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Views and Opinions

Do Miracles Happen?

THAT type of mind which I have often described as being impartial on the wrong side has usually been content to discuss the question of the miraculous from the point of view of evidence only. That, of course, was the original ground on which the issue was raised. Did this or that miracle happen, a question that gradually broadened to that of whether any miracle happened. Modern knowledge and an altered outlook has, of course, modified the issue for believers and disbelievers, but for the majority the fight for and against the miraculous has continued mainly on the level of evidence. Discussions are still common on whether there is enough evidence to establish the actuality of the virgin birth, or the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, without either opponent showing an awareness that for a genuine miracle there never was and there never could be evidence. An examination of "evidence" for or against a miracle admits the credibility of the miraculous, and the believer is left, if not in command of the field, at least with an established right to some portion of it. A belief in uniformity of nature—the chief feature of the argument of Hume against miracles—and still the standard one—may create a frame of mind that is hostile to miracles, but Hume's argument is not, as we shall see, decisive. An intelligent believer might well argue that the occurrence of a miracle actually presupposes the uniformity of nature, since it provides the occasion for, and gives significance to the miracle. And it is quite clear that a world in which anything might occur would be no place for a miracle. A miracle must have a background of uniformity, or it ceases to be miraculous. The pseudo-scientific mind which assumes impartiality under cover of the phrase, "With nature all things are possible," is just decorating folly with foolishness, since possibility is never anything more than a synonym for uncertainty or complete ignor-

ance. On these grounds it may serve a useful purpose to reconsider the whole question of belief in the miraculous.

* * *

God and Miraculous

One of the first things to bear in mind is that the belief in God is not based on the miracles, but the other way about. It is the belief in God that establishes the credibility of miracles. A miracle can exist only on two conditions—one is the belief in the existence of God, or gods, the other is a belief, however weak and fitful, in the uniformity of nature. The unbeliever who argues from the established invariability of natural law might well be met with the retort, "I agree with you on that point, it is essential to my case, for how could there be a miracle, in the true sense of the word, if there were no natural law to be suspended or set aside?" A miracle has never established the belief in God for anyone, it has only confirmed that belief. The action of some superior power, some supernatural force capable of setting aside natural law for the time being, and for a special purpose is actually what is meant by a miracle; and it is certainly a strange way of proving that a thing does not exist by establishing one of the conditions for its existence. This is, I think, what Bacon had in view when he said that miracles have been wrought to convince idolators, but not Atheists. The idolator believed in some God, the Atheist did not. Historically, the belief in miracles follows the belief in God.

The second thing to bear in mind is that the God in which religious folk believe must be a person. The God of religion has always been a person. No genuinely religious believer has ever been foolish enough to think of God as anything else. No one could continue worshipping a God, or to pray to a God, who was no more than a mere principle or a mathematical symbol. Let anyone try the experiment of praying to something that does not possess the quality of personality, and see how long he will continue the practice. The religionist may be foolish, but he must not be obviously foolish to himself. To call anything "God" is a device that may silence a not very acute critic, but it has no religious value.

Attempts are made to evade this awkward fact by the explanation that the personality of God is higher than the personality of man. But whether it is higher or lower the fact of personality remains. It is still man's personality magnified. On the other hand, if the personality of God is different from the personality of man, then it is not personality at all, and the question of higher or a lower personality does not arise. Most things may be classed as higher or lower in the group to which they belong, but that fact does not preclude their fundamental identity—the classification assumes it.

Thimble-Rigging

The truth is that the sophisticated religionist in trying to be profound ceases to be honest. What he sets out to do is to prove the existence of a God, and instead of doing that, he tries to establish the existence of some "principle," or some force, and then quietly assumes that he has established at least a presumption in favour of the existence of God. Actually, he has done nothing of the kind. Granting the truth of his demonstration the thing he produces is not God at all. The God he offers the believer is a mere word, and *that* kind of a God by any name would be quite as useful. The performance of this type of apologist is on a level with that of the conjuror who burns a handkerchief before one's eyes, and then hands it back unscorched. But there is one thing about the conjuror—he does give us back the handkerchief. The religious thimble-rigger gives us back just nothing. The believer who tries to satisfy himself with the God who is produced in this way soon finds himself in the condition of a man trying to climb an invisible fence in order to take a walk in a non-existent field.

But the belief in a God involved the belief that he did something, he manipulated natural forces to the injury or benefit of man—in other words, he worked miracles. Man was never, for long, foolish enough to pray for rain unless he believed that because he prayed the rain would fall where and when it would not have fallen otherwise. He might, when the rain did not come, console himself with the reflection that God knew what was for the best, or that he had not got what he asked for, because God was angry with him; but in any case the belief was based on the reality of the miraculous.

Nowadays the apologist tries to throw a smoke-screen over this aspect of the subject by arguing that every true prayer is answered because the mere sense of communion with a "higher power" gives man a feeling of confidence he would not otherwise possess. That also may be granted—so long as a man is able to fool himself in this fashion. But let anyone try this method with his eyes open. Let him go on his knees and pray, "Oh Lord, I know that you do not interfere with the operations of nature, but I like to persuade myself that you do, and therefore while I know that you will do nothing, I will still pray to you as if you would do something." How long would any man or woman continue in prayer after they had once realized that they were indulging in nothing other than auto-suggestion? A man may fool himself, most of us do on some occasions, but the self-fooling must be of the unconscious order. It cannot be done with one's eyes wide open.

The God in whom men have believed from the earliest times is a person, and a person in the same sense that man is a person. He may be wiser and greater than man, but he is still man-like. He must be able to control and direct natural forces in the interests of man, and it is this power of control which the believer has in mind when he says he believes in miracles. A religion which had a God who never interfered with natural processes, or who merely existed, would be of no use at all. A religion with a God of that sort would soon sink into a mere memory.

* * *

The Nature of the Miraculous

I have stressed these considerations because they give miracles their importance in the structure of religion. They are indispensable to an adequate study of the miraculous. Religion needs a God who does something, and who does something all the time, for, at bottom religion is strictly pragmatical in nature. It is the least idealistic of any form of thought. The

believer is always more or less in fear of his gods; his praise of them is no more than a disguised reflection of gratitude for favours received, or the expectation of favours to come. Right through the history of religion, sometimes open and unashamed, sometimes disguised in phrases borrowed from a more developed ethic, there runs a distinct profit and loss account between the believer and his God. It is present in the vulgar form of the insistence on rewards and punishments in the next world, and also in the belief that God looks after and rewards his own in this life. In a more sophisticated form it meets us in volumes of philosophy which argue that there can be no guarantee for morality apart from religion and in the belief in an order of existence that is beyond the scope of scientific treatment.

It is this belief that God does something for the benefit of those who please him, and against those who displease him, that gives the condition for belief in the miraculous. So long as we are dealing with the ordinary processes of nature, believer and unbeliever are on an equality; they share equally the good and the bad around them. There is between them also agreement as to the universality, even the invariability of natural law, but the believer adds that, while admitting the fact of natural law, there exists a *super-natural* being who has the power of suspending natural law in order to work some particular purpose. If this is not so, then the belief in God loses most of its value, and, as a matter of fact, when the belief in the miraculous weakens the belief in God weakens also. On the other hand, every attempt to revive religion is accompanied by an outbreak of what we may call minor miracles. At revivalistic meetings we get the "miracle" of conversion, at a "Healing-Mission" that of the cure of disease. We get it also in the belief that God calls certain people to do particular tasks. The possibility, nay, the probability of the direct intervention of God is of the very essence of religious belief.

But when we speak of the intervention of God in the order of nature, whether it be by suspension of certain "laws" or by the direction of forces, or by counteracting one set of laws by bringing to bear "higher" ones, we are speaking of what the religious world means when it talks of miracles. We do not mean the merely unusual—that would simply indicate wonder—nor the unexplainable, because that would express no more than ignorance. We mean, so long as we use "miracle" with any regard to its origin and its historic setting, a phenomenon which owes its existence to the direct action of God.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued.)

RELIGION AND SCIENCE

In the times of the Greeks mankind had made a fair step in the quest of natural knowledge, both of things not alive and of things living; the search had been carried on into the second century of the Christian era, when Galen expounded the structure and the use of the parts of the body of man. As Galen passed away, inquiry, that is to say inquiry into natural knowledge, stood still. For a thousand years or more the great Christian Church was fulfilling its high mission by the aid of authority; but authority, as with the growth of the Church it became more and more potent as an instrument of good, became at the same time more and more potent as a sterilizer of original research in natural knowledge.

Sir Michael Foster, "Lectures on the History of Physiology."

A Catholic Tribute to Shelley

"It is the part of a wise man to have preferences, but no exclusions."—*Voltaire*.

"Poor, wounded soul!
My bosom, as a bed, shall lodge thee."—*Shakespeare*.

AMID thousands of obscure graves at Kensal Green Cemetery is the last resting-place of the unfortunate Francis Thompson, who was buried there a generation ago. He was then almost unknown, and during his lifetime he had suffered the hardships of lonely poverty to a degree not surpassed by any of the unfortunate poets of the world. He had sounded the gamut of misery and privation. Many nights he slept upon the hard seats of the Thames Embankment, and under carts in Covent Garden Market. He hawked matches in the Strand, and was a bookseller's porter, staggering through London streets with a heavy sack upon his back. When he was carried to his grave, only a few intimate friends, who had looked after him for the last sad months of his life, were present to mourn. Now Thompson is placed by all good judges in the ranks of writers of genius, and the proud garland of laurel, which was denied to the living man, decorates his tomb.

It is possible to overrate and to under-estimate Francis Thompson's merits, but no one would contend that he was other than a genuine and unmistakable poet. A very unequal writer, he sometimes soared to the pure ether of the great singers, and at other times fell to the lower slopes of Parnassus. He had, indeed, his faults; but against them must be placed his unbalanced, imaginative, reckless nature. There can hardly be a sadder story than his in the whole history of literature, though Chatterton, Villon, Poe, James Thomson, and Paul Verlaine are among them. To be at once a genius and a slave, to live in dreadful poverty and to die of a lingering disease, is as melancholy a lot as can be imagined. Nor would he deserve less pity if we denied his genius. His faults injured himself alone; but genius he most certainly had.

Thompson is a poet's poet, like Blake, Rossetti, Keats, Meredith, and Shelley. His kinship with these singers is far nearer than to Crashaw and the religious mystics. Assuredly, he calls for a meed of praise equal to that accorded to Maeterlinck, D'Annunzio, Gorki, Rostand, and other European writers for whom so many British altars have flamed in worship. Thompson's genius was Oriental, exuberant in colour, woven with rich and strange textures. His poetry was largely a splendid rhetoric, imaginative and passionate, as if the moods went by robed in imperial purple in a great procession. Listen to these lines, which form the stately and sonorous valediction which concludes his *Anthem of Earth* :—

"Now, mortal, son-like,
I thou hast suckled, mother, I at last
Shall sustentant be to thee. Here I untrammel,
Here I pluck loose the body's cerementing,
And break the tomb of life; here I shake off
The burr of the world, man's congregation shun,
And to the antique order of the dead
I take the tongueless vow; my cell is set
Here in thy bosom; my little trouble is ended
In a little peace."

How fine, too, is his charming vision of the woman sleeping in the child, like a dainty dryad among the lush leaves of early Summer :—

"Thou whose young sex is yet in thy soul,
As hoarded in the vine,
Hang the gold skins of undelirious wine,
As air sleeps, till it toss its limbs in breeze."

The closing lines of *The Poppy* are dangerously near perfection :—

"Love! I fall into the claws of Time;
But last within, a leaved rhyme,
All that the world of me esteems—
My withered dreams, my withered dreams."

There used to be a tradition in common literary circles that poets cannot write good prose. It was a ridiculous theory. To look at the prose of Byron, Coleridge, Meredith, Matthew Arnold, Shelley and Wordsworth, is to prove its utter absurdity. Shakespeare wrote wonderful prose, as in *Hamlet*. The critics who affected to look down upon Thompson's prose were scribblers who were hardly entitled to look down upon anything. Francis Thompson was a Catholic, and Shelley was an Atheist. Many hundreds of men have written upon Shelley, but Thompson's essay is, far and away, the finest ever written. This is what Francis Thompson says of the *Prometheus Unbound* :—

It is unquestionably the greatest and most prodigal exhibition of Shelley's powers, this amazing lyric world, where immortal clarities sigh past in the perfumes of the blossoms, populate the breathings of the breeze, throng and twinkle in the leaves that twirl upon the bough; where the very grass is all a-rustle with lovely spirit things; and a weeping mist of music fills the air. The final scenes especially are such a Bacchic reel and rout and revelry of beauty as leaves one staggered and giddy; poetry is spilt like wine, music runs to drunken waste. The choruses sweep down the wind, tirelessly, flight after flight, till the breathless soul almost cries for respite from the unrolling splendours.

A noble and true passage on Shelley's wonderful imagination is the following :—

For astounding figurative opulence he yields only to Shakespeare, and even to Shakespeare not in absolute fecundity, but in range of images. The sources of his figurative wealth are specialized, while the sources of Shakespeare's are universal. It would have been as conscious an effort for him to speak without figure as it is for most men to speak with figure. Suspended in the dripping-well of his imagination the commonest object becomes encrusted with imagery.

What a superb tribute from one author to another! And, remember, the tribute came from a Catholic poet to the Atheist singer. Literature, like music, is wider than opinion, broader than dogma, as limitless as the humanity to which it appeals. At the height of the bitter Bradlaugh straggle, when Gladstone passionately addressed his speech on the Oaths Bill to a hushed and expectant audience in the House of Commons, he quoted some perfect lines from the old Roman Freethinker, Lucretius, as daring an iconoclast as Charles Bradlaugh himself. The majesty of the perfect quotation was its justification. Gladstone's brain and taste persisted in being independent of his heart, like the French soldier in the last great war, who, when killed, was found to have in his pocket a well-thumbed copy of the poems of Heinrich Heine.

Francis Thompson deserves a few words of praise. He never did weak or puling work in prose or verse. Although he waged an unequal war against fate, he was at least a happy soldier. When his turn came, he yielded up his broken, but not dishonoured, sword with a brave and humble heart.

MIMNERMUS.

It is easier to believe the impossible than to accept the improbable.—*Quondam*.

The Secular Origin of Morals

"The sense of right grew up among healthy men and was fixed by the practice of comradeship. It has never had help from phantoms and falsehoods, and it never can want any." (Prof. W. K. Clifford: *Lectures and Essays*, p. 338.)

"It is a man who confers upon his God the moral code in keeping with his cultural needs. Morality must stand or fall unaided. It has no divine origin, and is nothing more than the plan of a good life." (W. K. Wallace: *The Scientific World View*, p. 79.)

"We must therefore adjust our minds to the fact that the moral heritage of modern civilized society originated in a time far earlier than the Hebrew settlement in Palestine, and has descended to us from a period when the Hebrew literature now preserved in the Old Testament did not yet exist. (J. H. Breasted: *The Dawn of Conscience*, p. 15.)

CHILDREN in our schools are still taught that all moral conduct is founded upon the Bible; and that the Ten Commandments were inscribed by God himself on two "tablets of stone, written with the finger of God." (*Exodus xxxi. 18*) and delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai.

It is strange that the authorities who are so anxious to preserve religious belief should still continue to enforce this ancient fable when they must know that, later on, the child is certain to find out that there existed a high code of morality long before the Bible was written.

Down to the middle of the last century all that was taught of ancient history was that compiled from the Bible and the literature of Greece and Rome; practically all that was known of ancient Egypt and Babylonia was that contained in the Bible. The famous Rosetta Stone—now in the British Museum—with the inscription of a decree in the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek, which enabled Champollion to decipher the ancient Egyptian language; was not discovered until 1831. The translation of the Babylonian Cuneiform was achieved a few years later, and it was many years before there was any large body of translations available to make any connected history from them.

The translation of the ancient records was awaited with intense interest. Few people doubted but that the Egyptian monuments would reveal the story of Joseph's rule over Egypt, of the bondage of the Israelites, the Ten Plagues, the Exodus from Egypt led by Moses, and the destruction of the Egyptian Army in the Red Sea, and much additional information besides.

In this they were disappointed. Notwithstanding the most strenuous research, no mention of any of these stirring events could be found; no reference to Abraham the founder of the Jewish nation, or of Joseph's rule in Egypt, or of the Egyptian Bondage, the Ten Plagues, the Exodus from Egypt, or the destruction of the Egyptian Army in the Red Sea. And when at last the name of Israel was discovered on an inscription, it was merely mentioned as one of several enemies who had been wiped out and destroyed, just as a modern historian might mention a raid by tribes on the Indian frontier, which resulted in a similar defeat.

Instead of the Israelites playing the leading rôle among the ancient nations, it was now revealed that there were mighty nations practising a high code of morality thousands of years before the Bible with its God-given Ten Commandments was written; before the Israelites, as a nation, existed; and before the date given in the Bible for the creation of the world.

There has just been published a work by the distinguished Professor of Egyptology, James H.

Breasted, entitled *The Dawn of Conscience* (Scribners, 12s. 6d.), in which he shows that the best parts of the morality of the Bible are derived entirely from the ancient Egyptians. In the "Foreword" he tells us that, like other lads, he learned the Ten Commandments, and: "I was taught to reverence them, because I was assured that they came down from the skies into the hands of Moses, and that obedience to them was therefore sacredly incumbent upon me." And he found it a disquieting experience, "when as a young orientalist, I found that the Egyptians had possessed a standard of morals far superior to that of the Decalogue over a thousand years before the Decalogue was written." (pp. xi.-xii.). As he observes, Rollin's *Ancient History* was the standard history of the early history of mankind, though the author "had little more than Herodotus and the Old Testament as sources for the history of the Ancient East."

From his study of the earliest records of Egypt, Prof. Breasted is convinced that the source of moral conduct began in family life; in this being in agreement with the sociologists and anthropologists, as opposed to teaching of the Churches, and he quotes with approval McDougall's affirmation that from parental tenderness "and its impulse to cherish and protect, spring generosity, gratitude, love, pity, true benevolence, and altruistic conduct of every kind; in it they have their main and absolutely essential root, without which they would not be." And Westermarck, who, in his masterly work, the *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, observes: "Innumerable facts might indeed be quoted to prove that parental affection is not a late product of civilization, but a normal feature of the savage mind as it is known to us."

Starting from this early stage, Breasted traces the evolution of morality during succeeding ages, and tells us: "In these Old Kingdom sources, therefore, we are dealing with the *earliest* surviving body of evidence disclosing historically that man's moral ideas are the product of social conditions and form part of a social process." And further:—

We are contemplating the emergence of a sense of moral responsibility, as it was gradually assuming an increasing mandatory power over human conduct, a development which was moving towards the assertion of conscience as an influential social force.

This is evident in the fact that while the range of good conduct may at first have been confined to the family, it had in the Pyramid Age long since expanded to become a neighbourhood or community matter. (pp. 122-123.)

Several pages are devoted to Maxims of Ptahhotep, who acted as Grand Vizier, under a Pharaoh of the twenty-seventh century B.C. Of which he observes: "The supreme, indeed the imperishable, quality in human life is repeatedly asserted by this ancient sage to be 'righteousness,' and worthy character, as something which lives after a man has passed on, so that the memory of such a character survives eternally." (p. 139.) And again: a thousand years before the rise of the Hebrew monarchy, the social prophets of Egypt raised the cry for social justice, and looked for an ideal age of human happiness under the beneficent rule of a righteous king. They denounced the corruption and oppression under which the poor and the humble suffered at the hands of the rich and powerful, and repeatedly their denunciations were delivered in the presence of the king himself." (p. 361.) And he concludes that far from being indebted to the Hebrews for our morals: "history discloses our moral heritage as having been built up to a large extent in an age far earlier than the Hebrews, and having descended to us rather as the composite product of a

group of great civilizations, and therefore as *the highest and noblest expression of the life of ancient man as a whole, the sublimest message of our Father Man.*" (p. 335.) The italics are Breasted's own, and emphasize the fact that our morals are *not* a revelation from God the Father.

W. MANN.

The Failure of Religion

A Paper read to a gathering of Unitarian Ministers.

GENTLEMEN,—To commence an address in an apologetic strain is usually taken as a sign that the speaker feels his case to be weak; but I intend, this afternoon, to approach you in tones, if not apologetic, at least conciliatory, without being conscious of any weakness in my case. This conciliatory approach has, as its object, the removal of a possible misunderstanding between us, which might impede your minds in the process of receiving what I have to say.

There is a widespread notion that, when an Atheist inveighs against the Church, he is possessed by a sense of personal hostility to its representatives. It is, in my opinion, asking too much of human nature (and we Atheists believe, as you know, that human nature is unaided by Divine power) to expect that any man should listen to a personal attack upon himself, particularly when he thinks it undeserved, with a mind at once calm, judicial and receptive. To permit, therefore, a misunderstanding of this kind between us would be to subvert the very purpose of this address. Much that the Freethinker deplores in the world to-day is due to the incurable tendency of men to interpret doctrinal differences as personal antagonisms.

I hasten, therefore, to make clear at the outset that my criticisms are directed against a great movement, which sweeps along with it, like a tidal wave, all who sail under its flag. It is a force more powerful than any of its human instruments. It is even possible for such movements to develop evil features without transmitting them to individual workers. To inveigh against war, for instance, is not to disparage the valour or the virtue of the soldiers who make it possible. They may be good men embroiled in a bad cause; and sometimes, by a tragic irony, its very worst features are wrought out of their highest virtues. Thus, when the Atheist says hard words about religion, he is not necessarily confusing social with individual issues; and I ask you, this afternoon, not to take personally anything that I may have to say about the social force of which you are individually the representatives.

In speaking of the failure of religion we shall require to come to an understanding as to what we mean by failure and by religion. Success and failure are terms casually flung about in conversation as though all were agreed upon their meaning; but in fact, just as one man's meat is another man's poison, so what appears to be success to one may appear as failure to another. In the failure or success of an institution, however, I think we can all agree that our verdict turns upon a question of its contribution to life. If we insist that failure hinges upon whether that contribution is good or bad, we shall at once become embroiled in hot disputes on the interpretation of values; but we are on fairly safe ground if we confine ourselves simply to whether any contribution exists at all.

Clearly, an institution that has dropped out of the main stream of life, that has ceased to contribute anything to the current of human events, is a failure;

and if it can be shown that, at one time in its history, such institution was paramount in the life of the world, then its failure becomes all the more striking. Moreover, if it is true that this secession from life is more pronounced as we ascend into the more intelligent strata of society, it assumes a still more arresting aspect. So much for failure.

The next question to decide is what we mean by religion. Here we are confronted, at the outset, by a myriad of definitions, very many of which appear to be framed in violation of the very condition that makes definition what it is, namely the quality of exclusiveness. The object of definition being to mark off a territory from the adjoining area, it will serve us ill to define things in such a way as to confuse them with everything that they are not. My old headmaster, for instance, used to remind us that the word religion came from two Latin words meaning "to bind down," and used to say that our religion was, therefore, anything that bound us down to ways of living. That was clearly confusing religion with obligation, and only tended to obscure the subject. Again, Matthew Arnold's famous definition "morality touched with emotion" created, instead of removing, confusion. A study of ethical science would incline us to the view that all morality is touched with emotion, becomes morality, in fact, in virtue of its emotional content, so that according to this standpoint religion and morality might be identified. The fallacy of that supposition will be discussed later. In reality the task of defining religion is clear-cut. In the world are many religions, accepted as such by common agreement. What we must do, therefore, is to discover what features are common to all religions, being careful not to include anything that belongs equally to what is outside religion.

It will not do to invent something called religion out of a private conception of what we think ought to exist. We must take religions as we find them, in the present and in history, and from these construct a definition which shall include no more and no less than essential features. Admittedly we shall be adopting the logical method, but then definition is a logical process. Tackling the problem in this way we may follow the lead of Edward Tylor and say that one essential feature of all religions is belief in the supernatural. Individually they will differ according to what is believed about the supernatural, and these differences will very naturally show themselves in both doctrine and ritual. Religious practices will vary according to the particular theory of the forces to which they are adapted, but underneath all will lie the substantial fact that those forces are conceived as supernatural.

We may add to our definition a further quality, without which religion as we know it would not exist, and that is the personal character attributed to the supernatural, whether this be conceived as a world of innumerable beings or as only a single god. Worship, prayer, religious observances of all sorts, become an empty mummery unless the being to whom they are addressed is conceived as personal. A god that cannot understand, cannot feel, cannot think, cannot approve or disapprove, cannot judge between one thing and another, is not a god at all but a force. He is of the nature of Spinozistic substance, and may serve as a god of philosophy but he is of no use to religion. We could not worship him any more than we could worship the ether, and we should as soon pray to him as pray to electricity or gravitation. I am going to say, then, that religion implies belief in a personal being who is supernatural, and entails whatever practices and observances follow logically from such belief.

I am well aware that there are very many definitions of religion that include neither of these postulates, but I am going to say to you, as one sincere person to others, that whosoever reposes in the opinion that religion exists without any belief in a supernatural being possessed of personal attributes is merely humbugging himself. He is the sort of person who, saying to the Atheist, "There must be a something," imagines he has spoken religion. But everyone knows there is a something. That is manifest. The whole question turns on what that something is like; and I put it to you that it will not provide the basis for any religion, will not keep a church door open, if it is divested of personal qualities and supernatural powers. For the purposes of controversy the clerical world may welcome a god reduced to the humble status of a mathematical formula, and existing by the kind permission of Sir James Jeans; but once inside a church and that god is no longer of any avail. He must take a back seat and give place to a real god, a god of religion.

This belief in a personal, supernatural being or beings is, as we know from studies in religious anthropology, extremely old and probably universal. It was the first theory of the world and, even in its most refined forms to-day, still bears the marks of its heridity.

(To be continued.)

MEDICUS.

Christian Theft

A CHRISTIAN may be a very decent fellow as a man, but as a Christian he may be an unmitigated scoundrel. It has been remarked by Lecky that some of the Grand Inquisitors who presided over the torture of heretics were tender-hearted men in the ordinary relationships of life. Victor Hugo has even rehabilitated the character of the great Torquemada himself. To be wicked for the welfare of religion is really righteousness. Lying is not lying when it is done for the glory of God. Fraud and forgery are quite laudable if people can only be induced by them to accept the true faith, for a thousand falsehoods are better than the eternal damnation of a single soul. Torturing a heretic is not cruelty, as it is done for his salvation; and killing him is not murder, as it is done to prevent his dragging others down with him to hell.

Never trust a Christian as a Christian. Depend upon it he will sell you if he thinks it to the interest of his religion or of his own immortal soul. In relation to an "infidel" he has usually as much conscience as a shark looking round for a dinner. "Infidels," as such, have in his opinion no rights. It is really a concession to let them live. He will lie to them, and about them, with a perfectly straight face. He will concoct false stories of their conversion, and stick to the same (after exposure) as a religious duty. He will tax them to teach his own children religion, and call himself a friend of religious equality. He will rob them of the commonest rights of citizenship, and call himself a lover of justice. He will smile and be a villain—if it is a heretic who has to suffer by his villainy.

Until the law is altered and Freethinkers have its protection, they must expect to be treated with injustice. If they were to found an Institution for the promotion of their principles, they would soon find it appropriated by Christians. The thieves, in such cases, being in the majority, keep each other in countenance, and help each other against their victims. Stephen Girard, in America, founded a great college,

which he designed to be purely Secular. He expressly provided that no minister of religion was ever to set foot inside the building, on any pretence whatever. Yet the Christians have defeated his intentions. They teach religion and have prayers and hymns in Girard College. And when the Liberals—as they call Freethinkers in America—complain of this infamy, the Christians only smile and say, "Do you think we are going to respect *your* rights, until you can *make* us?"

A somewhat similar perversion of a trust has taken place in Scotland. The late Lord Gifford, an eminent judge, left the bulk of his estate to found Theological Lectureships at the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and St. Andrews. The endowment amounted to £80,000—which, to quote Slylock, was a good round sum, and one that the Christians were not likely to neglect, if they could get hold of it. Lord Gifford's intentions are nothing to them, so long as they can deliver the lectures and finger the cash. His lordship left that £80,000 for lectures on Natural Theology "in the widest sense of that term." He was not himself a Christian, in any proper meaning of the term. Whatever admiration he may have had for the character or teaching of Jesus Christ, he "deliberately rejected miracles," as Professor Max Müller tells us; and therefore he was a disbeliever in revelation. Accordingly he made the following declaration in his will: "I wish the lecturers to treat their subject as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all possible sciences, indeed, in one sense, the only science, that of Infinite Being, without reference to, or reliance upon, any supposed exceptional and so-called miraculous revelation."

This is plain enough, in all conscience; yet Lord Gifford's wishes have been violated in most of the courses of lectures. Sir George Stokes, even, who is a scientist and nothing else, plainly admitted the shortcomings of science as an aid to theology, and sang the praises of revelation as the only source of certainty in matters of religion. Principal Caird's lectures have been delivered as sermons in a religious building, indeed as part of a religious (that is, a Christian) service. Yes, the Christians have got hold of that £80,000, and they will stick to it with the tenacity of a thorough-bred bulldog.

Lord Gifford's will contained another clause, which has likewise been impudently flouted. "The lecturers," he said, "shall be subjected to no test of any kind, and shall not be required to take any oath, or to emit or subscribe any declaration of belief, or to make any promise of any kind; they may be of any denomination whatever, or of no denomination at all (and many earnest and high-minded men prefer to belong to no ecclesiastical denomination); they may be of any religion or way of thinking, or, as is sometimes said, they may be of no religion, or they may be so-called Sceptics or Agnostics or Freethinkers, provided only that the 'patrons' will use diligence to secure that they be able, reverent men, true thinkers, sincere lovers of, and earnest inquirers after, truth."

Lord Gifford did not found lectureships to promote orthodox Christianity. He did not even desire to have his own particular opinions expounded. He wanted the subject of Natural Theology, as distinct from Revelation, to be treated by able men of various views. "The lecturers," he said, "shall be under no restraint whatever in their treatment of their theme." "I am persuaded," he added, "that nothing but good can result from free discussion."

This is excellent. But it is not carried out. Lecturers are permitted to advocate the very Christianity which Lord Gifford excluded. They are selected from the ranks of "safe" men. Sceptics, Agnostics, and Freethinkers—all of whom are ex-

pressly included in Lord Gifford's will—have been studiously ignored. His lordship's £80,000 is being used, and will doubtless continue to be used, in promoting Christianity and swelling the already excessive fees of its advocates. We shall therefore feel justified in stigmatizing the execution of the Gifford trust as another Christian theft; and we shall only withdraw the accusation when the lecturers who happen to be Christians are prevented from preaching Christianity, and when a leading "Sceptic, Agnostic, or Freethinker" is called to fill one of the chairs.

(Reprinted.)

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops

Professor MacMurray, in the course of a broadcast speech, says that he believes the future of the world depends upon its adoption of Socialism, and with this the whole future of England, of the world and of Christianity is bound up. Of course we do not know what Professor MacMurray might have said, or what he would like to have said, if the B.B.C. censorship had not existed, or what he really did say before one of Sir John Reith's committee cast his eagle eye over it. But if he actually meant that the future of the world was bound up with its acceptance of Socialism and Christianity, he was talking arrant nonsense. For Socialism, whether it be good or bad, means the control of economic, and other social forces in the interests of Society, on the assumption that all the social forces are understandable and controllable, while the essence of Christianity is trust in God, belief in the power of prayer, and the control of society with a view to man's immortal welfare in some other state of existence. Either position might be the correct one, but it is quite certain that both cannot be right. Still, any implied or actual criticism of Professor MacMurray is given with the proviso that no one can be quite sure how far he is saying what he means so long as he is permitted to speak only after the B.B.C. has agreed to his saying it.

We feel certain that many of our readers take in *The Listener*, the organ of the B.B.C. If they do not, then this note is thrown away. On page 699 in the issue for October 24, there is an article by the Rev. J. S. Whale, President of Cheshunt College, which evades criticism because of the space it would require to examine it. But it deserves mention because it contains a greater quantity of fundamental stupidity than anything we have seen for many years. Nearly every sentence either begs the question he is stating or the point to which he is replying, or exhibits the most appalling ignorance of the subject with which he is dealing. We have no space to devote to an examination of it, but it would be an interesting thing for some of our younger readers to take a passage and dissect it. We should very much like to see the result. And the Rev. J. S. Whale is engaged in training youth! What an outlook!

The Archbishop of Canterbury says he is quite sure that the right Christian line of advance is the agreement to use the armed forces of combined countries to enforce the decisions of the League of Nations. We are not arguing that the Archbishop is wrong, but only commenting on the extreme fatuity of calling this the Christian line of advance. We are not aware that Jesus taught that you can use enough force to enforce decisions, whether the decision be that of an individual, a nation, or a League of Nations. His counsel was to turn one cheek when the other is smitten, and place trust in God. If the Archbishop wishes to be truly Christian he should preach that and have done with it.

It is this idle cant, which dubs everything a Christian likes to do real Christianity, that disgusts all intelligent people outside the Churches, and must disgust many within. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred a

Christian uses his religion to forge excuses for the indulgence of his inclinations. At one time it is Christian to go to war, at another it is plain Christian duty to oppose war wherever it occurs. At one time Christianity gives the clearest possible ruling in favour of slavery, at another, nothing is more anti-Christian than slavery. Christianity plainly forbids the equality of sexes to one, to another Christianity clearly wipes out all social distinctions between the sexes. Christianity is really the most comfortable kind of a religion that anyone can have. It will always provide a justification for whatever he wishes to do, whether what he wishes to do is good or bad. It even enables the Archbishop of Canterbury, when he happens to drop into something that looks like common sense to call it the line of true Christian advance.

"Save the Schools," is the heading of an article in the *Church Times*. The title is incomplete. Properly, it should read, "Save the Schools for the Churches," for at bottom that is practically the whole interest of the Church in education.

The *Church Times* admits that "the scheduling of unsatisfactory school buildings by the Board of Education, although justly carried out by his Majesty's inspectors, was a severe blow to Church schools." In other words the Church was prepared to sacrifice the health and the educational efficiency of the schools so long as it could get the "right" kind of religious instruction into the children. Robbed of all camouflage that is the truth that underlies the lament. "Suffer little children to come unto me"—and I will turn them out likely and profitable clients for the Church.

The cold that Hitler caught, and which prevented his meeting the head of the Nazi Church, was evidently not in his head, but at the other extremity.

The Bishop of Birmingham is constantly getting into hot water over his denial of miracles. Good Catholics are horrified, pious journalists are contemptuous, the ordinary layman is bewildered. Most of the latter class are quite willing to surrender ordinary miracles if those of Jesus are retained. One man, writing to a daily paper, says that "Christ's superior knowledge of the workings of nature enabled him to exploit natural laws then—and still—unknown, and to demonstrate his divinity and help his people." If this means anything it means that the miracles were not miracles at all, but, as Bishop Barnes maintains, only appeared as such to ignorant people. But this reduces Christ to a mere trickster playing upon the ignorance of his followers. And it loses sight of the fact that the very essence of a miracle is that it shall not come under the head of "Natural Law."

What can be said of Christianity, can be said of Judaism. A Judaism without the special intervention of God for the benefit of his chosen people is not Judaism at all. In one of the latest works on the Old Testament, *The Call of Israel*, the author, Canon Pythian-Adams, does his utmost to transform the miracles of Exodus into misunderstood natural happenings. The pillar of cloud and fire was merely the eruption of volcano; the tables of stone were blocks ejected from the volcano; the darkness that could be felt was clouds of volcanic dust that filled the air; the falling of the walls of Jericho was due to an earthquake, etc. We do not wish to discuss the peculiarity of a volcanic eruption that travelled before an army to show it the way, but we would humbly point out that the whole religious significance of these stories is that they exemplified the watchful care of God over his chosen people. And one might reasonably ask, "If they were only natural events misunderstood by an ignorant people, what the devil are they in the Bible for?"

Gipsy Smith, the evangelist, is on very intimate terms with the Devil—a character who is quite out of favour with the ordinary Christian Church. Gipsy Smith told

a meeting that the devil had whispered to him, "Don't you dare to make an appeal to-night, these people won't have it, and it will make you look a fool." But the brave devil fighter replied, "Then let me look like a fool." Well, whatever happened to his looks the devil's forecast certainly came right with regard to his speech. But probably the audience noticed nothing out of the usual.

Professor James, D.Litt., gives little encouragement to believers in Old Testament miracles. He sneers at "a mythological interpretation of events not set down in writing until a thousand years after they transpired." His belief in the New Testament miracles is curious after this scepticism of old ones. Surely it was still more miraculous to be able to know all about "miracles which happened a thousand years ago." To say that Dr. James "believes" in the Resurrection needs modification. He suggests that "the empty tomb may have been the result of the transmutation of the earthly body into etherial forms." This sounds like saying that it all ended in gas!

If the Sedition Bill becomes law, and it will unless there is very strong pressure brought to bear on this government of shifts and tricks, then it is quite certain that under its operations, printed selections from Mr. Lloyd George's *Memoirs* would certainly come under its operations. His revelation—revelations only to those who did not know the make-up of the military mind, its stupidities, its capacity for lying in the name of duty, and its profound egotism—of the character of such third-rate "poster" generals as Kitchener, the exhibitions of what the author calls the "insane egotism" of Haig who was made a national hero, in order to kill too quickly the series of myths by means of which the war was carried on—a wide circulation of excerpts of this character would certainly be taken to be literature calculated to spread disaffection among His Majesty's Forces. Every Member of Parliament who votes for the Bill should be marked and made to feel that he will have to face the consequences of his act at the next election. That is the one thing that will rouse the "conscience" of most of them.

The *Sunday Times* informs us that Mr. Bertram Mills' delightful circus has been encamped for the last few days in South Park, Oxford, but the Lady Mayor has placed a ban on the showing of the menagerie on Sunday. The reason being that "Oxford is different from other places." On the contrary, by so doing she brings Oxford into line with a large number of other places, some of them quite ordinary places. Oxford must not pride itself on its uniqueness in limiting human activity on Sunday to the Church, the monkey-parade and the pub. Humble places like Bury, Bradford and Newcastle do exactly the same thing. Mr. J. B. Priestley in his *English Journal* has pilloried many towns which make no special claims to light and learning for on Sunday adopting a garb of "barbaric gloom and boredom." They are in the hands of elderly men, he says, not in sympathy with the desires of newer generations. "I had a bad time on Sundays," they say. "You can have one now." Oxford must put forward her claims to special Sabbatarian silliness, with a becoming humility, in view of these facts, or the "widow of learning" may lose our respect.

The Rev. Alfred Robinson says that the four C.'s of Methodism completely states the characteristics of Methodism. We fancy we are not far from the truth if we put it down as Cheek, Childishness, Credulity and Cash.

"Churchman," in the *Daily Mail*, says that "there is a growing dissatisfaction among church people generally at the vagueness and want of courage in the attitude of their leaders on the subject of war." Possibly a good many "laymen" remember the sudden transformation of Jesus in 1914. He had always been preached as the "Prince of Peace," but directly war was declared, Jesus put on shining armour, and immediately became

the God of Battles. In this capacity he sent a legion of angels to help the British at Mons—as the Bishop of London affirmed—and as he still affirms, we believe. If the Church really is in earnest about the foulness of war, she should withdraw all her chaplains from the army as a beginning. They should be sent as peace missionaries to foreign countries—at the Church's expense. Such stupid ceremonies as "blessing the flag," should be abolished, and priests and bishops should abstain from attending all other "war" ceremonies like Armistice Day. But the power and "Kudos" attending dignitaries of the Church will never be given up by them, war or no war, The last thing a Bishop believes in is "humbleness."

Dr. Albert Schweitzer is less than generous to Thomas Paine, when he dismisses that great Freethinker's work for the American Revolution, by the stupid sneer that "English emigrants in America formulated for the first time the Rights of Man." Washington was not an "emigrant." His family settled in America in 1658. Jefferson's family were Virginians long before he was born. Not one of the authors or signers of the Declaration of Independence could possibly be regarded as emigrants. Thomas Paine was an Englishman, persecuted wherever there were tyrants and enemies of liberty. He, and not "English Emigrants," wrote that great work *The Rights of Man*, which people like Dr. Schweitzer cannot ignore—they can only rob the author of his credit because he was a Freethinker and they are—Christians.

Sir George Vernon, speaking at the Worcestershire Tithe Payers' Association, declared he would pay no tithes without protest. He gave some land to the Church for a graveyard, and found to his astonishment that it was a source of income to the parson ever since. This did not prevent the parson from demanding tithes from him. And Sir George Vernon has to pay by order of the Court. "I am not going to be buried," declared Sir George, "in the churchyard." We expect that so long as tithes are paid, this won't bother the Church very much.

A remarkable faith-healing case is reported by the *Methodist Recorder*. A "dear old lady," who had "sinned" became converted. Previous to conversion she had suffered from asthma and had about thirty attacks a day. After conversion the attacks dropped to three daily. But why not have gone the whole hog? It reminds us of the man who also was converted, and rejoiced, "Before I was converted I used to have fits, but now, thanks to Jesus, I only have convulsions."

The Commissioner of Police has issued a description of a wanted man in connexion with a recent murder. The *Daily Herald* publishes the description of the wanted man, who was recently living in the Westminster Institution. Anxious to help the police, the *Herald* thoughtfully publishes a picture of the Institution. If any reader of the *Freethinker* sees a man whom he suspects is the man wanted, they need only compare him with the picture of the Institution.

Fifty Years Ago

ACID DROPS

EXETER HALL has been frothing about the evils of moderate drinking. Jesus, however, made from twelve to eighteen firkins of wine for guests who were already "well drunk," and Solomon said to the poor man, "Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more." We are far, however, from commending either the advice of Solomon or the example of Jesus.

"Eight new missionaries" left Europe the other day for China. Ten thousand additional French troops are expected to follow close on their heels.

The "Freethinker," November 2, 1884.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

II. BELMES.—It is strictly correct for a Roman Catholic to say that he is acting in accordance with reason in basing his belief on the authority of the Church. Having reached by a process of what is to us illogical reasoning, the authority of the Church as a first principle, he then applies it to the matter of belief, and concludes accordingly. This method of first establishing and then applying a principle is done in every direction. The criticism of the Roman Catholic lies in the way in which the first principle is reached and in its application. But it is idle to bring against Roman Catholics a charge at which the acute disputant merely, and probably, smiles. Reasoning may be logical or illogical, but reason is there in every act of judgment.

For Distributing the *Freethinker*, W. Don Fisher, 3s.

J. BOOCOCK.—Hardly worth prolonging this particular controversy. Papers are being sent.

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

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

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

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.

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Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen will have another busy week-end. He will lecture twice in the Co-operative Hall, Green Street, Sunderland, to-day (November 4). In the afternoon, at 3.0, the subject will be "Things Christians Ought to Know," and at 7.0, he will speak on "The Fight for Freedom of Thought." Admission is free, with reserved seats at sixpence each. For those coming from a distance, and others who wish to join in, tea will be obtainable from the Havelock Café, Fawcett Street, Sunderland, two minutes from the hall. On Monday evening (November 5) at 7.30, Mr. Cohen will speak in the Socialist Hall, Royal Arcade, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, on "The Case for Freethought."

The Glasgow Branch had a very successful meeting on Sunday last with a lecture from Mr. Cohen. The hall was crowded, and there were a number of questions. Mr. Macdonald, of Arran, occupied the chair. It looks as though the McLellan Galleries will be too small for the meetings if things go on as they are. The Branch deserves the warmest support of all Glasgow Freethinkers.

The debate on Monday night between Mr. Cohen and Mr. Levine, on "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?" was a great success in point of numbers; but it left much to be desired from the point of view of a debate. Mr.

Levine's speeches were not so much arguments as statements of his belief in the shape of brief essays, and that did not provide matter for the keen intellectual contest which was expected. All that can be said is that the debate furnished an opportunity for Mr. Cohen to place the Freethought case before a number who probably were not very familiar with it. Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell acted as Chairman, and his good humour, witty remarks, and sense of fairness, with an avowed desire to get the essential issues discussed, had the effect of making the audience fix their minds on these, whatever may have been the effect on the speakers. The proceedings went off with perfect good humour, both as regards speakers and hearers.

On Sunday next (November 11) Mr. Cohen will speak in the King Edward Hall, Church End, Finchley, at 7.0, on "Things Christians Ought to Know." We hope that North London friends will do their best to make the meeting widely known. A large supply of conveniently-sized lecture slips have been printed, and the General Secretary will be pleased to hear from anyone who is ready to help in their distribution.

At the time of writing it looks as though the Government is determined to go through with the Incitement to Disaffection Bill. And in view of what has been going forward it is quite a logical step. The militarization of the police is naturally followed by an attempt to establish a military kind of rule over the civilian population. The Government is not pushing this Bill through for the fun of the thing. It knows it is unpopular, and it cannot point to any need for it. But it wants the right of entry to private houses in such a way that it can practically enter when it will, search where it will, and seize what it will. Considering the stupid decisions of magistrate after magistrate whenever a question of pure law or the application of justice is concerned, it is monstrous that so important a matter as the right of search should be so far extended as to render unsafe the home of every one. The Bill is meant for use, and it is one of the greatest threats to liberty that has been seen for a century.

It may be recalled that a similar attempt to make legal the invasion of the home in the search for anti-war literature was made during the war. This was killed by the opposition of the House of Lords. But we have, so far as liberty is concerned, retrograded since the war, and have reached the stage at which numbers only shriek about freedom when it is their own freedom that is attacked. We are paving the way towards Fascism, which if it were adopted would, of course, be called by some other name, in order to gratify our public fondness for humbug.

But it is not too late to kill the Bill if prominent public men who have already protested against it, proceeded to draw up a manifesto declaring that if the Bill becomes law they will continue their opposition, agitate for its repeal, and do their best to defy its operations, and deliberately break its provisions if necessary. They could resolve to undertake the full legal defence of every prosecution under the Act, and, still further, buy and keep any literature for which anyone is prosecuted, and circulate it so long as prosecutions occur under the Act. The attitude should be that taken up by the N.S.S. concerning the laws of blasphemy. They are bad laws, and whenever, and wherever, they are put into operation they must be fought, without regard to the character of the offence or the person who is charged with committing it. Unless something like this is done the Government is likely to take a great deal of the present agitation at what, we are afraid, is its proper value. There are many who will agitate while the agitation is safe, but so soon as it means a question of sacrificing money, or status, or position, then the actual defiance of a bad law is left to some poor devil who has neither money nor position to lose.

This week, Mr. Cohen writes the first of four articles dealing with the question of miracles. This is timely, considering the attempt being made to re-establish the belief in the miraculous, and we suggest that those who take an interest in the paper might well take an extra copy or so for presentation to religious friends. That is a practical way of helping us and the cause.

It is worth noting also that the discussion of miracles remains pretty much on the level that it has been for more than a century and a half. Freethinkers and Christians still meet and discuss miracles as though it were a question of evidence. But evidence—in the legal sense—never had anything to do with the establishment of the belief in miracles, and no evidence of that kind can disprove them. It simply leaves the question where it was, and for the most part the Freethinker is thrashing the air. Freethought, like most other things, needs continually restating in the light of a larger knowledge and wider experience.

The Blackburn Branch N.S.S. continues to do useful work in many directions, but as may be gathered from its position on the map, its financial position is hardly likely to be strong. Any local friend of the movement desiring to help could communicate with the local secretary at the Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn.

The *Literary Guide*, in its last issue, mentions that the Secretary of the R.P.A. has been in communication with the War Office, and is informed that the recruit who objects to taking the oath may affirm. There was not the slightest need to consult the War Office on the matter. Ever since Bradlaugh's Act of 1888, the affirmation has been available in every case where the oath is usually required. That should be borne in mind by every Freethinker, and acted on.

Soon after the war of 1914 commenced, we had it reported to us that some recruiting offices were refusing to take a volunteer's affirmation. We at once wrote to the War Office, saying that unless recruiting officers were instructed to carry out the law on the subject we should advise all Freethinkers not to enlist, and take the consequences. The War Office at once issued a circular letter to all recruiting officers, ordering them that the affirmation was to be administered without any questions whatever being asked. The *Freethinker* published the order directly it was issued, and we heard no complaints afterwards.

The best story we heard concerning the oath was that told of one of the N.S.S. members who offered himself for enlistment. He was asked, what religion, and replied, "What are you short of?"

The debate on "Secular Education in State-aided Schools," at Conway Hall, on October 23 last, did not attract a very large audience, in spite of its importance; but the arguments of Mr. H. W. Armstrong, of the Secular Education League, on the one side, and those of Miss K. M. Penzer of the Association of Teachers of Religious Knowledge, on the other, were thoroughly appreciated. Mr. Armstrong took his stand on the case that the secular solution was not only the best but the fairest in the face of religious squabbles and difficulties. Miss Penzer, not in the least dismayed at the array of arguments she had to face, gave a spirited defence of religion as taught in the schools now, and quoted a number of eminent authorities who declared that true education was impossible without religion. She also insisted that school hours provided the best and indeed, the only time it could be taught efficiently. Both the debaters and the audience enjoyed the discussion which was carried on in a spirit of good-humoured tolerance.

Science and Materialism To-Day

MILLIONS of folk who are not clear about the distinction between Einstein and *Epstein*, know at least that the materialistic science is dead, that all scientists walk humbly before the Lord, and that any problem more complicated than the dissection of a beetle can safely be left to the Lambeth Conference of Bishops.

They are quite satisfied that Physics (on the authority of the bishops) confirms the story in Genesis, that Darwinism (on the authority of their penny daily) is as dead as the dodo, that living beings (on the authority of mathematical astronomers) defy biological analysis, that mind (on the authority of a physicist, Lodge) is immortal, and that science (on the authority of Protestant clergy) has come round to the religious standpoint.

As against all this, Sir P. Chalmers Mitchell opines in his Herbert Spencer lecture that "a materialistic monism is more, not less, credible than when Spencer wrote," but our honest and impartial British press cannot publish this, in case its readers are led to think for themselves, which might be bad for the circulation.

If readers of the stunt press began miraculously to think for themselves they might discover, for instance, that Darwinism is not dead but supplemented, that in any case evolution does not stand or fall by Darwinism, that the speculations of Jeans and Eddington are scientifically unauthoritative, that in any case they are opposed to doctrinal religion, and that even their scientific "discoveries" are challenged by colleagues. They might find that a science of biochemistry has arisen, which shows the utter dependence of the functions called life on physico-chemical conditions, that materialistic philosophy is more widely sponsored than ever, and that the only condition under which science and religion can cease to conflict is when religion uncompromisingly retires from the field.

To those who say the conflict is over, Julian Huxley replies, "It is not so. What has been called the conflict between science and religion is just reaching its acute phase" (*Religion without Revelation*) and informed clerics like Inge agree. It is the character of science to push forward irrespective of whatever religious strongholds it may chance to take. It is the character of modernist religion to quit the ground and then claim that no conflict exists.

As for Darwinism, we have to distinguish between the General and the Special theory. The general theory, i.e., evolution, is proved up to the hilt, and it does not depend on Darwin's special theory any more than nebular evolution depends on the Laplacean hypothesis. And just as the theory of Laplace, developed, is now capable of being applied to the stellar system instead of to the solar system, as Laplace tentatively intended it, and just as its place there has been taken by other deterministic theories—the planetesimal theory or the effect of a passing star—similarly Darwin's special theory is now used to explain the origin of gaps, and not the origin of species as Darwin originally intended it, and similarly also, its place there is taken by other equally deterministic theories, e.g., physical determinants in the causing of mutations.

Who is it, then, that says evolution is untrue?—Writers like Chesterton, who show little or no understanding about it. Who is it that says evolution is true? Why, those self-same investigators—the Mendelians—whose work has put Darwin's special theory in its right place, and Darwin, like Laplace was no bigot, claiming infallibility.

Listen to the foremost of them. "The idea that Darwinism has been abandoned is not worth considering. (Prof. T. H. Morgan, *Scientific Basis of Evolution*). No scientist could deny evolution and remain a biologist. In a sense, biology is evolution, at least in the protoplasmic world. It would serve no purpose to quote other biologists who agree with Morgan, for the simple reason that there are none to pit them against. There is no scientific antagonist to evolution. The differences among biologists are solely of a domestic nature, but apparently we must not expect writers like Chesterton to notice it.

Note, too, that Morgan's contributions to biology have taken from the anti-materialist his last hold on evolution. Natural selection, heredity, variation and adaptation can no longer be used as creative agencies (cf. C. E. M. Joad's *Meaning of Life*). They are explored and analysed, and seem to depend on determinable and alterable conditions. With every advance in biology obscurantist conceptions like the Vital Force are eliminated. It would be difficult to specify any thoroughgoing Vitalist among eminent biologists—even the elder Haldane wavers—though there are probably a few holists.

But holism, properly conceived and minus the capital letter, which makes it an independent, conscious agent, is quite materialistic in character, and performs in biology what Gestalt does in psychology: that is, it draws attention to the effect of wholes on parts, a fact no materialist will deny. In her *Seven Psychologies*, Dr. Heidbreder puts *Gestalt-psychologie* on a materialistic footing.

But look at the mechanists, or materialists, in biology. Sir E. Sharpey-Schafer, Sir E. Ray Lankester, Sir P. C. Mitchell, Professors L. Hogben, T. H. Morgan, J. S. Huxley, E. B. Wilson, Beutner, Armstrong, Osterhout, Sherrington, B. Moore—let us say 90 per cent at the lowest—support the mechanistic view. And the others, mark, do not reject evolution, but merely imagine the process to be inoculated with some extraneous principle. Progress has lessened, and will lessen, their numbers. The story of the abandonment of antimaterialist theories would be a theme by itself.

No; vitalist theories about life are most warmly advocated to-day, not by those who know, but by those who don't know—for example, the physicist, Sir Oliver Lodge, the astronomer Millikan, Pupin, Joan, Bergson—experts on all sorts of subjects *except* biology, the one subject at issue.

Obviously, then, the opinions of Lodge, Jeans, Eddington and Millikan are not dictated by scientific conviction. They are physicists. Physics explains the behaviour of particles (or waves, or "wavicles") of matter in various forms. Its findings do not affect the fact that man has evolved from an animal ancestry, and that the story of his development is accountable only in materialistic terms.

Some physicists (not Physicists) think there is a God of some sort, though they are prepared to forfeit his whiskers and his wand for his ability to function as a mathematical gymnasium. Their colleagues remain sceptical, as is shown by the extremely poor response when Millikan solicited signatures to a profession of Theism wide enough to embrace even Jeans. More recent are the very significant results obtained by Prof. J. H. Leuba's questionnaire to American scientists, which he is at present recording in various contemporary journals. To my mind, the most important feature is the fact that unbelief increases with the complexity of the science. For instance, half the physicists are prepared to credit the survival of the mind, while the psychologists, *who study mind as*

their special job, throw the belief out by eight to one!

Now, obviously, if we wish to ask whether science has deserted materialism for religion, we should moot the question in this way. What is the essence of Materialism, as applicable to the present position? What did the old Materialists stand for? What bearing has science had on their central position? Is their position still arguable?

"The essence of Materialism is the belief that man, body and 'mind,' is no more than an animal with an exceptionally developed brain, and that an animal is a structure of mechanisms which we can trace back, through fifteen millennia of unplanned and unguided development, to certain chemical combinations in the slime of the primitive earth," and that "neither man nor nature gives any evidence of the existence of spiritual realities." (McCabe).¹ Has recent science given any evidence that such is not the case? Or has it, at every step, confirmed the materialistic account?²

That industrious popularizer of science, Mr. Joseph McCabe, has produced a work (*Riddle of the Universe To-Day*) in which he has collected evidence from the various branches of science, showing that, since Haeckel, science has added to the materialistic account, making Materialism, as Chalmers Mitchell says, more firmly entrenched than ever. Indeed, the advance of science could not be otherwise. Drawing largely from McCabe, it is hoped next to indicate what some of these advances are.

G. H. TAYLOR.

¹ These, of course, are the findings of Materialism, not the formulated principles.

² The implications of the new physics "cannot be summed up in the crisp, snappy sentences of scientific journalism, such as that Materialism is dead, and that matter is no more. The situation is rather that both Materialism and matter need to be re-defined." (Sir J. Jeans's Presidential Address to British Association, September 5, 1934).

The Super Bogey Man

AWAY back in the nineties of last century we youngsters used to be thrilled by a weird pantomime song called "The Bogey Man":—

Hush, Hush, Hush, here comes the bogey man,
Hide if you've been naughty, he'll catch you if he can!

The bogeyman of those glorious pantomime days might be eluded; but the super-bogeyman of the Christians is sure to catch you. Make no doubt of that!

Some dizzy poets and scientists have in these later days tried to furnish us with conceptions of the super-bogeyman, which pass all reasonable comprehension and which certainly do not fit in with the Scriptural revelation of that character. Some are so impressed with his immanence that they speak of him as being part of ourselves:—

Nearer than thought or breathing,
Closer than hands or feet!

And again:—

Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God!

Well, of course, if the super-bogeyman is so intimately mixed up with us as to be actually part of ourselves, it would seem to be impossible to escape him! Therefore at any moment he may nab and grab and noggle you and gobble you!

Yes, the appropriate place for God the super-bogeyman is the nursery. There, round the guarded fire in the hour before bed-time, we are regaled with fairy tales about him and others. The notable thing is

that Christians can never emerge from the nursery! Except ye become as a little child ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Heaven lies about us in our infancy. Yet even the Apostle Paul declared: "When I was a child I thought and spoke as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things." The Apostle was not cognisant of the contradictions of his own faith. This is the whole thing in a nutshell: that Christianity in essence is childishness. Childhood is fed with fancies, fables, fairies, and fairy tales. And the chief of the fables told to children is that about God the super-bogeyman.

But, really, are grown-up normal people to be fed with the pap, saps and slops of infancy? Are they to be coddled and nursed and spoon-fed like helpless children? Well, that is at the very foundation of Christian teaching when it comes to ultimate things. We must be born again.

This wholly chimerical scheme of compassing the salvation of mankind has been the curse of all ages. Man cannot grow because of supernatural swaddling bands. People in Britain used to speak with abhorrence about the Chinese practice of arresting the growth of little girls' feet. But can any enlightened person think about the British Christian practice of arresting the growth of young people's minds—of both sexes—without abhorrence and disgust?

Apparently the latter practice does not cause most people the slightest qualm! On the contrary, the dictates of the super-bogeyman are accepted as infallible and sacrosanct. Ah, he's the boy for you! Hush, Hush, Hush, you rebellious Freethinkers! He is sure to get you some day! There are bogeymen and bogeymen. You may elude the others, but you will never escape the super-bogeyman, who is the supreme joss of the Christians! He is the grand Panjandrum of the eternal Coke-ovens, and unless you bow the knee to him you will get one of the Coke ovens to stoke—and make no error about it! What a God! And what an Almighty Father!

IGNOTUS.

Self-Culture

DURING the nineteenth century quite a number of books dealing with self-culture and culture generally were published—most of them being marred, not merely by the narrow Puritanism of their Protestant authors, but also by the suggestion, more or less plainly indicated, that the beginning and end of all culture was the Bible. Hamerton's *Intellectual Life* was in its day a famous work, and men like the Rev. J. R. Beard, Prof. J. S. Blackie, the Rev. E. Paxton Hood and even old Dr. Isaac Watts (in the eighteenth century) all wrote books on the subject. Few survive at the present day, or if they do, it is only for people who have an insatiable curiosity for mediocre works of the past; and there was room for an up-to-date book written from the Rationalist or Secularist standpoint. Although Mr. Har Dayal refers to his book* as "short hints," the reader will find them packed with valuable suggestions, expressed with fine lucidity and a moving sincerity. A young man on the threshold of his career can be pardoned if he is bewildered by the multiplicity of subjects which he is supposed to know before laying claim to even a modicum of culture. Books on science, history, psychology, economics, philosophy and sociology pour from the press. They number already thousands and tens of thousands, and it must be extremely difficult to make a choice. John M. Robertson's *Courses of Study* is, without doubt, the finest book ever written on the question, but no one could hope to master a tenth of its treasures. Mr. Dayal indicates some of the best works a student should read, and he has, in addition, many valuable and temperate comments to make.

* *Hints for Self-Culture*, by Har Dayal, M.A., Ph.D., 5s. net. Watts & Co.

I was pleased to note in particular his insistence on physical culture. Not only exercise but dietetics should be studied. "A sick person," says Mr. Dayal, "puts his relatives and friends to needless trouble." It is a pregnant statement and should be borne in mind. It is interesting to see how many "cures" have been put forward—the water-cure of Father Kneipp, the mastication cure of Horace Fletcher, the dry-cure of Schroth and many others. All have their place in particular cases, and no one should be altogether obsessed by any. The acquirement and retaining of health should be an art taught to all children.

Culture requires also an intelligent appreciation of the arts. Some knowledge of dancing, music, oratory and painting is indispensable. Merely to know the names of Beethoven and Bach, Rembrandt and Michael Angelo, is not enough. And so with poetry. Mr. Dayal's chapter on the poets should be carefully read even by those who dissent from some of his judgments. A love of poetry is almost in itself a liberal education, and those who have not got this love should try and find out why. When it comes to ethical culture, Mr. Dayal touches on many controversial questions on which a good deal can be said on both sides. As one would expect, the author has his own opinions on economics, and he forcibly expresses them; but some of his readers will find his views very one-sided. It would have been better—in my opinion—to give a list of some of the best works dealing with both sides and allow the reader to judge for himself. Religion has, in the past, roused the fiercest passions, and does so in some quarters now; but in these days, fierce differences of opinion are mostly roused by politics, and students should try and keep their heads and not be moved by *clichés* or recurrent slogans. Liberty and not religious or political dictatorships should be the watchword for Freethinkers. I can, however, heartily recommend Mr. Dayal's excellent book. Self-culture is not easy; it takes time, but nothing is more worth while.

H. CUTNER.

My Reply to Mr. Cohen

I HAVE no love of newspaper controversy. It degenerates as a rule into personalities. On my part this will certainly not take place, for I credit Mr. Cohen with the competence needed to edit such a paper as the *Freethinker*, and I hold some of the Atheists related to the *Literary Guide* in respect and esteem. They are capable, good, honest men. A kinder man than Mr. Watts it would be good to meet, and it is superfluous to comment on the genius of Conybeare, Joseph McCabe, Julian Huxley, and others. I neither have disrespect for them, nor personal feeling towards them. Let that be understood, please!

And yet I totally differ from their findings and reasonings in connexion with the great religious verities. I have read what they have to say. I have lived in what I call The Great Dark Negation, and have now, as the result of fifteen years unbiassed investigation, arrived at the Sublime Affirmation: "There is no Death."

My respectful submission is this: assume that human survival is a proven scientific fact—which it is—the hoary *reasonings*—not Reason of the Materialists are all wrong. The bottom is knocked out of them by demonstrated fact. This was obvious to Mr. Watts—Editor of the *Literary Guide*—after he had read my *Rupert Lives*. He said to me in the Fleet Street Press Restaurant: "Well; if it is true, it may after all be another form of matter." That was a profound remark. The spirit-body may be that, and as unlike our present bodies as butterflies are unlike the grubs from which they come. But kindly note the immediate inference: The Universe becomes more than the telescope now being made at Mount Wilson, California, will be able to pick up.

Indeed, the problem of the future will not be altogether astronomical, but relates to what is *between* the stars. There resides the grandeur of the creation. In my two last books, *Man and the Universe*, and *Jesus, the Spiritual Astronomer*, I have tried to demonstrate this fact. The former book is my reply to Sir James

Jeans, who kindly wrote to me and said he had read it with "much admiration." Sir James has since then got nearer to my conclusion, namely, that "there is a God," to use Emerson's language. Define and describe Him as one will, one cannot make head or tail of the Universe without Him. To repeat: it is unthinkable that what has Mind could have been produced by what had No Mind. It is equally as absurd to contend that Mind is an inherent and constituent element in Matter, for we know that when Mind ceases to act in our bodies, they die. Their designed function ceases. I say again what I said in my article in the *Sunday Referee*: the evidence for human survival is immutable. As a lay student of astronomy and psychology, I endorse without modification the findings of Sir Oliver Lodge. It is not a question of Christianity or any other religion, or one of mere faith or belief. *It is a question of fact.* As the late W. T. Stead once said to me: "We have *believed* long enough. It is time we *knew*, if the fact can be known." It can be. It is. There exist *between* the stars many orders of beings whose intelligence and power infinitely surpass ours.

The proofs? I should require the *Freethinker* for months to give them. But of what value would they be? Mr. Cohen would reply with comments as weak as those in his last issue. He does not face the fact I stated, except in a way really too absurd to merit notice. He meets my affirmation that my son spoke to me by means of a reference to flying pigs! And intelligent men are expected to treat such a reply as argument and *reason*! I have more confidence in Mr. Cohen's readers than he seems to have.

Directly "proofs" of human survival are given, off go the Atheistic meteorites over a dark sky, and fade out in their mockery and laughter. But they don't disturb me. I have been dealing with them for fifty years, and have had cause to quote Shakespeare's works: "The only night is ignorance." I must ask Mr. Cohen to stop talking nonsense about, "if pigs fly," and *prove* to me I did *not* speak to my son. I do not simply *believe* this. I *know* it as a fact. And this fact is vitally related to the loss of life on the "Morro Castle." Mr. Cohen sneers at my logic as not being my "long suit." Strange to say—excuse the swank!—I passed in Logic with First Class Honours at a University College, and therefore I am justified in giving my opinion that every sentence Mr. Cohen has written in reply to me could be torn logically to pieces. But it is not worth the time! I pin Mr. Cohen down to a disproof that I conversed with my son. This is the pivot of my argument about God, the World, and the Universe. I know the truth of Christ's words: "Though one rose from the dead, they would not believe."

Mr. Cohen says the "thesis" of human survival is "silly." It is not a "thesis." It is a fact. Mr. Cohen is called upon to *prove* it is fancy. He says I simply "believe" my son spoke to me. I don't. I *know* he did. I keep on saying this, because I am acquainted with the mental acrobats, defined as Rationalists—a glaring instance of terminological inexactitude! Fronted by two hard-headed men, namely, Hannen Swaffer and Mr. Bradley, they treat them with a sneer, such as "if pigs fly." This attitude is pitiable.

Mr. Cohen sneers at great men, but he forgets that minds greater than our own have had to educate us from the time of our birth. If we are to regard their "beliefs" as silly, we have only one refuge amid the storm and wreckage of the ages—Mr. Cohen! I leave him to draw up the necessary logical syllogism. I trust Euclid in geometry; Sir Oliver Lodge in electricity; Jesus in *knowledge* of an After-Life. But in addition I have *proved* Jesus to be right. I don't require Mr. Cohen's opinions, based on what he calls his Reason. Mr. Cohen suggests I may be "mistaken." I am not. I have proved that my son—Rupert Wynn—is living as truly as I have verified the formula H_2O , or that light travels at 186,000 miles a second, or that the middle star in the belt of Orion is a vast nebula.

One word more. I deny that God was responsible for the burning of the "Morro Castle," or the drunkenness and wickedness on it; nor can we expect Him to be. I have sat for hundreds of hours and tried to think out

what our world would be like if the Creator robbed us of our freedom. Let Mr. Cohen have a smack at that problem, being strong on logic, and get Julian Huxley to apply the conclusions of his syllogisms to Farringdon Street and Johnson Court. Man's freedom is part of the Creator's plan. I *would* permit my children to suffer if this was the only way of teaching them. Some innocent beings are called upon to die for the ultimate good of others.

Human survival may be only a small part of the purpose of the Universe as a whole. I do know I shall live again, but ultimate reasons are unknown to me as much as to Sir James Jeans, whose logic is exact, while Mr. Cohen's is worse than that of a schoolboy who has just opened *Jevons on Logic*. Here's a gem: "How can design be stamped on anything until we know there is a designer?" Thus Mr. Cohen! I think this is the funniest bit of logic I ever saw in print. I might as well ask: how can you say my clock is stamped with design until you see the man who did the designing? Silly! There would be no *designed* thing to talk about if its Designer did not exist. I need not know what the designer's *intention* was in designing what he did design. His intention might be beyond my comprehension. Mr. Cohen quibbles over the two words *purpose* and *function*. The former means *to design*, the latter to *perform, act*; but both words logically imply a thinking Person. And this brings us to the only sound conclusion: the Universe is not a Palace of Mud, but a Mansion in which reside intellects, souls, men, women, our loved ones. The mystery of it all we cannot fully solve, but what we know not now we shall know hereafter.

I fear I have no time to continue this friendly debate, but I thank the Editor for setting an example to the Press in allowing full liberty of thought. This is why I read the *Freethinker*. Yet I should be glad to know why Atheists cling on to life, things being so risky, and God—if there is one—being so fast asleep.

WALTER WYNN.

Rejoinder by Mr. Cohen

I do not purpose entering into a competition with Mr. Wynn as to which of us is able to repeat "I believe" with the greater emphasis and frequency. I am not questioning Mr. Wynn's belief, and he need not question mine, but the first statement of belief being made, I do not see how it gains in force by being repeated all over again. For those interested I must therefore refer them to the *Freethinker* for September 30, and October 21.

Two points only call for a word of comment. First a correction. I did not say God was responsible for the burning of the "Morro Castle." It was Mr. Wynn who made God either negatively or positively responsible for it. But I have never made God responsible for anything—either good or bad. It is Mr. Wynn and his like who make God responsible by insisting that he planned and designed the universe. But as for me—well, I do not credit him with doing anything, good or bad, wise or unwise. Mr. Wynn must really not blame me for the implications of his own hypothesis.

The other point is one of logic, which I submit with all timidity, since Mr. Wynn has passed with first-class honours in logic, and I have never even sat for any examination in logic, save the kind to which one has to submit during a life-time of intellectual struggle. So marvelling greatly at my own temerity I venture to suggest, by way of explanation, that one is never warranted in inferring design from an examination of an object—unless it can be shown that the object in question belongs to a class that is known to be designed. I can tell that a hammer or a watch is designed solely because I can compare it with similar things that I *know* to be designed. It is a simple case of recognition of similars. But if I get hold of something, the like of which—neither in its parts or as a whole—I have never seen before, how can I infer design there? Can I compare this Universe with other Universes, and say I believe Universe A is designed because, I *know* Universe B is designed, and the two Universes agree in their structure. How does Mr. Wynn make any inference from a single and a

unique instance? I cannot; but then I never took honours in logic, and so may lack some skill that Mr. Wynn possesses.

Again, with all timidity, because this borders on instruction, and that may be considered impertinent, and it is not for one who is worse than a schoolboy to instruct one who is greater than a schoolmaster. Mr. Wynn is puzzled by my saying that you cannot infer design without knowing there is a designer. My mistake. I ought not to have put so obvious a truth quite so tersely. So, to elucidate, design is a manipulation of things—forces, events, objects—to a given end. But some events, forces, or objects are presumed to exist already or they could not be woven into the texture of a design. But whether the result achieved is the *designed* result depends entirely upon what was the intention of the designer when he set out on his manipulation of the existing materials. Design consists in the relation between a result and an intention. It does not consist in the relation between a process and a product. A relation between a process and a result exists everywhere, whether there is design or not. But a design can only be said to exist when we are able to prove (a) there is a designer, and (b) the product before us is a realization of what was in the mind of the designer.

I feel greatly daring in venturing to attempt instruction to one who passed, with honours, an examination in logic, and when I further reflect that probably Sir James Jeans, and Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Isaac Newton, Billy Sunday, and Gipsy Smith, to say nothing of Hannen Swaffer and Denis Bradley all disagree with me, my face burns, so that I have no need to use blotting paper to dry the ink that flows from my saucy pen.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD OCTOBER 26, 1934.

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

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Rosetti (A. C.) Moss, Clifton, Easterbrook (W. J. W.), Ebury, Preece, Easterbrook (L. M. W.), McLaren, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting read and accepted. Monthly Financial Statement presented. New members were admitted to Nelson, Tees-Side, Manchester, North London, West London, and Parent Society. Correspondence from West London, Swansea, Birmingham, Manchester, and reports of lectures from Messrs. Brighton and Clayton were dealt with. Progress was reported in arrangements for lectures to be held in the Birmingham Town Hall, Stratford Town Hall, and the King Edward Rooms, Church End, Finchley. The draft circular on the proposed revision of the Principles and Objects of the N.S.S. for circulation to all members of the Society was submitted and approved, and instructions issued.

The meeting then closed.

The next meeting of the Executive will be held on November 30, 1934.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

Obituary

CHARLOTTE KAY

ON Wednesday, October 24, the remains of Charlotte Kay, wife of Mr. P. Kay, were cremated at Golder's Green Crematorium. Although religious in a general way up to the time of her illness, two and a half years of intense suffering played a definite part in the remoulding of her thoughts, and before she died she volunteered the statement that she had no religious belief, and wished her body to be cremated. A large number of relatives and friends assembled in the chapel at the Crematorium and listened to a very impressive service. A selection of her favourite love lyrics from Burns was sung with much feeling and dignity by Mr. David M. Jones, and a Secular Address was delivered by Mr. R. H. Rosetti. To the husband and surviving members of the family we offer sincere sympathy in their great loss.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, November 4, Mr. P. Goldman. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, November 5, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, November 8, Mr. L. Ebury.

INDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Sunday, Mr. W. B. Collins. 3.30, Messrs. Wood, Bryant, Collins and Tuson. 6.30, Mr. Wood (W.P.). Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Wood, Bryant, Collins and Tuson. *Freethinker* on sale outside Park gates, and literature to order.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Hall No. 5, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7.30, Mr. G. Bedborough (N.S.S.)—"The Fraud, Folly and Futility of Prayer."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Gerald Heard—"Agnosticism, Now."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, November 5, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"German Protestantism To-day."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Conway Hall, 49 Theobalds Road, W.C.1): 7.0, Mr. W. W. Craik (Economic Recovery Association)—"The Way to Economic Recovery."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Mrs. Janet Chance—"Godless Humanity."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ACCRINGTON (King's Hall Cinema): 6.30, Debate—"Is There a Spirit World?" *Affir.*: Professor Howard. *Neg.*: Mr. J. Clayton.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, Birkenhead, opposite Scala Cinema, entrance in Lorn Street): 7.0, J. V. Shortt (Liverpool, President Liverpool Branch N.S.S.)—"Evolution versus God."

BRADFORD SECULAR SOCIETY (Godwin Commercial Hotel, Godwin Street): 7.0, Mr. J. M. Shaw—"The Moscow Dialogues."

BLYTH (Band Hall, Delaval Street): 7.0, Thursday, November 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"God's Little Folk."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (McLellan Galleries, 270 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. Harold Townley—"Whither Now?"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Joseph McCabe—"Light on the Origin of Civilization." A Lantern Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Milton Hall, 12a Daulby Street, Liverpool, off London Road, by the Majestic Cinema): 7.0, E. Egerton Stafford (Bootle)—"The Evolution of Religion."

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Hall, Royal Arcade, Pilgrini, Street, Newcastle): 7.30, Monday, November 5, Chapman Cohen—"The Case for Freethought."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): 7.0, Secularist—"The Roman Catholic Church."

READ UNITED DEBATING SOCIETY (Read, near Burnley, 8.0, H. P. Turner (Burnley)—"The Pagan Origin of Christianity."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Havelock Hotel): 7.0, Friday, November 2, Miss Edith Moore.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street, Sunderland): 3.0, Chapman Cohen (President, N.S.S.)—"Things Christians Ought to Know." 7.0, "The Fight for Freedom of Thought." Reserved seats 6d. each.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Havelock Hall): 7.15, Friday, November 9, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 7.30, Friday, November 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

EDGWARE FELLOWSHIP.—DR. HAR DAYAL, M.A., Ph.D., will speak on "Science and Human Life," on SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, at 7 p.m., at 34 Churchill Road, Edgware (off Whitchurch Lane and Montgomery Road. Lantern Slides of Assyrian art will also be shown.

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Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of enquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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