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

Views and Opinions

Pessimistic Christianity

I COULD not have been more than half-way through my teens when I came to the conclusion that while Christianity in its intellectual aspects provided an interesting study in the survival of primitive superstitions, its moral philosophy was an insult to human feeling and almost an outrage on decency. In all its aspects it made a disguised appeal to the lowest in man, and under cover of sublimating human qualities gave an expression to some of the lowest and most objectionable ones. Christians, for example, were taught to exercise intolerance under cover of regard for religious truth and eternal salvation. Untruthfulness regarding opponents was masked as concern for the purity of the faith. Of all the falsehoods that have been told by Christian writers and preachers concerning the opponents of their faith, I have known no case in which a representative body of Christians have denounced the slanderers. They have joined in the filthy lies that were told about Paine, and Voltaire, Ingersoll, Bradlaugh and others, but even when the lies were completely exposed, and it no longer paid to tell them, those who kept on at the old game were never publicly reprimanded. Added to this there was the public repudiation of what the older theologians called the "rags of natural morality," the affirmation of such creeds as the Westminster Confession of Faith that acts done without the grace of God are yet of the nature of sin, and the general doctrine of Salvation by Faith, which had no other essential significance than that no matter how admirably a man behaved he would be damned if he lacked faith in the saving blood of Jesus.

* * *

Christianity at Work

A very fair example of the very low level of the Christian conception of morality was provided in the *Evening Standard* of September 24, by the Rev. Dr. Mathew, who is Chaplain to the Roman Catholic students of the University of London. Dr. Mathew

was annoyed by some remarks made by Dr. Inge (late Dean Inge) on the Roman Catholic priesthood. Dr. Inge had said that for centuries the Roman priesthood "considered dirt part of the highest moral excellence," and that the Spanish people were "sterilized by clerical celibacy and decimated by the Inquisition." Dr. Inge was a trifle ingenuous in saying that the Church regarded dirt as a sign of moral excellence, and proved that even with its best advocates truth does not rise superior to the claims of Christianity. For dirt was never recognized by the Church as a sign of moral excellence at all, morality did not enter into the question. The great leaders of the Church and of Monasticism took dirt as a sign of religious excellence and reckoned bathing as an unwarrantable indulgence in pleasures of the flesh. But to have used the word "religion" might have given rise to some awkward reflections, and those who did reflect might have decided that the inhabitants of what was the Roman Empire, and with whom bathing was a universal habit, so far forgot, after the Empire became Christian, the use of the bath that when the Roman bath was reintroduced into Europe, centuries later, it came into Christendom as the Turkish bath; and the Turkish bath it has remained ever since.

The rest of Dr. Inge's statement is a truth that is known to every student of Christian history. Dr. Mathew does not contradict it. What he does is to write at length, and quite irrelevantly about the number of eminent Catholics at different periods, which leaves Dr. Inge's statement untouched. When one remembers that for several centuries the Church in Spain was powerful enough to reduce heretics to silence, through the medium of the stake, the prison, or by sheer terrorism, that the result of this was to place the people of Spain among the most illiterate in Europe, and that by its policy it killed off, so far as it could the better intellects of the nation, and said to the cowards, the liars and the hypocrites, "Be fruitful and multiply," it must be plain that Dr. Inge was stating the baldest of truths. What Dr. Inge did not do was to point out that, within the limits of its opportunities, the Protestant Churches acted in exactly the same way.

* * *

In Defence of Christians

But the passage in Dr. Mathew's article I wish specially to note is this:—

Christians might remember that every good action and work of charity done by Catholics is a result of their faith in Christ.

This is, of course, a genuinely orthodox Christian position, but Roman Catholic publicists do not usually so openly let the cat out of the bag. It is substantially what thousands of Christian preachers have said in the past, and what numbers of Christian philo-

sophers are saying in the present. I have it in mind that Dr. Inge himself once suggested the same thing when he explained the non-criminality of unbelievers as due to the influence of the environment created by past generations of believers.

But this is neither a justification nor an excuse for Dr. Mathew's crudity, or for his insult to his Roman Catholic followers. Under the first head one must note that a theologian in these days ought to be more astute. He should wrap up his absurdities in language that is sufficiently obscure to impose upon those who look to him for guidance. Otherwise, and in spite of all that may be done by an official chaplain the Catholic students of the University of London may resent the insult offered them by their chaplain. There must be a limit to even the assinine humility of Roman Catholic students.

For consider the insult offered to a number of young men when they are calmly told that every decent action they do is altogether dependent upon their belief in Christ. When they act kindly to their parents, or deal honestly with their friends, this is not because they feel that way as a consequence of the relations between them, it is entirely because they believe in Jesus Christ and because he wished them to behave in this manner. They have no sense of right or wrong save that implanted in them by a belief in Jesus Christ. These students of Dr. Mathew's may reflect that after all things are as they are whether Jesus Christ lived or not; and things being as they are the consequences of actions will be what they are whether Jesus Christ was raised from the dead or not. And I am quite sure that there would be an interesting few moments if one of these students were to tell the young lady whom one day he hopes to marry, that nothing in the relations between them could persuade him to behave to her as a man should behave to the young lady he intends making his wife, save belief in Jesus Christ. That young lady might reflect that beliefs—religious beliefs—are rather fragile things nowadays, and that she had better not chance it. Of course, I do not say, nor do I believe that Roman Catholics are so destitute of a sense of right and wrong that it is only because they believe in Jesus Christ they behave decently. It is an accredited official of the Roman Church who says so. I think Dr. Mathews should confine his analysis of moral motives, and his application of the result of his analysis, to himself. After making this amazing confession that Christian morality is on the same level as that of the man who won't steal because he is certain to be detected, I shall not be surprised if some of his fellow priests express the hope that Dr. Mathew will, for Jesus Christ's sake, remain silent in the future.

* * *

Are Freethinkers Superior to Christians?

After all, the world is, fortunately, not wholly composed of Christians, nor of those who have substitutes for Jesus Christ. There are millions of men and women who have no faith in Jesus, no faith in God, and no faith in a future life. How does Dr. Mathew explain their existence? I do not say that none of these is a blackguard—blackguardism is a quality of which Christians cannot hope to have a monopoly—but at least they are not worse than those whose incentive to decency is belief in Jesus. And it is possible that when Christians really understand the implications of Dr. Mathew's statement—which I must again emphasize is the orthodox Christian one—they may ask whether Freethinkers are made of such superior stuff, that while Christians need the power of Jesus Christ to lead them—perhaps one ought to say bribe them or frighten them—into decent behaviour, Freethinkers can

get along without it? For there it is! Freethinkers do not fill the gaols. Christians and other religionists do; and when some years ago I tried to get the prison regulations altered so that Freethinkers should be placed on the same level as Christians, and have a weekly visit from someone belonging to a Freethinking organization, I was informed that there were not enough Freethinkers in prison to justify an alteration in the regulations. So at present religious people remain the only ones that are catered for. They get their spiritual food regularly. It does not prevent their going to prison, it does not stop them paying return visits, but it does cheer them up while they are there.

Flattering as this compliment is to the Freethinker, I do not care to accept it. I have not a very high opinion of a Christian, as such, but I have a strong suspicion that in a surprisingly large number of cases there is a man there if one can only get rid of the Christian covering. I believe that if the Christian will only get rid of his paralysing religious belief he can be just as good as the Freethinker. That is he will be able to display the same good qualities and bad qualities that the Freethinker displays, who offers, on the whole, a rather higher proportion of good ones than is shown by the average Christian. But I do not believe that each is made of different material, so that while normal social relationships are enough to secure a moderately satisfactory quality of conduct from the Freethinker, the Christian is wholly dependent upon Jesus Christ for every "good action" he does.

The startling thing is that while the Christian preacher once found it enough to dwell upon the villainy of Freethinkers as a means of keeping his sheep within the fold, to-day he is more inclined to stress the absolute dependence of his own people upon the policeman—like care of Jesus. He cannot longer pretend that Freethinkers are worse than Christians. There are too many of them and they are too well-known. It is no use telling his congregation of the awful crimes the Freethinker ought to commit. The Freethinker obstinately refuses to carry out the programme of villainy which the Christian has drawn up for him. It must be his own people he cannot trust. So he addresses the world in language which, when translated into its plain common sense amounts to this:—

It is clear that there are numbers of people in the world who have thrown off all religion, and whose conduct does not appear to be any the worse for it. They are not worse friends, worse husbands, worse parents, or worse citizens than are Christians. Some have said they are better than Christians. So be it. Let it be granted, therefore, that these men and women can get along without any belief in Jesus Christ, or in God or in a future life. These men and women who are without the belief in a God and a crucified Saviour may do their duty in this world uninspired by the belief that there is a future life where they will be rewarded or punished for their deeds here. But what of my followers? Consider what they are with the full consciousness of a God who is watching them, and who will call them to account for their conduct. If they are what they are with that belief, what, oh what will they be without it? I beg the world not to rob Christians of the one thing that prevents their committing every crime in the calendar. For as we believe that the only cause for a good action is faith in Christ, it follows that if that faith is destroyed sheer criminality is the consequence.

I do not believe that these followers of Dr. Mathew and his kind are quite so bad as their leaders would have us believe. I firmly believe that Christians can be as self-respecting, and lead as decent lives as Free-

thinkers if they will but try. I do not believe that Freethinkers are naturally better than Christians. It is a question of self-respect, of understanding, and of getting rid of a belief that lowers man under presence of elevating him. It is a question of replacing charlatany with understanding, and humbug with self-respect.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Enigma of Egypt

"Because man's soul is man's god still,
What wind soever waft his will,
Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led."—*Swinburne*.

EGYPT has been called "the Motherland of Superstition" and this pregnant phrase conveys more information than whole libraries of books. For a close study of the religions of Ancient Egypt leads to the exposure of the greatest religious fraud of all the ages. Egyptologists have shown that the holy mother and child—the one a virgin and the other a god—were worshipped many centuries before the alleged birth of Christ, and that the central "truth" of present-day theology was 3,000 years before the Christian era. Indeed, it was in Ancient Egypt that all the dogmas of early Christianity, and all its myths and legends were manufactured. The current theology has been falsely founded on a misinterpretation of mythology by unconsciously inheriting the leavings of primitive or archaic man, and ignorantly mistaking them for divine revelations.

The ancient Egyptians were among the most godly people who ever lived. They were blatantly polytheistic, and prostrated themselves before jackals, hyenas, cats, crocodiles, hawks, the ibis, beasts and birds. If they were transported to England to-day, they would, in all probability, be found kneeling before Belisha beacons. It is not so surprising as it seems, for their minds were as naked as their bodies, and they were slaves. To such simple folk, many things were gods and godlike.

Not to the priests, however. They were educated, and knew better. They but affected belief in this menagerie of deities, and they superintended the manufacture of others far better calculated to impress their innocent human flocks. Fashioned in stone, these "gods" were dog-eared or longly beaked. Others, like the Sphinx, must have appeared nearly sublime, almost ideal, to the poor, unfortunate people, slaves in mind as in body.

Christian theologians point, artlessly, to the Jewish Scripture as part of the origins of their own faith, but they are strangely silent concerning their wholesale borrowings from Ancient Egypt, Assyria and Babylon. The doctrine of a Holy Trinity, common to so many antique beliefs, was a most terrible blasphemy to the Jews. The belief in immortality, also widely prevalent, was to them superfluous. The alleged miracle of divine descent they were too cautious and too practical to accept. There was no room in the comparatively simple Hebraic religion for the dogma of future rewards and punishments, and all these things, with many articles of the Christian faith, Egypt's priesthood taught millenniums before the dawn of Christianity.

Egypt, not Israel, was the cauldron from which belched forth the foundations of all modern theology. Osiris, who, together with Isis and Horus, formed the Egyptian Trinity, died for man. In an attempt to preserve harmony with evil, Osiris was slain, and, being a god, he rose from the dead. Is it not all too

familiar? To-day, in the presence of royalty, priests abuse the language of flattery, and make lickspittle sycophancy one of the fine arts. A few generations earlier the divine right of Kings was generally accepted. Two thousand years before the Christian era it was one of the traits of the Pharaohs to believe, or to assert, that their fathers were divine, and it therefore followed that they themselves were sons of gods. These Pharaohs were of the solar race, and so remained from the first dynasty to the Greek conquest.

All through these tableaux of Egyptian history the people were slaves, and were treated like animals. Even mummification was not for such degraded humans. Down to a late period embalming was a privilege reserved for priests and princes. When the common people were embalmed it was with no other design than that they should serve their lords and masters in a future existence as they had in this. Pyramid texts of the fifth dynasty show that there then existed what to-day is known as *The Book of the Dead*, a copy of which, put in a mummy's arms, was a talisman in the Court of Amenti, a passport to the Land of Light. One appeal, put in the mouth of the deceased, and used in *The Book of the Dead*, has a very familiar sound: "I fed the hungry, clothed the naked, I gave water to them that thirsted. O ye that dwell in Amenti! I am unpolluted, I am pure!"

The similarities are very noticeable. In a papyrus of the Thotmes III. period, 1600 B.C., it is written:—

The people of the age of the son of man shall rejoice and establish his name for ever. They shall be removed from evil and the wicked shall humble their mouths.

Nor is this all. From the Chaldean *Book of the Beginnings* came the story of creation, of the serpent, the fall, and the deluge. Before *Genesis* was, already these stories were well known. How old these olden times may have been is entirely conjectural, but they were all current at an epoch that in Christian biblical chronology is long before the creation, and the appearance of man.

The superstitions of Ancient Egypt, still extant in other and modern forms of religion, are entering upon a period of euthanasia. However interesting they may be to students of humanity, these will soon be only matters for the antiquary, for, as certainly as lesser lights vanish on the rising of the sun, so these will disappear when brought into contact with an educated democracy. As their votaries throw away the mistaken notions of their forefathers, so will they discard the misshapen idols of the ages of ignorance and faith. Historic religions will be seen interwoven with pure savagery, hoary with the ignorance of other ages. All religions alike have originated from the fears of mankind, in the policy of statesmen, and the craft and greed of priests operating on the ignorance and credulity of the masses, with the object of securing an effective moral police, and of gaining wealth and power. All through the ages Priestcraft and Kingcraft have been the obverse and the reverse of the same medal. And priests have been as arrogant as the kings. They have even been entitled "divines," as if their sorry profession made the man himself godlike! At the coronation of the Pharaohs, forty centuries ago, the procession was composed of priests and soldiers. At the coronation of the last English monarch the ceremonial was largely composed of priests and soldiers. That is the priestly idea of progress during four thousand years. If ever a new condition of society comes into being it will depend upon Priestcraft being kept at bay. For priests far too often make principles bend to the

necessities of occasion, and feather their nests on the foibles and follies of mankind.

Democracy has been fooled for countless centuries by these priestly charlatans. Too long have the priests circled round their idols, waving their censers and shouting their hymns of praise, while the ample draperies effectively hid from the public eye the cash-box and the alms-dish in the centre of the throng. It will seem strange to future ages that such charlatans could have been the pastors and masters of whole nations for such lengthy periods of time.

MIMNERMUS.

Things Worth Knowing*

I.VI.

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

THE Theist desires to prove that the supreme mind possesses consciousness and purpose merely as a step towards proving that they are of a very specific kind . . . the consciousness of a being . . . infinitely wise and holy; whose purposes are in accord with his holiness; whose execution is in accordance with his wisdom; and that amongst his purposes the welfare of the human race is pre-eminent. These are the essential propositions the Theist has to prove. These are the essential propositions which his scientific opponent questions. With regard to the general problem of whether or no this being has consciousness and purpose of some sort, we may begin by giving the Theist the full benefit of the doubt. We may assume that a Supreme Mind, conscious and purposive is a probability; and all we have to ask is, whether the observed facts of the universe compel, invite, or even allow us to believe that this Mind or God is possessed of those intellectual and moral perfections, and that definite purpose as to man, without which, for the Theist, he is no God at all. We shall find that the facts of the universe, so far as science can ascertain them, not only do not prove the existence of such a God as this, but are also, when considered in their completeness, utterly incompatible with it.

Let us begin with the most general of the propositions which the Theist puts forward—a proposition which forms a kind of connecting link between Theism as academic theory, and practical religion. This is the proposition that the most general view of the universe—its magnitude, its majesty, and its order—is enough to show, or afford a strong presumption that the Power by whom this universe has been made, and is at every moment sustained, must be a Power who is infinitely wise, and who is guiding the stupendous whole towards an end sublime as the means which he is visibly employing to produce it. This is precisely the argument which so strongly appealed to Kant, and he expressed in his celebrated sentence about the awe with which the starry heavens inspired him. . . . Here we come upon another example of how arguments which once appealed powerfully to the mind of everybody have, with changed conditions of knowledge, entirely lost their force. The fact of the universe which was mainly instrumental in producing a feeling of awe in the minds of Kant and his contemporaries was the fact of its universal order—the prevalence of un-

broken law. The enormous worlds which wheel through the depths of space were seen to accomplish their courses with an absolute and enduring exactitude; and this exactitude carried to the observer's mind a suggestion so vivid as to be almost a mental vision of a vast omnipotent will, never sleeping or wavering, guiding them onwards for ever by its own conscious act. The same suggestion, as a part of the poetry of thought, is carried to the mind by the same spectacle now; but we shall find, if we regard it as a basis for any serious reasoning, that it belongs essentially to a pre-scientific age. It belongs to an age which had realized spectacular unity of the cosmos, but had very imperfectly realized the nature of its mechanical unity; and which, moreover had never grasped the fact that the forces in virtue of which material things move, such as energy, attraction, repulsion, and chemical affinity, are as much a part of the material things themselves, and as much amenable to scientific experiment, as extension, or shape, or mass, or softness, or hardness, or visibility. Under conditions of thought such as these, matter was naturally looked upon as something that would not move at all without some external stimulus, and would certainly not move regularly without some external stimulus. The stimulus and guidance, being conceived of as external, were naturally attributed to a conscious will; and the infinite scope of the one, and the infinite steadiness of the other, challenging, as they did, a comparison with the feeble power of man, made man regard the uniformities of the cosmic process as a constant intellectual and a constant moral wonder. The deeper knowledge of facts which we possess to-day has not merely modified this view, but inverted it. When we consider the movements of the starry heavens to-day, instead of feeling it to be wonderful that these are absolutely regular, we should feel it wonderful if they were to be anything else. We realize that the stars are not bodies which, unless they were made to move uniformly, would be floating in space motionless, or moving across it in random course. We realize that they are bodies which, unless they moved uniformly would not be bodies at all, and would exist neither in movement nor in rest. We realize that order, instead of being the marvel of the universe, is the indispensable condition of existence—that is a physical platitude, not a divine paradox. In a word, we realize that the spectacle of the starry heavens affords the intellect no better grounds for believing that God has created the universe for some sublime end, and exhibit the perfect wisdom of the means he has devised for attaining it, than is afforded us by any one of the most homely facts of experience—the orderly swinging of a pendulum, the orderly boiling of a kettle, or the orderly death of a child when it tumbles out of the nursery window. It is therefore impossible, under existing conditions of thought, to found any presumption as to the wisdom of God on the character of the universe as a whole.

Religion as a Credible Doctrine,
by W. H. MALLOCK, pp. 150-163.

The most sensible people to be met with in society are men of business and of the world, who argue from what they see and know, instead of spinning cobweb distinctions of what things ought to be.—Hazlitt.

* 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.

I believe this is an error, and hence I set myself against the Church and insist that men shall have the right to work out their lives in their own way, always allowing others the right to work out their lives in their own way too.—Garibaldi.

Death and After

ASSOCIATED with the Christian Faith, one finds in many instances great concern (and sometimes apprehension, as to the whereabouts of relatives and friends after they have died. In the case of High Church people, the concern is increased if the departed has escaped the "sacrament of baptism" in babyhood, and has been found to be disentitled to be interred in "Consecrated ground." Dissenters are to be credited with a strenuous effort to undermine this peculiar brand of superstition, and to limit qualification for admission to Paradise to a simple and sincere belief in Jesus Christ as one's Saviour. Something has been done to reduce exceeding mournfulness and the extravagant funeral trappings of former days. The market in crape has gone down. In some cases by the wish and direction of the deceased, black clothes and similar evidences of grief are dispensed with. When a "Blood and Fire" Warrior pegs out he or she is advertised as having been "promoted to glory"; the band plays triumphant tunes; the congregation sings, "All, All is Well," and you can almost see old Bill Booth with beaming countenance and outstretched arms waiting to embrace the new arrival and march him or her up to the Throne of God!

Of course the Christian has no difficulty in realizing what the future place of abode of the unbeliever is. But there is the half and between individual, who has not in his mortal course dug a hole in the Lord's vineyard; and who in his lifetime here below has maintained an attitude of indifference or *laissez faire* to the extension of the Kingdom of God. Can such an one have the barest hope of securing admission to Heaven? He, or she, who has not come to a knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus, who has never given evidence of having "seen the Light" is the subject of much disquieting thought on the part of surviving Christian friends who are themselves active in spreading the "good tidings of great joy." That the departed may have been a law-abiding, good-living, kindly, just and generous person is a circumstance wholly beside the point. In this aspect, the Roman Catholic Church has devised a probationary period after death for the preparation of such an individual for eternal bliss; and, if the surviving relatives put down the necessary dibs, the probation can be materially shortened. There can be no doubt that at an earlier stage of human development this scheme was found acceptable and soothing by very many; but the ardent Protestant refused and refuses to consider any half-way house between here and glory. The Westminster Catechism definitely and uncompromisingly declares that the souls of true believers at death at once pass into their future eternal home. All others go South.

One of the great questions of Victorian times was "Where will you spend Eternity?" The pious fraud who invented the question evidently did not understand that he was constructing a contradiction in terms. For how can you *spend* eternity, seeing that Eternity is endless? Here is how the famous Sankey warned his audiences in other days:—

Time is gliding swiftly by,
Death and Judgment draweth nigh,
To the arms of Jesus fly:

Be in time!

Oh, I pray you count the cost,
Ere this fatal line is crossed,
And your soul in hell be lost:

Be in time!

The "Rock of Ages" has now become a precarious proposition as a place of safety. It may be said,

moreover, of the average believer, that the scheme of salvation in the Gospel has made him a cringer and an abject coward. Dependence is woven into his very tissues intellectually and morally. The pioneers, the deliverers of mankind, are they who reject dependence on the supernatural unknown and face the future with a brave front and a cheer! They are the Captains of their fates: they are the masters of their souls! Their ambitions do not lie in the direction of Pearly Gates and Golden Streets; but towards the liberation and elevation of their kind in the here and now. They do not ecstatically exclaim: "What must it be to be there?"; but cry: "Let us strive to secure happiness here!"

Several countries suffer from dictators. Britain suffers from oracles, who mingle familiarly with "Right Honourables," "Most Honourables," "Right Reverends," "Very Reverends" and "Most Reverends." To many of us it occurs that any person entitled to honour or respect does not require to have his admirable quality stressed. But superlatives are congenial to the supernaturalists and the super-sentimentalists, who, like the fat boy in *Pickwick*, revel in their efforts to make our flesh creep. But there are *not* degrees in honour or esteem. A person is either honest or dishonest. He cannot be "more" or "less" of the one or the other. When the "great" pass away, the adulation of the big clerics is nauseating. But our oracles are coming under the microscopic examination of reason and the days of the sentimentalist, with his fabulous or mythical bag of tricks, are numbered. The maudlin sycophant finds himself merely laughed at.

The self-appointed representatives of the Christian God direct all minds troubled with apprehensions about a "hereafter" to "go to the Bible" for guidance and consolation. They do not understand that many eminent thinkers have exposed the unreliability of the Bible as a moral guide or as a source of comfort. Even the general experience of the orthodox in face of death betrays a most unhealthy state of mind. Death is as natural as birth. But the peculiar quality of the Christian's "Holy Scriptures" is that they can be employed to moralize or demoralize anything. A character in one of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes' books followed the advice to "Go to the Bible"; and found it was therein enjoined upon each man to have three wives. It is really wonderful what can be read out of this wonderful Book! It is to be supposed, therefore, that a number of priests with lecherous minds were employed in the compilation of Holy Writ.

Where, in all, is the Love of God made manifest? Let the bruised, oppressed and tortured millions in all ages be adduced as witnesses to the inaction of this alleged Supreme Being. Many of them preferred death to continued wretchedness. On a fair weighing of all the evidence, the favourites of the alleged Creator and Ruler of the Universe form a small lucky minority. Is the unfortunate majority to accept the assurance that after death their wrongs will be righted? The Humanist answers this question in the negative, and demands that Right shall be done *now*; that Justice shall be vindicated *now*. Man's deliverance will never come by the instrument of a democracy with a theistic basis. A theocratic system holds no hope for his future.

IGNOTUS.

The quantity of Spanish works to prove the necessity of religious persecution is incalculable; and this took place in a country where not one man in a thousand doubted the propriety of burning heretics.—*Buckle*.

Masterpieces of Freethought

SIX DISCOURSES ON THE MIRACLES OF OUR SAVIOUR

By THOMAS WOOLSTON

I.

It was the few pages devoted to Woolston in Sir Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* which first directed me to Woolston's famous, or perhaps I ought to say notorious, work. It is not easy to get; but through the good offices of one of my friends, whose book-buying proclivities are greater than my own (and mine are bad enough), I am lucky to have before me the six *Discourses* bound up in one volume. Whether they can be called "masterpieces," is, of course, a matter of opinion. The term is a relative one, and, in this series, I do not pretend for one moment that every work I deal with deserves the title "masterpiece." I do claim for them, however, that they are the outstanding works in Freethought literature, and deserve, as such, to be rescued from the fate to which the hurry-scurry of our age condemns so many masterpieces in other fields.

Woolston is practically unknown to the present generation. Who has read him? Who has read Annet and Toland and Tindal and Blount, and Collins, to name but a few of the eighteenth century Deists? They are almost forgotten even by name. And yet they were all significant and authoritative writers with brilliant perceptions and suggestions. They keenly contested every idea through which Christianity had imposed its "dictatorship" on the people. They denied the authenticity of the Bible; they laughed at the miracles; they pool-pooled the "divinity" of Jesus. But it must not be forgotten that they were not Atheists but Deists. They never went as far as Diderot and d'Holbach, and would hotly deny that they were attacking God or the God idea through which only the creation of the Universe could be explained. The object of their attack was the God of Revelation, which they considered offensive and unworthy of the God of Nature—though Butler, in his *Analogy of Religion*, proved logically, and with great force, that the God of Nature was at least not better than the God of Revelation. Butler, indeed, almost destroyed both deities in his anxiety to get the better of Deists, which is one reason why his *Analogy* has not proved too successful even among Christians.

In looking over—and often in reading with care—these early writings, nothing has struck me so forcibly as their scholarship and patient analysis. Prolix they always were, but it was a fault of their age; yet the way in which they could quote, from the classics in Greek and Latin, the most apt illustrations for the points they wished to make, is astonishing. What more wonderful one-man work has ever been written from the point of view of scholarship than Peter Bayle's extraordinary *Critical Dictionary*, a work still useful for its tremendous knowledge of the by-ways of literature, history, and sociology?

To come to my subject, little seems to be known of Woolston, except through his books and subsequent notoriety. He was born in Northampton in 1669; studied at Cambridge, became a Fellow of Sidney College, and ordained as a minister. He early became convinced that the Bible generally, and the New Testament in particular, could only be explained as enshrining allegories—a view for which he was perhaps indebted to Origen. It was in 1726 that he commenced to publish his *Six Discourses*, and in 1729 he was tried for blasphemy and sentenced to a

year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. Efforts were made by friends, and even Christians like Whiston and Clarke, to obtain his release, as he was quite unable to pay the fine; but to no purpose; and in 1733 Woolston died in prison. John M. Robertson, however, quotes Voltaire as denying this, positively asserting that "nothing is more false, as several of my friends have seen him in his house; he died there at liberty." This is possibly true, as often prisoners of the King's Bench Prison were allowed to live within its precincts and under its supervision.

Whether Woolston believed anything whatever in Christianity may be difficult, perhaps, to say. But there can be no question about his opinion of the miracles of Jesus. Read as actual happenings, he considered they were utterly farcical, too stupid for anyone to read without roars of laughter. And he proceeded to give reasons for his unbelief in their ever having happened. His explanation was that they were all meant to be allegorical, written to inculcate some spiritual lesson. This is, in a nutshell, what Woolston set out to show.

Had it remained at that, had he written in a reverent spirit, had he credited Christianity with good intentions, had he eulogized its spiritual message, Woolston would probably have been left alone—and probably forgotten. What has made his name perhaps the most famous of the Deists is that he dared to treat "sacred" subjects in a spirit of levity and mockery, without reverence of any kind and without any due appreciation of "spiritual" values. Robertson called his *Discourses* "freshly reasoned, but heedlessly ribald." I am glad he used the word "heedlessly" instead of "needlessly," for it is something to be proud of that, in the fight for free speech, and Thomas Woolston was one of our great fighters, he saw no reason why he should not poke fun at such unmitigated absurdities as the miracles of Jesus. It was the same problem which faced G. W. Foote, and I am glad to say, Foote followed Woolston. Nonsense is still nonsense, whether it be called religious nonsense or not. It is not difficult in these days to laugh at the preposterous rubbish, say, of the story of Jesus and the Devil; but it was very different in Woolston's time. And it was men like Woolston who made it safe for the "educated" Agnostic or the "reverent" Rationalist to attack Christianity without having to pay fines or go to prison.

And this brings me to Sir Leslie Stephen. Admittedly he was a young man when he wrote his *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, and admittedly also in the preface to a later edition, he sadly confessed to many wrong judgments and hasty readings; yet the fact remains that his criticism of Woolston, as indeed that of other Deists, was biased and stupid. Christianity, in his opinion, though not true, should always be very reverently treated. Nothing whatever should be done to wound the believer in such a sacred religion; not a word of criticism save it be couched in the most gentlemanly spirit.

Let us hear him:—

Woolston's argument, therefore, coincided—intentionally or not—with the extreme sceptical view. He declared that the miraculous stories were without a particle of historical truth . . . the argument was the more offensive because there is no sign that Woolston appreciated the difficulties which may be suggested by criticism or by a priori objections to miracles. His contention is simply that the narratives are on the face of them preposterous. They are so grotesque that to listen gravely to their recital "exceeds all power of farce." This strange performance would have been sufficient of itself to raise doubts of its author's sanity.

If one did not know that Stephen himself was an amiable and estimable man, it would be difficult to excuse such egregious nonsense in the art of criticism. Woolston, of course, was quite sane, at least as sane as Stephen; and as for his "strange performance," had it been couched in the usual grave terms befitting such a grave and holy subject as the miracles of "Our Saviour" (who really is not), it would have been hailed as quite in the Stephen spirit—that is, the serious, weighty, earnest spirit without a laugh in it. And yet how can one think of some of Christ's miracles without laughing, as Woolston truly said?

Roberston came much nearer to the truth; as one could expect: "Woolston's [arguments] were indeed well fitted to arouse wrath and rejoinder . . . he was of the tribe who can argue no issue without jesting, and who stamp levity on every cause by force of innuendo whimsicality. Arguments that might have been made convincing were made to pass as banter and serious spirits repelled."

Stephen's was one of the serious spirits.

But let us see what Woolston himself says here and there.

H. CUTNER.

Acid Drops

The Rev. A. Barrett, of St. Anne's Vicarage, has found a very convincing reason why good Christians should have every sympathy with the military and clerical revolt against the Spanish Government. Spain has allowed "atheistic Communism to grow and rob people of the Faith." That this Faith made the people amongst the most illiterate, the most superstitious and the most poverty-stricken in Europe does not matter. It made the generals powerful, it kept the Church wealthy, with about two-thirds of the land of Spain in its possession, and the people had—Faith. That compensated for everything. We share the Rev. Barrett's anguish at seeing so splendid a structure threatened. And one thing is certain, which makes the disaster the greater. Once this combination of ruling generals, the Church, and a monarchy as corrupt as any existing, and more so than most, is broken, it will be no easy matter to restore that trinity.

Mr. Barrett sees a similar danger threatening us in this country. He bids us look at Glasgow. "A Presbyterian city, containing one-third of Scotland's population, with only twenty-five per cent of the children baptized in the Presbyterian Church." Think of it! Mr. Barrett shivers in his vicarage. The rest of the country may well shiver in its homes. We did not know that Glasgow had advanced so far along the road to civilized thinking as Mr. Barrett would wish us to believe. There are all sorts of other religionists in Glasgow and they have to be considered. Glasgow is not by any means so civilized as Mr. Barrett believes it is.

The Northcliffe Press always runs true to type. Some of us will remember its publication of the massacre of British women and children in the Chinese Boxer rising, and the story of the imminent danger of the Britishers in Johannesburg on the eve of the Boer War. In the European War, the Northcliffe Press played a great part. It was first in the field with "no after-war communication with Germany," "Hang the Kaiser," "Make Germany Pay," and it revelled in atrocities. There was the tale of "Belgian babies with hands cut off," Belgian women raped in the public streets with German officers looking on, and, above all the German boiling down of German dead for the sake of the fat extracted. During the present war with Spain, it has held to its traditions, merely turning out its own files and adapting the stories. The most striking instance of this is repeating the raping of women in the public streets, the substitu-

tion of Spain for Belgium, and Nuns for ordinary women. But the Northcliffe Press knows its readers and acts accordingly. It is a maxim in scientific psychology that like calls to like, and subjectively or objectively, open or masked, Sadism will out. Hence the eagerness with which this last story of the Northcliffe Press is read by those who apologize to themselves by professing extreme indignation at the villains who could commit such an offence as raping women in the public streets. To these the paper would be a good pennyworth on the day of the publishing of such "news."

The last example of the exploitation of the gullibility was given in the *Sunday Dispatch* for September 27. That Alcazar fell late on Sunday night. On the date mentioned, which meant the writing was done on Saturday night at latest, the *Dispatch* not merely announced the taking of the Alcazar by the rebels, but gave detailed accounts of the scenes that followed:—

Wild scenes of enthusiasm followed. Women and children rushed out of the ruins of the citadel and embraced the Moorish soldiers who had raised the siege. . . . Early to-day the whole city of Toledo was in the hands of the patriots.

This was a full twenty-four hours before the relief. And the corroborative details of the women falling on the necks of the Moorish soldiers were most convincing—of the imaginative power of the Northcliffe Press writers. But let us be generous and say that the Northcliffe Press is very, very simple and trusting. It believes anything it is told—so long as what it is told is what it wants to be told, and even though sometimes facts contradict what it publishes, yet it has the authority of Paul for believing that if a lie has abounded to the glory of God, no man should be called a sinner. For it must always be remembered that the Northcliffe Press is a champion of Christian truth and Christian morality. If only someone had time to chronicle the efforts of the Northcliffe Press to promote Christian truth and Christian morality during the past forty years, it would make a most interesting volume.

Mr. Frank Buchman has been carrying his Gospel into America. There he is reported as saying, "Thank God for Adolf Hitler for building a strong bulwark against a Godless Russia. If only Mr. Hitler would become a first-century Christian Europe would be completely saved." The head of the "Oxford Groups," added, "The Groups are the only thing in the ranks of Christendom that is sufficiently militant and international to save the world from war." Strange to say, the "House Party" at which he hurled these stirring remarks, was not, we are told, "a great success." It was thought that Mr. Buchman "had spread himself rather more than was desirable." Adolf Hitler as a first-class Christian saving Europe for Christianity seems about as big a joke as Mr. Buchman himself. As for Group members, their militancy to save the world from war is quite on a par with that of the Salvation Army or the Church Army. In bawling words they are undoubtedly supreme.

The American correspondent of the *Church Times* has come to the conclusion that:—

On the whole, American Christianity, at least the vocal part of it, seems to be more than a little hysterical at the moment about Communism and Fascism—a good deal more so than British Christianity.

Perhaps this is because both Fascism and Communism have Christian adherents—much to the surprise of other true Christians.

Sir Josiah Stamp, who is a convinced Christian, has written a work entitled *Motive and Method in a Christian Order*. The author does not seem impressed with Jesus as the greatest economist the world has ever seen. Sir Josiah, we are told, "cannot discover in the teachings of our Lord those specific directions as to system and method, which others have professed to find there."

This is most surprising. Does the eminent economist dare to claim that everything necessary for the salvation of mankind from the economic point of view cannot be found in the teachings of Jesus? Such heretical belief ought to cast out Sir Josiah Stamp for ever from Christian society.

Sir Josiah actually prints *all* the texts which appear to have an economic bearing in an appendix, so as to justify his dismissal of Jesus from the ranks of economists—a blasphemous proceeding, we venture to suggest. All the same we congratulate the author; for in addition to dismissing Jesus he dismisses the Church. He is quite "unconvinced of her power to produce a new economic revelation."

The stagnant mentality of the average bench of Magistrates has ever been a matter calling urgently for reform. It is to be hoped that recent administrative circularization will lead to the supersession quickly of the plethoric and plutocratic type on the one hand, and the cold-blooded, anæmic, vinegary-humoured type on the other hand. We need men and women of human experience and plain understanding to administer the law, and neither the divine nor devilish interpretations of it that have ruined the homes and blasted the lives of thousands of our people.

It is a serious menace to have any kind of superstition whatsoever mixed up with the administration of law in any form. For instance, extraordinary procedure like that of the Manchester County Coroner, whose death occurred the other day, can be a positive danger to social well-being and sanity. This gentleman referred to (according to the *Daily Telegraph's* local correspondent):—

Conducted inquests on somewhat unconventional lines. He always opened with prayer, and sometimes held his inquiries at unexpected places and times.

At an Oldham inquest in 1931 on a clergyman who committed suicide, he suggested to the jury the possibility that the dead man might have been controlled by "an evil entity," and the jury returning a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind expressed the opinion that the clergyman at times was possessed of an evil spirit.

There is no doubt that Prayer is becoming quite an effete institution amongst Christians. So many prayers, so many disillusionments. Some of the influential patrons of religion are assuring the churches that unanswered prayers are doing a lot of harm to belief. Even those who still believe in prayer are only too conscious of the general decline of this "duty and privilege." The Methodist Conference Annual Report declares that "the Church has suffered a deep and serious loss by the general decay of the once almost universal prayer-meeting," and urges on all local Synods a revival of an act now "appallingly neglected." But evidently the Conference is mistaken about the "loss"—prayer has been discarded solely because it was never answered.

It will not come altogether as a surprise for our readers to learn that, just as the Church invokes the blessing of the sea for sailors—from our Lady of the Seas—so the Church, to show how well abreast of the times it keeps, has appointed Our Lady du Platin as the patroness of aviators. A pilgrimage in her honour was held at La Rochelle, in France, the other day, and the pilgrims, most of them airmen, held a service on the beach with the Abbé Viaud at the head. The Church, naturally, does not guarantee immunity from accidents; but if none occur after the blessing, then that proves Our Lady du Platin has kept a weather-eye on the aviators and seen them through their perilous journey. If, on the other hand, there is an accident, then that is "the will of God." So the Church keeps up the merry old game with delightful insouciance.

It could only have been a typical unimaginative journalist who christened Dr. Inge "The Gloomy Dean," and the echoing press rose to another "brilliant" catchphrase with alacrity. If Fleet Street's alleged humourists were half as humorous or witty as the former Dean of St. Paul's, their readers would not be such pronounced creatures of "gloom" as we find them to be.

In "Preachers I have known," Dr. Inge provides an evening paper with some amusingly candid views on past and present pulpit figures. The two Archbishops and the Bishop of Durham seem to have his approval. Canon Scott Holland "always irritated him by his polix and emotional rhetoric." Page Roberts, who became Dean of Salisbury, "had an odd way of twisting about, as if he was trying to turn his back upon himself."

Dr. Inge never heard Spurgeon, and adds, "I do not suppose I should have liked him. He had a poor opinion of Anglican preachers. 'He will burn,' he said of one of them; 'he is dry enough.' 'Mr. Spurgeon forgets,' said the victim, 'that an unctuous person like himself will burn still better.'"

On the last visit of the ex-Kaiser to England, relates the merry cleric:—

He nearly choked Lord Morley of Blackburn, who, as we know, spelled God with a small "g" and Gladstone with a very large one, by suddenly asking him, at dinner, whether he admired the sermons of Bishop Boyd Carpenter, adding that he had had them translated into German, and read them on Sundays to his family. "Of course," he said, "I have cut out the dogmatic stuff." From my recollection of that eloquent prelate, I do not think it would have been necessary to omit much.

Some influential Indian leaders beside the now rather antiquated Gandhi, are being badly deceived by the clergy and religious writers who aim at "instructing" them. Here, for example, is Dr. Stanley Jones, author of *Christ of the Indian Road*, tells of an interview he has had with Dr. Ambedkar—a Hindu, who contemplated a change of religion. Ambedkar has interviewed the Pope, but "rose from the interview furious"—because, apparently, the Pope did not pretend that Christianity was different from what it is. But Dr. Jones assured the Leader "that Christianity has already gone through the fire of modern thought, and that the only result was that its bonds had been burnt." Dr. Jones's words are correct, but not in the sense Dr. Jones wants Dr. Ambedkar to believe.

The "Freethinker" Circulation Drive

It is proposed to celebrate the coming-of-age of the present editorship by an attempt to create a substantial increase in the circulation of this paper. The plan suggested is:—

(1) Each interested reader is to take an extra copy for a period of twelve months, and to use this copy as a means of interesting a non-subscriber to the point of taking the *Freethinker* regularly.

(2) So soon as this new subscriber is secured, the extra copy may be dropped by the present subscriber. Until this is accomplished, he will regard the extra threepence weekly (for one year) as a fine for his want of success.

The plan is simple, and it is not costly; but it does mean a little work, and whether or not it is more blessed to give than to receive, it is certainly easier for most to give than it is to work. But in this case it is the work alone that will yield permanent benefit. There are many thousands of potential readers in the country; why not try and secure some of them?

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

D. WILLIS.—We made no mistake in reading your letter. Evidently you have not what people foolishly call the "business instinct," or you would recognize that one purpose of the *Spain and the Church*, was to introduce both this journal and the Freethought movement to those who were not acquainted with both. The many thousands that have been sold has so far justified expectations. It is not for the purpose of making the thoroughfare bright that firms spend money on coloured electric lights.

W. E. WEAVER (Wallasy).—Thanks for securing the fifth subscriber in your work for the *Freethinker* "Circulation Drive." We hope many others will be encouraged to follow your example—and beat it.

T. M. CAMERON (Ballymena).—*Brimstone Ballads*, by G. I. Mackenzie has been out of print some years, and can only be obtained second-hand.

For Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—A. H. Deacon, 58.

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.

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

Sugar Plums

To-day (October 4), Mr. Cohen delivers his first lecture this season in the MacLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, at seven o'clock. His subject will be "Aspects of Life and Death." Admission will be free, but there are a number of reserved seats. A crowded house is expected.

On Sunday, October 18, Mr. Cohen lectures in the Picton Hall, Liverpool. He had also promised to lecture in Birkenhead on the Monday evening following. But at the last moment the Birkenhead Council refuses the use of the Town Hall for such a purpose. Birkenhead is a great deal of an intellectual backwater, but it is intolerable that a bigoted number of Councillors should refuse the right of certain of the ratepayers of the place using the Town Hall, because these members are not yet sufficiently developed to realize that every member of the City has an equal right to express his or her opinion. The matter is the more ridiculous since Mr. Cohen lectures in Town Halls and in Corporation Buildings in many parts of the country. We hope that Freethinkers in the district will give these Councillors as much advertising as possible. They deserve it. Mr. Cohen will be pleased to see his Birkenhead friends in Liverpool on the Sunday evening.

After all the talk of improvements in its Sunday programme, the B.B.C. announces that it will not give on Sunday the same performances it gives on week-days. It may give what it calls "light music," but it must be sufficiently solemn for Sabbatarians not to detect the possibility of anyone laughing, or feeling unspiritually happy. The reason is given, with characteristic Christian impudence, that it would hurt the feelings of a large number of its patrons. But no one compels sabbatarians to listen, and with alternative programmes, each one

could get what he wishes. But Sir John Reith, with his usual impertinence, wishes to decide what people shall have on Sunday if they use their wireless at all.

For a time the B.B.C. lied as only very pious people can, with regard to the number of letters received praising the Sunday programme or complaining about it. Then admission was forced from them that there were "considerable" complaints. But it never allows an independent census of the letters to be taken, and no one would take the word of the B.B.C. on the question. It is a matter of common knowledge that at least three-fourths of licence-holders would prefer a different Sunday programme. Let anyone take a rough and ready census of his neighbours in any district, and he will find about three-fourths of those who can get to the Continent on Sunday do so. They pay for one thing and they get another for nothing. We advise Freethinkers all over the country to get busy and let the B.B.C. know its opinion of what is being done.

From the *Leicester Evening Mail* for September 19, we see that the Loughborough Education Committee has been paying for a canvass of the town on the question of the attendance of children at Sunday School. It is not a matter of finding out the use of Sunday Schools, the Sunday Schools themselves would probably object to that. The idea at the back of it is to get more children into Sunday Schools. So we are not surprised to find a correspondent of the *Evening Mail* asking by what right the committee spends public money in "badgering parents with a view to getting children into local Sunday Schools." There is no right whatever, and any ratepayer would be justified in raising the question on the annual audit. The only kind of right to make the Education Committee advertising agent for Sunday Schools is the right of position, and a perfectly warped, but thoroughly Christian, mentality that is deficient in an elementary sense of justice. We have never wondered at the existence of such language as "Christian Truth," or "Christian Justice," for both represent a distinct brand which in operation would lead a man to the bankruptcy court in business, and to social ostracism in private life, if their exercise were not confined to the Churches and to religious matters.

Reports from Messrs. Brighton, Clayton and Whitehead, tell of good meetings held in their respective areas, with a steady demand for literature, and there is no doubt that these speakers are broadening our sphere of influence. There are, of course, some patches of noisy opposition, especially when new ground is tried, but the experience is general that a well-supported platform is the best corrective for bad-mannered Christians.

Bethnal Green Branch N.S.S. reports a successful open-air season in Victoria Park. Meetings were held every Sunday during the summer, the attendance has been good, new members have been made, and if a suitable hall can be obtained, active propaganda may be carried on during the winter. The Branch Secretary, Mr. C. Samuels, 85 Approach Road, London, E.2, will be pleased to provide particulars of membership to any local saints wishing to become associated with the Branch and its work.

The West London Branch N.S.S. opens its indoor season to-day (October 4) with a debate on "Can Anyone believe in the Scriptures?" Mr. G. H. Dicks, General Secretary of the New Church Evidence Society will take the affirmative, and Mr. E. C. Saphin the negative. The debate begins at 7.30, in the "Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edward Road, London, W., and every Sunday evening following meetings will be held in the same place, and at the same time.

The syllabus of indoor lectures arranged by the North London Branch N.S.S. is now completed, and copies may be obtained from Mr. L. Ellis, 28 Denning Road, Hampstead, London, N.W.3, also from Branch officials at the open-air meetings. The first lecture will be on October 11, in the Primrose Restaurant, Heath Street, Hampstead, and will begin at 7.30 p.m.

The Human Race in America

MAN is a relatively recent arrival in the New World. The absence in America of the higher apes and monkeys precludes the possibility of his evolution in that Continent. Its earliest human remains so far certified pertain to the polished Stone Age. Still, when the European invasion occurred, the population of America was very extensive and from the Arctic North to the extreme South every area was inhabited, as were also the adjacent islands.

The old world black, white, and yellow races were supplemented by the so-called Red Race when America became known. These natives were termed Indians by Columbus from his mistaken belief that when he landed in the Bahamas he had reached India by circumnavigating the globe.

In every American region the natives display peculiar physical features which distinguish them from Old World types. Yet, they are indubitably descended from prehistoric migrants from Asia, and have been long enough habituated to their adopted home to have developed characters firmly fixed by heredity through the sustained influences of novel geographical and climatic conditions. Still, the American Indian continues to carry traces of his Asian ancestry, and that eminent authority, Dr. Hrdlicka, declares that he "is derived from the yellow-brown stem of mankind in Asia. He may be regarded as one of the secondary races of mankind. The terms 'Red Man,' 'Red Race,' etc., are misnomers for he is yellow-brown."

It is quite unlikely that man migrated to America over a land bridge since submerged, or that he settled there once and for all. Successive waves of migration seem far more probable, and it is practically certain that man crossed the narrow Behring Straits from Siberia when he first entered the New Continent. As Professor Kroeber points out: "The strait is narrow; frozen over part of the year, less than 50 miles wide with the Diomedes Isles in the middle."

With man's advent in America he apparently carried with him the customs, arts and industries then common in the Eastern Hemisphere. These acquisitions included the use of fire with a knowledge of the means to engender flame by the fire-drill. The domesticated or semi-domesticated canine was his companion and servitor. Flint implements employed for scraping, severing, chopping, piercing and other purposes, he possessed. He was acquainted with the spear, the spear-thrower, and presumably the harpoon. The bow and arrow, basketry, nets and cordage were in use, while sexual rites for adolescents, both male and female, and spiritist superstitions, rites and ceremonies were features of native life. Indeed, all those phenomena which signalize savage culture in the more backward and benighted regions of the Eastern World were present. It is therefore clear that the races in their migration north-westwards conveyed the knowledge and beliefs common to the Eastern Hemisphere at the close of the Paleolithic or in the opening centuries of Neolithic Times.

Also, those discoveries, arts and inventions which distinguished later ages in Eurasia and elsewhere are entirely absent in early North and South America. There therefore seems no escape from the conclusion that these Old World advances were made at a time subsequent to that which witnessed the human migration to America. The dog was tamed in very remote days and accompanied his masters in their wanderings, but animals domesticated at a later date, such as, sheep, cattle, horses, asses, camels, the pig and goat were completely missing in

America. Not even the reindeer had been domesticated invaluable as that animal is. The Eastern World's most important cultivated plants, wheat, barley, rice and other growths were unknown. And if climate be urged as an explanation of this it completely fails to account for the absence of both the plough and the wheel, the working of iron, stringed instruments and other amenities of Eurasia in its later stages of development.

Some groups became expert hunters and fishers. Others learnt to cultivate maize, tobacco, chili-pepper, the tomato, pineapple and other plants. Yet, the agricultural implements of native America were merely a rude hoe and planting stick. Excellent ceramics were produced, and various weapons for warfare and the chase were elaborated. Other groups erected cities which became the capitals of important States. These urban peoples were those that progressed most rapidly in the arts and crafts, and such must have been the settlers in Ohio and the remarkable mound-builders of Tennessee, as well as the ingenious communities which developed the Maya, Mexican and Peruvian Empires. These last were in several respects equal, and in some, superior, in culture to the sanguinary Iberian Christians who wantonly destroyed them.

At the period of the Spanish invasion the various American communities were apparently engaged in chronic warfare. This and other evils, notably those of a sacerdotal character in Mexico, served to lessen the population. Dr. Hrdlicka contends that: "There was little race consciousness or solidarity, and the white invaders had little difficulty in conquering the different groups with the help of others. It was largely the Indian who overcame the Indian." Again, the introduction of an alien creed and European diseases to which the natives were previously immune have been sadly detrimental to them. It is estimated that the entire population of full-blooded Indians is now no more than five millions in the two American Continents. Of these it appears that fewer than 100,000 survive in Canada and the United States. Some celebrated tribes such as the Shawnees and Hurons are either extinct or verging on early extinction.

Transatlantic Indian groups have been arranged in seven regional classes. The Arctic tribes comprise the Eskimo stocks and the Aleutian tribes who inhabit the islands extending from the southern shores of Alaska almost to Kamchatka. The Eskimo range from Greenland to Alaska. They are primarily a seafaring stock who hunt the white bear, seal, walrus, narwhal and other arctic animals. Packs of dogs draw the natives in sledges across the frozen soil and sea of their bleak dwelling-place. The musk sheep and reindeer so abundant in this desolate clime remain undomesticated, but they are prized for their skins and flesh. The Eskimo canoes are cleverly constructed, and their fishing appliances and hunting implements are models of fine workmanship, while their snow houses are very remarkable erections.

A second group consists of North American tribes situated to the south of the Arctic section, and ranging from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, but these have wandered widely from their traditional camps. Indian intermarriage with whites is by no means unusual, and it is asserted that such unions are "generally stable, and the usually numerous children take at once their place among the whites." Surviving Chetaws, Cherokees and other pure-blooded natives are now regarded as civilized citizens. Nevertheless, they represent a rapidly dying race.

The North Pacific tribes, to some extent, retain their ancient hunting and fishing customs while in the South, the Pueblo Indians and others are the descend-

ants of ancestors who in the past attained considerable culture, as their earlier habitations, pottery and fabrics clearly testify.

The Mexican group embraces the old Aztec civilization, whose melancholy ruins alone survive as witnesses of its former magnificence. The romantic Mayas constitute another Central American group, but the present population is formed of the degenerate descendants of a once highly civilized community. Here again, majestic fragments of splendid architecture silently point to a great and glorious past.

Turning towards the south we are reminded of the earlier inhabitants of the West Indian Islands, the dwellers in the dense forests of the Orinoco, Amazon and La Plata regions, the Caribs, Arawaks and other tribes and their descendants. There are also the nomadic Indians of the Pamapas, the peoples of Patagonia and the natives of Tierra del Fuego.

The South Pacific was the scene of the great civilization pitilessly pillaged and destroyed by the Catholic marauders led by Pizarro of Spain. This Indian Empire, that of Peru, was in possession of a highly-organized system of government. The llama and alpaca had been domesticated, and from their wool the finest textures were woven. Agriculture was well advanced, and the art of irrigation was successfully conducted. Many useful plants were cultivated, and although the Peruvians lacked iron, they were richly provided with the precious metals. Their temples and other buildings were splendid structures, and they fully understood the art of embalming the dead. Their jewels were things of beauty, and their pottery-ware was very superior both in quality and design. But, as already intimated, all this was remorselessly swept away by a handful of European invaders, while in civilized Mexico the self-same tragedy took place.

T. F. PALMER.

The Missionary Racket in New Guinea

WITHIN recent months there have been at least half-a-dozen cases here in Australia of Catholic and Protestant missionaries before the courts, on charges ranging from the ill-treatment to the killing of the creatures to whom they were supposed to be bringing the blessings of Christianity.

I did not make the clippings from the daily papers that I might have done regarding these occurrences. Before me at the moment, however, are the reports of the final stages in a matter that had its setting in New Guinea. Yesterday, by three to one, the justices of the High Court, Sydney, decided to reduce from five years to six months the sentence imposed in New Guinea on a Catholic missionary priest, Anthony Cranssen. The dissentient was Justice Starke.

To quote from one of the papers:—

Justice Starke said that, in his opinion, the sentence might be reduced by three years, without endangering the peace, order, and good government of the Territory. The serious nature of the appellant's acts precluded, he thought, any further reduction of his sentence.

His Honour added that the appellant was a priest of the Roman Catholic Church; was born in Holland; and was 31 years of age.

He was charged before the Supreme Court of the Territory of New Guinea that he did, wilfully and unlawfully, set fire to a dwelling-house; and to this charge he pleaded guilty. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Territory, before whom the

appellant was charged, sentenced him to imprisonment for five years, with hard labour.

He now appealed to the High Court against both his conviction and the sentence.

The main ground for the appeal was that the appellant desired to plead not guilty, but that his solicitor said it would be better to plead guilty, because, if he pleaded guilty, the evidence given before the committing magistrate would not require to be given again, and he would be fined "a little sum of £5 or £10," and nothing would appear in the newspapers.

It was strange advice, said Justice Starke; but the appellant accepted it, and took the risk.

The conviction afforded no ground for the interference of the High Court, for the appellant, according to his own statements, directed his native boys to set fire to three shelters of huts occupied by some native boys from Kekaru and the coast, who were attached to the Lutheran mission; and the appellant's boys burnt down the shelters or huts in accordance with the directions given to them.

The want of knowledge in this Court of the conditions affecting the administration of criminal justice in the Territory, said his Honour, and its general lack of experience in the administration of criminal justice render interference on its part peculiarly difficult, if not dangerous.

The offence, with the particulars surrounding it, is sufficiently disclosed in the foregoing extract. Briefly, Cranssen was so fiercely eager to get the natives to Heaven by the Catholic route—as against the passage that was being offered them by the Lutherans—that he directed his boys to devastate the Lutheran huts per medium of the firestick. Certainly a reversion, in a way, to the good old days when Cranssen's forefathers glowed with heavenly radiance in the burning—not merely of huts or houses—but living human bodies!

In another paper we read:—

Justice Starke described the action of Father Cranssen as high-handed, wholly indefensible, contrary to law, and calculated to weaken the authority of the Administration of the Territory. Chief Justice Wanliss sentenced the Lutheran missionary, Henry Foege, to two years with hard labour, and in that case this Court refused Foege leave to appeal. "The acts of Father Cranssen," concluded his Honour, "were certainly as high-handed as those of the Lutheran missionary, and much more dangerous."

We have here, in the reference to Foege, a reminder as to another clerical offender in New Guinea. Let us not confuse him with the Lutherans with whom Cranssen was dealing. Foege, it appears, was operating in some other part of the Territory. Two years' hard labour is what he got, without even being allowed the right of appeal. I do not know the nature of his offence; but it is clear that it must have been something of a more or less dastardly character.

In the dailies—the very same day that they were reporting the Cranssen matter—is this message from Australia's Federal capital, Canberra:—

An investigation will be conducted into the grave charge by Chief Judge Wanliss at Rabaul to-day, against the Crown Law authorities at New Guinea.

Lucidius Zimmer, missionary, was found not guilty of the manslaughter of a native boy; but the judge declared that the Crown Law authorities had "framed" a charge of manslaughter when there was a *prima facie* case for a murder charge.

According to Chief Judge Wanliss, there was uncontradicted evidence at the inquest that Brother Zimmer, at a range of 75 yards, deliberately aimed at and killed a native. Only a manslaughter charge had been preferred. "As it happened," said Chief Judge Wanliss, "the evidence brought out resulted in an acquittal. It will be a sorry day for the Territory if the Crown Law Office can, in this manner,

prevent persons from being tried for offences; and where, what is deemed to be murder in the case of a miner, can be treated as manslaughter in the case of a missionary."

Reports of all Supreme Court cases are forwarded to the Territories Branch of the External Affairs Department; and in view of the seriousness of the Judge's statement, it is expected that the New Guinea Crown Law Office will be asked for a special report on the circumstances of the trial proceedings.

Zimmer belonged to the Roman Catholic Church.

Three missionary cases, then, have we here—and all from New Guinea. Just as frequently is trouble of the same kind arising in other quarters out this way. Could there be a more ruthless exposure of the missionizing business, the sufferings and torments it represents to the poor, unfortunate natives? A very humanitarian step would it be if the Federal Government had the Territory cleared of all the clerical parasites that infest it.

Let it be added, with regard to Cranssen, that the three justices, in opposition to Justice Starke, took the view that "it appeared manifest that a sentence of five years was out of all proportion to the seriousness of the offence," and that "the offence, after all, consisted in burning down three flimsy structures, readily replaced."

So there you have it. "Three flimsy structures, readily replaced." A very lofty, belittling view, compared with that taken by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Guinea, in imposing a sentence of five years, with hard labour!

Still further interesting reflections arise, if we briefly examine the whole judicial position, even at the expense of a little repetition.

Foege was sentenced to two years, and was denied right of appeal. Foege is a Lutheran (Protestant). Cranssen's offence, declared Justice Starke, was just as bad, if not worse than Foege's. Yet Cranssen was allowed to appeal, and had his sentence reduced from five years to six months. Cranssen is a Catholic. Chief Justice Wanliss considers that Zimmer should have been charged with murder instead of manslaughter. But manslaughter became the charge—and he was acquitted. Zimmer is a Catholic.

Shure, then, it's lucky ye are, if yer born a Son of Rome!

I. Y. ANERONEY.

Sydney, N.S.W. Australia.

The Materialist Basis

(Concluded from page 620)

As Mr. Cohen says, it is quite easy to prove that war doesn't pay, that it's bad business. Sir Norman Angell did all that long ago. I note an American version on the same lines lately.¹ Yet wars continue. Because they are very profitable to small sections. The Ethiopian War benefited hugely a section of the Italian bourgeoisie; it has already lowered the low standard of living among the Italian workers. Therefore Italy's "place in the sun" means profits for a small section, worse poverty for every other Italian.

Since I wrote my essay, the Fascist attack on Spanish democracy has been made. Greece (as a result of the puppet King George having gone back on all his pledges) has set up a Hitler system. Roumania has set up a Fascism, and Poland and Finland, near Fascisms, are on the brink. Could one ask for more startling corroborations of any thesis of social decay?

The most startling thing of all, however, was the exposure for us that almost all our national papers from

¹ *A Place in the Sun*, and *The Balance Sheets of Imperialism*, by Grover Clark.

the *Times* to the *Daily Mail* were pro-Fascist, and ready at a moment's notice to champion a rebellion against the mildest of democratic reforms. Only the *News-Chronicle* and *Daily Worker*, with the *Herald* and *Manchester Guardian*, spoke up for democracy. Think what a terrible descent is here shown from what would have been the attitude of even a few years ago! No one now can doubt the readiness of the British ruling-class for Fascist action.

And when will the time come? The moment that the market-shrinkage (compelling unrest in the self-colonies) reaches a certain stage, the Fascist rule of British Imperialism in India will be transferred to England itself. There will be no other way of preserving profits. Tanks will be on the streets—and doubtless regiments of Gurkhas. And will one be able to repel them by arguing that the economic basis isn't the essential fact?²

I am asking Mr. Cohen, and all Rationalists, to consider these points. But I am not asking for the N.S.S. to put Marxism into its creed. I agree with Mr. Cohen that it can best fulfil its work by carrying on on its present basis. What I wanted I have already largely achieved—a fuller and more careful consideration of Marxism, and attention drawn to the Fascist menace.

Mr. Cohen says: "I am convinced that there is always room for informed, drastic, and as the system criticized is certain to characterize it, 'destructive' criticism. . . . Variation is the condition of improvement, and uniformity—often an agreeable name for stagnation—paves the way for degeneration. The ideal situation, to my mind, is to establish a working but mobile arrangement between State action and individual freedom."

If Mr. Cohen investigates the Soviet system, he will find that it is the only system yet devised in which everyone is given full chance to express criticism, and to take an active part in ordering the state. "Already (as the Webbs show admirably in their *Soviet Communism*) an actual majority of the population is, at any given moment, engaged in the work of either legislation or administration, or both—so that 'the State' in the U.S.S.R. comes to include, as part of itself, most—eventually all—of the people of the U.S.S.R." (T. A. Jackson, *The Labour Monthly*). Of what other system, past or present, can this be said? The aim is to make all citizens partake responsibly of government, so that finally (in pure Communism, when mastery over production means plenty for all) the whole concept of "State" will disappear altogether, and any citizen be able to take over any office whatever at a moment's notice. Criticism, as drastic as can be, will always have its place; but surely it is obvious that criticism has a different function under a parasitic State than in a Socialist community advancing towards Communism.

I agree with Mr. Cohen that an imposed uniformity must cause degeneration. One has only to look at present-day German literature to see the staggering swiftness with which a culture can apparently become obliterated. I ask Mr. Cohen for contrast to read, say, Joseph Kunitz's *Dawn over Samarkand*. It will give him some sense of the mighty forces of creativeness (which by his own definitions could not proceed from oppression) in the U.S.S.R. Here are some words by Prof. Lascelles Abercrombie on this book, which deals with Central Asia:—

The Bolshevik Revolution came; and complete transformation followed. Transformation both material and spiritual. Filth and misery were no longer inevitable. Decency, comfort, health, progressive industry, economic justice incredibly replaced them.

And instead of apathy and fatalism and the fierce unreasoning conservatism of brutish ignorance (carefully

² I should like to make here a friendly challenge to Mr. Cohen. Will he read and review two books by R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution* (a great book, Lawrence & Wishart, 2s. 6d.), and *World Politics, 1918-36* (Gollancz)? Here is stated the Marxist interpretation of Fascism, the crucial point of our world to-day; here is marshalled all the factual evidence. If Mr. Cohen accepts this analysis, he is to all intents and purposes a Marxist. If he doesn't accept, I should like to hear what he will put in its place.

maintained), we see a people genuinely inspired by an ideal which they know can be realized, and eager to educate themselves in order to realize it the sooner, and as nobly as they can. . . .

What strikes me is, that the book is the raw material for the most magnificent of epic poems. A glorious cause to be fought for—the most glorious of all causes, hopeless apparently at first, finally triumphant; heroism on both sides, and great figures doing great things, good and evil; and one grand all-embracing *action* gradually and superbly unfolding itself. . . .

To anyone depressed about the present state of Western Europe, I recommend this book. Western Europe is not the whole world. There is Central Asia, and by that example humanity has still something to hope for.

And here let me pause to claim that "proletarian psychology" is not a misnomer. Man is not a static quantity. In my opinion, we are living in a period when man is making a great leap forward—comparable only to the period when he repudiated cannibalism because of his growing sense of relationship. Let anyone read, say Gladkov's *Cement*, Avdeyenko's *I Love, Leonov's Skutarevsky*; and he will see how the Socialist relationship is creating a "new man."

I had meant to argue out here the issues of Freedom under Socialism and Communism; but to do that I would need more space than I can expect. I therefore content myself with some words of Romain Rolland, uttered over the new Soviet Constitution: "This is the establishment of real democracy, one which was possible only in a classless society; this is giving life to the great slogans which, until now, were but dreams of mankind—liberty, equality, fraternity."

Let there be no fear. The road of advancing socialization *must* be the road of all freedoms. The road of retreat begets all tyrannies and oppressions. I agree with Mr. Cohen, that a Soviet Britain would not exactly repeat the history of the U.S.S.R. Naturally much has been learnt during the last twenty years; mistakes could be avoided; the start would be made from an immensely higher level of production, and therefore need create comparatively little dislocation (except for the sabotage of the ruling-class). But I hold that the future of freedom and rationality is the future of increasingly socialized activity, of Communism.³

By that one does not mean imposed uniformity. On the contrary. For, since exploitation would cease to exist, everyone would be free to develop his or her powers and characteristics to the highest degree. There, and there alone, is true freedom, true variety; an unflagging stimulus and progressive activity.

Let the Materialist have no fear. While the productive mechanism develops, there must be an increase in freedom, rationality, and happiness. The fantasy of men dominated by machines (as in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*) is utterly unreal as a prophecy of what could result from the unfettered development of the machine. It is a timid idealist fantasy, based on an abstraction of the present, when men are actually using machines to grind the life out of millions.

Freedom is not an abstraction. It exists only in *action*. (Mr. Cohen, in *Determinism or Free Will*, makes the good Marxist point that the problem of "free will" and "necessity" only arose as the result of society being cleft into slaves and free-men. In a classless society, the wound is at last healed. Freedom becomes the recognition of necessity; and that recognition, the first essential of mastery over the world.)

It is because I have a Materialist faith in the unconquerable powers of man, in his capacity for freedom, that I am a Communist.

JACK LINDSAY.

[Mr. Cohen will reply to Mr. Lindsay's articles in next week's issue of the *Freethinker*, and, for the present, this must close the discussion.]

³ *Britain Without Capitalists*, by a group of experts (Lawrence & Wishart) shows what a liberation our major industries could achieve in a Soviet Britain

The Advance of Science, Education and Rationality

READERS of general scientific journals, such as *Nature*, will have noted that the British Association for the Advancement of Science has entered the social domain. This movement, as has been well said, was a welcome recognition of the facts that the members cannot play a full part as citizens by activity in science alone, but must be concerned with the application of their discoveries and inventions and take a due share of responsibility for the social results of their work.

This attitude being fairly established, we may now ask, with all due diffidence, whether the Association will now proceed to enter the general intellectual domain. This comparable movement seems to be necessary in order, among other things, to develop further, more widespread, interest in science, together with fuller recognition of the cultural value of its facts, principles and methods as an important factor of the higher civilization.

Progress in these respects is at present hampered in a variety of ways: by the paucity of the science taught in our schools, this being at present mainly confined to chemistry and physics for boys and botany for girls, though biology of a more general kind is now being introduced; by the common error of holding science and scientists, instead of the whole community, responsible for the anti-social use made of some discoveries and inventions (as in war and gangstering); by the Roman Catholic *Index*, which we may conclude prevents many people from reading valuable scientific works; by ecclesiastical condemnation of Modernism, which, in conjunction with the inculcation of Medievalism by some eminent litterateurs, doubtless militates against science and tends to vitiate education (note Hilaire Belloc's statement that "true history is history written in accordance with Catholic philosophy"); apparently by one or more persons in authority at the B.B.C., as indicated by an article in the *Listener* which suggested that only "pseudo-scientists" believe wholly in evolution; and seemingly also by devotees of the lower religions, such as the Salvation Army, one of the leaders of which, in a sermon preached at Norwich during the 1935 meeting of the British Association in that city, emitted a sort of counterblast to the principle—"Darwinism (and something else) has destroyed us." Some newspapers help to keep alive cruder notions by reporting at length alleged cases of occultry (the poltergeist, etc.), by printing elaborate articles on astrology, and the like, and as remarked by Professor Hogben (Conway Memorial Lecture) there are "editors witless enough to welcome Sir Josiah Stamp's astute appeal for a moratorium on inventions." One or more coteries of earnest people decry medical science, and these or others of like mentality write of "The Bankruptcy of Science," "The Idolatry of Science," "The Idealistic Reaction Against Science," and tell us that "Science is to be replaced by culture," and so forth.

The total effect of all this in generating widespread neglect of, if not contempt for, science must be very considerable. The aid given by scientists to general positive, rational thought has been sporadic—except that the Royal Society has done something toward "a more intelligent consideration of science and scientific thought in the public Press"; advance has been slow, and the possibility of retrogression remains, as has been shown of late in a variety of ways—by the notable "retreat from reason," the rise of "freak religions," the recrudescence of medieval racial-religious intolerance, persecution and brutality. . . .

In view of these features there is urgent need for systematic help. And it is here suggested that the British Association, assuming an intellectual leadership which would be appropriate to and might well be expected from so important a body of thoroughgoing intellectualists and educators, should issue a few reasoned declarations on salient points. These might include the following:—

(1) The bases of science are naturalism, including observational experience and experiment (all of the publicly communicable kind), full research, testing and verification, with the exclusion of all authority which can-

not produce adequate credentials. The quest for truth proceeds solely by the light of reason grounded on sufficiently established, "positive" knowledge, as opposed to "mere logic or *a priori* argumentation." The knowledge gained is organized into a coherent body of fact and principle; and this forms a dependable criterion by which philosophical and other propositions that are not actually within the field of science must be appraised.

(2) The desirability of following up the observation lessons, nature study and simple science of the elementary school with courses in the secondary school that will include astronomy, physics and chemistry, geology with palaeontology, biology with at least an introduction to heredity, eugenics and psychology, prehistoric archaeology, and anthropology. And in view of the cardinal importance of the evolutionary principle as a background of thought, whether intellectual or social, this interlinking and illuminating generalization should form the subject of a final course in which the main events from the evolution of the stars to the appearance of man in history would be brought into review. This would then supply the indispensable basis of a final and fully effective course in world history.

(3) A call for full time education for all developing citizens throughout adolescence. This is imperative if the pupils in the secondary schools are to learn and digest sufficient science as well as other subjects; and the more specialized collegiate courses, whether of the more literary, scientific, educational (pedagogic) or other vocational kind, are equally necessary in order to detect and secure for the community the advantage of all the highest ability existing among the students.

(4) As it has become clear that a tolerably adequate acquaintance with science cannot co-exist in an active mind with a variety of current ideas and beliefs, a declaration against those most likely to cause confusion in the minds of intelligent pupils is needed. Beginning with the not inconsiderable remnants of astrology, palmistry and other divination—as distinguished from intelligent anticipation of a natural kind and from scientific prevision—the censure of other primitive-ancient errors and ecclesiastical derivatives from them would follow: miracle or other super- or supra-natural intervention in the course of mundane and universal phenomena—negated by physical and other science; supernatural creation of the world and man—negated by astronomy, geology and biology; doctrines such as virgin birth, spirit-human procreation, god-men, bodily resurrection, etc.—similarly negated by science in general and especially by biology and anthropology. Hence a ban must be placed on the teaching of "revealed theology" in schools, a course rendered imperative by the facts that the long notorious religious obstacle to the progress of education continues (e.g., in the matter of reorganization), and that teachers who are Nonconformists, and others who do not accept Christian theology—Unitarians, Deists, Jews, Rationalists, Agnostics, and some others—are excluded from more than half of our public elementary schools by Roman Catholic and Anglican "religious tests." And such tests, following on the adoption of "agreed syllabuses," based on such theology (though not sectarian), are now, in some areas at least, being extended to publicly provided schools.

The ban must include the use of the Bible, unless it is made clear that it is to be read like any other book of ancient literature. For so long as it is treated as "true" or "inspired," the children must absorb many notions that are wholly opposed to the scientific fact and principle they learn, as well as to their common knowledge and experience—e.g., talking animals, turning sticks into snakes, the "stoppage of the sun," witchery and necromancy, to say nothing of the erroneous moral-social teachings and the contradictions the book contains—e.g., "Take no thought for the morrow," the preaching of peace and the statement, "I came not to send peace [on earth], but a sword." . . . Moreover, the overwhelming support given to a predominantly unintellectual and transcendental orientation of thought by a mass of supposedly authoritative literature must in general militate against the advance of both science and education; and by diverting attention from mundane affairs must be inimical to social progress.

(5) Condemnation of that form of ecclesiastical interference with education which consists in bringing pressure to bear on education authorities and publishers to change or have altered school history books in the interest of a particular sect. As is well known this practice is current, though perhaps confined to that arising from the activities of the (Roman Catholic) Westminster Vigilance Committee.

(6) Finally we note a point that may have serious effects on the freedom of inquiry and discussion in relation to certain subjects. In 1910 a book entitled *De Stabilitate et Progressu Dogmatis*, written by a Jesuit Professor in the College of Propaganda, was issued with a letter of commendation by the Pope (Pius X). In this work the "power of the sword"—the right to execute "heretics" and "heresiarchs"—is intensely advocated. An English priest, Father Ronald Knox, in a recent book states that when the Roman Catholic Church is strong enough in this country it "will not shrink even from repressive measures in order to perpetuate the secure dominion of Catholic principles." With this we associate the definite claims of that Church to control all education (everywhere) and to superiority over the State. From this position it would be but a short step to the control of all scientific investigation, exposition and publication. This menace, though not immediate, calls for full recognition and emphatic condemnation, alike from the scientific, the educational, and the general intellectual and social points of view.

J. REEVES.

[The above is, with a slight alteration of title, a reproduction of a pamphlet which has been sent to some members of the British Association and other intellectualists.]

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

INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexander Hotel, opposite Clapham Common Station): 7.30, Mr. G. Bedborough—"Christ Crucified. The Sermon on the Mount."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Professor F. Aveling, D.Sc.—"The Human Will in Post-Renaissance Thought."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Debate—"Can anyone believe in the Scriptures?" Affir.: G. H. Dicks (General Secretary, New Church Evidence Society). Neg.: E. C. Saphin (National Secular Society).

OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30. Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, October 5, Mr. Preece. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Wednesday, October 7, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mrs. M. Saran.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Wood, Evans, Tuson and Carlton. 6.30, Messrs. Saphin, Bryant, Wood, Evans, Tuson, Leacy and Carlton. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Wood, Bryant and Tuson. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin and Wood. Friday, 7.30, Mr. A. Leacy and others. *Freethinker* on sale at Kiosk. Should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment.

COUNTRY

INDOOR.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Bush Hotel, Churchgate, Bolton): 7.0, "God and the British Association." Opener, the Vicar of the Labour Church.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (McLellan Galleries, 270 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Chapman Cohen—"Aspects of Life and Death."

(Continued on page 639)

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(Continued from page 638)

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, J. V. Shortt (President, Liverpool Branch N.S.S.)—"Man: Both Creature and Creator."

OUTDOOR.

BANKHEAD: 7.0, Wednesday, October 7, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Well Lane): 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. D. Robinson, A Lecture. Literature on sale.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Market): 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture. Literature for sale.

BURNLEY MARKET: 7.30, Tuesday, October 5, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (The Bridge): 7.30, Friday, October 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, October 6, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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