

# THE FREETHINKER

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## Views and Opinions

### More about Religion and Science

THE *Church Times*, commenting on the meetings of the British Association, says, after paying tribute to the "careful, consistent devotion to truth" of science, and its readiness to sit "at the feet of the facts":—

There are some facts that science cannot see, facts which, because of the inevitable limitations of scientific method, do not exist for the scientist, as such.

Which, as a gentleman named Euclid said a long time ago of something else, is absurd. The *Church Times* is careful to avoid mentioning what are the facts that science cannot see, and with which, if it did, it cannot deal. It does say that "science aims at being objective," but *objective* here is, I fancy, used by the writer in one sense, and is to be understood by his readers in another and a different sense. It is true that science aims at being objective in the sense that it will have nothing to do with the talk of a "truth" that cannot be so exhibited as to demonstrate its reality to others. It does not believe in the kind of truth that can only be established by a contemplative study of one's navel, and which must then be accepted by others with no solid testable evidence. That is, and always has been, the favourite method of the charlatan and the trickster. But if we are asked to believe that science is confined to "objective" as opposed to "subjective" facts then the statement is simply not true. The trouble, so far as the religious world is concerned, is that science *does* deal with subjective, or what religious people call, "spiritual" things, and in a way that is fatal to religious claims.

### Manœuvring for Position

We are warned that science is prevented from seeing or dealing with certain things because of the "inevitable limitations of scientific method." This is either nonsense leading to confusion, or confusion leading to nonsense; it depends upon which side one

makes the approach. Of course, science does not attempt to gauge the nature of a sensation with a pair of scales created for determining weight, nor would it measure sound with a spectroscope. The *tools* used by science alter with the subject-matter under examination. The *method* of science remains the same under all conditions. And the objection religion raises to science is not so much motived by an objection to the method employed as it is to the nature of the conclusions reached. The proof of the truth of this is that it was always to the actual evidence produced by science that the Christian Church objected. The Church was on much more logical ground when it applied its authority to *all* facts. It commenced its career with a definite teaching concerning man and the world; and for many centuries it held to those teachings. It was as definite and as dogmatic with regard to the truth of the biblical account of the origin of languages, the creation of the globe, or the revolution of the sun round the earth, as it was with regard to the nature of the soul, the power of prayer, and the objective nature of the visions seen by "saints."

It was when, in the face of the fiercest opposition from the Church, science made good its claim to state the truth to the world about the world and man, that two lines of defence were laid down. The first was a tentative one: admitting the truth of scientific teachings that could no longer be profitably disputed. It was the method of the pickpocket when a policeman catches him with another person's purse in his hand "It's a fair cop, I'll go quietly." The Church was content to admit as true what it could no longer profitably denounce as false. But continuance in that plan developed dangers. For science did not stand still, and every advance threatened a diminution of the territory over which theology ruled. Science was unconsciously following the British method of Empire-building—squatting, creation of territorial rights, and, finally, annexation. Unless something were done science would presently leave theology with no territory over which it might exercise rule.

So another plan was adopted. Science was to be given its own field of operations. But there was another field, that of "spiritual experience," the visions of saints and of men like Swedenborg; the "illumination" not to be expressed in precise language; all this it was thought science could not touch, and was to be the permanent stronghold of religion. In a way religion was getting back to its primitive condition, for in effect it was giving over to science all that was known, or ever could be known, even everything considered capable of definite conception, and claiming as its own inalienable possession, everything that would forever remain unknown and inconceivable. So was created the stupid theory of two worlds—one in which things were known or knowable that belonged to science, and another world

consisting of, not merely the unknown, but the unknowable, that belonged to religion. The strength of the latter position was that, provided religion kept to things that could not be handled, no one was able to prove that what was said concerning these things was untrue.

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#### The "Facts" of Religion

This is really all that the statement of the *Church Times* means. For what are the facts of the religious life to which the scientific method cannot be applied? I do not know of one. The conviction that there is a God, the sense of union with God, the belief that one gets help in trouble from an invisible source, the desire for a future life, the belief in inspiration, the belief in heaven and hell, the feeling that one is helped by prayer, and so forth; are these the facts of the religious life with which science cannot deal? If this is what is meant, then I can only reply plainly and categorically that it is demonstrably false. There is not one of these things, from the visions of a Swedenborg to the ravings of a religiously drunken travelling evangelist with which science finds itself unable to deal, and concerning which precise information is not being given to the world day by day. I wonder whether it is possible to get the editor of the *Church Times* to say in plain language just what it is in religion to which the scientific method cannot be applied, and why? If he cannot spare the space in his own journal this one is open to him.

Always behind such expressions as those used by the *Church Times* rests the assumption that there are certain phenomena associated with religion that lie outside the scope of science. The truth is, however, that scientific knowledge and the application of the scientific method do not meet religion with a bare rejection, they (to use an expression of John Morley's) "explain religion out of existence." Science accepts all the facts upon which religion is based, and absorbs them into the scientific explanation of human history. No scientific student of religion questions the existence of a group of facts upon which religion has built its doctrines. The belief in God or gods is one fact, the belief in a soul and a future life is another fact; so is the belief in inspiration, in the power of prayer, in miracles, in heaven and hell, in rewards and punishments in a future life, in the assumed inspiration of favoured people, in the belief that a better life may be derived from religion. To the true scientist, delusions and illusions, mistaken conclusions, and false inferences, are all facts of human nature that need accounting for as much as do the phenomena with which the science of physics busies itself. It is the non-recognition of this aspect of the situation that leads the religious advocate to spend his time beating the air, and attacking a position which to the scientific Freethinker simply does not exist.

\* \* \*

#### Science and Life

Let me give one or two illustrations of what I mean. About twenty years ago I published a work (*Religion and Sex*), in which the whole of the phenomena of religion was considered from the point of view of an acceptance of the psychological facts, and an explanation of them was offered in terms of existing scientific knowledge. To that work no reply has ever been made, nor do I anticipate that any will be made. That book did not "attack" religion, it explained it. Meanwhile religious advocates continue to write about religion as though we were living in the eighteenth century instead of in the twentieth. The only "advance" made is that of quietly dropping certain re-

ligious doctrines, and writing of religious beliefs in a more restrained manner, and so leaving it to be inferred that the religion advocated is the same as that which has been thrown overboard.

Those acquainted with the facts know full well that science deals drastically with religion. Science is in no doubt as to the origin of either the belief in God and a soul. It *knows*, despite disputes over theories and the particular order of development, that all existing ideas of God and a soul can be traced back to the mistaken interpretation by primitive man of phenomena that are now differently and adequately explained. This being so the problem is no longer one of evidence, it is one of psychology and sociology—that of understanding the condition which gave rise to such beliefs, and the sociological conditions that favoured their perpetuation. Science does not question the existence of certain states of what is called ecstasy, or a sense of oneness with some mysterious and unknown power; it merely points out that religious beliefs have, more and more intimately as we go back in the history of mankind, been associated with the presence of abnormal mental states, either induced by fasting, or by the practice of drug-taking, or by various other methods, all of which tended to induce a conviction of association with "spiritual" powers. And the scientist also points out that all of these states can now be paralleled by states that are admittedly perfectly natural in their origin, and which are dealt with in thousands of instances without ever considering religion in any way. For thousands of years (it is still the case with uncivilized peoples), both bodily and mental diseases were associated with the work of evil spirits. The New Testament is quite definite on this point. To-day science takes these same states and shows them to be due to quite natural and understandable conditions. And I put the question quite directly to the *Church Times*: In what way do we differentiate between the abnormal mental state induced by indulgence in a drug or in alcohol, and those induced by fasting, solitary meditation, or the starved sexual life of a male or female saint? In what manner differ from those of a monk leading a starved unwholesome life in a desert or in what is practically solitary confinement? Or again, it has been shown by very substantial statistical evidence that the conversions of people under evangelistic influence coincide with the period of adolescence, and that all that then takes place may be explained in terms of the development of new functions, and the awakening of the social side of human nature, misinterpreted in terms of religion. The phenomenon of "conversion" may occur in circumstances that no one would call religious.

So one may go through the whole series of religious beliefs. Religion fits into the framework of modern science. It is religion that can find no place in its ambit for science. There is not a single religious phenomenon—normal or abnormal, good or bad—that falls outside the scope of science. There is no longer room for debating whether religious doctrines are true, there is only the question of under what conditions did people believe them to be true, and under what conditions do they still so accept them?

It would be an easy "get-out" for religion: if science were to accept a division of territory. But the demand of science is for the whole of life, for the whole of knowledge actual and possible. As a French scientist has put it, "Science conducts religion to the boundaries of the universe and bids it a polite good-bye."

## Slaves of Superstition

John P.

Robinson, he

Sez they didn't know everything down in Judee."

*Biglow Papers.*

NEWSPAPERS are less free in this England of ours than at any other recent period of their history. The power of the editors and the writers has been a constantly diminishing quantity of late years and the power of the commercially-minded, and often ignorant proprietors as constantly increasing. All have become slaves of the advertisement manager. Journalists can neither do justice to themselves, nor serve the public honestly, in a newspaper press dominated by advertisers, vested interests, and get-rich-quick methods. In spite of their apparent rivalry, the English newspapers are of one mind in suppressing advanced thought, which is understood to be fatal to fat dividends. The conspiracy of silence against Free-thought is passing wonderful. The newspapers devote columns to gambling; admit bookmakers' advertisements; report at length the most disgusting murder and police-court cases. They encourage fortune-telling by publishing horoscopes, and insert quack advertisements by the score. In the summer, when space is plentiful, there is always the sea-serpent or the big gooseberry. The imbecilities of the clergy are reported constantly, but the leaders of advanced thought seldom have a line devoted to them, unless it is an insult. In short, the popular press has become a Niagara of nonsense, which bids fair to debase the moral currency. It is not entirely due to fanaticism or ignorance, but is simply done to promote huge circulations, and to tickle the ears of the groundlings. For these press proprietors believe with Mr. Biglow that:—

"A merciful Providence fashioned us hollow,  
In order that we might our principles swallow."

Journalism was once a profession; these creatures have made it, far too often, a disreputable trade. Once a moral function; in their hands it has no more ethical significance than the manufacture of glass eyes for dolls. The popular press has become divorced from the sobrieties and sanities of life, and has become a cesspool of corruption.

A recent example of this playing to the gallery on the part of editors of the popular press was the very cavalier treatment accorded to the meetings of the British Association. This reputable society exists for the advancement of science, and enjoys a world-wide reputation, and should, at least, be treated with some respect. But the *Daily Express* (September 2) printed a report which was sheer, unadulterated insolence. After alluding to the evening dress of the scientists, the journalist added:—

Very uncomfortable many of them looked, as if their fingers were more accustomed to test-tubes than collar studs and ties which get in the way of the whisker.

The speech of the President, Sir Edward Poulton, was concerned with the triumph of Darwinism. This was described as "a barren theme," and the President's remarks on natural selection provoked the flip-pant remark:—

We ought next to hear whether a horse with a short tail has a better chance than a long-tailed animal to win the Derby at Epsom in a gale.

If so, the writer adds, "it will be worth while to have proved that we are all descended from monkeys." There is more of this sorry stuff, but enough has been quoted to show that the British Association has been

treated with high-sniffing contempt by the hirelings of the popular press.

This is not an isolated case, for the Nonconformist *News-Chronicle* (September 2) treats the same presidential address with almost as scant courtesy as its Tory rival. Commenting on Sir Edward Poulton's speech, it says:—

His address described many famous encounters, some of a rather fiery nature, but although the wisdom of Darwin, Wallace, Huxley, Kelvin, and many another great man was mentioned, perhaps the most exciting name in the discourse was that of an African maggot, *T. biguttatus*.

That this trash should appear in the columns of the *News-Chronicle*, which is constantly girding at its sensational press-rivals, is curious, but that two so-called national newspapers should descend to such levels is not a tribute to British journalism. Let there be no mistake on one point. That these two rival political periodicals should both concentrate on Sir Edward Poulton's speech on the triumph of Darwinism lets the cat out of the bag. Evolution is the trouble, simply because the teaching runs counter to the unscientific pronouncements of the Christian Churches, which are powerful vested interests.

The *News-Chronicle* and *Daily Express* have frequently expressed their severe disapprobation of frivolity and sensationalism in the rival newspaper press, yet the editors in question do not hesitate to send humorous writers to report a scientific meeting. They do not send jesters to report a Church Congress, or a Missionary meeting, or to report a bishop or a cardinal. But what of the readers of their national newspapers? Is it not playing it a little low down on the reader thus to attempt to take advantage of his assumed innocence, and his lack of scientific knowledge? When the Education Act has run another half century, the readers of newspapers, perhaps, will cease to hunger for such sawdust, and will prefer the bread of knowledge. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Is there anything quite so utterly contemptible as Christian propaganda? These journalists are prostituting their intellects for a mere pittance. How the clergy must smile at getting their dirty work done at such a paltry price. They realize, better than the penurious pen-pushers of Fleet Street, the real menace of Charles Darwin, the solitary student who shook the world. But observe their slippery tactics. Since Darwin's death, the clergy, who formerly denounced him as Anti-Christ with all the extensive and peculiar vocabulary of theological abhorrence, hypocritically have claimed this infidel as one of their flock. They actually buried this very black sheep in Westminster Abbey, and, there, calmly pretended that the theory of Evolution is wholly in accord with the old-world ignorance of the Christian Church and the Christian Bible. Only two religious bodies have been reasonably honest in this matter.

Poles asunder in so many respects the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have remained faithful to Oriental ignorance and superstition. On no condition will they part with Eve and the fruit, and the talking snake in the fabled Garden of Eden. Romanists and Salvationists alike believe that Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and their colleagues, are now suffering the tortures of the damned in a fiery Hell. These uncultured folks no more believe in evolution than they understand the very alphabet of science. But all the other churches are so anxious to keep the money in the family that they are trying to effect a compromise between superstition and science, from the Bishops of the Anglican Church to the fluent liars on Pleasant Sunday Afternoon plat-

forms. Such hypocritical pretensions are nauseating.

And, great as is our debt to the newspaper press, who that is not blinded by sheer political prejudice or religious fanaticism, can honestly believe that editors are doing a real service by adopting a policy of always shouting with the crowd. They back opinions as gamblers would back a horse, because they believe that it will win. What is the use of teaching children to read, if, at the end of the period of instruction, they rely only upon the popular newspaper press for information?

MIMNERMUS.

## Suffer! Little Children!

THOSE who have suffered little children to come into the hands of Church may not have suffered themselves. A certain satisfaction may have been obtained in "putting them through it," as they, themselves, had been put through it. At any rate such parents ran no risk of missing the pleasant things the Church handed out to Conformity. There was little doubt about the suffering of the child. One of the legacies the present writer was bequeathed from the past was an attic full of dusty Christian periodicals. I can visualize yet those pale-blue covered weeklies, strung up in bundles of fifty-two. I examined them at an impressionable age. By the Grace of God I had been previously permitted to come across pamphlets of Ingersoll, Foote, etc., and the *Freethinker* had also fallen into my hands. With a sympathetic father, my reactions to these magazines—this quite fair reflection of the Christian Spirit—can be guessed. When, some years afterwards, I was to read *The New Machiavelli*, I knew full well what H. G. Wells was talking of, when he characterized the *Home Churchman* as the "most evil thing that ever came into the house," and said that "a score of vices that shun the policeman had nothing of its subtle wickedness." Every week the type of literature Mr. Wells pilloried (let us repeat, "this fair reflection of the Christian Spirit") had flooded Christian homes, poisoning the minds of its readers, inculcating them with uncharitableness towards all who had not had the good fortune to enjoy the blood bath; and taking, to quote Wells again, "an enormous toll of human love and happiness," and "making frightful breaches in human solidarity."

One youngster went through those dusty piles and learnt, if faintly, the painful story those pages unfolded. We are told nowadays by interested parties that what is wanted more than anything else is for mankind to return to the Church and its pretty ways. The situation is black enough, at the moment, and may (taking a short view of humanity's struggle onwards), be hopeless enough. But it requires an enormous faith and an impossible amount of self-stultification, to believe that the only escape from this débâcle is by still further tolls on human love and happiness by the concentration of man's thoughts, once more, upon the saving of his shrivelled little soul.

All the evidence is there for those who care to look for it. The Church when power was in their hands, sent their bilious and anti-social message into the homesteads of this island, giving the readers the cue as to how they could reach safely their tip-up chairs in the New Jerusalem, and telling them how to bring up their offspring piously so that they might, in their turn, become useful evangelizers in the Lord's Vineyard.

When a youngster, in 1898, ransacked a few specimens of these magazines and sent samples from bulk in the shape of an article to the *Freethinker*, G. W.

Foote printed that effort, thereby making a very proud young man, and, possibly, (who knows?) becoming responsible for that person's life attachment to the best of causes.

Mr. Wells spoke of the "unscrupulous lying" that characterized those periodicals. That was the characteristic that struck the boy most forcibly. The way the cleric dealt with the unbeliever in those days was to a great extent based upon the apostolic hint that if a lie redounded to the Glory of God, why, therefore, was he (the cleric) to be accounted a sinner? Mr. Wells spoke of the "boldly invented" last words of unbelievers. Certainly the lying was hard and consistent. I find in the old article a few examples of that kind:—

I was the nurse that attended Voltaire in his last illness, and for all the wealth of Europe, I would not see another infidel die.

I would give worlds (said Thomas Paine) had I them at my command—had the *Age of Reason* never been published.

When the sea was peaceful, the infidel was loud and clamorous in proclaiming his infidelity, but when the storm came on, he was on his knees crying for mercy.

The authority for such tales was generally *Anon*, or a *Mr. K*. What need was there for further witness when it was augmenting the Glory of God?

It is just fifty years ago that Thomas Henry Huxley was writing in *The Nineteenth Century* as follows:—

Theological apologists who insist that morality will vanish if their dogmas are exploded, would do well to consider the fact that, in the matter of intellectual veracity, science is already a long way ahead of the Churches; and that, in this particular, it is exerting an educational influence on mankind of which the Churches have shown themselves utterly incapable.

It is because Huxley said things like this, again and again, that literary puppyism a couple of years ago told us that it would have been better if this man (Huxley) had never been born. We know when we read utterances like the above how sure it was that people who fall into certain dubious ethical categories would feel this way about T. H. Huxley.

The "Christian Miscellany" had *Pages for the Children*. The little ones were told that:—

When the clergyman entered the room, the face of the infidel assumed a most savage aspect.

Later, the clergyman appears to have had some effect upon him, for the infidel yells:—

The curse of an offended God is upon me! Hell opens its mouth to receive me! Devils are waiting to torture me! O horror! horror!

Hark! Did you hear that peal? The infernal spirits are mustering all the artillery of Hell to give me a salute to the regions of Damnation.

Our spiritual and dignified clergy apparently thought the above to be fitting for children. From the point of view of such gentlemen it is not extraordinary that those who think otherwise they would prefer not to have been born.

Mark Twain was another humanist whose hatred of the typical Christian literature of his day was beyond bounds. Mark spent a considerable amount of his time trying to undermine its influence and therefore became in the same quarters another of the men who ought not to have been born. Mark introduced us to real boys, Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. The boys of clerical imagination, he satirized under the headings of the Bad Little Boy and Good Little Boy. The Bad Little Boy

went fishing on the Sunday and didn't get drowned. Another time he got caught out in the storm when

he was fishing on Sunday and didn't get struck by lightning. Why you may look and look through the Sunday Books from now to next Christmas and you would never come across anything like this.

Some people dismiss such reading as typical American exaggeration. We invite comparison with the following taken from the *Churchman's Penny Magazine* of December, 1853.

#### SUNDAY PENCE

MY DEAR CHILDREN,—I have something to say to you about a penny spent on a Sunday, and when you have heard what I shall tell you, I think you will be more careful than ever about what you do with your Sunday pence.

One Sunday afternoon a little boy received a penny from his father, and quickly put on his cap and ran out to spend it. As he went down the street he saw people nicely dressed quietly walking to church; boys and girls were on their way to the Sunday-school; shops were shut; and all the street looked Sunday-like. He passed a Sunday-school where the children were singing:—

"Lord, how delightful 'tis to see  
A whole assembly worship thee."

His heart grew uneasy as he thought of his penny, and he almost wished he was in school too. But his penny, he thought, he must spend that, father gave it to him, and told him to go and spend it, then he remembered something out of the Bible, which said we must not buy or sell on the Lord's day, and when he had got to the sweet-shop—which alas! is always to be seen open on Sabbath days—he scarcely knew what to do. He stood at the window; there he saw oranges, nuts, cakes, comfits, and such like. He peeped in at the door, there he saw one or two boys spending money. He felt his penny, he looked round to see if anyone was near (he forgot "Thou, God, seest me"), he went into the shop, and in a few minutes he was running home with his pockets full of nuts and an orange. He had spent his penny and broken the Sabbath.

As he ran home he slipped into a little pool of water, wetting himself very much. His nuts were soon cracked, and his orange eaten (while father was reading the Sunday newspaper). And, now, what was left of his penny? Only some nutshells and the skin of an orange! It was gone, all but this. The rest of his Sunday evening he spent playing with a kitten and tying its tail to a chair—while father had smoked himself fast to sleep, while others were praising God in churches and chapels, and hearing about the blessed Jesus and his love to sinners. When he went to bed, his mother who had been scouring out the room and cleaning the windows all the morning, and cooking the dinner and washing the plates all the afternoon, and sitting by the fire all the evening, found that his feet were wet and cold, so she soon covered him with clothes and tried to warm him, and bade him go to sleep.

But he could not sleep. He grew very hot and feverish, his head pained him, and he was very sick. After a time he fell asleep. In his sleep he said, "Sabbath day—Fourth Commandment—what's that to me?—I will spend my penny—father gave it me—mother buys on Sundays!" Poor boy, his mind was wandering, and he did not know what he said.

Not long after that a little coffin was quietly carried down the street, and the father and mother of that little boy were walking after it. It was on a Sunday, too! and the little Sabbath-breaker was carried on a Sunday to his long home.

Children, will you spend your pennies as he did?

Parents, will you let them?—Yours affectionately,

THE SUPERINTENDENT.

There are some people, Mark used to say, who can only be reformed with a shotgun. I expect it was cases such as The Superintendent which caused him to pen such a despairing epigram.

T. H. ELSTON.

## Mulk Raj Anand

No citizen of England with a social conscience can allow the question of India to stay long out of his mind. The boasted high-standard of living in England (which can, however, get along with the vile conditions depicted, for instance, in Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier*) is based entirely on the degradation of colonial peasants. This is a simple fact that is conveniently forgotten by those who argue that Capitalism has brought benefits to the English working-class. Any analysis of English Capitalism must include the colonial peoples within its view; otherwise it cannot expect to state the structural relations correctly. Whatever advantages in the past certain favoured sections of the British working-class have gained has been at the expense of the Indian peasants. The obverse side of British civil-liberties is the ruthless oppression of colonial peoples.

The state to which English Capitalism has reduced India is sufficiently suggested by the following quotation from the report of the Government Health Department on the population of Bengal in 1927:

The Bengal peasantry feed so badly that even rats could not live longer than five weeks on such a diet. The population is so terribly weakened that it is quite incapable of resisting the slightest infection. Last year 120 thousand died of cholera; 250 thousand of malaria; 350 thousand of tuberculosis and 100 thousand of enteric.\*

And remember that this passage comes from a bland Government report, not from "Red" sources; and it deals only with one province. But it is not with economic effects, but cultural, that we are concerned here. British rule blindly stamped out Indian culture; and set up a system of education designed to produce Government-clerks. And the unfortunate "babu" with his ridiculous false-culture became one of the English stock-jokes along with Paddy and Sambo. Thus do Imperialists add insult to injury.

Only in the last few years have there appeared Indian writers able to define with fearless realism their native land. (Preparatory work has been done by writers like Tagore, but only now do we find writers capable of full objectivity.) Outstanding among these young men is Mulk Raj Anand. It is not too much to say that in his work India finds at last a novelist with the insight and literary skill to tackle the gigantic task of depicting her social problems in all their width and depth.

Anand has set himself the work of a Balzacian Human-Comedy of Indian life. Born in 1905, he has seen almost of every aspect of that life. For his father was a hereditary craftsman in copper, silver and bronze, who left his town of Amritsar and joined the British Army. As the regiment was constantly transferred, Anand had every chance to see India from one end to the other; and at the same time he was brought into contact with Europeans in the officers and other British soldiers. Through his mother he was fed with folksongs, tales, and epics of the village-community. His father taught him to read and write.

Early he turned to creative work, struggling to find some basis for self-expression in the chaotic world of disintegrating Indian feudalism, and meeting on every hand the terrible weight of British censorship and oppression. "And I turned in on myself," he has written to me, "feeding upon my own lifeblood in the obscure lanes and alleys of towns and villages,

\* Cited Ralph Fox, *Colonial Policy of British Imperialism*. It is a good sign that the last few months have seen two excellent books published about India: *The Empire of the Nabobs*, by Lester Hutchinson, and *White Sahibs in India*, by Reginald Reynolds.

with others who in their desperation were taking to more violent methods of struggle."

But he fought his way through that hell. And, he says, "there could be no hell worse than the hell of India during the Rowlatt Act that was passed in 1919. And in the nightmare of this hell I fought for my life, along with my companions, fought for the right to be, through long illnesses brought about by savage Government floggings during the Martial Law in Amritsar." But we will leave the details of his struggle, which finally brought him to England, and to the gaining of a Doctorate of Philosophy. Working on a thesis on Hume and the contemporary realists, he had his attention turned back to Marx (whom he had first encountered in India), and he finally attained a fully realistic and Materialist outlook. In 1930 he started on his plan of a series of novels, which he hopes to complete by 1945, "barring such accidents as the impending war or imprisonment on one of my necessary visits to India."

He has published several books in England, but the three that we will consider are the novels, *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, and *Two Leaves and a Bud*. No one who reads these three books will fail to feel that India has at last found her first native interpreter, and that Anand did not overvalue his powers when he set himself his great task. It is not merely that Anand's experience has given him a passionate sympathy with his fellows, or that his trained philosophic mind can so clearly anatomize the tangled society of India. The sympathy and the scientific clarity would not avail without a creative sense of character, a capacity for narrative, and a control of dramatic structure. All these qualities are abundantly possessed by Anand.

And never once does his deep and suffering sympathy for his oppressed, starved, tormented fellow-Indians lead him into any falsities. He sees unerringly the distortions produced by generations of oppression; he castigates the native bourgeoisie, so often ready to cringe and to side with the oppressors, as sharply as the white sahibs themselves. And yet his castigation is always objectively controlled. Even when it burns with a fierce white heat of agonized indignation, it never caricatures. He depicts his Indian petty-bourgeois from the inside, as well as his peasants; and there is nothing doctrinaire in his pictures of the Europeans. Indeed, even where he shows the white at his worst, as in Reggie Hunt (a young public-school man who is sexually disintegrated by the chances of seduction in the Assam tea-plantations), there is a kind of sympathy, an imaginative penetration, an objective outlook that does not, in the last resort, blame the individual for the inevitable horrors of a system of exploitation.

*Untouchable* deals with the Untouchable Caste. It tells a day in the life of a young street-sweeper, Bakha. Nothing much happens except for an encounter with a priest, and a meeting at which Ghandi speaks; but the completeness of the picture is undeniable. The whole problem of the Untouchables is covered (and the solution, the commonsense answer to the religiously complicated question of "pollution," is skilfully introduced: Water-closets). But the charm with which Anand endows his Bakha is the most notable quality of the book. It is a charm unforced, natural; an example of what Anand can do in the way of defining character without stress or involved methods. Munoo, the peasant lad, who is the hero of *Coolie*, is somewhat in the same vein. But here the canvas is much wider. Munoo goes through many adventures, and the full extent of Anand's power is shown in the ease with which a multiplicity of characters is introduced. Munoo gets to Bombay, works in the mills, and takes part in a strike, finally dying of T.B. in the hills.

In *Two Leaves of a Bud* Anand takes yet another form. His theme is an Assam tea-plantation, to which peasants are decoyed with lies and where they are treated like serfs. His method is dramatically considered, and the Europeans play as much a part as the Indians. He builds up the climax with masterly economy; and the pathos of the attempt made by the workers to state their wrongs (which through the panic of the Europeans is transformed into a supposed insurrection, put down by soldiers and aeroplanes) is overwhelming.

Anand has the power to seize on to the essentials of character. That is his outstanding virtue; and it is a virtue possessed only by the writers to whom we give the name of great. He is a young writer, expressing himself in a foreign language; but the impression conveyed by these three novels is that he is fully the master of his medium, and that he will undoubtedly carry out his fine Balzacian ambitions. No one with any social conscience, no one who is interested in the great tradition of the novel, should fail to read these three books of his. If they do so, there will be no need to bid them look out for Anand's future work.†

JACK LINDSAY.

† The three novels are published by Lawrence & Wishart, 7s. 6d. each (or 5s. to Left Book Club members). They should be available in all public libraries.

## The Unmasking of a Saint

THE saint, in this instance, is Mr. Thomas E. Rofe, a leading lay member of the Council of Churches (Sydney, N.S.W., Australia), and Federal President of the Federated Churches of Christ in Australia. Out of his great wealth Mr. Rofe has even built a church that he himself controls. Recently he has been very much in the limelight in connexion with the ever-growing, sane and healthy practice of Sunday sport. Fierce is the religious opposition. Just now there are threats of prosecution, under archaic laws that are a disgrace to present-day civilization. Foremost in this crusade against the rights of the people is Mr. Rofe.

Under the guise of getting a full statement of his views—but really, it would seem, for the purpose of amusing its readers—Mr. Rofe was approached by a Sydney paper. So that what is to be revealed in due course may be fully appreciated, it is necessary to give a few of the sentences in which he expressed himself—so puritanically and so uncompromisingly. Here, then, are some of the questions put to him, together with his answers:—

Q.: "Why do you oppose Sunday sport?"

A.: "We oppose it because we want to prevent the abuse of the Lord's Day. I would prohibit everybody—whether it be the individual, or groups of individuals—playing any sporting game during the hours set aside for Divine Service."

Q.: "What hours would you prescribe as those in which all sport should be forbidden?"

A.: "Between the hours of 10.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m., and from 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m."

Q.: "Would you make it a penal offence for anybody to play golf, cricket, or football on Sunday during those hours, irrespective of whether they were near church premises or miles away from them?"

A.: "I would make it an offence, punishable by a penalty that would be a deterrent."

Q.: "What harm do you see in healthy sport on Sundays?"

A.: "There is Saturday afternoon, in which all organized sporting games can be played, so why trespass on the sacredness of the Lord's Day?"

Q.: "Do you say it is wrong, say, for a business-man who has only Sunday for recreation, to play golf, bowls, or tennis that day?"

A.: "That depends upon the individual conscience; but I would point out that God created the Lord's Day, realizing the necessity for man to have some period of rest from his labours. God himself laboured for six days and rested on the seventh. If there are to be no times for resting, then Nature would quickly wear itself out."

Thus, the stage was perfectly set by Mr. Rofe himself for the explosion that was shortly to follow. This was provided by another Sydney paper in an article headed, "Precept and Example." In this, reference is made, at the outset, to Mr. Rofe having "gained recent notoriety in New South Wales as the most active antagonist of Sunday Sport." In the light of this fervour for the preservation of the Sabbath, the paper proceeds to say, it now invites "Mr. Rofe's explanation of his financial interest in a company engaged in commercialized Sunday tennis at Coogee Beach."

Coogee is a Sydney Suburb. Through the same article, we go on to learn that the name of the company is the Coogee Amusement Park Ltd.; that it was formed in 1927; that in the company Mr. Rofe has the second largest holding, with 2,500 shares and that Sunday tennis, beginning at 9 a.m., is played throughout the entire day—that is, church-hours and all other hours.

Further, Mr. Rofe himself is one of the four directors. Says the secretary of the company, "Sunday tennis just keeps us going now, and if it is withdrawn the only people to suffer will be the shareholders."

What is Mr. Rofe's reply to this blighting, devastating exposure?

In another Sydney paper—the third, by the way, from which I have been quoting—he declared that he did not know that tennis was played in the park on Sundays.

This, from a director of the concern! The public knew—knew to the extent of playing on the courts on Sundays—that they kept the park going. But Mr. Rofe, a director of the company, did not know what was more or less common knowledge!

Happily, there is no law that compels belief in any publicly-made statement.

The experience of Mr. Rofe—"the most active antagonist of Sunday sport in New South Wales," side by side with being himself the director of "a company engaged in commercialized Sunday tennis"—is merely characteristic of the many exposures that might be cited to the discredit of those so loudly professing their grace and Godliness.

Still, it is a good purpose that is served by such revelations, when due publicity is given to them.

At any rate, it is certain that what has been so widely revealed here regarding the sanctimonious Mr. Rofe must enormously strengthen—in the way of public sympathy and support—the move that is at present being made practically throughout Australia for a rational Sunday, with the right of all to spend the day in whatever sports or recreations may be to their liking.

J. Y. ANDERONEY.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

### Acid Drops

A correspondent to the *Church Times*, an ex-teacher, writing on the question of religion and teachers, puts the matter very plainly. His words are worth reproducing:—

It is doubtful whether the authorities of the Church realize how strongly teachers are opposed to any attempt to question them about their religious beliefs, or to make their prospects in Council Schools in any way dependent on them. This applies to all teachers alike, whether primary, or secondary, religious, indifferent, or agnostic. In questions concerning denominational schools, teachers do their best to remain neutral, but this proposal to introduce tests into Council schools is bound to unite them into violent opposition. The recent trouble at Blackpool, when pressure was put on to teachers to accompany their charges to religious services, should be a warning to those who think that the cause of religion can be served in this way. . . . All [teachers], whether Christian believers or otherwise, regard their religious beliefs as their own private business. . . . I know of no question in which the teachers are as unanimous as they are on this [against a Questionnaire] . . . It would be a good thing for the cause of the Church and of religion if the proposals were quietly dropped.

It is a pity that much larger numbers of teachers do not openly voice their disagreement with the present state of affairs, even though they refrain from publishing their names.

But it is to be noted that the objection was raised to a "questionnaire," only, and will not remove the evil that now exists, and will not relieve the teachers from the effects of religious intolerance. As we have so often pointed out, so long as the State steps outside its proper sphere and plays the game of the parson—and commits an act of treason against the rising generation—by keeping religion in the school, so long there will exist a questionnaire in fact, if not in form. Teachers will be promoted or will have their promotion delayed, as they stand well in the eyes of the religious. And worse than that, thousands of teachers will be teaching what they believe to be false, and will be forced to a life of hypocrisy if they do not happen to be made of the stuff that will fight for independence. For ourselves, so long as religion is in the schools, we do not see that there can be any logical objection to teachers being questioned on a subject they are expected to teach. And if they are to be questioned the clergy are the ones who should do the questioning. One has to pay a price for everything in this world—even for the luxury of concealing one's opinions.

The Rev. James Reid, D.D., in a sermon on Sunday, August 22, draws our attention to very obvious imperfections in this big world:—

We forget that the world is only in the making. It is but half-finished at the best. . . . God bids us believe that He has His plan. The chaos and turmoil and pain are only temporary. They are inevitable. . . .

We seem to remember that a long-long time ago, God "looked upon all that He had made, and behold! it was very good." Dr. Reid seems to suggest that it was "very good" chaos, "very good" turmoil, etc., much as one might say, "a very good hell of a mess." It will soon begin to occur to pious believers that possibly Heaven itself is only a builder's site. Why should anyone suppose God would "finish" His Heaven (or His Hell, come to that) if after all these ages He leaves Earth "Half-finished at the best."

"Our Lady" did not seem to be particularly kind to the thousands of pilgrims worshipping at Knock, the Irish Lourdes, the other day. It rained heavily in spite of the unceasing prayers—most of the pilgrims praying right through the night. Not one of the 114 stretcher cases is reported to have been cured, and there was a collision between a motor-car and a bus load of pilgrims, the driver of the car being badly hurt. Really if "Our Lady" does not look after Knock a little better than this, it will mean bad business for the Church. Even a tiny cure is better than none at all.

Bishop Barnes complains that in Germany Christianity is regarded as "irrelevant." That is not quite the case. The German Government has adopted and incorporated in its return to barbarism, some of the worst features of historic Christianity. It has, so far, met with some measure of success—a success that has been purchased in the intellectual and moral degradation of the life of Germany. How long it will retain this measure of success will depend upon the German people and—to a smaller degree—upon the world outside Germany.

A person named John Drinman in *The Press*, a Glasgow paper, tries to explain that when the Lord commanded the Israelites to keep the women, "who had not known man by lying with him, alive for themselves," the purpose of this reservation was quite respectable. He puts up two arguments. The first is that "God's holy character and His Word forbid" any other construction. The second is a reference to Deut. xxi. 10-14.

It is surely from God's dealings with Midianites, etc., that God's Holy Character has to be determined. God's

conduct in that case was in perfect harmony with his conduct in multitudes of other cases. Those who come to the Holy Volume with another idea of God's Holy Character do not readily submit to the plainest of readings which conflict with that idea. As Ruskin said: No one is less ready to submit to a passage not to their liking than those who are most positive on the subject of the Bible's general inspiration.

This is the passage that this writer has the impudence to refer readers to:—

When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive.

And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, thou wouldst have her to thy wife.

Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house and after a full month . . . thou shalt be her husband and she shall be thy wife.

And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will.

but, says the Lord, thou shalt not sell her for money, because thou hast humbled her.

This, of course, does not conflict with other portions of the Divine instructions. It would, of course, happen that a particularly beautiful woman would inspire some male to wish to give her "for keeps." If, however, he "ceases to delight in her, he lets her go whither she will" He must not sell her. Christian piety in Glasgow is capable of getting enthusiastic over this small mercy. Mr. Drinnan fits the old Biblical times like a glove, and his apologetics may even at this time of day be that of a good Christian. That is the best we can say about him.

The Dean of St. Paul's, in a review of the Rev. Conrad Noel's recent *Life of Jesus*, admits that:

In spite of the warning by more than one eminent scholar that we have no material for a biography of Jesus in the modern sense, attempts to write the life of Christ will probably never cease.

Dean Matthews apparently agrees that the Gospel Biographies of Jesus had no material for any of their yarns, all of which are based on hearsay, gossip, tradition, ignorance and sheer invention. "In the modern sense," a biographer, at his worst, depends upon some accepted facts. The poor gossellers found "inspiration" and used it as a substitute for truth.

Professor MacBride, in the *Sunday Times*, "explains" how the Children of Israel were bamboozled into believing that they were led by "a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night," as they travelled through the wilderness. The Professor says an extinct volcano was active in the days of Moses, and the "Children" mistook it for the phenomenon of a miracle. Now Major Jarvis, the late Governor of Syria, declares that there has been no volcanic activity in that country for two million years. Another theory at which Prof. MacBride hints is that Moses knew all about naphtha the burning of which at the head of the hosts of Israelites would produce the impression referred to. But may it not also have been that the story is untrue?

William Blake wrote scathing verses about a garden where love and liberty reigned till "a chapel was built on the green," with:—

" 'Thou shalt not' writ over the door . . .  
And priests in black gownds,  
Were walking their rounds,  
And binding with briars,  
My joys and desires."

On a holiday in Norfolk a reader saw St. James's Park, Kings Lynn, with a church "built over the green," and Notice Boards at every entrance saying: "CHILDREN ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PLAY IN THIS PARK." It is only fair to say that these notices, like the city itself, are very ancient, and a number of happy children were playing all

manner of games unmolestedly in defiance of the "Thou shalt not" warnings. But we hope these old notice-boards will remain as a permanent reminder of what religion stood for in the days when people really believed in it.

The Church Book Room (Wine Office Court, E.C.4), issues an interesting little publication explaining the meaning of "The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion." It is apparently an answer to Romanists, Ritualists and similar Supernaturalists regarding what this pamphlet calls a "family feast," "a memorial supper," a simple gathering together of friends who share the same creed. In effect it is a "rational" "debunking" of the "mysticism" which talks about a "Sacrifice," calls it a "Mass," refers to "Sacred Chalices," Holy Grails, the Eucharist, etc., and in general treats it as transcendental, magical, and the drama of a constantly repeated miracle. This booklet is circulated by a section of the Church of England, which believes in a SUPPER, not an early breakfast!

Dr. Archibald Alexander is said, by the *British Weekly* to have "begun the holiday preaching season" with a Sermon "of surpassing interest." One of the "points" in this surpassing sermon was rehashing the ancient slogan that "A Man's Business is to do the will of God." It is certainly the Clergy—"man's business," and many of the clergy find it very profitable to talk about the will of God, leaving the "doings" to the laity.

From a recent Biography of Lucretia Mott, the Quakeress, by Lloyd Hare (published by the American Historical Society), we find new evidence of the ignominious part which the Churches played in the agitation for Negro Emancipation. Obviously, in the Southern States, no church would have tolerated a pastor (had such an one existed) who denounced slavery. But in the North too, in the "Puritan" states in Massachusetts even, where there was a genuine protest against slavery, the majority deserved the *Biglow Papers* comment:—

"Massachusetts, God forgive 'er,  
She's a kneelin' with the rest."

Mr. Hare's book quotes Miss Mott's evidence that in 1833 ALL the churches (with one solitary exception) in Philadelphia—the home, if not the birthplace, of American liberty—refused room for any meeting of the Anti-slavery movement. Miss Mott records that when she and other women of Philadelphia refused to be silent, the clergy described their appeals for emancipation of the slaves as "acts of flagrant sedition against God."

## Fifty Years Ago

CHRISTIAN ministers are showing a disposition to fight shy of the second half of the last chapter of Mark, where Jesus is represented as saying to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Some of them tell us to look at the Revised Version, where we shall see in the margin that all this portion of the chapter does not exist in the earliest manuscripts; and they innocently expect that Freethinkers will therefore quietly drop the offensive passage. Oh dear no! Before they have any right to claim such indulgence they must put forth a new edition of the whole Bible, showing us what they desire excised, and what they wish to retain and are ready to defend as the infallible word of God. We should then discuss whether their selection is justifiable, and after that we should discuss whether the amended Bible is any diviner than the original one. But we cannot allow them to keep the Bible as it is, to call it God's Word, to revile people who doubt it, and to persecute people who oppose it; and yet, at the same time, to evade responsibility for every awkward text. This will never do. The clergy cannot have the authority of inspiration in their pulpits and the ease of eclecticism on the platform and in the press.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephonic No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. P. O'LEARY.—We note your point, but we cannot argue in these columns whether Major Attlee and the Labour Party are definitely anti-Socialist or not. There is nothing unusual in charges of heresy being more rife between heretics than among the orthodox. But you will realize that it is not our business to adjudicate.

S. HASLAM.—We cannot say how many the *Pamphlets for the People* will run to. It depends upon what time Mr. Cohen has on hand—that is not very much—and the demands on his time increase rather than diminish. But they should run to thirty or forty. The world is wide, life is many-sided, and Freethought is as comprehensive as life. We note your suggestion as to binding.

P. YATES.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

W. J. MEALOR.—Many letters from local Freethinkers have appeared in the paper you name, and, of course, a much larger number have been sent. We agree with you as to the importance of using the press as much as is possible. Thanks for what you say with regard to ourselves.

A FRIEND calls attention to a jumbled sentence in last week's "Views and Opinions." "And it is by the *scientific method*—the patient collection of facts, their careful classification, and the generalizations derived from the classification, that constitutes the main features of a scientific method." The words in italics should obviously have been omitted. The error is an example of commencing to write a sentence and changing it in the course of writing. It offers material for a rather neat bit of psychological analysis.

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen commences his Autumn Lectures at Manchester on Sunday next, September 26. He will speak in the Picture House, Market Street, at 7 o'clock, on "Are We Civilized?"

Those who wish to get a clear statement of the nature and aims of German Fascism, cannot do better than read *The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism*, which has just been issued by the Left Book Club. Mr. Brady, the author, writes as dispassionately about it as one well can, and his statement, covering nearly 400 pages, is well supported by facts and figures. Time or space is wasted on denunciations of a system which is doing all it can to convert the German people into a nation of (measured by any reasonable standard) serviceable sub-humans—to use a favourite phrase of the present rulers of Germany when speaking of its opponents. The systematic manner in which the enslavement of the German people has been accomplished, and the steady replacement of *laissez-faire* capitalism with what the author calls "monopoly capitalism" has been well done. But at the back of all is the action of the Allies with regard to Germany, which has made such a state of things possible.

We have often pointed to the quite religious character of these dictatorships as evidence that the formal repudiation of the belief in a God does not make a man a "com-

plete Atheist." This is well illustrated by an example given by Mr. Brady from a speech by Dr. Bernard Rust, the Fascist Minister of Science, Education and General Culture. Speaking at Heidelberg, Dr. Rust said:—

The New science is entirely different from the idea of knowledge that found its value in an unchecked effort to reach the truth. The true freedom of science is to be an organ of a nation's living strength, and its historic fate and to present this in obedience to the law of truth. What is the meaning of "true freedom," and the "law of truth"? Let those answer who know the meaning of the biblical injunction, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." The Nazis identify "truth" with what they choose to call their own inspiration, and the same token they identify "false" with "heresy." In this meaning the German scientist is now "free" to study only what he is told, to arrive at just those conclusions which support the Nazi system and none other. . . . This is the position of the medieval Catholic Church, which brought the great scientist Galileo to his knees, and burned John Huss at the stake, of the order of the Society of Jesus which inspired Torquemada . . . to his ferocious persecutions of all who doubted the "truth" as the Jesuits saw fit to interpret it. . . . Carried to its logical conclusions it will, as it has done throughout all history, wither all scientific thought at the very roots, and substitute in its place arid scholasticism and civilization-destroying persecution mania.

Those who have the opportunity of talking to young German men and women on a visit to this country, particularly if they have been attending a German University, will be staggered at the fantastic ideas which they repeat in conversation with the same air of certitude that a Roman Catholic peasant repeats the story of a miracle. Quite solemnly we have been assured by such a one that ancient Egyptian civilization was derived from early German invaders and colonists. To talk to young German people nowadays, provided they are alone, is to realize how easily the Catholic Church could prostitute learning for generations. The German Fascist rule has done it with large numbers of Germans in a few years. The remainder of the nation are kept silent by the reign of terror that exists. But as the Roman Church failed in the end, so Fascism in the end must go down before the slow but inevitable movement of humanity.

The West London Branch N.S.S. will close a very successful Summer season of Outdoor propaganda on September 30, and will resume the usual course of Indoor Lectures on Sunday, October 3, at 7.30 p.m., at "The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W. Mr. E. Saphin will lecture on, "Why Christians have no Morality and no Ideal." Will members please note the Branch Secretary's change of address to: 2a Fairway Avenue, Boreham Wood, Herts. 'Phone: Elstree 1257.

Preston is fortunate in possessing an N.S.S. Branch, in which keen and enthusiastic members are anxious to get on with the work. The first conference of the North West Federation of N.S.S. Branches was recently held in Preston, and now Mr. G. Whitehead will begin a week's lecturing in the open-air from to-day (September 19). The local Branch will co-operate at all the meetings, and unattached saints will be welcomed. Mr Whitehead will have a supply of the latest Pioneer Press publications on sale, and details of membership may be obtained from any of the Branch officials present.

Bournemouth Borough Council voted evenly on the question of Sunday recreations, and therefore tennis-courts and putting-greens will be open on "the Lord's Day." The local "Stiggins's" are very active in their efforts to suppress *all* Sunday recreation, and a Mr. Dando declared, according to a London daily's correspondent, that "the council had no moral right to allow these Sunday games." A Mr. Turner seconded, asking members to "take another step towards building 'Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land.'" A pity Blake didn't survive to hear of *this* impudent interpretation of his "pleasant land!"

## John Lilburn and the Levellers

THE character and conduct of Lilburn have been greatly controverted. A powerful personality, who ever displayed undaunted courage, he was naturally a man of pronounced opinions very tenaciously cherished. A congenital rebel, he was, perhaps, the most turbulent figure of his time. An independent Puritan, he was an inveterate opponent of the Bishops, and their pomp and pretensions. Thus, he became the idol of that section of the people who entertained a grievance.

Lilburn lived from 1614 to 1657, and early in the conflict between the Crown and Parliament, he joined the army that fought against the King when, dissatisfied with the proceedings of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, he became the leader of the Levellers.

Even as a very young man Lilburn printed Bastwick's *Letany*, a work extremely derogatory to the Episcopacy, for the authorship of which the writer was sentenced by the Star Chamber to a fine of £5,000 and the mutilation of his ears in the pillory under Charles I. and Archbishop Laud.

Lilburn took the manuscript of the *Letany* to Holland, where it was printed, and then returned it to England, where it was on sale in volume form. So when Lilburn arrived in London, in 1637, from the Netherlands, he was arrested and charged with selling unauthorized books. But when he appeared in the Star Chamber he flatly refused to take the *ex officio* oath and rightly asserted that he was not legally compelled to supply evidence against himself. According to the official report of the proceedings the prisoner was sent to the Gatehouse and then to the Fleet. As he still refused to swear, he was sentenced to a fine of £500, to be imprisoned until he obeyed, and whipped from Fleet Bridge to Westminster, pilloried and bound over. He was confined in irons, denied communion with friends, and was herded with the prison scum. When in the pillory he tried to address the crowd, but was immediately gagged into silence. The indomitable rebel was then in his 24th year. Confined to prison until 1641, he was then liberated by order of the Long Parliament, and the House voted his conviction illegal "bloody, wicked, cruel, barbarous and tyrannical." The Commons also declared him entitled to reparation for his injuries, and this and other matters were referred to the Lords, when owing to the outbreak of the Civil War the case was postponed.

Lilburn when serving as Captain in the Roundhead Army was captured by the Royalists at the indecisive battle of Edge Hill, where Hampden was mortally wounded. Lilburn and other prisoners were, at Oxford, charged with and committed for trial for high treason. Parliament hearing of this instructed a committee to draw up a declaration "threatening reprisals in kind for anything that might be done to the men." Negotiations followed, with the result that Lilburn and his companions in misfortune were exchanged, and soon returned to their military avocations. At the age of 29, Lilburn was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and he was ever afterwards known as Colonel Lilburn.

Independent still, he in 1644 resigned his commission rather than subscribe to the Solemn League and Covenant. His earlier Puritanism outgrown, he increasingly opposed religious intolerance, and advocated fuller freedom of thought and expression. Constantly at variance with some one or other, yet, had he been a man of peace, the good work he undertook with occasional success well might have remained unaccomplished. As Mr. C. R. Gillett justly states: "From the time when he left the army until his death, he was continually engaged in controversy with

the Parliament, either in regard to his claims for arrears of pay, indemnity for his imprisonment, or upon questions involving the liberty of the people, particularly as these found embodiment in his own person or case. He also took up the cudgels for other oppressed or wronged persons or classes, so that the remaining twelve years of his life were troublesome in the extreme."

Never at rest, Lilburn circulated pamphlets charging public men with criminal conduct. For this he was imprisoned without trial, and then set free. He promptly petitioned Parliament for redress, and the Star Chamber sentence was annulled and Lilburn was awarded damages of £2,000. Pertinacity had won the day in 1646, after an agitation lasting several years.

Lilburn also accused Col. King, his superior officer, and Lord Manchester, the Commanding General, with what was tantamount to treason to the Parliamentary Party in a small pamphlet, *The Just Man's Justification*. When arraigned in the House of Peers as the disseminator of a scandalous publication, he refused to admit any delinquency or to subscribe the customary oath, but submitted instead *A Protestation, Plea and Defence*, which declared that the Commons only were his "competent, proper and legal Tryers and Judges." This was pronounced as both scandalous and contemptuous, and Lilburn was lodged in Newgate Prison.

Another pamphlet soon appeared: *The Freeman's Freedom Vindicated*, and the troublesome penman was again before the Lords. Hardily unrepentant and contumacious, he was sent back to gaol, denied the visits of adherents or access to pen or paper. But this restriction did not prevent the appearance of another tract: *The Just Man in Bonds*. This was anonymous, but the style and matter are Lilburn's. The Stationers' Company strove to discover the printer and suppress the pamphlet, and the men who sold it were warned.

When brought from prison to answer for his contumacy Lilburn was as recalcitrant as ever, so the Lords, before whom his case was considered, fined the obstinate Lilburn £2,000 for contempt, and sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment and debarred him from holding office "in Church or Commonwealth during his life." The offending pamphlets were ordered to be burned by the Common Hangman, both in Westminster and the City, in 1646, and this public functionary was to be protected in the execution of his duty from popular interference, as there existed considerable sympathy with, and approval of, Lilburn's campaign.

Lilburn was now conveyed from Newgate to the Tower, and during his incarceration a further tract entitled *A Remonstrance*, was circulated, which was denounced as a scandalous publication. It was certainly outspoken, and earnestly protested against "the Illegal and Barbarous Imprisonment of that famous and worthy sufferer for his countries freedoms Lieutenant-Col. Lilburne," and purported to constitute an appeal from the People "their Sovereign Lord" to the House of Commons, its servitor.

The Levellers in this Remonstrance accused the Parliament of pitiful subserviency to the Crown. For Charles I., despite his notorious insincerity, double-dealing and constant violation of the law, was excused as a man who meant well. The Remonstrants complained that the wording of Parliamentary papers was absurdly submissive and fulsome. Charles, they said, was respectfully entreated "to returne to his Kingly Office and Parliament, as if you were resolved to make us believe hee were a God, without whose presence all must fall to ruine." The petitioners, on the contrary, solemnly urged the Commons to treat the per-

jured King as an enemy of the people and "to convert the great revenue of the crowne to the publike treasure."

Moreover, Parliament, after abolishing the iniquitous Star Chamber, High Commission, and Council, itself continued the oppression and injustices of these bodies. But the time had come, the Levellers asserted, when Kings, Lords, Bishops and other tyrants should be completely swept away.

No doubt the impatient Levellers were root and branch reformers. They demanded the abolition of all monopolies; the statutes were to be reduced to terms of equity and common sense, and Magna Charta was derided as a beggarly document. Also, the insolence of office and the law's delays cried aloud for amendment. Imprisonment for debt, still with us as contempt of Court, must be ended as it was obviously an evil "as bad as the servitude of the galley slave." Finally, the Remonstrants requested the passing of an Act which would render impossible the unseating of a Member of Parliament save with the full concurrence "of his own constituents." This remarkable document, of course, met with little favour in high places, where it was stigmatized as "scandalous and seditious."

The settlement of Lilburn's case was long delayed for, as he and his adherents had many influential sympathizers, the authorities hesitated in pronouncing judgment. In several respects Lilburn's career anticipated that of Bradlaugh two centuries later. As an Independent Lilburn bore no love for either presbyter or priest. Gillett's estimate of the man is excellent: "Lilburn was one of a group of men whose ideal was to see the end . . . of Kings and Lords, of bishops and their pomp and ceremony, of injustice and the unequal treatment of the common men of the nation, and of the one-sided operation of the law as administered in the courts. . . . He became naturally the leader of the like-minded, and they were many. While he was not trained in the learning of the universities, he was an apt pupil in the school of experience and life, and he had abilities of intellect which fitted him for conflicts with those who held high official position, conflicts in which he did not come off second best." (Burned Books, Vol. 1, p. 286).

Never happy unless in a state of unrest, Lilburn was either in deadly conflict with the authorities, or more usually in prison, during the remainder of his days. Such an eyesore was Lilburn to the Government that he was sentenced to banishment from British territory, but he successfully contested the legality of the order.

His innumerable enemies must have felt greatly relieved when the ever-active agitator died in 1657, outside the walls of prison, as it chanced to happen. So contentious was Lilburn's nature that he seldom or never agreed for any length of time with his closest colleagues or adherents.

The following not altogether unkind composition very probably represents public opinion regarding the highly pugnacious John:—

Is Lilburn departed, and is John gone!  
Farewell to Lilburn, and farewell to John.  
But lay John here, lay Lilburn there about,  
For if they ever meet, they will fall out.

T. F. PALMER.

#### A THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

The savage does not discover Gods; he creates them. Civilized man neither creates nor discovers Gods; he buries them.—Chapman Cohen.

## Thomas Paine: An Investigation

[The following essay on Paine was published in 1888. It has for a long time been out of print. Recent discussions on Paine justify its re-appearance.]

(Continued from page 589)

It will be necessary, in conclusion, to examine this reiterated charge of "brutality" against Paine; and the inquiry will bring us to a final decision on Mr. Stephen's fitness for the work of comparative criticism.

No quotations being given by Mr. Stephen in support of his reiterated charge of brutality, we can but assume that he has in view some of those passages in the *Age of Reason* in which Paine attacks some Biblical absurdities with a rough derision that some might call coarse. Were the latter epithet used against him in these cases, I for one should not be much concerned to object, since I have no wish to pretend that Paine's polemic is always of the most refined kind. It could not well be, since he wrote for the people—or, as Mr. Stephen prefers to say, for the mob. It would seem to follow from the latter view that in Mr. Stephen's opinion the mob should have no literature whatever, since he will hardly say that it would have been profitable in Paine's time to write for them in a refined style. Cobbett, who could and did write for them, is admitted to have been tolerably brutal. It would probably stand for little if I were simply to counter Mr. Stephen on this head, and say Paine was not a brutal writer, especially for his time. Such dicta in matters of taste are unconvincing, and in mere authority Mr. Stephen's dictum, of course, outweighs mine. I will therefore simply cite one other expression of opinion on the point before resorting to comparative critical tests. Mr. Conway writes as follows:—

I know of no similar investigation in which the writer's mind is so generally fixed upon the simple question of truth and falsehood, and so rarely addicted to ridicule. Few will deny the difficulty, however reverent the reciter, of relating the story of Jonah and the whale without causing a smile. Paine's smile is in two sentences; in one place he says it would have been nearer to the idea of a miracle if Jonah had swallowed the whale, elsewhere that if credulity could swallow Jonah and the whale it could swallow anything. But after this, for him, unusual approach to the ribaldry of which he is so freely accused, Paine gives over three pages of criticism on the Book of Jonah, not only grave and careful, but presenting perhaps the earliest appreciation of the moral elevation and large aim of the much-neglected legend. (Article on "Thomas Paine," in *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1879, p. 413).

This also, of course, is not conclusive; but neither I trust is Mr. Stephen's simple epithet; and the next step is to weigh his characterization of Paine's tone and method against his treatment of other writers. Let us take one of his own sentences:—

Johnson turns the roughest side of his contempt to anyone suspected of scepticism, and calls Adam Smith a "son of a bitch." (ii. 369).

I am loth to attempt a precise definition of the term "brutal," since I fear it might be difficult to frame one which should not cover some of Mr. Stephen's own language against Paine; but I think it will be generally agreed that the word would apply to this utterance of Johnson.<sup>2</sup> If it is possible for a

<sup>2</sup> I say nothing as to the validity of the story. In his *Johnson* (p. 115) Mr. Stephen tells the other story that Smith applied the same expression to Johnson, to his face. I do not believe the latter version; but Mr. Stephen thinks "it is too good to allow us to suppose that it was without some (*sic*) foundation." Another sample of Mr. Stephen's critical method. Need I point out that the presumption against both versions of the story being true is enormous? Mr. Stephen, however, seems to accept both.

man of letters to speak brutally, Johnson did it when he thus spoke of Smith. Now, it is a simple matter of fact that there is nothing nearly so coarse in the whole of Paine; yet Mr. Stephen must needs speak austere of the latter's "brutalities," while the ruffianism of Johnson is genteelly described in the same book as the "roughest side of his contempt." Again, in his chapter on Warburton, Mr. Stephen quotes, by way of showing some of that divine's tendencies of style, two passages in which indecent words have to be represented by dashes (i. 352). On any theory of critical justice that I can formulate for myself, the term "brutality" should either be applied to such achievements as these of Johnson and Warburton, or else reserved for something still worse. Mr. Stephen never once uses it in regard to the sentences referred to. There is, however, in all Paine's writing, I repeat, nothing coarse enough to be put beside these passages. What is the inference as to Mr. Stephen's critical equity?

The points just dealt with lie on the face of Mr. Stephen's own narrative, but there is a further proof of his bias in the fact that he has entirely suppressed all mention of the frantic violences of Burke against the promoters of the French Revolution. The catalogue lies to the reader's hand in Buckle (3-vol. ed. i. 471-5). Burke in his later years saw fit to speak of the pure-minded Condorcet as a determined villain; to gloat over the sufferings of the imprisoned Lafayette, terming him a "horrid ruffian"; to shriek against France as a "Cannibal Castle," against the National Assembly as the "prostitute outcasts of mankind," and against the French people as the "scum of the earth"; and to urge that the war waged against them by England should be carried on revengefully, bloodily, and for a long space of time. And all these insane ferocities are never once hinted at in a compendium which professes to compare Burke with the thinkers and publicists of his time; while again and again the unenvinomed crudities and coarsenesses of the unsanguinary Paine, who braved death by opposing the execution of the French King, are stigmatized, forsooth, as "brutalities." Thus can history be written.

We come finally to the question of Paine's general calibre, or comparative intellectual standing among the men of his day. Comparative, one says, for it is difficult to imagine any other criterion by which a man's mind is to be finally measured or classified. And Mr. Stephen, though as we have seen he generally leaves the comparative method carefully alone, does fall back upon it here. It is after his memorable biographical paragraph that he proceeds to draw a comparison between Paine and Burke. In his first edition it began thus: "And yet Paine, though even his earlier years"—again wanton aspersion, this time without even a biographical reference—"were but too good a preparation for this miserable close, had in him the seeds of something like genius." The paragraph in the second edition runs:—

Yet Paine, whatever may be the truth [the discovery of that being modestly left by the historians to the general reader] as to his private life, or the motives which guided his restless political activity, had in him a dash of genius. Of his chief political writings the tract called *Common Sense*, published in January 1776, had, as was thought at the time, very great influence in promoting the Declaration of Independence; and the *Rights of Man*, published in 1791, in answer to Burke's *Reflections*, had an enormous sale. The attack upon the established creed in politics showed, in fact, the same qualities as his attack upon the established creed in religion. He was confronted, indeed, in his later writings by an opponent of incomparably greater power than the

orthodox theologians who shrieked at the blasphemies of the *Age or Reason*. But though Burke moves in an intellectual sphere altogether superior to that in (*sic*) which Paine was able to rise, and though the richness of Burke's speculative power is as superior to Paine's meagre philosophy as his style is superior in the amplitude of its rhetoric, it is not to be denied that Paine's plain-speaking is more fitted to reach popular passions, and even (!) that he has certain advantages in point of argument. (ii. 261-2).

Here, despite the syntactical infirmity of the last sentence, there is no difficulty in tracing Mr. Stephen's usual bias. The fact, as stated by almost all other historians, is that *Common Sense* really had a most decisive influence in bringing about the Declaration of Independence: it was not only thought so then; it is known now. In that matter, Paine affected the people of the States just as comprehensively and as powerfully as Burke later affected Englishmen towards the French Revolution: he was not merely appealing to the mob: he stirred a people to fateful action; and he maintained the impulsion by his further writings at critical moments. This, one would say, represented a genius at least for that sort of thing; but Mr. Stephen's measure makes out the faculty involved to be but a "dash" of genius. Wherein then lay the amplitude of the genius of Burke? There is a danger that in defending Paine against Mr. Stephen's special pleading we may be tempted into doing Burke injustice; but I think we shall not be so beguiled when we say that Burke's eminence and merit lay in the breadth and elevation of his social sentiment in his præ-Revolution period, and in the literary and dialectic skill with which he enforced his sentiment at all times, for good or for evil. Alike in his earlier sociology and in his self-expression then and at all times, he was powerful and original. But to say this is not to credit him with an all-round vigour of intellect, or to place him in the front rank of great men. To sum up a man, on the comparative principle, we have to take note of his limitations.

Now, Mr. Stephen is not slack to attribute limitations to Paine: as usual he can furnish the list without being at pains to collect the proofs. Burke is in an "altogether superior" intellectual sphere, revelling in "richness of speculative power"; while Paine's philosophy is "meagre." But what are the data? In what respect is Burke's speculation "rich" as distinguished from his rhetoric? There is really no "speculative" element in Burke's politics whatever: his great characteristic is the vehement and various eloquence with which he enounces his instinctive attitude towards the social tendencies of his time; now resisting what he felt to be blind pedantry and inhumane conservatism; anon finding a wealth of ingenious and imaginative justification for a pedantry and a conservatism in which he shared—as in resisting the claims of the Dissenters; and yet again exhausting the power of words to hurl hatred at those who outraged his habits of emotional attachment to historic institutions. He might be right or he might be wrong, but at least he was not speculative in his philosophy: he was a man of deep and strong sentiments and glowing sympathies, with an incomparable gift of vivid dialectic; a Gladstone raised to a higher power, because more intense, original, and organic in his convictions, endowed with a genius rather than a talent for expression, and carrying passion in his blood and senses, as well as in his brain. Is it not the express statement of all his admirers, Mr. Stephen included, that he hated the speculative men, who thought out schemes of policy without due regard to "prescription"? I cannot see how this squares with richness

of speculative power. What Mr. Stephen was really thinking of was just the richness of dialectic, of illustration and figure; of all, in short, that makes Burke really answer to that much abused designation—a prose poet.

JOHN M. ROBERTSON.

(To be continued)

## Thou Shalt not Kill

"WITHOUT man," says Swedenborg, "God is impossible." The gods, as we have them, are all creations of men. That accounts for their variety, number, character, and changeability. As man grows in stature and in knowledge so do his gods. Indeed, the gods tend to become the ideal—the unattainable. Man grows ashamed of the gods of his ancestors. What a great gulf lies between the infamous god of the Old Testament and the god of Goethe's conception!

The God of the Ten Commandments was an undeveloped god. Later on he was endowed with attributes which would have made the Ten Commandments impossible.

But killing had become a human habit long before the advent of the gods.

In the Late Stone Age, when flint implements became procurable, war became possible, and it would seem that just as death-dealing implements of war have increased in number and efficiency, wars have become more frequent and more ghastly.

For a god to issue the command "Thou shalt not kill"—and then to instruct his people in such detestable ways of doing it, as, for example, Deut. xxi. 10-14, and Numbers xxxi. 17-35, is hard to credit, but with gods nothing is impossible.

Even heaven has had its "Holy Wars" described by Bunyan and Milton. The latter, in describing the satanic legions in *Paradise Lost*, tells us:—

"Their devilish glut, chain'd thunderbolts and hail  
Of iron globes; which on the victor tost,  
Levell'd with such impetuous fury smote,  
That, whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,  
Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell  
By thousands, angel and archangel roll'd."

Could we but carry on our wars here in this heavenly way! If it could be said of our shots—"Whom they hit none injured!" And victory could only be achieved by putting the enemy out of action for a time! War might then become a rival sport of cricket and football.

But war in heaven seemed an absurdity without killing, and so it ceased. It had no appeal as a sport, there. And I doubt of its having any appeal, here. The killing of animals and men does not disturb us, and we accept their murder as a necessary part of our way of living.

Havelock Ellis, in his *Essays in War Time*, p. 31, tells us: "At the earliest dawn of history war abounded. The earliest literature of the Aryans—whether Greeks, Germans, or Hindus—is nothing but a record of systematic massacres, and the early history of the Hebrews, leaders in the world's religion and morality, is complacently bloodthirsty. Lapouge considers that in modern times, though wars are fewer in number, the total number of victims is still about the same, so that the stream of bloodshed throughout the ages remains unaffected. He attempted to estimate the victims of war for each civilized country during half a century, and found that the total amounted to nine and a half millions, while, by including the Napoleonic and other wars of the beginning of the nineteenth century, he considers that

the total would be doubled. Put in another form Lapouge says, the wars of a century spill 120,000,000 gallons of blood, enough to fill three million forty-gallon casks, or to create a perpetual fountain sending up a jet of 150 gallons per hour, a fountain which has been flowing unceasingly ever since the dawn of history."

Lapouge's calculations were made long before the Great War. Had he been living he would have suggested a specially constructed fountain being placed at the Menin Gate.

To read such things, and keep sane, is anything but an easy task.

A few days ago I overheard a conversation, in the bus, between a local preacher and a heretical gentleman, which had a very satisfactory finish:—

L.P.: You ought to have been at chapel yesterday.

H.G.: Whatever for?

L.P.: We had a fine sermon on the flood. It would just have suited you.

H.G.: It must have been a rum sermon then. I consider the Flood was the biggest blunder your God ever made.

L.P.: My dear man, excuse me, God makes no blunders.

H.G.: Do you agree that we have the Noah family to thank for all our troubles?

L.P.: Well, had they not been saved by the Ark, we couldn't have blamed them, could we?

H.G.: You tell me your God makes no blunders. Did he ever do aught else? Proceeding, like an untrained schoolboy at his trial and error task, he experimented making Adam and Eve and made them badly. Had they been well made they couldn't have fallen. Cain and Abel, the sons of the first man, were no improvement. Cain killed his brother, and Man has been killing his brother ever since. Your God recognized man was a failure, and regretted making him. He thought it were better to drown him and start afresh; then thought, lest he couldn't make as good next time, he would save Noah and give him another trial. That was where he blundered. He should have drowned the lot.

GEORGE WALLACE.

## Correspondence

### SCIENCE AND RELIGION

#### TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Your leading article of September 12 refers to an article of mine in the *Morning Post*.

I never said or suggested that:—

"Anyone or anything can tell us more about the world than science," or that

"We must, for ultimate knowledge, fall back upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London or General Booth," or that

We should turn to "ourselves" to "understand religion," or even that

"Science really knows very little."

Neither am I in any sense whatever a "religionist."

On the other hand I must admit that, in writing that "science can tell the world a great deal less about religion than is generally supposed," I meant physical science (although I should have thought that the context would have made this clear); and was primarily concerned with the attempts made by at least one of our mathematical physicists to demonstrate the existence or attributes of "the deity" by appeal to it.

The latter is not, I should have thought, an application of the "scientific method" of which you would approve. Indeed, it is not in my judgment—and I know in that of a large number of other scientists also—scientific at all.

But neither would I seek to establish by scientific

methods (including those of anthropology) such a difficult negative proposition as the non-existence of a God.

A. W. HASLETT.

[I welcome Mr. Haslett's assurance that it was not the intention of his *Morning Post* article to belittle science or to claim that anyone can tell us anything more about the world than science. Mr. Haslett must be the ultimate authority as to what he meant, but after carefully re-reading the article, I cannot see that I was guilty of misrepresentation on the facts before me. In all friendliness I suggest that Mr. Haslett was unfortunate in the way he presented his case. As a matter of fact my attention was called to his article by a journalistic friend who saw in it a plea for religion by way of emphasizing the alleged shortcomings of science. I am grateful for the assurance that this was not Mr. Haslett's aim, and also appreciative of the further assurance that he is not "in any sense whatever a religionist."

At the same time, and in self-defence I must say that, in the absence of Mr. Haslett's explanation, the statements that science could only tell us how things "behave" (when behaviour is the essence of things known), and that, therefore science could tell us "little or nothing" "about what things are," and that "science is helpless to explain reality," I could, and can, see nothing but the current religious plea that the secret of "reality" lies with religion. The notion that the things we know are not real, but that there is something beyond which is real, and that this something is not to be reached by science, is just a survival of the god-idea in other than its religious form. If I am right in my understanding of Mr. Haslett's position, he is not the only non-religionist who is walking about still retaining the ghost of the God he believes he has discarded.

I agree that science deals largely with abstractions, and have dwelt upon this point in several of my books and in numerous articles. "Laws of nature," which are popularly thought to be "discovered," but which are really no more than generalizations framed by man, come under this head.

But I strongly disagree with the statement that science can tell us less about religion than is popularly supposed. On the contrary, science can tell more about the origin and nature of religion and religious beliefs than is supposed. It can tell us *all* about them, and to-day has, by taking the facts of religious belief and explaining them in different terms, reduced the history of religion to the record of a delusion.

I did not say that Mr. Haslett advised us to get advice about the world from the Archbishop of Canterbury, General Booth, and the Bishop of London. This was my own alternative if we decided that science could not, either now or at some future date, give us the information we seek—of course, so long as we did not ask science meaningless and nonsensical questions.

Mr. Haslett says he had in mind physical science only. He did not say so, and in any case physical science is only an application of the scientific method to one category of experience. Other categories are equally "real," and come equally within the scope of the scientific method.

In just one instance I misread Mr. Haslett. In citing his remark, "If we want reassurance as to the 'purpose of man' we can only turn to religion—or ourselves," I stupidly made my comments refer to religion and not to the purpose of man. I am sorry; but I have no belief in any "purpose" in human existence other than that which man creates for himself.—C.C.]

[Letters from Jack Lindsay, Medicus, W. E. English, E. Larkin and others are held over till next week.]

## Obituary

JOHN D. HARLEY

We regret to announce the death of John Harley, after a series of strokes, on September 5.

His association with the Glasgow Branch is a long one, having acted as Treasurer 26 years ago. Though the years sapped his physical strength, his mental vigour remained unimpaired, and he was a familiar figure and regular attendant at our indoor meetings.

As he specially requested, a Secular Service was read by the Branch President, Mr. Hamilton, at the residence of his son, 324 Camberwould Road, and at Janefield Cemetery.

Expressions of sympathy were conveyed to his five sons, and other relatives by officials of the Glasgow Secular Society.—M.W.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON

#### INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1) : 11.0, John Katz, B. A.—"A New Use for Philosophy."

#### OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.  
NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) : 8.0, Saturday, Mr. L. Ebury. White Stone Pond, Hampstead, 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 6.0, A Lecture. Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. Barker. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford, E.) : 7.0, Mr. Connell.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Evans. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Leacy, Connell, Tuson and Miss Millard. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson and Miss E. Millard. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin, Bryant and Tuson. Friday, 7.30, Messrs. Barnes, Perry and others. The *Freethinker*, *Age of Reason* and Mr. Chapman Cohen's latest pamphlets on sale outside Marble Arch Tube Station every evening.

### COUNTRY

#### INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Albion Court, Kirkgate) : 7.15, Mr. H. Searle—"Jesus Christ."

#### OUTDOOR

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) : 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place, if fine; Chapel Street School, if wet) : 7.30, Monday, September 27, Debate—"Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" *Affir.*: Rev. W. A. Painter, M.A., B.D., Cong. *Neg.*: Mr. J. V. Shortt, N.S.S.

BLYTH (Fountain) : 8.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BOLTON (Steps) : 8.0, Thursday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

CHORLEY (Market) : 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

CHORLEY (Market) : 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. G. Whitehead.

CRAWSHAWBOOTH : 7.30, Monday, Mr. J. Clayton.

ECCLES (Cross) : 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

GLASGOW SECULAR (Grey Place, Greenock) : 8.0, Tuesday, Albert Road, 8.0, Wednesday. Albion Street, 8.0, Friday. Muriel Whitefield will speak at each meeting.

LUMB CORNER : 7.0, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths) : 8.0, Sunday, Messrs. Robinson and Shortt. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, or near vicinity, 8.0, Thursday, Messrs. Thompson and Robinson.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Park Gates) : 8.0, Saturday, Mr. W. A. Atkinson. Platt Fields, 3.0, Sunday, Mr. W. A. Atkinson. Stevenson Square, 7.30, Sunday, Mr. W. A. Atkinson.

MIDDLESBROUGH (The Crescent) : 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NELSON (Chapel Street) : 7.30, Tuesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market) : 8.0, Friday, A Debate.

NORTH ORMESBY (Market Place) : 7.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PRESTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Preston Market) : 8.0, Sunday and the following week, Tuesday evening excepted, Mr. G. Whitehead.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Pier Head) : 7.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue) : 7.0, Mr Norman Charlton.

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THE National Secular Society was founded in 1866 by Charles Bradlaugh. He remained its President until shortly before his death, and the N.S.S. has never ceased to live up to the tradition of "Thorough" which Bradlaugh by his life so brilliantly exemplified.

The N.S.S. is the only organization of militant Freethinkers in this country. It aims to bring into one body all those who believe the religions of the world to be based on error, and to be a source of injury to the best interests of Society. It claims that all political laws and moral rules should be based upon purely secular considerations. It is without sectarian aims or party affiliations.

If you appreciate the work that Bradlaugh did, if you admire the ideals for which he lived and fought, it is not enough merely to admire. The need for action and combined effort is as great to-day as ever. You can best help by filling up the attached form and joining the Society founded by Bradlaugh.

### PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM affirms that this life is the only one of which we have any knowledge, and that human effort should be wholly directed towards its improvement: it asserts that supernaturalism is based upon ignorance, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism affirms that progress is only possible on the basis of equal freedom of speech and publication; it affirms that liberty belongs of right to all, and that the free criticism of institutions and ideas is essential to a civilized State.

Secularism affirms that morality is social in origin and application, and aims at promoting the happiness and well-being of mankind.

Secularism demands the complete secularization of the State, and the abolition of all privileges granted to religious organizations it seeks to spread education, to promote the fraternity of peoples as a means of advancing international peace, to further common cultural interests, and to develop the freedom and dignity of man.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The Trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

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I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

### MEMBERSHIP

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name .....

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