

# THE FREETHINKER

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Views and Opinions

Fighting Atheism

The aim of the authors of *The War Against God*—to present the case against the belief in God in the language of Atheists—is an admirable one. But the performance does not fulfil the promise. The terms of their prospectus did not call for them to answer the Atheistic criticism of the god-idea; and the ignorance of the defenders of orthodoxy, which they deplore, is not removed by an outline of the political power exerted by professed Atheists in countries outside Britain, and by limiting their survey in Britain to a mere handful of men, many of whom would repudiate the name of Atheist. As to the tribute paid to the intelligence and the integrity of professed Atheists that was given long ago by Samuel Taylor Coleridge when he affirmed that "Not one man in a thousand had either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist." More than a century has passed since Coleridge uttered these words, but few of the champions of Christianity have taken heed of them. The vilification of Atheists and the misrepresentation of Atheism in orthodox quarters has received but little check.

The truth is, as was said last week, the two authors provide no ground for assuming that they have made any study of Atheism, and they have evidently not paid heed to the influence on the god-idea of modern scientific anthropology. At any rate I think their not having seriously studied Atheism is the most charitable way of accounting for their dealing with the preaching of Atheism in the last half of the nineteenth century. They say:—

In Bradlaugh's weekly paper, the *National Reformer*, Atheistic and radical opinions were freely expressed, but the paper rarely went beyond the bounds of good taste in its propaganda. This cannot be said of the *Freethinker*, edited by G. W. Foote, a follower of Bradlaugh, and who was sentenced for publishing a blasphemous libel in 1882, and was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. . . . Foote's contention was that God did not exist, and

it is obviously impossible to libel a person who is not. Bradlaugh brought unbelief from the schools into the street. Foote took it into the gutter.

Of course, the *National Reformer* is dead, while the *Freethinker* is very much alive, but if the *Freethinker* showed signs of following the *Reformer* into whatever limbo is reserved for Freethought papers, it is possible it would be treated with the same charity that is meted out to the *Reformer*. But if these writers were actually acquainted with Bradlaugh's life, they would be aware that "coarse," "illiterate," "blasphemous," "rough," to say nothing of harsher terms, were freely used by all classes of Christians concerning that great Atheistic reformer. I really ought to thank these two writers for so aptly reminding those who need the reminder, that to speak truthfully of their opponents is a lesson that Christians are the last to learn.

\* \* \*

G. W. Foote and the "Freethinker"

For charity's sake I will assume that Mr. Dark and his lady co-writer are quite ignorant of the facts of the case. They evidently do not know that it was the brutal treatment of Bradlaugh by Christians that led Foote to adopt the policy for which the *Freethinker* became famous. As Foote said: 'The bigots have asked for the lash and they shall have it.

Foote frightened the timid among unbelievers, as courage nearly always frightens those who lack it. He was a man of supreme literary taste, probably in this respect the first among the nineteenth century advocates of Freethought. He had an intimate acquaintance with English literature, and his directness of expression, often the form of it, was an outcome of his admiration for the best writers, including the theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His admirers counted among them such men as Sir Richard Burton, George Meredith, and Kingdon Clifford. He treated his opponents with far greater courtesy than they treated him. The charge that he was "coarse" in his writing and dragged Freethought down was made by Christians who feared him, and by would-be respectable Freethinkers who desired a camouflage for their disinclination to directly flout religious opinion. Of all the Freethinking papers that were issued during the nineteenth century, I know of none that contained so much "fundamental brain stuff" as the *Freethinker*. The *Freethinker*, in common with other Freethought journals, was in mental strength and positive decency far above the level of the journals that were issued against them. Volumes of proved lies and slanders may be extracted from these Christian papers. How many lies and slanders may be extracted from the fifty-six years of the *Freethinker*? The office files of the paper are at the service of Miss Essex and Mr. Dark, if they have any desire really to understand Atheism and Atheists.

Foote did not mistake dullness for dignity, and he knew that whatever liberty Christians gave to militant Freethinkers must be forced from them. He did not say to the Christians, "I hope that by my good behaviour and professed respect for the forms of savage belief that constitute your religion, I may be placed on a level with yourselves." He said, "I demand to be taken on sight as the equal of a Christian, and I believe that on close acquaintance I shall be recognized as his superior." Foote lashed the Christian creed as Voltaire lashed "the Infamous," as Swift lashed the follies and wrongs of his time. And he paid the penalty that daring spirits have always paid and still pay.

To present the *Freethinker* as dragging Free-thought into the gutter, is just a plain, ordinary Christian lie. To sum up Foote's defence in his trial for blasphemy as consisting in the plea that he could not commit blasphemy because he did not believe in a God, is as vile a distortion of a fact as I have come across for some time. I think I have read all the reports of trials for blasphemy that have taken place in this country during the past century and a half, and I know of none that equals, for strength and dignity, Foote's speech in his own defence. It was more than an attack on the artificial, priest-made crime of blasphemy, it was a magnificent plea for human dignity and freedom of thought. Foote's speech before Lord Coleridge is in print and may be obtained for six pence. We suggest its reading by the authors of *The War Against God*. But I do not wish them to remove from their book the statement I have criticized. I should prefer it to remain where it is as a standing example of the practical impossibility of Christians to deal fairly with Freethinkers, and of the need for checking everything that Christians have to say about their opponents.

Again, further to the education of Miss Essex and Mr. Dark, as well as to inform newcomers to our movement, who may not be conversant with the facts, I must point out that Foote underwent two trials for blasphemy. The first was before Judge North, a bigoted bullying Roman Catholic, who practically played the part of prosecutor as well as that of Judge. His conduct of the trial was a scandal to the average legal mind, and he was soon removed from where he was and prevented presiding over criminal trials in the future. There was no criminal appeal in those days, or the case would certainly have gone to a higher court.

The second trial was before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge—Foote was brought from prison for this, and Lord Coleridge made no secret of his disgust with North's sentence, and the fact that Foote was not placed in the second division. It was in his charge to the jury that Coleridge went out of his way to stress the fact that Foote did not pander to coarse passions or low appetites, in other words, did *not* bring Freethought into the gutter. And Coleridge permitted the jury and the public to see his own high opinion of the character of the man before him, and the quality of the speech to which the court had been listening. I am afraid that the work of our two authors will do little to remove the fundamental "ignorance" of the "defenders of orthodoxy" with regard to English Freethought. In the end the jury disagreed, and the Crown withdrew the charge. The prosecution had had enough. A re-trial might well have brought about the repeal of the blasphemy laws. And the majority of Christians had not then and have not now reached that level of civilized thought, or developed the capacity for justice, that the repeal of these would imply. The charge against Foote by Christian writers looks much like a case of "Throw plenty of mud; some will stick."

### The Case against Theism

The avowed purpose of Mr. Dark and Miss Essex is to give the defenders of orthodoxy a view of the case for Atheism as stated by Atheists. They are convinced that these defenders are "hopelessly handicapped" by their "ignorance" "of the intellectual and moral bases of unbelief." I am afraid I cannot compliment the two writers on the success of their achievement. The nearest they come to it is in statements of the Communistic case against Theism, and of the undeniable greed, and tyranny of the Christian Churches in countries where the Church has been deposed. And yet the real case against the belief in God, expressed in modern terms, may be put very briefly in outline. I follow the division adopted by the two authors—intellectual and moral.

First the intellectual or scientific basis. I leave out the classical arguments such as the argument from causation, from existence, from "Being," etc., as being, in fact, mere excuses for the continuance of a belief and not the reasons why that belief is held. There is not one per cent of believers who really understand what these arguments imply, and to take them as the reasons why man began to believe in gods is rank madness. A little more relevant is the argument from design, because that is an argument from human action to the operations of nature. But the case against this is, not the familiar one that it proves too much or too little, but that it is absolutely irrelevant. The belief in design might follow the proved existence of a God, it can never establish his existence.

The modern scientific case really rests upon the fact that we know the manner in which the belief in gods began to exist, just as we know the manner in which the belief in fairies and many other primitive superstitions began to be. The belief in "spiritual" beings is a product of mankind's misunderstanding of the nature of what is going on in both the external and internal worlds. For both Atheist and Theist there is the same world of experience. It is a world with which man has to come to some sort of terms. Primitive man sets up one set of terms; modern man sets up another set of terms. The distinction between the two, between the Theistic set of terms, and the Atheistic set of terms is the difference between two interpretations of the same facts. But we *know*, so far as the belief in gods is concerned, that this begins as a sheer illusion, and when an illusion is exposed as such it should be abandoned. When it is shown that insanity or epilepsy is not due to indwelling demons, but is due to some derangement of the nervous system, the earlier explanation is put on one side. We do this in all other directions, why not in the case of religion? It is possible for modern science to take every one of the known facts upon which religion is built, and to explain them without recourse to any form of supernaturalism. Why cling to the anthropomorphism of the savage in face of the knowledge supplied by modern science? The history of the belief in God is the history of a great illusion.

Next, the question of morals. This has nothing essentially to do with the goodness or badness of believers, or with the greed and tyranny of religious organizations. It is simply that human morality has its basis in the gregarious life of the animal world, and its flower in the development of social humanity. An ethical code does for inter-human relationships what science does for the human body when it lays down rules of eating, drinking, exercise, sanitation, etc. A moral code is, in brief, an exposition of the physiology of associated human life. But morality is implicit in practice long before it is ex-

PLICIT in theory. Moral injunctions are all manifested in action before they are codified in ethical rules. Even if we granted the unwarrantable theory that in early times the belief in gods was necessary to force upon mankind the observance of certain elementary lines of conduct, there is no justification in this for the permanent entronement of ignorance. Morality has no necessary connexion with religion, and the earliest gods are as destitute of morality as nature itself. But the gods once existing are also subject to the moral claims of the human group. As man grows in moral strength so he moralizes his gods. The God must conform to the norm of behaviour of the human group in order to exist. The evidence for the truth of this moralization of the gods is that while they do steadily grow better, there is always a "lag" on the part of the gods when they are contrasted with the best specimens of the human group. The gods never stand for more than the morality of the average man. They are never on an equality with the best.

The history of religion is, in brief, the history of an illusion. We know in broad and general terms how that illusion began. We know much more definitely and elaborately the conditions that have favoured its survival. Mr. Dark and Miss Essex stress the ignorance of defenders of orthodoxy concerning the intellectual and moral bases of Atheism. I cannot say with any degree of certainty that their own state of mind, judging from their book, is much better with regard to an understanding of Atheism. I only say there is not very strong evidence that they have this understanding. If they would face the arguments of modern scientific Atheism they would set up a record in Christian controversy.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

By

G. W. FOOTE

Before LORD COLERIDGE in the  
Court of Queen's Bench

Price 6d.

Postage 1d.

### Soliloquy by the Village Atheist

"AFTER long suffering bravely borne," he died;  
His widow and his orphan children cried,  
Yet, strangely, do not think that Parson lied  
When he said, "God is Love";  
He told them God created Man from clay,  
And made a garden in which Man could play,  
Until a talking snake led Eve astray;  
Then from that garden God did Man remove

Expelled from Eden by a sword of flame,  
Cast out from Eden, death and sickness came;  
Yet Parson bleats, "God loves Man just the same",  
Repeats that God is Love.  
That's why, he says, John suffered long and died,  
And why his Sarah and his children cried—  
Why can't folk see that Parson lied, yes, LIE:  
That God is Love Man's sufferings disprove.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

## Cash-Box and Cassock

"We can no longer take it for granted that this is a Christian nation. It is slipping away from the standards of the faith."—*Archbishop of Canterbury.*

RUDYARD KIPLING wrote a Jingo song with the refrain of "Pay, Pay, Pay." The clergy are always requesting their congregations to "Pay, Pay, Pay." Right throughout our generation there is this eternal clamour for cash. Money is wanted for church building, church extensions, more clergy, and social side-shows. At one time St. Paul's Cathedral is alleged to be in danger of slipping sideways, and cash is wanted. After the coronation, Westminster Abbey is opened as a peep-show, admitting ranging from ten shillings to a "bob." Cadging appeals for alleged "starving" clergy have been going on for decades. Bishop Creighton was always at it; and when he died he left £29,500. Since Creighton's death the present Bishop of London has been making people's flesh creep with lurid accounts of clerical sufferings, beside which the legendary Ten Plagues of Egypt were but trifling inconveniences. He has told us of a dean who had to feed an entire family of six persons on sixpence a meal. He has invoked our tears and our cheques on behalf of another Son-of-God, who lost whatever reason he had through worrying over finance. The Bishop's own personal experiences are as bad. He has assured us that the longer he draws his annual salary of £10,000 the deeper he gets into debt. In short, he has piled horrors on horror's head.

This game must be worth the candle because the quest for cash never slackens for a moment. Whether the common clergy starve, or only slim, deponent sayeth not. However, there are no corpses. But bishoprics have been multiplied from forty to nearly three hundred, and few bishops will work in the Lord's Vineyard for less than a four-figure salary. It is a game of pure, unadulterated bluff. A parson recently sent a letter to the press explaining his awful predicament. His salary of £400 annually, and a house thrown in, did not permit him to send his son to Marlborough College. It reads like the story of a King in exile retiring into squalid poverty with a dozen servants, girl-friends, and a pantechnicon full of jewels and silver plate.

This plaint of clerical poverty is put up simply to work on the emotions of old ladies and others with banking accounts. The three hundred bishops have no fear of the broker's man. Forty bishops share £182,000 yearly, and the high ecclesiastics are not at all likely to be on familiar terms with the relieving officers. Even bishops and ecclesiastics are not too proud to be pluralists, holding several jobs at one time, all being well paid.

A financial return made to the Church Assembly in 1934 showed that there are 500 benefices with a population of less than 500 in which the income was £600 yearly and over. Fifty of these have an income of over £1,000. Some of the livings in the City of London are very rich, and have a negligible resident population of caretakers and Jewish people. Of more ordinary parishes, Stainby-with-Gumby, Lincolnshire, has an income of £2,448 and a population of 216. Some livings are calculated to make a parson's mouth water. St. Mary the Virgin, Bury, has an income of £8,970. The patron is Lord Derby. St. Luke's, Chelsea is the gift of Lord Cadogan, and has £5,070. St. Michael's, Chester Square, has an income of £2,047. Altogether there are nearly 300 parishes with incomes of £1,000 and over. At the other end of the social scale there are about 6,000 livings which bring in £400 yearly, including a

house. This does not spell real poverty, as the poor know it. Even in the case of the curates the stipend varies, but very many get £250 annually. In many instances these young "sons-of-God" come from sheltered homes, and a curacy is just a stepping-stone to better things in the way of business.

This multiplication of man-power in this Church is a menace. Every Anglican priest is an emissary of the Black Army, and they may be found in every part of the country. There are 16,000 of them, whilst their generals sit in the House of Lords on the benches of the bishops, and actually hold the balance of power in the matter of legislation. No reform of this reactionary Church is needed. It should be disestablished and disendowed, and then let reform itself like any other society. And why has the disestablishment and disendowment of this particular Church been dropped out of the Democratic programme? Is it that present-day Socialists lack the foresight of their political predecessors, who knew where the enemy was? The Established Church is no more than a most reactionary branch of the Civil Service. It absorbs millions of money and so many offices and dignities, and is of no more value than a Society for the Promotion of Barbarianism.

The trouble is that this Established Church is on the side of the Cave Men. The clergy are not civilized; their whole outlook on life is antediluvian. For one Dick Sheppard there are 16,000 men with one-track medieval minds, who view working people with high-sniffing contempt. Their conception of their duty is to maintain the rights and Privileges of Priestcraft, and to resist every innovation or progressive measure as being injurious to their favoured position.

Democrats teach that all men are equal. The clergy divide people into sheep and goats, saints and sinners, saved and damned. Democrats permit reasonable divorce in ill-fated marriage. The clergy consider that ill-assorted marriages should continue until one partner murders the other. The common people are as nothing to these priests. There are 400,000,000 human beings within the British Empire. The clergy do not ask their "god" to save the people, but only a mere handful of members of one royal family. Ten million of men in the flower of their manhood perished in the Great War. The clergy, as a whole, never protested, never even thought of protesting against this wholesale murder. They preferred christening battleships, blessing the standards of murder, and taking the pay of officers whilst trundling communion outfits at the back of the fighting fronts.

"Semper Eadem" is the motto of the clergy. They preached hell and damnation fifteen centuries ago; they preach the same doctrine still. They proclaimed the fall of mankind for the same period, and they proclaim it to-day. The roots of their creed are embedded in sheer unadulterated barbarism. What have they in common with the highest ideals of present-day civilization? The wisest ruler mentioned in their Scripture had 700 wives and 300 concubines. The man described as being after their god's own heart was a murderer. It is not so long since that a service for King Charles "the Martyr" was a component part of the "Book of Common Prayer." When chloroform was first introduced in cases of midwifery, its use was opposed by the clergy on the ground that it alleviated their deity's primal curse on women. When a Bill for the provision of seats for tired shop-assistants was introduced in Parliament it was opposed by Right-Reverend Prelates, just as all progressive measure have been opposed by these god-inspired legislators. When the ages-long Tithe Racket, by which farmers had been fleeced of a sacred tenth for centuries, was commuted by a last payment of

£60,000,000, where did the money go? Was it not sufficient to pay for a few extra workers in the Lord's Vineyard without further cadging from congregations? And it is so very necessary to tell lies to get more money from the innocents in the pews.

It cannot be too often emphasized that the British Empire contains far more Non-Christians than Christians, and of the latter a very large number are only nominal religionists. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury himself has been forced to admit that this country is slipping away from the Christian Faith. If this be so, why should Christian ecclesiastics be allowed to continue to usurp so large a place in public affairs, seeing that they represent only a minority of the nation? Disestablishment and disendowment are the logical conclusion of the present position. Disestablishment alone is worse than useless, for it would be the height of folly to relieve such a Church of State control, and to permit it to use its ill-gotten wealth in working, not only against the State, but in attempting to frustrate the fruition of Democratic ideals. For the Black Army of Priestcraft is the deadliest of all enemies of Democracy, not only in this country, but throughout the length and breadth of the world.

MIMNERMUS.

## Our Bare Necessities

AN S.O.S. has recently been issued to the people of Sussex. The Christian Church (The Church of England, by Law established), is facing "one of the greatest problems in its long history." Two hundred thousand men, women and children are living in improved conditions in the great new housing areas of Sussex. The occupants of these houses have been, against spiritual precept, discontented with the original position into which it has pleased the Lord to call them, and have become articulate, pouring their woes not into the ears of the Lord, but into the ears of Man. The new housing estates that have come into existence are a testimony to their changed policy. Admittedly there is still much room for progress in the same direction. "So far, so good!" say those interested in human welfare. But, say the official representatives of the Church of England: "This is mere materialistic progress; in such manifestations there are grave spiritual perils. Which means, putting it bluntly, what is the good of houses, without churches?"

"Two hundred thousand men, women and children are living in the great new housing estates in our own Diocese, and are in grave danger of growing up unshepherded and uncared for from the religious point of view." So runs the Bishop's Appeal for Funds issued from The Palace, Chichester. This ecclesiastic's first appeal was made in 1932, and we expect it met with some success. In 1936 he asked for another £100,000. The purposes to which the money collected was to apply were:—

To buy sites and build Churches or Halls in the housing areas.

To assist with grants the reorganization of Church Schools and the training of teachers.

To augment the stipends of the poorest clergy.

All the objectives have a relish of salvation in them; salvation, that is, in the world to come. But it is well to point out, as the point has far-reaching implications, that the materialistic needs of the poorer clergy are not considered to be without spiritual significance.

Fifteen signatures to the Appeal are appended.

Amongst them we note the names of Leconfield, Cecil, Willingdon, Athlone, Bessborough and Abergavenny. It is plain that those who are most concerned with the spiritual progress of the Christian Church, come, in the main, from the Stately Homes of England. They are those who, by the Grace of God, have been called upon to bear the burden of their flesh in circumstances which allow them to treat superciliously the Want Materialistic. We are told that by the subscribing of £100,000, one hundred thousand coins, each of which Samuel Johnson could have proved to be solidly material by biting or fingering, the Church will be able to combat "the paganism and materialism of the present day." Of the £100,000, £55,000 is still required to provide the "bare necessities of worship" in these localities. The bare necessities of WORSHIP! So, in imitation of the *George V. Playing Fields Fund Appeal*, those with Banking Accounts are asked to give the odd Shillings and Pence at the end of three half-years, and so add to the number of Tabernacles made with Hands.

One can admit that the Clergy consider as necessities things which many others have found, from experience, can very well be done without. One can also admit, and cheerfully, that the Clergy are well within their rights in asking for funds for any object they think fit. All the same, there are relevant comments to be made.

It is clear to non-Christians, and, by implication, to Christians, that God will not lend assistance to purely materialistic aims. What God wants is tabernacles; what God wants is Worship. Better shelter, better raiment, better food, are of course excellent things up to a point. But Soul Qualities can thrive in hovels; excellent religious spirit can be shown by a hungry man, who exclaims, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Good Housing comes by the agency of frail men, men not necessarily devout; the advocates of social improvement may be even poor creatures animated by compassion and a sense of justice, who care not a whit for the silver chalice and the richly carved reredos. God will have no truck with movements purely pagan and materialistic. All right then—a Bishop should know—but all the same it seems a convincing exhibition of helplessness and hopelessness, when the bare necessities of existence are insufficient to move God's help, to suggest that he will do nothing towards providing the bare necessities of worship. It is easy to say "Bah" to those benighted ones who urge that no kind of spiritual growth is possible alongside acute physical discomfort. But to argue that the bare necessities of worship cannot be obtained without an abundance of that which is unnecessary for, even inimical to, spiritual growth, is getting as demonstrably near to humbug as can ever be reached in this world. This humbug is made clear when the exception in favour of better materialistic conditions for the poor clergy is unashamedly made.

We cannot see, from theological premises, why God cannot do a little towards improving the spiritual life of the community. To say that *God does nothing* in this sphere is something like a spiritual collapse in the very Holy of Holies. The Prayer that will remove mountains may be a little exaggeration on the part of the Lord, but the belief that the Lord will look after his own has surely, to some extent, potency. Must the Church indeed depend on hard cash, particularly when this delays the improvement in the material condition of the people by expenditure on objects ecclesiastical, ghostly and other-worldly.

The Bishop of Chichester will, we expect, get his Cash. Where appear the Noble Names, the good

Christian will be disposed to lend assistance. The great bulk of the money will come from those who have every reason to praise God that the position that they have been called upon to occupy is worthy of them. And, when the money is forthcoming, the things of the spirit can then be cultivated by them in more comfortable conditions. It is not consistent with God's dignity for his disciples to have to stand in all sorts of weather at street corners exhorting the hungry to come and be spiritually filled. When the coffers are full more churches will be built, and a brave show will be made in order to compete with the architectural exploits of Holy Mother Church and other spiritually misguided people. The Churches will be, with luck, better ventilated, and, perhaps, provided with seating accommodation equal to that of a village cinema. It is too much to hope for a revival of the time when no one entered the village church until the Squire entered with his lady and his relations, to be followed (oh, so correctly) by the genteel, and, lastly, by the labourers and such trash. To-day's paganism debars so attractive a vision. But some little effort will perhaps be made to see that the spiritual side of the subscribers may grow up in physical comfort. Why! in quite a modern church about 50 miles from London, the front pews have been delightfully rounded in order to accurately and comfortably nest the posteriors of a High Personage and his retinue, in order to assist their spiritual growth. And, as another instance of assisting the same process, we will have the "religious teaching in Church Schools" improved so that the children can be carefully shepherded into the Church of Henry VIII., the Church by Law Established. Get hold of the youngster, or the Church of England is imperilled! The Church of England, mark you, for there are several kinds of spiritual growth which are, obviously, quite obnoxious. *The Way*, is the Way of the Bishop of Chichester, and the method of keeping a respectable number moving on that way is to pump a brand of Spirituality into helpless children. This is, of course, by no means a method favoured by the English Church alone. Kidnapping is *the only way* for any Supernatural Church. It is clear that the issue cannot be left to God. For God (and it is evident that here the Bishops agree) does Nothing. Never was the Head of an illustrious House so careless of his name, traditions and reputation.

T. H. ELSTON.

## Wood, Wine and Wax

"A wave of crime is sweeping over Ireland."

*Belfast Telegraph.*

HIS Grace the most Rev. Dr. D'Arcy, Lord Primate of All Ireland, presided at the Consistory Court at Armagh to hear charges against the Rev. S. R. S. Colquhoun, Vicar of St. John's Church, Sandymount, Dublin, accusing him of having offended against church rubrics. The other members of the court were the Archbishop of Dublin, the Bishop of Derry, the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, and the Recorder of Belfast, the Irish Free State Judiciary also being represented. Defendant was found guilty, and sentence of six months' suspension was promulgated.

The charges against the defendant were very numerous. I do not know how many rubrics there are, but it would seem as if they had all been offended. Here are a few of the guilty deeds as set forth in the charge sheet:—

(3) Performed acts of obeisance to the Lord's Table on various occasions. . . .

(4) Conducted the said service with lighted candles standing on the Communion Table when the same were not necessary for the purpose of giving light.

(5) Frequently during the said service made the sign of the Cross.

There are umpteen charges of similar gravity, among others that the vicar caused or permitted divers acts and ceremonies to be performed by acolytes or servers, and that he did permit a server or acolyte to add liquid (presumably water) to the cup out of which the respondent did then drink, and after drinking . . . followed the reading of a passage from Scripture, which is known in the Roman Catholic Mass as the Last Gospel.

After all the learned and reverend persons have argued and pleaded, heard evidence at great length adjourned and resumed, and done all the other things done in courts, an irreverent Freethinker ventures judgment on the mighty issues involved.

Invocation to a table is indigenous to Latin. Like Mr. Winston Churchill, I always questioned the utility of such an expression as O, Table! Still, man is a table-using animal. He sits, eats, works, plays at or on a table; he frequently stands upon it, and has been known to lie under it. God wrote on tables commandments for the living; the dead use tables to prove that they are alive. It will be pointed out that here the obeisance is *from* the table, but if legislators bow to the chair in the Commons, surely a clergyman may bow to the Lord's Table.

While I strongly deprecate the adding of water to wine, I would be constrained to admit that involuntary oscillation or inclination towards a table as in the sacrilegious obeisance ascribed to the defendant does not appear to be due to the consumption of undiluted intoxicants. But "presumably water" is disquieting. I could quote Buzfuz that it is not evidence. Wine laced with gin would be modernistic. Why not communion cocktails? And if divers acts are taboo, what about a trapeze performance?

*Let there be light*, was not spoken of candles. One can hardly think of the creator of the sun getting a kick out of a wax taper. Yet His Grace and Your Worship, and the Lord Chief Justice have all in solemn conclave listened to evidence, and adjudicated upon the point as to whether the Almighty had been so parsimonious with solar illumination that His puny efforts had to be supplemented. While the burning of candles was admitted, a great deal of time was taken up with evidence as to the number involved. witnesses being called who had actually counted them. Then when the number eight was arrived at, the subject was unaccountably dropped. I think I could have prolonged proceedings very considerably by calling experts on actinic, ultra violet, and infra red rays, and by cross-examining them on candle-power standards of spiritual light.

The Reverend Mr. Colquhoun is alleged to have leanings towards Rome; he is certainly a very considerable Jesuit. He admitted making the sign of the Cross, but only "when engaged in silent and private prayer, not otherwise." Another way of saying, "I do not bite my thumb at you, but I bite my thumb." But the Justices would have no subterfuge. I quote from the report.

The Lord Chief Justice: He says he did it privately, not as part of the service. Is that an answer?

Mr. Phelps: No my lord. I submit it is not, if he does it during Divine Service or Holy Communion.

It would be wasteful of the space of this paper if I quoted further from the puerile piffle of the Consistory Court. The point will be conceded that if a man is hired to do a certain job, and forbidden to imitate the ways of a hated rival and fails, he is deserving of censure. But that this candle lighting, table bowing, wine diluting, public, private, single or double crossing was served up to the public as a real sensation is not so much a tribute to the power of the press, as to the stupidity of the people. That supposedly educated men should solemnly sit in judgment on such trivial issues, would incline a rational being to look at the date on the calendar. How far are we removed from the Dark Ages?

But the real tragedy is that mighty problems now confront the human race, and that if we give seriousness of thought to folly, we impress fools that we see wisdom in their antics. Let a man be as stupid as he likes. Say he shaves his head, wears petticoats, gaiters, comic hats, collars, waistcoats, beads, chains, sashes; burns candles, mixes drinks, beats his breast, bows to tables, and otherwise offends against the rubrics—whoever or whatever they are; all these things may he do for aught I care. But when these follies are subsidised by the State, and involve the services of our highest legal luminaries, the harassed tax-payer may well wonder if the table is worth the candle.

Yes, serious crime is on the increase in the Free State. A Catholic boy kissed a girl; the sound reverberated round the world. Humanity was staggered. Now a Protestant vicar lights a candle. Civilization is imperilled. To what abysmal depths will Ireland descend? All moral restraint is gone. Even to-day the rumour goes that in the Dublin Ghetto a schnorrer was seen gnawing a ham bone! Is not that against all rubrics?

J. EFFEL.

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## Acid Drops

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Father Woodlock is still protesting against people who have the "impudence" to imagine that marriage exists only for the "pleasure," and not primarily for the purpose of "parenthood." We are not disputing that from the point of view of strict historical Christianity the begetting of children is the main, if not the only object, of the mating of the sexes. This is true of the whole of the animal world, but it is the quality of human marriages that other considerations arise, and that these higher considerations dominate the lower one of reproduction. Many considerations dominate the lower one of reproduction. Many historians notice that the reduction of marriage to a low level was one of the consequences of the dominance of the Christian Church, and of the consequent lowering of the social position of woman under Christian rule. In the New Testament there is no recognition of the humanizing influence of family life, and the same is true of a great part of Christian literature. St. Paul's reason for permitting marriage is merely to prevent fornication, and though he wished all men were as he was, it was "better to marry than to burn." The superiority of the single over the married state was preached by the Christian Church for centuries, and the maintenance of celibate priesthood in the Roman Church is one indication of this. The virgin has always ranked higher in "spiritual value" than the married woman in authoritative Christian literature.

The aim of the Roman Catholic Church in this matter is not for quality of birth but for quantity. Politically it spells power, and in other directions it leads to the aggrandisement of the Church, and the Roman Church has never permitted any consideration to stand in the way of its achieving power in whatever form was possible. The

Christian Church is founded upon a celibate, and Father Woodlock is himself a celibate and forbidden to marry. Perhaps the world has not lost much in his case, but one can only say that it is a lie, a vile lie, and a conscious lie to say that men and women who practise birth-control are animated only by a desire for "pleasure." The intelligence, the forethought, the care for children, and the status of women where birth-control has its place is immeasurably higher than it is among Roman Catholics who see in the marriage of a man and a woman nothing but a means of securing pleasure.

The Bishop of Carlisle, preaching at North Cumberland, shed a flood of light upon the Christian outlook on medical science, and on the modern interest in public health. This extract from his sermon is worth preserving for use when clerics pretend that they favour public expenditure in the public interest to cure and prevent sickness:—

Would there be any need for this immense expenditure for hospital services if people were living righteously? How much disease is the result of wilful sin?

Though modern science keeps increasing the means by which the consequences of sin can be escaped, the moral evil persists. Lack of self-control becomes greater.

After all, this is no new attitude. The Christian Emperors destroyed the pre-Christian hospitals, and if some of the priests had their way to-day we should still leave the sick in the hands of "Faith healers."

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* reports that complaints have been made of the unruly behaviour of children at a Bridlington cinema during the playing of "God Save the King." This is the worst example of the corruption of manners that we have heard of for a long time; it is also an indictment of our educational system. What are we spending millions on education for, if teachers cannot train children to stand to attention when the hymn is played? And how is it possible for adults to develop the half-bored, half-vacant look that accompanies the playing of "God Save the King," unless the habit is cultivated in youth? These children, if they do not receive the proper punishment, may grow up asking why one must ask God to save the King at the end of every performance. Would not once a week do? God must feel as bored as most people look at this mechanical repetition of a not brilliantly-worded song.

*Bicycling News* reports a case of a shopkeeper who was prosecuted by an inspector (who seems to have been in need of cases) for selling him a piece of flex on Sunday. We are not surprised at this class of case occurring. Employ numbers of officials for the purpose of detecting this kind of offence, and the manufacturing of cases is almost certain to take place. More offences mean a better time for the officials. Few offences mean the "sack" for some of them. But why does not some one prosecute these inspectors for being an accessory to the fact? We fancy that such an action would hold good. The Act does not order Inspectors to go round lying and planning to trap a shopkeeper who often, out of sheer good nature, does that which exposes him to punishment.

The *Christian World* is impressed by the "tragic seriousness" of the outbreak of typhoid at Croydon. We fully appreciate the concern shown, but we note also the complete indifference to prayer as a means of enlisting God's help in ending that epidemic. Perhaps the *Christian World* has reflected that the bacillus of typhoid is as much God's handiwork as anything else, and that he created it for the purpose it serves. All the *Christian World* looks for is a closer co-ordination between the family doctor and a tightening up of medical administration. Really, this advice is quite Atheistic in its nature. God may well be annoyed that he is so publicly ignored by one of the leading Christian papers in this country. If the editor of the *Christian World* is stricken with typhoid in the near future, good Christians will not be slow to draw the inevitable conclusion.

Fears of having committed the "Sin against the Holy Ghost" have wrecked a number of so-called intellectuals. Many guesses have been made by Theologians as to the ingredients of this mysterious but unpardonable crime. Mr. M. J. Jacks, a Modernist Christian, and a famous Head-master, ought to be an authority. He declares, in his new book on Education, that "Vulgarity is a form of that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which is the only unforgivable sin." Believers may get away with dropping bombs on babies, but not with dropping their h's.

The *Methodist Times*, which has already "amalgamated" with the *Methodist Leader*, is now amalgamating with the *Methodist Recorder*. We remember what happened to the "ten little nigger boys"—and eventually to the "One little nigger boy." Perhaps like the Methodist Pastor who was assimilated by a Congregational Church, the *Methodist Journals* will end as the organs of some other of the innumerable Christian sects.

Lady de Villiers asks why do men not give money to the Church instead of to bookmakers. We are not sure, but the reason may be that with bookmakers they do occasionally strike a winner. At any rate they do not have to wait until they are dead to find out whether they have lost or won.

Those people who are intelligent enough to appreciate the poor intellectual quality of preachers do not usually complain. They simply stay away from Church. The more intelligent of Church attendants, when pressed, apologize for their going to Church by some vague talk about "an inspiring sermon," or "a good preacher," much as one might talk of a good actor, or they like the musical service, but not often because of any intellectual satisfaction they get from listening to what is being said by one of the Lord's anointed.

But probably because the Bishops and the heads of the Church are noticing the falling off in the quality of those who go to Church, and also because it is difficult to supply a class of preachers who will attract the more intelligent portion of the community, a Commission has been appointed "to investigate the training of candidates for the ministry of the Church." According to the *Church Times*, it is a question whether they are to leave parishes neglected or abandon "the accepted standards of clerical knowledge and equipment." Well, the standards of clerical knowledge and equipment are more or less of a laughing-stock to those who properly appreciate them, and if these are further lowered the outlook for the Church is poor indeed.

The truth of the situation is that life is in conflict with the Church, and the standard sinks lower as this conflict sharpens. A few superior men survive, but the conflict of religion with modern thought, the avenues that are open to men of ability in the fields of politics, science, literature and commerce, leave a mass of intelligences, who find a sense of superiority in the pose of a medicine-man that is hopelessly out of date. The *Church Times* itself speaks of the "hideous danger of producing a type of parsonical clergymen, moving in an unreal world, and insulated in a roseate aura of pietism from mental contact with the people they are sent to serve." But that is not a danger, it is an existing fact. That is one reason why some of the men who feel this try to find compensation in taking an interest in all sorts of non-religious activities that have no vital connexion with their religion, and even take pains to stress their own divorcement from the theological life.

A Frenchman visiting Ireland is credited with saying, "If you see anybody in the street looking more like a Catholic clergyman than any Catholic priest could possibly look, it'll be a Protestant clergyman."

Many of our readers may not be aware of the fact that there is in existence a "Medical Prayer Union." We presume that the aim of the Union is to help Medical men in their work. If so we are assured of two things.

First, that the medical man who tells his patients to rely upon prayer will soon be out of work. Second, if there is any likelihood of men and women taking the advice literally and seriously, few medical men will advertise the value of prayer. Of course, if medical attendance is to be accompanied by prayer, that may be with a certain class of doctors, a paying game. And we agree with Voltaire that prayer may do good, if it is accompanied by the right sort of treatment.

Some time ago a statue of the Madonna in a church at Brescia, Italy, was despoiled by thieves of jewellery, said to be worth several thousands of pounds. The indignant congregation raised a fund, and the Bishop was able once more to adorn the Madonna with her customary bracelets, brooches, etc. Now the Madonna has again been despoiled by thieves, who not only took the jewellery, but also valuable drapings, including a mantle presented by the Crown Princess. The thieves are evidently Christians of the type that disapproves of the laying-up of treasures in this world.

Mr. (or is it Rev.?) J. A. Thompson of Battersea Forward Movement, is shocked by the very mild heresy of Rev. Leslie Weatherhead. It seems that the City Temple Heretic dared to say:—

Has it ever struck you there was no more justice in the Israelites descending upon Palestine and driving out the rightful population from its own country, than for Italy to descend upon Abyssinia?

And Mr. Thompson shrieks at Mr. Weatherhead that horrible heresy of that kind "has already emptied England's Sunday Schools." Mr. Thompson believes that "the Old Testament is the inspired word of God, written by men who were moved by the Holy Ghost." He appears to take for granted that invasion of other people's countries, and the wholesale and atrocious murders of all inhabitants is just the sort of thing the Holy Ghost would "move" anybody to do and describe and praise.

A few weeks ago most of the papers were paying tribute to the valuable services of the Rev. "Dick" Sheppard. Sheppard ran a Peace Pledge Union, and intended holding a Commemoration meeting in Hyde Park on November 11, as a form of protest against the disguised recruiting performance around the Cenotaph. The badge of the Peace Pledge Union is a white poppy, and members of the organization wore these on November 11 instead of the conventional "order to remember" red poppy. Some appear to have worn both. Two of these white poppy wearers have been discharged from a firm of Lloyd's underwriters for doing so. The way we are going, it looks as though we may presently find men discharged from employment for listening to the wrong broadcast, and women fined for not following the fashion in hats set by the Duchess of Kent.

For ourselves we have never worn even a red poppy and never intend doing so. This, partly because we do not believe in any established advertisement of one's sorrow, when grief is genuine, and, secondly, because we detest an *order* to sorrow on stated occasions. And we are glad to see that this sensible view is gaining ground. Departures from the normal appearance of those who were related to the dead were quite "reasonable" when the aim was to protect one from the return of ghosts—which is the original reason for wearing or adopting an appearance different from the normal. To-day that justification no longer exists in fact, and grief and respect for the dead ought to be sincere enough to stand without advertisement. It is monstrous to make an outward profession of mourning either socially or legally compulsory. It is a degradation of the living and an insult to the dead.

We learn from the *Christian World* that Mr. Philip de Laszlo, the painter who died recently, an Hungarian by birth, regularly made an allowance to his mother, who lived in Hungary. When the war broke out this was done through an English Bank. The highly virtuous

Horatio Bottomley, who saw in the war one of his opportunities, used this help given by Mr. de Laszlo as an opportunity to show his "patriotism." After much agitation de Laszlo was interned for giving help to the enemy. The "succour" was the help of an aged mother in need! Dropping a bomb on Mrs. de Laszlo would have been, in the war-time jargon, shocking. Starving her to death was an exhibition of "patriotism" in action.

Now that our Government is anxious to establish good terms with Germany, why not advise the King to return to his original German surname, instead of keeping the new one of "Windsor," which was adopted to illustrate the "never again" attitude against Germany? We are entitled to say this, because right through the war we protested against the idiotic idea that we could cut ourselves off from a people such as the Germans, and that, even if we could, it would be only at a tremendous cost to civilization. But war-time savagery had to be encouraged, and we have been rewarded with Hitler, and Goebbels, and the rest of the gang of degenerates, and must now help them in their work of further demoralizing a kindly and cultured people.

The Rev. Oliver Puckridge, Rector of Pinhoe, near Exeter, explains how for over 900 years an annuity has been paid to his parish—or its Rectors—for the purpose of maintaining a donkey. Mr. Puckridge hastens to assure us that the annuity he is referring to is not the usual one for paying the salary of the Rector. It appears that in the year 1001 A.D., Ethelred the Dane was so pleased with patriotic behaviour of the then Rector's Donkey, that the Great Dane endowed the parish with sufficient money to keep a donkey in the parish for all time to come. This money is paid yearly by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to Mr. Puckridge, whose last donkey "bolted and kicked my trap to bits," says the rector.

## Fifty Years Ago

THEY cry out in hell for the turncock, and he cometh not. They protest that they have paid water rates for a great many years, and that the company ought to send them a pailful of the true *aqua vitæ* for "auld lang syne." They are roasted, baked, fried, boiled and grilled; always cooked, though never quite done.

"Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy farin'!  
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!

"Some Christians have a comfortable creed!" exclaims Byron. *Some* Christians, forsooth! Why most of them believe this infernal doctrine. The vast majority of those who profess "the only true religion" believe that the Father of all will go on cooking his own children, or nine-tenths of them, for ever, without granting them the benefit of being eaten for a change. Spurgeon, for instance, who is a perfect type of the ordinary Christian, and whose very success is a success of mediocrity, expresses himself as follows:—

"Thou wilt look up there on the throne of God and it shall be written, 'For ever!' When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torment they shall say, 'For ever!' When they howl, echo cries, 'Forever!'"

"'For ever' is writ on their racks,  
'For ever' on their chains;  
'For ever' burneth in the fire,  
'For ever' ever reigns."

What poetry, what humanity, what philosophy! As I write a dog is barking in a neighbouring garden, and another is howling replication from the opposite row of houses. I implore a miracle to smite them into silence, yet I unhesitatingly say that this canine duet is sweeter music than Spurgeon's "gospel of glad tidings." Fancy paying a man twelve hundred a year to preach this diabolical shoddy, which is hardly fit for the *Police News* or "a penny dreadful"!

*The Freethinker*, December 4, 1887.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We are obliged this week to omit several letters in the correspondence column and also answers on this page to other communications. The one rigid, unchangeable thing about the *Freethinker* is the number of its pages and the length of its columns.

H. MORRIS.—More pamphlets will come out as soon as possible, but Mr. Cohen has his hand very, very full at the moment.

DON FISHER, S. EDWARDS, and others, write suggesting that our "Acid Drops" on the Cenotaph incident might well be re-issued as a leaflet. Anyone is welcome to do so if they see fit.

J. MCKENNA.—Take the text as meaning that man's individuality ends with death and you will have its real meaning.

FOR Circulating and Advertising the *Freethinker*.—Don Fisher, 4s.

W. L. ENGLISH.—Thanks for book. Religion and militarism have always run well together.

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

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

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

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

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

On Monday, December 6, Mr. Cohen will speak in the Town Hall, Hamilton Square, Birkenhead, on "Can Christianity Survive?" We understand that the meeting is exciting interest in the locality. Doors open at 7.30; chair to be taken at 8 o'clock.

There have been a number of complaints of late of postal orders sent for books and pamphlets to the *Freethinker* office that have not reached us. In each case of complaint the orders have been discharged; the loss has, of course, been ours. But the number of missing letters has been too large for the matter to be explained by misdirection or loss in transit. We shall, therefore be obliged if those who send orders will in future note the number of the postal order, and make it payable to "Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch." This will enable us to trace the missing orders. We shall always take it as a favour, if those who send for literature, with or without money enclosed, will notify us if they do not receive what has been ordered. In nearly every case orders are discharged within forty-eight hours of receipt.

The Gateshead Town Hall was filled on Sunday last, to listen to a lecture from Mr. Cohen on "What is the Use of Religion?" The address was followed with interest, and a number of questions followed. Previous to the meeting Mr. Cohen met at tea some forty members.

(Continued on page 778)

## The Edinburgh Case

We were able to make but a brief announcement last week to the effect that the Edinburgh case had broken down. Very little was said on the subject while the case was pending; when a legal fight is on we prefer to be as silent, as wisdom dictates, until it is over.

About the middle of August the N.S.S. Secretary was informed that Mr. George Whitehead had received a summons to the Sheriff's Court in Edinburgh, to answer certain charges under the Shop Hours Acts, and also under an Edinburgh bye-law, of selling literature after 8 o'clock, p.m. There was no time to call an Executive meeting, so we instructed an Edinburgh solicitor to appear and enter a formal plea of not guilty. The case was brought on and adjourned until October 26. Before that date, at the request of the Executive, I went to Edinburgh to consult with the solicitor and an Advocate (the equivalent of our English Counsel) and to settle the line of defence. This was decided on, and the case came on for hearing on October 26. It was heard in the new Sheriff's Court, formally opened only the previous day. The case was presented by the Procurator Fiscal.

There were a number of counts in the indictment, and each count needed the examination and cross-examination of witnesses. I did not hear the evidence as, being a witness, I was not allowed to be in court until my own evidence had been given. It was after three o'clock when I was called, and by the time my examination, a very brief one, and the cross-examination—a lengthy one—was concluded, it was time for the court to rise; and the hearing was adjourned unto November 30.

It should be said that the Procurator was very well ill-informed as to the work of the N.S.S. and its associated organizations, but I was able to make the position quite clear to the court by utilizing the cross-examination for that purpose. As we left the court our Counsel remarked that there did not seem to be much left of the case for the prosecution. I did not feel so sanguine. It is true that the Sheriff appeared to be paying great attention to what I said, but I have heard too many cases to mistake a desire to get to the bottom of the matter as a safe guide to the direction in which the verdict would go. I was, however, surprised when our London solicitor received word from Edinburgh that the Procurator Fiscal had decided to withdraw the case. But I was not very pleased at the news. I should have preferred the case to end in a considered judgment even though that had not been obtained until an appeal had been heard.

The whole charge was, in my judgment, ridiculous, and I have a suspicion that the police imagined they had in hand nothing more than a case against an ordinary street hawker. It is quite clear that the Shop Hours Acts were never intended to apply to the sale of literature at open-air meetings. These Acts had two objects in view. One was to prevent employees working too many hours, the other was to protect the shopkeeper by permitting no one to sell from a stall goods that the shopkeeper was prohibited selling in his shop after 8 o'clock. The local bye-law also was never intended to apply to the sale of literature at public meetings. No one would regard literature sold in connexion with a public gathering as, in any vital sense of the word, trading. In such circumstances the sale of literature is an integral part of the meeting (more often than not the literature is sold at a loss) and its prohibition is, in actuality, a restriction of the right of public propaganda. Moreover, if the action of the Edinburgh police had been endorsed by the courts it would mean prohibiting the

sale of literature, after 8 o'clock, at a political, or a religious, or any other propagandist gathering, whether that meeting were held in the open-air or in a hall. I suspect that when the nature of the case was made plain to the court the Procurator wisely, for himself, saw the only way out of an awkward situation.

It is probable that had the police known that the case would be taken up by the N.S.S., and above all had they known how the Society fights such cases, they would not have acted at all. And in this case, as in every case that affects liberty of propaganda, the N.S.S. was not acting solely in its own interests. It was serving all to whom the rights of public gathering are of importance.

It is not politic, perhaps, to say more at the moment, or to indicate what might have been said had the case proceeded farther. The same situation may arise again. It is also unfortunate that in this case the Society is compelled to pay its own costs. Luckily it is in a position to do this without any need for appealing for funds. But the incident does demonstrate the need for a Society such as the N.S.S. that is willing and able to meet these emergencies. During recent years we have had occasion to interfere in a number of cases in which the police have taken to themselves the power to permit or to proscribe things that they have no legal right to control. In most cases the action of the N.S.S. has put these things right. In this case, as has so often happened in the history of the Freethought movement, the fight was not ours alone. It was a case that concerns and affects all who are engaged in the work of public propaganda, whatever its nature may be.

C.C.

(Continued from page 777)

Members were present from all the surrounding neighbourhood. Many of those present were personal friends, dating back more than forty years. It was good to meet them on intimate terms, and also pleasing to make the acquaintance of so many newcomers to the "best of causes." Mr. Cohen hopes to be able to count them as his friends during the time he has before him to continue his work for Freethought. Mr. Brighton took the chair, and carried out his duties excellently. We were glad to hear from all quarters of the excellent work that Mr. Brighton is doing in Durham and Northumberland. Large meetings have been the rule throughout the summer season, and the value of what has been done was manifested in the number of young men and women who have joined the movement. Mr. Brighton has tact, ability and good temper—three invaluable qualities in a propagandist.

At the Leicester Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak this evening (December 5), on "A Search for God." N.S.S. speakers always receive a hearty welcome from members of the local Secular Society and the audience. Mr. Rosetti's visit and his subject should ensure the presence of all old friends, and provide just the occasion for the introduction of those still in the orthodox camp. The lecture begins at 6.30, and, as usual, questions and discussion will follow.

One of the Roman Catholic papers, the *Catholic Herald*, in its issue for November 19, has the following:—

Mr. Chapman Cohen has clarified the situation in regard to the international "Godless" Conference, scheduled for London next year.

The news of the "Godless" Conference reached this country through a Catholic Continental news agency; it appears, however, that the conference is not to be one of militant Atheists, but an old-time conference of the International Union of Freethinkers, or old-fashioned Atheists.

But there is no regret from other papers for having published the lie. That would be too much to expect. Other religious papers, including the *English Churchman*, also published the lie, some of them devoting leading articles to the "outrage." We are waiting also for them to regret having told the lie, or ought we not to say to express regret that the lie has been so quickly found out and so easily exposed. This very religious journal thought it was the duty of the Home Secretary to forbid a Congress "planned and provided for by a militant anti-God organization in a foreign country." But what is Christianity in England, but the Pro-God organization established by a foreign country? Even supposing that Jesus was as the lunatic German professors of Germany are teaching, an "Aryan," belonging to a race of people that is as mythical as the honesty of German rulers, Christianity is still a foreign cult maintained in this country by a mixture of force and cash.

But the worst feature of the whole matter is the conduct of the virtuous Sir Samuel Hoare, the Home Secretary, in answer to a question in the House of Commons. Five minutes enquiry, a mere telephone call, would have given the true nature of the proposed Congress. Instead of that, and to serve both party, and, we presume, private religious, ends he deplored the holding of such a Congress. He hinted that obstacles might be placed in the way of some visitors on the ground of their being "undesirable Aliens." A quite elastic reason. We wonder whether Sir Samuel Hoare will summon up the courage to inform the House of Commons (a) that some of his supporters were telling a lie, and (b) express his regret that he had not bothered to make any enquiry before giving an answer that encouraged stupid and malignant people to believe that the Congress was such as some very good Christians had imagined. We do not think he will. Christians never express regret at telling lies about Freethinkers; they only look, and feel, sorrowful when they are found out.

We think the following from *Time and Tide* of November 20, is worthy of reproduction in these columns:—

It was all in keeping with these Party traditions that Commander Marsden should have unearthed his little mare's nest about the League of the Godless in Parliament last week. The facts are that a highly respectable old Association dating from Victorian days (and presumably of Darwinian rather than of Marxian descent), known as the International Federation of Freethinkers, which hold Conferences once in two years—the last was held in Prague and the leading delegates were received in the Presidential palace by Dr. Benes—has been invited by representatives from the Ethical Society, the Rationalist Press Association and the Secular Society, to hold its next Conference in London in 1938. Its last in England was held in 1888, and the idea is to make this one a Jubilee. All that the League of the Godless, a Russian Society, has to do with the business is that it is one of the various Societies who will probably send representatives to the Conference. But the thing was a perfectly good mare's nest for a Conservative Member to find, though perhaps he might have looked up his facts a bit more carefully before asking his question. What was a little shocking was Sir Samuel Hoare's reply. I do not always find myself in agreement with Mr. Gallacher, but on this occasion his outburst seemed to have a good deal of justification. It is one thing for private Members to make party capital out of mare's nests, it is quite another for Ministers to lend themselves to the practice. Really one expects of Ministers a higher standard of honesty than that.

We ought not to miss from this week's list of religious specimens, Sir Philip Dundas, particularly as we are nearing the pantomime season. Addressing the Edinburgh City Business Club, on November 23, he is represented by the *Daily Record and Mail*, to have unveiled a perfectly deadly plot against the safety of this country. There is in this country, he said, an "Anti-God Society" that is at work, particularly among the youth of Great Britain, and it is preaching,

just everything every decent man abhors. Its methods are to get at the moral fibre of youth first, and having first sapped their moral fibre, they start putting across the sort of stuff that is being preached in various countries of the world at this moment. . . . This is going to lead . . . to blood-red revolution running in our streets. . . . People are preaching the destruction of the things we cherish.

We are not surprised at the alarm of Sir Philip Dundas—considering, that is, the kind of mentality he displays. But we do not think he will please intelligent Christians in his suggestion that the Christian Church is so weak to-day, that it can be overthrown by a mysterious handful of men "corrupting" a young university student here and there, or that many centuries of Christian training may be wiped away by stealthily placing a leaflet in the hands of an unsuspecting Christian. Sir Philip Dundas says he has evidence for what he says, but, up to now, we only have Sir Philip's word for it. Perhaps the facts are that our Universities are becoming "infected" with Freethought, and the rest of the story is due to the activity of the vivid Christian imagination of Sir Philip Dundas.

Saltash Conservative Women's Association recently passed a resolution against a Godless Conference being held in this country. In reply a letter appears from Mr. Harpur asking:—

Why not let Atheists, Baptists, Donkobors, Evaneglists, Fascists, Gestaltists and other sets of persons down to Zoologists, expound their views as publicly as possible? That gives truth the best chance.

Why not? But we are afraid that appealing to the sense of justice and fair play where their religion is concerned is usually like trying to cultivate a taste for a vegetarian diet in a tiger by feeding it on mutton chops.

We are asked to announce that on December 10, a debate will take place in the Conway Hall, on the subject, "That Christianity is Compatible with Socialism." The affirmative will be taken by Mr. V. Benn; negative, Mr. A. Flanders. Chair will be taken at 8 o'clock, by Mrs. Janet Chance.

## Thomas Scott's "English Life of Jesus"

### II.

In trying to find some test by which to judge the historical accuracy of the Gospels, Scott takes the work of Paul, that is, the four Epistles, Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, as being actually written by the apostle, and compares it with the narrative given in the Acts. He has, of course, very little difficulty in showing the plain contradictions between what Paul has written himself, and what is written of him in the Acts, which is supposed to have been written by Paul's fellow-traveller Luke. As Paul is the principal witness for the actual existence of Jesus, it is very necessary that his authority should not in any way be impeached. Yet which of the two versions about Paul is correct? The plain answer is that no one knows. "The express statements of Paul," points out Scott, "not only invalidate the testimony of the writer of the Acts on all points which concern that apostle, but destroy all confidence in him when he relates any other event. When he has been convicted of deliberately misrepresenting the Great Apostle of the Gentiles, the remainder of his narrative is scarcely authoritative even if it be thoroughly self-consistent, thoroughly free from contradictions, and borne out by direct or incidental statements of writers known to be contemporary with the events recorded." In other words, if Paul is stating the truth about himself, then Luke cannot be trusted. If Luke, who was Paul's companion, cannot be

depended upon when writing about Paul, how far can we depend upon him when he is writing about Jesus, whom he never saw, and about whom he is supposed to have heard only from Paul? This is a very strong argument against the credibility of Luke, and it is ably put by Scott. Then, taking Paley's famous "twelve witnesses," Scott has no difficulty in showing that, except Peter (and Paul) they "are mere shadows that flit across the scene when their presence is needed at a council, or for public worship." They supply nothing in the way of affirming the historical accuracy of the Gospels. Scott contends that "internal evidence proves that none of the three synoptic Gospel writers is writing from personal knowledge; nor in fact had Paul himself any personal knowledge of the human life of Jesus to communicate to Luke, and Mark adds little or nothing to Matthew, or Matthew to Mark. . . . The matter of the fourth Gospel may be regarded as substantially different from that of the other three." From this and other considerations Scott concludes:—

The witness of the four independent Evangelists is reduced at once to the testimony of two authenticated narratives, the one supposed to exhibit the thoughts and convictions of John, the other forming the nucleus of the Synoptic Gospels. In neither case have we adequate evidence that the testimony is that of eye-witnesses. Hence, except on the assumptions which insure the victory of Bibliolaters and Sacerdotalists, it is impossible to feel in those narratives the confidence which we feel in handling the work of a strictly contemporary historian.

Of course, to most of the older readers of this journal, this is simply relating "old stuff." We have long since given up the authority of the Gospels. But Scott was trying to reach a strictly orthodox public—a public which had been brought up and nourished on the Bible as being true in substance and in fact; not the working-classes so much as the "respectable" section of our population, the High and Low Church people, the very backbone of Protestantism and Anglicanism. For them and their like, the four Gospels were literally historical documents of abiding worth, and proof against all infidel attacks because of their Divine Inspiration as well.

Believers such as these were very unlikely to read the sledgehammer attacks of "vulgar blasphemers" like Charles Southwell, Robert Cooper, and that brazen young Atheist who spoke under the name of Iconoclast, Charles Bradlaugh. Scott had to be very wary in his dealings with such pious folk, and had therefore to write cautiously and most politely. None the less his attack was very deadly, and was not to be ignored altogether. But the Church was very patient; it could afford to bide its time. "These attacks on our Divine Faith will slowly but surely be forgotten; the Gospel will again flourish with renewed life, and all will be well once more." Though the scholars in the Church may not altogether agree that this has come to pass, there can be no doubt that it is true for the majority of priests and parsons. They still preach in church as if the Gospels had never been assailed, or as if the infidel attack had been beaten off, and as if everything in the garden was lovely. Thus it seems as if Freethinkers in each generation have to go over the old ground again, and show the new generation why they are Freethinkers.

Thomas Scott saw how the Church, in his day, was constantly evading the issue just as we see it doing the same thing in ours. "But this evasion," he cried, "cannot last for ever. Questions constantly recurring, must be answered in the end; and high above all considerations of expediency, or social order, or political or religious calculations, rises that

supreme and most momentous of all questions. Are these things [in the life of Jesus] facts, or are they not? Did they take place as they have been narrated, or did they not? Am I to receive them, like all other facts of ordinary history, or am I not?"

These questions can be put to our parsons and priests now. It will be found that the answers will be by no means quite so cocksure as they were in Scott's time; and the reason is, of course, that his and similar books did their work. Our liberal-minded clergy are only so because they have been forced to give up in private the Bible as the supreme Word of the Lord, whatever they may say to their congregations. If the Bible, and particularly the Gospels are looked upon more as "literature" than as Divine Record in these days, it is because the clergy have not been able to answer the questions put so forcibly by Thomas Scott and his like. The way he pressed home some of his points can be studied with advantage even by those of us who are emancipated.

H. CUTNER.

## Reason Metaphysical or Concrete

ONE may roughly separate Freethinkers and Rationalists into two kinds. Those who consider Reason a sort of given measuring-rod which can be applied ready-made to all situations or scientific issues; and those who begin by asking what Reason is, where it comes from, what part it plays in human process, social development. The first kind, who are still too much in evidence, occupy a position which one can only describe as metaphysical; their Reason is essentially an a priori god-given instrument; they will doubtless admit that men may err in what they think is Reason, but this very admission presupposes a concept of Reason Absolute, a criterion which continues to exist however men may fail it. This attitude is purely Platonic; it is in fact closely allied to scholasticism and religious dogma, even though its exponents may be attacking religion because it fails to satisfy their measuring-rod. They may be comparatively progressive, just as Protestants were comparatively progressive in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Protestantism and Catholicism are equally fantastic from a higher angle of rationality; but the future of the world, the defeat of feudalism, was bound up with the triumph of Protestantism. That triumph created the basis for the advance into industrialism; and without it the rationality of modern science would have been impossible. (Now that Protestantism has no longer a progressive rôle to play, it stands with Catholicism as almost equally reactionary.)

So, the Rationalist who handles a metaphysical concept of Reason, is progressive when compared with, say, Thomas Aquinas, who also based himself on a metaphysical concept of Reason. The difference lies in the vast social development that has intervened. The Reason of St. Thomas, by no means a reactionary concept in his day, is now one of the cores of reaction. The metaphysical rationalist (who historically represents the triumph of the middle-class vanguard over feudal ideas) has had a tremendous part to play in developing human mastery (especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). But his position is now rapidly losing its progressive rôle, because the class of whom he is spokesman is ceasing to play a creative part in history.

There remains the fully scientific concept of Reason, which consists of applying to human history and behaviour the scientific attitude which grew so powerfully in other areas of thought during the last

century. An essential of that science was the conscious search for origins; this search led Darwin on his travels to the amoeba, Freud to the womb, Frazer to the primitive originals of custom, Marx to the dynamic social fact. These four great scientists were all doing essentially the same work in different areas; refusing to accept the rationalized explanations which had passed current since the beginning of history, and seeking for the hidden trails of real development. With them we may link Faraday; for the deepening of physics in his work (which penetrates beneath the metaphysical rationalism of Newton) shows the same direction of mind as in Darwin, Freud, Frazer, and Marx. Unless, then, the Rationalist or Freethinker can grasp these basic issues and see the meaning of the work of these five giants, he is still lost in the eighteenth century metaphysical rationalism. He thereupon ceases to be in the van of progress and tends to become a deadweight on human development, just as the Protestants became with the growth of the last century's science.

To follow out the implications of Darwin, Freud, Frazer, Marx and Faraday is to see that Reason is not a god-given measuring-rod, but a *form of consciousness developed out of social struggle*. And social struggle has two forms: that of men co-operatively engaged against nature, that of men seeking to shackle and enslave men. The two forms are not abstractly separate; they have been throughout history dynamically entangled; mankind has only been able to advance by the ceaseless formulation of new classes—that is, by the class-war. That has been the schism at the heart of human thought; the advance has not been able to proceed by the simple application of Reason. Rationality has been painfully developed out of the dynamic entanglement of class-war and productive methods (from which arises the "super-consciousness" of scientific inquiry). But to view this process from the angle of metaphysical rationalism (one of the last important expounders of which was the late J. M. Robertson) is to see only a fantastic conflict between reason and un-reason, a luridly horrible conflict between exponents of light and devils of darkness. In short it is to produce a purely mythical picture of history, tending to the level of the frankly religious myth of the Fascists. (Of course it is by no means Fascist; it has many progressive strands; but by substituting fantasy-forces for the real forces of history it does weaken the mind and prevent a full consciousness of contemporary issues. It is still at root personalized history, with a devil-god fantasy behind it; therefore it cannot properly resist the Fascist invocation of god and devil, even though that invocation takes place on an enormously lower cultural level. Only the scientific consciousness of the Darwin-Marx nexus can truly create the resistance.)

For the forces of "unreason" always have had very direct and simple reasons for their activity; they have been, and are, always protecting vested interests. The elucidation of this fact makes history understandable and saves us from the horror of a devil-god conflict (in which *anything* might happen—it is assumed for instance, that the Roman Empire fell before the unloosed devil-forces of Christianity; whereas the simple facts are that it fell because the mercantile slave-economy ended by creating vast land-monopolies, the pre-reformations of feudalism, which destroyed the successful lower middle-class civilization of the early Empire: a perfect exemplification of the coagulation of capital on the lines analysed by Marx in dealing with modern developments.)

Rationality is then a derivation from the successful conquest of nature and the growing sense of human unity. Under class-society it is torn by the conflict

outlined above. The forward drive is continually in conflict with vested class-interests; and organized religion as the arch-conservative force has always fought on behalf of the dead past, thereby willynilly becoming the defender of class-property.

I hope to deal shortly with the way in which conscious rationalism appeared in England, and to attempt to show that it was bound up with revolutionary social activity. Meanwhile, let me conclude here by pointing out that the Rationalist who takes an aloof attitude to Fascism is losing contact with all the living forces of history; he is in short consuming his capital (the metaphysical rationalism of the eighteenth century, which represented the point at which the middle-classes wished to halt human development) and not producing any fresh wealth (since he is standing outside the reality of his day's social struggle). He is taking advantage of what other men have gained for him; he is re-stating past forms of conflict in order to escape consciousness of the present forms.

JACK LINDSAY.

## Shelley's Religion

SHELLEY was a Republican and a social reformer in very early days, but even then he understood the futility of violence and the demoralization of revenge. "Popular insurrections and revolutions," he says, "I look upon with discountenance. *If such things must be*, I will take the side of the people; but my reasoning shall endeavour to ward it from the hearts of the rulers of the earth, deeply as I detest them." Reporting a conversation of his with Southey, he says:—

Southey says Expediency ought to [be] made the ground of politics, but not of morals. I urged that the most fatal error that ever happened in the world was the separation of political and ethical science; that the former ought to be entirely regulated by the latter, as whatever was a right criterion of action for an individual must be so for a society, which was but an assemblage of individuals; "that politics were morals comprehensively enforced."

"What can be worse," he asks, "than the present aristocratical system" of England, with its ten million inhabitants, only 500,000 of whom "live in a state of ease" while "the rest earn their livelihood with toil and care"? As a disciple of Godwin, he advocates a system of equality:—

Were I a moral legislator, I would propose to my followers that they should arrive at the perfection of morality. Equality is natural; at least, many evils totally inconsistent with a state which symbolizes with Nature prevail in every system of inequality. I will assume this point. Therefore, even although it be your opinion, or my opinion, that equality is unattainable except by a parcel of peas, or beans, still political virtue is to be estimated in proportion as it approximates to this ideal point of perfection, however unattainable.

Shelley had begun to recognize the difficulty of reducing theories to practice. He was always inclined to trust more to mental and moral reform than to direct State action. But he never abandoned his early dream of equality. There was such a thing as "natural justice," and had the politician "a right to infringe upon that which itself constitutes all right and wrong"? Shelley had not yet arrived at Shakespeare's:—

"right and wrong,  
Between whose endless jar justice resides."

But his aspiration was sound, as it always was; and, although he lived long enough to perceive that a vast interval must ever exist between present practice and the loftiest ideals, he still sang of the "Eldest of things, divine Equality."

One of Harriet's letters throws light upon Shelley's vegetarianism. Writing to Miss Hitchener on March 14, 1812, from Dublin, she says:—

You do not know that we have forsworn meat, and adopted the Pythagorean system. About a fortnight has elapsed since the change, and we do not find ourselves any the worse for it. What do you think of it? Many say it is a very bad plan: but, as facts go before arguments, we shall see whether the general opinion is true or false. We are delighted with it, and think it the best thing in the world.

Harriet concludes by referring to a matter which, we may be sure, gave no sort of concern to Shelley, who could be satisfied with bread and water. "As yet," she says, "there is but little change of vegetables; but the time of the year is coming on when there will be no deficiency."

In Shelley's correspondence with Miss Hitchener there are many passages relating to religion. We will begin with some curious references to Shelley's conversations with Southey. Here is a striking one:—

Southey calls himself a Christian; but he does not believe that the Evangelists were inspired; he rejects the Trinity, and thinks that Jesus Christ stood precisely in the same relation to God as himself. Yet he calls himself a Christian.

So that the New Theology is older than the Rev. R. J. Campbell fancies it to be. In a subsequent letter Shelley returns to the question whether Southey could honestly profess Christianity. The passage in which he does this is very interesting:—

I have lately had some conversation with Southey which has elicited my true opinions of God. He says I ought not to call myself an Atheist, since in reality I believe that the Universe is God. I tell him I believe that "God" is another signification for "the Universe." I then explain: I think reason and analogy seem to countenance the opinion that life is infinite; that as the soul which now animates this frame was once the vivifying principle of the infinitely lowest link in the chain of existence so it is ultimately destined to attain the highest; that everything is animation (as explained in my last letter); and in consequence, being infinite, we can never arrive at its termination. How, on this hypothesis, are we to arrive at a First Cause? Southey admits and believes this. Can he be a Christian? Can God be three? Southey agrees in my idea of Deity, the mass of infinite intelligence. I, you, and he are constituent parts of this immeasurable whole. What is now to be thought of Jesus Christ's divinity? To me it appears clear as day that it is the falsehood of human-kind.

No doubt the word "the" should be italicized. The deity of Christ is *the* falsehood of the world. Shelley never wavered in that opinion. Witness the reference to "the Galilean serpent" in the great *Ode to Liberty*.

Let it be noticed that, in the foregoing extract, Shelley writes "God"—putting the term between inverted commas to show that it is not his own. Let it also be remembered that Harriet stated how frightened she was at learning that he was an Atheist. Shelley was expelled from Oxford for writing a defence of Atheism; he called himself an Atheist while living with Harriet; he called himself an Atheist in the visitors'-book at an Alpine hotel, after reading the fatuous piety of a travelling clergyman on the

same page; and, as Trelawny insists, he called himself an Atheist to the very last. He never admitted the existence of a Personal God—and no other conception is entitled to the name of Theism. "Truth is my God," he wrote to Miss Hitchener in the very first of these letters. He never had any other deity.

(Reprinted) G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded)

## Correspondence

### LONDON IN ROMAN DAYS

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

SIR,—I have been to the British Museum and seen the remarkable instrument described by Mr. Brend in your issue of November 21.

In view of the reticence of the British Museum, it would be interesting to have a more detailed description of the instrument from Mr. Brend in your columns.

ANNINA NICHOLSON.

### PERFUME AND MEMORY

SIR,—Your contributor, Nicholas Mere, in the *Freethinker* of November 21 remarks: "There has not, to my knowledge, been any thesis taken upon the subject of perfume and memory." However, you may know of such. If so would you be kind enough to put me on it. In my case, smell and recollection are very striking.

Another extract from the *Freethinker* of the same date reads, "A stupidity that never happens on a bit of common sense is as great a marvel as a genius that never touches the back of mediocrity. Which leads me to enquire: In which category would you place Atheist A who sees nothing unjust in Franco's action in Spain.

B who condemns the Russian Constitution as being absurd and unpracticable.

C who believes in Astrology.

C. F. BUDGE.

### POISON OF POETRY

SIR,—Mr. Fraser knows little, if anything, of child psychology.

The beginner's language is naturally rhythmic. Rhythm is by parents' and teachers' example and precept strangled at birth. Before the age of five the child can and should be trained to speak in language (and to think in language) wholly in rhythm; and it can be done and with child-truth, child-logic, child-clarity.

It is better that he should speak (and think) in language-rhythms. The prose utterances from the beginner in languages, say, the child of semi-educated working-class parents is bad, haphazard, illogical, helter-skelter; it lays the foundation of all the loose mottling of the majority of human society. Restrain that prose utterance at the beginnings of language, and to beauty of utterance (poetic rhythm) truth will accrue with the growth of the child. The experiment has been made tentatively by infant educationalists—I, for one, professionally get my head torn off for attempting to apply this very sound theory.

With the matured pupil we should get all that Mr. Fraser asks for in language, adult sense, adult sincerity, regardless of form of language. But with the beginner, no: it is a world-evil that beauty and rhythm in language is despised by those professors who hold the whip-hand over teachers of babies and juniors.

BLEAN WOODS.

Admitting that all is true that has been said about the existence of God. I do not see what I can do for him; and I do not see either what he can do for me, judging by what he has done for others.—*Ingersoll*.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES. Etc.

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

### LONDON

#### OUTDOOR

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Saturday night and Sunday night, Mr. J. W. Barker will speak at each meeting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond-Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.0, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury.

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

#### INDOOR

MODERN CULTURE INSTITUTE (Caxton Hall): 8.15, Friday, December 10, Dr. Har Dayal, M.A., Ph.D.—"Psychology and Christianity." Admission free.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4): 7.30, Captain B. Acworth, D.S.O., R.N. (Evolution Protest Movement and Liberty Restoration League)—"Evolution or Liberty?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Herbert Read, M.A., D. Litt.—"The Myth, the Dream, and the Poem."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Miss E. Millard, M.A.—"The Need of Defining Words."

### COUNTRY

#### INDOOR.

BIKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, Rabbi R. H. Levine, B.A., I.L.B. (Liverpool Jewish Congregation)—"The Belief in God."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools): 7.0, Mr. T. G. Millington—"Is Christianity the Cure for World Ills?"

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Jubilee Assembly Room, Market Hall, Blackburn): 7.30, Tuesday, December 14, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Roman Catholic Menace" (Local, National and International). Literature for sale.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Albion Court, Kirkgate): 7.15, Mr. N. Bailey (Ossett)—"Glossary of Czecho-Slovakia." Lantern.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Fading of Hell Fire."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Freegardeners' Hall, Picardy Place): 6.45, Mr. J. O'Neill—"Evolution of Religion."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. Frank Smithies, The Laughing Propagandist, Edinburgh N.S.S.—"Christianity a Comedy of Errors."

GREENOCK SECULAR SOCIETY (Shepherds' Hall, Regent Street): 7.0, Muriel Whitefield—"Woman's Fight for Freedom."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"A Search for God."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, Miss Dora Seed (Bootle)—"To-morrow's Citizens."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. ("King's Café," Oxford Road): 7.0, Mr. C. McKelvie (Liverpool)—"Red Herrings."

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

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