

# THE FREETHINKER

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**PRINCIPAL CONTENTS**

	Page
<i>Religion and the State—The Editor</i> . . . . .	721
<i>The Exodus from Eden—Mimnermus</i> . . . . .	723
<i>The Social Science of Herbert Spencer—T. F. Palmer</i> . . . . .	724
<i>Things Worth Knowing</i> . . . . .	725
<i>Lord Byron was no Religionist—Frank Hill</i> . . . . .	726
<i>Masterpieces of Freethought—H. Cutner</i> . . . . .	730
<i>Union with God—Ignotus</i> . . . . .	731
<i>An Ultra-Modernist—W. R. Tomlinson</i> . . . . .	733

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

**Views and Opinions**

**Religion and the State**

So long as religion exists there is certain to be a reaction between it and political life. We may attempt to mark a line between the two, but however much we may agree with the division in theory, it can never operate in practice. Even in theory it cannot exist, so long as one believes in religion. As a Freethinker I can say that religion and politics should not be mixed, but as a religious man, and particularly as a Christian, I do not see how this can be done. If a man is a "true Christian," one who believes that the chief end of man is to praise God and obey him, if also he believes that right conduct in this world and salvation in the next depends upon this being done, how is it possible for him to keep his religion and his politics in watertight compartments? In these circumstances my opinions, the opinions expressed in these columns, the work of an organization such as the National Secular Society, are not merely wrong, they are the direct threat to the eternal, the fundamental welfare of man, both as a social animal and as a "spiritual being." For a believer not to mix religion and politics is thus impossible. He may profess to keep them apart, but he will consider all political questions from their probable effect on his creed, or on the welfare of the church that represents his creed, and he will usually, at the expense of his political opinions, act so that the first consideration shall be given to his religious convictions. That is why I have always paraphrased a famous saying attributed to General Sherman with regard to Red Indians. The only good religion is a dead one. The work of an intelligent and genuine Freethinker is not to "rationalize" religion, but to end it.

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**A Curious Plea**

So I have a certain sympathy with the staff parson of the *News-Chronicle*, in his article of November 4, when he expresses a desire to bring religion into

politics—as though it had ever been absent. But while, as a Freethinker, sympathizing with his desire, as a Christian, to bring religion into politics, I strongly disagree with his manner of putting it. He says, "For God's sake clean up the dirty party (political) game by bringing religion into it." But a party game is not of necessity "dirty." Party may only mark the gathering of two bodies of men who have strong opinions on art, or literature, or science, and even of politics. If the political party game is at present rather dirty, it certainly is not because of the absence of religion. I may remind Mr. Redwood that the House of Commons has refused to abolish the blasphemy laws which exist for the protection of religion. It refuses to abolish the laws which maintain the religious observance of Sunday. The vast majority of its members are professing Christians, and papers such as the *News-Chronicle* are fond of explaining to its readers how many of them have been trained in this or that chapel; and all but a very few members take an oath on the Bible, many because they are not, or dare not avow they are, Freethinkers. Finally the House of Commons has a special chaplain who daily prays to God that he will give the members justice and understanding. And Mr. Redwood is a very strong believer in the power of prayer.

"Politics" Meredith makes one of his characters say, "Is like climbing the greasy pole. Mutton or no mutton you get the grease." I agree with Mr. Redwood that there is a deal of grease in politics, and some of it very dirty grease, but this grease is evidently not due to the absence of religion. Religion is all over current politics, and religious pressure as much as anything prevents many politicians being as honest to themselves and to their constituents as they might be otherwise. But I do not wish to press that too hard, and Mr. Redwood might retort that it is not the right kind of religion. So let us be gentle and content ourselves with the obvious reflection and the indisputable fact that religion has not saved politics from being a "dirty game." How does Mr. Redwood purpose answering the question from some earnest reader on that point? I expect he would not answer it at all.

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**The Test of Experience**

I submit to Mr. Redwood that there are only three ways in which religion and the State can co-exist in the same country. If we may be permitted to give the name of State to a primitive tribe, then we have there a condition in which religion completely controls the State. It influences, even orders the entire life of the tribe. But that does not make for an absence of "dirtiness." Mr. Redwood, as a Christian parson, believes in sending out missionaries to these benighted people, whose politics are saturated with religion, and supports those who invite subscriptions

to send missionaries in order to make the natives less religious than they were and give freer play to non-religious common sense. This first phase has existed in a modified form in more modern times, and in every case the State has had to interfere and limit the activities of religion in the interests of decency and progress. I do not offer detailed proofs now, because I do not think Mr. Redwood will ask for them. The truth of the statement is self-evident.

Another plan is for the State to control the Church. We have this, to some extent in most modern countries. But it leads inevitably to the Churches and Chapels and other religious organizations doing what they can to achieve their ends by threats and bribes and back-stairs methods, to import a very large element of trickery, and general dishonesty into politics. It leads to the support of some men merely because they promise to help the Church, and to the opposition to others because they will not. It makes sectarian interests the deciding factor in Church politics, and sends the other interests to the devil.

There is yet a third method—that of the State leaving religion alone, and treating it as a speculative opinion, which men may hold or reject without it in the least affecting the quality of their citizenship. But here we come back to my first point. This can only be done when people have ceased to believe in religion as teaching the truth about another life, and as offering an indispensable basis for a desirable social life, here. This means that the only way to keep religion from an illegitimate attack on the State or the State interfering with the activities of religion—at least in a negative form—is to end belief in it. The only way to cleanse political life is to get the dirt out of it, and certainly a great part of the dirt in politics is the product of many thousands of generations of religious belief and of religious influence.

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### Sunday Again

Last week I said, in dealing with Mr. Morrison's desire to put a brake on the growth of Sunday entertainments, that the English Sunday had rested like a black cloud on the people, and had been responsible for more demoralization than any other single cause during the past two or three centuries. A good illustration of the truth of what I said, reaches me in the shape of a copy of the *Nottingham Evening Post* for November 4. The writer, one of the staff of the paper, describes the scene in Grantham High Street, "on any Sunday night." It is worth while quoting at some length as coming, not from a wicked Free-thought paper, but from an impartial observer. He says:—

Large groups of young men and girls stand on the pavements, talking loudly and guffawing, and bands of others patrol up and down, up and down. Most of them look bored to desperation.

They say there is nowhere they can go. On any other night, when their work gives them less freedom, the picture houses, the dance and billiard halls are open. In these places they can enjoy the society of each other, but on Sunday nights their only meeting place is the town's main street.

From a number of these aimless street strollers, who were reduced to a condition of respectable vagrancy because Church and State had decided that there ought to be a brake put on Sunday entertainments, and that if people would not come to Church or Chapel, then they should not be permitted to go anywhere else, the *Evening Post* gathered the following:—

A *Post* reporter last night fell into conversation with a few of these lost and listless young people. One, a clerk, said: "Sunday is quite the dullest

day of the seven. I hate the thought of its coming. If on Sunday I could get my fill of amusement, I'm certain I should make a far better and more contented workman during the week.

"But on Sunday I can get no entertainment at all. The B.B.C. drives me out of home on to the streets. If the picture-houses were open one could go there; but they are not, and so I, and hundreds like me, go to the public houses and then walk the High Street. This is all the religionists succeed in."

A blonde, working in a factory, said: "Sometimes I go to church, but I'd like the picture houses to be open so that I could please myself where I go. I don't think it a very Christian thing to deny us the right of going where we wish. I think it's rather cowardly of the churches to stop competition by opposing Sunday cinemas. Don't you agree?"

Another maintained his impartiality, and instead of answering asked: "Would you be satisfied with educational films? I don't quite understand what 'educational' means. After all, such films as those of George Arliss can educate you morally, but travelogues and news films would be perfectly satisfactory, perhaps with orchestra or organ interludes."

The fourth person to be interviewed was the son of a clergyman, who was just leaving one of the town's hotels. He said: "Of course the Church contends that Sunday should be a day of rest, but my generation doesn't want to rest for an hour, much less a day. If normal programmes were shown at cinemas on Sundays I'm certain the churches would feel no difference."

The newspaper man asks, "What is Grantham's answer to the protests of its young people?" But the thing goes much farther than Grantham. There are scores of towns in this country where the scenes depicted in Grantham are duplicated. In all these places where there is not merely an absence of places of harmless entertainment for the hours of leisure, the same aimless, empty, and supremely demoralizing scenes may be witnessed. And in all such places the main opposition comes from the clergy. Laymen, attached to Church or Chapel help in this policy of suppression and demoralization, but the chief opposition comes from the Churches. The Church and Chapel-goers are not forced to see pictures or listen to concerts, they can, if they please, go home, draw the blinds, and continue in a state of physical and intellectual somnolence until Monday morning, and unconsciously heave a sigh of relief when the "day of rest" comes to an end. But good Christian folk are not content with the liberty to stay away from picture house and concert room, they demand that others shall stay away also.

Now we again invite the attention of Mr. Morrison to this. He stands as a social reformer, anxious to make England free and happy. Can he really have given no thought to the influence on the rising democracy of days of leisure spent in the aimless and foolish manner described by the *Nottingham Post*? I invite him to consider the difference there must be between a generation brought up in this atmosphere of restrictive and narrow sabbatarianism, and one reared in other better and brighter conditions. I suggest to him and to others that the greatest reformers are not of necessity those who agitate for bigger houses, fewer hours of labour and increased wages. These things are necessary and good, but the way to make their abolition certain is to create an appetite for something that goes far beyond them, and so makes the realization of an ideal indispensable to happiness. One great distinction between primitive and civilized man is that while the former is moved mainly by needs, the other is moved by desires that have the force of imperative needs. The things that men are really fighting for to-day, is more than for food

or an increase in wages. The fight is for a larger and better life, in which all that art and literature can do to elevate life will play their part. It is this that makes the Sunday question of so great importance. A brighter Sunday helps to increase an appetite for life. The man who demands better houses, better pay, better conditions of labour, is making for a *reform*. The man who is creating an appetite for those houses to be more artistically built and furnished, and demands that all that civilization holds in beauty and art shall be within reasonable reach of all is going a long way to create a *revolution* that may open a new era in the history of mankind.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## The Exodus from Eden

"A noble aim,  
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed."

Wordsworth.

"Prefer knowledge to wealth, for one is transitory,  
the other perpetual."—Socrates.

OVER seventy years ago Charles Darwin demonstrated that man has attained his present state through a gradual process of evolution from a lower and less perfect condition. The general admission of this truth made an intellectual revolution. It swept away at once the old fantastic theological legends which men have been accustomed to consider a sufficient explanation of all things. The legend of a fallen race at once disappears, and with it goes the myth of the "Devil," and the many other strange and monstrous explanations that were necessary to harmonize the theological theory put forth. With it also goes the bibliolatry which, like so many other idolatries, has served to enchain and cramp the human intellect. The Bible of the ancient Hebrews must descend from its lofty pedestal and take its place among the numerous sacred books of other nations.

Nothing more momentous has taken place since the Renaissance, that great re-birth of learning which put the hall-mark on modern civilization. And, strangest of all, this intellectual lever, which will finally overthrow all existing creeds, has come among us so silently that many have scarcely noticed its approach. Opposition there has been, as there is to all new truths; but compared with the momentous issues at stake, the opposition has been less than might have been expected. Silently and steadily for over seventy years Evolution has been resistlessly pushing its way till few educated men now attempt to contravene it. There has been no "bridal birth of thunder peals" while this "great thought has wedded fact." To the clergy and their congregations, whose innocence will not permit them to follow intelligently the course of scientific thought, the new thought must appear like Banquo's awful apparition to the amazed Macbeth. They look up from their crosses, candles, and their prayers, and see the fearsome shape in front of them. "Adam" and "Eve," the "Lord God," and "the Devil," are driven out from the Garden of Eden, not by an angel with a flaming sword, but by Charles Darwin with the more potent weapon—a steel pen.

Since Darwin's death, the clergy, who formerly denounced him with the whole wide vocabulary of theological abhorrence, have, hypocritically, claimed him as one of their flock. They buried this black sheep in Westminster Abbey, and calmly pretend that the teachings of Evolution are wholly in accord with that of the Christian Church and its Fetish-Book. Only two out of the very numerous reli-

gious bodies in this country have been reasonably honest in this matter. Poles asunder in so many respects, the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Salvation Army have both remained faithful to ancient ignorance. On no condition whatever will they part with "Adam" and "Eve," and the apple and the talking serpent. Romanists and Salvationists alike believe that Darwin, Huxley, Herbert Spencer, and their colleagues, are now suffering the tortures of the damned. These uncultured folk no more believe in evolution than they understand the rudiments of modern science. Religion, however, is a vested interest, and many of the clergy are desirous of safeguarding their financial position by putting a scientific veneer on the crude theological stories they retail so glibly. Hence, many of them are trying to effect a compromise between the irreconcilables, superstition and science, and assure their hearers that the great truths of evolution are in absolute harmony with their own particular Bible, and that the crude legends of "Genesis" are, in the last analysis, pure science, without the tiresome details of Darwin and Herbert Spencer. "Oh, the sorry trade!"

This Christian camouflage might succeed better were it not for the fact that men and women have other sources of information than the pulpit utterances of their "pastors and masters." The idea of evolution was not unknown before Darwin. It is as old as the time of Lucretius, but, although many scientific researches touched the subject, it was reserved for Darwin and Herbert Spencer to show that complex forms of life come out of simple ones; and the "Synthetic Philosophy," no less than the *Origin of Species*, forms an important landmark in the history of human knowledge. The very greatness of their conception of their task marks them as very extraordinary men. To the great mass of men, it is true, they may be only great names; but to the world of intellect they rank with the highest minds, with those who open up new vistas to men's eyes and widen the horizons of human knowledge. Nor must we neglect the group of men who did their share in popularizing the new teaching, Huxley, Tyndall, Lyell, Hooker, and even Grant Allen. In their life-work we find recorded something of the beginnings of that great struggle for the theory of evolution, already so potent a force, yet only, in its modern form, seventy years old.

Slowly, with lapses into its "loved Egyptian night," mankind is slowly and steadily shaking itself free of the last desperate clutches of superstition. Bewildered by the new light of knowledge, missing at first the guiding hand of the priests, it stands amazed on the threshold of the future. The fundamental question of man's place in nature has been solved, and the wide acceptance of evolution has already begun to bear fruit in all practical affairs of life. Sooner or later it will lead mankind to a happier, more perfect condition of life, and to loftier ideals.

In this intellectual revolution the name of Thomas Henry Huxley will always be remembered. He was not an original investigator like Darwin, nor a philosopher like Herbert Spencer, but his finest and most suggestive work was that of a popularizer of science. Clear-sighted as he always was, he realized the immense importance of the teaching of evolution, and he never tired of bringing the new ideas before popular readers. He had a complete acquaintance with science, and he combined, with a splendid and attractive gift of interpretation, a command of lucid and beautiful English, which most writers would have given their ears to equal. "The Saint Paul

of Darwinism," someone dubbed him, and certainly his power of popularizing the evolutionary theory was very remarkable.

Below all the strife of opponents the quiet growth of the new scientific teaching gathers strength daily. And it is precisely at this stage that recognition must be accorded to the Freethought leaders and lecturers, who have continued the crusade for mental emancipation. For in the heart of the democracy their teaching has sunk deep, and, if professors frown and specialists sneer, it is something to have helped the people to grasp the teachings of science. It is because the hearts of these dauntless crusaders are aflame with human sympathy that their hard and untiring work has had such vital and permanent effect. By spreading the light of knowledge, these men have done more for Progress than any other men of their generation. For Freethinkers look beyond the tumult and the shouting of the day, and are touched by what the poet finely calls "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

MIMNERMUS.

## The Social Science of Herbert Spencer

SOCIOLOGY, the science of society, is now a highly important branch of inquiry. The two illustrious philosophers who laid the foundations of all subsequent research were Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. Spencer, however, must be regarded as its most influential and fertile forerunner. In addition to his monumental *Principles of Sociology*; his brilliant introductory volume, *The Study of Sociology*; *Social Statics*, and several sociological essays, the student may consult various volumes of Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology*, compiled by acknowledged experts which teem with information concerning human societies in every stage of culture.

To add to these treasures, Spencer's trustees, Major Darwin, Sir David Prain, F.R.S., and Sir Arthur Keith, F.R.S., decided to publish a final volume, *Herbert Spencer's Sociology* (Williams and Norgate, 1934), presenting a critical examination of Spencer's doctrines with an appraisal of the position they still occupy in sociological circles.

Dr. J. Rumney has been entrusted with this task and an excellent preface appears from the pen of Dr. Morris Ginsberg, Professor of Sociology in London University. Spencer applied the law of evolution to the cosmos as a whole, but it has been objected that the doctrine of development furnishes little help in sociological studies. But Dr. Ginsberg declares that, "Despite all criticism, the notion of evolution or development remains integral to sociology. We must still say with Spencer: 'On comparing rudimentary societies with one another, and societies in different stages of progress that they *do* present common traits of structure and function, as well as certain common traits of development,' and to discover the conditions of social growth, arrest and decay is one of the principal tasks of sociology. It is to be noted that Spencer's use of the word evolution does not imply that every people necessarily goes through the same stages in regular and progressive order."

In connexion with the rise and progress of private property the question of slavery emerges. With characteristic insight, Spencer traces the mitigation and steady decline of slavery to economic causes rather than to humanitarian or Christian influences. The extension of industry and improved modes of production were the main causes of slavery's decline.

For, "when slave labour and free labour came into competition, slave labour, other things being equal, decreases as being less economical. The relative lack of energy, the entire lack of interest, the unintelligent performance of work, and the greater cost of supervision, make the slave an unprofitable productive agent."

In his *Principles of Sociology*, Spencer deals in detail with the genesis of religion. Man's belief in gods, the after-life, and other fictions is derived from early humanity's misconceptions of natural phenomena. Spencer avers that "while the fear of the living becomes the root of political control, the fear of the dead becomes the root of religious control."

The religious rites and ceremonies of savage and civilized alike, Spencer derives from the fears and speculations of aboriginal man.

Spencer pictures primitive man as early impressed by the ceaseless transformations of natural phenomena. The rainbow, the rapid lightning-flash, the ever-changing clouds, the heavenly orbs, the winds and descending rain arrested his attention and awakened his wonder. He noted the changed appearances of plants and animals as they matured and decayed. Shadows, echoes and dreams puzzled his understanding. Incapable of any clear distinction between dream experiences and waking reality, he surmised that those visionary scenes were actual occurrences. And, as men dream not only of the living but the dead as performing the ordinary actions of life then, surely there must be a double or soul which leaves the body during sleep, survives death and retains the power of returning to its kindred as a shadowy form. Savages still attribute trance, somnambulism, catalepsy, unconsciousness and other abnormal phenomena to spiritual agency.

The souls of the departed were supposed to prolong their earthly avocations in the realm of shades. Their ornaments and artifacts were buried with their bodies for use in the spirit world. The souls demand attention and companionship, while the more powerful and truculent ghosts are propitiated with slain servants whose sacrificed remains are deposited in their graves. The dead still communicate with the living, so the survivors "pray for the dead; and the canonized dead are asked to intercede on behalf of the living." Food is deposited for their refreshment near their graves, and as spirits are apt to prove spiteful many modes of appeasement are adopted. Strange and evil occurrences are ascribed to spiritual animosity or revenge, for some neglected duty. When malevolent ghosts are irresponsive to praise, sacrifice or worship, other devices are employed. Exorcism of sinister spirits becomes essential, and the arts of the sorcerer, magician and medicine-man prepare the path for a later priesthood.

In such circumstances ancestor-worship arose. Ancestors—especially outstanding ones—were raised to the rank of divinities, while the burial rites and adoration of the dead developed into worship. Both "in their normal forms and in their abnormal forms all gods arise by apotheosis." Sacerdotal ceremonies and dogmas of the most advanced cults therefore repose on the crude imaginings of prehistoric humanity. As Spencer himself declares: "Instead of its being true that ideas of a deity, such as are entertained by cultured people are innate, it is contrariwise true that they arise at a comparatively advanced stage as results of accumulated knowledge, greater intellectual grasp and higher sentiment."

Dr. Rumney reviews the question of the genesis of religion in the light of later investigation, and concludes that the derivation of *all* sacred cults is scarcely restricted to ancestor-worship. There is not one religion in the world, he says, which consists of

ancestor-worship only. Still, it seems difficult to point to any doctrine or observance that may not have grown out of it. Again, he states that "it has a distinctly limited distribution—among the Bantu, Negroes, Melanesians, parts of Asia, among the Peruvians, and Pueblo Indians, in China and Japan." Surely, it is widespread in India, was customary in Greece and Rome, as well as in ancient Israel, while its unmistakable relics abound in the rural folklore and festivals of every European race.

The volume before us contains an interesting chapter on *Factors in Social Change*, with several examples of Spencer's penetrative power. He saw clearly that no innovation in social life fails to initiate other changes. For instance: "Such a simple occurrence as the discovery of gold brings multitudinous results—an inrush of people, growth of towns, new social arrangements, gambling hells, demoralization, besides much wider effects—new businesses, new lines of traffic, and the changes presently caused throughout the world in the relative values of gold and goods."

These and various other phenomena Spencer elaborates in terms of his Law of the Multiplication of Effects which ever operates throughout the universe. Spencer was also the pioneer in the study of what is now termed Ecology, "the study of habits and habits, of the interrelations and interconnectedness between the organic and the inorganic world." This fruitful field is now eagerly tilled by eminent investigators and promises rich results.

While conceding the past influences of militarism in the progress of civilization, Spencer regarded warfare with profound aversion in the changed conditions of modern industrial life. He denounced the South African War in scathing language, supported all humanitarian movements and ardently desired the immediate establishment of peace on earth. That the World War would have amazed him had he lived to see it, is doubtful, as he feared a period of rebarbarization before humanity resumed its onward march.

Dr. Rumney concludes that: "Spencer's place in sociology remains unassailed in spite of recent developments in philosophic thought. . . . He saw sociology as a whole—a science encompassing every phase of human thought and activity. He combined encyclopædic knowledge with powers of synthesis and analysis that are unrivalled, and a great ability for clear and lucid expression. His abilities were recognized by his greatest opponents and the literature of sociology abounds in generous tributes to his genius."

A man of noble character, Spencer devoted his life, sadly marred as it was by almost chronic ailment, to the construction of a majestic evolutionary philosophy. He received small encouragement from the world in general until his reputation was secure. Yet, he enjoyed the steadfast friendship and support of a few great men and women. He lived to find himself, world-famous and his name was linked with Darwin's as a revolutionizer of human thought.

Dr. Rumney stresses the circumstance "that although Spencer had a tremendous influence in Germany, France, Russia, Japan and the United States, and his works were translated into almost every language in the world, his influence in England was never, in his life-time properly appreciated. This is probably due to the fact that Spencer was not a university man and never held an academic position. The universities in general were hostile to his teaching, which they regarded as naturalistic and materialistic—a dangerous solvent to the rigidity of ancient beliefs, tradition and religion. Only late in life did the universities offer him recognition—

honours and degrees which, by this time, meant nothing to him."

Nevertheless, Spencer was venerated and admired very generally in English scientific and literary circles where the spirit of modern thought prevailed. Decidedly, on the other hand, the evolutionary philosopher's Rationalism became highly distasteful to the metaphysically and clerically-minded, as well as to semi-orthodox scientists of the Tait and Balfour-Stewart school. Still, Spencer's standing as a thinker was clearly appreciated by all the leaders of militant British Freethought. Charles Bradlaugh, G. J. Holyoake, G. W. Foote, and his successor Chapman Cohen, have all generously acknowledged Spencer's services to secular philosophy.

Spencer's sturdy independence of character, his refusal to countenance the many conventional pretences of his time and, deepest sin of all, his openly expressed Freethought antagonized and alarmed the orthodox clergy who still so largely influence and control public school and university instruction, and even now contrive to intimidate the public press.

T. F. PALMER.

## Things Worth Knowing\*

### XIII.

#### THE ROMAN EMPIRE UNDER CHRISTIANITY

LIBERTY is a proud spirit; it regards Government as a mere instrument of human happiness, and resists it when it becomes evidently prejudicial to happiness. Liberty flashes out against the Government that murders innocent men and dishonours women. Liberty is force of character roused by the sense of wrong. It is consistent, indeed, with a sense of duty and a willingness to bear just restraint; uncombined with these it achieves nothing lasting; but it is more often allied with turbulence and impatience of discipline. Such had been liberty in the old Republic, the rebellion of strong spirits against laws strained too far, self-assertion, sturdiness, combativeness. Such was not the Christian spirit. In this when it was genuine there was no rebellion, there was no assertion of right. Those who practised it were not less obedient, but more obedient than others. They had no turn for liberty; they had no quarrel with the despotism of the Cæsars; this they met, not in the spirit of Brutus or Virginius, but with religious resignation. The truth is they were under two despotisms while others were only under one. They were not satisfied with submitting to the Cæsar who assuredly did not "bear the sword in vain"; they endeavoured to obey the law of Christ also. They bore the double burden with all patience. Those were not the times for free spirits to flourish in. In the soldier-ridden Empire there was no atmosphere of hope in which a spark of independence could live or a breath of free heroism could be drawn. The Christian resistance to authority was indeed more than heroic, but it was not heroic. It arose from no impatience of restraint, but from a conflict of laws. The law of Christ carried it over the law of Cæsar. The spiritual sovereign prevailed over the temporal. Obedience was driven out by obedience and loyalty by loyalty. Therefore, saving the law of Christ, the Christians were the most loyal of the Emperor's subjects, and Christianity confirmed as

\* 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.

much as it controlled despotism. It produced a complete change in the attitude of the people to the Emperor. It made their loyalty more intense, but confined it within definite limits. It strengthened in them the feeling of submissive reverence for Government as such; it encouraged the disposition of the time to political passiveness. It was intensely conservative, and gave to power with one hand as much as it took away with the other. Constantine, if he was influenced by policy, was influenced by a wise policy when he extended his patronage to the Church. By so doing he may be said to have purchased an indefeasible title by a charter. He gave certain liberties, and received in return passive obedience. He gained a sanction for the Oriental theory of Government; in return he accepted the law of the Church. He became irresponsible with respect to his subjects on condition of becoming responsible to Christ. . . .

The position assumed by the Church at this time towards Government has determined its attitude throughout modern history. It has often controlled and defied kings as Ambrose did; but it has for the most part remained cold towards the spirit of liberty. . . . The earliest documents of Christianity, the biography of its founder, and the early history of the Church, bear the stamp of political quietism. In all disputes between authority and liberty the traditions of Christianity are on the side of authority. Passive obedience was plausibly preached out of the New Testament; when the opposite party sought Scriptural sanction for the principles of freedom, they were swayed irresistibly back upon the Old Testament, where rebellions and tyrannicides may be found similar to those which fill classical history. The whole modern struggle for civil and national liberty has been conducted not indeed without help from Christianity, but without help from the authoritative documents of Christianity. Liberty has had to make its appeal to those classical examples and that literature which were superseded by Christianity. In the French Revolution men turned from the New Testament to Plutarch. The former they connected with tyranny; the latter was their text-book of liberty. Plutarch furnished them with the teaching they required for their special purpose, but the New Testament met all their new-born political ardour with a silence broken only here and there by exhortations to submission.

*Lectures and Essays,*  
by J. R. SEELEY, pp. 74-8.

### Lord Byron was no Religionist

IN the *Freethinker*, some months back, a writer—in the correspondence column, I think—questioned the statement that Lord Byron was an unbeliever.

In his life of the poet, Andre Maurois establishes, beyond all dispute, that he was at least a Deist or an Agnostic.

"A course of reading in Voltaire," declares Maurois, "had robbed Byron of the faith of his childhood, and Matthew's forthright opinions confirmed him in his scepticism."

Charles Skinner Matthews was a Cambridge fellow-collegiate; and is described by Maurois as "a young man of wit and erudition, and a good writer both in Latin and English." He "believed in nothing," and "laughed at God and Devil alike."

Following his first visit to the East, Byron had "very definite ideas" on the subject of religion, with the result that Maurois summarizes him as saying: "It is a little hard to send a man preaching to Judea, and have the rest of the world—negroes and what not, dark as their complexions—without a ray of light to lead them on high; and who will believe that God will damn men for not knowing what they were never taught?"

A further statement by Byron was:—

"I am no Platonist—I am nothing at all. But I would sooner be anything than one of the seventy-two sects who are tearing each other to pieces for the love of the Lord. As to your immortality, if people are to live, why die? And our carcasses, which are to rise again, are they worth raising? I hope, if mine is, that I shall have a better pair of legs than I have moved on these two-and-twenty years, or I shall be sadly behind in the squeeze into Paradise."

Robert Charles Dallas, "a solemn fellow who believed the aim of an author was to be the auxiliary of the divine and the moralist," protested to Byron against such stanzas of "Childe Harold," as recorded the multiplicity of mankind's religious beliefs only to deduce their common weakness. Thus the change that was made in the eighth stanza of the second canto whereby "the immortality of the soul was restored by Byron to the rank of an amiable hypothesis."

Still, it remained Byron's belief that "the multiplicity of religions was proof of their weakness." At times of course he had to do a little hedging. Examples of this may be cited in his relations with Annabella Milbanke—"a girl he would like more if she were less perfect," and who in time became his wife.

Miss Milbanke was a pietist, "full of sentiments and sermons." She had noticed him at a lecture on religion, "writhing in an odd way at every mention of the word." In his letters he tried to ease her feelings. For example:—

"I now come to a subject which, you have perceived, I always hitherto avoided—an awful one—religion. I was bred in Scotland among Calvinists in the first part of my life, which gave me a dislike to that persuasion. Since that period, I have visited the most bigoted countries—Spain, Greece, Turkey. My opinions are quite undecided. I believe doubtless in God, and should be happy to be convinced of much more. If I do not at present place implicit faith in traditional revelation of any human creed, I hope it is not for want of reverence for the Creator, but the creature."

But even this was only a momentary attitude. Byron went to the Milbanke home. There, before the end of his stay, he "mocked at religion."

Byron's first meeting with Sir Walter Scott was at the office of the publisher, John Murray. In religion as in politics, relates Maurois, Scott and Byron stood in opposing camps. A further enlightening reference by Maurois is: "The Duc de Broglie found his conversation to be spiced with impious jesting."

Clear it must be that Byron utterly rejected the imposture regarding the inspiration of the Scriptures and the divinity of Christ. "He did not deny—he did not believe." In these words, Maurois would appear to present Byron as an Agnostic.

The death of Matthews drew from him these words: "Peace be with the dead! Regret cannot wake them. With a sigh to the departed, let us resume the dull business of life, in the certainty that we also shall have our repose." Then followed, with some friends, this toast: "We will drink to his memory, which—though it cannot reach the dead—will soothe the survivors; and to them only death can be an evil." Finally, there is the explicit sentence in the letter written on the death of his mother: "I have no hopes or fears beyond the grave."

Extraneous, it may be, to the purport of this article; but I would like to conclude with the Byronic inscription on the monument over his dog, thus:—

"Near this spot  
Are deposited the remains of one  
Who possessed Beauty without Vanity,  
Strength without Insolence,  
Courage without Ferocity.  
And all the Virtues of Man without his Vices.  
This praise which would be unmeaning Flattery,  
If inscribed over human ashes,  
Is but a just tribute to the Memory of Boatswain, a Dog  
Who was born at Newfoundland, May, 1803,  
And died at Newstead Abbey, November 18, 1808.

FRANK HILL.  
Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

## Acid Drops

Two important theological revelations have been made during the election which in the general excitement may have escaped notice. We therefore put them on record as valuable contributions to our understanding of religion. Dealing with an interrupter at one of his meetings, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald cried, "For God's sake let us speak God's English"; and Mr. Baldwin, in his speech at Leeds said to "fail democracy would be blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." Now we know two things about two members of the Trinity. God speaks English, and the Holy Ghost is a democrat. There only remains to know the political opinions of Jesus Christ, although we have the opinion of many of the Labour leaders that he is a Socialist. Anyway we have something to go on with.

We once called attention to a text hung in a hospital ward, "Thank God from whom all blessings flow." In its non-religious form this sentiment appears in a recent election speech by Sir Austen Chamberlain. He has discovered that the reservation of the British Government that bombing from the air must be retained by Britain for police purposes on the frontiers of outlying parts, was really due to kind-heartedness. He explained that it is a most merciful form of warfare against tribes that have broken the peace. "It does not destroy more of them; it saves a great many of the lives of our soldiers." That reflection should do something to reconcile those who are bombed to what is being done. They might even die murmuring their gratification that those who bomb are not running any risks. The report of this really religious speech appears in the *News-Chronicle* for November 6.

The Bishop of Carlisle said in a sermon, the other day, that "not only in the history of theology, but in the logic of the argument, belief in immortality seems to be bound up inextricably with belief in God." This profoundly original and arresting remark is one with which we certainly agree. If there is a God, why should there not be immortality? The difficulty is in the question of the existence of any Deity. And so far, that certainly has *not* been proved. But we agree; if a man believes in God, he should be able to believe in anything.

Must we believe Dr. James Reid's story about "a well-known psychologist who does not believe in religion," but nevertheless tells his patients, "You are suffering from the lack of faith in God. If you believe in God, you will get well?" Of course there are doctors who advise all their patients to give up whisky if they drink it, and to drink some if that is not their habit. Also, unfortunately "psychology" is not yet an exact science. One meets some queer fish calling themselves "psychologists"—it is as common in America as a Colonel or a Professor. And if this "well-known" gentleman unnamed "does not himself believe in religion," it looks as if at least he thinks it is only fit for sick people—like a dose of castor-oil.

A new Title for Christ. There are many examples of Christ as a Man of War, and of His Father as Lord of Hosts (see *Arms and the Clergy*). Rumours that Christ was hoped to be the "Prince of Peace" are not unheard of. But now, to be quite fashionable, and to complete the circle of "all things to all men," a speaker at St. Margaret's, Barking, took the bull by the horns and boldly declared that Christ was a "Sanctionist"! The vicar was present, but apparently did not dissent while Colonel Loftus said rightly that "Christ never called Himself the Prince of Peace," and that "the word 'peace' was mentioned only eight times in the Gospels," and that "he could find no utterance of Christ denouncing war." All of which must be very consoling to the Christian pacifists.

According to the "National Council of Lunacy Reform," there is a tremendous need—for Doctors? No, "for the appointment of whole-time chaplains for mental hospitals." It is said that all the Archbishops and Bishops "have given sympathetic consideration to the subject." Doubtless there are many chaplains and ministers of all denominations whose right place is thus indicated: "wholetime" is the "*not juste*." They might bid farewell to their present congregations in the time-honoured words: "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, ye may be also." But we fail to see how the presence of more parsons, in any capacity, fits in with lunacy "Reform."

Dr. Mozley's recent sermon in St. Paul's, on "Ideals," at least is honest enough to admit that it does not consider humanity the aim and object of his ideal. His gospel is the common Christian "otherworldism":—

The best hopes that man can have with regard to his future will depend upon his putting God and not man at the centre of that future.

So long as the hopes of man look elsewhere than to man as the help and "saviour," the world will remain what ages of superstition have made of it.

A church writer on saints is very careful to explain what he means. That is, a saint, no matter how filthy he is, how unwashed or how beastly in every way, remains a saint so long as he upholds the Church, no matter how stupid or credulous the tenet of that Church may be. "It is," says the writer, "hardly possible for a Christian to regard as saints the good men who have striven to lead religious thought away from the truth of the Gospel, or have by their earnest and devoted efforts riven Christendom into a thousand sects." Of course. So long as a man believes what he is told, does as he is told, and never ventures an opinion on a single point of doctrine believed in by the Church, he goes a long way towards the saintly ideal of that Church. But the least expression of opinion, the slightest objection to any farcical dogma and, thank goodness, saintship vanishes in a halo of smoke. In that way were great men—and not saints—made. And a great man is something infinitely bigger than a saint.

Bishop Chandler tells us that:—

The enemy to-day is not Church Association persecution, nor Privy Council theology, which are now out of date. What we are opposed by to-day is hostility to religion, as such; an anti-God campaign, which in addition to its open attacks of blasphemy and ridicule, has indirect and insidious repercussions, producing an atmosphere of doubt, hesitation, and misgiving in many people who have been brought up in the Christian religion.

The good bishop's remedy for such a horrid state of affairs is "deepening our own hold to God by prayer and Sacrament and personal devotion"—which we seem to have heard about before. At all events, it has often been tried yet somehow fails to ward off the "atheistic materialism," the bishop so much dislikes. Surely one of his friends could devise a more drastic remedy? Otherwise, the "enemy," we can assure the bishop, will not merely hold the ground won, but also proceed on further and bigger conquests.

On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham is "confident in the knowledge that England, in God's own good time will be brought back to the Faith." Possibly God has told him so—or possibly not. But how much such pious hopes must strengthen the faith of those that listen. These people probably see that religion is getting less and less in the country, but they hope they are wrong. And the grand inspirational speeches from their own holy archbishops must strengthen their hopes—unless they read other bishops.

For example, Bishop Myers is by no means so optimistic. He points out that while many people are baptized, large numbers are not; and that "there are also a large number of Catholics who have lapsed and no longer practise their Faith. Somehow they have fallen out of Catholic life and interests." We like that word "somehow." What it really means is that the "lapsed" Catholics have found out that their divine religion is built upon fraud, credulity and superstition. And it will take a great deal more than pious hopes to bring them back to the fold. And unless that is done, what chance is there for England to be converted?

It is astonishing the extent to which Christian evangelism runs to blackguardism! We leave it for Christian apologists to say whether the blackguardism is a product of the evangel, or the evangel appeals so strongly to blackguards. But the connexion is very common. Here, for example, is the latest sample. It reaches us from a Belfast lady, and deals with an evangelist named Knox, who has been lecturing in the district. He is reported as saying:—

The man who does not believe the Bible should not be allowed to cross the doorsteps of anybody's house, and should be shunned as one would a plague.

We imagined that this kind of language had died, but it evidently survives—in Belfast. Curiously the *Universe*, in its last issue, printed an account of the number of women and children killed and injured in the last religious riots in Belfast. And it looks as though the whole district would be cleaner and healthier if all belief in the Bible died out in the city.

The Rev. H. E. Fosdick says "Let's all be realistic," and he describes the Bible as "the most realistic book in the world." . . . "Its frankness about sex is notorious. . . . No modern war-diary can be much more realistic about the brutalities of battle . . . as for human abnormalities, have you read Paul's catalogue of the pagan vices?" We have to admit there is much obscenity and bloodthirstiness in the Bible. But genuine realism ought to hold the mirror fairly up to Nature. The Bible has done the vilest disservice to mankind, not because it was an obscene book, but because much of its worst pages are either the direct revelation of religious approval of abhorrent acts, or they tell of ghastly crimes passing without rebuke, while the whole wrath of deities and priests concentrate upon perfectly innocent acts. Of course Paul gave a bad character to those who disagreed with his gospel. But when and where did any of God's prophets, or Jesus or any of His apostles offer a word of criticism to almost inconceivable abominations prefaced by the words, "And God said unto Moses." Realism should not involve butcheries of men, women and children being credited to the direct commands of a "God of Righteousness."

The "Divine Order," says the Rev. John Bevan, "has never been put before humanity as a revealed truth, definite and complete." This seems a pity. The Bible is a big book, and whatever the Divine Order may be, it ought to find a place in a very stupidly over-crowded volume. Some of the minor and all the major prophets might well be eliminated as well as the vain repetition of all the people who seemed to spend their-lives "begetting" somebody. But after all this is God's business, not ours or Mr. Bevan's. If God is the author we must take for granted that He or "the Moving Finger" writes just what He or It desires us to know most about. It was good enough for the ages when people believed it.

Quite a flutter is going on in Church circles over a Hymn lately become popular. It is William Blake's fervent "Milton" poem, which for many years the late Rev. Steward Headlam made the watchword of his St. Matthew's (Socialist) Guild. Headlam was an admirable citizen—a very "poor" Christian in both senses. To him, as to many Christians, the word "Jerusalem" had

all the charm of "that blessed word," "Mesopotamia." The Rev. C. W. Townsend, in the *Christian World*, seriously discusses the possibility of Jesus Christ literally fitting Blake's question:—

And did those feet in ancient times  
Walk upon England's mountains green?

As the poem is called "Milton," it probably refers to Milton, if to anyone at all. But Mr. Townsend recalls a ridiculous yarn or

legend which affirms that Joseph of Arimathea, a rich merchant who traded with the inhabitants of England, was a friend of the family of which Jesus was the eldest child, and that once, when Jesus was only a boy, Joseph of Arimathea brought him from Palestine on a voyage to this country.

As to the "Jerusalem" part of the poem, Blake himself tells us that "Jerusalem is called Liberty," and we may let it go at that.

Dr. Scott Lidgett, in the *Christian World*, begins telling the Story of His Life. He is a remarkable man, undoubtedly, is the evident opinion of the author of his autobiography. But he is less original than he thinks. The "crisis" in his life came when he was sixteen. It took the shape of his choosing the profession of a paid apostle. Later another crisis came in the form of "a sudden intimation" from an unnamed mysterious source, saying unto him: "You have got to re-state the Doctrine of the Atonement." We can only say that the Doctrine of the Atonement is re-stated, and re-stated differently, every time any Christian teacher teaches it. However the "intimation" got Mr. Lidgett into what the films call "the big money." "It pays to advertise," even if it is only to advertise "an intimation" of so trifling a character.

Here is another minister of Christ who asks us to believe that "Hell Fire" is only a "symbol," and in order to temper the fire to the shorn fundamentalist, Dr. Ryder Smith says this "symbol" stands for "a spiritual state that is worse than physical pain." He seems to find some consolation in his idea that "God is not merely affable," and that it isn't everybody who will be saved from a hell of which hell-fire is a symbol! God is Love, of course, says Dr. Smith, but then there is also another side to His character—"there is a judgment"—and with old-fashioned candour he objects to people saying they "enjoyed" a religious service. He quite fitly denies the applicability of such a word to such a "meeting with God."

A Streatham minister, the Rev. Charter Piggott, preached a long and windy sermon recently on "The Silences of Love." There was very little about Love, and a great deal about the Silent God. Not only does he refer to the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross, when God was silent while His Son reproached His Father in the poignant words, "My God, my God," etc., but Mr. Piggott recalls Mr. Piggott's own similar case. He was not exactly being crucified, of course, but—almost worse—Mr. Piggott was beginning to doubt! And God forsook him too! It seems to be a habit with God. Mr. Piggott says, "I have wondered why God left me to grope in the darkness." Probably God thought Mr. Piggott was "groping" for fun, and didn't like to disturb him. Anyway, Mr. Piggott found his own way out, and is now minister of quite a large church.

## GREATNESS

Those who have read history with discrimination know the fallacy of those panegyrics and invectives which represent individuals as effecting great moral and intellectual revolutions, subverting established systems and imprinting a new character on their age. The difference between one man and another is by no means as great as the superstitious crowd suppose.—*Macaulay*.

# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE,

EDITORIAL

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. T. BRIGHTON.—Thanks for the trouble you have taken in the matter.

T. MASTERS.—Persecution and prosecution for difference in religious belief was unknown to the Roman law. The fact that when the Christian Church undertook systematic prosecution for heresy, it found no legal machinery in existence for the execution of its purpose, forced it to create such, and ultimately to establish the Inquisition. Atheism is not a crime, and never was at English law. It has always been unfashionable because it is direct and admits of no compromise. Perhaps also because it involves—when properly held—close, careful, and consistent thinking.

H. PAYNE.—Will deal with the matter next week. Thanks.

H. HOLMES.—Pleased to have your high opinion of this paper. We have a most enthusiastic band of readers, and we hope that many of them will convert themselves into an advertising brigade, so that it may be brought before a larger number of people.

M. BAKER.—We plead guilty. Either "print," or "repeat" would have been the right word. But while, we feel justified in chiding others for looseness or inaccuracy of speech, we should be greatly surprised if critical readers did not find examples of the same kind of thing in our own contributions. We can only hope that our mistakes are not serious ones.

MRS. E. LECHMERE.—Thanks for addresses for likely new subscribers, paper being sent for four weeks.

FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—C. G., 28.; W. James, 5s.; Don Fisher 3s.

R. J. BARR.—The power of Ministers of the Crown to make regulations that have all the force of law is one of the deadliest attacks now being made on individual liberty. We are not in this country setting up a dictator, we have set up scores of little dictators who, by Act of Parliament, are above the Courts, and often nullify what has been one of our safeguards. We are not surprised that Justice Macnaughton commented on this matter. Other judges, including the Lord Chief Justice, have done the same, and have warned the public as to its dangers.

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

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

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

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

The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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## Sugar Plums

To-day (November 17) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Stratford Town Hall, at 7.0, on "The Savageries of Civilization." Trams and Buses pass the door. The hall is situated in Stratford Broadway. Admission is free.

Our business manager asks us to express his regret that he is unable to send copies of *Givers of Life* and *The Dance of Life*, to all who have ordered them from the list or remainders, advertised on the back page. They are sold out. We should strongly advise those who would like copies of these remainders to send as soon as possible. Havelock Ellis is one of the men who has greatly influenced the thought of our time, and influenced it for good.

In spite of election meetings going on in Glasgow on Sunday last the McLellan Galleries Hall was quite filled to listen to Mr. Cohen's Address. Mr. Cohen has a confessed weakness for Scottish audiences, and the close attention and quite evident appreciation of the audience was complimentary to both speaker and listeners. The questions too were quite good, and as a result provided material for obviously appreciated answers. Mr. R. White, President of the Glasgow Branch, occupied the chair. Mr. White has just been elected on the Paisley Town Council, and it will be good to have an avowed Freethinker in that position. There was, we believe, a good sale of literature.

Edinburgh is not the easiest of places in which to work up interest in the Freethought movement, but the Edinburgh Branch is energetic and appears to be making good headway. To-day (November 17), Mrs. Whitefield, of Glasgow, will lecture in the Unity House, Hall-side Crescent, at 7.0, on "A Plea for Atheism." We hope that Edinburgh friends will not only go themselves, but will induce some of their friends to go with them. Mrs. Whitefield is a very hard worker for the cause and deserves support.

The *Rationalist Annual* this year is quite up to the usual level, and perhaps a little more controversial than usual—which is all to the good. Sir Arthur Keith writes a good article on Butler and Darwin, and Professor Laski is as interesting as ever in dealing with "The Churches and their Function." Professor J. B. S. Haldane writes "In Defence of Materialism," a good article from its point of view, but Professor Haldane ought really to try and discover what Materialism stands for. To define it as "The belief that all happenings can be explained in terms of material happenings," is almost humorous, but not very enlightening. Mr. Archibald Robertson, who writes on the "Materialist conception of History," does very little better than Prof. Haldane in defining Materialism as "A theory which regards nature as prior to mind, and man as a product of nature governed by natural laws." We should have imagined that any Materialist would have risen above speaking of nature as "governed" by natural laws—that would suit a Theist very well. We should have taken it as a settled thing that from the point of view of both science and philosophy nature would not be regarded as "prior" to anything, but that all that occurs, including mental and material phenomena would be regarded as equally parts of nature. Perhaps Mr. Robertson only means that "physical" phenomena in point of time is ranked as prior to "mental" phenomena. But that is not the same thing. Articles by Messrs. Thurtle, Eden Phillpotts, Dr. Breasted, C. E. M. Joad, Llewelyn Powys, and Sir A. G. Cardew, make up an interesting number.

It is this earth that like a kind mother, receives us at our birth, and sustains us when born; it is this alone, of all the elements around us that is never found an enemy of man.—Pliny.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be speaking at 3 p.m. and again at 7 o'clock to-day (November 17), in the Picture House, Market Street, Manchester, under the auspices of the local N.S.S. Branch. In the afternoon the sub-

ject will be, "The Persecution of the Jews," and in the evening, "The Basis of Freethought." Mr. Whitehead is well known to Manchester audiences, and that should ensure a full house on each occasion. Those who come from a distance, and others, will find teas provided at the café adjacent to the Picture House.

Readers will perhaps remember, that, earlier in the year, following the articles on John M. Robertson, written by Mr. H. Cutner, he was challenged to debate the question of the historicity of Jesus by Mr. H. G. Wood of Birmingham. We are pleased to note that the debate has finally been arranged to take place at the Friends' House in Euston Road (almost opposite Euston Station), on Friday, November 22 at 7.30 p.m. Admission is free, though there are a few reserved seats. Mr. Cutner will open the discussion on the question—"That the Jesus of the Gospels never existed." We hope to hear of a crowded meeting.

M. G. Bedborough will lecture for the Birmingham Branch N.S.S. to-day (November 17), in the Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street, at 7.30 p.m. on "Morality and the Christian Model." Mr. Bedborough has a pleasing style of his own, and those who heard him before in Birmingham are sure to make an effort to be present, and no doubt bring some orthodox friends with them.

Despite the modern apathy to intellectual matters, the North London Branch have conducted a vigorous and cheering open-air season, having held 105 meetings and having increased their membership. The courage and coolheadedness of their chairman and speakers have enabled the Branch to continue its work in spite of some police interference. The members of the Branch would like to extend their thanks to the speakers and chairman, and to non-members who have loyally supported these meetings, and who, the Branch hopes, will attach themselves as members next season. The North London Branch will, as usual, continue its open-air meetings at the White Stone Pond, Hampstead, during the Winter months.

The West London Branch N.S.S. is rapidly increasing in strength and usefulness. Each Sunday evening its lecture hall in the "Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, is well filled by a keen audience. There should be no exception to-day (November 17) when Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak on "Jesus, Fascism and Freethought," at 7.30. The address of the local Secretary, Mr. C. Tuson, is now 13 Portland Road, Holland Park, London, W.11.

## Masterpieces of Freethought

THE ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

By

DR. GEORGE DRYSDALE

II.

WHEN Drysdale wrote his famous work, England was in the grip of a drabness that can hardly be imagined these days. Side by side with monstrous cruelty and injustice was the preaching of a Christianity, the unloveliness of which was even then a by-word. Industrial conditions could hardly have been worse—the word "freedom" as against "slavery" must have been received with mocking laughter by workers all over the country. Sanitation seemed almost non-existent. Baths were such a rarity that few houses anywhere had a bath at all. For the rich, clothes were the last word in luxury; but for the poor, the foul rags they wore would now-a-days evoke horror. Cruelty to children and animals was rampant to an extent almost unbelievable were it not a fact that even now the reports of the

two societies dealing with these cases show how little it has been stamped out. The picture given by Henry Mayhew in his famous work, *London Labour and the London Poor*, on Prostitution, would be difficult to believe, were it not supported by unimpeachable evidence.

One should read some of the minor Victorian novelists—like Mrs. Gaskell or Charles Reade—to get an idea of the conditions under which most of the working class in this country had to labour. Naturally diseases and vices of all kinds were rampant, and it must have been difficult for reformers, anxious to improve the lot of the people, to know where to begin. Slums were then in such a state that our own slums are mostly like palaces in comparison. Hospitals were filthy and nurses like Mrs. Gamp were the rule.

As a young doctor, George Drysdale soon came up against not merely the problems of poverty, but those of disease, and, in particular, with those specially connected with sex. From the moment he realized the part ill-health played in our lives, and the way in which sex influenced it, he determined to devote the rest of his life to promoting happiness in this world and in this world alone. He had no use for "spiritualism," as he called the well-meant efforts of pious people to save our souls. Here and now your happiness, he cried, depends upon your well-being—upon your bodily health. Take all care of your body. Do everything in your power to ward off disease. Reverence only the laws of health which you ought to study as a duty to yourself. "Beauty of form," he categorically declared, "and physical strength and activity, as well as health, should be sought after, and valued no less than beauty and power of mind. . . . Ugliness and bodily imperfection or deformity are always marks of sin, and show us some error has been committed, or that we have not duly sought after bodily excellence. Physical beauty, whose expression forms the glorious ideal of the painter and sculptor is as high an aim as any other that could be proposed." Nothing that Sandow or Bernarr Macfadden, writing half a century later, on the necessity of Physical Culture, was more trenchant than the few pages Drysdale devoted to what he called "Physical Religion"; and he recognized—as perhaps they did not, or perhaps because the attitude of the Churches had changed—that against his plea for physical perfection was raised the voice of the hymn-singing parson whose only ideal was that we should save our souls. Against this doctrine Drysdale put forth all his eloquence—"As physical religion teaches to reverence the body as highly as the spirit, so does it teach us also to view with equal reverence all the different parts and organs of the body itself." And he put in one of the earliest pleas I recall for viewing all our organs without shame or disgust. He refused to look upon the satisfying of our sexual nature as sin. He insisted that we should study this part of our lives as reverentially as we do anything else so that it also should contribute its part to our happiness. And he declined to be bound down through "shame" or "immodesty" in saying openly what he thought about the subject.

Drysdale put in a strong plea for equality between the sexes as far as their different natures permitted, and in particular advocated woman taking up medicine as a career. In this he stood almost alone in his day. He said:—

It is not the "rights" of woman that are concerned, but her duties. On her as well as on man, the study of her physical past and its laws, is enjoined by nature, as a religion and a duty, second to none in its claims. . . . Ignorance of the physical

laws is in woman no less culpable than in man; and nature has no excuse for the softer sex for any breach of them. . . . She must learn to shrink from nothing and from no human being.

I think few Suffragettes knew the *Elements of Social Science*; had they known the book they would have been able to quote some striking pleas for equality, put with a courage and conviction almost unknown in those days. And the point to remember is that although there had been earlier advocates of feminism, none had written a more defiant work. In the chapter entitled "Life and Death" will be found also other pleas—such as "no human being, man, woman, or child, should die, without being dissected in their every nerve and fibre, as carefully, and minutely, as reverentially, as love and science can suggest. To squander such glorious subjects for our contemplation, on the grave, is the gravest and most wanton waste that is now committed by man." It required courage again to write like that especially, as Drysdale points out, when he well remembered "the sickening degradation I had when living in hospital, where our examinations of dead bodies, far from being sympathized in by the heartfelt interest of the patients and their friends, were viewed with loathing and horror; ourselves regarded at times as butchers, and every attempt made to baffle our laudable endeavours." How many of us, even at this day, agree with Drysdale on this question?

There is a chapter in the book on "The Health of Towns," and a splendid one it is, for no one knew better than the author what vice and misery and disease lurk in foul slumland, in filthy narrow streets, and under insanitary conditions. And here again one gets his fine, healthy, secularistic outlook on life:—

Instead of the working classes being exhorted and induced by every temptation of cheap and numerous railway trains, public gardens and promenades, with musical bands and various social amusements (for it requires no slight inducements to prevail on a pale and sickly frame to make any effort for its own regeneration) to spend their whole day in the open country air; they are pressed into the church service, amusements are forbidden, and even to go out to breathe the fresh air is, in many parts, especially in Scotland, scarcely thought proper. In the latter country, especially, all thoughts of the mind, all acts of the body, lie under a restraint more galling to many than even the week-day confinement.

The working man does, in these days, get out a little more on Sundays than eighty years ago; but there is still the exhortation to come to church—come even if you come on your bicycles, or in shorts; only come! Fortunately, people are beginning to see—it has taken a long time—that for Sunday to be a real day of rest means, not a stuffy church and dull boring nonsense about getting "saved," but a walk in the country or an excursion to the seaside; or some similar change from the week's work. At all events, our national Sunday came in for Drysdale's drastic condemnation—though we are still far from reaching his secularistic ideal.

And he was just as scathing in his condemnation of what he termed "spiritualism"—spiritual religion, the concern for the soul and God, the fear of hell and eternal punishment, which he considered frightened most people and prevented them from enjoying life here and now. "It is not," he cried, "by spiritual but by physical reformation that mankind can at present be chiefly benefited. . . . It is physical and not spiritual religion of which we are at present most urgently in need." To talk like this in the 50's of last

century was a staggering blow to our religious moralists; it was, indeed, as I shall show later, a staggering blow even to many Freethinkers; but it was necessary to say something, nay, to shout the truth from the housetops, to awaken people from the apathy and despair which surround them. And that is what the *Elements* did.

H. CUTNER.

(To be continued)

## Union with God

THIRTY years since it was popularly supposed among pietists that if you called a man an Atheist who wasn't one you slandered him. In his sketch of Philip Snowden, Mr. A. G. Gardiner says that during the memorable election campaign in Blackburn some one chalked up there: "Snowden is an Atheist." Mr. Gardiner records that Snowden "merely ignored the slander and passed on." Times change. But God doesn't. Nor do Christian presumption and arrogance. Professor W. R. Forrester of St. Andrews, in the course of a sermon to the New Education Fellowship prates about "Our Christian culture and civilization"—which in these latter days is communally exhibited in the invention of new instruments of destruction, and individually in the handling of revolvers and half-bricks as in such centres of "Christian culture and civilization" as Edinburgh and Belfast.

The Professor takes the same line as the Archbishop of York in trying to identify Secularism with Fascism or Communism. It is a cute move. Take the things that are most detested by and most revolting to the genius of the British people and label them "Secularism!" There are slanders and slanders. The Professor is an incompetent exponent of history when he speaks of Islam as if it were a devouring fiery dragon swallowing up the "Christian civilizations of North Africa and Asia Minor," and penetrating to Europe itself. Why does he ignore the superior culture which the followers of Islam brought with them? And are North Africa and Asia Minor to-day proofs of Christian culture and civilization? The disturbed Professor oracularly delivers himself thus: "I question very much if democracy will survive outside Christendom, for the democracies that have no spiritual basis or conviction in them have all collapsed or are collapsing like packs of cards." As we have as yet had no experience of a democracy without a spiritual basis or conviction, what is the Professor drivelling about? These banal generalizations help nobody and lead us nowhere! He was supposed to be speaking to Educationalists; and he had to acknowledge that there is such a thing as Secular Education as distinguished from religion altogether. A person doesn't need to be united to God to acquire distinction in History, Languages or Mathematics.

Does Dr. Forrester want the reimposition of religious tests at the Universities? It looks very like it. He is shocked that there should be so many who refuse to concede "the claims of our Christian Faith." But so is every enthusiast who cannot get other people to buy his nostrums. Christianity has had every chance. It has had State protection in many lands, and it has turned out an utter failure. Can Professor Forrester or the Archbishop of York face up to facts?

Recently Mr. Baldwin expressed a desire that the Air Force should be "Christianized." He said nothing about the blinking Army or Navy. Perhaps his wish had a special significance. In its flights the Air

Force may strike Heaven! Who knows? Union with God in some shape or form anyway is advertised as the present vital thing for man. The Bishop of Carlisle is very emphatic on this—quite as emphatic indeed as the Bishops of Islam, who say that union with Allah is the only means of man's salvation. And the Rabbis have still another supernatural means of saving man. The last is abhorrent to most believing Britishers because the Jews do not accept the New Testament. For the Jews the Messiah has not yet appeared. Jesus is nothing special to them. But Jesus is the stone of the corner of British Christianity. Take him away or prove his lack of divinity and Christianity collapses. In the minds of many Christians there is undoubtedly a real difficulty about the identification of Jehovah with the Father of Jesus. And when union with God is so strongly urged one would like to be satisfied and sure about the God with whom union is proposed. In former days Jehovah, according to Christian sermons and Christian songs, was looked upon as the Father of Jesus. But with the deepening of humanitarian feeling everywhere, Jehovah has been pushed into the background and many believers do not consider him a suitable father for the Prince of Peace. The claim of the hitherto innominate Holy Ghost to the position seems to be more strongly founded according to the Scriptural Record. But then we have the Heavenly Trinity clearly described as "Father, Son and Holy Ghost." If this description of the Trinity is accepted as correct the Holy Ghost may be regarded as Jesus' uncle. And if Jehovah is not Jesus' father who is? All this uncertainty leads to an unfortunate indefiniteness as to who the Christian God—the Creator and Ruler of the Universe—really is. And from the point of view of the faithful it is important that there should not be dubiety about the character and personality of the Supreme Being. It would be informing to see a plebiscite taken among all Christian believers on the question whether or not they accept Jehovah as God and the Father of Jesus Christ.

Modern Christians do not rhapsodize so much as their predecessors did about "Beautiful, Beautiful Zion!" The terminology of the Faith is undergoing changes as well as its doctrines. At the same time the majority of Christian believers regard themselves as the true "Israel of God"—in a spiritual sense—which is responsible for a great deal of nonsense. The minds of so many semi-literate people get cluttered up with a mixed hash of second-hand ideas and borrowed opinions on supernatural topics that they are unable to give any intelligible account of what they believe—far less of what they think. It is to the clerical interest that things should not be cleared up, straightened out and simplified. It is astonishing what a mass of casuistry is employed to induce human beings to believe that Christianity is the only true and beneficent faith. One wonders how the current ideas on religion will be regarded by mankind a thousand years after this! Surely by that time human beings will have realized how human advancement was impeded and frustrated by the black army, and the melancholic and desolating views that it imposed! Surely by that time dog-collars will be used only for canine pets! Surely by that time there will be real appreciation of the value of knowledge and wisdom and freedom and justice! Meanwhile those fundamental benefits must be sacrificed to the interests of clericalism and its Gods; and man must continue to endure mental impoverishment.

Must he? Well, the remedy lies in his own hands. Instead of sacrificing his substance for the comfort of the supernatural medicine-men and witch-doctors,

he can, if he so selects, use it to abolish poverty everywhere, to extend knowledge, to establish freedom and to vindicate justice. For example, among all the bequests to Churches, it is very refreshing to read in the Press such a paragraph as this: "The estate of the late Mr. John Duncan, retired Inspector of the Department of Health for Scotland amounted to £8,662. Mr. Duncan left all he possessed to the Radiological Department of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary."

But the majority of the minds of the members of Christian Churches are either (1) rudimentary and undeveloped (2) vacant or (3) diseased. So a clergyman never meets any one of his congregation who expresses difference with him on any fundamental religious doctrine. Hence the one-eyed clerics are lulled into a sense of false security. The developed, informed and healthy minds forsake the Church; and a few give themselves to the cause of Freethought. The others remain "united to God." God (whatever he is) must feel flattered!

The modern Christian appears to be guilty of more than base ingratitude towards the Jews. He got all he knows about religion and the supernatural from them. He erected his present faith upon the teachings drawn from Judaistic sources. His alleged Messiah and Saviour was a Jew though the Jews refused to recognize his supernatural claims. And now the modern Christian has the cheek to arrogate to himself the knowledge of *the only true faith*; and more than that to subsidize missions to convert Jews generally to his way of belief! "They are a bonny lot these Gentile Christians—'bonny fechtlers' anyway! In the main the Jews in their propaganda have always used methods of peaceful penetration; but the closer the Gentiles have got united with God the more have they exhibited fire-eating bullying and bellicose qualities. There was some legislative sense in the *Mosaic* dispensation; but in social and international relationships Gentile Christians have thrown wisdom to the winds. The new dispensation dispenses with humanistic and natural feelings.

In the individual aspect, the first consideration with the Christian, notwithstanding all disclaimers and arguments to the contrary, is the saving of his own skin and his own eternal well-being and happiness. If for him union with God does not mean that, it means nothing. A normally instructed human being does not require rewards or penalties to induce him to behave and live and speak and act with becoming decency. But if he is a Christian believer he does! And away at the back of his mind is the deep-seated consciousness of his God as the ultimate user of force and violence. Terrorism and frightfulness are God's policies in the final resort. It is therefore not surprising that the Christian disciple follows in his Lord's footsteps in this respect as in others.

Submissive belief in any supernatural being is debilitating and degrading. Man shows contempt for and debases his own faculties by making them the instruments of clericalism. Union with God has meant disunion and endless dissensions. Human beings want union among themselves for protection against all possible evils; for Peace and Happiness.

IGNORUS.

A man that is desirous to excel should endeavour it in those things that are in themselves most excellent.

*Epictetus.*

There are bad examples which are worse than crimes; and more states have perished from the violation of morality than from the violation of law.—*Montesquieu.*

## An Ultra-Modernist

Most Freethinkers hold the view that the preponderance of professing Christians, even among educated people, is due to the implanting of Christian beliefs in the minds of children who are too young to discriminate between the true and the false.

Support for this opinion may be found in the fact that many men of intelligence cling to their belief in an undefined Christianity even when confronted with evidence which would almost certainly cause them to alter their opinion, if anything other than religion were at stake. A glance at the remarkably rapid progress of the Labour Party in Great Britain should be sufficient to show how great is the number of people who are prepared to renounce the faith of their fathers on a secular subject. Fifty years ago there were probably not more than 100,000 Socialists in Britain. To-day there are about seven million supporters of the Labour Party—most of them subscribers to some sort of Socialist creed. It should be borne in mind, of course, that the elements of the Labour Party are almost as diverse as those of the Christian Church itself.

If a set of political beliefs were taught in childhood with as much assiduity as is shown by religious instructors in making infants God-minded, it is safe to say that the constitution of political parties, and the schools of thought they represent, would be almost static.

The reluctance to discard religious beliefs may perhaps most profitably be studied in the case of the modernists. It is certain that many of the sermons preached to-day by such men as Dr. Barnes and Dr. Matthews would have earned those eminent Christians the stake in a more truly Christian age. Their nebulous "faith" makes few demands on the credulity of their followers. Almost the sole necessity is a belief in the beauty of Jesus' character.

It is often said—by Four Square gospellers and other fundamentalists—that this latitudinarian preaching is the cause of present-day indifference to religion. A return to the word of God, they assert, would soon fill those empty pews.

The answer is that modernism is mainly an effect, and in no way a cause, of apathy towards the Church. When a great body of people ceased to believe in hell, largely as a result of the educative work done by Freethinkers in the last century, their chief motive for church-going—insurance against fire in the next world, as somebody wittily said—had gone. Consequently, most preachers realized that insistence upon this point of dogma merely antagonized their congregations, and made themselves appear ridiculous. "Comfortable" creeds are the result.

Increased facilities for recreation on Sundays is another factor to which, wrongly, many clerics ascribe indifference to religion. In this case, again, the effect is mistaken for the cause. Those who fear the Lord do not desecrate the Sabbath. The extent to which people avail themselves of new means for obtaining out-door entertainment on Sundays is conditioned by the apathy towards religion which already exists on their part.

The question of what constitutes the minimum amount of belief for a Christian is a common subject of speculation among Freethinkers. It seems to be the generally accepted view that no one can claim to be a Christian who is without, at least, the modernists' conviction that a very good man named Jesus once lived, and preached the doctrine of brotherliness.

It will therefore surprise Atheists to know that one can subscribe to the myth theory and yet be a true Christian. The authority for this statement is a young Quaker (presumably not a disciple of Mr. H. G. Wood) who informed the writer recently that true Christianity, which was in his opinion kindness, existed long before Jesus is said to have been born, and that to be a Christian all one need do is to make an effort to be kind, like the traditional Jesus.

The discussion which followed showed that this ultra-modernist, like most "progressive" Christians, had only the vaguest idea of what the teachings attributed to Christ consisted. He was shocked at the suggestion that Jesus, if he lived, was merely an ignorant Jew, as superstitious as the rest of the members of a race which was backward 2,000 years ago. To him the Saviour was a legendary figure, whom simple people believed to be the author of those humanitarian teachings which, in his opinion, had led to the abolition of slavery, the provision of hospitals, and the emancipation of women.

These impudent claims are commonly made from the pulpit, but when they are voiced by a Cambridge graduate with pretensions to liberal-mindedness, one sees clearly how successful the church's policy of distorting history has been. Here was a man whose mental development precluded his believing in the absurd unethical dogmas of the church, while permitting him to support organized Christianity. This attitude towards the church was directly due to the belief, inculcated since infancy, that every advance in civilization was gained because of Christianity, and that religion had even been, and always would be, the greatest deterrent to wrongdoing.

The attitude of this pseudo-Christian is one which is growing more common every day. He is altogether too clever, too well-educated, too conscious of the distinction between right and wrong to need a religion for himself, but unfortunately very few people are like him. The dogmas are not meant for the intelligent. They are to give comfort to those who need them, provided that they are correctly interpreted by the priest according to the needs of the moment.

For instance, the Archbishop of York's speech advocating sanctions against Italy has his hearty approval. Orthodox Quakers, it is true, will take their stand with Dr. Sheppard, the pacifist, but this attitude appears to have been discarded by Quakers who have had the benefit of a University training.

This modern apologist assured the writer that there was nothing inconsistent in his position, which was that of many of his friends. Freethinkers, at any rate, will share his hope that the strength of the ultra-modernist party will rapidly increase. It will be another welcome factor in the disintegration of the Church, and, let us hope, another step towards Freethought. It is a long way from orthodoxy to ultra-modernism—the second is Freethought in the wide sense of the term.

The adoption of the myth theory by "Christians" should have another heartening effect on Freethinkers. It may induce those rationalists who cannot imagine a religion without a founder to consider whether Jesus, after all, may not be a myth. If up-to-date Quakers have concluded that the Nazarene is a non-essential of Christianity, it may well be that the Agnostic brethren will have their respect for the myth theory greatly increased.

Freethinkers would rejoice at the establishment of a powerful sect of Christians whose members were all committed to acceptance of the myth theory. Alas, it is only a dream. Professional theologians are too shrewd not to realize that, when Jesus becomes a myth, the Church is doomed.

Whatever may be the future of the ultra-modernist sect, it is fairly safe to predict that its influence will be less pernicious than that of orthodoxy. If there is any foundation for the optimism of their Quaker spokesmen, there seems reason to hope for accessions to Freethought strength in the fairly near future.

W. R. TOMLINSON.

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I have hope that society may be reformed, when I see how much education may be reformed.—*Leibnitz*.

The best education in the world is that got by struggling to get a living—*Wendell Phillips*.

## Correspondence

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

SIR,—Mr. G. S. Smelters will find many supporters when he says in reference to the understanding of what he calls the Christian magical term "God" "that even Freethinkers are not quite clear on this point." One wonders if Mr. Smelters himself is clear. He says in his letter contained in your issue of November 10, that "if the Christian God is, in principle the sole one, then automatically the series: The Christian God Yahweh—God—are identical!" I would point out that an aspiring philologist ought at least to avoid attempting to arrive at a conclusion based on a grammatical error. In the above question the word "series" clearly refers to the collection of words immediately following, and a single series ought not to have a plural verb as though there were several such series. If Mr. Smelters means that the individual items in the series which he cites are identical, then the only series we are left with is a series of names for the same identical things, or rather for the same entity. If Mr. Smelters is prepared to admit that when Christians or the devotees of any other religion use a word such as "God," they are in fact referring to something which exists, and giving it that name, is he prepared to admit that that something which at least some of us who are called Christians, refer to as God is the same something which he even as a Freethinker is unable to define? Call that something what you will; e.g., "The Mysterious Tremendum" of Otto, "the Wholly and Completely Other" of Karl Barth, or the "unknown" of the pure Rationalist? It is obvious one cannot define the unknown, but it should be equally clear that the attempts to define reality are logically distinct from the reality itself, and while there are, and have been divers conceptions, definitions, and philosophies professing to give a clear picture of reality; reality itself has so far eluded such perfect definition. What term would Mr. Smelters have us use to express "the unknown"? Perhaps he is content with the phrase "the unknown"? I would point out that philosophers, religious folk and scientists have not been, nor are they likely to be content with the statement "the unknown is just the unknown," and to leave it at that, I notice "Mimmermus," in his article "A Critic on the Hearth," says Freethought "is actuated by the pure love of truth." Very well, so far so good. For me God is Truth, God is Light, but having said that I must still ask Pilate's question, What is Truth? I care not much whether you use capital letters or not. To say God is Truth is not to define, but in the last resort it looks very much as though whatever our label, truth will have to be faced by all, and we are controlled by reality however we define it; or attempt to do it remains the same for all of us.

(Rev.) W. R. WITCOMB.

SIR,—There is much to be said for Mr. Smelters point of view. He is particularly wise in urging that we should never allow Christian opponents to forget that "The Lord, thy God, is a jealous God," and that although there were hosts of gods to choose from, "Thou shalt have (or prefer) no other gods before Me." God is only one of the gods. He no more deserves a capital letter than does one of many nuisances.

The categorical "either it is a common noun or a proper noun" does not however cover the ground. We must not forget that "God" is the proper name of the god which Christians worship. I dare say if I lived amongst people who worshipped a monkey, I should call it Monkey when I wrote about it as a "god." As the Muslims say, "There is no god but God," meaning, I suppose, We've got the best of the bunch!

Mr. Smelters will do much good by his method of attack—more power to his elbow. I am beginning to think it time we persistently described as INFIDELS those pietists who reject the proved truths of modern science in the interest of discredited superstitions.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

## POLITICS AND RELIGION

SIR,—One knows that the Paper does not concern itself directly with politics, but with reference to your remarks concerning Mr. Herbert Morrison, will anyone deny that the decline in influence of the Labour Party does actually coincide with the trend towards religion of that Party in the last few years? Is there an avowed Freethinker amongst the candidates for the coming election? And if not, are all these candidates Christians?

But, whatever the cause, the Labour Party has lost caste, and influence in this country, and the coincidence I mention is there.

W. L. ENGLISH.

## 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, A Lecture. Highbury Corner, 7.30, A Lecture.

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, Father Vincent McNabb, O.P.—"Is the Bible Worth Reading?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John Katz, B.A.—"The Intelligence of To-day."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, November 18, Mr. P. Goldman—"The Institution of Marriage."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Stratford Town Hall): 7.0, Chapman Cohen—"The Savageries of Civilization."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti—"Jesus, Fascism and Freethought."

### COUNTRY

#### INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Wirral Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, J. V. Shortt (President Liverpool Branch N.S.S.)—"Determinism."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street): 7.30, Mr. G. Bedborough—"Morality and the Christian Model."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Tavern Hotel, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.30—A Lecture.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Kenneth Hunt (Read)—"Religion and Modern Youth."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Unity House, Hillside Crescent, Edinburgh): 7.0, Muriel Whitefield—"A Plea for Atheism."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Robert T. White—"Secularism and Politics."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, No. 3 Lantern Lecture by Mr. Joseph McCabe—"The Splendour that was Rome."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, Dr. C. H. Ross Carmichael—"Dialectical Materialism and Freethought."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (11A Renshaw Street, Liverpool): 7.30, November 15, Social and Dance. Tickets, including refreshments 1s.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (The Picture House, Market Street, Manchester): 3.0, Mr. Geo. Whitehead—"The Persecution of the Jews." 7.0, "The Bases of Freethought." Admission free. Reserved Seats, 3d., 6d. and 1s. Teas provided, moderate prices.

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