

# THE FREETHINKER

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

## Views and Opinions

### The Ghost of a God

I do not know on how many occasions I have stressed the fact that when a man formally rejects a specific form of belief he does not usually—certainly not of necessity—get rid of its substance. But whatever be the number of times I have urged this consideration, I feel quite certain that I am likely to do it as many times again. For the fact is very evident in its almost universality, although it is recognized by so few. One may find professional philosophers giving to an abstraction the character of a concrete fact; leading scientists thinking of the symbols and "fictions" of which they must make use, as though they had a completely objective existence; fiery revolutionists denouncing the existence of the "economic man," and having buried him, attended by an impressive display of verbal pyrotechnics, at once resurrecting him as a "capitalist" or a "proletarian." We find, also, religionists counting it as a great advance because they have exchanged a god they could comprehend for one that is quite unintelligible; and even professed Atheists of note carrying round the ghost of a god, with nothing better to disguise it than a scanty covering of ambiguous terms. When I think of it all, and of the very few men and women who are quite free from some form of primitive superstition, I wonder whether I am not getting like the Presbyterian who founded a new sect, but who finally could count only one other man who was theologically sound, and he entertained suspicions of even him. At this point, however, I find in the fact that I am not only suspicious of the "other one," but also suspicious of myself, some hope of salvation—or, at least, of conditional salvation. I know that, in common with others, I must use the language that has been given me, and make the best I can of the system of ideas that has been bequeathed to me. But to be constantly on one's guard against the misleading connotations of both the language we use and the ideas

we entertain, is to a very considerable extent to counteract their power for misdirection. A ghost ceases to terrify if we know that it is a creation of our own brain—even though it leaves us anxious concerning the health of our own organism.

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### The "Why" of Religion

In conversation with a friend the other day, one who believes himself to be an out-and-out Atheist, I was surprised to hear him say, with his hand on his heart (here is that confounded anthropomorphism again, for the heart has nothing at all to do with the matter) that with all that science has done it cannot tell us "why" things occur. I pounced upon this expression, not so much because my friend meant all that the religious person means when he uses the expression, but solely because it is a characteristically religious term, and because it serves as the basis of so much of the religious philosophizing of to-day. "Science cannot tell us 'why.'" Of course it cannot, and for two reasons. First because the term is scientific nonsense, and, second because it is wholly religious in origin and implication. Let me see if I can make this much clear. If I can, it will not be a bad hour's work for those who need the lesson.

"Why?" is the most primitive form of questioning that man puts to the universe. It is what one may call a *personal* question, and at any rate it belongs entirely to a person. It has no meaning in any other connexion. It also implies purpose. If I ask why I do certain things, or why someone else does a particular thing, it is because in both cases it is assumed that the action springs from a purpose that is to be realized. And it has its origin in that primitive frame of mind which sees a conscious intention (excuse the tautology) in everything that happens. The primitive mind (whether it is found in a forest or in a city, in the dwelling of the cave man or in a modern University) is not vitally concerned with "how," but with "why." In other words, it is not concerned with a process but with an event. And to describe this process does not satisfy the primitive mind at any stage of its existence. It will always ask "Why?" after the most complete explanation has been given of the character of the process that is under examination. It is one of the most primitive of mental phenomena, and is the condition—the sole condition, however differently described—on which all the gods come into existence, and also the condition of their continuing in being, whether in a purely theological or in a philosophic form. I am claiming no originality in stressing this point. It can be found in the Atheist Spinoza, and even earlier. Speaking of contemporary representatives of the Jeans and Eddington variety, he says:—

If a stone falls from a roof on to someone's head, and kills him, they will demonstrate . . . that the

stone fell to kill the man; for, if it had not by God's will fallen with that object, how could so many circumstances (and there are often many concurrent circumstances) have all happened together by chance? Perhaps you will answer that the event is due to the facts that the wind was blowing, and the man was walking that way. "But why," they will insist, "was the wind blowing, and why was the man at that very time walking that way?" If you again answer, that the wind had then sprung up because the sea had begun to be agitated the day before, the weather being previously calm, and that the man had been invited by a friend, they will again insist: "But why was the sea agitated, and why was the man invited at that time?" So they will pursue their questions from cause to cause, till at last you take refuge in the will of God—in other words, the sanctuary of ignorance.

It really does not matter whether we take the advanced religious philosopher of to-day, or the savage of to-day, or the scientist insisting on the eternal "mystery of things" that points to a personal will behind everything, or whether we take the primitive thinker of fifty thousand years ago, it is the "why" that gives food for this kind of thinking. Whenever and wherever we meet with this type of mind, we can make dead certain of one thing, which is that we are in touch with the religious type of intelligence, even though it is being manifested by one who considers himself free from all superstition.

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#### The "How" of Science

Now the problem of science—and also of philosophy is of a quite different kind. It is not concerned with "Why?" because every "why?" assumes a purpose, and it is the enquiry that mankind first makes because it looks for a personal agency behind events. Science—and philosophy—is concerned exclusively with the "how?" and it is concerned with the "how" because its work is to make the world understandable. (There is another "catch" here, but I cannot now deal with it). The business of science is to state the conditions under which an event happens. If science says that H<sub>2</sub>O. is the "cause" of water, it has nothing to do with *why* it is the formula for water, it is simply concerned to state the exact conditions under which water appears. To ask *why* does H<sub>2</sub>O. in combination manifest itself as water, is to suggest that there is some choice, or purpose, in the fact, as there is some purpose or choice in my setting forth on a journey by way of the back garden instead of through the front door.

Put it in yet another way, although we arrive at the same end. The business of science, we say, is to explain the world. But to explain is not to satisfy every imaginable enquiry without regard to intelligibility. To explain a phenomenon is to state fully all the conditions necessary for the existence, or the emergence of that phenomenon.

When we have done this we have done all that it is possible to do, and also all that is thinkably possible. To repeat, parrot-like, why? is as idle as the "Gu-Gu" of an infant. Even if we apply the term to a region where "Why?" has some intelligibility, that is, the field of human action, we reach the same result. As I have said, "Why" always implies purpose, something that is done with an end in view. A large part of human action comes within this category, because here action takes place with a conscious view of an end. But if we seek an *explanation* of human action we find ourselves doing no more than assembling all the conditions—environment, heredity, special physiological and psychological states, etc., which together emerge in the special action we are considering. Even in this extreme case "Why" thus

becomes only an immediate term with the recognition of the ultimate fact being of the nature of "How."

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#### Ourselves and the Primitive

My friend used another term as a possible equivalent for "Why." He argued that we must always recognize the existence of an eternal mystery, one which science could not dispel, when it had done its best—or worst. I do not see that "mystery" is any improvement on "Why." In science there are no mysteries, there are only problems. These problems may be within sight of solution, or they may not, but problems they still remain. So long as the terms of a given proposition are intelligible and contradict nothing that is known, the admission of a possible solution to the problem set is implied.

Of course, both "Mystery" and "Why" have their place in religion. They began there; but, for the genuinely scientific mind, and for the one who is neither anxious to fool himself or impose upon his fellows, they end there. The savage commences by asking "Why?" because as he believes that events are consequent on personalities—actual or quasi—he believes that what happens is the expression of purpose. He is logical because he is savage, whereas so many of our "civilized" acquaintances are illogical because they are only half savage. They have enough of the civilized in their mental make-up to cause them to be ashamed of the savage, and enough of the savage left to prevent their being quite civilized.

It is this primitive "Why" that is taken over by religion, which really is religion, and which is still strong with so many who consider themselves mentally emancipated. It is present with those rhetorical scientists who meet the religious claim with the remark that science has far profounder "mysteries" than those enshrined in religion (as though the contest between religion and science is nothing more than excursions into puzzlement), or those writers who love to declaim that science cannot answer man's eternal question "Why." If a man propounds the problem of how to get an object three inches in diameter through a two-inch circular hole, the proposition is rejected at once as ridiculous. But if a man looking as wise as an owl suffering from chronic indigestion asks "Why does H<sub>2</sub>O. eventuate in water?" that is accepted by thousands as evidence of profound thought.

"Why" is not science, it is not philosophy; in the light of what we know of the history of thought it is sheer superstition. If one believes in a God, and that this world is the working out of his plan, then one affirms purpose in the world and the "why" represents an attempt to discover its particular aspects. There is no intelligibility in "why," applied to nature, apart from the belief in God. But if one does not believe in God, if, further, one has cleared one's mind of not merely the formal god of theology, but of the very concept of God, and if one believes in science and the scientific method, then he will realize that the only intelligible question is that of "How." If he has not reached that stage, and it is quite clear that the vast majority of the public have not, then he should restrict his mind to lantern lectures on the "Wonders of the Microscope," or "The Orbs Around Us," or to some similar subject. They will amuse and instruct, but they will so far be safe; and there will be no absolute necessity for dressing the savage in the garb of a scientific philosopher, or reciting as science and philosophy the modified gabble of the medieval magic-worker.

## The Freethinkers' Burden

"Our souls grow up to the light; we must keep our eyes on the light and look no lower."—*George Meredith.*

"Fidelity to conviction is the mainstay of human advancement."—*John Morley.*

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

POETS and apostles are ever dreamers and prophets. Swinburne saw and sang "A Vision of Spring in Midwinter," and long years before Shelley asked the question: "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" Shakespeare, the world's greatest literary genius, contemplated "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come." Happy, indeed, are the poets and pioneers who can ignore the mistakes of the past and fix their gaze on the promise of the future. For them the darkest night is jewelled with the brightest of stars. For them there is a budding to-morrow in every midnight, and for them there is nothing irrevocable, for their eyes are ever looking forward to wide horizons.

So far as the pioneers are concerned, it is not, by any means, a case of "roses all the way." Some time ago, Mr. Lloyd George, turning aside for a space from the pettiness of party politics, related to an astonished audience the drawbacks and hardships of a political career. He spoke, feelingly, of the calumnies to which a politician was exposed, and, in characteristic fashion, explained some features of the seamy side of politics. After describing the burdens of a politician's lot, he went on:—

Tradesmen have their worries and anxieties; but suppose that in addition to their ordinary troubles they found a constant mob of detractors standing outside their doors, some doing it for hate and others for hire, yelling into every customer's ears as he entered their shop: "Don't go there, whatever you do. You will be robbed and cheated at every turn if you do business with those fellows. They are all thieves, rogues, and liars." The whole time you are attending to your customers you have to dodge bricks, clods, and worse, hurled at your head. Most men would rather give up business than endure this, if they had to break stones for a living.

There is much sad truth in this very frank avowal; but if there is sacrifice in the case of a prominent politician, what is to be said in the case of the leaders of a really unpopular movement, to whom sacrifice is a science and denial an art? The Freethought Movement is a far wider and nobler evangel than a merely political one. It has its roots in intellectual necessity, and, deeper still, in ethical right. It is based on the psychological law of human development, only appreciated by a few choice spirits for ages, but latterly taking on a new significance and a fresh urgency. Perpetually reaffirmed from generation to generation by unnumbered examples of unselfish martyrdom, from the days of Hypatia to those of Francisco Ferrer, it is to-day changing quietly the direction and character of the civilized world.

In very truth the Freethought leaders are the most potent forces of progress. No other men are discussed so widely as these apostles of freedom, but magnificent as is their life-work, the men themselves are greater. Hissed at by the superior people, stoned and cursed by the vulgar, they have many trials to submit to. Perhaps the hardest which can be mentioned is that of seeing charlatans ride by in their motors; or, in other words, to mark the success of knaves and humbugs, whilst they find that intellectual honesty is not a paying career.

Yet good and true men and women have had to submit to this treatment. The lion-hearted Richard Carlile endured over nine years' imprisonment for

championing free speech. Charles Southwell was aged prematurely by his fight for liberty. Charles Bradlaugh suffered defeat after defeat for sixteen years in a battle which was Homeric in its intensity, and his dying ear never caught the echo of his triumph. Edward Truelove was imprisoned when over seventy years of age. Francisco Ferrer, facing the rifles of his executioners, had to find his triumph in his own mind. George Foote had to listen to the mocking voice of the Christian judge telling him he had devoted his great talents to the service of the "Devil." Annie Besant and the poet Shelley were both deprived of the custody of their children on account of their Atheistic opinions. Yet, in their hour of apparent failure, these martyrs had actually triumphed. They were martyrs who missed the palm, but not the pains of martyrdom, heroes without the laurels, and conquerors without the jubilation of victory. Labouring not for themselves, but for their fellows and for future generations, for them was influence as far-reaching as the utmost crest of the great wave whose crest they sometimes were.

When a politician carries on a campaign against the lauded privileges of the aristocracy, he encounters, necessarily, the resistance of only a portion of the community; whereas a Freethought leader, directing his forces against Priestcraft, has to bear the brunt of an enormously greater opposition. He has to combat a vested interest entrenched behind millions of money, and in addition the machinations of 40,000 priests and clergymen, and their myriads of innocent but quarrelsome satellites. No enmity is more relentless, or more venomous, than religious hatred. The abuse directed against the leading politicians is the quintessence of politeness compared with the assault and battery made upon the reputation of a Freethought leader. The politician has, at least, the support of some of the newspapers of the country, but a leading Freethinker is certain only to be maligned and insulted by Conservative, Liberal, Socialist and Labour papers alike. Accused of almost every crime in the calendar, their actions constantly misrepresented, this well-nigh intolerable animosity, is, in the last analysis, a tribute to their influence. Yet these men against whom a hundred thousand pulpits and platforms fulminate abuse will have their reward in the coming time. Thanks to their courage and devotion, heterodoxy is no longer the serious danger it once was to the citizen. They have forced attention to Freethought views, placed its exponents on a strong platform, organized its forces, and justified its rights to equal citizenship. Through the antiquated religious prejudices of our time they have knocked an opening large enough for heretics to pass through in future, and in many directions our lives are easier and wider because of their life-work.

With the advent of Fascism and Dictatorships, there are already signs of the recrudescence of bigotry. Indeed, there was never a time when it was more clearly the duty and interest of decent citizens to resist the mailed-fist of Tyranny. It is for Freethinkers to resist any plunge into Medievalism. To-day the situation is ominous and uncertain. Let to-morrow and all to-morrows find it becoming less so, and those who have done their duty be judged worthy successors of those past heroes, who, in the days of peril, thrilled mankind, and raised on their shoulders the form of trampled Liberty. Oh, the brave clear-sighted pioneers; "the unacknowledged legislators of the world!"

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them."

MIMNERMUS.

## The "Future" Life

MANY and subtle are the ways in which words tend to obfuscate reason. Stock phrases, metaphors, abstractions, and the like, all possess underlying implications which escape the notice even of our most careful thinkers, thereby vitiating their contentions or invalidating their conclusions. One such stock phrase is that which forms the title of this article.

Using the words in their literal, and therefore most correct, sense, the phrase means nothing more than that portion of time in the existence of a living person which lies between the present moment and his death. For if the word "death" does not mean "the end of life," then it means nothing intelligible. In common parlance, however, the word "future" in this context has come to mean "after death"; so that the phrase now implies something which is not life as we know it to be, but some hypothetical existence which is supposed to begin when life has ended, and which is vaguely described as "spiritual." Utterly illogical as this conception is, nevertheless it is firmly held as a belief in the minds of millions. Indeed, so much is this the case that even those who do not believe in its validity have been misled in their judgment of other human phenomena by the implication contained in the phrase "the future life."

It happens that, in the course of their researches, archæologists, ethnologists and anthropologists frequently meet with and report upon death or mourning customs and rites of the most varied kinds. In some cases investigation fails to suggest any reasonable explanation for these customs, their origins being lost in the mists of time. But of many others it is stated that they can only be understood in terms of a belief in "the future life." To the ordinary reader the implication, whether intentional on the part of the writer or not, is that these rites and customs would not have arisen in the first instance if the persons concerned had not held approximately the same ideas of a "spiritual" life *after* death as we do. But, as I intend to show, this interpretation is both gratuitous and misleading.

Even those who decline to accept the theory of evolution will admit that monkeys and apes resemble us in all respects more closely than any other animals. Such reactions as they may exhibit towards their dead, therefore, are more likely to differ less from our own than the reactions of other species. Observations show that they have no conception of death such as we have, and that in their natural surroundings as well as in captivity the living react towards the dead, not as though they were dead, but as though they were passively alive. In their efforts at rescue during a fight, for example, they make no discrimination between the living and the dead. Even sexually their reactions to the recently dead show the same lack of discrimination. Further proof of their failure to realize that death is the cessation of life seems superfluous. To argue from this that they believe in a life after death would be ridiculous. It merely proves, as Prof. S. Zuckerman declares in his book *The Social Life of Monkeys and Apes*, that they have no appreciation of death.

Passing from the anthropoids to the most primitive races of mankind existing to-day, we find that they, too, have no clear idea of death as the physiological termination of our bodily functions. They regard it as an unnatural, and therefore uncanny, interruption of a state which should otherwise continue indefinitely in its normal course. And in this respect their attitude is only a few degrees removed from that of the anthropoids. Even when such an apparently unambiguous statement is made in respect of a corpse

that its "spirit has gone out" of it, little more is implied in the savage terminology than in the similar statement of a man who declares, after waking from normal sleep, that his "spirit has returned" to him. Our translation into "spirit" or "soul" of the original savage terms, for which no proper equivalents exist in English, is another example of the misleading effect of using words whose hidden implications are not consciously appreciated.

The discovery that Prehistoric man buried his dead together with his implements or weapons is often quoted as proving the existence of a belief in "the future life." This conclusion is discounted on the grounds that such a practice is far more easily explained and understood if we assume that primitive man did not appreciate the true significance of death and believed it to be merely a kind of sleep. For if he had really known that a corpse was irrevocably dead, he must equally have realized the uselessness, not to say the waste, of leaving implements for which the corpse could not have any further use. All the evidence points to the conclusion that the living expected the dead to wake up sooner or later and make use of the apparatus in a continuance of *this* life.

It needs no violent stretch of the imagination to picture our earliest, almost ape-like, ancestors before they settled down to any sort of communal life. They must have roamed the earth in small, scattered groups, suffering attrition in numbers by accident, disease, or the attacks of wild animals, and seldom dying a natural death in old age. The prolonged inanimation of a corpse would not only puzzle but embarrass such groups. In most cases their incessant quest for food would compel them to desert their dead, and even their severely wounded. Moreover the odds would be great against their return to the same locality in a short time. And even if they did return, it is most highly probable that nothing recognizable would be left after the depredations of hyænas and other carnivores. There would, therefore, be little to impress their memories with the finality of death. So with the idea that a corpse might wake again, they would place it in a cave or shelter, or else provide some rough covering of twigs or stones as a protection against possible disturbance or attack during its "sleep," leaving its tools and weapons with it for use when it should "wake." There is nothing in all this to suggest a belief in a "future life" as we understand the term.

Even Prof. G. H. Luquet, in his detailed investigation into "The Art and Religion of Fossil Man," has to admit that "the facts noted regarding Palæolithic sepultures suggest that, in the beliefs of the time, the dead continued a life analogous to that of the survivors, subject to the same needs which must be provided for in the same fashion." In my opinion, however, the use of the word *analogous* (implying *difference*) is quite unwarranted as long as the simpler explanation presents no contradictions.

We can also understand how, with increasing stability of communal life, burial rites became more elaborate and sophisticated, more complicated by motives and beliefs not immediately related to the phenomenon of death. Yet they would all continue to be impregnated with the original and more primitive idea of a later revival of the corpse to normal life. And parallel with this development of ceremonial, the accumulating evidence of experience must inevitably have caused the suspicion to germinate that such expectation was false. If we bear in mind the immense periods of time involved, we will appreciate how only by very slow degrees could the conviction have been reached that life definitely ceased when death supervened. And it was just the slowness of this realization that allowed these two

opposing factors to maintain an untroubled existence side by side for so long a time. Nevertheless, unconscious as this mental contradiction must have been at first, the queries of a growing intelligence could not be put off indefinitely. Some conscious compromise had ultimately to be devised, and language was the chief handmaid in the formation of this compromise.

To-day, in "civilized" communities, such compromises are to be found on every hand. We do not bury cigars and champagne, or revolvers and jack-knives, with our dead. But by the simple method of inventing meaningless phrases (based largely upon false analogy) we have evolved a number of formulæ whereby we succeed in concealing, while still perpetuating, the primitive misconceptions in regard to life and death. Some of these are, on analysis, found to be plainly illogical or self-contradictory. Thus "the future life," "the eternal life," "the life after death." Others have their absurdities toned down by omission or by a "spiritual" interpretation—the word "spirit" itself being the relic of a primitive misconception in regard to the function of breathing. Thus "the resurrection," with its constant omission or reinterpretation of the words "of the body." Thus, too, the Burial Service with its careful avoidance of any reference to Hell. In this manner we continue to allow our thinking to be bemused by words and phrases to the detriment not only of our interpretation of the past, but also of our judgments and actions in the present.

C. S. FRASER.

## Cosmic Purpose

THE assertion that the mere fact of evolution itself is indicative of the working-out of a divine purpose in the universe is becoming increasingly popular among religious apologists who seek formulæ which will harmonize their beliefs with science. Basing their observations on a panoramic view of history, they are wont to compare the Fifth Symphony with primitive dust, Shakespearian plays with featureless, meaningless nebulae.

Is it of no significance, they ask, that we have explored the realm of value, in the creations of art? Is all the evolutionary advance of the last several hundred million years fated to end in the débris of a universe in ruins?

Now there is actually no reason why it should *not* do so, no reason based on facts why anyone's private hopes *should* be gratified, no ethical necessity that things of value *shall* persist, that justice shall prevail, or that humanity shall not perish. On the contrary, if Jeans is right, the desire for an imperishable world is no more to be countenanced than that for immortal individuals. Moreover it is difficult to see how values become a mockery if they are only transitory. The symphony is not less worthy of appreciation because it will pass out of memory in a billion years.

I have no objection to the teleologist taking man as his standard of progress, because man is obviously the most complex, or advanced, creature in our experience. He needs to be reminded, however, that if his purposive unfolding of nature has produced a Raphael, a Mozart and an Einstein, it has also produced Mussolini and the mental environment which makes him possible.

At first sight, however, it may seem a striking fact that modern flights of oratory have a gradual evolution linking them with some Palæozoic amphibian croakings, or that the state of civilization reached in London and New York has causal continuity reach-

ing back to a primal swirling fire-mist. But when we pause to consider how such results have been attained, the argument for teleology fails.

Is it quite logical to conclude that because the present relation of the planet Earth to its sun is such as to breed a thin layer of life, therefore the whole of existence is conducted on a grand scale of design? And even granting the significance of this small oasis, what is the meaning of the vast deserts?

And if stars arise and decay, if one here and there produces a filament of life, and if an infinitesimal few of its organisms appreciate music; if, having appeared, these frail complexities, in the vastness of time, ebb and flow, and ebb and flow, and finally ebb away altogether, why should we be surprised if we are now on the flow and not on the ebb?

For, granted this planet is on the flow, others are on the ebb; dissolution is as much a feature as evolution, and operates even in the throes of evolution, or movement in the general direction of complexity. The graph is no simple rising curve. It is a few surviving threads which have broken through a tortuous maze of entanglements. Cruelty, failure, error, carnage are the characters of the meaningless rabble below, but we look proudly through from our point at the apex to the nebular knot at the root and call it progress.

Nature has certainly accomplished wonders. If we shut our eyes to the way it has done them, and compare the most complex with the most simple, forget the time-span, ignore the spare-features, overlook the repeated failures, dismiss the problem of pain and evil, parasitism and degeneration, put astronomy and biology out of mind, and concentrate on selected comparisons, then perhaps nothing shall hide from us a universe intelligently controlled in our interests. Glutted with egoism or anthropomorphism, philosophers have certainly negotiated the feat. They tell us that when the scientist has finished explaining how, there will always remain the Why? this being outside his domain, as the prerogative of religion and philosophy.

Even allowing this restricted view of science, a philosophical observer (the working scientist may himself be such) can consult the records provided by science, supplement them by ordinary empirical observation, and judge whether the process of evolution may fairly be interpreted as having a Why. What does he find?—Disease, cruelty, filth, error, repeated error, waste, colossal waste, injustice, monstrous and irremediable, and the setting of such harsh conditions of survival that his Evolver diminishes in prestige till he is left with a blundering ignoramus who may just as easily be malignant as beneficent. Not satisfied with his first muddle, the Evolver, according to some astronomers, even gives a repeat performance, starting again from nebula. We recall Bertrand Russell's story. God grew tired. Tired of the endless praises of the angels, weary of their worship. For, after all, he *deserved* their praise. Would it not be more amusing to obtain undeserved praise, and be idolized by beings whom he had tortured?

God smiled inwardly, and resolved that the great drama should be performed. He therefore evolved Man. Nebulae condensed into suns and planets, life appeared, and then Man with his animal ancestry strong upon him. And when he followed his animal instincts he called it sin and gave God thanks for the strength that enabled him to forego even the joys that were possible. And when God saw that Man was perfect in renunciation and worship he sent another star through the sky which crashed into man's sun, and all returned again to nebula. "Yes," God murmured, "it was a good play. I will have it performed again."

It seems to me the philosophy of Materialism teaches, as no other does, the independence of man. It promises him no friend in the heavens, and, steering clear of religion on the one hand, and fatalism on the other, depicts man as dependent on his own efforts, not provided for by any grand scheme of cosmic justice, nor yet at the mercy of omnipotent fate, but having a measure of control over his future.

Whether such control will affect the destiny of the universe it is impossible to foresee. Perhaps the situation anticipated with sarcasm by anti-Materialists like Dr. Joad will come to pass. Perhaps the last members of humanity will be as destitute and dull-witted as the first. Perhaps, ignorant of ancestral glory, knowing nothing of arts or sciences, they will huddle wretchedly in caves, listening dully to monotonous glacial activity, rolling over and obliterating the ruins of cities where men now scheme and hope, suffer and create.

Perhaps the last helpless survivor of mankind, surrounded by icy darkness, confronted with inescapable doom, will exhale to the unfriendly sky the last human breath, and sink to the relentless earth, whose little candle has been put out, and which now blunders on, callous alike to the birth or death of Man. Perhaps the ashes of his books and the remnants of his sculpture will be jostled blindly through the farthest fields of space, hidden for ever in the core of a big cold cinder that was once his world.

But before that time there is much that he can do, much for him to suffer, much to achieve. He will be helped, not by any reliance on cosmic purpose, or by the faith that he is the darling of an ethical cosmos, but by the recognition that he must shape his own ideals, must fashion his own laws of justice, and must therefore exercise to the utmost that measure of control given by knowledge, and that power of discernment born of wisdom, freed from the restrictions of religious myth or philosophical fantasy.

G. H. TAYLOR.

## The Last of the Taboos\*

(A REVIEW)

A FREETHINKING friend sent me, a little while ago, an interesting book under the above title, that deserves considerably more notice than it may receive. Though it has not the direct relation to Freethought suggested by the title, the Freethinker will quickly perceive implications in the book that are very familiar to his philosophy. Actually the subject of the work is precisely stated in the sub-title as "Mental Disorders in Modern Life," and the title indicates the angle from which the author, Dr. Isabel Emslie Hutton, approaches it. Freethinkers will doubtless feel that Dr. Hutton is a little optimistic in calling mental disorder the *last* of the taboos, for we might venture to name off-hand a number of other taboos that still degrade modern life. However, be that as it may, the author is to be congratulated on stressing an important, because avoidable, factor that is keeping mental disorder behind the times as regards prevention and treatment.

Roughly, there are two threads running through the book. One concerns the thesis, already indicated, that the atmosphere of taboo is hindering progress in mental therapy, and the other is simply a thread of useful information regarding all sides of mental disorder. The author brings out clearly, by an historical review, how much the element of taboo has vitiated medical practice itself in the former treatment of the insane, and with

\* *The Last of the Taboos*, by Isabel Emslie Hutton, M.D., published by William Heinemann.

equal clearness shows how, now that the medical outlook has been rendered wholly scientific, popular ignorance and fear step in to prevent the doctor from reaching his patients in the early stages of illness, and later cause treatment to be carried on under conditions adverse to the best interests of the sufferer. Leaving this aspect of insanity, Dr. Hutton makes excursions into almost all departments of her subject, even to the related branches of law. The reader will guess that a great range of life and its problems is covered in the course of the book, so that in a work of only some two hundred pages the treatment of many vital questions is perforce a little cursory. But the author has chosen her words well, and we always find something significant in every chapter.

As regards Dr. Hutton's personal outlook, it is distinguished by a deep humanity, a tenderness of feeling which, in times before sex distinctions became unfashionable, one would have described as essentially womanly, and an enthusiasm which carries optimism almost beyond its just limits. Some of us who share her aspirations may yet not share all her hopes, for she gives us at times the impression that the medical profession has reached greater powers in the treatment of mental disease than many of us believe to be the case. With the vulgar superstitions and fears removed which at present darken the horizon of mental illness, it would seem that Dr. Hutton sees many of our dreams of cure quickly materializing. But whether or not we follow her all the way in these bright hopes, it is certain that much real benefit to the mentally afflicted would result if the public and the authorities alike were converted to her cultivated outlook.

Purely from a Freethinker's standpoint it would have been gratifying to see Dr. Hutton trace the taboo of her thesis to its true source. At times, if we may be permitted a simile from "Hunt the Thimble," she grows very warm, and comes as near to the objective as implication will allow, but she recedes again without having touched it with an explicit indictment. But then her book was not written as a Freethought publication, and we must be content merely to glean from it the factual material out of which to make the more searching analysis. Freethinkers, in company with all others, will find much of interest in the book, and certainly much that was outside their previous knowledge. Dr. Hutton has devoted very many years to the study of mental illness, both as a laboratory worker and as a clinician, and it is clear that her heart is in this branch of medicine. It is not surprising, therefore, that she is able to tell us a great deal that we did not know before about psychosis in all its aspects. On such questions as that of marriage her opinions are likely to be of universal interest, and her precepts as regards the future attitude of society to mental disease will assuredly find an echo in most thoughtful minds. Dr. Hutton's book is essentially modern in tone. Humanitarianism is a motif throughout, and everything is discussed in the bland and outspoken way proper to one who is the product of scientific culture. A wide circulation of the book ought to accomplish much in the direction of a changed outlook on insanity. Probably Dr. Hutton would endorse our opinion that there are few subjects on which there is at once less knowledge and more need for it.

MEDICUS.

## RIISING TO THE OCCASION

The negro preacher had successfully concealed the fact that he had served a term of imprisonment, but the passing of the years had not destroyed his fear of exposure. One Sunday, on rising to begin his sermon, his heart sank on seeing in one of the front pews a former prison-mate. Quick-thinking was necessary. He fixed his eye on the stranger and delivered himself slowly and impressively. "Ah takes mah text 'dis Mo'nin' from de sixty-fo' chapter an' de fo' hundre'th verse ob de gospel ob Saint John, which says, "Dem as sees me an' knows me an' says nothin', dem will Ah see later."

## Acid Drops

There is something delightfully hypocritical in the discovery that war should be abolished because there is no longer any discrimination—thanks to the aeroplane—between combatants and non-combatants. But when did there exist this discrimination, in fact? A number of men are invited to join the army. They are not allowed to make war on their own, they can only do this when the Government of a country, or the people of a country, tell them to do so. The army goes out to fight, and the rest of the people keep them in food and clothing, pay them, and supply them with the weapons with which they kill the "enemy." But if the "enemy" kills civilians he is said to be slaughtering "non-combatants." But is the man who pays and clothes someone to fight for him, who tells him when to fight and when to leave off fighting, less a part of the fighting machine than the man who decrees war, and keeps it going? We see no real distinction between the two. All are part of the war machine.

The Pope of Rome is "a helpless old man with a small police force to guard himself." It is not we who say this but the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, to explain why the Pope says nothing against the piracy of his neighbour Mussolini. And all the time we have been told that the Roman Church stood for peace and brotherhood in a wicked world, and he had at his back God Almighty himself! But Dr. Hinsley says that if the Pope did say anything against the war, while he might have God with him, he would certainly have Mussolini against him, and balancing one against the other, he prefers to be on good terms with Benito. He knows what Mussolini would do, but of what the other party might do—well, God only knows.

In the circumstances the Pope will content himself with praying for the "right." This will satisfy everybody, for there has not yet been a war in which each party was not right. Our own wars prove this as well as those of other nations. Every war we have fought has been in the interests of right and justice. It is decidedly unpatriotic to hold otherwise.

The Professor of Philosophy in Dartmouth College, Mr. W. K. Wright, has come to the conclusion that "Christianity is the final religion," and that "it symbolizes more truth for more races and more environments than any other," and that "it is the closest approximation to absolute truth which can be obtained through the instrumentality of a religion." Which all go to prove that he is a thorough Christian—though he has a few ideas of his own not exactly to be found in the New Testament. For example, he "believes in an immortality in the mind of God in which our separate identities will continue. Separate individuals shall persist, know one another, and enjoy a mutual society"—all in the "mind" of God! What a curious characteristic Christianity has, to throw up, every now and then, people with similar ideas (or even sillier ideas). No wonder it possesses 600 odd sects.

The Rev. George Jackson, perhaps the most cultured of all Methodists raises a protest in the *Recorder* against the attempt being made to institute a Book of Common (set) Prayers into the Methodist services. It is a poor bit of snobbery, of the same type which calls a Chapel a Church. Mr. Jackson pleads for Free Prayer in a Free Church. We predict that Totalitarianism is the natural atmosphere for all churches. Freedom and all kinds of religion are uncomfortable bed-fellows, always quarrelling.

The Rev. M. E. Aubrey, next year's Moderator of the Free Church Council, in a quite admirable appreciation of the blessings of Peace, expresses surprise about a very natural phenomenon. He says:—

It seems strange to some of us that after nineteen hundred years of the Christian religion, with all that it has taught men of God, with all that it has done for the individual lives of those who have accepted it, that in the councils of the nations scarcely any mention should be made of God

It apparently does not occur to Mr. Aubrey that the absence of deference and even reference to Deity is the distinct result of many centuries experience of its uselessness. Although Mr. Aubrey repeats the mischievous parochialism and baseless superstition that "the only real hope for the peace of the world is in the teaching and love of Jesus Christ," he is obviously aware that those who are practically working for such peace must forget Allah, Jehovah, and think first and last of the common needs and interests of Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and Atheist MAN.

Beauraing is once again in the news. It will be remembered that this small town in Belgium was the scene of several apparitions of "Our Lady" to some children, and looked like rivalling Lourdes as a famous shrine. "Our Lady" seems to have now stopped her personal visits; and as this meant a loss of revenue, the pious inhabitants of the town have hit upon another brilliant miracle. A "bleeding" crucifix has suddenly appeared in a private house in the town, and "this brought a crowd of pious people," as we are told, "to a house, where the bleeding is declared to have been repeated in connexion with other crucifixes." In case people should think this is just a claim made by ignorant peasant folk, it is added that the Marquise de Beaufort also has a crucifix which "bled at the five wounds." The Princess de Mérode thereupon brought her crucifix to the house wrapped in transparent paper, and it also bled. In fact, "the blood stains left on the crucifixes have been analysed and certified as human blood mixed with two per cent of sweat." A miracle, testified to by such unimpeachable authority, should bring the infidel unceremoniously to his knees. We are afraid, however, the Devil simply will not allow him to see the Light.

Miss Evelyn Underhill is considered to be a great interpreter of Christian "mysticism"—not, of course, what Matthew Arnold called "mistiness." For our own part, we fail to see much difference between them. However, "she made it clear" at the Church Congress at Bournemouth that "Grace is the essential condition on which man can co-operate with God." No Grace, so to speak, no God. How Miss Underhill got to know this, we are not told; but she managed to spread out the "essential condition" into quite a long speech, with the result that a critic thought that "she insisted overmuch on God's independence of His own appointed sacramental channels" which is really too bad for Miss Underhill's marvellous "mysticism."

Another speaker at the Congress, Dr. Blunt, the Bishop of Bradford, gave a paper on "Christ in the Gospels," which was really an attack on those critics who have produced "spurious or distorted reproductions" of the portrait of "Our Lord," instead of the beauteous one so easily found in the Gospels. He attacked Harnack (so beloved of our "reverent" Rationalists) who regarded "Our Lord," as "pre-eminently a moral teacher," and he considered Schweitzer's "eschatological" conception "as lop-sided as Harnack's ethical interpretation." Dr. Blunt considered that "Our Lord" was "too big for any one school of interpretation" and after going for Prof. Guignebert's work *Jesus*, (which strips everything off the traditional Jesus leaving the equation "Jesus=O"), Dr. Blunt came finally to the strikingly original conception of "Our Lord" as being "a great originaive Personality who lived and taught and endured . . . to provide a living fount of divine inspiration for the life of discipleship." And of such is the Kingdom to Heaven.

The Congress, however, heaved a sigh of relief when they found that Dr. Inge "spoke as the author of *Plotinus*, rather than as the provocative journalist or the

modern Churchman." His contribution was on "Religious Experience," which he claimed to be "belief in the Holy Spirit, belief that the gift of the Spirit is in very truth a continuation of the Incarnation under another form"—which might have been said even by the Bishop of London. Dr. Inge said that "we do not go to Laplace to learn history nor to Mommsen to learn mathematics." Therefore as there is such a thing as religious genius, "Is it not reasonable that we should sit at the feet of saints to learn about God and his dealings with the human soul?" And it really is Dr. Inge who said that! The plain answer is, surely, that a man can *prove* he knows something of mathematics or that he is writing history; but how is any man, saint or otherwise, going to prove that he *is* in actual communion with "Our Lord?" Has Dr. Inge himself ever been in touch with God?

Mr. Hilaire Belloc insists that the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is "the most important spot in the world"—and, of course, it is to him. To many other people, especially those who have a little knowledge of history, the Holy sepulchre or its site, is one of the most unadulterated frauds known. Mr. Belloc does not like this argument, so he considers "we must allow for something more than mere stupidity; we must allow for malice." He then does his best to show that tradition identifies the Holy place for many years before the fall of Jerusalem, so there can be no doubt as to its authenticity. But, of course, he assumes there *was* a Crucifixion and a Burial, in the first place. As these are just as mythical as are the other adventures of "Our Lord," his argument completely fails.

The *Universe* is delighted with Hitler, who, in surveying the "new" Germany, added that "German women have given us hundreds of thousands more children—the most beautiful harvest a nation can reap." Perhaps it would be if they were assured of a long life of happiness; but as the Leader looks upon his kind as probable cannon fodder, we wonder what there is to boast about? The Catholic paper admits sadly that the same state of things does not exist in France, in spite of the way in which the authorities do their best to suppress birth-control propaganda; but is quite indignant that "it is conducted openly in the most shameless way," and "often with more or less official encouragement." When will the *Universe* learn that birth-control has come to stay? We have not yet reached the hopeless stage of a Catholic dictatorship.

There are many cricks in the neck brought about by gazing at the high level of B.B.C. Broadcasts (this is written sarcastic), but we think that the highest compliment is paid to all previous speakers who have submitted to B.B.C. Censorship. It was announced that the Quadruplets were to broadcast—though not on "What a world we are born in," but we have no doubt that there will be as much sense in their address as many others given or to be given.

Dr. James Reid, D.D., choses an unfortunate moment for his sermon on Jehovah's "gift" to Abram. Few Christian journalists to-day would care to interrupt their denunciations of Mussolini, by being reminded of the source and inspiration of unprovoked wars of invasive covetousness. Dr. Reid's text was "Lift up thine eyes and look . . . for all that thou seest, I will give thee." (Gen. xiii. 14-15). The "gift" included a permit to murder the owners of the land defending their country, and for God's soldiers to "take unto themselves" the women and the children. (Deut. xx.).

What is a Lottery? Most of our pious moralists would define the word in terms of the utmost detestation of a most vile invention of the devil. They should read the *British Weekly*, which imparts the welcome information that "casting lots was simply the recognized way of discovering the will of God." Apparently most modern Christians cry out in this case, "Not Thy will, but mine be done."

The most criticized of the generals during the World-War was Field-Marshal Haig, of whom the *News-Chronicle* says: "the tragic truth is that at the bidding of a clumsy and reckless generalship, the finest army the world has ever known blindly dashed itself to pieces." We are not very interested in the testimonial given to Haig by the Rev. G. S. Duncan, that "Lord Haig was a humble-minded Elder of St. Columba's Church," and that Haig declared, "I feel that every step in my Plan has been taken *with the divine help*, and I ask daily for aid, not merely in making the plan, but in carrying it out." It was not to Foch that Haig appealed—it was to God, to Whom we should therefore attribute the ghastliness of the useless sacrifice of myriads of lives.

We are not particularly interested in the general aspects of the recent case in which "a sincere and devout Christian" sued a newspaper for accusing him of writing a "blasphemous" play. Dr. Maude Royden and Father Martindale appeared as witnesses for the playwright. The jury returned a verdict for the commenting newspaper, whose counsel submitted that "the test was whether devout Christians would be shocked by a caricature of the Last Supper." Apparently the jury thought they would not. Our infamous Blasphemy Laws remain (for Freethinkers to disobey on peril of imprisonment), but as Blasphemy is now ONLY a CRIMINAL act, it is no longer slanderous or libellous to accuse anyone of blasphemy—in this respect as in many others an exception to both law and commonsense.

*Wisdom*, the American anti-Atheist journal flings us a bouquet, in these words:—

"Orchids to You." We presume that this was the sentiment of our esteemed contemporary, the *Freethinker* of London, when they graciously recorded in a recent issue the debut of WISDOM. We appreciate their thoughtfulness in so vigorously stating their ridicule and condemnation of our efforts against Atheism and indifference, for inadvertently, they have given us some free advertising that we had not looked for from such an unfriendly quarter. WISDOM insists that no vituperation be found in its columns or in its policy—hence, we shall not answer the challenge from across the seas.

We must return the compliment—a few Evergreens might be appropriate for a journal which can tell its readers that Evolution does not "dispense with God."

"Things one might have expressed otherwise," used to be an amusing heading in *Punch*. It would certainly have used the Rev. J. H. Squire's recent speech on "The Crisis," which is full of merry quips like the following: "There is a type of literature particularly appropriate for bad times." He alluded to the Book of Revelation as being "uninteresting and repellant" normally, but recommended to-day, apparently on the principle of bad books for bad times! He finished his speech with the enigmatical remark: "Every battle fought to the end is a defeat for the Empire and a victory for Christ." Mr. Squire omitted to say whether he alluded to Mussolini's, Abyssinia's, or the British Empire's defeat.

Do Modernists believe in the doctrine of the Holy Ghost? Amid a maze of words Modernists elude our pursuit of what they think about things. Anyhow, this is what Dr. Major says about one tenet of orthodoxy, in the *Modern Churchman*, which he edits:—

The doctrine of the Trinity contains profound spiritual, even metaphysical values—pools where lambs may drink and elephants may swim. The doctrine of a Divine Being, transcendent, immanent, incarnate, the God of nature, of history, and of the rational, moral and spiritual consciousness in man, is by its means preserved in popular form. Its seemingly half-contradictory affirmations maintain a practical balance which other doctrines of God fail to secure.

O quite so! But is it true, and does the clever word-spinner believe it?



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE,

EDITORIAL

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OWING to the editor's absence at Blackburn on October 21, we regret to hold over some correspondence till next week.

J. HUMPHREYS.—Thanks for cuttings.

FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—Don Fisher, 38.

"ENQUIRE."—*Civilization and the Growth of Law* is by W. A. Robson. It is published by Macmillan and Co. at 12s. 6d.

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

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

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

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

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One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

## Sugar Plums

The Manchester Branch had a fine send-off on Sunday last, for the opening of its Winter Season. In the afternoon, Mr. Shortt lectured to a very appreciative audience—a really good audience, considering the meeting was held in the afternoon, when most people are inclined to stay indoors. In the evening the Picture House was quite filled to listen to Mr. Cohen's Address. There was a number of questions, and, we understand, a good sale of literature.

On Monday evening, Mr. Cohen visited Blackburn, and in spite of the weather the good-sized hall was filled to the doors. Friends came from many parts, including a charabanc load from Preston. There was plenty of questions following the lecture, and a very evident impression was made. Mr. Jack Clayton occupied the chair. Mr. Cohen has promised to make a return visit when he can do so.

Tickets are now ready for the Social to be held in the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Saturday evening, November 16. For those who do not dance, there will be vocal items, and opportunities for introductions and conversation with friends from different parts. Proceedings will begin at 7 prompt, and a thoroughly enjoyable evening should be spent by all present. Tickets 2s. 6d. each, including refreshments, may be obtained from the

Pioneer Press, or the offices of the National Secular Society, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

We call the special attention of London members to this function. It forms one of the few occasions during the year, when Freethinkers can meet each other, and get to know each other. The "Social" is not restricted to members of the Society. A member may introduce as many friends as he pleases.

Mr. J. T. Brighton will visit Liverpool to-day (October 27) and lecture for the local N.S.S. Branch in Coopers' Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool. Mr. Brighton is a very energetic Freethought missionary, and has for some time been doing successful work in Durham and Northumberland, we hope the Liverpool saints will see that the hall is well filled. The subject of the lecture is "Men, Mind and Muddle," and begins at 7 p.m.

The Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. are arranging a Theatre night on Saturday, November 23, when Mr. R. H. Rosetti will be the guest of the evening. A two-course high tea will be served at Cranstons, Renfield Street, at 6.15 p.m., and this will be followed by a visit to the Alhambra (Pit Stalls entrance). Only a limited number of seats are available, and the Social Committee would be grateful if members would apply for tickets as early as possible. These can be obtained at 5s. each from the Branch Secretary, McLellan Galleries, or from Mr. Hamilton, 12 Walnut Crescent.

It is so seldom that one finds, nowadays, anything approaching due recognition of George Henry Lewes, that one notices the more testimony to whom by Mr. James Agate, as a "magnificent critic." He was certainly that, but he was far more than that. He was one of the most profound thinkers of the nineteenth century, and his *Problems of Life and Mind* (five volumes, not four as is often given) was a very valuable contribution to modern scientific philosophy. This work has been "cribbed" from very liberally, without acknowledgment; some have built up reputations on what they have thus stolen. Another dis-service has been done to Lewes by their reference in the list of his published works to his *Biographical History of Philosophy*, published in the 'forties, and ignoring the *History of Philosophy* (1867), which was written to replace it. This is the more regrettable since the later *History* contains many amended views.

Naturally, many of the scientific illustrations given by Lewes over sixty years ago are now out of date, although some of his speculations have been brilliantly established. The brilliance of Lewes was never better shown than when he took up an historical superstition, as in the case of the popular pictures of historical and other superstitions, and submitted them to close analysis. This was markedly the case in his short study of the Emperor Nero, in which he anticipated some of the conclusions by recent historians concerning the falsities that have been perpetuated concerning his character. It might also be said that Lewes did for Nero what Shakespeare did for Julius Cæsar.

It is a great pity that so many of his contributions to periodicals have never been collected and reprinted. It is also a pity that when many writers of to-day have occasion to refer to Lewes they appear to content themselves with consulting some popular biographical dictionary and, seldom trouble to consult Lewes himself. It is one of the things on which we pride ourselves that we have on our shelves all of Lewes' published volumes and a great many of his scattered essays, together with some of his plays. These appeared under the name of "Laurence Slingsby." Lewes was not distinguished in one or two fields, but in many. An appreciative biography of him has yet to be written.

## Things Worth Knowing\*

### X.

#### THE MEANING OF "EMERGENCE"

LET us take a simple example from the realm of chemistry. Under certain environmental conditions, Hydrogen and Oxygen combine to form the compound water. This water is a new emergent, it has no resemblance either to Hydrogen or Oxygen, but is a fresh entity of itself. It is not true to say that water is nothing but Hydrogen and Oxygen. Yet water involves these two elements; and in the absence of either of them it cannot exist. If water is not only Hydrogen and Oxygen, something else must be involved in its production. This something else is a special *relatedness* of the component elements to each other and to the environment. Hydrogen can be mixed in all sorts of ways, subjected to all sorts of influences from the environment, thermal, electrical, etc.; but unless and until the requisite specific relatedness is achieved, there is no integration of the elements into water. . . . This special relatedness is the secret of new emergence.

. . . It is advisable to trace the process of emergence throughout evolution . . . and to support the thesis that all phenomena, mental and physical evolve without the intervention of any outside agency, from the simplest to the most complex. For the sake of clarity, however, it is as well not to go back beyond the modern physical conception of the atom.

Physicists have shown that the atom consists of systems of protons and electrons, that is of positive and negative electrical charges, in relation to each other. This is true for all atoms, and brings out the importance of relatedness, more than any other example could. Gold and Oxygen are both composed of protons and electrons, differing only in their relation to each other. Hence this relatedness is the variable factor in the composition of these utterly different elements. The same is true of the combination of atoms into molecules in respect of the importance of relatedness in determining differences. Thus, given different forms of relatedness and different environmental conditions, the same components may result in different emergents. . . . This difference is due, not only to the quantitative proportions of atoms in the molecules, but also to the structural forms taken by the molecule. In the organic chemical compounds this variation of emergents from the same elements is still more noticeable, for the varieties of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen compounds are legion. Indeed, carbon itself is capable of the most various manifestations depending upon the relatedness of its atoms.

. . . So far, we may have a clear idea of the environmental conditions, and the special relatedness which determines the emergence of the new entity; but at the next stage, that of the emergence of life from the organical chemical compound, this factor is beyond our knowledge. It is at this point, above all others, that the animists claim that all the rival philosophies have failed. They say that it is absolutely necessary to postulate an influence coming in from outside, to induce this change between living and dead tissue. This argument, however, only seems to obscure the issue still further. . . . The animistic conception of

something coming in anew from the outside, leaves much unexplained. For example, what exactly is this new thing, and where is this outside and what resides there? It seems more reasonable to postulate that the new thing is the special relatedness, and that this makes the difference between protoplasm dead and alive. Because we do not know what this relatedness is, it does not follow that we shall never know it. . . . If the exact relatedness which constitutes the difference between living and dead protoplasm still escapes us, recent work on cellular physiology and chemistry does point the way for further research.

. . . Life having once emerged the process of evolution goes on by the emergence of new qualities, whose components can be studied without great difficulty, and the laws of whose relatedness, and the environmental conditions necessary for whose existence, have in large measure been worked out. A differing relatedness of very similar constituents determines the distinction between plant and animal, the one characterized by a dominant vegetative function, the other by a dominant motor function.

In our present study we are concerned with the animal kingdom, and especially the emergence of the nervous system. This system would seem to be evolved from a gradual specialization of certain functions, characteristic of living protoplasm. There are the negative and positive tropisms, met with in the lowest forms of living organisms, such as the amoeba. Certain mechanical, thermal and electrical stimuli, applied to such living protoplasm, induce motion of the whole organism towards the source of these stimuli. Other stimuli of a different mode, or different intensity, result in the motion of the whole organism away from the source of the stimulus. These processes are chiefly of a chemical nature at this stage of existence. Division of labour and differentiation of function are the chief characteristics of further growth. The researches of Parker and others on elementary types of nervous reaction demonstrate how the neuro-muscular system is developed in the process of evolution.

. . . The next recognisable stage in the evolutionary process is the emergence of the conditioned reflex response from the combination of one or more reflexes, with fusion or suppression of certain of the component parts. . . . Experimental work has shown that many forms of behaviour may be explained in terms of the conditioned reflex. We must however guard against the suggestion that all sorts of behaviour are nothing but conditioned reflexes. The principle of emergence, with the appearance of something new depending on different relatedness, is essential. . . . Considered from the neurological aspect, reflex reactions are the function of a purely segmental nervous system, where there is no specialization between one segment and another. Instinctive reaction depends essentially upon the specialization of certain segmental nervous structures to form a brain. This is a new departure in anatomical structure, and therefore it is only reasonable to expect a new departure in psychological research.

In this scheme of emergent evolution, it is very important to notice how the higher planes involve the lower planes. The atom cannot exist without the electrical charges whose special relatedness constitutes the atom. The molecule cannot exist without atoms. Life is impossible without the phenomena belonging to the realms of chemistry and physics, and consciousness is inconceivable without life and all that it involves. So . . . whatever level we are examining . . . we must remember that the particular type of relatedness we are concerned with involves all other forms of relatedness below it in the evolution-

\* 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.

ary scale. But it is not a mere summation of these, but a definite new entity of its own, different from its components and from everything else. . . . As we ascend in the evolutionary scale, the more complex is the pattern of unities in relation to each other, and the more subtle are the differences of the resultant product, even though the unities themselves are similar.

*Personality* (1926) by R. G. GORDON,  
Chapter III.

## A Naturalist and Immortality

(Continued from page 661)

IN 1904 Hudson tested his strength with a novel, which has the spirit of elusiveness and at the same time an undeniable charm. The writer of this series has no ready-made explanation of certain deep feelings which are experienced in a wood at any season of the year. The intellectual world is much too busy, and in many cases too busy on problems not worth a moment's thought, to examine and analyse and perhaps finally come to some conclusion, to explain certain very strong emotions which are experienced by human beings in woods. It is an easy matter to dismiss *Green Mansions*, published in 1904 as Meredith's *Melampus* in prose. Here is the keynote of a memorable poem written by a genius having great affinity with Hudson:—

"With love exceeding a simple love of the things  
That glide in grasses and rubble of woody wreck;  
Or change their perch on a beat of quivering wings  
From branch to branch, only restful to pipe and peck;  
Or, bristled, curl at a touch their snouts in a ball;  
Or cast their web between bramble and thorny hook;  
The good physician Melampus, loving them all,  
Among them walked, as a scholar who reads a book."

Hudson had handled snakes without receiving any injury, and he has bent his mind to a deep understanding of animate nature in all its varied forms. This novel *Green Mansions* has many meanings, and like all works of creative art possesses different meanings for each reader. It is not a plea for kindness to animals and birds, so much as an appeal to live and let live. By sympathy and understanding it is possible to know intimately the shyest of animals and birds, to which two necessary qualities we must also add that of patience. With Hudson's easy access to the life and habits of creatures that glide, and flutter, or fly, there was at the same time an utter lack of sentimentality, and it would seem obvious, at least to the present writer, that the naturalist possessed the great secret of inward tranquility with outward indifference. Those who look for any expression of acquiescence to the gawdy idea of orthodoxy will look in vain. Here is a short passage to be found at the end of *Green Mansions*, and this passage will be as easy for the orthodox to juggle with as three hedgehogs. The narrator, Abel Guevez de Argensola concludes: "In those darkest days in the forest I had her as a visitor—a Rima of the mind, whose words, when she spoke, reflected my despair. Yet even then I was not entirely without hope. Heaven itself, she said, could not undo that which I had done; and she also said that if I forgave myself Heaven would say no word, nor would she. That is my philosophy still: prayers, austerities, good works—they avail nothing, and there is no intercession, and outside of the soul there is no forgiveness in heaven or earth for sin. Nevertheless there is a way, which every soul can find out for itself—even the most rebellious, the most darkened with crime and tormented by remorse. In that way I have walked; and, self-forgiven and

self-absolved, I know that if she were to return once more and appear to me—even here where her ashes are—I know that her divine eyes would no longer refuse to look into mine, since the sorrow which seemed eternal and would have slain me to see would not now be in them."

Blake, from whose intellectual anvil sparks have flown to the advantage of many authors, provided a title for one of Hudson's books published in 1905, *A Little Boy Lost*. It is in our opinion a first-class book for any boy or girl, and it would, in a less prolific age of books, be ranked with *Robinson Crusoe*. In very simple language it describes the adventures of a small boy in country familiar to the naturalist, and again, there is an absence of the sugary nonsense which many writers for children imagine to be necessary for the youthful mind. In a postscript there is one indication of what we may call the supernatural, but it does not go any further than an expression, "the incarnate spirit of the rocky Sierras."

When we come to the year 1909—in the development of Hudson, *A Fool in England*,<sup>4</sup> contains affirmations which are striking in their simplicity, and leave the reader in no doubt as to his attitude towards the popular idea of immortality. Hudson, after a visit to a church in which he saw three butterflies—rear-admirals imprisoned and, with his usual observation, noticed five ladies in the congregation wearing aigrettes of egret and bird of paradise plumes in their hats or bonnets, concludes his chapter as follows: "It was a consolation when I went out, still thinking of the butterflies in their prison, and stood by the old ruined walls grown over with ivy and crowned with oak and holly trees, to think that in another two thousand years there will be no archæologist and no soul in Silchester, or anywhere else in Britain, or in the world, who would take the trouble to dig up the remains of aigrette-wearers and their works, and who would care what had become of their pitiful little souls—their immortal part." This particular book will be found to contain many similar affirmations to the one quoted above, and the reader who knows the memory value of the beautiful in nature will treasure this volume for its everlasting freshness.

It has been the present writer's good fortune to know shepherds and agricultural life in general. Therefore it was no small pleasure to first encounter *A Shepherd's Life* (published 1910) in the hands of a Sussex shepherd. He "grew" mutton as they call it in the country, and he spoke simple words of admiration for this book that would have delighted the heart of Hudson, and assured the author that he had not written to the wind. The chapter entitled "Old Wiltshire Days,"<sup>5</sup> burns with indignation against the pious judges, who, a hundred years ago, would sentence a man to be hanged for stealing a sheep. Was it likely that the naturalist who would not knowingly tread on a snail, could be caught by tenth-rate intelligence theories on the soul from a gallery containing such ruffians?

With its whimsical title, *A Traveller in Little Things*, Hudson draws on his memory and also on his notes of observation made on the things that he loved, and for our purposes (as well as for pure pleasure to the reader), the chapter in this book entitled, *Return of the Chiff Chaff*, is a gem of memorable prose. It is not everyone's taste, for various reasons to watch the coming and going of birds, but to the present writer the very name of this particular bird recalls spring sunshine in woods where each bush and tree beautifully strives to express itself. There

<sup>4</sup> The Open-Air Library—J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 3s. 6d. net.

<sup>5</sup> *A Shepherd's Life—Impressions of the South Wiltshire Downs*; Methuen & Co., Ltd., 3s. 6d. net.

are swinging catkins, the bronze of beech buds, the rising sap in reeds and branches which gives multitudinous colours on which the eye of the artist may feast. All this may be evoked by the mention of the name of this particular bird visitor to England. After a reverie in the open air Hudson writes as follows:—

If one had said that life was uncertain it would have seemed a meaningless phrase. Spring's immortality was in us; ever-living earth was better than any home in the stars which eye hath not seen nor heart conceived. Nature was all in all; we worshipped her and her wordless messages in our hearts were sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.<sup>6</sup>

And again he writes:—

The poet of nature was wrong when he said that without his faith in the decay of his senses he would be worse than dead, echoing the apostle who said that if we had hope in this world only we should be of all men the most miserable. So, too, was the later poet wrong when he listened to the waves on Dover beach bringing the eternal notes of sadness in; when he saw in imagination the ebbing of the great sea of faith which had made the world so beautiful, in its withdrawal disclosing the deserts drear and naked shingles of the world. That desolation, as he imagined it, which made him so unutterably sad, was due to the erroneous idea that our earthly happiness comes to us from elsewhere, some region outside our planet, just as one of our modern philosophers has imagined that the principle of life on earth came originally from the stars.<sup>7</sup>

The inclination to quote further, what in our own modest opinion is the best, truest and wisest of Hudson's writings on the subject is very strong. He had mastered the science of life in his own particular way which all men must come to know for their own particular needs. From his memory, a potential source of what we would call pure pleasure, could draw from sustenance, and if the reader should doubt the truth of this statement, he should, with Hudson's habit, test the theory for himself. Earthly enchantment the present writer knows as a fact. This enchantment is no selfish pleasure, robs nor disturbs no one of his peace of mind, adds to the sum of human happiness, and Hudson holds the key to unlock this for all who are willing to enter the world beautiful. The foregoing fact of enchantment in our opinion was a deciding truth with Hudson to relegate the subject of immortality to the background; it was not one on which he wasted his living hours, and for matters of fact, and if wisdom is the art of being at home in the world, he held closely to those things which could be experienced, related, and always be a source of mental strength.

C-DE-B.

(To be continued)

#### GOOD EVIDENCE

Official (to descending parachutist): "How can you prove you've broken the altitude record, if you've lost your plane and barography?"

Pilot: "Where do you think I got this harp?"

#### PUZZLING

The adjutant had arrived at the great beyond and passed through the pearly gates. He was looking around curiously when, suddenly his face grew pale and he rushed to Peter and gasped. "Surely this isn't heaven?" "I can assure you that it is," said Peter. "What makes you doubt it?" "I'm sure it can't be," said the adjutant, "because that angel over there used to be my old colonel."

<sup>6</sup> *A Traveller in Little Things*, p. 202

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 204-5.

## Eating One's God

### V.

EXCEPT in a few small circles of extremely pious Christians, the great controversy between Catholics and Protestants on the question of God-eating seems to have died out. At least, one only gets echoes these days. It was not so when faith was strong, when Catholics insisted that the words of "Our Lord" must be taken literally, and when Protestants showed a disposition to symbolize obvious nonsense.

Catholics took their stand on many famous passages both in the Gospels and in the works of the Fathers. It was all very well for Protestants to claim that John VI. 53 was never meant to be taken literally; but the words are clear and unequivocal. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And as Jesus kept on saying, "Verily, Verily," he either meant his words being taken literally, or he should have said, "symbolically, symbolically." Whether this particular chapter of John is an account of the Eucharist or not formed another one of those wonderful controversies which have excited Christians for ages. Certain it is that in the so-called Last Supper, John is far more anxious to get in his doctrine of feet-washing than in eating Jesus.

Protestants have always protested, however, that one must understand John only in a symbolical sense; otherwise, when Jesus said he was a vine, people might expect that grapes could be picked off him; or when he said he was a door, that you could fix a Yale lock on him and shut him up; or when Paul said "that rock was Christ," Jesus really was a rock as we understand the word. As the Rev. J. Cumming said in the famous Hammersmith debate—Cumming was very Protestant, with a most whole-hearted hatred and contempt for the Catholic Church—if you insist on a literal interpretation:—

I come to the conclusion "that rock" was actually transubstantiated into "Christ," or that "Christ" was transubstantiated into "that rock"; and therefore we shall have our blessed Lord, not merely under the *species* of "bread and wine," but under the *species* also of a "rock," a literal "rock."

The controversy went on also about the difference between *Consubstantiation* and *Transubstantiation*. The former is defined by Webster as "The actual substantial presence of the body of Christ with the bread and wine of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, impanation—a doctrine attributed to Lutherans, but repudiated by them." The other word is defined as "The change by and at the consecration of the elements in the Eucharist of the whole substance of the bread and the whole substance of the wine into the body and blood of Christ, only the appearances of the bread and wine remaining." And it would prove very instructive to know exactly the amount of sheer waste of time in the writing of books and articles, in public and private discussion, to say nothing of the hatred disputants have shown for one another, that these two doctrines brought about in the past. Both are unmitigated nonsense.

Harnack pointed out that when the Fourth Lateran Council placed "the dogma of the Eucharist on an equality with those of the Trinity and the Incarnation," it was "the boldest and most characteristic deed of the Middle Ages." Commenting on this Preserved Smith says:—

Hysterical saints received visions of Jesus telling them that the most precious thing on earth was his holy corpse which was daily transmuted by the

priest. Improving on Tertullian, the Synod of Cologne provided in 1280 that if any consecrated wine was spilt the priest should lick it up. Everything was done to make vivid to the people the reality of the body and blood. Thus the bread was made in the image of a man and pierced by the priest; just as the great god of the Aztecs had once been treated. Eugenius IV. tells of a host at Divio which bled when cut by a sacrilegious person. Cæsarius of Heisterback knew of many cases when Christ had appeared in the hands of the priest holding the host.

And, as a fact, the host was constantly used as a magical charm, many details being given by writers dealing with the subject of the way it was used. The worst of these stories are those showing how Jews used to buy the consecrated wafer so as to be able to torture Christ. As it always bled, the unlucky Jews were at once converted, though this did not seem to save them from torture and death.

Not all priests believed in Transubstantiation, however. There were always sceptics—as there are now; and Luther reports one saying, instead of "this is my body," "bread thou art and bread thou shalt remain."

Luther and the Reformation played havoc with many Catholic doctrines—though these are, in spite of that, held as tenaciously as ever by most modern Catholics. Luther hated "reason" quite as much as Catholics, unless it was "illuminated" by God. "Reason," he declared, "is the devil's bride, who adorns herself and occupies the Church and thrusts God's word out. If outside of Christ you wish by your own thoughts to know your relation to God you will break your neck. . . . Therefore keep to revelation and do not try to understand."

Luther would have liked to give up the Eucharist, but the Bible texts were too strong for him. He wrote pamphlet after pamphlet trying to justify to himself as well as to his followers, the doctrine of the Real Presence. He took part in dozens of discussions with other "reformers," notably with Zwingli, whom he hated, and over whose premature death in battle he gloated. Zwingli ridiculed Transubstantiation altogether, though he, like Luther, seems often confused on the question. He eventually "expressed the belief that the true body of Christ is present by contemplation of faith, though not essentially or really, and not in a manner allowing it to be eaten as the Papists and the Lutherans think." Germany and Switzerland seem to have seethed with religious writers, agreeing and disagreeing with the Roman Catholic Church which, in any case, formulated its unshakable belief in Transubstantiation and the Sacrifice of the Mass at the Council of Trent.

Even Calvin, who loathed Popery even more than Luther did, admitted the doctrine of the Real Presence:—

In the communion of his body and blood, Christ witnesses and seals the fact that he transfuses into us his life not otherwise than if he penetrated into our bones and marrow. . . . In the Supper we recognize that Jesus Christ is so incorporated in us and we in him that all his is ours and all ours is his. . . . We are thus united each individually, with Christ, in one body and one substance.

Preserved Smith's comment is that "the difference between Aquinas and Calvin on the one hand, and Rationalists and many modern Protestants, on the other, is not that they give different answers to the question of the Real Presence, but that to the latter the question itself seems absurd." The point to note is that none of the disputants ever doubted the authenticity of the texts dealing with the "flesh and

blood" of Jesus. They were in God's Holy Inspired Word, and that was enough. The real difficulty was how to interpret Jesus's own words; and one of the most amusing features of these theological encounters is the intense seriousness of all of them, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Bucer, Melancthon, and the others. All that their "Protestantism" did was to become, as Dr. McGiffert in his *Luther* says, "as blighting to intellectual growth as Roman Catholicism at its worst." And there does not appear to be a hearty laugh in the whole bunch.

Naturally, in England, attempts were constantly being made to introduce both the Lutheran and Zwinglian heresies, but the denial of Transubstantiation was at first made punishable by death. Gradually the English Church became "Protestant"—or rather Calvinistic; but as this did not prevent hot and angry discussion, from out of all this welter of words it is difficult to obtain a clear impression of a definite result. Jesus was or was not in the wafer, that is, he was *really* there—sometimes—or if not really, well "spiritually." The Roman Church has not, of course, changed at all. The clear words of Jesus, "This is my body, this is my blood," they insist must be taken literally. Protestants nowadays believe the bread and wine are purely symbolical, and simply cannot understand how anyone ever thought otherwise. It is difficult to pin down the Anglo-Catholics, but there can be no doubt that most of them believe exactly like the Roman Catholics. Certainly no words can be clearer than those used by Jesus in the Gospels. If the latter are credible and authentic, then bread and wine do really become the whole body of Jesus, blood, flesh, nerves, etc., when the priest performs his magical incantations on the altar. But if the Gospels are just as ridiculous compilations as those known as the New Testament Apocrypha, if, as I believe has been shown over and over again, they consist of simply a number of myths, legends, and allegories, strung together with some common-place ethical teaching—where it is not common-place, it is absurd—and that historically, they have no evidential value whatever, then one can dispose of the "flesh and blood" texts with contemptuous laughter. They are a survival of savagery at its worst; and one can only feel sick at heart to think that any sane person these days can seriously maintain otherwise. As Preserved Smith concludes his fine history of the Eucharist, "More and more, the Rationalist would add, men are finding the needs of their inner life supplied and their value-judgments given, in poetry, in art, and in science, and less in the repetition of outworn survivals from a primeval state."

H. CUTNER.

---

I could never divide myself from any man upon the difference of opinion, or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing in that from which within a few days I might dissent myself.—*Sir Thomas Browne*.

In the minds of most men, the Kingdom of opinion is divided into three territories, the territory of yes, the territory of no, and a broad unexplored middle ground of doubt.—*J. A. Garfield*.

#### THE WOMAN'S FAULT

One day, at the close of a hot day, Adam was returning with his hoe on his shoulder from a hard day's work to his humble cottage. Young Cain was running ahead. Suddenly they came upon a beautiful garden. "Oh, father," said Cain, "look at that beautiful garden. I wish we could live there." "We did live in that garden," said Adam regretfully, "until your mother ate us out of house and home."

## Is There Such a Thing as an Absolute?

We say that a line has length but no breadth. That is much the same as to say that a line is something which is nothing, for if it is "nothing wide," it does not exist. Of course it is obvious that if a Freethinking land-owner made the Secular Society a present of a strip of land a hundred miles long and "nothing wide," it would not suffice to fill a flower-pot on the President's window-sill. If we plane the edges of one piece of wood and one piece of iron so perfectly that no instrument can show any deviations from flatness and clamp them together so tightly that no razor edge can enter between them without cutting away some portion either of the wood or of the iron or of both, does that prove the existence of a line without breadth, or does it only prove that no razor can be brought to an edge that has no thickness? But what has this to do with Freethought, and especially with anti-Christianity and anti-theology? Well, just this; in moral qualities it is certain that the absolute is the impossible and that, therefore, God as described by theology, could not exist. God, the theologian tells us, is perfect goodness, that is, absolute goodness, goodness without any admixture of badness. But the goodness of any thought, word, deed, intention, inclination or conception consists in the resisting of the bad, less good or inferior thought, inclination, conception or tendency, the resisting of the impulse to commit the bad (or the less worthy) act or to say the bad or less good word or to indulge the bad or the less worthy intention. A perfectly good God could not have any bad or less good thoughts, intentions or inclinations, therefore, there being nothing to resist, he could not have any goodness. He could not be generous or magnanimous because everything he gave he could instantly re-create by a word. He would be in the position of a generous magician giving his Sunday dinner to a needy person, walking back into his dining room and saying "let there be another dinner on my table," and "it was so." Neither could a perfectly "theological" God be kindly. Looking on a wrong-doer he would *have* to say, "Well, that is how I made the poor devil, and those are the influences to which I made him subject, and so, if I had not been a silly ass, I should have known that the consequences would have to be just what they have been." Moral responsibility is a fiction of immense utility to men, but of no use whatever to an omnipotent.

ROBERT HARDING.

## National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD OCTOBER 17, 1935

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

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Hornibrook, Rosetti (A. C.), Clifton, Saphin, Tuson, Silvester, Easterbrook (W. J. W.), Ebury, Preece, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. The Financial Statement was presented. New members were admitted to Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Preston, Newcastle, Bradford, West London, North London Branches, and the Parent Society.

Permission was given for the formation of a Branch at Edinburgh, to be known as the Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. Lecture reports from Messrs. Brighton, Clayton, and the recent meeting at Bradford were received. The termination of Mr. G. Whitehead's Summer Tour was reported. Suggestions were made that certain articles in recent issues of the *Freethinker* be issued in pamphlet form, and it was agreed that the suggestions be further considered with that end in view. Matters connected with the South London, and West London Branches were dealt with. Progress was reported in arrangements for the Social on November 16, and the Secretary was instructed regarding the musical programme for the Annual Dinner in January.

The meeting then closed.

The next Executive meeting will be held on Thursday, November 21.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

## 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 27, Mr. Gee. Highbury Corner, 7.30, Mr. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, October 28, Mr. Tuson.

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

#### INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. F. Hughes, Editor *The Socialist Christian*—"The Arms and Ideas of the Socialist Christian League."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, W. B. Curry, M.A., B.Sc. (Dartington Hall School)—"Reason and Intuition."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, October 28, Mr. A. H. Millward—"Emerson and his Philosophy."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Rooms, 70 Grange Park Road, Leyton, E.10): 7.30, Mr. G. Bedborough—"Prayer and Praise."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, E. Brown—"The Ethical, Social and Economic Progress, in the Soviet Union."

### COUNTRY

#### OUTDOOR

BLYTH (Market Place): 7.0, Monday, October 28, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End): 8.0, Friday, October 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

#### INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead—"The Roots of Sex, Love and Marriage."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street): 7.30, Impromptu Debate—"Poverty Amidst Plenty."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Tavern Hotel, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.30, Mr. R. Day—"The Soul of Julius Caesar."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, John McLeod, M.A.—"Historical Materialism."

HETTON (Club Hall): 8.0, Wednesday, October 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Stanley Keble (Secretary Midlands Council, No More War Movement)—"Disarmament by Example."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton (Chester-le-Street)—"Men, Mind and Muddle."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Room 5, 2nd Floor, Drake Circus): 7.0, Mr. A. E. Knowles—"Bible Stories Re-told."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.0, Mr. A. Flanders—A Lecture.

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Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, R. H. ROSETTI, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Five Leaflets by Chapman Cohen.

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