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

Views and Opinions

Rome on the Rates

The Roman Catholic vote is the strongest unified vote in the country. I do not mean by this that it is the largest in point of number, but the strongest in its effectiveness. It is this because it is more docile to priestly pressure than is any other vote in Britain. It has an educated section, but in the mass it is the most unintelligent vote in the country; and when one remembers that a man such as Hilaire Belloc can publicly avow that having come to the conclusion that the Church is to be followed "I accept what she teaches and trust her more than I do the evidence of my senses," it is evident that whatever be the proportion of the educated to the ignorant Roman Catholic, my description of the most obedient vote in the country stands as correct. There is no such thing as independent thought with a Roman Catholic where his religion is concerned; and a man who is not in the habit of exercising his intelligence on what he considers to be the most important question in life, is not likely to be able to exercise it very effectively in other matters.

But this "solidarity" of the Roman Catholic vote offers a dangerous temptation to politicians; and it is gained by either neutrality or purchase. If a candidate for election has a large Roman Catholic vote in his constituency he either avoids giving offence through supporting measures to which the Church is opposed, or he buys support by aiding the Church in securing what it wants. From the point of view of a party the situation is the same—only more so. For the unity of the Roman Catholic vote extends over the whole of the country. It can be directed from Land's End to John O'Groats by the heads of the Church, and Roman Catholics can be relied on with a confidence that rests upon the obedience of an unintelligent support of one of the worst superstitions current in civilized countries. It is to this that the Roman Church owes an influence in public affairs that is quite out of proportion to the number of its adherents.

Raiding the Rates

In Scotland there is raging a storm between the Protestant and Roman Catholic sections of the population, over the question of the raid on public funds by the former body in connexion with the schools. A special committee of the Church of Scotland has just issued a report which details the consequences of the working of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, and the report is worth attention because it helps us to realize what is the aim of the Roman Catholics in England, and, I think, of the Church of England. It should be noted that the advantages (bribes would be a better term) given to the Roman Catholics may be enjoyed by Protestants, but the bother in Scotland has its roots in the fact that the Roman Catholics are making more use of the provisions of the Act than are others.

By Section 19 of the Act the Education authorities may, with the consent of the Trustees, take over any "voluntary" school, with the land and buildings and furniture, by sale or lease. If the trustees wish the transfer the authorities have no power of refusal. The teachers belonging to such schools are also to be taken over, and the wages (always higher under the authorities) must be the same as paid to other teachers. These teachers must be "approved as regards their religious beliefs by representatives of the Church or Chapel in whose interests the school has been conducted." There must be facilities for religious examinations in all such schools. Further, if there is in any district a number of children of one denomination, and representations are made to the Education authority, that authority must provide a new school, whether there be accommodation or not in existing schools. The time set apart in these new schools for religious instruction must not be less than that given in the other schools in that area. Under this Act defective buildings have been taken over for which, the Committee says, £771,000 has been paid, and about £1,335,000 has been spent in making defective buildings good, and building new ones to satisfy Roman Catholic claims. Should the Authorities refuse to take over a Roman Catholic school, the Catholics may build one and then compel the authorities to take it over and maintain it, after paying for the building. There is no doubt that the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland has managed in this way to obtain a very large endowment from the State for the perpetuation of Roman Catholic teaching.

This is not all. Very many of the teachers in the State-owned Roman Catholic schools are members of a religious order. On entering the service of the Education authority their salaries are raised to the level of other teachers. But this increase of salaries goes, in the terms of the teacher's religious vows to the Church, thus giving yet another form of State endowment. First the Church gets its schools bought or built by the State and fully maintained by the

State, while still retaining full sectarian control, next it gets the salaries of its teachers increased and promptly pouches the extra money.

* * *

The Pot and the Kettle

There is no question whatever that this yielding to the claims of the Roman Catholic Church is as much due to jerrymandering politics as is any local election in the United States. Of course, this buying of the organized religious vote exists with other Churches in England, but at the moment we are concerned with the position in Scotland. Every politician knows that Roman Catholics are driven to the polls like a flock of sheep, and obediently vote as they are told to vote. And although the ordinary Roman Catholic is certainly in normal matters not more truthful than other Christians, yet in this respect of voting the confessional opens the way to force the truth from him as to how he has acted. It is also true that the Roman Catholics alone are not able to cast a majority of votes in any constituency, but they are able to wield a sufficient number of votes in a great many constituencies to be able to *decide* an election, and perhaps the fate of a Government. It is these facts that make the Roman Catholic so great a menace to just government. The danger does not lie in the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is substantially different from other Churches in its aims. There is not a Church in existence that, if given power to work its will, could be trusted to measure out strict justice to all, irrespective of religious beliefs. Non-Catholic Churches are a little better in practice because the very thing that causes them to revolt against the Roman theory creates a number of divisions, and develops a greater measure of individual freedom. The danger of the Roman Catholic vote is, as I have already said, that it is mainly an unintelligent vote, and that it is wielded by a priesthood, whose avowed aim is supremacy in the State.

* * *

Compromise and the Way Out

The Special Committee puts forward a proposal which it thinks may remedy the existing state of affairs. It proposes a system of national (Scottish) education which shall include all children irrespective of their religious beliefs (one ought to say the beliefs of their parents), that no school of a denominational character shall be taken over by an education authority, that no member of a religious order shall be employed on the staff of a public school, and that the religious instruction given shall be either by teachers of the regular staff, or by recognized representatives of the Churches.

How will this remedy matters? Even if the Roman Church were driven to agreement, of what use would be the rule that no member of a religious order may be permitted to act as teacher? What is to prevent members of such orders publicly disclaiming their association with a religious order while continuing the association? The policy of dissimulation is not unknown to the Roman Church. But in any case, so long as teachers are called upon, or even expected to give religious instruction there will continue the same intriguing to get certain teachers appointed on account of their religious beliefs, or to prevent their being appointed because their religious beliefs are not of the right kind, or because they have no religious belief at all. In any case, whether the one giving religious instruction be the regular teacher, or a representative of a church, nothing that the wit of man may devise can prevent that instructor giving his own particular religious colour to the lesson he is imparting. The religious teaching given cannot help favouring some sects more than others, and the policy

of the one side trying to steal a march on the other will continue. The politician will continue to promise things to the religious section which guarantees him support or, which threatens to prevent his election. The shadow of a general religious hypocrisy will still rest over politics, and the game of getting the State to openly or tacitly support sectarian religious teaching will continue. Inside Parliament the Church of England will continue its work of trying to get more religion into elementary and secondary schools, and also into training colleges. The English religious bodies will promise support to the Scotch religious bodies—on terms. The Scotch religious bodies will play the same game. All this kind of underhand bargaining has been going on ever since the unhappy compromise effected in 1870, and it will continue. It cannot help continuing because the main thing that these religious bodies desire is to see that children are taught religion before they are old enough to understand the instruction that is being given them.

There is only one way out, and that is by the State leaving religion severely alone. To-day there can be no reasonable pretence that any kind of religious instruction given in the schools can be more than the religion of some taught at the expense of all. We do not believe for a moment that the Church of Scotland will get the Roman Catholic Church to agree in any such proposal as the one made. The only sound and just policy is that of leaving religious instruction solely in the hands of those who desire it, and restricting the educational activities of the State to purely secular matters. Sixty years of sectarian fights in the educational area should have made this quite plain to all.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Names of Note

"The infidels of one age have been the aureoled saints of the next."—*Ingersoll*.

"Rough work, iconoclasm, but the only way to get at truth."—*O. W. Holmes*.

To the meditative mind there is no better reading than a list of names of note. We can understand the sober joy of the old-time Puritans, who, taking their Bibles seriously, loved to grapple with the genealogies of Israel and Judah. Even a gazetteer is a mine of suggestion, and in a London directory you can lose yourself among the strange lanes from Pie Corner to Hanging Sword Alley. But a biographical dictionary or an encyclopædia is certain to make large inroads on our time. Take, for example, Joseph Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. In it there are many hundreds of entries, taken from all ages and all countries. That means hundreds of names of interest, hundreds of men and women who have played their part on life's stage, and who played it in a sufficiently remarkable manner to give their names a distinct interest to their descendants. We know of few more interesting occupations than the reading of such a book, and it is a pity that Freethought publishers are not sufficiently wealthy to publish a new and enlarged edition of a work that should be on every Freethinker's bookshelf.

Such a book is informative, and turns the handles of many doors. We turn a page and encounter the name of Charles Bradlaugh, as brave as any soldier who ever drew a sword. He fought a great battle for Liberty against overwhelming odds, and his was the cool head and the calm judgment of the great captains of men. He gave his life for Freethought, and our children will remember something of this great leader when they have forgotten the names of his

opponents. On a near page is the name of Annie Besant, the clergyman's wife, who gave fifteen years of her splendid womanhood to the cause of Freethought. A few pages further, and there is mention of Richard Carlile. What an indomitable spirit does it not conjure up! There flits into our memory the terrible martyrdom of this brave soldier of liberty. Think of it! Carlile, the lion-hearted, suffered nine and a half years' imprisonment for championing the liberty of the press. His wife and other members of his family, and shop-assistants, divided among them fifty years' imprisonment. Further, we see the splendid name of Edward Gibbon, the greatest of English historians, who, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, "sapped a solemn creed with solemn sneer." He walks for ever as to the clash of martial music under an imperial banner. Without exploration we have found the magnetic and powerful name of Voltaire. What a man! His epigrams stung the priests like wasps—rankled for years. At sixty-four years of age, when other men are thinking of slippers and ease, he was writing *Candide*, the wittiest book in all the world. Writing *Œdipus* at seventeen, *Irene* at eighty-three, he crowded between these two masterpieces the accomplishment of a giant. And Edward Fitzgerald, the East-Coast scholar, who turned the quatrains of the old Freethinking Persian, Omar Khayyam, into a great masterpiece of English poetry. "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," his friend Tennyson described it. The name of Thomas Paine is homely, but what a puissant personality does it recall. A character of outstanding ability, a maker of nations, and poles asunder from the uncouth and unlettered legendary figure of popular pious imaginings. Who can see the name of Robert Ingersoll without a quickening of the pulses? He comes riding down the wind like a white-plumed knight in shining armour to attack the embattled hosts of superstition. And the lonely scholar, Charles Darwin, who turned "Adam" and "Eve" out of the fabled "Garden of Eden," not with a flaming sword, but with a steel pen. And doubting Thomas Huxley, the "Saint Paul of Darwinism," who, in beautiful, limpid English, popularized the work of the Master, and leavened the thought of the entire civilized world.

Here is Percy Shelley, the sweetest soul of a thousand years of English poetry, whom Christians sought to deprive of his children, and imprisoned men and women for selling his *Queen Mab*. There is a very significant entry in the name of Charles Southwell, a very early Freethought editor, whose *Oracle of Reason* startled Victorian England. Another Freethought editor, George William Foote, the founder and first editor of the *Freethinker*, deserves special mention, for it was under his leadership that the Freethought Movement became a national organization, entirely divorced from Party politics. Joseph Wheeler, the assistant editor of the *Freethinker*, and the compiler of this biographical dictionary, is entitled to many words of praise, for he "emptied many an inkpot" on behalf of "the best of causes." A more romantic figure is that of Richard Burton, the translator of *The Arabian Nights*, and the intrepid traveller who penetrated to the "Holy of Holies" in Mecca at the peril of his life.

A sense of fellowship with the fled centuries invades us as we see the name of Giordano Bruno, one of the most fearless martyrs for Truth. And Time seems poised for a moment upon his spread wings as we encounter the austere personality of Lucretius, one of the sublimest poets who ever attuned his lyre under the eagles of the Cæsars.

Names such as these are but the merest signposts to meet the reader and direct him towards the won-

derful universality of Freethought. And, mind you, there are many hundreds of such sign-posts. "Wonderful" is the only adjective which will serve for this maze of surprises; this patient account of the men and women who have cared, not for wealth and notoriety, but for intellectual honesty. Here, under one roof, we may say, are the temple of Liberty and the house of Wisdom, compared with which the churches and mosques of the superstitious are but charnel-houses full of bones. For each of these men and women was, in a way, the apostles of Freedom, and the knight-errants of the evangel of Liberty. From the dim twilight when Lucretius rolled his richest thunders against the infamies of religion, until twenty centuries later when Meredith and Swinburne rallied the soldiers of Freethought with the golden trumpets of their genius, Liberty never failed of her votaries. The bare records of the doings of these pioneers thrill and fascinate by very reason of their simplicity. The feats of Freethinkers have needed little of the embellishment which high-sounding language could give them. From Hypatia, murdered by a Christian rabble, to Ferrer, "butchered to make a Roman holiday," they strike our imagination and hold our wonder in thrall. They are potent because of their very sincerity. Who could fail to recognize the splendid courage which held so steadfastly to the last moment, or fail to appreciate the iron nerve which broke only before the impossible?

We come to this in the end, that Freethinking "saints" are the best. It is significant that even in Christian Caledonia the popularity of St. Andrew's day is far less than Bobbie Burns' Nicht. Is it not also true that in the sheer fight of personalities for the possession of England's day, William Shakespeare has beaten "Saint George," the Cappadocian bishop, as our American friends say "to a frazzle?"

This is but a little cloud of biographical dust, and, if any apology were needed for such trifling, we point to the fact that the interest of such a volume is inexhaustible. It reaches from the greatest names in history to many men and women whose achievements were less important, but, who, because they dedicated their lives to the service of intellectual liberty, laid the deep foundations of the future greatness of the human race.

MIMNERMUS.

Masterpieces of Freethought

"ECCE DEUS"

By WILLIAM BENJAMIN SMITH

II.

In all the discussions on the question of the historicity of Jesus, the "biographical" school, while striving with might and main to support its thesis, can only do so by rejecting the God and preserving the man. They are often unwilling to discuss the "miracles"—especially the silly ones. How can they account for the most perfect being that ever trod the earth, the sweetest and most lovable character, cursing a fig-tree so that it withered, or stopping a storm by rebuking it, or causing devils to leave a man and esconce themselves in a crowd of pigs which forthwith were driven to destruction?

But behind their protestations that Jesus the man really lived, one can always detect even among so many "Rationalists" a belief, even though small, that Jesus was really "more" than man, that there was something "divine" at least about him; and

that it was this "divinity" which caused his first and (of course) truthful, biographers to exaggerate slightly his marvellous history—to heighten an effect here, to colour another there, to give credence to a "miracle" yonder, and so on. Get a thorough-believing "Rationalist" on this subject, and it is extremely difficult to know where his man-Jesus ends and his God-Jesus begins. What enthusiasm has been greater than Renan's, when he allowed his judgment to cool or be overshadowed, and his sentimentalism to rise?

As I have already pointed out, Smith will have no man-Jesus whatever. He repeats over and over again: "We affirm that the only real Jesus is the Jesus of the Evangelists, the *purely divine Jesus*, who in the Gospels has 'cast about him the shining semblance of a reverend man.'"

In addition, Smith insists upon "the primitive secrecy of the Jesus-cult. Over a score of times do we find *secrecy* and *hiding* of something, the most of which can hardly refer to aught else than the primitive esoterism that is admittedly present in Mark iv. 11, 12, 33, 34." This *mystery*, this *esoterism*, occurs also in some of Paul's epistles. What exactly does this mean?—"But we speak God's wisdom in mystery, the concealed wisdom, which God fore-ordained before the æons unto our glory which none of the archons of this æon knew; for if they had known they had not crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Cor. ii. 7). (Smith's translation of the passage is slightly different from both the Authorized Version and the Revised Version of the Bible). There are many similar mystifying passages scattered through the New Testament, about which even "the keenest exegetes are quite unable to agree, opposing one another at every point."

To strengthen his argument, Smith quotes passages from some of the early Christian apologists, and shows how they attack the prevalent polytheism. One of them, Aristides, even "attacks the Jews as not being quite monotheistic enough!" And Smith points out that in Aristides' *Apology*, there is actually no reference to "the New Testament or to the evangelic life of Jesus." His examination of certain passages in a Greek version of the *Apology* (there are various and differing translations in Syriac, Armenian and Latin) leads him to state that the "original conception of the mission of the Jesus or the Jesus-cult was the *overthrow of idolatry*, as even Origen (and Lactantius) much later attests scores of times." Smith claims that Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Minucius Felix, and Tatian all support his thesis, namely, that the original writings which later became our gospels were all written to propagate a pre-Jesus cult, a religion which set out to fight idolatry and polytheism in favour of a complete monotheism. And, in particular, he calls to his aid Origen, whose work, *Against Celsus*, he considers "the ablest *Apology* for Christianity ever published." Origen, Smith contends:—

Nowhere betrays any consciousness of the modern point of view, nowhere does he advance the human personality of Jesus to the front, nowhere does he ground any argument upon its uniqueness or even its superiority. But everywhere he stresses the sole rationality of monotheism, everywhere he is arguing against the error of polytheism, everywhere he is contending that the heathen gods are demons, that idolatry is demon-worship, to overthrow which and to lead humanity back to the one true God, is the especial and peculiar mission of Jesus and the Jesus-cult. . . . On the negative side the silence of the Apologist is profoundly impressive. He tells us *absolutely nothing whatever* of the beautiful pure human life in Galilee and Judea; not a single incident has he to mention, not a single illustration, not

a single exhortation, not a single suggestion—not a single motive has he drawn from that incomparable life that is supposed to have hallucinated the disciples and even the slaughter-breathing Saul. The modern minister, even the modern critic, at the distance of 1900 years, fills all the buckets of his distance from this clear-flowing, exhaustless well of the Jesus-personality and the Jesus-life. But the ancient Apologist under the Antonines, before the canon of the New Testament was formed, in debate with kings and emperors and philosophers and the intimates of his own circle, knows nothing whatever of this fountain. He draws never a drop from its waters; often he does not allude to it even remotely. Almost it would seem to exist for him, if at all, only as an exoteric doctrine.

This is how Smith carries the war into the enemy's camp; it was worth showing that the wonderful human personality of Jesus, made so much of by Christians and some Freethinkers alike, seems to have been unknown to the early Christian apologists. It should be remembered by those of us who have to debate the question with both sides.

In passing, it may be said that while Smith does not exclude the myth-theory as shown by Robertson, for example, to be largely responsible for the Gospels, he is not entirely in accord with it. He claims rather that the "germ" of Christianity was "the monotheistic impulse, the instinct for unity that lies at the heart of all grand philosophy and all noble religion." But he admits that myths from other countries may have "contributed more or less food to the organic idea that has unfolded itself in the historic church and creed and scriptures."

As for the reason why the new (and old) Jesus-cult founded itself upon the Jewish Bible, Smith claims it to be because "it was only in the Hebrew Scriptures that the absolute oneness of the Godhead was enounced and maintained clearly, consistently, and unequivocally. Hence the same Holy Scriptures formed the indispensable *point d'appui*."

"Nevertheless," continues Smith, "it was in the main a Greek and not a Hebrew consciousness that delivered the tremendous battle. The arms were the arms of Jacob, but the sinews were the sinews of Japheth." This passage shows how keen was the discernment of the American professor; I know of few contributions to the eternal quarrel between Jew and Christian more pregnant with truth or one which explains in a sentence why Judaism and Christianity are so bound up with each other and yet so far apart. For those who are interested in the psychological problems religion offers, *Ecce Deus* should prove a revelation.

One of the puzzles which pious theologians have tried in vain to solve was that connected with the extraordinarily rapid growth of "Christianity" in the years immediately following the supposed death of Jesus. Smith ridiculed the supposition that there were any quick conversions. "The central fact," he says, "demanding explanation is *the worship of Jesus*, a worship that did not grow up gradually, but is full grown from the very earliest New Testament times. Unless this be explained, all other explanations lose their importance, for we cannot be sure of the correctness of any detail until this central all-regulative fact is fully accounted for. Now since this fact meets us at the very threshold of Christianity, it must find its explanation in something pre-Christian."

And Smith insists that there can be only one explanation—namely, a Pre-Christian cult with a pre-Christian divinity, an "hypothesis absolutely unavoidable." His arguments as to a pre-Jesus cult seem to me unanswerable. Moreover, he will not

allow that the central essence of Christianity is any kind of moral teaching. "Christianity," he declares, is not morality; it is religion, it is *theoseby*—the worship of One God." Behold the *Summa Evangelii*!

This doctrine "broke the deep slumber of idolatry like a clap of Dantean thunder." It was "the proclamation (veiled at first, but afterwards open) of a sublime and inspiring faith and worship, the cult of the One God, the Jesus, the Christ, the Saviour, the Guardian, the Lord of heaven and earth, whose name is everlasting." And it is rather remarkable that Smith, who saw this so clearly, and whose long book is a defence of his position, did not see that, stripped from all sorts of accretions, his Proto-Christianity was singularly like the worship of the other "one God the Saviour, the Lord of heaven and earth,"—the Sun. I am sure that had he read Dupuis' vast work on the *Origin of All Worships*, he might have seen that his pre-Jesus cult could have been carried even further back than he himself took it.

But Jesus Christ is the hero of the New Testament, and it is this book's testimony to his actual existence which must be examined. Smith does this in his own inimitable way. He points out that "such an unexampled personage as the Jesus is universally assumed to have been must have made the deepest impression on the minds of his disciples. *Why, then, do we find no traces of any such impressions?* It is a fact that in the preaching of the Apostles, as recorded in the Acts, we can discover practically no marks whatever of any personal acquaintance with the Jesus. . . . They never say, We heard the Jesus say this and this, nor, We saw him do so and so. No one can get the impression from reading Peter's speeches that he is talking about a marvellous man, the Jesus whom he had known and loved." This very important point is elaborated with great detail; as, of course, Smith has to face the so-called biographical details of the four Gospels with solid argument. He does this—in my own opinion—successfully; whether in other readers' I have no means of knowing. But it is Smith's thesis to show how necessary is a symbolic interpretation for the fuller significance of any passage. "It may very well be that such a meaning may often elude us, for our comprehension of the mind of the evangelists is only very imperfect." He does not minimize the difficulties; for he realizes that there are legendary and myth-explanations as well. But he is certain that "a very large percentage must be interpreted symbolically" to the satisfaction of every competent and open-minded scholar, as "no other is addressed at present." The reader should carefully go through the numerous examples given by Smith as symbolic. They are fully treated in a large portion of his book—to be fully quoted here. And to the student of Christian origins they should prove of the greatest utility—stimulating and far-reaching.

H. CUTNER.

(To be concluded)

How to Create Peace

In the opinion of the present writer it seems, judging from recent remarks in these columns, that adequate justice has not been done the Government with regard to its preparations for war. To say that Germany is dictating the policy of the rest of Europe may be true, but things remain what they are whether that statement be true or false. Let us look at a few facts.

(1) There is a general agreement that the next war will be mainly fought in the air, and will be decided by air efficiency.

(2) As no Power can trust another Power to make a formal declaration of war and give a time at which hostilities will be opened, war will commence in a surprise attack. Masses of war-planes will suddenly appear and drop their bombs on an unprotected population.

(3) The only effective preparation against such an occurrence is to have a fleet of war-planes that will outnumber that of the enemy, a fleet so strong that it can beat off attacking planes, and also inflict reprisals on enemy civilian populations.

It is with these things in mind the Government is suggesting that air-raid drills for the general public, on the lines tried, first in Germany and later in France, shall be instituted. We must, it is said, become air-minded. This does not mean that we must all travel by air instead of by train or coach; it means that we must become *war-plane* minded. The public mind must become familiar with the expectation of being bombed from the air, not as something that may happen on some far-off date, but as something that may occur at any moment and without warning.

The Government would not be true to itself if it did not bear these things in mind, and the drilling of the population in methods of counteracting an air-raid will have the following results.

(1) It will familiarize the public mind with, not merely the possibility, but with the certainty of an air attack at some unpredictable time. If this state of mind is not created, drill would be of a casual character and would be ineffective in times of real need. The need of the moment is to keep the public mind in a state of constant fear of attack, which will tend to create unquestioning trust in those in whose hands the safety of the nation rests, and the public will be the more likely to obey orders when they are issued. Fortunately, the recent manifestations of enthusiasm during the Jubilee, and the visit of the Fleet to London, will have helped considerably in fostering that state of mind which will make these war-preparations easier than they would have been otherwise. The Government is acting wisely in pushing forward its preparations before this state of mind weakens.

(2) Living in a state of tension is always more or less unpleasant, and the longer this condition continues the weaker the resistance that will be offered to vigorous preparations for war, and the more readily the money will be spent. It will promise release from what may become an almost intolerable strain.

(3) Incidentally, the immense impetus given to industry, and the diminution of the number of the unemployed owing to employment in the wholesale manufacture of gas masks, the building of underground shelters, and the large number of men engaged in instructing and drilling the civilian population, will go far to create a war-mentality without which no great nation can retain its self-respect and hold its own.

(4) It is only by creating a widespread fear of what may happen, and by doing all it can to sustain fear that the Government can hope to secure even tacit agreement with the enormous expenditure in-

Alms are a distribution of one's own possessions, or of somebody else's, to the end of perpetuating the pious leisure of priests, monks, and other lazy folk who find it much more agreeable and convenient to pray than to work.—*Voltaire*.

The Son of God is the same as the Son of Man. The Son of Man is the same thing as the Son of God; his Father and God his Father is the same thing as his Son and as the Holy Ghost. This language may seem rather confused to persons of slight faith, but pious people will readily understand it.—*Voltaire*.

volved in these plans of air-defence, and to secure re-election in order to carry out their measures of protection.

But these preparations, if they are to be effective, must be thorough. Half-hearted measures will be waste of time, and, when the crisis comes, will mean the loss of valuable lives. And the drill must be compulsory, first because it is not part of the population we have to protect, but the whole, and, second, if some drill and some do not, the force of the discipline is almost certain to be weakened with those who at first respond to the call of the Government.

The air-drill must be compulsory on all. Part of the school time must be set aside—say the time now devoted to prayers—for this purpose, so that if a raid takes place while the child is on its way to school the gas mask, which it will carry regularly, can be affixed either by itself, or by some adult. Underground shelters adequate to shelter the whole of the population of a city must be constructed. To shelter part only is to fail. Men and women travelling from the suburbs to the city must carry their gas masks with them to be ready for immediate use. Gas masks must become as common as powder puffs with women and cigarette cases with men.

The method of dealing with gas and incendiary bombs involves special precautions. There will be no time between the dropping of a bomb and the moment of explosion to send for experts to deal with it, as one calls firemen in the case of a fire. Bombs must be dealt with at once. To do this trained men, armed with chemical extinguishers, must be kept in every street ready to do their part. Many thousands of men will find employment in this way, but it must be done if the precautions taken are to be effective. We have no doubt that the Government has these further steps in mind, but it must proceed cautiously.

There is no question that the German people will be trained in this way to make our air-attack ineffective, and we must not be behind them in this respect. If the precautions are taken, neither attack will succeed in doing any damage. The knowledge that each one is strong enough to defeat the other will be the supreme achievement of the intelligent and civilized nations of the world.

There is one further advantage that will result. Post-war experience has taught us that the only way to prevent an enemy attack is to be so strong that defeat of the attacker is certain. This, of course, applies to both sides, for it is an axiom of the militaristic school that no country will ever attack another unless it feels that the attacker is the stronger of the two. With each country achieving this position of mutual superiority in armed strength, and at the same time with each country realizing that the potential enemy is certain to be beaten, we shall achieve general peace.

Even though we were to adopt the plan of converting the Empire into a self-contained unit, what has been said remains true. So far as we are concerned the world would then be divided into the British Empire *versus* all other nations, or a combination of certain nations against the Empire. There would still remain the liability to attack, and, therefore, the same need for identical methods of defeating such an attack. In ultimate analysis it is the strong that survives.

But it is not only air-mindedness that we must develop. Navy-mindedness and army-mindedness must be developed also. We need to increase the number of battleships along the Empire routes in order to protect the aeroplanes that must be always on guard. And as battleships may be attacked from the air there will be need to increase the number of aeroplanes to guard the ships. An increase in any

one arm will involve an increase in other arms. It is plain that every increase in the number of war-planes will require an increase in the number of ships to protect their fuelling stations from attack by sea, and to carry oil and petrol for our airmen. Every time the number of war-ships is increased, more war-planes will be needed to protect them from attack from the air.

But an enemy that attacks us cannot be brought to terms by either battleships or aeroplanes, since neither of them can occupy enemy territory. For this we require land troops, and there must be a further supply of ships to guard the transport of soldiers, who will be guarding, even in times of peace, the fuelling stations of both ships and aeroplanes which are being utilized to protect them. The whole will form a chain of defences, and if one weakens the whole loses its force. Anyone who doubts this need only work it out in detail to see the truth of the statement.

Thus the aim of the Government goes deeper than appears at first sight. They realize that the only way to prevent war is for a nation, every nation, to be so strong that no one dare to attack it. Much time has been spent on a search for "parity," but the only kind of parity that will last is the parity that comes from a mutual superiority of one nation over another. Only when a nation realizes that attack means certain defeat, and when it feels that it is so strong that it can defeat any enemy that attacks it, will universal peace be in sight. We must be "war-minded," we must live with the prospect of war ever in our minds, with the country ever manifesting preparations for war, each nation must feel that the other is the stronger if we are ever to banish war from our midst.

If the Government is able to do this it will have done something that will rank as one of the greatest achievements of the human mind.

PATRIOT.

Acid Drops

We have often read, particularly of late, of a kingly air, or a queenly walk, or a regal manner, and have wondered what on earth these terms signified. All they mean is, apparently, the way in which kings and queens behave; but as they behave in all sorts of ways, much as shopkeepers and footballers do, the information does not carry one far. But in any competition for stupidity one may trust the *Daily Express* to at least make the running. And in its issue for May 20, it gives a picture of the King of Sweden kissing the Queen of Belgium, with the description, "A kingly kiss." The picture shows only the back of a man's head and the top of a woman's face, but it is just like any other kind of a kiss, with two people smothering each other's face. Just as intelligibly it might have been described, Bill Scroggins Kissing 'Liza Green.

In its editorial columns the *Express* lays down three laws with regard to war-planes. "(1) There is no defence against bombers. (2) ALL anyone can do is bomb the other fellow with the same savagery. (3) Whatever may be the next civilization emerging from the next war, it will not be the present one." But if there can be no defence against bombers, and if "the other party" is building bombers for the purpose of bombing "us," the sensible corollary would be to bomb the "other fellow" at once, and so prevent his doing it to us. And if civilization will certainly be destroyed when war comes, then there is an additional reason for at least doing one thing sensibly. But the worst of these ferocious preparers for war is that they have not the courage to strike nor the sense to see what fools they are making of themselves. With courage the English, French and American Governments could put a peremptory stop to war-planes. But each has its own game to play, and so they will go on

bullying and plotting and cajoling until war comes, and will then justify their behaviour by the results which it has helped to create.

We wonder whether God Almighty listens to the Countess of Oxford, or whether some angel reads to him what she writes? We imagine that the Countess thinks he does, and if he does, he could hardly be so discourteous as not to give heed to what she says. All the same it is strange that after informing the world that the great proof of God's existence is the "regularity of the seasons" that things should turn out as they have done. The wintry weather the Lord has sent during the middle of May has killed fruit and other crops to such an extent as to threaten many growers with ruin, and in any case, the general public will most probably have to pay high prices for fruit and vegetables.

Of course, we grant the Countess of Oxford that not only does some kind of season always happens, but there are always the same kind of seasons, or a mixture of the same kinds. And therefore we grant the Countess, and other profound religious thinkers, that as there are not quite new kinds of seasons every year, and a new way of mixing them every month, this does imply some kind of "Divine control" somewhere or other. All the same, we fancy most people would like the "Divine control" to be more regular in its operations, although it would not be reverential to point out what a holy mess is being made of things.

In the canonization ceremony of Sir Thomas More and John Fisher, the Pope has the petition addressed to him three times. The first time he is asked "earnestly," the second time "more earnestly," the third time "most earnestly." The speaker, who described the ceremony over the wireless, explained that the official reason for this is that if God is not pleased with the proposed canonization, time is given for the Pope to become acquainted with the fact. We suggest that it also gives time for God to consider the matter—something like the "going, going, gone" of an auctioneer to hesitant bidders. The strange thing is that during all the canonizations that have taken place God has never been known to order the Pope to stop the proceedings. One more piece of evidence that the papacy is directly in touch with God Almighty. The unanimity of these two is wonderful, or perhaps one should say, miraculous.

In this "Silver" celebration of King George's Accession, we must expect to find the "jubilation" taking the form of extravagant exaggeration. We are not concerned with mere personal eulogy. But we cannot pass altogether unnoticed the silly recrudescence of some "Divine Right" theory called the "Grace of God," by which one monarch has reigned twenty-five years. We cannot believe that God intervened to make Victoria reign longer than Elizabeth, Mary or Anne. It is nonsense to imagine that King Edward VII. possessed more of the "Grace of God" than Edward VI., and consequently reigned two or three years longer. Then again Professor Nathaniel Micklem thinks that "the State is ordained by God . . . the State is God's intention and appointment," which would apparently justify every revolution and every suppression of every revolution. Perhaps as God ordains everything, He organized the N.S.S. and the U.S.S.R. But then He also appointed Pilate, Judas Iscariot, and the Devil, to their jobs.

One of the references to the King's religion is in the Bishop of London's *Diocesan Leaflet*. The Bishop says: "Like all Englishmen, he is very reserved in saying much about his religion; but everyone about him knows it is there, deep down as the strength and guide of his life." This may mean quite a deal or very little. What does it mean?

As a matter of fact, the King and Queen both have to belong to the Church of England, and they take their religion with the crown. It is quite possible they both be-

lieve sincerely in it, one reason being, that probably they have never read a single Freethought work in their lives. But whether they believe in the mumbo-jumbo which goes with Catholic service in the church is a different matter.

The *British Weekly* has discovered that "the early Church was composed, for the greater part, of women and slaves." Women and slaves were doubtless the DUPES of the early (and late) church: woman to be degraded into silence, and slaves exhorted to obey, to be submissive to, and never escape from their owners, however horrible their slavery. But the "bosses" were on the side of the rulers and the rich. Jesus never appointed a single woman to be disciple or apostle. Paul, of course, like his Divine Predecessor, liked women to "minister to him of their substance," but insisted on their service being SILENT. The church gave women neither votes nor voices. Jesus came to "fulfil" the Slavery (and other) laws of Moses, which Paul conspicuously upheld.

The problem, "Can We Still Keep Sunday?" perturbs the *British Weekly*, which cites appreciatively a new German book by Father Redlich, in praise of "Der Tag" (which in this case means Sunday). His chief argument seems to be an echo of Cardinal Newman's amusing picture of "the wretchedness of the worldly Christian," who finds himself in Heaven unexpectedly after repeated breaches of the Sabbath. "How forlorn," mourns Newman, "would he wander through the Courts of Heaven," unable perhaps to find the page in his neglected prayer-book, or the number of the "Hymn to the Lamb," which is sung for ever and ever and ever in Heaven. It seems a poor enough "argument" for making oneself miserable in this world every Sunday. Besides, let us hope we shall always have a Hell to go to, if the worst comes to the worst.

A new aspect of the Sunday question is dealt with by Professor J. A. Findlay. He suggests that God doesn't care much about Man's prayer and Sabbath observance. It is really Man's own affair. "The answer is not that God needs it, but man needs sometimes to forget himself." Yes, but surely it is easy enough for a Christian man to "forget himself" without worrying God about it. And if a man likes to take physical "jerks" on his knees in order to "reduce," and to "Cry Out and Shout" to exercise his lungs, it is unnecessary to call it "Divine Service." We have pleasure in recording Prof. Findlay's expression: "How far we ought to seek to enforce Lord's Day Observance upon non-believers is quite another question." We wish all our pious law-makers and others would realize this.

The *Daily Express* heads its account of the result of the trial of the Duke of Manchester with "Duke in Gaol Last Night. A Bath, a Prayer Book, and a Bible." This is a striking example of cleanliness coming before Godliness.

That beautiful ceremony, the Washing of Feet, took place in Jerusalem this Easter. It was a sort of mix-up between Anglicans and Armenians, "an Anglican priest being among the twelve whose feet were washed by His Beatitude the Armenian Patriarch, the Anglican Bishop reading the final Gospel in English." What we should like to know is whether the feet are in their original condition of being unwashed for a more or less long period as is the custom in the East, or whether they are thoroughly washed before being washed again by a Bishop? We know which we should prefer.

Really, the fear of what may happen to a House of God can be carried too far. In Jerusalem, again, the service of the Holy Fire took place at Easter, and it "was crowded to suffocation." (The "suffocation" presumably had nothing to do with the "Holy Fire.") But the "venerable church is in a very dangerous condition," and all sorts of unsightly supports have propped it up to prevent it coming down. "But," we are told, "there

is a sigh of relief when all has passed off without incident." Surely God Almighty would not allow the Church to collapse while a service in his honour was being carried on? It would be most unkind; and we are surprised at the implied blasphemy of such a possibility.

The different creeds do not seem to have had a very happy time over the King's Jubilee. For example, at Newport, a parade of the local Territorial Forces had been arranged for a drum-head service, on the principle that no two better departments of life can be got together than a military and a religious display. A Jewish Rabbi was even present, though it is not recorded as to whether he joined lustily in the hymn-singing. The Mayor of Newport was also present, but merely to take the salute; as, being a Roman Catholic, he left the parade before the service began in loving obedience to his ecclesiastical superiors. The Archbishop of Cardiff refused permission to all Roman Catholics to attend other religious Jubilee services—except in London. The Lord Mayor of London is a Roman Catholic, but it was all right in his case to go to St. Pauls, because "*the King was present.*" How touching is a loyalty which can even over-ride a Divine religion!

After all the fuss made about the discovery of a "New" Gospel—or some fragments of it—now that it is published in book form, one pious critic does not seem to be very enthusiastic about it. In particular, he resents the suggestion that "parallels between it and the Fourth Gospel" have a common documentary source, and says that the fragments "suggest the existence of a new type of apocryphal Gospel." Dear, dear! And thus the wonderful new miracle of Jesus, unknown to the other gospels, canonical and apocryphal, may actually turn out to be—well, merely "apocryphal." What a pity God—or some spiritualist—does not point out where can be found a complete copy of the "original" document from which all our Gospels, or most of them emanate, the great scientific "Q" document, and thus satisfy all our doubts. Would not a few heartfelt prayers help?

The Annual Report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospels shows that its income of £295,257 for last year is £36,940 less than the previous year. On the other hand, its Medical Missions' Fund has gone up—which proves that most people prefer doctors to dope. The General Fund is £3,500 below that of 1933, and altogether the outlook for 1936 is rather alarming. The S.P.G. seems very concerned about "converting" China, but no one, as far as we could see, commented, at its General Meeting, on the fact that it would rather spend thousands of pounds in bringing a Chinese to Christ than help the unemployed or starving here. It is appalling to think that money should leave this country for "missions" to the "heathen." What a creed!

Lord Marley has been giving the Foreign Mission movement a piece of his mind. His indictment of the Chinese section of this old scandal has been met by denials from people who have no authority to deny the facts Lord Marley has adduced. The issue is now joined by His Lordship's categorical statement that "The Missionaries obtained their right to hold land in China by a fraudulent method." Lord Marley quotes the actual documents, as well as such undoubted authorities as Dr. Wellington Koo and Mr. C. W. Wu. The mission societies will not advance their cause by merely abusing Lord Marley.

An "ecclesiastical" enquiry has been opened in Castelflorentino, near Florence. It appears that a marble statue of St. Verdiana, who is the patron saint of the district, and is housed in a small chapel, has been caught crying, and that when the tears are wiped away, others appear again. So far no cures are reported; but we expect before the decision of the court appears, all the paralytics and incurables for miles around will have been cured, a grotto formed and a miraculous stream discovered

in which one teeny-weeny bathe is sufficient to make the most obstinate cancer disappear as quickly as the devil does before a crucifix. We wonder who is supplying the hankies for wiping away St. Verdiana's tears? What a fine chance for some handkerchief manufacturer to boost up his stock!

An apt protest has been sent to the Editor of the *British Weekly*, in answer to his fatuous suggestion that Rudyard Kipling's Hymn called "Recessional," should be sung at various Jubilee Year functions in which Christians take part. It is not so easy nowadays to "kid" the public into expressing the jingoism of such lines as:—

"Lord of our far-flung battle-line".

True this hymn is Kipling at his very least bullying patriotism, but it is like so many religious wishy-washy sentiments "in favour of peace" . . . on condition that England (or whatever country the author belongs to) remains top-dog, that all the rest are "lesser breeds without the law," that our country should own the best bits of the world, and that our armaments exceed in importance those of all the rest of mankind.

The Rev. John Bevan, faced with the problem of what to say to an unbeliever in order to bring him into a "knowledge of Christ," is frank enough to admit that such a man, if educated and well-informed, cannot "come to the knowledge of Christ by intellectual processes, no matter how disciplined and trained they may be." . . . "One needs something that is intuitional and not altogether intellectual." It sounds like advise to "listen-in" to the usual B.B.C. sermon any Sunday evening.

"These are difficult days for foreign missions," said Sir Harold Mackintosh, at the very depressing May Meeting of the Methodist Missionary Society, whose Annual Report says, "It is heart-breaking for all concerned." The Rev. Mr. Younger praised "the great appeal Dr. Lidgett made," which, he believes "must have been inspired." But it seems to an outsider that the "Inspiration" inspired the wrong person. Surely God wasted His time by "inspiring" a spell-binder to appeal for money. He ought to have "inspired" the people with wealth so that they might have given "of their substance." The "heart-breaking" result of this mis-directed "inspiration" is a deficit of over £50,000 on the year's work.

It appears that the Society of Friends does not recognize any kind of equivalent to the Mass, or Holy Communion, or even the sacredly celebrated Love Feast which used to be popular amongst some dissenters not long ago. This is bound to have an important bearing on questions of "Union" (it is absurd to call it "reunion" in cases where a sect has never been united to the Church of England (or Rome). The Quakers seem to agree with Atheists that all meals decently eaten in the company of our fellows are social functions of some value in human experience. Like most religious ritual, the more "sacred" the thing is made, the less valuable it becomes to humanity. In the churches which celebrate the "Communion," there is no attempt made to "share bread" (or anything else worth sharing), it is purely farcical as a "feast," and from being "The Lord's Supper," it has become infinitely less than a meal, and is "administered" before breakfast instead of after tea.

There is no reason why Members of Parliament should not preach on religion as well as on politics. But why advertise everywhere that three M.P.'s are motoring over the countryside before the vacation, in order to waste their eloquence on "What Jesus Wants Us To Do?" This is mainly a matter which concerns their constituents, who may, for all we know, think these men are doing less harm thus than by attending and voting in the House of Commons. We are bound to contradict the Rev. Stanley Hubbard, who seemed to think these Methodist M.P.'s represented Parliament when he said "It is good to see the House of Commons in the House of the Lord." It is another case of the tailors of Tooley Street.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. GREEN.—The Aboriginal Smith business seems to be a compound of folly and ignorance with, probably a dash of knavery. It is too silly for criticism.

C. S. MCKENZIE.—We are pleased to know you think the last number of the *Freethinker* one of the best for some time. Hope others will be equally good. The argument is, of course, circular. First, there must be a big birth-rate so that we may have more territory, next we must have more territory in order to find room for the growing population. The concern *should* be for the best type of men and women to dominate the world. Whether these are German, British, French or Italian are subordinate considerations, or should be so.

R. MELROSE.—The love of a crowd for shows is as old as history. It is indeed older than history, since the love of men and women for decorations—paint, feathers etc., etc., goes back to the most primitive conditions of human life. As you say, it is very child-like, but then one must remember that probably not more than twenty per cent of the population ever outgrow their mental childhood.

FOR Distributing and Advertising the *Freethinker*.—J. G. Denison, 58.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—W. T. Hawks (S.A.), 48.

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One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9. All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Sugar Plums

Arrangements are now complete for the National Secular Society's Annual Conference in Manchester on Whit-Sunday. The Business Meetings—for members only—will be held in the Victoria Hotel, Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; Afternoon Session, 2.30 to 4.30. There will be a luncheon for delegates and members at 1 p.m., in the Victoria Hotel, price 3s. It will help in making the necessary arrangements if those who intend being present will inform either the General Secretary, or Mr. W. Collins, 4 The Bungalow, New Mills Road, Hayfield, Near Stockport.

On Sunday evening there will be a public demonstration, of which full details will be found on the last page of this issue. Admission will be free, but there will be a number of reserved seats at sixpence and one shilling. We hope that Freethinkers will induce some Christian friends to attend. Reserved seat tickets may be obtained of Mr. Collins.

On Monday there will be an excursion to Castleton, a very beautiful part of Derbyshire. Those joining in this will meet at the Central Station in time to catch the 9.30 train. Carriages have been reserved. There will be a dinner at the "Cheshire Cheese" Hotel, at 12.30, and tea at 5.30. The return journey will be made at 7.27. Again, either the General Secretary or Mr. Collins will be pleased to learn as early as possible the names of those who are joining the party.

Just a last reminder to Branch Secretaries that the name and addresses of all delegates to the Annual Conference should be forwarded to Headquarters by the 27th inst. The Agenda to be discussed appears in another part of this issue, and each Branch Secretary will receive a copy so that steps may be taken to instruct delegates on particular points of interest and importance.

Mr. Cohen's new work, *Letters to the Lord*, will be published by the Secular Society, Limited, on June 1. We think we may safely predict a good demand for it. There is nothing quite on the same lines in Freethought publications, and the letter-form gives an ease of style and a tone that cannot easily be achieved in the essay form. Readers will find a smile on every page, and a laugh on most. But there is a serious argument underlying the whole, and while this argument is stated with simplicity enough to be understood by a newly-fledged curate, it is sufficient gravity to prevent a Bishop attempting an answer. The work will be in stiff paper covers at 1s. postage 2d., and in cloth at 2s. postage 3d.

We again call attention of readers to the good use that may be made of Mr. Bedborough's *Arms and the Clergy*. Just now, with so much talk of peace and war going on, a record of the part played by the clergy during the last war should prove useful, not merely in removing misconceptions, but in interesting men and women in our movement.

On the day on which we prepare this issue of the *Freethinker* for the press, the *News-Chronicle* has right across its front page, "The Fate of Europe rests in Hitler's Hands." It reads like a summary of a recent "Views and Opinions," and also stands as an unanswerable indictment of the rulers of Europe. To the more decent Germany these men said, "You lost the war, and for generations you must remain an enslaved country trying to fulfil conditions that are impossible of fulfilment, and without any armed force that will enable you to resist the pressure that will be brought to bear upon you." To the brutalized, intolerant gang of men who now rule Germany, the hand of friendship is held out, reparations are abandoned, armed forces are "sanctioned," and she is publicly proclaimed as the dictator of European policy. And when the next war comes we shall have the same type of men in power, all telling the same lies, all doing their utmost so to inflame public passion that a reasonable peace will be prepared, and so making preparations for another exactly similar cycle of events.

We have always a very great respect for Mr. George Lansbury on account of his devotion to principle, and also for his courage in saying what he believed to be true. Not many politicians, with an election so near, would venture on describing Lenin as "the wisest and the most single-minded man I have ever met." If other politicians thought the same they would be very careful not to say as much.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be in Burnley this week commencing to-day (May 26), and meetings will be held each evening. The local saints are looking forward to a busy week. Besides the lectures, a wide range of Freethought literature will be on sale, affording a convenient opportunity of obtaining works not always on sale locally.

The West London Branch has arranged an outing to Croydon Aerodrome to-day (May 26). Train from Victoria (Southern Railway) No. 9 Platform to Waddon 12 noon, Return Fare 1s. 6d. Admission to Aerodrome and Guide 6d. Lunch to be carried, tea will be arranged at a moderate cost. To help towards the general comfort of the party, will those intending to be present notify the local secretary, Mr. C. Tuson, 20 Flanders Mansions, Bedford Park, London, W.4. All Freethinkers and friends are invited.

We have to acknowledge receipt of thanks from several public libraries for free copies of the *Freethinker* supplied during the year.

Two Kinds of Scientist

"That truth should be silent I had almost forgot."

Enobarbus (Antony and Cleopatra).

"I HAVE never recommended Rationalism," says Prof. Sir Arthur Keith, "to anyone who can, or could, accept the salvation so freely offered by Christian and by Mohammedan preachers and prophets." (*Darwinism and Its Critics*).

This statement, and others like it, are interlarded with a masterly demolition of anti-evolutionist arguments. We are therefore given to understand that his own arguments must be carefully shielded from the eyes of the faithful. But the faithful include Sir Ambrose Fleming and his friends, who are the butt of Prof. Keith's criticism. Here's a pretty kettle of fish, then. On Sir Arthur's own statement, these creationists—men "who can accept the salvation so freely offered by Christian preachers"—must not be permitted to see the attack on their opinions! And Sir Arthur's words are set up in a "frame" in the *Literary Guide* (May). How, then, can the *Guide* presume to encourage its readers to work for converts?

In that case, then, why make the attack at all? Why did Sir Arthur write the book, so full of deadly argument and a fine vindication of evolution, if it is only for the eyes of those who already believe in evolution, and so need no conversion? In effect, Prof. Keith says, "Here are good reasons why Fleming's views, and those of his supporters, are false. But let us keep them a secret. Don't let us upset the equanimity of our opponents. It is best they should persist in error."

Meanwhile we have to pay, in more than one way, for the upkeep of these errors.

Sir Arthur, again, *deplores* Fleming's view that "adherence to the doctrine of evolution is entirely inconsistent with belief in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity as regards sin, redemption and future life."

The reader will see that while Fleming's position is absolutely logically correct, Keith here seeks to assist the reconciliationists, i.e., make possible by hypocrisy the extenuation of an obsolete creed.

Now again: Prof. Keith adversely criticizes Archbishop Temple's "Divine Spirit," the Archbishop of Armagh's "Universal Intelligence," Prof. Whitehead's "Principle of Concreation," and the deities of Eddington and Jeans. So far so good. But what have we here: "Whether we are laymen or scientists we must postulate a lord of the universe, give him what shape we will." Whose words are these? The Archbishop of York's? No. They were written for the American journal, *Forum*, in 1930, by none other than Sir Arthur Keith himself.

Then he alludes to Christianity (p. 55) as "the best kind of teaching"—after exploding its fundamental doctrines in the same pages. And so one might go on.

Even General Smuts—no hardy heretic—admitted in his Presidential Address to the British Association (1931) that "the story of creation" was "intimately associated with the groundwork of most religions," and that man had had to "come down from his privileged position among the angels." To the religious groundwork he applied the adjective "shattered."

What is the cause of Sir Arthur's emasculated, milk-and-water "rationalism"? Let us have the reason out of his own mouth: he says he "finds a strange reluctance" to set down his beliefs. "The real explanation," he says, "is fear, or cowardice, if you will." "I fear ostracism, and court it, perhaps deserve it, when I break the seal of my inner sanctu-

ary and expose the beliefs which rule my conduct and dominate my outlook." (*The Forum*.)

There is, I imagine, some excuse for elementary precaution where one's bread and butter is concerned, but how can this apply to Sir Arthur? Must the fighting front always be manned by the poor? Can they never hope for a lead by those more safely placed?

Fortunately, the situation is not so black, for we now turn to the Preface of Prof. J. B. S. Haldane's *Fact and Faith*, from which these are extracts:—

I am often asked why I do not stick to my proper business of scientific research . . . instead of attacking a religion which leaves me free to go my own way. There are many answers to this question. In the first place my practice as a scientist is Atheistic. . . . I should therefore be intellectually dishonest if I were not also Atheistic in theory . . . and I should be a coward if I did not state my theoretical view in public.

Secondly, I deny that religion leaves me alone. . . . I am writing this on a Sunday. . . . It is a monstrous injustice to men and women who have to work for six days, that their opportunities for amusement should be curtailed on the seventh. . . . Protestants still stop infidels from playing on Sunday because it is alleged that over 3,000 years ago Jehovah told Moses to forbid the Jews from working on Saturdays. Religion is like that. It endows excerpts from the laws of primitive peoples with an eternal significance.

Scientific education and religious education are incompatible . . . children have to learn about Adam and Noah, instead of about evolution, about David, who killed Goliath, instead of Koch, who killed cholera, about Christ's ascent into heaven instead of Montgolfier's and Wright's. Worse than this, they are taught that it is a virtue to accept statements without adequate evidence, which leaves them a prey to quacks of every kind in later life, and makes it very difficult for them to accept the methods of thought which are successful in science. Finally, I object to the privileges accorded to religious organizations, for which I have to pay. I don't mind having a church next door to my laboratory, but I think that it should be rated and taxed on the same scale as the laboratory.

And I do not forget my army experiences. Not only was I forced to attend church parades, though I soon managed to wangle my way out of them, but I was compelled to register as a member of some religion. All I could do was to go the round of the permitted religions, ending up as a Jew, after making sure there was no rabbi in the neighbourhood.

Now most scientific men and women of my acquaintance have no use for religion. But they have very little to say against it, for a quite simple reason. The arguments for religious dogmas seem to them so weak as to be quite uninteresting, and in consequence they tend to neglect the study of religion.

This book may be calculated to promote disaffection among His Majesty's Forces. Therefore if readers have a friend or relative in the forces, or if their cook is walking out with a soldier, their safest course will be to tear out the offending passage. The book should therefore be read quickly, while it is still legal to do so.

The author, let it be added, has risked his position at both Eton and Cambridge for carrying out his opinions.

A dozen Keiths, then, in the service of Free-thought? No. Give us one Haldane.

G. H. TAYLOR.

My task is to say what I believe to be just and humane. Whether that pleases or irritates does not concern me.

Romain Rolland.

The World of Books

For some time a number of books have been gazing at me reproachfully, sadly reminded of their neglect. Yet not altogether neglected, but only so far as noting their contents for the benefit of others. And even now I can spare no more than a passing note for some of them.

Three very useful additions to the "Thinker's Library" (Watts & Co., 1s. each) are *Psychology for Everyman*, by A. E. Mander, a very simply written account of positions and fundamental "urges" (we prefer that term to the author's use of "Instinct") and common-sense considerations that will serve as an excellent introduction to a more detailed study of the subject. In *The Social Record of Christianity*, Mr. Joseph McCabe makes a very effective attack on the claims of Christians, that their religion has conferred benefits on the modern world. The fact that such propaganda is necessary to-day says much for the manner in which the Christian Churches have managed to "dope" the general public. Those who wish for a brief summary of some very salient facts should get the book. *The Religion of the Open Mind*, by Mr. Adam Gowans Whyte, is of a different kind. It is a reprint of a work that has been in circulation for some years, but it lives up to its title, and the open mind described is that of a man of wide reading and keen intelligence. It is a capital little book for one to carry in one's pocket—provided that one's wife does not object to such a practice—to read whenever one feels inclined.

A very useful publication is one that Charles Lamb would probably have classed among books that are not books, to which category he banished cookery books and their kind. I have always sympathized with that, because in my experience the worst cooks have been those who worked by the book, the best, those who used their own intelligence, guided by the tastes of those for whom the food was intended. For of all things taste is the most variable of things, and how shall a mere author, who has probably spent little time in the kitchen, know just what degree of tastiness in this or that direction is likely to suit the palates of those who are to be fed. By all means, cookery books are not books. They represent a spoiling of paper in the interests of the inefficient.

But this book, in spite of St. Charles, is a really valuable volume to the careful student, and has a distinct measure of fascination for the one who is curious concerning the changes of human history and culture. It is called *The March of Man*, and it lives up to its title. It consists of a series of no less than 64 plates printed in colour, which contain over 200 separate maps, showing the state of the world at all dates from about 500 B.C. to 1935. The maps are beautifully drawn, and will awaken anyone interested to a lively sense of the political changes this curious world of ours has undergone. This is followed by seven very large folding comparative time-charts of universal history from the world as it was in 500 B.C. until 1935. These charts are printed in colour, and so arranged that at a glance one can see the state of the different countries all over the world. The charts, which open to about four feet in length, are backed by very fine linen so that the reader need not fear them splitting along the folds. There is also a series of photogravure plates depicting important historical scenes and persons. Some useful indices enables one to find whatever one is looking for. It is a valuable work for those who know how to use it, and is published under the general editorship of Mr. L. H. Lawson, at 80 Regent Street. Price £2 12s. 6d. It is not exactly a book to read, but it is emphatically one to have and use.

Another book that I can commend for reading—but only by those who have strong stomachs is *I Was Hitler's Prisoner*, by Stefan Lorant (Gollancz, 10s. 6d.). Mr. Lorant writes the account of his imprisonment for six and a half months for daring to offend the Hitlerite gang by the conduct of his paper. The author says that he has set nothing down in malice, and the narrative bears in the noteworthy calmness of its statements strong evi-

dence of its impartiality and truthfulness. But the record is a sickening one, both of his own treatment and that of other prisoners. Men were brutally beaten with rubber truncheons time after time, steadily tortured at recurring intervals, until they were at the point of death. It reads like a record of the Inquisition, without even as much justification as the old Inquisitors might have pleaded. The barbarity of it all haunts one. Surely nothing viler than this Hitlerism exists on earth to-day. One newspaper-man, because he refused to disclose the identity of those who had supplied him with the information published, was beaten savagely time after time, kicked and stamped on, and finally shot in his cell, after he had refused to commit suicide. It is a sickening record, both for the actual brutalities inflicted, and the thought of such a poison as Hitlerism eating away the "Soul of a People." It is, as we have said, a book to be read—but not by super-sensitive people. One would like to know the name of the responsible British Minister who advised the King to send birthday greetings to Hitler. Was it Sir John Simon?

The manner in which life steadily draws away from the service of Christianity the better type of man may be noted in *The Impossible Parson*, by Basil Martin (Allen and Unwin, 5s.). Mr. Martin was born in 1858, the son of a Congregational Minister, at a time when for the mass of the people religion, the Christian religion, was apparently holding its own. Mr. Martin had the usual Christian training, although diluted with a greater measure of liberalism than was the case with many. He entered the ranks of the clergy, but found himself more and more dissatisfied with even "liberal" Christian theological preaching. The autobiography leaves him with a vague theism, which is very obviously the dregs of his earlier religion, but also depicts Mr. Martin as very open to liberal and creditable humanitarian impulses. Mr. Martin is at present in the Unitarian Church, which was described to G. W. Foote as a very good resting place between Christianity and Atheism. To this G. W. replied, "Yes, but so many mistake it for a bed and go to sleep." But Mr. Martin's book is a record of a brave and honest man, whose sketch well illustrates the manner in which life, with most alert and upright minds, steadily eats away the religion of one's childhood.

India has been very much to the front of late, and no one who wishes to understand the situation can afford to neglect reading *British Imperialism in India*, by John Beauchamp (Martin Lawrence, 5s.). The volume was prepared for the Labour Research Department, and is largely based on official documents. It is one-sided, inasmuch as it leaves out much that might be said in favour of British rule. But the shameless exploitation of the poor in India, the existence of women miners earning about 4d. per day, the terrible treatment meted out to such as try to organize the poorer workers into some form of fighting movement on trade union lines, remind one of the struggle which trade unionism had in this country just over a century ago. The way in which the facts stated are kept out of British papers, also makes the book one to be read—with judgment.

It would be an insult to the author to attempt to review a work of the solidity and value of *Beyond Conscience*, by T. V. Smith (McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, Aldwych House, London, 15s.) in a paragraph or so. We must content ourselves with a brief notice, and perhaps a more lengthy one later. Mr. Smith is Professor of Philosophy in the University of Chicago, and the book stands for the best class of work that meets us from the best class of the American Universities. It is thorough without being ponderous, and is written with an ease possessed only by those who are at once complete masters of the subject under discussion, and have a freedom from mere academic prepossessions.

The larger part of the work is made up of a review of the different interpretations of conscience. The theological, the idealistic, the metaphysical and the

sociological implications of conscience are found to be inadequate. The author's own conclusions—perhaps one ought to say, temporary conclusions—are stated in the chapter on "Oughtness and Order," which deserves particular attention. In the main Professor Smith, while perceiving that it is in society that conscience takes its rise, is yet alive to the fact that even Society cannot safely be accepted as a dictator. His attitude here seems to be that of Santayana's, that while a Society is necessary to Conscience, yet "Society is like the air, necessary to breathe, but insufficient to live on."

Conscience is autonomous, but not authoritative, save to its possessor. Yet in admitting its authority for *me*, I must accept its contradictory authority in *you*. The dicta of conscience is—just the dicta of conscience carrying are no demonstrable claim save upon the person who makes them.

Professor Smith states the case well, but the contradiction just indicated may be solved by a deeper synthesis. For the revolt of the individual conscience against the commands of Society may yet be no more than a form of revolt against what is established in order to move towards a new order, to be questioned in turn by another development. We should like to have seen this worked out by Professor Smith. But as it stands he has provided us with a penetrating and suggestive study.

The Web of Thought and Action, by Professor H. Levy (Watts and Co., 7s. 6d.) appears to be based upon a series of broadcast discussions, in which Professor Levy played the part of questioner, and added a summary to the answers given to his questions. A number of different people are questioned, in the hopes of getting, from many divergent ways of looking at the world some sort of general philosophy. The book is full of good stuff, although, in some places, as is to be expected, one may raise a query against either the form of the question put, the answer given, or the ultimate summary made. But this adds to, rather than detracts, from the value of the book. Professor Levy is aiming at providing at least the groundwork for a philosophy of life, and that more than anything else is what the educated man of to-day greatly needs and mostly lacks. Educated ignorance is more than merely objectionable; it is to-day dangerous in the very highest degree.

We must content ourselves with by one sample from Professor Levy's book. Here is a picture of social history:—

We see a society struggling through confusion and misunderstanding, each member battling with the other to some sort of ordered life. Gradually it learns something about itself, about its own laws, and about the world it lives in. It does it, in many blundering ways, unconsciously. It discovers itself by bitter experience, by torturing itself, by its control over physical nature, through its thinkers, by social feeling, thought and action. . . . Institutions, teachers, priests, spring up and expound these ideas, and the ideas become looked upon as the last word, unchanging, timeless. But man has made these laws as he struggled, and as man himself changes in the struggle and his experiences widens, so he creates new laws, new modes of life, new art, new science, new values. From being leaders in thought, action and feeling, its teachers, its priests, its politicians tend to become upholders of the past, and so the institutions from which they emerge tend to remain rooted in society long after their time has gone. . . . This is social history.

Professor Levy's main purpose is to discover the "laws" of this social change. This attempt has often been made, and Professor Levy will, we take it, be satisfied if he can be credited with a very suggestive effort to place the feet of the social reformer on the road that may lead to ultimate success in this direction.

CRITICUS.

The Devil is the author of the modern dance, and the underworld is its proper habitat.

Rev. Dr. William McKeever, D.D., U.S.A.

The National Secular Society

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AGENDA

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Report on Society's revised Principles and Objects.
3. Executive's Annual Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.
Motion by South London, West London, Manchester, Liverpool, West Ham, Chester-le-Street, Birkenhead, Burnley, Swansea, and North London Branches:—
"That Mr. Chapman Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
6. Election of Secretary.
Motion by the Executive:—
"That Mr. R. H. Rosetti be appointed Secretary."
7. Election of Treasurer.
Motion by North London, and West Ham Branches:—
"That Mr. C. G. Quinton be re-elected Treasurer."
8. Election of Auditor.
Messrs. H. Theobald and Co., the retiring auditors, are eligible and offer themselves for re-election.
9. Nominations for Executive.
SCOTLAND.—Mr. F. A. Hornibrook, nominated by Glasgow Branch.
WALES.—Mr. T. Gorniot and Mr. A. C. Rosetti, nominated by Swansea Branch.
N.E. GROUP.—Miss K. B. Kough, nominated by Newcastle and Chester-le-Street Branches.
Mr. A. B. Moss, nominated by South Shields Branch.
N.W. GROUP.—Mr. H. R. Clifton and Mrs. E. Venton, nominated by Liverpool and Birkenhead Branches.
S.W. GROUP.—Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook, nominated by Plymouth Branch.
MIDLAND GROUP.—Mrs. C. G. Quinton (Junr.) and Mr. J. G. Dobson, nominated by Birmingham Branch.
SOUTHERN GROUP.—Mr. L. M. Werrey-Easterbrook, nominated by Hants and Dorset Branch.
SOUTH LONDON.—Mr. H. Preece, nominated by South London Branch.
NORTH LONDON.—Mr. L. Ebury, nominated by North London Branch.
EAST LONDON.—Mr. H. Silvester, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.
WEST LONDON.—Mr. E. C. Saphin and Mr. C. Tuson, nominated by West London Branch.
10. Motion by the Executive:—
"That, Branches of the N.S.S. shall have liberty to co-operate with outside organizations for specific purposes, provided that the purposes to be achieved by the co-operation fall within the avowed policy of the Society, but such co-operation shall not extend to affiliation or complete identification with other organizations."
11. Motion by Mr. G. Bedborough:—
"That in furtherance of our principle of the substitution of arbitration for war, this Conference is of opinion that some form of international control over the manufacture of arms should be adopted which would lead to the institution of courts of international arbitration with power to decide such issues as may arise between nations."
12. Motion by West Ham Branch:—
(a) "That, in order to promote the complete Secularization of the State, and to curb the spirit of Militarism, Freethinkers should do all that lies in their power to secure the abolition of military displays and religious ceremonies at all National, Parliamentary, and Civic functions."
(b) "That, in view of the distorted views of his-

tory, science, and religion which obtain in many books at present selected for use in public schools, greater care should be paid by those in authority to secure the selection of books which shall give impartial views of all disputed questions."

- (c) "That in view of the danger to democracy arising from the secrecy maintained in the conduct of national and international affairs, this Conference calls upon all Freethinkers to do whatever lies in their power to obviate the dangers arising from this, which paves the way for panic and extravagance in times of crisis."
13. Motion by North Eastern area :—
"That this Conference calls attention to the action of the Established and other Churches in using the question of raising the school-leaving age as a bargaining issue by which to gain increased support for sectarian schools, and emphasizes the fact that so long as religion is taught in State-aided schools, this obstruction to educational reform will continue, and calls upon all friends of educational advance to press upon candidates at municipal and parliamentary elections the need for restricting education to purely secular subjects."
14. Motion by Mr. E. Egerton Stafford :—
"That, in view of the gravity of the present World-situation, this Conference instructs the Executive to institute a campaign against war and Fascism, or to join anti-war and anti-Fascistic Movements in United Front Campaigns against War and Fascism."
15. Motion by West London and North London Branches :—
"That future cards of membership shall contain the Principles and Objects and Immediate Practical Objects of the Society."
16. Motion by West London Branch :—
(a) "That in the opinion of this Conference it is advisable that, wherever possible, a juvenile section of the National Secular Society be established, thus cultivating an interest in the principles of Free-thought."
(b) "That, in view of the growth of the principle of Dictatorship abroad and in this country, this Conference deems it necessary to affirm its conviction that sound, orderly and progressive government is possible only on the securing of equal freedom of thought, speech, and publication without regard to religious or political conviction."
17. Motion by Mr. E. C. Saphin :—
"That the N.S.S. actively associates itself with the League of Nations in its endeavours to secure world peace."
18. Motion by Mr. C. Tuson :—
"That in order to prevent the encroachment of religious interests in municipal and parliamentary spheres, this Conference advises a more extensive open-air campaign on the part of Branches, having for its special object the checking of this wide-spread evil."
19. Motion by Mr. J. V. Shortt and Birkenhead Branch :—
"That this Conference while upholding the practice of the Society in offering hospitality to all forms of opinion, is of opinion that this hospitality should not extend to the provision of a forum for the advocacy of the partial or complete suppression of Freedom of Thought."
20. Motion by North London Branch :—
"That printed copies of the Conference Agenda be forwarded to Branch Secretaries one month before the date of the Conference."
21. Motion by South London Branch :—
"That this Conference reaffirms its non-political attitude in propaganda."
22. Motion by Birkenhead Branch :
"That a Committee be set up for the purpose of revising the Immediate Practical Objects of the Society, as laid down in the Membership Form."

The Conference will sit in the Victoria Hotel, Deansgate, Manchester. Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; After-

noon Session, 2.30 to 4.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the door; Members, the current card of membership. Only Members of the Society are entitled to be present. A Luncheon for delegates and visitors at 1 p.m., price 3s., will be provided in the Victoria Hotel. There will be a reception of Members and Delegates at 7 o'clock, on Saturday evening in the Victoria Hotel, and a Public Demonstration on Sunday evening at 7, in the Picture House, Market Street, Manchester.

By order of the Executive,
CHAPMAN COHEN, *President.*
R. H. ROSETTI, *Secretary.*

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

QUASHING ANCIENT FETISHES

SIR,—According to public utterances (February 27, 1935) of a local academic theologian, Dr. Zican, all anthropomorphic notions about "God" are pure fictions, being the combination of our own experiences by the imagination. So the Christian God of prayers is disposed of by his own magicians! Now, how about the other concepts of "God"?

Well, here is one simple method of quashing any other of them together with that of "soul" and "immortality." This method, I am sure, may be mastered even by a child, and I see no reason why it should not be realized by everyone. Here it is :—

Consider a rose; it may be sweet (a quality), red (also a quality) and big (a relation), its petals may flutter at a puff (a process or behaviour). We can say further that redness (a quality) is a colour (a quality of second degree), bigness is a spatial property (also a quality of second degree), and so on. So it is seen that the *thing* is fundamental, all predicates being applicable only one way, towards the things: colour to redness, red to a rose, and not conversely. If the ascribing of predicates thus ends at the category of things, we may infer that what *ultimately* matters in any question are things, the only category of statements, where any referring to things is irrelevant, being the logico-mathematical tautologies, e.g., $1+2+3+\dots+n=\frac{1}{2}(n^2+n)$ or, there can be no ascription of mode to the universe as a whole in terms of its parts (see Prof. R. Carnap's importantly innovating *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, p. 20, Kegan Paul, 1935; 2s. 6d., and J. M. Robertson's exceedingly helpful *Letters on Reasoning*, p. 107, Watts, 1935; 1s.).

So we can generalize the matter in terms of the great alternatives: either the given statement (true or false) is ultimately about things (things proper as well as living systems of cells) or it is a tautology (resp. internal contradiction). If it is a statement about a thing, then what is meant is either something or nothing, it is either somewhere or nowhere, it is either sometime or never! All this is, of course, self-evident.

Now let us *apply* these considerations to "God," "soul," and "immortality." The procedure will be as simple as could be, for, you know "whatever can be said at all, can be said lucidly." (Wittgenstein).

We are told, preliminary, that God is some *thing* (i.e., neither a quality nor a relation nor a behaviour of anything, but himself an entity), otherwise he would necessarily be just nothing; but we are told further that God is immaterial and does not occupy a certain place, i.e., he is not somewhere (as is the anthropomorphic one); then, in this alternative, it inevitably follows that *he is nowhere, and thus becomes nothing!* The same line of argument applies exactly to the "soul." Now we see the alleged "immortality" simply fades away, being quality of nothing.

I have spared another alternative for an eventual objection. If some Christians would still pretend that God is something, there remains for them the sole category, *the all*; it means to say, their God would be then *another* name for the universe as a whole. Similarly, if there has to be any talking about a "soul after death" as

something not temporary, but going on *eternally* (which mode is logically linked with the all and the everywhere; see Carnap, *op. cit.*, page 85), well then "soul" must *swell* quickly enough as to fill the whole universe in order to be the "All Eternal," or be simply—nothing! Thus "the soul" must pervade all space. But as we are not so anxious to be fat as to live long, none of the metaphysicians in question has ever noticed this application of their reasonings. This is an instance of the amazing power of desire in blinding even very able men to fallacies which would otherwise be obvious at once (Bertrand Russell: *What I Believe*, p. 18, Kegan Paul, 1933, 2s. 6d.) To sum up: There are logically three fundamental categories: 1. Something, somewhere, sometime; 2. All, everywhere, ever. 3. Nothing, nowhere, never. Applying one term necessarily implies also the two other of the *same* category, while any two terms applied to one subject from *different* categories, would produce an internal contradiction like the notorious three horned one: Eternal immaterial soul (or, God)—Gods are words and words are Gods (Fritz Mauthner: 1879—1923).

G. S. SMELTERS.

Riga, Latvia.

"GOD SAVE THE KING."

SIR,—Your "Acid Drop" about the Jubilee is extremely timely, and I cannot imagine any good Free-thinker dissenting from your conclusions. The evil of unanimity is that it doesn't exist. This lack of all signs of difference modifies our transports in seeing that many worthy tradesmen approve of King George, and are of opinion that he has never failed us in any way: a quite reasonable proposition if sincerely demonstrated. One would believe that Messrs. Bones, and the Incorporated Drapers, Ltd., really thought this, if only we found an occasional dissentient tradesman asking whether Science, Literature and Art had received a fair amount of royal attention. They might also ask whether one and a half million pounds spent in national rejoicing over one man's excellent work for twenty-five years could not have been better utilized in providing efficient support for workers who have done their duty for fifty years or more, and who now see destitution awaiting them in the few remaining years of their lives.

Also, I wish to emphasize the burden of your Note appreciating the genuine services the King has done; and let us add our tribute of praise to him for *abstaining* from many things which showier monarchs have considered fitting as aggrandizing their "dignity," often at the cost of the peace and welfare of their country.

While Freethinkers may well desire a continuance of the present constitution in preference to any probable alternative in sight, it is necessary for us to be silent while these good wishes take the form of singing the National Anthem. If we wish the King "long to reign over us," we still do not believe in prayer to a supernatural being. "God save the King" implies three things which Freethinkers oppose: Prayer, a belief in Deity, and the silly superstition that anybody's health depends upon the intervention of a God.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

SPIRITUALISM AND RATIONALISM

SIR,—As an old and appreciative reader of the *Free-thinker*, may I take the opportunity of supporting Mr. Spencer M. de Golier in the views he expresses in your issue of May 19.

Spiritualism is in no way opposed to Rationalism. It is only an extension of knowledge. What the Spiritualist has found is that matter does not consist only of vibrations between 34,000 and 64,000 waves to the inch, which is all that our physical eyes are capable of sensing. Spiritualists know, from experiment and experience, that matter exists beyond these limits, and that in this finer matter, which Spiritualists term the etheric body, and others call the soul or spirit, we continue to function under the direction of Mind, which does not die at death.

This knowledge makes it impossible for us Spiritualists to be Materialists, in the sense that we believe that only

physical matter exists, but this knowledge does not prevent us from being Rationalists.

J. ARTHUR FINDLAY.

[We regret having to curtail this letter, but nothing material has, we think, been omitted.—E.D.]

CHRISTIANITY AND MYTHOLOGY

SIR,—In reply to Mr. H. G. Wood's challenge, I am not quite clear as to what he wants me to discuss with him. If he means by Robertson's "thesis," the whole of the matter contained in his five books on the Jesus problems, I am afraid I have not the time to devote to a complete discussion on everything touched therein; and I do not think anything whatever can be gained by a long drawn-out private discussion. On the other hand, I am quite prepared to debate the question, "Did the Jesus of the Gospels ever live?" on a public platform—preferably a Christian one. Christians as a rule are hopelessly ignorant of our arguments even when they know that the historicity of their God is questioned. I should like the opportunity to enlighten them a little even if Mr. Wood feels he can easily demolish my arguments. I hope, therefore, he will do his best to provide the platform.

H. CUTNER.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, W. C. Curry, M.A., B.Sc. (Dartington Hall School)—"Education in a Changing World."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. P. Goldman.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Sunday, May 26, Mr. C. Tuson. 8.0, Tuesday, May 28, Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, Mr. P. Goldman. 8.0, Friday, May 31, Stonhouse Street, Clapham High Street, Mr. P. P. Corrigan.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. Saphin.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Gee, Wood, Bryant and Tuson. 6.30, Messrs. Saphin, Wood and Bryant. 7.30, Wednesdays, Messrs. Evans and Tuson. 7.30, Thursdays, Messrs. Saphin and Wood.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR.

BEDLINGTON (The Cross): 7.0, Saturday, May 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (The Market): 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton—"Secularism: Its Purpose and Effects."

BURNLEY MARKET, 3.15, Sunday, May 26, Mr. J. Clayton.
BLYTH (Market Place): 7.0, Monday, May 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

ENFIELD, 7.30, Friday, May 31, Mr. J. Clayton.

HIGHAM, 7.30, Monday, May 27, Mr. J. Clayton.

LANESHAWBRIDGE, 7.45, Wednesday, May 29, Mr. J. Clayton.
LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, Messrs. W. Parry and J. V. Shortt. 8.0, Thursday, Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, Mr. D. Robinson.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 7.0, Sunday, May 26, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

MIDDLESBROUGH (Bedford Street): 7.0, Thursday, May 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR BRANCH N.S.S. (Stockton): 8.0, Saturday, May 25, Mr. Dalkin.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. A. Flanders—A Lecture.

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Registered Office: 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—

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