

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

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

Views and Opinions

The Dean and the "Freethinker"

My criticism of the Dean of Durham's handling of Freethought (*Freethinker*, November 24) has not met with the approval of—the Dean. And I infer from the tone of his reply to me, delivered in the form of an address in Durham Cathedral on November 24, that he is actually annoyed. I should have preferred his reply to have appeared in these pages, so that my own readers might have had the benefit of his address. In a moment of fantasy I have even imagined that I had been invited to reply to the Dean in his own cathedral or in one of the minor churches in his diocese. In either case Christians and non-Christians would have had the full benefit of the discussion. In the first instance Dr. Alington would have been following the example of his predecessor at Eton, the Rev. Dr. Lytton, with whom I had the pleasure of a lengthy discussion in these columns, a discussion conducted on both sides with good humour and courtesy. I admit that if Dr. Alington had adopted the second plan he would have been doing something unprecedented in the history of the English Church, but it is a policy that would command the respect of Freethinkers, even though it might not have altered their opinions. The Dean of Durham preferred the policy of replying in a place where no answer could be given, and to an audience which would have no means of knowing whether the reply was of any value. In this respect the Dean followed the example of the *Daily Telegraph*, which declined to insert my letters dealing with the Dean's article. It is a pitiful policy on the part of the editor, but it is quite usual. What is required of newspaper editing nowadays is subservience, not courage.

I note also that Dr. Alington was careful not to mention the name of the paper to which he was replying. Why? Did he desire to prevent the keener minds among his listeners discovering that his reply was no reply at all? Was the name of the paper not mentioned because he was afraid that if his flock

came into contact with the oldest Freethought paper in Europe some of them might have their faith disturbed? Why not encourage people to read both sides of a case? In the absence of a man doing this he has no right to say that he has an opinion, he is nothing more and nothing better than a walking bundle of inculcated prejudices.

* * *

Faith and Fact

I must guard myself in dealing with Dr. Alington by saying that I am dependent upon a brief report of the Dean's sermon which appeared in the *Northern Echo* for November 25. I take it that the paper has not misrepresented the Dean, indeed the citations given hardly admit of this. And without the least desire in the world to be offensive (nothing would have pleased me more than to find the Dean called for plain cut and thrust controversy) I find myself again compelled to play the part of one who has to explain, rather than to discuss, and to correct misrepresentations. I do not think the Dean should object to this. His Lord and Master once read his listeners a lesson through the medium of a little child, and in a world in which, as Christians believe, all things work together for the glory of God, it may be that God is using the editor of the *Freethinker* to clarify the thought of a Dean of the Established Church.

Either by accident or by intent Dr. Alington misrepresents my attitude by saying that I had made an attack upon him for venturing to hold that there was such a thing as faith. I did no such thing. "Faith" implies trust or confidence in some one or some thing, and I was never foolish enough to deny either the fact or the influence of faith. People have faith in all kinds of things from Jesus Christ to Karl Marx, from placing their money in gilt-edged securities to swallowing coloured water to cure corns. That millions of people have faith in the power of prayer is a fact so obvious that none but a lunatic would deny it. What the Freethinker questions is the validity of the faith, not its existence. There are millions of people who have faith in the second coming of Christ, or in the resurrection, or have faith that carrying sacred charms round their neck will ward off evil. I have not been for nearly fifty years studying the nature and value of religion without being certain that faith is a fact. As to the social and intellectual value of faith in religious doctrines we are on different ground.

The question at issue, I must explain to the Dean, is whether a particular act of faith is justified or not. The Freethinker believes that faith in Christian doctrines is not justified; and he has a sufficient sense of social responsibility to believe that it is part of his duty to make clear the mistakes that Christians and other religionists are making. He does not believe, as apparently does the Dean, that so far as faith is concerned with religion no one is justified in pointing

out that the faith exhibited is without logical basis and is socially injurious. I wonder why this attitude? Has he no sense of social responsibility towards his neighbours in intellectual matters? Does the Dean really mean that if I see my neighbour spending his time in prayer, or placing his faith in things that I believe are likely to have grave social reactions, that I am not warranted in trying to correct him? Does he never think of the implications of the text, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

* * *

The Nature of Belief

The chief contention between the Dean and myself is as to the nature of belief. He attempted to justify belief in Christianity by saying that we were all, and especially scientists, compelled to believe in things we could not understand. I met that with a frank denial and asserted that one cannot believe a step further than one's understanding will carry him. In the course of his sermon the Dean cites such passages as "When a thing is not understood we can have no belief about it," and "My belief cannot go beyond my understanding," and calls such statements "contemptible." I do not know whether he offered any proof of this statement, but none appears in the report, and neither as a logician nor as a psychologist is the Dean's authority remarkable. According to the *Echo* the Dean

quoted a statement of Huxley that he had no complaint whatever to make against the Christian creed. He added that there was nothing in the three creeds so puzzling as the necessary antinomies in science.

The Dean went on to say that this was the "attitude of the true man of science, and as everybody, except the editor of the periodical named, owned, the man of science was a man of belief, not of Christian belief, but a man whose belief was continuously reaching out beyond his understanding in the hope that one day the evidence of the present would come to support him."

It is strange, as I have many times remarked, how fond of scientists are theologians when the scientist happens to say something that is either silly or untrue. Huxley must evidently have been speaking with his tongue in his cheek, for apart from the mistake of likening the "antinomies" to the absurdities of the Christian creed, he was enough of a philosopher to know that the Kantian antinomies, far from removing any of the intellectual difficulties in the way of accepting the Christian creeds, actually proved that there was a stage in thought when belief became impossible—which is precisely what I have been trying to make Dr. Alington understand.

So I must again, in the absence of material for controversy, resume my task of explaining. What are the "antinomies"? The term was introduced into philosophy by Immanuel Kant. He argued that when we went beyond experience, either actual or imaginatively possible, we reached a position that offered contradictory alternatives, each of which cancelled the other, neither of which was thinkable, and therefore forbade any justifiable belief. For example. We may say that the Universe had a beginning or that it never had a beginning. But to *think* an absolutely eternal existence is clearly impossible, since thought by its very nature implies limitations. But a Universe that suddenly originated from nowhere and from nothing is equally unthinkable, and, therefore, also forbids belief. I specially invite the Dean's attention to this point because the essential feature of the antinomies is that where an antinomy exists real belief is an impossibility. A

true "antinomy" implies two positions, neither of which is thinkable because each one is equally plausible, until it is shown that they are mutually destructive. The position that emerges from this is philosophical agnosticism—but not the religious agnosticism which seeks to cloak timidity by confessing inability to decide on the existence of a God, when the history of that particular illusion lies clearly before the world.

* * *

Understanding and Belief

As the Dean, in a "Though he slay me yet will I trust him" kind of attitude obstinately clings to the position that one can believe without understanding that of which belief is asserted, and as he thinks this true of science, I must again explain the meaning of belief.

Let us assume that an hitherto unknown disease suddenly makes its appearance. No one understands its causation, no one understands anything of its symptoms, and no one understands any method of cure. What does the scientist *believe* about it? Obviously he can believe nothing at all. He would explain that he cannot form a belief, because he understands nothing about it. He cannot place it in this or that class of diseases, and he cannot indicate this or that method of cure. All he can do is to try first one thing and then another till he finds something that will "touch the spot." Then, and not till then will he have a belief about it. But his belief will keep pace with his understanding. He will say it belongs to group A. or B. because it resembles A. or B. in certain particulars. He has to bring this complaint into relation with other complaints, the nature of which are understood. Dean Alington says he is reaching out beyond his understanding in the hope that definite evidence may be secured. Agreed, but that is because experience has taught him to go beyond what is actually known in order to extend his knowledge. This is not merely the attitude of everyone. It applies to a man who is awakened in the night by a series of sounds, which he assumes to be a tom-cat and seeks for verification of a surmise based on experience of similar noises.

But the point the Dean overlooks is that speculations concerning that which lies beyond knowledge is always in terms of what is already known and understood. We may think of other worlds with a different fauna and flora, but the differences will consist in different arrangements in quantities or qualities of that which we already know. The unknown animals may have heads at the bottom of their trunk instead of at the top, their eyes may be in their feet or in the middle of their bodies, the vegetation may be all white, or all red, but the colours will be combinations of colours already known. Trees may grow with their roots in the air, the rain may be sweet and sticky, but it is beyond the power of man to think of the unknown save in terms of the known. In reaching out into the unknown all that any man can do is work on the basis that the future will in its general outlines resemble the past. Otherwise there is no room for thinking of any kind, and certainly no room for belief.

Dr. Alington is very fond of using the expression "Completely understood," as though that qualification may explain how a man may believe without understanding. The qualifying word makes no difference whatever to the general proposition. When a thing is completely understood—and there are few, if any, of which this is philosophically true, then belief has reached the higher and ultimate stage of knowledge. But whether our understanding is relatively complete or relatively incomplete, it still remains true that we must understand in order to be-

lieve, that our belief keeps pace with our understanding, and for the very good reason that unless we understand we do not know what it is we are asked to believe. This is really not a case for argument at all, it is a statement of simple fact. The only reason that I can see why Dr. Alington does not see this is that being a theologian he feels that he must encourage people to say "I believe," when they have not the slightest conception as to the meaning of what they are asked to believe.

Of course, it may be that Dr. Alington is under the impression that belief and knowledge are different things. They are not; they are two stages of the same thing. One implies a settled conviction of which the other is the earlier stage. Unbelief is not the opposite of belief, but the other side of the same frame of mind. The opposite of belief is doubt. One may doubt without understanding, many do. The Dean in his treatment of Freethought is an example of this.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Godly Gold-Diggers

"How quickly Nature falls into revolt,
When gold becomes her object."—*Shakespeare.*

"Religion is nothing but a trade."—*Dean Swift.*

AFTER a hot debate on a subject that suggested a meeting of a building-society directorate, rather than that of saintly-minded pastors, the Church Assembly at Church House, Westminster, recently decided to spend up to £10,000 a year for twenty years to provide new and enlarged churches in growing areas, and also to provide definite annual sums for low-income bishoprics. This was a clear case for battle, and bishops and minor clergy plunged into economics and mathematics to determine whether the cash should be spent on the clergy themselves or in bricks and mortar.

The Archdeacon of Barnstaple said that half the clergy of this country are underpaid, and urged that the money of the wealthy Ecclesiastical Commissioners should go to the living man, not to the mere ecclesiastical organization. He ended theatrically: "Did not our holy religion begin in a stable?" A Churchwoman, the only one present, heightened the tension by suggesting that the money might well be spent on new parsonage houses. The Archdeacon of Oakham pointed out that England was becoming more and more pagan, and new churches were needed. Eventually the original resolution was approved, and the money allotted to the bishops and the builders, the latter getting the lion's share.

The debate raised once more the question of the poverty of the clergy, and the matter is worth inquiry. It must be galling for the rank and file of the clergy to see men of not superior ability living in palaces and palatial houses, legislating in the House of Lords, and drawing comfortable incomes varying from £2,000 to £15,000 yearly, but can it be said that the average clergyman is nearer the poverty-line than the ordinary citizen? The Bishop of London has declared many times that some of the clergy are "starving," and he has quoted an awful instance of a parson who fed a whole family of five persons on sixpence a meal. Mr. Lloyd George has even said that the men-of-God are worse off than the miners. But this is the merest rhetoric, and is used to open the hearts and purses of believers. It is no more correct than the threat that Saint Paul's Cathedral was in actual danger of falling into Paternoster Row,

a pleasant exaggeration, which netted the ecclesiastics a sackful of money, and provided the newspapers with a thrilling headline.

Anybody who cares to consult Crockford's *Clerical Directory* can see at a glance that the average "reverend" enjoys a very comfortable existence. Half get more than £400 a year, and many enjoy salaries of four figures. In addition, the parson lives in a decent house, often nicer and larger than his neighbours'. He has just as much, or as little, work as he likes to do, and if he chooses to spend three-fourths of each day reading or visiting, there is no one to say him nay. He can count on invitations to dinner and other hospitality all the year round, which is no small saving in household expense. The higher ecclesiastics evade the blessings of poverty in a still more happy manner. The Bench of Bishops, forty in number, share £182,000 yearly, and the scores of Colonial and Suffragan bishops enjoy salaries equal to those of town clerks and borough surveyors, both of whom have most onerous positions. The bachelor Bishop of London, who is always reminding us of the poverty of the wretched clergy, "starves" on a salary of £200 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep fifty working-class families in comparative comfort. The blunt truth is that this Church of England is the richest Church in all Christendom. At the top there are prelates with seats in the House of Lords, where they never do any good service for democracy; at the bottom a multitude of holders of benefices far better off than the ordinary citizen. The ancient ecclesiastical endowments of this Church are far more solid than the alleged golden streets of the New Jerusalem, and they are not invested in "bucket-shop" concerns. Lord Addington's Parliamentary return of 1891 showed that the annual value of these ancient ecclesiastical endowments was then £5,469,171, exclusive of more modern benefactions which amounted to £284,000 a year. And properties have nearly doubled in value since that date. "Worse off than the miners," says Mr. Lloyd George. It will interest the miners to know that part of this huge amount of money is derived from coal royalties, and that one of the Commissioners is a Socialist.

Miners, forsooth! At Corringham, in Essex, the parsonage house has twenty bedrooms. The parish of Wigan has a rectory with twenty-six bedrooms. So one might quote instances. These palatial houses are relics of the ages of faith, when the clergy rode roughshod over the people and their liberties. They are survivals of the bad old days when the youngest son went into the "Church" as his brothers went into the Army and Navy. The "fatter" the living, and the less the work, the better it was. At Settrington, in Yorkshire, the rectory is far beyond "the miner's dream of home," for it contains twenty-one rooms, three staircases, a thirty-foot long drawing-room, and stabling for a dozen horses. As for the bishops, they live in semi-royal state. The episcopal robes cost £200, which is far beyond the cost of a miner's wife's best dress. "The stair-carpet at Farnham Castle are measured by miles," wrote old Bishop Thorold. "My episcopal income goes in pergolas," complained Bishop Stubbs. It is, indeed, a far cry from the fishing-nets of the legendary disciples to Lambeth Palace with its guard-room; Fulham Palace with its pleasure grounds; Farnham Palace with its deer-park, and Wells with its moated garden.

All this talk of the poverty of the wretched clergy is simply sob-stuff for raising cash. There is most certainly the money in this Church of England, not only for the clergy, but for the caretakers, organists, choristers, and other satellites, who are notoriously underpaid. But the money is unevenly distributed.

The higher ecclesiastics are most excellent gold-diggers. Just consider the matter of tithe, the ten-per-cent tax on agriculture, which these gentlemen have drawn for nearly two thousand years, and which they fondly hope will be bought at so many years' purchase when their Church is disestablished. There are many anomalies in this Parliamentary-made Church of England, but the most striking are the desperate efforts made by bishops and clergy alike to escape the blessings of poverty alleged to be promised by the founder of their religion.

The "old, old story" of a saviour born in a stable, and associated with the pharisaical profession of goodwill to all men, is pretence and make-believe. The clergy themselves are not deceived, for they make millions out of this sacred sham, and hiss at the "intellectuals" who would free their fellow-men from the clutches of ancient ignorance and superstition. Posing as "the sons of God," and deeming themselves "pastors and masters," the clergy are simply survivals from an older and more ignorant age. Pretending to be in the very van of civilization, they are but the last phase of Feudalism. The sooner their Church is disestablished and disendowed the better for everybody, except the clerical gold-diggers.

MIMNERMUS.

Grey Owl In The Flesh

GREY OWL, the naturalist and one-time trapper, whose recent book was mentioned in the *Freethinker* of November 24, lectured in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, on Friday of the same week, and I went to hear him. This is the hall where I have so frequently heard Mr. Chapman Cohen speak, and I found that I was recognized by the door-keeper. He gave me a smile mingled with a look of slight surprise, and as I passed him I murmured in his ear, "It's only beaver to-night." We both laughed. But within a couple of hours I was to discover that I would never again say "only beaver."

Once inside the Hall it was evident that a great proportion of the audience consisted of school-children. The beaver had attracted them too. As we sat down my companion turned to me with the question, "How do you like being at school again?" I laughed for the second time, but once again I was to make a discovery. Before an hour had passed I was at school again.

When we had collected ourselves after the first bustle of getting seated I became aware of faint strains of music coming from a gramophone somewhere behind the platform, and on listening intently realized that it was the grand fortissimo passage in Schubert's Unfinished Symphony. The incongruity of this feeble bleating irritated me, and I began to wonder if it was the prelude to a fiasco. Then the Chairman entered, and within a very few minutes Grey Owl stood before his audience. Adorned in full Indian costume, he took a few easy steps across the platform towards the auditorium and addressed a sentence to us in his native tongue. I grew uneasy. The lights went down and a moving picture appeared on the screen. The lecture had commenced. Grey Owl's opening remarks were shot at us in a series of abrupt phrases, delivered in a rasping monotone, and conveying almost an impression of ungraciousness. Matters were not improved when he fell into the phraseology of declamation, with the least suggestion of histrionics. Then, from behind the platform where lay concealed the almost forgotten gramophone, came

very softly the opening bars of the Moonlight Sonata, and my heart sank into my boots. Here was the "soft music off." Was it all going to degenerate into a Transatlantic stunt? Then the magic began to work.

Grey Owl's voice softened. Or were we just getting used to it? His words began to gather significance and a charm crept into his delivery as its obvious sincerity dawned upon us. Grey Owl was a Canadian woodsman, not a fashionable lecturer, and he was more used to talking to animals than to men. By the very force of his elemental presence he weaned us away from our comfortable city haunts, and soon we were transported, as on a magic carpet from the Arabian nights, into the nethermost regions of Earth. But it was not into the glamorous East that we were taken. Grey Owl bore us westward into the vast forests and snowy wildernesses of Northern Canada. His gift for communicating atmosphere was immense, and it was some time before I realized wherein lay the secret of it. Like most secrets it was a very simple one. The man himself was almost preternaturally receptive. Every tree, every shrub, every creature, every slightest sound of the forest touched in him a delicate chord of response, and his whole being vibrated in unison with Nature. His words were a mere echo of this inward harmony and we, being after all children of Earth like himself, felt the communicated thrill of elemental life. Grey Owl no longer seemed incongruous.

Something of the man himself may be understood from the story of how he came to settle down in Beaver Lodge. The first part of his life was spent trapping, and beaver formed the main portion of his "bag." That was how he earned his living. The profound change that came over his life commenced with his marriage. His wife, a woman of the Mohawk tribe, was, as he told us, "a cultured girl with a city education, who could not speak a word of the Indian tongue." But she found no difficulty in casting in her lot with Grey Owl in the Canadian wilds. Nevertheless she soon began to remonstrate with him about the brutality of trapping, to which he was as yet insensitive. The truth of her words dawned upon him for the first time when the woman, as the woman always will, got her way over the question of a couple of beaver kittens. The mother beaver had been killed, and the kittens were heard sending out pathetic squeals for help. Grey Owl's wife was all for taking the kittens into her care, but the husband saw it only as impracticable. Mrs. Grey Owl won the day and the couple kept the kittens, which lived to become the famous McGinnis and McGinty. The whole Canadian forest had failed to bring the real Grey Owl to life, but those beaver kittens did it off their own hat. The trapper has never killed an animal for business or pleasure from that day to this. It meant that his living was gone, at all events for a considerable time, but he and his wife stuck it over the difficult period and won through in the end. Beaver Lodge is the house built for them by the Canadian Government after the public recognition of their services to wild life. Round them lives a colony of beaver, who appear to have made a club room of the house, and this haven of peace and security has become a sort of mecca for the wild life of the surrounding area, where Grey Owl and his wife make periodic tours, rather reminiscent of justices on circuit, to reopen friendships with all the animals. Grey Owl tells us that he cannot abandon the lodge now (his wife is keeping the flag flying during his absence) because it would "let the animals down."

His account of wild life, in particular among the beaver, was more than instructive, it was inspiring. Like all great souls he combines directness and sim-

plicity of outlook with a rich sense of humour, and some of his sallies during the showing of the pictures spread ripples of laughter round the auditorium. A typical comment of his was heard when he was showing a picture of himself loading his wife's back with provisions at the start of a "portage" (a trip from water to water across a stretch of land, when provisions and canoe have to be carried through the forest). We saw Grey Owl's wife drop the final package, an extra heavy one, and stand there obviously unable, by reason of the load already on her shoulders, to bend down and pick it up. Grey Owl was seen to reach for it and heave it on to the incredible pyramid that almost hid her from view. In the gloom of the darkened hall we saw him smiling at the screen as he remarked, "That's what I call courtesy." But when he was shown lifting the canoe over his head, like an ancient Briton in a picture book, we knew who it was that bore the brunt of the burden. There was a quiet humour, too, in his account of the friendship with the beaver Rawhide, which started with a little first aid given to Rawhide at Beaver Lodge and ripened into a lifelong affection. Rawhide, he said, soon discovered that a bed was a more comfortable place to sleep on than a floor, and about the third night turned in with his host, lying on the bed cover with his nose resting on the man's body. It was not long, said Grey Owl, before Rawhide started to appropriate more than his fair share of the bed, and then to grumble when Grey Owl moved at night. "It was the old story," said Grey Owl. "It had become *his* bed." Then a few stories told against himself showed us the eternal gaiety of this man.

At the end of the lecture Grey Owl gave us a few hints about his philosophy, which centres round the kinship of all living things. Throughout the lecture we had enjoyed the unusual experience of an audience in which everybody between six and sixty was moved by the same feelings. Young and old alike, we all "Aw-ed" and "Ah-ed" and "Oo-ed," applauded, laughed or sat spell-bound at the same moments. That in itself ought to have suggested to us some deep note of unity struck by the lecturer. But this was made explicit in his final remarks, in the course of which he said many good things pregnant with wider meaning. Among quite a number of significant comments were such as this: "Wild animals. We call them wild, but is it not really *we* who are wild? How many so-called wild animals will kill for nothing but the pleasure of killing? In what community of animals would we find members gathered round for the delight of seeing their brothers fight and maul each other to death? How can a crowd at a bull fight call the peaceful creatures of the forest 'wild'?" And he was there to back up his remarks with pictures of these animals. We saw the bull moose stalking about the forest not fifteen feet away, and even a grisly bear was photographed, without a telephoto lens, in his native haunts. At one point we were eight feet from the grisly, the king of the Canadian forests. Grey Owl admitted that the cameraman stood turning the handle with one hand and mopping his brow with the other, while on either side of him crouched a man with a rifle at full cock. But Grisly went his way, evidently a little irritated (or was it puzzled?) by the noise of the camera but otherwise indifferent. We saw him at length shuffle off through the bushes.

In describing himself as an ambassador for the animal kingdom Grey Owl did himself less than justice. To thinking folk he is an ambassador for very much more than that. He comes to us, torch in hand, bearing an idea, an outlook, a philosophy. Some of the broader visions that Darwin bequeathed to us from the study, Grey Owl sends us out of the forest.

He is an ambassador of peace. It is fitting that this inspiration should come to us in the person of a backwoodsman. Our cocksure civilization, so proud of its mechanized conquest of Nature, would do well to ponder on a life that seeks only to establish a peaceful harmony with Nature, for what such a life will lose in sheer mechanical achievement it will gain in moral richness. We have more to learn from the forests than we might imagine, and we need not be too proud to learn it from the lofty mind of a Canadian Indian.

MEDICUS.

Things Worth Knowing*

XVI.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN

I MUST distinctly reject as erroneous the broad statement that the lower races in general hold their women in a state of almost complete subjection. Among many of them the married woman, though in the power of her husband, is known to enjoy a remarkable degree of independence, to be treated by him with consideration, and to exercise no small influence over him.

Let us now turn our attention to woman's position among people of a higher culture. In China her condition has always been a very inferior one, and no generous sentiment tending to its amelioration has ever come from the Chinese sages. . . . When young, she must obey her father and her elder brother; when married she must obey her husband; when her husband is dead she must obey her son.

From various quarters of the ancient world we hear the rule that the husband shall command and the wife obey. The Lord said to the woman, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." How great the husband's power was among the Hebrews we do not know exactly. He could divorce his wife at his pleasure, whereas it is nowhere said in the Old Testament that a marriage could be dissolved at the will of the wife; indeed the Jewish law has never given her a right to divorce her husband, though she may on certain grounds demand a bill of divorce from him, and the court may force him to give such a bill. . . .

In Greece a wife appears to have been a more influential and independent person in ancient times, in Homeric society, than she became afterwards. . . . Aristotle, always a faithful exponent of the most enlightened opinion of his age, gives the following description of what he considers the ideal relation of a woman to her husband, "A good and perfect wife ought to be mistress of everything within the house. . . ." But the well-ordered wife will justly consider the behaviour of her husband as a model of her own life, and a law to herself, invested with a divine sanction by means of the marriage tie and the community of life.

In Rome, in ancient times, the power which the father possessed over his daughter was generally, if not always, transferred by marriage to her husband. . . . Gradually, however, marriage with *manus* fell

* 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.

into disuse, and during the Empire generally, was succeeded by marriage without *manus*, a form of wedlock which conferred upon the husband hardly any authority at all over his wife. . . . This remarkable liberty granted to women was only a passing incident in the history of Europe. From the first Christianity tended to narrow it. Christianity enjoins a husband to love his wife as his own body, to do honour unto her as the weaker vessel. But "the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on the head." The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church; hence, "as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." It is difficult to exaggerate the influence exerted by a doctrine so agreeable to the selfishness of men, and so readily lending itself to be used as a sacred weapon against any attempt to extend the rights of married women, as was this dictum of St. Paul. . . .

Progress in civilization had an unfavourable effect upon the social position of woman by widening the gulf between the sexes, since the higher culture was almost exclusively the prerogative of the men. But there was another, and at least equally important cause of her degradation—a cause which was also largely responsible for the state of ignorance in which she was kept—namely, the influence which religion exerted upon ideas, customs and laws. Woman, as I have said, has always been looked upon as an unclean and therefore sinful being, dangerous to holiness. She may consequently be prohibited from approaching holy places or objects, or from taking part in sacred functions. . . . In Christian Europe, as ascetic ideas advanced, the women sat or stood in the church apart from men or entered by a separate door. They were excluded from sacred functions. In the early church, it is true, there were deaconesses and clerical widows, but their offices were merely to perform some inferior services of the Church; and even these very modest posts were open only to virgins and widows of a considerable age. Whilst a layman could of necessity administer baptism, a woman could never, as it seems, perform such an act. Nor was a woman allowed to preach publicly in the church, either by the Apostle's rules or those of succeeding ages; and it was a serious complaint against heretics that they allowed such a practice. "The heretic woman," Tertullian exclaims, "how wanton they are! they who dare to teach, to dispute, to practice exorcisms, to promise cures, to promise also to baptize!" A council held at Auxerre at the end of the sixth century forbade women to receive the naked Eucharist into their naked hands; and in various canons women were enjoined not to come near the altar while mass was celebrating. To such an extent was this opposition against women carried that the Church of the Middle Ages did not hesitate to provide itself with eunuchs in order to supply cathedral choirs with the soprano tones inheriting by nature in women alone.

Early Beliefs and their Social Influence,
by E. WESTERMARCK, pp. 160-9.

XVII.

THE CHURCH IN POWER

THE Church of the Middle Ages conferred inestimable benefits on mankind, and especially on England, from the days of Lanfranc to those of Grostete; but it inflicted enormous mischief in other ways. It was in

the last degree intolerant to all who would not agree with its tenets and its policy. As it became more zealous it became more implacable. It educated the human mind, but only on its own lines, and though it allowed growth, it stunted and distorted it. It had no patience with those who challenged its authority, and the means by which it thought fit to maintain its authority. It put out the most shameless fictions in order to vindicate its claims. It forged a whole body of law that it might maintain, first, the appellate, and, next, the original jurisdiction of the papal court. It forged charters innumerable, in order to give the pretence of independence for its action and status. It forged miracles by thousands, in order that it might at once enslave the people and fill its coffers. Mr. Hallam has quoted some of these stories, which he conceives were invented in order to be a counterpoise to the foolish romances of chivalry. They long precede such romances, and a heap of them—those which Mr. Hallam quotes among the rest—may be seen in an eleventh century MS. still preserved in the Bodleian Library. Nor was the papacy above sharing in these frauds. I do not say that the alleged miracles at Becket's tomb were deliberate impostures. The circumstances under which the unparalleled crime of Becket's was committed were sufficient to strike every imagination in the twelfth century, when the paroxysm of passion was over. . . . But the bargain under which the translation was permitted by the Pope was most significant. The murder of Becket occurred in midwinter, a most inconvenient time for pilgrimage, and the monks sought for the Pope's permission to put the day of translation in midsummer. The Pope claimed half the gross profits of the shrine, and on the monks insisting that they could not carry on the business on such terms, allowed himself to accept half the net profits. The Pope was Honorius III., who had succeeded to the policy and pretensions of Innocent III., and the narrative of the transactions is in the archives of Christ Church, now the Canterbury Chapter.

The more zealous was the reformer of Church discipline and doctrine the more ferocious was his zeal. We owe the Inquisition to Dominic, one of the founders of the missionary movement at the end of the twelfth century, and the savagery of the Inquisition's orthodoxy at the commencement of its career was as implacable as that of its later organization and activity. The mission of the new order was, like that of its predecessors, to save society; but if any members, or all its members, declined the means which the mission laid down by the agents of the reform, the doctors of the new way were quite ready to destroy society, for the fundamental condition under which it would do good was that of unhesitating obedience, of a total surrender of the judgment to dictation, and of unquestioning faith in the authorized revelation. The Church in the twelfth century needed reform grievously, but the discipline of the orthodox reformer fell on those whom the Church had offended. So the whole Church became hopelessly corrupt in the fourteenth century, so corrupt that there seemed no prospect of an internal reformation such as that effected by Dominic and Francis, and only one remedy remained—the submission of the hierarchy to the decrees of general Councils. But the Council was as bloodthirsty, as perfidious as the Inquisition. And when the Reformation became a fact, and a new race of obedient reformers sprang up in Loyola and his followers, there still was to be no truce, no mercy for the heretic; there was to be nothing but submission or death. If the Church of the Middle Ages strove to mitigate, to resist, to control, to subdue the evils of the age in which it found its

work, it would do so only on condition that the progress of mankind went on the lines it had sketched out, and to limits which is defined. Any onward movement was dangerous, suspicious, and finally intolerable

Six Centuries of Work and Wages,
by THOROLD ROGERS, pp. 358-60.

Acid Drops

The defeat of Dr. O'Donovan in the recent elections, and the success of Mr. A. P. Herbert is not all to the liking of our Catholic press. The doctor, as became a thorough and unquestioning believer, constantly opposed any attempt at Divorce Reform in the House. Mr. Herbert is, we are glad to say, a fine, convincing and logical champion of such reform. The *Universe* puts it this way: "it is deplorable that as, probably the private member outstanding in brilliance, persistence and popularity, Mr. Herbert should in the new House take the place of Dr. O'Donovan." On the contrary, it is splendid; and it shows quite clearly how often God works in a mysterious way!

The *Daily Sketch* is devoting space to what looks like an exposure of some "Spiritualist" deceptions. Mr. Harrison Owen is apparently surprised to find that professional mediums and "ouija Boards" do not come out well from his "excellent opportunity to test the evidential value of 'automatic writing.'" So far as we have read, Mr. Owen's "tests" were themselves of little "evidential value." If the medium had "revealed" to Mr. Owen that his name was Owen, and that he was still alive, but that his great-grandmother had "passed over," the "evidential value" of such revelations would not make it worth while for anyone with intelligence "to test" their origin. But perhaps these "failures" are a preface to some "genuine" examples. Advertisements often begin thus. We shall wait and see.

It is not surprising to find the Bishop of Exeter, Lord William Cecil, declaring that he rejoices to see that stag-hunts continue, because "the hunted deer will be profoundly happy, ready to fight to the death." As Mr. Foote said to Judge North, "the sentence is worthy of your creed." Lord William is the same cleric who declared in 1915 that in the Great War "there has never been a life lost; for those who have died on the field of battle found life." The "noble" bishop "congratulated" the parents of our dead instead of sympathizing with them.

A writer in one of the religious weeklies, very much concerned with the slack way religion is taught in our secondary schools pictures the teacher, Mr. X. deputed by his head to fill in a spare half hour on Scripture, something like this:—

Now Mr. X may or may not have a rudimentary knowledge of the Bible (and to-day this cannot be assumed even for the graduates of our older Universities); he may or may not profess some form of the Christian Faith; he may be an expert in history, geography, German, or biology he may be a Presbyterian, a Buddhist, a Fire-worshipper, or a militant Atheist, for all the difference it makes. Mr. X has a free period; Form III. C. have no one to teach them. Ergo, Form III. C. must be taught Scripture by Mr. X.

The result, according to the writer, is bound to be lamentable; and he does not blame the headmaster altogether—even when, as is often the case, the headmaster is a priest.

The critic thinks that one solution must be that the "Study of God"—which he calls the "Queen of

Sciences," should "rule with her beneficent sway the whole curriculum." Another is, if the schoolmaster is a priest, he should be "a priest first and a schoolmaster second." We quite agree—if religion has to be taught in schools, this is about the only way: surrender entirely to the Church and its priests. But as it is admittedly taught badly, as it is being "degraded to the position of assistant scullery-maid" and "made to peel potatoes and black boots," why not fight for the only logical solution—Secular Education? Why not remove religion altogether from such a contemptible state of things and teach it—at the Church's expense—where it ought to be taught, in Church and Chapel? But perhaps our critic is afraid that it might get an even worse innings there? Let us whisper—we hope so.

We are pleased to put on record that the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Chichester and the Bishop of Durham attacked Germany's treatment of the Jews within her borders as a foul and ghastly blot on civilization; and the Church Assembly, with very few dissentients, passed the Resolution moved by the Bishop of Chichester. Whether the speeches or the Resolution will have any effect remain to be seen—though it is most unlikely so long as the Hitler-Goebbels regime remains in power. But what a commentary on civilization is this treatment of the race—treatment which somehow has persisted through the centuries whatever excuse the barbaric or Dark Ages may offer, what excuse can be given now? And did not Goebbels put in a plea for *real* Christianity the other day?

The old idea that there was one law for the poor and another for editors of religious journals receives an interesting illustration in the *Methodist Recorder*, which quotes the "Divine" command "Owe no man anything." It attacks the poor man's "instalment system," but is not unnaturally silent about the impossibility of commercial life being based on ready money. If the pious editor believes that commerce is immoral or unethical, a wild absurdity which is not shared by socialists or the Soviet Government, then "our Lord" was giving only another illustration of the fact that morality is not a stagnant system of categorical imperatives. A god who issues a series of "Thou shalt nots" ought to date them and explain by footnotes that "these commandments apply only in suitable conditions and circumstances—if ever."

The Rev. H. T. Wigley tells us that "everything in civilization is coming to a judgment"—and we know what our clergy mean when they talk about a "judgment." Apparently there is no such thing as a favourable judgment. It is like an "Act of God"—a mighty unpleasant "act" in every case. Mr. Wigley sees red. He sees "a revival of paganism of the worst kind." Fortunately he has his remedy—we must "pay special attention to the sermon on the mount"—special attention in the surgical sense apparently. We are "to interpret it not with a wooden spirit, not with a literal mind, but with intelligent imagination"—for instance, by saying the exact opposite, which seems to be the ordinary method of "interpreting" inconvenient texts.

At a Methodist Church gathering at Leicester a Mr. Unwin is said to have delivered "an impassioned speech." He "described the recrudescence of the tiger and the wolf in human life to-day." No scientist ever believed the tiger and the wolf had disappeared from human character. Christianity has done much to delay its disappearance by its prisons, its tortures, its intolerance and its belief in hell-fire. Mr. Unwin piled up the agony by including in his indictment of the worst evils of to-day's common life, "the insatiable thirst for pleasure." Certainly Christianity has done its best to eradicate this terrible example of what Christians hate

most: "pleasure" is a cant word for human happiness. "Insatiable thirst" means (in this case) usually a weekly visit to the "Pictures" without satiety.

There is a good deal of impudence in the claim of the *Methodist Recorder* that "thirty-four Methodist Candidates were returned." At the election referred to there was not a single such candidate, at least no candidate stood for election as a Methodist. It is dishonest in the moral sense to make such a claim, it stamps the candidates mentioned as attempting to throw dust in the eyes of the electors by standing on one ticket while actually standing in quite other interests. Probably these men are exactly like other candidates running on the same ticket—they will make good party men, fighting each other in the ordinary way to accomplish the opposing ends they were elected to advocate. To pretend that they are really acting together as a single party is an insult to these political enemies.

For polite sarcasm, the Rev. A. E. Whitham has few equals. He says, "We complain that God is so elusive," and that we ask, "Why does He not speak clearer or knock louder, or if I am out why does he not call again?" Oh, no, says Mr. Whitham, "He does call again, but we mistake His knock for a neighbour asking help . . . and we do not answer." Christ should give a double-knock, and people expecting a cheque from their book-maker would run to the door at once. But why KNOCK?

It is always fascinating to meet with survivals of some almost discarded superstition. It needs bravery carried to the point of foolhardiness in 1935 to believe that there is still a God who actually talks to men. The Rev. Ernest H. Jeffs says:—

To give up the belief that the voice of God can indeed be heard, clearly, unmistakably, savingly, is to give up the very key position of Protestant Christianity.

If so, it would seem that we have "lost the key" which opened the door to all kinds of fraud for thousands of years, while sorcerer, medicine-man, priest and minister profited by an ignorance no longer possible. The Holy Bible was God's last message. He has never been seen or heard since He inspired St. John the Divine to say (eighteen centuries ago): "Surely I come quickly." The Wireless has taken away God's last rag of an excuse for not being "heard clearly, unmistakably," etc.

One of the wonderful "miracles" which Catholics almost invariably produce from Lourdes is known as the de Rudder case. It seems that for years Mr. de Rudder "had been in pain with a badly broken leg." As treatment had not the slightest effect, he went to Lourdes, and one dip was sufficient to cure it. To an admiring crowd of his fellow-believers Dr. O. Gorman, the other day, showed "pictures" of the leg before and after the cure—though the account does not say when, where, or by whom they were taken. Probably they were drawn for the occasion. We should not have called attention, however, to this story but for the fact that the "miracle" is almost always used as an example of one bearing "the signature of God himself." And we are not surprised to find its date is 1867. One can imagine the tremendous attempts to prevent fraud taken by Catholics as far back as that in such a superstitious district as Lourdes. We really wonder which to admire most—the perfect gullibility of the average Catholic or the complete confidence with which those in authority know that they can gull him.

For fifty years, every day every night, "a relay of worshippers has knelt before the altar" of the Sacred Heart Basilica, Montmartre. We should dearly like to know what for—or what good it has done? It has never prevented war or poverty or disease. It never prevented

the unsavoury cases which often distinguish French courts—or all courts for that matter—or such a monstrous piece of injustice as was meted out to the unlucky Captain Dreyfus. If ever we required proof of the utter futility of prayer—which we don't—we could hardly give a better instance.

It is interesting to find that another new book on God has just been published. It is called *God: His Existence and Nature*, and we are quite sure that its author knows just as much about both questions as did the authors of all similar books, and which must already number a few hundred thousands. He, however, deals mostly with the "celebrated" proofs of Aquinas, "to which all others," we are told, "are ultimately reducible." This may well be so, but it does not prove that Aquinas cannot be easily answered. He believed in "revelation" as showing the "essence" of God and "reason" as showing his existence; and both "revelation" and "reason" do not quite have the same meaning for us that they had for Aquinas.

The Protestant *Record* does not like Anglo-Catholicism, and puts down the decrease in Church attendance to "the spread of Catholic practices." The *Church Times* thinks such statements are "stupid and ill-mannered." Well, perhaps the two journals are both right and wrong; though the fact remains Church attendances are decreasing—and decreasing alarmingly. What can be the reason? Supposing we say that people are "fed-up" with both sects and leave it at that?

The Archbishop of York delivered the first Gore Memorial Lecture, the other week, on "Christianity as an Historical religion." "He dealt specially," says a report of the lecture, "with the view of those who, like Spinoza, cling to the Christian conception of God, but are indifferent to the historical standing of the events which are supposed to give rise to it." It will certainly be news to a good many students of Spinoza to learn that he clung to "the Christian conception of God"—or indeed to any of the prevalent religious "conceptions of God." For the rest, we certainly could not discover in the report any inkling of the proof, necessary to show that Christianity was a historical religion, that Jesus was God. What Dr. Temple is reported to have said seems uncommonly like what has been said a million times from the pulpit; but history. . . . !

A courageous and sensible article appears in the *British Weekly*, by the Rev. W. H. Stubbs, on Voluntary Euthanasia—a subject brought forcibly to the front by some recent tragedies. It is a subject which, like Birth-Control, Capital Punishment, Abortion, and many other humane proposals, has been advocated for a long time by many Freethinkers, often amidst derision and abuse, mainly from Christian conservative forces. Mr. Stubbs will meet with the same prejudices (modified by earlier propaganda perhaps), and we wish him well. Mr. Stubbs is a Wolverhampton Presbyterian minister.

We live in old cells, we move in old grooves, we go on using old watchwords, apparently unconscious that these are out of date, and have lost their savour of meaning. . . . Do we not need a leaven of independent thought to make us distinguish what is from what has ceased to be real and essential? . . . One is sometimes driven to conjecture that the faculty of independent thought is for the time weakened or distracted or numbered; or may we hope and believe that the thought is there, and is only deficient in expression?

Lord Rosebery "On National Culture."

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL

61 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- F. RUSFORD AND OTHERS.—Thanks for report of the Dean of Durham's sermon. We have dealt with it in "Views and Opinions."
- W. E. NICHOLSON.—Perhaps we have made the matter clearer in this issue. Whatever be one's state of mind in relation to anything an understanding, to some extent, is a necessary condition of belief. Whether our understanding is complete or incomplete does not in the least affect the issue.
- F.J.T.—We do not know exactly what Mr. Wells would call himself in relation to religion, but in the prefatory note of *The Way to World Peace*, he says, "He does not consider himself either a Christian or a Deist, and he disbelieves altogether in personal immortality." But the important thing is not what well-known men think about certain topics, but what you think about them yourself. One should not disestablish authority in religion merely to re-establish it in its opposite.
- H. JOHNSON.—We are sending out a large number of specimen copies of each week's issue, free, in the hopes of introducing the paper to new readers. Occasionally copies are received by old readers, as in your case. In condemning the suppression of freedom of speech and publication, we are not concerned with weighing up the relative merits of countries in connexion with other matters. The *Freethinker* stands for freedom of thought everywhere.
- "JAVAR HEM."—Many thanks for address of a likely new subscriber. Paper being sent for four weeks.
- FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—Don Fisher, 3s.
- CINE CERE.—Thanks for cutting. The subject cannot be dealt with in a note. Perhaps on some future occasion.
- Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4, and not to the Editor.
- The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.
- The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.
- All cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Sugar Plums

The very wild weather of last Sunday—heavy rain, wind at gale force, and splashes of snow—had its inevitable effect on Mr. Cohen's meeting at Bradford. The audience was below the usual, although one imagines that the weather had a selective quality with respect to those present. The lecture was not exactly what is called a popular one—that is, those who listened were not expected to refrain from thinking on their own account, but the interest of the audience was marked. Mr. Corrina made a very able chairman, and there was a good sale of literature. The supply of Mr. Cohen's *Humanity and War* was soon exhausted, and many more copies might have been sold.

We are very pleased to report that the reply to our request for help in circulating *Humanity and War* is good, but we hope there will be no slackening. We ought to exhaust the present edition before 1935 comes to an end, and a really large circulation of this pamphlet would certainly mean the introduction of the *Freethinker* and *Freethought* publications to many new readers. We are still sending out eight copies, post free, for 2s. Larger quantities pro-rata.

The Centenary of the birth of Mark Twain has received wide—and deserved notice in the press, but nearly all the writers have omitted to mention the fundamental fact of his Freethought. This silence is so usual that one is only surprised when the opposite takes place. But worse still, so far as the man himself is concerned, is to treat him, as many have done, as essentially a humorist, as the *Sunday Times* put it, one "who, in the role of humorists has had the gift of making their wisecracks represent a nation"; and it is equally ridiculous to say that "the world which Mark Twain interpreted has passed away." Nothing of the kind. The world with which Mark Twain dealt is still with us, and will be with us, on varying levels so long as human nature exists. The real mark of a great writer is that he sees beneath the special expressions of life the deeper humanity that runs on through the generations. And it is the mark of a little man to see nothing but the superficialities of the moment.

The purpose of Mark Twain was nearly always a serious one. He was serious as Lucian and Voltaire were serious. His wit and humour were vehicles of expression used to drive home the injustice of life and the possibilities of greatness in human nature. Multitudes who would not read a treatise in a more severe form realized these things as he expressed them. Those who think that Twain was only a great humorist should turn to a volume such as *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*, and if they have the wit to do so will find there a sounder philosophy of social life than in most solemn historical works of ten times its size. And those who wish to understand Mark Twain, and how a great nature may be crippled by home influences, and the evil influence of Puritanism, should read Mr. Van Wyck Brooke's *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, published in 1922. This is by far the finest scientific study of Mark Twain that has been issued.

The Annual Dinner of the National Secular Society will be held in the Holborn Restaurant on January 29. There will be the usual good dinner, first-class concert, speeches, and friendly intercourse. Tickets will be 8s. each, and we expect that provincial Branches will be arranging parties, as on previous occasions. Tickets may be obtained from the Pioneer Press or from the General Secretary. The sooner the application is made the better. Further information will be given later.

Freethinkers wishing to send New Year greetings to friends should avail themselves of the folding greeting card issued by the Executive of the N.S.S. The card has a floral design on the front, and inside is a quotation from Col. Ingersoll, in the form of a resolution for the New Year. The cards are 2d. each, seven in a packet for one shilling; post free, from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The West London Branch N.S.S., encouraged by the success of previous efforts, has arranged for another Social to be held at the Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W., on Thursday, December 12, beginning with a reception at 7.30 p.m. Members and friends of London Branches of the N.S.S. are cordially invited, and a very enjoyable evening should be spent.

Psychology and Religion: A Study by a Medical Psychologist, by Dr. David Forsyth (Watts & Co., 7s. 6d) is a work that will well repay study. In November, 1934, Dr. Forsyth gave the Presidential Address to the Psychiatry Section of the Royal Society of Medicine. The address consisted of an uncompromising application of psycho-analysis to religious beliefs. But, to its great discredit, the Society refused to publish the address in its proceedings. The address, with some alterations now forms three of the chapters in the book before us, and we think they are the best part. The remainder of the work consists of chapters on magic, religion, Christianity, etc., none of which would fail to shock the timid souls who declined to publish the original address. In some of these chapters there are indications that Dr. Forsyth needs a closer and more intimate acquaintance with his subject. It is not correct to say—although it is very common—that the activities of savages were “unquestionably scientific,” when all that can be meant is that they were compelled to notice facts and be guided by them. It is not quite accurate to say that the scientific activity of Athens centred round Socrates. It preceded Socrates, although Socrates acted as a great stimulative force. It is not correct to say that the “pioneer work” in the study of primitive races and their religious customs came from Sir James Frazer. There was very much done in this country for three parts of a century before Frazer, and Tylor’s great work (modified though some of his conclusions have been) *Primitive Culture*, was published in 1871, and his *Researches Into the Early History of Mankind*, in 1865. And in spite of all that has been written since, *Primitive Culture* is a work that should be read by all serious students, no matter what else is missed. But we hasten to say that the faults indicated are not important ones, and do not take away from the value of Dr. Forsyth’s main thesis.

We have to thank several of our readers for reminding us of the pamphlet on *Euthanasia*, written by Mrs. Besant, but which had escaped our recollection. The pamphlet was originally issued by Thomas Scott, who did so much to circulate heretical pamphlets about fifty years ago. It was reprinted in the collection of pamphlets published by Mrs. Besant under the general title of *My Path to Atheism*. In its later form the essay is revised and enlarged.

It is usually interesting, and sometimes chastening to hear what other people think of one. A young man of thirty-three, writing from Brighton, gives it as his considered opinion that “The current issue of the *Free-thinker*, with its attack on Christianity and Spiritualism, is the most diabolically destructive and depressing journal I have ever read. It makes the horrors of Frankenstein seem childish by comparison.” To be quite just to this doleful gentleman it is only right to say that he adds a postscript, “I wish I could understand you better.” Our correspondent reminds us of a clerical gentleman who once commenced a criticism of our lecture with “I don’t understand.” We were impelled to reply that his speech consisted in a most elaborate and decisive proof of the three words with which he began his remarks.

No one can be a great thinker, who does not recognize that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead. Truth gains even more by the errors of one, who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think. Not that it is solely, or chiefly, to form great thinkers, that freedom of thinking is required. On the contrary, it is as much and even more indispensable, to enable average human beings to attain the mental stature which they are capable of.

John Stuart Mill.

Thank God for Paint

It is the jerry builder who extols the virtues of paint. Paint distracts. It helps to cover up bad work. None knows better than the house-builder who leaves out your damp-proof course, and papers your walls and paints your doors vividly, that the world is still deceived by ornament.

All who have wares to market, trade upon this human weakness. The recognition of it is the stuff from which springs honest commerce. If South Kensington ask for art shades, well then South Kensington will have them—at a price, but Big Business much prefers a wider market in plain reds and blues. And so all through the piece. It may be important to be a good girl; it is important to be a good-looking girl. Should one desire to be well-off, it is essential that one should appear well-off.

Take literature, so-called. To a very large number of people, prose that has meaning is only poor stuff whilst poetry that has meaning is not poetry at all. Desmond Macartly cheerfully writes himself down a Philistine by stating that if, after a reasonable trial, he fails to elicit any idea from a poem, he gives up reading it. It is precisely at this point that many more soulful readers begin to suspect the possession of the divine afflatus in the writer. Ernest Newman has told us that what passes for musical criticism (he confesses himself a past sinner) is a collection of flowery “literary” passages telling the reader how he (the critic) re-acted to the music. (That is, something about *himself*). In book reviews, similar symptoms are displayed. A review in which the author’s main thesis is stated, and then either controverted or supported, is one of the rarest of phenomena. The expression of the reviewer’s personal prejudices seems to fill the bill, and if they are expressed nicely with a few historical allusions and literary quotations dragged in, he is considered a master at his job.

To say that one suspects paint in a world that reeks of it is sufficient to prove courage. The Veneerings do not take kindly to those who would do a little probing. They are a prolific family, and as they find veneer to be an ever-present help in time of trouble, one can understand how they dislike those who would restrict the use of paint to its own proper sphere. It has been known, for instance, for even the Noblest of Houses to be afflicted occasionally with a thick-headed son or daughter. That ordinary children should result from blue-blooded unions would appear at first sight to show a surprising disregard for *Noblesse Oblige* on the part of the God of our Fathers, but God has given his favourite children the chance of rectifying the trouble by providing Paint. The child Adolphus (this is one of his half dozen patronymics) has, because of his slowness of uptake, been supplied by his parents with a thousand points of knowledge unknown to, and unsuspected by, the humble, so that his natural superiority has become once again obvious. Adolphus knows, for instance, whether there should be braid on his dress-trousers, and if so, the exact width thereof. Adolphus knows that if, when he is in Regent Street, he desires the name of the 4.30 winner he must go without this information if the only means of acquiring it is by purchasing a *Star*. Adolphus knows that the bit of linen given him at meal times is a *napkin*, and that to describe it as a *serviette* is *declassé*; (It may, of course, become a *serviette* in 1937). He knows that certain ways of affixing it to the person are permissible, some ways vicious, and one way correct; he knows that to fold it up after a meal implies that his host may use it again before washing, a solecism of the worst order.

Adolphus has been taught the names of a few important personages, from God to Princess Elizabeth Rose, who must be mentioned with respect. He also knows that there are many other people, whose names he is vague about, who ought to be shot at dawn. Adolphus is acquainted with Bertie, whom he met at the same public school. Bertie is the grandson of Old Hardface, who distinguished himself during the Big War by his articulate Patriotism. His one public utterance to the effect that although he was eighty-four he still would like to help the boys kill Germans, was particularly admired by the right kind of people. God was good to Old Hardface, who saw to it that he got rich and a title, whilst the inarticulate patriots lost their shillings and their sons. Bertie thought that after his good start he would be able to lay hands on a few drums of the same paint as Adolphus, but he found the walls of the inner sanctuary, wherein it was stored, to be not so easily penetrated. Adolphus felt himself bound to Bertie to some extent by one tie, at any rate, of some importance, but he did not pass *everything* on to Bertie. Consequently Bertie commits errors every hour owing to his not being aware that what was all right in 1933 is all wrong in 1934. The colours of the paint may change in a single night, but those who do the changing are a close corporation. Bertie has not received up-to-date information and Bertie never will, unless, perhaps, he is lucky enough to learn a little compromising information about Adolphus or his set, and can thus indulge in what some coarse minds call blackmail.

Pedagogue Percival also specializes in paint. It is his business to shape young men so that in all the major vicissitudes of life, they can be relied upon to do what is just right. Most of his products spell correctly (if differently from Shakespeare), write grammatically, dress and walk presentably, eat and drink with decorum. They also know it is wrong to talk about Religion in public, unless indeed, one has got it very bad, when it becomes a virtue. They know how to appear impressed whenever God is mentioned, and to jump to their feet at the striking up of *God Save the King*. In short, they are venerated all over so as to appear perfect little gentlemen, and, as this world goes, have been well worth the amount per annum expended on them.

The Rev. Miles Malleable and the Rev. Oleaginous Up-to-date also know a good deal about paint. They have found themselves, owing to too-fond parents, the legatees of a crude creed with a bloody history, and they find paint the only redeeming feature of an almost intolerable situation. Their religion is plainly brimstone and treacle, but a few splashes of the brush, and lo, nothing but treacle is left! Their religion is a device to save souls. More splashes and a little sign writing, and lo, it is concerned with the minimum wage. Jesus thought the world was coming to an end, and that right rapidly, and taught plausibly enough in the circumstances "Take no thought for the morrow." Splash, splash and splash, and we are told what Jesus really meant. Jesus said Hell for the wealthy and Heaven for the poor. Says Mrs. Murgatroyd in the front row, "This won't do!" So these jots and tittles are painted out, for, as it is often said, "Men must live," even if life delay the enjoyment of eternal bliss, and even if the risk be run of being impudent to the Great Artificer. The Pope is God's agent, but when Mussolini mumbles, we are asked, "what can the old Gentleman do?" What indeed is there left for a modified Omnipotence to do but paint? Thank God for paint! Thus can we always hide grossness with fair ornament!

Some day, perhaps, (a long way distant!) paint will

be put in its place. There is, of course, a proper place for paint; it is an enhancement to virtues, not a substitute for them. The good girl who is also good-looking is a girl that even the gods (some of them!) would choose. Should the ship be built of sound materials and be constructed on scientific lines, then a few coats of paint can be thrown in to please the æsthetic. But if it will carry us safely and speedily to America we know that its main purpose has been achieved, apart from paint. If a person writes an essay and has an objective, and sets forth his ideas with so much clarity and logic that it is difficult to resist his conclusions, then he has achieved his end. Only the mal-educated person will emerge from the reading, and display triumphantly one mis-spelt word, one case of disregard for the sequence of tenses and a couple of split infinitives. Those who adopt such standards of valuation are like unto those who bathe in perfume, suck sweetmeats, lie in hammocks and pay attendants to fan them. No doubt they derive comfort from feelings of superiority, but this feeling has no social value. Their ideas of good taste will always remain inviolate because they cannot, as they know full well, be argued about or expressed in a syllogism. The business of the world is not affected for good by the Veneerings. Useful existence depends upon something more than being primed with platitudes in the nursery, followed by preparatory washes in the schools and then finished with three, four, or an indefinite number of oils. The result may be superficially attractive, but although some dwellers on Earth may express pleasure and Heaven open its gates ultimately to receive them, the world stands still.

T. H. HUSTON.

A Causerie on Clericalism

"As the big cock crows the little one learns." This is indisputably true with regard to the established fashion of clericalism in Britain. In the nineteenth century there were many bodies of Baptists and Methodists, whose services were presided over and conducted by laymen. But the laymen were gradually squeezed out as material prosperity advanced; and it became the thing for even democratic bodies of Christian believers to copy their big brothers of the Establishment and to have be-robed and white-collared reverend presidents. The various Nonconformist denominations who succumbed to the fashionable demand for ordained ministers probably did not realize that they were merely imitating the Established Churches, who in turn had borrowed their system of clerical overseers from the Roman Catholic Church.

It, of course, meant more expense—for the lay brethren who had efficiently conducted the Baptist and Methodist services for many years had done so voluntarily and without money fee or reward. But the deacons of the Nonconformist bodies who had waxed fat with growing prosperity—egged on by their socially ambitious wives, and having consorted with genial fellow-profliteers at market and in club who belonged to the Established Church—exclaimed, "Hang the expense! What's the good of going to Chapel if we haven't a regular pastor who has been through the University and Theological Hall? It has been all very well listening to the vapourings of Jack Smith or Tom Jones; but what the devil do they know about Hebrew and Greek? No, no, let's have a chap who has specialized in divinity, who knows all the literature about it from A to Z and can pitch the proper tale! We'll show the Church people that we

can equal them—ay beat them—in the matter of pulpit oratory!"

And so the Jack Smiths and Tom Joneses got their walking tickets and real begowned men of God took over their jobs.

It is all very well for the Churches, particularly through their clerical spokesmen, to stress the *spirituality* of their mission. But in point of fact the Churches depend for their existence upon purely *material* resources. What would they be without money—and plenty of it? The clerical game is to affect to despise money and intellectual advancement. We are told we must have the minds of little children and beware of this *snare* of riches. But, in private life, one never finds a clergyman who is not keen on acquiring as much of this world's goods as he can. It is notorious that a great many clerics marry wealthy women; and indeed several instances can be cited of divinity students, who seeing a "successful" career in front of them have callously jilted poor fiancées and wooed and won ladies belonging to wealthy Church families in order no doubt to make their "calling and election" sure in the present life—their *status* in that which is to come being already secured. What a game it is!

It is considerations such as these which make clerical mouth-attacks on "Materialism" a hollow mockery. The prosperous Christian—lay or cleric—never denies himself the comforts and pleasures which "materialism" affords. "Lay not up for yourselves treasure on Earth," is all right for the pulpit; but has no application to profiteering. The believing profiteer can comfortably sit in Church, and with bowed head hear his pastor fulminating against the acquisition of riches. But all the time he grins in his sleeve, for he very well knows that it is just all so much talk—devised to placate the workers, but never to menace the dictatorship of the Bosses of Industry!

The clerics have always professedly been sworn enemies of "moral impurity." One knows very well that opportunities for illicit sexual indulgence are in the main available to the very rich—and taken advantage of by them to the utmost. If some poor sexual pervert happens to transgress by attempting to ravish a girl, he is held up to public execration and consigned to penal servitude, while the seducers who can pay escape all the time and continue to gratify to the full their sexual appetites. We live in the days of indecent pictorial advertisements and indecent stories, and it is not surprising that these should have a sinister effect upon poor creatures readily influenced by sexual representations.

For instance, an enterprising journalist is at present retelling (in his own way) in the columns of *Tit-Bits*, Love (or lust?) Stories drawn from that reservoir of filth and frightfulness the Old Testament. The stories are illustrated by pictures of voluptuous and full-bosomed concubines in very scanty attire; languorously inviting the men in the picture to intercourse with them. Nothing could be plainer from a perusal of the text and the pictorial representations. Could anything be more calculated to excite the passions of young readers? It is great stuff this Bible! No censorship for it!

Holy Bible, Book Divine,
Precious Treasure, Thou art *not* mine!

IGNOTUS.

The word "instinct" is one of those unfortunate words which are supposed to be understood by all, words which are the more fatal impediments to the advance of science than almost anything can be.

J. Grote, "*Exploratio Philosophica*."

Australia's Aboriginal Mission Station

A LONG-SUFFERING race are the Australian aboriginals, and their lot is certainly in no way being improved by the Government-subsidized mission stations. The missions appear to have entire control over the aboriginals associated with them. They are worked directly for the benefit of the mission; and hired-out to station-owners who need their services.

Complaints are for ever being published in the daily papers respecting (1) the immorality to which the female aboriginals are subjected, with the more-or-less tacit approval of the missions, and (2) the way the men are worked, without getting anything themselves for their labour.

For example, the other week it was shown that aboriginals from one of the missions were doing full-time jobs for private employers for less than 5s. a week. The only reply that this elicited was that the arrangement was entirely satisfactory. Satisfactory it may be—to those using the aboriginals' labour, and the missions to which their earnings go.

Such indeed are the proportions that the scandal has assumed that protests are now beginning to come from churchmen themselves.

Speaking on October 18, at the Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of Victoria, W. Gordon Sprigg (Secretary of the Collins Street Baptist Church) attacked the Council of Churches with regard to the aboriginal mission at Lake Tyers.

"The Council of Churches," he declared, "has lamentably failed to give practical expression to any policy which has helped to secure a satisfactory spiritual oversight. I have no hesitation in impugning the veracity of the report framed by the Council delegation which visited the Lake Tyers Station in April. The administration of affairs there is most unsatisfactory.

"Immorality at the station has been—and still is—common.

"One of the most disturbing allegations is the alleged flogging with a whip of two lads, aged 17 and 19 years. The report that I received is that the lads were bruised and bleeding, and were sore for weeks afterwards. The report by the Council of Churches stated: 'We are satisfied that all that is humanly possible is being done by the board and the management to deal with an unique and difficult position.' It is deplorable that the Council should make such a good case for the station, while so much remains to be done from both the Christian and humane standpoints."

Thus, the evasion and the lying of the Church are exposed in the Church itself.

Mission-work among the aboriginals is just a repetition of what it is in all other countries. "Disturbing happy natives" was the pronouncement of Thomas Hardy regarding missions generally. But it is plain that it is much more than this in Australia. Here, with the connivance and support of the Church, it is accompanied by brutal floggings and barefaced robbery.

FRANK HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.—B. Franklin.

LAND TITLES

It can never be pretended that the existing titles to landed property are legitimate. The original deeds were written by the sword, soldiers were the conveyancers, blows were the current coin given in exchange, and for seals, blood. Those who say that "time is a great legalizer" must find satisfactory answers to such questions as—How long does it take for what was originally wrong to become right? At what rate per annum do invalid claims become valid?—Herbert Spencer.

Zoo Logic

Good gracious! oh my! what an awful to-do,
Some bother has just broken out at the zoo.
The baboon's got loose and is quite out of hand—
He says that he must have more room to expand.
So the cunning old monk, with an eye to his armour,
Decided he'd move to the pen of the Llama,
And said he was going to "do it or burst"—
Which made the rest mad, 'cos he'd thought of it first!

A meeting was called to decide on the matter,
And never was heard such a din and a chatter.
The question they seemed most concerned to decide
Was—how would the pen and the Llama divide?
And every time a suggestion arose,
The baboon said "No!" with his thumb to his nose
"I mean to proceed if it means spilling blood,
For what I am doing is for his own good."

"Tut, tut, sir," said Leo, with quite a guffaw,
"That's always an excuse for starting a war,
But it doesn't deceive us, I'm telling you flat,
You'll have to think something up better than that.
You're naught but a bully to start such alarms,
And pick on a fellow that hasn't got arms."
"So, be a good lad, or in veriest truth,
We'll cut off your peanut supply, sir, forsooth!"

"Oh yeah!" Baboon answered, "It's really surprising
To find you of all people thus moralizing.
You set an example then crib if we try it."
The Lion just coughed, for he couldn't deny it.
And so, as the meeting grew more intense,
The wily old baboon slipped over the fence,
And fearing he'd follow the baboon's example
And give him a handsome return for his sample,
They tied the poor Llama's head up in a sack,
To really be sure that he couldn't hit back.

The argument's raged for a number of days,
With everyone pulling in different ways,
And thus—while they're holding a sort of truce,
—For some of them's torn twist the sheep and the deuce—
The baboon proceeds with a spirit undaunted,
The odds in his favour—he'll get what he wanted.
And real honest folk who are worthy the name,
Cry out in disgust—"It's a sin and a shame."

"If baboon's permitted without any qualms
To enforce his might by the force of his arms,
Then reason could never survive such a bungle,
And back goes the Zoo to the law of the jungle.
For this is the truth and it ought to be stated
A dangerous precedent will be created.
The fact is quite plain to be seen at a glance,
That many another is waiting his chance,
With a somnolent pose, and an ear cocking larcy,
And well whetted fang, to devour the unwary.

The Llama's entitled to claim his redress
And who but the baboon should clean up the mess?
But—here he it said—those who sat on the fence,
For obstructing a man in his own defence
And withholding the help that could justly be proffered,
Deserve every censure, for not having offered.

FLAMM.

He who only knows his own side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion. The rational position for him would be suspension of judgment, and unless he contents himself with that, he is either led by authority, or adopts, like the generality of the world, the side to which he feels most inclination.—*J. S. Mill.*

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SCIENCE AND THE UNKNOWN

SIR,—Your correspondent signing himself "Medicus," says "the unknown is that of which science infers the existence, but regarding which no information has been acquired." I will not quarrel with that statement, but for the sake of further clarifying the position with regard to the main subject of my previous letter on "Using God," I will ask a question. Does not science begin by assuming the validity of its own reasoning, and so to say take for granted the power to observe, analyse and form judgments upon the nature of reality? I think Medicus will agree that it does. There is a primary act of faith, without which what we call knowledge is impossible. It was, I believe, John Stuart Mill who said, "When a man tells me God spoke to him in a dream, all I am conscious of is that he dreamt that God spoke to him." Such it seems to me is the condition of the true agnostic. "God" to the Agnostic is certainly a doubtful quality, but unless he imagines the Christian is talking through his hat, he must at least grant that the Christian does mean and refer to a definite entity when he takes such an interest in God. Medicus, for instance, is not likely to find in any scientific text book the statement, "and this shall be called God," precisely because any scientist surely knows that he cannot choose his maker and secondly because unless you are willing to include theology as a science (which it certainly is, with all due respect to Medicus!) the scientist is concerned with things and persons; what they are like, and how they are made. The theologian asks not so much how? but why? The mind of the Christian is centred not in the relative philosophies and theologies, for rival philosophies would cease to exist if any one of them could be proved true, but his mind is centred in the Ultimate, the Absolute, not the idea of the Absolute, but the Final Truth itself, and he cannot rest in the changing creeds of man. Medicus says that "whenever the scientist (excluding again the theologian) finds a little bit of God, He turns out to be quite unlike anything which is represented to us in Church." Granting for the moment that the scientist does find a little bit of God. I suggest "Medicus" is confusing what I endeavoured to make clear in my previous letter, namely the distinction between the idea, the definition, the picture of a thing and the thing itself. Scientists differ quite as much as theologians, but not even "Medicus" would deny the existence of the world, because some people have queer ideas about it. There is a knowledge of experience, besides a scientific knowledge, and God conceived as the Absolute is beyond definition. Put another way, He is a logical inference from the facts before us, but the inference is based on experience. We experience God, but epistemologically, or from the point of view of pure reason He is Transcendent, incapable of definition and in that sense unknown. To know a person, and to know about a person, to know what a person is, and to know something of his nature are different things. I must ask you to excuse the length of this letter, but I think you will agree "Medicus" deserved a cautious reply.

W. R. WITCOMB.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE

SIR,—The other afternoon I was present at Caxton Hall at the Annual Meeting of the Christian Evidence Society. On leaving the building an elderly man who was going down the steps quoted a hymn that had been sung:—

"We are not divided,
All one body we—"

"Oh," I thought. "This is one of those dear old Christians," when to my surprise he followed it up by saying! "What rot! Not two of them believe alike!" A man near us to whom his remarks were addressed (who

had also been at the meeting) said: "They don't believe what they talk about"; whereupon the first speaker added, "If that's a Christian Evidence Meeting the sooner Christian Evidence is smashed up the better."

I send you this information because it will not appear in the Society's report of the meeting.

EMILY GROUT.

FREETHOUGHT AND VIVISECTION

SIR,—You will permit, I hope, a short reply to Dr. English, whose comments appeared in your issue of December 1. I am sorry your correspondent completely avoids the points I raised, namely, that much of present medical practice is a legacy from earlier religious misconceptions. Moreover, practitioners either deliberately or unconsciously, are taking advantage of the rather general credulity perpetuated by religion. If the mysterious and secrecies of a departing religious ritual are retained in form and concept by another group, then arises the scepticism that I desired to express. I am sure Dr. English does not want me to tell him what knowledge is or how it is obtained, but I fancy he is confusing knowledge and inference. If a healthy animal is subjected to extraordinary treatment, then exact knowledge is obtained of how that individual animal has then and there responded.

It is an inference, which, may or may not be true, to assume that all animals of that species will re-act similarly under closely identical stimuli.

The assumption that a study of healthy animal behaviour under unusual treatment will indicate the reaction of a different species of animal or sick human beings is too great to pass without question. Yet the benefits of animal research depend on the correctness of this assumption.

One opines from the writer's letter that he is an anti-anti-vivisectionist, and would deprecate any investigation of the bases of medical practice.

The *Freethinker* exists to call in question such an attitude of inviolate orthodoxy.

At the same time I realize the difficulty of the medical student who, no less than the religious novice, cannot stop to question every pronouncement of his teachers if he is to get through his crowded examinations. It is unfortunate that in many cases this means a permanent surrender of critical powers and a disability to distinguish wood from trees.

DON FISHER.

Obituary

MR. JOSEPH DALKIN

It is with regret that we record the death of Mr. Joseph Dalkin, on November 22, at Stockton-on-Tees. Mr. Dalkin had been a very earnest and loyal Freethinker for many years, quiet in manner, but always prepared to do what he could to advance the common cause. His death was very sudden, and he leaves behind him a memory that will be treasured by all who knew him. His son is the present Secretary of the Teesside Branch of the N.S.S., and promises to be a worthy son of a worthy father. At the funeral a Secular Service was conducted by Mr. J. T. Brighton. We offer our sincere sympathy to the surviving members of the family.

The State rests on—the slavery of the poor. If labour becomes free, the State is lost.—*Max Stirner.*

The man who goes alone can start to-day; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready, and it may be a long time before they get off.—*Thoreau.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, A Lecture. Highbury Corner, 7.30, A Lecture.

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

INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Debate—"Is the Catholic Church a Block to the World's Progress?" *Affir.*: Mr. H. Gee (N.S.S.) *Neg.*: Father Dunstan Pontifex, O.S.B.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 11.0, Professor J. C. Flugel—"Morals and Reality."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, December 9, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Euthanasia, Ancient and Modern."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Rooms, 70 Grange Park Road, Leyton, E.10): 7.30, Mrs. A. Saran—"The Church Conflict in Germany."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Debate—"Is the Bible the Word of God?" *Affir.*: C. S. McKelvie. *Neg.*: L. Ebury.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, Charles Owen, B.A. (Birkenhead)—"British Political Ideals and the Baltic States."

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

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.0, Impromptu Debate on "Evolution."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Tavern Hotel, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.30, Mr. J. F. Harvey—"Our Wonderful Universe."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Psychology and Religion."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Unity House, Hillside Crescent): 7.0, Mr. A. Copland (Glasgow)—"Dogmatism."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street): 7.0, Geoffrey F. Asprey, B.Sc., Ph.D.—"Botany."

HETTON (Club Hall): Wednesday, December 11, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Women."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. H. Cutner—"Liberty, the Church, and the State."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, Miss Dora Seed (Skipton)—"Why Democracy?"

NORTON (Co-operative Hall): 7.0, Sunday, December 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Civilization and Savagery Ancient and Modern."

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

ACCRINGTON (King's Hall): 6.0, Debate—"Is Spiritualism Supported by Scientific Facts?" *Affir.*: Mr. Marks. *Neg.*: Mr. J. Clayton.

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