

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

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

Views and Opinions

Man and his Gods

SOME years ago a very interesting discovery was made in Rome. Someone unearthed an altar dedicated to "The God that Takes no Heed." Taking the inscription to mean exactly what it said, it struck me as being one of the most interesting contributions I have met with. Always altars have been erected to thank the gods for what they had done, or to beg them to do something they had left undone. There seemed no other reason for erecting altars than to wheedle or placate some god or other. But here was an altar erected by a man who was thanking some god because he left man alone and took no heed of him and his tricks. It seemed a reversal of religious practice. For a very long period everything that happened was attributed to the gods, and the more unpleasant the happening the more certain it seemed that no one but a god could have been responsible for it. Gradually the shrewder brains began to question whether, after all, the gods did all they were supposed to do. That led, one may assume, to the further question, "Why did they do it?" And that may have led to the final enquiry whether they did anything at all. The questions were awkward ones, and no religion loves questions. Head down, knees bent, eyes shut, is the traditional religious attitude. To believe because one understands is easy and natural. One cannot expect a crown and a harp for that. But to believe without understanding, that is the great religious virtue. In the heavenly circumlocution office the standing notice is "You mustn't come here wanting to know, you know."

At his best and busiest the activity of God is a doubtful blessing. The Bible assures us that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It is assumed that a dead one is quite safe. And religious records certainly show that the best of gods is apt to be promiscuous in his doings. Insurance companies recognize this, inasmuch as they will not

insure against what they call "Acts of God." The acts of man may be calculated, the stars in their wanderings may be made the subject of exact prediction. But where God may break out next no man knoweth. If he sends an earthquake or a disease because some people have offended him, it is as likely as not that more of those who have pleased him will suffer than of those who have not. He laid down laws for the extermination of witches, only for man to discover later that they did not exist. God told people that their health and prosperity depended upon their worshipping him, only for them to realize that it didn't matter to the value of a brass button whether they worshipped him or not. When he threw thunderbolts about he as often hit a church as a brothel—until his worshippers learned to put up lightning conductors to guard against God's bad marksmanship. He claimed to inspire men to action, but the action was bad as often as it was good. He was most precise and particular in giving orders about things that did not matter, and delightfully vague or careless about things that did.

Now the Romans were a very practical people. They had gods by the score, and they had a maxim that the best gods a man could have were those of his own country. That really placed all gods upon pretty much the same level, and like the lady who taught her children to rise and bow whenever the name of the devil was pronounced because one never knew what one might need, the Romans might have thought it wise to deal courteously with all the gods in case of an accident. Taking all things into consideration, it may be the case that while it was evident the less gods interfered in human affairs the better, it was only decent to thank the god, or those gods, who didn't interfere at all. It was the Roman way of saying to the gods, "Please leave us alone. We have made so many blunders with you that we can hardly do worse without you. Without the gods we may muddle through; with you, God only knows what may happen." There is a whole volume of philosophy in that altar to "The God that takes no Heed." He is the best God of whom I have ever heard. He is as bearable as a fever that one hasn't got.

* * *

Church or Hospital

More than two thousand years have rolled by since the altar was erected to the god that never interfered in human affairs. But life provides us with plenty of instances in illustration of its wisdom. Here is one from Sheffield. That city has a cathedral; and it has occurred to a number of the clergy that it should be enlarged. There is no demand for this from the laity, the cathedral is not overcrowded, it can shelter all the worshippers that turn up; but the world values cathedrals more for the ground they cover than the number of worshippers they shelter. So money is being collected to enlarge the cathedral, and £150,000

is still required to finish the job. But in July an attempt is to be made to raise a million for hospital service, and an appeal has gone out to raise the £150,000 at once in order to avoid competition.

Yorkshire folk are said to be very wide-awake, but this bracketing together the cathedral and hospital funds does not reflect favourably upon their traditional shrewdness. Apart, either appeal might be justified; together they do not make sense. Christians go to Church either because they want something from the Lord, or because they have received something—pleasant or unpleasant—from him. If neither of these reasons existed most Christians would sooner go to the cinema, or at least they would not bother to go to Church. In any case, one of these reasons, or both of them, are given by the clergy themselves why people ought to go to Church. Limiting our attention to the enlargement of the cathedral and the enlargement of hospital accommodation the conflict is obvious. In the cathedral disease is cured by prayer, in the hospital it is cured by medical science, and does not of necessity take any notice whatever of God. Again, the prayer book in use in the cathedral, and which cannot be altered without the permission of our godly House of Commons, lays it down expressly that all disease, no matter what kind it be, is a "visitation" from God. Popular piety endorses this by saying when a man dies that the Lord has called him home. It is clear, then, that in the instance before us hospital and cathedral are at cross-purposes. If the Lord sends disease, and if it can be cured in the cathedral, why raise a million pounds to cure it in the hospital? If the hospital is the place, or at least the surer place for the cure of disease, why raise £150,000 for an enlargement of the cathedral? Or are we to conclude that the mischief is done in the cathedral and remedied in the hospital, and it will cost the Sheffield folk a cool million to undo the mischief that the Lord does with the £150,000? I give it up. It looks too much like the policy of the British Government arranging a loan, or credits for Italy, and then spending millions to save our ships being blown out of the water by the submarines Mussolini has built with the money we loaned him.

* * *

The Empty Niche

There is another case that bears on the wisdom of the old Roman who built an altar to thank the only god he knew of that never interfered with things. Next year there is to be a world-fair in the United States. One of the features of the fair will be a Temple of Religion. That calls up visions in which representations of the world's religious beliefs would be exhibited. Such a museum would exhibit similarities of belief, such as the virgin birth, the process of turning a human being into a god by sacrificing him, and would link up the Christian with other primitive beliefs. The magical transformation of George VI. could be placed at the side of the Fijian ceremony of incarnating the god in the elected chief. The Hells of the various religions could be grouped, and some small text-book showing the affinities of the different religions circulated. One day could be given to the Jew to prove there is only one God, another to the Mohammedan assenting to one God, but proving him to be not what the Jew believes; the Christian could take another day with three gods, and a general panorama showing the different kinds of gods, human and semi-human, black, brown, yellow and white. A gathering could be arranged in which each of the Christian sects could have an hour to prove all the others were mistaken, and a member of some semi-religious ethical association, could wind up the pro-

ceedings by proving that all these religions were really good in essence, and that God probably created these different religious bodies in order to exhibit his own ingenuity and unfathomable wisdom.

But nothing of the kind is to be attempted. There is to be no exhibition of any kind. Neither priest nor parson nor Rabbi, nor Shaman, nor witch-doctor, nor any other example of this widely-spread genus is to be exhibited. There are to be no prayers and no preachments of any kind permitted. The visitor to the exhibition who walks into the Temple of Religion will find—nothing. It is to be a large temple, and that is all. At a single glance the visitor will see what the gods have come to. They are to be represented by a vacuum. The primitive believer said the gods were everything; they did everything, and so were obviously something. The modern philosophising religionist, lacking the courage or the insight, or both, to face ascertained facts, will not say that God is something since that implies particularity and particularity invites definition and opens the way to criticism. So he tries to avoid the awkwardness of criticism by saying that God is everything. But to say that a thing is everything is only another way of saying it is nothing. That everything is A. and nothing is A. are identical propositions. The Temple of Religion is a pictorial way of presenting this truth. The veil before the Ark of the Covenant has been rent, and the ark contains—nothing.

So the prologue written by the ancient Roman on the altar "To the God who takes no Heed" finds its epilogue in the Temple of Religion which offers a vacuum. It is to this pass that all religion, all genuine religion, must come in the end. Gods live on the belief and worship of their followers. They have not, they never have had, any other form of sustenance. In man's earlier state it never dawned on him to question what the gods did, why they did it, or whether they did anything at all. But these vital questions had to arise. Every advance in real knowledge was, so far as the gods were concerned, a note of interrogation. Nature began to shake off its "haughty lords," the questions became more numerous and more searching in character; and to that process of questioning there could be but one logical end. The more thoughtful began to recognize that not only did the gods not do the things it had been believed they did, but the more daring found them in the way. Their interference was so often on the wrong side; their judgments so often lacked reasonableness and justice. So, like the old Roman of my text, many began to think the best of gods to be those who did not interfere. But a God who does nothing for or against man, inevitably sinks into that limbo of the unknown and unremembered whither so many of the gods retire; and gods can stand anything but neglect. Consciously or unconsciously the American Temple of Religion indicates the last stage of the process. The Temple is empty, it is left for man to fill it with something of greater value and endurance.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

THE PRAYER OF CENTURIES

Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy "flock," that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and he made one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.—*Church of England Collect.*

Faith and Films

"A piano in a Quaker's drawing-room is a step for him to more humane life." *Matthew Arnold.*

"The Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators."—*Macaulay.*

THE early Nonconformists were men of courage and principle. They resisted priestly authority when such resistance was highly dangerous. Their present-day successors, however, have little of the sincere pioneering spirit. Since they have become respectable Free Churchmen, they have begun to imitate the older, orthodox Churchmen, who so innocently obey the behests of their opportunist pastors and masters. So much have the contemporary Nonconformists moved to the Right in sacerdotalism, that tentative efforts have been made to unite the Established Church with its trade-rivals, the temptation being the creation of Free Church bishops, with four-figure salaries.

It is significant that this move towards union should have come from the ecclesiastics of the State-supported Church of England. And it is just as noteworthy that the Nonconformist bodies should have commenced to discuss such a proposition, instead of dismissing the very idea peremptorily. It reminds one of the remark of the old judge; "the defendants hang together, because they do not wish to hang separately."

This sudden unforeseen sympathy between old enemies is not the result of a new-born fraternity, but a keen realization that Orthodoxy and the other "doxies" are in common danger from an ever-increasing secularism on the part of the people. The rising generation is far less interested in religion than its predecessors, and the result is being shown in half-empty churches, smaller offertories, fewer communicants, and dwindling Sunday Schools. This is common to both the State Church and the Nonconformist bodies, but the Church of England sees also the prospect of Disestablishment and Disendowment coming nearer and ever nearer. Hence the suggested brotherly umbrella between the Orthodox Churchmen and those whom they have been taught to regard as heretics as much doomed to everlasting perdition as the dreadful Atheists.

So grave is the position that the Free Churches have been startled into unwonted activity. The Methodists, Wesleyans, and Primitive Methodists have joined forces, and closed redundant chapels. Two bodies of Presbyterians have amalgamated. Other Nonconformist bodies are anxiously stock-taking, and dreading the ensuing balance-sheet. Under the pressure of adversity the Methodists have even gone to the length of sacrificing principle to self-interest, just as a drowning man will clutch at any straw.

For many generations the Methodist Churches have set their faces sternly against all forms of pleasure, except tea-fights, Sunday-School excursions, and bazaars. "Jesus wept," they seem to say, and all should be kept to that high but lugubrious ideal. To that end, theatres were taboo, music halls anathema, and dancing and horse-racing the very highway to Hades. Latterly, the cinema has been regarded as the latest lure of Satan, and it has been attacked from countless pulpits and platforms with all the concentrated bitterness of theological enmity. It was assaulted with such a wealth of detail that one suspected that the reverend censors were themselves film-fans. But business is business, and the fight lasted twenty years. Then, one bright day the Methodists themselves began showing not only films, but stage-plays also, in their church-halls. Not

special films on alleged sacred subjects, but ordinary films with familiar stars, as shown at neighbouring cinemas. The plays, too, were the usual type, as presented at famous theatres, but the players were Methodists, and the audiences were Methodists too. And no chapels have been destroyed by a vengeful Providence, and no pastors struck by lightning.

Of course, the whole thing was arranged for the purpose of attracting young people to the half-empty Methodist Churches, and drawing paying audiences. But what becomes of the pastors' parrot-like recitative that films and plays were highly harmful for adults and young people alike. Innocent Methodists, unaccustomed to such things, should be more deeply impressed by the realism of the screen, and the sentimental hokum of Hollywood. As for these innocents actually taking part in stage-plays, it is as sensational a piece of news as if hundreds of Methodists had rushed off and joined the ranks of the Latter-Day Saints, or the Froth-Blowers.

It is a truly topsy-turvy situation. We rather fancy that the local cinema-managers will smile at the frantic efforts of their old enemies, the clergy, to create new film-fans. Such a result is not only possible, but highly probable. Having tasted the delights of the screen, sandwiched between an appeal for carrying the Gospel to the Esquimaux, and the singing of "There is a Fountain filled with blood," the Methodists might hasten to the cinemas and partake of real entertainment undiluted by priestly wiles and eternal cadging for cash, and the following night these backsliders might even attend a theatre.

Despite the shouts of the clergy and their satellites, the films do no real injury to the audiences, young or old. The impression fostered by the pastors that the movies are highly mischievous is simply a trade trick to keep their own paying audiences away from the cinemas. Gangster pictures no more produce gangsters than the old-time melodramas created a race of criminal hooligans, or the presentation of "Othello" or "Romeo and Juliet," filled the Divorce Court with co-respondents. In plain language, people go to the cinemas, music-halls, and the theatres to be entertained. They do not go to be bored, and the theatrical managers realize that good entertainment means a thriving box-office.

What is the underlying meaning of this introduction of hitherto tabooed amusements into the once austere programme of the Methodist Church? The answer is that the rising generation is no longer interested in the Christian Religion. The great forward movement of Secularism has shown the way to better things than the mere priestly promise of a heaven when you are dead. People to-day need something more solid than old-fashioned church services and stupid sermons, something more nutritious than the dry husks of all out-of-date religion. Depend upon it, when the masses of the people begin to turn from the crudities of the Christian Religion, the power of the priest has lost its stranglehold upon this country. So grossly imperfect, so stupefying, so false was this narrow Methodist conception of human life, that the wonder is that it had not sooner fallen into public disfavour. A great Eastern sage taught his disciples not to dream that the living will walk for ever in the footprints of the dead. It is still a salutary lesson, for slaves of the past ignore the "mighty hopes that make us men." It is precisely because all the Christian clergy insist that the world's clock struck in Ancient Judæa some two thousand years ago, and has never moved since, that the great Christian churches to-day resemble nothing so much as a range of exhausted volcanoes with not a flame flickering on a single pallid crest.

This sudden change in opinion on the part of this

Methodist Church is not a paltry matter. It is a complete proof that the work of the Freethinkers is coming to fruition. Not only Methodists, but most men are innocents, saturated with old-world superstitions and prohibitions that, self-imposed, largely spoil their lives and destroy their happiness with futile sacrifice. It is the Freethinkers who are changing the viewpoint of the world, and they are doing so by widening men's mental horizons. Not one Methodist in a thousand is familiar with the details of the devastating attacks made by thinkers and scientists during the last hundred years upon their religion; not one Methodist in a thousand has read Chapman Cohen's books; but these pioneers have changed the intellectual atmosphere that men breathe, and there are more Evolutionists and Secularists than ever before in the history of the world. For these scholars have explained the mystery of religion, and lighted up the dark places of superstition.

Nothing like this movement has been seen since the Renaissance, and that was as much artistic as intellectual. Without noise, without advertisement, this newer scientific revolution has begun to change the ideas of quite ordinary people, who hitherto have been impervious to change.

The ultimate victory of Freethought is as certain as the coming of the morrow's dawn. For it embodies the cause of eternal justice and deathless liberty, not of a nation but of humanity itself.

MIMNERMUS.

The Trial of Robert Taylor

I.

ONE hundred and eleven years ago, the Rev. Robert Taylor, A.B., M.R.C.S., was tried for "blasphemy" at the Court of King's Bench. The description of his appearance given by a contemporary reporter is particularly interesting, and must have aroused eager curiosity in the number of "well-dressed and youthful females" who, we are told, crowded the court:—

His appearance attracted all eyes: he was arrayed in the flowing gown of a clergyman; his neat clerical hat was conspicuously born in his hand, an eyeglass depended from his neck, and the little finger of either hand was ornamented with a sumptuous ring; his hair was arranged in the most fashionable style; and a pair of light kid gloves completed the elegant decorations of his person.

Taylor, obviously, did not believe in being dressed as if he were a miserable specimen of "a blasphemer," the kind of "unhappy man"—this was the way very holy men generally designated those who were no longer Christians, and who had the temerity to say so—that people expected to see in an "infidel." The rings and the eyeglass must have come rather as a shock, as well as the rather contemptuous smile borne by Taylor whenever he was discussing Christianity, and which is brought out so well in his portrait drawn by W. Hunt. One feels this contempt in all his writings.

It is not so generally known that it was Robert Taylor who founded the Christian Evidence Society—not, of course, that quite hopeless body which exists this day, and which has so conspicuously failed to stem the tide of Freethought; the object of Taylor was to show that there was no evidence for the divine origin of Christianity, and that it was really founded on credulity, ignorance, and humbug. His Manifesto is an excellent example of a very brief statement against Christian claims compressed in a few phrases with remarkable terseness. His Propositions are:—

1. That the Scriptures of the New Testament were not written by the persons whose names they bear.

2. That they did not appear in the times to which they refer.

3. That the persons of whom they treat never existed.

4. That the events which they relate never happened.

Broadly speaking, Taylor's Propositions hold good to this day, except among the impossible Fundamentalists who believe everything on faith. Most modern critics have to agree that the New Testament was *not* written by the persons whose names they bear; that a good many of the events related are purely allegorical; and that there is very little proof that the persons of whom the "holy" volume treats ever lived. But, of course, to say such things boldly in 1827 was to incur the risk of heavy penalties or imprisonment—a risk which Taylor, to his credit, was not afraid of taking.

On his third Proposition he adds:—

That the Persons of whom they treat never existed; because demoniacs, devils, angels, hobgoblins, persons who had once been dead, who could walk on water, ride in the air, etc. (such as Satan and Jesus Christ) are the persons of whom these Scriptures treat; and that such persons never existed is demonstrable; First, From the utter incongruity of such figments with the immutable laws of sound reason. Second, From the total absence of all historical references to their existence. And thirdly, From innumerable passages of these Scriptures themselves which fully admit the merely visionary Hypostasis of their fabulous hero.

And Taylor gives many references in proof of all this.

The Manifesto appeared in 1824, when the Christian Evidence Society was first established and those interested were invited to attend the meetings held in the Society's Areopagus in Cannon Street every Tuesday evening. They were also allowed "to deliver their sentiments upon the topic of discussion"; and in addition, Taylor asked "if these things can be denied or disproved—your Ministers and Preachers are earnestly called on to do so . . . and upon the condition of allowing themselves to be respectfully questioned, and learnedly replied to, they will be received with honour, and heard with attention."

It was no boast on Robert Taylor's part to say that he would "learnedly" reply to any opponent. He was a brilliant University scholar, and was not only ordained as a clergyman, but in addition, was a fully qualified surgeon. It is impossible with his record to put him among the unlearned or illiterate; and Huxley's depreciatory opinion of Taylor's published work adds nothing to Huxley's credit. Taylor undermined the "authorities" upon whom Christianity rested and, if Huxley's method was different, in the end that is what his own work ultimately did. For my own part I am convinced that a Freethinker who has mastered Taylor's *Syntagma* will be quite as well equipped, and perhaps better equipped, to meet a Christian opponent, than if he followed only Huxley's arguments against Christianity.

At one of the Tuesday evening meetings a headle, residing in Walbrook, was sent by a local Alderman to take notes with the possible view of bringing an action against Taylor for "blasphemy"; he made some notes and it was these which formed the basis for the trial. The Judge was Lord Tenterden, and I am bound to say that he was as fair and just as it was possible to be in his day. There is no trace of that vindictiveness which characterized the Roman Catholic Judge North when, over fifty years later, he sentenced G. W. Foote to twelve months' imprisonment.

The Attorney-General who appeared for the prosecution was the usual believer horrified that anyone could treat his religion with "levity and contempt."

"Nothing but stupidity," he added, "or the most frivolous dissipation of thought can make even the inconsiderate forget the supreme importance of everything which relates to the expectation of a future existence." Of course he believed in "serious arguments" on both sides. He insisted on toleration to "the objections of unbelievers"; but he would have Christianity assailed only by "sober discussion and legitimate reasoning." And he simply would not sully his mouth with the words used by the defendant—"the words of mockery which he has introduced into his addresses, assailing both the forms and the personages which are most revered and sacred amongst us." Naturally he told the jury, "if you find that Taylor has been a sober, moderate inquirer, that he has made use of no weapon which it was proper for him to employ—then in God's name acquit him." If not, then the magistrates must have "recourse to this last resource, this ultimate method of removing from the precincts of the city, which they had a right to do, a nuisance so detestable, and if possible, ejecting those individuals whom he had collected around him like a nest of vermin, and who would seek to sap and destroy the foundations of our best hopes and happiness."

The aforesaid beadle, whose name was Collins, was then examined. Taylor insisted that he read the whole of the Manifesto—though this was not the actual subject of the indictment. Collins then told how he had gone to the Areopagus and had taken down parts of the discourse which he repeated in court. I am sure the present reader will be glad to know some of the "blasphemy" uttered by Robert Taylor, and for which he was subsequently sentenced. This is what Taylor, according to Collins, said:—

Shall God lay perjury to his soul and that for Jesus? I answer no. That there was no authority for its title page (the New Testament). That the translators rendered the New Testament falsely, the name was not known in 220.

St. Paul has denied the miracles of Christ. His ghost appeared to 500 at once, but they were asleep.

This, said Collins, caused a loud laugh, and many other passages were received with loud cheers:—

Christ rose again, but it is according to the Scriptures.

The authority of St. Paul is fatal to the Christians. The duty of the preacher is to preach, and the duty of the hearer is to hear.

The wonder-working God—that is the name which the Deist never uses but with awe!

I should like to know who was the eye-witness between the devil and Christ when he spent his holy-days in the wilderness.

The pigs were the first martyrs for Christ.

Did the devil drown the pigs or did the pigs drown the devil?

Mother Southcotte gained more followers in three years than the Christian religion had in three hundred.

Christianity is a wicked and mischievous fable, and they know it to be so.

This is the kind of "blasphemy" which so horrified the Attorney-General and kindred Christian souls—the sort of "foul" attack on the Christian faith which had to be put down at all costs. I wonder what modern Christians think about it these days? Are they proud that men and women were, earlier than Taylor, tortured and put to death for similar criticisms and, in his day were incarcerated, as he was, in "most horrible dungeons," as described in the report of Taylor's trial?

His examination of the witness and his lengthy speech in defence show him in a brilliant light. I will deal with both in my next article.

H. CUTNER.

A Censored Play

As a writer on sociological topics Theodore Dreiser is almost as well known in this country, as he is in his native America. He is the author of a number of successful books, of which *An American Tragedy* is perhaps the best known, and of at least one play. In the United States this play "The Hand of the Potter" was well received. An attempt was made to introduce it to the English stage, but those who wished to do so found they had to deal with that peculiar creature, the licencer of plays, whom Joseph Conrad well described as pursuing his trade as the old Venetian Bravo stabbed his victim, with the difference that the Bravo ran some risk and merely killed bodies, while the censor of plays might kill a work of art in perfect security. For his post the Censor need not know anything or have done anything; above all, he must not have the slightest consciousness of the absurdity of his own position or the ridiculous nature of his judgments.

The Censor forbade the public performance of "The Hand of the Potter"—why, God and the Censor only know, and the latter has by now probably forgotten all about it. So the play was read before a number of members of the medical profession and others who take an interest in the protection of children and young persons. Even the Church was represented. The opinions expressed were such that a committee was formed to produce the play privately, which means that no money could be charged to the general public for admission, and "The Hand of the Potter" had a week's run in the little Portfolio Playhouse, off Baker Street. We were present on the first night, and left with our opinion of the Censor confirmed, with a little pity for the public that can submit to such an absurd institution as our Censor of plays, and with genuine admiration for a cast that worked so well and so unselfishly to produce the success the play unquestionably achieved.

"The Hand of the Potter" centres round a poor Jewish family, of which the eldest son, 21 years of age, and obviously mentally ill-balanced, suffers from a form of sex-mania, which manifests itself unconquerably in the presence of young females. When the play opens, he has just returned home after a couple of months' imprisonment for assaulting a young girl. In a civilized society he would have been confined in a suitable institution until adjudged fit to be at large. Brought up in a society saturated with the idea of mere punishment, he is turned loose with the certainty that he will repeat his conduct at the first opportunity. The inevitable happens, but this time murder is added to rape, and there is the added fear of being sent back to the prison from which the semi-maniac has just been liberated.

The interest of the story runs quick and true. The desire of the family to guard their own, the horror of the parents at the renewed disaster that has overtaken them, the strong family affection which is extended to the half-maniacal son, and his re-action to the love of family with regard to his parents, the pressure of events that drives the son to almost complete insanity with one outstanding desire, that of escaping arrest, a desire that even in the most critical moment is not strong enough to prevent a manifestation of his obsession, ending at last in, what is not a quite impeccable ending, the deliberate suicide of the son when he is on the eve of capture, is worked out with a consistency that does credit to both author and actors.

The play is a study in both pathology and sociology. Throughout there is not a line that can be considered "indecent" or even offensive, there is not a movement that can be construed as "suggestive."

And you cannot banish "indecent" by suppressing plays. As psychologists are aware "indecent" nearly always lies in the mind of the observer, and indecent ranges from the exposure of a woman's face with an open exhibition of those parts of the body usually concealed, to a semi-nudity that makes an irresistible appeal to an unclean mind. We each make our own indecencies, and then saddle others with the responsibility for their existence.

One of our leading newspapers said that the play was a remarkable, even an important one, but "it is not a pleasant one." Well, neither is a policeman a pleasant sight to a burglar, or a case of smallpox to an observer. One member of the audience, who must have been there by mistake, or to represent the "crowd," said to us that he saw no reason why such a subject should be brought before the public. There is only one reason that we know of; this is that such cases exist, and if they are not handled with knowledge they are handled in ignorance, with consequences that follow such handling. At present our treatment of them is a bad mixture of cruelty and perverted moral feeling.

Surely the Censor might have withheld his ban, feeling that they who wish to find something "indecent" would not be attracted to "The Hand of the Potter." It is not salacious, and they who are on the look out for such amusement, will be quite satisfied with the suggestive language and gestures that so liberally besprinkle many licensed performances. Perhaps, however, the censor may one day permit this fine play to be seen by a larger audience than witnessed it in the Portfolio Playhouse. It is to be hoped so, for the whole work is an appeal for pity, a plea for understanding; and it is pity and understanding that are so badly needed to-day.

It would be unfair to close without paying tribute to the performers. Mr. Douglas Ross, as the father, acted magnificently, bringing insight and feeling into the character he was presenting. The mother, Miss Inez Bensusan, was best in the court scene, with her dogged determination not to be shaken from the line which she thought might save her son. To give praise where praise was earned would be to go over the cast one by one. We will only say that, among others, both Richard Coke and John Gabriel were outstanding. Both contributed to what, considering the conditions under which the play was presented, was a marked triumph of art over difficulties. And without cancelling anything we have said, we are sure that further rehearsals and a more spacious stage would result in the little improvements here and there that might be made.

We hope that the Censor may be induced not further to block the way to the publicity which "The Hand of the Potter" deserves.

PETER NORTHCOTE.

Realization

The clinging children at their mother's knee,
Slain; and the sire and kindred one by one
Flayed or hewn piecemeal; and things nameless done,
Not to be told: while imperturbably
The nations gaze, where Rhine into the sea,
Where Seine and Danube, Thames and Tiber run,
And where great armies glitter in the sun,
And great kings rule, and man is boasted free!

What wonder if you torn and naked throng
Should doubt a Heaven that seems to wink and nod,
And having moaned at noontide, "Lord, how long?"

Should cry, "Where hidest Thou?" at evenfall,
At midnight, "Is He deaf and blind, our God?"

And ere day dawn, "Is He indeed at all?"

William Watson.

Secular Education League

THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

THE Thirty-First Annual Report of the Committee of the Secular Education League is submitted to the Members for consideration. A year ago attention was called to the ominous situation likely to be caused by the Education Act of 1936, with its increased handicap upon such members of the teaching profession as were Theists, Jews, Rationalists, or Unitarians. Events in the twelve months under review have fully justified the anxiety which the Committee expressed last year, particularly in respect to the re-organization of schools which the administration of the Act entails, in the starting of new senior Central Schools. Both Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches are very active in seeking to benefit themselves by the application of that part of the Act by which seventy-five per cent of the cost of a new building is provided by the local authority, while but twenty-five per cent is contributed from denominational sources. These attempts to secure so large a proportion of public money for sectarian schools have aroused heated discussion and strong protests in many parts of the country, together with vigorous complaints in the public Press by disputants on both sides, whether for or against such action.

SOME EFFECTS OF THIS DISPUTE.—In Liverpool the Municipality refused such a grant for the purpose of building a Roman Catholic school, and it is reported that no non-provided school in the town will be helped in this way, so that if new Central Schools are required, they will be Council Schools only.

In Carnarvon the parents of children attending the Llanllechid Council School protested to the Education Committee as follows: "Under no circumstances will we allow our children to attend the Church School."

Two correspondents in the *Salisbury Times* wrote as follows, last October: "We see no reason why we should be asked to subscribe to the building of a denominational school (in Church Stretton). We think that public money, which will amount to seventy-five per cent of the total cost of the proposed new building, should not be used for denominational purposes."

Instances such as these could be multiplied.

RESERVED AND UNRESERVED TEACHERS.—In order to meet the difficulty of staffing when a new central school for a district becomes a denominational school by means of the seventy-five per cent Grant from local funds, teachers eligible for appointment to such schools are classified as Reserved and Unreserved, so that denominational teaching is given by Reserved Teachers only. But, as both Anglicans and Roman Catholics may claim the right to have none but Reserved Teachers, trouble is likely to arise. Last November the York Education Committee carried a resolution that the head teacher and one hundred per cent of the staff of a proposed new Central School in York should be regarded as Reserved Teachers. In considering the matter the steps leading up to this situation should not be overlooked:—

1. Reorganization requires new Central schools for all scholars up to the age of sixteen years.
2. In small areas one such school would be sufficient for the total number of pupils of school age.
3. If the Church, by raising twenty-five per cent of the cost, succeeds in securing the other seventy-five per cent from the rates, the Church will insist that denominational religion shall be taught in that school, although it will be the only Central school available for the children from Non-conformist as well as from Church homes.
4. Therefore to insist upon the appointment of one hundred per cent of reserved teachers is a very questionable proceeding, likely to lead to the appointment of teachers more for their doctrinal views than for their educational qualifications.

TESTS FOR TEACHERS.—In August the *Schoolmaster* published a questionnaire proposed by the Bishop of St. Asaph to be issued to applicants for teaching posts in Denbighshire. Some of the questions were:—

"Do you attend any place of worship?"

"Are you a Christian?"

"Do you accept the Bible as your supreme guide in spiritual and moral matters?"

It is interesting to note that the *Church Times* printed a letter warning the Church Authorities against such proposals, and an article in the *Christian World* asked: "Are you going to force teachers to say that they believe in Christ in order to secure appointments?" The National Union of Teachers took action in the matter, and finally the proposed inquisition was dropped; but, as the *Schoolmaster* pointed out at the time, "the price of freedom is eternal vigilance."

In November a letter of protest appeared in the *Salisbury Times* because an advertisement in that paper, for an assistant teacher, required applicants to submit a statement as to their Churchmanship.

The dissatisfaction of many teachers with the present conditions continues to be expressed. Following the presentation and discussion of resolutions calling for the secular policy in education at conferences of the National Union of Teachers and of the Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools, the latter body has passed the following resolution: "That this Council is of opinion that attendance at any assembly, the purpose of which is the inculcation of religion, should not be deemed a normal part of the duties of assistant masters in secondary schools." In the discussion much stress was laid upon the danger to liberty of religious thought and observance, and of putting a premium on dishonesty and hypocrisy.

BLACKPOOL.—A year ago the Committee called attention to the fact that an acute situation had developed in this town between the teaching staff and the Education Committee, owing to an attempt then being made for using the school organization to carry out a scheme for the attendance of scholars at churches and chapels on six days per annum from 9 to 10 a.m., to which arrangement the teachers rightly objected.

This effort to intensify clerical influence in Council Schools was likely to lead to a demand for the right of entry for denominational instruction, and to enforce upon teachers, parents, and children a declaration as to their religious beliefs, with the segregation of the children for religious lessons, also the danger of the application of religious tests for teachers, and for appointment to be made on sectarian grounds. The Trades Council of Blackpool protested at the action of the Education Committee in employing school attendance officers to advertise the scheme among the parents, which the teachers had declined to carry out. After nearly twelve months of tiresome negotiations and disputes the teachers were ultimately successful in escaping any liability in the matter, and, though the six annual services will be conducted, it has now been agreed that the clergy and ministers shall attend to all arrangements at their own expense.

It is hoped that this may be a lesson to other authorities to refrain from future attempts to use Council schools to aid denominational purposes.

The *Schoolmaster* is to be congratulated on the publication of an outspoken article by Mr. Frank Roscoe, entitled "Teachers or Gramophones," using as the text for his theme the following quotation from Oliver Cromwell: "The State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing to serve it faithfully that suffices." This article seems to indicate that there appears to be some awakening of interest in the cause of the Secular Education League. Another encouragement arises from the fact that applications for literature and for information have come from Bedlington, Berkhamstead, Birmingham, Brighton, Chester, Exeter, Switzerland, and West Africa. In two instances advice was requested as to arranging opposition to a proposed new central denominational school. Twice during the year the Committee has been invited to be represented at Conferences of Teachers in London.

Acid Drops

There is an interesting row going on with regard to the opening of the Glasgow exhibition on Sunday. The Scotch churches are up in arms against such an official opening of the exhibition on Sundays. On the other hand week-end trips from all over the country will be robbed of a large part of their benefit if those who travel to Glasgow find themselves able only to join the crowds which, according to the papers, now spend a part of Sunday looking through the gates. We are quite certain that if all those who came to Glasgow could be induced to go to Church at least once during Sunday, the preachers might agree to the Exhibition being open for a large part of Sunday.

The question at issue is purely a professional one. The clergy know that Jesus cannot stand against the attractions of an international exhibition which has been boomed as the greatest show these islands have seen, and which has been "hallowed" by the presence of the King and Queen. The Churches think, and some of them say, that they must look to the future, and for them to agree to people spending Sunday in a sensible manner may mean that the habit will grow. On the other hand the railway companies say they will lose a great deal of business, the caterers say ditto, and the exhibitors say that a great deal of business may be lost. It is not a question of religious versus business interests, but a contest between competing business interests. We prefer to look at the question from a human point of view, and to say that anything which encourages people, particularly to spend their Sunday in a cleanly, healthy, and, if possible, educative manner is a gain to the nation as a whole. That the clergy stands to lose by these things is a matter of concern—for the clergy.

It is worth noting that the Pope who was so shocked at seeing Hitler's Indian symbol, the swastika, placed above the cross in Rome that he left the city for a period, has been quite unmoved at the decision to give a military training to children of eight. So long as they are brought up faithful followers of the Roman Church, the Pope probably cares very little what is done to the children in any other direction. Perhaps, also, this military training of little children was one of the things that has aroused Mr. Chamberlain's admiration for the work Mussolini has done for Italy.

Thomas Mann, one of Germany's leading writers, has applied for citizenship papers in the United States. It is noteworthy that no great work in art or literature has been accomplished in either Italy or Germany since the establishment of Fascism in these countries. Neither art nor literature can flourish in a prison.

The officers, N.C.O.'s and men of the 1st Battalion at Renmore, Galway, entertained the Bishop of Galway to luncheon. In return, the Bishop gave them the Christian point of view upon war. "The Church," he said, "taught that as long as men and nations had recourse to violence, violence could not be repelled by soft words or rounded phrases, but only by the sword. Therefore it was right for them to fight for their homes and the altars of Ireland." It is natural, of course, for the Church to uphold the duty of fighting for the Church. Still all the same the method of the Third Person of the Trinity did, on occasion, seem to include the very methods the Bishop reproves. The soft words and rounded phrases of Jesus included, "I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Not a word as to making an exception in the case of one's country; not even in the case of the altars. But Bishops have evidently been appointed to put the Son of God right on these minor points.

Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it.—G. B. Shaw.

Who are these naïve journalists who know so much better than Christians (and the history of mankind) what Christianity stands for? The *Daily Herald* has an

article (signed "T.D.") headed: "If I were a Christian." It appears that this writer thinks that John Wesley, Joseph Parker, and, of course, Dick Sheppard, were unlike Christians to-day who "do not cry out against oppression or iniquity at all." While we do not accept the writer's silly indiscriminate denial of ordinary decency to ALL Christians, we laugh at the ridiculous illusion—ignorant and childlike—that the abominations of Hitler and Mussolini are "opposed to every Christian principle and practice." "T.D." protests too much when he says: "If I were a Christian I should blush to my bones?" "T.D." should read his Bible—not the "Bible as literature," but ALL the Bible, including not simply the selected "Ten Commandments," but ALL the commandments, including God's laws about slavery, persecution and the bloodiest of wars. If he has any time left he might glance through the history of the Dark Ages, i.e., the ages when people really believed the text-book of Genuine Christianity.

The man in the pew appears to be setting the Rev. Peter Green, of Manchester, a problem. Once upon a time he was told that the Bible contained the truth and nothing but the truth. Then he was led to believe that "properly understood" the truth was still there, and when heretical scientists came along with a theory of evolution, he was still informed there was some profound truth in the Bible legends. Now Mr. Green finds that the M.I.P. is aghast at the Church of England *Report on Doctrine*, and wonders what has become of "divine truth" and the like. So Canon Green informs him that such stories of the creation, the temptation of Adam and Eve, and so forth are, as "historical happenings" "impossible." Well, that is all that Freethinkers have been saying for the last three centuries. Meanwhile the parsonry has been drawing salaries for calling Freethinkers liars, and scores of men and women went to prison for saying what they did. But even now the clergy have not the decency to say that the Freethinkers were right and the Church was wrong.

The Roman Church is expressing some degree of indignation at the robbery and murder of Jews, and the ill-treatment of Jewish women in Germany. So far, so good, although something of the sympathy may be due to the fact that the Roman Church is also just a little "in the soup" in Germany. But what we should like to see the Church face is the fact that the tradition of the robbery and ill-treatment of the Jews was created in times when the Catholic Church ruled the European roost. Brutes such as Goebells, Goering and Hitler are really products of the regime of the Church, exercising under another name the brutality encouraged by the teachings of the Church. But they are really children of the days when the Church was at its greatest, and human brotherhood at its lowest.

Take the following from a recent issue of the *Universe*—the chief organ of Roman Catholicism in this country:—

The Jews are justly condemned for rejecting our Lord, because they were expecting the Messiah, and ought to have recognized that our Lord was the Messiah. There is such a thing as culpable and crass ignorant misunderstanding.

There it is in a nutshell. Taking the story of the death of the incarnate God—a belief that goes back thousands of years before the Christian Church was heard of—as an historic fact—the situation is plain. The Jews rejected and killed Jesus. They did not believe in him, and on these facts they were denied social and legal equality. All the forces of Christian bigotry—and there is nothing more bitter or more unrelenting in the world than that—were roused against the Jew. The Jews were condemned for their culpable ignorance and misunderstanding of Christ. That was the material which for centuries enabled the Christian population to rob and ill-treat the Jew. Hitler and the other degenerates with him are merely exhibiting earlier Christian history under

another name. We are not surprised that the Catholic press is anxious to disown the consequences of Christian training.

At a meeting of the Southern Diocesan Conference, the other day, the Bishop of Southwark said the future of Church schools in South London is at stake. The Church requires £10,000 to build new schools and, if the £10,000 is forthcoming, the Government will authorize Education authorities to pay out of the ratepayers' pockets £30,000. The Bishop says:—

There are few countries in the world to-day where such an offer would be made.

We agree with the Bishop on this point. There are few countries that would pay three-fourths of the cost of schools, and practically give them over to be controlled by Churches, permit sectarian tests, and substantially endow sectarian teaching. But our Government of tricks and jobs appears to be, as Voltaire said of Habbakuk, capable of anything and everything.

The Bishop of Durham, Dr. Hensley Henson, as reported in the *North Mail* for May 9, says he is convinced that the great majority of the English people wish to retain the Christian religion, but he is "afraid that people did not sufficiently remember that teaching." Which, being interpreted, means that the people are very anxious to get something, but they do not remember what it is. Perhaps what the bishop ought to have said is that he and his brother medicine-men want something, and there are a large number of people who will agree in giving it to them without understanding what they are doing. But Dr. Henson might have put it in a better way.

Christianity is the friend of woman! A proposal before the Synod of the Church of Ireland to permit woman to enter the Synod was rejected by 180 votes to 130. Another victory for those who really believe in New Testament teaching.

Lady Cynthia Colville says that "Religion is either everything or nothing." Well, it certainly isn't everything. We leave the conclusion to Lady Colville.

Fifty Years Ago

CHRISTIANITY "restored position of women in society." We have already seen what was the position of woman under the best Roman law. In what respect did Christianity improve it? As a matter of fact, Christianity degraded woman by two methods; first, by adopting the Jewish story of the Fall; secondly, by preaching up virginity. Paul's view of woman's position is contemptible; she is as inferior to man as man is to God. Saint Jerome called her "the demon's door, the road of iniquity, the scorpion's sting." Saint Chrysostom called her "a sovereign pest." "When you see a woman," said Saint Anthony, "be sure you have before you, not a human being, not even a wild beast, but the devil in person." Saint Augustine's insults are nearly as extravagant. Saint John of Damascus styled her "a child of lying, the advanced sentinel of the Devil," and "a malignant she-ass." Gregory the Great denied her "any moral sense." That is how Christianity "restored the position of woman in society."

Polygamy was not proscribed by Christianity, because it did not exist in the Pagan civilization which Christianity supplanted. Monogamy was legal in Greece and Rome, and had been so for centuries. When Christianity opposed polygamy among the barbarians it simply carried forward the morality of Pagan civilization. The Bible never censures polygamy or enjoins monogamy. It is a big book, but it never gives a right sentence on this subject.

That Christianity "put down divorce" is undoubtedly true, but the result was of questionable value.

The Freethinker, May 20, 1888.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. A. RAINE.—The World Union of Freethinkers is not likely to ban any delegates from its Congress because it does not approve of the general policy of the country from which they come. After all we are Freethinkers, banded together for what we believe in, not because of points on which we may disagree.

E. SMEDLEY.—Your interesting letter received. Mr. Cohen will be writing on his list of fifty-year readers as soon as opportunity permits.

ONE of our readers is desirous of securing a copy of the *Freethinker* containing an article by Mr. A. R. Williams on "Cursing and Swearing." We are unable to place it. Do any of our subscribers remember the approximate date of the article? If they do we shall be glad to hear from them.

T. LEWIS.—We note and appreciate your disagreement, but while we may recognize the impossibility of putting into operation a basic principle of Freethought, we cannot endorse action which runs contrary to it. It is circumstances such as are existing at the moment that test one's understanding and devotion to one's professed principles. Thanks for cutting.

S. L.—The business meetings are equally open to all members of the N.S.S., whether a member of a Branch or not. All members have an equal right to take part in discussions and an equal vote on any business that comes before the Conference. The current card of membership entitles a member to attend.

G. LEACH, H. BLACK AND T. H. SMITH.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for six weeks.

WILL HAROLD T., who contributed a letter in this paper on July 25, 1937, please forward his address to the Editor. To Circulating and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—C. Henriksen, 108.

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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

The "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.

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

Sugar Plums

We have little to add to what was said last week concerning the Conference, except to say that the tickets for the Corporation's Civic Reception are now all distributed. The invitations were limited to 300, but applications far exceeded that number. But those who are attending the Conference Luncheon (price 3s.), the Monday excursion to Loch Lomond, with Luncheon (price 6s.) must advise the Glasgow Secretary, Mrs. M. Whitefield, 351 Castle-milk Road, as early as possible. Notice must, of course, be given some days in advance. Delegates and members will be entertained by the Glasgow Branch at the Grand

Hotel, Charing Cross, on Saturday. Many members will be staying there, others will find their way easily enough. The function commences at seven o'clock. Refreshments will be provided by the Branch. It only needs the weather to be favourable for the Glasgow Conference to be a marked success.

On page 326 of this issue we reprint the Annual Report of the Secular Education League. We strongly commend the League to our readers, who may assist either by becoming a member of the League or by sending a donation to its funds. A good deal of quiet propaganda work is being carried on, and the question of religion in State-supported schools is always with us, while the shameless action of the present Government in subsidizing sectarian schools, must bring the question more prominently before the public. Those interested should write to the secretary of the League, Miss N. Freeman, Secular Education League, 12 Palmer Street, Westminster, S.W. The subscription is voluntary.

May we call the attention of our readers to the opportunities that are offered during the summer season for introducing this journal to new readers. This is our main means of advertising, and it is one of the best, if it is practised assiduously. The increased cost of publication—owing to the reduction in the hours of labour, rise in the price of paper and of printing, has made the task of making ends meet more difficult than ever. It is about the only worry we have; all the rest is an enjoyable occupation.

Now that it is no longer profitable to circulate the lie that the International Conference is ordered and financed by Russia, the lying is taking a different form. For instance, the *Christian Herald*, that used to fatten on the fools who expected the return of Jesus Christ at an early date, discovers that the Conference has been "postponed till September." There has, of course, been no postponement. The International Conference has always been held in September.

Mr. S. M. Dawkins, who writes, presumably, representing the "Christian Defence Society," states in the *Western Morning News*, that the Conference should not be permitted because it is an International Conference, and people are coming here from countries where religious freedom is refused. One would have supposed that would be an excellent reason for holding the Conference in this country, but we have no doubt that Mr. Dawkins looks enviously at those countries which would not permit a gathering of Freethinkers. Mr. Dawkins adds a lie to his bigotry by asserting that the coming Conference is "a direct outcome of the Conference at Prague in 1936." The Prague Conference had no idea, and expressed no opinion, as to where the coming Conference should be held.

There are other lies about, but these two will do for this week. But the Conference will be held. That is the main thing. And Christians are afraid, that is another thing. Those who are taking part in this campaign of lies would like to stop all Freethought gatherings if they could. That is yet another thing—and one that all Freethinkers should bear in mind.

In the Coroner's Court, at Lambeth, the Coroner, Mr. Douglas Cowburn, interrupted a witness—who had been duly sworn, and the following conversation occurred, according to the *South London Press*:—

"I do not think you are speaking the truth," commented Mr. Cowburn.

"Before God Almighty I am," answered the husband.

"Do not call on the Almighty," retorted Mr. Cowburn.

But in taking the oath the witness had already called on the "Almighty." It is almost blasphemous for the Coroner to bring God Almighty in and out in this manner. Perhaps, however, the Coroner only submits to God being in his court because the law compels him to do so, and is against his interfering with the rest of the business.

The Executive of the National Secular Society is prepared to send speakers to address religious or non-religious organizations, free of charge, within a reasonable distance of London. Application should be made to the General Secretary, 68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Members of the N.S.S. who belong to suitable bodies, might bear this offer in mind.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be in Manchester for the week commencing to-day (May 22). The active open-air work being done by the local N.S.S. Branch will no doubt provide the foundation for some really good meetings during the week. Pioneer Press publications will be on sale, or may be ordered through any of the officials present.

The first reading of Mr. R. J. Russell's "Contraceptives (Regulation) Bill" shows that the clerical animosity towards Birth-Control has not taken defeat lying down. This Bill is practically the same Bill which Lord Dawson of Penn introduced into the House of Lords in 1934. The present Bill has the support of the Archbishops of Canterbury, York and Wales, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Dr. Scott Lidgett and many other Christian "leaders." The intention of the Bill is merely to make the purchase of contraceptives more difficult (and incidentally dearer). We urge Freethinkers to do all in their power to prevent the bigots from winning on a side-issue a most important principle. The sale of contraceptives is perfectly legal, as legal as the sale of Bibles or masses for the dead, and far more socially justifiable.

Jews, Socialists, Liberals, and men of distinction in literature and science are not the only ones who are being removed in Germany and Austria. According to the *Observer*, people are having their cats and dogs destroyed in Austria because they feel certain that there is going to be a £5 tax imposed on domestic animals. And the Austrians were in the habit of assisting the transportation of swallows across the Alps to preserve their lives!

A Family Group

We have just been reading a Romanist denunciation of Cremation. Cremation, we are told, is allied to Atheism. Atheism is ANTI-GOD. Cremation shows a disbelief in the resurrection of the body. Yes! *The resurrection of the body!*

The body, it appears, is going to be clutched from the tomb, and, after aerial adventures, is going to move about in a brand-new happy land above. Always assuming, mark you well, that the legs are attached to a person who belongs to Holy Mother Church, that they are the legs of a person such as the Gallant Christian Gentleman, Franco, who genuflects at the right times and places, crosses himself in the presence of a Holy Man, attends Mass, and makes Confession the correct number of times per year, and supports the Church adequately by coin of the realm or its equivalent. But should the owner of a pair of legs omit these religious exercises, death will not prevent, and cremation will not prevent, the Lord from finding him a new pair; but the legs will disport themselves over an entirely different portion of the heavenly country-side. God, you see, will not like the extra trouble the cremation has put him to, and will register his dislike in approved godly manner; the body will continue cavorting, but (in the case of a cremated gentleman) on something approximating to hot bricks. Cremation or no cremation therefore he will continue to be *homo sapiens*, furnished with a proper quota of limbs and organs, a blood-stream with red and white corpuscles, the pituitary, prostrate and other glands, vermiform appendix, etc., all complete.

Mark Twain told a story of an Indian chief who

asked a Christian Missionary the solution to the following situation. An Indian dies and is buried. The particles of which his body is composed disintegrate and take on fresh forms. A crop of wheat finds it necessary to incorporate some of the matter of the dead man into its own structure. Another generation of Indians makes whoopee, and the banquet contains bread made of the wheat which their forebears help to build. The wheat, in turn, enters into *their* bodily structure. In the Resurrection, asked the Indian, when the sorting out takes place, would not some of those enjoying immortality have to go about with a hiatus here and a lacuna there. When the missionary appeared nonplussed, the Chief got up and left him, observing that he was afraid that he (the missionary) had not given the subject the attention it deserved.

The missionary, of course, was a poor fish. If he had had a whiff of the modern enthusiasm engendered by the Recall to Religion he would have readily pointed out that nothing could be easier for God than to manufacture duplicate parts. What Henry Ford or Lord Nuffield could do, could not the Maker of Heaven and Earth do better? True, the Indian could quibble—all pertinacious questioners on theological matters do that—and suggest that, if duplicate parts were provided, then the original body was not resurrected, but a substitute provided. What matter? says the theologian. It is the spirit of the teaching that matters, not the letter. With regard to our continued bodily existence, when happy family reunions take place, it is the *spirit* that matters, and the desire to pursue the subject to minute details is unworthy even of a reverent agnostic.

To some extent, in this matter, we are on the side of the theologian and see no difficulty whatever about the duplicate parts. If God chooses to collect, for instance, the person blown out of a gun and puts him together again ready for pastures new, I cannot see him deterred by any other kind of difficulty. A much more important question to us is whether, on achieving immortality, *growth* goes on in the human body. If so, the shape this old body of ours is going to assume after a few million years of development is not going to be the least interesting form of entertainment for us during an eternity of idleness.

A Christian friend assures us this is nonsense; our body, at the end of our earthly existence, is going to be standardized. Otherwise the happiest feature of the life hereafter is going to be eliminated. All right, then. We do not know how our friend knows this, but he belongs to a Church which professes to know, and in ecclesiastical matters, professing to know is much the same thing as having Authority. We must take him on his own ground and attempt to piece together the happy details.

One Alice Brown and one Charlie Mussell marry at the age of twenty-two. A year later, a small Cuthbert Mussell takes a long breath and commences making himself a nuisance. Alice Brown (*née*) unfortunately makes an error of judgment at a pedestrian crossing and lies awaiting the last trump at age of twenty-four. Charlie Mussell, liking his sample of connubiality (or hoping to do better), marries again. This time he marries a widow rejoicing in the name of Mary Blobb, the name Blobb being positively the least affliction the lady had acquired by her first marriage. Now Mary was a devout Roman Catholic and believed in the full quiver. She made her religious duty a pleasure or made her pleasure a religious duty—whichever way you choose to look at it—and produced fourteen little Blobbes, not counting the twins, who were begun for some purpose or other, but failed to survive more than a week. Charlie saw the light about Holy Mother Church for the sake of

Peace at Home, his confessions were sufficiently numerous, and his genuflections became so frequent as to become almost automatic, giving him the appearance of being perpetually weak at the knees. He died at fifty-two and, having a rather astute business sense, left most of his money to God.

His little boy of the first marriage, Cuthbert, did even better. He lived till eighty-two, and always said ditto (he found it less trouble) to anything he was told was approved by the Holy Father. His matrimonial adventures were many, strange, and peculiar, but with these we need not bother. What we are going to bother about (though not unduly), are the details up aloft when Alice Brown, after waiting an unconscionable time, has her own little family party put together again by the grace of the Great Architect—or the Great Designer, should you prefer this term. The details above are, however, curiously different from those down below, and one has only a faint hope of making the heavenly situation clear.

Alice Brown, having the bodily structure appropriate to twenty-four years of age, and a bonny girl, withal (which is neither here nor there), meets in God's Good Time, her husband, Charlie Mussell (fifty-two), and their sweet little baby-boy, who is now, surprisingly, a bewhiskered old gentleman of eighty-two, and possessed of a bewilderingly blood-shot right eye. The old gentleman, however, seems perfectly comfortable, if no one else does, and even Alice's natural error in mistaking her baby boy for her husband, does not put him about. His conversation is far from brilliant, his chief subject of anecdote being that he had been assured on unimpeachable authority that his appendix (removed at 34) has now been restored to its proper position, which fact seems to afford him infinite amusement. Alice is really prepared to be very happy, as her pastors had always led her to expect as her due, but the situation proves puzzling. She is alarmed when she finds that her husband Charlie has other and quite legitimate connexions which require his attention. These consist of Mary Blobb (by first marriage) or Mary Mussell (by second marriage) and a small regiment of Blobbs (by first marriage) and Mussells (by second marriage) the giving of even a kiss apiece requiring quite an appreciable portion of eternity. The state of affairs reduces Mary's mind to something akin to "modified rapture." Charlie is enjoying the Peace of God, but his peace of mind is every now and again much disturbed by the fact that the first Mr. Blobb will (also from a mistaken sense of duty) continue to blow in and pay attention to his wife and family, particularly the twins (6 days). Then there was that family of Alice's baby-boy, most of whom were quite regularly acquired, creating further complications—but why go on? It is not for us to cast profane eyes upon intimate domestic scenes. We realize, we hope, what is essentially sacred. We know, as well, that God, from first principles, can make a Heaven out of a situation which on Earth would just be plain Hell.

Still it does seem a pity that Cremation is not a way out. Is there no way of baulking the ingenuity of the Divine Prestidigitator?

T. H. ELSTON.

A coloured Baptist was exhorting his brothers and sisters to have their sins washed away. All came but one man.

"Why, brudder, Jones, don't yo' want yo' sins washed away?"

"I done had my sins washed away ober at de Methodist church."

"Ah! brudder Jones, yo' aint been washed away; yo' has jes' been dry cleaned."

Rationalism and Psycho-Analysis

(Continued from page 309)

THIS leads us on to the matter of Religion in general, one with which both Rationalism and Psycho-Analysis have to do. Before developing this theme, however, I should like to say a few words on the more general one of the relationship between Science and Religion.

Until psychology appeared on the scene, within the last few years only, this relationship has mainly concerned the more intellectual, cosmological and theological aspects of Religion. It is hard to estimate the relative importance of these aspects, but in my opinion Religion as a whole contains much more significant ones, and I feel sure that those Rationalists err who tend to take the part for the whole. They are, however, right in their contention that there is an inevitable conflict between Science and those aspects of Religion, and further, that their influence has had a deterrent effect on the progress of Science. It is surely evident that if one is brought to answer as an act of piety such questions as "why has the heart four chambers?" "why is the moon at the full only once a month?" and so on, by the simple statement that it is because God has so willed it, then any further inquiry is at once stifling as both superfluous and impious. Wherever religious feeling chooses to concentrate on any of these mundane questions and make a test case of it, as has happened over and over again in history, then a series of events inevitably and regularly happens. The scientific investigators who dare to prosecute their inquiries in the face of the ban are assailed as Atheists in spite of their being for the most part themselves religiously-minded; they produce their non-theological explanation of the phenomena in question; and more or less slowly the Church accepts the explanation, and no longer feels that the case was a vital religious issue. These recurrent happenings naturally began in the fields of astronomy and physics, since they were the more easily investigated aspects of nature. When Copernicus and Newton showed that the movements of the solar system could be correlated with simple mathematical statements, and with the familiar processes of gravitation, it became unnecessary to postulate an immediate interposition of the Deity to account for the observed facts. When a century ago Wöhler manufactured a substance, urea, which previously had been inseparably connected with vital processes, he dealt the first blow at the fundamental distinction so important to theologians between animate and inanimate matter. When the evolutionary biologists, culminating in Darwin, showed that man's body was, in spite of its differences, of the same order as that of other animals, and in all probability derived from them, then man's pride was badly wounded at the thought that it was no longer necessary to invoke an act of special Divine creation to account for his existence on the earth.

Although such events as these might be said to displace God to a greater distance from man by rendering unnecessary the idea of miraculous interposition on His part, two things prevented the religiously-minded from having their faith profoundly disturbed thereby. One was—and this was decisive—that they felt God to be as near as ever. The other was that Science, despite Keats' view to the contrary, does not destroy the sense of wonder and awe. In many ways, indeed, Science heightens this by displaying the orderly and grandiose scale of the way in which things work in the universe. A Theist with a capacity for imagination can feel more uplifted, even if less flattered, by the reflection that the creation of man has proceeded by a

more remarkable, though devious, fashion than he had previously supposed. The primitive belief in the miraculous is replaced by the more mature and profound sense of wonder.

Science, however, cannot stop at the intellectual aspects of Religion, and in the last forty or fifty years it has taken an objective interest in other aspects also. William James has studied the nature of the psychological harmony induced by the event of religious conversion, and other psychologists have correlated the intensity of religious phenomena with many individual and environmental factors. Any searching investigation of the human mind, such as psycho-analysis, must concern itself with such a fundamental constituent of it as Religion is, especially since it is so often involved in neurotic conflicts. It was soon found, as indeed might have been expected, that the sources of religious feeling arise very early in the course of mental development, though we see no reason for according it, as some writers have done, the status of a biological instinct which its universality might at first sight appear to demand. Thinkers have drawn two opposite conclusions from this feature of universality, a feature the existence of which psycho-analysis with few exceptions confirms. Some have inferred that it shows the existence of a supernatural world which the mind more or less clearly perceives. Others have inferred that it indicates a prevalent quality in the mind itself, although hitherto only very vague and general guesses have been made about the nature of this quality. In other words, some infer from it an external source of religion, others an internal. The discoveries of psycho-analysis are necessarily concerned with the latter, since it is not in a position to throw any light on the former.

If the sources of religious feeling are traced to their origins in the unconscious mind, it will be found that they are there always interwoven with the child's conflicting emotions about his parents. Here I touch on a theme so vast that it could not be expounded in any single volume or series of lectures. It would not be a gross exaggeration to say that psycho-analysis is essentially a detailed study of the relations between a child and his parents. At the moment I can only assert in a single sentence that the conflicting emotions in question are far more important for the whole mental development than can easily be imagined. Returning to the matter of religion, we should say that we find all the numerous mental attitudes that man has at different times displayed towards his various gods—love, hate, dread, adoration, awe, yearning, helplessness, exaltation—to be, without exception, copies or derivatives of corresponding feelings he has at an earlier age experienced, consciously or unconsciously, towards his parents or their substitutes. When the Christian says we are all children of one Father he is using a metaphorical parallel, but to the psychoanalyst he is giving a truly genetic description of his belief. We can go even further, and assert that the precise ways in which these earlier feelings become translated on to the plane of Religion are also fairly well understood. It is therefore hard to avoid the conclusion that even if there were no Divine Being in reality the human mind is so constituted that it would inevitably build such a conception together with the characteristic attitudes accompanying it.

This is a tremendous conclusion, and one would have expected Rationalists to have exploited it pretty extensively. It surprises me that they have not. Yet I think the scientifically-minded should be careful not to be carried away beyond the actual evidence before us. To infer that a given belief has a subjective origin is not the same thing as to say it is therefore untrue objectively. That is quite another matter, not to be confounded with the first one. On the contrary, our

analytical experience of subjective beliefs is that they have an uncanny way of piercing through to an external reality. When, for instance, a madman is for subjective reasons possessed of the idea that someone wishes his destruction, or that his wife is disloyal to him, he may have reached those ideas on purely internal grounds, but they are not always untrue in fact. Whether they are or are not has to be determined by quite another type of investigation. So to say that men believe in the existence of God for purely internal reasons, reasons which would be operative whether He existed or not, is very far from saying that therefore God does not exist. There are those, including some who write under the ægis of psycho-analysis, who argue thus, but in my opinion they are not reasoning scientifically in so doing. The question is not one for any scientific specialist as such, but for the philosophic thinker.

The Christian Church learned in time, not only to adapt itself to, but even to assimilate the teachings of Copernicus and Darwin, although these flatly contradicted some of its most important doctrines. I fully expect that it will be able to do the same with the teachings of Freud. The view will probably be put forward that the grandeur of God is more fully brought to expression by recognizing the extraordinarily complex—one might even say subtle—harmony of His works than by upholding the primitive ideas of particulate intrusion into their details.

Let us now review the situation so far. Rationalism and Psycho-Analysis both profess adherence to the principles of scientific method and to the value of Freethought. They both find reasons for criticizing the doctrine of Free Will and for accepting the theory of natural evolution. They both consider that human factors are adequate to account for the genesis of religious beliefs; Rationalism is apt to take the further step of declaring that these do not correspond with any external reality. There would thus appear to be a great deal of common ground between Rationalism and Psycho-Analysis, and we recur to our original question concerning the manifest lack of sympathy between them.

I can naturally say more about this matter from the side of the Psycho-Analyst, but I will first state what I perceive of the Rationalist's attitude. He shares, of course, the general doubt about Psycho-Analysis, the feeling that its conclusions are exaggerated and improbable. I seem to have noted two special features in the criticisms passed by Rationalist writers, and they are of considerable interest. We have been very accustomed to the epithet of "gross Materialism"; a variety of abusive adjectives may be attached to it, of which "carnal" and "earthly" are the mildest. This is perhaps not very surprising when one remembers the work psycho-analysis has done on the animal nature of man, and its conclusions that many of his "higher" attributes are derived from "lowly" impulses, such as the sexual ones. It is not very hard to distort psycho-analytic work into a picture of latitudinarian lewdness or of mundane coarseness; some people feel about it, as Keats did about physics and the rainbow, that it robs the soul of man of all its fineness and spirituality. We have, as I say, been so accustomed to this sort of misunderstanding that the news of certain Rationalists taking just the opposite view came with a certain sense of novelty. Here we found ourselves, to our equal bewilderment, assailed as being merely another variety of spiritualist, who under the guise of the word "psychological" tried to undo the progress of biology and physical medicine by reverting to ideological conceptions about the immaterial. So much has the simple word "psychical" been debased by that unfortunate phrase "psychical research" that it seems hard for many people to dis-

sociate it from the supernatural, and to such people Freud's conception of the psyche gets at once confounded with theological conceptions of the soul. To this I would say in reply, that those who are guilty of this misunderstanding seem to be still so affected by theological preoccupations as to find it hard to conceive of a scientific attitude towards mental phenomena.

ERNEST JONES, M.D.

(To be concluded)

The Philosophy of Freethought

A Sequel to "The Recall of Freethought or Turning the Tables."

I DOUBT whether the short article, under the above title, which appeared in the *Freethinker*, August 15, 1937, was taken as leading to anything more serious than the Reductio ad absurdum, to which it lent itself if placed side by side with the Archbishop of Canterbury's Recall to Religion, echoes of which, though faint, are still to be heard in our land.

My main thesis was, and is, that if we probe into the origin of what is termed orthodoxy in religious belief, we find there is as much Freethought in it as there is in heterodoxy, though it is only the latter which comes under the heading of Freethinking. But the difference between them is not one of kind, but of results. Every religion makes its own orthodoxy, and even in one and the same religion, notably in Christianity, we find an accumulation of conflicting orthodoxies. The heresy of one age may and does change its colour to that of orthodoxy in succeeding generations. This is happening under our own eyes in the position taken up by Modernism in the Church of England.

If all these considerations do not point to Freethought as the ground of religious orthodoxy to what else do they point? It is true that changes of a similar kind take place in science and its conclusions. But the comparison is misleading because the scientific method concerns itself with facts and their behaviour. These are not primarily matters of thought, but like the weather—as I said previously—"just happen" whatever may be our attitude towards them. Religious beliefs whether labelled orthodox or heretical do not just happen, but have their origin in the freedom of the mind to accept or deny. (For dramatic purposes in *Faust*, Goethe's Mephistopheles announces himself as "The spirit, I, which evermore denies.") Push orthodoxy in religion back far enough, and we find it was theological Freethought—influenced by what Anatole France calls "le vieux cosmogonic"—and made arbitrary as dogma by a Church powerful enough on occasion to make puppets of kings.

Its construction must have been easy work in the ages preceding the Renaissance, "commonly reckoned to begin," so J. M. Robertson writes, "about the end of the fourteenth century," and which he describes as "broadly speaking, an evolution of the culture forces seen at work in the later Middle Ages, newly fertilized by the recovery of classic literature."

But there must always have been—to requote Voltaire's remark from Mr. Robertson—"a small flock separated from the great," who indulged in "private heresy," but lay low to escape its dangers.

The distinguishing feature of modern lay Freethought is that it gladly and unrestrainedly keeps pace with science, whereas theological Freethought is timid and lags behind it. But there was a practical reason for religious orthodoxy—which naturally took the outlook of a superstitious age—and that was the alliance between Church and State. This alliance went hand in hand with the necessity for drawing up dogma, and setting it on an orthodox basis—something on the lines of religious law. This legal type of Christianity—which permits of no deviation from established orthodoxy, though deprived of political status—still survives in the Church of Rome, and its court is held in the Vatican. And in a smaller

way it is, presumably, perpetuated in the Eastern Church.

History repeats itself, and Hitler, looking back, and no doubt realizing the power which is lent to a State by its association with religion, has himself drawn up the formula for Reich religious orthodoxy. Could there be a more conclusive confirmation than this of my original contention that orthodoxy in religion is grounded on Freethought?

MAUD SIMON.

Correspondence

AN APPRECIATION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I am taking the liberty of encroaching on your valuable time to tell you how excellent is last week's number of the *Freethinker*. Your paper always reaches a high standard, but, in my opinion, this issue is one of the best.

I was delighted to see that you have included an article from the pen of that very able writer on psycho-analysis, Dr. Ernest Jones—whose writings on this fascinating subject I consider as second only to those of Freud himself. I am eagerly looking forward to his next two contributions, and hope that from time to time we shall be treated to further articles by him.

I also enjoyed Mr. E. Bradlaugh Bonner's remarks on the subject of "Sleep"; a nightly (or sometimes daytime) occurrence, which we accept, for the most part, unwonderingly—perhaps because those of us who spend our days in toil are too weary to question the wherefore, being only too thankful to escape into the unconscious for a few brief hours.

Sleep has at various times been the subject of verse, and Shelley in particular employs it countless times in his poems, possibly because it bears so great a resemblance to death, which was so attractive to him: "I am half in love with easeful death." In his poem "To-Night," he says:—

"Thy brother Death came and cried
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side
Wouldst thou me?"

Here are a few more, chosen at random:—

"Our boat is asleep on Serechio's stream—
Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream."

"How wonderful is Death—
Death and his brother Sleep—
One pale as yonder waning moon—
With lips of lurid blue—
The other rosy as the morn—
When throned on ocean's wave—
It blushes o'er the world—
Yet both so passing wonderful."

"I went into the deserts of dim sleep,
That world which, like an unknown wilderness
Bounds this with its recesses wide and deep."

"Silence! Oh well are Death and Sleep and Thou
Three brethren named—the guardians gloomy-winged
Of one abyss, where life and truth and joy are
Swallowed up. . . ."

"I could lie down like a tired child
And weep away this life of care,
Which I have borne and yet must bear
Till Death, like Sleep, might steal on me
And I might feel in the warm aid
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my brain its last monotony."

Perhaps the great difference between sleep and death is that sleep we can enjoy, knowing that we shall wake again, whereas death we do not enjoy, as you said in one of your articles. For "Death never happens in your

own consciousness—it happens to those around you.”

Linking up these two subjects which I have mentioned, I was reading only this week in Freud's work, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, of the case of a man who was normally very precise and methodical, and the last thing before retiring each night he would wind his watch. However, a period of great stress befell him, and, for some reason which he himself could not explain, he could not remember to wind his watch while he was suffering this mental anxiety. Obviously, he had a sub-conscious desire *not* to wake again, and the “forgetting” to wind the watch was the contribution of the unconscious to this desire. But I digress, on such a theme, one could wander far, and I have no desire to trespass further.

(Miss) J. DELL.

Branch News

GLASGOW BRANCH

THERE was a large attendance of members of the Branch at its annual meeting, and the President, Mr. R. M. Hamilton, in presenting the Committee's report said that every side of the work showed an improvement. Unlike the Churches they had to record, not a decrease, but an increase in membership. Sales of literature had been good throughout the year, and the year ended, on the financial side, with a small balance in hand. Mr. Hamilton was re-elected President, and Messrs. Copland and Christie were elected Vice-Presidents. Messrs. Gray and McNeil were elected librarians, Miss Janet Cairns, Treasurer, and Mrs. Whitefield, Secretary. Secretary's address, 351 Castlemilk Road, Glasgow.

Obituary

FRED. WILKES

WE learn with regret of the death, in New York, of an old English Freethinker, Fred. Wilkes, better known by the pseudonym he adopted early in his career—Malfew Seklew. He was a Yorkshireman who wrote for the *Bradford Truthseeker*—the blasphemous organ of J. W. Gott (who was imprisoned because he would not abstain from satirical attacks on religion). Malfew Seklew championed Freethought, fearlessly if not discreetly, in Hyde Park, London, and for the past few years in every available open-space in New York and Chicago. He was some sort of anarchist-individualist with whom I had many debates in more than one American city. Whatever else he was, he was a strenuous Secularist. The probability is that his witty audacious attacks on Socialism, Liberalism and other orthodox systems would have brought him in an income and given him a career, if he had only abstained from attacking religion. He knew it. He often quoted to me Goldsmith's lines, which he applied to his own uncompromising secularism:—

“Thou source of all my bliss—and all my woe,
Thou foundst me poor at first, and keepst me so.”

Personally, Malfew Seklew was the most lovable of men. He died in semi-destitution.—G.B.

There can be no safety in an illogical position, and one's chances of snug quarters in eternity cannot surely be bettered by believing at one and the same moment of true self-contradictory propositions.—Augustine Birrell.

In the eye of science the animal body is just as much the product of molecular forces as the stalk and ear of corn, or as the crystal of salt or sugar

Professor Tyndall.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, W. B. Curry, M.A., B.Sc.—“Is Liberalism Dead?”

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. C. Tuson—A Lecture. KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Mr. J. W. Barker—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury. White Stone Pond, Hampstead, 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Sunday, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mrs. E. Grout. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, Mrs. E. Grout.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Miss E. Millard, M.A., Mr. E. Bryant and Mr. G. Barnes. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Tuson. Thursdays, 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin.

WEST HAM BRANCH (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford): 7.0, Mr. L. Ebury—A Lecture.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

IRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, every Saturday commencing May 21. Speaker Mr. J. V. Shortt.

IRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Well Lane): 8.0, Wednesday May 25, Speaker Mr. D. Robinson.

COTTON TREE (near Colne): 7.30, Thursday, Mr. J. Clayton.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): Assembly Week Campaign. 7.0, Sunday, Mr. A. Copland (Glasgow N.S.S.) opens Campaign. Monday, 8.0, Mr. F. Smithies—“Calvinism Calcinated.” Tuesday, 8.0, Mrs. Whitefield—“Ten Commandments.” Wednesday, 8.0, Mr. Smithies—“Godism: A Margarine Philosophy.” Thursday, 8.0, Mr. Smithies, “A Myoptic Church.” Friday, 8.0, Mrs. Whitefield—“The Immortal Teachings of Jesus Christ.”

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albion Street): 8.0, Muriel Whitefield and Arthur Copland will speak.

GREENOCK BRANCH N.S.S. (Grey Place): 8.0, Wednesday, Muriel Whitefield—A Lecture.

HETTON: 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of High Park Street and Park Road): 8.0, Thursday, Mr. G. Thompson. Corner of Dalmeny Street and Aigburth Road, 8.0, Sunday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexander Park Gates): 8.0, Saturday. Stevenson Square, 3.30 and 7.0, Sunday. Deans Road and Lineroff Street, 7.30, Monday, also Thursday and Wednesday, Alexandra Park Gates, 8.0. Mr. George Whitehead will speak at each meeting.

NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton—“The Bishop and the Bible.”

OSWALDTWISTLE: 7.45, Wednesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

ROCHDALE: 3.0 and 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

STOCKTON (The Cross): 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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