

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN

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

Views and Opinions

Ourselves and Others

A FEW weeks ago I said it would be interesting to know how many of our present readers had been regular subscribers for fifty years. I have been agreeably surprised at the number of replies I have received, some of these subscribers dating back to the first issue in May, 1881. In the case of an ordinary newspaper this continuity of subscription would not be very remarkable. Those who wish to keep in touch with the world's news must take in a daily or weekly paper, and the differences between newspapers are not so marked that there is a very great attachment to any one in particular. When, for example, the *Morning Post* recently ceased to appear, I do not imagine that many of its readers shed tears, or felt that something had gone that could not be replaced. It was a case of "The King is dead, long live the King," and the vacant place is easily filled. But the *Freethinker* is distinctive in many ways. (I hope readers will forgive my talking about it myself, but I think I am only saying what very many subscribers would say if they were writing, and what many of them have already said in one way or another). This is the oldest Free-thought journal in Europe, and, with the single exception of the New York *Truthseeker*, it is the oldest Free-thought paper in the world. It has always been fearless in its advocacy, and plain in its speech. Although serving as the mouthpiece of the National Secular Society, the paper does not belong to that organization, and this has, perhaps helped to maintain its independent character. It began with a hand-to-mouth existence, relying upon one week's income to pay for the next week's printing, and has never been able to register anything but an annual loss in the whole 57 years of its existence. It has been responsible to itself for itself, which includes that moral responsibility to its readers of which it has always been conscious. It is a case of

. . . To thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

A Bunch of Letters

The letters I have received are from many parts of the world. In addition to home letters, there are communications from South, West and East Africa, from Australia, the United States, from Venezuela, Switzerland, France, and Canada. I know that this does not exhaust the list. To my knowledge many in this country have not written, although several of these have not done so because they have taken it that I did not need the telling. Naturally, the letters are very appreciative in character. Mr. H. S. Metcalf, writing from Chicago, writes:—

Fifty-one years ago I was a member of the N.S.S., and a little before that time became a reader of your great little paper. With the exception of a few copies that have gone astray, I have read every issue since then, and with undiminished admiration for it. In my judgment it is now better than ever, and I owe it more than I can repay.

One home reader, who will be well-known to the older generation of Freethinkers, and who for many years did good service for the Free-thought movement, Mr. F. A. Davies:—

My first recollection of the *Freethinker* is seeing it displayed in C. C. Cattell's shop near Ludgate Circus, but I did not become a "constant reader" until 1884. . . . After fifty-four years, although my occupation compels me to read a considerable amount, I never miss at least the first article.

Another London reader, whom we remember as an ardent worker when we first joined the movement (we shall have completed our own fifty years of service next year) Mr. A. F. Bullock, says:—

The *Freethinker* is still my favourite and most valued journal, and if anything in these unsettled days happened to cause it to cease publication it would be a disaster to real freedom. . . . English Freethinkers have to thank you for your many valuable ideas.

Mr. G. W. Maud, also of London, forwards his name as a reader from the first issue of this paper, and is evidently as interested as ever. Mr. H. Sharp writes as one who welcomed the founder and editor of this paper on his release from Holloway prison, after spending twelve months there as a compulsory guest for the "crime" of blasphemy.

I have been a little surprised at the proportion of those who have written, and who have read the *Freethinker* since its first issue. Some of these are well in the eighties, and as there is an old saying that "They whom the Lord loves die young"—much to the disappointment of the object of his affection, it may be that they whom the Lord dislikes have better "life value." We pass this hint on to insurance companies; it may induce them to offer better terms to Freethinkers. One correspondent says that he sub-

scribed for Bradlaugh's *National Reformer* in 1877. That makes my own half century appear rather juvenile. And this veteran writes a good letter, with his sentiments freely and well-expressed. Mr. Dryland, of Birmingham, says that his connexion with the movement goes back to the days of Harriet Law, a very brilliant expositor of Freethought in her day, and who for some time ran a paper of her own.

Our welcome contributor, Mr. G. Wallace, says he first became acquainted with the *Freethinker* through the prosecution of G. W. Foote, and has been a regular reader since 1883. Mr. Wallace is not alone in his experience. The trial of G. W. Foote brought about a decisive exposition of the Common Law of Blasphemy, and taught bigots that real Freethinkers were not to be deterred by the threat or the actuality of legal prosecutions. The prosecution turned largely on the cartoons that were then being published in the *Freethinker*. These were suspended by Foote's direct orders during his imprisonment, but directly after he was released they were resumed and the first issue was left, with G. W. Foote's compliments, at the house of the judge who had sentenced him. Since then the *Freethinker* has been left severely alone by the authorities.

The correspondence has brought to me a number of familiar names, who show that after many years their affection for the "old paper" is as strong as ever. Among these are those of A. W. Davis, whose name must be familiar to many readers, Mr. H. J. Hewer, of London, Mr. T. Birtley, still at work in the North for the cause, and who revives in his letter the name of Peter Weston, a Tyneside newsagent, one of the sturdiest Freethinkers in an area that tends to produce sturdy men, J. Roberts, of Salford, who recalls the name of another fine Freethinker of Leicester, Thomas Slater, T. W. Stanfield of Sheffield, and E. Smedley of Hucknall, Notts. I have enjoyed hearing from them, and if the present generation of Freethinkers live up to the standard of loyalty set by the last, then the future of our movement is assured.

If I had needed encouragement to get on with my work I should have found it in these letters from veterans in our movement—I have cut out the personal compliments. These writers have lived under the presidency of Charles Bradlaugh and G. W. Foote. The latter said more than once that it was a daring thing for any man to tread in the footsteps of Bradlaugh. Well I had perforce to tread in the footsteps of both. But I must confess that I never experienced the feeling that Foote had. Office never attracted me, and I never thought in whose footsteps I was treading. There was just something to be done, and I did it. I loved the work and I love it still. I thought when I was a young man that it was a fine work to do; I did it and I have kept on doing it. And after all I may claim to be the equal of both Bradlaugh and Foote in one direction. They gave of their best to the Freethought cause, and I have given of my best, and when men give their best, other distinctions take a secondary place. Several of my little army of semi-centenarians have paid me the compliment of saying that the *Freethinker* was never better than it is to-day. If that is true it is as it should be, and it ought to be; for we live in days when the great superstition may be attacked by tools that were only in the forging when Bradlaugh strove, and we who come later have the advantage of what has been done by our predecessors. If we can see farther than they, and deal more deadly blows than they, it is because we can stand on their shoulders and have the benefit of their pioneering work. The greatest compliment a child can pay a parent is by repeating him on a higher level, to know more than he did, to see further than he did. I do not know whether Confucius ever said it, but if not

he ought to have said—"The superior parent is the one who breeds a yet superior child." That is the superior man's legacy to the race. It is his method of repaying the debt he owes to those that have gone before him.

* * *

All Right Ahead

After I had said I would like to hear from those of my readers who had subscribed regularly to the *Freethinker* for not less than fifty years—about as lengthy a period as I have read it myself, I had a humorous letter from a friend enquiring whether the opinions of the twenty or thirty-year-old readers were of any consequence. On the contrary, they are of very great importance indeed, and I read no letters with greater pleasure than those from younger men and women who write in such generous terms of the "one and only." I have already said that in my judgment no better Freethinking paper has ever existed in this country than this one. I do not think that is conceit. If anyone will run through some of the back volumes of the *Freethinker*, he can hardly help noting how much of it will stand re-reading, and that is a hard test to apply to any periodical. It has never been the habit of the *Freethinker* to dictate to its contributors—never to a greater extent than to consider the suitability of an article. That condition complied with each contributor has had a very free hand. And if a writer cannot turn out something worth reading under such conditions he had better leave writing alone.

The only anxiety I have ever had concerning the paper has been a financial one. The *Freethinker* has never been run at a profit, and so long as it retains its character I do not see how it can be. The inevitable deficit on the paper was largely wiped out some years ago by the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust. The income from that source, as was explained, never quite covered the deficit, but it came near it. But investments that were bringing five per cent, have been repaid, and cannot be reinvested on the same terms. And there has during the past year been a considerable advance in the cost of paper, printing, labour, everything connected with the publishing business. I am very loath to ask for further financial help, although I know it would be forthcoming if I did so. But I would prefer it to come from a further increase of circulation, and to enlist the services of all interested to that end.

Tales will be told, and liars will stick to their favourite occupation. So I may say here that I have heard from time to time fantastic stories of what I "draw" from the paper. There is no secret about that, there has been none from the outset. As editor, manager, contributor, etc., I am supposed to draw the princely salary of three guineas a week—when it is there. When it is not, I go without. And I may add that from the start I arranged my financial relations to both the *Freethinker* and the N.S.S., so that it is a sheer impossibility for me to handle any money at all, without the knowledge of other parties. My signature alone on a cheque drawn on either the Society or the paper has no authority at all at the bank. I should have no objection to taking five hundred a year from it, if it was there. But there are difficulties in the way.

Let me in conclusion tell a story, which I fancy I have told before. When in the first year of the war I took over the responsibility for the *Freethinker*, the editor of one of the oldest papers in Fleet Street said to a friend, "Cohen has some pluck to take on that job. The paper simply cannot live in present conditions; it will never pay." I asked my friend to tell him that he overlooked one important fact, The *Freethinker* never has paid, and increased difficulties do not mean quite so much to us as they do to others.

The *Freethinker* lives because it commands the loyalty, I might almost say, the affection of so large a section of its readers. It is, indeed, not so much a paper as a voice. It lives to serve a cause, and papers of that kind do not easily disappear.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Seers all at Sea

"The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies."

Lucretius.

"The happiness of credulity is a cheap and dangerous quality of happiness, and by no means a necessity of life."—Bernard Shaw.

AGREEABLY to the law of supply and demand, prophets have in all times arisen, to foretell events smooth and otherwise, at prices absurdly cheap considering the alleged value of their services. From the days of the Roman augurs, who, it is said, could not pass one another without laughing, down to those of the present-day fortune-teller, who smiles in her sleeve until an infidel magistrate usurps her calling, and prophecies that she will spend some months in prison, an unbroken line of more or less inspired persons have existed.

The apparently inconsequent nature of the events that befall mankind engendered the idea of a supernatural control which, of course, according to the prophets was to be bribed. The rain-doctors and prophets, of uncivilized peoples, however, are kept to their contracts. They are expected to bring rain when needed, and, if they do not, the consequences are summary and unpleasant. But the prophets in civilized countries retain all the advantages of their savage rivals without any of the risks. The civilized dupes allow the prophet to play his game on the principle, "Heads I win, tails you lose." If the prophet is unsuccessful, they ignore the mistake; if he is correct, they put it to his credit, or he puts it to his credit, which is much the same thing.

These phenomena are not unknown in this country, and we can estimate the cases of some notoriety more correctly than those of the lesser luminaries. In the early nineteenth century, Joanna Southcott was in the prophetic business, in the time when the great Napoleon was identified as the "beast" in "Revelation." Joanna was bold, and she predicted that she would be the mother of the "messiah"—a lying prophecy that proved to be due to dropsy. Before she died, she left many examples of her artful prophecies, of her wranglings with Satan, and of verse, that not even divine inspiration could make readable, or even grammatical.

Another nineteenth century messiah was Lieutenant Richard Brothers, a half-pay naval officer, whose portrait was engraved with rays of light descending on his crazed head. The word came to Dick that he would be the King of Jerusalem and Ruler of the world, for he was as modest and as unassuming as the ex-Kaiser. But the message fell on stony ground, and the wicked world proved obdurate. After Richard had invited King George IV. to deliver up his crown and cash, and had ordered both Houses of Parliament to meet for receiving his message, this messiah was led away to a house of quiet, where so many sons and daughters of high heaven have suffered restraint at the hands of unbelieving keepers and sceptical doctors.

Credulous folks of a later generation sat at the feet of the Rev. John Cumming, who demonstrated that the Pope of Rome was "Anti-Christ," and that the

French people were aimed at in "Revelation." This North-Country Jeremiah preached before Queen Victoria, and the avenues of his church were as crowded as the approaches to the opera in the London season. Nemesis came at last, and he fell from grace. In a moment, of spiritual exuberance, he named the year 1861 as that in which Providence would make things very lively. The year was not uneventful, but it failed to fill the prophet's highly-coloured programme, and from that time his fame declined, and the subscriptions lessened.

There was still money in fooling the religious public, and Cumming's mantle was soon on the shoulders of another man. For many years the Rev. W. Baxter's name was a household word to pious folks. For a whole generation that book of religious rubbish, *Forty Coming Wonders*, was purchased with unabated gullibility, although the error of Baxter's pious pretensions was proved over and over again by the logic of facts to the satisfaction of reasonable persons.

Few prophets would find it easy to go on year after year delivering a succession of silly forecasts destined to utter failure. But Baxter's Christian dupes were the most greedily credulous of their species. The prophet gravely announced the ascension of 144,000 believers, without dying, in 1896, and the Great Persecution from 1896 to 1901. The second Advent of Christ was also in his programme for the same year. The prophet had an amusing adventure with the City of London Corporation. He applied for the lease of a site for a newspaper office, and it was pointed out to him that he had asked for a lease extending a quarter of a century beyond that he had fixed in his predictions for the end of the world. But a trifle such as this had no fear for this Christian Cagliostro, and the lease was signed.

All these are well-known cases. Baxter and Cumming found fortune-telling a pleasant and a very profitable trade. They did not advise women how to find husbands, or furnish their congregations with the names of "winners." They made far more impudent claims, and their "cheek" met with golden rewards. But they were just as much impostors as race-course fortune-tellers. They pretended to possess gifts which neither they nor other people possess. So do thought-readers, mediums, clairvoyants, and the whole troublous tribe of dabblers in the alleged "super" naturals. But whereas an ordinary person who pretends to tell fortunes is fined or sent to prison, the same despicable fraud may be practised with impunity if one uses the jargon of the Christian religion. The old Vagrancy Act provides that all persons professing to tell fortunes shall be liable to a fine or to imprisonment. Such is the more modern and more merciful form of the alleged Divine Commandment, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Indeed, the old laws against witchcraft do not prove that witchcraft ever existed. It never did exist. As a fact, tens of thousands of women, perfectly harmless and innocent, were legally murdered on perfectly fantastic evidence, which ought to have been incredible, for doing what was physically impossible, in supposed obedience to a legendary command of a doubtful deity. As Lucretius says: "To what damned deeds religion urges men."

Fortune-telling in our own day, in the twentieth century, in a country alleged to be civilized, means fines and imprisonment for gipsies, and poor people, but the careers of Baxter and Cumming show how it may be turned to the best financial account by Christian clergymen, who recall the soothing fact that a very large number of their co-religionists are only half-educated and exceedingly gullible.

MIMNERMUS.

The Trial of Robert Taylor

II.

TAYLOR'S examination of the witness Collins at his trial for "blasphemy" was designed to bring out the man's hopeless ignorance. The judge, Lord Tenterden, tried to show the jury, in his summing-up, that this did not matter: "Much had been said of the illiterate habits of the person," he remarked, "on whose testimony this case principally rested, but the jury could not fail to observe, that though the witness certainly was not a person with any literary pretensions, yet that he evinced strong common sense, and they ought not to overlook that the few sentences which the witness gave, were only a small part of a long oration." As a matter of fact, this is just what Taylor proved, as he asked Collins, "Now, as there was a great deal of my oration which you did not take down, what induced you, Thomas Collins, to take down the parts which you have noted?"

"Because, in my judgment, they were the worst parts."

Taylor went on:—

"I understand you to say that you only took down sentences which were very shocking. Did you hear nothing of a very different character, to explain and qualify them?"

"I heard nothing to explain them, so as to do away with their meaning."

"If you heard anything that would explain these shocking sentences, would you have noted it?"

"Certainly I should."

"Did you hear me utter no just or righteous sentiment?"

"It is impossible to say, my attention was completely taken up."

And later:—

"Can you undertake to say whether the language I used was that of a quotation, or spoken in my own person?"

"Certainly."

"You are a very learned man. Do you understand the general principles of ratiocinative argumentation?"

Here, says the report, the witness displayed all the ludicrous symptoms of the most perfect confusion. At length he said, "I could understand your words."

"Tell me, Thomas Collins, was my argument dogmatical or hypothetical?" (A laugh.)

"Part of it was very learned and above my comprehension." (A laugh.)

Taylor continued a little longer in this fashion to banter the witness, and eventually made him admit that, though he had sworn on the New Testament, that book told him to "Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool."

The witness, re-examined by the Solicitor-General, claimed again that "nothing was uttered by Mr. Taylor to qualify the passages which I have taken down. I can say that the scope of the whole discourse was to endeavour to persuade the audience that the New Testament was false." Well, of course, this is exactly what Taylor did do; it was the crux of the whole matter. The object of his lectures was to prove that the New Testament was untrue; and the object of the persecution was to show, not that he succeeded in doing this, but that he was using blasphemous language to accomplish his aim. That was Christianity's reply to the unanswerable logic of Taylor's position—"We can't answer your arguments, but we can fix 'blasphemy' on to your discourse and in that way get you."

Robert Taylor's defence in his speech to the jury is a masterly one. There is no doubt that he was a fine orator, and the Church lost a brilliant preacher when he left it. He took three hours and a half to deliver it, the report stating that he "spoke in an impressive manner, but with a redundancy of action, which gave to the exhibition a little too much of a theatrical air."

It is impossible to compress the speech in an article and do justice to it. He reasoned out his case step by step, for he knew how deep were the prejudices ingrained by religion. "In all other cases," he cried, "an accused person may confidently rely on the impartiality of a British Jury; but where religious animosities, the very strongest that can misguide and pervert the judgments of men, have originated the proceedings, and, after what I have learned from the learned opener, I fear are arrayed in hostile phalanx in the persecution, the chances are fearfully against a defendant, though 'his righteousness were clear as light, and his just dealing as the noon-day' . . . he trembles on the far more perilous hazard . . . that the interests of religion will forbid the exercise of humanity, and faith stand sentinel over captive reason."

It should be noted that whatever Taylor's opinions on the question of the existence of God were later, at the time of his first trial, he was, like Thomas Paine, a Deist, and he openly professed Deism. To be called a Deist was bad enough in those days; but to be labelled Atheist was the last word in horror. At least a man who professed Deism might be "saved"; he still was a believer. But an Atheist—!

This is why Taylor urged the Jury: "Dismiss from your minds, I entreat you, all impression of those absurd and cruel slanders, which my theological, and, mayhap, my legal enemies, have circulated, to make it be believed that, differing so widely in sentiment from them, I must needs be something which they are not—a monster of iniquity, an Atheist, a sot; a madman, everything which malice could devise, when nothing of the kind could be proved. Gentleman, I am no such character; I am not an Atheist; I am not a Christian; neither am I a hypocrite. I am in my heart and soul a Deist. In the cause of Deism I have suffered what, in any other cause, would be accounted a real martyrdom. For Deism I have incurred the loss of natural relations and friends, of property, of liberty itself, and have held my life, and my life's comfort, of inferior consideration to the great duty of inculcating just and worthy notions of the Supreme Being on an insulted and priest-ridden people. . . . I believe that I am bound by the most sacred obligations that can bind a man to conduct myself in life, in every respect, just exactly as I have done 'constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice, and, if suffering be inevitable, patiently to suffer for the truth's sake.'"

He denied that he was out for notoriety, or that he had no fear of "an adverse verdict." "Whatever might be its consequences to myself," he added, "I could not but regard it as an omen of worse oppressions to mankind—as a fatal blow to that which every good man ought to prize more than life, fatal to the right of free speech and free discussion." Taylor described the founding of the Society of Universal Benevolence and the Christian Evidence Society in detail, and claimed that he had given over one hundred lectures "in exposure of the fallacies and sophisms which abound in the writings of Christian divines" without "incurring the menace of intended magisterial interference." It is a pity that I cannot give here the very many excellent points he made—I certainly feel that the whole of his speech would be worth reprinting. Lord Tenterden only interrupted

him on points of law, and was ever ready to allow him time for rest or accommodation or refreshment.

Taylor contemptuously referred to the witness—and even to the way in which the Attorney-General referred to “the nest of vermin,” when describing those who attended the Areopagus. The joke went further when Taylor insisted that the “blasphemous” sentences were actually “either a direct quotation from the writings of our best English divines, or from Mosheim, Michaelis, or Beausobre.” He showed that the prosecution was untenable on Christian, moral, and legal grounds, with a fine wealth of argument and quotation, and begged for a verdict “which would put an end for ever to the reproach which these prosecutions reflect on the character of an enlightened age.” The judge, in his summing-up, however, took little notice of the arguments; and seemed mainly concerned with the legal aspects of the case. He fairly weighed it from the point of view of “blasphemy”—though naturally, as a Christian, one could see that he had little doubt that Taylor was “guilty” and in this the jury concurred, for they brought in that verdict.

Taylor was sentenced, over three months later, to a year's imprisonment in Oakham Gaol. Here he wrote his famous *Syntagma*, a work which must have done enormous damage to the Christian cause. It was a reply to Pye Smith, and made a sorry mess of that coarse-mouthed Christian. If Taylor nowadays is little read, his work lives on; and we who bear his flag should never forget what we owe to his courage, and the courage of the other soldiers in the “greatest of all causes.”

Robert Taylor called the jury to register a verdict “to wipe off the stain of disgraceful persecution for religious opinions, and establish the right of freedom of speech upon every question, political or theological.” Have we, over a hundred years later, still to ask for that right?

H. CUTNER.

Rationalism and Psycho-Analysis

(Concluded from page 333)

A SECOND, perhaps less characteristic, feature is the distaste many Rationalist writers have evinced for the evidently irrational modes of thought which are so much the concern of the psycho-analyst. When we describe what we find in the unconscious mind, its illogicalities, its self-contradictions, its contempt for reason, its grotesque suppositions and pseudo-ratiocinations all this must and does produce on conscious minds an impression of nightmarish improbability. Many Rationalists seem to shrink back from this picture with a peculiar horror, as if they wished to protest that the mind of man surely could not be so irrational as all that. I suppose their abhorrence for such irrationality is so great that they would fain deny its existence until they are driven to recognize it. Yet a cooler reflection might make them more willing to admit the strength of the enemy they have devoted their lives to fighting. Sometimes I think that their animus goes even further, and that they are inclined to blame psycho-analysts for the existence of the extensive irrationality to which we have called attention, just as in former time kings were wont to execute the bringers of bad tidings.

Now for the other side of the matter—the Psycho-Analyst's criticism of the Rationalist's position. I can best introduce this by reverting to our starting-point—the topic of Freethought. Psycho-Analysis not only demands for its work as much freedom of

thought as is available, but it is also concerned with the difficulties in the way of achieving freedom of thought. In investigating them it recognizes that freedom of thought is only one form of psychological freedom, and that one cannot properly consider the part without the whole. To deal with freedom of the intellect only, as Rationalists sometimes do, is unnecessarily to limit oneself. This is especially so because in our judgment freedom of thought is not so much the prerequisite of freedom in general—although it can plausibly be described as such—as a *sign* or *index* that the wider freedom of the personality in general has already been attained. The problem of what constitutes this freedom of the personality, on which the capacity for free thought very largely depends, is one that greatly exercises psycho-analysis. It has furthermore concerned itself with the significance of freedom itself, with the question of why the subjective feeling of freedom is so tremendously important to men, and with the interesting fact that its importance seems to vary so much at different periods. The feeling in question is evidently bound up with the sense of security, and may even be regarded as one aspect of this. It is certainly striking how often men will prize some form or other of freedom above all else, and will gladly sacrifice their lives in the endeavour to achieve it. Even more astonishing is the way the same men will at other times tamely submit to the most extraordinary regimentation of their daily lives and interference with every detail of their personal freedom, especially at the behest of their fellow-countrymen. Italy, for instance, has shown us several examples of both these reactions in less than a century. At the present time it is only too easy to point to numerous examples of extreme renunciation of liberty, whereas I should be hard put to it to find a good example of the contrary—outside, of course, the ranks of the Rationalist Press Association.

But the first thing that strikes an outsider about the laudable campaign Rationalists are conducting on behalf of freedom is the remarkable localization of their method. Confining ourselves for the moment to the external barriers against freedom, and still further to the barriers against intellectual freedom to the neglect of other perhaps equally important forms of freedom—social, political, economic, and so on—one cannot help wondering why Rationalists concentrate so much on the theological obstacles. In the definition I quoted earlier, it is stated that “Rationalism . . . aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics . . . independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority.” Well, I should have doubted very much that any Church, with the exception of that in Austria and Ireland, could nowadays be called an authority that hinders one from establishing such a system if one wants to. Matters were, of course, different in bygone ages, and, as I just hinted, are still different in a few countries of Europe, but I should have thought the Rationalist Press Association has survived long enough to discover that there are other much more formidable obstacles to intellectual freedom than organized religion. A very short residence in either Germany or Russia should be enough to convince one of this, and of the disturbing consideration that opposition to freedom can proceed not only from blind tradition, but also from a consistent and up-to-date efficiency. Even in England I should anticipate that anyone wishing to inculcate a new system of ethics would encounter at least as much opposition or prejudice from the legal and political worlds as from the clerical, nor do I think that most of it would be religious in its origin. Speaking a year after the War, William Archer said: “To the historian of a thousand years hence this greatest of wars will

rank as a mere skirmish in the never-ending battle of Rationalism against irrationalism." Assuming that by Rationalism he meant freedom of thought, we have to record the painful fact that the great victory won for freedom and democracy has led to far firmer shackles being put on freedom of thought throughout Europe than had existed for centuries previously, and that even in this country the number of those who admire and yearn for those shackles is unfortunately in the ascendant. And no one could maintain that organized religion has played any serious part in this restriction; if anything, its influence has been on the other side.

The investigations of Psycho-Analysis have thrown a great deal of light on the problem of freedom, and have also been able, to some extent, to explain the curious oscillation in man's attitude towards it. It has been forced to concentrate on this problem because in its therapeutic work its main endeavour is to bring about freedom from the bonds that have cramped the personality, or—to put it more modestly—to diminish the number of influences that have restricted its freedom. One important conclusion issuing from these investigations is that there exist internal bonds, i.e., bonds *inside* the personality, which are much more potent in their restrictive power than any external ones. Anyone, therefore, who is seriously interested in achieving mental freedom would do well to turn his attention to the nature of these bonds. It is not possible for me here to expound the psychology of the unconscious, that region where the tumult of the instincts releases emotional forces of which consciousness perceives only a faint mirror, but I should say very emphatically that the restrictive bonds in question are essentially due to the massive layers of guiltiness and fear that are always present in the unconscious mind. And I would add, what I am sure is an unexpected conclusion, that this guiltiness and fear is only in small part imposed on the child from without, its main source being quite endogenous. So important do we consider these layers of the mind, arising as I say mainly from within the growing personality itself, that we should not find it a very gross exaggeration if anyone tried to describe the whole of human life as a series of infinitely varied endeavours to alleviate the distress they would cause if allowed to function unchecked. These endeavours we term *defences*. Like the more familiar defences against external dangers they may be either active or passive. Instances of the first kind are; aggressiveness, intolerance, pugnacity and—curiously enough—often the struggle for freedom from external barriers. Instances of the second are: flight of all kinds, inhibition, denial, shame, aversion and a clamour for security. We now begin perhaps to see why mankind oscillates between the passion for external freedom and the passion for security: each promises help for his fundamental distress. Our social institutions also can be fruitfully regarded from this point of view. The one that has the most direct bearing on these difficulties of the individual is undoubtedly Religion, and it is not hard to see that it functions along both the active and passive lines. When St. Paul spoke of "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," the phrase must seem distinctly unintelligible to a Rationalist, but it is full of meaning to a Psycho-Analyst. The sociological disadvantages of the religious solution are first, that it operates successfully only with a minority of the community, and secondly, that its operation tends to be bound up with certain rather strict limiting conditions—to quote St. Paul again, "being then made free from sin ye become the servants of righteousness"—thus opening up the wide question of what constitutes "righteousness."

When the internal and unconscious restrictions be-

come too painfully tyrannical, various reactions of defence come into play. Of these I will mention a very important example to which we give the name of "projection." The unconscious restricting influence is here identified with a suitable external one, projected on to it, and this is then attacked with an aggressiveness that may culminate in a venomous hostility. Germany, for instance, pursued by world condemnation which she vainly tried to exorcise by repudiating what she called the "war-guilt lie," discovered with relief that the poison in her system could be identified with the Jewish section of her population. The Jews were both the unseen instigator of wars and the arch intriguers of defeatist pacifism, both the bloated upholders of the capitalistic system sucking the life blood of the nation and the evil Communists seeking to destroy the sacred rights of property. The action she took in response to this discovery is unfortunately known to all of us. The Priesthood, or any form of organized Religion, has at times been descried as the main enemy to freedom, and the frequent justification for this has led many to concentrate on it as the one and only obstacle, an attitude which, in my opinion, can only lead one astray. I should like here to echo the words of Lord Snell, when he warned us recently that no movement can live by worship at the tomb of the past.

Certain signs enable us to say whether a given emotional attitude contains this element of projection, and is thus being used as a defence against unconscious internal bonds. They are the combination of hostility and animus with a passionate enthusiasm for an ideal and excessive optimism about attaining it. I will leave it to you to decide whether the Rationalist movement has always been free of these characteristics. Whenever you come across them you may be sure that the clamour for external freedom they accompany is being misused to conceal an internal lack of freedom. True freedom, on the contrary, breeds tolerance, understanding and firmness. I wish, further, to lay stress on the self-righteousness that so often accompanies the projection attitude I have just described. When Thomas Jefferson thundered "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility towards every form of tyranny over the mind of man," we are naturally impressed by his earnestness, but we might not feel sure that such a categorical assertion of moral certitude, if seduced by power, could not degenerate into a doctrinaire opinionism. Bernard Shaw once caustically said "Beware of the man whose God is in the skies," meaning, of course, that a man may become inaccessible when his private prejudices are fortified by projection on the the idea of a supernatural Being. And when William Archer asserted of the human reason that "its genesis is the mystery of mystery, the miracle of miracles," one cannot help being reminded of the error the leaders of the French Revolution fell into when they replaced the worship of the Almighty by that of the Goddess of Reason.

This remark brings me to my last but not least theme, the subject of reason. All I wish to say here is that we have become very familiar in Psycho-Analysis with the deplorable fact that reason, however one may prize it, can be misused like any other faculty, when it becomes one of the "defences" about which I have been speaking. By misuse I mean the employing of the intellect not to discover truth, but to conceal it. Nothing is commoner than for a man unwilling to recognize his true motives for an action or an attitude, and unwilling to reveal the underlying feelings from which such motives spring, to prostitute his intellect by using it to invent reasons—quite logical ones—which will serve as an explana-

tion. An unwillingness to face intimate emotions is characteristic of mankind, and yet without feeling reason is powerless to understand the workings of the mind. The thesis I am sustaining here is that only by feeling can reason discover truth, and that, as was said by a certain Person, "the truth shall make you free."

ERNEST JONES, M.D.

Acid Drops

The Bishop of Kingston seems to be getting things out of their proper proportions. Addressing a meeting of a "Home for Friendless Girls," he complained of the number of divorces in which members of the House of Lords were implicated. He said:—

I imagine that if you were to go through the members of the House of Lords, you would find that they as a body have had as bad a record in regard to that kind of thing as any other body of people in England. It is a grievous thing because they are the people who ought to set an example in our English life.

We protest against this attack on the members of the House of Lords, and against the implied insult to those outside the upper chamber. When has there been a time when the domestic life of the aristocracy of this country as a whole was of such a kind that it stood out against the conduct of the ordinary citizen as light against darkness? Men are not made peers because of their superiority in moral or domestic behaviour, and never were made peers for that purpose. We protest very strongly against the insult contained in the statement that the average man and woman either looks to the House of Lords for guidance in matters of morals, or that the House of Lords shows any superiority to ordinary men and women in this respect. The Bishop of Kingston may believe that all men are equal in the sight of God, but he evidently has a different standard when dealing with men on earth.

The New Minister for Air (if it were minister for *hot air*, we could name quite a number who would fit the job) has been badly treated by the press. In all the pictures of him that have been published since he was appointed, not one has depicted him as looking at an aeroplane, or standing with a hand on one, or even watching a display of flying. And how is the public to become convinced of his ability to manage this department if he is not seen occasionally embracing a bombing machine?

Time has its revenge even within the fold of the Church. For example, an "Anglican," writing to the *Church Times*, the other day, says, "As one looks back, the outcry against F. D. Maurice and *Lux Mundi* have become subjects for shame. One cannot be exactly proud of the ill-mannered attack of Bishop Wilberforce upon Professor Huxley, or the violence of the agitation against the contributors to *Essays and Reviews*." If this means anything at all, it is almost a complete surrender to the positions taken by the two books mentioned—positions which at one time were looked upon as the rankest heresy, but are now seen to be the very mildest unorthodoxy. As a matter of fact, nothing would please the Church better if its members were to rest *now* on the "unbelief" of these two books. As it is, the disintegrating process within the Church has gone far past anything in them. There is only one way of preventing the growth of unbelief, and that is to forbid people thinking. And history proves that even this method breaks down sooner or later.

Christians will be very proud of the Rev. C. E. Jaynes, who is described as the world's youngest preacher. He gave his first sermon at the age of two and a half, and no doubt then pointed out that the only way to Salvation

from Sin was the Cross; now at the age of seven he has been ordained by the International Ministerial Federation. He has already become famous as an Evangelist of fiery power, and makes it his business to importune people everywhere to find out if they are saved. He is strongly opposed, at the age of seven, to drinking and smoking, and, we are told, warns men and women alike that "they are defiling the Temple of the Holy Ghost." Perhaps it is a good thing that his birth was registered in the ordinary way; otherwise his more enthusiastic followers might have insisted that it was another case of an incarnated God.

Summoned for keeping dogs without licences, masters of Harrow, wrote to the Wealdstone Court expressing regret. They were fined 7s. 6d. each. Similarly summoned, a third Harrow instructor of youth wrote an impertinent and sarcastic letter to the court. The chairman described it as "a very feeble defence." We would have described it as "feeble-minded," inasmuch the writer suggested dogs should be taught to bark to remind their owners when their (the dogs') licences were due. The point of difference between the three masters is that the two first-named are mere *laymen*, and the third is the Rev. E. M. Venables. It is, alas! too common that "reverend bounce" goes beyond the normal decent behaviour of the average citizen, but it is the country's greatest misfortune that such men have a large voice in the control of our public-school education, if not in the Universities.

A 17-year-old girl teacher at Sunday school was at Colchester put on probation "to give her the opportunity of leading a proper and decent life." She may shortly be mothering her child by one of her pupils aged 15. It is curious to relate of this case that the girl's name is printed and published: she being the *instigating party*. But if the girl had been a year younger, the boy would have stood in her position, and she would have been chief witness for the prosecution.

A correspondent of the *Observer* points out as an illustration of Victorian ideas, that the British Museum catalogue, under "Mill (John Stuart)" added to the list of his writings, "See Anti-Christ." Anti-Christ he was to most of the Christians of his day. To-day when preachers are giving their congregations much of what earlier Freethinkers taught, Mill would probably be described as one who was filled with the spirit of "true Christianity."

We so often hear about the "Consolations of Religion" that we dare not deny our readers the valuable contribution made by the *Catholic Times* to the orthodox supply of Aids to Human Happiness as quoted here:—

Q.: How can those in heaven be perfectly happy if some relative or dear friend is in hell? (B.C.).

A.: The happiness of the souls of the just consists in the Beatific Vision, which implies such a close and intimate union with God that nothing outside God is required to complete that happiness.

The presence of our relatives and friends in heaven can be said to be an extrinsic consideration adding to our beatitude, but their absence can in no way lessen that full and complete satisfaction experienced in the possession of God and the intimate and uninterrupted contemplation of His infinite perfections (I-II, 4, 8).

So that all the talk of the joy of reunion in the next world is just bunkum. The chief joy is to engage in an owl-like contemplation of God. One would think that even God would get tired of this kind of thing. But the *Catholic Times* forgot to point out that not only is the presence of our relatives in heaven not necessary to our happiness, but that some Roman Catholics have asserted that even in heaven the contemplation of those burning in hell would not affect our enjoyment.

Christians are bragging about their Bible having survived four hundred years of popular translation. We doubt if it is any better understood than in the days of

Mark Rutherford, whose education for the Ministry has been so graphically described by the author :—

The theological and biblical teaching was a sham. We had come to the college in the first place to learn the Bible. Our whole existence was in future to be based upon that book; our lives were to be passed in preaching it. I will venture to say that there was no book less understood either by students or professors.

The Rev. Norman Goodall, M.A., is worried to think that the Bible actually foretells the present state of the world as an armed camp. "Nation shall rise against nation," etc., etc. "What kind of God," he asks, "is this who talks thus and does nothing to prevent it?" He suggests, "there are two directions, in particular, in which we need to revise our thinking about God." Mr. Goodall has come to the conclusion that God is a Non-resister! If Jesus really correctly delineated God's opinions, there is something to be said in favour of the theory. God is most clearly not resisting Hitler. But if God is a "Man of War," how can He also be a Pacifist. Really God is not a non-resister, but a NON EXISTER. We hope Mr. Goodall will appreciate our assistance in clarifying the situation.

An American friend has sent us some statistics showing that Italy has 39 Cardinals, against 30 for the rest of the world. It seems that 120,512 Italians possess the doubtful advantage of having a Cardinal all to themselves, while other parts of the world must put up with one Cardinal to every 11,050,006 persons. It certainly doesn't look democratic, but we wouldn't like to ask for any more British Cardinals. Let Italy have them all, say we.

Speaking over the National Wireless, the Rev. William Paton was allowed time for a long drawn-out appeal for the International Missionary Society. He stated that there are 20,000 Missionaries whose "work is of the most varied kind." He gave some details of various activities without mentioning the vast trading connexions opened up by many of these gentry.

A chaplain of the Air Force has been struck with a brilliant idea. Recognizing that religion is the last thing in the world to restrain the lust for war, or weaken the fictitious "glory" of war, he has designed a religious film. In the story a shepherd whose hut has collapsed goes to the aid of an army aeroplane that has been forced to land in an isolated country. The fliers help the shepherd to rebuild his hut and suddenly all of them recognize that a cross beam and an upright is describing the sign of the Cross. One can imagine the moral of the story. It will make quite clear the lesson that to drop bombs on "bloody" Germans, or Italians or any other "enemy" (and whether it is towns or armies that are being bombed) is unmistakably a Christian duty.

There is, however, just one thing that puzzles us. In the New Testament story it is a supposedly innocent victim that is crucified. In the modern air-force fighting, is it the war-makers who are bombed—or others? And as this religiously designed film brings us into the region of the miraculous, one wonders how long wars would last if bombing planes dropped their cargo only on those who were really responsible for a war?

There may not be a Sunday school scholar in a quarter of a century unless the decline is arrested, predicts Mr. R. Wilson Black. Yet in his next breath, before the Baptist Union Assembly in London, he urges the need for churches and Sunday schools in new housing areas! We do believe that when there remains but a handful of "Christians," they will be clamouring for more churches in numbers proportionate to the new pagan population! Mr. Black announced that the Baptist Church had lost 16,000 scholars; the Congregational Church 23,000; the Methodist Church 66,000; and the Church of England 82,000 during the last year! The Recall to Religion, in spite of the assistance of the B.B.C., cannot check this decline.

One subject on which church-goers cannot make up their minds is whether people are attracted or repulsed

by Ritualism. The very question shows a lack of faith. It also proves that religionists aim at QUANTITY and are quite indifferent to QUALITY of their congregations. There is nothing new in this. It is the spirit of the "Master's" teaching: "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my House MAY BE FILLED." This is the inspiration of endless discussions in religious circles as to whether people want sermons or services, symbolism or simplicity, films or fairy-tales.

Leicester, or rather the Bishop of the Diocese, is making an appeal for the quite modest sum of £75,000 for "new churches." Something like £10,000 have already been given or promised, and we have no doubt that the remainder will be subscribed no matter what poverty or misery prevails in the town. The Lord Mayor of Birmingham strongly supports the appeal, for in his opinion "religion is the most powerful force in the world . . . in the formation of character nothing played so important a part as religion." Thus, as always, the same clichés are used about religion, despite the fact that they have been proved false over and over again. But it must be disheartening to think that a town like Leicester has always been progressive and independent, can encourage this nonsense.

Fifty Years Ago

BIBLE believers in these days seek to ward off the attacks of science and historical criticism, by saying that the Bible is only intended to teach morals and religion. How comes it that while inserting the fables of Genesis, Esther and Daniel, the Protestants exclude such moral and religious works as the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus. In these books there is much good teaching, and none of that obscenity and objectionable matter so rife in other parts of the Bible. The Wisdom of Solomon contains as fine poetry as any in the Canonical scriptures. Its praise of wisdom is very fine and in some places extremely like what the New Testament says of Christ. Thus wisdom in the beginning sat with God on his throne and by wisdom the world was made (ix. 4-9). "For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness" (vii. 26; compare Hebrews i. 13). Another passage, which is copied and not improved by Paul, is the description of the just man, "He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate and pure judgment instead of an helmet. He shall take holiness for an invincible shield. His severe wrath shall he sharpen for a sword, and the world shall fight with him against the unwise" (v. 18-20; compare Eph. vi. 14-16). "The multitude of the wise is the welfare of the world" it teaches (vi. 24), and we doubt if there is any lesson from Genesis to Revelation of equal value. The religion of this pre-Christian book is very similar to Christianity. Ewald indeed says it may be regarded as "a premonition of St. John and a preparation for St. Paul." Death came unto the world through the envy of the devil (ii. 24). The saints will judge the nations and the Lord reign on the earth for ever (iii. 8). The author believed in the pre-existence of souls (viii. 20) a doctrine held by the Essenes and by Jesus (see Matt. xi. 14; xvii. 12; John iii. 7; vii. 48; ix. 2). Some have thought this doctrine taken from Plato, as the author directly copies the four cardinal virtues of that philosopher, saying of Wisdom "she teacheth temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude: which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in their life" (viii. 7). The work being ascribed to Solomon only serves to show how rife was the tendency to pass off supposititious books under the cover of illustrious names. Though it certainly was not written by Solomon, it is also quite as certain that our Ecclesiastes was not written by Solomon, though it deliberately states that it was. Philo has been conjectured to be the author on insufficient grounds. It seems likely he was a bachelor, if not a Malthusian, for he says, "It is better to have no children and to have virtue. But the multiplying brood of the ungodly shall not thrive." (iv. 1-3).

THE FREETHINKER

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To Advertising and Circulating the *Freethinker*.—W. T. Hawks (South Africa), 5s.

V. H. BLUNDELL (South Harrow).—We agree that false ideas on any subject are injurious both to the individual and to the community, but it is too much to expect us to act as a Universal Provider for the intellectual world. We must keep to one line if we are to be effective.

A. THOMAS.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.

G. MURRAY.—(1) We have the greatest respect for the medical profession. On the whole we should say that it stands highest for a sense of public duty, and its members as "doers of Good." But it is a mistake to think that all of them are of a genuinely scientific bent of mind. That quality is confined to a few as is the case with other walks of life. (2) There is no proof that we know of that insanity, as such, is inherited, and the most scientific of medical men doubt that it is. (3) Beware of popular writers on science when they are dealing with "instinct." Very often you will find the word is used as the religionist uses "God." It is a substitute for explanation and careful thinking. It would be a good thing if we could banish its use in text-books for a generation.

W. BARKER.—Distortion of judgment and perversion of feeling are not uncommon accompaniments of strong religious feeling.

R. A. EVERETT (Atlantic City).—Glad to hear from a fifty-year reader from the U.S.A. We have never heard that Robert Blatchford has turned Christian. He is still living, and occasionally contributes to newspapers.

A. RAWLINGSON.—The publication of a new edition of *Materialism Re-stated* is held up for a little while. Mr. Cohen is writing two new chapters, and just now the approaching Conference gives him extra work and makes extra demands on his time. And there is in addition his ordinary work for the *Freethinker*, of which his "Views and Opinions" is the smaller part. Add to this his large correspondence, and you will recognize the need for patience.

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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

There is every prospect that the Glasgow Conference will be the largest, and therefore, should be the most successful yet held. Particulars have been advertised in earlier issues. The morning and afternoon sessions of the Conference open at 10.30 and 2.30, and is confined to members. Admission is by the current card of membership. There will be a luncheon at one o'clock, price of tickets 3s. Monday there will be an excursion down Loch Lomond, with luncheon, at a total charge of six

shillings, winding up with a Civic Reception at the City Chambers, at 6.30. There will be dancing at this function. Evening dress is optional.

Tickets for reserved seats for the Demonstration on the Sunday evening may be obtained at Grant's Educational Co., Union Street, and Collett's Book Shop, High Street.

We comment to-day on the letters we have received from some of our subscribers who have regularly read this journal for fifty years. We know we have not heard from all, and just as we are going to press letters reach us from several others, among them Robert Bell, a staunch old fighter from Stanley, Durham; J. Close, who was with us in some of our own early warfare in the open-air; and F. Hammond who sends an interesting account of his early experiences in the movement. There are still more to come, and we hope to refer to them at a later date. We wish we could offer all the writers a banquet, at which we might get together. On September first we achieve our seventieth birthday, and that would serve as a good occasion. But we shall have to adjourn it at least until we complete the jubilee of our work in the Freethought movement in September, 1939.

Two new volumes in the "Thinker's Library" (Watts & Co., 1s.) are Professor Levy's well-known work, *The Universe of Science*, originally published at 7s. 6d., and a selection of passages from the writings of Montaigne, arranged by Mr. Gerald Bullett. The first of this pair does not need to-day more than a notice of the very cheap edition. And for the second there are a dozen ways in which one might criticize a selection, which except it be very bad, can amount to no more than a statement of preference. But so far as Mr. Bullett's selection goes we can say that it is very well done indeed, and in the compass of about 150 pages one does get a deal of the essence of the great French sceptic. Montaigne ranks among the greatest of the world's Freethinkers; he has always been a seminal force in the world's thought, and to dip into him is to bring oneself into contact with a clear mind, a deadly wit, and a broad humanism of which the world never stood in greater need than it does to-day. Mr. Bullett calls his selection "A Book of Good Faith"—a rendering of Montaigne's opening sentence, "This, reader, is a book without guile." It is, at all events a faith of which the world needs more than aught else. We hope one result of this publication will be to send readers back to the more complete Montaigne.

It would not be quite so easy a task as selecting from Montaigne, but we should like Mr. Bullett to spend his leisure hours in doing what he has done for the master, for Montaigne's great disciple, Peter Charron, and his book *Of Wisdom*. The only English translation that we have is one that appeared in 1670. A selection might introduce it to many new readers. *Of Wisdom* also had a great effect on European thought. A number of reprints of the English translation appeared during the seventeenth century.

Wigan is badly in need of enlightenment on religious questions and beliefs, and Mr. G. Whitehead will hold Freethought meetings in the Market at 7.30 each evening for a week, commencing on Saturday, May 28. If the local saints will give their support at all the meetings some good work should be accomplished during the week.

West Ham saints are reminded that the local N.S.S. Branch hold meetings every Sunday evening at the corner of Deaverny Road, Water Lane, Stratford. Mr. R. H. Rosetti will be the speaker at 7 p.m. to-day (May 29), and will deal with the Bible and the recent report on Church Doctrine. Pioneer Press literature is on sale at all meetings, or may be ordered from Branch officials present.

Of Reading

CHARLEMAGNE, the first Carolingian King of the Franks, became sole ruler on the death of his brother Carloman in 771. By force of arms he made his kingdom extend from the Elbro to the Elbe. He was crowned Emperor of the West on Christmas Day, 800. Afterwards he devoted himself to the welfare of his subjects. He reformed the judicial administration, patronized letters, established schools, and kept himself in touch with everybody over his extensive domain. A great personality and a powerful, he found expression for his genius in his own generation. Many of his projects were good and should have been realized, but his influence as a reformer may be said to have perished with him. Had he, like Marcus Aurelius, given to the world his *Meditations*, he might still have been a force for good. But he was prevented from doing that. He could neither read nor write. Poor Charlemagne!

Very few people in those days could read. And now, even in these days, 1,124 years after Charlemagne, the building of endless schools and the spending of many millions on education, few people can yet read, save in a very elementary way.

"Each nature," says Browning, "is a bundle of potentialities, of which only some are allowed by the conditions to become actualities." The ability to read which has become an actuality enables people to find their way about, study betting forecasts, football coupons, etc. and to follow events in the newspapers.

In nature's infinite book of secrecy a little may be read, by a few. And the great books of the world—full of delight writ there by beauty's pen—are closed volumes to most.

Education was opposed at first because it was considered dangerous—would breed revolution. The reading of books in most countries was not encouraged, and in some countries prohibited.

About one hundred years ago few people could read even in an elementary way. "Sixty years ago," says an old Lancashire clergyman, "not a single member of my congregation could either read or write."

Study is not possible before the habit of reading is acquired. And conditions of labour, and life generally, have militated against the formation of this habit. Exceptions, I know, can be instanced. For example: When labouring in an iron works, in front of a Blast Furnace, I found that attempts to read Spencer's *First Principles* induced in me "an exposition of sleep," which could only be conquered by going early to bed and rising between four and five in the morning, so that I could manage to read before work made it impossible.

To those of us fortunate enough to have acquired this habit Bacon (1561-1626) tells how we should read. Study, he says, makes for sound judgment. Natural abilities, however great they may be, are not to be entirely trusted because they are like natural plants. They need pruning by study.

Read, not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. . . .

Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.

Good advice is given by Bacon here. He shows us that another habit must be acquired—the habit of thinking—besides the habit of reading, to make profitable reading possible. The critical faculty is a product of thinking.

Religious books are carelessly written. All religions are to be believed, not doubted. To doubt is to criticize. Critics are looked upon as low creatures by religious people.

But :—

He that questioneth much shall learn much. We should advance at a much greater rate if religious people only knew something about their own creeds. If ideas and words were distinctly weighed and duly considered by them, we should know exactly where we stood.

"Good men," says Locke, "are still liable to mistakes, and are sometimes warmly engaged in errors which they take for divine truths, shining in their mind with the clearest light." And when we are aware with what an authority and show of truth can cunning sin cover itself withal, how can we do other than respect the critic?

But the makers of the Church of England Prayer Book looked upon criticism as being unavoidable. In its introduction they tell us :—

There was never anything by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time has not been corrupted.

And the reader, as one proceeds, is warned :—

And forasmuch as nothing can be so plainly set forth, but doubts may arise.

The Bishop, of course, is to be consulted by any doubter, who will doubtless be allowed by his grace to see the

"truth that peeps
Over the glasses' edge when dinner's done,
And body gets its sop and holds its noise
And leaves soul free a little!"

To Bible students and readers of classical literature particularly, and to readers generally, I submit the following quotation from Book III., Chapter 9, Section 22 of Locke's essay on *The Human Understanding*, for their serious and studious perusal :—

Sure I am, that the signification of words, in all languages, depending very much on the thoughts, notions, and ideas of him that uses them, must unavoidably be of great uncertainty to the men of the same language and country. This is so evident in the Greek authors that he that shall peruse their writings will find, in almost every one of them, a distinct language, though the same words. But when to the natural difficulty in every country there shall be added different countries and remote ages, wherein the speakers and writers had very different notions, tempers, customs, ornaments and figures of speech, etc., every one of which influenced the signification of their words then, though to us now they are lost and unknown, it would become us to be charitable one to another in our interpretations or misunderstanding of those ancient writings; which of great concernment to be understood, are liable to the unavoidable difficulties of speech, which (if we except the names of simple ideas, and some very obvious things) is not capable, without a constant defining of the terms, of conveying the sense and intention of the speaker without any manner of doubt and uncertainty to the hearer. And in discourses on religion, law, and morality, as they are matter of the highest concernment, so there will be the greatest difficulty.

The columns of interpreters and commentators on the Old and New Testaments are but too manifest proofs of this.

Locke's opinions of the value of words met with the approval of Voltaire.

Of this concluding quotation he thought highly, as will, I think, every discerning reader :—

For he that shall well consider the errors and obscurity, the mistakes and confusion that are spread in the world by an ill use of words, will find some reason to doubt whether language, as it has been employed, has contributed more to the improvement or hindrance of knowledge amongst mankind. (Book III., Chap. xi., Sect. 4, *Ibid*).

GEORGE WALLACE.

A Vanishing Stone Age Stock

DR. CHARLES CHEWINGS has recently added an important contribution to the extensive literature appertaining to the Australian aborigines. Having spent half a century in closely intimate contact with the natives of the Central region of this Continent, he speaks not merely as a scribe, but as one clothed with authority. In his instructive work, *Back in the Stone Age*, Angus and Robertson (Sydney, Australia), Dr. Chewings has composed a volume of permanent value. This work is on sale in London from the Australian Book Company at their premises in Great Russell Street, W.C.1.

When our author first visited Central Australia in 1881, this area was practically unknown and, outside the white stations, Europeans were unwise in venturing unless armed, as the attitude of the natives was very uncertain. But ever anxious to conciliate the blacks, as well as to appreciate their viewpoint, Dr. Chewings soon obtained a deep insight into their psychology, and an understanding of their customs and superstitions. In substantial agreement with our most reliable authorities such as Strehlow, Spencer, Gillen, and others, he concludes: that all knowledge of departed times is preserved in the native traditions. These stories, the old men—the tribal philosophers—deem true, and many of their details are strictly concealed from the women and children. Not until the boys are initiated at the period of puberty are these sacred secrets communicated to them.

These treasured traditions, however, reveal little concerning the distant past, although they plainly prove that the ancestors of contemporary tribes "lived where the natives now live; travelled about the same country; and hunted for their food in much the same way as to-day. While the teachings and acts related in the traditions may be mythical, there is no denying that they are universally and deeply implanted in the whole community. Nearly every water, creek, gorge, range, hill, or camping place is named after some peculiarity, patronymic, or incident connected with the travels of some ancestors."

When and where the natives first appeared in Australia is an unsolved problem. It is conjectured that in the remote days of their arrival the Continent experienced a far more copious rainfall than now. For the newcomers seem to have soon scattered over the entire area. The sluggish or stagnant streams of to-day such as the Finke and Hanson were then fast flowing water-courses, and where salt pans now remain, fine freshwater lakes spread their surfaces to the sun. The now extinct giant marsupials still lingered, but the advent of the human hunter soon ended their career.

Destitute of permanent shelters or abodes, possessing only flint, bone and wooden implements, devoid of pottery and languishing in a communistic, hunting and food-gathering stage, the natives are veritable survivals of the prehistoric Stone Age of Europe and other regions.

Dr. Chewings' opening chapter: *Early Memories of the Ranges*, paints a picture of Central Australian scenery and its native life. Bare as the rocky accumulations of sandstones are, yet, *Zamia* palms, gum and fig trees grown out of the crevices, apparently dependent on the constituents of the atmosphere for nutrition.

The members of a few native families were sometimes to be seen reposing by a spring or waterhole. During the day they would wander gathering food, and the women plucked and devoured the foliage of edible shrubs as they proceeded. They carry wooden trays on their foraging journeys as well as their in-

fant until the children are deposited in a tray in some shady spot, each child guarded by a girl armed with a swish to drive away the flies. The children remain at the breast for two, or even four years, unless another infant is born, and when cleaned their bodies are rubbed with sand instead of water. When free from their burdens, the women dig industriously for yams and other tubers and search for lizards, honey-ants and rats. Snakes and grubs are also collected, and these, with the rats and other edibles are cooked and made palatable in hot wood-ashes.

The remarkably fine finish of the native implements and utensils awakens admiration when we note the very primitive character of the tools they use. Troughs, trays and shields are fashioned from soft wood, but the spears and spear-throwers are made of harder material. "A stone axe was used to cut the tree down and roughly shapen the article; all else had to be done with a bit of flint set on the end of a short weighty stick."

Many imagine that savages unsullied by civilization were strangers to disease. That Europeans have introduced diseases to native races is indisputable, but by no means all. Strehlow became convinced from careful inquiries, that the aborigines were afflicted with venereal disease before the advent of the whites. Also, Dr. Chewings observed native maladies bearing native names, one of which was widely prevalent. Noticing a number of aborigines he went to them with a gift of tobacco, which is always welcomed. "As I approached," he states, "they all stood in a row. One poor unfortunate was a mass of sores right round him, extending from the arm-pits to the crutch. Flies were about him like a swarm of bees; but the others did not seem to fear them or shun him in any way, notwithstanding his loathsome appearance. In after years many instances of diseased natives came under my notice, some of whom doubtless contracted their diseases either primarily or secondarily from the whites. But I agree with Strehlow that diseases were amongst the natives before ever they came in contact with the whites, ones for which they had their own specific remedies."

When reviewing the mental powers of the natives Dr. Chewings declares that their sound reasoning and capacity for minute observation relating to their environment are remarkably acute. The scarcity of water in desiccated districts has induced them to dig up yams and quench their thirst with the juices. No wonder that in their desert surroundings ablutions are ignored. The only occasion on which the native "indulges in a bath is in the heat of summer when he swims in the nearest waterhole—never with the object of cleanliness."

No garments whatever are worn by the Central Australians save when they are associating with Europeans. They are as nude as Adam and Eve before the Fall. Although they are energetic hunters and trappers they dislike hum-drum station-labour or physical exertion of any kind. While they have become completely adapted to their native environment, they experience great difficulty in reasoning on European lines. Chewings intimates that they seemingly feel "no regrets for the pain they may have caused in a fit of anger, or through neglect. How often have I found them out in giving the animals only half a drink because they were too lazy to draw sufficient water to satisfy them."

Still, in white employment the blacks make themselves very useful. "They come to work as raw savages, naked and unable to speak a word of English. Under sympathetic, kind, just treatment, they quickly undergo a wonderful transformation—but only on lines that coincide with their natural gifts." Yet they are well worthy of tuition. They soon learn

pidgin English, indeed, far more quickly than a white understands a native language, while their intimate acquaintance with the surrounding region and expert knowledge of bushcraft render them invaluable to the explorer, many of whose discoveries were due to his native guides.

Bands are worn as head and body ornaments and a "pubic tassel" also serves as an adornment. Cicatrices are regarded as things of beauty, and possibly possess tribal significance. These deformities are apparently produced as follows. "A slight incision is first made in the skin and filled with sand. This is not allowed to heal, being broken open from time to time, and more sand is put in. In Nature's efforts to heal, the skin thickens, and so these cord-like weals are formed."

Dr. Chewings never encountered a native of either sex, except those under European surveillance, whose hair was not verminous. "Their heads are always full of lice," he says, "it is quite common to see them going over each other's heads, picking these out and cracking them with their teeth." As they never wash themselves, save when the whites make ablution obligatory, the stench of their sanded and greased bodies is said to be unspeakable.

The natives are the invariable victims of the magician's wiles. For instance, a woman afflicted with ophthalmia is viewed as a sufferer from enemy enchantment, and this the magician dispels by pretending to extract stones and bones from the eyes. A waggish white requisitioned the services of one of these worthies whose proceedings were closely observed. The conjurer's fee was half a stick of tobacco for sucking out the disease. Secreted in his mouth were pebbles and bits of bone, which he professed to withdraw from the patient's body. "The rogue then declared the patient would recover, and received payment."

Dread of death from the arts of sorcerers is profound and faith in magic is so ingrained, that when a magician tells a native who is merely indisposed that he is about to die, death is almost certain to occur. There is also a widespread fear of waterhole monsters. One of these rivalled the Loch Ness monster but, much to the amazement of the natives, Dr. Chewings disproved its existence by emptying and cleansing the waterhole in which it was believed to dwell.

Still, the aborigines are never disconcerted by the intensely heavy thunderclaps and dangerous, if magnificent lightning displays during thunderstorms. One of these was so terrible that Dr. Chewings compares it with "a raging titanic battle." Yet the natives simply joked and laughed. "To them it was just the Rain Man up aloft emptying out his bag of tricks."

Back in the Stone Age conveys considerable information concerning Women's Hard Lot, Betrothals and Marriage Customs, Polygamy, Polyandry and other interesting themes. The concluding chapter deals with the natives' fate, and its author coincides with the opinion of Prof. Porteous and other authorities that the total extinction of the pure natives is merely a matter of time.

The enlightened Australian public strongly favours their preservation. The anthropologist desires continuity in their primitive condition in extensive reserves for scientific study. But the missionary is anxious to utilize these reserves for the erection of mission stations, where the natives can be Europeanized and converted to Christianity. And it must be conceded that some humanitarian pastors such as Kempe and Strehlow have made solid contributions to science. Still, Dr. Chewings ascertained that the general public concerns itself little with science, and even less with the native superstitions. So long as

they are prevented from murdering each other, and granted freedom to travel where they will; labour for whom they please, and keep the peace while being protected from white imposition, public sentiment is satisfied.

Although the native race seems doomed to extinction within a century, there are half-castes, quadroons and octoroons, who may be increasing in Central Australia. Intercourse with natives has been forbidden, but where the males so largely outnumber the other sex it is difficult to enforce the law. Dr. Chewings trusts that if considerately treated and engaged in some useful occupation, and by "adopting the white man's ways they may overcome the tendency to 'die out,' for those in work are healthy enough."

T. F. PALMER.

The Indian Rope and the Christian "Dope"

SCEPTIC: "Why are you so anxious to prove that the Indian rope-trick is a myth?"

Christian: "Because my investigations satisfy me that it is a myth, and I do not want people to be fettered with the idea that it is genuine."

S.: "I have always understood that it is a real trick, and have more than once read a description of its performance by an alleged eye-witness. How can you prove that it is a myth?"

C.: "During my long residence in India I made exhaustive enquiries from all sorts and conditions of people, including many professional conjurers, not one of whom could throw any real light on the matter. All admitted they had heard of the trick, but none had witnessed it. Comparatively large sums of money have been offered from time to time in India and England for its performance, but without avail."

S.: "Have you continued your investigations since you returned to England?"

C.: "Yes. I have followed with interest the proceedings of the Magic Circle, an association of conjurers, who among other matters, have endeavoured to solve the mystery."

S.: "What do they say?"

C.: "Like myself, they have arrived at the conclusion that it is a product of the imagination. They have interviewed certain people claiming to have seen the trick performed, but all were unable to produce anything like satisfactory evidence in support of their claim. Statements have appeared in the press that the trick has been witnessed by more than one prominent individual, but these, when approached, have denied any knowledge of the matter. It is remarkable how difficult it is to kill a myth once it has gripped the popular imagination. Cherished beliefs, however grotesque they may be, must not be disturbed."

S.: "The myth is so generally believed that many people may think it a pity to disturb it."

C.: "I do not agree with them. Truth, not fiction, should be our guiding star in life."

S.: "Do you not think that the myth resembles in some respects the myth of historic Christianity?"

C.: "I cannot admit that historic Christianity is a myth."

S.: "The evidence on its behalf is not more trustworthy than that advanced for the rope-trick."

C.: "How can you say that in face of the facts revealed in the Bible?"

S.: "These 'facts' have been investigated closely and like the rope-trick, have been found to be without solid foundation."

C. : "What exactly do you mean?"

S. : "The writers of the Gospels, the foundation of historic Christianity, cannot be identified, and many of their vital statements are flatly contradictory. The life of Christ is paralleled in the lives of other gods, notably Krishna and Buddha, and the precepts credited to him are paralleled by sayings current prior to the Christian era, facts which indicate that the ancient religions are to some extent derived from a common source. The stupendous events alleged to have happened in connexion with the life of Christ are not mentioned by any of the historians or philosophers who lived between A.D. 40 and A.D. 140. If such inspiring phenomena as, say, the Resurrection and the Ascension had really occurred, they would most certainly have been recorded by them. If the case for historic Christianity were tried before an unprejudiced legal tribunal, it would be dismissed peremptorily, for the only evidence forthcoming would be a book compiled by unknown authors, consisting of a mass of self-contradictions and impossibilities sufficient to strain to breaking point the credulity of a child.

PRO REASON.

A Lawyer's View of the Fourth Gospel

In the April number of the *Modern Churchman*, Sir Alexander Lawrence, Bart., explains what he calls "the lawyer's view of the Fourth Gospel." Sir Alex. almost disarms criticism by admitting that he "has not read any of the Early Fathers or the Higher Critics." He further claims to approach the problem as though it were merely concerned "a doubtful book of the *Odyssey*."

It would certainly be interesting to read an unbiassed judgment by a competent outsider. In this case, however, the judge is obviously a believing member of the Church of England. He may be ignorant of criticism, but he is accustomed to accept as fact the canonical claims on behalf of all four gospels. He may be quite honest. He may be entirely eager that his church may succeed. He is assuredly not unprejudiced.

If a learned Mohammedan, a cultured Parsee, or any genius hitherto unacquainted with Christian tradition were to bring to bear on one of the "Gospels" the ordinary methods of critical analysis, the results might be valuable.

It is history that the Gospels have been thus studied by great scholars who have rejected the claims made by the Church. Few nowadays defend the Old Testament to any practical extent. Lessing's publication of the New Testament researches of Riemarus (1694-1768) shook the confidence of orthodoxy, which had to abandon some of its claims regarding Gospel authority and authenticity. Von Herder at the end of the eighteenth century and numerous critics in the nineteenth century did much to destroy gospel pretensions. We know a great deal now about the origins of all the Gospel mythology. From Tylor to Frazer a host of investigators have made very difficult the paths of Bible believers.

Sir Alexander adds nothing at all to our information. He appears to be unacquainted even with books which we should have supposed all Modernist Churchmen regarded as Primers of Bible criticism. Sir Alexander simply expresses an unscientific loyal churchman's admiration for "that fascinating little book, the Gospel according to St. John."

He believes that "if Jesus had reappeared at any time before the Reformation, or at Geneva under Calvin," he might have been sent to the stake. Who can tell? If Jesus had been a historical human character anything might have happened to him in any age. Many impostors, many good and bad men have been fêted or burnt in all ages. If Jesus was God Incarnate, we can only assume that the intention of His Incarnation could never have been frustrated by judges being just or mobs being merciful. If Jesus was God we should imagine that God

would have made everything fit into His Plan. Belief in God seems incompatible with any other assumption.

The author summarizes the Fourth Gospel account of the relations between Jesus and the Authorities. But as this involves a belief in the substantial historicity of John's narrative, we might as well swallow the gospel as it stands. The Fourth Gospel needs much putty and cement to make it intelligible even, but it is a bit late in the day to accept a new guess at what intervened between the scattered fragments of a most unlikely story.

It is impossible to explain as history the purely mythical opening of this gospel. Its irrelevant allusions to the "Logos" seem to have no other purpose than to suggest that Myth and not Fact is aimed at. The notorious hiatus in Chapter One (v. 29) ("the next day") abruptly introduces Christ without birth, childhood or any other previous existence on earth.

The fact that John gives "many graphic details" of the later life of Jesus absent from the other gospels is quoted by Sir Alex. Lawrence as tending to show that John "speaks from the first-hand knowledge of a well-informed contemporary." From a lawyer we should have expected better logic. Each gospel contains "details absent from the other gospels," but that does not add to their weight as evidence.

What are these "graphic details" known solely to John? They are practically confined to two miracles and some talks by Jesus. John alone had the audacity to tell the incredible story of Lazarus's being raised from the tomb, where he had been buried long enough to "stink." Mathew, Mark and Luke's silence "has never been explained," says the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, which flatly asserts of John's narrative: "It is non-historical, like the history of creation in Genesis."

The other miracle "unique in John" is the far-fetched fish fable (Jn. 21) in which the resurrected Jesus appears to seven fishermen, who thereupon caught exactly 153 fish (of no given weight, size, quality or value).

Apart from these two unique miracles, John's peculiar contribution to the life of Jesus was a perfectly miraculous capacity for reporting verbatim what Jesus said! John must have been a mind-reader, for he often reports the secret thoughts of Jesus. If John had hired a first-class stenographer he could scarcely have been in a position to report the Meditations in solitude—the lonely musings and prayers in Gethsemane which occupy whole chapters in this queer gospel.

In referring to the internal evidence that John's Gospel shows signs of having been written long after the events he reports, as if he were a contemporary, Sir Alexander suggests as a parallel, an entirely different sort of statement. He says:

Tennyson really did write of "the Parliament of man; the federation of the world," and saw "the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue"; and published "Locksley Hall," containing these lines in quite early Victorian times . . . I can quite imagine a Tübingen professor a thousand years hence, contending that the poem could not have been written before 1920.

Tennyson never claimed to be a contemporary of the period he describes in the lines quoted. The whole point about John and his gospel is that it is placed before us as the testimony of an eye witness. Tennyson categorically and with perfect clarity, stated that he was predicting what he imagined might take place in a far-distant future. Here are Tennyson's lines—preceding those quoted by Sir Alexander:—

"For I dipt into the future
far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world
and all the wonders that would be."

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

If you teach a man to keep his eyes upon what others think of him, unthinkingly to lead the life, and hold the principles of the majority of his contemporaries, you must discredit in his eyes the authoritative voice of his own soul. He may be a docile citizen; he will never be a man.—R. L. Stevenson.

Correspondence

THE NEW REICH RELIGION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Readers of my sequel to "The Recall to Free-thought, etc.," may be interested in knowing that a full account of the new "Reich Religion," the "Religion of National Socialism," is given by the Rev. Father Edward Quinn in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*. We read there that "just as Christianity . . . is split into varied confessions, one of which claims supreme authority. . . . So does Germanism receive different interpretations, of which only one is correct, according to the National Socialists. The slightest deviation from the official creed is punished with heavier penalties than the Medieval Church ever inflicted for heresy."

MAUD SIMON.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD MAY 19, 1938

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Hornibrook, Rosetti (A.C.), Bryant, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Silvester, Tuson, Bedborough, Mrs. Quinton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Monthly Financial Statement presented. New members were admitted to Edinburgh, West London, West Ham, and the Parent Society.

Lecture reports from Messrs. Whitehead, Brighton, Clayton, and Mrs. Whitefield were noted. The extension of propaganda was discussed and an outline for future consideration proposed. Correspondence was dealt with from Greenock, Manchester, Birkenhead, Bradford, Derby, and the London area, and the Secretary instructed.

The President read the Annual Report for presentation at the Annual Conference, which was finally adopted.

Progress in arrangements for the Annual Conference was reported, and the proceedings terminated.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

Obituary

JOHN TAYLOR DUNCAN

ON Tuesday, May 17, the remains of John Taylor Duncan were interred in the Bebington Cemetery, Cheshire. As a young man he became a convert to the Free-thought position which he held until the end. He had been suffering for some months from cancer of the throat. Mr. G. Whitehead gave a short address in the home, and afterwards read a Secular Service at the graveside. To the surviving members of the family we extend our sincere sympathy.

AMBROSE READER

THE Birkenhead Branch N.S.S. has lost a valuable member by the death of Ambrose Reader, which took place in his 51st year after being for some time in hospital. He was enthusiastic in Free-thought propaganda, and by his general character won the respect of those with whom he came in contact. The remains were cremated on May 19, and in the presence of a large gathering of relatives and friends, including members of the Birkenhead Branch N.S.S. a Secular Service was read by Mr. G. Whitehead.—G.W.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Professor G. Catlin, M.A., Ph.D.—"Reason and Custom."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, 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, Mrs. E. Grout. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST HAM BRANCH (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Miss E. Millard, M.A., Messrs. E. Bryant and G. Barnes. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Tuson. Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. W. B. Collins. Thursday, 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin and Mrs. N. Buxton. Friday, 7.30, Mr. G. Barnes.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

IRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. J. V. Shortt—"God."

BLACKBURN (Market): 7.30, Thursday, Mr. J. Clayton.

BLYTH (Fountain): 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BRIERFIELD (Market): 3.15, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

BURNLEY (Market): 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End): 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CHORLEY (Cattle Market): 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. V. Shortt—A Lecture.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. Assembly Week Campaign (Mound): 8.0, Friday, Mrs. Whitefield—"The Immoral Teachings of Jesus." Saturday, 8.0, Mr. F. Smithies—"Hell Vanishes." Sunday, Mr. L. T. Smith, Glasgow N.S.S. closes the Campaign.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road and Peel Street): Tuesday, Muriel Whitefield and A. Copland. Minard Road, 8.0, Thursday, and Albion Street, 8.0, Friday, Muriel Whitefield.

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

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Stanley Park Gates, nearest to Cemetery): 8.0, Thursday, Mr. J. V. Shortt. Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths, 8.0, Sunday, Mr. W. Parry.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexander Park Gates): 8.0, Saturday, Messrs. F. Spencer and W. A. Atkinson. Platt Fields, 3.30, Sunday, Mr. W. A. Atkinson. Stevenson Square, 3.30, Sunday, Mr. F. Spencer, 7.30, Mr. W. A. Atkinson.

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

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

WIGAN (Market): 7.30, Saturday, May 28 to Friday, June 3, Mr. George Whitehead will lecture each evening.

GENTLEMAN, single, age 37, quick at figures and ability to correspond, seeks situation of light or clerical nature.—H. V. CREECH, Box 10, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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