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Views and Opinions

Again the B.B.C.

THERE are, says the *Christian World*, "two shining examples of the English genius for running voluntary institutions with an almost Parliamentary sense of national responsibility. One is the English hospital, the other is the B.B.C." We think the *Christian World* owes the hospitals an apology. These serve an obvious, and an imperative need, they are training grounds for one of the most important of the public services, and have nothing whatever to do with the moulding of public opinion. Moreover, the hospitals are absolutely dependent upon public opinion concerning them as expressed through donations. The B.B.C. is a government guarded monopoly, it is with it a case of "have it or leave it," and even though one were to use the continental stations, one must still pay the B.B.C. for the use of the "air." Moreover the B.B.C. avowedly aims at creating opinion, not at merely ventilating it. It gives the public what it considers it is good for the public to know, and only under very great pressure does it admit a measure of opinion with which it is not in agreement. Finally, during one seventh of each week it forces the vast majority of its subscribers to use a wireless service for which they do not pay, because they cannot get that for which payment is made.

The *Christian World* thinks that a proposed one day's debate annually in the House of Commons on the work of the B.B.C. would make for a better rule, because "the great thing is to settle upon a clearly understood principle in this matter." We do not agree with this one day discussion. Unless the B.B.C. is to deal with controversial subjects, and there are very few things outside this category, it must confine itself to pure entertainment (please don't tell me that this also is a subject of controversy, I know it). And Parliament, little more than the B.B.C. is in-

clined, of itself, to see that opinions with which it is in direct conflict will receive a "fair show." This covers all political parties, and every form of Government, Fascist, Communist, Conservative or Liberal. The only guarantee of fairness for minority opinion—in this respect the majority opinion can look after itself—is the creation of conditions that will prevent infractions of fair-play. In the history of the world I know of no exception to the rule that any government or any public body having the control of public opinion which does not do all that lies within its power to "protect" that opinion by keeping other opinions in the background or suppressing them altogether. Religion does it to save men's souls, politics does it for the benefit of the country. They differ as Hitler differs from Mussolini—in the use of a different language. But the thing remains the same.

* * *

The Control of Opinion

Italy and Germany should show us quite well the evils of a controlled opinion. Paradoxically it means the absence of all opinion; for an opinion can only be said properly to exist where there exists an opposite. No man with any sense of the fitness of words would say, on a brilliant summer's day, "I have an opinion that the sun is shining." The state of mind in relation to a fact of that nature is complete and final. A statement to the contrary would not be an expression of opinion, it would be an exhibition of insanity. *Opinion* must be—to use a rather unpopular word—individualistic, it must belong to *me* or to *you*; more, opinion really implies opposition. Without the existence of opposition what we are left with is, on one level, prejudice, and on another level, a form of instinct. But in Germany and Italy there is no such thing as opinion at all. People are told what they shall say, and even what they shall think, what they may see in cinema or theatre, and what they may read. There is no opinion in either country because the minds of the public is controlled by the Government of the day. Comparison of conflicting views is impossible because no man can trust his neighbour, and no man has an opportunity of hearing any view other than the official view. In such circumstances neither the slave nor the slave-owners can live with dignity or self-respect. The slave can find either or both only in death.

We have not yet reached that state in this country, but we are moving in that direction. With a syndicalized press a Government finds it easy to control "public opinion" by bribes or by threats. There are not half-a-dozen papers in the country that can be considered as genuine organs of opinion, even as expressing the opinions of those who own them or write for them. They have policies but no principles. The governmental formula that information is withheld in the "interests of public policy," has its analogue in the suppression or

the distortion of opinion in the press "in the interests of the public." And a broadcasting system under the control of the Government would be only a shade better than it is under the control of a bigot such as Sir John Reith and his bodyguard of parsons. If speeches against the Government were permitted, they would be of the mildest possible character, and would, in the minds of listeners, be outweighed by the immensely greater spate of loquacity in support of the Government. And there would certainly be no greater chance for a genuine criticism of religion than obtains at present. One need only consider the cowardly and contemptible measure which the Government placed upon the statute book with reference to Sunday entertainments, to see the way in which a Government would act when threatened with the hostility of church and chapel in the constituencies. No man in his senses would trust a Government control of news over anything more vital than a forecast of the weather.

* * *

The Loud Speaker and the Schools

But there is a more serious direction from which the B.B.C. threatens the growth of a healthy and genuinely educated opinion. This is the growth of broadcasting to schools. A national system of education is inevitable if we are to have anything like an educated people. This has its bad features at its best, but that is the price paid for the benefits it brings. Still the educational system at present does make it possible for enlightened teachers, with an interest in their work and in the future of those under their care, to create a certain individuality of teaching and of introducing varied points of view. But the B.B.C. has announced as part of its programme to extend its school service and the proposal has been welcomed by many who might have been expected to oppose it. For it means the standardizing of instruction to a much greater degree than is inevitable under the best of State systems. To the degree to which broadcasting is adopted in schools to that degree the pupils must become accustomed to one point of view in history, in ethics and with every subject with which the B.B.C. deals.

The development of this school broadcasting follows the same line that religious broadcasting followed. First a little religious service was introduced on Sunday to placate the parsons, then an extension of the Sunday time until finally there was little else, and with even that "else" a careful exclusion of things that, while good enough for week-days, could not be permitted to sully the Sabbath atmosphere. Then an extension to week-day services, and finally the public announcement that it was the aim of the B.B.C. to prevent the disintegration of Christianity. So the school broadcasting is proceeding, bit by bit, not by a policy of armed conquest, *a la* Mussolini, but by a policy of penetration, *a la* Great Britain, which ends in the complete occupation of a new territory.

It says little, too, for the mental quality of the teachers of this country, that school broadcasting should have been welcomed by so many of them, and protested against by hardly any. And up to the present a head teacher who stood out against it could prevent its use. For it offends against every canon of good education. I do not think that many teachers will contradict the statement that even more important to the intellectual future of the child than the actual instruction given is what I may call the "spiritual" sympathy that is set up between the teacher and the class before him. I have had it put to me by teachers who did not believe in religious instruction in the schools, that they had not asked to be relieved of the religious lesson, because it rele-

gated them to a secondary place in the minds of their pupils, and so weakened their authority when giving other lessons. If that is true of the introduction of other members of the school staff, to what degree must it operate when for the living person there is substituted a loud speaker which grinds out its mechanical message without the slightest regard to the actual needs of the pupils? It may be said that the lesson may be the same that the teacher would have given. Even if that were true the objection to it remains. Every teacher knows that in the course of a lesson he has to judge by a number of almost indescribable signs whether he is getting his lesson "across," and often modifies it in this or that direction what he is saying; he goes slow, or fast, or repeats, until he sees by the bearing of those before him that what he has said has gone home. The individual contact between pupil and teacher is weakened in the exact proportion to which the loud speaker takes the place of the living person. In fact, if the programme is to be developed there seems no reason why a very limited number of caretakers should not be installed in place of the teaching staff, and the teachers dispensed with. Nor would the absence of many who welcome the loud speaker as a school-aid be a very great loss.

* * *

What of the Future?

We are not, I am afraid, likely to get a broadcasting station in this country that is free from government control. Its value for the dissemination of news was recognized from the outset but, news is not of necessity education, and events both at home and abroad have shown what a powerful instrument of misdirection broadcasting may become. Yet freedom of movement and of message is not inconsistent with a system of licensing which should be just to all and yet prevent the air becoming a label of discordant and unintelligible noises. As it stands, broadcasting carries with it an actual, and in a growing measure, an implicit threat to independence of thought. It is something to carry news and information into every home, but it is a distinct danger to independence of thought if, beginning with the schools, we have an official version of what it is thought proper for the people to know. Accuracy of opinion is good, but the only way to useful accuracy of opinion is by the road of diversity. Until we have this we have only prejudices, and not opinions, with which to deal. With a standardized broadcast system installed in the schools, and out of the schools a system of transmission which carefully excludes opinions and criticisms "in the public interest," that it is thought advisable should not be ventilated, the next step appears to have been taken by Fascist Germany. Permit only such papers as represent the Government policy to exist, and broadcast whatever news it is thought the public should be told, and, finally, in the true Hitler manner, make it a punishable offence if all do not stand at attention while the message is being delivered.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

In our small personal affairs there is such a thing as righteous suppression of the truth—even such a thing as commendable lying. Under certain circumstances avowal of convictions is as hateful and mischievous as under most circumstances dissimulation is. But in all the large matters of the mind—in philosophy, religion, science, art, and the like—a lesser service to the race than utterance of the truth as he thinks he sees it, leaving the result to whatever powers may be, no man has a right to be content with having performed, for it is only so that truth is established.—*Ambrose Bierce.*

Bishops, Bayonets, and Beatitudes

"Open your mouth, and shut your eyes, and see what Zeus shall send you."—*Aristophanes.*

"In the sight of humanity and wisdom it is better to erect one cottage than to demolish a hundred cities."—*Landor.*

THE Great War shook all the Christian Churches to their foundations, and anyone who reads the fulsome utterances of the clergy and their apologists in theological literature and in the newspaper and periodical press will perceive that they were conscious of the reproach which that most terrible upheaval implied. It had long been the priestly boast that the Christian Religion had civilized a great part of the world, and few, except the too obsequious clergy, had the courage to claim that such a world-war was in harmony with the principles and ideals of Christianity. The priests, with the fear of Democracy ever present before their eyes, had but latterly mouthed brotherhood and peace, but the war itself meant that the big stick of brute force had been thrust suddenly into the mechanism of modern life. The wheels ceased turning, and the familiar hymn-tunes died into a silence, broken by the clangour of guns, the groans of the dying, and the noise of falling thrones. Not only business, but philosophy, literature, science and art, were suddenly arrested. At one terrible stroke we were back in the bad old times of barbarism and savagery, "chaos and old night," and hundreds of thousands of dead men were shovelled under crimson soil. The pre-war conditions were the fruit of centuries of evolution, centuries of steady moral and intellectual advance; a labour not of yesteryear, but of many generations of European civilization. Humanity had been cheated by Kingcraft and Priestcraft, and just too late the poor, unfortunate peoples discovered the awful state of affairs; and were swept to death in multitudes in the horrible hurricane of world war.

The degradation of Europe in coming to this dreadful pass after two thousand years of the Christian Religion was a direct indictment of organized Priestcraft. Take the particular case of the Church of England. Every bishop of that State-aided Church at the time of his consecration promises that he will "maintain and set forth quietness, love, and peace among all men." These Right-reverend Fathers-in-God have seats in the House of Lords, and they have had the fullest opportunity of forwarding the cause of peace in the affairs of this nation. In what manner have they fulfilled their most solemn promise?

War has been waged by British soldiers, instructed by British Governments, in every quarter of the world during these last hundred and fifty years. Whether these wars were just or unjust, or provoked by personal ambition or political diplomacy, whether they were crimes or blunders, the Christian Bishops in the House of Lords never condemned them. We have fought Afghans, Chinese, Egyptians, Frenchmen, Germans, Indians, Russians, and Zulus. None of these fratricidal contests earned the serious displeasure of the lawn-sleeved legislators on the episcopal bench. In every instance an overwhelming majority of bishops pretended that the conflict was in a just and righteous cause, blessed the soldiers, and invoked the help of their divinity against the enemy. Even in the "piping times of peace" the Church of England clergy blessed regimental colours, and christened battleships with the same zest as they blessed children and fisheries.

The cause of international arbitration owes nothing to the Archbishops and Bishops of this Established Church; negotiations for peace have never sprung

from their divine inspiration. The conduct of the Bench of Bishops has been such that it almost warrants the suggestion that the Church of England itself is but a branch of the Civil Service, and that the sole desire of the wily Anglican priests is to support whatever Government happens to be in power. In periods of peace the Bishops have never laboured for the cultivation of a friendly spirit between nations; in times of war they have not hesitated to shout with the mob, and rejoice flamboyantly over the blood-stained victory. The Bishops had voluntarily bound themselves by grave pledges to maintain quietness, love, and peace among all men. By supporting war they helped to maintain militarism which, with all its accumulated horrors, "makes a goblin of the sun," so damnable is it.

During the last great war the flower of the manhood of one entire generation was arrayed for wholesale slaughter. Thirteen millions died, and twenty millions were wounded, large numbers being maimed for life. Ten millions of people were driven from their homes. To the episcopal mind their awful fate only suggested "the will of God," with no cause whatever for honest indignation. Not a word of pity for the destruction of brains which might have carried on the intellectual traditions of ages; not a tear for the killing of men who might have enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, or have discovered easements for human suffering and solutions for social dangers. These splendid men in the pride of their manhood were destroyed in myriads as a sacrifice to the Moloch of Militarism, whilst the priests of the Christian Religion crossed their hands and mumbled their abacadabra.

O most impotent conclusion! If this is all that the highest and most revered clergy can get from their two-thousand years' old creed, small wonder that the Christian Religion appeals less and less to the modern man and woman. So long as men's theological conceptions remain radically unchanged, so long as no new Humanism flames into being with a passionate sense of brotherhood and a new scale of human values, so long will men seek peace in vain. Christianity is a great illusion, and Christian priests are too obsessed with the intricacies of theology to get to grips with vital affairs. The world-war produced horrors and evil enough, but there is a silver lining to the blackest of thunder-clouds if this most awful outbreak showed that Priestcraft is utterly out of place in a modern world. Archbishops and Bishops were so immersed in their own dogmas that they were unable to perceive that Brute Force had usurped the place of Reason. How can we, whose fathers built up in generations of suffering and toil the fair fabric of Western civilization, rely on the priests of an outworn Oriental superstition? Let the clergy leave the people of this country free to work out their secular salvation, without the fears and trembling of an old-world creed bred in the bad days of Ignorance and Faith. Twentieth-century Humanity is outgrowing the dogmas of Oriental creeds, and civilized man is better than all the duties of decadent superstitions. To adapt George Meredith's fine lines:—

"Could Britain accept the fables of her priests,
Who blessed her banners in the game of beasts,
And now bid hope that heaven will intercede
To violate its laws in her sore need,
She would find comfort in their opiates."

MIMNERMUS.

The mind which renounces, once and for ever, a futile hope, has its compensation in ever-growing calm.

George Gissing.

Eating One's God

II.

WHATEVER Protestants may say about the Eucharist, Catholics seem to have always taken the ceremony to the very letter. They scorn the idea of its being merely a symbol. By an official decree as late as 1903, the Catholic Church allows anyone to eat God and his Mother. "Images of the Madonna," we are told, "are printed on some soluble and harmless substance and sold in sheets like postage stamps." Anybody can buy these delicious bonbons and eat a few either with or without their ordinary food, thus performing an act which must give God—who somehow seems to live on just the same, swallowed or not—exquisite pleasure.

There is rather an interesting point in connexion with the supposed foundation for the God-eating of Christians. It is admitted that the origin was the famous "Last Supper." Now whether this took place on the Passover as Matthew, Mark, and Luke contend, or on the day preceding the Passover as John insists, is one of those delightful controversies which Christians wish to heaven had not to take place. Both inspired accounts contradict each other and thousands of books and articles, trying to reconcile the difficulty, have been written. Strauss, in his famous *Life of Jesus*, goes into the question thoroughly, and gives up trying to solve it. But if the Last Supper was the Paschal Meal (on the eve of the Passover), there would have been served the Paschal lamb, which Christians insist is a type of Jesus. Indeed, he was called the "Lamb of God." And if this is so, it is rather remarkable he did not use some of the lamb instead of bread when he said, "This is my body." Moreover, as the bread becomes thus the "flesh" of Jesus, it would have been far more to the point if he had used the flesh of the lamb.

The truth is, the three gospel writers, who say the Last Supper was on the eve of the Passover, had only the vaguest notion of the details of the ceremony of Passover night, if they had any at all. The main thing, the Paschal lamb, they do not mention at all; which is proof enough, whatever they were, that they were not Jews.

Then again, while it is true that the Synoptics claim that it was the Eucharist which was instituted at the meal, John seems to know nothing at all about it. He never mentions it. It was the washing of feet which John makes the big ceremony of the evening with Peter and Jesus as the principal actors in a nonsensical scene. The account of this washing is supremely ludicrous. On the other hand, there is no mention whatever about washing feet—rather a lugubrious rite in hot, filthy, and insanitary countries—in the Synoptics. This is a point pious commentators gloss over as much as possible. And for those interested in contradictions in the Inspired Word, there are plenty which have perplexed the faithful who believe God could never make a mistake. In both Matthew and Luke, Jesus said he would no more drink of the fruit of the vine until he drank it in his Father's Kingdom. In Matthew, he said it *after* instituting the Eucharist. In Luke, he said it *before*. And in Matthew Jesus passed the cup *once*. In Luke, he passed it *twice*. Contradictions, even if they are only little ones, are difficult to explain in an Inspired Word.

Now whether there ever was this particular "Last Supper" or not, or even whether it took place on the eve of the Passover or not, obviously is not and never may be known. But that feasts of a similar

nature did take place very early in the Christian community is obvious from the many passages describing them in the New Testament itself. The participants do not seem always to have behaved with rigorous circumspection or ascetism. They were regularly rebuked by Peter and Paul and Jude. The feast itself was often called the "breaking of bread" or "feasts of charity," but the proper meaning of the word *Agapæ* is, I think, "love-feasts." They were feasts given very often by the wealthier Christians to their poorer brethren on the first day of the week; and it was after the meal that the bread and wine were taken in remembrance of the Last Supper. Such at least, is the account given by Christian apologists; but the *Agapæ* were, in spite of that, purely Pagan in origin.

Roman and Greek history is packed with allusions to the Bacchanalian feasts which regularly took place. They were by no means innocent meals. Most of them were instituted for the "initiates" of both sexes who were never to divulge, under pain of death, the "mysteries" that took place. There can be little doubt that obscene practices of every description were common—the worship of Priapus and of Venus forming part of the ceremonies. Whatever phallic worship may have been in its earliest days, it certainly degenerated into something unspeakable in these Bacchanalian and Eleusinian Feasts. Both Herodotus and Sallust say that human blood was mixed with wine and tasted by all present. Even human sacrifices took place both before and after the Christian era. Evan Powell Meredith quotes Porphyry, who says that in his day (233 A.D.) they were very common in Arcadia and Carthage. He also quotes a long passage from the great Roman historian, Livy, describing some of these love-feasts which soon became general all over Rome. As they were held in the utmost secrecy, and as the early Christians also held their meetings in secrecy; and as both Pagan and Christian assemblies claimed to possess extraordinary "mysteries" exclusively belonging to their particular religion, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the *Agapæ* of the Christians followed on similar lines to those of the Pagans. At all events, almost similar charges of debauchery and savagery were brought against these Christians as against the Pagans. Eusebius quotes some of the charges made even against Christians living in Gaul. Were these charges true? Did the early Christians in emulation of the Pagans, perform all sorts of abominable crimes at their love-feasts?

It is a difficult question to answer. That Christianity is packed with Paganism is easily demonstrable; and there ought to be no surprise in learning that their love-feasts differed but little from those of the Pagans. Christians were certainly tried before great Romans like Marcus Aurelius and Pliny; and on evidence, were often found guilty. Gibbon deals with this in his famous work (Chapter xvi.).

Be this as it may, the fact remains that the communion table is called the *altar*, "the name of that upon which the ancients sacrificed their victims"—as Meredith points out. He adds, "The word *Sacrament* has a meaning as used by Pliny, which carries us back to the solemn oath of the *Agapists*. The word *Mass* carries us back still further and identifies the present *Mass* with that of the Pagans. . . . The Pagan priest said *Ita Missa est*, and from the term *Missa* comes the English, *Mass*. The consecrated bread was called the *host*, and signifies a victim offered as *sacrifice*—anciently *human* very often." From an early edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Meredith quotes a Christian writer on the *Agapæ* :—

These love feasts, during the first three centuries were held in the Church without scandal or offence; but in aftertimes, the heathens began to tax them with impurity. This gave occasion to a reformation of the Agapæ. The *Kiss of charity*, with which the ceremony used to end, was no longer given between different sexes; and it was expressly forbidden to have any beds or couches for the convenience of those who should be disposed to eat more at their ease. Notwithstanding these precautions the abuses committed in them became so notorious that the holding of them in Churches at least was solemnly condemned at the Council of Carthage in 307 A.D.

Fuller details are given in many books dealing with the vexed question. But there can be little doubt that the solemn ceremony of eating God held with such reverence in Christian Churches to-day is but a relic of the famous Bacchanalian love-feasts—celebrated not only for their "mysteries," but for their outrageous debauchery.

H. CUTNER.

Whither Germany!*

"Why hadn't England kept out of it? Why was she going to fight people of her own blood? The English had a blood-relationship with Germans. Their speech was a dialect of German. They had worshipped the same gods in the dawn of history. England. Good God!"

So muses Count Paul von Arnsberg, married to an English wife, when the news comes of the entry of England into the World War, in a notable recent novel by Philip Gibbs on this theme. The closing part of the book, which brings the story up to the present day, invokes the query posited above. In the development of an interesting study, the wide differences of modes and outlook obtaining between these two peoples, their temperamental reaction to a great crisis, is indicated with insight and experience. As exhibited by representative orders, the "blood-relationship" had become much attenuated in the course of time and circumstance.

Count Paul von Arnsberg, the heir of an old and noble Bavarian family, after taking his degree at Heidelberg, comes to Oxford before the War. There he becomes friendly with Edward Middleton, scion of a military family, and spends a week with him at his home in Sussex. He falls in love with Audrey, the sister, depicted as a fine, attractive type, and invites Edward and Audrey to make holiday for some weeks at his ancestral *Schloss* in Bavaria, before the end of the long vacation. Here they are warmly welcomed; and the sequel is an engagement of Paul and Audrey—not without some misgivings on the part of her parents.

Well, Paul and Audrey are married in May, 1914, and spend their honeymoon in Venice and Vienna. All is radiant and smiling. They return to the *Schloss*, while their flat is put in order in Berlin, where Paul has now a position in the Foreign Office. Then Audrey is disturbed. In a moment of impulse the English governess, Miss Smith, confides her fears about the situation in Germany:—

Oh, they're kind enough to individual English. But all the same, they hate us as a nation. I mean the young officers and the official class which comes here. They think we're trying to thwart their destiny. They talk about the time when they will have a naval war with England. . . . They think we are jealous of their sea power and frightened of their big army. They believe we're a degenerate people, not worthy of our heritage. I have to sit and listen to the greatest insults against our dear country. I want to get up and defend the honour of England. . . . I ought not to say these things, I know, but I can't help warning you, my dear.

Shortly the storm bursts; meanwhile Miss Smith has slipped away from home. Paul is called up as a reserve officer, and the lovers are faced by the tragedy of a

divided allegiance. Throughout the struggle, where other members of the two families are either killed or wounded, their personal loyalty withstands the strain and Audrey bears a son. The war is well described from the German side in the course of Paul's experience, who is taken prisoner during the Battle of the Somme. He escapes from England prior to the Armistice, only to rejoin his regiment amid retreat and failure.

The subsequent course of affairs in Germany is set forth clearly, in a way that has serious significance. Paul again enters the Foreign Office, and supports the policy of Stresemann until his sudden death. In the troubles that followed "a new Man of Destiny arose. He was a little man with a toothbrush moustache, and liquid eyes in which there shone the light of fanaticism. . . . He had many hatreds, but one hope and one enthusiasm. It was for the youth of Germany. . . . He called to their young spirit. He asked them to remember the valour of their fathers who had fought in the Great War against the whole world. He called to the courage of youth, to its spirit of sacrifice, to their faith in the glorious past of the German race, and their hopes of a still more glorious future which they could build if they had this courage, this faith, and this readiness for sacrifice. He had a new gospel which he called National Socialism. It would be National because German. It would be Socialism because in the German race every man and woman would be equal in service and duty."

Audrey is troubled over these developments and tells her fears to Paul, who himself has come under the Nazi spell. Her son, Franz, now growing up, is a thorough German in spirit, an admirer of the *Führer*, and joins the *Hitler-Jugend*—Hitler's Youth. She watches him one day in a march past of the Youth, where he is a standard bearer:—

The boys came marching—thousands of young Bavarians who had sworn to die for Hitler if one day he called upon them for sacrifice. They came marching, marching, marching, with their heads held high and with the Nazi salute to the *Führer* as they passed his base. Where had she heard this sound before—this sound of marching feet? Oh yes, she remembered. It was in Berlin. It had lasted for four and a half years, that sound. It was the grey men who had made that noise with their feet, the grey men who had gone marching, marching on their way to the troop trains. . . . Now young Franz was marching with his boy comrades.

A gibe of Franz at his English blood one evening at the dinner table, where some officers are present, wounds Audrey. She takes an opportunity to escape to her room:—

Paul came into the room.

"Are you there, heart's angel?" he said, "Is anything the matter?"

She gave a little cry and stumbled forward, and fell into his arms.

"Paul! I want to die. I want to be dead. We're all marching towards another war. The world is going mad again."

On this note the story ends.

AUSTEN VERNEY.

PLUCK AND PROVIDENCE

Trust in Providence somewhat spoils heroism, to me at least. . . . A "God-intoxicated man" can fight, of course, but I prefer a man who fights sober. Whether he gets drunk on faith or on brandy, it is still "Dutch courage" as the sailors call it. I must say Frederick's (Frederick the Great) clear, cold, purity of pluck, looking neither upward or around for any help or comfort, seems to me a much more wholesome and more admirable state of mind than Cromwell's splendid pietism. And then who would not face all chances if he were convinced that the gods were specially interested on his side, and personally excited about his failure or success? It is the old question between Jews and Greeks, and I, who can understand Leonidas better than Joshua, must prefer Marathon to Gilgal.

Letters of Algernon Charles Swinburne,
"Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 33

* *Blood Relations*, by Philip Gibbs, Hutchinson & Co., 8s. 6d. net.

Education and the Social Order

IN his book with the above title Mr. Bertrand Russell mentions that Samuel Butler's hero in *The Way of All Flesh* committed a heinous crime against his housemaid when he ceased to be a Christian—that is to say, when he ceased to believe that immorality was merely "sin," punishable by eternal torture, and so on. It is further remarked that "there are many sound reasons for not . . . housemaids, but the young man had only been taught that such acts are displeasing to God."

Now, though morality is in essence a purely natural and social product, it is probable enough that in the case of some persons who have been long and intensively trained in a system of superstition, and are otherwise thoughtless, and ignorant of the facts of social history and development, loss of belief may be a factor in the production of such behaviour as that mentioned. Mr. Russell states that he has known men educated as Roman Catholics, and who, when they lost their faith, behaved in ways that must be regarded as regrettable.

But even if this were common or even general it would not be a good reason for preserving silence about theological and allied beliefs (as some unbelievers do). At the best such a course would only defer the moral degeneration. For it is now abundantly evident that before long all fairly intelligent and informed persons will relinquish supernatural beliefs. The correct policy, therefore, is to bring about the change as soon as possible, so that a wholly rational, social basis of morality may be established.

To this we have to add that crime is directly and immediately produced by religious fanaticism, the former war and massacre being essentially continued in the brutal rioting and murder in India, Northern Ireland and other places. Moreover we are plainly threatened by Roman Catholic priests that religious persecution is and ought to be resorted to. In a recent book Father Ronald Knox, the well-known English convert to the Roman Church, with the lately developed confidence and impudence of some religionists, tells us that when Roman Catholics are strong enough they will not hesitate to apply "repressive measures" (not specified) in order to "perpetuate the secure dominion of Catholic principles among their fellow countrymen." And Cardinal Lepicier, a Jesuit Professor, in a book commended by the Pope, holds that heretics and heresiarchs, those who publicly profess change of belief from Roman Catholicism, and those who speak or write against "the faith" should be put to death. In this he closely follows Thomas Aquinas, whose "philosophy" has been so much "boosted" during the past few years. These things, together with the preposterous claims to control education, and to subordinate the State to the Church, render the Roman Catholic system a menace to freedom and rational government, and make for a return to medieval barbarism.

Education, to Romanists means education under their control, so that they can systematically instil their superstition into defenceless children. Otherwise it is to them, if not undesirable in a general way, of little importance. And in any case its progress must not weaken, if it does not increase, the hold of the Church on the schools. This was demonstrated in the discussion of the Bill to raise the school age, a Bill which would doubtless have passed the House of Commons if it had not been for the attack of Roman Catholic members of the Labour Party, urged on by their priests. As the elementary educational systems of Belgium and Holland have been largely spoiled by reversion to general sectarian control of the schools, so it will be in this country if we do not fight the movement (of Anglicans as well as Roman Catholics) for the public provision of the whole cost of sectarian schools.

We are much hampered at present by the Press boycott of secularist news and exposition (though this does not necessarily mean that newspaper and magazine editors and other writers are a body of pious believers; I am told that the Editor of one of the greater daily papers is believed to be a Rationalist). There has been very little mention in educational journals of the outcry against

the provision at the public expense of Roman Catholic schools in Scotland. And a significant little occurrence was the failure to appear in one of them of a letter drawing attention to what must have been the devastating effect on education of the sectarianization of the school system—and this after I had received a proof of the letter, followed by comments of the writer of an article to which the letter referred.

However, some slight encouragement may be drawn from a few recent events. Several teachers' associations have passed resolutions plainly showing that they are dissatisfied with the present condition of things; the *Schoolmaster* has for some years admitted letters advocating the secular solution; and during the last few weeks such letters have been printed by *A.M.A.* (the organ of the Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools) and *Education* (the organ of the Association of Education Committees). So that our "preaching" is, we may reasonably believe, not quite confined to the "converted."

J. REEVES.

A PLEA FOR HONESTY

As theology is not only by definition but by etymology a reasoned knowledge or theory of God or Gods, it becomes desirable to define the sense in which I understand and shall employ the word God. That sense is neither novel nor abstruse; it is simply the sense which I believe the generality of mankind attach to the term. By a God I understand a superhuman and supernatural being, of a spiritual and personal nature, who controls the world or some part of it on the whole for good, and who is endowed with intellectual faculties, moral feelings and active powers, which we can only conceive on the analogy of human feelings, faculties, and activities. . . . In short, by a God I mean a beneficent supernatural spirit, the ruler of the world, or of some part of it, who resembles man in nature, though he excels him in knowledge, goodness and power. This is, I believe, the sense in which the ordinary man speaks of a God, and I believe he is right in so doing. I am aware that it has been not unusual, especially of late years, to apply the name God to very different conceptions, to empty it of all implications of personality, and to reduce it to something very large and very vague, such as the Infinite or the Absolute (whatever these hard words may signify) the great First Cause, the Universal Substance, "the stream of tendency by which all things seek to fulfil the law of their being," and so forth. Now without expressing any opinion as to the truth or falsehood of the views implied by such applications of the name of God, I cannot but regard them as illegitimate extensions of the term, in short as an abuse of language, and I venture to protest against it in the interest not only of verbal accuracy, but of clear thinking, because it is apt to conceal from ourselves and others a real and very important change of thought; in particular it may lead many to imagine that the persons who use the name of God in one or more of these extended senses retain certain theological opinions which they have in fact long abandoned. Thus the misuse of the name of God may resemble the strategem in war of putting up dummies to make an enemy imagine that the fort is held after it has been evacuated by the garrison. I am far from alleging that the illegitimate extension of the divine name is deliberately employed by theologians or others for the purpose of masking a change of front, but that it may have that effect seems at least possible. And as we cannot use words in wrong senses without running a serious risk of deceiving ourselves as well as others, it appears better on all accounts to adhere strictly to the common meaning of the name of God as signifying a powerful supernatural and on the whole beneficent spirit, akin in nature to man; and if any of us have ceased to believe in such a being we should refrain from applying the old word to the new faith, and should find some other and more appropriate term to express our meaning.

The Belief in Immortality, by Sir James Frazer, pp. 9-11

Acid Drops

Mr. George Bernard Shaw, who so often appears to prefer saying something that will cause surprise rather than to fall into complete accuracy, explained some little time ago that he did not join in the protest against German brutality because that only angered foreign governments and made things worse. Of course, this is wildly untrue. One of the earliest agitations against a foreign government with which we were connected was that concerned with the "Barcelona outrage" in the early nineties. The Spanish Government made this the pretext for bagging Freethinkers, Trades Unionists, Liberals and Reformers of every kind, flung them into prison, refused to bring them to trial, but subjected them to the most obscene tortures—we use that phrase advisedly, and on the medical evidence our Committee of protest had. It was solely as a result of the agitation carried on in this and other countries that the Spanish Government was compelled to release its prisoners. They were expelled the country, and our Committee was able to find them employment in other countries. There was no pretence that these victims of brutality were taking away native labour.

Now the unspeakably, beastly and degenerate crowd that governs Germany has been compelled to release Berthold Jacob, as a consequence of the firm action of the Swiss Government and international opinion. Jacob, it will be remembered, was a German journalist, an anti-Fascist, who escaped to Switzerland. From here he was kidnapped by Fascist agents and confined in a German prison. To the first demands of the Swiss Government the Goering gang, through its mouthpiece, Hitler, refused to release Jacob. He declared the release of Jacob to be out of the question because he was a traitor of the worst kind, etc., etc. But the Swiss demanded that, failing release, the matter should go before a court of arbitration, and that is the last thing that these gallant Fascists dare to face. So Jacob was released, as Dimitrof was released. It is one more instance of the success of world public opinion. Mr. Shaw should reconsider his position.

The *Manchester Guardian* publishes the news concerning the treatment of a Japanese Professor, the greatest authority on Japanese Constitutional Law. The Professor, in his writings, had broached the theory that the Emperor is an "organ of the State," and so comes within the Constitution in the same manner as does the people and parliament. For saying this he has been so attacked in the Diet and in Parliament, that he has been compelled to resign from the House of Peers, as well as to forfeit his Professorship. Evidently the ancient theory of the divinity of the Mikado dies hard. But we are not so sure that there are not a very large number of people in this country who would also be enraged if King George were referred to as a public official, whose duties are marked by the Constitution, and who might legally be brought to book by Parliament if those duties were overstepped. In theory we have all given up the belief in the divinity of kings, but in practice and by a carefully fostered sentiment the feeling attaching to that superstition is still strong. We recall the amazement of the *Daily Telegraph*, that the Jubilee week was marked by fine weather, and the thinly-veiled inference that God Almighty had something to do with it.

Among the bewildering display of signposts that now decorate the country, room must be found for mention of one that has been erected in Assynt, Sutherlandshire. This notice "to tourists," runs:—

Tourists are respectfully requested to refrain from profaning the Sabbath-day by any recreation.

If the old Scotch rule is followed this will prohibit laughing, whistling, singing mundane songs, pic-nics, and anything above a very sober crawl by a motorist

would be denounced as an assault on the morals of Assynt. We wonder whether our Attorney-General, who is the President of the Lord's Day Observance Society goes to Assynt for his holidays. We rather think he does not. But what a place to live in!

There has been a strike of dockers at Cape Town, the cause of which was the refusal to load beef for the Italian troops in East Africa. So far as the white dockers were concerned an earnest appeal for them to go on with the loading was addressed them by General Hertzog. The appeal was ignored. In the case of the black dock labourers the police were summoned, the ring-leaders were arrested, and the others offered the alternative of either work or prison. This is not very far removed from forced labour, and we shall be surprised if the Italian newspapers do not make capital out of this. It is worth noting that this item of news appeared, so far as we noticed, in the *Manchester Guardian* only.

Some Christian professionals seem absolutely incapable of playing the game decently. *Headway*, the organ of the League of Nations Union, in its latest issue, has an article by that curious windbag, the Rev. Porter Goff. It is headed, "Religion and the League," and its opening sentence reads: "Most members of the League of Nations Union are members of the Christian Church." If true, this may perhaps account for many of its faults, but we are not so interested to deny the statement as to deplore its impertinence. In the State of Utah, it might well be that the majority of members of, let us say, the Statistical Society of Salt Lake City may conceivably be Mormons. What on earth has that to do with a Statistical Society? We can only advise Mr. Goff to mend his manners, and the League of Nations Union to confine itself to its very important propaganda. *Arms and the Clergy* shows at least that Mr. Goff's business connexions do not guarantee any particular dislike of wars of all kinds.

The Rev. E. C. Bayley thinks that "Union with Christ must be the object of all efforts in education." He does not mean this, of course, literally, for obviously the only way in which any union with Christ could be accomplished, providing there is a Christ, and that he really lives up in Heaven—is by dying, and that won't be much good for education. What Mr. Bayley means is that everybody should be taught that Christ "is the Way, the Truth and the Life." He considers it to be "most practical" and to be "a preparation so thorough as to include every phase of life and every type of mind." In fact, "Jesus Christ should be the goal of all education." All of which shows a definite anxiety that as Jesus Christ is mostly left out of education, Mr. Bayley and his fellow priests may one day be without jobs. By making Jesus the "goal" of education, room and jobs surely must be found for parsons.

Mr. Bayley admits that one rarely hears a parent say, "I want my children to be what God wants them to be." Apart from the fact that the average sensible parent couldn't possibly say anything so incredibly foolish, here we have again Mr. Bayley's anxiety for the parent to come along and say that as he, being a layman, cannot get in touch with God about the question, perhaps the man of God would do so, and ascertain exactly what are the Lord's views on the sort of career Cyril or Eunice ought to have in the future. This gives people like Mr. Bayley a definite job in education and career finding.

Finally, it goes without saying, that Mr. Bayley wants religion fully taught in schools. "Religious education," he says, "must aim to give a Christian bias to the whole outlook on life, so that the world's affairs, business life, social life, school life, and the personal life of the individual should all be centred in Christ." Heaven

preserve us! The small portion of religion which does manage to dribble through—as, for instance, the B.B.C. Sunday Services—is boring enough in all conscience. But fancy having Christ thrust on one everywhere and at all times! It is good to feel that most parsons like Mr. Bayley can ventilate their nonsense only before their own small and select congregation or in the pages of a religious paper. And even this, some may think is too much.

Canon Peter Green is shocked at the “terrible ignorance” people show of the Bible. He says he has taught scholarship boys and girls and has “been astonished at their ignorance of the simplest Bible stories.” He also says he was an examining chaplain for ten years, and “was shocked at the slight acquaintance with either the Old or the New Testament displayed by some of the candidates.” On the other hand, though everybody seems so ignorant of the Bible, “it is none the less true that they love it.” The people are, it seems, almost entirely ignorant of the Bible, but they do love it. Perhaps that’s the reason, however. Perhaps if they knew a little more about it, they would prefer Dickens or Edgar Wallace. But are we to understand the people are not taught “simple Bible teaching” these days? If this is true, then religion is far more of a back number than even we believed. But is it true?

Father D’Arcy (who rather fancies himself as a great Christian apologist, we believe) has declared that there is no scientific fact which is opposed to Christianity. The *Church Times* thinks this is “unassailable ground.” Well, of course, it depends on what a Christian means by both a “scientific fact,” and “Christianity.” We should, however, like the thesis put another way. How much of “genuine” Christianity—that is, the Christianity of Fr. D’Arcy—can stand scientific investigation? How many scientific men are there who declare that science vouches for the existence of Hell or Paradise, or that a wafer can turn into Jesus Christ directly a priest pronounces a magical formula, or if the wafer was broken into a thousand pieces, there’d be a thousand Jesuses? We venture to assert that Fr. D’Arcy—and the *Church Times*—will not answer.

The Old Catholics in Germany are urging the Roman Catholics to escape the bondage of Rome, and establish a National Catholic Church, “which can be loyal to the New German National State.” They attack Rome as the “Public Enemy No. 1,” who aided by Moscow and Jewry, are “seeking to wreck the German economic system.” It seems also that Rome “has always shown a devilish hatred of nationality.” Whether they wish to make Hitler God Almighty, or His German Son, or even the Holy German Ghost we don’t know. But there are certainly some Germans who believe Hitler is the Holy Trinity complete, and before long he may believe it himself. For our part, we can’t see much difference between a Roman religion or a German religion, or why swearing allegiance to the Pope is any worse than doing the same to Hitler. The slogan should be “exit both.”

Knock, the Irish Shrine, trying to compete with Lourdes, was visited the other day, by 1,350 pilgrims. There were a number of invalids but, alas, no cures. This simply will not do. If “Our Lady” doesn’t order a few miracles, business at Knock will die out. Surely this is not a case of “Our Lady” not being able to be in two places at the same time? Miracles seem to be rather scarce at Lourdes also. But there one can live on hope. And so far there are no grounds for even hope at Knock.

Mr. Arnold Lunn has been writing on the “value of controversy.” He thinks Catholics ought to “begin by destroying,” and he prefers a “written debate” to a “platform one.” He thinks also that if more took place “travesties of the Catholic Faith would be far less frequent in the utterances of and writings of modern

leaders of thought.” We can assure Mr. Lunn, however, it is just as easy to make mincemeat of the real thing as of the travesties. As for his own controversies with Atheists, it seems quite a number of people were “heartened by discovering not only that there is a reasoned answer to the attacks of the Atheists, but that the Atheist has no answer to the great arguments for theism.” One can only say in reply that this kind of thing is easily put over with readers of the *Universe* and other Catholic journals simply because precious few have ever heard an Atheist, and almost all have not a ghost of an idea of the Atheistic argument. Mr. Lunn has certainly “debated” with Atheists, but his arguments . . . !

The mis-statements of Christians regarding their Bible would fill an immense book. The *Methodist Recorder* has an article headed, “The only Business-Woman in the Bible.” It is about “Tydia: a Seller of Purple.” This is casting a slur on quite a number of the professional ladies of Scripture. Unnamed “Scarlet Women” abound in the sacred pages. Rahab may have been an amateur traitor, entertaining spies whose reports led to the massacre of Rahab’s countrymen. But her “business” is plainly given in Joshua’s story. The Witch (of Endor and elsewhere) was a business woman. Indeed, in the home town of Tydia herself, Thyatira, there was a lady busily industrious, bearing the already famous name “Jezebel” whose “business” is recorded in Rev. ii. 20.

A correspondent of Professor J. A. Findlay asks that very pious professor, “Why has the Church always taught that families are to be reunited in the after-life?” Mr. Findlay gives an unconvincing, unentertaining answer: “This doctrine is based upon our Lord’s teaching.” Mr. Findlay is much more amusing when he assures us that in heaven we shall not be fused into one big family, but remain British, etc., to the end; “Nothing can alter our nationality.” We were under the impression that the World-War altered a great many nationalities. The Findlayan theory will give God some puzzling problems. Some Tyroleans, for instance, who died as Austrians, fighting against Italy, will find themselves called Italians in heaven, unless meanwhile the chances of war have made the Tyrol the property of the Poles or the Eskimos.

A new biography of Christ is issued, called *That Strange Man Upon His Cross*, by Richard Roberts. Of course, in one sense of the word He was indeed a very “strange” man, as becomes a fictional character “written up,” by many hands. Mr. Roberts succeeds in his aim (if it was his aim), in making Christ even “stranger” than before, if we may believe the *Methodist Recorder* review, which says that Jesus “had to be defeated in order that He might triumph. He had to fail in order that His faith might be proved invincible.” We have met many failures in our time whose failures proved nothing at all except that they were failures. If the united League of Nations defeats Mussolini, we sincerely hope Mussolini is not thereby “proved invincible.” Apparently the correct way to defeat Mussolini will be to offer him the earth.

Professor Hearnshaw, M.A., reminds us that the word “holiness” “was originally devoid of ethical significance; it meant little more than taboo.” This admission by an eminent and learned “divine” is worth noting. It is all very well of the professor to argue, as he does, that under God’s guidance holiness developed an ethical significance. Of course it did. The world moved, man progressed towards a social conception at variance with Godism. Dr. Hearnshaw is hard put to it to explain what prevented Holiness from presenting man with an ethic capable of averting evils we are even now only slowly relinquishing. He claims that “the Christian ethic has achieved some remarkable victories during the two thousand years of its operation,” but admits that “the Christian ethic has not yet effected its perfect work.” We ask why?

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE,

EDITORIAL

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

V. SORENSEN.—We cannot see that your definition of a snob differs materially from our own. We were mainly concerned in analysing the conditions that made snobbery possible. The worship of birth or wealth are only indications of snobbery in a society where such things give a status or are taken as indication of worth.

J. HUMPHRIES.—Thanks for paper. We have filed it for reference. Such things come in handy sooner or later.

C.S.D.—Your story of winning a prize for an essay based on a chapter from Mr. Cohen's *Grammar of Free Thought*, and to have the prize presented by an archbishop, is almost too good for privacy. But we do not know if we are entitled to make it public.

For Circulating and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—A. H. Deacon, 58.

J. BROADLEY.—Pleased to hear of the prospects of a new Branch at Preston, and also of the success of Mr. Clayton's meetings there. We shall be pleased to give any help we can.

M. FELDMAN.—The N.S.S. Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, will be writing you.

W. R. TOMLINSON.—Next week. Thanks for birthday greetings, none the worse for being a trifle late.

B. L. BOWERS AND W. MCINTOSH.—Much obliged for cuttings.

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Sugar Plums

To-day (September 29) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, his subject will be "The Savageries of Civilization," and in the present state of affairs the subject should prove interesting. Admission will be free, but there will be a number of reserved seats at one shilling each. We hope that those who come from any distance will make it a point of being in good time. On several recent occasions late-comers had to be refused admittance.

After the cremation of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, several of those present asked us if we would reprint our speech in the *Freethinker*. We replied that we could not for two reasons. One was that the speech was impromptu, and as far as we knew, no report had been taken; the second was that, although the speeches of Lord Snell and Mr. Gilmour were read from manuscript, we did not know there was any intention of reprinting them. Two or three days after the ceremony we received a transcript of a shorthand report taken by our old friend Mr. R. H. Clifton, and one from another old friend, Mr. G. Watkins. We now see that the speeches of Lord Snell and Mr. Gilmour have been reprinted in the *Literary Guide*. In the circumstances we, therefore, fall in with the expressed desire of our friends and reprint our own speech. This will appear in next week's issue of the *Freethinker*.

There was a good gathering at the Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday last, to listen to Mr. Cohen's lecture on "Some Savageries of Civilization." There was no mistaking the eagerness with which the lecture was followed, which is the highest compliment that any

lecturer can receive. Another marked and pleasing feature of the meeting was the unusually large number of ladies present. Their enjoyment of the lecture was very evident.

Centralized and organized effort has its good side, but it also has a very ugly one—it leads to censorship and intolerance. We have to hand an example of this in the action of the Bill Posters' Association. The Communist Party recently had printed a poster advocating support of the National Government against the action of Italy. A copy of the poster lies before us, and the only possible objection lies in one line that "the National Government is preparing to strike a thieves' bargain with Mussolini." For the rest it follows the general line advocated by many of the papers. But a letter marked "private and confidential" has been sent round by the "Censorship Committee" of the Association advising "members of the Association that the poster should not be exhibited." The line quoted might well have been deleted, but the Communists generally resemble the mentality of Christians, and the "true gospel" must be introduced on any and every occasion. Hence the special trouble with the poster.

But in this country, at all events, Communists have the same legal, and should have the same moral, rights as any other party, and denial of this to them should arouse the resentment of anyone who knows the meaning of Free Thought and values its expression. It is the Communist poster banned to-day—not openly, but by means of a secret letter—it will be something else tomorrow. This organization of bill-posters controls the principal stations in the country, and to deny the equal right of all sections of the community to their use is a blow at freedom of thought and of expression. The control of the free expression of opinion on any subject is damnable, whether it is effected by an individual, an organization, a Government or by the State. It is at this point that organizations, whatever be their quality or aim, become a threat to social security, and should be corrected in the interests of all.

A new edition of Colonel Ingersoll's *About the Holy Bible* is now ready. It extends to 48 pages, and is bound in stiff paper cover. The pamphlet is issued by the Secular Society Limited, at the price of 3d. In the existing state of the religious world we consider the two most useful pamphlets that can be circulated amongst Roman Catholics and Protestants are *About the Holy Bible* and *Rome or Reason?* Sevenpence will secure both pamphlets, post free.

The N.S.S. Study Circle will resume its meetings on Monday, October 7, when Mr. A. D. McLaren will speak on "The Foundations of Culture." The meetings are held at 68 Farringdon Street, and begin at 8 p.m.

Mr. G. Whitehead finishes his summer tour with a week in Preston commencing to-day (September 29). It has been a very successful tour stretching from the north to south of the country, and apart from the large number of lectures delivered, a considerable quantity of literature has been circulated. Much more could be accomplished along the same lines did funds permit. At Preston a new Branch of the N.S.S. has been formed, and those responsible are full of enthusiasm and promise. The Secretary is a lady, Mrs. B. Coward, "Brookside," Fernyhalgh Lane, Fulwood, Via Ribbleson, Preston, who invites all local Freethinkers to come in and make a really strong movement in Preston. The Branch will co-operate at all Mr. Whitehead's meetings during his visit.

The Birmingham Branch has arranged for a trip to London on Sunday, September 29 for the purpose of paying a visit to South Kensington Natural History Museum. An official guide will conduct the party in the Museum. A carriage has also been reserved on the train. Lunch can be taken or a light lunch obtained on the train. Tea will be arranged in London before returning. The train leaves New Street at 10.10 a.m., and returns from London at 7.55 p.m.

Things Worth Knowing*

PIETY AND PROFIT

NOWHERE, perhaps, in Europe can the philosophy of this development of fetishism be better studied than at Cologne. At the cathedral, preserved in a magnificent shrine since about the twelfth century, are the skulls of the Three Kings, or Wise Men of the East, who guided by the star of Bethlehem, brought gifts to the Saviour. These relics were an enormous source of profit to the cathedral chapter during many centuries. But other ecclesiastical bodies in the city were both pious and shrewd, and so we find that not far off, at the Church of St. Gereon, a cemetery has been dug up, and the bones distributed over the walls as the relics of St. Gereon and his Theban band of martyrs. Again, at the neighbouring church of St. Ursula, we have the later spoils of another cemetery, covering the interior walls of the church as the bones of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgin martyrs; the fact that many of them, as anatomists now declare, are the bones of men does not appear in the Middle Ages to have diminished their power of competing with the relics of the other shrines in healing efficiency.

No error in the choice of these means seems to have diminished their efficacy. Prof. Buckland, the eminent osteologist and geologist, discovered that the relics of St. Rosalia at Palermo, which had for ages cured diseases and warded off epidemics, were the bones of a goat. This fact caused not the slightest diminution in their miraculous power.

Other developments of fetish cure were no less discouraging to the evolution of medical science. Very important among these was the Agnus Dei, or piece of wax from the Paschal candles, stamped with the figure of a lamb and consecrated by the Pope. In 1741 Pope Paul II. expatiated to the Church on the efficacy of this fetish in preserving men from fire, shipwreck, tempest, lightning and hail, as well as in assisting women in childbirth; and he reserved to himself and his successors the manufacture of it. Even as late as 1517 Pope Leo X issued, for a consideration, tickets bearing a cross and the following inscription: "This cross measured forty times makes the height of Christ in his humanity. He who kisses it is preserved for seven days from falling sickness, apoplexy and sudden death."

Naturally the belief thus sanctioned by successive heads of the Church, infallible in all teaching regarding faith and morals, created a demand for amulets and charms of all kinds, and under this influence we find a reversion to old pagan fetishes. Nothing, on the whole, stood more constantly in the way of any proper development of medical science than these fetish cures, whose efficacy was based on theological reasoning and sanctioned by ecclesiastical policy.

It would be expecting too much from human nature to imagine that pontiffs who derived large revenues from the sale of the Agnus Dei, or priests who derived both wealth and honours from cures wrought at shrines under their care, or lay dignitaries who had invested heavily in relics, should favour the development of any science which undermined their interests.

From "The Warfare of Science with Theology,"
Vol. II., pp. 29-30.

* Under this heading we purpose printing, weekly, a series of definite statements, taken from authoritative works, on specific subjects. They will supply instructive comments on aspects of special subjects, and will be useful, not merely in themselves, but also as a guide to works that are worth closer study.

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

WHENEVER the time shall come that we who teach others (perhaps because we cease to do so) shall have recognized the mischief of hoodwinking the good faith of those whom we teach, and thereby lowering the standard of intellectual honesty, and destroying the credit of all teaching; whenever that distant time have arrived, it is quite possible that the word *lie* will be dropped out of discussions, or rather the words *correct* or *incorrect* be substituted in matters of opinion, for the words *true* and *false*. It may be not only a proof of obscurantistic habits, but a mark of imperfect understanding and of the habit of small personal consideration, to connect what we think about Nature and Man with such notions as honesty on the one hand or fraud on the other. To do so shows that low as may be commercial integrity, intellectual honesty is lower still, since it has not yet established a system of credit.

Be this as it may, we can still watch our educated selves and neighbours failing to discriminate, e.g., in the sort of *Researches* called *psychical* or *spiritualistic*, because they deal with the hypothetical souls or spirits of the dead, instead of the obvious souls of the living—we can watch ourselves failing utterly to discriminate between testimony and proof; indeed in more practical questions even, it is still largely the character of the witness which helps to hang or release, quite as much as the nature of what that respectable witness happens to allege. Parents and legislators, let alone Governments and nations (Tripoli, November, 1911) are still apt to take offence, as if doubt of their statements implied doubt of their honour. Authority is still the basis of parental, as it is of military and sacerdotal, discipline; authority in the sense of "Do you call me a liar?" as opposed to authority as a presumable competence of knowing. Just now the Pope has taken to making priests swear that Modernism is wrong and the old theology is right, absolutely on the principle of the continental swashbuckler who runs you through the body for "doubting" his word, or contradicting too hotly. And it is not only characteristic, but perhaps advantageous, that such should have become the Pope's method of carrying his point about, let us say, the authorship of the Gospel of St. John.

Meanwhile the human mind will be freed from superstition in proportion as it recognizes that a *fallacy* need not be a *lie*, that error is more plentiful than truth, because error is tentative and truth final. Moreover that error when widespread implies no intellectual (and still less) moral obliquity, since it is nine times out of ten the inevitable result of *how* we know and not *what* we know. So that while error may be exploited or clung to or artificially kept up, there is very little chance (or need) of its having been invented on purpose to take men in. Perhaps the death-blow to what our grandfathers called "priestcraft" would be the recognition that so far from having been fabricated to keep the vulgar in its proper place, as Voltaire and (which is odder) Plato opined, all myths are the honest thinking of a given time or people.

Furthermore, the most important lesson taught me by all this examination of the *Will to believe* is precisely that this *Will* is no act of volition at all, but the unguessed, usually unconscious action of habits and desires which close up certain channels of thought and deepen others into stagnant pools without an issue.

I have even caught myself wondering whether human life has ever really required lies. But it has wanted certainties where certainty was unattainable, hopes and consolations where there was reason for neither. Above all, human life has wanted rest for

tired minds before they had got to a rational resting-place, and freedom for busy ones to think of something else. So, when all is said and done, Vital Lies represent human weakness, human sloth, and human dullness, above all, perhaps human impatience, which cuts down the tree to eat the fruits. In other words, it seems as if Vital Lies meant the need of the moment and the individual against the need of the race and of the future.

Vital Lies, by VERNON LEE (Violet Paget),
Vol. II., pp. 182-5.

Ehecatl

THERE are many things to deceive primitive man—dreams, shadows, reflections, etc., and theories have differed as to his conception of the "soul." He apparently conceives, for instance, that in dreams the soul, acting alone, leaves the body, which in waking life it uses. Death while sleeping thus results from the soul not returning.¹ It will be unusual to differ from McCabe, but I cannot side with his suggestion that "the chief root of religion, or of the belief in spirits, was primitive man's speculation on his mysterious double, the dark shadow on the ground or the coloured reflection in water, though the dream is another obvious source." (*Riddle*, p. 145.)

We have to remember that at death the soul was supposed to leave the body, yet there would be no disappearance or diminution of the shadow cast by the corpse. Moreover, the shadow disappears in darkness without any corresponding loss of vitality. Max Müller,² for one, insists that even primitive man would not mistake the soul for the shadow. What seems to lend support to the shadow-theory is the number of primitive words for soul which also mean shadow, like *ucja* (Arawek), *natub* (Quinché language), *loákal* (Abipones), and *tunzi* (Zulu), which may become an ancestral ghost.

Yet it may be, as Müller suggests, that the conception of soul springs from a plurality of sources. To me the phenomenon of breath appears to be an extremely important, if not the root, factor. In that case the words meaning shadow may, if we are ready to allow some power of analogy to the primitive, mean that the soul is like the shadow, just as in some languages it is likened to a butterfly or bird.

Various parts of the body have words synonymous, or nearly so, with soul, such as *lēb* (Hebrew; heart), *manawa* (Maori; belly, heart, lungs, breath, the seat of affections), *mānawa* (Samoan, stomach, inner man), giving *manavanava* (to think) and *manao* (thought, idea). Compare also *manawa* (affection) and *mana* (intelligence) in the Hawaiian, and *manava* (Manganesen, conscience). Intestinal words also indicate soul, or conscience (compare the expression "take it to heart"). The point is, however, that that part of the body which most definitely and most obviously disappears at death is the breath. The shadow, belly, heart, lungs, etc., remain, but the breath is gone. For primitive man it has taken its aerial flight; for instance the *julio* (Nicaraguan) goes "up above" at death.

We are encouraged in this view by the many words which in certain tongues indicate a common derivation for soul and breath, e.g., *thymos*, *pneuma*, *animos* and *psyche* (Greek) from the roots "wind" and to "breathe"; *anila* (Sanskrit), from *an*, to blow or breathe, but the etymology is here rather

doubtful. There are also *uyir* (Tamil), life, from the verb, *ū-thu* (to blow), *u-yi* being "to breathe"; and *rūach* (Hebrew; thunder being the voice, and the storm the breath, of God); *neshāmāh* is similar. To-day the refined conception is *nephesh*. *Manava* (Mangaian) is wind or spirit, and *manawa* (Tongan) breath, life, or as a verb, to throb or pulsate; it is the soul which serves as perfume to the flower, body. Other examples are *wang* (W. Australian), *puits* (Netala, California), *ehecatl* (Aztecs), air, soul, born from the breath of their highest god; *alouritz* (Mohawk), soul, from *alourion*, to breathe; *anima* (Latin), air, breath, with *animus* as mind; *anal* (Irish), air, breath, with *anam* as life, soul; *kneph* (Egyptian); *far* (Finnish), and possibly *niya* (Dakota). From the Icelandic *geisa*, to rage, as of a wind, we have *ghost* (English), *Geist* (German) and *geest* (Dutch). The Holy Ghost of the New Testament is conceived as a rushing mighty wind. We speak to-day of a gust of wind. To expire is also to breathe out or to die.

Other considerations relating to the behaviour of the soul seem to suggest the comparative probability of the theory that the soul was something of a delicate substance, like air or breath. The Karens of Burma are reported to run about trying to catch the soul of a dying comrade. Or the jaws of a corpse would be tied to prevent the soul's escape, or the soul "caught" in a bag. Other instances abound in the works of Tylor, Frazer, Robertson Smith, or even E. Clodd's popular *Animism*. Some German peasants will avoid trapping a soul in a door. Rustics in this country sometimes open windows to facilitate the soul's departure at death. Macusi Indians imagine the *cmuawarri* to have left the eye of the corpse. Congo negroes do not disturb the dust in the house of the dead, lest they should injure a soul of delicate substance. By Greenlanders the soul is conceived to be fleshless and boneless, by Lapps only visible to wizards.

Modern theology has never dropped the aspect of materiality with much satisfaction to itself. Mutual recognition in the next world seems to demand some material organ of vision, and other obvious difficulties arise. The late Bishop Gore spoke of what he termed the indispensable "spiritual body," which Canon Streeter even contended was built up during life on earth. Whether "spiritual" (Gore), "celestial" (Streeter), "astral" (Dr. McConnell, an American divine) or "etherical" (modern spiritualists), the soul appears to be of a substance nearer to the degree of tangibility represented by breath rather than by shadow, so as to be fitted for "the execution of our social purposes in the Other Life," as the Rev. Dr. Fosdick puts it.

Even modern Vitalism has its counterpart in words for soul indicating movement and vitality, like *kúttan* (Tamil), dancer, leaper; *saivala* (Gothic), indicating violent movement; *nawa* (Java), health, and *ukrishuil* (Yokama, of Oregon), life.

The Materialist has fully covered the fallacy of the belief in a soul when he has not only shown it to be redundant in science, but has also explained its origin.

G. H. TAYLOR.

"Do as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington, just explain to me what you really mean." "I think I had better not, Duchess. Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out."

Oscar Wilde "Lady Windermere's Fan."

¹ The Melanesian belief.

² Anthropological Religion.

Marriage Meddlers and Muddlers

To our young people nothing could seem so utterly inconceivable as that the important and purely secular institution of marriage should be at the mercy of a Church. They would naturally think that these Sceptics who disbelieve the proven facts of science demonstrate their incompetence to decide how ordinary citizens should regard the human marital relationships.

But, as Mr. Chapman Cohen has often pointed out, this is a survival of the days of primitive ignorance, not, as now, confined to priests, but practically universal, when religion claimed the regulation of all human activities.

It is amazing to find the Church "Authorities" (of course they have no authority in this matter) passing 13 Resolutions, and issuing a 115-page Report* (besides "Minority Reports" signed by three bishops), saying, "what the Church should allow" citizens to legislate in regard to Marriage, Divorce and Re-Marriage.

The recent discussion on the Proposed Revision of the Prayer Book proves that the Church's claim to legislate is a bogus one. The present Resolutions therefore must be taken as the opinions of a body of Christians, as much entitled as any other organized body of citizens, to recommend to the electors whatever they fancy.

The basis of these Resolutions is expressed in the first clause of No. 1, in which "Our Lord's principle and standard of marriage" is stated to be "a life-long and indissoluble union." If "Our Lord" said these words, He also said, "Take no thought for the morrow," and many other silly things wisely disregarded by priests and people alike. Christians who sign a lease or merely order to-morrow's milk in advance have to admit that the mere *ipse dixit* of "Our Lord" has nothing to do with practical conduct in 1935.

We have scriptural authority for stating that Jesus never put into practice Himself His own "principle and standard." It may be good advice or bad, but it is ridiculous to call it His "principle and standard." It is as devoid of personal authority as the "standard" of a deaf and dumb man in regard to the best type of Radio.

Convocation has not yet had an opportunity to discuss all these Resolutions, but it is pretty certain they will obtain large majorities. Even the Modernists are represented as saying, "They are a distinct advance upon anything the Church of England has hitherto achieved." They could easily be all this, and still remain, as they are, backwoods fundamentalism.

It is all very well to object (in Resolution 9) to the prevalent "methods of collusion and perjury," characteristic of divorce in Christian lands. But bad as perjury is, the denial of divorce for the most urgent of human reasons, is far worse than the often inevitable "white lies" for which the law itself is mainly responsible.

As to "collusion," why should the Church seek severer action against a couple who both equally desire the same thing? A wise divorce administrator on the contrary would "strengthen the safe-guards" against faked, false and forced pretences, and above all would endeavour to suppress the most disgusting of "private detective" indecencies. Divorce records reek with outrageous invasions of detectives

into the intimate lives of those on whom they are paid to spy.

Genuine "collusion" is the only basic condition of ordinary marriage—it should be a sufficient condition for divorce where there are no children. Where there are children, the child's material interests should be safe-guarded as far as practicable. It is impossible for any law to secure to every child a happy home. The constant bickering or absences of parents already separated temperamentally, or through unsocial habits may be far worse than any other home for the children. Both parents do not always live till the child becomes an adult, and Boarding-school and College life is not always an evil.

It is difficult for a Freethinker to appreciate the distinction often drawn between civil and religious marriage. It is not acceptable to Freethinkers to allow any Church to insist, as Resolution No. 11 does, "that the rights of the Church in relation to its own members should be fully secured in all legislation," on any subject at all, but most emphatically as regards Marriage and Divorce. These Resolutions and their Sponsors confuse two different things. Freethinkers wish to see religion disestablished (and, of course, disendowed), and this would give the Church complete liberty as regards its own religious services. It would then be free to refuse the use of its churches to whomsoever it would. But Freethinkers also want Marriage secularized.

No marriage should be recognized by law, except a secular agreement entered into before the ordinary legally appointed Registrar, whose certificate alone should be essential and without whose certificate no marriage should be recognized as subject to the laws relating to marriage.

This would not (as in France it does not) prevent the same couple visiting a church (or two churches) in order to obtain the blessing of a priest, or for any other purpose not prohibited by law. Marriage Law reforms would then at least have to conform to human needs unprejudiced, in time, let us hope, by the abominations of the Old Testament or the insane asceticism of the New Testament and the monks and priests who insist that divorced people should never re-marry.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

The Deistic Movement

(Concluded from Page 587)

MATTHEW TINDAL'S *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, published in 1730, when the author was over seventy years of age, is considered to have marked the culmination of the Deistic controversy. No less than a hundred and fifteen answers to it appeared. The argument, that the religion of nature is perfect, and that revelation can neither enhance nor diminish its perfection, is one without force in days when the varied manifestations of the religion of nature, as exhibited amongst savage and barbarous races, are known; but the incongruity of an immutable God giving a revelation only to a barbarous tribe in an obscure quarter of the earth, and the difficulty of reconciling the divinity of a religion with its want of universality, were evidently keenly felt at the time. It was an attack from the currently-received notions of the perfections of Deity. The author, a Fellow of All Souls, had passed through many phases of thought, and had evidently closely studied the controversy. At first a High Churchman, his principles had led him to Romanism; but reason at length drew him back to Deism. At the age of fifty he had

* *The Church and Marriage*: Reports of the Joint Committees of the Convocations of Canterbury and York. S.P.C.K. Price 2s. 6d.

published a defence of civil and religious liberty under the title of *The Rights of the Christian Church*, a work which had the honour of being presented before a grand jury of Middlesex.

One of the most redoubtable opponents of Tindal was Waterland, whose *Scripture Vindicated* was highly extolled by the orthodox. Waterland swallowed the hog, bristles and all. The talking serpent, confusion of tongues, and stopping of the sun, were all literal. God may have kept the clouds in such a position that there were no rainbows before the Flood. The Jews, as the chosen of God, were quite entitled to spoil the Egyptians and massacre the Canaanites. Ehud was right in stabbing Eglon, and his example was no justification of the Popish assassins, Clement and Ravallac, since "The text expressly says the Lord raised up Ehud." Jael was justified because "it was prophesied beforehand that the Lord should sell Sisera into the hands of a woman." Dr. Conyers Middleton, the principal librarian of the University of Cambridge (who had already dealt a heavy blow at the most considerable body in Christendom, by his *Letter from Rome*, showing an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism), entered the controversy with a powerful pamphlet directed against Waterland. Middleton, while representing himself as a true Christian, avowed his disbelief in the literal story of the Fall, and convicted his opponent of much shuffling in his endeavours to defend the old Jewish stories.

While the bolder Deists were attacking Christianity directly, Latitudinarians, like Conyers Middleton and Samuel Clarke, were undermining the old foundations. Unitarianism, too, was advancing, gathering to its side superior men like Moses Lowman and Nathaniel Lardner. The repeal of the law against witchcraft in 1736 was a significant sign of progress. Butler's famous *Analogy* was followed by Morgan's *Moral Philosopher*. Thomas Morgan was a dissenting minister, who had been dispossessed on account of his Unitarianism. His work is noticeable for taking a more historical view of the rival claims of Free thought and dogmatism, and for his anticipation of Baur, in pointing out the two great schools, Pauline and Judaic, which divided early Christianity. Paul, the *bête noir* of Chubb, as of Bolingbroke, was recognized by Morgan as the true founder of Christianity and the exponent of its most liberal spirit.

In 1742 appeared an anonymous treatise, entitled *Christianity not Founded on Argument*. This was one of the cleverest tracts of the whole controversy. It was written by Henry Dodwell, the son of the learned, but eccentric, nonjuror of that name. In a tone of grave irony Dodwell argues, as a Christian, that Christians had made a great mistake in appealing to reason. Rational faith is a contradiction in terms. Proof pre-supposes suspension of conviction. The rational Christian must have begun as a sceptic. He must have doubted whether the gospel was true or false. The settling of doubts is precarious, and likely to take up much time. If doubting is lawful for a moment, it might be lawful for a lifetime. Reason cannot come to any one decision concerning things beyond human faculties. To permit reasoning is to permit a variety of conclusions. How are children, or the unlearned, to be saved by a faith founded on reason and the examination of evidence? All are required, under threats, to think alike, and are ordered to be baptized into the true faith. As a matter of fact, the mass of people have never thought out the problem of the truth or falsity of the propositions to which they assent. And then how ridiculous of those, who admit reason, to attempt to prescribe its limits. Jesus Christ did not propose his doctrines for examination, but spoke with

authority. He refused to work miracles to convince the unbelieving. Let those who are unconvinced look to it.

The dust was to be forthwith shaken off against them, and their doom pronounced. The apostles derided philosophy and vain wisdom. Christianity requires all men to believe alike, but all are not equally convinced by reason. No man can say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. All difficulties are chased away by the simple axiom that "with God all things are possible." Philosophy and religion are utterly at variance. The ground-work of the one is examination and scepticism; that of the other, submission and faith. Tertullian was right when he said, *Credo quia absurdum et quia impossibile est*. Therefore, my son, trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.

It is notable that, while Dodwell was urging this in irony, Wesley and Whitfield were proclaiming its truth in solemn earnestness. The reaction of Methodism was soon to show how superficial was the culture of reason, and how far more deeply seated lay the complex inherited emotions and superstitions upon which religion is built.

(Reprinted).

J. M. WHEELER.

THE POWER OF A UNIFORM

No one has yet adequately examined and exposed the hypnotizing influence of a uniform—not merely on others, but also on the wearer himself. The fondness of most men for a uniform is easily observable. It begins with early childhood. Children love to "dress up" to play at soldiers or sailors, or to strut around in some quite distinctive dress. And the child is continued in the adult with badges and a special dress of this or that order. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides follow on, the chief attraction here being again a distinctive dress. Court ceremonials owe their chief attractiveness to the uniform of this or that order, or to a dress distinct from that of ordinary life, worn with a simple pride strongly reminiscent of the mentality of the "untutored savage." Knights of the Garter and members of the Order of Buffaloes; Monarchs in their robes and members of the Klu-klux-kan in their winding sheets, the savage in his war-paint and the modern major-general in his uniform, all feel a childish delight in being separated from others by a distinctive dress.

A volume could be written without completely exhausting the significance of the uniform in life. Only one or two features can be noted here. The first and perhaps the greatest thing a uniform does is to separate the wearer from his fellows. It marks him as something distinct from those around him, and to most lovers of a uniform to be distinct is the equivalent of being distinguished. Unimportant within, he feels visibly important from without. He impresses himself and he impresses others. If Al Capone had developed the sense to dress all his followers in uniform he might easily have gathered round him a measure of respectability and social distinction he was never able otherwise to obtain. But he made the mistake of dressing as did other folk, and permitting his followers to follow his example. And the end was prison. A uniform might have meant a different end. Criminality goes a long way towards legality once it is dressed up in uniform. Absurdity becomes almost reasonable by the same method. Black shirts and brown shirts, green shirts and red shirts, and old school ties are more than articles of dress, they are the eternal witnesses to the shallowness of the average human mentality, evidence that the adult is not often far removed from the child, the civilized person very near to the savage. The day that soldiers are despoiled of their uniforms, armies will crumble into nothingness. When the pantomimic ceremonial of a court assembly is dispensed with, a more intelligent standard of human worth will be nearer establishment.—*Quondam*.

We Cannot Remind Ourselves Too Often

"The standard in the Gospels is heroic and perfectionist; it is not, as we cannot remind ourselves too often, a code of permissible conduct for a large community."—Dean Inge.

I.

DAMNED to his salary and platonic thought,
he patronizes the ferocious past.
For this the martyrs, saints, and fathers fought:
to see their fancies quarantined at last.

II.

Here's a mystery surely screened
from even the shrewdest crossword-fiend
or those who've gained a world-diploma
for first-rate academic coma.

What saves a man, destroys the race.
There's pestilence in (wide-spread) Grace.
We can afford some heroes saved;
the rest must be more well-behaved.
If each man turned a christian hero,
life's temperature would sink to zero;
this mirage of perfection quickly
would see the race decoyed and sickly.
Our heroes we can safely spare—
such heroes, luckily, are rare;
but what a lapse, if all, infected,
sought to be christianly perfected . . .

Haste! or you'll leave us in the lurch!
Save men from Christ! Send 'em to Church.

JACK LINDSAY.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 19, 1935

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

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Clifton, Saphin, Tuson, Ebury, McLaren, Sandys, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

A number of apologies for unavoidable absence were read. Minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted. The Financial Statement was presented. New members were admitted to West London, South London, Bethnal Green Branches, and the Parent Society. Permission was given for the formation of a Branch at Preston to be known as the Preston Branch N.S.S. The chairman paid a tribute to the long, faithful, and generous services to the Cause by Mr. J. G. Dobson, whose death has been reported elsewhere. Many kindly sentiments were expressed, and the Secretary instructed to send a letter of condolence to the children. Correspondence and reports were dealt with from Glasgow, Plymouth, Birkenhead, Birmingham Branches, and Southend, Messrs. Brighton, Clayton and Whitehead. The Secretary reported that Stratford Town Hall had been booked for a lecture on November 17, and Caxton Hall for a Social on Saturday evening, November 16. Mr. A. D. McLaren reported he had made arrangements for the Study Circle to start on Monday, October 7, at 8 p.m., in the Society's offices.

The meeting then closed.

The next meeting of the Executive will be held on Thursday, October 17.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

A Revolutionist is one whose ideas of reform differs from our own. A dangerous Revolutionist is one whose ideas are favourably impressing other people.

Quondam.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The Book of Job: A Modern Argument."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, September 29, Mr. Goldman. Highbury Corner, 7.30, Mr. Tuson. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, September 30, Mr. Goldman.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.0, Sunday, September 29, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

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. Ryans and J. Darby. Thursdays, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin and Gee. Fridays, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Connell. Current *Free-thinkers* on sale at The Kiosk.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Tavern Hotel, Godwin Street): 7.30, Branch Meeting. Will all members please attend.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall, William Brown Street, Liverpool): 7.0, Chapman Cohen—"The Savageries of Civilization." Doors open 6.30. Chair 7.0. Reserved Seats 1s.

NEW SEAHAM (Miners' Hall): 7.0, Saturday, September 28, A Debate—"Do Spirits Exist?" *Affir.*: Mr. and Mrs. Jones (N.S.U.). *Neg.*: John T. Brighton (N.S.S.).

OUTDOOR

BURNLEY MARKET: 7.0, Sunday, September 29, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End): 8.0, Friday, September 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

COLNE: 7.30, Monday, September 30, Mr. J. Clayton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Grant Street, St. George's Cross): 8.0, Muriel Whitefield.

HETTON: 8.0, Tuesday, October 1, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PRESTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will address meetings under the covered Market from Sunday, September 29 till end of the week at 7.30 p.m.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Crumbling Christianity."

WORSTHORNE: 7.30, Friday, September 27, Mr. J. Clayton.

TEE-SIDE BRANCH: 7.0, Sunday, September 29, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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