

THE  
FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

Vol. I.V. No.—28

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 1935

PRICE THREEPENCE

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

Views and Opinions

Substitutes for Religion

DEAN INGE has been writing a series of articles in the *Evening Standard* on "Substitutes for Religion." As is to be expected, he does not find any satisfactory substitute for religion—but religion. That is, he can only agree to the removal of religion providing it is replaced by—religion. And in a sense, to be made clear presently, I agree with him, although I am afraid the Dean would not accept my reasons for agreement. I believe that nothing can replace religion, or be a substitute for religion, and I claim that they who believe otherwise are confused, first, as to what religion is, and second, the part that it has played in life. Of course, it is possible so to define religion as to make it indispensable and inevitable to everything that is decent, or honourable, or desirable, and that device is very common, both with those who are genuinely religious, and with those who are not religious at all, but wish to lead the public to believe that they are out to "purify" religion rather than to get rid of it. I have gone into this pretty thoroughly in my *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought*, and must refer readers to that book for further treatment. I do not wish to repeat myself more or with greater frequency than is absolutely necessary. But in the light of a correct understanding of religion, and of a proper use of the term, the things that Dean Inge examines and rejects, are not substitutes for religion at all. They are phases of thought, theories of social idealism, statements of ends to which men believe they ought to devote themselves. Such substitutes may belong to one of these groups, or a mixture of them, but they are not religion. Dean Inge commences his articles with a fundamental confusion in his mind, and he must have left most of his readers in as great confusion as his own. Perhaps the result will not altogether displease him.

Muddle

What is the meaning of "substitute"? It means one thing serving the purpose of another, and this sense is definitely implied by Dean Inge. A metal pipe may be a substitute for a wooden one. As Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin, is a substitute for Mr. Macdonald. However it is used, "substitute" carries with it this vital significance, and when used in relation to religion it implies (a) that religion is useful or is a good thing, and (b) that if anyone sets out to remove religion he is morally bound to provide a substitute which will be as useful and as good as religion has (theoretically) been. If this method of evasion is grasped one can realize how convenient it is for both timid, or muddle-headed unbelievers, and simple, or artful, Christians to discuss substitutes for religion. In the case of the first there is removed the impression that the aim is to do away with religion. He becomes not an anti-religionist, but a purifier of religion. His aim is either to restore religion to its primitive, but wholly imaginary, purity, or he is out to remove from religion age-long misunderstandings, and for the first time to show what true religion is. And while the religionist condescendingly pats the Freethinker on the back as a well-intentioned, but mistaken brother, the latter is protected from the charge of harbouring such a terrible idea as that of removing religion altogether.

Conversely, when the religionist induces people to discuss *substitutes* for religion he is playing, not quite a game of "heads I win, tails you lose," but something that comes very near it. The device is a passable substitute for that time-honoured pastime. It removes religion from the definitely intellectual sphere of proposition and demonstration, to the indefinite sphere of moral action and motive. We are not then so much concerned with whether religion is true, as we are with whether it is useful; and the indictment which sets forth the evils wrought by religion is evaded by stressing the good that has been associated with it. Above all, it grants the essentials of the religionist's claim, just as the passing of a token vote in Parliament for £100 may authorize the spending of £100,000. The Christian need no longer defend his faith or justify it. The discussion of what is to be substituted for religion sets aside the question of the truth of religion, and discusses only what other religion can be put in its place. The general conviction that a man must have some kind of a religion remains almost unaffected; and upon that the Christian may so build as, if not to stop the slow disintegration of his creed, at least prevent its rapid disappearance.

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Nature and Faith

Now if Dean Inge had asked the straightforward and searching question, "Must we find a substitute for religion?" the direction would have been given for some really useful reflection. It would have suggested the enquiry, "What is it that religion as such

does, and is it of such a character that before removing it some substitute must be found?" That would have brought us into touch with the realities; for religion, wherever it exists, has its being in a social group, and is therefore subject to the operation of the forces that determine the existence of other things within the group, and even of the group itself. A man may be quite convinced that men ought to be able to fly, but if he persists in stepping off a precipice he and his theory will disappear. Another man may believe, as millions have believed, that to abstain from food will bring him into touch with a spiritual world. But if the periods of fasting are unduly lengthened, there comes an end to him and his beliefs, and fasting is brought down to a level that nature can tolerate. Negatively he is bound to preach a limit to the period of fasting, and positively, he must arrange for periods of eating and drinking. The Christian Church could preach the superiority of the celibate life, and granting its superiority, it ought to have been practised by all, since the spiritualizing of Jack Jones is not of greater importance than the spiritualizing of Dick Brown. But unless the Church had, along with its theory of the celibate state, also taught that celibacy was possible only for a few, the race and the Church would have died out. So also with morality in general. Social—that is group—life involves an obedience, unconscious or conscious, and never wholly one or the other, to certain forms of conduct. If there is any general and serious infraction of these forms a disintegration sets in and society splits up into disconnected parts and, as a society, disappears.

In human society, one may say in all animal society, the two sets of forces, integrative and disintegrative, are always in operation. The balance is seldom equal; sometimes one is in the ascendant, sometimes the other obtains the upper hand. But there is a point beyond which the disintegrative factor cannot go. So religion, as I have said, begins and remains in society. Religion is impossible without it. And being in society it is as subject to the play of social forces as are other beliefs and practices. "There is a social "Thus far and no farther," for Gods as well as for Men. Millions of men have shown the possibility of existing without Gods, but never has there been a God who has found it possible to live without men.

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#### A Real Enquiry

Now if Dean Inge had set forth on his enquiry in the manner I have suggested, he would never have written such absolute balderdash as "Secularism . . . means the acceptance of a low and unspiritual standard of values, and as such is the enemy of the higher religion." Secularism may be good or bad, it may be wise or foolish, it may lead to man's (social) salvation or damnation, but it has simply nothing to do with religion either higher or lower. I am not arguing the point; I am stating a simple elementary fact. If Dean Inge had supplied his public with anything other than newspaper tomfoolery (and what a contempt some of these newspaper men must have for their readers!) he would have begun by asking what are the functions that religion—real religion—discharges in social life. Having answered that question, which would have required a careful and genuinely scientific analysis of the situation, he would, if he had been able, have proceeded to prove that the functions discharged by religious organizations, owed their being to religion, and to nothing else. In that case he might have proceeded to consider what could be substituted for both the functions of religion and for religious organizations.

But that would have been a very dangerous line of enquiry. It would have disclosed the fact that the

qualities for which Christianity is praised by its defenders have no more to do with that particular religion than the phases of the moon have to do with the taste of cream cheese. A man must be peculiarly and almost criminally ignorant to believe to-day that any of the human virtues have a fundamental connexion with religion of any kind. They become associated with religion, but they have no essential connexion with it, either in their origin or development. And if that line of investigation were pursued, it would have been found that the only remaining justification for religion is a purely intellectual one. And here the case is quite clear. The intellectual side of religion belongs to the prevalence of a frame of mind that would now be called insane or considered as a reversion to a lower type. For religion begins in a set of ideas that are now completely discarded by *all* intelligent men and women. The current definitions of religion in educated circles are nothing but ingenious excuses for perpetuating a decaying superstition.

Muddled minds may offer a substitute for religion, because they do not realize that there need be no substitute for a thing that serves no useful function. One does not offer a man a substitute for a hole in the roof when he complains that the rain falls on his bed. Artful minds may talk about providing a substitute for religion, because there is in the attempt, or in the agreement that such a substitute must be found, the admission that religion discharges some useful function, and it is necessary to put something in the place of religion. But the clear-headed Freethinker will recognize that one does not provide substitutes for evils. One removes them, and in removing them permits other and better things to flourish more vigorously. But clear-headed men and women are very scarce, while muddled and artful ones are very plentiful and hold many key-positions. The fools are always in the majority, and so provide the most promising material for the knaves. And most fools are so wedded to their folly that they form an almost invincible bodyguard for those who live upon their foolishness.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Rhymes of a Red Republican

"The kind, wise words that fall from years that fall;  
Hope thou not much, and fear thou not at all."

*Swinburne.*

When Algernon Charles Swinburne died in 1900, a suggestion was made that the dead poet should be buried in Westminster Abbey. The Church authorities, faced with a dilemma, loudly declared that the Abbey was "full up," and proved the statement by quietly burying the wife of one of their own archdeacons within the sacred precincts. The clergy have rare noses for heresy, and they made no mistake concerning Swinburne. But for his very outspoken views about priestcraft and monarchy, he must inevitably have succeeded Tennyson as Poet Laureate. As it was, the honour was conferred on Alfred Austin, and Alfred the Little succeeded Alfred the Great.

Swinburne's own impression of the sprightly Mrs. Proctor, who, when near ninety years of age, "walked like her own granddaughter," is something like that left upon the reader by the great poet's biographers. For Swinburne attracts one as a child, and one likes him from the time he first goes to school hugging a bulky volume of Shakespeare under his arm. Tennyson, it will be remembered, died with an open volume of Shakespeare lying beside him.

From Eton College, Swinburne went to Balliol College, Oxford, when he drew the attention of Ben-

jamin Jowett, who had a keen eye for intellect. Oxford, that "home of lost causes," had little attraction for the fiery young poet, who was already a red Republican. He tried his 'prentice hand at verse, but failed to win the Newdigate with a poem entitled, "The Discovery of the North-West Passage." As an undergraduate, like Shelley, he was a failure. He left the college without a degree, but with an excellent knowledge of Latin, Greek, French, and Italian. So fervent was his Republicanism that he hung in his sitting-room, a portrait of Orsini, who attempted to assassinate Napoleon the Third. This alarmed Swinburne's parents' who would not allow the poet to go to Paris until he had promised to do nothing to undermine the authority of the French Government. So well known were Swinburne's political views, that he was invited to stand for Parliament by the Reform League, at that time a body of much influence, but, on the advice of Mazzini, he wisely declined to give up poetry for politics. Swinburne's only subsequent association with Parliament arose from an outspoken sonnet on the Czar of Russia, commencing with the words:—

"Night hath but one red star—tyrannicide!"

and invoking someone to:—

"Send him howling down his father's way."

A Conservative member asked the Speaker of the Commons if his attention had been drawn to a poetical and personal attack on a neighbouring monarch.

Swinburne set literary England alight with his "Poems and Ballads," although some of the poems had already appeared in the sober *Spectator*, and the austere John Ruskin had given the book his blessing. "In power and imagination and understanding," Ruskin said, "he simply sweeps me away before him, as a torrent does a pebble." Indeed, the volume roused as much excitement as Byron's *Don Juan* had in a previous generation. Robert Buchanan voiced Mrs. Grundy's view in an article entitled *The Fleshly School of Poetry*, and complained that the verses were unfit reading for the young. Swinburne retorted with crushing effect, "I do not write for school-girls, I leave that to the Buchanans."

Swinburne's vogue was extraordinary. Young men shouted the poems, sang them, flung them about to the skies and winds. Henceforth, until his seventieth year, he was an acknowledged force in European literature, and readers came to think of him, with Keats, with Shelley, with Wordsworth, as one of the poets who mark an era. For two whole generations he gave us poems, plays, and criticisms which breathed into our literature new harmonies and a new revolutionary spirit. It is the simple truth to say that, had not Swinburne lived, the reading world would have been largely ignorant of the infinite flexibility and potentialities of English, the finest language in the world.

The last thirty years of Swinburne's life he lived at Putney with his best friend Watts-Dunton, formerly known as Theodore Watts. Meredith facetiously suggested that he added the name of "Dunton" to distinguish himself from the once-popular hymn-writer. Swinburne's extraordinary memory never showed itself to better effect than in table-talk on men and things. He quoted Dickens as readily as Ben Jonson. A great admirer of Scott, he never neglected lesser men. He revelled in Wilkie Collins, Eugene Sue, Charles Reade, and had them at his call. His panegyric on that shy genius, Emily Brontë, is "a gem of purest ray serene." For the Border Ballads he had an especial liking, knowing them easily. Swinburne had no ear for music, but he prided himself on his taste in words. This was no vain boast, for there has been no such

metrical inventor in the English language. He actually enlarged the frontiers of poetry, although men of rare genius had ransacked verse for centuries before he was born. Compared to Swinburne, Keats and Coleridge are poor of resource, limited in range, timid in execution. This is not to say that Swinburne has excelled them in ideas or melody, only that he was a master in the use of a far wider choice of instruments. He was also a rare critic and a sound scholar. Observe his masterly essays on Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, and his beautiful renderings of Baudelaire, Victor Hugo, and Villon. Swinburne could write a lovely Northern song with the perfume of the heather in it; and he could lower his higher cadences to the ear of little children without loss of the beauty of his incomparable style.

Owing to his deafness, his life was largely a sedentary one. It is not the least wonderful phase of that amazing mind that, amid the drawbacks of that aural defect, he could still pursue his ambitions and write his books, when other men would have found existence intolerable. During later years Swinburne could hear nothing, unless it was said slowly and deliberately at close range, and a story is told of a journalist who met the poet on Putney Common, and to whom the poet said: "I see you are speaking to me, but I can hear nothing."

Swinburne's claim on the attention of Freethinkers is that he sang Atheism and made a clean sweep of supernaturalism. Shelley himself never sang with greater passion than Swinburne when he was arraigning Priestcraft at the bar of humanity. Listen to his "Song in Time of Order":—

"We have done with the kisses that sting,  
The thief's mouth red from the feast,  
The blood on the hands of the King,  
And the lie at the lips of the priest."

The "Hymn to Proserpine" represents an old-world Pagan poet deriding Christianity:—

"O lips that the live blood faints in, the leavings of racks  
and rods!  
O ghastly stories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods!  
Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all  
knees bend,  
I kneel not, neither adore you, but, standing, look to the  
end."

Note the relentless questioning in his lines "Before a Crucifix":—

"The nineteenth wave of the ages rolls  
Now deathward since thy death and birth;  
Hast thou fed full men's starved-out souls?  
Hast thou brought Freedom upon earth?  
Or are there less oppressions done  
In this wild world under the sun?"

Swinburne regarded prayer as folly, and he vents his scorn in music:—

"Behold there is no grief like this,  
The barren blossom of thy prayer,  
Thou shalt find out how sweet it is.  
O fools and blind, what seek ye there  
High up in the air?  
Ye must have gods, the friends of men,  
Merciful gods, compassionate,  
And these shall answer ye again,  
Will ye beat always at the gate,  
Ye fools of fate?"

For half a century Swinburne expressed Freethought ideas in his poetry and prose, and his consistency is proved right from the publication of *Atalanta in Calydon*, the work of his young manhood, to the august utterances of his later years. No one can doubt for an instant his passionate sincerity. Hear the beautiful lyrical cry which came from him in his *Mater Triumphalis*, one of the noblest and most profound poems in a thousand years of English poetry:—

"I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion,  
Full of thy life, sonorous with thy breath;  
The grave of souls born worms and creeds grown carrion,  
Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death.

Thou art the player whose organ keys are thunders,  
And I beneath thy foot the pedal prest;  
Thou art the ray whereat the rent night sunders,  
And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast.

I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish  
As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line;  
But thou from dawn to sunsett shalt cherish  
The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine."

MIMNERMUS.

## Early Pioneers of Modern Locomotion

DESPITE our many vaunted improvements, a spirit of pessimism is widely prevalent and it is still asserted that men's happy days perished with the past. Yet, if there has been no real progress all must admit that innumerable changes have occurred. For, during the eighteenth century, the primitive means of communication and travel, so detrimental to civilization throughout long antecedent times, began to give place to those more modern methods which have enormously increased the comforts and conveniences of life.

Roads, as the old Romans realized, represent a primary element in the material progress and prosperity of a people. In their absence, a country remains undeveloped, and even in England, it was not until the reign of Charles II., that the initiation of the turnpike system made possible the use of a few arterial roads for the precarious passage of wheel traffic.

One notable achievement of the succeeding century was the establishment or restoration of an important network of roads. Bitter were the complaints then made concerning the appalling conditions of travel. Still, improvements were slowly proceeding. The growing population and the increasing requirements of industry and commerce demanded facilities for transport previously non-existent.

Many accidents occurred, and early passengers in the coaches and other conveyances were hurt or inconvenienced. Such mishaps were immediately instanced as evidence of the degeneracy of the age. But an observant contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1754, expressed a saner opinion when he wrote that: "Were the same persons who made the full tour of England thirty years ago to make a fresh one now, and a third some years hence, they would find themselves in a land of enchantment. England is no more like what England was, than it resembles Borneo or Madagascar."

Arthur Young's imprecations concerning the roads in his day are classical. Yet, when one critically examines his propagandist utterances, quite apart from the cogent testimony supplied by independent witnesses, it becomes plainly evident that had as most of the roads still were, they had recently been far worse, and were steadily becoming much better.

Daniel De Foe was an earnest advocate of reform, and he strove to make his countrymen more familiar with the scenic beauties of their native land. Indeed, his celebrated *Tour* (1740-6) became the parent of many later volumes dealing with this theme. Two fairly good roads then existed, one from London to York, and another running through Northampton, Leicester and Nottingham. But De Foe deplors the treacherous nature of the soft clay district in the Midlands, where the roads were little else than ruts. Yet, much vehicular traffic struggled through them

although many horses met their death, and De Foe suggests that the "new building of causeways, as the Romans did of old, seems to me to be a much easier expense." He commended the new turnpikes and especially those serving the eastern and northern home counties from London. He hopefully anticipated the day when the public "may see the roads all over England restored in their time to such perfection, that travelling and carriage of goods will be much more easy both to man and horse, than ever it was since the Romans lost this island." When we contemplate the stupendous system of roadways now in existence, which the constantly increasing requirements of motor traffic have made imperative, we may visualize the revolutionary changes brought about since the century of De Foe.

The construction and maintenance charges of the roads were defrayed by toll-gate payments which were generally denounced by the travelling community as excessive. On the other hand, the Turnpike Trustees complained of the scandalous manner in which the tolls were evaded. This, Mr. H. L. Beales remarks, "was positively encouraged by the tenderness of Parliament to the interests of the gentry. The extra tolls fixed in 1741 upon vehicles whose weight was over three tons did not apply to gentlemen's carriages, farmer's vehicles, or wagons in the King's service. Perhaps too, the desire to exempt from payment those best able to pay, had something to do with the popular hostility to the extortions of the toll-gate officer. An Act of 1728 imposed stringent penalties for attacks on the toll-gates—three months' imprisonment and a whipping for the first offence, and seven years' transportation for the second. A little later the death penalty was introduced."

Nevertheless, turmoil continued, and armed attacks, in which hundreds participated were common. Riots sometimes lasted for several days together, and the turnpike houses were frequently demolished, when the military were called out to restore order. These were ordinary demonstrations, but those in high office were not above the avoidance of payment when a favourable opportunity occurred. The times were bad for the bottom dog, and no doubt the populace resented charges made for the use of the King's highway, previously free to all. Moreover, it became common knowledge that the turnpike trusts were not always too honest in their administration of the funds committed to their care.

Marked as the improvements were, the roads remained in many places so atrociously bad that travellers who journeyed over them were nearly shaken to pieces. Naturally, the more rural areas were in the worse plight. It is remarkable that a blind engineer, John Metcalfe, became the means of immense improvements in transit through the industrialized districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, where he secured several contracts for the construction of roads. Ultimately Metcalfe surveyed and built 500 miles of reliable roadways in those counties. He is eminently entitled to remembrance as an able innovator, but, even with his and others' achievements, canals and rivers were still required to relieve the roads and reduce the costs of transport.

With the widening, strengthening and straightening of the communications, wheel traffic was greatly transformed. The new mail coaches became the world's wonder, as they proved of greater speed and safety than the earlier stage-coaches, and with good horses the distance between London and Bath could be covered in a day. Tedious as this seems, to our age of rapid railway and motor speed, it appeared an astonishing achievement to De Quincey. "Seated on the old mail coach," he says, "we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity . . . we

heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed, was not the product of blind insensate agencies . . . but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest among brutes, in his dilated nostrils, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs."

A halo has long encircled the head of the highwayman, whose exploits have been given a romantic air by the *Beggar's Opera*, *Paul Clifford*, the tale of Dick Turpin, and other products of imagination. Despite their questionable calling, highwaymen have been depicted as brave and chivalrous heroes. Careful study of contemporary publications, however, has led Mr. Beales to the conclusion that the average highwayman was an unmitigated scamp. A few might at times display redeeming features, "but as a rule the 'gentlemen of the road' had no compunction and robbed the poor postman and toll-house keeper as readily as the quality. He was not invariably successful, for the intended victims were sometimes sufficiently courageous and sufficiently well-armed to defend themselves; but at all times he was an intolerable nuisance and a source of apprehension to the peaceful traveller, who saw nothing romantic in having his journey interrupted and his pocket picked." (*Travel and Communications*, in *Johnson's England*, Clarendon Press, 1933).

The insanitary rookeries and taverns in Clare Market, which stood near the present site of Kingsway, were a favourite retreat for cutpurses who pursued their calling near the many heaths and commons adjoining London. Nor were they indifferent to unconsidered trifles to be picked up from the docks and warehouses along the river, while pickpockets were ever active among the theatre-going crowds.

In the eighteenth century the roadside inns were indispensable to the traveller and, like those of to-day, might be considered good, bad and indifferent. The inns of Manchester had an evil reputation. At Wainstead one is mentioned as "dirty and impertinent," while the "George," at Winchester, was "dirty and dear, but civil." Occasionally the vermin prevented the guests from obtaining sleep, however weary they were, but by the end of George III.'s reign inns were immensely improved. Many new ones were erected, and old ones rebuilt, and the requirements of travellers received greater consideration. Some of the hostleries doubtlessly earned the praise implied in Shenstone's celebrated lines:—

"Who-e'er has travelled life's dull round,  
Where'er his stages may have been,  
May sigh to think he still has found  
The warmest welcome at an inn."

Various eighteenth century writers speak well of mine host; others, however, constantly complain of exorbitant charges and miserable attendance. At Windsor, Pastor Moritz, a pedestrian, was shown into a chamber which "much resembled a prison for malefactors," and when he refused it, he was rudely advised to walk to Slough and get something more to his taste. But he found another inn in Windsor where the landlord was civil, although the waiter and chambermaid were insufferably insolent. He was constrained to sleep with a drunken man, and the waiter displayed an open contempt for his apparent poverty. Yet he expected his tip. "I gave him threehalfpence," remarks Moritz, "on which he saluted me with the heartiest, 'God damn you, Sir!' I have ever heard. At the door stood the cross maid, who also accosted me with 'pray remember the chambermaid!' Yes, yes, said I, I shall long remember your most ill-mannered behaviour and shameful incivility; and so I gave her nothing."

The Hanoverian Age was also signalized by the development of inland waterways. Rivers were rendered available for boats and barges, and then

came the cutting of canals. These departures accelerated the growth of Liverpool and other ports, whose colonial trade in cotton, sugar, tobacco and slaves, was widely extended. Among other enterprises was the construction of the famous Bridgewater Canal, with capital furnished by the Duke of Bridgewater, which enabled the wheelwright, Brindley, to exercise his engineering genius.

A famine in coal and other essentials was long endured in isolated districts, but this was now banished. The canals now conveyed many utilities within purchasing distance, previously unattainable, except at prohibitive prices. As Pennant noted in 1782: "Places which rarely knew the use of coal are plentifully supplied with that essential article upon reasonable terms; and what is of still greater public utility, the monopolizers of corn are prevented from exercising their infamous trade; for the communication being opened between Liverpool, Bristol, and Hull, and the line of canal being through counties abundant in grain, it affords a conveyance in corn unknown to past ages. At present, nothing but a general dearth can create a scarcity in any part adjacent to this extensive work."

T. F. PALMER.

## "The Unfolding Universe"

IN the preface to his latest book\* Mr. Findlay rather disarms criticism by declaring that it "is not written for the novice, but for those who accept the reality of psychic phenomena, and are prepared seriously to think out its implications, its effect on old ideas, and how it must influence thought in the future." I am not exactly a novice, and I certainly do *not* accept psychic phenomena if by that term is meant the survival of human personality after death, and the power of the survivors to cause things to happen in this old world of ours. So what am I to do? Mr. Findlay is such an earnest believer, so sure of his "facts," and so anxious to get them "over" to a hostile or unbelieving world, that it looks as if anybody who still disbelieves after reading this book and his two preceding ones is simply beyond argument and not worth bothering about. But there are, let me assure Mr. Findlay, quite a number of us, and we do not find it particularly difficult to dissent even from him. At least, I certainly do not.

Like so many of his predecessors in "spirit" belief, Mr. Findlay is very strongly opposed to orthodox Christianity. A good deal of his book is consequently devoted to a systematic attack on this religion; and, with the exception of a few errors which do not particularly matter—such as, for example, the statement that "Thomas Paine was the first man in Christendom to advocate the abolition of slavery"—the author follows familiar lines. He cannot really go far wrong; for the case for Freethought has been well put by many fine writers, and a journal like this one has had, in the past so many brilliant articles against orthodoxy, that it is by no means difficult to give a *précis* of the principal arguments. This Mr. Findlay has done; and as his book will reach a good many pious believers, it will do excellent work in showing that Christianity is not only untrue, but is based on all sorts of myths, legends and pagan superstitions. Moreover, he cites as his authorities such works as the *Golden Bough*, Grant Allen's *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, Massey's *Beginnings and Ancient Egypt*, Robertson's *Pagan Christs and Christianity and Mythology*, and many others—

\* *The Unfolding Universe*, J. Arthur Findlay. Rider & Co. 7s. 6d. net.

which is all to the good, and may lead some of his readers to study the case against Christianity for themselves.

On the question of the historicity of Jesus, Mr. Findlay plumps entirely for the man as against the God. "Scholars," he tells us, "are approaching unanimity that a man named Jesus did live about the time commonly accepted"; but as Mr. Findlay does not tell us the names of these scholars, it is difficult to say on what grounds they throw over the god in favour of the man. It is true we are sent to the works of Burkitt, Streeter, and Conybeare. But the first two surely believe in the god; and Conybeare (whose book the *Historical Christ*, should have been called the *Hysterical Conybeare*), at least on this question, can hardly be called a "scholar." Moreover, Mr. Findlay gets a little confused; for in one breath he says, that "if Jesus had never lived on earth there would have been no Paul" (he probably means no *writings* of Paul); and in another, he says, "Jesus is not an historical character"—a statement that had to be qualified by a reference as to what is meant by "historical."

Of course, if one believes Paul and everything he wrote as credible and authentic, there is an end of the matter. Mr. Findlay certainly considers Christianity to have been almost wholly founded by Paul, and he insists that Jesus (that is, the Jesus Mr. Findlay believes in) had nothing to do with it. He gives Harnack's "reconstruction" of the (more or less) "original" gospel; but nearly all these "reconstructions" are pure conjecture, and perhaps would never have been attempted but for the fact that so many apologists are moving heaven and earth to find some safe ground for an historical Jesus. As I have more than once indicated, if only Christians can save Jesus the man, it will not be too difficult to claim him as *almost* divine—even perhaps really Divine. And that is pretty near to God anyway.

Mr. Findlay devotes a complete chapter to "Jesus or Christ." All those things attributed to Jesus Christ which he does not like he says Christ is responsible for; all that he does like he claims belong to the real Jesus (*his* Jesus). He says:—

Jesus stands for a martyr, a reformer, and for one who suffered for his convictions. . . .

Jesus taught us to look on God as our Father in Heaven who pities us. . . .

Jesus taught the brotherhood of man. . . .

Jesus taught love, charitableness, loving-kindness, and long-suffering. . . .

Jesus stands for unity. . . . Christ stands for dis-sension, the Church, dogma, for very God of very God, for the persecution of the Jews, and is responsible for the statement, "He who hates not his father and mother . . . cannot be my disciple." . . .

I am very sorry, but on looking up my New Testament, I find that nearly all the nasty things were actually said by *Jesus*; so that Freethinkers should be wary of accepting such statements on Mr. Findlay's authority. But the *real* reason he prefers Jesus to Christ is because "Christianity stands for what Christ stood for. Spiritualism stands for what Jesus stands for, for what he preached, and for which he suffered and died." And he adds, "If I were asked to give an impartial description, in a word, of what Jesus was on earth, I would say that he approached more nearly in his beliefs and teachings to the seven principles of Spiritualism than to anything else I know." Of course, Mr. Findlay is a Spiritualist, therefore Jesus must be one or nearly one. Had Mr. Findlay been a vegetarian, a business man, a Communist, a poet, an opera composer, or a humorist, Jesus would have been exactly the same. Was it not Mr. Bruce Barton, an American business man, who wrote *The Man Whom*

*Nobody Knows* (except Mr. Barton) who found Jesus not merely a fine humorist, but the greatest Business Boss the world ever produced?

As a "Rationalist," Mr. Findlay, using his reason, became a Spiritualist; and as a Spiritualist, he wishes "to extend the bounds of knowledge of the Materialist." In fact, we Materialists have "only part of the truth." I regret not having the space to deal with his arguments against Materialism, but they are familiar to anyone who has—as I have—been reading Spiritualist literature for many years. Mr. Findlay rests his case for Spiritualism on "six classes of phenomena"—clairaudience, clairvoyance, psychic photography, pencil writing, Direct Voice, and materialization. To deal with each in detail is beyond the scope of a review. I can only say here that of the many shameless frauds that have infected mankind, about the biggest is spirit photography. There never has been a genuine spirit photograph, and I cannot put that statement more clearly. Pencil writing certainly takes place, but no one yet has proved it has any connexion whatever with "Etheria"—the name which Mr. Findlay prefers to the old "Summerland"—or human "survival."

Nor do I agree that the only thing we lose at death is our "physical" body, while we ourselves survive, as Mr. Findlay maintains. The "proof" given by him in support may convince him; but I have read quite as much proof of the survival of our souls in the Christian heaven (and hell) as he gives us of their survival in "Etheria," which, he declares, "greatly resembles our earth." He believes "the Yogis have the power of projecting their etheric bodies and minds to any devised place." I do not. I have read a great deal of the Yogis, but they seem to have always shirked a demonstration of their wonderful powers before European conjurers—who, incidentally, mystified them with the simplest school-boy tricks.

Whether the average unbeliever will be helped by the various diagrams which illustrate "greater suns," "greater worlds," etc., I do not know. They seem to me to be as devoid of anything useful as are many of Mr. Findlay's arguments in favour of "Etheria." These arguments may be, as he says, "based on evidence and experience"; but belief in Spiritualism requires a little more proof than bare assertion, especially in view of the fact that almost every medium before the public in the past has been caught out in fraud. He himself believes that "Walter, the deceased brother of Margery Crandon, broadcasted his voice over the wireless," and it was heard both in America and in this country. If the broadcast voice was as genuine as were Walter's "thumbprints," I can only express my deep sympathy for Mr. Findlay. Can he possibly believe in "Walter"?

With regard to his "Coming World Religion," and the "Church of the Future," I am afraid I have little sympathy with the establishment of such laudable objects. *We oppose all religions and religious Churches.* If he has not discovered that, his reading of Freethought has been in vain.

H. CUTNER.

I believe in the future union of all people, and I call for it with that ardent charity for humanity which, formed in the Latin conscience of the period of Epictetus and Seneca, and, for so many centuries extinguished under European barbarity, is once again revived in the hearts of the highest of our modern days. It is in vain that I shall be told this union is only the illusion of desires and dreams; desire creates life and the future takes care to realize the dreams of philosophers.

Anatole France.

## Episode at the Gates

A MONIST died and, to his considerable surprise, went to Heaven.

"Come in, my dear fellow, come in!" exclaimed Saint Peter, springing to his feet and heaving open the pearly gates.

"Before I go in," the Monist demurred, cautiously, "I would like to know who are in before me. For I am temperamentally a lover of good company—wide-awake stimulating company—and, without any derogation to your jovial self, I am uncertain whether I would be in my element within your portals."

"The company within," smiled Saint Peter, "is the very best. Take it from me, my boy, the very best."

"I am glad to hear it. Have you, let us say, any of the great philosophers within?"

"Did you ever hear of a philosopher who was able to take time off from chasing his own tail to consider eternal things?" demanded the Saint.

"I am sure you will have plenty of the aesthetes—the artists, the musicians, the poets, who have enriched life for millions of their fellows," the Monist pursued.

"All art is a carnal abomination, and all its devotees are saturated with the Pride of Life—not to speak of more unmentionable evils," Peter explained not unkindly.

"Have you any lawyers?—a choice lot of men are lawyers."

"Of all classes of men it is lawyers who, by reason of much balancing between the true and the false, have utterly confounded themselves."

"Dear me! I am sure you have a large selection of medical men, at any rate."

"The doctors, poor wretches," said the Saint with a sincere sigh, "are always too busy saving the bodies of their fellow-men to spare a thought to the salvation of their own souls."

"Even I," the Monist admitted, "am not so optimistic as to expect you to have any financiers."

"For once," Peter smiled, "you are right."

"As for the scientists—" the Monist hesitated.

"A murrain on those blackguards," Peter snorted.

"As much as my job is worth to let one of them within smelling distance of the gates."

The Monist was frankly at a loss. After a pause, he resumed:—

"I remember that one or two of my friends were most devout Christians. They"—he mentioned their names—"are with you, I know."

"Ha! ha!" Peter laughed outright. "A man of your scholarship ought to be aware that no Christian, professional or lay, has entered Heaven during the last sixteen hundred years."

"Oh come—we're not joking!" the Monist protested.

"Devil the joke, my lad! Not a Christian but has gone straight to the other place since Christendom got switched on to the Athanasian heresy by that Council of humatics at Nicæa. But come in, I beg you, come in." The Saint took the Monist by the arm, and urged him forward gently.

The Monist, however, shook his head and maintained his ground.

"I'm afraid," he said, "that I have come to the wrong house. You will have to excuse me; I must seek out the other place."

A look of the utmost disappointment came over Saint Peter's features. "Well, well," he muttered, resignedly, "if you feel that way, I don't blame you. Not one of you that I take a notion to but goes off in the same way. Indeed, you're right enough: for it's a poor melancholy place within."

"If it's so drab and uncongenial," the other queried, "why do you stay?"

"Why?" Peter figured his beard thoughtfully.

"Why? That's just it—why?"

"Goodbye!" The Monist held out his hand, with a feeling of sincere pity for the old fellow.

"Why?" Peter repeated. A sudden beam irradiated him. "Oh, fool that I am! Hold hard a minute, man!"

He darted within the gates. The Monist looked after him curiously; but he saw no reason why he should wait. He was turning on his heel, when the Saint rushed out again, with a staff in his hand and a small bundle done up in a red pocket-handkerchief.

And they moved away in search of the other place together.

TIERSITES.

## Acid Drops

The Bishop of Ely claims that "Queen Anne's Bounty is accustomed to grant relief to tithe payers in proved cases of hardship." In spite of this he maintains that quite a number of people who can well pay tithe refuse to do so—even "church officials adopt this questionable course." Even Church officials! But if pious believers refuse to pay, surely there is something wrong about the whole question? The Bishop is particularly indignant with the idea that "a Nonconformist should not pay tithe to a clergyman of the Church of England," and says that "this is as good as saying that if he ordered a leg of mutton from a Catholic butcher, he should be excused payment because that would involve support of the Pope." But surely the question of tithes goes a little deeper than that? Did not the Church impose this payment in the first place without any legal authority whatever? Was it not "a tenth part of an income payable for the maintenance of a priest?" It was, as a matter of fact, Egbert who, in 750 A.D., "taught his clergy to teach their people to pay tithes." And any history will show that this payment was rigorously enforced; in some cases, actually the income was greater than needed, and the surplus was used for cathedrals and monasteries, and also to pay for lay vicars and rectors. It was an infamous imposition on the workers who were forced to keep hordes of greedy priests in comfort for the rest of their lives. The ignorance and credulity which made people believe that a priest was a "man of God," someone apart from the common ruck, frightened them into acquiescence. Nowadays, that ignorance is slowly being dispelled, and few people believe a priest is any "holier" than a policeman. And tithe is rightly resisted.

The clash between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Edinburgh, a week or so ago, when bottles were thrown, attacks were made on women and children, and a Bishop had to be smuggled out by the police (who also had to make frequent charges against the mob), resulted in twelve men being fined £10 each for riotous conduct. It was quite like old times, when both in England and Scotland "No Popery" was a magnificent battle-cry. The pious who are now praying for "unity," have a magnificent object lesson in Edinburgh. The curious thing is that there have *always* been violent schisms in Christianity; Christians have never agreed about their holy religion; and it is a safe bet that they never will.

One reason for these differences is that the various sects cannot agree as to what Christianity really is. Prof. MacBride, in a letter to the *Times* recently, pointed out the difficulties of testifying to the reality of Christ unless the Archbishop of Canterbury "defined exactly what he meant by Christianity." The *Church Times* comment is that "there is a silly notion abroad, which seems to be shared in part by the eminent zoologist, that what the Bishops really believe is a compound of pious emotion and unscientific superstition." Well, isn't it? Is

Christianity anything else but a hopeless mixture of crude legends, myths and miracles? And can the Bishops of its various sects even agree on these things? What "unity" is there between a Presbyterian, a Catholic, a Modernist, and a Greek orthodox?

It is said that the "atmosphere" of the Lloyd George Conference was "religious." As Mr. Swaffer truly says some of the speakers "quoted texts, each different ones, claiming to prove different things." Mr. George Lansbury was sanctimonious instead of political as usual. But he could hardly have expected that his quotation of Christ's rebuke to Peter to avoid fighting single-handed against a lot of Roman soldiers had any bearing at all upon the main question of wars. And here is Lansbury's evidence (to be added to copies of *Arms and the Clergy*):—

"During the war," he said, "I sat in churches and chapels in despair listening to ministers urging people to go and fight. I knew that, in Germany, other Christian ministers were doing the same thing, asking the same God for victory."

(*Daily Herald*, July 2, 1935).

We shall soon begin to believe that ordinary journalists (who have for many years shown signs that they READ the *Freethinker*) are beginning to THINK on *Freethinker* lines. Mr. Hammen Swaffer, writing in the *Herald* last Thursday, actually wrote quite sensibly—for a couple of paragraphs, speaking of the clergymen at Lloyd George's meeting who to-day talk vaguely in favour of peace:—

I do not take too seriously the pious platitudes of some of the speakers. They sound all right in the pulpit, but they were of the type which, at election time, support the existing Order.

But Mr. Swaffer remembers himself in good time. While admitting that "much orthodox Christianity is concerned apparently in making to the smug, the respectable and the well-fed, an appeal which does not disturb them," he hastens to reassure his pious readers:—

Mind you this was not true of all the speakers. Nor is it true of all Nonconformity. Nor is it true of all Christianity.

A pious writer, discussing Messrs. Chesterton's and Shaw's recent broadcasts on "freedom," declares that "force and repression are not Christian weapons. In past ages the Church has sometimes played with them." We have italicized the word "played." It was merely playing when Jews, for example, were for centuries, tortured, imprisoned, beaten, and massacred; when thousands of so-called heretics like Bruno, Huss, Vanini, and Servetus were burnt at the stake; when hundreds of thousands of poor old (and often young) women were slaughtered as witches; and when the rack and the thumbscrew and similar playthings were playfully used against the living and sensitive bodies of men, women and children, often for nothing at all. The ghastly story of "man's inhumanity to man" is never more ghastly than when the Church took in hand "force and repression," and "played" with them. If they are not Christian, how did they get into the Christian Church?

The Very Rev. D. H. S. Cranage, in a sermon on St. John Fisher, said that "the history of the Church of England is a chequered one, and is defiled by the weakness and folly of men, but the good hand of God has always been upon it." It is a pity that the good hand of God did not help with a few reforms then. For it is an historical fact that the Bishops as a body have opposed almost every reform initiated in this country on which they were allowed to vote. The record of the Church of England is not quite as ghastly as that of the Church of Rome, which it might have equalled; only as an active power it came in many centuries later. But it is bad enough; and it is no compliment to God to say his good hand has always been upon it.

Some curious optimism comes from the editor of one of our religious journals. He imagines that if "bands of gay-hearted Franciscans, demanding nothing for them-

selves but service could only be seen and heard on village green and city market-place," England could be "re-Christianized." Nothing to do with logic, or history, or science, simply some "gay-hearted Franciscans," and our "intellectuals" would immediately swallow the myths and miracles of Christianity! Whether this kind of thing is written to keep up the spirits of his readers and the circulation of his journal or whether he sincerely believes that the "conversion" of England can be attained as easily as that, we do not know. But we would dearly like to see a little debate between one of our own stalwarts and a Franciscan, gay-hearted or doleful, it would not matter; for doleful that Franciscan would become in the one case and doubly doleful in the other within five minutes. The "re-Christianizing" of England would be some tough job anyway.

The missionary ramp is becoming increasingly difficult to "get over." For one thing we were told at some recent meetings, "the Church wants more monks"—and they are very difficult to get. "The supply is by no means equal to the demand," and the work of bringing natives to Christ requires men with no ties or responsibilities. It is obvious that most sane, healthy men are not going to give up the "ties"—everybody knows what they mean—so as to spend the rest of their lives teaching natives the imbecilities of the New Testament; at least not these days. Secondly, "men of experience" declare that "Africa and Asia can only be won for Christ when an adequate and effective native ministry has been established." Well, if the "native ministry" is anything like that the American negro possesses we wish it every luck. For it is almost impossible to think of these preachers of the Word without laughing. Even Sam Weller's friend Mr. Stiggins is not funnier. And nothing kills a religion quicker than ridicule.

Mr. Maurice Reckitt, writing in the quarterly *Christianity and the Social Order*, says, "It is unrealistic to talk of 'Christianizing the mind and the will of Christians themselves.'" This is a nice confession to make after nineteen hundred years of preaching true Christianity! How and why did it fail? Mr. Reckitt thinks "we have to return to theology," but which "theology"? That of the Catholics, Anglo and Roman, of the Protestants of a hundred sects, of the Modernists—which is the true "theology"? These precious admissions by responsible Christians prove that they realize that, while all may or may not be right in the world, God looks like being no longer in Heaven.

Dr. G. G. Coulton, who has done so much to "debunk" the baseless pretences of Catholics that their church encouraged art and music, has written an interesting study of "Puritanism and Art." He traces the inhibitions of Catholic Puritanism to its true source. He concludes, "If men did in fact produce splendid art, and churchmen encouraged or even sometimes worked at it, this was less in obedience to the greatest theologians than in reaction. If the peasant had his village dance, this was in disobedience to the church." The later Puritanism of post-Reformation days was merely "a tactless adherence to theories which for a thousand years had been honoured in the Roman Catholic Church."

An unintentional contrast is afforded by the recent "Manifesto" in favour of peace, and the ghastly appeals to the worst side of human nature illustrated by all the clerical sentiments quoted in *Arms and the Clergy*. This appeal is signed by many ministers of religion. The significant fact is that while in 1914-1918 vengeful battle-cries are wholly "spiritual," and generally expressed in Bible language, the present appeal has to admit (to quote the summary given in the *British Weekly*) "that it is nonsense for us to expect to find a basis for a peaceful and calculable future unless we—" unless we what? Believe in God and follow the Bible? Not a bit of it. They admit that the solution—if Peace is desired—is that we and other nations must sacrifice something of our national claims. For war, try the Bible; for Peace seek the secular solution!



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**E. COLLINS.**—We do not know what would be done to us in the circumstances you name, but we expect it would be something unpleasant. In the Communist State we expect we should be "liquidated" for having a "bourgeois" mind or for acts of sabotage resulting from our insistence that the individual should have the right to attack anything and everything with which he disagrees, including the State. In the Fascist State we should be rubber-truncheoned or beheaded for not worshipping the "Leader," and in the strictly individualistic State we should get into some sort of trouble for holding that all "rights" and duties are social in origin, and that equal rights for all are secured by a series of wise restrictions. Anyway, we should not have a dull time.

**For Advertising and Distributing the Freethinker.**—D. Fisher, 38.

**C. E. GOUGH.**—Many thanks for cutting.

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## Sugar Plums

The Irish Free State, with the Roman Church in a position of power manages to place very severe restrictions on freedom of speech and publication. But Northern Ireland is distinguished for its loyalty to the Crown, and there Protestantism rules. So the following from the *New Statesman* is interesting:—

Under two Acts, passed in 1922 and 1933, the "loyal" portion of Ireland has placed the life and liberty of its citizens at the mercy of the Home Minister and his police. These Acts give the police power to arrest on suspicion, and to keep persons so arrested in prison without a trial for as long as the authorities may desire. Any policeman may recommend internment, which also may be continued indefinitely without trial. Persons imprisoned or interned may be denied access, either in person or by letter, to friends and legal advisers. The death penalty, which in Great Britain can be inflicted only for murder or treason, can, in Northern Ireland, be also inflicted for certain other crimes, and when it has been inflicted the police have the sinister right of refusing to allow an inquest. A more thorough-going police tyranny could hardly be imagined. It is clear that those who live under it cannot agitate against it, since the police can intern or imprison the agitators, even if their activities are in no way contrary to law.

The growing power of the police, both legal and non-legal, in this country also needs careful watching. For example, we are constantly receiving news concerning the interference of the police with open-air meetings. It is not uncommon when a man sets up a platform in the open-air, for a policeman to enquire whether he has permission from the police to hold a meeting at that place, and if that has not been obtained, to order the meeting to stop. We believe this to be quite without any legal unwarrant, and, indeed, to be a serious infringement of the rights of every citizen.

We, therefore, give the advice publicly that we have often had to give privately. There is no right of public meeting in the public highway. On the other hand there is no legal right vested in any person or in any body to prevent it, provided the meeting is not held in an enclosed place—a market-place, a park, etc., where the authorities have the power to make rules regulating or even prohibiting meetings. But in the open highway no one has the right to prevent a meeting, provided there is no incitement to a breach of the peace, that there is no indecent language used, no obstruction created, and no annoyance to householders created. But in each case it is left for the police to justify their charges. In the case of disturbance, the guilty party may be either the speaker or a member of the audience. Again, a question of evidence.

The advice we offer is this. Open-air speakers should never apply to the police for permission to hold a meeting. They should work with the police in every reasonable way to preserve order and to prevent obstruction. If a policeman attempts to stop a meeting he should be asked by whose orders, and under what power he is acting. This should be done quietly and civilly. If the police decline to reply, their orders should be ignored and the meeting proceeded with. This leaves it to the police to take action and to justify their action. But violence should not be resorted to. In all cases, it is important that any conversations with the police should be in the presence of witnesses, and a note taken of what is said on either side. There may be particular instances where what has been said does not apply completely, but it is impossible to lay down rules that will apply to every case. The general policy should be on the lines we have said. We have prevented scores of cases of police interference by following the lines indicated. The police are usually acting under orders, and it is the one who issues the orders with whom we have to deal.

The papers of July 3 report that while the monks were at prayer in the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi the building was "rocked" by a violent earthquake. The population gathered outside the Church in prayer. The newspaper report says that "no damage was reported as the medieval houses of the town were very strongly built." What a conclusion! The preservation of buildings was not due to the influence of St. Francis, but to the fact of their being strongly built. So that if there had not been a church in the place, or if no prayers had been said, the result would have been just the same. It looks as though the stock of the saints is rather low at the moment.

It is advertised that the portions of the Bible are now available in 692 languages. We have not the slightest doubt that the Bible is equally useful in any language in which it appears.

In Professor R. H. Lightfoot's *History and Interpretation of the Gospels*, which gives a sort of resumé of the theories on the historical origins of Christianity as a whole, derived for the most part from modern German writers, will be found many admissions very disconcerting to the believers in an historical Jesus. For example, a pious critic points out that Prof. Lightfoot maintains that St. Mark was "dominated by a doctrinal motive, namely his faith that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God . . . we are, therefore, to regard St. Mark as giving us, not history, but a compilation of little stories about

Jesus . . . not biographical but doctrinal . . . the Passion narrative should be regarded as prophecy precipitated . . . into the form of historic fact"—and so on.

Prof. Lightfoot "makes a good deal of the fact that we cannot now regard St. Mark as biography," and the pious critic aforementioned comments, "It would be strange if it were." And he goes on by declaring that "the most scholarly theologians have always insisted that the Gospels were not so much biographies as portraits." It need hardly be said in these columns, that this kind of criticism was carried to its logical conclusion in the work of Dupuis, Robert Taylor, and John M. Robertson; yet these great Freethinkers have been attacked, not only by Christian Theologians, great and small, professional and amateur, but also by many reverend "Rationalists," who see in St. Mark, not "portraiture" but actual "history." It would be interesting to see how they would reply to Professor Lightfoot as well as to "most scholarly theologians."

But there is one point we must make again, though we have stressed it often enough. It is, as the critic insists, the fact that "the most radical criticism of the Gospels leads us back not to a Jesus who was simply a teacher, but to One who was a Messiah, the Son of God." That is the whole point at issue. Jesus was a God and not a man; and therefore, for Atheists, he simply could not have existed.

Professor Garstang—the well-known archaeologist, who put the "fall of Jericho" on the map once again for credulous believers—has now written a book called *The Heritage of Solomon*. It is supposed to deal with the sociology of ancient Palestine, but one orthodox writer, trying his best to find in the book some ground for genuine Biblical history, sadly confesses that though "the author has made the best use of the available data, the material is really insufficient for a descriptive sociology, and he is not to be blamed for failing to make bricks without straw." He adds that "in the case of the Hebrews, independent historical illusions are almost non-existent." We venture to predict Prof. Garstang's book will not be hailed as another great proof from archaeology that the Old Testament is packed with historical truth. It is, like the New, mostly a mass of old legends and folk-lore with, in some cases, symbolism worked in; and to call this kind of thing "history" is farcical.

Bolton saints will be pleased to note that Mr. G. Whitehead will visit their town and conduct open-air meetings each evening for a week commencing Saturday, July 13. It is a return visit, and the local N.S.S. Branch will cooperate. Pioneer Press literature will be on sale at all the meetings, and officials present will be pleased to give the necessary details to those wishing to join the National Secular Society.

## Man's Ancestry; the Present Position

ANTHROPOLOGY is the study of man. One branch studies him as a physical being; another investigates his mental development. It is the former we are here concerned with, and so much has happened in the last ten or twelve years that it may not be untimely if we here attempt to set down in summary fashion the present position, for it is no longer true, for instance, to regard Neanderthal, Heidelberg, Piltdown, Peking, Java, etc., men as directly ancestral to us, and the point at which the ape and man line branched off is more in dispute.

One main fact is established: every advance in the study of man's ancestry has endorsed his kinship with the animals. Where anthropologists are at variance is in regard to details. These difficulties are easily understood. The overwhelming majority of land animals leave no fossils accessible to remote pos-

terity, and at best we have only speculatively scratched the earth's vast surface.

The opportunities for variance in opinion are illustrated by a peculiar case from a twelfth century Viking cemetery at Gardar, Greenland, from which was taken as unfossilized skull and jawbone akin to Neanderthal Man. Was it a belated representative of a prehistoric race? Most probably not. And so Prof. Hansen the discoverer, suggested atavistic reversion by inbreeding (known on other grounds). Keith, however, took the view that the owner suffered from acromegaly and giantism.

In what follows I am depending chiefly on recent works by Profs. Arthur Keith and Grafton Elliott Smith, and the more prosaic recordings of the authoritative quarterly *Science Progress*.<sup>1</sup>

The chief recent discoveries are as follows: Rhodesia, 1922; Taungs, 1924 (*Australopithecus Africanus*); Ehringsdorf, 1925; London, 1926; Peking, 1929 (*Sinanthropus*); Palestine, 1931 (*Homo Palestinianus*); Java, 1932 (*Homo Soloensis*); Kanam and Kanjera, 1933 (*Homo Kanamensis*). The ones with no fancy name have not yet been "placed."

Let us now pick out the salient features of man's evolution, and put the various sub-men, hominids, etc., in their proper place in the story. A modern "tree" of man's descent<sup>2</sup> will be slightly different from that so well attempted by Haeckel.

In the Eocene period (go back at least four million years) the Primate stem gave rise to higher anthropoids, and split up in the next Tertiary period, the Oligocene (over two million years ago) into (a) Large and (b) Small apes. The latter thus take their departure from man's direct line, and survive to-day as the gibbon and the siamang. Before the Miocene (nearly two million years ago) the stem which was to produce man branched off into two main directions, one giving to-day the orang, gorilla and chimpanzee; and the other ourselves. At this juncture where our brand of ape separates from the gorilla brand, so to speak, there is one Egyptian Oligocene ape (*Propithecus*) which appeals to Keith and to W. K. Gregory as very near the line of our direct ancestry, if not an actual ancestor. Its jaw and teeth indicate a smaller animal than the gibbon.

The theory that our stem broke up when the common ancestor was quite a small animal is also supported by Le Gros Clark, who has succeeded the late Sir A. Thomson to the chair of anatomy at Oxford, in an article on man's place among the primates (in *Man*, January). He suggests *Dryopithecus*, a Miocene ape, as our direct ancestor. More will have to be known about the skeletal structure of this being, but in this rich period he romped among the branches in central Europe, as did *Pliopithecus* and *Oreopithecus*, his relatives. At that time, and in the succeeding early Pliocene, there were apes with larger brain-cases than now (e.g., *Siva* and *Dryopithecus*), and thus the potentialities are considerable. The ape-skull which is the nearest approach to ours, however, is that found at Taungs, Africa, in 1924, and S. African authorities place him on the brink of the proto-human phylum, though Keith relates him to the gorilla, removing him from the straight path.

Higher still, though again off our path, is the famous Java Man, whose discoverer (Dubois, 1891), finally classed (1924) as hominid, an endocranial cast

<sup>1</sup> This journal shows a marked awareness of the anti-Christian implications of scientific research; cf., the current critical and sarcastic reviews of the recent books by Bishop Barnes and ex-Dean Inge. It also puts the knowing Mr. Sullivan in his place. Mr. Sullivan will be remembered as the instructor of that mercifully mythic figure, the pathetic and puerile Mr. Everyman, in the glories of Eddington.

<sup>2</sup> *The Earth and its Rhythms* (Profs. Schubert and Le Vene.)

having shown him "more human than simian." The capacity of this gentleman's cranium is about 900 c.c. This is apparently not big enough for a Catholic writer in the *Dublin Review*, who denies Java Man the "spiritual principle" so necessary to qualify as a human being. Even though man and ape superficially correspond on the physical side, he contends, there must be some barrier hidden to mere scientists (though doubtless revealed to His Holiness the Pope), which determines the distinction.

Slightly more advanced are the remains found in the Solo River bed (Java), while another turn-up in Java, at Wadjek, is termed "proto-australoid."

At a still higher level various non-ancestral twigs shoot off in the later Pliocene and early Pleistocene. Almost as primitive as Java Man is Elliott Smith's Peking Man, of which there had been premonitory symptoms since 1922. The teeth and parts of jaws and skulls combine Java and Piltdown features, and Dr. Hrdlicka regards the type as a variant of Neanderthal. *Sinanthropus* used tools and possibly fire.

Closer yet to us is Heidelberg Man ( $\frac{1}{4}$  million years ago), whose quasi-human, though chinless, pre-Neanderthal mandible, found in a Mauer sand pit (1907), has been added to by later discoveries, and Keith regards his leg bones as more anthropoid than the Neanderthals' (*Ency. Brit.*, 1927 article on "Evolution of Man"). He rejects Duckworth's suggestion that the jaw may be articulated to the Java skull, thus to give similarity of type. Bonarelli takes Heidelberg Man as a separate, extinct genus, while Prof. Lull considers he may have been ancestral to Neanderthal, who, however, represents only a cul-de-sac, a terminal point, so that neither is ancestral to us: physically and mentally they indicate a different line from *homo sapiens*. T. H. Huxley spoke of Neanderthal's "ape-like characters stamping him as the most pithecoïd of human crania yet discovered." Comparatively much is known about Neanderthal, for the early discoveries (Düsseldorf, 1857), have been augmented by later ones like the skeletons in the Grotto of Spy in the Meuse Valley, and more finds at Krapina and elsewhere. This tool-maker also used fire and probably crudely dressed skins to wear. He was right-handed like us, but his thumbs were not opposable. He slouched along with heavy protruding jaws and low forehead, from which hung the characteristic heavy brow-ridges.

Next in ascent we have *Eoanthropus* (going back  $\frac{1}{4}$  million years or more). A thick sub-human skull, much larger than existing apes', and with no receding forehead or heavy ridges, came to light in a Sussex gravel stratum (1912). Later came a canine tooth with specific ape characters, and a chinless mandible akin to the chimpanzee, yet the cranium is 1100 to 1400 c.c. After years of dispute, it was established by Smith Woodward that the jaw and skull belonged to one individual. This Piltdown Man made Keith point out that we must abandon the notion that man has descended in a straightforward manner. Just as the anthropoid branch of Primates has split, so also has the human stock.

The Rhodesian finds are controversial. Some speculate as to a relic of the Neanderthals, driven south by the European Ice Age, but most authorities prefer to think that we have here a fragment of an earlier race. Keith ranks him below Piltdown, but Bonarelli unites him with Heidelberg as *Palaeanthropus*. There is a bigger forebrain (of great significance in learning) than the Neanderthal type, but the same low ridges. The skull is poised erect on the backbone, and the teeth are quite human, but an ape-like face is indicated.

The major part of a skull was recovered during excavations for the new bank at the junction of Lime Street and Leadenhall Street, London (1926). Keith regards this as a descendant of Piltdown; others look on it as a contemporary of Neanderthal, while Elliott Smith speaks of its "australoid" affinities.

Next, the Ehringsdorf skull, in the view of Dr. Wiedenreich, takes us towards the common parent at the point where Neanderthal branched away from our line, in which case (Ehringsdorf being the less primitive),<sup>3</sup> certain pithecoïd traits in Neanderthal must be taken as recessive.

Skeletons of what Keith considers a new racial type have appeared in Palestine. The chin of Palestine Man is well defined, and the cranial vault relatively high.

Of especial interest are the discoveries at Kanam and Kanjera (Africa), the former of Early, the latter Middle, Pleistocene. Mandibular fragments lead the finder, Dr. Leakey, to the conclusion that here we have an actually direct ancestor to ourselves, and a Cambridge sitting (March, 1934) provisionally classed it as *homo sapiens*. The first "True Men"<sup>4</sup> were the tall Cromagnons, who probably have descendants today in the Plynlymmon district of Wales, and elsewhere.

In conclusion, it is indisputable that a simian mammal was the common ancestor of G. B. Shaw, and of the Whipsnade chimp. Where to start using the term "man" is a point for discussion; the late J. A. Thomson places him in the Miocene (over a million years ago). One remarkable conjecture is worth noting. Dr. Wood Jones, author of *Man's Place Among the Mammals* (1929) suggests that man has a long pedigree independent of the ape. How, then, must we account for the similarities? His answer is, by parallel evolution, unrelated species undergoing the same structural modifications, thereby creating a deceptive appearance of kinship. Is it to be the Garden of Eden, then? No; Wood Jones has no balm for the harassed religionist. Instead, he even relates us to lowly tarsius, a connexion with the lemur monkey, found in Malay.

He is not ambitious for his theory, however. And it is surely easier to imagine that the many features shared by man and ape indicate a common heritage, while our few resemblances to tarsius may mean, on the assumption that hominids and anthropomorpha both come from a being with lemuroid or tarsioïd characters, that man has retained certain archaic features dropped by the ape. In any case, Le Gros Clark has more recently said that the lemurs and their allies branched off from the basal primates in the very early Tertiary, and another branch was tarsius, before the separation of the man and ape group from the monkeys.

We conclude with a quotation from the same authority: "A searching investigation of human morphology leads to the inevitable conclusion, that in the structure of the brain, skull and other features, the human system must have passed through a phase of evolution in which it so closely resembled the known anthropoid apes that it is necessary to postulate an anthropomorph ancestor for modern man."

G. H. TAYLOR.

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I value a man mainly for his primary relations with truth, as I understand truth,—not for any secondary artifice in handling his ideas.

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

<sup>3</sup> See Keith's *New Discoveries*, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> Possessive of anatomical similarities to us—brain-case, thumbs, necks, teeth, etc.

## The "Ascension" Absurdity

(Concluded from page 427)

PROFESSOR H. B. SWETE, D.D., in his *Ascended Christ and The Appearances of Our Lord After the Passion*, says precious little about Our Lord's Disappearances! He says, "The Ascension put an end to all intercourse" (of the kind previously familiar to Jesus and His disciples), "it was a departing from the world, a withdrawal once for all from the whole order under which men live." This is much the same sort of comment as already seen in the *Encyclopædia*, but we are left in the dark as to what Dr. Swete regards as the essential facts about the "Ascension" itself. Dr. Swete "thinks" the Ascension must have been instantaneous: "nor was the journey by which it was covered, one that needed days or hours or even minutes to accomplish," yet, at the same time, it was also gradual if as Dr. Swete says, "the cloud which seemed to mark the Lord's upward way, lingered . . . and the Eleven watched it gradually disappear." We must not blame Dr. Swete; the infinitesimal "reports" in the gospels leave the way open to infinite conjecture.

Dr. Swete calls in aid another "witness"—not, unfortunately an "eye-witness" this time. He declares, rather dogmatically, but illogically, that the probabilities of the matter must "rest ultimately on the 110th Psalm," because he thinks Jesus was referring to this musty Old Testament reference when He told the High Priest and Sanhedrin, "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power." But if the words have any meaning at all they are a prediction of an "Advent" (shall we say a "second coming") and not to a "going" or "Ascension."

Bishop Gore, in *Can We Then Believe*, has a short note on "The Supposed Incredibility of the Ascension." Dr. Gore was always hopelessly confused between a desire to appear modernistic and a fear that people might think he really was so. After asserting, on page 61, that "He ascended into Heaven is the record of an actual fact," he adopts, on page 207 the theory that the Ascension is an "acted parable." Dr. Gore opposes Dr. W. R. Inge's objection to "the painfully literalist phrase about the Ascension in the Thirty-nine Articles," but Dr. Gore's views are equally "painful" as well as incoherent and incomprehensible. He sways from symbolism to simplicity until the reader is lost in amazement as to which is fact and which is mere mysticism.

Believers cannot make up their minds as to what sort of "Being" or "Body" ascended, nor as to what sort of life that Being is now engaged upon, since His Ascension. He seems just to be "sitting pretty." Matthew xxvi. 64 is claimed as suggesting that Jesus does nothing more than sit down eternally. Bishop Pearson says, "The notion of sitting implies rest, quiet and indisturbance," so Jesus is "sitting on the right hand of God."

Revelation xix. 11-16 rather plausibly describes Jesus as sitting—not at anybody's right hand, but on horseback, dressed in what we called "frightfulness" in 1914, leading armies and (apparently for the sheer lust of it) making war, to "smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron."

1 Corinthians xv. 25 seems to suggest a similarly blood-thirsty Jesus in Heaven, who "must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet."

Hebrews vii. 25, and ix. 11-12, shows that Jesus "continueth ever" in Heaven, as a sort of irremovable High Priest, presumably killing animals for sacrifice and "interceding," i.e., begging His Father not to be so rough in Divine slaughter and vengeance.

According to the *Encyclopædia of Religion*, it is

generally believed that "the body in which He ascended was the same body which had hung on the cross and been buried in the sepulchre." This seems rather silly in the face of Paul's completely different statement that only a "spiritual body" can ever enter heaven. (1 Cor. 15).

Dr. Gore says "the Resurrection of Our Lord was bodily-material in a sense, or capable of materialism." (We will not stop to interpret Dr. Gore's meaning). Dr. Inge assumes that the Ascension was "not a real occurrence," and apparently believes in neither a bodily resurrection nor a bodily or any other "real" ascension.

The Thirty-Nine Articles very emphatically claim that after the Resurrection Christ possessed a material body "with flesh and bones and all." Obviously, if Jesus ate the very "material" meal (the Menu of which is given in Luke xxiv., from Fish to Sweets), He had the usual organs of assimilation. Unless the flight to heaven subjected the traveller to "mal de l'air," heaven must be less ethereal than is usually assumed.

In vain we ask WHERE is this Heaven to which Jesus "ascended"? Nobody knows. And if the whole story of the "Ascension" is "wropt in mystery," mystery is the very currency of men who would delude their fellows. Wherever Jesus "ascended" to is from whence He will come back some day "in like manner as He went away" (Acts i. 11), so the absurdity of the "Ascension" is to be repeated (or reversed) in the senselessness of the "Second Coming." Nothing could be more fitting; He went away in a cloud and He will return in one. And Christianity will remain under a cloud until it discards these silly stories.

The origin of "Ascensions" into "Heaven" takes us back to primitive man and primitive beliefs about the size, shape and nature of the universe. Heaven is only about a mile away from Earth, above it; and Hell is about the same distance away—below. The knowledge which began to be set free following the acceptance of the Ptolemaic system of cosmography is admitted to have compelled mankind to modify its phraseology about these unscientific beliefs. We often overlook the fact that nothing else happened as far as theology is concerned. Nothing else has taken place amongst the credulous rank and file in our churches to-day. But the "Ascension" cannot be discarded alone. On it depends the perpetuation of all religious beliefs to-day. Ascension Day will find its acceptance still until men cease to follow the savage superstitions of the most ignorant devotees of antiquity.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

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### RELIGION AND SCIENCE

The method of Cardinal Wiseman was one of the best examples which has been used with considerable effect during the latest stages of nearly all the controversies between theology and science. It consists in stating, with much fairness, the conclusions of the scientific authorities, and then in persuading oneself, and trying to persuade others that the Church has always accepted them and accepts them now as "additional proofs of the truth of scripture." A little juggling with words, a little amalgamation of texts, a little judicious suppression, a little imaginative deduction, a little unctuous phrasing and the thing is done. One great service this eminent and kindly Catholic champion undoubtedly rendered; by this acknowledgment, so widely spread in his published lectures, he made it possible for Catholics or Protestants longer to resist the main conclusions of science. Henceforward we only have efforts to save theological appearances, and these only by men whose zeal outran their discretion.—Andrew D. White.

## The Nature of Sex Appeal

(Concluded from page 428)

PHYSICAL sex appeal awakens a response in all not emasculated men, be they saint or sinner. The founder of Christian monasticism, the Egyptian Antonios, now known as Saint Anthony, wrestled in his disused funerary chapel with imaginary "Scarlet Women," and the flesh calls as loudly to a present-day Saint Anthony as it does to a modern with the soul of Elagabalus, the Roman—the "Golden Lunatic," who found his spiritual home when he was dropped down a sewer by his exasperated subjects. This universal irritant, physical sex appeal, is obviously a direct result of the physical attraction of the one in whom it originates. As Man apperceives the abstraction of beauty, with its concomitants of colour, form and rhythm, the beauty of Woman has inspired the growth of an ideal of the perfect female form, an ideal which varies in different countries and with different individuals. The Turk likes a fat woman, while most Englishmen prefer a slender one; the tall may like the short; and the dark the fair. Within the confines of a particular country, or of countries closely allied in racial characteristics, there are always, however, women who seem to exercise appeal to all whose preferences are not too markedly individual. The explanation is that these ladies typify in their persons a sort of mean between the individual variations of the racial ideal of feminine beauty. Any well-built chorus girl is a type of this mean, and although she may not arouse the more passionate ecstasies of the connoisseur, she undoubtedly exercises a certain fascination even over him, in his more prurient moments.

As an explanation of individual preferences, the attraction of opposites has already been mentioned. Then there are those whose sense of beauty is refined to a point which enables them to appreciate only such personifications of the racial beauty mean as those whose beauty depends on a more subtle blending of parts, even when the feeling aroused partakes as little as possible of the mental nature of sexual desire. The question of aberration may also throw some light on the subject. While it is only necessary to touch very briefly on those poor unfortunates who have some horrible abnormality in their mental make-up, they are useful as an extreme example of, and as a proof of the existence of, individual preferences resulting from some hereditary taint, or some condition or circumstance of early childhood. The phrase sex appeal was not intended to be applied to the objects of such unpleasant perversions as gerontophilia, infantilism or necrophilism, but there are probably less morbid deviations of object which result in individual preferences whose keenness is inexplicable to ordinary men. For instance, a man may secretly harbour, or even not be properly conscious of, some fetish in connexion with female charms or wearing-apparel, and so long as a woman can satisfy his particular fetishism he is not much concerned with her other physical attributes.

The differences between various minds are more subtle in their effect than are the differences between various bodies; consequently sex appeal, which is the result of mental attraction is more limited in its scope than physical sex appeal. There is, no doubt, however, that a man may come across a woman and experience the awakening of desire, not so much because of her physical allurements, but rather because of some attraction arising out of her mental make-up. The poise of her head, the manner of her speech, or her expression of face, may have for him an exceedingly keen fascination. While a beautiful body, if she possess it, would be an additional pleasure, and

the combination of the two would raise his emotion, if he could consummate them, to the pinnacle of human delight, yet the basis of her appeal for him is in the first place a mental one. We can only guess at the reason for this. A man is the sum of his emotion, thought and experience, and certain women may be a complement to his particular ego. He is able, perhaps, to recognize such women through the aura created by their personalities.

The influences of childhood may also predispose an inclination towards a particular mental type. Sexologists assert that nascent sex desire causes emotion even in a child of a year old, and the fuller consciousness of later childhood may cause a surge of such emotion, given appropriate circumstances, to be directed against a certain type of personality, which would remain an ideal for the rest of the child's life.

It may seem that there is little difference between the desire resulting from mental sex appeal and the awakening of love and the desire for marriage. While it is true that altruistic love might be inspired by such appeal, yet there is no doubt that a man might feel nothing but a desire for coition, in which the ever-present physical pleasure would be reinforced by the added pleasure of possessing one who appeals most strongly to his mind. Whether or not love is also there, or whether it would develop with continued association, does not affect the fact that there can be sex appeal of a mental kind, without love being inspired.

A further point for consideration is whether sex appeal is consciously or unconsciously exercised. It can, of course, be both or either, at least in the physical sphere. There are women whose sex appeal does not depend on the factitious allurements displayed by some of their sisters, for even when dressed in the plainest of clothes these women may be undeniably attractive. On the other hand, the fashionable dress of modern women, though few would admit it, is carefully calculated to inspire admiration in the breast of the distracted male. Delicate contours are emphasized by subtle self-concealment, and from the dawn of civilization women have sought means to improve on the natural colouring and texture of their skin. These tendencies range in the intensity of their practice from the modest titivations of the best type of women to the frantic "beauty culture" of nymphomaniacs, some of whom, if thoroughly washed and then stripped—would be stripped indeed.

In conclusion, it would be absurd to suppose that sex appeal is employed by the great majority of women with a view to attracting wholesale amorous advances. The code of morality of modern society being what it is, the exertion of sex appeal is like the cultivation of a garden which is to be admired from the other side of the fence, and not subjected to the trappings of closer inspections. In other words, even when the average woman exerts her appeal consciously, she usually does so more for the sake of her vanity than from any overwhelming desire to be seized like a luscious fruit by the first lusty male who crosses her path. Sex appeal is undoubtedly exploited for entertainment purpose, however, by the ladies of the stage and screen, and men's natures being what they are, the usual response to strong sex appeal, failing the opportunity of a more practical one, is a kind of mild mental masturbation—even though most men, perhaps, would prefer to call it by another name.

KENNETH S. COX.

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Truth is tough. It will not break like a bubble, at a touch; nay, you may kick it about all day, like a football and it will be round and full at evening.

*The Professor at the Breakfast Table.*

## Piety and Pictures

THE Theatrical Artists' Film Society held a meeting at the Criterion Restaurant, to protest against the employment, in the film studios, of so many untrained, inexperienced people of all ages who are brought in by agents, studio employees and others as small part players and crowd workers, while, at the same time, there are hundreds of actors out of employment who would be glad of the work.

The Gaumont Picture Co. are making a screen version of "The King of the Damned." The Devil's Island scenes are being made at Northolt, and although hundreds of actors daily visit the film agents only a limited number of them have been engaged, but many men, "reformed" crooks, etc., have been supplied by the Salvation Army.

Thirty-six revolvers were stolen, and many costumes all belonging to the Gaumont Co. A well-known provincial actor had just got his boots off, and had started to remove his trousers when the boots disappeared and he has not seen them since; but he was fortunate compared with other actors, who had all their clothes stolen, and had to go home in their "props." Police had to be employed eventually to keep order.

Owing to the competition of the "Talkies" with their cheap seats, some 550 provincial theatres and music-halls have had to close down, and it is disgraceful that while actors are available others are engaged; it is also disgraceful that artists, who are compelled by economic pressure to do crowd work, should be forced to dress with the social outcasts provided by the Salvation Army.

OBSERVER.

## Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### WOMEN IN RUSSIA

SIR,—In the issue of June 23, your contributor, F. G. Cooper, refers to Russia as a land of Socialism, where there are no private profits. One might wish to believe it, but how can one, since we have been expressly told in *The October Revolution* (J. Stalin), that in an article in *Pravda*, No. 190, August 28, 1921, Stalin gave reasons why the Bolshevik Party considers it expedient—to allow a partial regeneration of capitalism, making it dependent upon the State power to attract leaseholders and shareholders? Even without the specific reference to capitalism, one might well ask, what are leaseholders and shareholders doing in a land of Socialism, and in any case, how does the State or anybody else attract leaseholders and shareholders in a land where there are no private profits? The wish to believe may be a basis of religion, but a Freethinker should have regard to the facts.

H. PREECE.

### A REJECTED DEFENCE

SIR,—I enclose a copy of a letter I addressed to the editor of the *Sunday Referee*. I cannot say I am at all surprised that it did not appear—but it seems to throw a flood of light on the attitude of a very liberal editor towards liberty. It is admissible to criticize a Freethinker, but inadmissible to let readers hear his defence.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

To the Editor of the *Sunday Referee*.

DEAR SIR,

### "ARMS AND THE CLERGY"

I greatly appreciate the literary flavour and genius for concise expression shown in Mr. Rathkey's prize-winning review of my book.

If, as he hints, the unpretentious work is called as evidence when the Bishop of Blank applies for admission to the Celestial Regions, I sincerely hope the Bishop will, by hook or by "crook," crash the eternal gates. He will have no difficulty in proving that his bloodiest wishes were merely polite echoes of the terrible war-sentiments of the Sacred Book he is (generously) paid to extol.

The World-War itself proved that Christianity and implacable war definitely and easily blend. My book does

not prove that religion is untrue, but all its many quotations emphatically show that either (1) God and the Bible encourage war—as Canon Wilberforce said, "this hideous Armageddon is a clear example of 'being about Our Father's Business,'" or (2) The principal clergy of practically all the Churches, including archbishops and free church divines, should be formally repudiated as fraudulent pretenders in their grave misinterpretation of God's will.

Any ordinary believer in evolution is aware of how religion arose in the darkest ages of human ignorance. War is not so ancient as religion. Religion has never prevented or abolished war—no war has ever yet failed to have its gory banners blessed by priestly prayers. There is no good reason for supposing that because religion is based on undemonstrable theories that it must therefore have attained to superiority in ethics. The contrary fact is in all ages obvious.

Let us at least endeavour to get rid of this vile thing called WAR. If Christians individually and as citizens desire the abolition of war, let them cease to glorify a Book which the clergy can always find defending the worst forms of war. Peace is the concern of us all, not just something which is to be praised or blamed according to whether it fits into an irrelevant theory about the origin of the universe.

Yours obediently,

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

### LONDON

#### INDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH DISCUSSION SOCIETY (375 Cambridge Road, E.2, opposite Museum Cinema): 8.30, Monday, July 15, Mr. Marchi—"Free Love."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"Confessions of an Economic Heretic." (1)

#### OUTDOOR

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, Mr. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 7.30, Mr. Ebury. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, Mr. Goldman. Mornington Crescent, 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, July 14, Mrs. E. Grout. Rushcroft Road, Brixton, 8.0, Tuesday, July 16, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Manor Street, Clapham High Street, 8.0, Friday, July 19, Mr. L. Ebury.

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

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 BRANCH N.S.S. (The Market): 7.30, Thursday, July 18, Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Hall Steps): 7.30, Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture on Saturday, July 13 and every evening during the week.

CRAWSHAWBOOTH: 7.30, Wednesday, July 17, Mr. J. Clayton.

FASINGTON (Lane): 8.0, Wednesday, July 17, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (West Regent Street): 7.30, R. T. White. *Freethinker* and *Letters to the Lord* on sale. HETTON: 8.0, Tuesday, July 16, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, A Lecture. Belfast Road, Knotty Ash, 8.0, Tuesday, A Lecture. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, A Lecture.

NELSON (Chapel Street): 8.0, Tuesday, July 16, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, July 12, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexander Park): 7.30, Saturday, A Lecture. Platt Fields, 3.0 and 7.0, Sunday, A Lecture.

PRESTON (Town Hall Square): 3.15 and 7.0, Sunday, July 14, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR BRANCH N.S.S., 8.0, Mr. Allan Flanders—A Lecture.

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