

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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

Views and Opinions

Blasphemy

So long as blasphemy laws exist in this country they are a standing danger here and in all English-speaking countries. The statute law of blasphemy, while actually inoperative, is a background of authority for the operative Common Law. And the Common Law is, in turn, a lead for other attempts at limiting freedom of thought and speech. The Government knew quite well what it was about when it smashed the attempt to repeal the blasphemy laws, after it had reached, for the first time, the Committee stage. Whether it might be required to prevent the free criticism of religious beliefs or not, they knew that it gave an irrefutable precedent for other attempts at restricting freedom of speech. If it is not to be legally admitted that men may exercise freedom of criticism with regard to religion, why should it be taken as a principle that they ought to be granted freedom in other directions? And with the Common Law, while the interpretation of that has advanced so far as to permit a degree of criticism which to our religious ancestors of three or four generations back would have appeared as a direct incitement to blasphemy, yet so long as that law remains, things may take another turn, and the freedom that at present exists may be curtailed to within something like its old limits, and on the principle that has always been fundamental to the English law of blasphemy—that of danger to the public interest. And if we look further abroad, to our own colonies and dependencies, and to America, there is no question that as their laws against blasphemy were based on the English example, so the abolition of the blasphemy laws here would give a powerful incentive to their abolition elsewhere. They have followed our example so far; they may well be helped to do better, if we again set the pattern for them. So long as they exist, the blasphemy laws represent a very real danger to liberty, both in this country and elsewhere.

Blasphemy in Montreal

An illustration of the truth of what has been said is furnished by a recent blasphemy case in Montreal, Canada. Montreal is, as most of our readers will be aware, preponderantly Roman Catholic. And in line with Roman Catholic traditions an attack on a priest is almost as bad as an attack on the deity. There is also every reason for believing that in Montreal, Roman Catholicism is strong enough to influence the course of justice, and in the courts a man is more likely to be treated leniently if he merely attacks Protestant beliefs, than if he makes an attack directly on the Roman Church. I do not mean that this is substantially different from what occurs where particular forms of Protestantism are concerned. In this country, one cannot be charged with blasphemy whatever one may say about the Mass. But it is a different thing if one attacks in "blasphemous" language a doctrine that is embodied in the teachings of the Church of England.

In Montreal there is a Protestant parson, the Rev. Victor Rahard. Mr. Rahard is an ex-Roman Catholic clergyman, and of late he has been particularly active in evangelistic work among the French-speaking population in the poorer districts of the city. Recently Mr. Rahard exhibited a placard—a kind of "Wayside Pulpit" production—bearing the following:—

The Mass—it is thus they sell Christ. Judas sold Christ for a large sum of money. The Roman Priests sell him every day, even three times Judas repented and threw the silver away. The Roman priests repent not, but amass the money. What do you think of the Roman religion?

That is all, judging from the newspaper reports with which Mr. Rahard is charged, but he seems to stand an excellent chance of being found guilty. In this country, as I have said, no charge of blasphemy would lie against a statement of this kind. In fact the 31st article of the Church of England declares that the Mass is, as offered by the Roman Catholic Church, "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." Every parson in the Church of England is sworn to believe this; the King is charged to defend it—in England. But in Canada it is rank blasphemy, and a parson is placed on trial for saying so. In Wales, it would not be blasphemy because there is no Established Church there—at least it is not blasphemy unless the Judges strained the law to make it so. But in Montreal it must not be said. The character of the priest is taken under the protection of the law, and a clergyman is charged with blasphemy for saying what thousands of Protestant ranters say with impunity in England, and even a Freethinker might say with absolute safety.

I do not know of a better illustration of the truth that what is true in religion is entirely a matter of geographical accident. Readers of Mr. Golding's *Magnolia Street* will remember that in that book whether one believes in Jesus Christ as an incarnate God, or whether one believes in him as the child of an un-

married Jewish woman, depends upon whether one is born on this or that side of a particular road; and each side thinks of the other side as composed of wicked blasphemers. And each side of the street would imprison those living on the other side of the street—for the offence of not being on the "right" side, if it had the power. Considering the importance of our having the true religion, God almighty appears to have been inexcusably careless in the casual manner he adopts in seeing that we get it.

* * *

An Absurd Offence

A plea put forward by Mr. Rahard's counsel was that the offence of blasphemy was one that could only be committed against the deity, and further that what Mr. Rahard has said amounted to no more than an expression of opinion set forth in the Church of England official articles. The Judge did not agree, but declared that the sentiments expressed were such that would wound the feelings of the majority of people in the province of Quebec, and that, therefore a *prima facie* case had been made out to substantiate the committal of the offence.

I think the judge was substantially correct according to the present reading of the Common Law of blasphemy; and this only serves to advertise the absurdity of the situation. In England, as I have already said, a man may wound the feelings of Roman Catholics as much as he pleases. Unless what he says amounts to slander, or it is said in such circumstances that it may provoke a breach of the peace—and in that case the charge would have nothing whatever to do with the law against blasphemy—he cannot be touched. In England he must, to commit blasphemy, outrage the feelings of Protestants. It will not be enough to outrage the feelings of Jews or Mohammedans, or members of any other religion. In the province of Quebec, where one is brought before a Roman Catholic Judge, and tried by a jury that is largely Roman Catholic, he may go much further in attacking the beliefs of Protestants than he could here. And who is it that has to say whether the feelings of people have been outraged to such an extent that the writer or speaker ought to be sent to prison? Not an impartial jury of non-Christians or of non-Roman Catholics, not a judge who is outside this or that Church, but a body of men who are themselves in the position of prosecutors. They have to consider whether *their* beliefs have been attacked in such a way that their feelings are hurt. Would anyone agree that this state of things should exist in connexion with any subject other than religion? A little time back we had an example, also from Montreal, of a man who was actually committed to a criminal asylum, the prosecution having despaired of securing a conviction for blasphemy, because the blasphemer, after discovering a priest in criminal conversation with his wife, had referred to the Roman Catholic Church in a way that displeased Roman Catholics. Much has been said in England of the travesty of justice in German courts, where those who try and sentence men are judge, jury, and prosecutor in one. Is it any different in a case of blasphemy since blasphemy laws existed? Blasphemy laws in a civilized community are a disgrace to any community that calls itself civilized.

* * *

A Grave Danger

There are two reasons for maintaining the statute and the common law of blasphemy. One is to gratify the malicious bigotry of a class which waits only the opportunity for putting that bigotry into practice. Blasphemy laws do not prevent a man disbelieving in religion, they can only prevent his saying it in the way and manner in which he feels inclined to say it.

They make a man who is timid a hypocrite, and they punish a man who has the intellectual honesty and the moral courage to say openly what he believes. They do not in this country aim at preventing anyone "outraging" the feelings of those who are not Christians. The gods of other religions must look after themselves. It is the Christian deity and the Christian religion alone in this country that require the protecting arm of the police, who must be stationed at various points, like a theological "traffic cop" to see that no one travels on the wrong side of the road. Blasphemy is the one offence which no man can be certain whether he has committed until a jury tells him that he has. A law against blasphemy is farcical in its extravagance, an outrage on common sense and justice wherever such a law exists.

But there is another and a more serious aspect to be considered. The common law of blasphemy has become what it is, it has been broadened from its original aim of punishing any expression of disbelief in an established religious doctrine, to permitting a criticism of all religious beliefs, no matter how severe the criticism, so long as the feelings of Christians are not "outraged." But this concession has not been willingly granted by Christians. It was not until scores of men and women served term after term of imprisonment, and made it quite plain that they would not be silenced, that the common law of blasphemy was brought to its present stage. But its present interpretation depends upon the existing state of public opinion: and any alteration in public opinion of a retrogressive character would enable judges and juries to interpret the law of blasphemy as it was interpreted a little more than a century ago. Our freedom to criticize religion, bearing in mind certain tendencies at work, rests upon a rather precarious foundation.

The second reason for maintaining the blasphemy laws is that they are essentially laws against the publishing of opinion. In the present state of things it is opinions concerning religion that are affected by them, but the principle of the right to punish opinions that may be obnoxious to the majority is there, and an occasion may come that is favourable to their extension. It is not a question of "blasphemy" threatening public order, no public disorder has ever been created by any speech or by any book that has been made the subject of a prosecution. It is a question of the control of opinion by the State, and so long as that principle is admitted, the will to apply this control more generally awaits only the opportunity. The abolition of the blasphemy laws is not a question that should concern Freethinkers alone. It is one that to-day very seriously concerns everyone who places a value upon the right of freedom of thought, speech and publication.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

FAREWELL TO THE CROSS

Straightway he raised the Cross high in the air;
Its Shadow darkened space: into the deep
He threw it: then his terrible despair
Fell from him, as a sleep

Falls from a young man on a summer morn:
Wondering and glad a lowly way he took
By pastures, flowers and fruit, and golden corn,
And by murmuring brook:

And while we heard descending from the skies,
Or out of future times and future lands,
A bruit low and whispers, shadowy cries
Of joy and clapping hands.

—John Davidson.

The Daring of Davidson

"I would have all men come out of Christendom into the universe."—*John Davidson.*

"Who loveth not his brother at his side,
How can he love a dim dream deified!"

James Thomson.

THE reproach has often been levelled against our insular art that it is Philistine. The French artistic sense lifts itself out of that ruck. It may go to what Mr. Mantalini called "the demnition bow-wows," but it is not Philistine. As a fact, art in France, in all its divisions, is Bohemian. Miss Marjorie Bowen and Mr. Warwick Deeping are nothing if not respectable, and Mr. John Masefield permits himself to become "the linnet on the wrist of a King." Nowadays, with us, James Thomsons are exceptional, but so is the genius of that gifted, but sombre, poet who sang of "The City of Dreadful Night." If any foreigner should throw this up in our faces we may take refuge behind the broad backs of Swinburne and Davidson.

Neither of these singers dwelt beside the still waters. To think of their literary careers is to think of alarms and excursions, of the goddess Grundy in hysterics, of chapel calling unto conventicle, of manifold recriminations and vituperations. We may wish that these two poets had not been compelled so often to exchange their pens for their swords, but on their careers all will look with pride to whom the glory of English literature is dear. The bright flame of their enthusiasm has always burned for right issues and noble causes. Their eagerness for battle has been in the cause of Freedom against convention and tradition. Swinburne is already a classic, beyond praise or blame, but Davidson deserves attention as he so worthily carried on the splendid tradition of his illustrious predecessor.

John Davidson won attention by his *Fleet Street Eclogues*, and *Ballads and Songs*. The appearance of the latter volume raised a storm, for orthodox folk could not endure his *Ballad of a Nun* and *Thirty Bob a Week*. Respectable people were, indeed, startled. Admirers of the placid poems of Lewis Morris were unaccustomed to the beauty and freedom of Davidson's lyrics. It was a long way from the sugary *Epic of Hades*, which was dubbed the "Hades of an Epic," to Davidson's virile music.

Like all pioneers, Davidson had to be contented with soldier's wages. In one of his latest books, *The Triumph of Mammon*, published in 1907, he said that he was fifty years old, and that nine-tenths of his time, and that which is more precious, had been wasted to make a mere livelihood. He also complained that the age was too commercial, too restless, too pleasure-loving, to care for poetry. The imagination of our time was not healthy enough, serious enough, joyful enough, passionate enough, for the highest in literature. So Davidson cast his books upon the waters, and appealed to posterity.

In Davidson's later books he emphasized his belief that the Christian Religion was nearing its end, and it was upon the great changes that this transformation involved that he based his poetic visions. For the out-of-date Oriental cosmogony he substituted that of man and science. Being a real poet, he breathed life into the conclusions of scientists, for, like Swinburne, he blew everything to melody through the golden trumpet of his genius.

The poet's description of a world without the shadow of the Cross palpitates with passion, for he foresaw:—

"A beauty and a glory of the world
Emerged from Christendom, like love's beloved,

With April from the wrinkled womb of death,
Delivered fresh to Aphrodite's arms."

Now listen to another quotation in which Mammon delivers his message:—

"Instead of temples I bring the universe,
Instead of creeds I offer you yourselves,
The greatness of the universe become self-conscious,
In flames and crimson seas we shall advance
Against the ancient immaterial reign
Of spirit, and our watchword shall be still,
"Get thee behind me, God; I follow Mammon."

There are passages which are very glories of charm and imagination:—

"High hearts and youth are destiny enough."
"Life's heavy fruitage and imperial nights,
When naked darkness gluts the sky with stars."
"And thunder of the thought shall seem to wait
Upon the nimbler lightning of the deed."

It is by means of passages such as these that the reader can see something of the genius of the poet who found eclogues in "London's central roar." As a dramatist, John Davidson was the antipodes of ordinary playwrights. For instance, he regarded the Christian Religion as being a mischievous vested interest, and he wrote books with the deliberate object of converting people to his own opinions in this matter. He hits the god of Orthodoxy hard, and his worshippers still harder. When you read *God and Mammon*, for example, you are asked to interest yourself in the happenings to Prince Mammon or King Christian, but the whole thing is a polemic against religion, expressed oftentimes in as beautiful language as the honeyed perfection of Kit Marlowe, who narrowly escaped being burnt to death for blasphemy.

Davidson's own life was a tragedy, deeper than any that he wrote. He possessed literary ability that would have enabled him to make plenty of money had he prostituted his talents. Penury drove him to translating books from the French, but he would never sell his soul. He dedicated himself to the service of principles, and he was entitled, in his degree, to echo the noble words of Heine: "Lay a sword upon my coffin, for I was a loyal soldier in the war of the liberation of Humanity."

When lion-hearted Richard Carlile was fighting the good fight for Freedom, he was unaware that his deeds of daring were watched by Keats and Shelley, two great poets, both Freethinkers, who looked out from the towers of song, and recognized that he was a hero battling for the most precious possession of humanity. Nearly a hundred years later, George Foote, fighting bravely in the same good cause, was heartened by the encouragement of George Meredith, Gerald Massey, and John Davidson. It was well and happily done. For the Freethought leaders have always looked beyond the tumult and the shoutings of the day, and are touched by what Shakespeare finely calls "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

MIMNERMUS.

A CHILD'S LAUGH

Strike with hand of fire, O weird musician, thy harp strung with Apollo's golden hair; fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft touches of the organ-keys; blow, bugler, blow, until thy silver notes do touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering amid the vineclad hills. But know, your sweetest strains are discords all, compared with childhood's happy laugh—the laugh that fills the eyes with light, and every heart with joy. O rippling river of laughter, thou art the blessed boundary-line between the beasts and men; and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fretful fiend of care. O Laughter! rose-lipped daughter of joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheeks to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief.—*Ingersoll.*

Emotion in Language

WHEN we ask the question, "What is the chief function of language?" the answer which comes to mind most readily is, "To communicate thought." And this is probably the shortest and most comprehensive answer which can be given. Yet its very brevity renders it unsatisfying as an explanation, while its comprehensiveness makes it somewhat vague. So we are prompted to seek a little further for an answer that may be equally comprehensive and, at the same time, more specific and informative.

Why do we try to *communicate* thought? It is clear that we do so for a multiplicity of reasons. We may wish to impart information to others, or to extend our own knowledge by enquiry. We may wish to record our own experiences or the experiences of others. We may wish to express our emotions, or to rouse the emotions of others to serve our own ends. But to whatever uses we may put language, behind them all we invariably discover two motives. The first is the carrying out or realization of our personal aims and desires; the second is the influencing of other human beings to that end. The chief function of language, then, is to serve as an instrument whereby we may influence other persons in such a way as to promote our own ends more speedily and effectively than would be possible without its use.

It follows from this that there are two pre-requisites which must be fulfilled before language can begin to function at all. The first is that, in addition to the person using it, there shall be one or more other persons for it to act upon. The second is that those others shall at least be able to react appropriately to the instrument when it is applied to them. In other words, the person or persons to whom the language is addressed must be able to *understand the meaning* of the person who addresses them. And the only way in which these essentials can be established is through a special community of experience amongst those by whom, and upon whom, a particular language is used. (See article "Definition and Meaning," *Freethinker*, May 6, 1934.)

These facts lend colour to the view that the beginnings of language consisted of vocal expressions which our primitive ancestors were in the habit of uttering when several individuals were in company. But we realize that before a given sound could acquire significance for more than one individual, it would not only have to be repeated fairly often, but the repetition would have to occur in circumstances when the attention of the group was most alert and their memories most likely to be vividly impressed. The circumstances which would best fulfil these conditions would obviously be those of a tense and emotional sort.

If we observe the vocal utterances of animals we find a considerable proportion that seem meaningless to us. Yet there is a residue to which some significance can genuinely be attributed. Many of the sounds which the human ear recognizes by their consistent pronunciation are just those sounds uttered under stress of emotions such as fear, anger, and the sexual emotion. Moreover, from the behaviour of many gregarious animals we notice that it is these very sounds which seem to be understood by, or to have meaning for, other members of the herd or group.

These observations would lead us to conclude that the languages of our primitive ancestors were largely composed of words which were evoked by emotion, and which, in their turn, evoked appropriate emotional responses in their hearers. Yet when we study

modern languages it would appear that by far the largest number of words in use are purely *referential*. That is to say, we seem to use words more as symbols of reference to the unemotional facts and objects of experience than to the emotional. Nor, at first glance, is it noticeably evident that many of the words we use are evoked by emotion in ourselves, or that they arouse emotions in others. On the face of it, therefore, no very obvious link seems to exist between our hypothesis of a primitive emotional language and the referential languages of to-day.

We should bear in mind, however, that to describe the units of primitive languages as *words* is merely analogical. As a matter of fact such sound-units would function not as *words* but as *sentences*. The sound of alarm uttered by some animal, if interpreted into sophisticated speech, might stand for one of a dozen complete sentences, such as the following: "I heard a noise. Keep quiet!" or "I saw a movement in the bushes. I fear an enemy!" or "Some danger is threatening. Let us escape!" etc., etc. Not until specific sounds had come to be *consciously* recognized and repeated in other than emotional conditions would the emotional element become dissipated in their use for purely referential purposes. If now we transfer our attention from words to sentences, from grammatical to functional units, we shall see that the emotional element which seems to be absent in the former reappears with considerable force in the latter.

Let us cast our glance over the whole realm of speech and literature. Let us listen to the perorations of preachers, politicians and barristers. Let us note the language of hymns, popular songs, and operas. Let us read the poems, stories and novels that are written. Let us witness the performance of plays and cinema films. If we had to name one factor common to them all, what would that factor be but *emotion*? In every one of these linguistic spheres the dominant motive seems to be either to express emotions or to evoke them, or both. It will be seen that the difference between the hypothetical emotional language of our primitive ancestors, and the apparently purely referential languages of to-day is not so great as seemed at first.

Another relevant fact is that the more ignorant we are, the more easily can we be influenced by appeals to our emotions rather than to our reason. And the converse is equally true. The more knowledge we acquire concerning the facts of nature, the more we understand the causes which underlie our conscious and unconscious actions, the less liable are we to be led and misled by arguments that swamp our judgment by exciting our feelings. Calm logic and reasoning, and the use of language for these purposes, are the direct results of the spread of education and knowledge. And this is borne out by the fact that emotional language is found to be least in evidence in the writings and utterances of those who are nowadays looked upon as the most learned and reliable persons—the scientists. Not that they are unlike the rest of us in being exempt from error or emotion; but merely that in proportion as they evince emotion in their reasoning and judgments, so is the value of their work discounted. The relationship between reliable accuracy and the absence of emotion is one that is recognized by most people when dealing with matters that can be verified. When it is ignored, it is usually to the detriment of truth.

But even if we confine our inspection to words alone, we shall still find plenty of evidence which bears witness to the descent of language from a primitive emotional form. For, in addition to those purely emotional expressions, *i.e.*, exclamations, there are plenty of words in existence whose purpose, apart

from that of objective reference, is either to express an attitude of emotional approval or disapproval in the user, or else to evoke an emotional response in the hearer. Examples of such words are: coward, traitor, bastard, villain, pervert, stink, muck, pest; while at the other end of the scale we have words like: hero, patriot, aristocrat, gentleman, convert, perfume, darling, holy, and so on. Slang and metaphor also provide us with a large variety of emotional epithets such as: Bolshie, crook, crank, brute, swine, ass; while at the other end of the scale we have words like: pal, brick, trojan, peach, and so on.

Since the use of words like these is generally indicative of some emotional bias or prejudice, it has been suggested, with considerable justification, that the interests of truth and reason would be well served by their complete elimination from language. Apart from the impracticable nature of such a scheme, however, we should still be left with an enormous number of words which, while being indispensable for purely referential purposes, have acquired meanings that are emotionally tinged. The way in which meanings are formed in our minds makes it practically impossible for us to escape altogether from the emotional associations which are so often linked to their purely referential associations.

Let us take the case of a child brought up by elders of an anti-semitic persuasion. In acquiring a meaning for the word *Jew*, it is probable that the child would hear it uttered in association with epithets such as "dirty" or "horrid." Even if no epithets were used, the utterance might be accompanied by facial expressions of contempt or dislike. These epithets or expressions having already acquired an emotional tone in the child's mind, it is a foregone conclusion that a similar tone would attach itself to the meaning of the word *Jew*. And in after life this would constitute an emotional prejudice which the adult would find it hard to eliminate from any discussion in which the word *Jew* appeared. The same is true of the word *Christian*, which, when used as an adjective by Christians, always implies the acme of morality and beneficence in the person to whom it is applied. Yet these words, and many others like them, are necessary as linguistic symbols for purely referential purposes and, as such, they should serve as correct objective descriptions in which no emotional feelings of approval or disapproval are implied or need be evoked.

It is a peculiar fact that when definition of such words is asked for, the emotional element in their meanings is seldom verbally expressed. And this is a sign either that we ourselves are unconscious of the emotional tone which we attach to them, or else that we realize the irrelevancy of emotion when it comes to correct definition and use. The unfortunate degree to which emotionally tinged words can warp our judgment and reasoning is one very good reason why, in providing ourselves with clear-cut meanings for the words we use, we should examine ourselves by introspection in order to discover and control any emotional tone that may be attached to those meanings. The mere bringing into the light of consciousness of these emotional trimmings will materially assist us to check the bias which such words are apt to create in our own reasoning. It should also prevent us from being too easily side-tracked by their influence upon our emotions when used by others.

C. S. FRASER.

VIRTUOUS IMPOSITIONS

Virtues, like lovers, should win their way: the most vicious people are those who impose them on us.

Where Witch-Doctors Differ

IN the matter of controversy Roman Catholics have nothing to learn from Protestants. The bitterest Protestant opponents of the Papacy do not understand that by their fulminations they are doing their own cause more harm than good; and, in point of fact, in some areas have helped to advance Roman Catholicism. What galls these Protestant firebrands is that Roman Catholics will not pay them the compliment of attacking them or of replying to their attacks. The latter merely lump them together with all other heretics who do not kiss the toe of the Pope.

It is a rather depressing reflection upon the present standards of general education, that particularly in Ireland, Protestants are to be found who are prepared to copy and even outdo the most malignant persecutors of days long past. These gentry would rejoice to see the repeal of the Catholic Emancipation Act. They would gladly, and without compunction, prevent the civil employment of clever Catholics, Jews and Freethinkers *if they could*. They affect to see in Romanism the deadliest foe of Protestantism and to minimise the growing influence of Freethought in the British Empire. Russia? Well, of course, Communistic Atheism is a terrible and diabolical thing, conceivable only in a nation of unenlightened savages. But apparently because the Vatican has pronounced so strongly against it, and has issued denouncing Encyclicals about it, Protestants paradoxically maintain the attitude that Rome is still the greater and more insidious danger to their particular brand of faith! Or do they conceive that in his warnings against Communistic Atheism the Pope is talking with his tongue in his cheek? Perhaps their position is that they would rather have an openly declared enemy than one who in his schemes of proselytising uses nine tenths of their own formulas and terminology.

There can be little doubt that in the religious disorders that periodically occur in the West of Scotland and Ulster, the Protestant participators have been the most to blame. They lose all sense of proportion when the secular authority does not withdraw from Roman Catholics the free facilities for propaganda that they themselves enjoy. To them a picturesque Catholic procession through the streets of a town is like a red rag to a bull. So they run amok. Their partisan zeal eats them up and then the brickbats begin to fly. It is only human that brickbats should provoke resentment and retaliation—even in usually placid individuals. But generally speaking it is very seldom that evidence can be adduced to show that Catholics are the originators of these riots. The Pope has his children well warned. He has sedulously taught them that violence does their faith nothing but harm. Their weapons must be persuasion, precept and example. Are detached persons likely to be attracted by rowdies who are for ever inveighing against the licentiousness and intolerance and tyranny of Romanists? We know from John Richard Green's history that when the younger Pitt turned his attention to the matter of political and economic reforms in Ireland, he was simply horrified by the "bigoted fury" of the Protestants of Ulster. And they have evidently left many successors. They are the type of religious persons, whose policy is to give hell in the life that now is to those who do not agree with them. The Romanist has certainly belief in a hot place for the unbelievers in his faith in the life which is to come. But he is by no means averse to people having a reasonably good time on earth; and to joining even with heretics in a beano. Let it be frankly said that a Romanist enjoys a laugh as well as a Freethinker. The Calvinistic would-be dictators are deplorably lacking in a sense of humour. It might be of advantage to themselves and their

neighbours if they could see themselves as others see them. It takes a surgical operation to get the glimmering of a joke into their fat heads.

In the faith of the Romanist, at any rate God is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. But God in the estimation of fashionable and up to date Protestants is for ever chipping, chopping and changing. They every now and again clamour for a "restatement" of faith or creed, so that it may be adapted to the new conditions in which we live. You do not find trimming or jettisoning countenanced by Rome. Its established, divinely ordained and immutable doctrines are for all men in all ages under all conditions. Is it to be wondered at that people who feel they need a supernatural faith, people who are possessed by the "instinct of religion," should prefer certitude to the shifting bases of Protestantism? No. And that is why the adherents of Rome are growing in number day by day. Moreover, the Roman Catholic priest enters without snobbishness or superiority into the daily life and interests of the common people. But the average Protestant clergyman proves himself as big a snob as the God he represents. If he is to gain converts he must rid himself of his attitude of superiority and his air of self-importance. These limitations are particularly observable among Presbyterian ministers. Episcopal clergymen guard more against them. They want their flocks to regard them as decent, homely, companionable fellows. But you mustn't try to slap a Nonconformist pundit on the back or call him by his "Christian" name!

But after all is said, any man, clerical or non-clerical, can only be judged from what of him is outside and visible—not from what of him is inside and invisible. And as regards priests and parsons of all Churches, their ultimate claim is to dictate what beliefs every individual shall embrace to regulate his life and conduct. They do not, any one of them, recognize the right of any person to act on standards of his own making, no matter what the quality of his intellect may be. Supernaturalism means a levelling—distinctly a levelling down. The most intellectual and well-doing unbeliever can go to Hell, while the illiterate parasite, who has been guilty of the grossest conduct and many anti-social crimes, but who before the end of life looks in faith at the crucified one, immediately he dies enters the glories of Paradise and becomes a precious jewel in the diadem of the Almighty. Who says the ethics of the Bible are weird and jumbled and baffling and fantastic? Only the damned rationalist who even maintains that the promulgators of such "punk" should not be paid big stipends out of the nation's purse for retailing it.

There is a considerable section of Protestantism—particularly in the Episcopal Churches—which has come to realize that bigoted fury and narrow intolerance are very largely responsible for the failure of Protestantism. So efforts are being made to supplant the dreary and menace-breathing fanatics, who it is said are driving so many into the arms of Rome. The reformers' argument against the fanatics seems to be: "It isn't so much what they say as how they say it." So it may be that the "message" will not be sacrificed though the form may be made attractive. Meanwhile the progress of British Freethought, of which there are many proofs, is conveniently ignored by the leaders of Protestant denominations which have command of the "dough," and by a servile-pseudo-pious Press through which the Buchmans, Douglases and Redwoods *et hoc genus omne* may tootle their toots. But Freethinkers stand fast for individual independence and the right to expose the falsities of the supernaturalists in *what* they actually say, being only secondarily concerned with how they say it.

IGNOTUS.

Acid Drops

At Dundee arrangements were being made for a Sunday Concert by Jack Hilton and his band for the benefit of a local charity. But the Committee which had arranged the concert had reckoned without the Rev. McIntosh Mowatt, and this servant of the Lord rose up and denounced the concert as being made up of "popular music," or else "Jazz pure and simple." And the equally godly police-committee stopped the Concert. So Dundee is saved from listening to popular music on Sundays, in the hope that they will go and listen to the unpopular music of the McIntosh Mowatts and their kind.

The incident gives one additional exposure of the Bill given to the country by our Government of tricks and traps. Without the moral courage to maintain either the Sunday laws or abolish them, it adopts the methods of the Chicago gangsters by promising "protection" to those who are content to give a "rake-off" of ten to fifty per cent of profits to be given as the local big-wigs shall decide. And it places in the hands of bigots and their tools, the power to prevent thousands of men and women spending Sunday in a perfectly rational manner. It is a pity that the Dundee Committee did not make the admission to the concert free, have a collection, and tell the local police committee and McIntosh Mowatt to go to the devil, or anywhere else where there existed enough bad taste to give them a welcome.

"Methodism's New Doctor," is the *Methodist Record* headline. We knew that Methodism was sick, and we are accustomed to seeing Bibles and creeds "doctored." The "New Doctor" will find plenty of chloroform in the patient's bedroom, but we should not advise an operation on the brain: that will prove either fatal or impossible.

The Rev. Henry Bett, M.A., of Stockport Methodist Circuit, is the author of *Nursery Rhymes*, and a book about *The Hymns of Methodism*, which should be popular in the Infants' Class. He also wrote *The Games of Children* and *Studies in Religion*. He seems to have only one subject to write about.

Birth Control is fighting an up-hill, but very brave, fight in the U.S.A. A Texas jury, after surveying crime conditions, unanimously agreed that Birth Control is badly needed. The Rev. George Wilhelm, pastor of Holy Name Church and Dean of Houston, objects strongly. He says the "jury is morally, psychologically, and physically wrong; the laws of Nature are above juries and judges," and apparently far below the level of a puritan priest.

Rev. A. E. Witham writes, "There is no sense in judging religion by the poor varieties with which the shores of history are strewn." What other criterion is there? Mr. Witham jestingly tells us of two types: "the one that takes religion in homœopathic doses, and the other takes it like neat brandy; the former is as unsatisfactory as the latter is unpleasant." What about taking it in water—plenty of water? Ingersoll once said he believed in baptism—with soap!

The "Social" work of the churches consists in the most barefaced proselytism. Mr. Hamilton Fyfe made a very timely protest against the propaganda of Christians at meetings called ostensibly to advocate "social reform." At the Mansion House meeting last Tuesday the assembled clergy simply got a huge advertisement and free use of the civic property while they advocated what the Archbishop of Canterbury very aptly called "a wind of the Spirit." The Bishop of Chichester called for financial support, and Lord Rochester claimed that "Social, economic, and international problems could never be solved apart from Jesus Christ." The Rev. H. L. Henriod told the assembly to "Seek first the Kingdom of God." It was simply an unadulterated trade show.

The Rev. Meirion Davies says he has discovered an "infallible remedy for Fascism, Hitlerism and Bolshevism." It is simple enough. It is "the recognition of Jesus Christ as the Lord." Any Dictatorship apparently is better than none at all. There is no pretence that the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is any kind of Democracy.

"What Is the Gospel for To-day?" is asked by the Rev. Frederick H. Benson. We imagine it exists (to-day as yesterday) for enabling ministers to earn a living while "explaining" it. G. W. Foote once said, "many a minister lives on the cross who could not live on the square." In quite another sense, the "gospel for to-day" would be a gospel that converted waste into usefulness. Waste includes Churches and Armaments.

Sir Charles Marston, who is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, has been writing in the *Daily Express* on "Digging up the Truth of the Bible." Like other famous believers, he imagines if some spot mentioned in the Bible is discovered by excavations, it proves the Holy Word to be true. No one denies that, considering the Bible was, more or less, written in or around Palestine, it would contain some Palestinian topography. But this by itself would never have made people Christians. It is the supernatural in the Bible, the miracles, the dealings with man by the one true God, that keeps up faith in religion and the Book. Have excavations proved the truth of one single miracle? Do Prof. Garstang and Dr. Woolley, whose work is quoted by Sir C. Marston, really believe in miracles? Why, so poor has been the result of these excavations in proving Bible history, that there is no proof yet of a convincing nature, that the Jews were ever slaves in Egypt, or that Abraham or Moses or David or even Solomon ever lived.

The fact is that if anything can be proved from the unearthing of potsherds or tablets with inscriptions on them or records of any kind, it is that the Bible stories were written from the myths, legends and crude beliefs, of ancient peoples, and adapted so as to make them appear as if they belonged to the history of God's Chosen People—the title they gave themselves, and actually believed to be their true one, even by their enemies. A bigger hoax has never been played in history. This has, of course, long been recognized by Freethinkers and even learned Christians have been compelled to admit the facts. But readers of the *Daily Express* cannot be expected to know much about genuine Biblical criticism, so they will no doubt accept such articles as that of Sir Charles Marston, and thank heaven the Bible is once more vindicated. Poor boob!

At Leigh-on-Sea, the other day, the Ratepayers' Association voted against Sunday games in Southend. An interesting antiquarian relic of Cromwell's days, Alderman S. F. Johnson, delivered himself this wise:—

Sunday is God's Day, and woe betide anyone who does not observe it. God has punished the people severely in the past for failing to observe His day, and the day has not yet passed when He has ceased to visit upon people their desecration of the Seventh Day.

As a matter of fact, if Alderman Johnson knew anything about the matter, or could think logically and seriously about the Sabbath Day, he would know that *Sunday* is not the seventh day, but the first, and that the real Sabbath Day, which he desecrates every week of his life, is Saturday—the day mentioned in the Bible and believed in by Jesus. Sunday may be Sun's Day, but it isn't the Sabbath Day, so why mix them? But what keeps us wondering is how do so many of these hopeless fossils manage to get on local councils? Any town which can put up with such out-of-date blatherers fully deserves whatever it gets on Sundays. And life is so short too!

A gentleman, bearing the appropriate name of "Codd," writes as Secretary to the Sunday Defence Alliance. He objects to public recreation grounds allowing cricket to be played on Sundays, but impudently states, "the private playing of games is quite a separate issue." So,

this precious "Alliance," pretending to be helping God to "keep" holy a certain day, will let members of rich men's private clubs desecrate Sunday as much as they like. "The poor" as usual "have the Gospel preached to them." And what a gospel!

The *Christian World* adopts literally, Sir James Barrie's colloquialism that "Cricket is the game of the gods." Surely the *Christian World* does not think Cricket is referred to in the text, "The Eleven stood up and were bo(w)l(e)d." Do they suggest that Jehovah has been caught out, and that the Holy Ghost was stumped? Has Jesus had his last innings, we wonder. We dare not, of course, connect the B. V. Mary with "a maiden over," or "First slip." We are not at all convinced that Christianity is "ever cricket," or that Christians "play the game." Perhaps, "base-ball" is their appropriate pastime.

"The Crown Rights of the Redeemer," is a headline in our pious contemporary. It emphasizes the fact that "Geneva and Rome, Calvinists and Catholics, find themselves standing together at the Cross, fighting the common foe of Secularism." And the more they stand together the more they will prove the utter unreality of their preposterous divisions, which have drenched the world with blood and have excused persecution, torture, and all forms of hate in the pretence that one sect was in God's confidence, and that all others were inspired by His Enemy the Holy Devil.

The Bishop of Kensington is a wit. He described the world as "a heathen land with pockets of Christians scattered about." He will excuse our adding that the "pockets" are usually well-filled.

John O'London's reviewer draws attention to the decline of piety in modern poetry. A correspondent disagrees, but it is obvious from the citations given that the correspondent would like to claim as piety every fine thought of every poet. In phrases like "filial piety, the adjective has as much to do with the noun, as in the label German silver." Piety means religion, filial-piety means something else. And it is time that writers ceased to pretend that good poetry has to be religious, or that religious poetry is good poetry.

After being called severely to task for inviting a Christian to deliver addresses in Liverpool Cathedral, Dr. David, the Bishop of Liverpool, has promised never to offend again. It was an unheard of scandal to invite anybody who did not believe in the Divinity of Our Lord to preach from a Christian pulpit—though the hospitable Doctor excused himself by saying that:—

The popular conception of Unitarianism—that its main tenets is the denial of Our Lord's Divinity, is so far as modern Unitarians (with the exception of, perhaps, a few eccentrics) are concerned, entirely mistaken. As a body they make no dogmatic denial of that truth.

Well, we certainly always thought they did, and indeed, there are a good many Christians who prefer to dwell upon the inherent "beauty" of the teaching of Jesus rather than on his filial relationship with God Almighty. If what Dr. David says is true, however, the Unitarians ought to go over to the Trinitarians at once. Jesus is or is not the Son of God and God Himself. What do representative Unitarians say? In any case, the one thing that emerges is that Christians still love one another in the good old fashion.

The decision of the Catholic Truth Society to hold its Congress this year in Belfast led to some pretty speeches by Dr. Hanna, a Presbyterian, Mrs. Harnett, and the Rev. M. Glass. "Force might have to be met by force," says Dr. Hanna. "I am determined to arouse you. . . ." He wanted every loyal citizen to shoulder arms in defence of Ulster. Mrs. Harnett insisted that the audience should get someone to drill them. She even asked her hearers if

they could shoot. Mr. Glass said that if the exhibition was held in Ulster Hall, there would be a counter-demonstration outside.

These speeches led Cardinal Macrory to refer to this meeting of Orangemen, who "through bigotry and hatred of the Church denounced the letting of the hall." Sir Joseph Davidson, who is the Grand Master of Orange Hall, in Belfast, then denounced the Protestant speakers, who had, he said, no connexion with his order; and called upon the Cardinal to withdraw his imputation of "bigotry and hatred." The Cardinal did so—as far as the Orange Order was concerned—and the Catholic Truth Society are now trying to withdraw from their contract with Ulster Hall for their Congress. All this is a pretty picture of the love which genuine Christianity invariably engenders in its followers. But quite possibly, Orangemen and Roman Catholics would fight shoulder to shoulder against Freethought! It's a strange world.

The Archbishop of Baltimore has helped to launch a "Decency Crusade" in America. He is against the "filthy" films which emanate from Hollywood, and he seems to be a worthy descendant of Anthony Comstock. We should like to bet that quite a number of people who produce these films—which are not necessarily indecent because a Roman Catholic denounces them—are Catholics themselves, as well as the writers, adaptors, actors and actresses, photographers and even producers. But it will be interesting to see how many Catholics in America and elsewhere can be induced to stay away from the "movies." Pictures and wireless give *pleasure* to people and very often real happiness. And those in pursuit of these things will seldom be deterred by vain prohibitions from priests or pastors.

A writer in the *Times* recently showed the wonderful value of Sunday schools in teaching religion, and all about its heroes. For example, Moses was variously described as (1) a disciple or scribe of our Lord; (2) a Jew who preached to the Israelites about Jesus; (3) one who had something to do with the Ten Commandments; (4) one who preached against the will of Roman priests; (5) one who did great work for the Christian Church; (6) one who was both a Christian and a Jew. This is funny enough, but is it funnier than calling Jesus the greatest poet, orator, medium, business man, humorist, economist, etc., that ever trod this earth?

"The great day comes," says the Rev. Surtees Sloane, "when Jesus comes to claim his jewels." "Will you be a Ruby or a Diamond for the breast-plate of the Lord?" Mr. Chesterton as a priceless pearl will leave but little room for any other gem, unless the Lord's "breast" stretches to breaking point.

The Mayor of Lambeth has apparently acquired a unique Bible. His version is different from any we have seen. "The Bible," he said, "is the most up-to-date instruction book in the world." There is no doubt about it being chock-full of "Instructions" about slavery, all kinds of bestiality, how Motherhood should be stigmatized as "unclean," and how to massacre prisoners of war and all unbelievers. There are even cookery lessons of a sort (Ezek. iv. 12). But the Mayor must be a "modernist" indeed to call any of these "Up-to-date instructions." They are as old as Jehovah.

The *Daily Herald* ought to have asked a Christian to "write up" the "Land of the Bible." Any ordinary Bible-reader would have avoided the pitfalls Mr. Morton's articles sink into. A humorous instance occurred last week. A picture of an Oasis is labelled, "It is undoubtedly the inn mentioned in our Lord's parable." Readers of *Æsop*, as well as Bible readers know what a parable is. Mr. Morton will show us next a photo of a napkin, and label it "undoubtedly the very napkin mentioned in the parable of the Talents." The word "undoubtedly" is characteristic of the professional fictionist's audacity.

Old family scandals live on, but it hardly seems worth while paying for a long advt. in the Agony Column of the *Morning Post* as some pious old lady did last Monday, merely to ask "Why did St. Barnabas and St. Paul part company": and, rather less grammatically, "Innocence has been condemned before, see Matt. xxvi. 66." We are still in the dark about Barny and Paul, but we are sure the lady herself was "innocence" itself.

Illusions about Christ are shattered one by one. The Rev. C. Lowe, Headmaster of Highfield School, assures us that "Christ was not one of those rabid Socialists who condemn the rich." "Nowhere does He forbid men to accumulate wealth." Illusions about the Bible will go if we have to strike out of it all that Christ said about "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." Probably all that Mr. Lowe meant was that Christ ALSO says the exact opposite to what He said about wealth and everything else.

The Rev. John S. Whale does not like Hitler's insistence on a blood test for citizenship. He makes fun of it, quoting Goethe's jocularly, when Mephistopheles makes Faust sign in a "very special juice." According to Mr. Whale "the real controversy is between election by blood, and election by Grace." Mr. Whale backs Grace all the time. He forgets the vital value attributed to "The Precious Blood," in Christianity and all other religions. Christianity is reeking with blood, in its ritual, in its origins, and in the blood of its million victims.

Half the Christian world disagrees with the other half on all important Christian principles. The familiar "Wayside Pulpit" posters point this moral: "One God, One Bible" may have more than "One Meaning." Last Sunday, outside the Norwood Congregational Church the "W.P." Poster boldly proclaimed "God's Teaching" in OPPOSITION to war. A day later another school of Christians posted a similar-looking poster covering up the "W.P." poster, and quoting Luke xi. 21 FAVOURING war. It bore a footnote as follows: "You've had your say. Now read what your God has to say." It was signed "Christian Patriot."

Fifty Years Ago

CHRISTIAN JUSTICE.

MR. JOSEPH DAVIES, of Peckham Rye, has had a lively experience of Christian justice. Last March he went to St. Mary's College to hear Sir Hardinge Giffard, Mr. Marriot, and other pious patriots, denounce the "weak and vacillating policy of the Government. His ticket of admission was taken at the door in the usual way, but in the passage his right to enter was challenged, and he was finally thrown out by a number of Bible Conservatives. He was so much injured that for three weeks he was a patient at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. The principal offender was William Phillips, of the Peckham Conservative Club, against whom Mr. Davis brought an action to recover £30 damages. The case was tried before Mr. Pitt Taylor at the Lambeth County Court, and the barrister for the defendant was Mr. H. C. Richards, the would-be Tory member for Northampton. The assault was clearly proved, but the jury returned a verdict for the defendant, although one of their number was so deaf that he never heard a word of the case. The judge treated this fact as a joke, and he appears to have spent most of his time in bandying puns with the witnesses. Mr. Richards, of course, dragged Mr. Bradlaugh's name into the case, and accused Mr. Davis not only of shouting "Three Cheers for Bradlaugh," but of crying "To hell with the Bible," although this charge was distinctly disproved by his own witnesses. The result is that Mr. Davis is mulcted in costs to the tune of nineteen guineas. Mr. Davis appeals to us for assistance to prevent his home from being broken up. Mr. Bradlaugh has promised a guinea, and Mr. Foote another. Any subscriptions we receive before Tuesday morning, when the costs must be paid, will be handed to Mr. Davis.

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THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412

TO CORRESPONDENTS

- A. FORBES.—Pleased to hear of the continued success of Mr. Brighton's meetings in Stockton, and hope it will lead to the formation of a Branch there.
- A. C. TREGASKIS (Transvaal).—The intense competition of Missionary Societies to secure the souls of natives is nothing new. It is, in the religious world, the analogue of the competition of trading companies to secure customers. The natives know this, and often get converted over and over again—for a consideration—and all in the way of business.
- H. HICK.—Sorry, but letter too lengthy for publication.
- "BLACKBURN."—The Rev. Mr. Hutchcroft seems a good deal of a braggart, with nothing to say that hasn't been said thousands of times in a much abler manner.
- B. L. BOWERS.—Obliged for cuttings.
- H. MARTIN.—There is an edition of the Apocryphal New Testament published by the Oxford Press. A reading of it should help one to understand better the atmosphere of credulity and gross superstition in which the Christian religion came to maturity.
- B. J. BAILEY.—The case is not quite as bad as you seem to think. Man is a social animal, and the development of his nature is such that he cannot avoid finding some pleasure in acting so that his conduct benefits those around him. The recreation is, of course, mutual.
- P. GOLDMAN.—We agree with your point of view. There is naturally some risk attached to toleration as with almost everything, but the dangers of suppression are really much greater. That, however, is a point of view that many of our tin-pot would-be dictators cannot appreciate.
- W. R. STEVENSON.—Thanks for letter and good wishes. Two copies of *Selections from Ingersoll* have been sent to Messrs. Rawsons Bookshop at Melbourne.

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

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

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

Sugar Plums

To-day (June 24) there will be a number of meetings held all over the country protesting against the "Incitement to Disaffection Bill" of the Government. Among these is one that will be held in Trafalgar Square, London, at 3 o'clock. There will be speakers representing various organizations, and among them, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, will speak as representing the N.S.S.

Another meeting will be held in Liverpool at the Stadium, near Exchange Station. Mr. Cohen will speak on behalf of the N.S.S., and there will be other speakers representing various shades of religious and political

opinion. Admission will be free, but there will be reserved seats at 2s. 6d. and 1s. each. Doors will open at 7.0 p.m. Chair will be taken at 8.0 p.m.

We feel confident that rain will come in the near future. This is not based on any careful calculation of meteorology, but upon the simple, but reliable fact, that the Bishop of London asked all the clergy to offer prayers on June 17 for rain. Now careful observation has shown us that whenever prayers for rain are said, the rain does come afterwards. No matter whether the "afterwards" be short or long, it comes, and that it follows the prayer justifies the belief that the rain has come as a consequence of the prayer. Otherwise what would be the use of praying?

But we must note that the Bishop has been very patient. Some impatient persons would have called the Lord's attention to the water shortage so soon as it looked like being serious. Others might, believing that prevention is better than cure, have asked the Lord at the beginning of the year to take care and see that we had neither too much nor too little rain during 1934. Others might have actually blamed the Lord for not observing that water was getting scarce, and that it was his business to see that the rain came. Our bishop does none of these things. He waits patiently, week after week, to see whether the Lord will attend to things without being prompted. He does not blame him for letting the cattle die or the crops wither, neither does he tell him that he ought to manage things better. But very quietly and humbly he calls attention to the fact that water is getting short, and if the Lord doubts it, he need only glance at the notices now exhibited "Use Less Water." But now we feel certain that rain will follow the day of prayer.

We are pleased to hear that the West Ham Branch had a very successful outing on Sunday last. The excursion was to Kew Gardens, an ideal place, bearing in mind the nature of the weather, and everyone enjoyed himself, or herself, thoroughly. Some old members of the Branch were unable to be present, but they were in the minds of those who were. Further excursions may be arranged during the summer.

Branches of the N.S.S. in Northumberland and Durham have formed themselves into a federation for the purpose of co-operative propaganda and much useful work has resulted. Mr. G. Whitehead will carry on special work in the area for four weeks, and the Federation will co-operate in the area. Mr. Whitehead will open at Sunderland on June 24, and speak at the usual places each evening until Friday at 7 p.m. The local saints predict large and successful meetings.

The Rev. Frank McConnell has written a Letter to his parishioners at St. Alban's, Streatham, denouncing the pacifists. He is like the Scots deacon, who on being reminded of the Bible stating that Jesus "went through the cornfields on the Sabbath-day," remarked that "he thought none the better of Him for that." Mr. McConnell says that if Jesus really meant "Resist not evil," "then He Himself was the most flagrant transgressor of His own injunction." All Freethinkers will agree with the parson.

Mr. Lloyd George exposes other people's mistakes (and worse) in the Great War. He accuses Lord Haig of a terrible action. Here are his words: "Better death (for other soldiers) on the Western Front, than victory (for other generals) on any other flank." The grave insinuation means that either Lloyd George is lying or Haig did what Lloyd George suggests. It is a case of one Christian versus another Christian. By the way when this Christian statesman wants to describe something particularly hopeless, he can think of nothing worse to say about it than: "It had all the unreason and extravagance of a religious revival." Mr. Lloyd George hasn't lived in Wales without knowing what a religious revival is.

Necessity and Natural Causation

THAT all the experiences of our waking lives are traceable to antecedent and coincident causes has long been regarded as axiomatic. In other words, all natural phenomena must be interpreted in terms of cause and consequence. When we become conscious of a sound, we either instinctively infer its origin, or glance round to ascertain its cause. This principle applies to all our other sensations. Moreover, this constant association of sensation with some causative factor is not confined to mankind. When a cat hears an unusual sound it listens intently and displays curiosity, until it has determined its cause. Again, this relation of happenings in general with some antecedent or concurrent cause is universal throughout the higher animal domain.

The principle of determinism reposes on a kindred basis of experience. Given certain specific or general causes, certain results are bound to emerge. Much as the gases, oxygen and hydrogen, in given circumstances, are impelled to combine to form water, so also sentient creatures such as men and women are constrained to think or act thus and thus by the joint influences of heredity and environment.

Still, it is urged that man does not act entirely through necessity, but exercises a power of choice, and thus demonstrates at least a partial freedom of the will. Schopenhauer's demurrer, however, remains unanswered: "Man can do what he wills, but he cannot will what he wills."

Sensational journalists have recently hailed the alleged discovery of indeterminism in the workings of inorganic Nature, and a few physicists have enunciated similar ideas in writings addressed to the ordinary reading public. These vain views repose on Professor Max Planck's discovery that energy in its passage from the atom is conducted not, as was formerly supposed, continuously, but in separate quantities of definite magnitude. Now, these pronouncements are characterized by Einstein as objectionable nonsense. "Indeterminism," Einstein declares, "is quite an illogical concept. The indeterminism which belongs to quantum physics is a subjective indeterminism. It must be related to something, else indeterminism has no meaning, and here it is related to our own inability to follow the course of individual atoms and forecast their activities. To say that the arrival of a train in Berlin is indetermined is to talk nonsense, unless you say in regard to *what* it is indetermined. If it arrives at all it is determined by something. And the same is true of the course of atoms."

The wide acceptance of the General and Special Theories of Relativity has led to various misconceptions, among them the view that the classical mechanics have been superseded and that their inseparable associate, the philosophy of realism, must be discarded. But the vagaries of Jeans and Eddington are in no way countenanced by Einstein, or for that matter by Planck himself. Mr. James Murphy, the authorized translator of Max Planck's *Where is Science Going?* (Allen and Unwin, 1933) shows how Einstein deprecates any return to pre-scientific speculation. Referring to the hypothesis that the external world is a mere coinage of consciousness, the apostle of Relativity says: "No physicist believes that. Otherwise he wouldn't be a physicist. Neither do the physicists you have mentioned. You must distinguish between what is literary fashion and what is a scientific pronouncement. These men are genuine scientists, and their literary formulations must not be taken as expressions of their scientific convictions. Why should anybody go to the trouble of gazing at the stars if he

did not believe that the stars were really there? . . . We cannot logically prove the existence of the external world, any more than you can logically prove that I am talking with you now, or that I am here. But you know that I am here and no subjective idealist can persuade you to the contrary."

Jeans and others have insinuated that the quantum hypothesis has deprived natural causation of its autocratic rulership of the world's affairs. In his *Mysterious Universe*, Jeans alleges that while "The old science had confidently proclaimed that nature could follow only one road, the road which was mapped out from the beginning of time to its end by the continuous chain of cause and effect," that now we are compelled to speak in terms not of certainties, but of probabilities, and coming events are determined by the gods, "whatever gods there be."

Now, the scientist who is probably the greatest living authority on quantum phenomena decisively negatives this bold assumption. Not only does Max Planck affirm his steadfast belief in the external world's objective existence, but he sternly deprecates all endeavours to weaken the principle of natural causation. The recent intrusion of mere metaphysics into science has led to what Max Planck describes as "a very serious situation." This unsatisfactory state of affairs he wishes to set right.

In his chapter entitled *Is the External World Real?* Prof. Planck states: "The beginning of every act of knowing, and therefore the starting-point of every science, must be in our own personal experiences. . . . These are the exact data of the act of knowing. They form the first and most real hook on which we fasten the thought-chain of science; because the material which furnishes the building-stones of science is received either through our own perception of outer things or indirectly through the information of others, that is to say, from former researchers, or teachers, or publications and so on. There are no other sources of scientific knowledge. In physical science we have to deal specifically and exclusively with that material which is the result of observing natural phenomena through the medium of the senses. . . . The reactions thus registered in observing external nature are collated and schematized on the basis of repeated observations and calculations. This subject matter of our scientific constructions, being the immediate reactions of what we see, hear, feel and touch, forms immediate data and indisputable reality."

That every event is the resultant of preceding and concurrent causes seems a necessity of thought. The idea of a causeless happening is really inconceivable. Planck, however, concludes that although no sane man ever disputes its reality, the universality of cause and consequence cannot be demonstrated by reasoning alone. Yet he remains positive of its practical certainty. Consequently it is justly claimed "that physical science, together with astronomy, and chemistry, and mineralogy, are all based on the strict and universal validity of the principle of causality."

Nor can causality be excluded from the realms of mind and morals. For the complete dependence of every experience upon simultaneous and antecedent phenomena compels physiological psychologists to establish their science on a firm foundation of causal interrelationing. Indeed, they postulate an operating principle of causality which permits no exceptions. "The principle of causality," states Planck, "must be held to extend even to the highest achievements of the human mind. We must admit that the mind of each one of our greatest geniuses—Aristotle, Kant or Leonardo, Goethe or Beethoven, Dante or Shakespeare—even at the moment of its highest flights of thought, or in the most profound inner workings of

the soul, was subject to the causal fiat, and was an instrument in the hands of the almighty law which governs the world."

Were our ethical standard higher, authoritative deliverances such as Einstein's and Max Planck's would suffice to restrain the reckless outpourings of popular penmen who pander to the emotional cravings of the religious public. Long and toilsome has been humanity's pilgrimage from primitive magic and religion to modern science and rationalism. There is now in many lands a marked reactionary revival, but it appears to have already spent its force in France and England, and will probably prove ephemeral elsewhere.

T. F. PALMER.

Freethought and Social Science

III.

ECONOMIC phenomena present, among others, two phases of causality which obscure their clear appraisal. One is the multiplication of effects; action taken in one direction has unaccountable repercussion in another. Then there is the antinomy or contradiction of circumstance awaiting reconciliation. Thus a singular fall in price of primary commodities a while back so affected the producers as to limit their purchasing capacity for goods in exchange. Hence all round depression. Again, if we proceed here to encourage home grown food to the value, say, of another one hundred million pounds, by so much will the transport agencies that previously brought commodities to this value be affected to their detriment, by so much will the producers abroad be affected, and there will be other consequences. It is possible too, as things go, that were a universal free trade in operation the general standard of life of the "worker" would be determined by that of the lowest level of *efficient* competitive labour—for the moment, apparently, active in Japan.

The preservation of a people's life standard and its enhancement is a paramount concern of national policy, however this may best be secured, and a highly complex issue, for first of all it must be earned. This feeling in other countries has some connexion with the contraction of world trade or exchange, due to various causes, said to be one half, or less, of what it was in 1929. The words "internationalism" and "world-planning" are much in use among critics of and prescribers for this situation. Yet despite lectures given at Economic Conferences on the evils of tariffs and restrictions the "world" persists in perverse ways, for it is still made up of separate States, egoistic in outlook, at differing levels of culture, varying in race, tradition and sympathy. Both new and old States alike aim at being as "self sufficient" as possible; and some have entered into manufacture on their own account with which previously they had little connexion, so enlarging productive capacity for the availing market. With less external exchange there is intensified internal action, and European nations are bent on conserving their own agriculture as a source of power and security, and the maintenance of a vigorous peasantry apart from its abstract "economic" bearing. Thus, we are informed, whereas France, Italy and Germany together in 1929-31 imported on an average 107 million bushels of wheat, they are now net exporters, which, of course, affects other primary producers elsewhere. So in place of open competition tempered by "most favoured nation" treaties, we seem to be in for a period of bargaining and quotas in foreign trade; "We'll take so much of your stuff for so much of ours."

Marketing in view of world exchange is a novel feature in human affairs, brought about through modern means of mechanical intercommunication. Prior to that countries were self-contained with limited external relations. This had its drawbacks when crops failed in unfavourable seasons, and drought injured cattle, as instanced recently in South Africa. The "plenty" of to-day on the lips of "planners" is largely a figment, due to local misdirection of effort in some direction or other. If more coffee is grown in South America than the existing general demand can absorb, there will be waste and loss. All special fertility in cattle or crops is owing to scientific or exceptionally sensible modes of culture improving the original article, while constant war has to be waged against pests and disease which militate against their full fruition. Moreover, these things involve corresponding capital expenditure.* A case of the opposite kind is to hand from a statement on the Native Reserves of South Africa with a growing population. "The inspection of the Native Reserves and the evidence placed before the Commission convinced its members that the present methods of agriculture followed by the natives—overstocking the land with cattle and goats, and their primitive and wasteful methods of cultivation—were rapidly reducing such Reserves to howling wildernesses. In fact, they were shocked by the evidence of soil erosion, and the beginnings of desert formation they saw in some of the Reserves, brought about by the natives themselves."

Some attempt at a general adjustment of demand and supply is a likely objective in future trade relations; while allowance must be made for emergency. Then there is need for a stabilization of currencies on the basis of a valid unit of exchange, independent of the fluctuating value of gold. Here the important commercial part played by Britain in world affairs should give a lead toward the solution of a question demanding acute, informed intelligence. That introduces again the national outlook, which has been affected in degree by the circumstances noted above.

Whereas, formerly, the "rake-off" allowed this country a handsome credit balance on its entire transactions in commerce, shipping, industry, finance, and provided ample fluid capital for re-investment; at the crisis of 1931 we were faced by a Budget deficit, and a foreign debt of £100,000,000. The situation has been retrieved so far that the Budget yields a surplus, our trade has been just balanced, with a slight increase going forward at home and abroad; and at the moment the country is again first among exporting nations and is getting a fair look in. While this shows, happily, that the Old Firm is solvent and holding ground amid stressful conditions, much leeway must be made up to engage actively a number of unemployed "hands."

If Government action has in any way assisted this improvement, its real springs are intelligent endeavour among people themselves. Foreign trade remains an important asset in our economy, and the means to its expansion is a concern of high technical capacity and business acumen.* No State legerdemain alone can bring increased prosperity at home or abroad. Lancashire cotton can only meet the devastation of its market by its traditional forceful spirit and new methods. British ships are laid up, and thousands of the finest seamen idle, in part through diminished trade, in part through competition by subsidized vessels under foreign flags run under inferior condi-

* Owing to this year's drought a shortage of crops is now reported from the chief grain areas. Russia is importing corn.

* Reports from the British Industries Fair reveal manufacture's historic skill and alertness at work herein.

tions. But inventive genius has put a fresh type of cargo-boat on the water, more economical in its mechanism, to face this competition. Coal is in the doldrums, and pits are said to be closed for good; yet energetic brains and private means have been expended on scientific treatment of coal to extract therefrom valuable bye-products like oil and motor spirit. This is now a commercial success with wide possibilities. Enhanced technique is a potent factor in recovery or maintenance; and one of the objects to be pursued is development of our home-grown food. We can no longer afford as in the days of an expanding commerce to depend upon its chief increment from abroad. Mitigation of Unemployment by forms of special public or private action is a matter wherein many proposals are forthcoming. But that belongs rather to current controversy and the sphere of responsible citizenship; for we have in view throughout the continued presence of a Free State and effective public opinion.

In so far as mechanism enters into the process, extensive changes already are in operation reducing multiple units serving similar needs to fewer, more efficient agencies; great industrial mergers, rationalization, organization of distribution, electric supply on a national basis not to mention revival of tariffs and other State engagements, some of which remain to be justified by results. Voluntary co-operation on the widest scale, in combination with free formation of capital and resourceful initiative, is the key to future betterment. And behind that is an interest of another character—the national health and physique; for the first requisite of a forceful polity is a vigorous people.

Mens sana in corpore sano. Despite the attention given in recent years to matters of public health we have reports that 50 per cent of the recruits that present themselves for enlistment in the army are rejected as below a normal, good standard of physique, and even among the classes from which candidates for commissions are usually drawn, out of 336 medical rejections 141 were for failure to reach the moderate chest measurement now required of army cadets. In 1932, of every 1,000 children examined in the schools of England and Wales, 267 were suffering from physical defects requiring treatment and 115 requiring observation, besides dental defects, by which two-thirds of the children were affected. Inspection of boys' clubs in London and Liverpool "show an almost incredibly high proportion of working boys suffering from physical defect of one kind or another." Systematic physical culture is being pursued by energetic peoples abroad, and it claims solicitude here. It links with questions of population and resource, eugenics, diet, and the secret of race advance. Indeed, the final determinant of welfare is summed up in "culture," whether as applied to crops, or to man and what he wills. The quality of taste and satisfaction displayed in the course of "consumption" reacts on the *kind* of wealth in demand and the resultant prosperity.

That, however, is an issue in itself, and others indicated at the outset are left untouched. To some we may return. We have so far taken a general survey of the ground to be covered by creative thought and scientific attack in the conquest of a fairer social order.

AUSTEN VERNEY.

TRANSPARENT HYPOCRISY

Act the hypocrite to your highest point of perfection, you will not have long intercourse with any one for whom you inwardly feel contempt without that person being aware of it.

The Way of the World

And a very curious way it is! Recently the B.B.C. permitted the Baron Von Rheinbaben to put the official case for Germany before the world. But the official case is not the case of the Allies, so there has been an outcry in the press against permitting Germany to attack the policy of the Allies. But why not? If Germany has a bad case, and the present Germany has about as bad a case as any country ever had, and will lie and lie as heartily as any country ever lied, why not give it as much rope as possible? And just when the B.B.C., after its continuous denial of free speech (although even here some censorship is exerted) resolves to let the other side of the international question be heard, our freedom-loving press shrieks out for it to be stopped. The worse the case the greater should be the publicity given to it. Never muzzle a liar. Speech is the only method by which sensible people can know that he is a liar. And the same applies to a fool.

The latter explains why so many people who will not speak gain the reputation of being strong silent men. They really have nothing to say, and if they tried to say it their reputation would be as dead as cold mutton.

Two more illustrations of the very curious ways this world of ours has. Recently there were strong protests against sending money to Ireland to buy sweepstake tickets, and all the morning papers, by evident arrangement, for the first time did not publish lists of winners. But all the evening papers did, and these belonged to the same proprietors as the morning papers, so that they were all able to sacrifice unto righteousness, while at the same time reaping profit from the other side. On the other hand all the morning papers kept to their usual policy of printing racing "tips" day by day. Wicked people might suggest that the distinction in the two cases lies in the fact that those interested in the Irish Sweepstake will not wait for the morning papers for the news. On the other hand, people want their day's racing tips with their breakfast.

It has also been decided that Britain cannot prohibit the sale of armaments to foreign countries so long as all countries will not agree to do likewise. Our desire to imitate other countries is quite touching. But it is to be noted that we do prohibit Irish Sweepstake tickets, although in most other countries lotteries are quite legal. And while on the Continent, for the most part, no prohibition is placed on Sunday entertainments of any kind. In England we decline to permit cinema performances, unless the proprietors of the Cinemas submit to a special tax, and we will not permit theatrical performances at all. We admit there is a difference between armaments and international murder, but it takes a Christian conscience to see a justification of acting on "our own" in the case of entertainments and not in the case of selling arms to anyone who wishes to buy them. And we have not the slightest doubt that if we went to war with Germany or France, our patriotic armament makers would be rushing guns and shells into the "enemy's" country until the last possible moment.

That great organ of the Ancient Order of Spooftists and Stuntites, the *Daily Express*, is desirous of two things. First to get a very, very strong army, navy and air-force, and next to have nothing to do with foreign countries if we can help it. And a well-known representative of this order Viscount Castleross, "issues an appeal to readers of the *Daily Express*" to sign a declaration that they will take no part in a war of aggression, never to fight on foreign soil, only to give battle if our hearths and homes are threatened. Capital! It is a declaration that all may sign, because anyone can make it mean what they please. The last war was not a war of aggression by either the Allies or the Germans. Each of the extended boundaries where they were fighting—ours happened to be Belgium in Europe, and God only knows where in other parts of the world—marked the limits of protected areas, and there was nothing so cer-

tain that each country was fighting in defence of its hearths and homes. That is the kind of formula that would delight the heart of Ramsay Macdonald, since no one knows what the devil it means, and so anyone can make it mean whatever one pleases. Vive la Spoofites!

No one can deny that the B.B.C. is a great educational institution. And one can admire the care taken in the nature of the education given. The other day we turned on during the Children's Hour. There was being broadcast a pageant of Empire, and we were in time to hear the announcer proclaim, India, "the Indian mutiny, in which so many gallant men and brave women laid down their lives in defence of *our heritage*." The italics are ours. We did so admire that description of India as *our heritage*—in 1854. It helps to explain why Britain rules so much of the world's surface. We were simply taking hold of "Our heritage."

Part of the body of a woman was found in a railway station at Brighton. With that desire to aid the cause of justice that is so striking a feature of our press, the morning papers of June 19 publish the portrait of the man who issued the ticket for the trunk at the lost luggage office, the portrait of a porter standing on the exact spot where the trunk rested, and the portrait of the porter who called the police. The portrait of the station that was found near the trunk containing the body, and of a man who lived near the house of the porter who worked next to the man who stood on the spot on which the trunk rested, will follow in later issues.

SIMPLE SIMON.

Courage

I.

WHEN Tom Handasyde fell ill, his wife said it was a judgment. He never took his own part in such questions, because he was not interested. "Well, you should know," he answered drily, with the grave twinkle she detested. Mrs. Handasyde was slightly, but secretly, disconcerted by that bright glance: it made her feel like a lumber-room when the morning sun shines through the window. Only for a moment, however. . . .

She should know, certainly, for she was adept at separating sheep from goats. It is true that judgments were often delayed, but she knew that a time would come. . . . And a sufficient number of her forecasts were winners, as Tom would say, to encourage her and justify her standards. If, on the other hand, a judgment fell on one of those she regarded with watchful and tentative favour, it was made acceptable—to herself, at any rate—by an adroit change of label. It became a cross, and the unfortunate a martyr. So she contrived to be always right.

She belonged to a sect called the Sons of Elijah, fulfilling its requirements of salvation by Bible-reading, regular Sunday attendance at the little meeting-house, and avoidance of the homely "sins" that comforted the unsaved neighbouring women. There was a group of old cronies that would often meet at mid-day in the bottle and jug department of the corner public house, sharing the news over a refreshing glass of draught stout. Mrs. Handasyde was not one of them. Sometimes a pang of envious curiosity troubled her when she passed the door and saw the group of heads together, comfortable in their husbands' old caps, right hands holding the foaming glasses, left hands tucked under large aprons. It was a warm, companionable glimpse. But there was always sufficient satisfying scandal talked among the Daughters of Elijah to prevent the pang from developing into temptation—scandal quite as sexual as that of the sinners, but prudishly expressed, so that its nods and hints held a more thrilling depth of suggestion than their crudity and guffaws.

The husbands of the Daughters of Elijah were all Sons of Elijah—except Tom. They were sober, clean-living fellows who did not drink, or smoke, or get paternity

orders made against them, or tell indecent jokes, or gamble. On the positive side, they shaved every day, wore collars and ties to work, held down the same jobs for donkeys' years, enjoyed the confidence of their employers, and received in wages a poor proof of it. They were always cheerful, because their faith sustained them in cheerfulness most of the time, and artificial cheerfulness served to hide their wistful moments.

That was one thing against Tom—he was no Son of Elijah. But his chief sin was an interest in horses. Not that he backed them, except in the Spring Double, the Derby and a few other major races, in which not to have had a tanner or a bob on a likely outsider would have been so eccentric as to make his friends at the factory look askance.

Mostly he studied the green, pink and yellow racing papers, delighting in the paragraphs that gave oblique hints. In a curious jargon these paragraphs indicated that certain horses "should not be allowed to run loose," were "coming to hand rapidly," or "merited another chance." And so cunningly were they balanced on the edge of vagueness, that if one of the horses happened to win, the paper was able, without alienating too many readers, to claim on the next issue's posters to have "given" the winner. These equivocal references excited Tom with their mystery, and when he read that certain news came from "a very knowledgeable quarter," he imagined hazily a kind of superior burglar, or perhaps detective, of extreme efficiency, able to lie invisibly on the bare downlands when trials were in progress, to enter locked and guarded stables, and so to discover with his eagle eye the merits and defects of the horses.

But his chief pleasure lay in trying to work out an infallible system. He tried everything from favourites, jockeys' mounts, horses that were fourth and second in their last two races, and similar simplicities, to the most complex mathematics. His root belief was that the infallible could be synthesized from the partially successful. He was like an alchemist trying to obtain gold from base substances; and just as the alchemist was sometimes able to get a deceitfully yellow metal, so Tom had his temporary winning runs.

He recorded his results in a series of penny notebooks, and stored them in his locker at the factory as soon as they were full, for Mrs. Handasyde would have burnt them as she burnt any of his sporting papers that she could get hold of. The current notebook he always carried in his pocket during the day.

Tom's only other big sin was the smoking of a particularly powerful kind of black twist, which he found an aid to study. He was not allowed to smoke this in the house until his wife had retired to bed, so after supper he would chivvy her, restless for his pipe. "Come on, Liz," he would say, "ain't you going up to bed yet?" "No, I ain't," she would retort: "if you thought less of your filthy pipe—and—" "All right: all right." There would be a pause for a few minutes, then: "Liz." "Well?" "You got to be up early, remember." "I ain't going yet, so make up yer mind to it." And so on until at last she would retire in dudgeon, and he would settle down to an hour of happy calculation, a short reeking clay protruding through his walrus moustache. Then he would hide his notebook carefully under the edge of the lino, and go to bed. He knew that Lizzie was quite capable of searching his pockets for the book while he was asleep, to save him from the devil.

At the factory the men listened to Tom with kindly scepticism. "Blimey, Tom, the race'd be over before you worked all that out, chum."

II.

Tom came home accompanied by one of his mates, who explained to Mrs. Handasyde at the door: "Thought I'd better come along with Tom, missus. He was queer dinner time, and 'e ain't been right all the a'ernoon."

"I knew it," said Lizzie excitedly, looking at Tom, who was rather more shrivelled up than usual, more like a monkey with a walrus moustache.

"Give 'im a drop of 'ot whisky, missus, and get 'im orf to bed. It's something laying on 'is chest."

"Whisky," said Mrs. Handasyde, breathing deeply.

Tom's mate went off, thinking what he would do if he had one like that.

Tom got no whiskey: he got double pneumonia, and had a bad time. In his convalescence Lizzie, retaining a small one for her own use, gave him the large family Bible to read. She found it closed beneath his hands, after his relapse, and told all the Daughters of Elijah how Tom had been saved at the last minute. Everybody was very pleased.

After the funeral Mrs. Handasyde let herself into the empty house. It was evening, she could hear the kids shouting in the street, and the quick footsteps of men going home from work. It was very quiet in the house. Usually at this time the kettle was singing, and she was bustling from pan to pan at the stove, while a cheerful smell of cooking filled the house. Tom would soon be home. . . .

But Tom would never be home. She sat down, realizing for the first time what that meant. Gazing at the empty grate, she sank into memories of her life with him. His irritating ways appeared less irritating, his good humour more endearing. The future loomed up, cold, empty, full of vain echoes. There would be nobody now to chivvy her around at bedtime, no smell of black twist drifting up the stairs. . . .

She pulled herself together. Tom was saved: he had gone to Heaven, and there they would meet. . . . She was a little heartened by this, and said a prayer for Tom, asking that his sins should be forgiven. Dropping to her knees on the hearthrug, she turned her eyes to the ceiling. "Forgive him," she said, for at the last he accepted the Word."

And she picked up the family Bible that Tom had read just before his death. It fell open easily, for there was something between the pages. Tom's system notebook: his last hours had been spent with more pleasure than profit.

Lizzie gazed a moment at the sinful object, then melted into tears. "Oh Tom, how could you be so wicked?" she sobbed, this time addressing the floor. . . .

But presently her sobs died away. She stared in abstraction for a long time. Then, with a look of mingled fear and determination, she fetched a few of Tom's old sporting papers from a cupboard. Spreading them on the table with the system notebook she put on her spectacles and, with uncomprehending eyes settled down to read.

ERIC ROBINSON.

Correspondence

REACTION IN FREETHOUGHT

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I find myself in full agreement with Mr. Egerton Stafford in this week's *Freethinker*, and a remark in an "Acid Drop" seems to have a bearing upon what Mr. Stafford is writing about. Here it is: "if we are to wait for peace till all the world turns Communist, we might just as well say we are in favour of war." Might not the same be said if we used the word "Freethinkers" instead of "Communists?" We've a "long row to hoe" and "its a long way to Tipperary," and so I'm afraid its a long way to permanent peace through "Freethinking," convinced Freethinker as I certainly am. Mr. Stafford mentions "Liberty, equality and fraternity," that is (or ought to be), the "one true and undivided trinity," and we shall never get any one of them without the other two to be of much use, and by that road only shall we get to permanent peace.

D. DAWSON.

THE RARE FOR THE RARE

When we have grown to reverence the best among men, the flattery of the many will fall upon deaf ears; and we shall have learned the lesson of the little that goes a long way.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"A Revolutionary Middle Class."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCHES N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.0, Mr. H. S. Wishart—"Christ, Christianity and Journalism."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, June 24, Mr. W. P. Campbell Everden. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, June 25, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, June 28, Mr. C. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Brockwell Park): 7.30, Sunday, June 24, Mr. G. F. Green. Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, June 26, Mr. L. Ebury. Stonhouse Street, High Street, Clapham, 8.0, Wednesday, June 27, Mr. P. Goldman. Aliwal Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, June 29, Mrs. E. Grout.

WEST HAM BRANCH (Corner of Deanery Road, opposite Library, Water Lane, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. E. C. Saphin.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, Mr. W. B. Collins. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Wood and Bryan. Platform No. 2, Messrs. Saphin and Tuson. 6.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Collins and Hyatt. Platform No. 2, Messrs. Saphin and others. Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. Campbell Everden. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Wood and Saphin. Friday, 7.30, Two Lectures.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (Dunne Square): 8.0, Saturday, June 23, Mrs. M. Whitefield—"Complexes, and How?" West Regent Street, Glasgow, 7.30, Sunday, June 24, Mr. R. T. White—A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, June 24, Messrs. C. McKelvie and D. Robinson. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, S.4, Thursday, June 28, Messrs. A. Jackson and J. V. Shortt.

LIVERPOOL STADIUM (St. Paul's Station, near Exchange Station). Sunday, June 24. United Mass Protest Meeting Against the Incitement to Disaffection Bill. Speakers: Professor J. B. S. Haldane, Neil Lawson, K.C., Councillor S. S. Silverman, Dr. Olaf Stapledon, Q. D. Dennis, Chapman Cohen. Admission free. Reserved seats 2s. 6d., 1s. and 6d. doors open 7.0. Chair will be taken at 8.0.

NORTH EAST FEDERATION OF N.S.S. BRANCHES: 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at the usual pitches in Sunderland from June 24 until 29.

PRESTON (Town Hall Square): 7.15, Mr. F. Maughan (An Ex Roman Catholic)—A Lecture.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Bottom of Church Street): 8.0, Mr. D. H. Copeland. A Lecture.

STOCKTON (Market Cross): 7.0, Tuesday, June 26, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Did Christ Ever Exist?"

MORPETH (Market Place): 7.0, Saturday, June 23, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BLYTH (Market Place): 7.0, Monday, June 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Would Have Memorial): 7.0, Wednesday, June 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LUMB-IN-ROSENDALE: 7.30, Friday, June 22, Mr. J. Clayton.

RISHTON: 3.15, Sunday, June 24, Mr. J. Clayton.

DARWEN MARKET: 7.0, Sunday, June 24, Mr. J. Clayton.

NELSON: 8.0, Tuesday, June 26, Mr. J. Clayton.

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