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**Views and Opinions**

**More About War**

I HAVE had several curious and interesting letters concerning what has recently appeared in these columns on the subject of war. Most of these correspondents approve, some dissent, some are very critical. I like this diversity. It proves that Freethinkers use what brains they possess, and are not to be induced to swallow anything with their eyes shut—because it appears in their favourite paper. It would not be interesting to write for a third-rate Methodist Sunday School, or for one of those political parties that obediently shout whatever they are told to shout by headquarters. One correspondent tells me, not for the first time, that war will never be abolished until the economic basis of society is altered. I am not so sure. My reading of history is that war did not come into existence because of the existence of capitalism—the existence of capitalists among the fighting Red Indian tribes of North America, for instance, is rather doubtful—and in any case capitalists could not cause war, however much they desire to benefit by it, unless they were able to fool the masses of people into supporting war for reasons other than a desire to fill the pockets of the said capitalists. If the vast majority of a people are robbed it seems clear that they must be fooled first, and in my blundering way I have got it into my head that if I can do anything to stop people being fooled I may in that way prevent their being robbed.

In any case I am not out, the *Freethinker* does not exist, to propound a sovereign cure for all social ills. It is enough if we can play the part of a mental cathartic, and so help people to see the nature of war, and the essential futility of it from almost any point of view. Nor do I care to weaken the efficiency of the mental cleanser by using the futility of war, and the horror of war as a cover to commend some pet social or economic theory I may happen to hold. Finally, I may say that my hatred of war, my perception of the real nature of war, is not a thing of yesterday. It does not date from the “great” war of 1914. In my

judgment that war was not worse or better than other wars. It was only larger. Among the earliest articles I wrote for this journal—it must have been quite thirty-five years ago, was a series on “Teeth and Claws,” in which many of the things now commonly said were then set forth.

\* \* \*

**An Educational Campaign**

So I think that if I can drive home to the minds of people the futility of war, the stupidity of war, the cowardly character of war, particularly of modern war, the foolishness of railing against children being killed by bombs or the horror of the mangled bodies of civilians littering the streets, when every nation at war in these days is of necessity fighting and killing women and children and civilians generally, and if I work for discouragement of a mass mentality of a very primitive type, I really think that this is a work of a very valuable kind. And the strongest proof I have that I am right in my opinion, is that it is this kind of propaganda that war-mongers hate most.

One question asked me is whether I object to the use of force altogether? Of course I do not. But I do not want force disguised as anything but force; and, above all, I want to replace the power of physical force by the power of logical ideas and justifiable sentiment. If force must be used, let it be used as what it is and for what it is, and if we can realize this much we shall be ever dissatisfied until we have found something better. In the same vein as my questioner the *Daily Express*, that monarch of flapdoodleism, said the other day, in defence of our building a huge force of war-planes, that we did not encourage crime when we gave the police batons. But we do not give the policeman a baton to decide a dispute between himself and a member of the public. He acts under orders, and may be punished if he uses his baton save under definitely understood conditions. He is not supposed to have any personal interest in the contest. His job is to take the offender before an impartial judge who will decide whether wrong has been done or not. But it is this impartial judge in the form of some international court to which the *Express* very strongly objects. It holds that every nation must be the guardian of its own honour, and must force that conception of its own honour upon other people. Kill that idea, establish a police force that shall have no personal interest in disputes between nations, and war would be reduced to “gangsterism” in its purest form.

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**Facing Facts**

Here is a very little thing that may serve to make clear what I mean by the power of teaching people to see things clearly and in their true light. Some time ago I wrote an article pointing out that the wisdom of the Allies had succeeded, as it was bound to succeed in making Germany the virtual dictator of

Europe. During the past few weeks I note that many of the papers—who make elaborate pretence of not knowing that such a paper as this exists—have been using the expression as descriptive of the facts. I also asked, following the *Church Times*, why our Government did not offer Germany to scale down mutually the number of war-planes instead of trumpeting that they would build up to anything any nation attempted. During the past few days many of the papers have asked the same question. Well, so far as I can judge, there are only the following reasons against this being done.

(1) There is no electioneering or popularity-making value in securing peace with a small, even an insignificant armed force. It is far more spectacular to crowd the Thames with battleships, or to darken the skies with war-planes, and to claim that we have kept the "enemy" at bay by brandishing a bigger "mailed fist" than he has; meanwhile foolishly thinking that we can keep the "enemy" from trying to enlarge the size of his fist.

(2) Unless armament building firms are kept busy enough to pay for the maintenance of their plant they will scrap it and turn it to other uses. We shall then be without armament making plant when war comes. We increase our armaments to keep away war; and we increase the chances of war with every enlargement of our armaments.

(3) If we do not make war-planes, we must build civil air-planes, and every one knows that—particularly if there are no special war-planes in existence—civil planes may be used for war purposes when required.

The logic and the sense of the situation is then to put all aeroplanes—civil and military—under some form of international control. At present there is not one nation that can trust another not to steal a march on it, if "national honour" demands that it should do so. (The decision in the Versailles Covenant that there was to be no more secret treaties, that all was to be "open covenants openly arrived at," has been completely, even contemptuously ignored.) In this respect "National Honour" is very much like "Christian truth," it moralizes and justifies conduct that would make a man an outcast in decent society. Do we believe what France tells us? Does France believe what we tell her? Does Italy believe what England and France tells her? Does England and France believe what Italy tells them? All of them tell lies in the name of "National Honour." If individual honour rested on the same level as national honour, civilized society would be impossible. Surely it is doing something to end war to try to place "Honour" on the same level in both instances.

\* \* \*

#### Mass Mentality

But what I dread most in the fight to end international war, is the existence of a childish mass mentality that is so easily excited and blinded by the shaking of a mailed fist, or by talk of national honour; that "conditioned reflex" of the mass which makes people such easy tools. During the Jubilee preparations that so providentially occurred in time for the country to receive the news of a resolve to build war-planes and war-ships up to anyone and everyone, the papers contained an account of hundreds of people who visited St. Paul's Cathedral to gaze reverentially on the spot on which the King and Queen would stand during the Jubilee Service. A little earlier one of the London papers filled a page day after day with accounts of people who had *seen* the King—not dined with him, or talked with him, or walked with him, but had just *seen* him. Both the seeing the King, and the fascination of looking at the spot on which

he would stand, were events to be treasured as much as the most ignorant of Roman Catholic peasants treasures seeing the vision of a Saint—it was, in fact, a worshipper looking at a Saint. The same type of mind was there in both cases. And in the radio programmes published in the papers for May 29, there occurred the following in the official description:—

8.15. The Duke and Duchess of York at the command performance of Il Barbiero di Siviglia.

This was not put in to sell the seats—they were already sold. It was not put in for the information of those who were at the opera, they knew. It was not indicated that either the Duke or the Duchess would take a part in the performance. It was to let listeners know that they might listen to a performance to which the Duke and Duchess of York were listening at the same moment. I have not the least doubt that many thousands of the type that went to St. Paul's to see the spot on which the King would stand, would be listening and would hand down this memory to their children as a heirloom. It would not be surprising to know that many preserved the newspaper cutting, and I am sure that if the B.B.C. announced it would send out specially printed copies of the programme, with the names of the Duke and Duchess printed in bold type—as it was in the papers—these would have reached a very large sale.

It is this mass-mentality, this surge of feeling under the direction of primitive thought-forms that I think constitutes one of the greatest dangers of the time. It is at the mercy of any adventurer that cares to exploit it. It is utilized in Germany and Italy for one purpose, in Russia for another, in Britain for another. If society is ever to guard itself against those unreasoning panics and the play of ill-balanced emotions that are at least one of the prime conditions for war, popular feeling must be taken in hand and sublimated to a more reasonable use than is the case at present. There are none of the qualities exhibited in war—pugnacity, courage, loyalty, discipline—that are essentially connected with war. They are born in the field of social life and exploited and wasted in war. It is the lifting of these qualities to a higher level of expression that is required, and how can this better be done than by making men realize the nature of the forces that drive them to action? Warfare gives us human faculty on the level of savagery. The task is to lift it to the level of a genuine civilization.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Ingersoll the Inimitable

"Originality irritates the religious classes, who will not be taken out of their indolent way of thinking."

G. W. Foote.

"It takes two to speak truth—one to speak and another to hear."—*Thorau*.

ROBERT INGERSOLL occupied, in America, the position as a militant Freethought orator and writer, which Charles Bradlaugh, the Napoleon of British Freethought, filled in this country. Both were big men physically and intellectually; both could sway popular audiences; but here the resemblance ends. Bradlaugh sought to beat down Priestcraft by sheer force of logic and law. His speeches read like judicial utterances by the side of the brilliant, witty, sparkling orations of Colonel Ingersoll. America dearly loves rhetoric, and Pagan Bob as an orator had no equal in the length and breadth of the United States. He dealt rhetorically with elemental emotions, and he really enjoyed the fame of being an apostle of liberty. Expressing the simple feelings of plain men, he made a tremendous appeal. "Give me liberty, or give me

death!" That was the kind of thing; a sonorous and impassioned phrase flung out at white heat to thrill the hearts and flush the cheeks of thousands. Phrase after phrase has this special quality, and sounds like poetry, grandiose and sweeping:—

"Liberty, a word without which all other words are vain."

You can almost see the outstretched arm, hear the thrilling, resonant voice. There is music in it, too, the trumpets sing to battle.

Ingersoll wrote in quite as brilliant and delightful a style as his spoken words. So forceful was he, that he compelled the clergy to reply to his strong indictments. He was "answered" by the clergy of all denominations, and even drew Cardinal Manning and Gladstone into the controversial arena. Some of these were really notable encounters, and drew the best out of Ingersoll. Taunted by Gladstone with riding a horse without any bridle, Ingersoll retorted crushingly that this was better than "sitting on a dead horse in a reverential calm." Huxley claimed the victory for Ingersoll. "Gladstone's attack on you," he wrote, "is one of the best things he has written. I don't think there is more than fifty per cent more verbiage than is necessary, nor any sentence with more than two meanings." Huxley knew the wily ways of politicians, for he had crossed swords with Gladstone himself more than once.

Ingersoll's masterpiece, *Some Mistakes of Moses*, is a Freethought classic, and still commands a ready sale. Some of his lectures are still popular a generation after his death. Such literary vitality is the surest test of his power, for it is rare that controversial matter is endowed so richly as to survive the ephemeral purposes of the moment.

It is good to find that Ingersoll is still read so many years after his death, for there are few Freethinkers whom it is more necessary to remember. He was of the race of the Sun-Treader, whom Browning once worshipped this side of idolatry. He was the mouthpiece of liberty and fraternity, believing, as he did, that freedom was the very breath of brotherhood. As the evangelist of Freethought, he had that all-embracing appeal which mere rhetoricians never succeed in attaining.

In the lambent light of his genius intellectual liberty appeared as beautiful a thing as a flower, a bird, or a star. At heart a poet, he found the world a place of ethical ideals, and he was no less exalted when he spoke of the golden hopes of humanity than when he described the exquisite beauty of a little child's laugh:—

"That fills the eyes with light, and every heart with joy."

Recall, too, his oration on Napoleon, in which he denounced militarism with all the fury of a poet's scorn, and in which he declared that he would have rather been a peasant wearing wooden shoes than Napoleon the slayer of millions. A whole-hearted humanitarian, Ingersoll's works are full of a fine and noble indignation directed against all that is cruel and despicable in religion. From thousands of minds he lifted the awful belief in eternal torment which oppressed, and still oppresses, so many of his countrymen.

Imagination and humour were the qualities in which Ingersoll surpassed the orators of his time, but his humour was his most unassailable work. A collection of his jests is, perhaps, the finest contribution to Freethought literature since Voltaire. An example of his brilliancy is his smiling remark: "With soap, baptism is a good thing." Another: "Had the Chicago clergy been present at the burning of Ser-vetus, they would have quietly turned their backs, solemnly divided their coat-tails, and warmed themselves."

An advanced movement like our own can have no better champion than a smiling advocate. No human emotion is so readily awakened as that of which laughter is the sign. And if the cause be a great one, and if the arguments, barbed by wit and winged by laughter, have any intrinsic worth, they strike the deeper and take the stouter hold because of the humorous nature of their presentation.

In a theological discussion a laugh is a blessing, and Ingersoll was genuinely our benefactor. The artificial solemnity of the subject made a joke more jocund, as the arms of a dusky maiden give a double beauty to her pearls. Apologists for the Christian religion have lost themselves in trackless deserts of alleged evidence, and almost smothered the subject in verbiage. But Ingersoll challenged the defenders with a smile. There were few fallacies in that Oriental tissue of falsehoods which he did not laughingly expose. Nowhere is he so happy as when he describes how religions grew out of hot-beds of ancient ignorance, and that the more modern versions were but savage survivals. Although a master of the lash, he uses his whip caressingly. He does not cut his subject to ribbons like Jonathan Swift, nor, like Voltaire, sting like a thousand wasps. Rather is he a Voltaire into whom has passed the geniality and suavity of Renan. It is a mellowed and transformed Voltaire, looking upon a busier world with the laughing eyes we know so well. That was one of the reasons why the long-necked geese of orthodoxy sought for many years to hiss him down. They realized only too well that it is ridicule that kills. Gravity was what they wanted, for they knew that opponents who treat religion too seriously play their sorry game for them.

The clergy wished people to think of Ingersoll as of a clown grinning through a horse-collar. But Ingersoll's enormous influence and personal qualities remain "four square to all the winds that blow." Frederick Douglass, the ex-slave, has borne testimony to the welcome he met on Ingersoll's threshold when no one else in Illinois would take "the nigger" in. His old antagonist, Gladstone, admitted that the Colonel wrote with "a rare and enviable brilliancy." Had it not been for his known Freethought opinions, Ingersoll might have been President of the United States. He had every qualification except his want of Orthodoxy. He knew this himself, for, when a friend asked him the price of a handsomely bound set of the works of Voltaire he saw in Ingersoll's library, the Colonel replied: "That row of books cost me the Governorship of Illinois." One thing, at least, quotations like this prove, they help to refute the absurdities of those persons who pretend that Robert Ingersoll was a commonplace antagonist. The Ingersoll we treasure in our hearts was a keen-eyed warrior, as well as a very noble man, who fought in the Army of Human Liberation, and who never wavered in holding aloft the standard of Freethought against all the gods in the Pantheon. Despite his motley dress, he was ever a knight-errant, charging down the winds at the hosts of superstition. Honour was his shield, and Truth tipped his lance. The lustre of his fame must deepen with the progress of the years, for he helped the coming of the dawn of Freedom:—

"Not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light,  
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward, look, the land is bright."

MIMNERMUS.

I find the great thing in this world is, not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

## Real Christians

*The Story of an African Farm* was a literary sensation in the 'eighties. It was written by Olive Schreiner, a young South African girl, and its power and sincerity combined to give it a vogue in Victorian England in spite of its outspokenness on both religious and sex themes. It was simple and direct. It may not have altogether fitted into the preconceived ideas of what constituted artistry by the literary schoolists, but the authoress had something to say, and the book succeeded in getting itself read. Some of the "precious" are often known to fail under both these heads. According to Sir Charles Dilke's opinion at that time, Olive Schreiner was the only person of genius the Colonies had ever produced. Unfortunately a chronic asthma curtailed her literary output, but before she died (in 1920) she had written also, *Dreams*, *Trooper Peter Halkett*, *Woman and Labour*, and *Man to Man*. The writing of each of these works was a real joy to her, so strong was her conviction that it would be helpful to others, particularly to her own sex. She was first and foremost a Freethinker, and a Freethinker of courage, expressing herself not only in her writings, but in her every-day life. She had remarkable intensity of feeling, and was incapable of intellectual dishonesty. In 1886 she was in England, and for health reasons she made a brief stay at a Convent at Harrow-on-the-Hill. When leaving, one of the Sisters said to her, "You are a real Christian." Olive replied gently that she was not; she had no religion. The sister persisted and repeated, holding her hand, "You do not know it, my dear, but you are a Christian."

The Sister possibly meant well. It was her way of paying Olive a huge compliment. Possibly, as well, it was her sub-conscious way of paying herself a huge compliment. Olive Schreiner would have been the first to admit that what she didn't know would have filled many notebooks. But her desire for knowledge had always been a passion. When a child, in answer to the question in a "Confession" Book, What do you want most in the world? she had written "To know." Catholics are fond of using the expression, intellectual pride. It required both intellectual pride and intellectual arrogance to accuse Olive Schreiner of not knowing where she stood in matters of religion.

Parallel cases are as plentiful as blackberries in autumn. Bradlaugh was repeatedly being accused of being a real Christian—Bradlaugh for whom the word God had no intelligible meaning, and whose work for the National Secular Society in combating Christianity was, on his own confession, the part of his work he *loved*. The Sister's remark is one that seems to rise naturally to the lips of puzzled Christians when they come into contact with a non-Christian of amiable qualities. Is it because they have been led to expect something very different? The blackguarding of "Infidels" has always come easy to those who accept the faith once delivered to the saints; and to find the facts otherwise is apt to leave the honest adherent puzzled and more than a little dismayed.

It mattered little that Olive thought herself to be a Freethinker, and that her writings were highly obnoxious to Christians. One Bishop, in fact, described a fragment of Olive's writing, entitled "Sunlight lay across my bed" as "The most blasphemous thing I have ever read." Into the count she must go as a real Christian. On no account must her obvious virtues be allowed to ornament another faith.

What were Olive Schreiner's leading virtues? Well, she had a passionate regard for truth, she hated subterfuge and was ready and anxious, at any moment, to fight for justice and ally herself with the weak and

oppressed, cost what it might. These are the characteristics it is claimed, so unmistakably Christian as to justify the classifying of a person possessing them as a real Christian, even after he or she has rejected every distinctive Christian dogma.

Christians of this type exist, of course. It is a rare type in any circumstances, but it will be found occasionally in Christian households, just as is every type, good and bad, found there. We know of one man at any rate, who possessed these characteristics in a marked degree, and that was Colenso, Bishop of Natal. We know other things. We know that his heresies were mild compared with Olive Schreiner's; we know that he, too, allied himself with humble people with coloured skins; and we also know very emphatically that the Church of England, far from recognizing him as a *real* Christian, pursued him with bitter fury and invective in its efforts to turn him out of the Christian Church. And Colenso seems to have left few spiritual children to rise up and call him blessed—in the Churches at any rate.

Because the expression, A Real Christian, is constantly being reiterated, it does not necessarily mean that it has an intelligible significance. It should, however, have the most precise of all meanings, for it is here that God has seen fit to grant special illumination. Poor imperfect man, with his equally imperfect vocabulary, can write about hardly anything without making confusion worse confounded, but God has no imperfections, and it is a matter of consummate ease for him to make his meaning crystal-clear even to the meanest intelligence of his own creation. God therefore wrote a book explaining what Christianity is. And yet, strange though it may seem, those who call themselves Christians agree about nothing contained in this book, either regarding doctrine or conduct. It is questionable whether they even wish to agree. If it were possible to bring together to one room, people of the type of Faraday (a Sandemanian), Cardinal Newman (a man of intellect), Cardinal Manning (a "pompous windbag") "General" Booth (I), the Bishop of London, Dean Inge, Woodbine Willie, Dick Sheppard, Maud Royden, Mary Pickford and Barrett of Wimpole Street, and ask them to apply themselves to the question of what are the ingredients which go to make a real Christian, consternation would reign. All the elements (for outsiders), which go to make a comedy of the season, would be there. Even if a few "real Christians" of the type of Olive Schreiner and Mr. Chapman Cohen were added, signs of a greater disposition to get to business would undoubtedly be evinced, but that would be all. The matter of definition would have to be left eventually to less business-like methods. In the roughest of rough terms only can such a person be defined. He is discernible not by any test of character or conduct, but by certain formalities openly observed by him, one day in seven, accompanied, frequently, by a seven-day preoccupation with the conduct of other people, particularly on the question of sex. Then, from that we could make a guess at the creed and from that, as Emerson said, anticipate the argument.

There is admittedly a disposition nowadays for the Churches to lay less stress upon doctrinal points, and to put forward Christianity as a religion of conduct, containing principles, it is claimed, that would revolutionize society. The Scheme of Salvation by which man can save his little soul does not now commend itself to mankind. Men sniff at post-mortem dividends, and clamour for something on account. They ask for a fair deal, an even chance with all their neighbours for shelter, food and the amenities of life. So the Oracles of God speak accommodately through a new record. The scheme of salvation has become by *special request* a scheme of social regeneration, and

this life of ours, instead of being but a pilgrimage by way of introduction to the Life Eternal is going to be quite a pleasant little curtain-raiser. The real Christian is no St. Simon Stylites. He is attached to no pillar. He is going to move about, wash himself and try to help his brother man by applying the principles of Jesus to everyday life. Attendance at Church and the sacrament will not, one can anticipate, be negligible. "Back to Jesus," the Churches of accommodation say, and a new day will dawn. Of course even Jesus was a little extravagant at times. For instance, when he talked of the day that would come when God would neither be worshipped here nor in Jerusalem but in spirit and in truth, that was going a little too far. Ernest Renan (he, by the way, was another real Christian) rather liked that bit of Jesus, but the Churches have never seen much in it. Nor have they ever, sensibly enough seen, much in the Sermon on the Mount, save as a thing to talk about in an idealistic way. Some time ago Somerset Maugham wrote a play called *Sheppey*, elaborating a truth so obvious that it made Christians quite uncomfortable. Sheppey was a barber, good-natured, simple and honest. He was not what one would call religious, and one day he knocked up against a New Testament and read all about Jesus. Sheppey was quite struck with some of the ideas of Jesus, particularly that bit about selling all that one had, and giving it to the poor. He thought there might be something in that, and determined to try it out. And this is how it came to pass that in the course of time poor Sheppey was found to be a little touched in the head, and arrangements were made for his being placed in a mental home. We saw a capital performance of this play recently by an Amateur Dramatic Company—and not a sentence rang false. Again, some five-and-twenty years ago, one Thomas Senior was condemned by a Christian jury to be placed in jail in this Christian land for believing that Jesus was right in saying that the prayer of faith would raise the sick. Nay, not for believing it; that would have been quite all right if he had stopped there. He acted on this belief—with unfortunate results. Sheppey was, in Somerset Maugham's view, a real Christian, Thomas Senior was a real flesh and blood Christian, in one respect at least. George William Foote was also, one supposes, a real Christian, if one admits the validity of the Bradlaugh-Schreiner order. Foote hated Christianity, but he respected Thomas Senior, and he went out of his way to say so. In this way on occasions do extremes meet.

T.H.F.

#### ARE MAJORITIES RIGHT?

And what can be said of the attitude assumed by the press of these leaders of the people who speak and write of freedom of thought, and at the same time make themselves the slaves of the supposed opinions of their subscribers? I receive more and more corroboration of any conviction that there is something demoralizing in engaging in politics and in joining parties. It will never, in any case, be possible for me to join a party that has the majority on its side. Bjornson says: "The majority is always right"; and as a practical politician he is bound, I suppose, to say so. I, on the contrary, must of necessity say, "The minority is always right." Naturally I am not thinking of that minority of stagnationists who are left behind by the great middle party, which with us is called liberal; but I mean that minority which leads the van, and pushes on to points which the majority has not yet reached.

Ibsen.

## Pilgrimage

THE Town of Bethlehem was hot, though it lay on uplands. The heat was banked up heavily between the houses, thick with grit and dust and sweat-smells, goat-smells, nameless ancient smells; odour of sanctity and quenchless sun. Samuel O. Kendrake panted and dragged his large body along the street, between the tall faceless houses, dirty-bleached with heat, grey, grey-lichened with the dry decay of ages, stabbed with eyeholes that slanted down on Samuel O. Kendrake rolling largely and ponderously along behind his slim indefatigable middle-aged wife and the placatory Arab-guide. Samuel O. Kendrake took off his panama-hat and wiped his mottled brow.

"Come along, Sam," said his wife in her iron-grey voice, insistent, irritated, expressionless.

"Give me time, Sister Anne," he answered, blowing loudly. "What did you say this here place was?"

"Bethlehem. You know perfectly well." She put him in his place, expressionless, uninterested, remorseless.

He tried to whistle, but had no spittle left; he swallowed with an effort. "If you hadn't told me, I'd never have noticed it."

She went on: "And you must try to speak less vulgarly. I hoped that travel would refine you, but it makes you worse. You put on all these tricks of yours, deliberately. You try to talk like a low comic-strip person. Deliberately, to shame me."

A note of bitterness came into her voice. "The guide was listening with intent shameless face, looking from husband to wife with impartial sympathy and impudence."

"Granted, lady," said Samuel. "But not to shame you. I jest can't help it. The more I see of the world, the better I like the lil' ole homeland. Gee, I'd go to a Harlem night-club if I wanted to see things, rather than subsidize this dec-aydent Old World you're so smit on, lady-bird. Our niggers are our niggers, blast 'em, but what are these scum?"

He turned to the listening guide, "What are you, smut-face?"

The guide beamed delightedly, but made no answer.

"You don't even know, you brown mongrel," said Samuel; then, silencing the guide, who broke out fiercely into a diatribe against the British authorities for favouritism towards the Jews, he waved his pudgy hand, "Lead on Macduff. Let's have a look at the an-teeks. What are the holes in the walls for? To spit on your enemies?"

He paused to look at a swartly girl, whose long plaits of hair hung down over each shoulder, while strings of coins ran round her neck. He opened his mouth to say something to his wife, but stopped, and began searching in his loose white linen coat for his cigar-case. The Bethlehemites went on with their daily tasks, long inured to monsters. Samuel didn't know whom it was that he'd meant to give the cigar to; certainly not the girl.

They came to the spacious square before the Church built to mark the birth-place of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God and Saviour of the World; passing under the narrow entrance that made them feel it would fall and crush them. The sense of unforgivable intrusion tightened, frightened, then flashed away as they entered the spacious glare of barren light. Mrs. Kendrake was ready with the disensorcelling guide-book.

"The Church is claimed by three Christian sects, each of whom has a part-ownership."

Samuel showed interest, blinking, fingering a cigar lovely crisp.

The voice instructed space in thin emphatic finality. "The chancel is allotted to the Orthodox Church—they're the Greeks. Part of the transept belongs to the Armenians—they're the, er—the Armenians. The nave belongs to the Latins—they're the Roman Catholics."

"Like three lots of bailiffs."

The crisp cigar rustled under the damaging fingers of Samuel, like the hair of the beloved under a lover's caress.

"No, no," answered Mrs. Kendrake in indignant colourless voice. "I think it's beautiful. All the different churches have a piece. It reminds us that all we Christians are really part of one great Society of Love."

"Have the Memphis Baptists staked a claim too?" he asked. "You can't tell me the Armenians are truer Christians than one of our hometown preachers. You better tell the minister when he calls next. Don't blame me."

"You know we're Episcopalian—" She turned on him a fierce cold glance, which almost daunted him.

"Now she's getting waxy," he said to the guide. "You be careful, boy." He waggled a fat forefinger.

"Samuel!"

"Present!" he answered smartly, and moved ahead, leaving her anger derelict. "Let's go and have a squint, now we're here. I suppose lil' smut-face can sell us picture-postcards of the tomb."

"It isn't a tomb," snapped his wife. "It's the sacred stable."

"O yes," said Samuel. "So it is. My mistake. I spoke out of my turn. Ain't it a prime stable? Where's the horses?" He turned to the guide. "Gee-gee, baa-baa."

"It's a Church now," said the guide in his proud English. "The stable was a Cave, then it's a Chapel, now it's all a Church."

"Rebuked again!" said Samuel, smiting himself flabbily on his heated brow. "Lordie, what a vile country. Who'd have thought to find scraps of slum stuck on a burning lot of desert and called the Holy Land? There ought to been someone in the firm with a better knowledge of real estate, though there wasn't much he could have been learned about advertising junk. Why, the Florida land-boom was nothing to this bit of flapdoodle. O My-ammy." He went on hurriedly to his wife. "Don't you read me anything more out of that book or I might get annoyed. You hain't ever seen me get annoyed yet."

Disregarding him, she read out, "There is a beautiful sixth century font, inscribed: Given as a memorial before God, and for peace and forgiveness of the sinners of whom the Lord only knoweth the names."

"Come and let's have a peep-o at it," said Samuel. "I seen so much, I got reckless now. It was you that made me come and now you won't go and look at it. Ain't that like a woman, eh, Gyppo?"

The guide grinned and volubly led the way to the door of the Church, shaking his head and its red fez. Samuel fingered the cigar in his pocket and felt consoled, but he wasn't going to give it to a jabbering Arab. He took it out and smelt it tenderly.

They entered the Church. It was difficult at first to see in the dark coolness. They stared into the enchanting hollow of the apse zealously decorated by the Greek priests, the Holy of all Holies. Lamps splashed and festooned dim-burning colours before it, and two twelve-foot candlesticks stood on each side of it like lean angels saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Samuel said nothing, his small spoilt mouth open. His wife said nothing, her thin aggressive mouth

closed. Even the guide paused for a moment before he chattered.

Then Samuel recovered, quite unimpressed. "Where's this here stable?"

The guide drew them to a low arched doorway that led down into the Cave. ("Venus was once worshipped here, Astarte as the Mother of Tammuz," the guide-book calmly informed Mrs. Kendrake; the voice of Saint Hieronymus fierily crying out in the despair, the battle-ground, of his littered spider-webbed study; actually looking at the accursed thing, the naked breasts running perpetually with warm milk, stirred the films of silence. Mrs. Kendrake adjusted her horn-rimmed spectacles. "Venus," said Samuel, "Yeh, we met her in Paree.") They looked down into the small cavern where Jesus had been born and Tammuz slain. It was about fifteen feet wide and ten feet high, lighted only by the smouldering flame of lamps plastered with gems and burning day and night, dark wounds of incense-warmth (not the milk of hot life perpetually souring on the palate of Saint Hieronymus. "Away, away! I will know it all! I will, I will! Star-patterns scrabbling in the dust. . .") Six lamps were owned by the Greek Church, five by the Armenian, four by the Latin. A cloth of gold covered a portion of the walls and the ceiling.

JACK LINDSAY.

(To be continued)

## Acid Drops

The latest reason for having a huge increase in our air force is that if we are to join in any air-pact we must have "effective membership." By effective membership is that we must have a number of bombing planes equal, if not above that of any other member of the pact. In plain language each member of the pact must be strong enough to defend himself against the other members if they happen to fall out. But as that is the only reason given for having "parity" in war-planes, we do not see any difference between existence with or without a pact. When each member of an agreement has to be ready to knock down any other member, one wonders what the value of the agreement is.

The Rev. W. Watson, speaking at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, said fifty per cent of adolescents have no connexion with any Church. That is really good news.

After four years of labour, a "phalanx of brilliant theologians" presented to the General Assembly of the Scotch Church, a "Restatement of the Faith of the Church." Some of the faithful view the document with grave suspicion. For example, it is stated that:—

The authority of the Scriptures depends on their effectual truth made sure to faith by the Holy Spirit, not on their scientific accuracy or verbal inerrancy.

In other words, it doesn't matter a button whether what the Holy Scriptures says is true or accurate. The value of the statements depends upon their being "sure to faith," again, that is so far as Christian ingenuity can make them serve the purpose of propping up the Church. Apply that rule to any other book, and you will see that *Jack the Giant Killer* can be made equally "sure to faith." No wonder some of the more intellectually honest Christians feel a little uneasy.

Here is another passage from the same report:—

God has every human life in his gracious and holy keeping.

This gives one objector the staggers. He says:—

This associates God with Nero, Abdul Hamid of Armenian butcheries, the assassins, the profligates, and criminals of the centuries.

Quite so, but in any case God made Abdul Hamid as well as the Bishop of London, and is responsible for both. And if he has not, everyone in his holy keeping, it looks as though he is responsible for the wrong ones through neglect. But, after all, the critic ought not to be shocked by God having the characters named in his holy keeping, if one were to take the list of the famous characters in the world, who have in their day been honoured as sincere Christians, or who have organized wholesale massacres on account of their strong religious feeling. One should remember the instance of the thief on the cross whom Jesus took straight to heaven with him. Character had nothing to do with his conversion.

The *Daily Telegraph* assures us that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald is a Presbyterian, and has attended a Presbyterian Church from childhood and is even now actively in membership at his favourite Presbyterian Church. While this explains a good deal of Mr. Macdonald's political peculiarities, we wonder why this fact is advertised so conspicuously at this moment. We know he is on his way, "on and on and on, and up and up and up," and we imagine these "references" might indicate that he is going into the ministry (or the presbytery) where his talents for everlasting preaching may possibly be appreciated. All the same, we can recall a time when Mr. Macdonald's religion was of anything but a robust character. But other times, other professions.

"Truth will out—even in a church," to quote a veteran Freethinker, and seldom has the epigram been more apt than as applied to a sermon by the Rev. J. A. Broadbent, as summarized in the *Methodist Recorder*. Amongst other observations, based on a wide experience, he declared, "There are people here who are stuck in pews like stuffed dummies in a shop window. They do nothing. They sacrifice nothing. They only come for what they can get. . . . They are dead weight. . . . They have a name to live and are dead." The editorial report rather sarcastically adds that at this particular meeting, and after all this pother, "there was the usual response" . . . and then continues "After a crowded tea. . . ."

"Religion as an Art," was the subject of a sermon by the Bishop of Ripon at the York Synod. Of course, Fiction is sometimes worthy the name of "Art." But it is not a pleasant or "fine" art when it can be described in the words of the Bishop who went on to say:—

Imagine that we look out of the window into the street below, and we see Christians misunderstanding one another. Catholics burning Protestants, and Protestants persecuting Catholics, and all those busy people down there falling out into several groups, and doing it all in the name of the Divine Artist Who gave us the picture of The Good Samaritan. Why?

We could answer the Bishop's question, but our answer would have little to do with "Art."

The "Stage Army" of the Christian Church is well exemplified in the "Group" Article in the *Methodist Recorder*, wherein it is clearly stated that the so-called Oxford Group business always was a mere *alias* for members of the Christian Church:—

The movement represents spiritual life and activities that should normally function within a healthy Church. The life having originally proceeded from the Body of Christ—since its leaders are either ministers or members of one or other of its branches—there is nothing to prevent these energies flowing back to the Church.

It is just like the "Revivalist" services of Gipsy Smith and others which attracts crowds—of church members. These converts become "converted," and their numbers go to swell the lying statistics common to all religious sects.

Class distinctions still linger in the church atmosphere, but it seems curious when applied to the "Methodist Movies" adopted by some enterprising churches. But so it is, according to the *Methodist Recorder*, which reports, "All churches will not need films for the same

purposes. Middle-class Churches will value films for historical and educational purposes, but hardly need them for religious propaganda, while what may be described as mission audiences are in a stage that calls for the presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." We still think that "Mickie Mouse," and "Charlie Chan" will give as much "uplift" at the local cinema, as when prefaced by prayer and followed by a sermon, in a church.

The Rev. Basil Mathews, speaking at the Annual Meeting of the London Missionary Society, made a good effort attacking war and Dictatorship. As to the latter he said "Christians would not stand for a Dictator" (he excepted the dictatorship of Jesus). We have no objection to dead dictators, especially one who lived, if ever, nineteen centuries ago, although Moses and the Bible dictatorships are not to be recommended. But how can Mr. Mathews pretend that only Atheists "stand for a dictator." Can he seriously believe that Germany and Italy, and most of the other countries where dictators flourish are not Christian? While we applaud the German ministers who object to being flung out of a well-paid job, there is no reason to believe that the masses of Lutherans and Catholics refuse to "stand for" Hitler's dictatorship. A ready test is found in the question of how many of the protesting pastors ever raised hand (or voice) against the persecution of Socialists, Freethinkers, Radicals, and all types of reformers who, if still alive, are now suffering in Concentration Camps?

Christians are for ever talking "unity," but they all seem to mean by the blessed word something different. The Roman Catholics ridicule the idea that the Anglo-Catholics have a genuine priesthood. The Anglos scorn the Free Churches for the same reason. All three repudiate the Modernists whenever the Modernists refuse to accept as truth that which they consider as myth; and these people, in their turn, refuse to associate themselves with the heresies of Christian Unitarians. And so the game goes on. For Freethinkers, however, the game is most amusing, and the end is not too difficult to foresee. Whatever it is, is bound to be to our advantage providing we keep our powder dry, and never relax our "eternal vigilance"; though the fight for freedom from superstition is bound still to be a bitter one.

The Churches never relax the hold they have (or think they have) on the schools. They make desperate efforts to be represented on boards of managers and education councils, and their attempts in these directions should be warily watched. The Archbishop of Canterbury said, the other day, that "the secondary schools have drifted largely out of the religious influence of the schools . . . nevertheless the spiritual tone of the secondary schools is a matter of incalculable importance for the future, both of the country as a whole and of the teaching profession." He recognizes that most teachers come from secondary schools; and if their religion is not carefully looked after by the Church, how can they teach it, in their turn, to their pupils?

On this point the Headmaster of Winchester also said something worthy of notice. He "believed that a greater opportunity lies before the Church at present in influencing secondary school education than at any time for many years past." This was very good news to his hearers who also learnt from him that the teachers "have learned to discard the old-fashioned mechanistic view of the world and human society which was prevalent at the end of the last century," and are ready "to listen to the Christian Faith if presented to them with prophetic fire." One would very much like to see some of the teachers with degrees of science for example, who are ready to throw overboard the findings of science and accept once again the ridiculous miracles of Christianity, its absurd creation stories and still sillier accounts of angry and flying deities as historical and scientific facts. But one can see the strangle hold the Church still has on our educational system when men with such views as the Headmaster of Winchester can hold responsible positions.

It is well known, of course, that history can be written with bias—and very considerable bias too. But how much of it in our school books can be trusted? How can we be sure that a writer is strictly confining himself to facts and not to “colouring” facts in favour of royalty or toryism or democracy—or religion? How much of the “history” taught in schools, for example, has boosted up “Christianity” before the Reformation and only “Protestantism” afterwards? Neither Roman nor Anglo-Catholics are satisfied with the presentation of Protestantism given in many school books; and they are beginning to take strong exception to many statements therein concerning “real” Christianity. The snag comes in when they are asked to define the “real.”

It is said that Roman Catholics both here and in America made great efforts to “correct” or “censor” many articles in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; and that they have even asked to be allowed to “edit” text books used by the L.C.C. Schools. How far their efforts succeeded we do not know; but if it is true, it is one more proof that the Churches are leaving no stone unturned to further their ends. History once again presented by Christianity would be the sorry mess it was while the Church had power; and the difficulty of finding the truth greater than ever. We must ever keep a wary eye open.

In the hey-day of religious Victorianism, one famous story of “a waiif’s awakening to religion,” entitled *Jessica’s First Prayer*, sold to the extent of a million and a half copies. Does any one imagine that young (and old) readers of such a typical religious story would be found nowadays in such numbers? In spite of everything the Churches are doing to foster belief in, and love of, religion, it is true to say that stories with religious motives are mostly as dead as the proverbial door-nail or soon would be, if again lucky enough to get a publisher.

It is at least encouraging to find present-day children prefer a good healthy scientific or adventure story rather than the sickly nonsense of a poor starved waiif who, before dying, sees Jesus all dressed in white, ready to take her up to heaven—as if anybody really wished that awful fate. And yet this kind of rubbish is a Christian ideal; for a pious writer in the *Church Times* actually says that “he cannot doubt” if another writer like the author of *Jessica’s First Prayer*, “were to arise, she would conquer the hearts of the young.” Some hope!

One of the reasons given by a Catholic editor to a perplexed female reader as to why a woman cannot be a priest is that “by Divine Law priesthood is confined to the male sex.” In case it is asked who made the Divine Law (with the answer that it was the “male sex”), the editor hastily adds that “by nature there is a division of function between the sexes.” Thus, a woman cannot be a father; nor a man, a mother. (But as a priest ought not to be a father, and, obviously can’t be a mother, one wonders what God had in mind when he designed a Roman Catholic priest.) Similarly, “in the Divine Society—the Church—a woman cannot be a priest but only a woman could be the Mother of God.” This ought to make both God and the female reader happy; and, of course, it is so conclusive.

Really it is too bad of the *Daily Express*. The other day, at the village of Cannington, in Somerset, the vicar and choir, followed by the village school children “carrying wands on which are tied posies of flowers,” celebrated the Ceremony of the Blessing of the Growing Crops. This “blessing” of food, domestic animals, ships, wild waves, etc., is quite a common occurrence at the hands of Christian ministers in the name of Jesus Christ. But here comes the *Daily Express* giving the show away by saying it is “a custom which derives directly from festivals in Pagan Rome honouring Ceres, goddess of crops.” What can possibly be more intriguing for its readers than this little “give away”? Won’t the pious ones, the truly orthodox, be pleased?

Mr. J. A. Douglas gives, in the *Church Times*, as an instance of international leadership, a recent prayer of the Pope, “Scatter the people, oh Lord who want war.” That is very striking, and so safe. For the mischief of it is that no one ever wants war. None of the parties engaged in the last conflict wanted war. In the whole of our history, and we have fought a few wars, big and little, we have never wanted war. If other people will only give a nation what it wants, said nation to decide, and also allow the nation to have its just rights, said nation to decide what are its just rights, that nation would never go to war. The Pope’s prayer would suit Mussolini, and everyone else. It is the kind of thing that sets a knave right with a fool.

The Rev. George Jackson undertakes the onerous task of explaining “What a church is for,” in the sympathetic columns of the *Methodist Recorder*. He would not, of course, be permitted to “explain” that a church is mainly a machine for collecting cash to maintain preachers who teach untruths in which many do not believe. Mr. Jackson expressly repudiates the suggestion that “our churches are just so many ethical societies.” In a sense he is right in claiming that churches dislike ethical teaching in general. But the churches do teach ethics of a kind: for further particulars, see *Arms and the Clergy*.

#### THE GLORY OF WAR

It is, of course, true that rapacity for territory, commercial rivalry, and all other expressions of that avarice which is as instinctive to the human species as the sexual and intestinal functions, has always been present as the underlying causes of war. But it is doubtful whether these more or less realistic reasons would culminate to the actual point of explosion as often as they do if mankind did not, in spite of repeated demonstration, obstinately harbour a totally erroneous conception of what actually constitutes a war in terms of experience. It is not, of course, the propaganda of glory, the *dulce est pro patria mori*, and so forth, that influences men so deeply. These and similar residues are only effective rationalizations of more fundamental impulses. Much more deeply significant are the boredom with the unutterably dull peace-time occupations of most people, and the childish but universal delight men take in playing soldiers. Until they actually suffered from dirt, lousiness, fatigue, terror, disease, or wounds, most men enjoyed the last war. Think of the man who has lived meagrely in a frame house on the outskirts of Somerville or Weehawken, and for ten years—except for two weeks in August—has regularly caught the eight-fifteen, spent the rest of the day floor-walking, and then caught the six-twenty back to what he came from in the morning! Think of his feelings of relief and self-satisfaction when he is marching up Broadway behind the band, between files of cheering garment workers. Think of his pride in a renewed manhood, standing guard at dawn or lying behind a pile of sandbags pot-shooting his fellow man, or drinking beer with his comrades—knowing that the world approves him as a hero, and that his family has the Government to look out for it for ever and ever!

But beyond the release from boredom there is the joy in uniforms which stimulates war. The instinct for fancy dress is hard to kill, as anybody knows who has been in a town where Mystic Knights or the Shriners or the Red Indians were holding a convention; or even in Boston, when the Ancient and Honourables are blocking traffic on Beacon Hill. And, further, there is the applause of women—not women in general, but each man’s own women—who as instinctively as the men like to play soldiers, have the hereditary longing to glorify the brave brutalities that their heroes write home about; “I threw a hand grenade into a dug-out, and blew up six Germans, I’m going to be kissed by the General.” “Isn’t he wonderful? Just a big brave boy!” One can hear the devil’s grandmother, adoringly watching him turn a squealing sinner on the spit, saying, “Oh, Beelzebub—you’re nothing but a great big boy.”—From “*Rats, Lice and History*,” by Professor Hans Zinsser, pp. 150-2.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTÉ,

EDITORIAL :

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JAYAR HEM.—You appear to have overlooked the fact that the article was "writ sarcastic." What a splendid endowment is a sense of humour!

S. WILSON.—Irony is a tremendous weapon when it is used properly. Otherwise it tends to become obvious clowning. Pleased you so much enjoyed the article by "Patriot."

T. RICHARDS.—Mr. Cohen is very busy just now, but will try and find time later to do what you wish. What he requires is a private secretary.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—J. Lane, £1.

G. JESSOP.—Thanks for cutting. Mr. Cohen will be writing you.

H.C.C. writes: "I do wish you would publish in book form each year your 'Views and Opinions.' Although some of them would be 'dated,' nevertheless they would be of historical interest to those who study international affairs, and would give them an unbiassed opinion of the true state of affairs." We are flattered, but we cannot see our way to doing this at present; but we have published three volumes of this kind, and hope to issue another one as soon as we can.

R. BERTON STAFFORD.—Our offer was that of a column, not a "few words" in which you might have your say. This was to be in the form of a letter, because there are things that may go in the paper in that form, while unsuitable for a set article.

FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—A. Horgan, £2; F. Barwick, 3s. 6d.

JACK BARTON.—We do not know of any English translation of *The Romance of Haeckel*. We like to keep the contents of the paper as varied as its purpose will allow, and are pleased you still enjoy the *Freethinker*. But so that we may not suffer from swelled head by the same post we get a letter from another source, which assures us that we are publishing some "poor-quality stuff." So our head is reduced to the normal size, and we can only reply very humbly that we do our best.

T. HANDLEY.—Thanks, but you enclose only one page of the article, and we like to form a judgment of an article as a whole before we criticize it.

G. BURGESS.—Your suggestion was a good one. We shall see what will come of it. Probably nothing, but it was worth trying.

R. HARDING.—The excerpt from the Apocryphal New Testament needs some sort of a commentary to be printed. Thanks all the same.

F. BARWICK.—Many thanks for your endeavours to gain new readers. Pleased with success achieved.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums

This is the last opportunity we shall have of reminding members of the arrangements for the Conference. There will be a Reception and Social, at which Mr. Cohen will be present, at the Victoria Hotel, on Saturday, at 7.0 p.m. The business meetings will be held on Sunday; the Morning Session from 10.30 to 12.30, and the Afternoon Session from 2.30 to 4.30. Lunch will be served at 1.0, at a charge of 3s.

The Demonstration will be held in the Market Street Picture House, on Sunday evening. The doors will open at 6.30, and Mr. Cohen will take the chair at 7.0 p.m. Full particulars will be found in the advertisement on the back page. Tickets for reserved seats at 6d. and 1s., will be on sale at the Conference.

The proceedings will conclude with an Excursion to Castleton, Derbyshire, on Monday. The charge for travel, Dinner and Tea will be 8s., and all who intend to be present will greatly assist by securing their tickets from the local Secretary, Mr. W. Collins, on Saturday or Sunday. Those who are going will assemble at Central Station for the train (in which a saloon coach has been reserved), which departs at 9.30. Lunch will be served at the Cheshire Cheese.

Bradford has been unfortunate this year, and Mr. G. Whitehead will be there for only a part of this week. His open-air meetings will begin on Tuesday evening (11th), and continue each evening until the end of the week. The local saints will no doubt make the most of the shortened visit, and see that the meetings are made known, and well-attended by Branch members as well as by the general public. Mr. Cohen's new book, *Letters to the Lord*, will be obtainable at the meetings.

From the *Observer's* "One Hundred Years Ago":—

SUNDAY TRAVELLING ON RAILROADS.—In the House of Commons, on Tuesday, Mr. Miles moved the introduction into the Grand Western Railway Bill of a clause for the prevention of travelling on that railroad on Sundays.

Mr. Roebuck opposed the motion and gave a history of his own travels on a certain Sunday: "I went out that morning into Piccadilly. The first person I met on horseback was the Duke of Wellington. I went into Hyde Park, and there, while the church service was going on, I found some poor men watering the ride for the comfort of the refined classes in carriages in the afternoon. A little farther on I came to Knightsbridge, and there I found the soldiers exercising and their officers in arms. I pursued my journey and crossed Hammersmith Bridge, and there I met the Lord Chief Justice on horseback taking a ride, with his servant, into the country. At three o'clock I arrived at Hampton Court, and there I met the Rt. Hon. Member for Tamworth." (Hear, hear, and laughter.) The motion had arisen, he contended, in a proud, overbearing Pharisaical spirit.

The House divided, when there appeared for the motion 24, against 212.

For those who still look upon Paul as the great witness of the historicity of Jesus, the latest book dealing with him, *Beyond Damascus, A Biography of Paul the Tarsian*, by F. A. Spencer, will prove somewhat of a shock. The author is a Christian, and no doubt would have been delighted to insist on Paul's unique testimony to the living Jesus. Unfortunately, he has come to the conclusion that—according to a reviewer—"the Christ whom Paul preached has little connexion with the historic figure of Jesus of Nazareth, and that the Pauline Gospel was created by a subjective experience on the road to Damascus, rationalized into a type of Hellenic mystery-religion." This attitude on the part of the author has upset quite a number of orthodox critics as, of course, theologians "have demonstrated that the fundamental differences between the mystery cults and St. Paul's interpretation of the Christian way present grave objections to such a hypothesis." Naturally; for if the author is right and Paul, even by Christian writers, can no longer be cited as a witness for anything but a "Hellenic mystery-religion," where can the living Jesus now be found?

## Woman in Soviet Russia

"A necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill."—*St. Chrysostom.*

SUCH is the conception of woman, as expressed by one of the Fathers of the Faith, John Chrysostom of Antioch, called the golden-mouthed. There are other edifying descriptions of woman as sex-voiced by saints, who from their labours rest in Paradise: consider the gems pronounced by Tertullian, Jerome, Anastasius, and Clement, all godly and righteous men while dwelling on earth, according to the perverted values of a depraved faith. It is something to turn to a land which has effectively curbed the activities of the priesthood, a land—

Where kings no longer league against the rights of man,  
And priests no longer barter with the name of God,

and consider the position of woman in Soviet Russia.

In this article it is my earnest endeavour to dissipate the smoke-screen of mendacity which is, with deliberation, thrown up by the Press in order to disguise its fears and delude its credulous readers. I have drawn upon the writings of Saslavsky, Boross, and other contributors to the pages of International Press Correspondence, for much of the material of which this article is composed, and also to my own study of Soviet Russia.

When the combined allied forces circulated the base slander about the nationalization of women by the unspeakable Bolsheviks, Mr. Winston Churchill declaimed against what he termed, in the House of Commons, "this bloody baboonery," while bishops, priests and others proclaimed, with loud voices and shameless untruth, that Communism destroyed marriage and the family. The enemies of Soviet Russia assumed as one of their hypocritical poses that of defenders of the sanctity of marriage and the purity of the family. They endeavoured, with considerable success, to inflame the minds of the dwellers in Suburbia with wild tales about the defilement of womanhood, and filled the pages of the Press with reports of the workers in Russia sharing their wives as common property. A few months ago the Archbishop of Canterbury informed the House of Lords that the spectre of starvation walked the streets of Kiev, and the inhabitants were reduced to eating the corpses of their young!!! Those who know the state of that city, at the present time, will gaze in blank amaze at such a statement, and conjecture as to the limits of human credulity. It is recorded that a cynical Roman Cardinal once remarked, "Populus vult decipi: decipiatur." The Press of our day and age appears to have adopted that apothegm for its motto.

Does Communism destroy the ordinary form of the family? Undoubtedly it does, but this does not mean that it destroys the family as such. On the contrary, it creates for the first time the possibility of a real family among the people. To-day the family of the worker in the U.S.S.R. can be compared to the family in other lands as an already existing and developing fact, despite the gloomy prophecies of the priests and their dupes. Does the family exist in Russia, or has it been replaced by a disorderly, lawless community of men, women and children, similar to the hordes of primitive mankind?

Before discussing this question it will be well to consider the family as it exists outside Soviet Russia, and as it existed in the towns and villages of Tsarist Russia. Even the publicists of other lands are compelled to admit the profound crisis in the family under their various forms of government, a crisis which is evident in whatever direction we look: in the constant increase of prostitution, in the increasing num-

ber of prosecutions for abortion, in the upward curve of the suicide graph, the diminishing number of marriages consequent on unemployment, and, not least, in the activities of the Divorce Courts. Human beings who do not know where and how they are going to spend to-day and to-morrow cannot afford marriage and a family. The family becomes superfluous when children become a burden. The family becomes a dangerous leap in the dark, when even young workers in employment are threatened daily with dismissal, unemployment, and starvation. We see that the growing collapse of the family among the masses of the people of capitalist countries is becoming a danger to the State. The capitalist state of society is involved in a fantastic paradox. Every new-born child is another hungry mouth to feed, and the churches are calling upon the workers to exercise continence and chastity, which is as futile as praying for rain. On the other hand, the State needs cannon-fodder, and the declining birth-rate is causing considerable perturbation among the governing classes. Germany and Italy are endeavouring to promote marriage by every possible means, a fact which in itself affords sufficient proof that the question of the family has become a serious one.

In Tsarist Russia, Moscow was one of the great centres of cheap prostitution, and could compete with Constantinople as a white slave mart. Foreign writers frequently directed attention to the cheapness and accessibility of Russian prostitutes. Unemployment and the impoverishment of the rural districts supplied an abundance of prostitutes for home and foreign markets. As to the family life of Russian workers under the old régime, the old textile workers of the greatest mill in Moscow, the Trechigornya Factory, can give a graphic account. The owners of this factory, the Prochorovs, were known in Moscow as God-fearing, Christian gentlemen, extremely concerned for the morality of their employees. They mostly engaged as workers the fathers of families, as a rule from the neighbouring villages, their real motives being truly Christian, for female labour in those good old days was much cheaper than male, and employment of fathers of families secured for the Prochorovs a constant supply of cheap female labour, all of which was in the most approved industrial tradition. Workers with families were housed in barracks, where separate families were not provided with separate rooms, but all huddled together in common dormitories. They were not supplied with beds, but slept in bunks, erected in tiers all round the dormitory, much like the arrangement of a ship's fore-castle. The married couples were divided from one another by curtains, and the children were herded together with the adults. Under such conditions there was no semblance of family life, nor even common decency, unless it be the resemblance of such conditions to the life of the farmyard. Dirt, drunkenness, depravity and fighting—that was the manner in which the devout and pious Prochorov family, and their paid henchmen, the priests, cared for the sacredness of marriage and the family.

F. G. COOPER.

(To be concluded)

Altars are God's tables, upon which he, disgusted with the meats formerly served up to him, now requires that his sacrificers shall serve up to him his own Son, of whom they (the sacrificers) likewise partake and cause others to partake. The sight of this delicate repast disarms the Eternal Father of his anger, and inspires him with the friendliest sentiments for all who thus sit on his table and gobble up portions of his beloved Son under his very nose.—*Voltaire.*

## Causation

THE inadequacy of the notion of causation as a chain is seen in the relationship, say, of the last nut in the locomotive to the next event, the complete locomotive, the specific qualities of which, *in toto*, are lacking till the last nut is applied. With that, the process of assembling ends as an assemblage, a finished noun. The effect as a whole now comes into being for the first time. But the last nut no more caused the locomotive than the last runner wins a relay race. The locomotive has been built up by a causative process, and rests on a system of causes, sub-causes, and auxiliary causes, all being effects in their turn: the causes lie about, so to speak, in space and time.

It was the last nut in conjunction with the already existing state of the arranged parts that suddenly made valid the completeness of the locomotive, i.e., enabled the qualities of a completed assembling to function.

The state of the world is an exact consequence of the previous state, but this does not sanction us to isolate a portion of space-time filled by "locomotive" and discover its history in the previous moment, even though the last act carries with it all that is necessary for the final effect. Nor is it possible to follow out one single causal track, or even an infinity of the same, each being self-sufficient, as are separate links of beads. The chain, jolted fore and aft, this side and that, with endless ramifications and entanglements, loses its character as a traceable succession of events. We look, therefore, not for a "causal chain," but for a "web of causation." And we seek not the "cause" of the loco., but its causation history. We start, not from a kind of last telegraph pole, but from the centre of a sphere, in exploring which we first encounter the causes which lie nearest, and finish with those farthest away.

But since the whole universe is a deterministically connected monistic whole, where shall we stop? How far shall we consider in establishing the causation history of the locomotive? Shall we go back as far as the unsmelted ore? Or still further back with the astronomer? Or shall we begin with the prepared pieces? And what of the non-material conditions—the ideas in the heads of the engineers? What of the "final cause"—the buyer's demand? And there is no definite time-limit; some parts were made during construction. Meanwhile, many electrons may have been lost, i.e., passed on to other bodies.

It is obviously a matter for human arbitration. It is for us to eliminate, narrow down, generalize, select. Our selection will obviously be based on given facts, but we are the final arbiters. We have to allot boundaries, and these will be rough and blurred. We cannot profitably talk about the geological yield; nor, at the other extreme, can we gather up in one sweep all the history of the locomotive into the last act, the penultimate effect. And just as the causal process is not a simple affair on a chain, similarly the final locomotive is really a dissembled web of effects, though for our purposes a unity.

It is the same with a comparatively simple event like potting the red, at billiards: the texture and strain of the cloth are certainly as near to the effect as the white ball.

Isolable, self-sufficient cause-tracks are impossible. To be self-sufficient is to be independent, that is, isolated; that is, non-existent. It is best to conceive the whole universe as a web conditioning multitudes of phenomena, shooting up an infinity of connected events. They are too intricate to be analogous to

twigs on a tree, too interconnected for a chain or number of chains, and actually too chaotic for the web analogy. Causation, then, is not a simple act, but the whole universe gathering into a new formation at a certain locality.

G. H. TAYLOR.

## Religion v. Reality

WHEN, out of the growth and conflict of instincts, nature introduced mind into her experiment with the universe, she created the thing that may one day wrest from her, her power. Until that step was taken her creatures were unconscious of their bondage. They did not make an attempt to stand up to her, much less to know her. This bondage is revealed in their conduct, and still hangs over very heavily as a drag in the conduct of man.

It is revealed specifically in man's thralldom to religion. His first conscious knowledge that he was something apart from nature took the form of attributing to her the feelings and desires that he began to discover in himself. Because he could be impelled to action in return for a reward, it seemed to him obvious that nature could be moved likewise. Hence his yielding up one of his kind as a sacrifice to secure a food supply. And because he had discovered the advantage to himself of the practice of deception, he began to practise deception in his sacrifices. This was a true gain to him economically, but because of an uncomfortable feeling at the back of his mind that it would not be an advantage to himself to be deceived, he set his "conscience" to work to solve the difficulty. Thus, through failing to realize that there was really no other party to the fabricated religious bargain to be advantaged but himself, he had perforce to become a hypocrite and a humbug. The history of religion reveals very clearly the progress from anthropomorphic fear and bargaining to the higher plane of deception of nature and the gods. And as far as it goes it is a true progress, because it frees man from a bondage of his own imagining.

This uneasy alliance between self-advantage and self-deception still characterizes religion. Man cannot yet say honestly and openly to himself that he seeks exclusively his own advantage in the universe. The conflict does not now exist so much between himself and nature or his gods as between himself and his fellows. Twist and turn and deceive as he may, he is impelled to follow his own advantage. It is the only light that he has to follow. His co-operation with his fellows, his subordination of his own advantage to theirs, is still the following of his own advantage. This is not a mere play upon words. The growth of the so-called altruistic ideas has been rigidly conditioned by the self-advantage of the creature. Every persistent quality of "self-sacrifice" and other regardingness has been moulded and naturally selected, from maternal instinct to the pure love of knowledge. The creature has not lessened itself thereby. It has immeasurably strengthened and aggrandized its sphere of being. And what is more, the ultimate appeal of religion is to that very end—the greater advantage of the creature.

But where, then, it may be asked, does the conflict come in? It arises in the false opposition between the welfare of the individual and the welfare of others. Religion, still moving on the moral plane of deception of the gods, teaches that the individual's interest can be pursued only at the expense of society. To promote the welfare of society the individual must destroy his own welfare. He must think exclusively of others. He must take no thought for the morrow. This is the supreme sacrifice, the greatest bid ever put

forward, in return for which the individual is to receive a thousandfold more than the savage either asked or expected. The individual must care nothing whatsoever for himself on the distinct understanding that the reward shall be everything for himself. Man's religious explanation of himself here attains to the final flower of self-deception.

And the drag upon his progress is evident in his attempts still to find some solution in terms of the underlying delusion. He has even gone so far as to break the spring of life within himself, as in some forms of Buddhism where life itself is regarded as the supreme evil. It is not for want of effort or want of faith that the solution by way of religion has not been achieved. Every form of mere willing and repression has been tried, from hatred of sex to contempt for reason. If the unencumbered will, unswervingly obedient to precept, were the sovereign remedy for human ills religion has represented it to be, the riddle of the universe would have been solved long ago.

Even where man has swallowed his religion with a grain of salt, as in Christendom, the burden on his freedom to pursue his welfare is still heavy. An all-pervading fog of obscurantism and hypocrisy, economically entrenched, envelops him. He must not think of himself; he must think of others. He must not ask honestly why his feelings do not move and his mind revolve in the direction and manner his religious preceptors say they should move and revolve. The way of a mother with her child, and of a man "sacrificing" his life in an attempt to save another from drowning, are to be regarded as inexplicably sacred mysteries. They are to be regarded as things alien to the "selfish" happiness of the individual. And so those further steps in human evolution, that expanded "interest" of the individual in a wider but quite logical synthesis of co-operation, cannot be taken. If the sacred mysteries of "unselfishness" could be unveiled and their true relation to individual interest be grasped, the valid and sincere emotional drive towards the higher synthesis of co-operation would begin. For it is in the nature of men that they cannot pursue an end which their uninstructed feelings tell them is humbug. But when by taking thought they perceive the end to be one with those already suffused with feeling they will feel about the new end also, and pursue it.

With a creature that is breaking free from the bondage of nature there is only the sovereign remedy of reason. It must not be afraid to take itself to pieces, so to speak, and understand how its parts work. If it hesitates, let it remember with what trepidation it first began to take nature to pieces, and how abundantly it was rewarded for the sacrilege of penetrating into the sacred mysteries which it was to be death to know. It plunged into the heresy about the sun and the earth, destroying the sacred mysteries with impunity. It snatched the lightning from heaven, and the defenders of the remaining sacred mysteries now use that one whenever they use a telephone in their strategy of war against the march of man's mind.

The remaining so-called sacred mysteries must vanish also, and the plain facts they manifestly fail to explain must be revealed and built into man's scheme of knowledge. The timid rebel from nature must not attempt to compromise by deceiving himself, or put forth his will to overcome a conflict that stubbornly refuses to be resolved. That way lies defeat, which even the most strenuously maintained humbug cannot hide.

And in the meantime progress is halted, waiting upon the use of man's one superior weapon—his mind.

H. E. W. GAY.

## A Scientific Nephew and His Clerical Uncle

"SMITH'S WEEKLY" is a publication with an Australian-wide circulation. Such publicity for Freethought has never before been given through the press in this part of the world. But let us, without any further preliminaries, to what we have to reproduce from *Smith's*.

In the issue of that publication of February 9 appeared the following:—

It was a curious trick of circumstance that caused two distinguished Queenslanders and members of the same family to make important statements on the problem of evolution, within a few days of each other, and yet diametrically opposed to each other.

Thus His Grace the Very Rev. Dr. J. Duhig, Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, has made a public pronouncement castigating Darwin and Darwinism; while his nephew, Dr. J. V. Duhig, as President of the Rationalist Association of Queensland, speaking in Melbourne, deduced what he termed proofs that Darwinism had a sound basis!

The statement of Dr. Duhig came first; the pronouncement of Archbishop Duhig was later, although one had no reference to the other.

Now compare excerpts from both statements:—

ARCHBISHOP DUHIG—

It . . . reflects discredit on the judgment of men of science that they should treat as an established truth a speculation absolutely discountenanced by latest knowledge.

All the vast array of evidence accumulated by Darwin was unconvincing and inconclusive. . . . As to the "natural selection" theory, Darwin's definition of it was not very clear to anyone . . . no sane man would for a moment maintain that because artificial selection was a fact natural selection must also be a fact. However, notwithstanding the apparent weakness of the Darwinian theories, a propaganda . . . spread . . .

Intoxicated with success, Darwinism was not content with its absolute sway in the realm of science . . . (ii) challenged religion and even bade it give a reason why it should not be despatched forthwith.

Most Darwinians, past and present, have been and are as anxious to destroy the notion of God and the supernatural as they have been, and are, to establish man's descent from the ape.

How the evolutionist can stick to his creed, boast of civilization and democracy, art and music and literature, and still confess to man that he has no destiny higher than this world, no hope of immortality any more than the beasts of the field, no prospect of triumphing over the darkness and despair of the grave, is rather a puzzle . . .

It is, I think, perfectly safe to say that Darwin did not prove his theory, and that, with the possible exception of Abbot Mendel's contribution, all that has been said or written on the subject of evolution since the days of Darwin might be dropped into the ocean without any appreciable loss to the world.

DR. DUHIG—

I have made practical contributions to biological science and have made new knowledge. Think of me in that way, and not as an alarmist. . . . Science has made it possible for everyone in the world to enjoy the beauties of life.

I believe that evolution is just as much a fact as the circulation of the blood. It has been said that Darwinism is dead. I don't know what people are talking about who say such things. All that Darwin did was to demonstrate the fact that evolution had occurred, and is occurring. His theory of natural selection fits the facts so well.

It is sometimes said that scientists are dogmatic. . . . Once you see a scientist tending to become dogmatic you see a bad scientist. Scientists do not dogmatize. . . .

The development of ethics can only be explained on an evolutionary basis. To try to tell me that such a mutable thing has an absolute rigid supernatural sanction seems to be just talking nonsense.

To attempt to seek some other explanation (of kinship between man and anthropoid) seems to be like looking for mid-day at 1 o'clock. . . . I get impatient with people who, on general grounds, want me to accept some other explanation, some other theory of the universe.

belonged to a very old-established theological institution . . . but I follow my own opinions and conscience, and although the fact of evolution is so obvious, these people have tried to convince me it was wrong, and to assert as true things which seem to me so supremely ridiculous that I got out and intend to stay out.

People still speak about the "soul" and "inspiration," but in a sense different from that of the old theology. Those terms are simply a reflection of their ideas of the universe. Religion is only a refined and sophisticated animism.

The mass of evidence to support evolution is increasing on all sides: physiological, chemical, serologica evidence keeps coming in from all quarters. The work promoted by inquiry always tends to confirm the fact and never to refute it.

Readers of the *Freethinker* will readily realize the knock-out sustained by the Archbishop at the hands of his nephew. General readers of *Smith's*—so many of whom have never bothered to give religion a thought for themselves—will also become awakened as to the superstitious delusion under which they have been living, without a suspicion or a question. For propaganda purposes, therefore, the publicity given by *Smith's* to the controversy, so to speak, must be most widely and warmly welcomed.

All the more do we here, in Australia, appreciate the service rendered by *Smith's* to Freethought, because of the wholly unfair attitude of rigid exclusion adopted by all other sections of the press.

The Monday issues of the dailies comprise reports—in the aggregate, running into columns—of what even the most obscure Bible-banger has to say.

Nothing that happens to be said by them is too fatuous or futile for the papers in question to chronicle. But nobody is permitted to utter a word in reply. For example, here is a little letter I wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald*—Sydney's leading daily—apropos of something I read in one of its week-day issues. My idea was to express myself very delicately—even innocuously—in the hope of publication. Still, the letter did not appear, nor did I get even the courtesy of an acknowledgment.

The letter—which I here submit in the way of a conclusion to this article—was as follows:—

Sir,—Two matters in to-day's issue of your paper that I read with particular interest were (1) the letter by the Rev. Ronald G. McIntyre and (2) the remarks by Mr. Eric Campbell at the convention of the New Guard, held the previous evening at Scots' Church.

Mr. McIntyre speaks of the Darwinian theory of evolution and the Bible.

Very rightly does he say that a belief in Darwinism is in no way inconsistent with a belief in a Divine Providence. Darwin himself, I think, would have been amazed to feel that any acceptance of his views involved a rejection of the existence of a Superior Power. The two beliefs—that is, in evolution, side by side with the belief in a Creator—are perfectly consistent.

But that is not the point.

The question is—Does not a belief in Darwinism, with what that belief implies as to the origin and development of life, necessarily involve a rejection of—well, the Biblical pronouncements regarding creation? The two, it is submitted, are in direct conflict. Therefore, we must discard the one or the other. All I wish to ask is—Will Mr. McIntyre state which of the two it is to be—the Biblical story or the Darwinian theory?

Now to Mr. Campbell.

His New Guard movement, he said, was "casting out the materialism of the post-Reformation philosophies," and "bringing back a standard of ethical conduct and spiritual reform—and is bound to win."

Will Mr. Campbell please explain—in other words, will he show by illustration, and substantiate by proof—that "the ethical and spiritual standard" was higher in pre-Reformation years than it has been—not merely in subsequent years—but, in any way, is comparable to the enlightenment and humanity of the present day?

I feel sure that, if Mr. Campbell can do this, he will succeed in revealing a discovery that has completely escaped every reputable historian—religious or anti-religious—that the world has ever known.

Sydney, N.S.W.

FRANK HILL.

## Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### FASCISM AND FREETHOUGHT

SIR,—In this week's "Sugar Plum," bearing on Mosley's unsuccessful Newcastle debut Mr. Cohen demonstrates his unwillingness to face realities and seems satisfied with an armchair idealism.

If Mr. Cohen really thinks Mosley "the most ridiculous figure in public life," etc., etc., he shows a distinct ignorance of Fascism. I agree with what is said regarding Mosley as an individual, but I disagree most emphatically when you say leave him alone if you wish to "kill" him. Nothing could be more dangerous, and the Communists are the only class of people who fully realize it and are taking action.

Freedom is all very well, Mr. Cohen, if we all possess the same opportunities, but as long as the press, wireless, cinema, nay, every form of the propaganda machine, is in the hands of our capitalist class, plus control of the armed forces, briefly, we are up against it. Mosley is the puppet of finance capital as Hitler is of the German capitalists, and given the freedom that Hitler was given he will rise from his puppet stage to one of power, just as Hitler rose from insignificance. Then we shall see if even Mr. Cohen will be allowed his freedom.

The history of Fascism shows that it curtails liberty as soon as it gains power, and the Communists in their open opposition are only anticipating the danger and endeavouring to prevent it coming.

Because the police (at Newcastle) refused to allow Mosley's hired ruffians to beat the audience into quiescence they are criticized, but whilst they stood by and watched the Fascists kick and beat interruptors, including women (Olympia) they were acting impartially!

If we are to prevent Fascism securing control by methods similar to those adopted in Italy and Germany, something a little more drastic than that suggested by Hannen Swaffer is needed. Few want Fascism, but who will stop it?

AUSTIN FORBES.

[We have printed the whole of the above letter, although much of it is quite irrelevant to the paragraphs criticized. We did not criticize the police for not permitting "Mosley's hired ruffians" to beat the audience at Newcastle, nor did we applaud the police for permitting it to be done at Olympia. On the contrary, we strongly denounced the proceedings at Olympia, and also the interference with freedom of speech at Newcastle. Mr. Forbes appears quite unable to understand a Freethinker acting in this way, which means that he does not understand Freethought at all.]

But Mr. Forbes wants Fascists forcibly suppressed because they are intolerant in Italy and Germany, and would suppress freedom of thought here if they had the chance to do so. We rather fancy that has already been said many times in this paper. But it is equally certain that if the Roman Church gained complete control, that also would prohibit freedom of opinion in relation to religion, if not to other things as well. So would, we believe, any other Christian Church if given enough power. Would Mr. Forbes then say that Freethinkers, in the name of Freethought, should go to churches and chapels and violently interrupt what is being said? And by the same reasoning would he applaud Christians attending Freethought meetings and interrupt their speakers? We are quite unable to see the difference in principle between Fascists preventing Communists arguing their case and Communists preventing Fascists arguing theirs.

The precise degree of general freedom possessed by either party has nothing to do with the point at issue. Minorities never do have the same opportunities as majorities of gaining the public ear—that is one of the conditions of their being minorities. But Communists are permitted, in this country, to argue their case, and Fascists are allowed to argue theirs. It is the right of anyone to speak on anything, we defend, the wrong of denying that right we are attacking. Mr. Forbes evidently believes in giving freedom of expression to such opinions as he agrees with. In this respect he is at one with both Fascism and Roman Catholicism. In that case, while he may be a very ardent anti-Christian, he has yet to realize what Freethought really means.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

## A PILLAR OF THE CHURCH

SIR,—The newspapers intimate that the Baird Trust, Glasgow, has offered to build and equip eight new churches for the Church of Scotland. James Baird the Ironmaster gave, forty years ago, half a million Sterling (£500,000) to be known as the "Baird" bequest, the interest only to be used for Church purposes, and restricted to the building and repair of Church and Manse. At the time it was stated to be the largest fire premium on record.

Baird travelling down one day from London was being bantered by Merry, another Ironmaster, anent the bequest, and who bet £10 that he (Baird) could not begin the Lord's Prayer. Baird, accepting, began, "The Lord's my Shepherd, etc." Merry paid, expressing surprise at his knowing it.

Mr. "Abington," the Gentleman Jockey of former years, whose own name was Baird, belonged to the same family.

J. MACKINNON.

## National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD MAY 31, 1935

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

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Rosetti (A. C.), Silvester, Easterbrook, W. J. W. Ebury, Preece, Easterbrook, (L. M. W.), McLaren, Sandys, Saphin, Mrs. Venton, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Monthly Financial Statement presented. New members were admitted to Hants and Dorset, Swansea, Blackburn, Plymouth, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, North London, South London, West London Branches, and Parent Society. Correspondence with the National Peace Council was noted and the General Secretary instructed.

Arrangements for indoor lectures next season at Bradford and Liverpool were sanctioned. The Chairman reported that a quantity of books belonging to the late W. Mann had been handed over to the N.S.S. by his son. The Executive's Annual Report was read, discussed, and accepted. The last meeting of the old Executive then closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

## WAR

I do not know anything that is more fundamentally false or more radically misleading than the statement made by Ruskin, and endorsed by popular idealism, that it is a soldier's business to be killed in defence of his country. This converts every soldier into an incipient hero whom it is blasphemy to disparage. But it is untrue in every possible way of looking at it. It is not a soldier's duty to be killed, but to keep alive. (1) A dead soldier is a loss to an army and to a country. (2) It is a soldier's duty to kill others, not to get killed himself. He may get killed in trying to kill others, but it is the one who survives who serves his country best, because he has removed an "enemy" without the killer's country losing a man. (3) It is the soldier's duty to preserve his life, and by all kinds of tricks, by subterfuges, by luring an unsuspecting enemy to destruction, but outnumbering him, by starving him, and conquer by a hundred and one tricks which in the prize ring would be considered disgraceful. (4) The idea that soldiers are a higher mental and moral type than civilians, will not even be stated by anyone. The idea of duty is not the sense of duty which an intelligent citizen shows towards an ideal irrespective of orders; it is a blind unreasoning obedience to a command however foolish and however obviously

wrong. Military duty is ordinary duty minus the control of a moralized intelligence. (5) It ignores the source of both courage and duty. These are not born on the battlefield, but in the field of social life. They are exploited by militarism, but decay if the only field for exercise is that afforded by militarism. Hence the need during war-time for periods of exemption in order to recuperate the qualities that are being slowly weakened by a military life.

Quondam.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

## LONDON

## OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, June 9, Mr. L. Ebury. 8.0, Highbury Corner, Mr. L. Ebury. 8.0, Wednesday, June 12, Mornington Crescent, Mr. C. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.45, Sunday, June 9, Mrs. E. Grout. 8.0, Tuesday, June 11, Rushcraff Road, near Brixton Town Hall, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. 8.0, Friday, June 14, Manor Street, Clapham High Street, Mr. L. Ebury.

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. Current *Freethinker* on sale at the Kiosk.

## COUNTRY

## OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN MARKET: 7.30, Thursday, June 13, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (The Bridge): 8.0, Friday, June 7, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CLIFTON (Burnley): 7.30, Wednesday, June 12, Mr. J. Clayton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Grant Street, St. George's Cross): 7.30, Bobby White—A Lecture. 8.0, Friday, June 14, Grant Street, Muriel Whitefield and John More. *Freethinker* and other literature on sale.

HAPTON: 7.30, Tuesday, June 11, Mr. J. Clayton.

HETTON (Front Street): 8.0, Tuesday, June 11, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, June 9, Messrs. W. Parry and H. Little. 8.0, Tuesday, June 11, Belfast Road, Old Swan, Messrs. J. V. Shortt and D. Robinson. 8.0, Thursday, June 13, High Park Street and Park Road, Messrs. W. Morris and J. V. Shortt.

PORTSMOUTH (Todmorden Valley): 7.45, Friday, June 7, Mr. J. Clayton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. Dalkin.

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Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

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

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

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