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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Politics and Religion— <i>The Editor</i> - - - - - | 705 |
| <i>A Critic on the Hearth—Mimmermus</i> - - - - - | 707 |
| <i>Death Customs—C. S. Fraser</i> - - - - - | 708 |
| <i>Masterpieces of Freethought—H. Cutner</i> - - - - - | 709 |
| <i>Things Worth Knowing</i> - - - - - | 714 |
| <i>Symptoms—Iris Llewellyn Abraham</i> - - - - - | 715 |
| <i>Obstacles of Freethought—J. Reeves</i> - - - - - | 716 |
| <i>Ethics and Supernaturalism—Ignotus</i> - - - - - | 716 |
| <i>The Invisible Ray—Reginald Whittallson</i> - - - - - | 717 |

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

Views and Opinions

Politics and Religion

LAST week I had something to say on the evil of permitting religion to operate in politics and in the consideration of social problems. Illustrations of the justice of the warning have been plentiful during the week. I select just two. In the *Evening Standard*, for October 30, there appeared an article by Dean Inge, on the question of whether the law should permit a man or woman suffering from an incurable and painful disease to end his or her life. I am not now going to discuss the right or wrong of this. That would only distract attention from my main point, which is not whether there ought or ought not to exist this legal right. Dean Inge outlines the terrible conditions which exists where people lie month after month, suffering terrible agony and with no hope of cure or even of permanent relief from pain. In the end he concludes that religious considerations are strongly against one ending one's life, either by proxy or by one's own hand. It is against the teaching of the Church, which is that suicide is a deadly sin and a soul dying in deadly sin is lost. After his article many letters have appeared in the papers deciding against voluntary euthanasia, because the Bible and Christianity forbids it.

Now, I repeat, that I am not now concerned with discussing whether the right to have one's life terminated in the case of virulent and incurable disease ought to exist or not. What I am concerned with stressing is that here is a question of tremendous and far-reaching significance (the question really goes much farther than cases where actual disease exists), and it is apparently decided, not on sociological, scientific, or humane grounds, but upon what some ancient document, or some ancient soothsayer had to say on the subject. How on earth can we expect any subject to be properly and logically considered while we have it decided by large masses of people

on a basis such as this? One might as well decide national policy by reading tea leaves, or practicing some other village superstition.

* * *

Our Great Taboo

The second item that calls for mention, is supplied by Mr. Herbert Morrison, leader of the Labour Party in the London County Council. On October 29, there came before the Council a proposal to permit the use of stage properties at Sunday entertainments. This means no more than that artistes might wear costumes or use "make-up" paint, wigs, etc. Permission was refused, and in the course of the discussion, Mr. Morrison supported the rejection of the proposal and said:—

I do not think the general public is worrying about this matter. . . . I think the ordinary Londoner gets on Sundays the entertainment he desires. If the law requires that on one day in the week there should be a higher type of entertainment than on other days, I am not sure it is a bad thing. . . . I think London is becoming rather wild. . . . It is becoming continental. I think it is becoming more continental than Paris. In some respects I am not at all sure that it is not the least religious city in the world. . . . I believe that the proportion of people who never go to church is probably larger than any other capital in Europe. I do not say that this is good or bad, but we have to put the brakes on a little bit. There is a tendency to go pell-mell for sheer personal enjoyment and more tinselled variety on Sunday, and we ought to put the brakes on a little bit.

Now there would be no great need to bother with Mr. Morrison's own sabbatarianism, or with his pandering to the sabbatarianism of others, were it not that he happens to be, practically, the ruler of the London County Council. And the first thing to remind him of is that it is not his business to discuss whether London is the most religious or the least religious city in Europe, or whether it has more or less Churchgoers than any other city. These statements are ridiculously untrue in themselves, and Mr. Morrison probably knows they are untrue. If he does not, some of his better informed colleagues might correct him. But Mr. Morrison was not elected to protect the interests of Church and Chapel, or to devise legislation that may by a species of force be used to prevent people doing as they please with their lives on Sunday. He is in the Council to do a certain secular business as he best can, and there is but a small sense of justice or fairness, or intellectual toleration displayed if, having reached the Council, he uses his position to see that people go to Church and Chapel, or to suppress those things that prevent their going there. I do not know what Mr. Morrison's religion is, and don't care. But I should not be surprised

to find it is the kind of religion that believes in the power of the greatest massed vote.

Mr. Morrison's remark that he will not say whether London, having a very small proportion of Church-goers, is good or bad, but *we have got to put the brakes on a little bit* is both impertinent and silly. It is impertinent for the reason given. And it is silly, because if it is time the brakes were put on entertainments because they keep people away from Church, then he is saying that staying away from Church is a bad thing, and so ought to be stopped—unless Mr. Morrison wishes us to assume that he wishes to obstruct what is a good thing. Or does he mean that, good or bad, people must be induced to go to Church. In that case, why?

Personally, I have a feeling that Mr. Morrison really does not care very much whether people go to Church or stay at home, and his remarks had no very clear application to the question before the Council. But the municipal elections had not then been decided; and I think, therefore, I shall not be very far off the mark if I assume that Mr. Morrison had in mind the fact that the sabbatarian vote is a mass vote, and that where the more stupid forms of religious observance are concerned, people are most inclined to think like asses and move like sheep. Mr. Morrison's indictment of London as being more "continental" than Paris, and the most "irreligious" city in the world, by which term he evidently wished to identify, in the minds of sabbatarians, "irreligious" and "wicked," was delivered on October 29, and the polling day for the municipal elections was on November 1. In these elections the sabbatarian chapel vote is rather strong, and the question of Sunday entertainments is in many cases a very live one. Had the application for permission to use theatrical costumes and "make-up" been made *after* the elections, I have a suspicion that Mr. Morrison would not have said what he did.

* * *

The Gloom of Sunday

But London is really not a riotously jolly city on a Sunday, although I quite admit that it might appear as such to the most rigid of Sabbatarians. The playgrounds in the parks are not wholly free on Sundays, and a large part of the London area still wears an air of sadness and desolation. All theatres are closed, and there are numerous other restrictions. It is true that the Cinemas are now open, but they are subject to a special racketeering tax, and outside the West-End of London local councils, bossed by clerical influence, rule that the pictures shown must be of a kind that will not too-greatly offend the taste of sabbatarians—who do not attend. And they are all closed until evening, for the avowed purpose of not getting in the way of children being sent to Sunday school. Outside London, the big cities still present a very gloomy and forbidding air—even a frightening one to the visitor who has come from the less continental city of Paris. Our manufacturing towns are bad enough, gloomy enough, and generally demoralizing (I want to emphasize that word) on week-days. But they reach their highest point in each of these directions on Sunday, the day on which Mr. Morrison thinks it wise to put the brakes on when the question of entertainment is raised—just before a municipal election.

Consider the nature of the application which roused Mr. Morrison, and which he thought ought to be refused in case we should grow even more continental than we are. The Cinemas present men and women in all sorts of costumes, and sometimes with very little costumes at all. In the next street, or next door, a musical entertainment may be given, or

a performance may be given, but at either of these, if any of the performers dares to put on as much as a wig, or wear a false moustache, or put on the stage some "props" such as a scene depicting a drawing-room with the usual accompaniments, that is at once prohibited. You may legally act a part without costume, you must not act the same part with costume. In the latter case Mr. Morrison agrees that the brakes should be put on. Can anyone but those sabbatarians on whom Mr. Morrison had his electioneering eye, explain why one should be permitted and the other prohibited? Will Mr. Morrison please be good enough to say what there is in a stage play that makes it demoralizing on a Sunday, and innocuous on a week-day?

* * *

The Shadow of the Savage

Of all the primitive superstitions that continue to cast their shadow over modern life this superstition of a "sacred" day is the most absurd and the most demoralizing. It is also the most hypocritical. Take for an example of this last characteristic the expression "The day of Rest," as though rest was the essence of the Sunday question. The Sabbath did not begin as a day of rest, it has not continued as a day of rest, and it is not a question of a day of rest at present. In the narrower and popular sense "rest" stands for cessation from labour, but that is not what a weekly "sacred" day, whether the day is Saturday as with the Jews, Friday, as with the Mohammedans, or Sunday as with the Christians. It meant cessation from everything, play, work, all and every occupation that normally engages human energies, and a restriction of human activities to certain religious observances. Partly astrological in origin, the belief in a recurring "sacred" day during which service must be paid to the gods, and neglect of which is punished by the gods sending disease or refusing to give good crops is common with many primitive peoples. We see it continued to our own day, with the same threat of how God will punish a nation that neglects the "Sabbath day." And a leader of the Labour Party on the London County Council thinks we ought to put on the brakes because Sunday entertainments tend to keep people away from Church.

How demoralizing Sabbatarianism has been the whole of its history in this country demonstrates. Sabbatarianism was one of the leading aspects of Puritanism in its rise in "Merrie England" and there was an almost immediate cessation of the Sunday games, an increase of drunkenness, and a decline of the peasant art life, just in its earliest stages, a decline that was to end in complete destruction during the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Sabbatarianism robbed the working classes of this country of one seventh of their lives and settled down as a heavy cloud upon the lives of all. It was strongest, as Mr. Morrison must know, during the period when the British people were being driven off the land, robbed of the opportunities of a healthy life, and when children were being sold into what was virtually slavery to perish like vermin in the factories of Lancashire and Yorkshire. And Mr. Morrison thinks that we ought to put on the brakes when an attempt is made to treat Sunday, so far as legitimate entertainment is concerned, as we do every other day in the week. At least he believes this when an election is at hand and the chapel vote is to be had or lost.

Moreover Mr. Morrison must know that side by side with the growth of Sunday sports and Sunday games there has gone on a marked improvement in the behaviour of young people, and also a decline of drunkenness. Mr. Morrison might say that other causes have operated. So be it; but at least the

development of Sunday secularization has not prevented this improvement. It is also easy for Mr. Morrison to discover that police officials all over the country have testified to the improvement in the state of the streets since the opening of Cinemas on Sunday. Youths and maidens may hold hands in the Cinemas, but they cannot form drinking habits there, and they are protected from the bad habits developed by hanging about street corners. Apparently none of these things count. There are fewer people going to Church and Chapel on Sundays; the British public is growing less religious, and Mr. Morrison probably realizes that the sabbatarian vote is a very solid one, and where the vote is concerned a fool is the equal of a philosopher. This vote may not be strong enough to get a man elected, but it may, with other things, be strong enough to keep a man out of a local council.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Critic on the Hearth

"We seek for truth."

Motto of the National Secular Society.

"There is nothing on earth divine besides humanity."

Landor.

"Liberty makes man a citizen of a better world."

Schiller.

A FRIENDLY critic, some time ago, said that, after an absence of many years abroad, he had found that the Secularists had made little or no progress either in the extent or style of their propaganda. He added further that if ethical and social activities, as seen within the very numerous Christian Churches, were associated with the Freethought Movement, the cause itself would benefit by greatly increased membership.

It may have been owing to this critic's prolonged absence abroad that he had overlooked or forgotten the objects aimed at by the Secularists, but it may be well to mention that those objects are to dispel superstition, to spread education, to disestablish religion, to rationalize morality, to promote peace, to dignify labour, to extend material well-being, and to realize the self-government of the people.

This, it must be admitted, is a very lengthy and ambitious programme for any single organization, even if supported by large resources, which the Secularists do not possess. Freethought is a poor struggling cause, its members are comparatively few and scattered, and it has no wealthy endowments to defray the cost of a wide national propaganda. Still, the Secularists have kept the flag flying bravely for over seventy years, and they have managed to relieve their necessitous members. Their Benevolent Fund has, during its existence, been well supported, and is, probably, the only fund which is administered without a single farthing of expense. Until a very short time ago it was not possible to bequeath money for Freethought purposes with any real prospect of the trust being carried into effect, as it was always in the power of the next-of-kin to invalidate the legacy on the ground that it was illegal. The famous Bowman case altered this, but Freethought was actually robbed of thousands of pounds before that memorable legal victory in the Law Courts.

During our friendly critic's many years' absence two Presidents of the National Secular Society have died from the overwork and anxiety inseparable with such an onerous office. Despite the most undeniable fact that the Freethinkers have compelled the clergy to refrain from thrusting their more repulsive religious dogmas on the public, the fight between Freethought and Superstition is by no means over. We

have not yet succeeded in eliminating the clergy from our national councils, nor from our country's schools. In both these places the clergy still wield enormous power. There are not wanting signs that Church and Free Church may yet combine their efforts against the common enemy, and a recrudescence of superstition may yet cause us need for greater vigilance and activity in the very near future.

Our critic complains that, during his absence in the wilderness, we have made little or no progress. Surely, great changes have taken place. In the stormy days of Southwell, Holyoake, and Bradlaugh the Freethought audiences were almost entirely composed of men, whereas, to-day, under Mr. Chapman Cohen's leadership, there are as many ladies as men. The literary appeal, too, has been much broadened, as anyone may see by comparing the later issues of the *Freethinker* with the earlier, or by contrasting the present-day high-class Freethought publications with the earlier. Thanks to the courage and devotion of Freethought leaders, heterodoxy is no longer the disgrace and danger it once was to the ordinary citizen. Our present leader has added respectability to Freethought advocacy, and placed its exponents on a stronger platform than before, besides organizing its forces on modern lines.

The social activity of Christians is not always entirely benevolent. Our critic, for instance, might ponder over the case of Stephen Girard, the American Freethinker and philanthropist. At his death this large-minded and big-hearted man left substantial bequests to charities, the principal being a munificent endowment of an orphanage. By express provision in his will, no ecclesiastic, no priest, nor minister of religion, was to hold any connexion with the college, or even to be admitted as a visitor, but the educational staff of the institution was required to instruct the pupils in secular morality, and leave them to adopt their own opinions. This will has been most wantonly and shamefully perverted, for the officials are all Christians, and, in order to keep within the letter of the law, only laymen are so employed. To-day the Girard Orphanage is pointed at as a proof of the value of Christian philanthropy, and as a rebuke to the Secularists.

As for imitating the social activities of the Christians, our critic should know, as an instructed citizen of a civilized country, that whilst charity is very good in its limited way, what the world wants is justice. If the Christian world were run on fair and reasonable lines, there would be no occasion for philanthropy to exist. Christian charity is largely a bribe to the working classes to keep them in order, and also to attract them into the churches and chapels. In India, and elsewhere, the missionaries bribe the natives with medical dispensaries, and count the patients as converts. At home the clergy use the lure of coals and blankets, soup kitchens, children's nurseries, Sunday-school "treats," pleasant Sunday afternoons, and other material attractions. The cash-box and the cassock have always been on the same side, and will be to the end of the sorry chapter. So long as wealthy profiteers have surplus thousands derived from underpaid labour wherewith to found and endow churches and chapels; so long will religion be necessary to keep people quiet, and so long will thousands of places of worship mock the few lecture-halls devoted to Secularism.

Our critic needs to be reminded that Freethought is not a religion, nor a substitute for any form of superstition. It is not concerned chiefly with social reform as such; but it is actuated by the pure love of truth, and is justified in bending its whole energies to the destruction of delusions, ecclesiastic and supernatural. Its mission is to free mankind from

ancient ignorance, and in so doing it is rendering a really important service to the whole human race. Human nature does not need a supernatural religion, does not require an other-world superstition. It needs urgently, more urgently than ever, to be freed from the shackles of priestly control, and it will then adjust itself naturally to the real conditions of life, material, psychological, and social. Although no absolute ideal perfection may ever be reached, men will be all the happier for having escaped the purely selfish control of the money-grubbing priestly caste. To be true to truth is man's first duty, and from it all other duties will unfold.

It necessarily follows that if Freethinkers do their own thinking in religious matters, they also do it in everything else. Spiritual and temporal authority are brought under precisely the same rules, and they must justify themselves. In this sense Freethinkers are thus social reformers, and they are almost to a man and woman on the side of justice, freedom, and progress. To make an entirely new world, no audacity contributes that is not in the first place entirely intellectual. Man's greatest need in present-day conditions is boldly honest minds. As truth-seekers, we Freethinkers live for the highest. This is the intellectual life, and, as George Meredith says with justifiable pride:—

"Though few,
We hold a promise for the race,
That was not at our rising."

MIMNERMUS.

Death Customs

IN a previous article on "The Future Life," I pointed out how easily the conclusions of modern investigators may be vitiated by the implications which underlie many of our popular phrases. In particular, I showed that the funerary practices of our earliest ancestors could more easily be understood if we assumed that they were not consciously aware of the physiological finality of death; and that therefore it is unnecessary and even misleading to read into these practices a belief in "the future life" in the present meaning of this term. Relatively to the immense period during which man and his primitive forebears are known to have existed on earth, this conception is of modern origin.

The fact that primitive man did not appreciate the finality of death—that he regarded it merely as a kind of sleep—is borne out by Prof. Luquet in his *Art and Religion of Fossil Man*. After an intensive examination of the conditions surrounding all the known interments of fossil human beings, he writes in conclusion that "the deceased were considered as preserving after death an existence comparable to that of their terrestrial life, in which they maintained with the living relations which the funeral rites were intended to render as favourable or at least as little dangerous as possible. Thus men of that time believed, on the one hand, in the survival of the dead, on the other, in the efficacy of certain practices intended to act upon them."

But like so many others, Prof. Luquet is misled by his own religious beliefs and its accompanying terminology. So the wording of his remarks becomes tendentious. On precisely the same evidence his conclusions could have been worded thus: "The deceased were treated as though, after a period of inanimation, they would continue their terrestrial life again, and the funeral rites were intended to render this continuance as favourable or at least as little

dangerous as possible. Thus men of that time believed, on the one hand, in a *revival* of the inanimate, on the other, in the usefulness of certain practices intended to act for their benefit." The dangers which the living wished to avoid were, firstly, that of the "sleeper" being molested by strangers or carnivores, and secondly, of possible revenge when he "awoke" to find that inadequate provision had been made for his protection or comfort while "asleep."

This interpretation is borne out by numerous facts. In some cases, for instance, it is clear that joints of meat had been left beside the corpses. In many others tools, weapons or ornaments were also left. Besides, with their ignorance concerning the conclusive signs of death, it is probable that at least on certain occasions they would be unable to distinguish between a state of death and other states of inanimation closely resembling it. Mistakes of this sort have even been made in recent times. In these latter cases an actual revival would most certainly be followed by recriminations if the "sleeper" had been left uncared for. It is, therefore, superfluous to interpret these obviously utilitarian funerary practices in terms of our modern conceptions of a "spirit" or "future life."

Admittedly some customs are baffling in their apparent irrationality. For example, up to the present no explanation has been offered for the peculiar, though not very common, practice of sprinkling the corpse with red ochre. But the need to assume a belief in spirits in this connexion seems entirely gratuitous, not to say irrelevant.

Cremation is another custom which has baffled investigators. This has been variously explained as follows. (1) It overcomes the unpleasantness of a corrupting body. (2) It prevents the return to earth of the spirit of the deceased. (3) It affords protection against molestation from the spirits of those already dead. (4) It is a means of providing warmth in the future world. Explanation (1) savours too much of modern hygiene to provide an acceptable reason for the origins of this custom. Explanations (2) and (3) beg the question of "spirits." As for explanation (4), since throughout the ages the direct relationship of fire to the human body has been that of heat-giver, this explanation comes nearer to the mark than any. But, as I hope to show, even here the assumption of a "future world" is unnecessary.

Reverting to Prof. Luquet's investigations we find him saying that "cremation does not appear to have been practised during the Paleolithic epoch. The superficial and irregular burns noted on certain skeletons resulted from the incomplete extinction of the hearths on which they were placed." He also declares his belief that the burning of the bones was quite unpremeditated. But, we may ask ourselves, why were these bodies placed close to, or even upon, hearths that were almost extinguished? The rational answer seems to be: to provide warmth for bodies that were becoming, or had become, cold—a practice habitual with the living, both awake and asleep. In other words the custom, if one may call it so from these few instances, was purely utilitarian and had no reference to a supposed "future world" or "spirit."

It needs no stretch of the imagination to see how, from such simple and non-metaphysical beginnings, the modern custom of cremation amongst otherwise insanitary peoples ultimately reached its present form. Moreover, there seems here to be a possible explanation of the red ochre practice. At least one primitive corpse was found in the midst of ashes which had not inflicted any damage to the bones. This suggests a practice of covering or sprinkling the body with warm ashes. In the possible absence of

these ashes, or even from motives of economy, the use of red ochre as a makeshift does not seem beyond credibility. Even to-day some people drink red wine because they think it makes blood!

Another modern death custom which has, in my opinion, been misinterpreted is that of a son slaying his father before the latter has become quite decrepit. According to E. Bendann, the author of *Death Customs: An analytical study of burial rites*, the reason given is "to prevent the parent reaching the future world in a weakened or debilitated state." But this seems to be nothing more than a lame excuse on the part of the son. The probability is that other more rational and material reasons lay at the back of this custom when it originated. Possibly there may have been something of the Œdipus complex involved; the son being anxious to rid himself of his father's dominance. But it is far more likely that in prehistoric ages the act was done because of food shortage. The urgent need to move to new feeding-grounds, combined with the helplessness and uselessness of the old man would provide a sufficient motive for slaying him.

Later in the book the author declares that "a son will kill his aged father frequently *at his own request* before the period of decline sets in." The italics, which are mine, bear out my theory as to the original reason for the custom. The old man's request is simply explained by the fact that, once he realized the inevitability of the decision to move camp, he made the best of the situation by asking to be killed in preference to being abandoned and left to starve. Here, again, any explanation of the custom involving a "future world" is superfluous. Although the original reasons have generally disappeared under modern conditions, the custom survives, smothered under a number of more sophisticated and less rational beliefs.

Indeed, there is scarcely one of the hundreds of death and mourning rites in existence to-day whose origins cannot be more easily and intelligibly explained, when we have shorn them of those modern metaphysical and illogical conceptions with which our language is loaded. And this applies with equal force to the interpretation of those obscure and peculiar practices which so frequently come to light in the researches of archæologists, ethnologists and other students of mankind and his works from earliest times.

C. S. FRASER.

Masterpieces of Freethought

THE ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

By

DR. GEORGE DRYSDALE

I.

I AM not quite sure whether this famous work ought to be included in this series as it is not directly concerned with the Christian religion. It is not exactly an attack on religious dogmas. But after some consideration, I feel that, after all, it is really a masterpiece of *Freethought*, using that word in its broadest sense. In any case, it is a book which, in the past, played a very long and important part in the development of both Freethought and Freethinkers; and in many other ways it is a notable work. I will go further and declare it to be one of the most famous pioneers of the large and increasing number of books on the sexual question published to-day—a pioneer

not at all behind in its courageous stand against the cant and hypocrisy which mark even so much of our modern attitude on questions dealing with such an intimate subject as sex.

From about the '60s of last century to at least a few years before the War, the "beggarly" *Elements* (as it was called) was the great weapon used by Christians in their childish and futile attempts to suppress or defeat Freethought. Whenever one of them could drag in the book it was almost invariably done with either a snigger or in a horrified tone of voice. It was supposed to be *our* great text-book in teaching the hideous morality of Atheism. On the one hand Christianity taught love in all its branches—as if love was confined only to Jesus and those who believed he was "Our Lord"; on the other, the *Elements* was invoked to prove that Atheism taught nothing but free love in its most horrible form, and that Atheists were thinking of nothing but wholesale seduction under the protection of mechanical and vile contraceptives. Many of the debates between Christians and Freethinkers of last century provide humorous illustrations of the way in which a Christian, directly he found out things were going badly for him, immediately played his trump card—that is, dragged in, by hook or by crook, some reference to the "foul" work (which he often would not name for fear of soiling his tongue.) The discussion would then be switched off "genuine" Christianity on to statements in the *Elements* which were supposed always to have the whole-hearted support of all Freethinkers. And it was a great triumph for the Christian when he produced "testimonies" from many anti-Christians to the effect that they also loathed the awful book and its teachings.

The *Elements of Social Science* was first published in 1854, but its title then seems to have been *Physical, Sexual and Natural Religion*. A third edition was published in 1859, and the title changed to its present one. The author was Dr. George Drysdale, who was born in Edinburgh in 1825. We are told that "he early evinced great powers of intelligence so much so that his teacher named him 'King' for his rapid progress in study." He obtained the highest prizes, and "the medals and books given to him for merit quite formed a library of themselves." He then went to the University of Glasgow, "and obtained equal honours from all the Professors of that University." After touring the Continent he graduated in medicine, and at the age of 28 wrote his famous work. It was the result not only of his medical knowledge, but also of his study of political economy and "he took copious notes of the works of Adam Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, Chalmers, Whately, and the two Mills."

It seems that Drysdale had great difficulty in finding a publisher, but eventually that fine old Freethinker, Edward Truelove, decided to produce it. We owe a great deal to Truelove, who kept the flag flying by publishing so many Freethought and other advanced classics during the second half of last century when Evangelistic Christianity reigned almost supreme with its drab and ugly chapels and little Bethels, and when to dub oneself a Freethinker meant almost complete social ostracism.

The *Elements* was published anonymously as its author did not want to "cause pain to a relation"; but he pays generous tribute to Truelove in the Preface:—

I feel deeply indebted to Mr. Truelove for the service he has done me in its publication; and the more so that he has been actuated, by no means by a full acquiescence in its opinions, but by a generous

desire to promote the free discussion, and earnest investigation of the most important, though unfortunately most neglected, subjects. In particular he is desirous to afford expression to whatever may throw light upon the great social difficulties, and the condition and prospects of the poor and oppressed classes. He wishes the author the opportunity of advocating his views, and to the reader that of examining them, and forming his own conclusions.

Truelove never disclosed the name of the author who later contributed to Bradlaugh's *National Reformer* under the initials "G.R." The death of the "relation" later (it was his mother) allowed the name of the writer to be revealed. The *Elements* was translated at Drysdale's expense into most European languages; and, so that the translations did the book justice, "he made himself familiar with those languages, even with Russian, a feat which was only rendered possible by his previous deep studies in language and in science." He also wrote small works on Logic and Utilitarianism following Mill and Bentham; and many other pamphlets on medical questions—he was a learned physician—and, as he was in favour of "the federation of the nations of Europe," on Autonomy and Federation. This is specially interesting in these days when the question of the "League of Nations" is so acute. And, as a key to his work, his brother, Dr. C. R. Drysdale, claimed that:—

His whole life was dedicated towards an attempt to lessen the horrors of poverty by the only possible means by which that end can be arrived at, namely, by the wise restriction of the size of families. His death-bed request was to press on unceasingly the necessity of a State regulation of the size of families, as being the only real method of getting rid of poverty.

Dr. George Drysdale died in 1904 at the age of 78; and it must have been some source of satisfaction to him to have seen how, during his long life, so many economists and social workers recognized the truth of many of the principles and objects he so ardently worked and fought for, and who, in their turn advocated them with equal enthusiasm.

It was in the third edition that Drysdale added a fourth part, that on "Social Science" and changed the title of the book though he expressly declares "it need scarcely be said that I do not make the slightest pretension to have offered any comprehensive or adequate exposition of this great science." And he added that his "chief reason for changing the title was, that the Malthusian Principle and the Laws of Nature involved in it are, in my opinion, incomparably the most important elements of social science; so much so that, while they enable us readily to comprehend the chief social phenomena, the theory of society without them is in reality a mere chaos."

It should be added that one of the final editions of the book (dated 1905) has still another sixty-four pages added on "The State Remedy for Poverty," and a section on "The Extinction of Infectious Diseases," both first published in the *National Reformer* in 1884. Another point of interest is that this edition was printed mostly from stereotypes that had already seen fifty years service and were becoming rather too worn. It is a pity that a properly printed edition in good type brought up to date with exhaustive notes by a competent editor cannot be produced. Such a work would show not only how much in advance of his time George Drysdale was, but how "advanced" he still is to-day.

H. CUTNER.

(To be continued)

Acid Drops

In this column for September 8, we published the following paragraph:—

Now that a marriage has been arranged between the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Alice Scott, one can easily forecast the account of the wedding when it takes place. The bride will be "lovely," "charming" and "gracious." The marriage will embody a "romance," the bridegroom will be "stately" or "dignified," the love of the people will go out to the newly married couple, the whole nation will be "thrilled," and the Empire will, through the marriage, be united "in bonds of love and loyalty to the whole nation," and so forth, and so forth. Newspaper men need only look up what has been said on the occasion of previous royal marriages, and just alter the names of the principal parties. The weather is the one doubtful quantity, but if it is wet it can be said that heaven dropped its benediction on the young couple, and if it is fine the skies put on their most glittering raiment in honour of the marriage.

This paragraph has now turned up in the columns of the *West Woolwich Citizen*, which is said to be issued in the interests of the Co-operative movement. I have, of course, no objection to its being reprinted—our paragraphs often are reprinted in other papers, sometimes large parts of articles are so reproduced. The source is sometimes acknowledged, usually it is not. We do not complain of this. So long as our ideas get into circulation the *Freethinker* is doing its work. And that is the only thing that greatly matters.

We note and reprint the paragraph now only because a reference to it appears in large type on the front page of the *Evening Standard* for November 1, and in the *Daily Express* for November 2. The *Woolwich Citizen* printed the paragraph under the heading of "The Royal Wedding, a Prophecy," and the *Standard* says it is "mocking the Royal wedding," while some unnamed Woolwich Conservative described the paragraph as "a diabolical sneer at the Royal Family." Now we wish to say at once that we should be neither less nor more inclined to sneer at a Royal family than at any other family, or at a Royal wedding than at any other wedding. It would entirely depend upon the nature of the case. From the point of view of a wedding there is no difference to us between one wedding and another. There is neither, other things equal, less romance about one wedding than there should be about another, although, as a matter of fact there is probably less romance about Royal marriages than about others. We trust, too, that we are neither too old, nor too blasé to see the romantic aspect of marriage, the solemnity of death, or the significance of birth. But we also hope that we have not grown quite so foolish as to fall into states of ecstasy, or astonishment, or awe when the couples married belong to a Royal family, or when a baby is born to a King or Queen, or a member of the Royal house dies. Ninety per cent of what is said on such occasions is just rubbish, and they who write it know it is rubbish.

But, as a matter of fact the paragraph which is described by the outraged Woolwich Conservative, and which the *Standard* blazons on its front page was not a "sneer" at the Royal wedding at all. It was a sarcastic comment on the stereotyped gush that is common in newspapers on such occasions. If anyone doubts that we invite him to turn back and compare what has been said on similar occasions in the past with what will be said when the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Scott are married. They will find that with a change of names the writings are built up on a set pattern. If they were written differently the papers would not insert them. If the crowds, after being invited to gather by extensive newspaper notices were not present, stress would not be laid on their absence. If the bride and bridegroom quarrelled before going to Church, it would not be published. The newspapers have certain things to say, because they have taught the public to expect them. We were not sneering at the Royal wedding, but at the

quality of the news writers. And when we remember that so staid a paper as the *Daily Telegraph* suggested that the fine weather during Jubilee week had a close connexion between the Jubilee and a special providence, we do not think that what we said was unnecessary.

But even more than the news writers, who live, poor devils! by writing as they are ordered to, or are expected to, the paragraph was written to call attention to a phase of the public mind that has to-day its special dangers. We claim, in this country, that the people rule, but there is all the difference between the *people* ruling, and a *crowd* ruling. Crowd rule is mob rule, and the special characteristic of a mob is that it moves under the impulse of feeling without intellectual control or guidance. Thanks to the yellow press and the steady degradation of the public mind by it, the crowd of to-day may be worked up in almost any direction at very short notice. It will accept any story no matter how fantastic, it can be brought to worship anyone or anything upon which the proper stress is laid. Publicity has been raised to a science and the coercion of the public mind into a fine art. The superstitions, the readiness to believe without evidence, once properly and naturally associated with religion, are now easily transferred to the fields of sociology and politics. Thoughtful writers on social questions have noted this for some years, and have marked its dangers; but, unfortunately, thoughtful writers have not easy access to the newspapers, and the ordinary public do not meet these writers through their books. The nation is not "thrilled" when a Prime Minister or his son is married. They do not feel that the birth of a baby to the wife of the Lord Chancellor establishes a bond of unity between the public and him who sits on the Woolsack. We invite readers to consider the distinction, and if they do so they may realize that they are in the presence of a state of mind that may wreck what of democracy is left, unless democracy can raise itself above it. Our "diabolical" paragraph had little to do with the Royal family and its weddings. It had a deal to do with the existence of a state of the public mind that is of far greater consequence.

And now having said so much, we beg to wish the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Scott a very happy married life, as we should wish it to any other couple whom we were informed were about to get married. But we shall be no more "thrilled" by that marriage than by any other; and in the affairs of the world, and in the affairs of this country, we do not expect it to be of greater consequence than any other marriage contracted during 1935.

There is a quaint mixture of pathos and bathos in the Rev. Leslie Weatherhead's fears of the evils likely to result from the action of the League of Nations. He declared that "naval and military sanctions never could be an expression of the mind of Christ, while the application of economic sanctions might starve Italian local preachers and class leaders." Mr. Weatherhead suggested as his contribution to the problem "Churches should organize a mass vote of all their members, condemning aggression, to be taken personally to the Pope and Mussolini." The Pope would be delighted to hear from Protestant Nonconformists, and Mussolini would rejoice at this concern for "Italian local preachers," who are perhaps already firing on Abyssinian local and other preachers.

So many novelists and other writers have lately deluged the market with books about "The Search for God," that we hastened to study a new book with a very different title. It is called, *In Search of Man*, by the Rev. James Wilkinson. We felt sure that this was some story of reprisals, and that we might expect to read a Romance about a party of Gods leaving heaven to explore the universe in the hope of coming across a man. The tale might have hinted delicately that as only the most anæmic Christian mannikins ever reach the Celestial Empire of the Gods, these gods may be sceptical as to man's existence. Alas, the book is a poor attempt to

convince us that Christ came to seek and to save the men His Father once made, and who then apparently forgot to tell Jesus about them.

In *Time and Tide*, Lord David Cecil, quite needlessly explains that religion and morality have nothing in common. He claims that "the strong appeal of religion is not moral but spiritual. . . . The religious view of life is first of all concerned with the absolute and the eternal. . . . It is here that the unique, the compelling attraction of religion lies, and it is in so far as people feel it that they will return to religion. They will not come for moral reasons," and he continues, "they can get all the morality they want" outside the churches. After these illuminating confessions, it seems weak for Lord Cecil to conclude that "dogma is necessary to a living religion, for it is the intellectual basis on which the practice of religion rests." But how can it need an "intellectual basis" any more than a moral one?

Mr. John Gibbons, the Catholic author, has discovered a wonderful way for avoiding another war. It is that *the whole world* should pray for peace. Wonderful! For, of course, while the whole world was on its knees it couldn't very well fight. But what about the time when the whole world was *not* on its knees praying? There's the rub!

According to the *Daily Telegraph*, "five thousand pupils of North Middlesex Secondary Schools were asked the most unpopular school subject." It breaks our heart to say it, but the "with the boys *Scripture* headed the list." And yet we are constantly told that the people, the common people, are simply pining for God's Simple Message. It looks as if not many champions of Scripture will be recruited from these schools.

The protests by Christian critics against the totalitarian state come with singular inappropriateness from so tainted a source. It has been the aim of the Christian Church in all ages to force on every citizen a "Conformity" to its own creed, indifferent to every individual "conscience." Its present complaint relates solely to the acts of States whose "totalitarianism" does not include the religion of the protestors. We never yet heard of a Church opposing the persecution of unbelievers, or refusing to participate in any unjust privileges which a "totalitarian" or other state gave the Church at the cost of the general liberties of citizenship.

"Miracles in Mandalay" is an attractive headline in a current religious weekly. It claims that "Christ touches the leper," and presumably cures their leprosy. Yes, no doubt He does all sorts of clever things. . . . if the patient goes to a hospital and gets the latest scientific treatment. Certainly this is what is happening in Mandalay. Lepers used to be common enough, even in England. Beyond providing them with "Leper Windows" in the walls of churches, no cures were ever dreamt of until medical science came to the rescue, with the result that leprosy is now eliminated from our indigenous diseases.

While giving full credit to the humanity of Archbishop Downey in denouncing the German persecution of the Jews, it must not be forgotten that no religion ever persecuted them with such ferocity as his own. The burning and torturing of thousands of Jews in Spain, for example, were regular public spectacles in which the King and Queen took part as well as the whole court. In old Germany one of the favourite pastimes of the pious ruffians was to shut men, women and children in their synagogue and set fire to the lot. Roman Catholics here and there may now be sorry for what their brethren in Christ did a few centuries ago, but they rarely or never say so. Modern Germany can always point to the magnificent example set by the Holy Church—and for which she never has apologized.

How much or how little Christianity—or God—has now to do with the Council of Nations can be seen from the fact that none of the principal speakers in their recent discussions on Italy and Abyssinia mentioned either—except Mr. de Valera. He was the only one who “referred openly to God in his recommendations.” Even Mr. de Valera, however, will now have to admit that God, though never missing a sparrow’s fall, utterly failed to stop the war. Perhaps he will now have a ready answer to the question, “What is the use of God?”

Father Bonner, at a recent meeting, considers England is ripe for conversion to Roman Catholicism—though “the next five years will be decisive one way or another in this country for the Church or against it.” We can forecast the result of any Church “drive” towards conversion. England will *not* be converted. One reason was given by Father McNabb—“not the ignorance of non-Catholics; a far greater obstacle is the ignorance of Catholics”—which shows how rightly the Father gauged his fellow-believers. We may, in any case, have our own ideas about the ignorance of most people in England; but we would never believe they could ever descend to such depths as being converted *en masse* to the gross superstition and hopeless credulity which characterize Roman Catholicism.

A Catholic editor, in declaring “it is really of little use to argue with bigoted Protestants on the interpretation of the Bible,” invites the retort that he is just as bigoted himself on the question. He declares that “the Bible belongs to the Roman Catholic Church—hence it belongs to the Church to say what it means.” But the Church “pinched” the Old Testament from the Jews and calmly put its own interpretation on a number of passages. It silenced any protest by the killing of both Jews and heretics. The Church might say that the Bible belongs to it; but we should like to know on what better grounds than that of a burglar “pinching” some jewels, killing the owner and then claiming the jewels were his?

Both Anglo- and Roman Catholics are horrified at the Lord Chief Justice’s plea for easy divorce. The *Church Times* thinks his articles on the subject in the *Daily Telegraph* “do not show any real grasp of the issues at stake. . . . He seems,” it thinks, “to regard with sympathy such an extension of divorce as would deprive marriage of the last shred of its Christian character.” It cannot be said too often that it is sheer impudence on the part of Christians to talk about marriage as “of a Christian character.” Marriage is a civil contract between a man and woman performed by the State and is, in essence, thoroughly secular. If the people concerned can, in strict accordance with the law of the State, break their contract, what right has any Church to interfere?

It may be true that “Christian” marriage is indissoluble; but it is a pity that people contemplating marriage have this not made more clear to them. The more they realized what “Christian” marriage meant, the more likely they would be content with a “civil” one; and that would be all to the good, for divorce *is* recognized by the State. Lord Hewart’s fine advocacy should go far to help the splendid cause of divorce reform.

Anglican, Roman, and Free Church clergy and laity all united in an attack on Birth-Control under the auspices of the Catholic League of National Life, the other evening. Bishops and M.P.’s jostled one another in their anxiety to speak, and the Bishop of Ely asked, amid cheers, “Could anyone seriously contend that our Lord would ever recommend to his followers the purchase and use of contraceptives?” Well, certainly not if “Our Lord” remained single. But supposing he had married and *the* Lord happened to forget that he ought to feed ‘em as they came and “Our Lord” got a quiverful of eight in ten years, was out-of-work without the dole,

and they were all living in one terrible room—what then? We fancy, in spite of celibate bishops, sour spinsters, and wealthy aristocrats, “Our Lord” would have been delighted to obtain some of the information which might have eased the problem. What we should like to see on such a platform are crowds of the “poor,” all with large families and all almost starving, vigorously condemning contraceptives. But unmarried priests. . . .!

Dr. Scott, in his *New Testament Idea of Revelation*, claims that “no sophistry can conceal the fact that when all stress is laid on the purely ethical revelation Christianity ceases to be a religion.” Of course. It was not the Christian ethic that made Christianity, but the Christian God, Jesus. Without this God, the religion would have miserably failed to attract worshippers. It was Jesus, very God of very God, that was the lodestar. And that is the answer to those “reverent” Rationalists who still talk of Jesus as a “mere” man.

An old play called “The Passing of the Third Floor Back” has been filmed. It was written by the “comic cockney,” Jerome K. Jerome, author of *Three Men in a Boat*. For some reason which eludes us, the part of “the stranger” has always been played as if it represented Jesus Christ, although the Gospel story insists that Jesus had *NOWHERE* to lay his head, whereas this “Stranger” lives in Bloomsbury. It is quite in keeping with most people’s ideas of the “Christ” character, that in the present case he is a foreigner. The *Star* critic says:—

The Stranger, as I understand the role, was a humble person. Veidt cannot suggest humility. Nor could I wholly appreciate “The Stranger” speaking with a slight accent, though, actually, there is no reason why he should not.

A foreigner on the stage always speaks “broken English.” Much of the “dialogue” of the gospels suggests a tremendous amount of polishing, as has been said “from pidgin Greek into divine English.” Conrad Veidt’s representation helps us to understand the difficulty.

There is an ancient allegation, dearly loved by Theists, that there is no exception to the rule that all primitive peoples have believed in some kind of deity. Atheists have never denied that there is a large percentage of truth in this widespread belief. In fact we go so far as to recognize that the primitive mind has, in this respect as in many others, survived like other vestigial remains, into the present age. The Rev. Dr. Selbie rejoices to find himself in perfect harmony with the “thought” of “the earliest stages of the human race.” It was at that stage, says this Doctor of Divinity, “That the human race became very conscious of a spiritual world, and powers which eye could not see nor ear hear.” We know quite well that Dr. Selbie would be annoyed if anyone accused him of any other “ideas” of his as being capable of such “justification” as this. It is only in a theological atmosphere that savage superstitions are defended because savages believed them.

A writer in a Protestant weekly, is “disposed to admit that in the supreme intellectual issue of our time, that between the Christian Faith and modern Secularism,” “the more formidable warriors” will be found in the Roman Catholic ranks. This distrust of his own side’s apologists is natural—the *British Weekly* contributor knows his friends too well to think his cause is safe in such hands. We are not so sure. The Modernists are probably the wisest of them all; they have the sense to see that some at least of the Christian citadels will never again be occupied by the more intelligent or better informed Christians. Fundamentalism (and Roman Catholics are all of them Fundamentalists) cannot survive honest elementary education. The nebulosity of Modernism will enable it to hold on to the essentials of superstition long after the more obvious myths of fundamentalist presentation have made educated people ashamed of such crudities.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE,

EDITORIAL

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- R. GERRARD.—Many thanks for addresses of possible new readers. Every little helps.
- H. WOOD.—Thanks for address, paper being sent.
- FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Finney, 308.
- W. WILLIAMS.—Thanks for cuttings. Glad to see so good a report in the Birkenhead paper of Mr. Whitehead's recent lecture. Pleased to know that your meetings are going so well.
- LONDON IRVING.—Next week.
- F. W. R. SILKE (Cape Town).—Letter received, but the newspaper cuttings to which you refer were omitted.
- H.L.—We will pass your congratulations on to "Bystander." He may write more on the same lines.
- C. MATHEWS.—Please introduce yourself and wife at the Social on the 16th. We shall be delighted to have a few minutes' chat with you.
- FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—A.W., 108.
- H. J. TAYLOR.—Many thanks for addresses, paper being sent for four weeks.
- H. SILVESTER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."
- 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.
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Sugar Plums

To-day (November 10) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. Chair will be taken at 7 o'clock, doors open at 6.30. With election fever raging, November 10 is not the best of times for lecturing on other subjects, although in this case the address of Mr. Cohen will have a very direct bearing on the responsibilities of voters, even though he takes sides with none of the candidates.

This will be the last reminder of the Social to be held in the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Saturday evening, November 16, and Freethinkers looking for a really enjoyable evening should send for tickets without further delay. Those who intend to be present are asked to be ready to begin at 7 p.m. prompt, so that a full programme can be carried through. Young and old are invited, and members may invite their orthodox or unorthodox friends. Tickets 2s. 6d. each, including refreshments may be had from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, or the offices of the N.S.S., 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. We hope that London Freethinkers will do what they can to make the gathering a success. Entertainment will be provided for all ages and tastes.

On Sunday next (November 17) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Town Hall, Stratford. This will be Mr. Cohen's

only lecture in London this side of the New Year. Stratford Town Hall can easily be reached from all parts of London by either bus, tram, or train. Trams and buses pass the door. The lecture will commence at 7 and admission is free.

A new pamphlet will shortly be issued by Mr. Cohen on *Humanity and War*. It will be a reasoned criticism of the militarist position, of the League of Nations, and of the need for what the late Professor William James called "A Moral Substitute for War." The pamphlet will be published at threepence.

Efforts are being made to strengthen the Brighton Branch N.S.S. with the view to greater activity and local Freethinkers willing to enroll are invited to communicate with the Secretary, Mr. L. A. Miles, 23 Round Hill Crescent, Brighton, Sussex.

King George is going back to Greece, called there by the unanimous vote of the Greek people. Some weeks ago General Kondylis seized power by an act of force and proclaimed a republic. Republican leaders were imprisoned, and a proclamation issued that all who opposed the will of General Kondylis would be severely punished. On Sunday, November 3, the people of Greece were called on to vote the return of the King. On the day before, hundreds of known republicans were imprisoned, and on the voting day numbers refused to vote. At the polling stations voters were presented with two differently coloured tickets, and these were placed in transparent envelopes, which were given to an official in the presence of soldiers. On the polling day some regiments marched to the polling station and voted—by order. Ninety-eight per cent of the votes were in favour of the King's return. So King George now goes back to Greece, called there by the unanimous vote of the people. He will, by order of General Kondylis, be received with rejoicings. Then the General will surrender his office to the King, on the understanding that it will be returned to him. The King goes home, by the free and unanimous vote of the people. He declined to go back until he was sure of this.

THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

Consider also the "religious sentiment" which we see referred to in so many books, as if it were a single sort of mental entity.

In the psychologies and in the philosophies of religion, we find the authors attempting to specify just what entity it is. One man allies it to the feeling of dependence; one makes it a derivative from fear; others connect it with sexual life; others still identify it with the feeling of the infinite; and so on. Such different ways of conceiving it ought of themselves to arouse doubt as to whether it can possibly be one specific thing; and the moment we are willing to treat the term "religious sentiment" as a collective name for so many sentiments which religious objects may arouse in alternation, we see that it probably contains nothing of a psychologically specific nature. There is religious fear, religious love, religious awe, religious joy, and so forth. But religious love is only man's natural emotion of love directed to a religious object; religious fear is only the ordinary fear of commerce, so to speak, the common quaking of the human breast, in so far as the notion of divine retribution may arouse it; religious awe is the same organic thrill which we feel in a forest at twilight, or in a mountain gorge; only this time it comes over us at the thought of our supernatural relations; and similarly of all the various sentiments that may be called into play in the lives of religious persons. As concrete states of mind, made up of a feeling plus a specific sort of object, religious emotions, of course, are psychic entities distinguishable from other concrete emotions; but there is no ground for assuming a simple abstract "religious emotion" to exist as a simple elementary affection by itself, present in every religious experience without exception.

"The Varieties of Religious Experience,"
by WILLIAM JAMES, pp. 27-8.

Things Worth Knowing*

XII.

At the time of the life or recorded appearance of Jesus of Nazareth, and for some centuries before, the Mediterranean and neighbouring world had been the scene of a vast number of pagan creeds and rituals. There were temples without end dedicated to gods like Apollo or Dionysus among the Greeks, Hercules among the Romans, Mithra among the Persians, Adonis and Attis in Syria and Phrygia, Osiris, Horus and Isis in Egypt, Baal and Astarte among the Babylonians and Carthaginians. And an extraordinarily interesting fact, for us, is that notwithstanding great geographical distances and racial differences between the adherents of these various cults, as well as differences in the details of their services, the general outline of their creeds and services were—if not identical—so markedly similar as we find them.

I may roughly say that of all or nearly all the deities above-mentioned it was said or believed that:—

- (1) They were born on or very near Christmas Day.
- (2) They were born of a Virgin-mother.
- (3) And in a cave or underground chamber.
- (4) They led a life of toil for mankind.
- (5) And they were called by the names of Light-Bringer, Healer, Mediator, Saviour, Deliverer.
- (6) They were however vanquished by the Powers of Darkness.
- (7) And descended into Hell or the Underworld.
- (8) They rose again from the dead, and became the pioneers of mankind to the Heavenly world.
- (9) They obtained Communions of Saints and Churches.
- (10) And they were commemorated by Eucharistic meals.

Let me give a few examples.

Mithra was born in a cave, and on the 25th of December. He was born of a Virgin. He travelled far and wide as a teacher of men. . . . He had twelve disciples or companions. He was buried in a tomb, from which, however, he rose again; and his resurrection was celebrated yearly with great rejoicings. He was called Saviour and Mediator, and sometimes figured as a Lamb.

Osiris was born on the 361st day of the year. . . . He was betrayed by Typhon, the power of darkness, slain and dismembered. . . . His body was placed in a box, but afterwards came to life, and as in the cults of Mithra, Dionysus, Adonis and others, so in the cult of Osiris, an image placed in a coffin was brought out before the worshippers and saluted with glad cries, "Osiris is risen." His sufferings, his death and his resurrection were enacted year by year in a great mystery play at Abydos. . . .

What we chiefly notice so far are two points; on the one hand the general similarity of these stories with that of Jesus Christ; on the other hand their analogy with the yearly phenomena of nature as illustrated by the course of the Sun in heaven and the changes of vegetation on the earth.

* 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.

The similarity of these ancient pagan legends and beliefs with Christian traditions was indeed so great that it excited the attention and the undisguised wrath of the early Christian fathers. They felt no doubt about the similarity, but not knowing how to explain it, fell back upon the innocent theory that the Devil—in order to confound the Christians—had centuries before caused the pagans to adopt certain beliefs and practices. . . . Justin Martyr, for instance, describes the institution of the Lord's Supper as narrated in the Gospels, and then goes on to say; "which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithra, commanding the same thing to be done. For that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn." Tertullian also says that, "The devil by the mysteries of his idols imitates even the main part of the divine mysteries. . . . He baptizes his worshippers in water and makes them believe that this purifies them from their crimes. . . . Mithra sets his mark on the forehead of his soldiers; he celebrates the oblation of bread; he offers an image of the resurrection, and presents at once the crown and the sword; he limits his chief priest to a single marriage; he even has his virgins and his ascetics." Cortez, too, it will be remembered complained that the devil had taught the Mexicans the same things which God had taught to Christendom.

Justin Martyr again, in the Dialogue with Trypho, says that the birth in the stable was the prototype of the birth of Mithra in the cave of Zoroastrianism, and boasts that Christ was born when the Sun takes its birth in the Augean stable, coming as a second Hercules to clean a foul world; and St. Augustine says, "We hold this (Christmas-) day holy, not like the pagans because of the birth of the Sun, but because of the birth of him who made it." There are plenty of other instances in the early Fathers of their indignant ascription of these similarities to the work of devils, but we need not dwell over them. There is no need for us to be indignant. On the contrary we can now see that these animadversions of the Christian writers are the evidence of how and to what extent in the spread of Christianity over the world it had become fused with the pagan cults previously existing.

It was not till the year A.D. 530 or so—five centuries after the supposed birth of Christ—that a Scythian monk, Dionysius Exiguus, an abbot and astronomer of Rome, was commissioned to fix the day and the year of that birth. A nice problem, considering the historical science of the period. For the year he assigned the date which we now adopt, and for day he adopted December 25 . . . the very date, within a day or two, of the supposed birth of previous sun-gods. From that fact alone we may fairly conclude that by the year 530 or earlier the existing nature worship had become largely fused into Christianity.

Pagan and Christian Creeds,
by EDWARD CARPENTER, pp. 20-6.

NO PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT

Before they left Windsor, somebody came to Albert and proposed that a sentence should be added to the Liturgy, to pray for the Queen and the baby which was to be born. "No, no; you have one already in the Litany—'All women labouring with child.' You pray already five times for the Queen."

"Albert the Good," Hector Bolitho.

Symptoms

ONE of the things that distinguish modern from ancient medical science is its attitude towards symptoms. Formerly, in its empirical days, medical science treated the symptoms of a disease as something to be eradicated in itself, and not as now as the result of a deep-seated cause. Science to-day looks deeper, and realizes that a pain in one part or organ of the body might point to a weakness or disease in a quite different part.

To take a concrete example; a headache might be the symptom of such diverse ailments as bad eyesight, indigestion, sluggish liver, etc. The modern doctor examines the patient, finds out the cause or causes, and attacks the pain at its seat. This is a scientific, as opposed to an empirical diagnosis and treatment. The scientific treatment of any problem should begin by analysing it, and finding the particular factors involved in that problem. Knowing the cause or causes, it is then much easier to supply a remedy, or to suggest the steps to be taken to abolish that problem.

The scientific habit of analysis is not common in treating urgent modern problems. In fact the general habit is to take a *prima facie* view, and to discuss symptoms only. In no department of thought is this so much so as in religion. The religious thinker solemnly talks about the symptoms of religion without enquiring into the facts and fundamental bases of the subject.

Religion is based on a belief in the supernatural, the existence of another world or spiritual sphere, and of beings who inhabit that world. But that is taken for granted by religious thinkers. They are often logical enough in their arguments, except when trying to prove the existence of the supernatural. And that cannot be proved by mere logic or knowledge. That belief dates to the time when the mind of man made its first tentative steps to explain the universe. The seed of religion was sown at that time, and like all ideas has kept on growing. Here the laws of evolution operate as in the biological region. Planted in a fertile soil, it spread and proliferated, casting out fresh branches that took on an independent life. As in plant and animal life the struggle for survival is severest between members of the same species, so in the religious life, the struggle between rival religions was ruthless in the struggle for existence.

Now most of that energy and strife was wasted on a battle over what were pimples upon the religious body. The struggles in the Christian Churches by Catholic and Protestant, and the hundred sects of Nonconformity have achieved nothing in making religion truer or better. A Unitarian might protest that his conception of Christ is more "rational" than that of an orthodox Nonconformist; a Church of England Modernist will say he has made his religion better by the throwing overboard of many of the miracles and legends; and the Church of England claims it has rejected many of the superstitions of Rome. But what they have attained is not a more logical position; it is something quite different. They have merely cleared the religious body of some of its pimples; and they have done that by the inversion of logic.

Jesus Christ drew attention to the priests of his day, whose minds were such that they could swallow a camel, but strained at a gnat. The Modernist swallows a supernatural camel in the form of a Supreme Being, but strains at the gnats of miracles, the Virgin Birth, the physical resurrection and so on. If

we believe in an omnipotent power, and then say that that power could not have performed certain things, which after all, are, although alterations of natural law, not so incredible if we first believe in that power, this is making such half and half religions ridiculous. To say that God is all powerful, and then say he cannot perform a miracle is to contradict oneself.

All this springs from the fact that religious thinkers never try to analyse the basic principles of religion. They argue from symptoms only. No religion can be viewed by itself. It must be examined in its perspective to other religions. The study of comparative religion and mythology is a fruitful source of profit to those who want to find the real worth of any religion. At one time parsons were eager to study these subjects, but lately their zeal has abated. Every religion prides itself on its uniqueness. But a knowledge of other religions has taught us that no dogma or belief is peculiar to one religion. A belief might assume many forms, but it is often found in many different religions. Also as Gibbon observed, like conditions produce like habits. It is true too that similar conditions give rise to similar beliefs.

As material conditions changed, religion had to contend with another enemy—secular knowledge and science. Every new discovery, as it encroached on the preserves of the priests was opposed with all the weapons at their command. Modern apologists have a way of ignoring this, and pretend that Christianity has always been in favour of education and the free broadcast of knowledge. Not that religion has been against knowledge; Christian knowledge that is. Christianity has never opposed any discovery that did not tell against it, as a study of its history will show. As for facts that were in contradiction to its beliefs, when it had the power, it suppressed them, and when they became too numerous to suppress, it conceded a point, and admitted a defeat in that area of science. The history of religion is a record of the slow sure retreat of the boundaries of the supernatural. Religious beliefs are circumscribed by the knowledge of the times.

The course of development of every religion shows a surprising similarity. Religion begins by being everything and ends by being nothing—or almost nothing. When a religion can be observed in a state of pristine purity, and in its extreme evolved form, as Christianity can to-day, the truth of this can be seen. And here we see a surprising contrast to the history of a secular science. A science begins by knowing nothing, and ends by knowing a great deal. As the science progresses, inferences and theories give way to knowledge and explanations. Shadowy and incomplete ideas are supplanted by minute and careful particulars. But how different is religion where the longer it has been in existence the less is known with certainty. The early Christians knew all about God; the modern Christian says it is impossible to know anything about "him" at all. The early Christian knew all about a future life; the modern refuses to hazard a guess on the subject. All he knows is that he says there is one. When tackled on the question, he can only give the usual vague answers. Brought to lay he generally falls back on our old friend—mystery. These things are a mystery; but they do not present half the mystery that the working of a Modernist mind shows.

IDRIS LLEWELLYN ABRAHAM.

More than anything whatever I prize intellectual honesty.—Arnold Bennett.

Obstacles of Freethought

NOT long ago a friend of mine remarked to me that we have travelled a long way from the familiar Protestant slogan of, say, forty and more years ago: "To Hell with the Pope!" The religionists have now become a sort of happy family, except in certain more benighted centres, such as India, Northern Ireland, and (we may add) Liverpool and Edinburgh, where rioting, and in some of those places murder, mutual alternate murder of Protestants and Roman Catholics, occurs. However, so far as general management is concerned, the family mentioned have been successful in arranging matters so that while they can freely propagate superstition in the public press and on the wireless, their opponents are denied the opportunity of stating their views, and the overwhelming evidence on which those views are based.

I have for many years looked through and read articles in *The English Review*. This was for a time edited, I think, by a son of Frederick Harrison, the eminent historian and leader of the English Positivists, all of whom rejected all kinds of supernaturalism and other occultism. At that time, so far as I can recall, no religious matter appeared.

Nowadays, however, the *Review* contains religious articles and reviews of books by Arnold Lunn, a recent convert to Roman Catholicism. Of course, Mr. Lunn does not boom his particular brand of religion: that would probably offend Protestant readers, and so affect the circulation of the periodical.

In two articles from his pen which have appeared this year, statements are made, with the usual confidence of religionists of to-day, that will command the interested attention of Freethinkers; to wit: "God does not coerce Faith. The evidence for the Supernatural is just short of the Coercive." This is presumably a sort of apology for the paucity of the evidence, and need not detain us. Nor need we pay more than the tribute of a sigh (mingled with a smile) to some other statements, such as "Materialism is dying, if not dead."

As usual, in such articles, evolution is decried, and also evolutionists. The great bio-chemist, Professor J. B. S. Haldane (in saying or doing something or other) "is in effect adopting the methods of the old witch-doctor"; and we read of some persons who "take a high line about science and behaviour in so unscientific a fashion," as to "explain things in terms of those agencies which they approve." Mr. Lunn is evidently unable to see that he is not only doing that, but is postulating an agency which is rejected by practically the whole body of scientists, who proceed on the basis, not of mere tradition, prejudice, "wish-dreams," and the like, but of ascertained fact and proved principle. One other quotation may be given: "*If* (italics mine) phenomena may be divided into those which are due to supernatural causes, and those which can be explained by natural causes, . . ." On this we need only note that useful little word "if"; and the passage is one of a number of Jesuitical pleas, which are not likely to appeal to anyone who has fairly freed himself from the bonds of ancient and medieval superstition.

There is, however, one statement of a scientific kind, viz., that fossil birds are found in earlier rocks than reptiles, and the conclusion is that the former cannot be derived from the latter, as palæontologists and biologists (doubtless all of them) believe.

Although the reading of many books and articles on palæontology and evolutionary biology convinced me that there is no sound basis for the statement mentioned, I have looked up the point in several other works, and can find no suggestion that birds appeared

before reptiles. The following is to be found in Prof. J. Arthur Thomson's *Outlines of Zoology*: "The first known occurrence of reptiles is in the Permian strata"; "The oldest known bird is *Archæopteryx*, two specimens of which have been found in the Solenhofen Lithographic Stone (Upper Jurassic) of Bavaria." Now, between the Permian and the Jurassic there was the whole of the Triassic period. Therefore, although the geological record is still, for obvious reasons, very incomplete, we may be quite sure that the advent of reptiles preceded that of birds by many millions of years. And as the known structural relation of the reptiles with the birds above them (as with the amphibians below) is so marked, any other view than that the evolutionary course is as here indicated incredible to anybody who is fairly acquainted with the facts.

J. REEVES.

Ethics and Supernaturalism

WE are continually being told that if we give up supernaturalism, we may as well say good-bye to ethics. This favourite lie is rubbed in by pious orators and writers with all the fervour and earnestness they can command. But these emissaries of the ecclesiastical corporations are merely speaking from a brief and underpaid instructions—just like any pleader in a Court of Law. Now, the ethics of the nation are not shown by any of the religions to be found in it, but by the secular laws by which is governed. The consummate impudence of clericalism consists chiefly in its claim that beneficent secular laws have been the outcome of religious propaganda. All impartial students of history very well know that this claim is entirely without foundation. Indeed, but for the obstructiveness of the Churches, the efforts of secular reformers would have produced much more fruit in the shape of protective and ameliorative legislation. The attitude of the Episcopal Benches in the House of the Lords in the past is too well understood by all well-informed people to admit of any doubt on that point. And the scandalous thing is that these Prelates are permitted to participate in the enacting of secular laws for such a country as Scotland; which for centuries has repudiated bishops! But the Scottish hypocrites who pose as leaders of thought will put up with a great deal and consort with very strange bed-fellows so long as they are assured that the fingers of *some* religionists can get into the legislative pie. The once hated prelatism of England will even do; so long as *some* supernatural control is exercised over secular legislators! Of course, in the minds of these hypocrites lingers the hope that representatives of other denominations beside the Church of England may yet be admitted to Parliament to co-operate in the enactment of secular laws. But if that happy end cannot be immediately attained, they will do what they can to retain the English Bishops as legislators! In the recent "conversations" which have been proceeding between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland the flattering obsequiousness of the representatives of the latter is little short of nauseating.

Advancement in ethics, as in other departments of life, is demonstrated by the general body of the Law of the Land at any given time. Doubtless there are occasional lapses and retrogressions; but it is so far satisfactory to note, that despite these, and despite a time-serving and greedy clericalism, our ethical system is vastly improved since the beginning of the nineteenth century. One has only to read the infuri-

ating accounts of child labour of 120 years ago, when the Christian Churches were at the height of their power and prestige, to realize this. A truly ethical system in essence teaches an ever-deepening humanity. The S.P.C.C. and S.P.C.A. owe nothing to divinity or divines. They originated because of the growth of finer humane feelings. It is a very remarkable fact that when the Churches wielded most influence and power, such feelings were seldom in evidence, and if they conflicted, as they often did, with the doctrines of the Church, they were condemned and ruthlessly suppressed.

One would deplore any restriction upon the right of free speech in Britain. At the same time one is disposed to be critical of certain servants of the public, holding even judicial offices, who appear on platforms as supporters and boosters of clerical systems. For example, a learned Sheriff in Scotland, the other day, in the course of a fervid speech, demanded a more militant Church with Christ as the supreme and only Dictator. Such gentlemen as he seem to forget that their appearance on sectarian platforms is not accordant with the dignity of their secular positions. Their duty is to administer the secular Law of the Land—Common and Statute—impartially for the whole population which comprises a great variety of religious creeds: Jews, Mohammedans, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, etc., as well as a not wholly negligible minority of Ethicists who repudiate the claims of all supernaturalists. And any reference to the Carpenter of Nazareth, who is reported to have washed his own disciples' feet as a Dictator, not only sounds terribly incongruous but is surely totally out of place! But our religious propagandists, even though men of high education, must borrow the phraseology of the misguided peoples who have been led astray by Fascism. In fact the suggestion of any Dictator, human or divine—or hybrid—is a sign of retrogression in thought and feeling. The modern Mosaic command is "Say unto the children of men that they go backward." Was there ever such pessimistic philosophy? We who are Freethinkers see valid reasons for pessimism in much that is; but we are optimistic as to that which will be—not by what has been done by ecclesiastics and their supporters; but by the intelligence, inventiveness, and genius of mankind in the mass. The conditions of the present sadden and revolt many of us when we realize how much further we might have advanced; but they do not rob us of the hope that the vast majority of mankind will yet "tak a thoct and mend." We know that humanism will spread and deepen, and that human beings will yet slough off their greed and self-consideration. We also know that, with every opportunity to regenerate the world, supernaturalism—with or without dictators—has ignominiously failed. Compassion and kindness have their sole source in Humanity. Divinity has proved a cheat and a snare.

IGNOTUS.

All of us who are worth anything, spend our manhood in unlearning the follies, or expiating the mistakes of our youth.—*Shelley*.

FRIENDSHIP

There are three friendships which are advantageous, and three which are injurious. Friendship with the upright; friendship with the sincere; and friendship with the man of much observation: these are advantageous. Friendship with the man of specious airs; friendship with the insinuatingly soft; and friendship with the glib-tongued: these are injurious.—*Confucius*.

The Invisible Ray

THIS remarkable account of mysterious happenings will be received with incredulity. That is inevitable and, frankly, the incredulity is justified. The reader will ask, for instance, why so wonderful an invention as an apparatus which can throw a ray directional, sound carrying both ways and invisible is not exploited commercially and so made the source of colossal wealth, why, if it exists, is it merely used as a machine for playing tricks and practical jokes? This question is quite legitimate and, although I will submit a possible answer, there is but one person who, if he can be found, can ever give a *satisfactory* one; that person is the inventor.

Tentatively, I will suggest that, perhaps, the production of the ray is a task so simple, when once understood, that if its secret were revealed all the Toms, Dicks and Harrys, as well as the Thomases, Richards and Henrys would compete with the inventor. Perhaps, finding that the acquisition of any proprietary rights is impossible, he prefers to *experiment* with his apparatus or, so to speak, to play about with it.

It must be clearly understood that the words with which I have headed this account "The Invisible Ray," represent no more than a guess. If the reader can discover any better explanation of the phenomenon described he is, of course, free to do so. My duty is simply to narrate what happened, not to comment or speculate upon it.

I state the facts, to account for them is, for the present, beyond my power. Others may succeed where I fail, and the following lines will put the particulars into their possession, and that with some accuracy and minuteness of detail.

It was at 11.45 p.m. on a Sunday in the month of September, about six months after my wife's death that, as I sat on the edge of the bed preparatory to retiring to rest, I heard a voice, seemingly quite close to me, calling me by name. The voice called me Reginald. Now, no one but my wife had been in the habit of calling me by my full Christian name. Throughout my life I had been Regi to some members of my family. Uncle or Uncle Regi to others. Dad or father to others. Mr. Whittallson to those outside the intimate circle and, by long-established custom, Reginald to no one in the world but my wife. I cannot say I recognized the voice but the method of address took my breath away. The electric light was full on, I could see no one. When I recovered from my surprise I asked, Who are you? I am Eva, replied the voice. Eva was my wife's name. Then ensued a succession of questions and answers, all the questions were mine and all the answers those of the voice.

Is it really you dear?

Yes, we were quite wrong, Reginald, there *is* a future life.

Really, is that so, dear, and can you only come to me as a voice; can I not touch or see you? I have so longed all these months since you died for just, if it might be, only one hour with you.

That may be possible perhaps or, at any rate, you may perhaps see me, but not through my own agency. It is only with great difficulty and suffering that I am getting these few words through to you. You must get into touch with a strongly endowed medium; then I can talk to you more fully, and even, perhaps, after a time, make myself visible to you, but even these few words have a terrible effect on me if I try to transmit them direct. Don't ask me much more, dear, this time. Go and see a medium. I shall know whom you have been to; space and distance are nothing in this world.

Oh, dear, dear Eva, don't go for a minute. I want to ask you, are you happy in the other world?

I shall be happy when you join me, but I am as happy as I could possibly be apart from that. I see and know all that you do. I am far happier than any of you ever are on the earth plane. I am by your side constantly, Reginald.

Then you know about my nervous breakdown when you died and how I was in hospital, and about the doctors sending me on a sea voyage, about my sea

voyage to the Cape and another to Scotland.

Yes, I was with you all the time. I stood by you on the deck when you could not smoke that cigar because it was the anniversary of our wedding day, and you were overcome by grief thinking that I was not there with you. I know all about it, Reginald dear.

And Aunt Alice's funeral, you know all about poor Alice?

Oh, yes, I was there when they lowered dear Alice into her grave, though, of course, in reality, Alice is here and has been my closest companion since what you call her death. But I am exhausted, Reginald dear. I will come to you again. Find out a medium, Reginald. Good-bye, dear love.

During the whole of this conversation there was a slight whistling sound in the street below. I switched off the light and looked out. A motor car moved slowly away from the other side of the road as the whistling ceased. I never had any nervous breakdown, I was never in my life a patient in a hospital. I have not been on a sea voyage to the Cape, Scotland, or anywhere else, and my Aunt Alice is alive, well and hearty.

REGINALD WHITTALLSON.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"
ON USING "GOD"

SIR,—I have often found that there is, inevitably much muddled thinking among all kinds of Christians, concerning the linguistic status of their chief magical term "God," and it seems sometimes that even Freethinkers are not quite clear on this point, which I infer from the fact that in criticizing the modern Christian belief in God, they are all bent on disproving it by mythological and anthropological data, which is all right as far as the belief in one of the innumerable anthropomorphic gods is concerned, but the shortest and most efficient method of clearing up the modern *verbal phase* of the belief is, I think, the *linguistic analysis*. Therefore some plain hints in this respect may not seem quite superfluous.

Every schoolboy knows that there are ultimately two kinds of nouns, common (including collectives, etc.) and proper nouns. It follows that for every designation of a thing which we may come across the following great alternative is inevitable: *either it is a common or a proper noun!* The use of capitals need not confound us here, and prevent a rigorous application of this criterion: some quite obvious common nouns are being written with a capital in the fashion of proper nouns merely for the sake of stressing.

Now in the light of these considerations let us attack this term "God." First of all if it *has* to be with a meaning, it cannot escape the said alternative. Let us assume it is the former. The use of a capital being in such a case only ornamental, it should be written "a god." This original use is evinced when we find it sometimes written "a God." Now this usage of a noun with the indefinite article implies that the talk is generally about all kinds of gods, while "the God" implies that the term is used as a substitute for a particular god alluded to in a context. Applying this to the Christian Bible, "the god" or "God" simply stands for Yahweh. Writes a local divine, Rev. Dr. J. Sanders, D.D., emeritus *dozent* of the Latrian University: The god Yahweh as depicted in the Old Testament is only a "local fire-god of the Midians and other Semitic peoples, the 'great fire' Deuteronomy v. 25. The word Yahu or Yahweh, Yahu, shortened Yah, means the Roarer and Destroyer. Later on, as we know, the people feared to utter the name Yahweh, and instead they put Adonai—the Lord, Greek *kyrios*. It is utterly wrong to translate it so. If it was to be translated, then it ought to be written correctly: the Roarer, the Destroyer or the Terrible One." Such is the original meaning of God as a common noun in the Christian usage.

But here comes in—the cultural evolution. Every schoolboy knows too, that the Christian God is claimed

to be *the only one*. Originally it meant for the Hebrews simply a preference over the other gods (whose existence was not desired, as we know, even by Church Fathers). But interpreted literally in modern times this qualification severs, suicidally, all links with the possibility of logical thinking about this term. All confusion is springing precisely from this starting point. If the Christian God is, in principle, the sole one, then automatically the series: the Christian God—Yahweh—God—god, are *identical!* It follows that even the "definition": Yahweh is the sole god, is meaningless, because the predicate here has no function of a common noun (for which there must be in principle at least two individuals), but has become by definition, *another* identical (proper) name for the subject!

G. S. SMELTERS.

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, Mr. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 7.0, Mr. Ebury.

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

INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W. 4): 7.30, Debate—"Is There a God?" *Affir.*: Mr. C. S. McKelvie (British Israel Federation). *Neg.*: Mr. H. C. Smith (South London Branch N.S.S.).

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John Drinkwater—"The Nature of Poetry."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, November 11, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"What is Progress."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Rooms, 70 Grange Park Road, Leyton, E.10): 7.30, E. T. Bryant—"The Triumph of Materialism."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Archibald Robertson—"Agnostic or Atheist?"

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET: 8.0, Friday, November 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton. Weather permitting.

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, D. Robinson (Liverpool)—"Atheism v. Christianity."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street): 7.30, A postponed lecture by Mr. H. W. Cottingham—"Hypnotism."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Tavern Hotel, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.30, Mr. F. J. Corinna—"Pools and Pallacies."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"What is Atheism?"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Chapman Cohen—"The Savageries of Civilization."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, No. 2 Lantern Lecture by Mr. Joseph McCabe—"The Glory that was Greece."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, E. Egerton Stafford (Bootle)—"The Drive to War."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (11a Renshaw Street, Liverpool): 7.30, Friday, November 15, A Social and Dance.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Room 5, 2nd Floor, Drake Circus): 7.30, Mr. J. Smith—"Galsworthy's 'Loyalties.'"

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

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