

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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Views and Opinions

Whoso would be a Reformer!

A CORRESPONDENT writes me expressing the opinion that I often write what I must know is "unreasonable." He points out that owing to temperament, education, financial necessity and family pressure, the average man or woman does not feel the desire to play the part of a reformer, and if he or she did, their position in life restrains them doing so. All I can say in reply to this criticism is that I entirely agree with it. It is a statement of fact. I might demur to the use of the word "unreasonable," but that is not a matter of great moment. Of course, not all men and women, not even most men and women, are cut out for playing the part of a reformer. If they were there would be no great significance in anyone exhibiting the character. As W. S. Gilbert reminded us, when everybody's somebody then no one's anybody. If reformers were found at every street-corner there would be no need to call for volunteers to essay the part. The reformer is scarce because he is necessary, and he is necessary because he is scarce. To some extent, too, the reform is in the same category as treason, which never succeeds because when it does it ceases to be treason. In both law and fact treason is an unsuccessful attempt to achieve something. In actual fact a reformer is one who is trying to induce the majority to achieve something which, as often as not, the majority do not care about having. The best thing that George Bernard Shaw ever said was when, many years ago, he was agitating for baths in the homes of working-men, and some one said that working men did not want baths. "I don't care," replied Shaw, "whether they do or not. I am not asking for them because working-men want to wash, it is because I object to seeing them dirty." Illustrations of this truth may be seen in the facts that it is the drunkard who pays least attention to a lecture on temperance, the landless man who helps the landlord to break the neck of the man who is advocating land reform, and the

Christian who tries to murder the Freethinker who is trying to improve him. One of the really funny sights I saw at the opening of the war of 1914, was a man whose clothes were made mostly of fresh air, and whose acquaintance with a square meal was of an evidently casual character, complaining that if the Germans came to England they would take everything from us. A reformer is one who tries to induce people to fight for something they don't particularly care about. He begins often in a minority of one. When he finds himself with a majority his value as a reformer has almost gone. He then sinks into line with the normal or looks round for other fields to conquer. But if he is to continue a reformer he must beware the crowd.

* * *

The Need for Courage

I rather like answering questions. They have always had for me the fascination a chess problem offers to an expert. And I will begin by doing what I have always warned students they must not do—or if they make the attempt it must be done under severely restricted conditions. I am going to explain my position by considering the essential nature of a reformer, the qualities required, without, at least for the moment, taking into consideration a number of circumstances that must to some extent nearly always operate. But just as a chemist can discover the qualities of an element only by isolating it from those other things with which it is usually found in combination, so the social analyst must isolate the reformer from his normal relations to things and persons in order to determine his specific and distinguishing characteristics. And when we have done this, I think we shall find that most of us may, to some extent, play the part of a reformer, although it is only given to the few to do so on a scale that attracts public attention—often on a greater scale than he truly deserves.

In the first place a reformer must be a man of courage. I do not mean that he must display courage on the physical level. That is cheap enough and common enough. The courage displayed on the physical level is as nearly animal as anything about man. Herbert Spencer once delivered a deserved retort to one who was praising that social myth, the typical Englishman, as one who never knew when he was beaten. Spencer retorted that this was the outstanding quality of a bull-dog. There has never been any difficulty in inducing men to engage in physical combat. It begins with the schoolboy "daring" another boy, and the other boy feeling it is a question of "honour" to do the thing he is "dared" to do. Unfortunately this sort of thing does not die out with boyhood. Men and nations indulge in it, mainly because they lack the development of the higher qualities which would enable them to treat with contempt the invitation of the bully to come down to his level. "National

honour" has never been inconsistent with lying, with falsehood, with taking by force what one cannot legally or morally demand. It has only been inconsistent with the practice of the higher qualities that obtain between individuals of the same group.

The reformer must be a man of mental courage, which should always dominate mere animal courage; courage of a kind displayed by Bruno, when he replied to the ecclesiastical court that condemned him to death, "I doubt not but that you give this sentence with greater fear than I receive it." The courage required is that which enables one to face facts, to brave opinion, to count social status as inferior to mental independence. The reformer must be poles apart from the man who will not read a paper because he does not agree with the opinions expressed, or listen to a speech because he does not agree with the speaker. He must have the courage to stand alone, not merely for the moment but, if necessary, for always. He must not merely hold himself aloof from the crowd, that may be only the pose of the self-conscious, the little-minded, the hallmark of the snob, of the man who has been elevated to a position of prominence by a mere accident, and who manifests his littleness by a constant awareness of what he considers his "dignity." The reformer must by sheer force of character find contentment in being where he is—alone. If it happens others follow him, so much the better, but so soon as his following assumes the proportion of a crowd, he will take another step in pioneering work. When he fails to do this his career as a pioneer is at an end. All this must be an expression of his character. He must be alone without feeling loneliness, independent without consciousness of courage. These qualities must be an essential part of himself, not assumed as one assumes clothing of a particular colour and form because it happens to be the fashion of the moment.

* * *

The Need for Understanding

Finally, the reformer must be one with a strictly logical mind. I do not say he must love reason, or be guided by reason, because such expressions mean little. I do not know any form of thinking that does not involve reasoning; it is logical reasoning that is of consequence, beginning with verifiable data, and then proceeding carefully and rigorously to the unavoidable conclusion, which must be finally tested by the appeal to facts. On grounds of mere reasoning, the Freethinker has necessarily nothing in hand against the Roman Catholic theologian. Great theologians have revelled in reasoning, and the more they reasoned the farther they got from the truth. It was because of bad logic they went astray. Above all the reformer must beware of the use of terms that satisfy without enlightening, express without defining, and allay prejudice without destroying it. It is for lack of these precautions that so many who think themselves free men, are still carrying round with them the ghosts of superstitions and do duty to many a falsity they believe they have discarded.

Finally, the reformer must not confuse knowledge with understanding. A great amount of knowledge may easily be acquired by men of no great intellectual ability. Alone, this is little more than the industry of the boy storing up marbles, exhibited on a higher level. Mere knowledge puffs up its possessor without greatly enlightening others. All the knowledge implied in Darwin's theory of Natural Selection was there before the formulation of his great thesis. Huxley struck the right note when he said of Darwin's theory, "How stupid of us not to have seen (understood) it before." The whole of science is built on

knowledge, as bricks are made out of clay. But science is only knowledge in the sense that a stratum of clay represents a beautiful brick building. Science builds on knowledge, but it arises out of understanding.

* * *

The Warfare of Impulse

But when these things have been said, and have met with agreement, we still have to face the fact that in the world of everyday work there are very few of those working for reform who can be said completely to fill the bill. We have, in what has been said, acted in a justifiably scientific manner. We have taken a particular phenomenon from its associates, isolated it, studied it, and determined its character, so to speak, in *vacuo*. But when we have done this we have to follow the method of science further and replace the thing we have isolated back in its normal environment. Then we discover *why* so very few reformers can be credited with a full percentage of marks. For the reformer in actuality is more than a reformer, and therefore is, like the curate's egg, good only in parts. He is a friend, a husband, a father, a child of other parents, he has his own individual tastes in art and literature and amusements, which have no necessary connexion with his character as a reformer. We isolate the reformer in order to understand what his character is, and then we restore him to his inevitable place as one of a human group, and as such having individual tastes and desires. We realize that he is, not merely a very complex individual, but also that his behaviour as a reformer is limited and qualified in a number of directions. The claims of family may prevent his going as far as he would wish to go as a reformer. So might his relation to friends, also the claims of the group to which he belongs, or his interests in art, literature, science, sport, and various other things. What we began with thinking very simple turns out on examination to be very complex. Man is really a very complex animal, not in his structure merely, but in his normal relations to life. He is made up of many loyalties, whereas we usually make the mistake of thinking of but one at a time; and it is these contesting loyalties, allied to a certain indecision of character and timidity of temperament that is accountable for his so frequently falling short of the ideal he has set for himself—or which we set for him.

But we need not be disheartened at the discovery that human nature is—human nature. And I can assure my friendly correspondent that I do not the less value the help given by anyone to an advanced movement because he is not built on heroic lines. None of us is one hundred per cent anything; but if we realize the value of the qualities I have tried to describe, it may at least strengthen us in developing our individual resources. The best of us will fall short of our ideal. The thing that matters is having an ideal that is worth fighting for. After all, we can all do what we can towards doing what we ought, and may the more heartily admire those who manage to attend to the lesser loyalties of life without a too great disregard of the larger ones.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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.—T. H. Huxley.

The Zeal of Zola

"Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues."—*Shakespeare.*

"Great ideas do not win through academics. They are fruitless until they operate through the world of men and women."—*G. W. Foote.*

A PARAGRAPH in the press says that Emile Zola is to be the subject of a film, and that the career of the great French writer should prove as dramatic as the lives of Parnell, Disraeli, or Abraham Lincoln. If the scenario will include the tragic story of L'Affaire Dreyfus, and it is treated adequately, the film should be well worth while. For, in its way, Zola's crusade on behalf of Alfred Dreyfus is an unforgettable page of history, which not only reflects honour upon the great French Freethinker, but raises our estimate of human nature.

Near sixty years of age, when so many men are thinking of slippered ease, Zola, a world-famous author, member of that brilliant company that enriched European literature in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Anatole France, Alphonse Daudet and the rest, risked his position, his reputation, even his life, in order to right a great and terrible injustice.

Captain Alfred Dreyfus, in 1894, was accused of selling military information to the Germans, convicted of treason by a military court, publicly degraded on the barrack square, and sent as a convict to serve a life's sentence on Devil's Island, off the coast of French Guiana. Zola was convinced that the unfortunate Dreyfus was falsely accused and wrongly condemned. He was also convinced that Dreyfus's only crime was that he was a Jew, and that highly-placed French officers were determined that Jews should not occupy important positions in the army of France.

Zola took up his pen again to undo that crime, and he proved, as Rabelais and Voltaire had done before him, that the pen can be mightier than the sword. Zola wrote his famous open letter, every paragraph of which began with the words "I accuse," and in which he proclaimed his belief that a gross miscarriage of justice had been committed, and was being corruptly condoned.

Zola rose to great heights in this struggle. He put everything to the test in defending Dreyfus. He dared all the powers of France—the army, the law, the Government, the crowd that had so often applauded him, and now were ready to rend him. The mob hounded him in the street, they burned his books. But "Truth is on the march," flamed the old Freethinker and flung down fresh challenges.

The demand for the revision of this sentence for years divided every town, every village, and even many families in the whole of France into irreconcilable groups of Catholics, militarists, and anti-Semites on the one hand, and convinced champions of liberty and justice on the other, and ended in 1906 with the proclamation of Dreyfus's innocence, followed six years later by his restoration to the rank which he would have held in the artillery if his career had proceeded along its normal course.

Truth had triumphed; Truth had marched to victory. Zola himself had died in harness, still working for the cause of liberty and justice. But Alfred Dreyfus was a free man, and justice was vindicated. It is true to say that there were many other men in this agitation, but Emile Zola gave the fire and enthusiasm without which the agitation could never have begun, and the phalanx of Royalism, Reaction, and Militarism have remained unbroken. Indeed, this great struggle and triumph have a special significance to-day, for the cause for which Zola and his colleagues fought was the cause of human liberty, and the im-

putent claim they withstood was the claim which in one form or another has spread tyranny and despotism so far and so wide since the dark days of the Great War. If the Democratic peoples escape the fate of the subjects of the modern dictators, it will be due to the qualities of which they gave so noble an example.

Zola has a two-fold claim on the attention of posterity. Not only was he a very distinguished writer in an age of distinguished authors, but he proved himself a true humanitarian. Like his illustrious predecessor, Voltaire, who used the sword of his genius on behalf of the unfortunate Jean Calas, La Barre, and so many others, the Atheist, Zola, championed the cause of the poor hunted Jew against the embattled ranks of Corruption. Both were examples of supreme courage. Honest to their own injury, brave against the enmity of tens of thousands, these Freethinkers not only exalted their own cause, but the cause of human liberty and justice:—

"True as a dial to the sun,
Although it be not shined upon."

The really disquieting element in contemporary affairs is such a thing as the recrudescence of Jew-baiting, which is not confined to one place or one country. For its revival is an unpleasant reminder that much of our boasted and over-rated civilization is only the merest veneer over sheer barbarism. A savage is none the less a savage because he happens to wear a serge suit and a bowler hat. There is even a society in England for the conversion of the Jewish people to the Christian Faith, with an income of some forty thousand pounds a year. The number of converts is so small that it has never raised the merest ripple upon the surface of contemporary Judaism. This may be accounted for by the bare fact that Christianity has persecuted the Jewish people with constant and relentless malice for the greater part of two thousand years. For centuries these unfortunate people were hounded into Ghettos, and had fastened upon them an ignominious gaberdine. These things are imperishable parts of European history, but persecution is by no means a thing of the past. The treatment of Jewish people in a country such as Germany is a scandal to civilization. Jews, more than any other race, have most excellent reasons for estimating the true value of Christian charity. In the Dreyfus case the poor captain said, after suffering the torments of the damned, "My only crime is that of being born a Jew." That cry of Alfred Dreyfus is so pathetic, so full of meaning that its import cannot be avoided. Sufferance is the badge of all their tribe, wrote Shakespeare of the Jews. And it is the Jew, conscious of the yoke and sufferings of many centuries, who alone can recognize the awful hypocrisy of the pretence of Christians loving their enemies, and can appreciate the awful irony that one half of the Christian world professes to worship a Jew, and the other half a Jewess.

MIMNERMUS.

They are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing: it is no small happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.—*Shakespeare.*

THE TRINITY

This is the Trinity that rules to-day,
On whose red altar even babes must die:
Man and his brother, born and bred to slay,
And Cain the bomber, roaring in the sky.

W. A. Rathkey.

Religious Education

AFTER posting the MS. of my previous article on "Some Bible Worthlies," dealing in a somewhat free-and-easy manner with several Biblical episodes by putting them into a modern setting, I entered the public library in search of some mental food containing Vitamin B's. And almost the first book that caught my eye was a small volume entitled *Spiritual Psychology*, which I thought might be of interest. Its sub-title was: A Child's idea of Christianity; and the author: The Rev. W. H. Cock, L.C.P., F.G.S., B.Sc. (London). Sometime Director of Religious Education for the Diocese of York. And if I had had any misgivings as to my treatment in lighter vein of these Bible Worthies, this book would have dispelled them. The Rev. Mr. Cock and myself would seem to be agreed that such a mode of treatment meets a long-felt religious want.

Summing up the general results of his many examinations in Church of England Schools, he says:—

In the teaching of Christianity there is not sufficient use made of biography in the Scripture. The people of the Bible should be shown in "modern settings," and made real to the child.

It is many years ago now since I produced some eight of these Bible stories, putting them into suitable modern settings; and thus in my humble way carrying on the good work unknown to Mr. Cock. The Rev. gent. seems to have high hopes of such a method of treatment, and doubtless there is much to be said for it. If, for example, instead of an Oriental figure, in a seamless garment and long flowing hair, with a staff in his hand, and carrying a little lamb in his arms, Our Lord were to be presented dressed in plus-fours, or in hiking costume, with his hair cut short and parted down the middle, there is little doubt that he would appear more *real* to the modern child.

The author goes on to say: "There is no reason why the Holy Ghost should not be made as real a person to the little child as Our Lord himself; and if this were done, and the teaching given in modern child language instead of ancient theological terms, greater success would undoubtedly attend it." But I am afraid that the modernization of the Holy Ghost would present some difficulty. In the presentation of such a mysterious being, one would not know whether to use male or female attire, or supply it with feathers and wings. But perhaps it doesn't matter, as according to a Catholic paper, this elusive Ghost has gone back in the betting (to use a sporting phrase) due, it appears, to the ever-growing power and influence of the Holy Virgin; and the "coldness" of Catholics toward God's Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Psychology is merely an analysis of several thousand answers to questions put to children in Church of England Schools; the result of which, according to the author, shows the "too often lamentable ignorance of these school children in matters of religious belief; and the vague and curious ideas which so many children have of Christianity." A large percentage of the answers he characterizes as "meaningless," as showing that the children do not understand the import of the questions. One of these was: Why are we born? to which written answers were given by 655 children. The answer given by one child was: To look after God's animals. So that every time we give the pussy its milk, or throw a bone to the dog, or extract a painful thorn from the paw of a lion, it is pleasing to reflect that we are thus fulfilling the lofty purpose for which we were born.

Another child wrote: We are born in our homes. Well, not always, dear child. True, some of us are born at home; but some are born at sea; and some on

the top of an omnibus in a case of emergency. According to one child, the purpose of being born was: To make more population. It is evident that this child is not far from the kingdom of heaven; at least it would be gladly welcomed as a convert by the Catholic Church for its penetrating understanding. A Catholic couple who had had twenty-one children, were recently awarded the Pope's Blessing: and if it had been possible for them to have forty-two, they would doubtless have received *two* blessings. The answer may not have met with the Examiner's full approval, but it was in accord with the Church's teaching—the command of God to be fruitful and multiply, and His promise to make the seed of Abraham as numerous as the sands of the sea-shore. One child had a lofty idea of its future destiny. She was born that some day she might be an angel—and with the angels fly—I suppose. In answer to the question: What is your idea of the Prayer Book? one child thought that it resembled the constituents of the curate's egg, by being true "only in parts."

There is a story told of a pitman coming from work, who, meeting a Jew pedlar, took his fist and knocked him down. "Vat you do it for?" said the Jew. "Well, wasn't it your people who killed Jesus?" "Yes, but that vos two thousand years ago," said the Jew. "Never mind," said the pitman, "I only heard about it yesterday." And so, in answer to the question: What is your idea of the Atonement? one child wrote: I have never heard about the Atonement. Surely, there is something rotten in the State of Denmark! This transaction is said to have taken place some two thousand years ago, and here was a scholar in a Church of England School in Christian England, who had never heard of the fundamental doctrine upon which the whole of the Christian theology is based.

If the incompetence and ignorance shown by both the questions and the answers in this book are to be taken as the general results of religious education in the schools, the sooner secular education is made compulsory, and the child's mind left free for the consideration of subjects that are helpful, the better and the sooner may we hope to obtain such results as will justify the present huge outlay in connexion with child education.

JOSEPH BRUCE.

Traumatism

Trauma, oh the joyful sound,
How pleasant in our ears,
A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears!

THE Gospels agree in reporting that Jesus used vituperative language of the most violent kind towards the Pharisees. Except the wild abuse which he poured upon this sect, history reports nothing more to their disadvantage than what they have in common with many other sincere professors of religion.

From the above sources we also learn that Jesus treated his mother with indifference, and even with rudeness, and that only near his death (presumably moved by repentance) did he show any concern whatever for her welfare. Trauma would explain these facts. If as a little boy, playing checks in the street with other children of his age, he made a naughty little gesture at a passing Pharisee who wore the quaint habiliments of his sect, and if the good man gave him what Old Queen Bess used to call, "a clout on the lug," thereby causing him to run home howling to his mother, and if she in turn gave him a sound spanking on another part of his anatomy, we should, in accordance with the theory of traumatism have an all-sufficient explanation of the bitter hatred which he showed towards the Pharisees, and of the disregard which he manifested towards his mother.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

On the Heights

If you wish in the world to advance
Your merits you're bound to enhance.
You must stir it and stump it
And blow your own trumpet
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance.

W. S. Gilbert.

As I see things, Barker, the trouble about your propaganda is that it doesn't shout its virtues from the housetops. (So spoke Wemyss-Morris, helping himself to a cutlet.) You have your merits, but they have to be discovered. And as most people haven't got the time or the energy for exploration, and, what is equally important, they do not wish to discover what they are afraid they may discover, your talents are hidden under a bushel. You make a point of being plain-spoken, and the world writes you down as trite. People can understand what you are driving at, consequently you are dismissed as inartistic and commonplace. You use mild expressions such as *being decent* instead of being moral or ethical, or following ideals. You do this in your modesty, but people miss the gush and doubt your sincerity. You can hardly blame them for this for most of them have been religiously trained and are inclined to make a song about goodness. Goodness requires boosting and advertising and a certain rather involved technique. You do not care for this; you dislike hypocrisy and affectation so much. In this, if you will excuse me, you are unpractical. You cease to count. If at any time you seem to be a factor to be considered at the ballot-box, you will be crushed by a slogan. You have a contempt for the slogan, you are old-fashioned enough to make your appeal to the rational side of man. That contempt will not prevent the slogan from *doing you in*. Your enemies will say when they consider it necessary, but not before, "You have to choose between Codlin and Short. Short is red and materialistic; Codlin, on the other hand, is spiritual and patriotic. He soars." And what does it matter then if Short is a man of discernment and lives humbly, whilst Codlin is a bookmaker and liverish? Why, Stalin wears reach-me-downs and the Archbishop of Canterbury doesn't, but what does that count? The facts will be overlooked. It is the *words* that will do the trick. The Archbishop soars. Take a note and mend, Barker, old man, and meanwhile try one of those Bismarck Herrings. They're more than decent; they're good.

What's that? What would happen if I spoke like this in a general way? Well, I've no such intention. But, if I did. Take it from me, very little would happen. It would soon become known that old Wemyss-Morris was showing signs of having broken the leash, and was therefore not to be considered as one of the kennel. It would be industriously, and ever so nicely, circulated that the poor old fellow had gone wrong in the head. The substance of a few conversations like this would be sufficient; no contributory evidence would be necessary. These cases do occur and, believe me, they occasion little trouble. Now if all the Wigley-Clumbers, the Menzies-Huskissons, the Norris-Paynes, and those who think similarly to me, were to open their mouths at the same time, that would be another matter. Probably then there would be some palpable change in "values" and, because of that, some eventual changes in institutions. But any such epidemic of candour is most unlikely. And it is quite impossible for me, the way I am built, to bell the cat and go in for, what you Freethinkers call, speaking the rude truth in all ways. O yes, I am perfectly safe in talking to you in this way. If you were to go from here and broadcast it that old W-M had been spilling the beans, one or two of your very

intimate friends might believe you but that would be all. If challenged, I would, of course, deny that any such conversation took place, and that without any compunction, for this type of conversation, whether stipulated or not, is always considered confidential. Never forget that on the emergency Wemyss-Morris is, before all, loyal to his order. W-M can be depended upon to shout the old war-cries until he falls. The old war-cries have served him well, and no others look like serving him as well. O, I know full well that this sounds rather dreadful to you. You represent almost the only idealists nowadays. You have some faith in man, and are even prepared to suffer. Faith in God nowadays, whatever it may have been, rarely comes satisfactorily out of such acid tests. You have a right to be scornful, perhaps, about our low standards, but when you analyse us, pause a little, I ask you, when you reach our *loyalty*. If, in your judgment, we are only loyal to mean and outworn idealisms, learn from it how strong you would be if you could learn to be equally loyal to those ideals which you hold firmly but mouth so reluctantly. You must be more articulate about your loyalties, Barker, if you would gain ground. Why not devise sound and unimpeachable slogans which you could march to without loss of dignity. There are things (of the mind, of course), for which you and those who think with you are prepared to suffer and (in some cases), die. We, on the other hand, exercise our loyalties to bring us Bismarck Herrings and also, mind you, a certain Peace of Mind. O yes, *you* wouldn't find Peace of Mind that way. Granted, cheerfully! You lack theological training, you admire too much the calling of a spade a spade. I sometimes think it unfortunate, Barker, that you are cut to such a pattern. Your path is strewn with grim and ghastly disappointments, which I, God forgive me, inadvertently have done nothing to minimize. And they stretch out and hit your wife and children, worse luck. (Put some of those bon-bons in your pocket for Rosie. Please do!) I can see something in altruism in moderation, Barker, but I do hate the disastrous ways it has of stretching out.

O, I know my loyalty means, at times, hard lying, lying consistently and persistently. I don't care for it. But I manage to persuade myself that such lying tends to conserve something which I value more highly. I have a scale of values, and, so I surmise, have you. Our scales do not give the same readings. Look in this book I am just reading. Brailsford tells us that Voltaire introduced comparatively humble people into his history; men, for instance, who specialized in making canals and so added something to the value of life. Some of these men took the place of the customary Kings and Warriors. That was Voltaire's idea of value. I, poor creature that I am, would have agreed with him at that time, and perhaps hailed him as the prophet of a new era, if I had been engaged in making canal barges or lock-gates, or even if the stream ran past my factory.

All the same, Barker, I think the future is for you. Remember what I said. It is no good having Virtues without shouting about them. If you take my advice and do shout about them, don't fall into the theological error of thinking that shouting about them is just as good as having them.

Pardon my low ideals, Barker! I'm getting an old man now, and I can't deny that I have a sneaking weakness for your attitude. I daresay you think me poor stuff. But, Barker, I only genuflect in moderation. And perhaps you will remember it of me to my credit that my weaknesses I admitted, and never tried to make them into virtues. I have always had contempt for those who believe that their father who sees in secret will reward them openly. They back

the Larger Hope and call that soaring. You who keep to the earth impress me more. All through my life I have known full well on which side my bread was buttered, and have acted accordingly, but in so doing I have never professed to be SOARING. Remember that, Barker. Goodnight, and thank you. Give my love to the little girl.

T. H. ELSTON.

The Just

MARTIN LUTHER characterized the Epistle of James as a gospel of straw. The apostle offended Luther. "Faith without works," said James, "is dead." Luther was possessed of an idea that *his* faith did not need works to justify it. To Luther it was faith, *his* faith, only that mattered.

To James, if the tree of faith bore not good fruit, it must be a bad tree.

They were both right and both wrong.

Luther, by faith, meant *his* own view of faith. Anyone else having a different faith must be necessarily wrong. He misunderstood the scriptures.

James was wrong. The tree of faith might bring forth good fruit, and yet, judged from the standard of James, be a very bad tree.

Of the four mentions made of this piece of scripture, one, only, leaves no doubt as to its meaning.—

"The just shall live by his faith." Heb. ii. 4.

His faith, mark! Not Luther's faith; nor that of the Apostle James; nor that of the Pope of Rome; nor that of anybody else; But, *his* own faith!

And this explains why the whole world has gone so far astray, religiously and politically. Of course, this is my point of view, and it may be entirely wrong. One must be careful these days. As Heine observes—"If you speak to the most stupid Englishman about politics he always knows how to say something rational. But as soon as you turn the conversation on religion, the most sensible Englishman will deliver himself of nothing but absurdities."

One wonders what type of Englishman Heine came in contact with. It would, I think, be more true to say that neither the English people, nor the German, has ever been in the habit of speaking rationally about either politics or religion.

Neither English, nor German, has yet made up his mind about politics or religion. So far he has been carried away by every wind and wave of doctrine. What happens, generally, is that some one comes along with a cut and dried scheme, some short cut, presumably, to the Promised Land, with the forty years of preparatory wandering in the wilderness judiciously left out, and it becomes, according to the numbers which blindly accept it, either a great success, or a great failure.

Rationality has never entered into politics or religion, either here, or in Germany. Trial and error has been our only method of solving our political, and, largely, our theological problems up to the present.

And while all this unseemly wrangling over politics and religion continues, nothing of any moment, however necessary it may be, is ever done.

Why don't we try and find a common ground upon which we can all meet, and get some necessary things done, and leave our wrangling over details to a more convenient season?

Whatever city or town is entered to-day, shameful things present themselves—on the one hand a vulgar soul-destroying wealth; on the other hand a soul-destroying poverty meets one everywhere.

Ruskin's questions apply to-day, after nearly one hundred years:—

What would be said of an Atlantic liner if, while the crew were dying of typhoid fever and starvation, the chaplain, the passengers and the ladies were feasting in the cabin or dancing on the quarter-deck?

Yet the ship of State is just such a ship and in it are such things done.

What would be said of a man who sold his children's

bread and spent the money on plate and jewels for the church? But such men are the holy rich men of England. Observe the magnificence of our church and State. Observe the luxury and display of our Parliament Houses, our town halls, our palaces, our art galleries, our cottages, our cathedrals, and our ships of war; contrast these things with the slums, the workhouses, the prisons, the coal-pits, and the workshops of the poor. Can you reconcile the splendour and the poverty, the vanity and the misery, to the principles of justice or of wisdom?

Had this been written yesterday, it might have been much more terrible!

"Faith without works is dead," said James. "The Just shall live by faith," said Luther. If James was right, has faith been justified by works?

If Luther was right, where are the just?

Why do we live at all? What real interest has any of us in life beyond purely material ones? Is there any reality in the faith of any one of us?

How many of us can give answer to these questions in the words of the poet:—

"What live we for but this?
Into the sour to breathe the soul of sweetness,
The stunted growth to rear to fair completeness,
Drown sneers in smiles, kill hatred with a kiss."

GEORGE WALLACE.

Acid Drops

In the midst of national and international troubles, our morning paper brings an item of good news. The Duke of Windsor has all his shirts sent to London to be washed—we beg pardon, laundered. That save the news from being commonplace in character. Now if we could only get a portrait of the woman, or man, who washes the shirts of King George, we should feel that we were really in touch with life at some of its most important points.

Our sympathies go out to the "spirits" who strive so hard to demonstrate their existence to those on "this side." Either the information given lacks verification, or the spirits solemnly announce things that are already known, or they give us information that ought to be at the command of anyone outside an idiot Asylum, or they demonstrate their spiritual quality by giving yards of sickly commonplaces that would reflect small credit on the greenest of green curates. And yet, seeing that human beings have been living and dying for many hundreds of thousands of years, and as we are asked to believe that everyone of them goes to the "summerland," and that the capacity for each one entering into communion with their earthly friends was always present, it looks as though by this time lines of communication between the next world and this ought to be as well known and as regularly traversed as the road from here to Glasgow.

Here is the latest example to hand. On October 20 the B.B.C. is to broadcast the "lost" Schumann violin concerto. The spirits saw a chance of helping humanity, and accounts were published of messages received from the spirit world giving the location of the manuscript which, wonder of wonders, was duly discovered. And a Mr. Kenneth Wright travelled to Berlin, with some "spirit messages" to get the concerto. The spirit of Schumann even named the lady whom he, or it, wished to perform the work. But either someone in the spirit world had been pulling the spiritual leg of Schumann, or some jokeful spirit had been taking a rise out of their earthly correspondents. For Elizabeth Joachim, the only surviving daughter of Schumann, writes to the *Listener* for last week, pointing out there has never been any "mystery" about the manuscript, there has been no "tracking down," the manuscript was given by Schumann to his family, and the family gave it to the Prussian State Library, where it has remained ever since. Its existence there was well-known to all interested. Moreover, the concerto has been performed on several

occasions. Miss Schumann remarks, "Strange that the spirits should take such a roundabout way to reveal what has never been concealed." But not so strange. Miss Schumann cannot be well acquainted with the habits of spirits not to know that in this case they have followed a very common procedure.

By the way, we see that an American spiritualist on September 28 described to a Glasgow audience how he had seen and spoken to thousands of spirits, and had even danced with them. He said it was "a beautiful thing to feel the soft glow of their hands in yours." Quite so. But from a business point of view we should say that soft heads are more profitable—to the operator.

Our readers may remember that some time ago we called attention to the arrival in England of a colonial Bishop Crotty, who announced that he had come to the very heart of unbelief in order to destroy it. Well, that must be nearly two years ago, and we have not noticed that anti-Christianity has grown perceptibly weaker, or that Christianity has grown stronger. Now Bishop Crotty has made a discovery that a schoolboy might have made. He says:—

Some of you may be old enough to remember the earlier attacks made on the Churches by assailants, who contended that it was not the essence of Christianity they wished to destroy, but unnecessary cults and dogmas. But they were wrong; and to-day it is not only the carved work, the beautiful adornment of our religion which is being assaulted, but the four-square walls of Christian faith and morality, the main structure of the Faith itself.

All this is only saying in a cock-eyed way that the more learning grows and human nature develops the more devastating becomes the attack on Christianity, not merely the studied attack of the propagandist, but the attitude of mind of ordinary men and women. People began to question Christian doctrines, many of them in the name of some imaginary ethical Jesus. Then they went on to doubt his very existence. Many also began with questioning the Christian God because they thought he was not good enough for a god, as though any kind of a thing had not been good enough for a god right through human history. Then they went on to examine the very conception of God, and so Atheism was born. That development is obvious to anyone who studies the matter. It is becoming obvious even to Bishop Crotty. His middle name ought to have been Partington.

We don't know who Father Owen Dudley is, but he has been conducting some kind of a mission, and after being heckled by Communists declares that "if Catholics were as well instructed on social order as the Reds are on social disorder by their Moscow masters, we should be making more headway with the masses." Fr. Dudley should join hands with Mr. Belloc; their sociology appears to very often move on the same level. The movement against religion has its origin in causes long before anyone ever dreamed of Marxism by name, and the idea that those who attack religion take their orders from Moscow is just one of those falsehoods with which the Roman Church is so liberally stocked. It did not need Moscow for men and women to realize that in the historic struggle of the people for a better life, it was the Christian Church that stood as their greatest enemy, and as the champion of the worst kinds of vested interests. Father Dudley's thesis is as ridiculous as that of those parsons who say that unbelief is just an excuse for leading an immoral life—as though any kind of a life has not been possible in the Christian Church.

Mr. Albert Smith writes to the *Methodist Recorder*, bearing a double tribute to the beneficent work of Secular teaching. One is that there is a "landslide" in religious popularity; the other is his admission that "If I compare 1872 with 1937, I see that there was less sobriety, more prudery and less benevolence than prevail in 1937." It is true that Mr. Smith professes to believe

that it is "Christian benevolence," and that "Christian Ethics" (whatever these may be) "have made a tremendous advance." We merely note that the world is all the better for the acknowledged "landslide" of religion. Mr. Smith's "gloss" may only mean that even Christians are better than they were. If so it is one more tribute to the victory of Freethought.

Something appears to have gone wrong with Lourdes. In a recent Irish pilgrimage two deaths occurred, and there is no mention of a single cure. We do not expect that this will make any difference to those who believe in the magical cures effected. The reasoning is, if cured then there is clear evidence of God's goodness, if they are not cured "God's will be done." It is not surprising that all sorts of quacks take so kindly to religion.

In at least one case we are led behind the scenes—in this instance by the Roman Catholic paper, *The Universe*. An alleged doctor rang up the editor to inform him of a wonderful cure that had been achieved at Lourdes. On investigation it was found that no doctor lived at the address given. We wish the *Universe* would be equally on the alert with regard to other alleged cures. It would be even better if it were noted how many "miraculous cures" are effected with no mention of God and the saints. It is easy to effect a cure in some cases, particularly when one is dealing with types of hysteria. Every doctor knows of scores of such cases, and sees no reason for dragging in the Virgin, or God to account for the phenomena.

The Rev. Christopher Woolcott, of St. Francis Church, Sidmouth, does not altogether approve of wireless religious services. He does not object to people "listening-in," but, he asks pathetically:—

Is it really worshipping, as, from the depths of an easy-chair, in carpet slippers; with cigarette in mouth, they listened to other people worshipping God? It demands nothing from you, and you are making no sacrifice.

From which lament we gather (1) that one ought not to take it easy or be comfortable when one is worshipping God; (2) if one listens one cannot at the same time be at Church, and the congregations of Mr. Woolcott and other parsons will dwindle; (3) one may be quite comfortable when listening to a wireless sermon, because one can "plug the parson" when one is bored and then write a letter to the B.B.C. saying what spiritual comfort has been derived from the service. But Mr. Woolcott complains that the wireless service is not worship; it is an entertainment. We agree with the statement, but demur to the complaint. Some of the sermons are really entertainments—to those blessed with a sense of humour—and we have warmly recommended some of these parsons to our readers.

Dr. Sidney Berry, one of the leaders of the Free Church recently preached a sermon at Geneva on the League of Nations. He informed the world that "God wills that all men should be brought into one family." Well, who is stopping him? Does he mean that it is Hitler, or Mussolini that stands in the way? Both these men suffer badly from swelled heads, but their bombast is warranted if it is they who can so easily knock "God's plans" into a cocked hat. Or does Dr. Berry mean that God can get his own way only when man decides he may have it? If so, why bother with God at all? But we note that Dr. Berry adds that the one family is to be "under the lordship of Christ," which really means one family with Dr. Berry and his kind at the head of affairs. And if the choice is to lie between this and the Hitler-Mussolini combination, then we can only say that we ought to try and hurry up the practice of fewer births which some of our none-too-bright writers tell us means the depopulation of the world.

In the Socialist monthly, *Fact*, Mr. George Lansbury writes that the controversy over the historical Christ

"leaves me rather cold. Religion is a personal matter. No one else but the recipient can explain what the Sacrament means." After that it would, we suppose, be useless asking Mr. Lansbury what he means by the Sacrament. We only once tasted sacramental wine, and we thought it rather poor stuff, which, if persisted in, would mean a stomach-ache.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc, recently returned from Germany, summing up the position of religion in that country, says that those who govern are convinced that what they call Christianity is disappearing rapidly from the human mind, and particularly from the German mind. We do not know that this is more applicable in Germany than elsewhere, even though the German Government aims at creating, as another form of religion, the worship of the State. But Mr. Belloc, whose aim it is to be considered an historian, might have reflected that the worship of the State in modern Germany is a direct product of the teaching of religion in Germany right through its history. What Mr. Belloc is witnessing without appreciating what he sees is the transference of superstition from one object to another. And that, as we have so often pointed out, is one of the greatest dangers that front the modern mind. Or perhaps it did not suit Mr. Belloc to understand what was before him.

What Mr. Belloc presents us with is the empty generalization that in Germany there was a cleavage between Catholic culture and anti-Catholic culture. That, too, tells us nothing. That cleavage is everywhere in the modern world, and it is precisely that force against which the Roman Church is ultimately powerless. The Roman Church may well win in the end against Hitler, as it won in the end against Bismarck. But the one thing against which the Roman Church is ultimately powerless is the steady advancement of the human race as a whole. This is a force that cannot be exclusively located in a man or in an institution. Mr. Belloc should remember the fight of Christianity against Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, evolution and against science as a whole. It took the Church over two hundred years to officially admit that the earth went round the sun, but it came to it at last.

It is amusing to read in the Christian press complaints of Muslim Missionary activities in our midst. We are warned by the Rev. J. W. Sweetman that "it is the avowed object of Muslim propagandists to paralyse Christian enterprise at its base." New Mosques are arising in London. The original Mosque at Woking is said to be particularly active, and the aim of the Muslims, according to the *Islamic Review*, is to make "The Holy Quran (Koran) the living guide for the West as well as the East." We remember the words of a long forgotten poet:—

A Mussulman Mosque looks strange at Woking,
Missions to "native" Britons. Most provoking!
"Lo the Poor Indian" now has his diversion:
He pities us and prays for our conversion.

The Rev. Dr. Henry Bett points out in the *Methodist Recorder* that "these are adverse days for the Church," and that "in this year of grace most folk will frankly admit that the position is desperate." He thinks "it may not be pleasant to face the facts, but it is honest, it is wise." . . . "the old traditional regard for religion has almost completely gone." Perhaps so, but we ask Dr. Bett: Does it appear honest to him—we say nothing about the "wisdom"—to pretend, as Dr. Bett seems to do, that morality is dependent on credulity (or "faith")? He says:—

For it has to be remembered that it is a question of morality as well as of religion, since there can be no doubt that, when the tradition of religion loses its hold, the next thing to go is the tradition of morality. There are many very serious signs that that is already happening. Though I cannot discuss it here, there is a great deal of evidence that both in regard to chastity and honesty the sanctions that were in force even a generation ago have been very greatly weakened.

We challenge Dr. Bett to produce his evidence or statistics proving that morally, mentally or physically the present generation is not better than in the days when "religious sanctions were in force." Dr. Bett is playing the part of a privileged slanderer.

An Australian Anglican Rector, the Rev. R. C. Firebrace, M.A., has been rebuking (in the type of language used by Jesus when referring to the High Priests of his day) the Bishop of Goulburn for presiding at the first Australian Congress of Peace and Friendship with the U.S.S.R. He reminds the Bishop that there are still many thousands of Christian people in Australia "who believe that the millenium will come, not as a result of human effort, but by a mighty act of God." We are thankful that now there are thousands of such people where once there were tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands. "Human effort" has been handicapped sorely by their existence.

To prevent the suspension of activities during the summer months, the Rev. John R. Hart of St. Stephen's Protestant Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, has organized the Anti-Moth Ball Society. In addition to three religious services each week, there will be held "an interdenominational stunt night, a flag-day programme, Wednesday evening socials, an educational programme, and inter-church tennis tournament, a tree planting commission and employment agency, a co-operative study and folk dancing." Why call it a church, unless to enjoy tax-exemption?

The *Catholic Citizen* (New York), informs us that the Catholic Church condemns cremation because of "the motives that have inspired its advocates, and also on account of the atheistic influence to which it is allied." They also ask that bodies after death, being the temples of the Holy Ghost should be treated "with great respect and a reverent regard and sincere affection for the departed." To hold that burning is less "respectful" than handing a body over to a "convocation of politic worms" is one of those things which the atheist "in his blind folly" finds it difficult to understand, without special enlightenment.

When religion is driven to its last trench, the clergy will preach pure secularism and even atheism, and protest "This is what we meant all the time; this is what true religion is, of course." The tendency is very strong that way now. Vicar Hensworth of Sompting, near Worthing, invites motorists, hikers and holiday-makers generally, to picnic outside his church in "whatever clothes they feel inclined to wear," and "join their picnic with worship." Vicar Meredith of Bognor Regis will not mind if holiday-makers go into his two churches and eat their meals in the pews. (Not everyone may know that some clergymen have charge of more than one church or parish). Vicar Manners of Felpham, near Bognor (Regis, of course) says people can worship in bathing suits just as well as in frock coats. He holds services on the beach. (Some day one of the parsons will admit that he has no objection to a strip-tease chorus dancing—in a devotional spirit, of course—at the altar.) Vicar Drury doesn't wear a clerical collar "for fear people should be on their best behaviour when they see him coming." Seaside religion bids fare to be an entertaining development.

Dr. John M. Tutt commences a lecture on Christian Science with: "The Bible is authority for Christian Science," and then goes on to tell us that "orthodox theology" has made a sad mistake in "misinterpreting the doctrine of salvation." But Mary Baker Eddy came along and straightened things out. The authority of Mary Baker Eddy is of equal value to that of Father Divine; they both make claims, that is all And so did all the many exponents of mistaken "orthodox theology," who said as Dr. Tutt says: "The Bible tells us—the Bible is our Authority." Tutt, tutt, Tutt!

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E. EDWARDS.—Pleased to learn that our advice to you led to such agreeable results. Generosity in such matters is always advisable.

N. HERBERT.—We are not greatly interested in stories about the ill-deeds of unbelievers, nor, for the matter of that about the crimes of Christians. In the case of the latter they are too common to make "news," and in the case of the former we must always bear in mind that the majority of Freethinkers have been brought up in a Christian environment, and in all cases have had a Christian, or a religious ancestry. With so many influences working in the wrong direction, the surprising thing is that so many people take a tolerably right one.

S. BURROWS.—You appear to have put a too drastic interpretation on the paragraph. Anticipating a time when the instilling of superstitions into the helpless mind of a child will be regarded as a serious offence, does not of necessity mean that the writer expected it to be made a "criminal offence." We do regard it as a serious thing that parents should so far abuse their power over a child to instil into its mind as above and beyond question doctrines that are rejected by an increasing number of responsibly-minded men and women.

T. SMITH.—We do not at all admit that our claim for freedom of expression involves granting the right of entry to these columns of everyone without regard to the space taken up or the cogency of what is written. After all, there are limits to both our available space, the patience of readers, and the good nature of editors.

LETTERS from R. B. Kerr, W. Kent and John Rowland are held over until next week.

L. W. BRAY.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for the next four weeks.

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

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

A packet of letters recived at the *Freethinker* office on Monday morning and sent by post to the editor's private address, has been either delayed or lost in the post. Will those who posted to us on Saturday or Sunday please repeat the substance of their communication.

We have every sympathy with a protest raised by Mr. Dan Benjamin, at the monthly meeting of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, against the "legalized blackmail" to which they are subject through the Act permitting Sunday entertainments. We protested against this form of gangsterism when the Bill was introduced. It had neither principle nor justice behind it. If Sunday entertainments were bad, levying a certain percentage to be given to "charities" could not make them better. It was sheer gangsterism, in which the Government demanded a certain "rake-off" from those who opened on Sunday. No viler principle was ever introduced into the English law than that.

But the Cinema proprietors have to thank themselves for the continuance of this legalized robbery. Nearly everywhere the police have acknowledged the improvement of conduct in the streets on Sunday evening where the cinemas are open. The cinema proprietors may refuse to open their halls unless this form of

gangsterism is abolished. This would certainly lead to an outcry, and might cause the repeal of this section of the Act. They may refuse to pay the "rake-off" unless summoned, which might lead to the closing of cinemas on Sunday. They may take refuge under the old Sunday law, have admission free, with a charge for reserved seats. (We believe that the old law still holds good thus far.) The general objection of the trade to doing these things is that opposition of this kind would open them to vexatious police action (at the instigation of local bigots) and their business life would be a constant fighting of petty annoyances. This may be true, but one must do a *little* fighting if one is anxious to secure justice. And so rich an industry as the one under consideration ought to be able to put up a pretty big fight if necessary. Merely protesting is not enough. Reforms are not gained in that way.

To-day (October 10) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. Admission is free. Chair taken at 6.30. On Sunday next (October 17) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Picton Hall Liverpool.

It is not good news that the *Morning Post*, after a life of nearly 165 years, has had to cease publication. The *Morning Post* did actually fill a specific place in the newspaper world. It catered for, and so kept others in touch with, a peculiarly unintellectual type of Tory—the retired military and naval man, the type known as the "club-man," and that curious individual that Low has made known to us as "Colonel Blimp"—to be found in all classes of society. The paper was well edited, and it at least stood for something, and was not ready, even anxious, to exploit any stunt that promised circulation. It had principles and fought for them.

The *Morning Post* gave as the chief reason the rise in the cost of production, and the further rise that is due in the near future. Last year its losses amounted to £40,000, and to its credit it scorned to stoop to an exploitation of the general ignorance that prevails. We can sympathize here, as we are feeling the same financial pressure. Paper has advanced by over 25 per cent, and other rises in printing are imminent. It is to meet these increasing losses that constitutes one of the reasons for our readers doing what they can to introduce new subscribers. We have managed to meet the recurring deficits somehow, but there are, of course, limits to what we can do. And we do not wish, unless we are forced, to appeal for annual or bi-annual financial help. We know all needed would be subscribed, but we intend to carry on without as long as it is possible to do so. Still, the perpetual financial worry does not add to the peace of one's mind.

As already announced a Joint Committee consisting of the National Secular Society, the Rationalist Press Association, the Union of Ethical Societies and the South Place Ethical Society has invited the International Federation of Freethinkers to hold the 1938 Congress in London, which invitation has been accepted. We are not surprised to find the *Catholic Times* is shocked, and in its issue for September 24, calls for British Catholics to "at once protest." With a desire to help Roman Catholics advertising themselves in this way, we insert this notice. We hope they will act on it, and protest.

The "Views and Opinions" in last week's issue did good work in directing attention to the *Bible Handbook*. Orders are coming in very briskly, and these we suspect are largely due to what we said about the *Bible* last week. We publish in another column a letter asking for a cheap edition. The book, because of its character, is expensive to produce, and the only cheap edition we would be inclined for the moment to favour would be one on the lines of the *Age of Reason*, at, say, about sixpence. That would, of course, mean a great loss, but if any of our wealthy readers are willing to back it, we are ready to consider the matter.

Two more of the *Pamphlets for the People* will be issued within the next few days. The titles are "The Church's Fight for the Child," and "Giving 'em Hell." Both will be found very useful for propagandist purposes, and the first-named should be of particularly topical interest, dealing with the clerical attempts to get control of the schools, and giving a brief description of the sociological and philosophical issues underlying the fight. We are glad to say that this series is selling well, and each new pamphlet appears to create fresh demands for those already published. More will be ready before the year is out.

Mr. G. Bedborough pays his first visit to the Fails-worth Secular Sunday School, in Poole Lane, to-day (October 10), and will speak in the afternoon on "Let's Pretend," and in the evening on "Christ and To-day." We can assure Mr. Bedborough of a hearty welcome, and promise the local saints two interesting and instructive addresses. Admission is free.

In Glasgow to-day (October 10) Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture for the local Secular Society in the Berkeley Hall, Kent Road, Glasgow, on "Dictators, People, and Persecution," at 7.0 p.m. Admission is free, with some reserved seats. During the afternoon Mr. Rosetti will visit Greenock and lecture for the newly-formed Greenock Branch N.S.S., on "Nature, Man and God." The new Branch is largely the result of Mrs. Whitefield's activity, and with an enthusiastic membership a good assembly is expected on Sunday afternoon.

We are asked to announce that on Thursday, October 14, under the auspices of the Hampstead *Daily Worker* League, at 21 Pond Street, N.W., a lecture will be given on "Thomas Paine and this Age of Unreason." The speaker will be Mr. Ralph Wright. Our correspondent has omitted to give the time of the meeting; we presume it will be either 7.30 or 8 o'clock.

The Birkenhead Branch opened its Winter Session on Sunday last. The lecturer to-day (October 10) is Mr. R. H. Standfast, who will speak on "Birth Control." The Birkenhead Branch is working very hard, and we hope that Freethinkers in the neighbourhood will give whatever support they can. The Secretary's address is W. H. Fletcher, 5 Queensbury Avenue, Bromborough.

Owed to Franco

"People who deny every principle in which the tradition of Spain and Christian civilization in Europe are based."

Gen. Franco on the Spanish Government.

"Suffer little children to come unto me."

A JEW said that, my Franco,
A gibbeted Jew,
Who knew all about you.
But children suffer, who come under thee
Blasted and bombed for £ s. d.
Christianity! My Franco!

And Torquemada lives again
Christian, benign in sunny Spain
And the furnace flares in an *auto-da-fé*
Though you're slaughtering kids
(Not bulls) to-day
In your typically Spanish Christian way.
Enjoying yourself? My Franco.

You claim to be so civilized
But have you ever realized
That in the Sacred Cross you've kissed
How much, my Franco, you have missed
By not becoming an Atheist,
My Franco?

GWYN EVANS.

Obituary

THOMAS NEILSON ROBERTSON

IN the death of Thomas Neilson Robertson, of Glasgow, Freethought in Scotland has lost a tried and loyal supporter, and I have lost an old and dear friend. From his youth upward Thomas Robertson has been closely associated with the Freethought movement, a large part of that time in an official capacity. By marriage he became a member of a family whose Freethought runs right back to the days of Robert Owen; his grandchildren represent the fifth generation of this line. In the business life of Glasgow he held a deservedly, although unsought, high position. Commencing as a mere shop-assistant he, with no other help than his own intelligence and tried integrity, became the head of a very large business undertaking. The testimonies to his worth in this direction are numerous and unqualified. Peculiarly happy in his domestic life, he was the centre of a domestic circle, which in the unity of its feeling and in the interaction of its affections might be equalled, but could hardly be surpassed. My own intimate friendship with the family goes back some forty-two years, and I have held its friendship as one of my dearest possessions. The Robertson family was one in which meanness held no place. Other homes may be as worthy. I have a difficulty in picturing one that is higher in its character.

For the past two years Mr. Robertson had been in failing health, and the disease from which he suffered proved to be incurable. To the end, which came on September 25, he showed himself as full of consideration for others as he had always been. He was seventy-two years of age. The cremation took place on September 28, and the large number of business friends, employees, and members of the Freethought movement present fully taxed the holding capacity of the Crematorium Chapel. I travelled from Manchester in order to be present. My own store of memories of those whom I have known and have held dear is a large one, but none holds a more honoured place than that of Thomas Robertson.—C.C.

AT THE CREMATORIUM

ADDRESS by CHAPMAN COHEN

To-day's ceremony is a reminder that nothing we have that we prize can be had without payment, and those who possessed the friendship of Thomas Neilson Robertson are to-day, in their grief, paying the price of that intimacy. No matter how prepared we believe ourselves to be, death comes always with an element of shock. To the young it comes as an abrupt and anachronistic interruption in the smooth sequence of events; to the old it comes with a snapping of old ties, an eruption in the related parts of our environment, that leaves us with a feeling of intense loneliness that seems to overwhelm. We are paying for what has been, and the measure of our sense of loss is, in its first stages, the measure of our affection. Had we loved less we should grieve less; had those we love been less worthy of our affection one might meet the occasion with those conventional expressions of regret that fall so easily from one's lips and which mean so little.

For myself I am to-day turning over the last page of a volume which contains a record of more than forty years of friendship that was never marred by any mean passion, and never darkened by the slightest suspicion of each other's integrity. There have been, of course, divergencies of opinion, but I know they made no difference in my opinion of him, and I have

no reason to believe they made any difference in his opinion of me. It is only as we become older that we rightly appreciate the value of such friendships, and so learn to rate them higher than any honour from crowned heads or the plaudits that come from the easily-earned enthusiasm of the crowd.

Many here to-day know Thomas Robertson only as a respected member of Glasgow's commercial world. On that head I am not in a position to form any authoritative opinion. But I am not surprised to learn that he stood very high indeed in the estimate of the commercial world of this city, that his advice was sought, his judgment given every attention, and that his personal integrity, his character as a man and an employer, stood very high indeed. I should have been greatly surprised had the case stood otherwise: for each man is a whole, and the qualities that raised him in the estimation of his business colleagues were a consequence and expression of that sense of personal self-respect, that innate dignity that rises above mere outward forms, that intellectual self-respect, and that sense of ethical responsibility which were such marked features of his character. There was with him a unity of character that expressed itself in all he undertook, and in these dealings a sense of justice and a consideration for others were notable features.

As a young man Thomas Robertson threw in his lot with the Freethought movement, which was then under the dominating influence of that gigantic figure Charles Bradlaugh. It was a movement that could promise nothing in the way of financial gain or social advantage, but which for that very reason made an appeal to all that was best in man, and to which appeal only the best could respond. Such movements exercise an influence of a selective character, and in this instance it manifested its power when it called to its service a man of the type of Thomas Robertson. It taught him the philosophy of basing one's life on facts, of taking the consequences of actions in this life as the test of morality, and that the task of seeking for truth and acting upon the results of that search embodied the highest kind of duty. To this philosophy he remained faithful during the whole of his life. He had nothing in common with that mistaken teaching which subordinated man's duty here to the required needs of some fanciful life hereafter.

With this philosophy he faced death with the same fearless courage with which he faced life, and with the same integrity of character. A few weeks ago I last spoke to him. He said that he was content to live if he could only do something that would make continued living worth-while. But he had no desire to live bed-ridden, helpless, a burden upon himself and upon others. I replied that he had said what I would have had him say, and what I had expected him to say. But his last thoughts were of others. He had lived the centre of a deep family affection, and he repaid it then and always in kind.

In spite of the qualities that might have given him high public office had his inclinations leaned in that direction, he played no prominent part in public affairs. But public honours are, after all, often cheaply bought, and often reflect small credit on those who wear them. There is a passage in one of George Eliot's essays that bears on this. She remarks that the world would not be as good as it is for you and me were it not for the labours of men and women who lead unknown lives and who rest in unknown graves. I think that applies well here. He played a worthy and unostentatious part in a great movement. To that he gave time and money. It was a movement that had for its sole purpose the bettering

of human life, and the consequences of his actions are being enjoyed to-day by thousands who may never hear his name.

I do not think that I need say much upon the personal aspect of death. I am speaking for those who hold it a foolish task to paint death as the king of terrors, and to set life in a framework of death. We reverse that picture and place death in a framework of life. We know that the affections we value are born of the fact of death, that the cradle and the grave are complementary facts, two aspects of the same thing, and that our most valued feelings and affections are rooted in the fact of man's mortality. Without death human virtues would have scant value and would rapidly wither to probable decay.

I have said that to-day I am closing a volume of experience. I would enlarge that by way of a qualification. For when we close that volume we straightway open another in which we find recorded all those bitter-sweet memories which embody our own most treasured possessions, and which so often form an inspiration to us. Whatever death may rob us of, it cannot rob us of that. The past is always ours while life and memory endures. While we have life we can turn with confidence to that volume, of which each of us possesses a copy, and read in its pages a lesson of comfort and courage, until such time as we ourselves pass into the great silence. The name of Thomas Neilson Robertson will always occupy a treasured place with all who knew and appreciated him.

We are to-day paying a tribute to one who right through his life walked with his eyes open and his head erect, who shunned everything that was mean and intellectually dishonest, and who in his last hours of consciousness thought mainly of others, and in thinking of others thought most worthily of himself. We can think of him as a loyal citizen, a faithful friend, an affectionate husband and parent. In so doing we accord him the only measure of immortality that this life holds—love and regard in the memories of those who are left to mourn his death and to find helpful inspiration in his life.

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.]

(Concluded from page 635)

DID it ever before occur to a historian to sum up a man's performance by enlarging condemnatorily on what are alleged to be his failures, and dismissing in an incidental clause the great successes which have kept his name alive? To see what such a method would lead to if consistently applied, let us just take one of Mr. Stephen's own sentences, concerning Newton:—

Newton himself was unconscious of the bearing of his discoveries upon the traditional theology, and bent his mighty intellect to that process of solving riddles which he called interpreting the prophecies (i. 82).

This is, by comparison, a sufficiently lenient way of speaking of Newton seeing that the belief in "prophecy" is, in the eye of pure reason, to the full as puerile a superstition as any of Priestley's, being indeed the very form of superstition which Mr. Stephen specially so characterized in Priestley's case. Mr. Stephen admits that Newton was a consummate failure as a rationalist theologian, apart from his Arianism. Yet

what in Priestley's case is made the justification of a substantially belittling verdict is in Newton's only made an occasion for a respectful remark on the weaknesses of greatness; and Newton is reverently adjudged "mighty" on the strength of his notorious scientific success, while Priestley's notorious scientific success is barely reckoned as a mentionable offset to his theological weaknesses and inconsistencies. The thing would be ludicrous if it were not so displeasing a violation of the simplest instincts of critical justice. Mr. Stephen undertakes his history of a century's "Thought" without a glimpse of a scientific interpretation of his term; and he passes judgments on men by the score without an attempt to arrive at a reasoned or uniform standard of measurement. He has neither test nor method.

Such criticism is but a formal restatement of the drift of general prejudice, deflected by prejudice that is personal. And to come back finally to the matter in hand, it is just the drift of general prejudice that has settled Paine's place in ordinary history. His singular powers have been in part ignored, in part treated as mere genius for evil, for the simple reason that he was identified with two causes which passed before his death into common odium, the French Revolution and Freethought. In the immense reaction against the evil outcome of the Revolution, all pretence of fair criticism of the men who had incited it disappeared; and in the English imagination Paine was slumped with Robespierre and Marat, who sought to slay him because he boldly resisted them. Burke's to-day is seen to be the really lost cause; but eighty years ago he sowed a kind of archangel assaulting the dragon; and the gradual change of sentiment has left his legend almost intact; while Paine, who became identified with the dragon forthwith, is whelmed in limitless slander. His Freethought was taken as a dispensation for every form of calumny that Christian malignity could devise; and in his adopted country the result was a new revelation of the possibilities of human baseness. No tale of national ingratitude in the annals of antiquity, where they are so plentiful, will eclipse the record of the repudiation of Paine by the Republic he had helped to make, when he recorded his hostility to its superstitions. Others, known to be as unbelieving as he, dissembled, and retained their place on the roll of fame: his name became the chosen target of the great tribe of dastards. "A bust of [Paine], by Jarvis, in the possession of the New York Historical Society, is kept under lock and key because it was defaced and defiled by visitors" (Article in *Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1859, p. 15). And men who are far above the moral plane of the Christian black-guard can still be found to carry on the defilement with pen on paper. Where the known vices of great men are habitually palliated, one falsely imputed vice is made out to be Paine's main characteristic. Addison suffers no diminution of esteem for his confessed intemperance; Lamb is loved no less for his pathetic weakness; the licence of Burns leaves him worshipful to his countrymen; but the disproved charge against Paine is forever iniquitously fastened on his memory, and his unquestioned innocence of life in other regards only stimulated to new fury of obloquy the bigots whose creed he had impeached. The thrice disproved lie as to his death-bed terror and remorse is still part of the stock-in-trade of "Christian Evidence"; and I have just had sent me a copy of a tract entitled *The Inspiration of the Bible*, by H. L. Hastings, published by the reputable firm of Bagster and Sons, circulated by the late Lord Shaftesbury, and marked "Fifth Hundred Thousand," in which the lie is retailed with the "circumstance" that it was vouched for in 1876 by a woman of eighty-eight, who at the age of eleven

was "invited by a distant connexion . . . to go and see T. Paine on his death-bed." And this precious story the pietist offers by way of answering, as he says, the statements of "infidels who were *not present*," and who speak of "events which occurred years before they were born." The inspiration of the Bible apparently cannot be defended without false witness against unbelievers, and the story is deliberately told in such a way as to prevent the pious reader from suspecting that the death-bed figment was exposed, after personal investigation, by Cobbett, who was Paine's contemporary. And all the while piety is complacent over the assertion that a child of eleven was taken by a Christian relative to hear, for edification, the delirious blasphemies and shrieks for mercy of an infidel dying in extreme bodily agony.

In the face of these crass mendacities of average Christian controversy, it is but just to mention that Mr. Stephen from the first rejected the death-bed story as a fiction. I am sorry there is so little more to say in praise of his treatment of the subject.

JOHN M. ROBERTSON.

The Priest's Profession

LAW books do not usually make entertaining reading. They are, strictly, the province of the law student or the professional barrister who has to pore over them to absorb the Law for examination purposes or to refresh the memory on some tricky point.

To the Freethinker, or other serious-minded person, the volume of Halsbury's *Laws of England Ecclesiastical Law* is what the Bible is to the devout. One comes to look up a point and stays to read with interest; in fact, the assumed "history" of the Church and the details of law, practice, fees and internal regulations with their development down the centuries therein set forth in their naked truth is a strong indictment of the vast profit-making machinery that is the Church. It is also an amazing recital of the credulity of mankind, the craft of the early Church stalwarts who built up a powerful organization, and an admission of the weakness of mass mentality which still allows superstition to run a successful business.

The Bar and the Church have much in common. A University education is practically essential to both careers; the subjects on which to practise (litigants and congregation) mean less than the fees to be extracted from them; clients come to both barristers and clergy only when they are in trouble, real or imaginary. A man enters either profession to make a career, money and position. Both may provide rich—and easy—rewards. The House of Commons is often thick with lawyers, the Upper House harbours the Bishops. Only when the Law of the Land steps in does either profession give something for nothing. In Poor Persons cases a lawyer works for nothing or next to nothing; in christening and burial the State overrides the regulations of the Church, and provides the means of service, regardless of the subject's station in life.

Prelates tell us that "the Devil takes care of his own"; an apt tag! By extortion and fear in the past, and by "fees" payable for this and that—and precious little without fee—to-day, the financial future of the Church is sound, despite the old, old plea of poverty. Endowments, land freeholds and investments place most churches out of danger. Not that the humble incumbent always gets fat on his living; the lower orders of a profession invariably work harder for less remuneration than the "stars."

The similarity of Bar and Church does not extend to their work. A lawyer has got concrete facts to work on; on his success or failure in criminal cases depends the actual physical welfare of his client. A wrong has been done, a crime committed, a contract broken, suffering endured. He is paid for something tangible. A priest is paid for making people believe, for playing with myths, for dealing with abstract things, for indulging man's fear of something in the "world to come."

Lawyers are out of work just now; there is less crime and very much less litigation. Fees are cut, methods are overhauled and reorganized. The Bar must fight, not for its very existence, but for its status and the standing of its constituent parts. It exists on law and order, a direct result of progress. The more laws the more the sidelines for lawyers, but the more lawfulness, the less work for counsel.

The Church, contrary to its outcries, has no need to fight for its existence. It is safe behind the State. Were the Church of England disestablished to-morrow, although its prestige would suffer a nasty blow and it would have to compete with the other religious denominations for the available flocks, its broad financial position—except in isolated instances—is assured. In popular language, the Church lives on its Capital (wealth accrued for many many years, and its "spiritual" stock) and not on Labour (the work of its parsons).

Let us not underestimate the power of the prelates. They have a tight grip on some important strings in life. From Kings' Coronations to interference in the Lords' debate on Abyssinia, and from prohibition of a tombstone over a grave to an "Amen" at the death sentence in a court of law, the clergy have a finger in the pie.

Modern indifference to Church dogmas, the growth of secularism, empty pews, the tendency to Registry Office weddings and cremations out of the Church province are but the beginning, the thin edge of the wedge. Prestige and offertory boxes may suffer but the power remains.

Emancipation is always a slow business.

A. F. WILLIAMS.

Correspondence

FASCISM

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—In comments on the proposed Fascist march in South-East London, you state that the quickest way to kill Fascism would be to have people listening "quietly to what such a person as Mosley has to say."

Such quiet meetings have already been held in many parts of the country—with great success and increases in local membership as a result. The British Union policy is strong enough to convince the average intelligent man and woman; it is because they are afraid of that policy being heard that our opponents attempt to prevent, either by banning or by violence, such meetings from taking place.

You also comment that Blackshirts are heroes in action, "When in a ratio of about three to one or armed with knuckledusters." Anyone acquainted with our members is aware that they do not carry knuckledusters. Neither have I heard that a handful of men, establishing a branch in an area ignorant of, and in some cases hostile to, our Movement, formed a proportion of three to one. I suggest that the best indication of Blackshirts' willingness to deal with difficulties was shown in the Paramount news-film of the trouble that occurred last October. In one shot it was shown plainly that a solitary Blackshirt (in actual fact he was an ex-service-

man of nearly 40) was being attacked by hooligans while in a hostile crowd of several thousands. Yet that man was not only defending himself, but making things very difficult for a number of the hooligans who attacked him. That film, shown to a huge number of ordinary British people, is sufficient answer to any number of cheap sneers delivered from the safe atmosphere of a newspaper office.

MARGARET COLLINS.

[We beg to offer our sincere sympathy to Miss Collins in her curious mental affliction from which she appears to be suffering. This, apparently, prevents her recalling the testimony that has been given from time to time by quite independent witnesses of the savage assaults upon men and women who have ventured even to ask a question at a Fascist demonstration. Also, we may add, the beating-up and castor-oiling of harmless men and women in the other Branches of the Fascist movement in both Italy and Germany. Whether this mental affliction followed after her achieving a semi-official post in the Fascist Army, or whether she was appointed because of this affliction, we have, of course, no means of knowing. But our sympathies always tend towards the afflicted.—EDITOR.]

SIR,—The signs of the times become more flamingly obvious every day. The case of Mr. W. F. Vernon shows what justice a person with left sympathies can now expect. Mr. Vernon, one would deduce from the reports of the case, was pilloried for having been the subject of a Fascist attack. He was treated as a criminal because Fascists had burgled his house. And the culprits were treated with the utmost lenience. Nothing has been done to the Chairman of Surrey Quarter Sessions, under whom the case was conducted. However, Mr. Vernon has learned what happens to the audacious civil servant who resists Fascist illegality. He has been suspended from his work as a technical officer of the R.A.F.

It is clear then that the person of Socialist sympathies can no longer claim the full protection of the law. His sympathies can be used to defame him in court, and have him treated as a pariah. To be a member of the Left Book Club apparently now means that one has lost the common rights of a British citizen.

Now take the other side of the picture. This morning, in the letterboxes of this neighbourhood, there was inserted a leaflet purporting to give The Truth about Spain. I am not concerned here with the general mendacity of the leaflet. (For instance it declared that the legal Spanish Government "condoned assassination" because Sotelo was assassinated. It does not mention that Sotelo's gangs had six hours previously murdered Lieutenant Castillo, a popular leader of the Socialist Youth, and that members of Castillo's military troop went to arrest Sotelo to ensure that he did not escape from Madrid. They took Sotelo off in a police-car. The story told was that one of them shot Sotelo before they reached the station, under the apprehension of a rescue. Murder does not excuse murder, of course; but at least the avengers of Castilla were acting under extreme provocation, and certainly with no authorization from the Government. Yet the leaflet calmly mentions only that Sotelo was killed. It quotes the extreme reactionary Lerroux as "Arch-radical," and so on. And, of course, has a quotation from our I.L.P., who have put themselves into the position of Trotskyites; which means that they provide ammunition for the Fascists.)

But what is of interest in relation to the situation in England is that this leaflet bases itself on the right of the Military to rebel. Imagine what would happen if it was one of the left parties putting out such a publication and widely distributing it. Within a few hours the authors and printers would be arrested for sedition. Yet as long as propaganda is directed towards inciting the army for Fascist purposes no notice is taken.

A general view of the state of public liberties will be found in the latest number of that excellent monthly sixpenny *Fact*, by James Curtis.

JACK LINDSAY.

ATHEISM AND EVOLUTION

SIR,—I am obliged to Medicus for his comments, which I beg your courtesy to allow me to answer *seriatim*.

1. I have not yet started to "put the Christian position effectively in the columns of the *Freethinker*. I am awaiting the Editor's invitation to do so.

2. I do not "shun this question of Atheism in general." The original question was one concerning our Chorley visitor, Mr. Shortt, who came to tell the Chorley public to watch "how the parsons would run away from him." When they did not run away, the matter was referred to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, who sought to make the matter a question of Atheism in general. In this he did not succeed.

The question of Atheism in general has been so effectively dealt with so frequently in the past, that it would seem like waste of time to repeat the process; especially as it appears as if no Atheist wishes to be convinced of his errors of thought.

3. I am also obliged to Medicus for reminding me that the British Association has a special brand of Evolution of its own. One is not surprised to hear it, for theories of Evolution are innumerable. Like a certain type of well-known individual, "there is one born every minute."

What those of us who do not accept as FACT mere scientific THEORY are waiting for is that the British Association, or any other scientific body or individual, shall produce for us one of five items:—

(a) A living organism produced out of inorganic matter.

(b) A process which can change any one animal or plant into a different type.

(c) A fossil intermediate between any peculiar type of animal and the ordinary type from which Evolution would say it is derived.

(d) An incipient or nascent organ from any animal.

(e) A fossil from the strata of rocks immediately beneath the Cambrian.

The production of any one of these five phenomena would go further to prove Evolution than all the arguments in the world. That production is eagerly awaited by

MAXWELL CARNSON.

[We print Mr. Carson's "reply," but we hope our readers will have mercy on our space—or want of it—and not flood us with criticisms. Mr. Carson appears to have so comprehensive a want of knowledge concerning the meaning of evolution and its evidences that there appears no ground upon which a better-informed person could touch him. After all, discussion does suppose that more than one of the disputants shall be acquainted with the subject in dispute. A closing thought—the survival of primitive forms, physical and mental, is quite in line with the hypothesis of evolution.—EDITOR.]

"THE BIBLE HANDBOOK"

SIR,—I have read this week's leader on the Bible with, as usual, much profit and appreciation.

I also notice the new edition of the *Bible Handbook* is issued at 2s. 6d., and although this is good value, respectfully suggest a cheaper edition in paper backs at, if possible, 1s. or say, at most, 1s. 6d., would be more within the reach of readers with slender means. This reduction, I feel sure would lead to greater sales which would re-act against the "Bible Push." My copy of the *Handbook* has been the best means of propaganda in dealing with several professing Christian friends and acquaintances, and if, with the co-operation of other readers, you can see your way to issue a cheap edition, I will take at least twenty copies.

V. FRANCIS.

I am an Epicurean. I consider the genuine (not the imputed) doctrines of Epicurus as containing everything rational in moral philosophy which Greece and Rome have left us.—*Thomas Jefferson*.

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, Professor T. H. Pear, M.A., B.Sc.—"The Relationship of Human Learning to Age."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4): 7.30, Debate—"That the Catholic Church Proposes the Sanest Scheme of Life in the World To-day." *Affir.*: Father Dunston Pontifex, O.S.B. *Neg.*: Mr. F. P. Corrigan, N.S.S., President, South London.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, F. Hornbrook—"Freethinking Puritans."

OUTDOOR

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.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Miss E. Millard. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson and Miss E. Millard. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Miss E. Millard.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Cross, Eccles): 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. V. Shortt. Stevenson Square, 3.0, Sunday, Mr. W. A. Atkinson.

COUNTRY

INDOOR.

BEDLINGTON (Co-op Hall): 7.15, Tuesday, A Debate—"Is Atheism More Reasonable than Christianity?" *Affir.*: Mr. J. T. Brighton. *Neg.*: Mr. Blessed.

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, R. H. S. Standfast, Hon. Sec., N.W. Federation N.S.S.—"Birth Control To-day."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Albion Court, Kirkgate): 7.15, Mr. J. Backhouse—"What is Capitalism?"

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Fregardeners' Hall, Pierardy Place): 7.0, Mr. A. Copland—"The Origin of Religion."

FALLSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole Lane): Mr. G. Bedborough (London). Afternoon: "Let's Pretend." Evening: "Christ To-day." Admission Free.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Berkeley Hall, Kent Road, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Dictators, People and Persecution."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Chapman Cohen—"Are We Civilized?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington): 7.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt—"Are We Unusual?"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Burton's Buildings, Gray Street, Oxford Road, Manchester): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead (London)—"How Man Made God."

NELSON (Weavers' Institute): 7.30, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Roman Catholic Menace: International, National and Local."

SEGHILL (Miner's Hall): 10.30, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"What Think Ye of Christ?"

OUTDOOR

BIGG MARKET: 8.0, Friday, A Discussion with Bible Students, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

FOULRIDGE: 7.45, Tuesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

PRESTON MARKET: 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (The Cross): 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

WORSTHORNE: 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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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.

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