sorrowing parents declared:—

God needed one more angel child
Amidst his shining band,
And so he bent with loving smile,
And clasped our darling's hand.

Some slight doubt on the ultimate destination of a loving wife is expressed by herself in the following words attributed to her husband, who had died two years previously:—

Farewell, dear wife, my life is past,
You loved me dearly to the last,
Grieve not for me, but to prepare
For heaven be your greatest care.

Another widow of two years' standing expresses her sentiments somewhat differently:—

My husband has gone and I am left
The loss of him to mourn,
One of the dearest, one of the best
God, in His mercy took him to rest.
Two years have gone, but none can tell,
The loss of him we loved so well;
His grief is over, his pains are done,
A life of everlasting joy he has begun.

And this how two Salford parents wrote four years after the death of their one year old child:—

An angel came and took my flower,
Yet I must not repine;
For Jesus in His bosom wears
The flower that once was mine.

An assurance of safe arrival in Heaven is contained in the more imaginative message from a brother as published by Sister Grace, Charlie and May:—

Over the river to Eden,
Home to the mansions so fair,
Angels have carried me safely
Jesus has welcomed me there.

Less confident in the welfare of the loved one is a bereaved husband who writes:—

When some beloved voice that was to you
Both sound and sweetness faileth suddenly,
And silence, against which you dare not cry
Aches round you like a strong disease and now—
What hope? What help? What music will undo
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh,
Nor reason's subtle count . . . Nay none of these.
Speak Thou, availing Christ, and fill this pause.

A hint of dissatisfaction with this life below is given by the widow of a soldier who died of wounds in 1917. She declares sixteen years after:—

We often sit and wonder what he would do or say
If he only knew the changes that had happened since that day.

Then there is the pathetic cry of another widow of Eccles:—

We often sit and think of him,
His name we oft recall;
But there's nothing left to answer,
But his photo on the wall.

These pitiful quotations are just a few examples from a large collection of such epitaphs published in the Press of the gloomy North. They are typical of the outlook on life and death of the masses living in a depressing poverty-stricken area. The predominant note is a longing for a future in a better world—a sentiment which can well be understood by anyone who knows the squalid industrial towns. Thanks to the exploitation of human misery by the Salvation Army and Methodist revivalists, the poor devils who exist amid those drab surroundings are reconciled to their hard lot because they actually believe in a "Better Land." But among the younger generation there is a growing disinclination to accept the empty promises of religion, and a growing demand for a share of the good things of this life.

W. H. BLACK.

Correspondence.

WHO KNOWS WHAT JESUS MEANT?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Was it I in my letter to the *Telegraph*, who dropped the vitriol, or is you in your "Acid Drops"? My cheek burns, so I must turn the other for another drop! Will a mild answer turn away your wrath?

First, Mr. Editor, there is one of Christ's alleged utter-

ances upon peace and war free from metaphor: "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." The other references are clear to students of Hebrew, Greek or English. As Jesus spoke so much on the way how to treat our fellow-men, His meaning is clear on the pacifist theme.

It was not the acceptance of Christianity that brought about wars and mutilations, but its wrong interpretation, even by Origen, and others who framed the Nicean Creed. The burning of heretics, the cutting off of hands, continued in Turkey till this century, for theft; the sending back to their own country of three thousand prisoners with their eyes out, by a former Sultan. All this is not the acceptance of Christianity, nor its imitation by the ex-Christian Mohammedans.

Do I believe in the Nicean Creed? No! I do not believe Jesus was God, because if God exists, then God is a spirit not a masculine person created by the conceit of male human beings. This same conceit made the male Jesus out to be God.

Jesus himself is alleged to have said "greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my father!" If you will abolish War you will, Mr. Editor, do more than Christ ever did. I am a convert to non-flesh-eating, and if I could make others like myself and stop all unnecessary killing of animals for meat, I should be on a par with you, and we should both have done greater works than Christ.

The last saying I quote of Christ's, illustrates His belief in evolution.

H. CRAWSHAY FROST.

Theological College,
Wells, Somerset.

M.A. (Oxon)

HUMILIATING HYMNS.

SIR,—I have come upon a still better example than the one given by "Mimmermus," in his interesting article, of the "impassioned appeals to the British working-man in modern hymnology." Rev. Studdert Kennedy, better known as "Woodbine Willie," wrote one in which occur the astonishing lines:—

"God in his workman's jacket as before . . .
Sweeping the shavings from the workshop floor."

Truly a full-blooded doctrine of the Incarnation, though hardly compatible with the Modernism which probably the deceased clergyman embraced. The curious point about it is that the question "Did God Almighty come down and make wheelbarrows in a shop?" was asked by Thomas Carlyle, and horrified his mother as a sign of nascent scepticism.

W. KENT.

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

Her oldest child, Maria, married a missionary, and died in grace—et up by the savages. They et him, too, poor feller—biled him. It warnt the custom, so they say, but they explained to friends of his'n that went down there to bring away his things, that they'd tried missionaries every other way, and never could get any good out of them—and so it annoyed all his relations to find out that that man's life was fooled away just out of a dern'd experiment, so to speak.

Don't tell me it was an accident that he was biled. There aint no such thing as an accident. When my uncle Lem was leaning up agin a scaffolding once, sick, or drunk, or suthin', an Irishman with a hod full of bricks fell on him out of the third storey and broke the old man's back in two places. People said it was an accident. Much accident there was about that. He didn't know what he was there for, but he was there for a good object. If he hadn't been there the Irishman would have been killed. No one can make me believe anything different from that. Uncle Lem's dog was there. Why didn't the Irishman fall on the dog? Because the dog would have seen him a coming, and stood from under. That's the raisin the dog wasn't ap'inted. A dog can't be depended upon to carry out a special providence.

Mark Twain.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.) 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Conflicting Interests and the Common Good."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, November 27, Mr. P. Goldman—"Determinism."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Reggiori's Restaurant, 1 Euston Road, opposite King's Cross Station): 7.30, Arnold Lunn—"Miracles."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Hall No. 5, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. Hesketh Pearson—"A Secular Priest."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate): 6.30, Saturday, November 25. A Social. Dancing, Games and musical items. Admission free. Freethinkers and friends cordially invited.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform 1, Messrs. Collins and Bryant. Platform 2, B. A. Le Maine. 6.30, Various speakers. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Collins and Le Maine.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Council Schools): 7.0, Mr. Cottingham—"The Psychic Side of Life."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Gospel of Atheism."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Commercial Hotel, Godwin Street): 7.0, Mr. J. P. Harvey—"The Philosophy of Evolution."

CHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Peoples' Hall, Delamere Street): 7.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt (President, Liverpool Branch N.S.S.)—"Christianity and Morality."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"The Gospel of Atheism."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, M'Lellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. John MacLeod, W.P.A.—"The Reversion to the Primitive." Freethinker and other literature on sale at all meetings.

HETTON (Assembly Rooms): 7.30, Monday, November 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Are the Churches Alarmed?"

HULL BRANCH N.S.S. (Metropole, Balmoral Room, West Street, Hull): 7.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (President N.S.S.)—"Things Christians Ought to Know." Admission free. Reserved seats 6d. and 1s. each.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. J. Bailey—"Dialectical Materialism."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton (Chester-le-Street)—"Civilized Savagery."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Clarion Cafe, Market Street): 7.30, Mr. Brewin (Manchester)—A Lecture.

NORTH SHIELDS (Labour Hall): 7.0, Thursday, November 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Man and Tragedy."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Hall 5, Drake Circus): 7.0, Mr. McKenzie—"Intellectual Prostitution."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Central Hall, Chapter Row, South Shields): 7.0, Mr. Bradford—A Lecture.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.15, Sunday, November 26, Mr. Allan Flanders. Unity Chambers, Athenæum Street, 7.30, Tuesday, November 28, Speakers' Class. Mr. J. T. Brighton presiding.

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