

THE FREETHINKER

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

Views and Opinions

The Dean of Durham and the "Freethinker"

THE Rev. C. A. Alington, Dean of Durham, and late headmaster of Eton, is annoyed with the *Freethinker* and also with Freethinkers. In the case of a Dean this is very natural, and even proper. But to express this dislike he writes an article in the *Daily Telegraph* which is not quite so proper. It is illogical in some parts, fallacious in others, and it misrepresents the position he is attacking. This, also, might be quite proper to a Dean, but it is certainly not becoming in one who was once headmaster of a public school which won the Battle of Waterloo—at least by popular rumour. For an article such as that under consideration makes one wonder what type of pupil Dr. Alington would turn out—unless the under-masters were made of better and more dependable stuff. One ought always to be careful not to mis-state an opponent's case, even when writing for a paper the editor of which is not likely to permit any drastic criticism of those who write articles on religion for him. Still, it is usually a dangerous policy to misrepresent an opponent's case—except in politics, and there one may count on prejudice helping one out.

It may be that Dr. Alington is a very excellent preacher, but he does not strike me as being a very serious antagonist. He may also be a good writer of Saturday religious articles, for such as require something for Sunday reading that will not interfere with their after-dinner nap. But because I do not consider Dr. Alington as an antagonist that requires taking too seriously, I will content myself with merely explaining certain things, on the charitable assumption that his article should be taken at its face value.

* * *

The Nature of Belief

Dr. Alington seems to be annoyed with something that has appeared in the *Freethinker*, but as he does not say what it is, I take it that his distaste for this

paper is very comprehensive in character. Like the old form of Excommunication he would probably damn the paper piecemeal and then damn it as a whole for fear something had been left out. One general fault of ours is described thus:—

To suggest that anyone should believe in anything which he does not completely understand is regarded as ridiculous by "freethinking" people... (who) forget that all good scientists believe in many things they cannot completely understand.

I think that this will justify my decision, not so much to argue with Dr. Alington as to explain. For here is a very simple matter, and the statement is so grossly wrong that, when given by a headmaster it should certainly receive minus marks. Dr. Alington thinks he can believe a thing without understanding it. I assert as an elementary psychological fact that where a thing is not understood we can have no belief about it, and that our belief can only proceed so far as we have an understanding of it. Not complete knowledge concerning it, be it noted, that is a very different proposition, but an understanding of what we are asked to believe. If Dr. Alington questions this I suggest that he tries believing that a cause of tidal motion is the reaction of a "Plofka" on a "Bliff." He would probably reply that as he does not understand what a "Plofka," and what a "Bliff" is, he cannot believe anything about them. Exactly. If I believe that the behaviour of certain molecules is due to particular atomic motions, I must have an understanding of what is meant by atoms and atomic motion in order to believe anything about them. In every case my belief *must* march with my understanding. It simply cannot go beyond it. What a man believes may be a complete statement of all there is to know, or it may be incomplete; it may cover a complete understanding of all the factors involved, and so pave the way for exact knowledge, or it may leave the exact force of certain conceivable factors undecided, and so fall short of exact and complete knowledge. But for anyone to believe without understanding is simply impossible. The existence of a science which believes without understanding, or where belief goes beyond, understanding is as wonderful as feeding a multitude on a few loaves and fishes and having more food at the end than there was at the beginning.

As I said, this is not a case for argument, but for explanation.

* * *

Religion and Freedom

My next example involves the fault of lack of historical perspective leading to mis-statement. Admitting that there has been the most "iniquitous violence" "in the name of religion," Dr. Alington says that to-day such attempts are not common, and approvingly quotes Voltaire that even 200 years ago "an Englishman goes to heaven by the road he

chooses," and adds that Freethinkers "in their official organ" raise the strongest possible objection to anyone thinking differently from themselves.

This is very bad! In all charity I take it that the Dean reads the *Freethinker* only occasionally, else he would know that not only do we not object to people thinking differently from ourselves, but we have championed the rights of all sorts of Christians to express their opinions freely, and have encouraged them to think for themselves, regarding their agreement with us as quite a secondary matter. I do not recall the passage from Voltaire, but assuming it to be correct, it is strange that Dr. Alington should praise Voltaire for saying something of the England of the early eighteenth century that is demonstrably wrong. The Catholics could not go to heaven by the way they chose—at least, not publicly. Jews and Nonconformists and Freethinkers suffered all sorts of legal and social penalties for their religious differences. It is wrong for Dr. Alington to mislead people in this way. Where Voltaire was right with regard to religion I expect that Dr. Alington would not quote him. It is strange how often the blunders of Freethinkers are taken by Christians as indisputable truths.

But some sense of historical perspective ought to be present with the headmaster of a school that won the Battle of Waterloo. It is true there is far more liberty of thought than existed two hundred years ago (I do not wish either to beg or to confuse the question, or I might say that this is because there is less Christianity than there was two hundred years ago). But it remains broadly true that freedom of thought and publication is to-day obstructed by the Church and by the religious world to almost the extent of existing opportunities. In principle the Church never did more than this. But it is not for the burglar to take credit for there being fewer robberies than there were fifty years ago. Some little credit may be due to the police.

Still explaining. Blasphemy laws existed two hundred years ago. They exist to-day, and Christians refuse to abolish them. Dr. Alington, I gather, would also maintain them. But, he says they aim at no more than preventing "publications calculated to outrage the feelings of decent citizens." The defence is ingenuous but futile. Outside religion the laws against slander, libel, and abusive language are found adequate. Why will they not also cover speeches and publications dealing with religion? Why is a measure of protection required for religion not found necessary in all the other affairs of life? The only possible reason is that the law still regards religion as a "sacred" subject which must be protected by special penalties, and the present reading of the blasphemy law is as much legal persecution as the times will permit. I emphasize "legal" because the boycott—in business, social circles, and politics, still continues.

As for the "decent citizen," that is quite the wrong term. For, actually, in blasphemy prosecutions it is the rough-minded, and often the rough-mannered, the least intellectual, and the most bigoted who are outraged when "blasphemy" is committed. In a twentieth century blasphemy case the judge solemnly warned the jury that in considering whether the language used outraged people's feelings they must not consider intellectual, or educated men, they must just take the ordinary man in the street. But we should like to hear from Dr. Alington why, where there are laws which are enough to satisfy "decent citizens" in every other direction, they will not suffice in the case of religion?

Freethought and Christianity

The other examples from Dr. Alington that call for explanation (I had almost said instruction) are three in number, and these I think exhaust his article. He says:—

It is strange, in the name of Freethought, to object to a Christian thinking prayer is good for him.

It is still stranger to find a Christian Dean, in these days, asserting that if one sees a man governed by a delusion, and misunderstanding the real character of his own mental states, one is not in duty bound to try and bring him to more logical and profitable courses. Or does Dr. Alington mean that if a man has a religion of some sort, no matter what it is, one ought not to try and convince him that he is making a mistake? I suggest that the Dean lays this counsel before the next meeting of the Church Missionary Society. Here is example number two:—

It is a thousand pities that (Freethinkers) should devote their energies, not to discover truth, but to denouncing the views of a large section of their fellow-countrymen.

May I explain to Dr. Alington that when one states a truth he cannot help either directly or by implication denouncing all views that are opposed to that truth. And where is the denunciation of any belief unaccompanied by the enunciation of what is taken to be a new truth? It really cannot be done. Either Dr. Alington's psychology is as weird as his historic sense, or he has just picked up a Christian Evidence lecture of about sixty years ago and turned it into a newspaper article.

Thirdly:—

It is preposterous in the name of freedom of thought to sneer at those who see in God's existence the only real foundation for scientific thinking, or indeed for the existence of Truth at all.

I am not quite sure what it is Dr. Alington has in his mind when he talks of the *Freethinker* sneering at those who believe in God's existence. It sounds much like another ancient weapon of the Christian Evidence Society, but I feel certain that I should not be reproved if I spoke of ghosts in the same way that I speak of the belief in gods. And this leads me to ask Dr. Alington quite seriously, how does he expect, or how does he advise, me to speak of a belief which I regard as wholly false? Does he mean that I must give to what I believe to be false the same respect I give to what I believe to be true? It would be interesting to know what advice a late headmaster of Eton gives to such a question, because it goes to the root of the whole matter. But I am really inclined to sneer, even to laugh out loud at the statement that a belief in God lies at the foundation of science. It is a pity that so very many scientists are quite unconscious of the fact. I do not mean that Dr. Alington does not believe this to be the case, but he must permit me to take it as one of the most foolish things I have read for some time. It is quite worthy of the Bishop of London.

The truth is that Dr. Alington appears to know very little of either the meaning of Freethought, or the attitude of the Freethinker. Certainly he never could have read much of modern Freethought literature. And in the absence of this knowledge it is not surprising to find him repeating some of the oldest, the commonest, and the shallowest criticisms of Freethought. Not to believe in his God is "preposterous," to speak slightly of his religion justifies a blasphemy law, and if a man does not believe in Dr. Alington's God, he should feel thankful he is allowed to do so in language that is not displeasing to the believer. If Christianity is rejected, those who

do so must be content with a humbly whispered dissent. If a man believes in prayer he should not be reproved, however stupid it may be. Folly in literature, or science, or politics may be rebuked. Folly in religion is "sacred." And if one does not observe these rules, the Dean of Durham reproves him with the outraged dignity of a headmaster entering a schoolroom when none of the scholars rise to do him honour.

May I remind Dr. Alington that just over a hundred years ago the editor of the *Durham Chronicle* was prosecuted, in Durham, for writing in a manner calculated "to bring into contempt the Church of England," and of "bringing into public contempt and hatred the clergy," and "particularly the clergy resident in or near the city of Durham." I do not know what view Dr. Alington would have taken of this prosecution had he been then alive, but I do hope he agrees with me that the only way for a body of men to escape contempt is to act so as not to deserve it; and if they would have their opinions escape being sneered at they must at least be opinions that are strong enough to withstand healthy criticism.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Down Among the Dead Men"

"Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul,
When hot for certainties in this our life!"

Meredith.

"Why should we fear death? For where death is,
there are we not; and where we are, there death is not."

Epictetus.

SIR OLIVER LODGE has proved a rare asset to the Spiritualists. A distinguished University man, his very name has given a new impetus to their mischievous cult, just as a titled director inspires confidence in a dubious prospectus. Indeed, the astute dealers in the occult have taken full advantage of the occasion. The name of Sir Oliver has been shouted to the skies as a triumphant proof of the truth of spiritual phenomena. Hence an examination of Sir Oliver's claims is both timely and necessary.

With the exception of the Christian religion, there is probably no other cult whose history is so steeped in fraud as that of modern Spiritualism. The fraud is "gross as a mountain, open, palpable." Even Spiritualists themselves are forced to admit it, and have been driven to argue that the detection of fraudulent mediums is no absolute proof that all manifestations are unsatisfactory and questionable. The cases of detection, ranging from the far-off time of the Davenport brothers, the Fox sisters, down to the days of Madame Blavatsky and Eusapia Palladino, are sufficient to indicate that "Sludge the medium" is far more in evidence in this strange cult than the earnest seekers after truth. Although Spiritualism is primarily concerned with the question of man's immortality, it is full of talk of telepathy; it is sure about the "soul" of man, and full of the chatter of clairvoyance; it is rich in matters religious, and discusses automatic writing. In the last analysis, these Spiritualists base their case for man's immortality on these things, and the critic but follows their lead. Sir Oliver Lodge's books are supposed to be among the most authoritative yet issued. Yet the net result of his years of research is "flat, stale, and unprofitable." The only thing he demonstrates is that "spooks" have contributed nothing whatever to human knowledge.

Sir Oliver Lodge's most valuable book, *Raymond, or Life and Death*, contains some extraordinary features. His son, Raymond, was killed in Flanders in September, 1915, and it is claimed that members of his family have been in communication with the young man since that time. The volume contains a record of these alleged conversations between the living and the dead.

For a trained scientist, Sir Oliver gives very little evidence for so momentous a matter. One point relates to a prophecy of Raymond's death made at a seance a month before he was killed. Another refers to a "sitting" shortly after the young man's death, in which an alleged message from Raymond was conveyed to his mother, containing the words:—

Good God! how father will be able to speak out!
much firmer than he has ever done, because it will
touch our hearts.

Further "conversations" with Raymond give descriptions of life in the alleged next world, such as:—

There are men here, and there are women here. I don't think that they stand to each other quite the same as they did on the earth plane, but they seem to have the same feeling to each other, with a different expression of it. There don't seem to be any children born here. People are sent into the physical body to have children on the earth plane; they don't have them here.

Another piece of information follows:—

People here try to provide everything that is wanted. A chap came over the other day who would have a cigar. "That's finished them," he thought. He means he thought that they would never be able to provide that. But there are laboratories over here, and they manufacture all sorts of things in them. Not like you do, out of solid matter, but out of essences, and ethers, and gases. It's not the same as on the earth plane, but they were able to manufacture what looked like a cigar. He didn't try one himself, because he didn't care to; you know he wouldn't want to. But the other chap jumped at it. But when he began to smoke it, he didn't think so much of it; he had four altogether; and now he doesn't look at one.

That is just a part of Lodge's case for survival after death. There are other matters included, which have no value as evidence, such as exalted visions, and a statement that Raymond had met "Christ." It all sounds very odd in the face of the familiar priestly argument that the surgeon's knife cannot find the "soul." For, in a sense, Spiritualism does try to find the "soul" with the knife, that is, with material means. It wants to get as good evidence of John Smith after death as it had for his existence before dissolution. The supposed "spirit" of the deceased Mr. Smith is required to prove his existence by showing that he remembers Aunt Alma, or Grandma Smith, or by having his photograph taken, or by playing a tambourine.

Now, what is there in Sir Oliver's evidence to convince the world, or even to carry conviction to the minds of plain men and women? The prophecy of his son's death was not even improbable, for he was a soldier, and sharing a soldier's constant risk. And what are we to make of the revelations of the "hereafter," with its laboratories, and its cigars, and its factories? Are we to suppose that all life is indestructible? In that case, we have still to ask where life begins, and wherever the line may be drawn, it is manifest that the jellyfish, the oyster, the bug, and the mosquito, are on the hither side of it, and have "souls." All these, and a thousand other difficulties, encounter us when we try to consider Lodge's flamboyant account of the "beyond."

Whilst "Raymond's" description of a future life seems absurd to us, there is one point well worth noting. Life after death is not painted as being horrific, but as a continuation of life on earth, such as young Shelley's sarcastic description of "hell" as a place "very like London." Apparently, even religious people are getting ashamed of the old theological theory of a monotonous choral-society heaven, and a red-hot-poker hell. Unconsciously, their ideas are slowly, but surely, becoming more and more secularized. Their ideas may be childish, but it is gratifying to find that they are actually more humane. There is an enormous difference between Lodge's farcical views of a future existence and the horrible views of the orthodox Christians. The oldest of the Christian Churches, the Romish Communion, teaches that the majority of the human race is destined to eternal fire. The Salvation Army, whose beneficent work has received royal approbation, has never abated one solitary spark of its fiery damnation for outsiders. Our Spiritualists may be credulous, but they are more kind-hearted than these Christians. There is grim truth in the story of an interruption shouted at a Secular-Education candidate at an election: "That's the bloke who wants to rob us of our bloody religion."

Spiritualists are not the only people who profess, for a consideration, to have dealings with the alleged "supernatural." The dear clergy are as much interested, financially, in "spooks" as their rivals, the mediums. They babble from their pulpits of "gods" who get angry with us; of "devils" who must be guarded against; of "angels" who fly from heaven to earth. Their Holy Bible is a spook-book, and belief in "spirits" is an integral part of the Christian religion. To-day, forty thousand clergymen are engaged in this spook-business, to say nothing of their assistants and satellites. The "spooks" of the clergy are no more real than the "bogeys" of the Spiritualists. The clergymen, however, have been in business much longer than the Spiritualists, and are wiser than the mediums. They realize that if a showman never lifts the curtain, it does not matter a straw whether he has anything or nothing on the other side.

Note that all the so-called oracles are very contradictory with regard to the alleged next world. The poor Indian dreams of his happy hunting-grounds; the Mohammedan pictures his paradise as peopled with houris; the prosaic Christian looks for the golden streets of the New Jerusalem; and Lodge will have it that spirits swagger in a next world, smoking imitation cigars. Indeed, the case for human survival is, in the last analysis, but an appeal to emotionalism. The poet Heine hit the right nail on the head when he suggested smilingly that the idea of immortality may have suggested itself to a lover in the arms of his mistress, or to some worthy citizen sipping his beer on a summer's evening. It is, critically examined, but a desire for personal continuance; to be for ever as we are.

After all is said, death is not so much our prime concern as life. The secular solution is best. All sprang from Nature, and have their day, and all return for sleep. Fear should have no place. As George Meredith so finely asks: "Into the breast that gives the rose shall I with shuddering fall?" Common-sense and superstition are usually at variance, but, at least, we can be frank and honest in these matters.

MIMNERMUS.

Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.—Bacon.

Masterpieces of Freethought

THE ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

By

DR. GEORGE DRYSDALE

III.

It was in the second part of his book that Drysdale dealt more fully with the question which made the *Elements* one of the most discussed works of its time. The problem of sex was one which had been debated throughout the ages. The ancients were pre-occupied with it to a great extent, well known to those students who have made a special study of the phallic worship and the social life of antiquity.

Apart from this, the sexual life in Greece and Rome before the Christian era, and for some centuries afterwards, was open and unashamed. Greek and Roman writers like Lucian, Ovid and Juvenal have left lurid descriptions of what may be called the science of love practised by the people of their day. "Voluptuousness," says Feuillet de Conches, "was, in antique society, both a science and an art—like philosophy and poetry." This well sums up the conditions in those days—conditions which brought down upon the people the wrath of Christian priests and writers, resulting finally in the degradation of the body and the elevation of the soul, and in the dreary, drab Puritanism of Protestants.

Sex, however, was not to be denied, and in spite of the thunders of the Church—which, by the way, was often as lax in morals as any period of Roman or Greek history—people did, when they could, what they liked, and books were published which even in these days of free discussion, would not be allowed to be openly sold.

But, in spite of this, conditions among the poorer classes were almost always appalling. Sexual disease was nearly impossible to avoid. Treatment was incredibly stupid. Ignorance of the sexual organs and their functions was universal. Sex, indeed, was looked upon as something "unclean"—and for this attitude the Bible was, in many instances, entirely to blame. As Drysdale put it, "From the mystery and secrecy in which sexual matters have been involved, and from the consequent want of due attention to them, the whole of our moral and social philosophy has been rendered unsound to the core, and the progress of our race has been blighted." To remedy this, he gave first a clear account of the organs of reproduction in general and of man in particular; and then of the diseases which are peculiar to them. But he never descends to what may be called a dry catalogue of things. Always are his descriptions interspersed with remarks revealing his great humanity. He insists that "mankind may be termed one great composite individual, instead of a collection of individuals. We form an organism, whose earlier parts are dead, and whose life is ever renewed afresh to the latest posterity by the reunion of certain of its component parts. . . . This great *unity of life* should serve to bind us more closely to our fellow men and to all living beings, and to increase the heartfelt sympathy between the different races and individuals of mankind."

Drysdale writes perfectly frankly, not only on the evils of excess of sexual intercourse, but also of the evils of abstinence and abuse. He goes straight to the heart of the problem, and refuses to look upon sex as in any way sin. Some of his conclusions may be, quite naturally, more or less erroneous. He was a pioneer trying to find some solution for his difficulties, and he was hampered on every side by the ignorance and folly of his contemporaries. It

was due to books like his that other students were urged to investigate more fully. Slowly was it recognized that there should be no mystery whatever where the human body was concerned, that the whole of sexual phenomena should be investigated without fear or shame. He said:—

The subject of love cannot, more than others, bear the supernatural mode of reasoning. In it as in all others the world is escaping at the present day, from the assumptions and dogmas of the supernatural to the clear and demonstrable region of nature; and it is only by examining every individual case, as it occurs in nature, that we shall attain to true views on the subject. Would that all mankind could learn to consider of infinite importance the fate of every single individual. . . . We are too ready to sacrifice the interests of the individual for what is falsely called the general good. . . . Every single case of disease is of infinite importance to one individual, namely, to the sufferer, but of no less real importance to us; and world-wide theories must fall, if they unrighteously stand in the way of his cure.

Putting aside the very valuable chapters dealing with the cure of venereal disease—and which perhaps a modern physician would, nowadays, consider somewhat out-of-date—we come to some remarks the author made in dealing with women, and which were the principal cause of the furious attacks made on the book as a whole. Here again he refused to be silenced by “false shame.” “Until a few years ago,” he said, “the subject of female disease was in many parts shrouded in the profoundest darkness. . . . What is the reason that so very extensive and important a class of disease remained so long hidden from mankind? The one great reason is—the mysterious and unnatural manner in which the female sexual organs have been regarded. . . . The sexual organs, especially of woman, are still regarded with the old Hebrew feelings of mystery and shame, as if they differed from the rest of our humanity.” And in his day this “mystery” and “shame” were almost everywhere prevalent—particularly among those classed as “genteel.” Not that there was no *obscenity*; for the mid-Victorian era had its Holywell Street which poured forth a continuous torrent of pornographic works that the authorities had great difficulty in suppressing. Side by side with this was such an extreme delicacy that trousers were often referred to in novels as “unmentionables”!

Drysdale attacked the prevalent conceptions of sex which he attributed largely to the Hebrew Bible though he does not spare the Christian attitude in the least:—

Almost all those who have been imbued with the Christian beliefs have given a great superiority to what they have termed the spiritual part of our being, over the animal; meaning thereby chiefly, the sexual appetites and enjoyments. The latter they have studiously endeavoured to degrade and disparage, and they have always striven to exalt what they call the moral and intellectual over the sexual enjoyments of man.

He has nothing but contempt for “the pernicious idea of the mortification of the flesh, as it exists in monasteries and nunneries.” And instead of looking upon chastity as the greatest of all virtues in woman, he categorically declared that “far from being a virtue, it is invariably a great sin.” He defined chastity as “complete sexual abstinence”; and he carefully examines his case in relation to the laws of nature:—

There is no organ in our body, nor any faculty in our mind, which to be healthy (or in other words, virtuous), does not require its due share of appro-

prate exercise. The sexual organs are subject to this law as all others; and, whatever theories we form about them, nature invariably rewards or punishes them according as the conditions of their health are observed. She cares not for our moral code; marriage has nothing sacred in her eyes; with or without marriage she gives the seal of approbation to the sexually virtuous man or woman in a healthy and vigorous state of the sexual organs, while she punishes the erring by physical and moral suffering.

Nothing can be plainer than these passages; and their publication by a man who was obviously no Christian, and who, indeed, never concealed his contempt for Christianity, caused a hullabaloo which has, even to this day, hardly died down.

To say that chastity was no virtue but a “natural sin,” was too much—especially in a society that exalted “virtue” almost as high as heaven. At least, it did when it spoke of “woman’s virtue.” Here was a man who ridiculed the conception; who saw nothing in chastity but a violation of natural law. This, then, was what Atheism led to. This, then, was the moral code of the hopeless infidels who wished to destroy God’s precious word and his holy religion. The Christian world was receiving some hard blows from the rising tide of Freethought. No better book could be used against Freethinkers than *The Elements of Social Science*. It was received with joy by the Christian. And, strange to say, it was attacked even by “Agnostics” as something unutterably vile. The sequel is interesting.

H. CUTNER.

(To be concluded)

Things Worth Knowing*

XIV.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY

NOT one of the Fathers even hints that slavery is unlawful or improper. In the early ages martyrs possessed slaves, and so did abbots, bishops, popes, monasteries and churches; Jews and pagans only were prohibited from acquiring Christian slaves. So little was the abolition of slavery thought of that a Council of Orleans, in the middle of the sixth century, expressly decreed the perpetuity of servitude among the descendants of slaves. On the other hand, the Church showed a zeal to prevent accessions to slavery from capture, but her exertions were restricted to Christian prisoners of war. As late as the nineteenth century the right of enslaving captives was defended by Bishop Bouvier.

The Apostles reminded slaves of their duty towards their masters, and masters of their duties towards their slaves. . . . The clergy sometimes remonstrated against slave-markets, but their indignation never reached the trade in heathen slaves, nor was the master’s right of selling his slaves whenever he pleased called in question at all. The assertion made by many writers that the Church exercised an extremely favourable influence on slavery surely involves a great exaggeration. As late as the thirteenth century the master had practically the right of life and death over the slave. Throughout Christ-

* 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.

endom the purchase and the sale of men, as property transferred to buyer, was recognized as a legal transaction of the same validity as the sale of other merchandise. Slaves had a title to nothing but subsistence and clothes from their master; and if a master from indulgence gave his slaves any *peculium* or fixed allowance for their subsistence, they had no right of property in what they saved out of that, but all that they accumulated belonged to their master. . . .

The gradual disappearance of slavery in Europe during the latter part of the Middle Ages has also commonly been in the main attributed to the influence of the Church. But this opinion is hardly supported by facts. It is true that the Church to some extent encouraged the manumission of slaves. . . . At the close of the sixth century it was affirmed that, as Christ had come to break the chain of our servitude, so it was well for us to imitate Him by freeing those whom the law of nations had reduced to slavery. . . . Too much importance has, however, often been attached to these phrases. . . . And whilst the Church favoured the liberation of the slaves of laymen, she took care to prevent the liberation of her own slaves; like a physician she did not herself swallow the medicine she prescribed to others. . . . The Council of Agatho in 506, considered it unfair to enfranchise the slaves of monasteries, seeing that monks themselves were daily compelled to labour, and as a matter of fact the slaves of monasteries were everywhere the last who were manumitted. In the seventh century a Council of Toledo threatened with damnation any bishop who should liberate a slave belonging to the Church, without giving due compensation from his own property. . . . Nay, the Church was anxious not only to prevent a reduction of her slaves, but to increase their number. She zealously encouraged people to give themselves and their posterity to be the slaves of churches and monasteries, to enslave their bodies—as some of the charters put it—in order to procure the liberty of their souls. And in the middle of the seventh century a Council decreed that the children of incontinent priests should become the slaves of the churches where their fathers officiated.

The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas,
by E. WESTERMARCK, Vol. I, pp. 694-6.

God Looks Down!

A hopeless wreck and a human freight,
A landless sea, a relentless fate,
And a yawning gulf insatiate—
And God looks down from his Chair of State!

Brave men down in the deep may die,
And women may weep and the children cry,
But the God of Mercies sitting on high
Looks calmly down and says, "It is I!"

The night is past and the sunbeams dwell
On scenes of a shimmering sea's soft swell—
All that is left of a raging hell!
And God looks down and says, "It is well!"

Lo! The only help of Man is Man!
'Tis vain all the vaulted blue to scan!
For God exists as Gods only can—
By the consent of their maker—MAN!

A. HANSON.

How Compares the Indian with the Christian

IN *The Men of the Last Frontier*—the truly admirable work of Grey Owl, the Canadian-born son of a Scotch father and Indian mother—are clearly set forth the religious beliefs of the Indians.

For what appear to me to be their authenticity they are, I consider, a most worthy contribution to the theologies of the world.

Grey Owl removes from the popular mind the impression that the Indian's idea of heaven is "the happy hunting ground"—in other words, a field of unlimited game, easily captured. Rather is it a place, it is pointed out, where humans and animals live in perfect amity.

"The Indian's God," he explains, "does not reside in the inaccessible heights of majestic indifference of most deities.

"The Indian feels his presence all his waking hours, not precisely as a god, but as an all-powerful benevolent Spirit, whose outward manifestation is the face of nature.

"An intimate kind of Spirit who sends a message in the sighing of the North-west Wind that may plant a hidden motive in the action of a beast for man to profit by, or disturb the course of nature to save a life.

"They do not fear him, for this God jogs at their elbow, and is a friend; nor do they worship him, save through the sun, a tree, a rock, or a range of hills which to them are the outward and visible signs of the Power that lives and breathes in all creation.

"The Indian believes that his dead are not gone from him—that they live invisible, but ever-present, in selected spots, to which in trouble he will repair, and spend hours in meditation."

Readers will duly note the reference to "the inaccessible heights of majestic indifference of most deities." Grey Owl is clearly not disposed to allow the Indian to be discredited by comparison with the Christian. Again and again is he witheringly sarcastic—devastatingly scornful—regarding the vaunted superiority of the latter creed.

Take this passage:—

"For the Indian, the woods are peopled with spirits, voices, and mysterious influences. To him the Spirit of the North—a brooding, sullen destroyer who glooms over the land like a shadow of death—is very real. How this destructive demon retains his supremacy over the forces of nature in face of the Indian's ever-present God, to whom he can apply at a moment's notice, is as easily explained as is the uninterrupted prosperity enjoyed by the Satan of the white man."

And this:—

"If the Indian accepts one or other of the white man's various religions, he does so with reservations.

"He fails to see what lasting benefit can be derived from a gospel of love and peace, the adherents to the many sects of which are ready to fly at one another's throats over a discussion as to which is the shortest road to Hell.

"An Algonquin once innocently asked me what did I suppose the white man had done in the past that he was unable to approach his God save through an interpreter?"

Or this:—

"Under the white man's scheme of existence, the Indian is asked to forget his language, his simple conception of the Great Spirit, and his few remaining customs, which—if it were demanded of the Hindus, the Boers, the Irish, or the French-Canadians—would without doubt cause a rebellion; and as he sits and glooms beneath the arches of the forest before his little smoky fires, he coughs his hacking cough and stares dumbly out into the dancing shadows, wondering—now that his spirits are forbidden him—why the white man's God that dispossessed them does not fulfil the oft-repeated promise of the missions."

And just one more:—

"All savagery, no doubt"—this, in reference to some past Indian practices—"but not more savage than a civilization that permits the continuance of bull-fight-

ing, where worn-out working horses, as a reward for their long service, are, when wounded in the unequal contest, patched up until killed by the bull—blindfolded, that they may not evade the thrust that disembowels them, their vocal chords destroyed so as not to be upset by their screaming the delicate nerves of a cowardly and degenerate audience, who, elated by the knowledge that helpless dumb creatures are being tortured for their amusement, shout their brutal satisfaction. And this on the very day they set apart to worship the white man's God of mercy and love! Indians never did these things. Frightful torments they inflicted, or submitted to, according to the luck of war; but to inflict such brutalities on an animal as a pastime seemingly never occurred to them."

The appeal of *The Men of the Last Frontier* must extend far beyond those who may be directly interested in the Indian. But it is written, of course, primarily in the interests of that more-or-less doomed race. A perusal of it, I feel, will convince all that Grey Owl has thus rendered the Indian a service beyond the power of any other living being, so simple and natural—so understanding and sympathetic, so eloquent and forceful—is the book from cover to cover.

FRANK HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Acid Drops

The King of Greece has gone home—at the unanimous vote of his people. Out of the total number of voters on the lists only three-eighths voted for the King's return. General Kondylis, who had seized power and proclaimed the King weeks before the "unanimous vote" was cast, carefully locked up all the Republican leaders and announced that anyone who offered opposition would be severely dealt with. The special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*—a paper not inclined to very advanced views—says that the vote was the most corrupt on record. One man, he says, openly boasted that he had voted 61 times, another voted 17 times, while the *Telegraph* correspondent, saw bodies of soldiers marched, under their officers, from voting station to voting station to record their votes for the King. So the King goes home, with tears in his eyes, and at the urgent call of his people.

Tears of ink trickle down our cheeks as we announce the conversion of another avowed Atheist. It appears, from a report in the *Christian Herald* that the avowed Atheist, "Mr. H."—what's in a name—called upon his neighbours Mr. and Mrs. H.R.B. whilst they were at breakfast. As usual, little Miss B, four years old prayed, and this time added, "and God bless Mr. H." When the family rose from their knees tears were rolling down the face of Mr. H. Soon afterwards Mr. H. was taken with a fatal illness, during which he put his hands together, and according to the report, prayed a most beautiful, childlike, and penitent prayer. We can quite believe it. Shortly afterwards Mr. H. passed away. We can believe that also. Now no tactful person would call upon neighbours at breakfast time, and apparently poor Mr. H. paid dearly for his indiscretion.

The Bishop of Liverpool is very concerned with the "problem of shifting population." It seems that "slum clearance and the relief of overcrowding have resulted in a stream of migration and the formation of huge new districts without any adequate provision for their religious needs." This means that thousands of church people are drifting away from the "Word and Sacraments," and many children will grow up without religion. It is all very pathetic—for the Church—but nobody seems to know exactly what to do, and some of the proposals to cope with the problem are fantastic. In any case, what proof is there that any or many of the "shifting population" want their religious needs looking after? It may well be that they are delighted to get rid of the Church, once for all.

Writing about the North Middlesex Secondary School Boys who regard Scripture as their most unpopular subject, the *Church Times* waxes very indignant, not only because the boys fail to appreciate "the greatest masterpiece of English literature," but because their vote proves their indifference to religion. And the journal goes on to lament the "very unsatisfactory state of religion" in our secondary schools. As it says:—

If a boy, instructed by three teachers in succession, is first taught by a firm believer in the Deity of our Lord, next by a Unitarian who sees nothing in Christ but a son of man, then afterwards by a Rationalist who has no belief whatever in the supernatural, what else can happen but that his mind becomes bewildered and confused?

And it points with pride to the Woodward schools, where every attempt is to win the children to the Church's faith. Woodward's "whole conception is that all real education is religious." We can only say that it is a good thing that the majority of our secondary schools are not of the opinion of Woodward. And the verdict of the boys above is a very good omen.

A pious reviewer of the *Selected Poems* of "A.E.," the late George Russell, and his biography by W. M. Clyde, is obliged to admit that "A.E." was another fine poet and writer who was almost, if not entirely without Christianity. He says:—

He leaned to theosophy, to the faith of the Vedas, to an earth worship; he shared with some of the peasants a faith in fairies and demons—but towards Christianity he rarely displays more than a polite appreciation. . . . It seems to us the greatest pity in the world that such a man as A.E. remained so remote from the religious feeling of his countrymen.

Why should it be a pity? Surely it is a cause for congratulation that Russell could not believe in the credulity and superstition of Irish Roman Catholicism?

According to Miss Essex, at a recent meeting of "churchpeople" in the Albert Hall, "the only thing that can save the world is a Christian revolution." We seem to have heard this before; in fact, it is one of the most hackneyed of all Christian slogans. What we want to know is, has there never been "a Christian revolution?" Did not Christianity have almost entirely its own way for over one thousand years? Moreover, what exactly does a "Christian revolution" now mean? The Roman or Anglo-Catholic kind? The Calvinist or Methodist or Salvation Army or Plymouth Brethren brand? It is, in fact, pretty obvious that if one sect managed to get "a revolution" over, all the other sects would fight like cats and dogs to be in at the spoils.

What does a "Christian revolution" mean in the face of the recent religious riots in Belfast when a howling mob of Protestants attacked a boy of fifteen because he was a Catholic, severely injured him, and eventually shot him dead? And this was only one of the foul outrages which occurred in Belfast, and which our National papers did so much to minimize. We can give every credit to Miss Essex and the other speakers at the meeting for all their humanitarian ideals, and for all they wish to do for unemployment and the abolition of slums. But a "Christian revolution" will do nothing except stir up religious envy and hatred. The solution is *Secularism*. Man alone can help himself. God never has helped him and never can.

Catholics have been celebrating what they call a Catholic-Jew *entente* at the Catholic Guild of Israel. It was presided over by Bishop Myers, who spoke very feelingly about the "fervent" Jew as being a good model for Catholics. Father Day (who thinks he ought to be called Rabbi Day) added that "the two great centres of spiritual light and warmth in the world, the greatest was the Catholic Church, and the other the Jewish re-

ligion." How many observing Jews cheered these inspirational words we don't know; but the *annual* report of the Guild gave *three* Jewish converts. Perhaps the Jews do not respond as heartily as the Bishop and the Father wish.

Just as the pious Christian critic will take some absurd statement of Paul, or from the Gospels, and show how reasonably beautiful and true it is, so the apologist for "National Socialism" in Germany is proving incontestably that the new German religion is something also unutterably grand and wonderful. Dr. Schobel, for instance, writes:—

In a certain sense National Socialism is a religion, for it demands of its adherents, not that they should be convinced of the rightness of its doctrines, but that they should believe in it. The faith, the myths of the German, and especially of the National Socialist, is the Honour of the German nation. Every doctrine which comes from elsewhere, whether it be the Jewish Liberalistic, the Catholic or the Protestant, has to retire in the face of this faith of National Socialism.

One can hear in these words a distinct echo of Roman Catholicism itself. Everything, in fact, should retire before the faith of a Belloc, a Chesterton, or a Knox.

There is not much in the General Electioneering to merit the attention of an intelligent being. But we ought to record the admission of Major E. W. Smith at Cosham, supporting Sir Thomas Inskip's candidature. "Thank God," he said, "we have been governed by Christian men in the last four years." If the Opposition had any sense they would win the Election by the mere repetition of this damning indictment of one of the worst Governments of modern times. Unfortunately the Opposition are tarred with the same brush—they too want a Christian Government to undo what the last one did.

Canon Elliott, Rector of Warrington, says that "a foul disease, a shattering bullet, the decay of the grave or ashes of cremation, can have no real hurt to a personality that has the love of God." Funerals seem a sheer waste of time in such circumstances. It is queer how a tiny atom of coal-dust getting into the human eye makes a Christian personality very much the same as an ordinary swearing human being's—and yet, cremation doesn't "hurt" it. No wonder the clergy make such good recruiting-sergeants: they can assure every hesitating "half-made recruit" that they can be "killed" over and over again and get "no real hurt to their personality." A very cat-like "personality," with apparently much more than nine lives

A writer in the *Methodist Recorder* rises to eloquent if senseless appreciation of the "Gentleness of God." He declaims:—

How gentle God is! How softly He moves within His creation! How unobtrusively He does His great work! God is so delicate in all His operations that He often escapes the notice of men altogether.

The orator seems never to have been in a thunderstorm, or have noticed the "unobtrusiveness" of a blizzard, or the "delicacy" of a volcano. The silence of a cyclone is no more "gentle" than the awful ebullition of an earthquake, and both are as much part of "God's" operations as the softest zephyr or the gentlest rivulet's flow. Pious platitudes refuses to face facts. The religious intellect may not always be "gentle"—it is invariably "soft."

There are degrees in a Christian's "resignation to the will of God." The Rev. A. E. Whitham, says that it may be God's will to make him a "doormat," but:—

I am not so far advanced in grace as to ask specially to be made a doormat. But I suspect I must get there . . . before He can trust me with more important or conspicuous work.

It is like saying, "Thy Will be done O Lord, but if you

intend to give me anything I don't like, I'll accept it on condition that your will will change pretty soon into something more acceptable." There is a world of significance in the expression "important or conspicuous work."

An amusing feature of the General Election was the fatuous "List of Methodist Candidates." Seventy names are given, and we shall watch with interest the "Christianity" of the Christians elected, when it comes to action. The futility of religion is illustrated by the fact that about one third of the "list" are of "National Government" supporters, the remainder being Labour or Liberal. We do not complain, we rejoice, that religion has not welded opinion into a uniformity of political opinion. But obviously the moral is leave out this utterly irrelevant religion from the political arena where it is in this case useless, but in other cases dangerous. The mere publication of such a list is offensive or, at the best, an appeal to trade interests.

The Armistice brought out a good deal of clerical humbug in all directions. One instance was the Rev. Edward Shillito, M.A., a front rank chatterer whose nonsense is venerated with unctuous piety. He "explained" how it happened that although it "is God's Will that there shall be a family of nations," He has been wise enough and good enough not to insist (as stupid people do in prayer) that "His Will be Done." Mr. Shillito makes us understand that:—

He will not force upon us justice and mercy and their wonderful sequel, peace. What is forced upon us cannot be justice and mercy. He will not force peace upon us.

Mussolini seems to be doing God a good turn. Mussolini at least agrees with God and Mr. Shillito in not forcing Peace upon the world.

It is reported that the Rev. Campbell Morgan made a most dramatic pause lasting "several moments," after he had quoted the boastful words of Christ: "I am the Light of the World." He very truthfully added as he resumed his preaching: "Those moments of silence are more valuable than anything I could say." Yes, but his audience need not take a trip to Westminster Chapel in order to be silent. There will be a few ministers of the (silent) gospel, when all ministers are as humbly modest as Dr. Morgan. It is like going to an expensive restaurant in order to fast, or buying a Radio in order not to listen-in.

"I sometimes wonder," says Dr. James Reid, in an Armistice Sermon in *The Expository Times*, "if the Church has not got to die in order to live." Why not try the experiment? Voluntary Euthanasia (commonly called suicide) is said to be quite a pleasant experience—at any rate nobody who has undergone it so far has complained. If the Church found it could "live" after it, we should have to put up with it, but we heartily recommend one trial.

Prayer is not what it was. In the days of gloriously untruthful witnesses like the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, prayer was something like a full-bodied romance. He prayed for £1,000 once, and really seemed annoyed with God for coughing up only £990—until accident revealed the existence of an overlooked tenner. "The Tale of H. R. Horton, The Lady, The Golosh, and a Prayer," has often made the table roar. George Muller, who advertised that he never advertised, but provided for the needs of numerous orphans by Prayer and Prayer alone, is still one of the giants of fascinating fooling. The late E. W. H. Myers (or his departed spirit) has recently exposed the bareness of God's larder. He (or it) communicates to a "medium" that "Fate may be altered by prayer," but only in a reflex way—"not quite in the manner generally supposed." You eat a good meal and pray God to take away your hunger—and if the meal does you good your prayer is answered. As the old Latin tag might be translated, Prayer consists in doing the job yourself.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE,

EDITORIAL

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have had enquiries concerning a pamphlet published in 1876, entitled *Euthanasia*. Our correspondent says he has reason for believing it was written by Mrs. Besant, but it was published without author's name. Does any of our readers know of any such pamphlet?

D. MARR.—At the time of the receipt of your letter we had not the space for its insertion, and it covered too wide a field. But your letter was sufficiently interesting to lead us to believe that a short article from you on ideas versus circumstances would prove interesting. Why not try it? When we said that guns are powerless against ideas we had in mind two facts. First, that ideas cannot be disproved by force; second that as ideas arise from the existence of certain circumstances, these same circumstances will continually evoke similar ideas in one place when their expression is forcibly suppressed in another.

D. MAPP.—Thanks. See "Views and Opinions." Please pass on the copy received. It has been sent in the course of working the plan we have for attracting new readers—We note your pleasure—shared by a large number of our readers—with the new series "Things Worth Knowing." If we receive enough encouragement we may publish a volume which might run to 200 or 250 pages. Such a book would contain for the *Freethinker* some of the world's best reading.

H. MARKS.—You will find a very good discussion of the whole question of Instinct in *Instinct in Man*, by J. Prever, published in 1917. But you must be careful. "Instinct" is almost as great a trap and as useful a cover for ignorance as is "Race," for an unscientific thinker. Please note the emphasis on the last word.

M. A. HOOLE.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader. Paper being sent for four weeks.

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

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

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Sugar Plums

On Sunday next (December 1) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford. Admission is free, but there will be reserved seats at sixpence and a shilling each.

Sunday last was a wretched day in London, and it was not surprising that the Stratford Town Hall was not more than three parts full when Mr. Cohen came on the platform to deliver his lecture. But within a very few minutes after the opening of the address, the hall was comfortably filled, only three rows at the back being vacant. The striking and pleasing feature of the audience was the large proportion of young people present—probably the weather kept many of the older ones away. But the lecture was followed with evident atten-

tion and appreciation, and, considering its nature, that was a compliment to both speaker and listeners. Mr. Warner occupied the chair, and made a very earnest appeal for support for the West Ham Branch in its propagandist work. The Branch is doing good work, and we hope that it gets the help it needs and deserves.

A very enjoyable evening was spent by those attending the N.S.S. Social at Caxton Hall last Saturday. The number present was a little in excess over the last occasion, and the bad weather was no doubt responsible for many absentees. Dancing to the music provided by the Somerville Band was enjoyed by the young, and by many of the older. Miss Kathleen Sothcott's singing fully deserved the hearty applause it received, and Mr. George Thomas kept the party in a merry mood with his humorous songs. Miss Somerville's violin solos were thoroughly enjoyable items. A "Few Words" from the President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, is always looked for as one of the good things of the evening. There is the rare combination of charm in matter, manner, and personality, which always makes the "Few Words" appear to be very few indeed. Mrs. Venton and her committee of voluntary workers had charge of the refreshments, and as usual they worked very hard to make that department successful. Messrs. Gee and Rosetti (A. C. and R. V.) acted as M.C.'s during the evening and kept things going from the beginning until Auld Lang Syne by the whole company brought a very happy evening to a close.

The Secular Society, Limited is issuing to-day Mr. Cohen's new pamphlet, *Humanity and War*. It extends to forty pages, with coloured cover, and is priced at threepence. Postage 1d. extra. We would like the help of as many of our readers as is possible to give this pamphlet a wide circulation. *Humanity and War* is a timely subject, and it is well that the views of a *Freethinker*—one, that is who writes as a *Freethinker*, and is not concerned with party political issues—should be set before the world. For that reason we ask our readers to help in its circulation. Eight copies of the pamphlet will be sent post free for 2s. At least a couple of thousand of our readers ought to send at once for eight. In this way they would be doing some very useful propaganda, and at a very moderate outlay. So soon as he can find the time to write them, Mr. Cohen has in view a series of popular pamphlets, but for the moment he has his hands very full. But if the present pamphlet is to do its work it must be brought before the public while the topic with which it deals is in the public mind.

In our comments on the Dean of Durham's article we gave it as our opinion that the Dean might rely on the editor of the *Telegraph* protecting him from adverse criticism. We had not to wait long for confirmation of what was said. We hear from Mr. Bedborough that he sent a letter to the editor which was refused insertion. Others have since written to the same effect. What cowards these editors are! Often we have been asked why we did not go in for ordinary journalism. The answer is simple. We were conceited enough to think too much of our personal independence.

Mr. C. R. Boyd Freeman sends us a copy of a just published penny pamphlet, *Papists are Trailors*. On the strength of the claim of the papacy to secular supremacy, he advocates the banishment of all Roman Catholics from this country. We are afraid if that principle were adopted, it might be extended to at least the trial and imprisonment of many besides Roman Catholics; for although not claiming secular supremacy, many of the Protestants are not above claiming that obedience to their religion is above that of obedience to the State. The pamphlet may be obtained from the author 33 Nottingham Road, Ripley, Derbyshire.

Following a tea and theatre party as guest of the Glasgow Branch on Saturday, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will settle down to serious work to-day (November 24) by lecturing for the new Edinburgh Branch in Unity House, Hillside Crescent, Edinburgh, in the afternoon at 2 o'clock, on "Nature, Man and God," and in the McLellan

Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow in the evening at 7.0, on "Jesus, Fascism and Freethought." The early beginning in the afternoon is necessary to enable the speaker to be back in Glasgow in time for the evening lecture, but Edinburgh friends will no doubt take full advantage of having a London speaker in spite of the early commencement.

There is very much our Branches might do in advertising their work, but it requires a regular effort, and if practicable, more than one member's interest. In many cases the Branch Secretary has all his available time taken up with the ordinary organizing work. But a regular report of the weekly or other lectures, if tactfully worded, would often find an editor of a local paper willing to use it. By "tactful" we simply mean that no editor of any newspaper will publish long, windy, offensive reports about anything except perhaps attacks on unpopular movements. Of course we are not referring to paid advertising, which is unfortunately out of the question in most cases. Nor must direct advertising, in the guise of reports be attempted. In this connexion we note with pleasure the unusual fair-mindedness of the *Streatham News* and its associated South London group papers. Six weeks ago, Mr. Bedborough lectured for the South London Branch, and after the report appeared in the local paper, a correspondence began by a courteous opponent, who was answered by Mr. Bedborough, while other correspondents on both sides followed. This correspondence has not yet relaxed. In fact it grows each week. The current week's *Streatham News* gives most of its "Correspondence" space to this subject—a very good letter on our side, and no fewer than four other letters from the enemy. Probably the latter do our side more good than their own, for Christians can always be trusted to split into sections as soon as they "come together."

Civilization and Christianity

AN alleged relation between these two phenomena is now a familiar point of Christian apologetics. As lately put by the Archbishop of York in a broadcast address, it runs as follows: "The progress of Christendom has been largely brought about by the application of Christian principles . . . to one side of life after another."

We may set against this the remark of J. M. Robertson in *A Short History of Christianity*: "Once more, it is not Christianity that has civilized modern Europe, but the variously caused and conditioned progress of Europe that has civilized Christianity."

The latter view is, of course, the correct one. The conclusion that, taken on the whole, the Christian system could not make for civilization, but must have been in various directions a static and even decivilizing agency, as it is to a decreasing extent now, may easily be reached by a cursory examination of its doctrines and the associated practices.

Taking the chief factors of civilization to be (1) intellectual activity of the genuine naturalistic kind, including the accumulation of knowledge and its dissemination by education, (2) ethical development, and (3) politico-social organization, we find during a thousand years or more a lack of or deplorable weakness in these features that fits the Christian system in both its theory and procedure like the hand and the glove.

Added to the well known obscurantism in science and in education, some of the newer doctrines were so absurd as to be maintained only by the abnegation of reason—e.g., that of the Trinity, of which Robertson writes (*Letters on Reasoning*), ". . . and there it stands to-day, a shibboleth fit for savages,

the intellectual scandal and demoralization of the Christian system."

Then we note the overwhelming obsession with supernaturalism, which, along with belief in the imminent end of the world, fixed the notion that mundane affairs were of little or no importance.

Then we have the intense aggressiveness and exclusiveness of the system, leading to strife, oppression, religious wars and massacres, and especially to the elimination of many of the more enlightened individuals and some of the more progressive sections of communities, including the "Moors" of Spain and the Albigenses.

Next we note the predominant insistence on belief instead of on conduct. And the effect of this must have been greatly intensified by such devices as absolution, indulgences and death-bed conversion. Robertson tells us that "At the beginning of the thirteenth century Pope Innocent III offered absolution from all sins, past and future, dispensation from the payment of interest on debts, and exemption from the jurisdiction of the ordinary law courts, to all who would serve for a given period against the Albigensian and other heretics in the territory of the Count of Toulouse," and that "later, similar inducements were offered to all who would take up arms against the Moors in Spain." These things must have been intensely demoralizing, as also must have been (on many individuals, and in effect on communities) such practices as forgery of writings, including interpolations, decretals, etc., the "discovery" of spurious relics, and the miracles of the saints.

Then, in the more general aspect we have the great obstacle to civilization which consists in the notion that all needful, and final, truth (that is worth while) is contained in the dogma and teachings of the Church. Of course there has been some modification in the smaller (Protestant) sections; but the largest Church (the Roman Catholic) continues generally in the Dark Age and Middle Age condition. This supposed finality has resulted in the perpetuation of a variety of ideas and practices that would doubtless have disappeared centuries ago if what we may call normal conditions of freedom, toleration, natural investigation, education, and the like, had existed (e.g., those of ancient Greece or Rome). Now, however, they have become powerfully traditional; ecclesiasticism has become involved with political and economic interests, and the process of breaking it down has become a very laborious and tardy one.

It has been sufficiently shown that the civilizing of Christianity began, in the first instance, about the tenth century, a movement due no doubt mainly of wholly to contact with the notable Moorish civilization of Spain. Here the famous scholar Gerbert (afterwards Pope Sylvester II.) studied. But his efforts to forward enlightenment were of no avail. A school he opened in Italy was wrecked by a Christian mob, incited by priests. And darkness again supervened.

As is well known, after about three more centuries the Renaissance appeared. And since then, despite the thunders of Churches, the Inquisition and *Indexes*, of political and social disabilities (excommunication and other ostracism), of embargoes on speech, publication and teaching, of resistance to science and to education (except that controlled by ecclesiastics), and much opposition to a variety of due and overdue reforms, advance has slowly continued.

Secularists, of course, appreciate the improvement made by some sects—the dropping of some of the more absurd and outrageous beliefs and practices, of the grosser intolerance and persecution, and the decreased stress put upon mere belief and the increased concern for humanitarianism. But as already

indicated these things hardly apply at all to the Church which contains about half the total number of (nominal) Christians. Added to Father Ronald Knox's threat of "repressive measures," and Cardinal Lepicier's declaration of the necessity of applying "the power of the sword" to heretics and heresarchs, we have the condemnation of "Modernism" by the Pope: Messrs. Chesterton and Belloc busy themselves in "rewriting English history" in order to support Romanism, and the Westminster Vigilance Committee do what they can (and, I hear, with some success) the same with school history books. With some help from other sects they try to discredit science, especially the principle of evolution; to prevent free and open exposition and discussion in the Press of views opposed to their own; and they still hinder the advance of our national education. Also, following centuries of religious strife and brutality, we have still with us religious riot and murder.

It is therefore obviously incumbent on us to continue our efforts to break down such barriers to freedom, to rational thought and behaviour, to intellectual, ethical and social progress—that is to say, hindrance to the further advance of civilization.

J. REEVES.

The Chances of Survival

If we only knew for certain that we survived—if this is not a contradiction in terms—what a grand, consoling thing it would be, and what a lot of trouble would be saved. More especially now that Hell has virtually been given up even by believers. Hell was too hot to last, and the hereafter is now generally considered to be a nice place.

Many men of great intellectual attainment have held, and still hold, to the extraordinary conception of the consciousness detaching itself from the brain and "carying on" somewhere else in the universe: exactly where is unknown. The only ground for this optimism is that spiritualists are said to receive messages from the dead, although no evidence has ever been advanced to prove that these messages have not come from other living, not dead, beings; or that they have arisen subjectively within the brain of the receiver, and have not come from without at all.

It is not usually perceived that the survival of the consciousness after the body is dead is contrary to natural law. A law of nature has been best described as an unvarying sequence of phenomena *under given conditions*. The only consciousness we know anything about is that which we find associated with, or bound up in a human brain. We do not find it elsewhere. This consciousness, which is to function in the hereafter is something which must do so under entirely different conditions: that is, without association with a living brain, and therefore under new conditions of which we know nothing. And if such consciousness does exist, it is contrary to natural law. To state that one has received a message from the spirit of a dead person is of less value than the statement of one who is certain of having seen the great sea-serpent.

On the other hand, there is considerable evidence against consciousness surviving death. The dead body is lifeless—dead. We grieve when we have lost one of the living who will never be replaced on earth, and so we foster the hope that we may meet again in the hereafter.

The five senses convey messages to the brain through the sense organs. The spirit which goes to the hereafter will convey messages without any sense-organs or organs of speech, so it is said—once more breaking the laws of nature, and giving its unvarying sequence not under given conditions, but under

utterly different conditions about which we know nothing.

As personalities are not packed into brains ready made, but are built up on the matter of the brain by the impressions conveyed to it by the senses if the personality did not cease to exist at death, there would be no need for new ones to be built up by contact with the environment at all. One of the released personalities could simply step into a newly-born brain, and as it should possess memory of the past, would at once establish reincarnation on a firm and indisputable basis. Instead of this, however, believers in reincarnation, reasoning with unscientifically trained imaginations, are able to convince themselves that they are certain personalities of the past re-born, as for instance Cleopatra, Alexander the Great, or Napoleon.

Personalities, however, being built up from childhood, and not handed on ready-made from the dead, to the living, cannot reincarnate without running contrary to natural law: and again come under the heading of phenomena which occur without altering their identity, not under given conditions, but under imaginary and unknown ones.

Y.C.

On Finding God

SOME nights ago I dreamed that I died and went to Heaven. Of course it was a mistake, my going to Heaven! It happened in this way; when the blonde, blue-eyed angel sat me down in the reception-room she placed me close to her registration-book. Peering over her arm as she wrote, I saw that I had been mistaken for a *reverend* Mr. Whittalson (with one "l.") I was not slow to profit, as I thought, by the mistake, so when an unattractive old gentleman I took to be St. Peter came round to verify the names on the list, I mildly answered to the name of Whittalson. "What first name or names?" he asked. I was in a terrible position; the terrors of hell seemed to dawn upon me; I had not had time to read more than "Whittalson (Rev.)" I thought to escape from my dilemma by pretending to misunderstand his question so I said "minister of the gospel." "I said *what first name*," roared Peter. I hesitated, but my faculties came to my aid. "First name? Oh yes, you asked my first name; Oh, I beg your pardon." Then it occurred to me that if I reeled off several common names, perhaps one of them would happen to be the right one. "John, Henry, William, James," said I. "Ah," said Peter, "there must be some mistake here; the register says *Samuel*." "Oh yes," I replied, "that is what you might call, in a manner of speaking, my pulpit name. You see, in the local public house they nick-named me Sippy Sammy, and I, finding it attractive to broadcast under an affectionate title, adopted the name of the reverend Sammy Whittalson." "What church?" "Oh the Church of Christ," said I, hoping that this would be accepted as an explanation. "Yes, but which church of Christ?"

"Well, I was quite undenominational, that is, I belonged to all churches that I considered to be truly Christian and orthodox." "What do you mean, the Russian Orthodox Church, and you are English? I begin to suspect that you have come here under false pretences, I begin to see the cloven hoof of the wolf peeping out from underneath the sheep's clothing." I thought Saint Peter confused his metaphor but, of course, I was too frightened to pay any attention to that. "Where was your church?" "Oh yes, my church, well you see, I had a good many in my time and sometimes I carried the gospel message into the high-ways and by-ways, especially the by-ways." "Yes, yes, but where was your church?" "The last one was at Brum-in-the-Bushes, near Costerpool, in Stocking-hamshire." "Angel-face, bring me a map of England," cried Peter, red in the face with rage. I felt that no Hell could be heated up to the degree that I should be adjudged to deserve if my deception should be dis-

covered—and it looked very much like being discovered within the next few minutes, so I slipped round behind the other applicants while Peter was engrossed in the study of the map.

I quietly seated myself unobserved at the head of those who had already passed Peter's examination. Peter turned in fury on the man who had moved up into my seat. Blinded with anger so that he could not observe that the poor fellow was a new comer, he cried, "To Hell with you, you unmitigated scoundrel, there is no such county in England as Stockinghamshire and no such town as Costerpool." The man tried to reconstitute and explain, but Peter blew his whistle and he was hauled off. As far as I know he never got a hearing before the Supreme Judge. As for me, I was soon admitted to the presence chamber.

This building is somewhat more lofty, I should say, than the tower at Blackpool, and consists of only one storey. It covers an expanse of some ten or twelve acres, and is shaped like the heel of a boot.

Occupying the flat-side sat the Almighty in a golden chair. The curved part consisted of hundreds of tiers of seats after the manner of an amphitheatre. I was bidden to ascend. To my judge I must have seemed like a fly crawling up the inside of a corrugated funnel. The place was full of angels, very beautiful and all girls. They flitted from tier to tier singing sweetly and playing on harps. Had I not been on trial for my eternal life I could have been supremely happy among them, for they smiled upon me as they passed to and fro. One of these charming creatures must have been familiar with current matters on this lower earth, for, as she flitted by, she whispered, "If you get off come up and see me sometime."

The reader will now learn how hard are the ways of the transgressor, how corrupt lying, however dexterous and trickery, however skilful, profit nothing. I had obtained admission as the reverend Samuel Whittalson with one "1." St. Peter, his attention diverted by the roaring flood of his angry passion, had omitted to remove the name from the list. The chief had caused the record of the reverend Samuel Whittalson with one "1" to be brought up to him. I say "up" because he could only be reached by winged angels. Though of human appearance his height is enormous, his head is, I should judge, four times the size of the dome of St. Paul's, and his voice, though mild and gentle, is louder than any loud-speaker ever dreamed of.

"Samuel Whittalson, 57, married, Baptist Chapel, Toadstool Lane, Wapping, and 3 Crumpet Street, Shadwell," said the Supreme Judge.

"Yes, sir," I said, for I was afraid to contradict. Then he read out, "Married Jeanetta Smith, 1903, representing himself as a wealthy man. Took her to Canada where he said he had property. Was found to be a penniless ex-convict, but his wife held firmly to him in spite of this, and notwithstanding that he ill-treated her. Deserted his wife in 1920, leaving her with eleven children and without means. Went to England. Got a cheap ordination as a minister. Obtained large sums from Maria Jobson, widow, representing himself to her as a single man and owner of a large farm in Canada. With the money so obtained, he paid a substitute to officiate at the chapel of which he had become the minister while he frequented resorts of infamy in the West-end of London, where he ultimately drank himself to death. HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY, SAMUEL WHITTALSON?" Wrong deeds come home to roost! I had not done any of the things read out, but I had practiced deception and impersonated the very man who had, as it seemed, perpetrated these atrocities.

I humbly explained that I was not Samuel Whittalson with one "1," minister of religion, but Reginald Whittalson with two "1's," an Atheist.

"That," said Almighty God in a calm, deliberate and kindly tone, "only makes the matter worse. Your Atheism we should not object to, but we have no room for liars here. We are full up with them already. You must go down below." He touched a switch or a knob of some kind, the foundation on which I was standing gave way, and I fell out of bed.

REGINALD WHITTALSON.

The Law and Prudery

A CASE that has recently terminated in a London Police Court is another example of the prudery and bigotry of the middle ages. A book entitled *The Sex Impulse*, has been condemned as obscene and indecent. This work has been read and praised by several people in the first rank of scientific fame. Yet in the eyes of our out-of-date, priest-ridden law, a work of first-rate importance is branded as unfit for public reading.

Every person with any pretension to biological knowledge knows perfectly well that the sex urge is the strongest of the animal instincts to which man is subject. They also know perfectly well that ignorance of sex matters is the cause of nearly the whole of unhappy marriages, and of the immorality that takes place in the single state. From the sexual point of view man is still very much the untamed, savage animal he was hundreds of thousands of years ago.

The Church, with its usual ignorant bleatings, pleads for sexual chastity, but is content to keep its followers from sex knowledge that would help them to lead the desired chaste life that priestcraft demands. Throughout its long and infamous history Christianity has done all in its power to prevent the march of progress, and to hinder the advance of scientific research.

It is of interest at this point to consider how the Church's aversion to the spread of sex knowledge had its origin. In the early centuries of the Christian era, when fanaticism was at its height, we had the retreat to the desert of a band of unbalanced hermits. These people, suffering as they were from abnormal sex repressions, thought they could overcome their natural instincts, which they imagined were temptations of the evil one, by unnatural habits such as rolling in thorns and thistles. It is a perfectly well known fact to the man of science that constant suppression of the sex urge leads to mental disease. The Church, however, thought otherwise. These half-witted, unwashed fanatics were canonized and became the first saints and fathers of the Roman Church.

The most illogical characteristic of Christianity is its static concept of knowledge. While the world moves forward to one victory after another over nature, religion stands still. Now, in the second quarter of the present century, theology is where it was a thousand years ago. Its worn-out dogmas are still preached from its pulpits. It still throws dust in the eyes of its misguided followers, to keep them in ignorance of scientific fact. This being the case it is not surprising that the church's attitude to sex should be one of unhealthy repressions. The advance of a sane, healthy sex hygiene is of no use to religion; it is contrary to its tenets and dogmas; it must be prevented at all costs.

In recent years much has been said on the subject of sex instruction in schools. Every attempt in this direction has been countered by the insane thunderings of the theologians. Sex is still a closed book to a vast majority of the population of this priest-ridden country. Our people are still being decimated by venereal diseases. Our young manhood and our young womanhood are being condemned to lives of misery and vice. All this could be prevented by a clean, sane outlook on sex. The only way to get this outlook is by sex instruction in early years, as a part of the ordinary, daily work of the schools. There is a way in which this can be obtained. The law of obscenity requires radical reform. Prudery must go, and with it the worn out, unnecessary stranglehold of priestcraft.

JOHN L. A. SILLEM.

The opinions of men who think are always growing and changing, like living children.—*Hamerton*.

We should always keep a corner of our heads open and free, that we may make room for the opinions of our friends. Let us have heart and head hospitality.

Joubert.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"
MAGIC AND MEDICINE

SIR,—Your notes of November 3, 1935, under the heading Man and Religion, contain an illuminating revelation, which will I hope receive re-iteration. The stultification of powers of critical examination which has gone on under religious dominance is not likely to be removed in a single generation, even though no alternative influences arise again to curb the exercise of critical faculties. The religious subjection had its chief hold by keeping in being terrors of unrelieved death.

For a long time two of the organizations which traded on this fear, medicine and religion, were allied, but with the decay of the religious imposition there remained the alternative service, which would aim at inheriting some of the effects that a dead or dying religion could no longer possess.

I think it profitable to ask, therefore, whether some sections of the medical profession are not using the vestigial religious influences to which you draw attention.

Is there not in this direction, too, a ready field to which essentially religious tendencies and forms of thought can be transferred?

If we examine the present position of Medicine as evinced by numbers of modern practitioners, we find—apart from the traditional secrecies and archaic hieroglyphics—that to the extent approximately that creeds have lost hold; closely allied conceptions are put forward by the medical hierarchy and find easy acceptance.

Is this not evident from reference to the following facts. The priestly emphasis on the necessity for baptism, or other operation, to ensure purity in the child, find an echo in, and prepares the way for a belief in physical imperfection from birth.

The Medicine Man seems certainly to have exploited the idea by instituting the rite of vaccination, and mentally may have received the preliminary inspiration from the old idea.

The principle of remediable imperfection at birth is common both to the religious and medical concepts, and the rituals for betterment are claimed to be exclusive to the graduates in both cases. A basic similarity covers the modern extensions which claim to produce immunity to many of the ills likely to beset us. My opposition to these rituals is promoted with something of the vehemence evinced by martyrs of religious non-conformity; whilst the emphasis with which the protagonists of invisible all-pervading evil (the germ theory) prosecute their salvation-gospel savours much of religious fervour.

It would be foolish indeed to pretend that the methods follow slavishly those of the departing power—*Autre temps, Autre mœurs*—Take for instance the idea promulgated in all seriousness—Medical Research Council Special Report No. 105—that it may be necessary to give serum injections to pregnant mothers to tide their offspring through the early months of separate existence, until the more regular charms (prophylactics) can be inserted by inspired acolytes into the infant's blood stream. In the religious rites there is nothing which quite compares with this.

In one respect the new Ecclesiasticism differs from that of its forerunner since so far only animal sacrifice is demanded under the guise of vivisection, but that this will not long be so is sure from the facile activities enlisted for sterilization and "euthanasia." The vested interests, which in the case of religion were centred in the priesthood, are in the new order based in the Pathological Laboratories. The high orders therein dictate the creeds and I suppose a catechism. Q. Do you believe we can tell whether a child will get Diphtheria? A. Yes we do believe by applying the Schick Test. Q. Do you believe we can tell when a child will be serum sensitive? A. Yes, we do believe, by applying the Maloney Test. And so on for Tuberculosis, Syphilis and the like.

Look at the dogmas covered by C. B. G. Spahlinger, 606 Neo Salvarsan, Insulin, T.A.T., Formol Toxoid Dead Vaccines, Monkey malaria, Embryo chick vaccines and the like. The credulity, observable primarily in the best educated classes when the treatment was exclusive and costly, has now extended to the simple folk, and yet on investigation it is found that the claims put forward have no more basis in fact than the miracles they succeed. The old coat of religion is exchanged for a costume which resembles science.

Just as belief in the efficacy of prayer rests on the publicity given to the isolated successes, so with therapeutics all emphasis is directed to spreading knowledge of wonderful cures, forgetfulness is counted on to obliterate the innumerable failures, which are required to give the picture contrast.

I cannot leave the subject without mentioning some facts, which show I think, something of the way the medical fraternity has more or less consciously stepped into the position, which the churches have lost, to cater for those who seem to be left with a void that they desire to fill, and are therefore receptive to new mysteries.

In Leeds alone more than 30,000 children have received prophylactic injections against Diphtheria, while at Daventry an inquest was held on two children who died from Diphtheria and yet were not isolated or nursed for this complaint since the laboratories could not find any of the (germs) bacilli on the throat swabs. Three other children from the same house were diagnosed both clinically and by the laboratory to be suffering from Diphtheria.

The *Lancet*, September 28, 1935, p 700, publishes an article in which reference is made to the injection into children of the fluid from the blisters of shingles, and naively records that no other experimental animals were available. A boy "carrier" of the Diphtheria germ has been reported (*Yorks Post*, November 10, 1935) from Tickhill, nr. Doncaster, and was kept in hospital for twenty-four weeks, he is now at liberty but branded, according to the report to the U.D.C., as capable of conveying the germ to every other child. A Cattleman at Ivor, Eton R.D.C., Bucks, was declared a scarlet fever carrier, and though not ill was shut up for thirteen or more weeks as scapegoat to carry the sins of local health services when faced with a sudden scarlet fever flare up. Typhoid imported from Lourdes is being camouflaged by allegations of a carrier of the disease in a dairy in Belfast. All these activities point to a receptive mental make up, and by the ease with which they are assimilated induce the official part of the profession at any rate to launch a campaign based on fear on behalf of laboratory-produced remedies to correct invisible defects in the healthy. Defects which a departed religion has prepared the way for all to expect.

The question was early asked the Atheist, what are you going to put in the place of God? The very framing of the question supplies our answer.

With religion removed from the religious-minded the vacancy is there for a Stalin, a Hitler or a State, the space is there ready for extension of fearsome quackery now that room is to let since God vacated the district.

W. DON FISHER.

SCIENCE AND THE UNKNOWN

SIR,—It would seem that the Rev. Witcomb is under a misapprehension as regards the attitude of science towards the unknown. Actually he speaks of "scientists," but I am sure he would not object to the substitution of the word "science" on the ground that individual scientists might not be representative of the general body of thought referred to under the term science. It is the latter that is important.

What science means by the unknown is so very clear and simple that it should not be allowed to suffer a misunderstanding. When the Rev. Witcomb says, "It is obvious that one cannot define the unknown," there is a little verbal jugglery here which I am sure is quite unconscious. If he means that it is obvious one does not know the unknown, we will not cavil at the statement beyond suggesting that it is not worth making. But if

by the word "define" he implies the power to state clearly what one means, then science certainly can and does define the unknown. The unknown is that of which science infers the existence, but regarding which no information has been acquired. A good example of such would be the topography of the other side of the Moon. Without the least apology science infers that there is another side of the Moon, though it has never been observed, and goes on to infer that a map of it could conceivably be made if observation were possible. If anyone were to call this "The Wholly and Completely Other," astronomers would be very surprised. If it were called "The Mysterious Tremendum," they would be more than surprised. But science goes further. It harbours the belief that there are facts regarding which we have not even the remotest knowledge. That is to say we do not even know where to look for them and their discovery would depend on our stumbling upon them. Thus does science conceive the field of the unknown. Science therefore is "content with the statement that the unknown is just the unknown," but we can agree with the Rev. Witcomb that she is not content to "leave it at that." This discontent is what creates and maintains the existence of science, and her perpetual and progressively successful work is to keep on invading this field of ignorance with knowledge.

Coupling the phrase "that something which at least some of us who are called Christians refer to as 'God,'" with the text that follows, there is a distinct implication that the Rev. Witcomb numbers himself among those who identify God with the unknown. The similarity between a representative scientist and the Rev. Witcomb would therefore be that the former is looking for God in the laboratory, while the latter seeks Him in the Church. But the difference between them would be that, whenever the scientist finds a little bit of God, He turns out to be quite unlike anything which is represented to us in the church. And this disparity is so striking that the scientist never finds himself able to apply the term "God" to his discovery. It is safe to say that the Rev. Witcomb can search a complete library of scientific text books without finding anywhere the statement, "And this shall be called God." God perpetually remains in the church as the bit we do not know. I fear that if the Rev. Witcomb pursues his present line of thinking very much further he will find future sermons resolving themselves into the simple announcement, "The great thing about God is that we know nothing about Him."

MEDICUS.

EXPOSING THE INFANTILE RESIDUES.

SIR, As a very striking illustration of your saying, "that when a man formally rejects a specific form of belief he does not usually—certainly not of necessity—get rid of its substance," which was brilliantly demonstrated by you in the issue of October 27, let me cite the following passage, that I find in Prof. James H. Leuba's latest book, *God or Man. A Study of the Value of God to Man.* (Watts, cheap issue, 3s. 6d.), on p. 200. This excellent contribution to the application of the scientific method to the understanding of a most important sphere of human obsession hits the bottom out of all religions in a thorough fashion, but nevertheless, to my greatest surprise, there stands the insisting remark by the author, that his book "does not lead to an alternative between materialism and the spiritualistic metaphysics of the religious. *What it does, is to lead to a choice between a primitive conception of God—the one embodied in the religions—and some other conception, in our opinion an anti-materialistic one also. The materialistic systems of philosophy appear to us radically false.*" (Italics are ours.)

As for Professor Leuba's self-delusion about that "other, anti-materialistic conception of God," readers may refer to my earlier letter in the issue of May 26, 1935.

G. S. SMELTERS.

Riga, Latvia.

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 Tason. Current *Freethinkers* on sale.

INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren, N.S.S.—"That Freethought is Indispensable to Progress."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Mrs. Mary Agnes Hamilton—"Modern Writers I Like."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, November 25, Mr. Edward Gee—"The Roman Catholic Church from Within."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Rooms, 70 Grange Park Road, Leyton, E.10): 7.30, Mr. E. Gee—"Religion in Southern Europe."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, H. Prece—"The Primitive Communism Myth."

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 3.0, Mr. L. A. Miles—"Foundations of Religion."

INDOOR

BERKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, Wm. J. Paul (Neston)—"Secular Education."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street, Birmingham): 7.30, Impromptu Debate—"Freewill."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Tavern Hotel, Godwin Street, Bradford), 7.30, Mr. J. Backhouse—"Joseph Dietzgen and Dialectical Materialism."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Unity House, Hillside Crescent, Edinburgh): 2.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Nature, Man and God."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, A Discussion. Mr. J. Clayton, Mr. J. T. Eastwood (Nelson), and Mr. T. H. McWhinney (Burnley).

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Jesus, Fascism and Freethought."

HETTON (Workmen's Club Hall): 8.0, Wednesday, November 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, No. 4 Lantern Lecture by Mr. Joseph McCabe—"The Magnificent Arab Civilization."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, Dr. Tudor Jones, F.R.S.E. (Liverpool Social Credit Association)—"Political Democracy."

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, November 22, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Room 5, 2nd Floor, Drake Circus): 7.30, Mr. A. E. Knowles—"Some Bible Stories Re-told."

PRESTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Market Inn, Market Street, Preston): 7.30, Debate—"Did Man Create God?" *Affir.*: Mr. J. Broadley. *Neg.*: Mr. Carter.

STOCKTON BRANCH AREA: 7.0, Sunday, November 24, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.0, Mr. A. Planders—"Militarist Manœuvres Today."

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