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Views and Opinions.

Man and his Environment.

LIFE has been defined as the maintenance of harmonious relations between an organism and its environment. Whether we accept that definition or not, it is quite clear that this relation is essential to the continuance of living forms. But the phrase "organism and environment" consists of a definite and an indefinite word. Organism is clear enough for all working purposes. But "environment" is not so clear. Normally we think of it as built up of the immediate surroundings of an animal—in this case we are concerned with man only. Then we enlarge it so as to include everything with which man is in either immediate or remote contact, and that includes both the present and the past, both material and "spiritual" things, the habits and customs and ideas of past ages, as well as those that come to us from far-away peoples now living. And then we find that "environment," from being an apparently single and definite term, becomes a rather complex one. For we suddenly think of that old friend, the law that "Action and reaction are equal and opposite." And we find that this is as true of mental life as it is of physical happenings; that if the environment affects man, man also affects the environment. I do not mean by this the ways in which man defeats extremes of temperature, changes the productivity of the soil, or affects the rainfall, but that the total environment of a man does, to some extent, depend upon the man himself. One man finds pleasure and profit and beauty where another finds nothing but pain and loss and ugliness. If I may be excused quoting myself, I may repeat here what I have said in my miscellaneous *Opinions*: "In a fog the artist catches an inspiration; the in-artistic man catches a cold."

So that eventually we are driven further to enlarge our idea, if not our definition, of environment. We

have to think of it as not merely consisting of all the things that affect man from the past and in the present, but also the transforming effect of man's power over an environment that is partly a creation of his own. And our final definition would have to be that, "environment" includes everything that affects man, including his own feelings, ideas, and appetites. Man and his environment are, in a real sense, two sides of the same fact.

* * *

Primitive Nationalism.

The muddled, the mentally lazy, and the mentally incapable, will probably say that I am just indulging in metaphysics, so I have begun by calling them names first. For in sober truth, what I have said is not moonlight metaphysics; it is not even abstract thinking. It is very ordinary, very simple, and vastly important. As I have so often said, great things and true things are nearly always simple; it is only untrue things that are complex and difficult to understand. There is very small difficulty in understanding that if two things are equal to a third thing then they are equal to each other, but it has taken ages to understand the puzzle of the Christian trinity, and even now it is as much a puzzle as ever. And what I have said about the real nature of the environment has a practical and immediate bearing upon some very pressing present-day problems.

For example. Following the war we had—what might have been expected—an outburst of Nationalism. War, being a very primitive way of settling disputes—its chief elevation above an animal scrimmage lying in the deadliness and costliness of the implements used—it can only be conducted by an appeal to the primitive in man. So, appeals were made to the nationalism of this and that group, and when there was a cessation of the actual fighting, and a settlement of affairs was attempted, it was by an assembly which did not dare even to reprove the intense nationalism that had been excited. Nationalism became more virulent than ever. It was not said openly that an era of national self-sufficiency had been established, but each group acted as though that were the case. Each nation began to consider itself alone, or, if it considered others, it was only so far as profit could be made out of them, or in what way an arrangement could be come to by which a group of nations could combine to secure a separatist nationalism for each of its members. In Italy this principle of "We for ourselves, and the devil take all others" was openly proclaimed. America, intoxicated by its war—gained fictitious wealth, and quite imagined that it could live alone. And in this country there were persistent attempts to spread nationalistic feeling over a little wider area by calling it "unity of the Empire," and, in some quarters, by openly proclaiming that the proper plan would be to draw a fence round the Empire and to tell

the rest of the world to go to the devil. These people were suffering from pathologic nationalism with a dash of megalomania.

Now, if there were two countries in which this gospel of a self-sufficient nationalism could be tested it was in Russia and America. In Russia there was a huge country, which had everything that man could need. Certainly, it had the drawback of being in a very backward state compared with the rest of the world, but that was largely due to the fact that it had for centuries carried out the policy of nationalism in the world of ideas to a degree that none of the other great powers had been able to do. In America, theoretically, the conditions were ideal for the experiment. There was a huge continent; mechanical skill was well-developed; it could raise all the food it required; and the differences of climate, and even of culture, within the United States, made self-sufficiency an experiment that promised success—to the advocates of nationalism. But in both instances the method failed utterly. Russia was compelled to consider the nations it thought it could do without. And America was driven by the threat of complete disaster to recognize that, in the long run, to set up co-operative terms with the rest of the world was the only plan that promised success. The theory that the camel could live indefinitely on its own hump had broken down.

* * *

The Significance of Evolution.

What had happened? Well, they had all forgotten—no, none of them had ever learned—the evolutionary significance of "environment." They had talked, as so many thousands talk, of evolution, without having the least notion of its real meaning and implications. They thought that advance in evolution meant accretion, the piling of one thing on another, when its abiding function with living beings, is change of structure and function. They knew that evolution, animal and national, meant a specialization of parts, but they did not realize that it meant also a greater interdependence of parts. The closer the working arrangement between different parts of the body, the greater the dependence of each part on the whole. The more a particular nation specializes in the production of one thing, the greater its dependence on other nations for the things that these other nations show greater proficiency in producing. They did not realize—these mouthers of evolutionary terms—that the environment to which we of to-day must adapt ourselves or perish is not the mere physical environment of particular groups, but the environment which is constituted by every nation, by every people, with whom we have direct and indirect dealings. The things we learn from them act on us, and then react on those from whom we received them. The environment becomes such that no one can separate himself from the environment or the environment from himself.

Of course, we could conceivably act on the advice of our flag-waving nationalists and decline to join in the stream of human evolution. If we could do so, and if we did so, we should be acting as we might think the persistent lowly animals had done—keeping themselves outside the main stream of evolution, pursuing some little back-track of their own, and remaining crawling on the ground while others were soaring into the heavens. Our Lady Houstons, our Beaverbrooks, our Rothermeres and the like, stand to human evolution in about the same relation that the lowly animals that have persisted since the carboniferous age do to the present world of living beings.

Development by Expansion.

It is true that adaptation to environment is the condition of an organism maintaining its existence. That is true of a single organism, and it is equally true of that super-organism, that compound organic structure, which we know as a human society. The vital fact in survival is a matter of adaptation. But in the case of survival the process is not by way of developing new organic structures. We do not need to develop another limb, or longer and stronger limbs. Neither have we to develop new feelings. What occurs is more in the nature of expansion. It was noted by Buckle, who took it as evidence of the lack of development in the sphere of morals as opposed to the development in the sphere of intellect, that our existing moral maxims were known several thousand years ago, without this knowledge having any greater influence on conduct than it has to-day. The fault in Buckle's conclusion was that he overlooked the expansion of the environment. The urge to loyalty to the group is as true now as ever, and as useful as ever. But it needs a larger interpretation now than it did of old. Then a man's neighbours might be only those of his particular town or city. The nationalist ideal had then some validity. To-day our neighbours are not merely those who live in the same city, or even in the same country; they extend over the bounds of the civilized earth, and even to the uncivilized world. In the earlier stage the man who wished to work-out his own salvation and assist in that of the group to which he belonged, concerned himself with his immediate surroundings. To-day the man who is intelligently inspired by the same idea, expressed in the same language as of old, finds that his neighbours are those living in all parts of the world. The brotherhood of man to the first Christians meant a brotherhood of believers; the brotherhood of man means to-day the whole of humanity. "Thou shalt not steal," meant little more, a few thousand years ago, than a prohibition against stealing from those of one's immediate environment, and even to-day it does not carry so far for the white man as to reach the coloured races, and has but a very weak hold with regard to "national" possessions. It is not the formula that needs recasting; it is its interpretation in the light of a fuller knowledge that is required.

An *understanding* of the environment to which the human must adapt itself, if man is to achieve all that might be achieved, is thus of first-rate importance. The fault is that while human conquest of the environment—measured in terms of mechanical invention, time-and-space-conquering productive machinery, and other devices—is well up-to-date, man is still thinking of the environment in terms of some centuries ago. His neighbour in thought still is the one he meets; he still thinks of the group as consisting of the particular one in which he is born, and in which he passes his life. He does not realize that just as the welfare of the individual depends upon the welfare of the group, so the welfare of the group depends upon the welfare of all other groups with which it is in communication. We are often told that man is a fighting animal, or a tool-using animal, or some other kind of animal. But the greatest truth of all is that man is an expanding animal. His fundamental qualities remain to-day what they were in the days of ancient Egypt; it is their expression that marks him as civilized or the reverse. He may think and feel on the level of a thousand years ago; and in that case he is out of harmony with the environment of to-day. Or he may take the formulæ that have been handed-down to him and reinterpret them in the full light of present-day circumstances. In that

case, he is getting more in harmony with his environment. And adaptation to environment is a law of life. It is for our understanding to determine whether we exist as museum specimens of a bygone time, or as vital factors in the progressive life of the race.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Nothing but a Trade."

"This mystery of sending spiritual gifts is nothing but a trade"—*Swift*.

"Do I view this world as a vale of tears?
Ah, reverend sir, not I."—*Browning*.

To the innocent observer, not skilled in penetrating beneath the surface of things, there is, probably, but one thing in the world more solemn than a funeral, and that is religion, which in this country means the Christian Religion. Short of death itself, nothing seems more awe-inspiring than the orthodox scheme of salvation. Only think of it! To Mr. John Smith, believer, it looms as the most stupendous thought that can engage the attention of the watery custard which he is pleased to consider as representing the human brain. For it is not alone the weal or woe of all living people, including Mrs. Smith and the children, but also of generations of Smiths unborn, that will be involved in the awful and tremendous issue.

The alleged perpetuity of this turgid theological scheme in a vanishing world, where all things pass as a dream, seems to impart a quality of awe to the dwarfed perception of the uneducated believer. To such an innocent, indeed, all this priestly abracadabra must seem solemn and impressive. But appearances are often deceptive, and it is foolish to look at any question with only one eye, as is said to be the habit of birds. The unfeathered biped, man, should know better. A more detached and philosophic view of the whole matter would lead to another conclusion. So far from religion being what priests pretend, it is simply a trade. An expensive and elaborate business it may be, but none the less a money-making concern, like selling coal or clothes. You cannot tell what the religious circus is really like by looking at the highly-coloured posters on the walls. For in all nations it has been customary for priests to invest their procedure with an air of spurious authority. So it was in the twilight of history, is now, and must be, even in the byways and burrows of our own country, until our people wake up.

What does Mr. John Smith himself gain by his conversion? The Christian Bible? His condition is almost as parlous as that of a dark-skinned native who has accepted the sacred volume at the hands of a kind-hearted missionary, and will presently lose his liberty and his home. Mr. Smith may read this Bible daily, and his verbal knowledge may be nearly perfect, but always what he apprehends is limited by an imperfect education. The literature of Israel is intensely local. There are passages where the perfumes of Sharon and Lebanon, the atmosphere of the hills around Jerusalem, the beauty of the daughters of Judæa, are so caught and rendered that in a distant age, an alien speech, a remote land, they affect the reader. But Mr. Smith is not a poet, and the unhappy man is hampered by his limited vocabulary and dwarfed perceptions. To him the word "publican" invariably suggests a licensed victualler; and the archaic expression, "divers diseases," conjures up vague ideas of water on the brain. So "cribb'd, caged, and confined" by educational defects, Mr. Smith is forced to rely on the clergyman's artful ex-

position of what is written on the sacred page of his own scripture.

There are other rocks ahead. Mr. Smith cannot accept the "Beatitudes" and adopt New Testament ethics with his ordinary business avocation, and keep clear of the relieving officer or the workhouse. He cannot, with any success, apply Christian principles to his everyday life, if he is to escape Colney Hatch or Earlwood. Hence his admiration for the Rev. Facing-both-ways, who shepherds his faithful congregation, and shears them well into the bargain.

The clergyman instructs poor Mr. Smith as if this Christian Bible were written yesterday, and the Oriental legends but the common-place facts of "late-night final" journalism. The minister tells Mr. Smith that this Christian Bible is true from title to colophon, from cover to cover. He tells him that the three-headed Christian god put "Adam" and "Eve" in a garden, and for a crime of petty larceny punished them with death, and continued the punishment on all mankind, whose everlasting fate will be determined at an alleged Judgment Day. Mr. Smith is further instructed that the first baby was a murderer, and that mankind became so very wicked that Papa drowned all, except eight persons, like kittens in a pail. Afterwards, this God became the War Lord of the ancient Hebrews, who became his chosen people, although even their deity could not always help them to victory. And so on, and so forth, through the riotous Oriental exaggerations of this particular Bible until the most absurd of all climaxes, when a limited-liability Omnipotence is alleged to be put to death in order to appease his own malignant anger. At no single stage of the theological instruction does the pastor and master point out to the innocent believer what a level of barbarism must the people have who could thus conceive of their duty. Hence, the priests' coffers are filled with money, and poor Mr. Smith, and other innocent believers, are duly exploited by as sorry a collection of charlatans as the world can show. Some day the people of this country will be sufficiently educated to perceive "the lie at the lips of the priest." When that day dawns they will raise their eyebrows at the clergy, politely smile, and pass on. And the priests themselves will have to look for honest employment.

We say honest, because in the case of the clergy this quality is conspicuous by its absence. They foist old legends on half-educated people, and live handsomely on the proceeds of their hocus-pocus. All the while education in this country is controlled by the clergy. That is the reason why the English people are so little removed from illiteracy, and will be, until the strangle-hold of the priests is removed. For ignorance is the most favourable soil for the growth of superstition and the exploitation of the people.

MIMNERMUS.

THE SHINING RECORD TELLS.

The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds, both great and small,
Are close-knit strands of unbroken thread,
Where love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpet, ring no bells;
The book of life the shining record tells.

Thy love shall chant its own beatitudes
After its own life working. A child's kiss
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad.
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong.
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service which thou renderest.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

The Codex Sinaiticus.

THE British Museum should be congratulated on having acquired such a rare and valuable Greek uncial MS. of the Bible as the Codex Sinaiticus. From a literary and artistic standpoint the manuscript is priceless, and no one should begrudge the Government devoting £50,000 to its purchase price. Any country is enriched by the acquisition of unique paintings, the masterpieces of great artists and sculptors, antique pottery and furniture and tapestries. The actual handiwork of man, in the past, not only tells us something of his history, his joys and hopes and fears, but is evidence of the artist in him, and that surely is something worth knowing and preserving.

The beautiful calligraphy of the copyist in the pages of many of the Bible Codices shows with what loving care the artist, as well as the believer in him, worked on what was, in his eyes, the most precious story in the world. We have no need to believe the story, but we can, surely, agree upon his art. I do not believe in the Virgin Birth, but I love the pictures of the great masters who have given us their vision of Mary and the Babe. And so posterity will, I think, be very grateful for the preservation of literary treasures, and not the least among them, the Codex Sinaiticus.

Its romantic discovery by the German theologian, Dr. Constantine Tischendorf, is pretty well known. It has often been told by himself, and particularly in a pamphlet issued by the Religious Tract Society in 1866, entitled *When Were Our Gospels Written?* I understand it will shortly be republished with various notes and additions. Charles Bradlaugh wrote an effective reply in a tract with the same title, but Bradlaugh did not then have the chance of any examination of the *Sinaiticus* MS., he simply dealt with some of Tischendorf's arguments in so far as they bolstered up an early date for the composition of the Gospels.

Dr. Tischendorf first discovered some leaves of vellum, on which were undoubtedly early Greek uncial characters. They were in a box from which the monks at the convent of St. Catherine on Mt Sinai took old MSS. for firelighters. This should, I think, dispose of the legend that the "Church" carefully preserved its divine treasures through the ages—except, of course, its gold, silver, precious stones and relics. Indeed, it is amusing to think that the church which could guard such treasures as the Holy Coat, bits of the Cross and absurd remains of ignorant and stupid saints, allowed the originals of the gospel writers and of Paul to perish so utterly that not a trace of them remains anywhere, and, what is more peculiar still, there is no mention of them anywhere, either.

The earliest copies of the Bible are now acknowledged to be no older than the fifth century and, if we are to believe the experts, Tischendorf's great discovery belongs to this date. He was able to purchase the Codex in 1859, through the generosity of the Tsar, Alexander II., after a great deal of trouble with the monks, who were, by then, able to see that the MS. was of a high antiquity and of great value. Otherwise they would have used it as a fire-lighter.

Tischendorf had produced by then several editions of the New Testament in Greek, but the influence of his newly discovered Codex was so great that he scrapped these editions and set to work on a new one, and it was this which played no small part in the revision of our Authorized Version.

Of course, scholars had long been dissatisfied, not only with the Authorized Version, but with the

Greek text of the New Testament. What was the original Greek text, when and where was it written, and by whom, were questions anxiously asked by Christians, and the replies were certainly not particularly encouraging. The whole question of textual criticism, as it was called, was involved in it, and the more it was studied, the more hopelessly the critics floundered. There was an easy way out, and it certainly is to the honour of many great orthodox scholars that they did not take it but were ready to risk the frail bark of their belief on the awful uncertainty of a study of the various Codices of the Bible. The simple infallible way was to give up study and rest upon the solid rock of faith—the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. She had the Latin version of the Bible in her possession, called the Vulgate, and it was vouched for by the Pope, appointed by God Almighty as his own special representative. What more could be required?

The truth is that—for genuine scholars—even the Vulgate was suspect. How was it written and, most important of all, from what Greek manuscript was it translated? And were the copies we had then absolutely without blemish? Scholars came to the conclusion that the Vulgate was quite as big a mystery as the Greek Codices.

Let us begin, if possible, at the beginning. Who wrote the first Gospels, when and where were they written, and in what language? We can supply the answer very briefly: *Nobody knows.* That is the absolute truth, and there is not a single modern scholar in the world to-day who can deny that simple fact.

No one is *quite* certain of the language in which Jesus spoke. (I am, of course, assuming for the moment that there was a Jesus. There is no evidence of that either.) There is quite a good case made out that he spoke Greek, as it was, in his day, almost a universal language; for if he spoke Aramaic, somebody must have translated his speeches into Greek. There is no evidence of any kind that our Gospels are translations, in spite of some Hebraisms and barbarisms.

Again, when did our four Gospels first definitely appear? Nobody knows. Desperate efforts have been made to show that they were composed some 30-50 years after the Crucifixion. There is no evidence worth looking at, however, that, as we have them now, they were known before the year 150 A.D.—a date which earnest Christians look upon as hopeless if the credibility of the Gospels is to be maintained.

That after 150 A.D., not only were the gospels in Greek appearing, but various translations in Latin and Syriac and Coptic, is claimed by most scholars, but here the trouble commences. What was the definite text? Nobody knows. For you get immediately a *Western* text, an *Alexandrian* text, a *Syriac* text, and what is called the *Received* text. All these texts form the bases of innumerable copies, copies from each group, copies from each other, all corrected by various "experts," differing from each other because of bias, or because of different interpretation of doctrine, or even through ignorance. Moreover, though some of the copyists were artists, others performed their work as mere manual labour, and, as it was tedious and often mechanical, the various Codices are packed with ridiculous mistakes and omissions, and even then the trouble is not over. Vellum seems to have been precious material to write upon, and so quite a number of MSS. have had the original Greek writing of the New Testament erased as far as possible—it was often particularly difficult—and the vellum used for copying some medieval sermon or other pious but worthless disquisition.

The Western text has for its base the famous Codex Bezae (or a Greek text like it) with what is known as the Old Latin translation side by side. It differs in hundreds of places from the Received text—in fact it is the only text used by the early Fathers, and is not now found in any other known Greek text. It has been amended by no fewer than eight correctors—and this with a holy infallible Church behind it. Dr. Scrivener calls its text “a most difficult and an almost inexhaustible theme.” Dr. Davidson calls it “a corrupt text,” and I could devote several articles to explain why. The Old Latin text is behind the Vulgate which stands in relation to it, much like our Revised Version stands to the Authorized Version. It is not by any means certain how far Jerome, who is said to be responsible for the Vulgate, merely revised the Old Latin or produced an independent translation from the Greek. For my own part—it is, of course, heresy to say so—I often wonder whether the old Latin came first, and if it is the Greek which is the translation.

The text of the New Testament, which has been commonly received by the English and German people, is called the Received text, and is mostly based on late cursive (small letter) MSS., which seem based in turn on one of the three great manuscripts called the Codex Alexandrinus, and another called the Codex Ephraem—the text of which, says Scrivener, stands nearly midway between Alexandrinus and the Codex Vaticanus. The English Authorized Version is merely a rehash of various faulty translations from late, and acknowledged worthless, authorities, but the language, though quite archaic, has often a kind of beauty and poetry. The Authorized Version translators claimed to have translated from the “Original Greek,” which is nonsense. They did, however, make use of MSS. other than those used by Wycliff, Tyndale and Coverdale, the earlier translators.

It was during the nineteenth century, with the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus, and the permission to make full use of the Codex Vaticanus, that desperate efforts were made to obtain a genuine Greek text of the New Testament. Aided by the work of other scholars who wasted their lives in collating hundreds of MSS., Westcott and Hort gave the world their Greek text, upon which our Revised Version is built. Pandemonium at once broke out. That God's Infallible Word, which had reigned in the hearts of the English people for 300 years, was now dethroned was more than orthodoxy could stand. The Revised Version was most severely criticized from many points of view. Dean Burgon, in particular, took upon himself the defence of the Received Text. He called Westcott and Hort's Greek text “the most vicious text in existence, full of the gravest errors from beginning to end.” And he gave as an example of the way in which the Uncial MSS. were used, by imagining a revision of Shakespeare's famous “To be or not to be” of Hamlet. This would be, according to the Alexandrine MS.: “Toby or not Toby; that is the question”; the Vatican MS.: “Tub or not, is the question”; the Sinaitic MS.: “To be a Tub or not to be a Tub; the question is that.” Ephrem's MS.: “The question is, to beat, or not to beat, Toby”; Beza's MS.: “The only question is this: to beat that Toby or to beat a Tub.” Yet critics like Sir F. Kenyon have to admit that the readings of the Received Text are comparatively late, and therefore cannot be considered as any real evidence as to what the “original” Greek actually was.

If the Sinaitic Codex could have solved the difficulties of textual criticism, it would have been hailed as the greatest discovery in literature. Alas, it was

attacked quite as viciously as the commonest and poorest manuscript. Burgon and his successor, Miller, accused both it and the Vatican MS. “of being tainted with sceptical tendencies, and especially with minimizing the Divinity of our Lord”—though Kenyon does not agree with them. Tischendorf maintained it was originally written by four different writers, and there are, in addition, quite a large number of correctors who have made some readings particularly difficult to decipher and harmonize. Two books, the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, are included in the MS., both, of course, quite “uncanonical”—though looked upon as canonical by many of the early churches for centuries. Both the Sinaitic MS. and the one in the Vatican were probably written in the same place—but where, nobody knows. Dr. Scrivener, after examining it, came to the conclusion that it convinced him more than ever “of the futility of seeking to derive the genuine text of the New Testament from any one copy, however ancient and, on the whole, trustworthy.” It omits the last eight verses of Mark and the story of the woman taken in adultery—much to the disgust of orthodox critics; for if any story ought to be attributed to Jesus, it is this particular one. But though the Codex Sinaiticus belongs to the same family as the Codex Vaticanus and “upholds it,” as Dr. Scrivener says, “in many of its more characteristic and singular readings, it has made the mutual divergencies more patent and perplexing than ever.” “Shall I,” asks Dean Burgon, “be thought unreasonable if I confess that these perpetual inconsistencies between the two codices—grave inconsistencies, and occasionally even gross ones—altogether destroy my confidence in either?”

Thus, while from the artistic and literary standpoint the Codex Sinaiticus is a great treasure, from the point of view of genuine orthodoxy, the more it is studied in relation to other MSS. of the New Testament, the more baffling becomes the problem of textual criticism. And we are as far off any solution as ever.

I may add there is still another problem connected with the manuscript—which has not received the attention it deserves. It contains the Septuagint as well as the New Testament; and this Greek text of the Hebrew Bible is worth a whole article, at least, to itself. I may deal with it some other time.

H. CUTNER.

A Rival of Jesus of Nazareth.

We have long been familiar with “Pagan Christs.” And of those who may be so called, the most interesting is perhaps Apollonius of Tyana, or Apollonius the Revivalist. He was a Pythagorean philosopher, a close contemporary of Jesus (assuming that the latter really lived). He was brought forward as a competitor with others for the religious suffrages of the Romans. His life was written by Philostratus; and accounts of his career, drawn from that work, appear in Professor Flinders Petrie's *Personal Religion in Egypt Before Christianity*, and in Cardinal Newman's *Historical Sketches*, Vol. I.

The birth of Apollonius, in 3, 4, or 5 B.C. (the date is uncertain), was heralded by prodigies, including a thunderbolt and a chorus of swans. At fourteen years of age he began his studies of the extant religious-moral systems, and at sixteen, sent a letter to the people of Tarsus rebuking them for a certain practice, to which presumably they were much addicted. Then, after a period of five years' silence and meditation, he spent a long life in the common ancient practice of travelling about teaching and preaching. Accepting the current classical religion, he passed much of his time in the temples, speaking to the priests and trying to effect improvements in ecclesiastical practice.

He had many disciples, including two "secretaries," one of whom set down the master's experiences and activities in shorthand, while the other put the matter into longhand. He was received with much honour at many places, and exercised great influence. "The admiration his whole appearance excited bordered on something divine"; "he had a penetrating glance which terrified bad consciences"; the "Satrap in Babylonia and Domitian in his palace both cried out that Apollonius was a daimon (or good spirit) when they first saw him." He was credited with the prevention of several insurrections in cities by the "mute eloquence of his looks and gestures."

He was a famous healer and for this was commended by the oracles. Among his cures was that of a youth from hydrophobia. His still more impressive miracles include the raising of a dead girl from her funeral bier, and the casting out of a demon from a young man. Frazer, in the *Golden Bough*, says that he was credited with the clearing out of scorpions from Antioch by making a bronze image and burning it in the middle of the city.

Being imprisoned by Domitian on a political charge, he vanished at his trial and was "transported" to Puteoli, where he had sent on his principal disciple and secretary, Damis, in advance. A temple he visited in Crete contained much treasure, and was guarded by fierce dogs. But the animals fawned upon him, and he was therefore charged with magic and put in bonds by the priests. But at midnight he freed himself, woke the priests, entered the temple, the gate of which closed after him, while the building resounded with the singing of virgins—"Leave the earth, come to heaven, come, come."

Apollonius predicted events, including the precise time of the death of Domitian, and also a pestilence at Ephesus, to which he put an end. He refused, however, to adopt the common practice of sacrificing animals; and he drove from a temple priests or their myrmidons ("sorcerers") who were collecting money for a great sacrifice.

His moral teaching was on a high level. He condemned riches and taught "all the virtues." It does not appear that he claimed divinity, though he came to be regarded by some as the incarnation of the god Proteus. The claim that he rose from the dead is based on his posthumous appearance to a certain youth.

The numerous parallels in the lives of Apollonius and Jesus leap to the eye. Newman suggests that the former imitated the latter. But as the one was based on the contemporary journal of Damis, and on some letters and city records, and the other on memory and hearsay, the reverse would seem to be the case. But doubtless many things in the lives of both are repetitions of old traditional legends.

The comments of Newman on the supernatural activities of Apollonius form an interesting illustration of the feebleness and credulity engendered by theological obsession. The miracles are not definitely questioned. But it is suggested that they followed from the possession of "theurgic virtues," special knowledge of "secrets of nature." Indeed it is held that the early Christians made a great mistake in challenging the miracles of Apollonius, because that procedure tended "to overthrow one of the main arguments for revealed religion." Newman's own criticism of the thaumaturgy in question is that the alleged occurrences were not, or were not sufficiently, "grave and dignified," "conclusive," not "a plain interruption of established laws," and not related to the "First Cause," like those of Jesus.

J. REEVES.

Humanity has yet to find its method in sexual things; it has to discover the use and the limitation of jealousy. And before it can even begin to attempt to find, it has to cease its present timid secret groping in shame and darkness and turn on the light of knowledge. None of us knows and most of us do not even know what is known.

H. G. Wells.

Acid Drops.

The British Empire is far flung, and naturally contains some queer things and many strange survivals. But among the strangest and the most barbaric is that reported in some of the papers of January 13 concerning a recent case in Montreal. A *Judge of the Supreme Court* has just annulled a marriage between a Catholic and his non-Catholic wife, on the ground that the ceremony was performed by a Protestant clergyman, instead of by a Catholic priest. The marriage took place twenty-four years ago, and there is a grown-up daughter. This is the most monstrous thing we have heard of for some time, and if the judgment holds good, Montreal ought to be removed from the list of civilized centres. If ever a Government had the right to step in and readjust affairs in the interest of the individual, it is surely in a case like this. Of course, the incident has its uses. It helps to show those who need showing what religion is like when it is permitted to work its will. In parts of Canada the Roman Church seems to enjoy a power that is denied it almost everywhere else.

What is described as the "most beautiful church in London," St. John the Baptist, Holland Park, London, caught fire on January 12. It was only a small fire, but a woman worshipper who noticed it ran to inform the vicar. And the Vicar, holy man! did he go on his knees and call on the Lord to extinguish the fire, or cast some holy water on the flames, and did the awe-stricken worshippers watch the flames die out before their wondering and worshipping eyes? Not a bit of it! The brave man, Father Lester Pinchard (his name deserves placing on record) looked at the size of the flames, and mentally ejaculating, "Don't you interfere, Lord, we can manage this little job ourselves," rang up Gabriel—we mean the fire brigade—and before it had arrived he and the women worshippers had put out the fire with buckets of water. So can faith nowadays work miracles. The next step, we presume, will be the holding of a thanksgiving service for the preservation of the Church to thank God for his non-interference.

Some one is responsible for making a writer in the *Observer* say that the Germans are determined to have "a CIGAR understanding." We presume that means an understanding that does not end in smoke.

Meanwhile, we may note that if politicians ever learned anything they ought to learn, diplomatists ever understood anything they ought to understand, and militarists ever remembered anything they ought to remember, the world would not be as it is to-day. The treatment of Germany by the Allies has resulted so far in making Germany one of the virtual dictators of European policy, and as France before mainly helped to create the German Empire, so with the growth of Nazism in both Germany and Austria, we are likely to see develop the most organic federation of the German peoples that has ever yet existed. Of course, there may intervene another war, and in that case politicians, diplomatists, militarists and flag-wagging "patriots" may have the field cleared for a second attempt to ruin the world.

The censorship on the wireless in France is not so strong as it is in England, but Roman Catholics seem to exert considerable interest when their religion is roughly handled. The other day, a hospital doctor broadcast an attack on "the foolish superstitions such as processions and the invocation of saints, which constituted the entire hygiene of the Middle Ages." The Abbé Bethléem protested to the Director of the State Broadcasting service, who replied that he had issued new instructions that the strictest neutrality should be preserved in the political and religious broadcasts from the State radio stations. "Strict neutrality" thus means that the filth and ignorance and credulity of

Roman Catholics during the Middle Ages must now never be attacked in a wireless talk. And this in a country which has separated Church from State! We would wager that those responsible are strict Catholics.

The new Divorce Bill, which will shortly be introduced into the House of Commons, is already being attacked by Catholics. In the House of Commons, Dr. O'Donovan has given notice to move its complete rejection, and Dr. E. J. Mahoney has criticized it in the *Clergy Review*. Roman Catholic citizens have, of course, as much right to public life as anybody else but no more. They certainly have no business to place religious teaching before reasonable consideration of a measure that may bring happiness to a great many miserable people. Men and women married to murderers, criminal lunatics, drunkards, child torturers, hopeless wasters and deserters, have a right to ask the State to release them from their civic contract—for that is all marriage really is. There is nothing whatever to prevent Roman Catholics from sticking to a life-long partnership—or imprisonment, whichever they like to call it.

How Roman Catholicism works in practice when it has a free hand, can be seen from some news "gleefully" reported by a Catholic newspaper. The first man to be divorced in Trinidad was married again in a registry office, and all the Catholic churches in St. Joseph, the ancient capital, tolled their bells as if for a funeral. For sheer unmitigated impudence this is hard to beat, but it gives one an idea of the real Roman Catholicism, which, in spite of our civilization, is true to its tradition of bigotry and cruelty. The leopard *never* changes its spots.

An Anglican clergyman wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* the other day:—

Take the Bible. What exactly is its authority, and how far does its authority extend? Church people are brought up to believe it is a unique book divinely inspired. Dignitaries of the Church regard certain parts as unprofitable, scholars, other parts as legendary or mythical, and the Church refuses to have certain parts read in public. What is the average man to think?

And this after literally millions of books and pamphlets have been printed and sermons uttered to a Christian people! The average man should resign himself to the hard, cold fact that the Bible is *not* inspired, that it is legend and myth, and that priestcraft is a money-making game. That's all.

It is refreshing to notice a reference of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, in his Epiphany sermon at Bath, to "St. Paul's white-hot and ungrammatical letter to the Galatians." The common theological pose is that in grammar, style and matter alike, the Bible is from cover to cover the model for all literary students. If one holds that in some way or other God had something to do with the Bible, then panegyrics of its literary excellence naturally follow, for plainly God cannot be connected with anything second-rate. Fifty years ago, responsible heads of theological seminaries in England held that God was responsible for the position of commas and semi-colons in the Holy Book, and also spent much of His time seeing to it that the translators were stuffed with the correct intuitions, and that the hand of the compositor did not shake.

It was not foolish to believe in the Inspired Comma, for the belief in the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible carried with it, in logic, the Divine Vigilance over every phase of translation and reproduction. It was not only the first step that counted, every step had to be divinely guided, or the value of God's Revelation to Man became questionable. It was only when the bombardment of Freethinkers became unbearable that the "error in translation" and the "typographical error" became argumentative necessities. Then we heard no more of

the Inspired Comma; the uninspired comma became in fact a God-send, a very pleasant help in time of trouble. When Protestantism substituted a Holy Book for a Holy Church they landed themselves in such webs of folly that extrication has proved impossible.

Those who are obsessed with the idea of the all-importance of the study of the Bible as a method of literary training, need occasional corrective. We bring to their notice the case of John Ruskin. This eminent Victorian, when a child, read every day a portion of the Bible aloud. When he had gone through it from end to end he turned back to Chapter 1, and so over and over again. Ruskin was *steeped* in the Bible. The result was that, in the opinion of Mr. Wilenski, his biographer, Ruskin, as a writer, was ruined. What happened can be gathered from the following passage by Mr. Wilenski, taken from his essay on Ruskin in *The Great Victorians*:—

Again and again he began by making sentences in which the words exactly represent the thought; and then some remembered emotive words and phrases would rise to his mind's surface, and he would take first one sip of the fatal drug, and then another, till, finally, he would abandon the hard task of precise externalization of thought, and yield to the pleasure of making "some sort of melodious noise about it."

That impeccable newspaper, the *Morning Post*, is rebuking yellow journalism. The ordinary reader is somewhat bewildered by the colour scheme of the argument from an organ so true blue and pre-historic in ideas that it continues to oppose trade with a continent geographically named Russia. If it is somewhat backward in matters of this kind the ordinary English mutt can find in the same issue the names of various places where hounds will be meeting.

Lord Hugh Cecil decided not to carry further his case against the Bishop and Dean of Liverpool for having allowed a Unitarian to preach in Liverpool Cathedral. The Bishop has explained that he did not approve one of the parties asked, and the incident will not, we expect, be repeated. The *New Statesman* opines that 80 per cent of the people don't care a damn one way or the other. That, we expect, is because the people have no "damn" to care about. When they had to dodge damnation they were more particular concerning the risks they ran.

It is reported that Sir Oswald Mosley's British Fascists have ordered three armoured cars, for party uses. If true, this is quite in line with the policy and principles of gangsterism, and one day Fascists from all over the world may organize a holy pilgrimage to Chicago and to the grave of St. Capone. The principle of gangsterism was formally adopted by our own Government, when it demanded a special "rake-off" from all Cinema proprietors who opened their places of business on Sundays. The armoured cars may be regarded for the present as the theatrical "props" of the Fascist Party.

We said long, long ago, that a great distinction between the old ancient Rome and ourselves was that the barbarians that threatened Roman civilization were outside the Empire. The barbarians that threaten modern civilization are within its boundaries.

The "Shops (Sunday Trading) Restrictions (Scotland) Bill," at present before Parliament, aims at preventing anything to be sold on Sunday in any place but a shop, and also aims at closing shops, except for the sale of specified articles. "Shop" includes a stall, cart, or barrow. Newspaper proprietors say that if this Bill becomes law it will kill the sale of Sunday papers in Scotland. We presume that is one of the things aimed at. Sabbatarianism is a vile thing, and the country will only be safe from it when all interested make up their minds to kill it, and make resurrection impossible.

Says Dean Inge: "When I retire think of me as a Berkshire rustic cultivating his garden." There is some little difficulty in conjuring up this picture. For when a real Berkshire rustic retires he does so on the old-age pension, often supplemented by charity from needy relatives. Whereas, our clerical rustic will rusticate on the savings from a well-paid position in the service of a religion that glorified poverty.

That wonderful Revival of religion, so confidently talked of in religious circles, and by journalists writing up religion as the latest "news stunt," seems to have somehow got lost in the post. Anyway, so far as Methodism is concerned. The Rev. Dr. Rattenbury thinks that, if the Lord came in 1934, it is doubtful if Methodism would give him a welcome. Mr. Rattenbury sees "few signs either of general expectation or desire for Revival." So we are forced to the conclusion that all those glowing and colourful reports of enthusiastic religious meetings are merely the product of pious reporters' imaginations! They were just up-to-date examples of how to lie to the glory of God.

Bishop Carey of Bloemfontein has at last arrived in England and is now engaged in getting a move on with the Gospel of Christ, which has been observed to be "hanging fire," funds having dropped in quite a painful fashion. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel see that they can trust to God only with reservations, and have created a new office, that of "Chief Messenger," and appointed Dr. Carey to fill it. We called attention in this column some months ago to the fact that this prelate had stated in the South African election, that he would vote for the Coalition "even if the Archangel Gabriel came and stood against them." Strange to say this flippant language has impressed the S.P.G., for now, evidently, Gabriel has been deposed and Bishop Carey reigns in his stead.

We read in the *Canton Daily Sun* that the latest order to be imposed by the Bureau of Education in that city reads to this effect: "All primary school students in the city will henceforth be forbidden to read fairy-tales and stories tending to arouse superstition." This, of course, is only to be expected from the Heathen Chinese. Where a higher degree of civilization exists we see to it that in the elementary schools we have Simple Bible Teaching.

Simple Bible Teaching is all about jealous Gods and clever Devils, wicked witches and virgin mothers, prophets fed by ravens and conveyed to Heaven in chariots, Saviours who seek money (and find it) even in the fishes' mouth, and a menagerie of dragons, cockatrices, unicorns, satyrs, and serpents, walking, talking, fiery and winged. All this to ensure that our children grow up decent men and women. A weak hold on the idea of causation is apparently all-essential; otherwise the Church would fail and Good-bye Civilization! We have tried to introduce this into China, but the heathen in his blindness has proved, up to now, a tough proposition. Still the prospect is not altogether discouraging. Bishop Carey, Chief Messenger of the S.P.G., is going to make another effort—should funds permit—and in a few more years (who knows?) Hosannas may rend the air.

Some Members of Parliament are easily satisfied—especially if they are Christians. We seem to have heard of Unemployment and of a Housing shortage, but Mr. Isaac Foot, M.P., is "delighted" because the new Methodist Hymn Book has added to its dreary collection such poetic gems as "Mine Eyes have seen the glory of the Coming of the Lord." Mr. Foot's constituents will be interested to know that "this last hymn was sung in Westminster Abbey . . . all the leading statesmen of the country were present," and, adds Mr. Foot, "it was most interesting to see how they took their parts in that magnificent song." "Took their parts!" It is time some of them took their hooks.

The Rev. G. Beesley Austin says that "David's faith was audacious." His behaviour before the Ark was also nudist, but Mr. Austin does not mention that! He calls David audacious because David said "I shall not want." But a wealthy monarch, untroubled by Socialists or even a Parliament, was hardly likely to let himself be in want. Mr. Austin has little imagination when he says, "there is nothing more amazing in God's Book." What about Sarah's queer adventures at the age of ninety . . . but "God's Book" is full of "amazing" stories? Kings in want would be more amazing than Kings who say, "I shall not want." Even ex-Kings nowadays retire into a super-luxurious exile.

Who says that Christianity has no solution for current problems? The Rev. F. L. Wiseman, in his Presidential Address to the Methodist Church says, "I am convinced that the best and shortest way to social reform is through spiritual regeneration." Get born again, and presumably of richer parents! Mr. Wiseman thinks "the supreme need of the hour is for better Christians." We do not agree with the need, for the better the Christian the less worthy the man. But after such a confession it needs supreme impudence for Mr. Wiseman to pretend that "the future is with the followers of the Christ." Lenin was right: religion will never be anything but dope.

As referred to in these columns last week, strengthening the foundations of Christ Church, Consett, appears to be a full time job for Special Providence. Fire broke out at Castle Frome Church, one of Hertfordshire's prettiest buildings, on Saturday night, and destroyed the chancel, the beautiful altar and the organ.

Outside London's smallest church, St. Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate, the dial of its old clock is being reconditioned. Inside, we venture to say, a new face is being put on to the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE following is a specimen of a Christian bill sent into our office:—

DAMNATION.

"Except ye Repent, Ye shall all likewise perish."

YOU

Atheists, Sceptics, Freethinkers, Infidels, Blasphemers, Blackguards and bullies, Convicted sinners; but not converted Drunkards and Demo(n)crats, Enemies of Christ and God. Fornicators or unclean persons, Gamblers on Race-courses, Tap or Drawing Rooms. Hypocrites that pretend to be what they are not. Impostors at Churches, Chapels, Mission Rooms, etc. Janglers of Clerkenwell Green. Liars of course shall and will have their part in the Lake. Murderers of Women and Children, by neglect as well as violence.

Pharisees should read the ten woes of Matthew xxiii.

Ritualists should read Col. ii. 8-23.

Swearers delighting in filthy talk.

Thieves that rob employers of their time—beer-drinking lazy sneaks.

Unbelievers that make my God a Liar.

Villians (?) of the deepest dye that are among us.

Whosoever is not found in the Book of Life,

I TELL YOU, WILL BE CAST INTO

THE LAKE OF FIRE.

You cannot say you have not been WARNED.

Witness my Signature

Year of Grace, 1884

WM. CATLIN, S.S.

The "Freethinker," January 20, 1884.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL :

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- J. C. EDWARDS.—Thanks for good wishes from yourself and friends, which we warmly reciprocate.
- C. S. MARTIN.—Pleased to hear from a new reader who finds the *Freethinker* both instructive and interesting.
- A. HANSON (Hong Kong).—Thanks for your New Year's good wishes.
- J. ROWLAND.—Thanks. Will publish soon.
- R. WILLIAMS.—Mr. Cohen has never debated with the person you name. If there is anything in it, it probably means that he offered some opposition, or asked a question, at the end of a lecture.
- G. DAWES.—Thanks for excerpts. They will be useful.
- J. C. KEAST.—We are not surprised the *Christian World* declined your letter. Straightforward attacks on religious ideas are naturally not welcome to a Christian newspaper.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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."

Sugar Plums.

We take this opportunity of reminding all concerned that applications for tickets (8s.) for the *National Secular Society's* Annual Dinner on Saturday, February 3 should be made at once. The number of diners must be fixed by January 30. There will be the usual excellent concert, some new features here are likely, and there will be speeches. The place will be the *Holborn Restaurant*, so that a good dinner is also assured. A good gathering of provincial friends is anticipated. Dinner will be served at 7.0. The Reception will be at 6.30.

To-day (January 21) Mr Cohen will speak in the *McLellan Galleries*, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, at 7.0, on "Is Christianity Played Out." Admission will be free, but there will be reserved seats at one shilling each.

May we remind our readers of the fact that all subscriptions for membership to the *N.S.S.* are due on January 1. This applies to old members, and also to new ones. We should like to see all the old members renew before the end of the month, and also a goodly number of new members registered. One of our contributors expresses his surprise that all *Freethinking* readers of this paper are not already members of the *N.S.S.* So should we be if we were not familiar with the fact. The *N.S.S.* does not tout for members, and issues

no private invitations for anyone to join. All the same, we regard it as the duty of all convinced *Freethinkers* to join, and agree with our correspondent that those who do not join are inadvertently lending a helping hand to our opponents. This hint ought to be enough to a number of people.

The following is taken from the *Manchester Evening News* :—

FIGHTERS FOR FREEDOM.

In writing *Bradlaugh and Ingersoll* (*Pioneer Press*, 2s. 6d.) Mr. Chapman Cohen has brought together in one volume biographies of the Puritan and Cavalier of the *Freethought* movement. It is a small book, necessarily inadequate for the final appraisal of the two men and their work, but it is certainly a most intriguing study in the contrasts of two campaigners for freedom.

Bradlaugh, made a martyr for his opinions while still in his teens, was hardened by experience for a life of uncompromising struggle. He was stern, unbending, humourless, direct. His weapon was often the bludgeon, forced into his hands by the bigotry of opponents. Ingersoll, on the other hand, was a man of natural talents, great good humour and graciousness. His stars—oh terribly non-materialistic thought!—decreed success and popularity.

His platform oratory had often the beauty of poetry. He smiled in battle and was smiled upon. There was but one contact between these two men—their common passion for freedom and their common hatred of privilege. Mr. Cohen, their disciple of the religion of unbelief, has done admirably in delineating the twin pontiffs so well in such brief space.

There is another lengthy review in the *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, and a briefer one in the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*.

We must congratulate Mr. Winston Churchill on having made a breach in the B.B.C. censorship. He insisted on being his own censor, and after much struggle the parsons, and other self-appointed directors of the public conscience, have been compelled to give way, and Mr. Churchill delivered an uncensored speech. Perhaps other public men will now have the courage to insist on a like freedom, particularly in the case of the bogus debates, which are carefully rehearsed beforehand. For the time being we may divide B.B.C. speakers into the following classes :—

1. Those who value their independence and dignity enough to decline to submit to censorship.
2. Those who value publicity more than dignity and independence.
3. Those who don't care a damn about their independence or duty to the public so long as the B.B.C. fees are forthcoming.

At present every speaker is suspect of not saying all he believes on the subject on which he is speaking, or of suppressing much that he would like to say. And it is idle to say that the speech submitted was not censored. The Roman Church knows that when a thing is written for a censorship, it has been censored before it is submitted.

With unquestionable courage, although with perhaps questionable discretion, the *West London Branch* continues its open-air meetings in *Hyde Park* right through the winter. Nearly three hundred meetings were held during 1933. The Hon. Organizer, Mr. B. A. Lemaire, says the Branch does not receive the financial support it deserves, which we can readily believe. The Secretary's address is 26 Edgware Road, Marble Arch. Perhaps some of our readers will take the hint.

The *Freethinker* for 1933, strongly bound in cloth, gilt-lettered and with title-page, will be ready in a few days. As 1933 was the Centenary Year of Bradlaugh and Ingersoll the volume will have a very special interest to *Freethinkers*. As for some years now the available copies have been rapidly exhausted, those who require the volume should send their order without delay. The price is 17s. 6d., plus 1s. postage. Orders will be executed in rotation.

The Chester Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged a meeting for to-day (January 21) to take place in The People's Hall, Delamere Street, at 7.0. The speaker will be Mr. W. J. Paul, subject "Religion in Soviet Russia." We hope that local Freethinkers will give this Branch their fullest support. Freethought propaganda in Chester cannot be too easy a task at the best.

Charles Smith, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, has been challenged to debate by Miss Aimee Semple McPherson Hutton. Of course Mr. Smith has accepted, and the debate will take place shortly in the huge Tabernacle at Seattle (Washington State). Seattle by the way is the largest City in Washington, but is not the State Capital.

The Problem Child.

By A. S. Neill. Published by Herbert Jenkins, Ltd.

THE subject of upbringing has this in common with religion: that everyone thinks he knows all about it. So forcibly does the egoist in the average man exhibit itself, that he not only feels entirely capable of bringing up children, but fondly imagines his way to be superior to all others. Actually it would appear that there is no subject on which such a degree of general ignorance prevails. The situation is deplorable. Every little jobbing paterfamilias will buy a book on wireless before he begins to tinker with his own set, but who ever thinks of buying a book on children before he starts tinkering with his own? Yet the damaged wireless set is infinitely easier to mend than the damaged child. Mr. A. S. Neill has written a book called, *The Problem Child.* It should be read by all parents. In it are to be found truths which most Freethinkers might have guessed, and probably have guessed, long ago; but it is hailed by the Press alternately as a revelation and a challenge. It has been described as "the most heretical book on education that has appeared in recent times," but it is justly credited as "the results of Mr. Neill's long experience."

Among many profoundly significant points made by the author, one takes a place of paramount importance; it is that the manufacture of a conscience is one of the most damaging processes to which a child is ever submitted, for it is the cardinal method of producing conflict and therefore neurosis. How could this be otherwise?

Is not conflict the very essence of conscience? The conscience which conflicts with nothing is not operating at all, and in-so-much is non-existent. Conscience, by the agreement of common parlance, shows itself in the form of a "prick." It is thus nothing more nor less than a sharp instrument with which to perform a surgical operation on desire. It is a thorn in the flesh that hurts every time we move in the direction of a forbidden wish, and Mr. Neill tells us that it is not so much the voice of the tribe within us as the voice of the parent raised in moral instruction. What then are we to say of a religion that starts out with the axiom that we are essentially bad, and must become good by training? Surely that it is a religion of conscience from start to finish. Our every wish, left to itself, is wrongful, and conscience becomes the only means of avoiding evil. We must carry about this knife in our pockets and jab ourselves with it every time we desire something, until the very pain deflects us from the wrong path. The doctrine of original sin emerges in the ugly light of a doctrine of psycho-neurosis.

It is evident from his book that Mr. Neill is not an Atheist, or at least would not call himself one,

but it is equally evident that he is a fearless and honest man. He opens up his chapter on religion with the following bombshell: "The most neurotic children are those who have had a religious upbringing." And a few lines after, "Religious instruction is fatal to the child's psyche, for religions of all kinds accept the idea of original sin." He goes on to show us how the unfulfilled wish, repressed and crushed back into the unconscious by the operation of conscience, simmers there in a poignant conflict, ultimately to emerge in the form of a neurotic symptom, frequently anti-social. He protests with vigour and, one feels, with indignation, that children are not bad but good. He shows how it is possible to let aberrant wishes, of which there must be some, live themselves out to a natural death and leave the psyche to pass on to a further stage of social development, if only we will preserve the child, during this process, from the pathological assault of conscience. The book is full of first-hand knowledge, wisdom and hope, and is coloured throughout with the warm tones of a tender humanity. It sounds the note of the future, and all who are imbued with the spirit of onward movement should read it.

To numberless people conscience will be presented in the startling light of something which, far from keeping us good, actually makes us bad, or if not bad, then ill. This will doubtless shock them, but if they are thoughtful it will be found arresting and should deeply affect their philosophy.

MEDICUS.

The Spirits' Autumnal Return.

AMONG all the peoples of Indo-European descent traces of a prehistoric ancestor-worship survive. The Feast of All Souls, still celebrated in Catholic lands, is clearly related to this cult. This solemn observance in its Christian disguise has a curious history. In France and Germany a feast of All Saints was instituted in 835 A.D., about a century before the inception of the Feast of All Souls. The Roman Church, realizing the difficulty of eradicating the ancient heathen custom, strove to deflect the adoration of the dead towards prostration to Christian saints. This attempt completely miscarried and, about a hundred years later, the Festival of All Souls was substituted for that of All Saints. This compromise proved more successful, and while the Saints' Feast was celebrated on the first of November, the Souls were honoured on the second day of that month. Thus, despite its Catholic veneer, the cult of ancestor-worship has proved victorious. For, to this day, in every Catholic country this solemn festival preserves a seriousness that no secular consideration is permitted to disturb. As Herzog and Plitt observe: "It is then the sacred duty of the survivors to visit the graves of their loved ones in the churchyard, to deck them with flowers and lights, and to utter a devout prayer—a pious custom with which in cities like Paris and Vienna even the gay and frivolous comply for the sake of appearance, if not to satisfy an impulse of the heart."

Alike in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres an annual commemoration of the dead has been universal. With American Indians, ancient Mexicans, the natives of India, China, Cambodia and Japan; in ancient Egypt, Assyria, Greece and Rome; in mediæval and modern Europe the custom may be traced. The belief in the autumnal return of the departed lingered in England until quite recent generations. Soul-cakes, as they were called, were eaten or given to the poor on All Souls' Day. Frazer

notes that: "In Shropshire it was customary on All Souls' Day to set on the table a high heap of soul-cakes, and most visitors to the house took one of them. The antiquary, John Aubrey, who records the custom, mentions also the appropriate verses:—

"A soul-cake, a soul-cake.
Have mercy on all Christian souls, for a soul-cake."

Indeed the custom of soul-cakes survived in Shropshire down to the latter part of the nineteenth century, and may not be extinct even now."

We gather from Burne and Jackson's *Shropshire Folk Lore* that, in that county, as late as 1883, All Souls' Day was called "Souling Day," and at that date "in many places, poor children, and sometimes men go out 'souling', which means that they go round to the houses of all the more well-to-do people within reach, reciting a ditty peculiar to the day, and looking for a dole of cakes, broken victuals, ale, apples, or money. The two latter are now the usual rewards, but there are few old Salopians who cannot remember when 'soul-cakes' were made at all the farms and bettermost houses in readiness for the day." The same custom lingered until lately in Lancashire, Cheshire, Monmouth and other countries. Down to the middle of last century impecunious peasants begged gifts of bread in Wales on All Souls'. This custom it is stated was "a survival of the Middle Ages, when the poor begged bread for the souls of their departed relatives or friends." In Yorkshire small loaves were specially prepared and sold for the occasion. Further north, in Aberdeenshire, baked cakes of a peculiar kind were presented to visitors at All Souls' anniversary. These were known by the significant name of dirge loaves.

The festival of the dead prevailed widely in Eastern Europe. In various regions in Russia the peasants combined to welcome the return of the departed. Three tables were arranged at a dwelling in each village, one outside, one in the entry, and one in the apartment, with the lighted stove all ready to receive the ghostly visitors who were, and perhaps still are ushered into the house with this greeting: "Ye are tired, our own ones, take something to eat." The invisible guests then regale themselves with the food on the tables. "Then the master of the house bids them warm themselves at the stove, remarking that they must have grown cold in the damp earth. After that the living guests sit down and eat at the tables. Towards the end of the meal the host opens the window and lets the ghosts gently out of it by means of the shroud in which they were lowered into the grave." The ghosts are then advised to go home and are bidden a fervent farewell.

In Catholic Germany and Austria soul-cakes are extensively eaten at the Feast of All Souls. The cakes were formerly offered to the spirits of the dead. In Bohemia, again, Catholics celebrate All Souls' Day with elaborate ceremony. Every family commemorates the annual return of the departed. On All Souls' Eve soul-cakes and cold milk are consumed to assuage the sufferings of the poor spirits who are still in Purgatory. When with the chiming of the church bells at night the signal has been given for the temporary release of the poor souls from their infernal prison, they again return to their old earthly habitations, to remain free from their fiery torments for the night. German scholars and folklorists assure us that "in many places people fill a lamp with butter, light it, and set it on the hearth, that with the butter the poor ghosts may anoint the burns they have received from the sulphureous and tormenting flames of Purgatory. Next morning the pealing of the church bells ringing to early mass is

the knell that bids the souls return to the place of pain, but such as have completed their penance take flight to heaven."

Doubtless the worship and propitiation of the dead were prevalent in America, before the advent of European invaders. To-day it is observed among the native population under Catholic auspices in Ecuador, for Carchi in that territory furnishes an instance where the Indians prepare a supply of food for the festival, and when the eventful day arrives, part of these provisions is conveyed to the church and set out on tables prepared for the purpose. These choice viands are reserved for the priest who celebrates mass for the repose of the departed. The service concluded, the Indians proceed to the cemetery where, with vessels of holy water, and flaming candles, they bow in humility and adoration before the tombs of their ancestors, while the Catholic priest or the sacristan proffers prayers for the spirits of the dead. Towards the close of day the celebrants return to their dwelling where a table illuminated by four lamps is furnished with solid and liquid refreshments, especially the favourite food and beverages which the mourned ones consumed during life on earth. The door stands open through the hours of darkness to permit the spirits to enter the abode and the relatives remain up to cheer their ghostly companions until the break of day. From early morn and throughout the day bands of children parade the village and its environs, and proceed from one habitation to another jingling a bell and calling aloud, "We are angels, we descend from the sky, we ask for bread." When requested, the children recite a prayer for the dead, and the Indians in the house then give the children dainties from the table. This continues through the night when, as the increasing light heralds the dawn, the family in each household finishes the food remaining up on the spirits' board. Sir James Frazer, our veteran anthropologist, suggests that these young people who wander from door to door during All Souls' Night "personate the souls of the dead who are also abroad at this time; hence to give bread to the children is the same thing as to give bread to the poor hungry souls."

Turning from imperfectly civilized and barbarous communities to purely savage society one may note the observance of seasonal commemorations of the departed in dark Africa. In the spring of the year the Dahomans of West Africa deck out a table and invite their acquaintances to dine with their departed relatives, whose spirits are believed to gather round and share the repast. "Even my interpreter," states Forbes, "who pretends to despise the belief in fetishes sets a table to his ancestors, and will tell you that his grand or great-grandfather makes a meal on this occasion which will last him to the next annual feast."

Again, two agricultural tribes who inhabit the North of Abyssinia observe an annual feast in November after the harvest is garnered. This forms a combined harvest thanksgiving and remembrance and propitiation of the dead. Consequently, the ceremony is more jovial than mournful. Beer flows in abundance; the granaries are well stored; so there is ample provision both for the quick and the dead.

T. F. PALMER.

The actual fact, strange though it may seem, is that no persons are so little likely to submit to a passage of Scripture not to their fancy, as those who are the most positive on the subject of its general inspiration.

John Ruskin.

What is Philosophy?

[In this slight article Mr. Swagglus Duffer handles in his happily-inimitable way the problem that has baffled untold millions of honest Christian souls ever since Christianity shed its mental, moral, and supernatural effulgence upon a world darkened by pagan orgies and cold rationalism. Mr. Duffer has no sympathy with other than Christian solutions; he knows the danger of mere thought, the pitfalls of mere intelligence, the transitory nature of mere reasoning. He writes for the poor in spirit, the feeble in intelligence, the backward in opinion. In this way he reaches that great, Christian, Patriotic, average public that hails him as Master, swallows his outpourings, and buys the papers that have the honour to publish his writings.]

It is an old and famous saying that the metaphysician is as a blind man seeking in the dark for a black hat that isn't there. Proudly and finally may it be here asserted, that that black hat that isn't there is the very hat where-through Mr. Duffer is about to talk.—V.B.N.]

PHILOSOPHY is a game of How, When, and Where, played on paper by people who have University degrees. It doesn't really matter how dismally dull you may be mentally, so long as you have an M.A., D.D., Ph.D., or anything like that, after your name. Degrees transform intellect—the fact is notorious—even as coats transform character.

The great poet George Macdonald struck the keynote when he propounded his immortal and unanswerable query, "Where do you come from, Baby dear?"

The answer to that is not, as they say colloquially, a lemon, but a philosophy. Practically any philosophy will do. As nobody knows the correct answer, we form a philosophy; a philosophy is the University term for a guess. And we can all go on guessing for as long as we like, without extra charge, for as long as life and breath hold out.

Great is the mystery of Godliness; greater the mystery of philosophy. Thousands of ponderous tomes in all tongues, living and dead, have been penned by professors of the science of philosophy. It speaks volumes for the profundity of that eternal study that we know no more—or very little more, anyhow—about it now than we did before those mountains of papyrus and paper were virgin, and all the bald heads of the theory-perpetrators were thickly sown with the downy—very downy—locks of youth.

How fascinatingly elusive—how fairylike in their agility—are the terms used so freely and contradictorily in the transcendentalisms of philosophy; for the first time I make things (if I may call such divine abstractions "things," indeed) clear. Listen, beloved reader:—

Time and place are accidents, personality is a variable, and truth is relative; so it follows that, transcendently speaking, it doesn't really matter so very much whom or what we put for whom or which.

In a single flash of illumination, in one spasm of inspiration, we can thus grasp the all-elusive thing-in-itself, our old and hefty friend the Noumenon—bless it—and squeeze the life out of it with our left hand; even while we pen its autobiography with our right.

Thus, with full hands, a warm heart, and a soul palpitating with undigested emotion blended with streaks of transcendental piety, fresh life-force can be infused into philosophy, more vim into transcendentalism, and the whole sphere of metaphysical speculation can be unrolled before the grovelling materialist who regards the world as a mere lump of the Cosmos rolling to decay in the womb of a Godless and amoral and non-spiritual chaos.

What could be clearer? What argument is valid against this royally-rapturous reality that some of us

call goodness, others, godliness, and that the rest of us prefer to label "God"; purely, simply, and finally?

Let us lapse for a moment into Theology. Here we are, "Souls clad in a garment of flesh," as my friend, the Reverend Jeremiah Wovser so beautifully and originally observes in his exquisite "Souls and Coals; a journey 'twixt Hell and Heaven."

What is flesh? The same reverend and revered writer, genius that he is, answers his own strange and subtle question; thus: "Flesh is the outer covering of the Divine Essence, made ponderable to human cognisance, and amenable to the discipline imposed upon it from without by the infinitely graded universe of matter, subject always to Free-will, which is the same thing, reflected in human minds, as the will of God."

And now, what is "soul"? Soul, according to the saintly and lucid Theologian already named, is "the inner pith of man, breathed-on to perfection by the Divine Spirit, angelically seeded, called of God, and heir to the Cosmos."

What could be clearer? Nothing; except, regrettably, though possibly, to those voluntarily-blind souls so sunk in grovelling materialism that they try—poor fools—to insist upon the exact meaning of words. But what are mere words to me? Practically nothing, as regards meaning; though everything as touching emolument. I can write thousands of words an hour, at ten minutes' notice, upon any subject whatever; and words, mark you, so cunningly disposed, and so strangely ambiguous, that they have no real meaning of any kind.

Clearly it is I, of all modern writers, who am most fitted, both by nature and occupation, to expatiate upon, and to expound, hitherto vague subjects like metaphysics and theology.

Metaphysics form the religion of the moony-minded; too fastidious spiritually to join the Salvation Army, excellent and spiritual as that intensely Christian organization may be; too original mentally to be content with the plain and homely Gospel-fare dispensed—say—by the Wesleyan Methodists; these rare and enquiring souls need something stranger, finer, subtler; some divinely-hued web-of-wordcraft, coloured by the rainbow-prism of the reflection of the One Great Mind that illuminates the Cosmos.

So it is just here that I come in; mere meaning is nothing to the True Mystic, who wanders dreamily from suggestion to suggestion; until he falls in soul-separate wonder before the Divine Simulacrum that shadows-forth the holy essence of transcendental Godhead to merely mortal mind.

It may well enough be that no merely human being can understand fully this utterly-incomprehensible Mystery; but—God be praised!—we can all, if we like, go on spinning words into sentences that have no mortal meaning; but are, nevertheless, webs of white-hued beauty wherein the souls of the pious are enmeshed to the exceeding glory of God, and the Higher Angelic Powers.

Well; there we are. It may be that we shall never fully understand. But, after all, mere human reason is allied to carnality; the brain is a poor sort of instrument for God to instruct. Let us, therefore, return to that dear old Divine Incomprehensible Mystery that either is or is not God, according to our personal and individual spiritual development in the sight of Him before whom we are but worms, dust and blighted divinity.

Mere words are nothing to express what cannot be said; but that is no reason why we should not go on talking about it to the Greater Glory of God.

SWAGGLUS DUFFER.

**"Monstrous" Scepticism
of Sir Arthur Keith.**

"I have come to the conclusion that the existence or non-existence of the Loch Ness monster is not a problem for zoologists, but for psychologists."—From an article by Sir Arthur Keith.

FROM a glance at the title you'll probably guess
We've arrived on the banks of Loch Ness.
With our interest roused in the way it has been
By the prodigies people attest they have seen,
You'll admit we can hardly do less.

The Monster appears in all shapes and all sizes
Defying our expert surmises.
It has knobs on and blobs on and ridges and lumps,
And a tail like a snail, and some hummocks and
 humps;
For the creature is full of surprises.

Sir Arthur's opinion thus comes as a shock;
He's rejected the Monster *en bloc*.
With the evidence furnished by people galore
That they've seen it disporting itself on the shore,
This gives us a bit of a knock.

But Sir Arthur is adamant, sticks to his guns
Against evidence measured in tons.
He says in assessing the pros and the cons
We have got to remember the Angels of Mons;
And that's how his reasoning runs.

To conquer illusions we all may attempt,
But he tells us that none is exempt.
The thousands who witnessed contingents of
 Russians
Transported through England to fight with the
 Prussians
Were thinking of something they dreamt.

He tells us he lived as a boy by the Loch,
In the land of the reel and the "Hoch!";
Knew folks who'd seen kelpies and elves by the
 score,
So the evidence does not evoke from him more
Than a single contemptuous "Och!"

But in skitting at Scots we admit we have been
Perhaps just a little bit mean;
For still in old England our memory itches
With incontrovertible stories of witches
That millions of people had *seen*.

But halt! If to skitting we grow too inured
It might spread to such places as Lourdes.
Then what if the pilgrims, their sceptic rapacity,
Challenging even *this* Holy Veracity,
Doubted the way they were cured?

So enough. Bid adieu to old Plesiosaurus
Before he commences to bore us;
And spare the old beast a too scornful indictment;
At least he's provided a bit of excitement
To brighten the dull days before us.

TWINKLE.

But the age of the Wycliffes, Cobhams, Arundels,
Becketts; of the Latimers, Moores, Crammers; of the
Taylors, Leightons, Herberts; of the Sherlocks and
Butlers, is gone for ever. Silent revolutions in opinion
have made it impossible that men like these should re-
turn, or find a place in their once sacred stalls. The
spirit that dwells in this church has glided away to ani-
mate other activities; and they who come to the old
shrines find apes and players rustling the old garments.

Emerson.

Nature.

To me there is nothing outside what the word "nature" signifies, but an indefinite and inadequate description of everything. Nothing can exist *outside* of everything, for everything includes *all*, leaving nothing excluded. That is what I mean by "nature," and so, all being natural, nothing is supernatural. For were there what is termed supernatural beings, or being, these would not be really so; but quite natural themselves, or itself. In fact they would be included in what I call "nature," whether they directed it or not, for they would depend upon what we agree to call nature for their field of operation and manifestation. It is a truth of truths that if there is a "God," a "Supernatural Being" who directs "nature," then we can only understand "Him" as manifested in the order of the universe—we can only apprehend "Him" through the veil of nature, natural laws conforming to the "Will of God," assuming, of course, that there is a "God." But we cannot pass beyond what is "natural" to us, and, everything being so, we have no earthly right to assume else.

Everything conforms to law, though law is not known to *impersonal* nature itself; but consciously or unconsciously, whether the thing be a man or a stone, the being or thing obeys the laws of its natures and laws of surrounding things.

Whether "God" is mocked or not, I do not know; but I'm certain that the laws of nature, or abstractions of the idiosyncracies and behaviours of natural substances which occur the same in the same circumstances, are not mocked by either man or beast.

But in nature, apart from the mind of man, or any being like him, there exist no such abstract recognitions as we call laws any more than cause and effect exist for it.

Nature is a continuum where what is chance to us is law; where what is still to us is moving; where breaks of natural occurrence into cause and effect are unbroken; where subject and object are interchangeable—are united as one. All our convenient divisions are non-existent in nature. All is necessity that truly knows no law.

We must remember, always, that we are but part of nature, and that cause and effect, subject and object, necessity and chance, matter and space, motion and inertia, force and energy, life and mind, and a thousand and one necessary categories are merely our mind's doing—are modes of our thinking mind, are, in a way, our aspect of nature.

We think we must have a First Cause, because we think we see cause and effect in nature. The theologian argues that this First Cause is "his God"; and in the "Bible" we find Solomon saying: "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." I say, on observing that the First Cause vanishes with cause and effect: "the fool hath said in his heart there is a God." The fact is, "God" is a complete non-essential when nature is viewed as a "continuum" that negates cause and effect. Kant's "categories of the mind" is, no doubt, correct—we do as a clear matter of fact think ourselves behind the universe and forget, all the time, that we are merely speculating on nature subjectively.

On this view, "God" is not and never can be a deduction from knowable objects in nature. "God" is a deduction from our own ability to rearrange matter according to subjective plans, and from our thinking that the universe must have been shaped by a being like ourselves. "He" is a pure exaggeration of the imagination, made possible by our erroneously deducing cause and effect where actually we are observing a continuous process of natural activity in parts, just as we see a cinematograph film in parts, but know that it is a continuous strip of celluloid.

When we further remember that in nature everything is evolving and devolving—never stopping but always becoming or decaying to start becoming again—we see how a break would prevent any further progress in that evolution of natural things, which must go on.

A. KIRKMAN.

Correspondence.

BRADLAUGH AND "ONE EXISTENCE."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR.—Your rejoinder to Mr. Taylor refutes the nonsense of those who believe the *Freethinker* is still serving the fare it did fifty years ago. The old materialists left a good deal to clear up, and you are doing it most effectively. Of course, if they had solved everything you wouldn't be a thinker; you would be like a parson retailing old teachings, except that yours would not be false.

We ancients have all echoed Spinoza, with his "one substance and phenomena, its modes and attributes"; but if, as Mr. Taylor says, Bradlaugh did not affirm existence and phenomena, let us give him credit for it. You say Bradlaugh was guilty of confusion in sometimes speaking of existence as something in itself, and at other times as the sum of phenomena.

Did Bradlaugh do this off and on throughout his life, or was the second definition an emendation of Spinoza and adhered to after his first proclaiming it?

Really so many giant intellects have laboured and brought forth explanations of existence that still require further explanations to explain their explanations, that I suggest you offer a prize of one of your works, to your readers, for the best definition of existence.

I append one, not for competition, as I might evolve something more succinct. "Existence is the totality of possibilities experiencable by consciousness (if any), and outside consciousness, wherever possible—if possible—with due allowance for marginal error."

H. IRVING.

[We do not think there was any alteration whatever in Bradlaugh's thought about the question. At first he used the exact words of Spinoza, and towards the end of his life (*Doubts in Dialogue*) he expresses the same idea by affirming "one existence," explaining that the difference between his one existence and that of the pantheist is that his *pan* was without *theos*. There is no need for a man who believes in phenomena only to affirm a "one," nor is it necessary to Atheism. It is, to us, quite clear, that Bradlaugh was following the line that had been travelled since the days when the Greeks introduced a something existing apart from phenomena, and which has persisted down to the modern ambiguous and ghost-like "Reality" of current theological philosophy. "One existence" cannot be used as an equivalent of "nothing exists but phenomena," and "I know nothing but phenomena" does not include "one existence." We have tried a simpler analysis of the situation in our *Materialism Re-stated*, which we are glad to see is finding imitators—as usual without acknowledgment.—EDITOR.]

We have received a letter from Mr. Taylor too late for insertion in this issue. It will appear next week.

A CORRECTION.

SIR.—In your review of my book, *The Rock of Truth*, last week, you refer to a blunder I have made in attributing to Paul the statement that Jesus was hanged on a tree. I am quite correct, as in Acts 13 and 29 this remark is attributed to Paul.

I am sorry your reviewer cannot accept my views with regard to the Etheric World, but if he had read my book, *On the Edge of the Etheric*, of which *The Rock of Truth* is a continuation, he might have been able to accept my position, or at least be willing to admit that I had put up a very strong case in support of the belief in survival, and another world to which we pass at death.

J. ARTHUR FINDLAY.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JANUARY 12, 1934.

THE President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Hornibrook, Clifton, Wood, Silvester, Ebury, L. M. Werry-Easterbrook, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. The monthly Financial Statement was presented. New members were admitted to Blackburn, Seaham, S. Shields, N. Shields Branches, and the Parent Society. Permis-

sion was given for the formation of a Branch of the Society at North Shields. Permission was given for altering the name of the Bethnal Green Branch to the Bethnal Green and Hackney Branch N.S.S.

The Committee appointed to examine the Principles and Objects of the N.S.S. reported progress. Reports were noted from Newcastle, Birmingham, Bradford, Mr. J. T. Brighton, and the International Federation. Details connected with the Annual Dinner were discussed and instructions given. The Secretary reported that the Caxton Hall had been booked for a Social to be held on Saturday evening, March 3. The Secretary received instructions concerning the Annual Conference. The meeting then closed.

The next meeting of the Executive will be held on February 23, 1934.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

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.

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.

INDOOR.

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, January 22, Mr. J. Marchi—"Is the Soviet Government a Dictatorship?"

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Reggiori's Restaurant, 1 Euston Road, opposite King's Cross Station): 7.30,—"The Pet Bee in my Bonnet is—" Six Speakers; ten minutes each.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Hall No. 5, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. P. Goldman—"A Freethinker's View of Christianity."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Gerald Heard—"The Growth of Sensibility."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.30, Mr. F. Maughan (Bolton)—"What is to be Done?" Catholics and members with Catholic friends specially invited to this lecture.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Commercial Hotel, Godwin Street): 7.0, Mr. H. L. Searle—"Conduct and Morality."

CHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Peoples' Hall, Delamere Street, Chester): 7.0, Mr. W. J. Paul—"Religion in Soviet Russia."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Thompson (Nelson)—"The Denizens of the Deep."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, M'Lellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. Chapman Cohen—"Is Christianity Played Out?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, C. McKelvie (Liverpool)—"The Rebel."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Clarion Cafe, Market Street, Manchester): 7.30, Mr. F. E. Monks (Manchester)—"God as a Fiction."

NORTH SHIELDS (Labour Social Hall): 7.0, Thursday, January 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"The Warfare Between Science and Religion."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Hall 5, Drake Circus): 7.0, Mr. A. E. Knowles—A Talk.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Central Hall, Chapter Row): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Christian Science."

SUNDERLAND: Tuesday, January 23, Mr. J. T. Brighton. Discussion Class.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.15, Mr. Allan Flanders—"Catholicism and Fascism."

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