

# THE FREETHINKER

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

Views and Opinions

(Concluded from p. 227.)

**Atheism or Agnosticism?**

SIR LESLIE STEPHEN may be taken as one of the most distinguished defenders of the Agnosticism set forth by Professor T. H. Huxley. Their followers have done little more than repeat their arguments—more or less feebly, but none have done anything to clear up the original mis-statements and confusions. In his *An Agnostic's Apology*, Sir Leslie sets out his reasons for adopting "Agnosticism" in preference to "Atheism":—

It indicates an advance in the courtesies of controversy. The old theological phrase for an intellectual opponent was Atheist—a name which *still retains* a certain flavour of the stake in this world and hell-fire in the next. Dogmatic Atheism, the doctrine that there is no God, is, to say the least of it, a rare phase of opinion. The Agnostic is one who affirms, *what no one denies*, that there are limits to human thought.

I think the two phrases italicized show quite clearly the cause of Sir Leslie's preference for Agnosticism. The word Atheism still arouses antagonism in a world where religious intolerance is apt to make itself felt. On the other hand to affirm what no one denies ought not to bring one into trouble. You cover your disagreement by laying stress on your agreement with current opinion. It is a very common mental attitude, but hardly heroic. Real pioneers should be made of sterner stuff.

The confusion grows worse as the explanation and justification of Agnosticism proceeds. Agnosticism is preferred to Atheism, because it adds to the courtesies of controversy. Whether it adds to the clarity and profit of controversy is not considered. But we may note that the discourtesies of controversy did not come from the Atheist, but from the Theist. It was he who denied the right of the Atheist to voice his disagreement with Theism, and who wielded all the historic religious weapons of slander, vituperation and falsehood when the Atheist insisted

on speech. All the initial discourtesies, at least, were on one side. The Theist remains unchanged. He does not express regret for his discourtesy, he does not really behave himself better—save that he does not frame his discourtesies in such vulgar language. So the Agnostic calls on the Atheist to improve the "courtesies of controversy" by dropping a term which is a plain statement of his position, and adopting another one which serves to disguise his real position. So might the relations between the burglar and the householder be improved if the latter would leave his door unbolted at night. I hardly think that Sir Leslie could have meant all he said. Probably he meant the *comforts* of controversy; and I agree that one may live more comfortably with the Christian if one conceals one's real opinions. Only I would very humbly suggest that in controversy the first concern should be, not for comfort, or even for what the one we are attacking may determine to be courtesy; the first thing for which we should seek is accuracy.

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**An Ancient Bugbear**

I do not know what Sir Leslie means by "dogmatic Atheism." A dogmatic opinion is one that is expressed *ex cathedra*, and which does not allow discussion. Surely that is the last thing that can be affirmed of Atheism. It almost looks as though Sir Leslie was so impressed by the need for being courteous to Godites, that he did not mind their calling Atheists names, a practice that is hardly advancing the courtesies of controversy—so far as the Atheist is concerned. But, of course, it may be that heretical minorities have no right either to demand or to expect courtesy of any kind.

As to denying the existence of God, one can only say, as Bradlaugh so frequently asked his opponents, how can a man deny a thing of which he can form no conception whatever? Denial and affirmation can only be made concerning definite mental conceptions. One must either affirm or deny some-thing, one cannot deny no-thing. Abstract terms are fictional, not concrete existences. They are of value only so far as they summarise the essential qualities of the definite things with which we are dealing. Thus, there is no such thing as the abstraction "tree," but there are all sorts of particular trees—apple, pear, beech, oak, etc. So if anyone asks whether I believe in the existence of "tree," I answer, yes, meaning by that a number of particular objects, which I summarize under the general term by noting that they possess some features in common. But if I were to deny the existence of particular trees, I fail to see how I could honestly and intelligibly deny that I must at the same time negate the relevancy of the generalization that is based upon these particular existences. I must deny the existence of the general so soon as I deny the existence of the particular. On the other hand,

to ask whether I refuse to admit the existence of a "tree" which is not similar in kind to the "tree" I know, is voicing mere gibberish.

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#### Much ado about Nothing

Now we are in exactly this position with regard to God. There are scores, hundreds of particular gods in the world. From the savage to Professor Jeans they come before us in battalions; gods of all sorts of qualities, sizes and colours. And "God" as an abstract term stands to the gods of religion as does "tree" to particular trees. The abstract is always a generalization based on the concrete; the general cannot have an existence apart from the particular. But neither Professor Huxley, nor Sir Leslie Stephen, nor any other Agnostic, has the slightest hesitation in denying the existence of each and every one of these particular gods. What, then, does the Agnostic mean by saying that he does not deny the existence of "God" in precisely the sense in which every Atheist has denied God? The Atheist and the Agnostic do deny the existence of the particular Gods as they pass before them. But the Agnostic persists that he will not deny the existence of "God," which by itself, unspecified, undefined, unparticularized, means exactly nothing at all. As a matter of fact, while polytheism may believe in a number of Gods, monotheism is bound to deny the existence of every God but one. It seems that it is in treating all gods alike that the Atheist breaks the courtesies of controversy.

Sir Leslie Stephen's attempt to outdo the confusions of Huxley does not end here. Agnosticism, he says, affirms what no one denies. Then why take the trouble to affirm it? Why write an "Apology" to defend what no one dreams of attacking? This may be courteous, but it is certainly not controversy. Was Huxley merely "pulling our leg" when he pictured himself as pondering the "problem of existence," when all he meant to say was what no one ever thought of denying? When the fabled mountain laboured it did at least bring forth a mouse. But the Agnostic mountain had not even a flea to show; it simply labours.

And what is the statement that is produced after so much brain-work? It is that there are limits to human intelligence. It is quite evident that there are limits to an agnostical sense of humour. One becomes just a trifle suspicious that the Agnostic is not here saying what he means—perhaps it would not be courteous to say it. One feels certain that while the Agnostic says one thing he really means another. He asserts that the limits—he really means the conditions—of human intelligence are such that we cannot know (he means, conceive) anything about a God, and further that no conceivable growth in knowledge can alter this fact. The Agnostic does not say merely "I do not (he means 'cannot') know anything about a God, he says to the Theist, 'you do not know either.'" His assertion of Agnosticism issues in complete irrelevancy or stupidity, unless he affirms Atheism in stating his Agnosticism.

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#### Can We suspend Judgment?

There is one other statement made in defence of Agnosticism that deserves a little attention. It is asserted by some that Agnosticism is superior to Atheism because it stands for a suspension of judgment. We suspend judgment when we lack enough evidence to come to a decision on one side or another. But the subject about which we are to suspend judgment must be known. In this instance the whole

case for the Agnostic rests on the unintelligibility of the particular proposition—God. You can suspend judgment on the proposition as to whether life exists in Mars, or whether the world exists apart from my consciousness, because here "life" equals the sum of certain known phenomena, and "world" equals colour, shape, mass, weight, etc., and the issue is whether these things exist in certain given circumstances. But the Agnostic does not say, I grant the existence of a God, but am Agnostic concerning what exactly he is like. In this latter case he would be a Theist. He says I am Agnostic of the existence of the thing you are talking about because the word "God" means nothing to me apart from the particular Gods that are believed in by certain religions. The conditions necessary to a suspension of judgment do not exist. A suspension of judgment can only be made when there exists some knowledge of the existence of the thing in question. We cannot suspend judgment concerning an inconceivable proposition. It is evidence of intellectual rashness to come to a decision without adequate evidence. It is also wise to practise the rule "In matters of the intellect do not pretend that conclusions are certain that are not demonstrated or demonstrable," but it is committing intellectual suicide to say, "I suspend judgment concerning a thing, the meaning of which I have not the slightest comprehension." It is treating the wildest, the most nonsensical of nonsense rhymes as an essay in mathematics.

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#### A Great Illusion

One final consideration must be set forth. It is one with which I have often dealt, but have never hitherto persuaded either Agnostic or Theist to attempt an answer. This consideration is the scientific agreement of all scientific investigators that the belief in God represents a "psychological blunder." It is the explanation of natural phenomena given by the primitive human mind, and through various changes and modifications fronting us in the established religions of the world. The belief in gods and spirits, the supernatural generally, represents the primitive interpretation of the world as opposed to the modern scientific one.

Now, socially, we may find it possible to run with the hare and keep in with the hounds. It may be possible to profess profound respect for religion while all the time treating it as of no account whatever. But you cannot maintain this attitude intellectually. You cannot say, "I know the interpretation given of the world by the savage to be false, but I also believe that it may be true." To say this would be too much for even those who wish to have tails to match the other foxes, or for those who are anxious to maintain the decencies of controversy. Logically, you must either accept the data on which religion is based, or you must reject the data, in which case the rejection follows.

But if the story of anthropological science be true, there is no room for Agnosticism with regard to the belief in Gods. The Gods are all of a piece with witches and fairies, angels and devils; they have the same origin, and none have a better title to existence than the other. Otherwise the Agnostic must revise his rule and say "In matters of the intellect do not pretend that conclusions are certain that are not demonstrated or demonstrable—*save in matters of religion, where we are justified in saying that even though we know conclusions to have been drawn from admittedly false premisses, yet we may not say that they are wrong.*"

## Who is Deceived ?

On the whole I do not think that Sir Leslie Stephen and other Agnostics fare any better than does Professor Huxley as exponents of Agnosticism. In all of them the desire to avoid breaking with religion is painfully obvious. All of them might have gone to the Rev. Professor Flint for the information, that :—

The word Atheism is a thoroughly honest, unambiguous term. It means that one does not believe in God, and it means neither more nor less.

Strange that one has to send certain unbelievers to a Christian clergyman for a lesson in intellectual straightforwardness. Not that the average Christian is so easily fooled as the Agnostic appears to believe. The Christian knows that Agnosticism means, finally, Atheism. But it suits his game to pit the Agnostic against the Atheist, and to ignore the evident truth that the Agnostic is, as G. W. Foote once put it, merely an Atheist with a top-hat. The Christian is able to hold up the Agnostic as the good boy of the non-religious family. But, the Atheist once out of the way, a very different position would arise. The Agnostic would be without an Atheist behind whom he now shelters; and *he* would get the cuffs the latter now receives. And for those who are eternally looking round for some name other than Atheist that would be more acceptable to Christians, and would not incur so much obloquy, I commend the words of Bradlaugh, "I do not care what kind of a character religious men have put round the word Atheist, I would fight until men respect it." Whatever may be the case with charity it is eternally and universally true that intellectual self-respect must begin at home, and also that the respect which we may gain from others is a rough and ready measure of the respect we pay ourselves.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Shelley Once More

(A REJOINDER.)

"Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"

"No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir."—*Shakespeare "Romeo and Juliet."*

A CORRESPONDENT has taken me to task severely for maintaining that the poet Shelley was an Atheist, and has even gone to the length of saying that I was guilty of falsifying the facts to suit the purpose of the moment. It is not to the point that this correspondent should have been a secretary of a literary society, or that he should have written books. Thousands do the same thing. It is important, however, that the reading public should have a clear idea of Shelley's views concerning religion, especially in view of the known animus against Atheism.

There is no dispute that Shelley wrote a pamphlet entitled, *The Necessity of Atheism*, for which he was expelled from Oxford University. There is no gain-saying that he wrote the Atheistic poem, *Queen Mab*, with its extensive explanatory notes. There is no doubt that Shelley was deprived of the custody of his children by Lord Eldon in the Court of Chancery on account of his known Atheistic views. There is no dispute that men and women were sent to prison for selling copies of *Queen Mab*, and these people were charged with blasphemy. There is no denial that Shelley addressed a pamphlet to Lord Ellenborough, protesting against the prosecution of Daniel Isaac Eaton for bringing the Christian Religion into contempt. All this proves Shelley to be a militant iconoclast.

The alpha and omega of Shelley's poetry was the perfectibility of human nature, which he learned from the great French Freethinkers and from his father-in-law, William Godwin. It glows in the splendid rhetoric of his earlier works, in the nobler music of *The Revolt of Islam*, and in his greatest masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound*. Indeed, his later writings are as frankly irreligious as his earlier, but his command of language in the intervening years had improved enormously. Shelley never repudiated his youthful Atheism, but, as an artist, he recognized the immaturity of expression in the earlier works. In *Prometheus Unbound*, written in the meridian of his splendid genius, not long before his death, he is just as Atheistic as in his *Queen Mab*. The speech which ends the third act describes "thrones, altars, judgment seats, and prisons" as part of a system of misrule, and pictures man "sceptreless, free, un-circumscribed." The same idea finds eloquent expression at the end of the fifth act. Here are his words, written at the height of his power :—

"To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;  
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;  
This, like thy glory, Titan! is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;  
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory."

Against all this, the correspondent sets four lines of poetry from *Adonais*, containing the well-known quotation, "life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, stains the white radiance of eternity." When will pious people learn the very simple lesson that poetry, especially great poetry, is not prose, and must not be construed rigidly like the lease of a house, or an affidavit? *Adonais* is glorious poetry, not a catechism of religious devotion. So critical, indeed, is this correspondent, that it is surprising that he did not object to the phrase, "Galilean serpent," in Shelley's fine *Ode to Liberty*, on the ground that this species of reptile was unknown to naturalists.

This correspondent suggests further that, because certain critics think they perceive Pantheism (Carlyle called it "Pot-theism") in the poet's later writings, Shelley himself had turned a complete somersault in matters concerning religion. But scores of other critics have suggested, quite as emphatically, that Shelley was a Christian all the time, but was too stupid to notice it. Where does all this critical hubbub lead us? Shelley's own writing is worth attention, but the contradictory remarks of Messrs. Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson on Shelley are of considerably less importance. Facts are needed, not mere opinions, and the facts prove the great poet's Atheism.

This correspondent, who is so desperately anxious to disprove Shelley's Atheism, had the whole of Shelley's voluminous verse and prose, and his very numerous letters, to quote from, and all he can manage to drag in to bolster-up his case consists of four lines from *Adonais*. The mountain has been in labour, and the result is not even a mouse. As for critics, they are vastly more entertaining when they discuss "chatter about Harriet," or the escapades of Byron.

It is related of Robert Browning that, as a young man, he one day passed a bookstall, and saw a volume advertised as "Shelley's Atheistical Poems, scarce." Badly printed, shamefully mutilated, these discarded blossoms touched young Browning to new emotions. This contact with the dead singer was the dawn of a new life to the clever lad. From that time Browning's poetic production began. This result was not surprising. Shelley is one of the greatest poets

of a thousand years of our literature. To him song was natural speech. With a great outlay of labour, special education, and careful selection of circumstances, many have purchased their poetic rights as the chief captain bought the name of Roman, but Shelley was poet born. Many of his contemporaries who overshadowed him whilst he was living have almost faded into mere names, but Shelley has a message for unborn generations. Florence to the living Dante was not more cruelly unjust than England to the living Shelley. At the age of twenty-nine he was drowned in the sea he so loved. His ashes rest beneath the walls of Rome, and "Heart of Hearts" chiselled on his tomb well says what all who love Liberty feel when they think of this young Atheist who gave his short life to the service of his fellows. Shelley made good the splendid boast of the poet Swinburne concerning Liberty:—

"I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion,  
Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy breath;  
The grave of souls born worms and creeds grown carrion,  
Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death,  
Thou art the player whose organ-keys are thunders,  
And I beneath thy foot the pedal prest;  
Thou art the ray whereat the rent night sunders,  
And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast.  
I shall burn up before Thee, pass and perish,  
As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line;  
But thou from dawn to sunset shall cherish  
The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine."

MIMNERMUS.

## The Dangers of Analogy

To those who may be interested in arriving at correct conclusions, whether it be in problems of thought or action, there is nothing more important than a proper understanding of the nature, the functions, and the limitations of language. It is obviously impossible to formulate, much less to discuss, a problem in a logical manner without the use of language. Yet few people take the trouble to master the intricacies of the only medium available to them for discussing the manifold questions of everyday life. And, being ignorant of the linguistic traps which are so frequently set for them, they are apt to accept, all unknowingly, conclusions which appear correct on the surface, but which are in fact radically illogical and false.

In this article I shall limit myself to one particular aspect of discussion which is a common and insidious cause of logical error, namely, the use of analogy as a means of arriving at conclusions. At the same time I will also lay bare a few of the incidental ruses of argument which are sometimes adopted in conjunction with analogy.

An analogy may be defined as the comparison of facts or circumstances in one sphere of experience with facts or circumstances in another sphere. An argument in which analogy is used corresponds in language to the proportion sum in mathematics, though it differs in that the symbols of language are far less definite than those of mathematics. An analogical argument, therefore, may be defined as one which seeks to show that, because the relationships between the facts in one sphere are true, therefore the relationships between the facts in another sphere must also be true. It should be added that, in the opinion of the user of an analogy, there always appear to be sufficiently close resemblances between the two spheres to justify the use of comparison between them. And these similarities are also supposed to be obvious to the hearer.

It is, however, most important to remember that, in actual fact, no one sphere of experience is the same

as any other. Although there may be similarities, there are always bound to be differences. And herein lies the danger of analogical argument. For the conclusion which such argument seeks to establish is always based upon the *acceptance* of the similarities and the *neglect* of the differences. Yet while the similarities may seem pertinent and obvious, the differences which have been ignored or concealed may be such as to invalidate the argument completely.

In evidence of this I cannot do better than give a couple of examples of analogical argument that have actually been employed. And my first example is taken from a speech by Sir Edward Grigg. It runs as follows: "To say that because you hate war you are against all use of armed force is as much as to say that because you hate crime you are against the use of an adequate and efficient police." The proportion sum may be verbally expressed in this way: "The relationship of police to crime is the same as the relationship of all use of armed force to war"; and the conclusion which the speaker means us to accept is this: "If you do not object to police, you cannot object to all use of armed force."

Now, if verbal symbols were as unambiguous as those of mathematics, this conclusion would be perfectly correct. The larger category "all use of armed force" clearly includes the smaller category "police" as a part of it. So if you do not reject one part of a category, you cannot reject the whole. Unfortunately, words are tricky things. The phrase "do not object to" is equivalent to the word "accept," while "cannot object to" is equivalent to "should accept." So the conclusion given above can with equal correctness be worded thus: "If you accept the use of police, you should accept all use of armed force." But this conclusion is patently false. For the acceptance of one part of a category, while it prevents the rejection of the category as a whole, does not necessitate the acceptance of *every other part* of it. It will be seen, therefore, that the non-objection to (or acceptance of) police does not imply the non-objection to (or acceptance of) every other kind of use of armed force.

Apart from the foregoing, the speaker made use of one of those incidental ruses to which I referred previously. He was arguing not in favour of *all* use of armed force, but of *some* specific uses, to wit, armies, navies and military air-forces. His substitution of the general term for any and all of the particular forms of force he had in mind is a method of concealing the real argument to make it seem more logical. In this he succeeded. But if we put the conclusion in the form which it was really meant to have, it would read as follows: "If you do not object to police, you cannot object to armies, navies or military air-forces."

The validity of this conclusion depends upon the supposed similarity in the relationships between "crime and police" on the one hand, and "war and armies, etc.," on the other. And since these similarities are presumed to be obvious, I need scarcely labour them here. The question remains: what of the differences, and how do they affect the argument?

If the relation of crime to police were the same as that of war to armies, then crime would be carried out by police just as war is carried out by armies. But in fact police are specially organized to *prevent* crime, whereas armies are organized to *make* war. In the absence of armies war would be more difficult; in the absence of police, however, crime would be easier. These few differences (and there are many more) should be enough to demonstrate that the re-

relationships between the two parts of each sphere are not such as to make their comparison relevant.

So it will be seen that the real conclusion which was intended for acceptance is not logically justified. It would have been far more logical if the analogy had taken this form: "If you favour the use of police to prevent crime, you should also favour an international armed force to prevent war." But this analogy would not have served the speaker's purpose, which was to urge the maintenance of *national* armed forces to fight each other.

My next example was presented to me by a correspondent at somewhat greater length than here given. My précis, however, has left the kernel of the argument untouched. It runs as follows: "Suppose there are a number of machines which can reason, but only within the limits of their own dimension. One of these asserts that machines have evolved; another asserts that they have been made. On various grounds the latter infers a superior being who is their maker and he calls it Man. Similarly there are a number of men, whose reasoning is limited to their own dimension. One asserts that men have evolved; another asserts that they have been made. On various grounds, the second man infers a superior being who is their maker and he calls it God."

The proportion sum here may be verbally expressed as follows: "The relationship of machines to Man is the same as the relationship of men to God." And the conclusion which we are asked to accept is: "Since the inference of the second machine is correct, therefore the inference of the second man must also be correct." Again we need not elaborate the similarities in the two spheres since they are presumed to be obvious. So let us investigate the differences, if any, and see where they lead us.

The first point to note is an incidental ruse akin to one that was used in the first analogy—the substitution of a general term for a particular. Whether the ruse was adopted consciously or unconsciously does not concern us. All that matters is its effect in clouding the argument. The term I am referring to is "Man." Now this word means either *one man* or else *mankind*, a multiplicity of human beings of all ages and both sexes. If the former is meant, then the inference of the machine is incorrect. For machines are not all made by one man. If, on the other hand, the latter is meant, then the inference of the machine is correct, but the corresponding inference of the man is incorrect—unless, and only unless, by the term God he means a multiplicity of deities of all ages and both sexes.

The second point to note is that, in the first sphere, the reasoning of the machines has been "limited" to their own dimension. Yet this "limitation" consists of endowing them with faculties which they do not possess, and which belong essentially to the dimension of man, to wit, reasoning and speech. In other words, the machines have not been limited in any way, but have had their powers *fictitiously augmented*. Again, while endowing his machines with just those human faculties which suit his argument, the inventor conveniently refrains from endowing them with other human faculties which would spoil his argument. For example, he does not allow them the faculties of sight and touch. The reason being that the admission of these faculties would do away with any need for *inference*. For with these *specifically excluded* faculties the machines would become aware of their makers as they are already aware of themselves. The purpose of this method of special or fictitious qualification is to enhance the resemblances between the two spheres and is another of those incidental ruses to which I referred previously.

Of course, machines that can reason and converse with each other do not exist in reality. They are purely fictitious. Any analogy, therefore, which depends upon such a fictitious basis is bound to lead to equally fictitious conclusions. Logically correct conclusions should not require the aid of analogy as a means to proving their truth. Indeed, it is a safe rule in discussion to suspect the correctness of any conclusion which is arrived at by analogical argument. Most arguments of this sort are nothing more than special pleading, in which material evidence is ignored or concealed for the purpose of obtaining a one-sided verdict.

C. S. FRASER.

## The Troubles of Sincerity

It is always interesting and often amusing to read the weekly column called "The Correspondence of Professor J. A. Findlay," in a Christian journal. Findlay is so obviously sincere, and at the same time so accommodating.

Christian correspondents are very inconsiderate. They *will* ask awkward questions. Oscar Wilde once said, "there are no indiscreet questions: the answers are sometimes indiscreet." Professor Findlay must often disagree with Wilde. His questioners are indiscreet, but the answers are a model of discretion.

One week an irritated reader wants to know why Westcott and Hort's "New Testament" version invariably spells "God" and "Lord" with small letters, while "Jesus" and "Christ" have capitals. Mr. Findlay most judiciously suggests that his correspondent should try somebody else's version! He naïvely adds, "I am not sure that I agree . . ." How tactful!

Another correspondent begs for "definite guidance on the problem of Christianity and War." The fat is in the fire indeed, and we tremble with curiosity to know how our polite professor will prove that both are right (or otherwise).

His "war" correspondent crudely complicates the case by admitting that he has commercial interests in the "Far East," and does not therefore inquire "with clean hands"—if we may be pardoned the mixed metaphor.

War may be Christian or not, but what about Japan "in contrast with the British Empire?" Mr. Findlay ignores the trader's alarm, and tries to turn the discussion into another channel.

"War," says Mr. Findlay, ought to be studied quite apart from the question of "force" generally. He has consistently opposed war, and it is not necessary in this short article to consider this question in all its ramifications. We only ask what sort of force is it going to be (if it is not war) which "will defend what is most sacred to you, in the last extremity by force." Such use of force, says our author, "is not unchristian." (We are left to guess if this means that it is Christian.)

But where does this land us? The Crusaders certainly defended by force something exceedingly sacred to them. The Japanese seem to regard Manchuria as peculiarly sacred to them. What sort of "force" are they justified in using?

Mr. Findlay, like very many Christians, evidently considers a name more important than the thing it represents. He thinks it "rather futile to discuss," "should a Christian bear arms in defence of his country?" Why is the question futile? Because by calling war by another name you need not offend any of your correspondents.

Mr. Findlay calls war by some very hard names, not at all undeserved, of course, but quite Christian words like "devilry." Christians evade the divine responsibility by this clever word. God wants peace. War is only devilry. And from 1914 to 1918 (as at most other times) God allows the Devil to frustrate Him!

It is not unnatural that Mr. Findlay is very confused and self-contradictory in explaining "What Jesus taught," or rather "What Jesus really meant."

Jesus, it appears, actually "told his disciples to submit to conscription," even though Mr. Findlay agrees that "this might mean fighting with your own countrymen." Jesus taught also that his followers should not "refuse to rebel against many evil things such as slavery and war."

The pious Professor does not quote the words of Christ, on which he bases his belief that Jesus taught his disciples to submit to Conscription. He does, however, give a reference to Matt. v. 41, as his authority. This text says, "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Without expressing any opinion ourselves as to the meaning of this ridiculous commandment of Jesus, we note for future use the view of a Christian teacher in 1934, that Jesus favoured submission to Conscription, even when Civil War might be involved.

Readers must judge for themselves whether the foregoing statements can possibly be reconciled with Mr. Findlay's extraordinary judgment that "Jesus went to his death partly as a protest against His countrymen taking up arms against tyranny and wrong."

Was Christ a militarist of the most extreme character, or was he a pacifist of the most fanatical sort? Mr. Findlay's answer apparently is an incoherent "Yes."

Christianity is cornered! It has friends on both sides of every conflict, and it has to ask God's blessing on both flags.

"Ask and ye shall receive," but if you ask straight questions you will get some crooked answers from the most honest of Christians.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

## Acid Drops

A correspondent of the *Christian World* writes pointing out, that while the B.B.C. broadcasted the death of a Roman Catholic Abbot, it made no mention of the death of the Rev. Dr. Horton. He thinks this is a one-sided propaganda. So it may be; but it is noticeable that the correspondent is not asking for fair play all round, which would include non-Christians, but merely that the same treatment shall be measured out to *all Christians*, the rest may go to the devil. But without being malicious, may we say that if the deaths of people have to be recorded, we would rather hear news of Roman Abbots and Christian preachers than of Freethinkers.

But if the B.B.C. had announced the death of the Rev. Dr. Horton, we wonder whether it would have been said that he once gave it as his considered opinion that:—

Men who do not believe in their immortality, if I may use strong and colloquial language, are a public nuisance. They bestialize life, they lower the tone of everything, they make the world a huge graveyard, where the only thought is to eat and drink, and to try to forget that to-morrow we die. I would mark them all, and avoid them, and if they cannot change their mind they should be ostracized from a human society which depends for all its vitality and for all progress upon a permanent belief in the immortality of man.

The preacher at the memorial service, the Rev. Dr. Short, said he regarded Dr. Horton as one of "God's great

gentlemen and saints." We are not in a position to question the accuracy of the description, but we readily admit that the description does fit in with the history records of many of God's gentlemen and saints.

Almost the Rev. John Bevan received a shock. A friend in Fife informed him that "the two most honest and best men I have known intimately in an active business life have both been avowed Agnostics." And to add to the trouble of Mr. Bevan, this same friend passed some scathing opinions on the "pharisaism and presumption of ministers." This last was not news to Mr. Bevan, because he adds a little of his own on the "corruptions" of the Christian Church, and its "deplorable history." That is shrewd, because when faults are well-known it is good tactics not only to admit them, but to denounce them. All he can offer in extenuation is the fact that the "experience of God" in the lives of people helps to make the national environment healthier. Yes, yes, but the experience of God is evidently not strong enough to prevent the opposition of his church to progress in general, and that is the really important point.

But an inspiration comes to Mr. Bevan. These two Agnostics are able to be as good as they are on account of their Christian environment. He explains that "Agnostics are able to live their noble lives without God because their ancestors could not." That makes it quite plain. The belief in God was so powerful, it made the ancestors of the Agnostics so good that their goodness became hereditary, and persisted in spite of men not believing in God at all. Which means, on analysis, that if you believe in God too much you are paving the way for your descendants getting along without him. The thing is almost Hegelian in its formulation. All the same it is a pity that these pious ancestors of present-day unbelievers did not manage to influence their own times sufficiently to prevent those corruptions, acts of cruelty, of opposition to enlightenment, which Mr. Bevan laments.

Why do not miracles happen nowadays, asks the Rev. Colin Roberts in the *Methodist Recorder*? Well, the answer is that they do happen to-day in the same way that they happened in other days—that is, they happen just so soon as people believe in them hard enough. One can trust a parson for messing up a question when he puts one. The real question is not why do miracles not occur nowadays, but "Why do not people believe that miracles occur nowadays?" Miracles always occur when people believe in them hard enough. People never saw the dead raised from the tomb, or big fishes swallowing runaway prophets, or water turned into wine. They only believed these things happened. We can ourselves perform miracles if we can only get people believe we can do so. The trouble is that this kind of believer does not flourish in the neighbourhood of our office. Mr. Roberts mistakes a psychological problem for an historical one.

Some quotations in the current *Quarterly Review* express views of the so-called "Oxford" Group Movement which are worth keeping for future reference. Mr. Chavasse thinks the Groups are like the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican, only much worse. The Bishop of Durham objects to "the grotesque exaggeration of their advertisements, the unseemly luxury and extravagance of the 'Teams,' and the mystery of the financial arrangements." Mr. Reginald Lennard, an Oxford don of many years standing, frankly calls the movement "most depraving in its ultimate tendency, and most insidiously inimical to the formation of fine character."

The Rev. Dr. T. R. Glover says that every minister should preach from the text, "Ye must be born again." We wonder exactly what Dr. Glover means by this? Does he mean that as they are, they are not satisfactory, and need remaking? For our part, after we have

studied many Christians, both those who are now alive, and those who have been living, we have wondered what on earth they were born for, and certainly should not advise another venture with such poor material.

Dr. Glover also asks, "Why is it that without Christ you lose hope for the human race?" Well, the answer is, we don't, but we can easily understand a parson finding the human race very unsatisfactory without Jesus Christ. Every operator of the confidence trick would find the human race very unsatisfactory if it lost all faith in the commodity technically known by the name of "gold-bricks."

Unemployment, says the Archbishop of York, is a curse. We are not disputing the actual truth of the statement in existing conditions, but it is so untheological as to be almost blasphemous. For, consider, according to the Bible it is work that is the curse, not employment. Part of the curse on Adam was that he should have to work—prior to the fall he did nothing. And, also according to the religion for the preaching of which the Archbishop takes a substantial annual sum, the good will be rewarded by an eternal life in which there is no work. The Archbishop has got very, very weak in his theology. If Christianity is true, it is work that is the curse, not unemployment.

The great Dr. Dale, according to the *British Weekly*, used to say that he had a congregation as intelligent as any in England, and it took him five years to get a new idea into their heads. Well, that is not so bad. Most bodies of Christians take a generation or two to settle down to a new idea. Consider how long it took Christians to get into their heads the fact that witches did not exist, that burning for heresy was a rather bad practice, or that the Bible did not teach exact science. Really if it only took five years to get new ideas into the heads of the majority of Christians we should go ahead at a very rapid rate.

And, after all, we wonder how many really new ideas Dr. Dale tried to put into the heads of his congregation? Very few, we fancy. His new ideas would be of a very unexciting character, and even when adopted would not mean much. If anyone will take the ideas of men like Dr. Dale, and contrast them with the really advanced ideas of their time, it will generally be found that they were no more than a step in advance of the dullest, and a long way behind the brightest. Even to-day a preacher needs do no more than say that he does not believe in the scientific accuracy of Genesis, or in the bodily resurrection of Jesus, for newspapers to publish the phenomenon in staring headlines, and for other Christians to denounce the daring man as an Atheist in disguise.

Mr. Ramsay McDonald attended a service at Lyndhurst Road Church, London, on a Sunday morning recently. Dr. Elvet Lewis preached from the appropriate text: "Be thou faithful unto death." One who was present describes his sensations thus in a pious contemporary: "I could feel the deep controlled emotion of that great congregation beating about me." . . . "It was a beautiful service of hope." Surely nobody even "hoped" that the Prime Minister intends to rejoin the Labour Party, and to revert to Pacifism, Freethought, and a general interest in the welfare of the unemployed, the unhoused, and the milk supply for the children of the poor? Or is Mr. MacDonald contemplating the adoption of Mr. Churchill's family motto, "Faithful But Unfortunate?"

Rev. Leslie Farmer, speaking at St. Paul's Church, Bedford, explained all about Angels, and Heaven. He said that God never gave wings to angels. The wings are only man's invention to make the angels appear more ideally perfect. Mr. Farmer had better read his Bible again. It was God himself who (in Ex. xxv. 20) instructed Moses how to make graven images (which, of

course, "thou shalt not make") of "cherubims covering the Mercy Seat with their wings." As for poor old Ezekiel (chap. x.) he actually saw with his own eyes the most ghastly lot of "wings" imaginable. He called his winged vision "the glory of the Lord." Mr. Farmer may say that a "cherub" is not an "angel." If not what is it? God certainly has his own wings (Psalm lvii. 1), but, of course, God would say with Miss Mae West: "I'm no angel."

Missionaries ought really to consider the feelings of their old-lady subscribers, who no doubt believe that a cannibal just listens to a sermon about justification by faith, and forthwith becomes a vegetarian Christian. But Dr. A. W. Hooker, a Methodist missionary who has recently returned from China, India and West Africa says that "not only doctors but the missionaries engaged in evangelistic agencies are insistent that the establishment of a dispensary would make all the difference to their work." We have always believed it. But if this is true, why not try it without complicating the good work of science (which "makes ALL the difference!") by dragging in irrelevant untruths about the "Divine Healer," and how Jesus "cured" blindness with saliva?

"Is the Church a Going Concern," asks Dr. Albert Peel in the *Congregational Quarterly*. It is a commercial question, and, of course, the Church can point to its fat bank-balance for a favourable answer. The Church is not yet "going" in the sense of immediate disappearance. In many respects it has already gone—some would even say "gone off." It has obviously departed from its original Articles of Association. It has paid big salaries to its directors ("the fatal opulence of bishops"), but it has never paid a dividend. The preposterous promises of its prospectus are now explained away. There are no "jasper gates," no "golden streets," and even the important Contract about answers to prayer is now declared to be "immaterial." It is time the company was wound up.

"Bruno was sent to the stake." We hardly expected that one day Bruno's martyrdom for Freethought would figure in a Christian journal as an item of news, an incident to adorn a sermon on "Power from on High." Yet so it is. Dr. Norman Maclean includes this unrelated detail in a paragraph commencing "They were charged with the proclamation of a message—that God had raised up Jesus from the dead." There is not a word to indicate that Bruno was an unbeliever, and that he was murdered by Christians. "Bruno was sent to the stake," is the only reference to him. It is only another illustration of the spirit which calls Darwin a Christian, and describes Bradlaugh as a well-meaning "reformer."

In case someone is still unaware of the exact nature and quality of the Brotherhood and Love which the Christian religion engenders, we draw attention to the following piece of revealing news. At Blackburn (Lanes.) there has recently been formed a cycling club that is open only to pure and simple Catholics (Roman brand). The official announcement explains that the club was formed "to enable Catholic cyclists to enjoy the advantage of club life without the perennial friction and inconvenience attendant upon membership of otherwise excellent but non-Catholic clubs." It hardly seems diplomatic to advertise the fact that "perennial friction" is the rule rather than the exception among the various adherents of the religion of Brotherhood and Love. But presumably the fact is so widely known now that there seems nothing gained by concealing it. Nevertheless, the reminder may serve a useful purpose. When the inspired assertions that the religion of Christ is the only thing which will bring Peace and Goodwill among the nations are being circulated, the millions of people outside the Churches will be able to appreciate that they are merely listening to a Christian delusion.

Sermons, singly and in bulk, can usually be bought in the penny-box outside booksellers' shops or on market stalls. When even this price does not tempt buyers, cartloads of them are fortunately burnt in incinerators. But that there still must be a market for this class of goods is evinced by the publication of the *World's Great Sermons*, edited by Sidney Dark, and sold at 8s. 6d. No doubt this edifying volume will gladden many Christian hearts, and bring joy to the budding curate, void of ideas, and ready to bless such a heaven-sent book, from which masterpieces of extempore preaching can be successfully fudged. We have no intention of inflicting even the most humorous passages from such a work on our most hardened readers, but there is a gem in the introduction we can in nowise pass over. "The preacher's business is ultimately with Christian doctrine and dogma, and, if he neglect them, he is inevitably failing in his mission." We cordially agree, and call this passage to the notice of the many country vicars, whose concern is rather with (so-called) Christian ethics. We plump for doctrine and dogma every time.

The Archbishop of York, in the current issue of the *York Quarterly*, agrees with the recently expressed opinion of the Master of the Temple, that "the six great formative minds of the nineteenth century in England were Newman, Bentham, Coleridge, Mill, Darwin and Maurice," but he adds another name—that of Karl Marx. It is interesting to note that of these seven names, four were definitely opposed to Christianity, and two, Bentham and Marx, were undoubtedly Atheists. Coleridge's religion was certainly nebulous, so that only two genuine Christians appear on the list. This does not, of course, prove that Christianity is not true, but it does prove how unnecessary it is to have faith in Jesus to be a "great formative" mind. We congratulate the Archbishop and the Master of the Temple for their recognition of this fact.

But when he comes to talk about preventing war, the Archbishop simply cannot forget he is a Christian, and this is the kind of balderdash we get:—

If we are to triumph over the forces that threaten to destroy us, it is because we have learned to love, to trust, and to obey God. We cannot save civilization by our love for civilization; perhaps God will preserve it for us when we have learnt to love him more for it.

Everybody knows that when we say at last, "God help us," it means that, for all practical purposes, no more help whatever is forthcoming. If we have to trust to the Lord to preserve us from war, then it is really and truly "God help us!" Nothing but man and man's work can save us from war. No prayers or appeals to God can possibly have the slightest effect either way. One might just as well love, trust, and obey an old hobt. What effect did the Archbishop's prayers, or the prayers of millions of human beings have during the last war? When will these Christians learn common-sense?

Mr. Hilaire Belloc has now thoroughly "exposed" another myth, the myth of "Bloody Mary." It seems that the ordinary histories about her have all gone wrong—biased against her because she was such a true and beautiful daughter of the Church, and because Protestant historians are such prevaricators of the truth. "Mary Tudor had been," according to Mr. Belloc, "the idol of the English people," and as such, it is quite unthinkable that she should have degenerated into such a "Bloody Mary" afterwards. She really was not responsible for the wholesale burnings and tortures which distinguished her reign above all others. Her heart really bled in pity for the poor misguided heretics. "The true authors of the policy of prosecuting for heresy," according to Mr. Belloc, "were the majority in the Council." It was the Council, not Mary, who put over 300 people to death during her reign, and nobody troubled much because in that delightful *insouciant* Catholic atmosphere, burning alive was quite a normal punishment.

So the blame—if any—about these necessary but unfortunate punishments against heretics should be put, not on poor dear Mary, who was "devout, sincere and respected, and of the most dignified integrity," but on the Council. Thus you see, how thoroughly Mr. Belloc has exposed the machinations of the impudent Protestant historians who—till he put them right—either consciously or unconsciously, served up biased history and invented the myth about Mary. Those of us who are outside these Christian quarrels are not, however, altogether convinced. If Mary signed the death warrants of the "heretics," or assented to their foul torture through personally signed orders, Council or no Council, she deserved the epithet posterity bestowed upon her. The truth is that, brought up in the Catholic atmosphere of her times, she was as ruthlessly cruel as any of the Council, and Mr. Belloc knows this as well as we do. In point of fact the Council in what they did was merely an instrument of Mr. Belloc's church.

It is not only in England that Catholics make desperate efforts to scotch any reform of our stupid and antiquated divorce laws. In Barbados, in 1932, a Divorce Bill passed its second reading in the local parliament. It failed in Committee, was reintroduced last year, passed all its stages, and was actually rejected by the Governor's Council last month. The real hero partly responsible for this rejection is Fr. Besant, S.J., who combated the Bill in the *Barbados Advocate* "with lucidity and vigour." It was his attack on the Bill which helped to kill it. Is there any other organization in the world with such power to stop necessary reform as the Catholic Church, always reactionary, and always ready to fight to the last ditch against almost anything which will give people real hope and happiness?

Some people seem to be losing a proper understanding and reverence of the solemn festivals of the Church. Here's a newspaper reader who wants a "fixed Easter," and gives as his main reason that it is a holiday for most people, and a later fixed date would be more suitable for that purpose. This must sound rather awful to pious ears. Just fancy the audacity of regarding Easter as merely a holiday, which should be fixed in accordance with the pleasure of man! If such sinful ideas have become common, the good Lord will need to do his sacrifice stunt over again, just to remind the indifferent that it wasn't a joke.

### Fifty Years Ago

ROBERT BUCHANAN, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, deprecates the sentence of four months' imprisonment on Edmund Yates, editor of the *World*, for a libel on Lord Lonsdale. He says: "The punishment, in my opinion, is far in excess of the offence, and, what is worse, it savors of old-fashioned persecution. No good ever has resulted, or ever can result, by treating as criminal mere offences against good taste." What humbug these "high-class" journalists are capable of! Robert Buchanan never wrote a line to any of the papers against Mr. Foote's atrocious sentence of twelve months for "insulting opinions"; but he feels constrained to ask mercy for Mr. Yates, whose sentence is only four months for scandalously libelling a lady and gentleman who had never done him the least injury. Mr. Foote, too, was treated like a common felon, while Mr. Yates will be treated as a first-class misdemeanant, wearing his own clothes, having his own books and writing materials, liberty to receive and answer as many letters as he likes, to be out of his cell all day, to have frequent interviews with his friends, and to provide his own food. Mr. Foote's real crime was being a Freethinker, or he would never have been subjected to such brutal treatment, with the applause of these snobbish journalists, who, while they cry out against Freethinkers for "insulting" orthodox "opinions," think it a trivial offence to charge innocent men and women with cruelty and adultery.

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# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

## EDITORIAL:

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Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

- A. FORBES.—We note your substantial agreement with the principles we have laid down. There is, of course, a gross fallacy involved in taking the fact that you are acting for the best as a justification for any policy you may pursue. The majority of Christians thought they were acting for the best when they burned heretics, and the plea of acting for the best and in the interests of society is that put forward by every autocrat. Conscious villainy does not play the largest part in human affairs, although there are many who assume so when attacking things with which they disagree.
- D.C.E.—Copies of paper are being sent. Pleased to hear of your success in breaking down local opposition.
- W. POWELL.—We think it best to confine this controversy to the two disputants.
- T. F. ATKINSON.—The religious doctrines of Missionaries, and the influences of a higher form of culture, separate from their religion, must be carefully distinguished in order to form a fair judgment. You do not appear to have done this.
- M. D. FLEISCHMANN (Spoleto).—Received cheque with order for books safely. No address sent, please forward.
- J. ALLEN.—The leaflet appears to explain what on the face of it is a bad religious swindle, one of many; but we should have to be in possession of actual legal evidence, which is not in our possession. Not that we question for a moment the accuracy of the statements made.

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## Sugar Plums

Those attending the Annual Conference at Bolton at Whitsun, and requiring hotel accommodation, Conference Luncheon, etc., should send their requirements along to the General Secretary, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, or to the local Secretary, Mr. W. H. Sissons, 197 Eskrick Street, Bolton, Lanes. There is every promise of a very full Conference this year, and an early attention to details as above will be wise. Fuller details will appear later

The first of the four addresses to be given by non-Christian speakers, as arranged by the B.B.C., was an address on Spiritualism. That is to say, the B.B.C. carefully examined the speech, made whatever alterations it thought fit, and also arranged for another speaker to take a turn who would put the Christian point of view. It is all very farcical, and we are not surprised that the editor of the *Psychic News*, who has a

capacity for swallowing almost anything, protests against having Spiritualism first "questioned by an ignorant announcer, and then questioned again by an equally ignorant member of the Church of England." But there is little use, and certainly little dignity, in questioning the procedure adopted by the B.B.C. after one has taken part in it. One must bear in mind that every question has to pass the censor before it is put, and any phrase which does not suit the B.B.C. is eliminated. The only real way, and the only honest protest, is to decline to take part in a proceeding which no lover of free speech and fair play should tolerate for a moment.

We have not to wait long for anything we have said concerning the B.B.C. to receive repeated confirmation. Following the recent refusal of men and women to speak, because the B.B.C. had "mauled" their manuscript, there comes another cancellation of a talk by Mr. Nigel Tangye on "Home Air Services." To a *News Chronicle* reporter (April 11) the B.B.C. explained that the talk was cancelled because the manuscript contained what was considered advertising matter. Mr. Tangye, on the contrary denies that. He says, "No names of persons or companies were mentioned. The only references were to towns connected by the air service." This is one more confirmation of our repeated statement that no reliance whatever can be placed upon the official statements of the B.B.C. It will "lie like hell" when it chooses, and we have had documentary evidence of it, in addition to the examples we have published from time to time. So we again ask, when will our leading public men refuse to submit to a censorship that publicly degrades all who submit to it, and decline to pass off as their own an address which is actually only an address that has been "prepared" by the B.B.C.? Self-respect and a sense of public duty should prevent participation in such a system.

In the *Listener*, the editor explains—we assume under instructions from the B.B.C., that it is not the fact of expounding unpopular opinions that causes the B.B.C. to exert a censorship, it is the *manner* in which they are expressed that causes the censorship to function. Now that is very interesting. Those public men and women who have spoken before the microphone must be pleased to learn that it is not their opinions to which the Admiral, the retired Army officer, and the man who spent his time in the engineer's shop object, but they cannot trust them as to the *manner* in which they put their opinions before the public. The impertinence of it! And the lying of it. And how safe the Admiral and the Soldier and the parsonic Engineer who boss the B.B.C. must feel concerning their speakers since they can offer them this public insult without fear of resentment.

It looks as though the Government will not be able to proceed with its Pecksniffian Anti-Betting Bill, since it has graciously given its followers permission to vote as they think they ought to, instead of voting as they are told to do. But we wonder whether there will be enough people interested in personal liberty to be able to order the Government to withdraw the infamous Incitement to Disaffection Bill. This Bill makes the possession of seditious literature a punishable offence, in which case anyone with a library worth having will become an offender, a very liberal right of search is to be given the police, and the case may be judged and settled by a mere magistrate—examples of whose legal wisdom and sense of justice we have to expose from time to time. Nothing more reactionary has been attempted against freedom of speech for a hundred years. We are not surprised that men like Sir John Reith is beloved of the Government.

If the British people submit to this kind of legislation they will submit to anything. It is said that the Bill is specially aimed at preventing the circulation of seditious literature in the Army. We wonder whether we are indictable for saying that we see no reason why a man directly he joins the Army should be treated as mentally incapable, and so unfit to form an opinion for himself,

that the Government has to decide what literature he shall not read? For that is what it really comes to. A civilian may read all kinds of things and listen to all sorts of opinions. But a soldier may not have given to him a pamphlet which can legally be given to a civilian, for fear of his mind becoming disturbed. One could hardly offer a man a greater insult than is implied in this procedure.

But the excuse of the Government spokesmen—we hope we shall not shock those who believe in approaching a member of the Cabinet on bended knees—is just a deliberate lie. The real aim of this measure is to first of all attack men with whose opinions the Government disagrees, and second to send them to prison without the “chancey” method of their being tried by a judge of the high courts and a jury. There is to be no trial by jury for political offenders if this Government can prevent it. Already the Grand Jury has been abolished, and that might have voiced a popular protest against injustice; the movement for creating the police as a class separated from the general public is proceeding, and a very tender attitude is taken towards German Fascist activities in this country. Britain is one of the few places where some measure of personal freedom remains, and even that will go if we are not careful. We really won the war in order to make the world safe for democracy, and Britain a place for heroes to live in. Well, the last may come true, and it may take a hero to stand up against what may be coming.

Liverpool, and Birkenhead Branches N.S.S. each report a successful year's work, although from different angles. Activity in Liverpool has been well maintained, and the Branch holds a strong position. In Birkenhead, Christian bigotry and pettiness has to be fought, and fortunately there is a gallant little band of local saints doing it. But fancy, one Branch of the N.S.S. in Birkenhead, and the local Christians are in a funk, and as usual, their weapons are such that decent men would scorn to use.

## A Victorian Childhood

IN the recently published autobiography of his early life, entitled *First Childhood* (Constable, 8s. 6d.), Lord Berners reveals what the Victorian era was like in the more aristocratic circles.

The period concerned is that between the year 1883 and the end of the century. Our own recollection goes back twenty years earlier, and is connected with the manufacturing and shopkeeping class; but notwithstanding the difference in time and social standing, our experiences under Victorianism is in surprising agreement with this later chronicle.

We say surprising, because we were always under the impression that the aristocracy—at least in the last years of the nineteenth century—did not suffer anything like so much as the middle and lower classes from the old-fashioned ideas about the Bible, morals, religion and sex. That in fact they were better educated and more cultured. But in this frank and outspoken narrative, we find all the old-fashioned ideas in full force just as they prevailed among the lower classes.

Lord Berners is no stilted writer; he does not stand upon his rank and dignity. He takes you into his confidence, introduces you to all the members of his family, describes their peculiarities, weaknesses and failings, without reserve. His lordship is a born writer, and also possesses a mordant wit. There is not a dull page among the two hundred and fifty-five constituting the book; this, probably, amounts to a record among members of the peerage. We read the book at a sitting.

We are first introduced to Lord Berners' grandparents, on the mother's side. His grandmother “was all that one could possibly wish a grandmother

to be, in singular contrast to all the other members of the family.” His grandfather was also a similar character, until he was stricken with a strange mental affliction, attributed by the family to “an act of God,” though what particular sin the poor old man was expiating, we are told “God only knows,” for he was a devoted husband and excellent father. “But in those days every calamity that was not properly understood, from an earthquake to a blunder on the part of the Government, was attributed to the capricious temperament of the Deity. And that is no doubt why so many people, who were outwardly religious, detested Him in secret.” (p. 16.)

Of Lady Bouchier, his other grandmother, we are told, “She was actually one of the most forbidding, awe-inspiring women I have ever known . . . intensely religious and violently low-church.” While quite a young woman she was “converted” by the pious Lord Radstock, who used to hold Revivalist meetings at Exeter Hall in the Strand, at that time the headquarters of missionary and revival enthusiasm; the site is now occupied by the Strand Hotel, which provides for the needs of the body rather than those of the soul. Lady Bouchier brought up her children on the principle that “respect is preferable to love,” with the result that “her children merely came to regard her with a sullen aversion.” She had a forcible personality and a will of iron. She dominated and repressed all those with whom she came in contact. “You felt that, if only some interest had possessed her, other than this narrow, intolerant religion which cramped and stultified her whole being, she might have been quite a remarkable woman.” Who can deny the influence of religion upon character! In appearance, we are told, “Lady Bouchier was not unlike Holbein's portrait of Bloody Mary, with just a touch of Charley's Aunt,” her lace cap, surmounted with two large melancholy black bows, “always made me think of crows perching on the roof of a Methodist chapel.” She seemed to derive a certain amount of pleasure from hearing instances of other people's godlessness, “It gave her satisfaction, no doubt, to hear of yet another of God's creatures obviously destined for Hell.”

At Stackwell, Lady Bouchier's country seat, “the dreary rite” of Family Prayers took place twice a day; in those days, says his lordship, “it was customary in every home”; it was in ours. It caused no end of annoyance and ill-feeling among the domestics, who had to quit their work, dress themselves up and troop into the dining-room “to sit on hard benches for twenty minutes or more, listening to my grandmother declaiming scriptural exhortations in a voice that seemed to hold out very little hope of salvation for the lower classes.” However, he managed to extract some amusement out of it, for he observes:—

I have always taken an almost intoxicating delight in “perilous laughter,” that is to say laughter which, either from good manners or fear, has to be controlled at all costs. The kind of laughter which, on solemn occasions wells up within one with such violence that the human frame is nearly shattered in the course of its suppression. The vision of that grave row of domestics sitting bolt upright on the benches opposite to me was irresistible. I used to try to disturb their deadly seriousness by making surreptitious grimaces at them, and on one occasion I scored a memorable triumph by laying on the place occupied by the butler a notice bearing the words “Stand for one donkey.” This masterpiece of humour was successful in producing an exploding of muffled snorts, and one footman was obliged to leave the room with his handkerchief to his face. (p. 44.)

This brings vividly to our recollection what we

had long forgotten, namely, that we also suffered from these spasms of perilous laughter at solemn moments, and had to use the handkerchief as a veil and retire from the room to give vent to it in safety.

Towards the end of Lady Bouchier's life, and the approach of senile decay, "family prayers developed into a sort of macabre farce." "She got horribly mixed up in the prayer, in which the words 'true joys' occur, and kept on referring to 'Jew's toys.' But it was really more pathetic than funny. Poor Lady Bouchier! What a dreary, unprofitable existence! If only her religion had proved some sort of consolation to her instead of merely serving to fill her soul with bitterness." (p. 45.)

As a child Lord Berners saw very little of his father, as he was nearly always away at sea, holding a commission in the Navy; we are told that he was a curious, moody, rather brilliant creature, worldly, cynical, and intolerant of any kind of inferiority. He could be very charming when he wished, and had many devoted friends. The son used to admire and enjoy his father's flashes of wit which was often exercised at the expense of his mother or her friends, of which he gives an instance. A foolish old bore, a Colonel Stokes, who had a red military face "that looked as if it might go off bang at any moment," and lived in a perpetual state of righteous indignation, was describing how a neighbour had lost his temper and kicked his wife in public: "I mean to say," he protested. "To kick your wife! And in public too! It's not cricket, is it?" "No," said my father, stifling a yawn; "It seems to me more like football."

His father "had the easy superiority of manner which enables people to command respectful attention whether on a battleship or in a restaurant. Anyone meeting him for the first time might have mistaken him for a minor royalty." The photograph given of him discloses an extremely handsome man. He lived a life of his own, into which they could not enter, and he never took any part in his son's education. Once when his mother suggested that he should beat him—this was the appointed task of the Victorian parent, he always acted as the executioner—he merely said that he couldn't be bothered; and as the child's idea of God is often based on the character of the parent, it may have been responsible for his reply to his nurse when she warned him: "If you're not careful, one of these days God will jump out from behind a cloud and catch you such a whack!" The threat was an alarming one, but he was not perturbed, and retorted, "Nonsense! God doesn't care what we do."

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

## Living on the Cross

GOOD FRIDAY was a regular gala day for Christians. The Story of the Cross was advertised in most churches and chapels in London, and the clergy and the Nonconformist parsons, although their churches and chapels have very microscopic congregations nowadays, were able to proclaim that the tragedy of their beloved Saviour dying upon a Cross at Calvary over nineteen hundred years ago, was what they alleged to be an historical fact, never to be forgotten for a moment by Christians, and certainly was worthy of the earnest consideration of unbelievers. In the evening I heard the Dean of Winchester on the wireless, in a sermon on "The Crucifixion." The Dean has a very fine clear voice, which came over the

ether with conspicuous clearness and force, but notwithstanding his good elocutionary power he could not make the incredible story of the "Crucifixion," as narrated by the Gospels, reasonable to anybody who had not had this story drummed into their minds in their childhood, when they were quite incapable of reasoning on the subject. The learned Dean said that his sermon was intended for believers in the Christ as the Son of God, but his address was also intended for any other persons who had admiration of the life and character of Christ.

Then he went on to tell the story of the Trial of Jesus for blasphemy, in claiming to be Christ, the Son of God—and telling the priests that "hereafter you shall see the Son of God sitting on the right-hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven."

This was too much for the High Priest. Pilate said: "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ. They all say unto him let him be crucified!"

The learned Dean then went on to describe in detail all the incidents of the crucifixion, of his death and burial. Also of his alleged resurrection as given in St. Matthew, and he even read the passage that said that at the resurrection of Jesus there was an earthquake, "and the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after the resurrection and appeared unto many"—but he did not say whether these saints died over again and returned to their graves, or wandered about the earth for some time among their friends. All these incredible stories the learned Dean of Winchester read solemnly and seriously to what was no doubt a very large congregation of persons who profess and call themselves Christians, and probably did not sneer, or smile, or give any signs of disbelief to any of these incredible and contradictory stories.

And so throughout England and Ireland, and on the Continent, the priest of every denomination glorified "Good Friday" as a day on which their position as priests and parsons was re-established and maintained throughout the Kingdom, as teachers of "the Lord Jesus Christ and Him Crucified."

\* \* \*

On the same evening a Grand Sacred Concert was given at Queen's Hall, of the Oratorio of "The Crucifixion" with Bach's beautiful music, and with Sir Henry Wood conducting a full orchestra. This concert, which had a fine company of the most expensive vocalists in the chief parts, came through on the wireless, and thus was heard by millions throughout the civilized world. Am I not right therefore in saying that the priests and parsons of Christendom were having a gala day on Good Friday? They know the value of Good Friday to them. They probably wish there were many such days, for it means renewed power and glory to their contemptible profession.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## KNOW THYSELF.

No man is a good copy of another; but every man is unique, and at his best possesses a capacity and some native talent, or characteristic, which no other man can claim. To develop these latencies is the object of real education; to quench them is the destruction of the individual and the fostering of the automaton, the civilized respectable brute and the disreputable criminal mind.

## Notes from Austria

THE February events in Austria have not resulted in any significant changes either in the situation inside that country or in its relationship with Foreign Powers. Even the dissolution of the Socialist Party and of the Free Trade Unions does not signify a fundamental change, for already a year ago sections of the Party were dissolved; the *Schutzbund* (military) and the Freethinker Union. The Social-Democratic Press was sharply controlled by the Government; and the public activity of the Party was severely curtailed by measures forbidding the holding of all meetings, with the exception of members' meetings; lastly, by the exclusion of the Socialist section from the Nationalist (Parliament), the latter were robbed of the possibility of influencing political developments through this channel. The Trade Unions—as was emphasized by prominent people inside their ranks—were robbed of their economic power by the crisis, and of their political power by a Disputes Act passed in May, 1933, which declared illegal all political strikes, and all strikes carried through in vital industries.

Again, the terror now practised by the Catholic Church and by Government organizations had existed previously, although, of course, not in the open form which it now takes. The supremacy of the Catholic Church in the sphere of culture, and its decisive influence on political life, can be traced back over a period of twelve months. At that time a Concordat was concluded, and a political victory for the Church was celebrated by the almost simultaneous outlawing of the Freethinker organization.

It is clear that the victory of the Government has resulted in an intensification of the previously existing conditions. The Government has now no more scruples about openly acclaiming its allegiance to Fascism—in the Austrian form, of course. The terror is of such a nature, that every worker, whether he is employed by an ordinary employer or by the State, must join the "Vaterlandischen Front" (Fatherland Front), otherwise he will be dismissed as a traitor to the State.

The most significant factor in Austria to-day is the Catholic Church. As is always the case, her stronghold is built in the schools. The hours devoted to religious instruction have been extended, and in Council Schools religious instruction is now obligatory for all children, including the children of Freethinkers. It is also being introduced in all training schools. In the High Schools reforms are being prepared for the year 1934/35, which aim at encouraging Christian and Nationalist education. All marriages which did not take place in Church are now declared invalid. The Church has achieved what she aimed at with this measure, for large numbers of people have in consequence rejoined the Church; people previously married at Registry Offices are now seeking a Church wedding and are having their children christened. It was reported that in one Parish in a working-class district in Vienna, more people have rejoined the Church in one week than had left it during the whole of 1927, the year in which the largest number of people forsook the Church. Also Social Welfare work, which has added importance because of the impoverishment of large masses of the people in Vienna, is widely intermingled with the Catholic charity institutions, for which enormous propaganda is being made. In practice, this charity is not extended to those victims of the February events who are, politically, from Left-wing Socialist circles.

Hand in hand with the Catholic Church the military forces of the Government are dominating Austria.

"Catholicism is not only a matter of belief to us, but it also signifies our political system." These are the words of Graf Starhemberg, the leader of the Heimwehr. It is also because of their mutual belief in Catholicism that Starhemberg and Dollfuss can easily come to an understanding. It is because they are both "good Catholics" that Dollfuss can find it possible to make his policy "coincide largely with our programme," to use Starhemberg's own words. But in spite of this conciliatory attitude, Dollfuss founded the "Fatherland Front," the organization which, according to its leader, "shall represent the political will" of Austria. Therefore the widespread doubt as to whether the agreement existing between Dollfuss on the one hand and Fey and Starhemberg on the other is really stable, has a solid foundation. At the moment, the leaders of the Heimwehr and the "Fatherland Front" are negotiating with each other, but the results of their discussions have not been made public. The differences in opinion, however, which exist between Dollfuss' Party and that represented by Fey and Starhemberg are not of a fundamental nature, and to Socialists and Freethinkers it is a matter of indifference which of the two rivals eventually dominates the other.

At the moment in Vienna the Austrian Nazis are lying low, and are keeping out of the dispute. It was reported in one paper that in one district they fought on the side of the Socialists, although in the same paper they were described as "absent" in the struggle to "rid Austria of the Marxists." In the Provinces the situation is not quite the same, and occasionally collisions and shootings take place between members of the Heimwehr and the Nazis.

The Government makes every effort to win the support of the working class. It emphasizes incessantly how much better than the "Marxist leaders" it will satisfy the needs of the workers. But it has as yet not succeeded in making the workers believe this. For instance, by means of changes in the Social Insurance System it has relieved the employers of their obligation to contribute. Also the fact that a one-time member of the Free Trade Unions is now given a seat on the Executive Committee of the Fascist Trade Union does not succeed in making these unions attractive to the workers.

Practically everybody, who has something to lose (either work, or position, or wealth), declares his allegiance to the Government; that is, he joins the Church and the "Fatherland Front." But that which the Government desires most of all, namely, "to win the hearts of the workers," has not yet met with success, and it is very unlikely that it will succeed. The working class feels nothing but bitterness against this Government which has bombarded their homes with artillery, starved and beaten the political prisoners, and which robs former members of the Free Trade Unions of their employment, putting in their places members of the "Schutzcorps" (Government Military Organization). The workers hate this Government which does nothing to reduce their economic distress, but which instead wants to teach them and their children to pray.

S.S.

Vienna.

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Men and Women range themselves into three classes or orders of intelligence. You can tell the lowest class by their habit of talking about nothing else but *persons*; the next by the fact that their habit is always to talk about *things*; the highest by their preference for the discussion of *ideas*.—Henry Thomas Buckle

## Correspondence

### CAN RELIGION CAUSE INSANITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. J. I. Orton chooses to cast a slur upon my integrity. In his letter of April 15, he makes the following accusation: "He ascribes to me statements which I did not make, and, I may add, which are contrary to my convictions." For the enlightenment of those who may have missed Mr. Orton's first letter and my reply to it, I will quote *verbatim* the former's statements and my own references to them:—

(1) Orton: "Mr. Fraser seems to have omitted to take notice of the emotional elements in religion."

Fraser: "Mr. Orton says that I have omitted to notice the 'emotional elements in religion.'"

(2) Orton: "But is it not passing strange assuming that 'mental' influences are of no account, that argumentation can increase the tenacity with which insane ideas are held? and that the study of mathematics or of unexciting history often tends to cure insanity?"

Fraser: "He also asks whether it is not strange that argumentation can increase the tenacity with which insane ideas are held. . . . With regard to the study of mathematics or unexciting history as a cure for insanity, I would be glad to have full and exact details of the clinical history of one insane person who has been cured by these methods."

(3) Orton: "My work as a practical psychologist affords me abundant evidence that imminent insanity can often be aborted by means of a genuinely analytical nature (not Freudism) in association with constructive treatment of frequently hypnotic character."

Fraser: "Mr. Orton states that imminent insanity can often be aborted by measures of an analytical nature. In this case we have to assume that insanity would certainly have supervened but for these measures. I am, personally, not prepared to make that assumption; nor do I see how Mr. Orton can make it with any hope of proving it to be correct."

In no other part of my letter did I either quote Mr. Orton or ascribe statements to him. The remainder of my letter consisted entirely of expressions of my own opinions. In view of these facts, which anyone can prove by referring to the letters in question, I feel justified in demanding a public retractation and apology from Mr. Orton.

C. S. FRASER.

### THE MONGOLS.

SIR,—Your correspondent, W. Mann, gives the following quotation: "Few conquests have ever been so hideous, and on the whole so noxious to mankind. The Mongols were savages as cruel as they were brave and hardy." Compare this with the account given of them by James A. Williamson, in his book *Evolution of England*. Published by Oxford Clarendon Press, 1931. He says: "These Mongols under their Emperor, Genghiz Kahn, were without doubt the most wonderful fighting men the world has seen. From a breeding-ground so arid and desolate they could not have been very numerous. Yet in one generation they conquered China with its settled government and teeming cities, struck down the Moslems of Persia and the nearer East, trampled over the Slavs of Russia, and poured triumphant into Central Europe. Whilst the Great Khan was giving law to China his generals were routing the feudal hosts of Germany upon the Danube. *It was all done without elaborate armament or novel engines of war.* The bow and the horse were the Mongol weapons, and the secret of their use lay in *discipline and self-denial and brains.* Napoleon's marshals were blundering amateurs compared with the Princes trained by Genghiz Khan. In 1241 it seemed as though the last hour of Christendom had struck, and panic spread even in Flanders, France and England. But the Mongol chiefs were content with Asia (which for them included Russia). They had seen the West and enjoyed its conquest, and then they with-

drew as swiftly as they had come. In Asia their sway lasted for three generations, with PEACE AND ORDER from the Caucasus to the China Sea. They were not Mahometans, and they taught the Christians without rancour. *So mild were their manners that Europe had hopes of converting them,* and the first men of our race to describe the mysteries of high Asia were friars sent into Mongolia in the wake of the retreating horde."

B. J. BEULEY.

### THE EVIDENCE FOR GOD.

SIR,—With your permission I should like to say that Mr. Gilbert T. Sadler seems to be on the same quest as Bernard Shaw's Black Girl; but his microscope will avail him nothing! The only evidence of God is to be found in the ignorance of superstition, arising from the delusion of religious training; and he would do well to revise his vocabulary and his premises. Awe, faith and worship are very useful, expressive and beautiful words when rationally applied to mundane and natural objects; a man may worship his wife or sweetheart, he may have faith in his vegetarian principles, and the experience of 1914-1918 may create a feeling of awe. But there is no more awe about bacteria than about potatoes, which multiply in the earth in a similar way.

Nature may be marvellous, wonderful and incomprehensible, but such terms as will, design or intention cannot be applied to nature, they are simply human. There is nothing supernatural in the whole universe, and a "One Infinite Life-by-giving-life" is an utterly meaningless phrase, a confusion of thought of the superstitious Mind.

B. I. BOWERS.

## Obituary.

MR. PHILIP G. PEABODY.

Too late for insertion in our last issue, we received notice of the death of Mr. Philip Peabody, and even then without details beyond the fact that it occurred as far back as February 23, and, apparently, in Copenhagen. We have written to try and get details, and if these can be secured they will be published later. For the moment we wish to pay a tribute to one whom we have known for many years, and with whom we were in frequent touch.

Mr. Peabody was a member of a well-known American family, a lawyer by profession, although we do not think that he ever practiced, if at all. He was a great traveller, visiting a number of European capitals every year, he had visited many parts of the globe, and had crossed the Atlantic about 130 times. Abstemious in his habits, simple in his tastes, he was, while warmly attached to his own country, yet an internationalist and a democrat in the best sense of those much abused terms. I met him frequently in London, and there was a large charitableness of spirit about his talk, and about his general view of life that did one good to hear. He was a steady supporter of many advanced movements, and I recall his showing me a pile of letters early in one January—a time at which he sent his annual donations to reform movements in England, America, and other countries—the size of which bore testimony to both his generosity and catholicity of outlook.

But I think his dominating interest was in Freethought. Soon after the death of G. W. Foote, he wrote me, fearing as many others did, that the *Freethinker* would die with its founder, and realizing what a blow that would mean to Freethought in this country. He offered financial help if it were required. I told him not to be alarmed. The *Freethinker* would not die, and I would not ask or take any financial help until the first year had expired. Then he wished to help Freethought, and to stimulate others he offered pound for pound up to two hundred pounds to be spent on propaganda provided the disposal of the £400 was at my absolute discretion. The required sum was raised within two or three weeks, and I think gave Freethought

propaganda a splendid filip. I kept my word as to spending the money at my discretion, but appointed a committee to watch expenditure.

He also assisted liberally the Freethinker Endowment Trust. Here he offered to give £1,000 provided £7,000 was raised. That also was done in record time. No sum approaching this had been raised for a similar purpose in the whole history of Freethought in this country. To prevent misunderstanding I may add that he gave to movements only, not to individuals. He did not always realize that some individuals are necessary to movements, but it was his way of helping.

Wherever he went, in whatever country he was, the *Freethinker* followed him week by week. I was proud that he often said it was the finest Freethought paper he knew or had ever known. His letters to me were frequent, containing scraps of news, or cuttings that he thought might be interesting. I prided myself on his good opinion of me, and to those who knew him, that was a compliment one might well prize. He did not cut so large a figure in the public eye as he deserved, but his kindly thought and generous hand has helped many a struggling cause. And that the cause he helped should reap success in its work was enough payment for him. The world of reform has lost a wise and generous friend.

C.C.

### THE SUBJECTION OF WOMAN.

Although at certain periods of history in certain places women—or rather some women—have achieved something approaching equality with men, it remains generally true that in the past Woman has been, if not Man's slave, at least his subservient mate, a thoroughly domesticated, child-bearing drudge.

In the days when he was a hunter . . . she remained behind in the cave-mouth or forest retreat, to scrape the skin and prepare the food, tend the children and shape the flints, gather the brushwood for the beast-defying fire. When he became a pastoralist she kept a watchful eye on the animals he had tamed and nursed the lambs and calves; and when after long ages he settled down as an agriculturist she, too, went out into the fields, dug and sowed and planted, reaped and thrashed, suckling her babe in the intervals of toil beside the hedgerows or among the hayricks. In the ancient world she was still a toiler at many tasks beside the one she alone could do; far removed from philosophers' eyes and thoughts, she kept house and garden, washed and cooked, swept and sewed.

The Middle Ages brought with them no alleviation—on the contrary, perhaps a worsening of her lot; for, writes Havelock Ellis, "When we look into this wonderful medieval literature we never find men and women in the attitude of comrades and fellow-workers, as we nearly everywhere find them in earlier stages of society. . . . Partly, it seemed, women were good to play with, partly good to worship." And though the knightly prated of their chivalrous love, they did not extend their courtesy to the peasant girls who caught their lustful fancy. The age of discovery dawned, but though men found America and the Indies, no discovery lightened woman's load; and with the coming of steam and machinery women flocked into the factories and were set to work in the dangerous darkness of the mines. . . .

In 1792 the noble-hearted Mary Wollstonecraft made her passionate plea for the emancipation of her sex from their bonds; demanded that women should be treated, not as pretty dolls to be toyed with and petted, but as human beings with minds to be cultivated and bodies to be exercised, functions to be fulfilled and appetites to be satisfied. She scornfully exposed the hypocrisy and short-sighted reasoning of those who mouthed so loudly and so long of liberty, yet denied it to one half of the human race. . . . Rousseau, in particular, received her fire—and deservedly; for the man who with his pregnant phrase had done so much to further revolution had also written that "the education of women should always be relative to men. To please, to be useful to us, to make

us love and esteem them, to educate as when young, to take care of us when grown up, to advise, to console us, to render our lives easy and agreeable—these are the duties of women at all times, and what they should be taught in their infancy." Never was the subjection of one sex to the other demanded with such brutal frankness, and when such views were held by the apostle of advanced thinking it may be readily understood that Mary Wollstonecraft's appeal fell on unhearing ears. . . . —*New Popular Educator*.

### 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.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.40, Mr. Paul Goldman.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.0, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Bryant and Collins. Platform No. 2, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 6.30, Messrs. Wood, Hyatt and others. Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. W. P. Campbell Everden.

##### INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Sir Norman Angell—"Social Ethics and Popular Education."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 68 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4): 8.0, Monday, April 23, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Freethought and Nationalism."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Reggiori's Restaurant, 1 Euston Road, opposite King's Cross Station): 7.15, Mr. J. Stewart Barr, M.A. (The Economic Recovery Association) "Economic Recovery."

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Central Halls, Bath Street, C.2): 5.30, Annual General Meeting. Members please note.

NORTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Labour Social Hall): 7.0, Mr. Allan Flanders—"Christianity v. Labour."

##### OUTDOOR.

SEAHAM HARBOUR: 7.0, Wednesday, April 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.30, Sunday, April 22, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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