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Views and Opinions

Civil War

ONCE again the world is at war. I use that expression advisedly, and stand by its full significance. When the war of 1914 commenced I said that it disguised the truth by calling it a war between different nations; it was civil war in the true sense of the phrase. If that was true of 1914, it is almost a commonplace with reference to the present Italian-Abyssinian conflict. A war strictly and literally between two nations is to-day almost an impossibility; and whether the armed conflict remains confined to the two countries now at war, or spreads to Europe does not affect the substantial truth of the statement. It was noticeable that the moment it became certain that Italy intended to go to war with Abyssinia other countries were on the alert, because their interests were involved. France has interests that would be affected by Italian dominancy in that part of Africa. Far off Japan finds its commercial interests threatened. And England, above all, is not inclined to sit down and witness the establishment of a potential threat to Egypt and the East, to say nothing of the menace of a strong military power established in Africa. There are other interests involved, but these are enough to show how idle is the talk of the war as being between two peoples, and that the rest of the world may sit down quietly and watch the combat. When Hobbes wrote of the *Great Leviathan*, he had in mind a single State only; to-day cultural, commercial and scientific developments are so interlinked that a self-contained Leviathan no longer exists. For good or or ill the States of the world are interlocked: the Leviathan "bestrides the world like a colossus"; we have actually reached the world-State in fact, although we have not yet realized it in theory.

One further consideration may be noted. In the public-mind—mainly because it is so largely fed on the output of the half-educated newspaper writer

—the thing that really counts concerning the present war is whether the fight can be localized in Africa. But even so the rest of the world cannot help sharing in the conflict, and in an important sense participating in the war. We share in the war-mentality created by it. Our bellicose Admirals and Generals, the professional exploiters of ignorance and other sinister interests associated with war and preparations for war, gain prominence and strength on occasions such as the present one. Already the government is resolved upon an enormous increase in the armed forces of the country, and we see an attempt to pursue a race in armaments, which must end as the last race ended, in a world-war. And that is again a manifestation of the essential quality of a civil war. It is because social and economic and scientific developments are making of one nation all the peoples of the earth that war to-day is civil war. Nations are to-day little more than geographical or political expressions. You cannot have a war that is strictly between two nations because there are not two nations that can be isolated from the rest.

* * *

The Treaty of Versailles

We are reaping the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles—the end of a war that derived from old conditions and was—unfortunately—settled by minds that belonged to those conditions. It was one of the worst Treaties of modern times, because it was one of the most stupid. It was a peace forced upon a beaten enemy at the point of the sword, and with the direct threat of starvation for the whole of the German people if the terms were not signed. Mr. Lloyd George, one of the creators of the Treaty, has said that none of the signatories intended to keep its (better) provisions. But they were determined, so far as they could, to keep its worst ones. Into this war had come Italy—when the German thrust on which everything was staked had failed. Italy came into the war in the true spirit of the ancient Italian Condottiere, bargaining for its pay, and obtaining the best possible terms. Part of that agreement, fixed in 1915, was that if England and France received any portion of German possessions, Italy should be recompensed with territory in East Africa. But that promise was made to pre-Fascist Italy, and payment is claimed by an Italy with dreams of an African Empire, claims made by a man who has reduced Italy to a state of slavery in which every man lives in terror of his neighbour being a spy. The Italy of the swashbuckling Mussolini is one against which England certainly has to be on the alert. Hence our concern for the integrity of an Abyssinia which had met with so little consideration in 1915 and in subsequent treaties between France, England and Italy.

One other consideration. The question of Italy and Abyssinia has raised in an acute form another

matter that must be settled if we are not to commence another era of war and progressive barbarization. It is precisely because the nations of to-day form sections of an unorganized world-state that the domination of a large section of the world by this or that "Power" is becoming intolerable. With countries that were substantially self-dependent the practice of land-grabbing, painting the map red, or black or green might be tolerated. The "possession" might even be largely verbal, the "greatness" fictitious, the happiness imaginary, but it was enough to excite competition, and it established the rule of force. But presently, after the era of open piracy had declined, there began to be demands on behalf of this or that nation for a "place in the sun," not always in terms of material need, but often in terms of national greatness. The Versailles Treaty, not merely left this problem untouched, it became largely an instrument to preserve the "rights" of the powers that had been most successful in the scramble for control of as large a part of the surface of the earth as was possible. Versailles stood largely for the continuation of the *status quo* in circumstances which made its maintenance a steadily growing danger to the world's peace.

* * *

The League of Nations

From the war there came one thing that contained an element of compensation. This was the League of Nations, which contained a promise of the dream of Thomas Paine of a "United States of Europe." But the League as constituted had many of the faults of Versailles. It was made up of the "old gang," the members of which could not trust each other, and who had no faith in each other's words or intentions. Each was resolved to hold what it had, and if possible to get more. Each was ready to give up those instruments of force which it needed least, if others would give up those instruments that it needed most. The result was that the League was firm when it should have been weak, weak when it should have been firm, and blind when it should have been open-eyed. It stood by while Japan plundered China, and in the case of Italy, it waited all the time Italy was transporting troops and arms to Africa, with the avowed intention of invading a country which was a member of the League, and actually prevented Abyssinia getting arms to protect itself against the coming invasion. But in law the penalty is not laid down for an offence after the offence has been committed, it is made plain before. And in this case the very least the League should have done was to make it quite clear that in the event of Italy making war on Abyssinia, whatever the result of the war might be, the aggressor would not be suffered to profit from his aggression. As in the case of ordinary robbery the stolen property would have to be returned—with compensation.

Now I know it will be said that this means war, and that I have often pointed out that war spells a costly process of national degradation. I agree with both statements. Warfare always means degradation and brutalization. But I have never said that there could not be circumstances where, despite the toll (not in life, for that is *not* the greatest cost of war) that war exacts, war is justifiable. I have protested against the villainous glorification of the soldier over the head of the civilian, the teaching that war is a school of character which develops heroism and manliness. I have claimed, and still claim, that the military life dulls the intelligence of the brightest, and lowers the character of the best. War in the modern world, certainly, is a school in which brutality is exalted and intelligence deteriorates. Think of the

Italian airmen—fantastically called the "Desperate Squadron," engaged in dropping bombs on men, women and children who have hardly seen an aeroplane before! I do not mean by what I have said that every soldier is a brute and a fool, I mean precisely this: that modern warfare degrades and brutalizes to a greater extent even than when men stood foot to foot and met each other with sword and dagger.

But I also believe that there are occasions when one has to descend, if temporarily, to a lower level because action is not possible on any other. And it is quite clear that with a megalomaniac such as Mussolini let loose the world will have to deal with him sooner or later. The League of Nations may shirk its obvious duty to-day, but it must either dissolve in consequence or do its duty at a greater cost to-morrow. It must choose whether it will convert itself into an association of nations which intends to prevent aggression of one nation on another—no matter what the difference in its civilization, or whether it is to be no more than a combination of piratical powers determined on preventing the proceeds of its piracy being touched.

* * *

The Final Question

The notion, sedulously cultivated in a portion of the syndicated press (perhaps for no better reason than the desire to work a "stunt" which other papers have not adopted) that the British Empire is to isolate itself, and sit within a closed circle, providing itself with an army, navy, and air-force large enough to fight the rest of the world, is of all suggestions the most stupid. It has been formally admitted that Italy has a right to expansion for its "surplus population," even though its surplus population either does not or need not exist. But it is also the truth that Great Britain "owns" some fourth of the earth's surface, and a glance at the map shows that it holds key-positions all over the globe. Does anyone imagine that the rest of the world will sit down for ever under this state of affairs? Already Japan makes precisely the same claim as Italy and with at least equal justice. Are we willing to open Australia to Japan? Or are we to say to these powers who demand a place in the sun, "Certainly you may have it because you are entitled to it; but you must not take it from any of the great Powers. You may have it from those peoples who are not adequately equipped to protect themselves, and above all, when you take it you must not act so as to threaten *our* position." The peoples of Europe and the politicians of Europe must recognize that we are living in the twentieth century and not in the sixteenth. Peoples and politicians must recognize that the ages of *profitable* piracy are over, and when the peoples of Europe recognize this fact, the politicians will soon be educated up to the desired level.

I use the word "profitable" because I am not blind to the fact that the world is being driven into more honest courses from the sheer pressure of events. It is not as a consequence of any great concern for Abyssinia that the European countries are protesting against Italy. It is mainly because Italy has arrived late on the scene, and its success means a rude upsetting of the present distribution of the so-called ownership of parts of the earth's surface. Part of the world is being driven into honesty against both its traditions and its will. It is recognized that a man like Mussolini is a world-danger, not because he is in any real sense of the word a great man, but because he has gained control of a machine that may cause unpredictable calamity if he is permitted to use it. The issue is either the League of Nations, or the creation of

something of the same kind, differently manned. The growth of civilization has meant the growth of settled law, and the growth of settled law means the equality of all before it. The talk that it is not consonant with the greatness of a nation to place its case before a court belongs to the age when the robber lord thought it degrading to have to reply to a charge brought by a "common citizen." Unless we can have an international court established to which all peoples will submit their quarrels, unless we can make the duel between nations as ridiculous as it is between individuals, the prospect is that of a steady decline of genuine civilization. That is the issue Mussolini has raised, and, perhaps he has thus done civilization a greater service than he intended.

I am writing this before the meeting of the League Council. Some statements must therefore be taken with reservations. But I do not anticipate that much will call for radical alteration.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Boosting the Bible

"Thou comest in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee."—*Shakespeare.*

"If the truth of Christianity is not disputable, for what purpose are these books written? If there are sufficient to prove it, what further need of controversy? If God has spoken, why is the universe not convinced?"—*Shelley.*

PATENT-MEDICINE proprietors are fine showmen. They offer to cure fatal diseases for a few shillings, and less serious maladies in half an hour or so. Bookmakers dazzle their clients with visions of wealth "beyond the dreams of avarice." Cinema managers profess to portray all the delights of a harem for a few pence. Newspaper editors offer a daily menu of sob-stuff and sensationalism. The clergy take the cash, and promise their clients a gold harp after death. But my favourite professional boosters are the gentlemen who angle for donations for the British and Foreign Bible Society. "Age cannot whither them, nor custom stale their infinite variety!"

With the alluring title, "The Common Bond," the very latest of the Society's appeals for cash has made its appearance. The title is a pleasant alternative to earlier issues, which included the nautical "Deep calleth unto Deep," and the military "The Book and the Sword." As variety is the spice of life, and the report itself is unconsciously amusing, it should appeal to the taste of the jaded "Intellectual," bored to distraction by the multifarious appeals to his pocket from the many churches, chapels, tin-tabernacles, and sectarian institutions, all hot on the scent of any shilling without a home.

As an example of the up-to-date and pushful method of "telling the tale," the report states that the Society has published, since its foundation, no less than 464,000,000 copies of the Scriptures, and distributed 10,970,000 during the last twelve months. Publication is now being carried on in 692 languages, 142 new languages being added last year. Of these, 142 are for peoples of the British Commonwealth, presumably because they lack spirituality. That such an appeal is worth publishing is evident, for a surplus of £2,630 is reported on the year's working, and the report itself costs sixpence.

The editor, the Rev. J. A. Patten, who is the Society's literary superintendent, says that in a naughty world the Christian Bible is a common bond, making for friendship and unity. Brother Patten may be the most excellent of accountants, but he does

not know everything. For example; there are millions of Roman Catholics, and all of them are Christians, but the majority would be embarrassed if Mr. Patten offered them a copy of his Society's publications. They have a Bible of their own, which, in its turn, would scarcely find favour with the subscribers to the British and Foreign Bible Society. Indeed, in Roman Catholic countries a Protestant Bible is as offensive as a glass of beer to a rigid teetotaler. Mr. Patten should know this, for the Society's agents experience greater difficulty in selling their wares in such places.

The Christian Bible is the most over-rated of all books, and it is overestimated of set purpose by people whose living is bound up with it. Abyssinia has had the benefits of the Christian Religion, including the Bible, for a longer period than Britain. Yet Abyssinia remains one of the most backward countries in the world, and at present it is the last stronghold of human slavery. Yet the dear clergy pretend that wherever you find this Bible you find civilization. You might as well say, as Ingersoll has pointed out, that civilization is due to the sacred bowler-hat for wherever you find that form of headwear you find civilization. It is also contended that this Christian Bible is, from a purely literary point of view, the finest of all books. It is so "fine" that it cannot be read in its completeness before a mixed audience; it is so "fine" that some portions have had to be omitted from the State-Church Prayer Book as being too shocking for modern readers.

The way the bait is thrown out in these Bible Society's reports year after year is in flamboyant descriptions which rival the efforts of the film advertisers. Here is a purple passage from an earlier report:—

They (the colporteurs) win their way among Russian immigrants in Canada, amongst throngs of devotees at idol-festivals in India, among coal-miners and schoolboys in Japan. One man rides with camels across the deserts of Central Asia. Another wades through swamps reeking with miasma in South America. Another ventures in a frail canoe down tropical rivers infested with alligators.

Is it not thrilling? No one would pause to ask, churlishly, why Japanese schoolboys should be regarded as being as risky companions as alligators. These colporteurs are as resourceful as they are courageous. In France, for instance, they meet philosophic gentlemen, who have a distressing habit of uniting precept with practice, so unlike the stolid Anglo-Saxons. In such cases the champions of the Bible have to display tact, and it has been suggested that to quote the religious faith of Mr. Lloyd George, or some eminent believer, would serve to disarm the sceptic. But what happens if the pertinacious critic points to Monsieur Stalin, or Herr Hitler, neither of whom attend the same tabernacle as the Welsh statesman?

Despite the modern commercial methods employed in these reports, there is an old-fashioned theological flavour which is reminiscent of "General" Booth the First and the earlier full-blooded days of the Salvation Army's financial manœuvring. Listen to this account of wholesale conversion in the good, old melodramatic fashion of the earlier days of the *War Cry*; and in the direct tradition of Corybantic Christianity:—

Shortly before Christmas, the Bishop of South Tokyo confirmed forty-five Japanese in the pro-cathedral at Tokyo. One of these had just undergone fifteen years' penal servitude for deliberate murder, committed when he was a youth of nineteen. He looks a pretty good ruffian, but he's a dead-keen Christian.

'This is unsettling language! It is not unlike a window-advertisement which ran: "Lodgings for a respectable gentleman," which roused the revolutionary idea that some "gentlemen" were not even "respectable." It also reminds one of the story of the American millionaire's father, who was hanged in Arizona for horse-stealing. The son, wishing to do the right thing, had an expensive tomb erected, and, being approached by the mason concerning the inscription, said: "I guess we'll say nothing about dad's stealing horses, but you might say he was 'jerked to Jesus,' and add the date of his death."

Although these Bible Society's reports are filled with "moving accidents by flood and field," the most heroic deed was that of an English lady, who was "not afraid to sell farthing vernacular Gospels in the streets of Lahore." Ingersoll said that when a thing became too stupid for the pulpit it was passed on to the missionaries. The truth of this criticism is seen in an account of "God's work in China, where copies of *Genesis* and *The Book of Jonah* were sold and expounded literally. This happens, be it remembered, at the very time when the preachers at home roll their eyes and assure their credulous congregations that this same *Book of Genesis* is but an early edition of *The Origin of Species*, without Darwin's tiresome scientific details and exactitude.

In Burma, one report informs us, the unhappy people lack Christian culture, and the brave colporteurs are "often reviled with words too coarse for translation." It is "too deep for tears," but the Saints of God still have much to put up with at the hands of Satan and his followers. Some terrible Italians almost invited an eruption of Vesuvius and Etna together, for they actually had the infernal impudence to describe the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society as "a bottega, a money-making concern," which was, indeed, "the unkindest cut of all."

Doubtless, those countrymen of Dante and Verdi lacked spiritual discernment, or, maybe, they had seen some of the Bible Society's balance sheets. The reports contain columns of figures and pages of statistics, and it is quite clear that this propaganda is largely carried on by means of dead men's money. The figures prove this beyond all question. The British and Foreign Bible Society is but one of many similar institutions which have enormous incomes. Hardly a week passes but one or the other of these propagandist organizations receives legacies from the estate of some Christian "backwoodsman," showing that the hysterical sob-stuff advertising is not without its appeal. It will thus be seen that Freethought has to make headway, not only against the grossest ignorance, but also against a most heavily endowed superstition. Indeed, the Christian Religion is as much a vested interest as the Drink Traffic, to which it bears a marked resemblance, for spiritual intoxication is as great an evil as spirituous intoxication. In fighting Orthodoxy, Freethinkers are opposing an enemy strongly entrenched behind mountains of money-bags. In money lies the power of the Black Army of Priests and their fetish-books, and it is well to remember that this particular Bible is not a "common-bond," but a curse. It is the wedge that holds asunder great portions of the Christian world. There is scarcely a text in these Scriptures to which there is not an opposite text, and there has usually been a sword laid upon each. The history of Christianity shows that Bible believers were never in so little mischief as when they were persecuting and murdering their fellow-men. In twenty centuries they have proved themselves the most hypocritical of all peoples of the earth.

MIMNERMUS.

"Thou Shalt Not Kill"

The *Freethinker's* views about war are on record, and are neither to be shelved nor made the subject of apology. Christians are invited to read our files and find out what Freethinkers said before, during and between wars. A contrast between our views and those of Christian preachers may suggest some far-reaching reflections. The *Freethinker's* editorial policy may be summarized in two short sentences:—

War is a blot on civilization, let us act as if we really believed it.*

Secularists have used and will continue to use all the influence in their power to stir fellow-citizens to realize that

the task before the world is that of ending the era of armed force.*

All the same, and perhaps because that is our aim, we cannot read with patience the crude attempts of some ultra-pacifist Christians to identify hatred of war with love of "God," to confuse peace with piety, or to exploit men's revolt against violence by glorifying a religion whose history and teaching reek with unctuous blessing of myriads of wars.

So recently as the period of the World-War, the parsons, calculating the current popularity of the appeal to arms, threw aside all reticence in their indecent defence of violence and outrage. There was practical unanimity on the Christian side in 1914, as on all previous occasions when England was at war, that God willed it, God commanded it, and that God would reward in heaven those who fell fighting for the side that England aided.

There are many, perhaps a majority, of Christian professionals to-day whose delight in war is in no sense diminished from the 1914 and earlier models. Many are more prudent of speech. It is a matter of fact that some Christians are rightly expressing pacific sentiments rarely heard in 1914, and appealing as Christians to their fellow-Christians to "seek peace and ensure it."

In so contradictory a bundle of documents as the Bible, it is easy to find every kind of good, bad and indifferent sentiment about many subjects. If believers want texts which oppose war, such texts may conceivably be found—with microscopical research. By ignoring, for instance, that Jesus proclaimed:—

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace but a sword. (Matt. x. 34)

It would not be difficult to quote texts like "Take no thought for the morrow," which would make the provision of armaments rather silly. By forgetting that Jesus told his disciples to sell their clothing and buy swords (Luke xxii. 36), a Christian might remind his fellows that Jesus also told the disciples to "resist not evil," but of course that commandment does not necessarily call on anyone to oppose a "righteous" war.

A Glasgow minister's letter appeared in the *British Weekly* (September 26, 1935) protesting against the "pitiful pedlars of an erroneous theology" who do not believe that "the Lord is a Man of War." He consigns to eternal Hell all who support the League of Nations, and all who seek to substitute persuasion for a more powerful British Navy. *Their views*, that the Bible supports their peaceable policy he calls "not Christianity but a perversion of the New Testament." This is but a feeble echo of many such utterances by the leaders of every Church (except perhaps the Christadelphians and Mormons) in 1914-1918.

But why will Christian Pacifists concentrate on an utterly irrelevant Old Testament slogan? "Thou

* *War, Civilization and the Churches*, by Chapman Cohen, London, Pioneer Press.

shalt not kill," says Dr. Alfred Salter, M.P. (*Daily Herald*, September 17), is still a valid commandment!

It never was valid! But that doesn't prevent its being the text of all the sermons Mr. George Lansbury preaches in Parliament or elsewhere. Canon "Dick" Sheppard too, in his "We Say No," spoils much of what he writes by his insistence first and last on what he calls "taking God's word seriously." Canon Sheppard claims, or boasts, that the Christian attitude towards war

is crystallized in the words of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill."

Repeatedly this parrot-cry is emphasized in the Canon's eloquent denunciation of war. It is not his only argument; it is his only Christian argument! In his references to the Sermon on the Mount, he quotes "Love your enemies," and similar meaningless words, without commenting on them. But Christ's reference to the Mosaic "commandment" "Thou shalt not kill" is taken to imply that Christ approved of it.

Laws against criminal homicide required no tablets of stone, written by Jehovah's own hand, to emphasize a prejudice (much older than Moses' "Commandment") which men have always felt against the possibility of their being murdered. Neither Moses nor his contemporaries nor his successors could ever have imagined that this "commandment" meant any more than this.

To put it mildly, a very large proportion of the "divine" commandments which Moses gave Israel might easily be "crystallized" (to use Dr. Sheppard's word) into the phrase "Thou shalt kill." To begin with, the very text so favoured by Christian pacifists, "Thou shalt not kill," was only part of the law against murder. Its immediate sequel was (and unhappily still is) "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

Myriads of innocent lives, chiefly of elderly women, were sacrificed in obedience to the commandment (so discreetly forgotten by respectable Christians to-day) "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." In fact there were few of God's (or Moses') laws which were not prefaced by "Thou shalt kill," or concluded with the words, "He shall surely die," i.e., be killed!

To injure a man fatally without intent, involved the assailant being put to death. A man who hit his parent, even if it involved no injury, must be killed for it. Stealing a slave was punished by killing. (Killing one's "own" slave was by no means a capital offence, and if the slave were slowly killed it was not punishable at all). Even an animal could be vindictively executed if it offended. Yes, Moses is a great authority on "Thou shalt not kill!"

The Tabernacle sacrifices of animals and birds seem to have offered special delight to the mind of Moses who "legislated" for their provision and clearly took pleasure in the details of the killings.

To those who imagine that "Thou shalt not kill" implied any sort of restrictive criticism or veto regarding the vilest wars in all human records, we recommend a further reading of the Old Testament. The Israelites' war in their invasion of Palestine was at least as inexcusable as an Italian invasion of Abyssinia could be. It was conducted with a rapacity incredibly cruel. Mothers and babies were specially "commanded" by Jehovah to be slaughtered in cold blood, and for virgins to be the prey of God's chosen warriors, divinely inspired to lustful killing and condemned only when human mercy occasionally opposed God's abominable commands.

"Thou shalt not kill" is not only a senseless slogan; it is a "crystallization" of pious hypocrisy.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Eating One's God

IV.

WHILE it is true that Christians, urging the acceptance of "genuine" Christianity, almost invariably insist on going back to Jesus, the fact remains that Christian theology is based, as a whole, on Paul. Not that Paul is easily understood. On the contrary, commentators have the greatest difficulty in coming to any real agreement as to what he meant. That he was steeped in Pagan "mysteries" is, however, generally admitted, and that—if he really were the great missionary he is commonly reported to be—he introduced the Eucharist into Christianity—is also, though reluctantly, generally admitted. If his Epistles are the first contributions to the New Testament, written long before the Gospels (in their present state), then it must be admitted that it was he who first described the Last Supper. Of course, the description may be an interpolation; and there are many arguments to prove it is.

John M. Robertson devotes some pages to the subject in his *Christianity and Mythology*; and he claims "that the narrative first took Christian shape in a Jesuit mystery-drama is the only satisfactory view of its origin. The Supper itself was an ancient rite; and to introduce the God in person was only to do what the Greeks had done long before, as in the *Bacchae* of Euripides, and what the Egyptians had done in the rites of Osiris."

Now if Paul—or whoever wrote the Epistle to the Corinthians—introduced the whole idea of the Last Supper from Pagan sources, and if there never had been a Last Supper with Jesus as the principal figure, it would be quite in keeping with the non-historicity of Jesus. There are, indeed, a number of New Testament writings like James, Jude, 2 Peter, and the Apocalypse, which never mention the rite. And scholars claim that the document behind our synoptic Gospels, which they call "Q," does not mention it either. The Shepherd of Hermas is likewise silent, and it is one of the earliest of Roman Christian documents. Now all this is curious if there had been a real Jesus sitting at the Last Supper. But it is highly significant if—as I, for one, claim—Jesus is a myth. It is just what one would expect. The great French Modernist, Loisy, who seems to have given up everything in the gospels but Jesus, says that the words of Jesus at the Last Supper are the doctrine of Paul, "and are simply incomprehensible as addressed by Jesus to his disciples on the day of his death."

The attitude of John towards the Last Supper is the one which has given pious critics most trouble. As I pointed out in a previous article, he omits it and substitutes feet-washing though he uses very strong language elsewhere about eating his body and drinking his blood: "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life . . . for my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him." These beautiful thoughts couched in such lovely language have not, all the same, roused the admiration of the Christian world. In fact, most believers hastily gloss over the subject, and it is only on rare occasions that they quote these words, and then with the pathetic plea not to take them literally.

The real truth at the back of John's omission of the Last Supper may never be known, though many suppositions have been hazarded. It may be that the early Christians were mostly at loggerheads on all sorts of doctrinal points, and that the Jewish converts objected very strongly to a rite being introduced into the new religion which was so obviously derived from Paganism, and which, at the moment, was in full

swing, so to speak, in Mithraism. Moreover, no one can deny that John was constantly "symbolizing"—it would be silly to take many of his statements as literal. "Water," "wine," "spirit" and "blood," are constantly dealt with in some way. He even makes water and blood issue from Jesus's side at the crucifixion.

The symbolic interpretation of many things held literally by modern Christians will be found constantly insisted upon by many of the early Church Fathers. They seem to take a delight in showing the "spiritual" value of all sorts of absurd incidents, particularly those connected with Jesus. Justin Martyr has a lot to say in this fashion in his famous *Dialogue with Trypho*. They also argue as to whether the Eucharist is a sacrament, or a sacrifice, or even a sort of magical charm. But, as Preserved Smith says, "the fundamental idea in eating god was to become like him. This was carried so far in the Pagan religions, that the initiates not only imitated what the God was fabled to have done, but were actually called by his name. The adorer of Bacchus became Bacchus; the follower of Attis was called Attis." And there can be little doubt that most of the early Christians held something of the same idea when they ate the bread and wine.

At the Reformation, it was the business of the Reformers (or Protestants) to ridicule many Popish practices. They were not disposed altogether to abolish the Eucharist so they claimed for it just pure symbolism. The bread and wine, says the Rev. J. P. Lundy, "are spiritually Christ's body not casually." But not all those who have left Rome are of this opinion. The members of the Society known as the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament are required to pray, "That there may be a more widespread belief in the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence, and of the Eucharistic Sacrifice"; and one of its ministers declared in a sermon:—

That the Holy Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ under the forms of Bread and Wine, that therein is Christ Himself, His Body, Soul, Divinity, as truly as at Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or Calvary, or at the right hand of God, we take as certain.

And Dr. Gore—who is said by his biographer to be a "real rationalist"—insisted in one of his sermons that:—

Christ is present in the Eucharist indeed externally to us, objectively and really; He is present as the Bread of Life, the Sacrifice for sins, the object of worship He is present wherever the Consecrated Elements are.

It is only fair to state that as far as can be gathered from the language used by the Church of England in connexion with all this hocus-pocus, the literal interpretation is not required. The twenty-eighth Article says, "The mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith" which makes one heartily thank the gods that be for that blessed word *faith*.

It was, as a matter of fact, faith that was required, above all things, by Augustine. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was the "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace"—though Augustine certainly believed in the literal interpretation of the rite. And later, when a number of theologians tried to impose the symbolical view on believers they were completely crushed.

The Council of Trent, held in 1551, and called into being through the Reformation, was obliged to lay down authoritatively Catholic doctrine; and modern Catholicism has not, as far as I know, departed from its decrees. It affirmed that "Jesus Christ, very God and very man, is truly, really and substantially pre-

sent under the species of bread and wine." It was a master-stroke of diplomacy, for masses became a tremendous source of revenue for the Church. They were not only good and necessary for the souls in Purgatory, but also for all sorts of more objective realities—such as soldiers in war, for weather, for the sick, for allaying tempests and for many other things. The Church owes its influence and survival to many things; but a good deal, it must be admitted, to the Eucharist.

H. CUTNER.

Acid Drops

Hardly anything better illustrates the ethical level of modern war than the fall of Adowa. After three days' fighting this "city" was captured, and Italy went wild with joy—or at least officially so, because one knows what happens where Fascists rule to anyone who does not laugh or cry when the order is given to do one or the other. Italians embraced each other, by order, they cheered, by order, and rejoiced, by order. Everywhere the cry was "Adowa is avenged." We who are old enough remember that cry just over a generation ago when we had the Boer War ushered in with "avenge Majuba," and afterwards the shouts of "Majuba is avenged." The chief difference in the two cases is that not being under Fascist rule, every Englishman did not join in the cry, and many publicly protested against the inherent savagery of the cry. Britain has never yet lost a healthy difference of opinion, and is never likely to do so unless dictatorship establishes itself in this country.

But "Adowa is avenged," does help to illustrate the low level upon which war-mentality works. Over forty years ago the Abyssinians beat a force of Italians. The conquest was accompanied by marks such as so often have accompanied conquests by semi-civilized Christian peoples. (Civilized ones prefer starvation by blockade and decimation by disease to the direct mutilation of bodies, and dropping bombs on women and children to cutting their throats). Over forty years later—after actual wrongdoers are dead, and there is no possibility of punishing them a Christian nation makes an unprovoked attack upon the people in the country in which the defeat was experienced, it brings numerous war-planes dropping hundreds of explosive bombs, against men who have nothing of the kind to fight with, it brings armoured tanks and machine-guns against second- and third-rate rifles, and after three days' desperate fighting captures this tremendous stronghold of mud huts and flimsy walls. How many were killed one is not able to say, the important thing is that those who were killed had nothing to do with the original offence, and it is certain that if the Italians had been certain that man for man the Abyssinians equalled them in numbers and in equipment, the attack would never have been made and Adowa would not have been avenged.

But this is war-mentality. It is not peculiar to Italy, although, being Fascist, and therefore, brutally barbaric and culturally retrogressive, it gives us a clearer illustration of its working than other countries do. The war mind is the same everywhere. Ethically, and socially it moves upon a level of barbarism, and when excited, on a level of sheer savagery. The uniform makes no difference; the scientific apparatus makes no difference. If the parents have eaten sour grapes the war-mind believes that the teeth of the children ought to be set on edge. By dropping bombs on villages of mud huts the Italians have avenged Adowa. If the rule holds good Abyssinia ought to set to work, as soon as possible to avenge Adowa, because this had been done by the Italians. Otherwise they will forfeit the right to be called a civilized country.

Another exhibition of the Fascist mind in operation comes from Professor Lenard, of Heidelberg, via the

News-Chronicle. The Herr Professor said the Asiatic spirit "should be eliminated from science, particularly in the case of Einstein, because, it is unworthy of a German—and indeed only harmful to him—to be the intellectual follower of a Jew. Natural science, properly so-called, is of completely Aryan origin." The next step should be to deny the laws of planetary motion because they were discovered by a Pole, and Newtonian gravitation must certainly go, because that was discovered by an Englishman.

In his *More Strictly Personal*, the well-known writer, Mr. Sydney Horler writing about Sir John Reith, says:—

Someone who claimed to know, told me recently that Reith boasts that he knew nothing about wireless when he applied for his present job, beyond what he had read in a sixpenny manual. We wonder if that sixpenny manual told him that it was ill-advised to have Free-thought or any controversial subject broadcasted?

The original story was that Reith was passing through London, saw the advertisement, applied for the job, and got it. The man who can believe that the public can swallow such a story concerning so well-paid a job as that held by Reith, will swallow anything. But then judging from the different excuses the B.B.C. has given the public, it is probable that Sir John Reith believes the public will swallow anything.

Here is another passage from Mr. Horler's book, concerning a Hampstead funeral:—

As I listened in that Hampstead Church to the clergyman conducting the funeral service, I thought once again how bewildering religion, as taught by the Church of England, must be to the average mind. None of us asked to come into this life; we came here (if the priests are to be believed) through God's will; yet directly, we are sinners (because of the inborn tendency to evil), we live through many of us—lifetimes of misery, and at the end of life we thank the same God who brought us into the world for taking us out of it.

It is a little puzzling, if looked at by a man who is used to standing on his hind legs, and using whatever intelligence he possesses in a proper way. But Christianity is not really intended for that type. It is meant for men who reason like morons and act like slaves. The more God whips them the lower on their stomachs they go and the louder their cries for mercy and their praise of the hand that whips them. A mad dog may bite the hand it loves best, but the sign of the true Christian is, the greater the thrashing he gets the louder his protestation of devotion to the power that wields the whip.

We do not know whether Dr. F. Swanson Hawks of Swansea is really a "distinguished surgeon" or not, but whether he is a distinguished surgeon or just an ordinary practitioner, he would have become distinguished, to a Christian crowd so soon as he testified to the power of prayer. At any rate, on its face value, we take his account, given at a religious meeting in Swansea of how a man was healed by prayer. The doctor and the nurse stood by a bedside in a hospital waiting for a man to die. (In these stories the man is nearly always dying and the doctors have given up hope). Then a vision came to the dying man. He saw his own minister and his own congregation praying for him. The dying man felt a "definite shock," and from that moment began to recover. He didn't get up there and then, seize the nurse round the waist and jump round the ward, he just recovered slowly. The miracle was effected, but it was not so spectacular as it might have been.

It is rather difficult to believe that this "distinguished surgeon" is unacquainted with such a phenomenon as auto-suggestion, or to be unaware that there are thousands of cases in which a doctor stands helplessly by waiting for some stimulus, which he can neither direct nor control, to set his patient on the right path. If the doctor is wise he looks for such help and appreciates it

when it comes. If he is artful he attributes it to his own superiority over other doctors. And if he is very religious he is as ready to see the "hand of God" in it as the most ignorant peasant in Europe. And, after all, we should not be surprised to learn that a careful statement of the facts would put a different complexion on them—even as they stand.

Another "miracle" of a different kind is reported in Cherai. We rely for the account of this in the *Universe*. It is stated that there had been in Cherai, South India, a rapid spread of "Malabar Atheism." We do not know exactly what this variety is like, but is evidently of a virulent kind. Anyway, there it was, with a reading room, "on the public highway," and a general invitation to "Be an Atheist." In the old days this would have been met with an earthquake or a pestilence, or the notice would have crumbled away as it was put up. In this case a different plan was formed. The local priest gave a course of six lectures—six only, and at the end "the Atheistic influence was totally uprooted, the reading room was closed and the inscriptions were removed." All with six lectures, which were attended by, "Brahmins, Nairs, Muslims, non-Catholic Christians and Catholics." Apparently there were no Atheists present. We, of course, accept the statement of the *Universe*, but what a scope there is in this country for the preacher to repeat his remarkable series of lectures! This story goes very well with the Swansea one, and proves that, despite all differences, Christianity is much the same the world over.

Another sample from the *Universe*. This time it is about angels. Says the *Universe*:—

God has willed that Michael should lead the forces of the good angels against the evil angels, and to him we should constantly resort invoking his strong protection against the assaults of Satan. . . . The angels of God are pure spirits, of great might and power. Let us invoke their constant aid, and especially that of Michael, so that at the last we shall be able to say that Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.

This is, of course, written for readers of the *Universe* and loyal readers of that paper would never dream of reading an anti-Catholic paper. But here we are, back in the ages of demonism; mentally at one with the devil dancers of the most uncivilized of human peoples. Mussolini may congratulate himself on the fact that when he meets the "uncivilized" Abyssinians he has on his side, and acting under his order a Church that is, in essence, as uncivilized as anything that exists on the face of the earth.

The Bishop of Fulham is described by the *Streatham News* as a "former heavy-weight boxer, cricketer, oarsman and tennis player." The Bishop, in preaching at Christ Church, Norwood, was in congenial surroundings. Around the chancel steps and pulpit, we learn, were piles of "cricket-bats, pads, and stumps, tennis rackets, hockey sticks, boxing gloves, dumb-bells and clubs." It was a "sportsmen's service." The Bishop was the bearer of good tidings of great joy, for he announced that "God has handed over to mankind the management of the world." We call this real sporty of God. But we should like to see the charter, or power of attorney or whatever the document is, and some clearer proof of its genuineness than the mere word of a Bishop. The Bishop could give no better evidence of his own sincerity than by helping to demolish all these expensive buildings known as "the house of God." The new managers will need decent housing if they are expected to improve on the old mis-management now extinct.

The Rev. Viscount Mountmorres said the other day that "it used to be the fashion a short while before the Great War for a certain class of 'Rationalist' to maintain that Our Lord was nothing more than a fervid social reformer." The Rev. Viscount is, of course, quite right though he might have added there are quite a number of these reverent Rationalists still with us. On the other hand, it is the hard-boiled Freethinker who agrees with

him that Jesus is not a mere man but a God; and that the four Gospels prove this conclusively. Jesus, in fact is a genuine God exactly like Osiris or Jupiter or Krishna; and we are sorry so many of the reverent type of Rationalists do not agree with us.

But the Rev. Viscount adds another piquant bit of information. "As a matter of actual fact," he says, "every great social reform has been the outcome of, and inspired by, the teaching of the Church." What a pity we were not given precise details of these social reforms—for "as a matter of actual fact," almost every great social reform for nearly 200 years at least was invariably opposed by the Bishops in the House of Lords. Of course, one can say that the Bishops were not inspired by Christianity but, if that is so, what, in the name of heaven, did inspire their fervid opposition? The truth is, the social record of Christianity is one of the ghastliest in history.

Alas, the pious Editor of the Catholic *Universe* has had to make a direct reply for once to a puzzled and equally pious reader. "The date of the creation of the first man," he says sadly, "is quite uncertain and it is generally agreed by scripture commentators that the Bible gives not sufficient data to enable us to assign any special date to that event." It is, in fact, "quite" uncertain, but, in a thoroughly Catholic country, what would have happened to a poor benighted heretic had he said the same thing quite so clearly? We shudder to think of his terrible fate. But the Editor continues still more sadly: "The date of 4000 B.C., found in the margin of our Catholic Bibles is, strangely enough, copied from a calculation made by a Protestant Archbishop, and is entirely without authority." And yet those Catholic Bibles had actually a genuine Catholic imprimatur as being Divinely inspired!

At the same time, we are told that "the story of Adam and Eve is an article of faith so far as the following points are concerned"—points concerning the usual rignarole—the woman was made from the man, the transgression of the divine precept, the promise of a Redeemer, etc. In fact, everything is true but the date—and yet Usher's dates which are mostly accepted—even in Catholic Bibles—are based on careful Biblical figures; and ought to be accepted as much on faith as anything else. In fact the only way to swallow the whole Bible is by an act of faith, for there is no other way. We never could understand why any Christian should bother about *proving* anything when he has such an invincible stronghold as the Rock of Faith.

Mr. Arnold Lunn is still hankering after "Secularist lions to play with," and he admits his Catholic friends are to blame "for the complete lack of contact between Rationalistic Societies and the Church." This reads very well in the Catholic journal he is writing for, but the fact remains, neither Mr. Lunn nor the Catholic lions are at all anxious to meet any competent Secularist on a Catholic platform. They would retreat with pious horror if it were suggested that the Secularist would like to be given the chance of putting his case before a crowd of young Catholics, and, at the same time, selling some of our literature to the pious ones. Neither the valiant speakers of the Catholic Evidence Guild, nor the Knights of Columbus, nor any of the other shining gladiators so ready to meet the infidel when the infidel is not about, have the slightest intention of debating the issue between us. And nobody knows this better than Mr. Lunn.

The question as to whether Christians should or should not go to war is being hotly argued in the religious press, and the answers show almost as many varieties of opinion as there are Christian sects. The real point is—what does the New Testament say? The Rev. H. L. Goudge admits sorrowfully that "the question is there never directly raised." He adds, "There is no expectation that war will be abolished before the return of the Lord"—which is so extremely helpful,

especially for those Christians who are against war and, at the same time, rather dubious about the "return of the Lord." Mr. Goudge does his best to expound the Scriptures, and what Jesus and Paul and Peter said or thought without adding a single word of value to the discussion. The truth is, the vague generalities about war in the New Testament are hopeless as a guide, and it is a pity that some of these well-intentioned believers do not boldly say so.

It is intriguing to find the latest use of the word "Rationalist." In the *Life of Charles Gore*, Dr. Prestige says that "Gore was a real Rationalist," and a reviewer of the book adds, "but a Rationalist who started and remained within the sphere of orthodoxy, broadly understood, because no other position seemed credible to him." As Gore believed in the "Real Presence," in Transubstantiation, the credibility of this kind of Rationalism must be apparent to all. In addition Gore's belief "included the facts of specifically Christian experience, both individual and corporate." Reasoning this way, we shall soon have other reverend gentlemen described either as Atheistic Christians or Christian Atheists reconciling thorough unbelief in God with positive belief that Jesus was God. Genuine Christianity is so helpful.

Angels are not very popular these days (unless one confuses the theological kind with the Mae West type), so it is refreshing to find a pious writer letting himself go like this:—

Angels, so theology teaches, are pure spirits, unlike man whose spirit finds expression in a body. Although for purposes of manifestation to human eyes, they may assume a shape, they are by nature immaterial. Thus mankind is tempted to think too little of them since it puts most trust in things that it can touch and see. Yet it is almost a logical necessity to the believer that the angels should exist.

But why this "almost"? Why not boldly proclaim that a belief in God absolutely necessitates a belief in angels? Does any Christian dare deny God's creation of angels? Wasn't Satan a "fallen angel"? Come, come, if God exists, so do angels. And we can add heaven and hell also. In fact, the whole blessed Christian creed.

Modern Christians speak very disparagingly of the Crusaders, those valiant knights who swarmed across Europe, and in the name of Jesus, tried to rescue Jerusalem from the profane hands of the infidel. They are described by a Mr. B. C. Boulter as wearing "the Cross upon their breasts, but their feet were swift to shed blood. Their violence and debauchery became a by-word. They treated the enemy with no vestige of Christian compassion; and the enemy prevailed. The Cross-bearers had betrayed the Cross." All this is not surprising to those of us outside the Faith, but for a Christian to describe his fellow-Christian soldiers in this way shows that at last a glimmering of common-sense is beginning to dawn upon him. The truth is that the "Cross" had no effect in preventing most of the Crusaders from becoming foul and bestial ruffians; and most Christians are forced nowadays to admit it.

New ways of "harmonizing" the contradictions of the Bible occur to theologians constantly. Dr. James Moffatt (who has been described as the author of the 'Arry and 'Arriet Bible) claims that Professor Scott "brings out the common central element in the different writings" of the sacred authors. He "recognizes the new categories" (i.e., the contradictions) "converge upon the central fact of Jesus as the revealer of God." Yes, but the trouble is that they "reveal" a different kind of God, and emphasize the "central fact" that Jesus said irreconcilable things about the God he "revealed." Professor Scott says he can "show his readers a reasonable sense in which these things are true for modern minds," but—and here comes the trouble, he can do this "if only they are prepared to shed misconceptions, such as those which identify Christianity with the revelation of a theological scheme or an ethical programme." A fairly comprehensive proviso.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL :

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"FAIR PLAY."—We cannot print letters that are not accompanied with the name and address of the sender—not necessarily for publication.

W. B. COOK.—You may be right, but, on the other hand, it may be no more than parental pride in a son's accomplishments. That is very pardonable.

J. T. BRIGHTON.—We are very pleased to hear of the success of your debate.

J. LUCAS.—Pleased you are so delighted with Mr. Cohen's *Letters to the Lord*. The book is selling well, and most Freethinkers find it very suitable to hand to a Christian friend.

C. E. GOUGH.—Obliged for cuttings.

M. HOOLE.—Thanks for address, paper being sent for four weeks.

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Sugar Plums

To-day (October 13) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30, on "Some Savageries of Civilization." We believe this is the opening meeting of the autumn season of the Leicester Society, and we hope the audience will be such as to give plenty of encouragement for those on whose shoulders the responsibility rests for carrying on the work.

On Sunday next (October 20) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Picture House, Market Street, Manchester, at 7.0. Admission will be free, but there will be reserved seats at sixpence and one shilling each. This is the opening of the Manchester lecture season, and in the afternoon, at 3.0, there will be a special lecture by Mr. J. V. Shortt, of Liverpool. We hope that local friends will do their best to see that both meetings are well attended, and the session is opened in good style. Full particulars of both meetings will be found in our Lecture Guide column next week.

On the Monday following the Manchester lecture, Mr. Cohen will visit Blackburn, and will speak in "The Public Halls," at 7.30, on "Do the Dead Live?" Admission will be free, with reserved seats at sixpence. It is some years since Mr. Cohen lectured in Blackburn, and he hopes to meet many old friends from the surrounding district.

The original priest had a deal to do with the cure of disease, even though his main stock of cures consisted in charms and incantations. But a great deal of the Priest is still evident with many of our medical practitioners. Most people, for example, will recall the publicity given some years ago to an alleged cure for tuberculosis by Dr. Spallinger. Dr. Spallinger approached the British Government with samples of his vaccine for experimentation. The suggestion was, it is said under the influence of the Government's medical advisers,

turned down. The Government of Northern Ireland then took up the matter, and a report has now been issued claiming an extraordinary measure of success in curing bovine tuberculosis. Our own Government is now thinking of testing the matter. And bearing in mind the manner in which Dr. Spallinger has worked, and, it is said, spent his money, and also the terrible ravages of the tuberculosis, it is quite evident that some person or persons should be called to book. But as we have said, there is a good deal of the priest left in the average medical man, who may be a very intelligent man, or an unintelligent one who has managed to pass an examination, and who belongs to a very strong and very close trades union.

On Saturday evening, November 16, a Social will be held in the Caxton Hall, Westminster. The Executive of the N.S.S. will be responsible, and a thoroughly enjoyable evening is promised. The Somerville Band will be in attendance, and a programme of dances, vocal items, and other forms of entertainment will be arranged, and, of course, a few words from the President. London Branches and individual members are asked to co-operate towards making the event an opportunity for general introduction of saints and friends from all parts. Tickets, including refreshments, are 2s. 6d. each, and may be had from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, or the offices of the National Secular Society, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Two debates, one at Sunderland, and the other at Seaham, have been part of the good work Mr. J. T. Brighton carries on in Durham. In both cases the local press gave good publicity, and from other sources we learn that Mr. Brighton conducted his case with marked ability, and an ever ready reserve of humour. At Seaham, Mr. Brighton met two Spiritualists in debate, a lady and a gentleman. This was also conducted with the greatest good humour—though whether the audience were satisfied that any communications had been received from the spirit world, is doubtful.

THE ARABS IN SPAIN

The Arabs brought with them rare skill in tilling and watering the soil. They covered the hills of Granada with orchards of orange, fig, and pomegranate. They planted thousands of mulberry trees and built up a silk industry of the first magnitude. Every peasant's house was covered with rich grapes. Sheep grazed all over the higher, steeper places. The broad plain of the Xenil, some thirty-seven leagues in circumference, was metamorphosed into a vast irrigated garden. Sugar was raised in immense quantities, for beyond domestic needs; so that a rich export trade was created. Toward the close of the tenth century, all this engineering and scientific husbandry was supporting an immense population. In Cordova a census of dwelling houses was taken and showed some 200,000 of them. So it is not unreasonable to infer a city of 1,000,000 people.

All this was observed and envied by the Spaniards for many generations. This high prosperity must have been noted and famed fully seven hundred years, from the eighth century down to the fifteenth. But did a single Spaniard take the lesson to heart? Did the land beyond the rule of the Moslems imitate their agriculture? Far from it. Nor is this the worst indictment of the Ibero-Celt. No sooner had the last Moslem been overwhelmed after the surrender of Granada in 1492, than the victorious Spaniards allowed the whole fruitful region to sink into disrepair, neglect and eventual ruin. Spain became largely a desert—which she still is, a place as horrible as the bleak plateaus of Central Asia. Roads faded into paths, paths into mere marks across the wastes. Once thriving cities withered, went hollow of humanity, and finally crumbled. The stretch between Toledo and Madrid, once green, rich, and thickly populated, became a dry desolation dotted with three or four wretched Stone Age villages. The Aurignacians had come into their own again.

From "A History of Human Stupidity,"
by W. P. Pitkin, pp. 106-7.

Things Worth Knowing*

VIII.

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN—"

THE factory children of the Industrial Revolution fell into two classes; (1) apprentice children, (2) free-labour children, or children living at home with parents or guardians. The apprentice children were the first to be employed. The early spinning machinery invented whilst the wonders of steam were still unknown, needed water-power for its working; hence the first mills were placed on streams, and the necessary labour was provided by the importation of cartloads of pauper children from the workhouses to the big towns. London was an important source, for since the passing of Hanway's Act in 1767, the child population in the workhouses had enormously increased and the parish authorities were anxious to find relief from the burden of their maintenance. Jonas Hanway . . . was one of the founders of Magdalen Hospital and introduced the umbrella. By the Act generally called by his name, passed in consequence of his untiring exertions, all London parish children under six years of age were boarded out . . . at not less than 2s. 6d. per week. . . . Before this Act very few parish children survived to trouble the authorities. Hanway himself estimated the death rate at 60 to 70 per cent. The Act according to Howlett caused a deficiency of 2,100 burials a year. To the parish authorities, encumbered with great masses of unwanted children, the new cotton mills in Lancashire, Derbysire and Notts were a godsend. It must be remembered that, as a committee in 1815 pointed out, in London relief was seldom bestowed without the parish claiming the exclusive right of disposing, at their pleasure, of all the children of the persons receiving relief. The manufacturers were anxious to oblige, and in one case at least, a Lancashire millowner agreed with a London parish to take one idiot with every twenty sound children supplied. The guardians had thus available a system of transportation for poor children, which was cheaper and more effective than the transportation system that had brought relief to the London prisons.

These children were consigned to their employers at the ages of seven and upwards, till they were twenty-one. Next door to the mills prentice-houses were built, and in these two buildings their young lives were spent, at best in monotonous toil, at worst in a hell of human cruelty. . . . A model mill at Styall, near Manchester, employed from seventy to eighty children procured from the Liverpool workhouse, living in a small prentice-house near the mill. Here, where kindness was the rule, and the children's education was supervised by members of the owner's family noted for its benevolence, the working hours were seventy-four a week, or over twelve hours a day, Saturday included. The majority of mills worked fifteen hours. In many of them, work, like the stream, never stopped all night, and the children who had tended the machines all day crept into beds just left vacant by the children who were to tend them during the night. . . .

A vivid picture of life in these prentice mills was given before the 1816 committee by a certain Mr. John Moss, governor of the workhouse at Preston. For a year, from February, 1814 to March, 1815, he had been master of about 150 parish apprentices at a

cotton mill at Blackborough, in Lancashire. The London children came at ages ranging from seven to eleven, the Liverpool children from eight to fifteen; all were bound till they were twenty-one. Their regular working hours, Saturday included, were from 5 a.m. till 8 p.m., and with the exception of half an hour at 7 a.m. for breakfast, and half an hour at 12 for dinner, they were working continuously the whole time. They were, however, allowed to eat something while working in the afternoon. There were no seats in the mill. When lost time had to be made up they were working from 5 a.m. till 9 or 10 p.m., and this sometimes lasted for three weeks on end. On Sunday always some, and sometimes all, were employed from 6 a.m. till noon cleaning machinery. . . . At night Mr. Moss regularly inspected their beds, "because there were always some of them missing, some sometimes might be runaways, others I have sometimes found asleep in the mill." The bedding was simple and unclean. A blanket to lie on, and another blanket with a horse cover to throw over them. During his time sheets were introduced. Nobody from London ever came to look after the children, who, according to Mr. Moss, developed into depraved characters. Once before Mr. Moss's time, when the mill had stopped payment under its former proprietors, the children were taken from the mill in a cart and turned adrift near the sands on the Lancaster road.

These cotton mills, crowded with overworked children, were hotbeds of what was called putrid fever, and it was an epidemic at Radcliffe, in 1784, that first drew public attention to the condition of the apprentices. . . . No outside person, whether parent or magistrate, had any right to enter a mill or a prentice house; the apprentices were, in fact, absolutely at the mercy of their employers. The law in theory gave them a remedy; by 20 Geo. ii., c. 19 (1792) an apprentice could appeal to a magistrate against his ill-treatment, and if the case were proved could obtain his discharge. . . . But the risk that a child who passed his life shut up in the prentice house and the mill could find his way to a magistrate was not very serious, and if he succeeded it was as likely as not that the magistrate would turn out to be his own or a neighbouring employer. Gisborne tells us that cruel punishments were inflicted on those who found some means of complaint.

Fourteen or fifteen hours confinement for six days a week were the "regular" hours, in busy times hours were elastic, and sometimes stretched to a length that seems almost incredible. Work from 3 a.m. to 10 p.m. was not unknown; in Mr. Varley's mill they worked from 3.30 to 9.30. At the mill, happily called "Hell's Bay," for two months at a time, they not only worked regularly from 5 to 9, but for two nights each week worked all through the night as well.

It was physically impossible to keep such a system working at all except by the driving power of terror. The overseers who gave evidence before Sadler's Committee did not deny that their methods were brutal. They said that they had either to exact the full quota of work or to be dismissed, and in these circumstances pity was a luxury that men with families depending on them could not allow themselves. The punishments for arriving late in the mornings had to be made cruel enough to overcome the temptation to tired children to take more than three hours in bed. One witness before Sadler's Committee had known a child who had reached home at eleven o'clock one night, get up at two the next morning in panic and limp to the mill gate. In some mills scarcely an hour passed in the day without the sound of beating and cries of pain. Fathers beat their own

* 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.

children to save a worse beating from the overseer. In the afternoons the heavy iron stick, known as the billy-roller was in constant use, and even then it happened not infrequently that a small child as he dozed tumbled into the machine beside him and was mangled for life, or, if he were fortunate, to find a longer Lethe than his stolen sleep.

The Town Labourer, 1760-1832,
J. L. HAMMOND AND BARBARA
HAMMOND, PP. 144-160.

A Naturalist and Immortality

In the writings of W. H. Hudson, the famous Naturalist, there is an intimate personal touch which has an irresistible appeal to the reader. Throughout his numerous books he seems to be at one's side walking, and talking naturally, and speaking of what he knows. He is not on the side of the loquacious who would enter heaven with a tankard of ale, he does not burden one with conundrums about the Trinity; his long contact with the earth, his pure pleasure from it which he shares with the student, ratifies the aspiration of Emerson who, approached on the subject of religion replied gently, "One world at a time."

Testing and trying all things, applying reason to theories, making friends with the illustrious giants of thought, the thinker has his reward. Through sifting grain from chaff, he becomes enriched with a preponderance of adequate ideas for mental health, slightly to adjust Spinoza, and, if the ring of sincerity in the life work of a writer catches his ear, and the author's facts are verifiable, there is full measure of trust extended which will never be betrayed.

The present writer, with many guesses of his own without taking in a load of others, came naturally to Hudson through a predilection for all writers, who in their brief stay on earth, could find enough to occupy their minds without wanting to shoot the moon, murder thousands in the name of war, or create a speed record. And throughout the splendid sanity of Hudson's writings, with good health in abundance, it became a fascinating subject to mark and note his ideas on immortality.

At the outset, Hudson's independence of thought, his disesteem for all the world's trash that mesmerizes the undeveloped, and his scorn of false delights compel one to listen with both ears to an exposition of life, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. Nietzsche said that many a good thought could be got by walking; Hudson's philosophy is proof of this truth.

In a volume, *Merry England*, Hudson had published in 1883 in poem form, "The London Sparrow." It will be found to contain some of his early thought which was, during the following years to be expressed in a hundred different ways. A facing up to reality, a curb on the imagination, these were and are ever present in his written thoughts; a lover of the poet, Robert Bloomfield, was not going to tie himself nor his readers in metaphysical knots as the following lines will demonstrate:—

"Never a morning comes but I do bless thee,
Thou brave and faithful Sparrow, living link
That binds us to the immemorial past;
O blithe heart in a house so melancholy,
And keeper for a thousand gloomy years
Of many a gay tradition; heritor
Of Nature's ancient cheerfulness, for thee
'Tis ever Merry England!"

Among birds, the sparrow was a favourite of Venus; the naturalist who had no erroneous ideas of where man came from, who could look on the past

with brave eyes (and this requires courage) never made the mistake of losing the lesson from history which is no history at all if Greek thought be left out.

The Naturalist in La Plata, published in 1892, when Hudson would be about forty-one years of age, is a narrative chiefly of personal observation; its significance is the stress put on the plea for the preservation of the species alive of beautiful birds and animals. Pelts, and plumage of dead birds, were of little or no interest to the naturalist. At this point in Hudson's growth there are many examples of straight hitting at the predatory and destructive instincts of man. Not without bitterness he writes the following against the killing on the Pampas of the rhea and the flamingo: ". . . this enlightened, scientific, humanitarian age, which should have for a motto, 'Let us slay all noble and beautiful things, for to-morrow we die.'" The living specimen, to be allowed to perpetuate its kind, was a link with some remotely known past, to be permitted to live in freedom. Here, we think, the author had his base for much that followed in his later work, which is the subject of this paper. He is careful never to mix fact with fiction, he is never ashamed to admit that he does not know, and in his intensest moments of writing where the siren-sweet call of belief is mistaken for truth by many writers, he keeps to the gravamen in such statements as: "And as to telepathy, the plain common sense view of the matter is that the Flammarions had better drop it as an additional proof of the soul, or else overcome all opposition to the idea of sharing their heaven with the lower animals."

Birds in a Village, published in 1893, gives the author an opportunity of commenting on a theory of Michelet (1798-1874) in his book *L'Oiseau*. Hudson suggests that the French historian's work might be included in the hundred best books. Brought out in the fifties, *L'Oiseau* was an eloquent appeal on behalf of birds. Michelet, in his emotional prose, paints the following picture:—

"The winged order—the loftiest, the tenderest, the most sympathetic with man—is that which man nowadays persecutes most cruelly. What is required for its protection? To reveal the Bird as soul, to show that it is a person." Then comes the cold shower from Hudson, who knew men, but did not trust them very much:—

"Vain, vain dream which so many have had! Did the writer, enthusiast and dreamer that he was, know and take into consideration the dull, stubborn, brutish character of that huge mass of humanity which he aspired to leaven? It was not by merely writing an eloquent book that so great a change could be brought about. To him the Bird might be a 'soul,' 'person,' but he could not make Michelets of other men; to the ordinary Frenchman it remained a creature that existed for one purpose only—namely, that he might have the pleasure of killing and perhaps eating it; but, in any case, of killing it." Hudson would have his remedy on a firmer basis than that of the theological tangle in which the first trap for the unwary is the Christian exposition of the soul. Birdless Italy, country and source of celestial certainty was disproof of any nonsense concerning the exercise of consideration for feathered songsters from those Latin human beings who had "souls" with, one might add in current jargon "hundred per cent proof."

The Naturalist in La Plata, and *Birds in a Village*, are two of the earliest works of Hudson; in his later books Hudson's ideas on immortality, as they became clearer, have a brilliant white light expression.

¹ *The Hind in Richmond Park*, p. 57

Their clarity made them easier for him to define, and misunderstanding his meaning can only be obtained by mental perversity. In a further paper we shall examine, with mutual profit we trust, Hudson's more mature thoughts on immortality. From a man at home in the world that was anywhere outside towns and cities, with cultivated natural talents with critical observation used on things that matter, his ideas on the subject must have weight, for he had no axe to grind, and that he was not included in the ranks of the professionals is our gain. He could write freely on truth without wishing to stand well with the academic figures of literature, whose sole reason for existence is to prevent Minerva from wearing anything more grown up than a pinafore.

C-DE-B.

(To be continued)

Results and Appliances

"RESULTS are rarely proportionate to appliances," says one of our greatest philosophers, yet here I think the appliances are out of all proportion to the results.

Has our expenditure of time and money on education been justified? Is real progress a reality or an illusion? Thinking over the above questions, in terms of my own life's experience, the following found expression.

On a peaceful Sunday morning recently, before 10 a.m., whilst enjoying a quiet ramble, eight busses suddenly passed me laden with territorials on their way to rifle shooting practice.

This set me thinking. Why, after the Great War have we this blasphemous preparation for another war going on?

Nearly a hundred years ago John Bright wrote: "Within the limits of this island alone on every Sabbath 20,000—yes, far more than 20,000—temples are thrown open in which devout men and women assemble that they may worship Him Who is the Prince of Peace. Is this a reality or is your Christianity a romance?"

In many respects we have never grown up. Intellectually we have made great advance. But morally we are still in our infancy and our intellectual advance, therefore, has made of us intellectual devils.

Now why should we have developed along these lines? What has religion to say for itself? Or education? Have they not made us, or helped to make us, what we are?

Pope tells us:

"'Tis education forms the common mind,
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclin'd."

We may here ask—Is the common mind capable of being formed by education? Has the common mind been denied education? Or is it that the right sort of education has been withheld? These questions may be reasonably asked. Some one may interject here that "All the common mind cares about is sport"—and there is much to be said for the interjection. But there seems no such thing as permanency. What may be characteristic of the people to-day may not be so to-morrow. It was quite different once. When we were scholars had anyone mentioned Rugby we should have instantly thought of Dr. Arnold—now the youth of to-day would think of football. In concluding his interesting essay on Dr. Arnold, Lytton Strachey writes: "The earnest enthusiast who strove to make his pupils Christian gentlemen, and who governed his school according to the principles of the Old Testament has proved to be the founder of the worship of athletics and the worship of good form."

Dr. Arnold must have bent his twigs the wrong way, surely!

Nearly seventy years ago, the wild, thinly populated country district into which I was born possessed the following within an eight miles radius—14 Churches and Sunday Schools, 12 Day Schools and 6 Police Stations.

These Churches would all be several centuries old, and would owe their number to the existing population when they were built. The Sunday Schools and Day Schools were, of course, more modern. Yet all these institutions still exist whether they are needed or not.

A few remarks upon educative methods seventy years ago may help to illustrate some of the questions raised.

We were treated, in those days, as children far too long. We continued to grow in stature and in knowledge quicker than our teachers noticed. At no time during our growing youth were we ever given credit for having any intelligence. Our teachers all had the idea of instructing, but never of educating us.

On the religious side we were taught in a very materialistic way. The sense of beauty and mystery which every child possesses, more or less, was soon destroyed completely. Our teachers at Sunday School and Day School personified for us, in a more or less ridiculous way, both God and the Devil.

We were told that God dwelt above "the bright blue sky"; that thunder was the sound of His Voice speaking to the wicked; that our Chapel was His holy house (to our childish minds, in passing it during the week with all its blinds drawn, we thought that He must only leave the bright blue sky at week-ends); that whatever we said would, sooner or later, come to His ears; that the Devil and his home, Hell, were down below.

At Sunday School we received a very liberal education in sin. Sins we were advised to avoid had not been as much as named amongst us. Whether our teacher thought, like Browning:—

"We lacked that first apprenticeship to sin
That makes the sinning soul secure."

I never could tell.

A picture of an eye was framed and hung above our kitchen mantelpiece, having "THOU GOD SEE'ST ME" printed in large type underneath it.

He and the Devil walked about us as companions, never leaving us. The good companion (God) on our right side, urging us to do good, the bad companion (the Devil) on our left, just as persistently tempting us to do evil—the devil, judging from the remarks frequently applied to us by our parents and teachers, were pointed out to us which had been damaged by the Devil when trying to effect a sudden escape; a rock was shown us where he had hung his grandmother, and places where he had done other remarkable tricks. This on the traditional side.

On the other side, as we grew older, our forebears, desiring to accommodate our stature with a knowledge more fitting, had provided a library in the Chapel vestry. And what a wonderful little library it was! Well do I remember the contents of one of its shelves, though I have not seen it for well over fifty years—Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de Medici* and his *Life and Pontificate of Pope Leo the X*; Dauligné's *History of the Reformation*; Sturm's *Reflections*; Krummacher's *Elijah the Tishbite*; Josephus' *History of the Jews*; Pearson *On Infidelity*. (To the last-named I would like to express my indebtedness. Pearson was stationed at Eyemouth when he wrote this book. It is a very remarkable book, and it contains a fine introduction to pagan literature). Then we had Boston's *Fourfold State*; *The Scottish Worthies*, and the *Cloud of Witnesses* (who can ever forget them?); Simpson's *Plea for Religion*; Debate by Cummings and French;

Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*; Chambers' *Book of Days*, and *Vestiges of Creation*; *The Old Red Sandstone*, by Hugh Miller; Farrer's *Chapters on Language*; and the Scott Novels and those of Dickens. These all come easily to memory. There were, of course, many others, but these appealed to me most.

I sometimes wonder whether these books, if they yet exist, are ever opened by the youth of to-day.

A small proportion, say one per cent, of the congregation, in my day, ever opened any of the books mentioned, but the novels and light literature were sought after by about four per cent.

Other churches I know had libraries, but I was not familiar with any of them.

I make the following inferences. Of the 14 Churches the average date of erection was about 1263. The Sunday Schools attached to each had no standing before 1783. The average date of the 12 Day Schools would be somewhere about 1840. Of the 6 Police Stations, I do not know the date of erection, but it was certainly long after the Churches were built.

I am supposing that the district referred to is no exception to similar parts of the country and that urban districts and towns are better catered for.

Strange is it not that we had not got these institutions earlier, when we learn that in ancient Greece both boys and girls were taught at public schools, as also were they in ancient Rome?

Still we have had as stated:—

14 Churches, since	1263
14 Sunday Schools, since	1783
12 Day Schools, since	1840
6 Police Stations, since well after the Churches were built.			

Now, have these institutions justified their existence?

May I ask thoughtful readers why we are still in our moral infancy?

And if Pope spake truly when he said:—

" 'Tis education forms the common mind,
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclin'd."

And if he did not, is it education that's at fault, or the common mind, or both?

GEORGE WALLACE.

METAPHYSICS

The maxim that metaphysical enquiries are barren of result, and that serious occupation of the mind with them is a mere waste of time and labour, finds much favour in the eyes of many persons who pride themselves on the possession of sound common sense; and we sometimes hear it enunciated by weighty authorities, as if its natural consequence, the suppression of such studies, had the force of a moral obligation. In this case, however, as in so many others those who lay down the law seem to forget that a wise legislator will consider, not merely whether his proposed enactment is desirable, but whether obedience to it is possible. For if the later question be answered negatively, the former is surely hardly worth debate.

Here, in fact, lies the pith of the reply to those who would make metaphysics contraband of the intellect. Whether it is desirable to place a prohibitory duty upon philosophical speculations or not, it is utterly impossible to prevent the importation of them into the mind. And it is not a little curious to observe that those who most loudly profess to abstain from such commodities are, all the while, unconscious consumers, on a great scale, of one or another of their multitudinous disguises or adulterations. With mouths full of the buttered toast which they effect, they inveigh against the eating of plain bread. In truth the attempt to nourish the human intellect upon a diet which contains no metaphysics is about as hopeful as that of certain Esyvern sages to nourish their bodies without taking life.

Collected Works, T. H. Huxley, Vol. VI., pp. 288-9.

Harvest Thanksgiving

THE ripe golden corn is cut; perspiring men and sometimes women too are labouring from early morn to darkness to get it safely carried. Bottles of beer and cyder, small bundles of provisions lie about the stubble, men with shot-guns prowl at the edge of the corn for a chance to shoot scurrying rabbits. By the sweat of the brow yet another harvest is nearly gathered in. Thoughtful Nature provides what we call the Harvest Moon to shed her light at the right time in order that there shall be as little delay as possible, in order that the work may be carried on far into the evening.

Months of watching, tending and working culminate in this harvest; man's subsistence during the coming long winter is assured.

In the dawn of civilization, when man was content to exist on a few potatoes, a handful of corn and an occasional piece of meat, the harvest was of vital moment. The success or failure of his local harvest meant the difference between poor existence and absolute starvation. He had achieved a miracle in extracting food from Mother Earth, he gave thanks, at the behest of the local priest; he also gave a moiety of his produce to that priest in lieu of cash payment.

Good harvests, besides having ecclesiastical significance, also were matters of political import. Most of the great wars in History have commenced in the months of September or October, when the result of the harvesting was known; a bountiful harvest meant a greater chance of war.

An army marches on its stomach, it must be assured of food, food garnered just before the Fall; further, an army of men working on the soil cannot take up other implements till that work is terminated. Full stomachs and full granaries lend courage to the warlike.

And now the Churches will call the faithful to Harvest Thanksgiving; parishioners will bring ears of corn, fruit, vegetables, roots and other products, symbols of the bounty of Nature. Once more has man triumphed over pitiless earth, making it give of its fertility, making it yield the essential life-giving food.

Thanksgiving in Church! But there will be many cursings and much scheming in high places if the harvest has been good. A glut of the gifts of Nature means falling prices and less profit to be made, fewer opportunities to corner the supply, more to be burned or destroyed. The wheat market will be crazy, fortunes made and lost, great stocks of this and that will lie rotting; trawlers will return to the open sea to dump their hard-won catch; large tracts of growing corn in other parts will be burned, tons of vegetables turned to pig-food or manure; yes, the harvest has been good, Nature has been bountiful, we must give thanks.

Hungry children asking for another slice of bread, pitifully eyeing rosy apples in shopwindows that their parents cannot afford to buy for them, or sniffing curiously at fish-shops, and wondering what fish tastes like.

Nature has indeed been good to man, perhaps too good; so complete is his power over the soil that he does not know what to do with the products.

He scorns the obvious. Give the proceeds of his ingenuity, and his machines' toil to those who need food, those who are in want of the fish, the fruit and the bread? What nonsense; it does not pay to grow or cultivate these things. It does not pay Nature to be so plentiful, so bountiful.

We cannot truthfully be thankful for abundance. Until these crazy economies are amended, until a plentiful harvest means plenty for those who need, it is mockery; abundance is a curse and a difficulty for our method of life; our inventive sense has outrun our commonsense.

When each and every hungry person in the slums gets benefit from the perspiring men in the corn-field, then let us be thankful to the scientists, engineers and chemists who discovered the means to make Nature give so bountifully.

A. F. WILLIAMS.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

PRINCE VON BULOW AND THE JESUITS

SIR,—In the last volume of the posthumous memoirs of Prince von Bülow, one-time Chancellor of the German Empire, there is a passage of interest on the Jesuits. Bülow was married to a Catholic lady of a leading Italian family. The memoirs themselves contain much that is highly questionable as historical statement. But that is another story. After referring to a report from Jesuit sources of Peace tentatives in 1916, he says: "Eight years after this I was so fortunate as to meet Count Ledochowski [the General of the Society of Jesus] in Rome. He lived in a flat, in the Via San Nicolo di Tolentino, at the top of a very modest house, altogether different in appearance from the magnificent churches and palaces, and picturesque convents, of the rest of ecclesiastical Rome. A long passage led to the flat of the General of the Society of Jesus. Its walls were hung with portraits of his predecessors, among them many interesting faces. They included those Vicars-General who from 1773, the date at which the order had been suppressed, had kept the Jesuits together, saving what was left to save through the years of storm and persecution till their re-establishment in 1814. A lay brother, who told me he came from the Bavarian Palatinate and certainly seemed not to have forgotten its patois, ushered me into the room where the Count received me. This room was bare, except for a statue of the Virgin, and a few portraits of Popes. The General is a man of middle height with unusually intelligent eyes, the wrinkled and moulded features of a savant, and the certainty of manner of a born aristocrat.

In measured terms, frankly, without reticence or evasion, he discussed the international situation, showed extensive knowledge of all that was going on in every country, and seemed well able to appraise the driving forces at work within each people. His judgments were acute and individual. I was very much struck with his remark that ideas are, in the last analysis, stronger than material forces. Violence always discovers its limitations. In the end it is ideas that shake the world.

This applied, he said, even to such false and pernicious theories as Marxism. He gave me the impression of a man of wide intellectual horizons. I began to see why, up to now, every General of the Jesuit Order has refrained from accepting the purple. Their own function is more interesting, they see more, have more influence in the Church than most Roman Catholic Cardinals."

These memoirs were first published in Germany in 1931, and the English translation in 1932.

AUSTEN VERNEY.

Auld Reekie

EDINBURGH, City of Church Spires,
whose weekly din incurs our ire,
Nought have ye learned from David Hume,
who pierced the bubble of your gloom.
"Let there be light," is cut in stone,
in seat of learning of your own,
but these are words you never tent
with taradiddles you're content.
Yet hope will grow with youth apace,
and Freethought then will sway the race.

J. MACKINNON.

UNDENIABLE EVIDENCE

An earnest preacher in Georgia, who had the habit of telling the Lord all the news in his prayers, says *The Expositor* (New York), began a petition for help against the progress of wickedness in his town with this statement: "Thou great Jehovah, crime is on the increase. It is becoming more prevalent daily. I can prove it to You by statistics."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, October 13, Mr. Tuson. Highbury Corner: 7.30, Mr. Ebury. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, October 14, Mr. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Gee, Wood, Bryant and Tuson. Current *Freethinkers* on sale.

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"Fascist Italy—Ideal and Actual."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. H. Preece—"The Myth of Primitive Communism."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, October 14, Mr. P. Goldman will speak on "Logical Fallacies."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Rooms, 70 Grange Road, Leyton, E.10): 7.30, Athos Zenoo—"Scientific Atheism or Cloudy Religion."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, E. C. Saphin—"Christianity its own Condemnation."

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (The Market): 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton—"Science and Religion."

BRIERFIELD: 7.30, Friday, October 11, Mr. J. Clayton.

INDOOR

BERKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beccheroff Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead (London)—"The Roots of Personality."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street): 7.30, Impromptu Debate—"Marriage for and against."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Tavern Hotel, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.45, Rev. J. Ivens—"The Simple Beliefs of a Christian."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Is there a Conflict Between Religion and Science?"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries): 7.0, Andrew Kent, M.A., Ph.D., F.C.S.—"The Gold Fakers."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Chapman Cohen—"The Savageries of Civilization."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, T. H. Elstob (Aldershot)—"The Business of Living."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Clarion Cafe, Market Street): 8.0, Tuesday, October 15, Branch Meeting. Members Only.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): 7.0, Mr. J. McKenzie—"Facts."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (The Unitarian Church, Derby Terrace): 7.15, Wednesday, October 16, Debate—"Has Humanity Gained from Christian Teaching?" *Affir.*: Rev. W. Beer (Unitarian). *Neg.*: Mr. A. Flanders (N.S.S.)

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

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

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

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