

THE  
FREETHINKER

▪ EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN ▪  
— Founded 1881 —

VOL. LIV.—No. 50

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1934

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions

The Parson and the War

THE publication of Mr. Bedborough's *Arms and the Clergy* sent me rummaging among my collection of newspaper cuttings, pamphlets and so forth, relating to the Boer War—one of those enterprises in which we had played our favourite part of defender of civilization. I hope that *Arms and the Clergy* will produce a similar result on all who read it. Then they will realize that the collection of clerical glorifications of war during the "Great War" is but a spoonful from an ocean of similar utterances. So far as the last war is concerned, Mr. Bedborough's collection is just representative; it is the only collection of its kind we have, and for that reason I hope that every one of my readers will buy a copy; or, better still, that he will buy two copies, one to keep and the other to lend. It is a record that will grow more interesting as the years pass.

Not quite justly, an excuse might be put forward for the war-mongering of the clergy during the late war on the ground that they were carried away by a wave of popular passion. Their claim to stand as moral guides to the nation should be above this, for it is the man's ability to retain his sanity of judgment in such crises that test his worth. But the case against the clergy rests on a deeper foundation. The basic clause in the indictment is that religious feeling, because it is deeply-rooted in primitive forms of thinking and feeling, is naturally at home when such forms are more than usually active. Religion may be compelled to move forward, but its face is turned longingly towards the past. When General Crozier said "The Churches are the finest blood-lust creators we have," he was stating a wider and deeper generalization than probably he realized.

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The Bishop's Ballyhoo

There can be little question to-day that the South African War was deliberately engineered by a combination of a rabid imperialism—the desire to paint the whole of Africa red—and a desire for sheer

financial aggrandisement. As the censorship was, during the Boer War, neither so strict nor so vigilant as it was during the late European War, these filibustering aspects were stressed by a large number of publicists and also a number of clergymen, but the majority of the clergy were doing what they could to keep the war-flame burning. One of their number, the late Rev. Silvester Horne, said that "The pulpits of the Established Church rang with enthusiastic panegyrics of that appalling and disastrous policy." (Mr. Horne was a Nonconformist, which may account for his limiting his denunciations to the Church of England). Mr. Joseph Chamberlain also claimed that in South Africa "Ministers of religion . . . whether they are British or American, are without exception? 'backing the war.'" The work of the clergy during the Boer War was, as in the case of the war of 1914, as has been the case in every war whatever its character, to throw a cloak of morality over conduct which might otherwise stand out in all its naked barbarity.

This was very evident in the official form of prayer issued in the name of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York directly the Boer War commenced:—

Let Thy protecting care be over those who have now gone forth to fight the battles of their country for the deliverance of the oppressed and for the maintenance of justice and equity between man and man.

This note was struck continuously during the war. The Bishop of Chester believed:—

From the bottom of my heart that the war was not only an inevitable war, but a just and righteous war.

The Bishop of Chichester held that the war

had knitted together England and her many sons in a bond of love and common interest which shall never be divided.

The Bishop of Durham held that the war had

revealed the Empire to itself. They felt as they had never felt before, that they were one people charged with a great mission.

The Bishop of Liverpool, said in apologizing for the Concentration Camps, formed after hundreds of the Boer farms had been burned because their men would not surrender, and which caused the death of 15,000 children:—

No doubt the death-rate has been lamentably high, especially among the children, but so has it been amongst strong and seasoned men.

He also said that "the great majority of evangelical Christians support and will continue to support the policy of the Government."

The Bishop of London, addressing the C.I.V.'s:—

You go for your fathers who begat you, whose work you cannot refuse to carry on. You go for your children who are to come after you that you may hand down to them England's honour untarnished.

And on another occasion the same genius for saying



even a truth in a more stupid way than anyone else would do, showed itself in the remark :—

We must never forget that we have received in this war priceless lessons; we have received a unique experiment of warfare under difficult conditions.

The Bishop of St. Albans said :—

We do right to ask God to bless our cause, believing it to be a just and righteous cause.

The Bishop of Truro let loose the following :—

God has added to this Empire a diamond field, a land whose harvest is pure gold, whose rich mines were of ruby or rocks of opal; these sound like phrases, but our colonists knew they were facts.

Dean Farrar, to those who held that war was un-Christian :—

Our Lord never forbade war from which he sometimes took his metaphors.

The Dean of Gloucester had no doubt whatever that "The sword of Britain is being blessed in heaven."

So much for only a few specimens of the large number I have by me, belonging to the Established Church. And it will probably have struck the reader that when the war of 1914 commenced, all the clergy had to do was to look up their sermons on the South African War and substitute "Hun" for "Boer." And when the Boer War began all they had to do was to look up what they had said about previous wars, and only alter a term here and there. A very unoriginal lot are the official servants of Christ.

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#### The Nonconformist Trumpet

But, of course, it will not do to assume that the Clergy of the Established Church were alone in thus blowing the trumpet of war in the name of Jesus Christ. They were well backed by the Nonconformist clergy. Thus the Rev. Rabbi Cohen :—

It was felt by British Jews to be a privilege and an honour to fight for the British flag. The spirit of the Anglo-Saxon seemed to them more to draw its nourishment from biblical principles than was the case with any other modern stock.

Cardinal Vaughan, speaking for Roman Catholics :—

Whatever doubt was entertained as to the lawfulness of enforcing British demands by recourse to the sword, there can be no doubt that we have been forced into the war, and that justice is on our side.

The Archbishop of Armagh (Protestant) :—

It was said that war was hell. I have my doubts of that. There are worse things than war. God, in the scheme of this great universe, had included the earthquake, the pestilence, the storm, and how did they know that He was not the Lord of Hosts, and the God of Battles?

Another Irish Protestant, Canon Carmichael :—

The Lord Jesus never said a word against war. John the Baptist gives advice to soldiers but never condemns their profession. The history of the world is full of wars, then war must be congenial to the mind of God in his evolution of humanity.

The well-known London preacher, Dr. Horton, boasted that the proportion of "pro-Boers" among the Nonconformists was smaller than among the members of the Church of England; and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes claimed that seventy-five per cent of Methodists were in favour of the war. Another well-known Nonconformist, the Rev. W. J. Dawson, preaching at Highbury, after a number of sons of members had enlisted :—

Glory be to God that such sons are still born of English mothers. The war must go on so long as a single man in the British Empire is capable of bearing arms.

Dr. Joseph Parker, the oracle of the City Temple, was quite sure that "the Government knew better than those outside could possibly know," and whatever their decision he was ready to "Throw his lot in with theirs." The well-known Brixton Nonconformist, the Rev. Bernard Snell, believed that

Great Britain has undertaken stern and arduous work, involving honour and justice.

The Rev. Dr. John Watson (the celebrated novelist "Ian MacLaren"), speaking against those who were pressing for peace :—

I see no other way for it, but that we must continue this war till our arms have triumphed and we have planted our flag in the capitals of the Allies, and to accomplish this we must put forth our whole resources of men and of treasure.

Dr. Watson also said that the war "was brought about by the lust for gold and by international criminals who ought to be in penal servitude." But this was said *after the war*, and when the information as to the way in which the war had been engineered had become public property.

During the Boer War there was not the wholesale suppression of reliable news that occurred during the last war, neither was there the purchase of large numbers of journalists by the Government, who wrote articles to order, and of the kind ordered. Some of the facts about the campaign in Africa were made known even before the war was over. Thirty thousand farms were burnt, and the women and children turned out to starve because their men had not surrendered, or because the trains holding British troops had been fired on by those to whom the farms belonged. Concentration camps were afterwards opened for women and children, and 15,000 children died. In one case the Canadian soldiers burnt all the farms in a track some six miles in length. Mr. John M. Robertson, who went out to Africa for the *Morning Leader* did good work in making the truth known to the public. The *Morning Leader* sent out 8,000 letters to clergymen, asking for their signatures against the perpetuation of the Concentration Camps. Only fourteen per cent could be induced to put their signatures to the document, and over fifty per cent sent back abusive letters by way of a reply.

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#### The Sin of Religion

On the whole what strikes one in the passages cited, and in the large number I have looked through, and which have not been cited, is their identity with what the clergy said during the European War. The "Hun" was merely substituted for the "Boer" and the apologies for our barbarities were those which the Germans used for theirs. It is an unfortunate fact that for many years this country has not met with a worthy enemy in the field. Always those with whom we have been at war have been careless as to obeying the rules of war, they have poisoned wells, used dum-dum bullets and killed the wounded. Our enemies have been so obviously a danger to civilization that against our own will we have had to shoulder the burden of saving civilization from disaster. The Boer, said Canon Bertram, of St. Mary's, Dover, "is a cunning, treacherous, deceitful foe." Exactly, so were the French when we were fighting them over a century since, so were the Russians when we were at war with them in the mid-nineteenth century, so were the Boers, so were the Zulus, so will be our enemies in the next war. Hardly ever have we had an enemy who moved on the same level of high and unselfish endeavour as ourselves. It was because of our moral solitariness that God called upon us to shoulder the burden of so large a portion of the earth's surface.



It has been a heavy load for us to carry, but the possession of outstanding virtue carries with it some kind of a purchase price.

To-day the clerical voice is generally raised against war. So it was after the Boer War. But we may feel quite sure that when God again calls upon the British to defend civilization by arms the clergy will repeat what they have said in previous wars. There is an unconscious perception with them that in the revival of barbaric feelings that accompany all wars religion may profit, and they will again prove themselves useful in fanning the war-flame. In war time the Government cannot do without the clergy, and in peace time the clergy hope to receive the reward of the faithful.

But I am not complaining of the clergy because as individuals they were largely in favour of the Boer War. One may be opposed to war, as such, and yet feel that in a particular instance war is, so to speak, inevitable. My complaint against the clergy is that they do in times of war what they have done throughout the whole of the history of the Church. In these days the low intellectual esteem in which they are generally held, the loss of the power they once derived from their capacity as emissaries of the supernatural, has forced them to become panderers to those in power, and touts for the support of whatever opinion happens to be in the ascendant. But right through the history of the Christian Church the clergy have never failed to provide a moral cover for the worst of human passions and a moral excuse for their expression. This was seen in the prayer of the Archbishops when the war opened, "For the maintenance of justice and equity between man and man." Bring man face to face with his real motives and if they are bad, the sight of them may be enough to disgust him. But plaster over mean and brutal motives with religious and moral platitudes and there is no rascality of which mankind is not capable. The Christian clergy have over and over again dwelt upon the attraction their religion has possessed for rascally characters. Had the clergy been better psychologists they would not have pressed that claim. It invites examination.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### "Peace With Honour"

MR. A. A. MILNE'S name will, I imagine, need no introduction to the majority of readers. His reputation as a humorous author is too well established. To those, however, who have not had the pleasure of enjoying Mr. Milne's writings, it may be well to mention that the title "humorist" is apt to be misleading. For it often carries with it the suggestion of one whose aim is to raise guffaws. But the wit of Mr. Milne is too gentle and kindly to do that. His art is to persuade us to smile with sympathetic amusement, rather than to give vent to that uproarious laughter whose aftermath so often leads to reactions of an uncomfortable and even shamefaced sort. In the most hilarious of Mr. Milne's passages there is nothing of spite or of malice.

The humanitarian feeling which is manifested in Mr. Milne's best works comes out with full force in his latest book, *Peace with Honour* (Methuen, 5s.). According as to whether you agree or disagree with its thesis, the title itself becomes either an ironical comment on modern politics or a sincere plea for the abolition of war. That the author possesses a strong sense of the absurd is very evident. Yet the book is in no sense a joke. On the contrary, it is a book with a serious purpose, which is written with a sin-

cerity that is often quite passionate in its intensity. And the purpose is to suggest a method whereby mankind may once and for all be rid of the horror of war.

To call *Peace with Honour* the propagandist effort of a pacifist is to damn it in the eyes of all to whom the word "propaganda" is anathema. We who did less in the Great War than direct the policies of generals and admirals; we fools who believed what we were told by those who wanted someone else to do the dirty work—we have now had our eyes opened to the patriotic lies which masqueraded as truth under the guise of propaganda. The word stinks in our nostrils. For this reason amongst others, I refuse to admit that Mr. Milne's work is propagandist. Besides, it differs from all true propaganda in that it is not mere emotional assertion unsupported by factual evidence. It is fact and commonsense strengthened by reasonable argument such as anyone may readily understand who is not an intellectual moron.

I defy anyone who has read the book intelligently to bring forward any argument in favour of war or increased armaments which he can honestly believe to be sound. There is scarcely one of the many claptrap phrases used by militarists and politicians which Mr. Milne does not show up to be the utter humbug of irrational idiots, or the empty repetitions of unthinking human parrots. That the illogicality and folly of these slogans has often before been exposed in the columns of the *Freethinker* does not detract from the individuality of the method employed by Mr. Milne. Amongst other fallacies he exposes the favourite one of comparing armies with police forces, though his exposition is not, I venture to think, so complete or so pertinent as the one which I put forward in these pages some months ago.

From the standpoint of cumulative effect, I confess to finding Mr. Milne's arguments to be less convincing towards the end of the book. He is somewhat too insistent upon the necessity for some oath of renunciation to be publicly taken by Heads of States. No oath yet invented, be it sworn in the name of a deity or any other revered object, has been of the least avail to make secure the undertaking which accompanied it. For the honest man a plain statement of intention is as binding as any oath. For the dishonest man such oaths constitute the most convenient cloaks for hypocrisy and double dealing. However much we may choose to blink the facts, it still remains true that human nature is not perfect. It follows that contracts may be entered into by dishonest persons; and unless there exists a physical force superior to the contracting parties, there would be no means of maintaining justice in the event of a breach of contract. If peace between nations is to be secured, then we have to choose between two alternatives. Either we must abolish nations as such, thus abolishing any cause of difference between them; or we must enter into international contracts which can be, if necessary, enforced by some superior international force—not by separate national forces.

As an Atheist and ex-Christian, too, I find Mr. Milne weak when he comes to deal with those aspects of pacifism which have contact with religion. I guess that, if he were asked to state what religion he professed, Mr. Milne would probably answer "Christianity." But I judge him to be a bad Christian. That is to say, Mr. Milne's badness as a Christian is in direct proportion to his goodness as a humanitarian. My opinion in this respect is derived from the eighth chapter of his book, a chapter entitled (one presumes ironically) "Onward Christian Soldiers." The major part of this chapter is taken up with an imaginary discussion between the author himself and a character called C who, as the author puts it, "whether the Archbishop of Canterbury or his



humblest Curate; whether Canon, Clergyman or Christian, I cannot say." If Mr. Milne had been less of a Christian, there is little doubt that he would not have treated C so leniently. If he had been more of a Christian, he would have known better how to put into C's mouth answers of a more religious and more evasive sort. The discussion referred to ends thus:—

M. You see what I am looking for, don't you? The point where Christianity ends and Patriotism begins. Let us go on looking for it. Suppose that in 1920 an inspired statesman had foreseen this war of 1940; had been convinced that it would be a war of attrition; and had realized that England's only hope lay in a *maximum* increase of population. Suppose that the Government had passed a law requiring immediate marriage and begetting of children from all adult males; and, since this would leave two million females still unmarried, had called for two million volunteers to commit adultery. Would the Church have approved?

C. Does that require an answer?

M. Most urgently. The Church has already said that it approves of murder on behalf of the State; I want to know if it approves of adultery.

C. I have already said that I do not call it murder.

M. But then you needn't call it adultery. You could call it "Enlisting as a Temporary Husband." *Pro Patria*. . . . Well?

C. You know perfectly well what the answer is.

M. I assure you on my honour that I do not. (And so, not knowing what the answer is, I shall not attempt to give it.)

My comment on this is that, in his anxiety to be specific, Mr. Milne throws away his case. In the first place, as long as killing is both nationally and internationally legalized—as it is in war—then to call it "murder" is absurd. The question, therefore, is not whether Christianity condones murder, but whether it condones the settlement of disputes by mortal combat. And this simple question has, of course, often been answered by Christians in whatever way suited their convenience best. In this, as in every other social and moral respect, Christianity will always first look to see on which side its own bread will be buttered. And it would act in precisely the same manner in the case of adultery. Anyone who is at all familiar with the history of Christianity knows perfectly well that its professors have been able to find justification in its Holy Book for almost every kind of vice, just as they have been able to claim that it is the fount and source of every virtue.

As regards "adultery," too, Mr. Milne is too simpleminded. It does not seem to have occurred to him that the "inspired statesman" above referred to would probably be as much of a Christian as C. He would not, therefore, be so innocent as to formulate a law authorizing illicit intercourse in such crude terms as Mr. Milne uses. This statesman might begin by appealing to Christ's notorious concern for the welfare of little children, and then introduce a law abolishing illegitimacy. Having taken the first rational step on irrational grounds, he might proceed to introduce a second law providing State support for all children under ten years of age. Subsequently a proviso would be added that the support would be continued to the age of fifteen or sixteen in the case of males, if they were committed to special naval and military training schools. There would indeed be nothing simpler than to pass a series of laws in perfect accord with Christian teaching such that in a short time the largest part of the population would in effect be breeding generations of fighters at the maxi-

imum rate. And the consciences of the Archbishop of Canterbury or his humblest Curate; of the Canons, the Clergymen and the Christians would remain quite undisturbed.

Again Mr. Milne quotes and critically examines two passages from the Bible (Luke xi. 21, and Matthew xxii. 21) which, he says, are most frequently used in support of the arguments for armaments and patriotism. But one wonders why he failed to deal with the most famous passages of all, Matthew x. 34-39; Luke xii. 49-53, and xxii. 36. Doubtless it was because, as a Christian, he himself interprets these passages metaphorically or allegorically. For our part, as Free-thinkers, we are sick and tired of pointing out how any passage in the Bible which justifies one action can always be countered by some other passage which condemns it. Even if the justification or condemnation be perfectly explicit, the Christian will twist it to his own interpretation by declaring that his opponent has misinterpreted it. The whole upshot is, as Mr. Milne should have known, that to argue with a Christian on the basis of an agreed or accepted Christian standard of morality is utterly futile. There is no fish so slippery, when it comes to escaping the net of reason and fair-play, as the true Christian.

In spite of these minor criticisms I can only conclude by recommending everyone to read Mr. Milne's book. If it has the success and the influence it deserves, then humanity will have taken a long step forward in its march to happiness along the pathway of peace.

C. S. FRASER.

## A Most Marvellous Menagerie

"Learning is good, but common sense is better."

G. W. Foote.

"Be neither saint nor sophist led, but be a man!"

Matthew Arnold.

THOMAS CARLYLE, probably prompted by an unusually severe attack of dyspepsia, once drew on his recollections of Shakespear's *King Lear*, and described man as a "two-forked radish." The term was neither accurate nor complimentary, and it would not have won the approval of scholarly Charles Darwin, doubting Thomas Huxley, or Ernst Haeckel. Yet Carlyle erred in most distinguished company, for, if the Christian Trinity, who, it is alleged, inspired and wrote the sacred book in use in this country, could not recollect accurately such an elementary fact that the whale is not a fish, although the firm is supposed to have made countless millions of them, there is every excuse for the splenetic sage of Chelsea.

Curiously, the writers of the Christian Bible were so unscientific, and so often as careless of facts as mere politicians and Christian Evidence lecturers. They frequently contradicted themselves, and, when bankrupt of ideas, simply copied whole passages written elsewhere in the same book and filled the vacancy. They often said the thing which was not, but their crowning glory was their extraordinary knowledge of natural history, which was peculiar, extensive, and most inaccurate. Their idea of mathematics would disgrace a fourth-form schoolboy, their history was almost entirely imaginary, but their excursions into zoology were nearly too funny for words.

In natural history proper not the veriest tyro, the most myopic bungler, would confound the hare with the ruminants. Yet dear religious folk would have us all believe that the creator of Linnæus blundered concerning the hare chewing the cud, and fondly imagine that the maker of Cuvier wrote delirious jar-



gon about clean beasts and dirty beasts. As a fact, it was actually reserved for mere worms of the dust like Buffon, Lamarck, and Darwin, to mention no others, to clear out the Augean stable of Biblical ignorance, and to create the science anew.

"Wild animals used once to roam at will through the whole of Britain, but now very wild beasts are only found in theological gardens," wrote a school-boy during an examination. And "very wild beasts" are to be discovered in the pages of this sacred volume. Where else can you find a talking snake, a lodging-house whale, or a pigeon co-responder? Where else are the fiery serpents, the dragons, the cockatrice, and the fearful worm that never dies? Where, other than in this sacred zoological gardens, are the bedevilled pigs, the four-legged fowls, the unicorn, the cherubim, the ventriloquial donkey of Balaam, and the theatrical menagerie of the Apocalypse? Even the human beings in this sacred work are unique, and act most strangely. "Adam" and his consort, "Eve," both start life at full-age. The lives of some of the patriarchs run to near a thousand years, and some other fortunate persons have two funerals apiece. Some folks were so magnificently developed that ordinary men looked like grasshoppers beside them. Among such a collection of "freaks" it is remarkable that cats are nowhere mentioned. Maybe, the third person of the Trinity, that sacred dove, had an objection to that animal. The Bible menagerie likewise boasts of horses of fire which carried the prophet Elijah to "the beautiful land above." There is also Aaron's rod that turns into a serpent and swallows other snakes. The leviathan, mentioned in the book of "Job," is a wonderful creature, with its comely proportions, its firework "neesings," and organs of vision "like the eyelids of the morning." And what is to be said of the nautical yarn of Noah's Ark, including, as it does, the suggestion that millions of creatures, from elephants to lice, were crammed into a seaworthy pantechnicon. The climax is reached in the further suggestion that only two fleas accompanied eight Orientals on the voyage. Nor must we forget the kind-hearted raven who brought refreshments to the prophet Elijah. This Biblical menagerie is unique, there is nothing like it on earth.

Wordsworth has told us that "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." And this sage remark reminds us that there is such an astonishing discrepancy between the zoological conclusions of earnest students of nature and the so-called inspired accounts of the Oriental writers of the Christian Bible. The consideration of this difference affords us material for a few genial comments, entirely free from that acrimony too often imported quite unnecessarily into the voluminous writings of theologians.

Aesop and Bidpai, Phædrus and La Fontaine have assured us, smilingly, that everything talks from a lodging-house bug to a hairdresser. Even the taciturn tape-worm unfolds itself when in liquor. From the animated descriptions of these famous authors there would appear to be an international esperanto. Surely the Oriental writers of the Christian Bible could have effected the capture of the various animals as simply as sparrows are said to be captured by salting their tails. A few minutes private conversation would then have verified the accuracy, or otherwise, of the extremely entertaining Biblical unnatural history, and thus saved generations of commentators much ink and more headaches.

And, mark you, these nonsensical ideas emanate from this Bible, one of the strangest, most frantic, and most irresponsible books which have ever issued from the brains of theologians. The work Free-

thinkers have set themselves is that of freeing their fellow-men from the mischievous absurdities of pre-scientific times, which are perpetuated by this fetish-book. To class this particular sacred work as a book of ordered knowledge is the last word in absurdity. It is a Salmagundi of riotous, exuberant, Oriental imagination, far too reminiscent of the lively pages of the *Arabian Nights*. If people would only read this Christian Bible instead of worshipping it as a fetish-book, such absurd veneration would be well-nigh impossible. The first stage of the religious road to ruin is to regard such a comedy of errors as the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The volume is manifestly incorrect concerning matters that can be tested; it is just as likely to be as erroneous on matters of conjecture.

If this so-called sacred volume had not been associated with the vested interests of Priestcraft, it would, long since have taken its place on the library shelves with the other literary relics of half-forgotten superstitions. Bishop Colenso avowed that he himself was taught commonsense on certain points of Biblical criticism by a young Zulu. It would appear, in fact, that the present-day intelligentsia will not only have to force commonsense on the Christian Church, but will have to recognize that Priestcraft is a vested interest, and that, so long as men are well paid to enter the Christian ministry, so long will men be found to prostitute their intellects in the service of an Oriental superstition, which no longer commands their real allegiance nor their actual admiration. It used to be said in Ancient Rome that when two soothsayers met in the street they invariably smiled at one another. Present-day priests have equal cause for merriment and satisfaction.

MIMNERMUS.

## Samuel Butler's Notebooks

EARLY in life Butler began to carry a note-book, in which he entered things he wished to remember. It might be a remark somebody had passed, or something he himself had thought, or said; a quotation from a book or paper, or a piece of criticism or philosophy; and later in life, he spent an hour every morning in arranging his notes and keeping an index of them for future reference. At his death, in 1902, he left five bound volumes containing 225 pages of closely-written sermon paper to each volume, and more than enough unbound sheets to make a sixth. So Mr. Festing Jones, the lifelong friend and biographer of Butler, tells us<sup>1</sup> in the volume of selections from these books published in 1912. Presumably the notes were transferred to the sermon paper, for that paper is far too large, to say nothing of being unbound, to be used as a notebook.

In these books Butler ranges over every field of human interest. They include art and science, theology and philosophy, music and literature. His versatility is remarkable, and the whole is enlivened by the flashes of his acute and pungent wit, sarcasm and humour. Another volume compiled from the same source, was edited by Mr. A. T. Bartholomew, and published in 1932.

Butler was one of the most independent writers who ever handled a pen. No doubt this was mainly due to the rebound from the restraint and bondage of Rectory life under his father, Canon Butler. After his return from New Zealand this freedom was especially noticeable. Mr. Jones observes:—

Butler always talked in the most open way of whatever was in his mind; and, when writing and

<sup>1</sup> H. P. Jones: *The Note-books of Samuel Butler*.



thinking about the evidence for the Resurrection, talked at Heatherley's [Studio] of the Christian in a manner that would have confirmed Theobald [Butler's father] in his view of the deteriorating influence of the atmosphere of Bohemia. He was once understood to say that the greater number of those who profess and call themselves Christians are really worshippers of Mrs. Grundy, whose name can often be substituted for that of the Founder of Christianity, and that no progress will be made until this is generally recognized. "The fact is," he said, "Mrs. Grundy's carriage stops the way." (H. F. Jones: *Samuel Butler* (1835-1902). Vol I., p. 134.)

In answer to a letter from Mrs. Heatherley (April 19, 1887) apparently asking him to deal with the sexual question, he declines, on the ground that this defiance of Mrs. Grundy would put him out of action altogether. He says:—

"... I am aware that the sexual question is of more practical importance than any such as Christianity can be; at the same time till Christianity is dead and buried we shall never get the burning questions that lie beyond approached in a spirit of sobriety and commonsense. It is therefore against superstition that I have fought to the best of my ability.

But I have got to take the world as I find it, and must not make myself impossible. At present I have the religious world bitterly hostile; the scientific and literary world even more hostile than the religious; if to this hostility I am to add that of the respectable world, I may as well shut up shop at once for all the use I shall be to myself or anyone else." (H. F. Jones: *Samuel Butler*. Vol. II., p. 49.)

Another testimony to the evil influence of Christianity in the suppression of free inquiry into one of the deepest and most vital questions concerning the future welfare and happiness of mankind!

A few selections from Butler's Notebooks will give a better idea of the man and his style than much description. Under the heading "St. Michael," he observes: "He contended with the devil about the body of Moses. Now, I do not believe that any reasonable person would contend about the body of Moses with the devil or with any one else."

Of the Greek myth in which Perseus rescues Andromeda from the monster, he remarks: "It is said that when Andromeda and Perseus had travelled but a little way from the rock where Andromeda had so long been chained, she began upbraiding him with the loss of her dragon who, on the whole, she said, had been very good to her. The only things we really hate are unfamiliar things."

Under the heading "Fashion," we have the description: "Fashion is like God, man cannot see it in its holy of holies and live. And it is, like God, in-crease, springing out of nothing, yet the maker of all things—ever changing yet the same yesterday, to-day and for ever."

Under the heading "The New Testament," he comments:—

If it is a testamentary disposition at all, it is so drawn that it has given rise to incessant litigation during the last nearly two thousand years, and seems likely to continue doing so for a good many years longer. It never can have been admitted to probate. Either the testator drew it himself, in which case we have another example of the folly of trying to make one's own will, or if he left it to the authors of the several books—this is like employing many lawyers to do the work of one.

Under "Entertaining Angels," he observes: "I doubt whether any angel would find me very entertaining. As for myself, if ever I do entertain one it

will have to be unawares. When people entertain others without an introduction they generally turn out more like devils than angels."

Under "The *Enfant Terrible* of Literature," he says: "I am the *enfant terrible* of literature and science. If I cannot, and I know I cannot, get the literary big-wigs to give me a shilling, I can, and I know I can, heave bricks into the middle of them."

Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* he declares: "Consists mainly of a series of infamous libels upon life and things." And "its notion of heaven is hardly higher than a transformation scene at Drury Lane." They "hold out to me the chance of a golden crown and harp with freedom from all further worries, give me angels to flatter me and fetch and carry for me." Upon which Butler comments:—

There is no conception of the faith that a man should do his duty cheerfully with all his might though, as far as he can see, he will never be paid directly or indirectly either here or hereafter. Still less is there any conception that unless a man has this faith he is not worth thinking about. . . . What a pity it is that Christian never met Mr. Commonsense with his daughter, Good-Humour, and her affianced husband, Mr. Hate-Cant; but if he ever saw them in the distance he steered clear of them, probably as feeling that they would be more dangerous than Giant Despair, Vanity Fair and Apollyon all together—for they would have stuck to him if he had let them get in with him. Among other things they would have told him that, if there is any truth in his opinions, neither man nor woman ought to become a father or mother at all, inasmuch as their doing so would probably entail an eternity of torture on the wretched creature whom they were launching into the world.

Under "An apology for the Devil," Butler points out, "It must be remembered that we have only heard one side of the case. God has written all the books." We ourselves, have often thought that an excellent case could be made out for Satan, upon the supposition that he and the rebel angels were the true angels of light, who were thrown out of Heaven by the wicked magician Yahveh, because they rebelled against his cruelty and injustice. This would account for his drowning the world; for his hardening Pharaoh's heart every time he wished to let the Hebrews go, so that he could indulge his lust for slaughter. From the time when he kept them wandering in the desert for forty years, down to the present time, the history of "The chosen people of God" has been one of sanguinary injustice, tribulation and woe.

Do the clergy believe in the dogmas they teach? To this Butler replies:—

In a way the preachers believe what they preach, but it is as men who have taken a bad £10 note and refuse to look at the evidence that makes for its badness, though, if the note were not theirs, they would see at a glance that it was not a good one. For the man in the street it is enough that what the priests teach in respect of a future state is palpably both cruel and absurd while, at the same time, they make their living by teaching it, and thus prey upon other men's fears of the unknown.

We cannot do better than conclude with a summing up of Butler's character by a lady admirer, as follows: "His complex nature contained many apparent contradictions. A pioneer and a conservative, a seeker for freedom and a hater of people with "causes," a ranger of many fields, with limited sympathies in each, profound, superficial, aggressive, shy, caustic and tender, devoted and egotistic, trustful, suspicious, eccentric and sane, the soul of courtesy, the pink of rudeness, charming, infuriating, he was



full of generosity, envy, dislike, irritation and love. It is little wonder that he has puzzled not only the unsympathetic, but many who have had a sense of his greatness, and were capable of understanding it." (Clara G. Stillman: *Samuel Butler: A Mid-Victorian Modern* (1932), pp. 10-11.)

W. MANN.

## Acid Drops

An indignant father wrote to the *Daily Express* protesting against the conduct of someone who has sent his boy a toy model of a gangster's machine gun. The gun is made in Japan, and the father says that while gangster's guns may be children's toys in America or Japan, we do not want such toys here. Now we wonder what would have happened if the present had been made up of a few toy cannon, some toy rifles, and a toy aeroplane bomber? We expect it makes a deal of difference whether boys have given them modes of authorized or unauthorized guns.

Dr. Thomas Colvin, at the Catholic Medical Guild, opened a discussion, the other day, on "Miraculous Cures." He said, after 42 years study, he would consider a cure miraculous if it fulfilled seven conditions: (1) The cure must be instantaneous. (2) The cure must be permanent. (3) The cure must be of a disease with objective signs as well as the symptoms of a patient. (4) It must be a cure that cannot be explained by a natural process. (5) The alleged cure must have been examined immediately before and after by a credible surgeon or witnesses. (6) The cure must not be such that it could be paralleled by a similar cure where no question of miracle was raised. (7) A nervous disease must have objective evidence of an organic lesion, so as to exclude purely functional diseases like hysteria. The Catholic doctors present endorsed all the tests; but we wonder how many "miraculous" cures would survive if the tests were rigidly put into operation? We should like Dr. Colvin to take advanced cancer cases to Lourdes for fifty years, and see how many would be instantaneously and permanently cured. Would he guarantee one?

Dean Carpenter (of Exeter) amused his congregation, recently by accounting for goodness (moral goodness) in Atheists, by calling these strange beings "Parasites." They may be good, says the Dean, but then, look at the Christian background to which they owe it all—and "all these people, good as they are, would be enormously improved in character if they could be converted." The prospect appals us! Fancy becoming as good as, shall we say the present Bishop of London, whose bloodthirsty utterances about killing good and bad Germans will be found in all their incredible savagery on pages 62-64 of *Arms and The Clergy*.

Dr. James Black says "the essential difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant conceptions of sainthood" is that the former is hidden away "under a paper-shade or in a hothouse," while the latter variety (Dr. Black's sort) "flowers and grows robustly out in the open." Sometimes we see these "flowers" which are robust enough, growing in the open, and we are not surprised that others, if anything like them, seek to hide discreetly from public gaze. Dr. Black's description of nunneries and monasteries as "hothouses" is neither polite nor altogether accurate. A more correct label would be "Refrigerators."

The *Church Times* is in agreement with Mr. Baldwin, with what he recently said: "If Freedom is to be abolished Christianity must go, for slavery and Christianity cannot live together." But the *Church Times* says that Mr. Baldwin should have pointed out that "Economic slavery, possible in, though not essential to a capitalistic democracy, is every bit as anti-Christian

as any other form of slavery. It should never be forgotten that the right and the power to acquire property is vital to the Catholic conception of Freedom."

By Catholic, the *Church Times* means, Christian and semi-Roman Catholic. And that makes us disagree with both the *Church Times* and Mr. Baldwin. Christianity, in all its forms has found itself compatible with the existence of slavery, and has used the Bible to back up the teaching of the lawfulness of slavery. In fact the oldest Christian State in the world, Abyssinia, still uses Christianity and the Bible as its warranties for maintaining slavery. And as to the right and power to acquire property being vital to the Catholic conception of Freedom, we fancy there is something about not laying up treasures on earth and trusting to God to feed us and clothe us, as he feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field. And if he really does look after this, then he does it by permitting hundreds of thousands of birds to die for want of food, and permits millions of lilies to perish owing to the inclemencies of the weather. When Mr. Baldwin wishes to expatiate on Christianity and slavery he should hand the task to Mr. Macdonald. He is much better used to saying nothing in several ways, and no one ever expects him to mean anything at all. Mr. Baldwin should be more careful.

Christianity stands or falls by its creeds, and its complete and undiluted theology. To take away the miracles or the Incarnation and babble about the humanity of the Saviour, unmixed with Divinity, is to deprive Christianity of real Christianity. One might as well try and play *Hamlet* without the figure of Hamlet. The Archbishop of York, we are glad to note, insisted upon this the other day. He said the Church was founded "on theological truth and not on moral aspirations," and it is about time most Christians agreed. Unitarian Christianity is neither Unitarian nor Christianity really. It is anything believed in by a particular individual, and is quite pathetic in its attempt to hold on to some kind of religion. As a pious writer says, "The Deity of the Catholic religion has done for His intelligent creation what the Deity of the Unitarian has not." If this means that the "Catholic religion" tends to make its adherents content with their stupidity, we are inclined to agree.

Writing on the difficulty of bringing "Evangelicals" and "Catholics" together, Dr. H. L. Goudge points out that the former "are accustomed to think and speak chiefly of 'the Gospel'"—the latter, of "the Faith." "Gospel truths," he writes, "are all parts of the faith, but not all the faith is part of the Gospel," and "The Faith is the whole body of Christian truth, while the Gospel is a portion of that truth." It is really interesting to find out the splendid subtleties of God's own religion, and how believers strive their utmost to help each other.

Dr. Goudge also answers the question, "How are we to distinguish the evangelistic truth from the rest?" Quite simply. "By common-sense and experience," and also by studying the sermons in Acts and the Epistles. Of course, one has to study quite a lot more—in fact everything about Jesus that is in the New Testament and all about the "Divinity of our Lord and Salvation through His Blood." Then in addition, why "the bald statement 'Jesus is God' conveys no meaning to the uninstructed but a Sabellian one." After swallowing all this—and far, far more than this—we hope evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics will get together at last and seriously discuss why they still differ. And why they both differ from Roman Catholics. "Unity" may—we say *may*—then get a look-in somewhere.

The missionary ramp is slowly being exposed—that is, the dupes who were providing the necessary funds are by no means satisfied with the results. A leader writer in one of the religious weeklies, complains most bitterly of the falling off in funds:—



Two of the most cogent appeals ever printed on behalf of missions have been issued in the course of the past two years . . . the miserable fact remains that the Churches' contributions, instead of being increased by the ten per cent necessary to maintain work on the present footing, let alone launch out on new adventures, are not even being maintained.

This is particularly good news. The waste of money (wanted for a thousand practical enterprises in this country) in trying to convert "savages" and "pagans" to an out-worn creed, was simply colossal in the past. Let us hope common-sense and decency will, in the future, recognize that money spent on missionary work might just as well be thrown down the gutter. We hope the missionary slump will continue.

That stout controversialist, Dr. G. G. Coulton, managed to get a letter in the *Catholic Universe*, in which he smites Mr. Hilaire Belloc hip and thigh. He repeats the charge he made in 1929, that Mr. Belloc "was not only a bully but a coward, who would not dare to discuss publicly with me for printing, *The Causes of the Reformation*." And as the subject of Mr. Belloc's attack on Dr. Coulton was the Reformation, the latter continues, "Mr. Belloc now tries to impress your readers by sheer bluster and vociferation!" That some kinds of "Protestant" history were biassed no one can deny, but Dr. Coulton's charges against "Catholic" history go further.

Catholics are very fond of quoting (the Protestant) Cobbett's *History of the Reformation* as being "unbiassed" from the "other" side. This is how Dr. Coulton disposes of Cobbett:—

Cobbett had very nearly Mr. Belloc's own qualities; a first rate English style, and a vehemence which often concealed abysmal ignorance. Therefore he had far more influence upon the multitude than a real historian like (the Catholic) Lingard. When Cardinal Gasquet wanted to strike a blow for his Church, he reprinted by tens of thousands, not his predecessor, Cardinal Pole, nor the really great Lingard, but Farmer Cobbett.

The "Christmas Number" makes a poor showing in these sceptical times. It maintains old pretences with feeble efforts to prove that these old myths still appeal to popular sentimentality. Commercial journals exploit religion just as they exploit all ignorance which brings in cash. Art journals imagine there is something "artistic" in poverty-stricken child-birth, so long as the baby wears a halo: there is no beauty in the birth of a baby in a slum. As for the religious weeklies, they positively revel in reaction, and wallow in witless wisecracks.

The *British Weekly* Christmas number has as its main attraction "a devout interpretation of that great forecast by Isaiah," which, believe it or not, occupies no less than four whole pages! Imagine grown-up men spilling four pages of printing-ink in a pretentious plea that a weird old gentleman happening to mention that "A child is born" was really predicting that a few centuries later "THE SAVIOUR WILL BE BORN," and although he also talked about somebody who was despised and rejected, he really meant that this "Saviour" WILL BE despised, etc., when he arrived. Also they ignore that although Jesus was called many names, He was never called "the mighty counsellor" nor "mighty" anything else, and that He was called the "Son," not (as in Isaiah's alleged "prophecy") "The Everlasting FATHER." There are some genuine prophecies in Isaiah which have "come true" as they say. He "predicted" (xvi. 15 and 16) "The Lord will come with fire, for by fire and with his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many."

The *Christian World* celebrates Christmas by suppressing all "controversial issues," including Letters from correspondence, in its Christmas number. Its very fine reproductions and sketches are in marked contrast with its "artistic" letter-press. Miss Taylor obliges with a

"seasonable" poem about "the nativity" in which she tells us that

"The strong-brow ox and sturdy ass  
Forget to chew their hay."

while

"Kind Joseph carries thorny sticks  
To make a cheerful fire."

because

"The Manger Bed is softly spread  
With hay and linen white,  
There sleeps the Son, the Lovely One,  
The world's wee Heart's Delight."

There is at least nothing "high-brow" about Miss Taylor with her "strong brow ox," but we hope the ass was not so assinine as to "forget to" eat for ever.

We like the *Methodist Recorder* best of all the religious Christmas issues. It has a lot of comic yarns and a beautiful burlesque of a "Report on Christian Endeavour in 1934." By way of Romance, there is a series of "Life Stories" called "The Ways of Providence," in which contributors out-rival one another in extravagant "stories" of "Answers to Prayer." The Rev. T. Westerdale was "in the trenches" (as "padre" we presume), and was already figuring out his next job at home. He had two "calls." One a London job, which he turned down, but continually felt would have suited him in every way. He accepted a Liverpool offer solely because some mysterious voice continually pressed him to do so. He does not mention the respective salaries or we might guess the nature of this insistent "call." After all this worrying he asked God to send him "some unmistakable sign," and promptly God sent a strange soldier who had apparently dropped from Heaven into the "trench" to tell Mr. Westerdale that the congregation of the Liverpool Church were very nice people. As the London Church, or its God, sent no strange soldier to advertise the advantages of their Church, the way was clear—and let us hope the salary was satisfactory too.

Dr. J. E. Clarke, Editor of the *Presbyterian Advance*, has published a new "Pious Editor's Creed." It starts with the avowal: "I believe that God calls even Editors." Yes, but *what* does He call them? If we knew what an intelligent God thinks about the average religious editor, we should probably agree for once with the divine critic.

## Fifty Years Ago

CHRISTIANS say the Bible is holy, but they don't believe it. Belief is not to be tested by words, but by action. Their conduct proves their insincerity. What they sent us to gaol for saying, they prove by their daily practice. They no more believe the Bible to be God's word than we do. If they did, they would obey its commands. They protest that the Bible is a divine book, and they will lock you up in a felon's cell for deriding it; but they laugh at it by their conduct, and treat it with scorn by their practical neglect. It is God's word, it contains all the rules of morality and salvation, but it must never be quoted on any matter of importance. Yet in Mohammedan countries all public proceedings are sanctioned by texts from the Koran, and all questions of right and wrong are decided by appeal to the same authority. Why? Because Mohammedans really believe that the Koran is really God's word. The old Puritans quoted the Bible in the same way, because they really believed what Christians now only profess. They still say "Holy Bible," but they never consult it. They never quote Scripture at a Town Council meeting, on a School Board, at a Vestry meeting, or on any committee. Holy Bible! Nobody regards what it says, nobody obeys it, nobody consults it. The Christians worship it as intelligently as an African worships his fetish. They only use it as a table ornament, as a public sign of respectability on Sundays, or as a missile to sling at the head of any Freethinker who asks them to square their practice with their profession, or to admit on Sunday the principles on which they act every other day in the week.

*The "Freethinker," December 14, 1884.*



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE,

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. SANFORD.—Very pleased to have a note from so old a stalwart as yourself. If we were nearer we would do ourselves the pleasure of calling on you. As it is we can only send you our best wishes, and receive yours with the heartiest appreciation.

R. W. CRACKLOW.—Please read again what we said. "Matter" is a general conception embracing all experiences of resistance, persistence, and extension. There are not these things, so far as our capacity for thinking goes, and an unknown something called "matter." "Matter" is the thing we know, and the thing we know is that which is given in experience. If you take away the known aspects of experience which are summarized under the term "matter," what you have left is as insubstantial as the Theist's God. It is, in fact, as we have said, the ghost of a God.

N. A. PEASE.—What can you expect? The clergy can no longer maintain their position by depending on their purely religious influence, and they are forced to play to any and every movement that is, for the time being, popular.

J. POLLARD.—Thanks. Will be used.

S. SALVEDO.—You haven't got the proposition correctly. (1) The properties of a product are never in the factors. To call them "latent," may pass as a mere mode of speech, but not otherwise. The specific qualities of a compound can only come into existence with the combination of the factors, and one of the factors is the assemblage of the conditions. (2) Your other point is answered, by implication, in what has been said. There can be no time sequence in an act of causation if the effect is no more than an assemblage of the factors necessary to its appearance. The effect is, to put it in another way, a synthesis of a given number of factors; or, yet again, the distinction between "cause" and "effect" is the difference between analysis and synthesis.

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## Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen's new work, *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought*, will be published on December 18. The book should prove of more than usual interest to both Christians and Freethinkers. It is as controversial as anything Mr. Cohen has yet written. It will be issued in two forms, in cloth gilt at 2s. 6d., and in stiff paper at 1s. 6d. By post 3d. and 2d. extra.

A report of Mr. J. V. Shortt's address on "Religion, Why I Attack It," appears in the *Bootle Times*. The lecture was given by invitation, to the Bootle Everyman's Meeting, and the chair was occupied by the Rev. H. Fisher Short. The lecture was followed by questions and discussion. Mr. Shortt is President of the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S., and the invitation to lecture on such a subject indicates a pleasing exhibition of liberality.

Several correspondents have asked us whether the Postmaster-General or the Home Secretary has the right to confiscate money sent to Ireland for a letter in the Sweepstake. There is no law which gives either of these men the legal power to confiscate either the money or the tickets, but officials nowadays do so much that is illegal, and the British public have become so sheep-like in the face of an official order, that we do not know what may be done. The Home Secretary got his Bill through by assuring the House that anyone would be at liberty to purchase a ticket, but that selling them or distributing them only would be affected. Having said this, he next proceeded to talk at large about preventing any such thing being done, and no one in the House had the courage to tell him that this was a piece of very cheap trickery. The Government has its eye on men who are independent enough to act thus, and no jobs are forthcoming for such.

The Home Secretary, and any Secretary of State, has the power to have opened any letter sent through the Post Office, and many, many thousands of letters are so opened—letters dealing with all sorts of subjects. But it is not the practice in this country to do this sort of thing openly, so they are not sent on marked "Opened by the Post Office," they are carefully opened, and carefully sealed again, so that unless a trap is laid the sender receives the letter knowing nothing of the opening. Some time ago we wrote an article pointing out the extent of this interference with private correspondence, but with the growth of this practice and the move made by the Incitement to Disaffection Act, neither an Englishman's correspondence nor his home can be considered really private. The Government performs contemptible actions in the meanest and the most hypocritical way.

But the opening of a letter does not carry with it the right to confiscation. The Post Office has legal justification to open any letter or parcel it is carrying on an order from a Secretary of State. But the letter or parcel having been opened, it must be returned to the sender if the Post Office refuses to carry. It is a pity that someone, or some few men, are not public-spirited enough to send for tickets to Ireland, and then compel the Post Office to either carry the parcel with which it has been entrusted or send it back to the sender. We have every confidence that the Courts would order its return, and the illegal action of the officials would then be prevented. The Disaffection Bill was cowardly in its scope, the Home Secretary gave way to Church raffles and the like—it was hypocritical in the way it was passed through Parliament, and it is now intended to add dishonesty in its administration. We are concerned with the matter, not because we care very much about sweepstakes, but because we are concerned with the growth of administrative action, that is not subject to the ultimate control of the courts. While protesting against individual dictatorships abroad, the public are quietly submitting to the establishment of numerous petty dictators at home.

The Birkenhead Branch N.S.S. are expecting a full house to-day (Sunday) when Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak in the Boilermakers Hall, Argyle Street, Birkenhead, on "Dictators, People, and Persecution." The subject is topical, the speaker is known in Birkenhead, and the expectations should be fully realized. The lecture commences at 7 p.m.



## Blowing the Gaff

(Concluded from page 782)

SEVENTY millions of people are imprisoned in the Japanese islands, ready at any moment to colonize any tract of land that offers an opportunity for that progressive, industrious, and prolific race. Foreigners are—or at least were—welcome to, and doing well on their soil, as we have personally observed, but they are considered even as lepers in several countries where the so-called white man reigns supreme. The cultured citizens of the U.S.A. do not tolerate the "yellow swine"; and though they cannot very well dispose of the black ones, they are well marked, and duly labelled; even their places of worship are like segregation camps, specially intended for undesirables, good enough for nothing except to work for their superiors.

At the present moment there is a grand centenary celebration in the State of Victoria. No doubt much eloquence will be expended on the virtues of our colonies; the divine mission of our race; and the glorious success of our worthy sons of Empire. Here is a mere handful of white inhabitants—seven millions only, living on the rim of a huge, almost undeveloped continent; a land with untold possibilities; up to the eyes in debt; and full up with the pride of the inflated imperialist and white man. Above is Japan, a comparatively poor and unproductive country; anxious to expand, and with a moral right to do so. The spectre of a future terror glares upon the large but lonely isle; and, in the minds of those who think, there are strange forebodings. It is well for us, the white Sons of God and fortune, having gobbled our share of the earth's substance, to ask the yellow and black races to sit still and peaceful in their corner whilst we enjoy the fruits of the victory as best we may; or, failing to do so, nurse our dyspepsia after the national, and imperial gorge. There are several portions of this earth, particularly suited for the coloured races, which could and should be developed by them. There is necessary to-day, not imperial restrictions and a policy of isolation, but an international court to deal out justice to all the nations; and especially the smaller ones. No empire to-day is fitted for the power it arrogates to itself. The World is waiting for the end of imperialism as the remedy for many of our ills; unfortunately, however, the reactionary is more rampant than ever; and a retrograde movement is evident everywhere; the virus of nationalism, imperialism, and whitemanism having entered our blood and poisoned our mind. To make matters worse, this disease is regarded as a sign of virility; and we possess a Government that does all in its power to encourage the spread and virulence of the malady.

"The ties of Empire," says Mr. Neville Chamberlain, "are wearing thin"; and towards strengthening the bonds, all sorts of concessions are made, all kinds of imperial ballyhoo are resorted to, to inspire a spirit of constipated patriotism, in readiness for the day when the white scourge is faced by the yellow peril, and the lords of creation will be compelled to justify their existence on earth.

It is useless gnashing our teeth at the Japanese because they are beating us at our own game; our duty lies in another direction. We have changed the face of Europe for the benefit of no one knows who; it is now our duty, and should be our pleasure to review the map of the world. There is a League of Nations; which is anything but a league of the peoples those "national representatives" in the league

are supposed to represent; and to-day there is not even a league of undesirables.

"There is a challenge to Western civilization in India," says Mr. Isaac Foot, M.P. Yea, verily; and not only in India. The 100 per cent American has gone; so has the 100 per cent Australian—with the exception of what has been allowed to remain for convenience or show purposes. But the coloured races will awake; and in the interests of a cultured humanity, challenge our right to lay down the law for all men; and rid the world of this whitemanism which is eating into the vitals of every nation in Europe to-day. High living and low thinking will not allow the British or any other imperialist body to impose upon a troubled world for ever; nor will all our military tattoos, pageants, and other ballyhoo deceive the intelligent. In our protectionist propaganda we discover more than those superficial folk who take the market gardener's point of view; in this, with its language of pestilent prejudices, we find the munitions of peace—to fight with equal weapons, bargaining weapons, to conquer, to crush, to stifle, to inundate with foreign goods, to be beaten, invasion, tribute, etc., phrases inimical to the peace and progress of mankind. In this propaganda we have a profundity of moral turpitude which is staggering to those who take the trouble to think. Now you have a good insight into the object of the Sedition Bill! He who hath eyes to see, let him see; he who hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches!

The way of Empire is the way of a serpent; and those who make Empires are usually strangers to the street called "Straight." What needs foul means to acquire, too often demands foul means to maintain. Mr. Lloyd George, I believe, said on one occasion, that nations went to war for reasons statesmen dare not utter. Now that the battle for income and status is over, and both secure, he might furnish us with the good things at the bottom of his mind, instead of the popular sentimental ideas that float on the surface. He might tell us what he really proposes the Churches and the people should do. Does he advocate mass opposition, in which the Churches would concur? Are the Welsh Nonconformist ministers firmly convinced as to what Jesus would do? I fear not. When the doctrine of non-resistance serves them for peacetime purposes, they apply it; when war breaks out, there is the temple flogging scene, and Christ's order to his disciples (Luke xxii. 35, 36, 37, 38) to sell their garments, and buy a sword with the proceeds. They seem, however, to have anticipated Him; for they said: "Lord, behold, here are two swords." And he said unto them, "It is enough."

We believe in peace; but, as we previously asserted, the sacrifices are great. We believe in the spirit of peace; but we must blend the spirit with a little sense. We need enthusiasm in the cause of peace. Enthusiasm is good; unfortunately, however, it is a dangerous weapon in the hands of too many of its possessors. Without enthusiasm you are nowhere; and with it, too often, God knows where you are. Many lack the sense and ability, but are filled with enthusiasm, and burst; others with the ability to remove mountains are like Ludham's dog who leaned against the wall when he was compelled to bark. Mr. Lloyd George knows the real enemy. Let him or them be exposed; and let him tell us how to fight the foe. It is not the people who want war. It is not the Government, he says; then who or what is it that demands war?

He talks about bringing Christianity to bear upon our statesmanship. When does he propose to introduce Christianity into Great Britain? There is as



much resemblance between the Oriental old original, and the British product, suited to the Stock Exchange and general purposes as there is between a virgin forest and a timber-yard!

We have, in the town of Llangollen, six chapels, two churches, and one gospel mission room. We presume they are used for preaching purposes; we would not care to suggest they are registered for the sale of milk. Mr. Lloyd George advises preaching to the masses. What have the Churches been doing during the last sixteen years? Their preaching for hundreds of years has brought us no nearer to the reign of peace.

If Mr. Lloyd George hopes to reconcile the gospel of the meek, mild, poor, and lowly Jesus with the faith of the governing class of his own or any other denomination; and the non-resisting Jesus with the War Office version of the gospel, as preached in the pulpits of the land during every war up to now, he will find something more formidable than anything he has taken in hand. His successor in the next war will find the clergy of all denominations as flexible and as accommodating as he found them. He will find the "Angel of Peace" in the guise of a clerical khaki clown, with a Bible in his hand, and a knife between his teeth. We shall find in the "dyfroedd maws 'stonnau" that will swamp the Ship of State, and our civilization, a nation on its knees—cursing the Enemy—the foes of our own household!

WM. J. LAMB.

## The Art of Living

### II.

CRAFTSMANSHIP as applied to every-day utilities calls for its due meed of appreciation. During the time we may class as "modern," but anterior to that of machinery, singular skill is displayed by designers and workmen in connexion with furniture, dress material, china, ceramics, glass, silver, wood-carving, and the like. English furniture is said to stand alone as regards design, proportion, timber, construction and general durability. The making of a comfortable and commodious dwelling in comparison with the scant amenities of previous centuries, the supply and manipulation of all manner of material for its structure and decoration is a related achievement. The cultivation and development of the garden to correspond alike on its practical and pleasing sides have brought gains to health, the cuisine, and through floriculture an added grace to the refinement of living.

These accomplishments of industrial art carry us well into the time which witnessed the transformation wrought by mechanical invention, with its peculiar influence upon æsthetic fortunes. And now, after a catastrophic upheaval, we are confronted afresh with novel questions of well-being.

Behind the piece of furniture, glass, silver, what not, that pleases at once with its grace of proportion and fitness is the *idea* in the mind of the designer. Before such improvements on previous practice as the lucifer match, the oil lamp, electric light became possible there was the fertile concept of their inventors. The machinery that puts within the reach of millions some necessary article—a pin, a needle, or reel of cotton may at first have meant continual initial experiment; not to speak of the means by which this was carried on, and then set going. Our fine breeds to-day of cattle, horses, poultry, enhanced fertility of cereals, fruit, vegetation, the soil itself come through the creative vision of the agriculturist—the art which adds to nature by selection. Every decisive forward

step bears the impress of originative intelligence. These are truisms; but their implications are usually ignored by apostles of absolute doctrine, who treat the indirect and circuitous course by which the present measure of civilization and culture has been reached as a "system," charged with malign general exploitation. The facts point rather to its negation, and to simple, fortuitous growth—a process certainly open to more direct, purposive quickening. This as distinct from proposals of revolutionary schools for mechanical state organization that, on the *ipse dixit* of its prescribers, is to assure prosperity of sorts to all and sundry; much after the fashion of the provision of "music" by a barrel organ.

The smoke-begrimed agglomeration of the factory town arising out of machine production and the steam motor, the urbanization of the population that followed is usually associated with the reverse of beauty. Previously, the people were mainly country dwellers; where still vistas of thatched cottage, brown barn and homestead set against surrounding copse and field yield that harmonious charm of the pastoral scene which stirred the interest of our early artists. Yet as against these urban liabilities we may reckon the assets that accrued from the chaotic time when under the impulsion of invention and enterprise a new era was emerging. These methods facilitated the manipulation of stubborn material, iron, steel, concrete for ordinary use, or great engineering feats—bridges, tunnels, waterworks, means of communication by land and sea, of which a late triumph is the *Queen Mary*. Ingenious conveniences of sanitation and hygiene have aided domestic and social cleanliness and health and the finer modes of carrying on. All the necessities of existence—food, dress, clothing, household goods, the toilet have been made available to the million in a cheap and ready form. The multiplication of "wealth" of a kind, and its more equitable distribution of recent years has raised, in a way, the general standard of life. And now machinery itself has become a problem.

The less satisfactory side of this movement did not fail of attention. The art tradition persisted; and under the impulsion of independent thought, of critics like Ruskin and others, a crusade was maintained against its evils and æsthetic sins. Since when some of these evils have been modified, and with a more vivified purpose animating action, we may hope to find the process extended. Much, however, depends on the direction this takes, and the manner of its benefaction. Though craftsmanship has suffered through these changes, enlightened patronage has kept certain phases of art alive, and, as we have seen, a large body of pictorial and plastic work has been forthcoming. One form of expression in a related medium has become enriched by mechanical resource—the symphonic orchestra, which has been thereby improved in its instrumental technique to the advantage of music at large. The treasures preserved in private and public collections have guarded good standards of style and workmanship. With the break-up of estates through declining fortunes, and the offer of some of these collections in the market, it is desirable that a portion of the funds now bestowed on industry shall be diverted to securing them for the nation. For we have entered on a time when the total assets of the country are menaced by a change of international circumstance. Those resources derive from a *world trade*; and if that trade fails they cannot be improved to a corresponding degree within our own borders by any factitious device whatsoever. This does not imply setting bounds to possibilities of endeavour, but the causes of a decline in trade are not easy of removal. Every



capacity of technical skill and business acumen is needed to maintain the world-market in exchange for much of our food and raw material.

This country has a reputation for turning out good work, and, despite increasing competition, some of its products are so much in demand as to surmount successfully all tariff barriers. Without ignoring other claims, it may aim to make the most of this asset by promoting taste for excellence in production all round, not least at home, which absorbs some two-thirds of the total output of manufacture. The movement to adapt Art to Industry, wherein William Morris was a leading spirit, its encouragement by National Schools of Design has borne fruit in the meantime; as shown in the finer forms of fabrication displayed by the great emporia of the metropolis. Superior output involves extra skill and attention, and justifies corresponding reward. It works indirectly against the mass production fetish, and may allow of the revival of smaller specialized business units and valuable handicrafts. The nature of "consumption" in general exercise—the quality of the desires and satisfactions it subserves, alike in utilities and pursuits—determines the *kind* of wealth circulating in a community, all that sustains welfare and the mode of its interpretation. With an advance in æsthetic appreciation and intelligence, the intimate surroundings and accessories of daily life could be given a lift in taste and attraction; and with its reaction on production, crude and wasteful expenditure would be modified.\* We could look for the disappearance of piffle newspapers and shoddy periodicals, and an enlarged desire in the way of *literature*. The sensational fantasies of the films might receive a lessened support, and patronage be transferred to a renewed interest in real drama. The excellent cartoons of the Empire Marketing Board showed what could be done for pleasing advertising, as compared with the flamboyant perpetrations on the hoardings. Other things that some consider of value linger of realization for want of the necessary backing, as with a National Operatic Institution.

Change of circumstance has affected in degree the market for graphic art. A smaller type of picture than formerly in vogue is looked for, subject apart, as shown now at representative exhibitions.† There is scope for widened recognition of decorative painting in mural work for public buildings and places of assembly; and this is an historic English accomplishment. It would be a good thing also to remove not a few of the statues to old worthies that figure in open places of London, and replace them by something more harmonious with present ideas. And carrying this spirit into still wider fields, it would schedule for preservation a number of "beauty spots" throughout the country, menaced by untoward developments, beyond the service here of private action.

All of which pertains to a "cultural" approach to the study of well-being, and accords with the humanist outlook that takes all culture and the art of happiness for its province. For the social philosophy of which the above is but one phase, treats the play of human personality as the key to all things else, as a material order can only reflect the individual quality of its members. It therefore regards the making of capable citizens as of primary import—a course of enlightenment as anterior to rational progress, whence the *State* will evolve from within, correlatively with the total power and character of

its constituents. All its methods of getting things done, whatever their direction, will follow from these factors, the sure influence of effective opinion and personal values in co-operation. This ideal stands in absolute antithesis to retrograde codes of some mechanical super-state directed from above, whatever flag they fly, red, black, brown; where for a dubious mess of pottage the human unit becomes a soulless robot, void of attributes that alone give to earthly existence its dignity and worth.

AUSTEN VERNEY.

### Freethought and Sociology

THERE are many approaches to-day to the problem of man's social life, and as might be expected from numerous methods of approach, many doctrines resulting. This, in some measure, has always been the case, but it has become even more varied of late, and liberty of thought is, as a result of particular philosophic conclusions, being called directly into question.

If such conclusions are really the result of scientific approach and method, the sooner the great "truth" is accepted the better. If liberty is merely a shibboleth from the past with no scientific credentials, then by all means let it be discarded and a "scientific" state of society attained; after all, scientific investigation is of more importance than "high sounding" phrases.

Perhaps, however, these new-found "philosophies of control" have not been sufficiently careful of their own method of approach, possibly they may be the result of logical reasoning, but any amount of logical reasoning may proceed from a false premise with but poor results. Are the various "isms" in our midst based on a firm scientific foundation? Have they been critical of their first approach to the problem of society? Are they in fact, based on social science at all?

These questions must here be left in the air, for a review of the various tendencies to intolerance would be both lengthy and unsatisfactory in that after much ground being covered, which is already fairly well known, it would do little to supplant these opinions with something better. The human mind, figuratively speaking, "abhors a vacuum," and an idea, or set of ideas, is best removed by the mind being occupied with something preferable. Consequently if this concept of liberty emerges from a scientific attempt to comprehend society, then "liberty over all" may be established as a guiding slogan for humanity. No transition period, no promise of liberty after a stage of partial or temporary suppression, will ever again bribe man to his doom under the guise of "science."

Maybe it is that man rationalizes "Freethought" as he rationalizes other things. Perhaps even the "Freethinker," in his attempt to justify the position he has taken up, is guilty of the same mental process as the parson who parades all kinds of "scientific" arguments to bolster up a belief which is unquestionably acquired in proximity to the human cradle. At any rate such a possibility may be conveniently allowed if only to show that, unlike "God," "Freethought" when submitted to a scientific analysis, becomes ever clearer, and ever of more importance to humanity.

The term "Freethinker," employed to describe a man who does not believe in "free" thought nor in "free" will, must surely be a frightful paradox unless there is some significance in it over and above its literal appearance. The Freethinker stands for determinism in human thought as elsewhere. He believes that the law of causality applies to the brain and thought processes of man, as surely as it applies to any other phenomena in nature, and yet he uses the term "free thinker" to describe his attitude towards life.

This apparent paradox is fortunate in one way, for it calls attention to the fact that the word is only applicable in a certain sphere. It is evidently not applicable to physics, to biology or to a study of the psychological processes, for in these fields the "Freethinker" himself emphatically denies its value. To him it is meaningless

\* The forthcoming exhibition of Industrial Art at the Royal Academy should forward this aim.

† The last Royal Academy reports a larger sale of work, and an increased attendance over previous years.



in any of these categories of science. He must have in mind another category, not covered by any of these; another department in which "Freethought" finds a place, and is valid verbal coinage.

In this manner the "Freethinker" has marked out his very title, the most useful and the most necessary fact in any attempt to grasp the content of the science of sociology; a phenomenon where laws and principles ought to obtain, over and above those with which biology and psychology deal.

It is in the nature of man to attempt explanations of the unknown from his knowledge of the laws of the known, and as an assumption this process serves a useful purpose, but unfortunately the assumption often lingers on after fresh facts are brought to light which negate its validity. Science more and more illustrates that we cannot continue to describe the complex by the laws of the simpler. It is this fact which brings about an increasing number of scientific categories, with fresh and more suitable laws of formulation. The scientific process in essence has been merely the mental groupings or abstractions that man has made, and is continually making, from nature. Primitive man is faced with nothing but an ever changing "whole," from which he forms impressions, resulting in certain groupings, and forming the subject-matter of the sciences. Man in this way is the indispensable factor in the evolution of scientific law.

This conception of mental groupings then, explains how it is that the various sciences are considered to have a delimited sphere of application. It is not that each science considers itself to be in disharmony with others, or that it does not realize other sciences are involved; it is merely the recognition that a defined domain of investigation is the essence of his subject that causes the scientific worker to exclude from his labours the matter which is the property of other sciences.

The phenomenon man is himself the property of many sciences. He is a mathematical entity; he is also physical; to the chemist he is something not covered by either of these, whilst to the biologist he presents characteristics which require laws only to be elucidated by his science. No mathematician, physicist or chemist would, in a truly scientific spirit, undertake to describe life by the laws of mathematics, physics or chemistry. The science and laws of biology arise out of their inadequacy to do this.

Up to this point the position appears to be fairly clear, but when one carries this further, and observes that man is also psychological and social, there is not the same clarity apparent. The biologist, or student of biology, in some way considers that this is still his domain, and fights like a vested interest to retain that which his science cannot cover. He talks of the "social organism," or perhaps it is the "social mind," using the terminology of his own particular science in order to force his laws into circulation. In fact it is only by conceiving society in such a way that these laws, which are only suitable to organism, would even appear sensible. It is the age-old process of trying to describe the little known in terms of the known. The history of the other sciences is repeating itself in the history of sociology, and not until man fully realizes that in dealing with the social, he is dealing with a special category, will he properly delimit a fresh field of investigation; an emergence of the other sciences to be described only by impartial and concentrated attention to its special characteristics.

This field the Freethinker has at least implied; he appreciates that he is dealing in the sphere of opinion, and to this extent he is dealing with something not found in ant or bee "society."

Speech alone—properly so-called—marks man off from the rest of biological phenomena. Man is not born with a knowledge of human language; locked up from birth, would he ever acquire anything beyond a few grunts? True it is that animals have various cries and howls, but these may be considered biologically, in so far that a kitten fostered by a bitch from birth will as surely meow and scratch as all the cats that went before it. Man's speech is not of this character, although it emerged from it; it is something which is acquired from this environment (social) into which he is born, something which is

the verbal expression of ideas accumulated over the centuries. Herein lies something that is specifically social. Accumulation of ideas; giving to every fresh birth an advantage of a start, by acquiring what one individual life would be powerless to accomplish.

It is for this determinant of our individual development for which the "Freethinker" claims recognition, whilst fully appreciating other causal phenomena. In this field he demands recognition of the fact that every new idea is a contribution to this accumulation, and that whether an idea be "true" or "false" is best determined by its unquestionable right to "conflict" in this field. More still; he emphasizes that the conflict should only be of the same texture as the social, namely mental, and that physical force is as unwarranted in this connexion as dealing with a phenomenon which it can never cover.

JOHN V. SHORTT.

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## Religion and Life

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THERE are scores of religions.

"Religion" is described in Webster's Dictionary as: "Any system of faith and worship: as the religion of the Turks, of Hindoos, of Christians."

Buckmaster stated: "Religion will attend you . . . as a pleasant and useful companion in every proper place, and every temperate occupation of life."

Milton wrote: "With gay religions full of pomp and gold."

Others have said that "Religion is a good policeman" and that "One man with a surplice by merely pointing to the stratosphere—with eyes uplifted—can keep a crowd in order, which on the other hand would require a squad of mounted police to control them!"

"Religion" through the ages—has been a series of underground plots by different sects and creeds to gain supremacy.

Of secret pacts—with Kings, Queens, and leading Ministers.

Of confiscations, murders, slaughters and pogroms.

"Religion"—has extorted and cajoled many who were possessed of wealth in any degree—to transfer it during their lives or at their deaths—to the coffers of the Faith—whichever it might be—or

To bequeath it direct to its teachers!

"Religion" has committed numberless murders—by fire—by wild beasts—by boiling oil—by the rack—by the thumbscrews—by the sword—and by poison—

And in the east young girls are killed in various horrible ways as sacrifices.

All this—is called—Religion; and—strange as it may seem—these bigoted people each thought—and to-day still think—that each is—justified.

From *The Cinema*.

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## Correspondence

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### STATUS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—On Armistice Day, 1934, certain senior officers of what is grandiloquently (and erroneously) termed His Majesty's Merchant Navy, meaning the Merchant Service of this country, were deputed to attend, officially, the Service held in Westminster Abbey. Arriving at the portals of that sacred and historic edifice, all being decently habited, like candidates for ordination, they assumed that they would be accommodated in the nave, and walked with slow gait and reverent mien up the aisle. Looking about for seats, they were approached by a minion clad in a black robe and bearing a wand of office, who inquired their status. On being informed, this hound of heaven pronounced these egregious words, "Mercantiles at the back: follow me." Thereupon those affronted officers of His Majesty's Merchant Navy were conducted to seats at the back of the Abbey, and in the rear of the rank and file of the Royal Air Force. Like Melchizedek, Priest of the Most High God, and King of



Salem, they were evidently regarded as being without descent: in short, monkey's orphans! All of which is right and proper according to that religion which instructs its children to follow these slavish precepts: "To submit myself to all my Governors, Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters, to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters, to learn and labour truly to get my own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me." With Master Anatole France I remark, "You cannot conceive the empire the clergy still wields over the masses of the foolish."

F. G. COOPER.

#### NAPOLEON AND GOD

SIR,—With regard to the article on Napoleon by Mimmernus, there is an oft-quoted passage, in which Napoleon is said to have said to General Bertrand, "I know men, and Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of Empires, and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christ and all other religions whatsoever the distance of infinity, from the first day to the last He is the same, always the same, majestic and simple, infinitely firm and infinitely gentle."

The conversation is stated to have taken place during his captivity. It would be interesting to know if there is any doubt about the passage, as it either shows that even that great man was not always consistent, or that his views underwent some change. Perhaps Mimmernus or someone else can throw some light on the matter.

RALPH L. ROBINSON.

#### LIFE AND PHYSICS

SIR,—In your issue of December 2 you say: "We should never have had the confusion which exists among scientists about explaining life in terms of physics."

If you mean that as a reproach to scientists, I disagree with you. From Democritus to Herbert Spencer the greatest intellects of the scientific world have endeavoured to explain life in terms of physics, and they have made much progress towards that achievement.

The whole of the inorganic universe has now been explained in terms of physics. Heat, light, sound, electricity, were so explained long ago. Chemistry alone held out, but has been vanquished at last. It is now known that all the ninety chemical elements are composed of protons and electrons identical in their character, and the whole of inorganic chemistry has been reduced to physics.

The great question now is whether biology can also be reduced to physics. The mechanists say yes, and the vitalists no. The widest view is still that set forth in Spencer's *Principles of Biology*. Spencer was an engineer, and he maintained that all the movements of living bodies could be explained by the identical laws which govern the movements of engines. Experiment has largely verified his views. We now have calculations as to the number of food calories which a man must consume per day in order to do a certain amount of work. These calculations follow precisely the same principles on which we estimate how much petrol it will take to carry an aeroplane to Constantinople. If it is found that every movement of living bodies can be so explained, then biology will have been brought entirely within the realm of physics.

By biology I mean, of course, the science of the structure and movement of living bodies. I do not mean that all the activities of living bodies will ever be described in the language of physics. It will never be possible to describe the qualities of a poem in the language of physics, but it will very likely be proved that every movement which a poet makes in composing his poems can be explained by the science of physics. If there are movements which cannot be so explained, then the vitalists are right and the mechanists are wrong.

R. B. KERR.

[If Mr. Kerr is correct, it follows that laws of biology, laws of psychology, and all other "laws," are only temporary conveniences which will be abolished when our knowledge of

physics is complete. To state the proposition plainly is enough for its disproof. A scientific "law" is a generalization devised to describe certain groups of phenomena. But its scope and application ends with the group with which it deals. That is why the advance of knowledge means, not fewer "laws" of nature, but more—laws of biology, laws of chemistry, etc., etc. A new law does not of necessity abolish an old one, it usually supplements it.

Mr. Kerr is wrong in thinking that unless we believe it possible to explain everything, even a poet's fancies in terms of physics we must accept "vitalism," and that the question between the Vitalist and the Mechanist is whether biology can be expressed in terms of physics or not. "Vitalism" is the assertion that life is the manifestation of an independent principle, but no genuinely scientific mechanism asserts even the possibility of reducing *all* phenomena to a single "law." It will be noted that in the end, Mr. Kerr says he does "not mean that all the activities of living bodies will ever be described in the language of physics." In that case it seems that either biology cannot be reduced to physics, or we shall have to create other "laws" to cover the field that cannot be covered by physics. And that, m'lud, is my case.—EDITOR.]

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

#### LONDON.

##### OUTDOOR.

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

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

##### INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Lantern Lecture—"Central Europe To-day."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"Is Freedom Possible?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Hall No. 5, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. G. F. Green (British Section)—"The Militant Socialist International."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, December 17, Mr. Edward Gee—"Capital Punishment, Christianity and Freethought."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Grove House, High Road, Leyton, E.10): 8.0, Mr. H. Stewart Wishart—"The Great Achievements of Atheism."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Debate—"That the Social Teachings of Jesus Christ is the True Basis of Socialism and Humanism." *Affir.*: J. J. Waddell, B.A. *Neg.*: C. A. Tuson.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, Birkenhead, opposite Scala Theatre, entrance in Lorn Street): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Dictators, People, and Persecution."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.0, Gramophone Recital—"The Meaning and Value of Freethought," by Chapman Cohen. Also draw for Wireless Set Competition. Study Circle at 7.30 every Thursday evening.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton (Burnley)—A lecture.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Commercial Hotel, Godwin Street): 7.0, Annual Meeting.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Spiritism."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, M'Lellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, W. S. Cormack, B.Sc., Ph.D.—"The Meaning of Democracy." *Freethinker* and other literature on sale at all meetings.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Professor Robert Peers, M.A. (Nottingham University)—"Post-War Germany."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Milton Hall, 12a Daulby Street, Liverpool, off London Road, by the Majestic Cinema): 7.0, R. F. Bisson (Liverpool)—"Culture and Class Struggle."

(Continued on page 799)



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*(Continued from page 798)*

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PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus) : 7.0, Mr. Easterbrook—"Religious Experiences."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Hall, Laygate) : 7.0, Friday, December 14, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"The Birth of Gods and Spirits."

MIDDLESBOROUGH (Bizacta Hall, Newton Street) : 7.0, Tuesday, December 18, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"The Paragraph Mind."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES : 7.0, Thursday, December 20, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"What we are Fighting For."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street) : 7.0, Mr. B. O'Connell—"Peeps in Palestine."

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