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Views and Opinions

George Bernard Shaw and the Bible
 INGERSOLL said that the hardest thing in the world is to kill a lie. It will get all round the town while truth is putting her boots on. I agree that a lie is very hard to kill, but there is one thing that is still more tenacious of life. This is a religious superstition. It travels more rapidly than a lie, is much handier at assuming disguises, and its vitality is almost beyond belief. In the first place no great degree of intelligence is required for its acceptance. In the second place, it usually falls into line with the general body of established and institutionalized beliefs. It therefore captures all the fools at one end of the scale, all the self-interested ones at the other end, and all the lazy and shiftless mentalities in-between. The sticklers for truth and accuracy are few, and are left as helpless as a crowd of "uncivilized" people, exposed to the operations of the heroes of the air, who are dropping bombs on them. A lie is something that is intended to deceive, but a superstition is not so much an invention as a growth, and as it easily assimilates itself to its environment is not so susceptible as a lie to logical disproof.

Among the superstitions current in this Christian country of ours, there is one—not so ancient—that is very prevalent. This is the belief that English literature owes a great debt to our English Bible. Somehow the Bible has to be kept to the front, and when the religious argument grows thin a non-religious one may serve. I don't know who it was who first made this discovery concerning the Bible, but it crops up in all sorts of places, it is used by all sorts of people, and the inference appears to be that while the Bible may have no religious value, while some very bad teachings are derived from it, somehow or the other it must be kept to the front and given a value that is not possessed by any other book. The value of the Bible as literature serves as well as anything for this purpose, although it is a plea that

might as well be offered on behalf of other books. When the real reason for maintaining the Bible in a privileged position no longer carries weight, and while it still involves certain social penalties openly to discard the Bible, the plea that the Bible is of immense value to an understanding of English literature suits the unbeliever who hesitates to let his opinions be known in all their fulness; it satisfies the Christian when nothing else can be obtained regarding his fetish-book, while it gives the word-snatching journalist an air of scholarship when he rolls off the cliché that the Bible is a "well of English undefiled." It would be interesting to take haphazard a dozen men and women and find out in what they consider lie the literary beauties of the Bible. I once tried it on a chance acquaintance. He gave me the ten commandments.

* * *

Literature and the Bible

Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, the other day, gave an address to an audience chiefly interested in literature. In the course of his speech he said:—

Shakespeare's language is to a great extent a dead language. I understand the Elizabethan speech because I was brought up on the Bible.

I am not quite certain just what Mr. Shaw meant his hearers to understand by this. He might have meant that the language of the Bible is a dead language. I would agree with this—the reason will appear presently—but I cannot agree that the language of Shakespeare is a dead language, and in any case it is not so completely dead as is the language of the Bible. There is no greater difficulty in reading Shakespeare than there is in reading some of the late eighteenth century writers. He is not overlaid with provincialisms, and he is not "slangy." But the Bible language is actually a dead language, and has been dead from the beginning. It was never a living language in the sense of one that grows and proliferates, as every living language does. From the very beginning, as everyone will see who examines the various translations, the Bible language was fixed. It is this that completely knocks the bottom out of the cant remark that English literature owes a great debt to the Bible. It owes nothing of the kind. It is not the Bible that has enriched English language and literature. The boot is on the other foot.

But I think we may take Mr. Shaw to mean that the Elizabethan language, as represented in the writings that have come down to us, and we have no other material on which to form a judgment, is the same language that meets us in the Bible. And if by the Elizabethan language is meant that which was written and spoken by those who lived during the period known as "Elizabethan," then it is simply not true that the Bible language and the Elizabethan language are the same. Anyone with the slightest

ear for cadence and rhythm and an eye for structure, can at once tell they are not. Mr. Shaw is voicing a very vulgar superstition. Bible English has all the marks of a priestly "lingo," one that is reserved for a special and a "sacred" purpose. There is a lingering of this in the reservation of a special language, and the use of a special intonation in the language of prayer and church services. From the first the translations made of parts of the Old and New Testaments had these special qualities. It was a fixed language, subject only to such modifications as the genius of individual translators imposed upon it. But from the first it followed a definite and a fixed line. It has had the rigidity which is the outward sign of death. In the translation of 1611, the authorized version, every effort was made to prevent the language of the translation taking on the character of the current tongue. The translators were instructed to *depart as little as possible from the translations of previous times as possible*. That the Bible was translated into English, a form of English, is undeniable, but that the English of the Bible was not the English of the Elizabethan language is quite clear to anyone who has a knowledge of the writers of that period. Freethinkers who have followed the lead of those who were afraid of throwing away too much of the current creed, have simply been giving us an intelligent repetition of a fable.

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The Test of Facts

If Mr. Shaw, or anyone else, doubts the truth of what I have said, they may very easily put the matter to the test—that is, if they have any literary taste or ear worth bothering about. Attached to the 1611 authorized version is an address to that "Most High and Mighty Prince," King James. The address is written by the men who were responsible for the translation of the Bible. They were scholars, men who were in the habit of using English for both speaking and writing. They used in their address the kind of language they wrote and spoke, and it is plainly and unmistakably *not the English of the Bible*. They wrote as they spoke; it was *Elizabethan English*, it was not Bible English; that was a language which the English people neither wrote nor spoke.

Here is another piece of evidence. In 1562 there was published "Certain Sermons or Homilies appointed to be read in Churches." It was published by order of the Queen and her Council. In 1562, mark, the time of Queen Elizabeth. These sermons are fine examples of virile, nervous English. (I would like to take some of our modern well-known journalists and compel them to read them daily for a year on end). They were intended to be read to the Church congregations, not particularly to the "common people" (they had not emerged) but to the better placed and better educated classes. These sermons are in the Elizabethan language; they are *not* in the language of the Bible. They are distinct in style and form. Let anyone who prates about the Bible being Elizabethan English, or a "well of English undefiled," sit down and read the preface to the Bible and half a dozen of the Homilies, and compare them with the Bible. He will have to be either destitute of "ear," or his ears must be generously elongated if he fails to recognize that in the two sets of reading he is dealing with two different tongues. The one is a language fixed with the rigidity of a religious ritual, impressive in its way, and with a dramatic force here and there derived from the genius of the translators. The other is a language pulsating with life, adaptive to every phase of human passion and feeling, fixing its roots in the past, taking its nurture from the present, and holding out infinite promise for the future.

A final point to which I invite Mr. Shaw's serious attention. Let a qualified reader turn to such writers as Spencer, Kyd, Raleigh, Peele, Sydney, Green, Marlowe, Nash, Drayton, Shakespeare, and a score of others, all belonging to the Elizabethan school, and then see if he can find any of their styles in the language of the Bible, or if he can trace any likeness between their English and that of the Bible. Quotations from the Bible, yes, but these are far outnumbered by quotations and references to pagan and other writers. Genius lays all nature under levy for its purposes, and genius took a quotation from the Bible as it took words and phrases from Horace, and Euripides, and Livy, Ovid and other non-Christian writers. If space permitted, I could print specimens from some of the writers named, and then take the same topic when dealt with in the Bible and show how little these men had to learn from it where literature was concerned. Whenever I hear a man, particularly when he is a professed unbeliever, talking about the English Bible as a "well of English undefiled," I feel I would like to tie him in a chair and keep him there until he is able to indicate just where and when the masters of English prose were really dependent upon the Bible for their work.

"A well of English undefiled!" The Bible composed of Elizabethan English! Such expressions are either the product of literary ignorance, or an indication of the difficulty of removing a superstition once it has taken root.

* * *

A Fetish Book

Not only is it true that the Bible does not represent the vernacular of any one age, but it would have destroyed its character as a sacred book had it been so translated. Nor did the Bible enrich the English language as did Shakespeare. What it did was, at most to preserve a number of archaic words and terms, which because they were archaic, took on a sacred character to the ignorant. If Shakespeare had been given the task of translating the Bible he would have made it far more poetical than it is, and would have shown a greater knowledge of the springs of human action. If Ben Jonson had been given the task he would have turned out a more rousing book than the Bible now is, but it would have lost its fetishistic character. The Bible as a store of pure or powerful English is sheer superstition. And definitely to call it Elizabethan English, shows a strange want of acquaintance with the Elizabethan writers.

The truth is that the English of the Bible began as a specific variation from the time when parts of the Bible were first translated. Its form was fixed from then onward, subject to such modifications as could not be avoided. Bible English and spoken and written English represent the two lines of an angle, which, starting from the same point, show a greater divergence the farther they extend. The Bible was a fetish-book, and the law governing every fetish, from the fee-fo-fi-fum and fetislistic ceremony of childhood, to the cathedral service, is that it must remain unchanged. The great Elizabethans owed to the Bible nothing of a vital nature. It is true that with the advent of Puritanism to power Bible texts and Bible names grew common, although not so common as some writers would have us believe. But this was because the Puritan quarrel centred round religion, and religious phrases were part of the war material. And with the advent of Puritanism the richness of the Elizabethan times underwent a rapid change for the worse.

So if Mr. Shaw can understand the Elizabethan language because he uses the Bible as a key, he has

done something that is equal to opening a yale lock with an old-fashioned street-door key. At any rate I could not pass the opportunity of trying to kill the superstition that English literature is under any particular debt to the Bible. I believe that literature and life does owe something to the Bible, but that is another story, and when I tell it I shall be surprised if Christians rush to thank me for my services.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Beginning of the End

"Our reformers knock off the head of Jupiter, but they leave the orb and sceptre."—*Landor*.

"Of what use are the Bishops in the House of Lords?"—*Lord Shaftesbury*.

It is useless to close our eyes to the fact that a silent intellectual movement is at work among us, questioning and even undermining the authority of institutions and opinions that seemed to an earlier generation more lasting than stone. There is probably no one who is not surprised, if he seriously reflects, that people once implicitly believed in the literal interpretation and divine origin of the Christian Bible. This book, to-day, is no longer regarded by anybody, except a handful of the backwoodsmen of Faith, with the old blind credulity. Its alleged facts are now seen to be legendary, and the theories and dogmas built upon these foundations are mined, not only by professors writing for the select few, but by Freethinkers addressing the multitude.

Our forefathers, even as late as the Victorian Era, were hidebound in their theology. When Macaulay visited Edinburgh to address his constituents on Corn Laws, Sugar Duties, and the Eastern Question, he was met by fatuous questions, such as: "Yes, Mr. Macaulay, that is all very well for a statesman, but what becomes of the headship of Our Lord Jesus Christ?" Even when chloroform was first introduced as an anæsthetic in cases of childbirth, some of the clergy protested against such an infidel attempt at interference with "God's" primal curse on mankind. In the closing years of this Victorian period it was possible for a Liberal Prime Minister, such as Gladstone, to write a defence of this Bible bearing the ingenuous title, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. Most of all, the discussion of the Christian Religion was still an important feature in all strata of society, not merely in the contest between High and Low Churchmen, Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals, Unitarians and Trinitarians, but in the divergent direction of the Moody and Sankey revivals, and the triumphant reigns of Dr. Parker and Spurgeon, whose temples were regarded as the sights of London no less than Mme. Tussaud's Waxworks, the Zoological Gardens, and the Tower.

Meanwhile, the Christian Religion recedes, and it loses size and lustre as we get further and further away from it. When organized Freethought began to act in urgent and direct action against clerical authority, the old order received its notice to quit. That was some years ago, but the change is not by any means complete. Why is it that the Christian Superstition takes such a long time to die? The answer plucks the heart from Priestcraft, and explains so much that was hitherto hidden from sight.

Not only has the Christian Religion, in this country, the continued support of the State, but its priests control mountains of money, and still have power in national education. Freethought lecturers and writers may convert a few thousand men and women, but all this time there is a continuous flow of young people from the schools who have been taught

to believe the Christian Bible, and to treat the clergy with the utmost respect. Whatever private opinions school-teachers and University professors may hold, they must pay outward respect to the Christian Superstition, or be dismissed from their positions. In other words, Priestcraft still possesses the power of the purse-strings. Years ago, secular education was a plank in the old Radical Party's programme, but since the advent of the Labour Party this has been very quietly dropped out of sight. This is not due to the fact that the Labour leaders are all Christian, but simply that, in their desire for power, they are constantly pursuing the Nonconformist voters. It would never do to annoy these voters by being boldly honest in such a matter as religion. The clergy are not honest, and the politicians are not above the flattery of imitation, especially when it concerns their bread and butter. Hence so many tame Labour leaders turn Christian for half an hour at Pleasant Sunday Afternoon meetings and other gatherings of the intellectually lost.

Not only secular education, but the disestablishment and disendowment of this State Church should be in the Labour Party's programme. These things are necessary if the democratic ideals are to be brought within the realm of reality. For the State Church is no more in sympathy with Democracy than the Romish hierarchy, which is the hereditary enemy of progress. The official Prayer Book, and the "Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion," to which every Anglican priest must subscribe, prove it beyond cavil and dispute. Such a body, with its sixteen thousand priests, and its millions of money, combined with its clutch on its own catspaws, is a power to be reckoned with.

Consider what this precious Anglican Church stands for. It teaches that all who do not belong to it are damned and doomed to eternal punishment. It teaches that its priests, from the greenest curate to the two archbishops, are a sacred caste apart from their fellow-men. It teaches that the monarch is god-appointed, and, in addition, is the head of Christ's Church. It has forms of prayer begging for rain and for fine weather, and prayers for individual members of royalty. In plain English, it represents Feudalism pure and simple, and has nothing whatever to do with twentieth century ideals. If there is to be any betterment in the society of the future, and it is to be a real advance on the bad, old days, it must, at least, insist emphatically upon human liberty and brotherhood, and reject altogether the savage ideas of the fall of man and his subsequent damnation. Take away the present State-support of this most reactionary church and it totters to its fall, but take from it those very substantial emoluments which the priests seized in the Ages of Faith and it must take a modest place alongside the numerous other Christian bodies in the country. It is nothing but money that constitutes the power of these priests, for with it they always find a supply of men who are willing to prostitute their intellects for a consideration. A French officer was reviewing some Algerian troops when he noticed a gigantic black trooper with his breast covered with religious emblems. He asked what it all meant. The soldier replied with a grin, "More religion, more coffee, sir." There are many men in England with no more ethical scruples than that black soldier, and with far less reason.

Everything eventually crumbles which is not true, and the Christian Superstition is crumbling. Never was there so little religion, never so much Secularism, as at the present time. Never have men attended places of worship so little, never have they attended more to social activities for the amelioration of

human suffering. Christianity is in the melting-pot, and Secularism is slowly permeating everywhere. The Christian Religion no longer satisfies, for no faith can satisfy which is found out. Men and women, nowadays, do not accept so readily, upon mere blind trust, the religious misconceptions of their remote and ignorant ancestors. Over the pulpits of the fast-emptying places of worship is inscribed: "To the glory of God," which, translated into plain speech, means the triumph of the priesthood. That is the voice of the past, even of the remote past. Secularism sounds the vibrant and triumphant note of the future: "To the service of man." Based on fables, supported by dead men's money, trading on ignorance, the Christian Religion at length finds the conscience of the nation steadily rising above and beyond it. Believing in reason, and having faith in the progress of humanity towards perfection, and labouring for that end, are we reformers to be frustrated by the Black Army of Anglican priests in every effort after a juster and better order of society? The idea of ecclesiastical reform is no novelty, for former Governments disestablished the Irish and the Welsh Churches. Out of the dust and heat of present-day politics it may be that the cool courage of our ancestors will emerge again, that superb audacity that marches against the enemy and breaks the line or is broken in the attempt.

MIMNERMUS.

An Epoch in English History

THE legal rights and liberties of the English people repose on Magna Charta, the Petition, and the Bill of Rights. These celebrated political documents constitute outstanding landmarks in national Constitutional History. Yet these precepts, whether of the thirteenth or seventeenth century, profess to establish nothing of a novel character, for they simply express rights and liberties of ancient standing, which had been abrogated by the illegal encroachments of the ruling class. Indeed, in every age or clime, constant vigilance has been, and is, the sole safeguard of freedom.

The Great Charter has been termed a treaty of peace between the King and his subjects in arms. Green, the historian, describes John as "the ablest and most ruthless of the Angevins," but several events conspired to weaken the regal power. King John's defeats in Normandy, with its severance from the English Crown, constrained the barons to devote their attention to domestic affairs and their sympathies became more largely English, with the result that they extensively sided with the nation in its conflict with the King. Also, a considerable percentage of the baronage was of recent creation and was much less Norman in outlook and interest than in earlier reigns.

Macaulay's assertion that "the talents and even the virtues of England's first six French Kings were a curse to her" may be far too sweeping. But one can assent to his statement that "The follies and vices of the seventh were her salvation. . . . John was driven from Normandy. The Norman nobles were compelled to make their election between the island and the Continent. Shut up by the sea with the people whom they had hitherto oppressed and despised, they gradually came to regard England as their country, and the English as their countrymen."

Whether John was as black as he is painted is perhaps an open question, and Hume hints that Lackland's character has suffered from clerical vilifica-

tion. For this overbearing ruler rode rough-shod over the clergy and laity alike. And great was the influence of the prelates in that intensely superstitious age, especially that of Canterbury's Archbishop. There occurred a vacancy in the archiepiscopal see and John, quite legally, if unwisely, directed the election of the Bishop of Norwich to the Primacy, while the Canterbury clergy chose their sub-prior. Then the disputed election was referred to the Pope who grimly nullified both elections and appointed Stephen Langton as Archbishop much to the Holy Father's later annoyance.

John refused to acknowledge Pope Innocent's choice, so the imperious Pontiff placed the kingdom under interdict in 1208. All public worship was suspended, the church bells were unring and the dead remained unburied. Still, the undaunted King refused to submit; was excommunicated in 1209 and as he still found friends and could rely on his mercenary soldiers, the Vicar of Christ actually deposed the stubborn monarch in 1212.

The Pope was Innocent in name only, and he then deputed the French King to seize the English throne, when the beaten John surrendered. He then recognized the Primacy of Langton, resigned the realm to the Papal envoy, Pandulf, and was only restored to his kingdom as a fief of Rome on his agreement to furnish an annual tribute of 1,000 marks to the Holy See with the added humiliation of an enforced performance of homage to a foreign prelate acting as the Papal representative.

These proceedings were naturally unpopular, and as soon as the Papacy became the victor, the Holy Father changed his policy and warmly encouraged the misdeeds of his vassal. Langton and the clergy generally, supported the barons, much to Innocent's annoyance. And even when John had been driven to concede the Charter he was determined to scorn its Provisions at the earliest opportunity. As Langmead states: "He applied for aid to the Pope, now his suzerain, who declared the Charter void, excommunicated the barons, and suspended Archbishop Langton."

The City was also laid under interdict, and to supplement these spiritual menaces, the King secured a body of mercenaries and resumed the civil war. These seasoned soldiers soon dispersed the barons' rude retainers and the Crown was proffered to Louis, the French ruler's son who landed in 1216, when John's unexpected death led to the succession of his infant child Henry, who was hurriedly crowned nine days after his father's demise, Lord Pembroke assuming the Regency until the boy king reached his majority. Pembroke's policy proved pacific when, shortly after John's decease, he renewed the Charter and succeeded within a year in restoring the disaffected party to the royal cause.

Previously, when the barons had insisted that the crown should conform to the laws and liberties of the land, John procrastinated. Meanwhile he tried to placate the clergy to whom he granted a separate Charter. He also endeavoured to pacify the barons, but no one trusted John's word, and the national party united in its demands for redress of grievances. But the King remained adamant so, when the time granted him for reply had expired, armed insurrection occurred, when the unswerving support of London to the popular cause decided the contest, and many of John's adherents deserted and joined the winning side. The King now bowed to the inevitable, and the articles submitted by the barons were embodied in the Charter, which was signed at Runnymede in June, 1215.

Under the Charter reliefs were granted to heirs to estates, and minors in wardship who were to take over

their property without the payment of fines on attaining their majority. Guardians were permitted to take "only reasonable fruits and profits," and were required to maintain an estate in proper condition during the term of wardship. Widows were protected from forcible re-marriage, and both King and Lords were forbidden to impose re-marriage on their tenants in order to exact a fine for consent. Some of the provisions, however, seem to have favoured the barons at the expense of the Crown.

More important was a better administration of law and justice, and clauses were inserted restraining extortions of the Crown known as fines or amercements. No sheriff or other subordinate functionary was permitted to hold pleas of the crown. This clause secured the trial of serious charges before the King's justices and the "writ of inquest of life or limb shall be given *gratis* and not denied." This clause was intended to prevent the long imprisonment of a subject accused of crime without any inquiry concerning his guilt or innocence. A writ resembling that of the later Habeas Corpus already existed, which granted a person charged with murder, release on bail, but this was abused by the King to extort exorbitant payments for the privilege. Now, Magna Charta "made it grantable as a matter of right without payment. Henceforth it became one of the greatest securities of personal liberty."

Save with prisoners, outlaws and alien enemies the right to travel beyond the kingdom was conceded. The Forest Laws were mitigated, and under clause 43: "Justices, constables, sheriffs and bailiffs shall only be appointed of 'such as know the law and mean duly to observe it.'"

Clauses 12 and 14 abolish the royal claim to impose arbitrary taxation, and the principle is enunciated that the community should never be taxed save by consent of the National Council. The City of London derived considerable benefit from this, but many of the provincial towns were still regarded as royal or baronial demesnes.

No freeman, under clause 39, were in future to be arrested or imprisoned, their property seized or other indignity allowed except by the lawful judgment of their peers or by law established, while clause 40 declared: "To none will we sell, to none will we deny or delay, right or justice."

These constitute the most beneficent and far-reaching provisions of the Charter. As Mackintosh stated, these clauses contain "Habeas Corpus and Trial by Jury, the most effectual securities against oppression which the wisdom of man has hitherto been able to devise." The historian Hallam, also considered these the essential clauses as henceforth "it must have been a clear principle of our constitution that no man can be detained in prison without trial. Whether courts of justice framed the writ of Habeas Corpus in conformity to the spirit of this clause, or found it already in their register, it became from that era the right of every subject to demand it." Protection against arbitrary spoliation was also given, and as Green notes, "a special provision protected the poor. The forfeiture of the freeman on conviction of felony was never to include his tenement, or that of the merchant his wares, or that of the countryman his wain." Sale, denial, or delay of justice was repudiated, but unfortunately these salutary provisions were long destined to remain more frequently honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Cities, boroughs and ports were to retain their ancient liberties. No Crown servant was to take any subject's corn or other possession without payment unless the seller voluntarily granted credit. For, as Blackstone tells us, the Crown exercised the prerogative of "buying up provisions and other necessaries

at an appraised valuation, in preference to all others, and without the consent of the owner." This iniquitous system was known as purveyance, and the Crown was still known to fix its own price until the system was abandoned in the reign of Charles II.

The foregoing and other rights and liberties were by the Charter extended in clause 60 to the entire community. Still all these remedial provisions were likely to prove of little utility unless they were made secure from violation. So it was decided that a Council of twenty-five barons should be elected to guarantee their due observance, and if the King or his servitors infringed the Charter in the slightest degree the Crown granted its subjects the right to demand immediate redress. If, after forty days had expired the King remained recalcitrant, the Lords and Commons might distrain and distress him even to the extent of seizing his castles, lands or other possessions. John would doubtless have broken the most solemn pledge without the least hesitation but his death ended the strife.

T. F. PALMER.

William Tyndale and the Bible

THE large number of eloquent testimonies to Tyndale, to mark the occasion of his martyrdom four centuries ago, was, in the main, well deserved. In spite of his egotism, foolhardiness, and combative instincts, Tyndale must always be credited with a very wonderful translation, a translation that led to the Authorized Version, which, whatever may be thought of it as a Divine Revelation, is a remarkable piece of English prose. This does not mean that it is a prose which ever was "spoken." It does mean, however, that for the special purpose for which it was used, nothing could have been found more suitable. If anyone doubts this, let him read a version of the Bible put into *really* modern English. All its "mystery," its "sacred," and "reverent" character, disappears. The words of the "Lord," put into either Americanese or the kind of writing which one finds in some of the articles in our popular daily press, would lose all their distinctive form. They would become nonsense for the most part, and interpreted as such by even unlettered readers.

But the poetry and majesty of words used in a special manner, and for a special purpose, are combined in our Authorized Version in quite an unusual way; and I am sorry for anyone who does not see this. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters . . ." has a beautiful cadence; it is real poetry. There are quite a number of people who laugh at the word "poetry," insist that poetry is, for the most part, nonsense; and who, therefore, may see nothing in the way in which the Bible has been translated. I cannot share their views. How beautiful a language may be is evidenced by its poetry, and a great deal of the special kind of language of the Authorized Version is real poetry if that word has any meaning.

The great triumph of Tyndale was in taking the Greek of the New Testament, and putting it into that "sacred" idiom which has made critics almost unanimous in their appreciation of the English version of the Bible. Translating from one language into another is by no means an easy task. Let anybody who thinks he knows French try and translate Montaigne or Moliere or Zola or even Voltaire. Even when one has got at the *thought* of the author it is exceptionally difficult to put it into fluent English

and give the impression sought for by all translators, that the version is not a translation. It requires a genius of a particular kind to give us a translation like Urquhart's *Rabelais*, Florio's *Montaigne*, or Motteux' *Don Quixote*. Tyndale used that special idiom of so-called sacred prose which was preserved and intensified in the Authorized Version, and which, for many reasons, could never again be used. The Revised Version, albeit a far more correct translation in hundreds of places, lost a tremendous deal in "sacredness" through its modern revisors, while still later translations are hardly ever read except by scholars, simply because, however correctly they have preserved the "true" Word of God, it is not apparent in the idiom.

Had the Bible been written in the style of its contemporary prose—for example, like the famous Dedication to that prince of cads, James I.—it is very doubtful whether it would ever have had its tremendous influence not only on religion, but on the subsequent English literature; and the Dedication is certainly good Elizabethan prose.

Tyndale's determination to enable any plough-boy in England to read "God's Word" was, from his own standpoint, a laudable one. But there is, of course, quite a great deal of nonsense talked about it. One bit of this nonsense is to the effect that the people of England were dying to read the Bible in their own tongue, and that the Roman Catholic Church deliberately prevented them from doing so. But what is the evidence that in 1520, or thereabouts, the ordinary English plough-boy was gasping to read the Bible? How many of them could read, in the first place? Where were the schools which was turning out efficient English scholars? Was it possible to produce the thousands of Bibles required to satisfy the hungry and thirsty? I must confess, knowing that large numbers of people were unable to read and write at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after centuries of printing and the production of books, to the gravest doubts as to this alleged and fervent desire for an English version of the "Holy Book." This does not mean that the people knew nothing of the Bible. On the contrary, it was to the interest of the Church to keep them alive to it, and its value, and therefore to the necessity of Pope, Priest and Cardinal. Through sermons and pictures and plays, the average English citizen knew quite a lot about the Bible, far more than is commonly supposed; and this in spite of the fact that the Bible then was written or printed in Latin—the Vulgate as the revision by Jerome is known.

Those who could read, could read the Vulgate. Those who could not, could not have read a translation. And it is quite possible that most of its religious readers would have preferred the Bible to remain in Latin as it was, in those far off days, a sort of universal language.

Wycliffe and his successors did make an attempt to translate the Bible into the English of their day, and no doubt they did their best with the materials at their disposal. Not much seems to be known as to the circumstances surrounding their translation; and it may be added that there is proof that portions of the Bible, at least, were translated before them—as the translators of the Authorized Version, and writers like Sir Thomas More and Cranmer admit. The Roman Catholic Church attacked Wycliffe and his friends because they had made an erroneous translation—at least, that is what it claims. It and it alone had the right to translate, and I am not sure, looking at the facts of the case, whether it was not logically in the right. Wycliffe certainly had no use, or little use for the Church, and it is not surprising to find that it did its best, in turn, to suppress Wycliffe. "He

held views," says Doré, in that excellent work *Old Bibles*, "which if carried into practice, would have been totally subversive of morality and good order." And the Church did not feel he was the right kind of person to whom to entrust any translation.

It was the printing of the great Guttenberg Bible in 1456 which led to the desire for printing and distributing the Bible in various languages. Luther decided to translate it into German, using whatever M.S.S. were available, and depending on the Greek and Hebrew as well as on Latin. And it was because Tyndale came into contact with the heresy of the Reformation, and later with Luther, that he was so anxious to try his hand at translating the New Testament. Whether he was fitted for the job is another matter. He certainly knew Greek and Latin up to a point, but I can see little evidence that he knew much Hebrew. I doubt very much whether there were Hebrew Bibles within easy reach, or Hebrew grammars and dictionaries, to say nothing of learned Jews.

Tyndale translated the New Testament abroad, and certainly with the aid of Luther's version. His own version, as the Anglican Canon Dixon says, "contained also a prologue and notes written with such hot fury and vituperation against the prelates and clergy, the monks and friars, the rites and ceremonies of the Church, as was hardly likely to commend it to the favour of those who were attacked." It is not surprising, therefore, that the copies reaching England were burnt. The then Bishop of London said he counted 2,000 errors in the translation, and Sir Thomas More actually wrote a treatise against it. The notes were the damaging parts, and Tyndale struck off an edition without them. Sir Frederick Kenyon claims that Tyndale's mistakes were really due to following Erasmus' Greek text, and "do not appear to justify its extremely hostile reception." At all events, Tyndale produced another more correct edition though this was attacked quite as much as the first one, both by religious and lay readers; and even Henry VIII., who was by no means averse, at first, to Tyndale, denounced it in no unreasoned terms. Tyndale was not content to rest with a translation of the New Testament only to his credit. He worked for four years on the Pentateuch and followed this with the book of Jonah. They also were provided with strongly controversial notes.

The net result of his work was his apprehension in 1535 by the officers of Charles V. through being trapped out of the City of Antwerp. He was condemned, strangled and burnt to death in 1536—a foul crime if ever there was one. But the Church never ceased its task of suppressing heresy, and Tyndale had a more merciful death than Dolet, Vanini or Bruno. Sir F. Kenyon in his *Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* says of Tyndale's translation:—

The genius of Tyndale shows itself in the fact that he was able to couch his translations in a language perfectly understood of the people, and yet full of beauty and dignity. If the language of the Authorized Version has deeply affected our English prose, it is to Tyndale that the praise is originally due.

It is, of course, one thing to admit the beauty of diction in the Authorized Version of the Bible, and quite another to admit its influence as "God's Word" to be what Christians claim for it. The world would have lost very little indeed had the Bible been destroyed at birth. We may have had priests of other religions, but the Christian ones, the Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, Nuns, would, at least, never have left their trail of blood behind them as landmarks through the centuries. We have nothing to thank the Bible for, really.

H. CUTNER.

Acid Drops

It is a pity that some of our politicians do not develop a greater sense of reality than is the case at present. Here is Mr. Isaac Foot, President of the National Brotherhood, telling the world that "the devilry going on in Italy and Germany" is impossible here because we learned our sense of freedom "from the Book (the Bible) denied men in other countries." But Germany had the Book also, and since the Reformation Germans have not been denied access to it. And no Government in the world, no matter how tyrannical, could ask for more than the teaching of the New Testament concerning the individual's duty to the "powers that be."

On October 21, women knelt in a Woodland Street Tabernacle, and prayed to God to save their Church, which was on fire, from destruction. And God replied to their prayer—through the fire brigade. But the whole side of the roof was destroyed. The machinery of the business is plain. The women called on God to save the Church; God called on the fire brigade to do their "stuff." In between the appearance of the fire brigade and the call on God, the latter does not appear to have done anything. The vicar tried to enter the Church while it was burning, but was driven out by the smoke. God might at least have waved the smoke on one side to let the vicar secure the collection boxes. There seems a lack of dramatic sense about this business.

Miss Rebecca West, in the *Sunday Times*, reviewing a book about the Roger Tichborne Claimant, makes an excellent point often overlooked but worth emphasizing:—

The poor Claimant went to prison, died, and is forgotten save by the antiquarian. But had he claimed to be more than a baronet, to be a supernatural person high in the heavenly Debrett, or an unveiler of Oriental mysteries, there would still be little groups who would keep his name alive in some hired room on Sunday evenings.

Claimants to earthly titles and small estates have to face real criticism but Christ, Mahomet and Joseph Smith are "justified by faith," and accepted by credulity when they lay claim to mediumship between God and man.

The ingenious Professor J. A. Findlay is at it again. He has discovered exactly what happened during the last few minutes that Jesus is said to have lived (or died) on the Cross. All the contradictory accounts of what He said are "harmonized" after many centuries of dispute. It seems that Simon of Cyrene was standing quite close to the cross all the time, and he heard Jesus all the time. The disciple-reporting-staff seems to have been too far away to hear anything except:—

a loud cry, the purport of which they could not make out.

But the gospel-writers could hear plainly enough all that Christ said secretly and alone in the Garden of Gethsemane, of which we have a verbatim report. But perhaps "Simon of Cyrene" deputed again.

We wonder how the world will toddle along in that great day when we have no Christian charity and courtesy, not to say politeness and common decency. The *Methodist Recorder*, in a leading article on "The Church and the Family," says: "Anyone not an Atheist must regard the family as sacred." The records of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children teem with cases of ill-treatment of children by Christian parents.

In a leading article on the Tithe question the *Church Times* says:—

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have now grasped the result of the last Tithe Act, which, as the *Times* has pointed out, when its full effect is felt, will have the result of confiscating £436,000 per annum of

the Church's former income from the tithe rent charge. Before the passing of the Act, an incumbent obtained for every £100 tithe, a sum ranging from £95 to the full £100. He will now only have £76 . . . to meet this loss to the Church, the Archbishops appeal to the Tithe-payers, whose liabilities have been reduced under the Act, and who value the work of the Church, to contribute, for the benefit of the tithe-receiving clergy, the whole or part of the annual sum, of which they are now relieved to a fund, to be called the Archbishop's Tithe Compensation Fund.

Quite an interesting situation! The Archbishops, finding that the law has at last moved in favour of the unlucky tithe-payer—who ought not, in the majority of cases, to be paying anything whatever—calmly ask him to disregard the law and pay up in spite of it; only, instead of calling it just plain "Tithe," call it "Tithe Compensation Fund." This would so please the dear Archbishops.

The *Church Times* says pathetically, "The question is whether the landowners will give this assistance." Well, of course, that is the question—to pay or not to pay. Those who believe the Church is a heaven-sent institution will—perhaps—gladly pay. But those who do not . . . ? It may gradually dawn on some of them, if it has not done so already, that there never was such a shameless robbery of land as that done by the Church in its early days in England. By building a church on a plot of ground, it filched the surrounding country, in the name of Christ, from the land workers; and was "good enough" to allow the latter to work on the land if they paid tithe. This is how the Church mostly acquired Church property. We hope the majority of land-owners will treat with the contempt it deserves the Archbishop's request to pay up.

One of the Roman Catholic journals, in an article on Christian missions, quotes that profound saying of the late Cardinal Vaughan: "England will never be converted till she does more for foreign missions." Most Cardinals are more famous for their portraits in red hats than for saying anything worth preserving. But we think this particular saying of Cardinal Vaughan should be preserved as a gem of the first water. It would be difficult to cap it with anything much sillier. The joke is further enhanced by the fact that all the money that can be wheedled out of the faithful Catholics for their own missionary society—the Association for the Propagation of the Faith—is about £16,000 per year; so that it looks as if England is likely to be unconverted for many centuries yet.

In spite of her unconverted state, however, the Pope recently blessed "our dear England," the land of martyrs. The Pope also blessed a number of English pilgrims, their wives and families, as well as a large number of Austrian youths. Well, blessings cost nothing, and the best that can be said of them is that, while they do no good whatever, they do no harm except to one's sense of humour. No man possessed of that could be blessed without roaring with laughter at its downright and incredible stupidity.

A recent meeting in America was convened at Washington, and consisted of Catholics, Protestants and Jews all combining "for the defence of religion and freedom against secularism in national and international affairs." We have italicized the word "freedom" as the idea that secularism does not stand for freedom, while religion does, is more than a piece of downright impudence; it is lying in its worst form. Secularism has always stood for freedom—freedom of thought, freedom to discuss anything without interference, and freedom to publish. (Freedom here does not mean unlimited licence.) As a matter of fact, it is its uncompromising attitude in defence of freedom that has made secularism hated by religious and political factions alike. We might add, indeed, that so long as this ideal of Secular-

ism is held and fought for, dictatorship—whether of the Right or Left or of religion—is impossible. And no one knows this better than would-be dictators.

“The tide of Secularism,” said Dr. J. S. Whale, the Principal of Cheshunt College, Cambridge, the other day, “was creeping up every day. Christians at home were guilty. They did not share the enthusiasm of their fathers.” As a matter of fact, their fathers made a point of boycotting, as far as possible, the obvious success of Secularism. They pretended that they had never even heard of the *Freethinker*; and they deluded themselves that such a man as Bradlaugh, for example, was a Christian without knowing it. We are glad to note that Dr. Whale is frank enough to admit that “Secularism was creeping up every day.” But if he thinks that it can be successfully challenged, why does he not do so? It is not the Secularist who runs away.

Great efforts are constantly being made to liven up the very poor enthusiasm now existing for missionary work. Two thousand people listened, the other day, to the Archbishop of Canterbury’s eloquent appeal for funds, and his vivid description of the way in which not only “untouchables” but “high caste people” are coming into the Church in India. Their great problem was how to cope with these mass conversions, and they wanted plenty of money with which to do it. These glowing pictures should have made Christians here pour out their wealth for Christ’s sake like water; unfortunately Dr. Scott Lidgett had to “bemoan the fact that, speaking broadly, the great mass of Christians were lukewarm and parsimonious in their support of the missionary cause.” If this is true, we can only heave a sigh of thankfulness that at last the “great mass of Christians” have seen through this impudent missionary ramp. It would mean far more happiness to thousands of people here if missionary funds were spent, as they ought to be spent, on them.

A Christian correspondent in Jerusalem, speaking of the British Tommy in Palestine, says that “their ignorance of Biblical history is appalling.” But whose is the fault? Is not Bible teaching the rule in almost every school in this country? Not to know what is “Bethlehem,” for example, after years of religious instruction, is a fine tribute to the teaching capacity of our religious teachers, is it not? Needless to say that the “religious life” of the men in the Army is well catered for, all the same. There are crowds of Chaplains, and Lieut.-Gen. Dill, the Commander-in-Chief in Palestine, has asked that “prayers be said for him and his men” in the carrying out of their difficult task. We presume the prayers were successful, as the Arabs have called off the strike!

There is terrible anxiety in Scotland. “Fears,” we are told, “that the sanctity of Scotland’s Sabbath is in peril were expressed at a meeting of the Convention of Royal Burghs.” A hot discussion took place, and Baillie McKie made the meeting shiver with horror as he solemnly pointed out that both trains and buses run on Sundays! So great was the concern shown that in view of the question, further discussion was postponed until next April. In the meantime the various Baillies and Elders of the Kirk in Scotland, will be, so to speak, suffering the fires of Hell for the awful desecration of God’s Own Day, which takes place every week. It is a wicked, wicked world.

A new book is announced by the Rev. Charles Leach, D.D., called, *Shall we Know Our Friends in Heaven*. Dr. Leach takes for granted, apparently, that “Our Friends” are all in the Crown-and-Harp Department. We prefer the less assured and more modest attitude of Bill Nye. He was at a Spiritualist Séance, when he was told that his Brother Alf wanted to “communicate” with him. “Have you any questions to ask your dear brother” said the Medium. “Yes,” said Bill, “ask him if he finds it too hot down there,”

The *Methodist Recorder* is concerned in the vital problem of “How Can the Bible be Brought Back into Our Homes.” So, the guilt is off the much-advertised gingerbread. Mr. Isaac Foot, who writes the article, has evidently discovered that the mere “circulation” in global numbers of the “Word of God” is a much over-rated futility. Where are the Bibles which used to lumber up the wash-stand of all our commercial hotels? Nowadays in countless Suburban windows the *Aspidistra* has discarded its one-time sure foundation. Smaller families enable the housewife to remember the names of her offspring without having to write them in a Dictionary or Bible.

It is remarkably easy to “prove” the truth of Bible Miracles. The Rev. S. Maurice Watts, B.D., says with beautiful simplicity “You can’t deny the fact of a man being healed when you have seen him before and after the event.” It is like the conjuror who shows you that he has no chairs or tables up his sleeve, and then after you have seen the rabbits come out, you look again, and—lo—there are still no chairs or tables there. Mr. Watts is “proving” that Jesus healed a lame man nearly two thousand years ago, and we see neither before nor for many centuries after. Even the man Lazarus who was raised from the dead is very dead now. Why not cure a wooden leg to-day of a man who lost his leg say in 1914? “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

Christian Pacifism is a queer thing. From an obituary notice of Dr. Fred B. Smith, an American “divine” who styled himself a pacifist, we learn that he opposed all forms of Conscription, but distinguished himself by advocating the electric chair for the “third offence against the Liquor Laws”—i.e., prohibition.

In the United States there is an almost feverish haste to build Cathedrals and Churches. The National Geographic Society describes it as “a building era, possibly paralleling that of the Middle Ages.” The *Magazine, America*, says “the number of new churches erected recently is well nigh incredible.” Some of them are of immense costliness. The new St. John the Divine, New York, is estimated to cost over £3,000,000; a new Baltimore Catholic Church cost £1,000,000, and a twin Protestant rival will cost even more. The *Literary Digest* tells us that there are already 210,000 churches in U.S.A. worth £800,000,000, and that in 1936 additions are costing £8,000,000. In one recent year, 1920, the expenditure on new church building was £50,000,000.

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.

To Advertising and Circulating the *Freethinker*.—J. Lane, £1; H. Hunter, £1.

JUST as we are going to press we learn of the death of our old friend and contributor, Mr. Andrew Millar, of Saltcoats, Ayrshire, N.B. An obituary will appear next week.

W. J. VAUGHAN.—Thanks. Shall appear.

P. HANSON.—We appreciate what you say with regard to the *Freethinker*. With reference to the other matter we do not think that any doctor would hold to-day that his sole business is to cure a cold. They would probably say it was their business so to advise their patients as to *prevent* colds. Good feeding and warm clothes are among the most vital factors in this direction. And if one has a cold there is nothing like keeping in a level temperature until it is better. That is why bed is a good place when the cold is in anyway serious.

W.R.—We saw the notice of Dr. Forsyth's *Psychology and Medicine* in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and were not surprised at its quality. Stupidity or misrepresentation, or both, generally marks that journal's notes on any book of a genuinely advanced character. It is a paper that is most carefully edited in the interests of orthodoxy of every description. Advanced books are noted, but the review is most often misleading in terms of either suppression or misrepresentation.

F. HOBDAY.—Sorry, but cannot use.

C. W. D. NEWMAN.—Sorry, but we cannot discriminate between what you call "practical" and "real" Christianity. "Real" Christianity is doctrinal and historic Christianity. That stands plainly condemned. What you call "practical" Christianity is the moderate amount of socialized feeling that has been forced on the Churches.

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."

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

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

Sugar Plums

To-day, (Sunday, November 1) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Winter Gardens Ballroom, High Street, Clapham, on "The Fight for Freedom of Thought." Admission is free, with a charge for reserved seats. The nearest station to the Hall is Clapham North, Underground. Buses from all quarters pass the door. This will be Mr. Cohen's only lecture in London this side of the New Year. On Sunday next, November 8, Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester.

The first two of the series of pamphlets that Mr. Cohen is writing are now on sale. The titles are *Did Jesus Christ Exist?* and *Morality Without God*. Each pamphlet extends to 16 pages, and is attractively got up.

They are written as simply as possible, and should prove useful for propaganda. The two pamphlets will be sent post free for 2d. or 12 for 10d.

Tickets are now available for the Social which the Executive of the N.S.S. has arranged for Saturday, November 28, in the Caxton Hall, Westminster, London. Dancing, vocal and instrumental items, a "Few Words" from the President, and introductions and conversations with Freethinkers from different parts should provide an enjoyable evening for all tastes; and all friends of the movement are invited. Tickets (2s. 6d. each, which includes refreshments) may be had from the General Secretary, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, or from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4. Application for tickets should be made without delay.

Mr. J. T. Brighton opened his indoor work with a debate in the Priestman Hall, Roker, Sunderland, with the Rev H. D. Rosenthal. The subject discussed was "Is There a God?" which drew a large and attentive audience. We understand that another debate, this time between a Methodist minister and Mr. Brighton is in course of arrangement, and will take place in Blyth. The activity of the North East Federation of N.S.S. Branches appears to be disturbing the men of God in that area.

We wondered, if by any chance, Mr. Bernard Shaw had joined the Roman Catholic fraternity. We are quite certain he has not. Neither he nor the Catholics would leave the world in any doubt if he had been "caught." Mr. Shaw's signature was attached to an appeal stating that "no more fitting memorial could be found to Mr. Chesterton than the completion of the building in which he had been received into the Church." In the *Tablet* of October 17, this appeal is referred to as "a letter over the signatures of many distinguished Catholics"—not a word is said to hint that it was also signed by a heretic named Shaw.

The *New York Times* of September 14 last, contains a very proper protest by Mr. Shaw against the highly obnoxious "censorship"—unofficial, but possibly potent—of Mr. Hay's organization of American Film "critics." Hay's gang includes a body called "Catholic Action," and they have condemned Mr. Shaw's new film, in which Miss Berger takes the part of St. Joan. With the protest itself we, of course, agree. We quote a few words (out of a very lengthy letter to the *New York Times*) which—if we may say so—seem a trifle too polite to these sanctimonious busybodies:—

I promise that wherever there is a cultured Catholic priest who knows my play, he will do everything in his power to deepen the piety of his flock by making them go to see it. . . . I hope this service of mine to the Church may be accepted as a small set-off against the abominable bigotry of my Irish Protestant childhood, which I renounced so vigorously when I grew up to some sort of discretion and decency that I emptied the baby out with the bath and left myself for a while with no religion at all.

Mr. Shaw is eighty years old and deserves allowance for an occasional excess of politeness.

The new Kingston-on-Thames Branch has secured accommodation in the Clarence Club House, 56 London Road, Kingston, and Mr. R. H. Rosetti will open the indoor session this evening (November 1) with a lecture on "A Search for God," followed by questions and discussion. The lecture begins at 7 p.m., admission is free, and the enthusiasm and energy of the Branch officials deserve to be rewarded by at least a good response from members and supporters of the movement in Kingston.

The Pope is seriously ill with a chest complaint. We are surprised. With the Lord curing all sorts of diseases at Lourdes, and performing faith cures at evangelical performances, one would have thought that he would

have seen to it that one of his chief representatives on earth was kept free from complaints. We note that it is an ordinary doctor, and not prayer or a saint, or a relic that the Pope is relying on for a cure. But he will, we expect, still advise his followers to look to the saints for a cure. It is an indication of his Christian humility that he contents himself with a mere doctor.

A discussion is to take place on Monday, November 2, at 7.30 p.m., at the Brighton and Hove Parliament, on "Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England." The subject will be introduced by Mr. J. C. Keast. Local Freethinkers will please note.

There is more "horse-sense" in the following from the New York *Arbitrator* than one usually finds in deliverances on religious questions:—

The Roman Catholic is the oldest and largest Christian denomination; its theology is a logical interpretation of the New Testament, which represents Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the divine Son of God, born of a virgin, the transcendental Saviour of mankind, who performed miracles and condemned to hell those who disbelieved in his divinity. There is no historical authority for the Jesus of the Modernists who was merely a good man. Either Jesus was as portrayed in the Bible, or Christianity has no reliable foundation.

For many years we have been saying what is here said in the concluding sentences.

The Text of the Egyptian Mysteries

MUCH is said by those developing the Myth Thesis of Christian origins about the relation of the Gospel Story to Mystery Drama and Sacrament; but I have seen little use made of the actual evidence we have of the form that certain of the Osirian Sacraments took. I give here a rendering in rhyme of the words used in the Mystery of the Resurrection of Osiris during the night hours. (There was another set for the day hours.) This version follows the text as inscribed on the temple-walls of Denderah, Philæ and Edfu. Those who wish to test the literalism of this version can turn to the prose version given in Wallis Budge's *From Fetish to God*.

One may claim that in many respects the symbolism of these Osirian chants is more beautiful than the symbolism of the corresponding portions of the Christian Gospels. What the Gospels have in contrast with the Osirian Texts is a more humanized story. The horrible experience of the suppressed peoples of the Empire simplified the notion of the dying and resurrected god in terms of the actual episode of slave-crucifixion. That alone was the element added by Christianity; an intensification of narrative power.

As expressions of bewildered pity and pain, nothing in the Gospels, however, can match some of these cries of the mourning women—christianized as Mary and the other women at the foot of the Cross. But the potency of these sacramental moments, their richness of poetic suggestion, need no emphasis on my part.

The gaps near the end represent gaps in the texts.

JACK LINDSAY.

THE WORDS OF THE NIGHT-HOURS OF THE MYSTERY OF
THE RESURRECTION OF OSIRIS
FIRST HOUR

The Utpu Priest: God, your Ka, which came from Nunu's primeval abyss, is now at hand.

Servant of God: I am Thoth. The Living Osiris I proclaim.

The Sem Priest: Here is cool water, Osiris, and Hor played the drawer's part.

I bring you the Eye of Hor to freshen your heart.

The Two Women: Purified we stand, we have censured our bodies with a scented flame.

Kheri Heb or Chief Priest: Earth and Heaven mate.

One of the Women: O joy of Heaven on Earth.

Kheri Heb: God is coming. Down on your knees.

The Other Woman: O joy of Heaven on Earth.

(*She strikes her tambourine*).

The Women:

Heaven and Earth rejoice, they are glad when they hear:

Our Lord is in his House, he has nothing to fear.

Kheri Heb:

Earth brings your Sisters, Isis and Nephthys, to your side.

Isis hails you, Nephthys welcomes you.

They lift up your face. You shall be justified.

O Khenti Amentiu

Amset comes to look on you, he'll drive your enemies away

from your right side.

Woman:

I weep for the god whom I love.

Rest in your house and in your tomb abide.

Fall down O evil-doer,

but come you in peace, come.

SECOND HOUR

Sem Priest:

Here is the water which is in our land, which brings all living things to birth.

I have brought it to you that you may live thereby.

be sound again and breathe its air.

Utpu Priest:

How beautiful it is to look on you.

How comforting it is to look on you.

How beautiful it is to see the fire.

Sprinkle incense and water.

Kheri Heb:

O, Osiris Khenti Amentiu,

awake, raise up yourself upon your right,

and on your left. Your Father Earth

joins you together, you are made anew.

Your head to your bones he ties,

he opens your blind eyes,

he stretches out your fettered legs, Osiris,

both front and back you are purified.

Anubis:

See the Four Gods before Osiris' House,

Nekhabet the Vulture on the south,

Uadjit on the north;

and they protect your Ka.

Osiris, Hapi comes to see you waken,

he hurls your enemies far and wide.

Kheri Heb:

Where is he?

O where are you?

Woman:

I weep because he was forsaken.

I invoke heaven and I cry

to the gods of the underneath.

I clothed the naked,

I dressed the divine body.

The great-ones mourn you as a god, tears for your fate they give.

I weep for you that you may not die, I weep that your Ka may live.

The gods lament your coming, as you go and you come at your desire.

I grieve because you were forsaken.

THIRD HOUR

Sem Priest:

O Father of the Pharaoh,

Osiris, the water which is yours, the water which you created

together with the gods, I bring you.

Utpu Priest:

O Osiris Khenti Amenti
 rise up, rise up once more.
 Raise yourself up and stand in Netit, stand.
 With greeting of life and joy, Hor your Son comes
 nigh
 to you remaining with the gods, Osiris.
 You hate sleep and darkness you deny,
 to you it is a horrible thing to die,
 your Ka sees it as a thing abominated.
 You shall be justified, you shall be justified.
 Tua-mutf comes to look on you, he'll strike
 the foes from your left side.

Woman:

I have travelled through the land,
 my way through Nunu I have taken,
 I have searched the river too.
 I lament with tears because you were forsaken,
 I clothed the naked one on Netit's dyke.
 The two sorrowing women, the two sisters, lament,
 their wings are spread above you.
 I grieve because you are forsaken.

FOURTH HOUR

Sem Priest:

I bring the Eye of Hor and pour out water for you.

Utpu Priest:

Watch in peace, close round him, gods, let your
 watch be true.
 Lay your hands on the noble scent
 which comes from the horizon forth.
 Hor's emanation comes to you,
 the emanation of the Eye of Hor.

Kheri Heb:

O Osiris Khenti Amenti,
 the gods who are Four, the sons of Hor,
 Amset, Hapi, Tua-mutf, and Quebh-senuf,
 who sit on the walls of your chamber, cry:
 Hail to you, Osiris Khenti Amenti!
 They protect your Ka,
 they ward off your enemies and drive them afar.
 Nut your Mother the Sky
 mates with you to send your griefs away.
 With lamentations does she spend the day
 and glorifies you all the night.
 She places your abode where none may find you,
 before the great and glorious gods
 and the dwellers in the horizon.
 She lays her arms around you, and closely she em-
 braces.
 You shall be justified,
 O Osiris Khenti Amenti.
 Quebh-senuf comes to look on you, and chases
 the foes that lurk behind you.

FIFTH HOUR

Utpu Priest:

O Osiris Khenti Amenti
 Pharaoh comes to bring you Nunu and what out
 of Nunu came.
 He pours himself out, through the Two Lands,
 violently.
 He makes the Nile rise up to you with his stream,
 he floods your altar, in such a hurry is he.

Servant of God:

Here your head is fetched,
 and out Hor's Eye is stretched.
 That which came out of Nunu, behold, for you I
 have got
 and what Atum sent delectably forth in her name
 of Waterpot.
 Osiris Khenti Amenti
 is pure, he is pure, he is pure, he is pure.
 O Osiris Khenti Amenti,
 this your cool water
 is brought to you, this your cool water
 Hor that came forth from cool water.

Utpu Priest:

O Osiris Khenti Amenti,
 the Eye of Hor is brought to you here,
 its perfume now draws near.

Kheri Heb:

The Son comes to protect his Father now.
 So all the gods with joyous hearts avow.
 The Son has come to see his Father righted.
 So the Nine Gods say, their hearts delighted.
 You shall be justified.
 Heka comes to behold you, and he'll drive away
 the foes from your right side
 I mourn for my Lord.
 I lament for the Lord, whom I love.

Woman:

I weep here for your plight.
 I am your Sister, sad of heart.
 I am your Wife, and sick sorrow is my part.
 Come, let our moaning fill the air
 that he may be rejoiced. Come, let us share
 the hours of service with him in the night.

SIXTH HOUR

Sem Priest:

Pharaoh comes to you, Osiris.
 The Son protects the Father, here he stands.
 The primeval waters in a waterpot he brings.
 On you he sprinkles that which once came forth
 from you.

Utpu Priest:

Pharaoh comes to you, Osiris.
 The Eye of Hor as incense now he brings,
 he censes you with that which once came forth
 from you.

Kheri Heb:

I glorify you, Father. For ever you endure.
 Great God, there is naught lacking now in ful-
 filment of your Face.
 The Weeping Goddesses mourn you, they both
 smite you with their hands,
 they dirge for you, they moan for you, unceasingly
 each sings,
 that joy within you may be born anew,
 that with their dirges they may glorify your Ka.
 You shall be justified.
 Arnawi comes to see you, away your foe he flings
 on every side.

Woman:

I came to seek
 One lost and weak.
 The Lord I mourn and bitterly I moan.
 My heart is cleft with sighs
 for still my Brother lies.
 I weep for him because he is alone.

SEVENTH HOUR . . .

EIGHTH HOUR . . .

Women:

Lo, for you we sadly cry.
 Lo, your Name we glorify.
 Lo, for you the tears are in our eyes.
 Osiris, come, arise, arise!

NINTH HOUR . . .

TENTH HOUR . . .

O Osiris Khenti Amenti,
 Isis salves you from all harms,
 Nephthys clasps you in her arms.
 You are Glorious God between the pair.
 Both you own . . .

ELEVENTH HOUR . . .

TWELFTH HOUR . . .

Verily you remain to dwell upon your Throne.
 O Osiris Khenti Amenti, you rest, you are
 alone . . .

Nationality and Internationalism

III.

THE Nation States of the West as existing prior to the War embody a historic process of causality. The multitude of principalities and powers that formed the feudal society of early Christendom was hardly favourable to the growth of large organic States; though the theory of the Holy Roman Empire, sponsored by the Church, maintained a formal unity in part of Central and Northern Europe. This is the theme of Dante's treatise *De Monarchia*. Considerable Kingdoms compounded out of the greater fiefs, and their recurring strife, began to arise from about the tenth century A.D. England was early in the field as an organized realm, later embracing Wales; and Scotland followed suit. The disruptive and creative forces alike of the Reformation schism and the politico-religious wars of the time, together with other vital changes from the fifteenth century on, brought about new political combinations and entities. So by stages there come into being the countries with which we are now familiar, Norway, Sweden, Holland, France, Spain, Russia. The separate States of Germany and Italy were unified under one sovereignty in quite recent times. Many are the vicissitudes and fortunes through which the union of sometimes different elements was effected. The consolidation of France was favoured by the long struggle with English territorial dominion and its end. Spain became welded by the fierce conflict with the Muslim Supremacy, and by its ultimate expulsion from the Peninsula. Russia grew out of an independent effort to expel the Mongol overlordship, and the absorption of several Russian principalities by a central autocracy with its seat at Moscow. Influences, both religious and secular, from Constantinople allied it to the Greek Orthodox Communion. And as these countries develop on their "cultural" side, they manifest a distinctive national psyche, language, and indigenous social institutions whatever may be their peculiar form of government. The so-called Latin countries—France, Italy, Spain, present marked contrasts in this respect, a many-sided interest where we touch the subtler aspect of national divergence, of which more anon.

With the ocean voyages that discovered America and first made known the habitable globe, the "new world" was linked with the fortunes of Europe and the colonial enterprises that followed. The pre-history of the Continent is a matter apart. So is the story of European settlement, its merits or the reverse, which took different courses in N. and S. America. A mixed population of European and native grew up in S. America, which to-day presents singular and instructive phases of "miscegenation." The colonial empires of Britain and Spain had a similar fate; both revolted from the mother country and declared their independence. The Portuguese territory of Brazil remained for some time afterwards a constitutional monarchy ruled by a member of the Royal House until it, too, became a Republic. Whereas the British colonies set up a Federal Union, the Spanish Provinces resolved into a number of independent States that since have found ample grounds for quarrel, and have quite a respectable list of "Wars" to their credit, as lately over Gran Chaco. They have also revealed that the adoption of a Republican Government is no guarantee of the exhibition in practice of concomitant republican virtue and the character essential to its success. Neither is the phenomenon confined to this area.

These States are protected from outside influence by the Monroe Doctrine, which forbids territorial

acquisition on the Continent to any outside power. Yet they are jealous of domination by the U.S.A.; and a Pan-American Conference under the auspices of the last is mooted for this year, to be held at Buenos Aires, to advance good relations all round. The great northern Republic was formed from thirteen colonies or settlements, established at the outset under special circumstances by disgruntled elements having little in common with each other, where the passions and strifes of the "old" world were carried by migrants into the "new." After their secession from Britain, it was with some difficulty that they were made into a permanent union, with strong reservations over "State Rights"; a contention since evidenced in American affairs down to President Roosevelt and concerns of the New Deal. Baleful influences survive from the last conflict over this issue, which led to the greatest civil war of modern times, fought to exhaustion on the weaker side; where beyond the question involved, strong hostile feeling was shown as obtaining between people of different States with separate associations and antecedents. A high Constitutional problem faces the Republic over the powers of the Federal Government to deal with matters affecting the material welfare of the country as a whole, raised by the President's policy, and decisions of the Supreme Court. Then whereas the former emigration to the U.S.A. was by kindred folk of North European lineage, during the last half-century there has been an inroad of people of East and South European stocks which present questions of ethnical assimilation that discount prior American optimism therein. And has led to restrictions on their future entry; besides stern determination to exclude the Asiatic alien on the Western side, with his low standard of life and foreign usage.

The Dominion of Canada occupies a singular position, closely connected with the U.S.A., and linked with the British system. It is also of composite make-up in respect of its history and population; only one-half are of British origin, and of the remainder the French Canadians, a fertile stock, are almost as numerous, and there are German, Scandinavian, and other European settlers. Strongly Roman Catholic, entrenched in what was Lower Canada, owning simply a nominal allegiance to the British Crown, these French Canadians are a nationality in themselves.¹

This survey, within its limits, sufficiently demonstrates the realities underlying "nationalism" in its wider meaning. Whether of comparatively recent emergence, or rooted in centuries of experience and association, it includes ethnical, psychical, lingual and historic factors elemental in their scope and incidence. To which must be added in its developed character, the achievement of a polity and culture that minister to a congenial communal life. Either in a simple or complex expression this embraces a customary habitude, a sanctuary from antipathetic alien influences and modes, and the strongest incentive to maintenance of national independence. It may as in certain Eastern lands, amid a mixed population, partake of the nature of a cult with its rites and obligations as a basis of brotherhood. The Parsees of India are an instance in point. In the West it is mainly secular in direction and springs of action though religious communion may enter in as with the French Canadians, or the Irish Free State, of to-day.

¹ According to an estimate of the Population of the U.S.A. in 1870, out of 39 millions the Roman Catholics were approximately half a million. In the latest returns available, out of a population of 122 millions, Roman Catholics now number 18 millions. In Canada the same returns give a population of 10,400,000, with 4 millions of Roman Catholics, about 5½ millions of Protestants, and various separate minor Communions.

The leading European nations have a variety of idiosyncrasy in this regard. In her national egoism historic tradition, temperamental attitude and economic structure France is among the most self-sufficient. In matters of the family system; household amenity, cuisine, art, and usage, she adduces a defined phase of civilization. Long an arbiter in the sphere of fashion and feminine foibles therein (though that is not unchallenged) it is appropriate that *La République* should be typified in caricature as a woman. To pass from a French to an English atmosphere is to change into another spiritual climate, and a masculine aura. It has been said that the English developed a peculiar character after severance from dominion in France during the fifteenth century. Be that as it may, the seeds of English originality were sown in the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom prior to the Norman conquest and its questionable outcome—in the nascent Constitution, defined language and customary law—the Common Law of England, little affected by Roman legists. Passing centuries of pregnant experience, we have in the modern period the instincts of a barbaric martial people sublimated in the form of sport and games, where combative qualities are exercised under rules that make up a secular standard of conduct and good form. The old pleasure in pugilism brought in the phrase a "square fight" as guiding the contest. Other phrases as "it's not chickety," "to play the game," pass into a code of honour and fair dealing as a rule for life as well as sportsmanship; aspects of popular "ethics" detached from traditional religious notions and sanctions. To which may be added a stoical good humour and ironical travesty in face of the trials of fortune, well shown in the War; absence of malignity in political satire and controversy in contrast to the *malice* of French wit. Then when we compare the individualism of English marriage, where free choice of partners discounts familiar opinion, with the French *mariage de convenance*, that is, of suitability to the clan so upholding its status; representative English food and drink; the reserve that savours the practice of personal freedom—we get two separate working interpretations of the conduct of living in its every-day actualities.²

The causal agencies resulting in these traits and social modes, of which we give but a few illustrations, are as difficult to trace as those producing the physical type and temper of their respective exemp-

² With the purely economic side of our subject we are not here concerned. But we may note that the tone and outlook of the English Commonwealth as it goes to-day reduce to a ridiculous absurdity the classification in terms of Continental Socialism, much in evidence of late in this journal. The jargon of "Proletariat" and "bourgeoisie" has no bearing on English facts; the words are as meaningless as foreign. English class distinctions, as privately understood, are far too subtle to be included under this crude dual summary. Among the dwellers in "mean streets" the more respectable, in their own estimation, hold aloof from their ruder neighbours. There are various categories that divide the "workers" themselves. A bricklayer in full employment earns a wage a bank clerk might envy. There is no "class-consciousness" in a public sense, as it is common now not to refer to one's own "class," whatever it happens to be in private estimation. Everyone with ambition hopes to rise beyond where he started: "A fair field and no favour." Many occupying the highest posts in commerce and industry began on the first rung of the ladder. The head of one of the greatest firms of contractors was first a navy. Bismarck said of the English people they gave small hope to revolutionists, as they were without envy of the "rich," and delighted in the spectacles the last provided like racing and the sight of a good horse. If a man rode a horse in Germany others felt, why should he have a horse and not me.

To which one may add the considerable re-distribution of national income which has taken place during the present century; through taxation of "wealth," which helps to meet "social services," and a general increment in wages.

lars. The other great dynamic of nationalism lies in the institutions through which it operates politically, and sustain its mass needs. These further control and affect contacts with other States, and the relations usually classed as inter-national.

AUSTEN VERNEY.

From Belief to Reason

For many people, the pathway from bondage to doctrine and dogma is impossible. To others, it is a hard uphill fight to escape the fruit of seed sown in the receptive soil of the child mind. It involves acute and subtle reasoning which many adult minds are incapable of. The seeds of doubt and dissent were sown in the mind of the writer in a Unitarian Church, in which the minister read his lessons from *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Very slowly the writer began to drift from the liberal atmosphere of Unitarianism with its free but uncritical thinking. It is so easy to believe without subjecting or having subjected one's belief to critical examination; but if one intends to venture beyond the pale of belief into the domain of reason, self-examination and analysis of one's personal belief is highly important. We must be prepared to lay aside all preconceived ideas regardless of any pleasure the entertaining of them may have afforded, and face facts as they are.

Looking out on the world as we see it, we discover no evidence in support of the belief in an intelligence or power outside of, or above, the human. The Christian tells us there is a power or intelligence which he calls God. On this admission we very naturally conclude that all the hostile forces of nature, which man has no control over, such as earthquakes and storms, are directly traceable to this God if he "made all things." For ages man has fought and attempted to master some of those hostile forces at great sacrifice of life and limb entirely unaided by this God. No! there is no "Divinity that shapes our ends rough-hew them how we will." Man alone lives and reigns upon the earth untouched, uninfluenced, by any God.

To atone for "this sorry scheme of things entire," the Christian tells us this God has made compensation by the provision of an endless life after death for man. Upon closer examination of this attractive provision, however, one finds it is conditional upon a personal assent to a certain belief; the believer will enjoy eternal bliss, but the unbeliever will be subjected to horrible torture through all eternity. And when one turns with horror from either prospect, one becomes an infidel or an Atheist and escapes both. One remembers too, that the "gentle Jesus" taught such things as part and parcel of his Gospel, his message from God to man, and that later, his holy church on earth seized and used them to propagate his teaching for hundreds of years, until men groaned and sickened with disgust and despair at the cruelties inflicted upon humanity by the merciless and fiendish "Holy Church."

One of its most ghastly methods of torture and suppression was burning human beings alive. Millions of prayers went up to heaven from the lips of those poor creatures as they endured the agonies of torture, but heaven remained *silent, mute*, to them all. As this ghastly panorama unfolds itself to the mind's eye, we are reminded by the same "Holy Church," that only their lack of temporal power prevents them from perpetrating those cruelties to-day. Those of us who have, through the emancipation of reason, escaped from bondage to belief, into the pure atmosphere and sunlight of the realm of freedom of thought, have much to be thankful for. We should be deeply grateful to and remember the noble army of known and unknown men and women, whose pioneer work cleared the way for us by destroying some of the stubble and rubbish in the path of progress.

NORMAN CHARLTON

Correspondence

SECULAR EDUCATION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Your contributor, Mimmermus, says in last week's *Freethinker*: "A few generations of really secular education and the last Christian may be embalmed for exhibition in the British Museum, alongside the mummies of Ancient Egypt."

The dictum has surely never been given more clearly, and it seems to me to illustrate what you so often say of the persistence of Christian thought in the ranks of Secularism. The advocates of State-aided and enforced Secular Education are in the same category as Romans, who wish for grants for their schools, or *broad-minded* liberals who demand *simple* Bible teaching.

Which of them will be dished remains to be seen. We, as likely as anyone. But whoever goes to the wall, our ideals of liberty for all alike, a fair field and no favour, will go with them. We Secularists should establish our own schools to teach our own opinions, and we should also refuse to pay for the teaching of Christianity.

W. W. KENSSETT.

MARXISM

SIR,—I see that you have replied strongly, and correctly, to a correspondent who claims that the same laws govern animal life as well as human; that is, that biology is the true social science. The woeful stuff that most biologists write about social problems is typified by the preposterous arguments of Sir Arthur Keith in defence of racial fanaticism, which you rightly castigate.

But I think it is not sufficiently known that so far from condoning this kind of muddle, Marxism takes as its central point that society cannot be analysed purely from the biological angle, that when man invented the tool (and thence developed mind) he separated from nature (though related to it dialectically and making a unity with it).

The trouble is, however, that so many "materialists" take an idealist attitude towards mind. Though they admit that it is material in origin, they treat it as if it obeyed laws of its own formulation and was free abstractly to impose its will on nature. Mind is related dialectically to body, and all the material facts of society; that is, it can only develop on certain lines and in certain directions; it modifies conditions, but only as a part of the movement of those conditions with which it makes a dialectical unity. Much of the misery that has been caused in the world has been caused by the belief that mind can impose itself directly on phenomena—which means, in fact, impose some abstract emotionally—a conditioned desire. This type of fallacy, of which Christianity is the supreme example, appears (in milder form) in the vague positivist ideas that so often accompany "materialism."

JACK LINDSAY.

The fanatic not only habitually flies to extremes but to opposed extremes. Thus Jesus, after an excessive glorification of humility indulges in the most revolting threats of hell-fire. Once more I shall be told that Christ "did not mean" that which he said. He only spoke metaphorically. Once more is forced upon us the difficulty of deciding when Jesus means exactly what he says and when he does not. It is a matter of observation to-day that many of the teachers of religion are ashamed of this horrible teaching of the founder of their religion, and a dignitary of the English Church has endeavoured to translate the eternal damnation of his Master into eternal hope. . . . But Christ in his wild fanaticism taught the literal hell as punishment for the most trivial faults.

Dr. E. B. Aveling.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Evans, Barnes and Tuson. *Freethinker* on sale at Kiosk. Should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment. *Freethinker* and *Spain and the Church* on sale outside the Park gates.

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Primrose Restaurant, 66, Heath Street, Hampstead, N.W.3, one minute from Hampstead Underground Station): 7.30, P. Dooley—"Communism."

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Clarence Club House, 56 London Road, Kingston): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"A Search for God."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Winter Garden Ballrooms, High Street, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.0, Chapman Cohen—"The Fight for Freedom of Thought."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, J. Langdon Davies (*News Chronicle* Correspondent in Spain)—"Spain and Ourselves."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Archibald Robertson—"Thirty Years of—Progress."

COUNTRY

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, H. Little (Liverpool)—"Tolerance."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street, near Livery Street): 7.0, Impromptu Debate—"Is Gambling an Evil?" *Affir.*: Mr. W. J. Smith. *Neg.*: Mr. H. W. Cottingham.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Cafe, entrance via passage facing Burtons): 7.15, Parliament Night. Motion: "That capital punishment must be abolished."

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brighton and Hove Parliament): 7.30, Monday, November 2, Mr. J. Cecil Keast will introduce a Bill for debate—"Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England."

BURNLEY (St. James' Hall, Burnley): 11.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Freecardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh): 7.0, Debate—"Is the God Idea Consistent with the Present-day Thought?"—*Affir.*: Mr. R. Monaghan. *Neg.*: Mr. A. G. Senior.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (McLellan Galleries, 270 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. J. McLeod, M.A., Ed.B.—"Effective Social Thinking."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, entrance in Christian Street, Islington, Liverpool): 7.0, E. Egerton Stafford (Bootle)—"Democracy or Fascism."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Joseph McCabe—"The Church and the People in Spain."

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

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