

# THE FREETHINKER

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

Views and Opinions

A Breach of Trust

THE Gifford Trust is one of the best known of British lectureships. It was founded by Lord Gifford, a famous Scotch Judge, more than fifty years ago, and its lectures—with one or two exceptions—have been issued to the public. I do not know whether Lord Gifford called himself a Christian, and in any case what he called himself is not material to my reason for writing. His Christianity could not have been of a very virile type. He was probably a philosophical kind of Theist, with leanings towards a general and popular misunderstanding of Spinoza. But whatever he was, and whatever he called himself, the founding of the Gifford Trust lectureship marked him as a man of wide and tolerant outlook. By his will he left a sum of £80,000 for a lectureship or classes to be instituted by the Scotch Universities for "Promoting, Advancing, Teaching and Diffusing the Study of Natural Theology, in the widest sense of the words, the Knowledge of God, the Infinite, the All, the First and only Cause, the one and the sole Substance, the sole Being, the Sole Reality and the Sole Existence, the Knowledge of His Nature and Attributes, the Knowledge of the Nature and Foundations of Ethics or morals, and all obligations or duties thence arising."

So far it looks as though the Trust was an ordinary religious Trust, which might have little more in view than the fixing of mental fetters on succeeding generations by paid lectureships, although even as it stands there is evidence here of a little wider outlook than is shown in the ordinary religious bequest of this kind. But, as a Judge, Lord Gifford, had probably noted how frequently liberal intentions are frustrated by strong religious views, which may justify any rascality so long as it stops short of actual criminal delinquency. So Lord Gifford proceeds to make it quite clear to his executors what he has in view. The will provides that in instituting these scholarships:—

The lectureships shall be appointed from time to time, each for a period of two years and no longer. . . . The lecturers appointed shall be subjected to no test of any kind, and shall not be required to take any oath or to emit or subscribe any declaration of belief, or to make any promise of any kind; they may be of any denomination whatever or of no denomination at all . . . they may be of any religion or way of thinking, or, as is sometimes said, they may be of no religion, or they may be so-called Sceptics, or Agnostics, or Freethinkers. . . . I wish the lecturers to treat their subject as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all possible sciences . . . without reference to or reliance upon any supposed special, exceptional, or so called miraculous revelation. I wish it to be treated just as astronomy or chemistry is. The lecturers shall be under no restraint whatever in their treatment of their theme.

That seems precise enough, and definite enough, and there is no mistaking the intention of Lord Gifford. He wished the question of belief in the existence of God to be discussed from all points of view. Those without belief in God were not to be barred. The belief in God was to be treated exactly as lecturers would treat any other subject—as a pure question of natural science. It could be treated from the standpoint of a believer or from that of an unbeliever. It is the way in which every question should be discussed. To science the belief in God is of no greater importance than any other belief. There is only one scientific standpoint from which to discuss the belief in God, and that is from the point of view of origin, nature and history.

No testator ever made a will that more clearly showed his intention than did Lord Gifford. Had he intended his bequest to be spent in merely propping up religious views, he would have stopped with the first paragraph I have cited from his will. But he knew the religious world, he evidently appreciated how lax the sense of moral obligation is where religion is concerned, hence the elaborate protestation that no one was to be asked because of his opinion, asked to avow any opinion, or excluded on account of his opinion. Sceptics, Agnostics, Freethinkers, were to be placed on exactly the same level as Christian believers. The intentions of the testator were admirable. But no law has ever been devised that can make Christians act with complete justice where the interests of their Church or their religion is concerned.

\* \* \*

Artful!

The Gifford Trust has been effective for nearly sixty years. Yet during the whole of that period not a single avowed unbeliever—one who was opposed to the belief in God, and who would have traced the idea back to its origin, who would have shown how it began in a complete misunderstanding of the nature of phenomena, and how it has lived by, at its best, an

identification of itself with ethical and social sentiments, and the extent to which it has operated in obstructing the development of a sane and healthy social life—not a single person of this type has been invited to deliver a course of Gifford Lectures. The trustees did not refuse to administer the Trust, that might have led to comment and to the appointment of men who would; or, if they had said we will not appoint anyone who attacks the belief in God, they would have advertised their delinquency. They adopted the policy of inviting speakers who could be trusted not to make any direct attack on the belief in God. The Trustees did not say no avowed Atheist or Agnostic shall be invited to speak, they simply did not invite them. By their conduct they rendered nugatory the essential thing the Trust was intended to secure. Lord Gifford drew up an admirable document, he had admirable intentions, he intended to give all points of view a chance, but he overlooked an important consideration. The conscience of a good Christian is governed by his religion, and whenever religious considerations enter the sphere of either moral obligation or intellectual rectitude these two last things suffer. He forgot the trustees. Had he selected as the first trustees men whom he could have trusted to carry out his real intentions, and had they set an example by selecting two or three avowed unbelievers to deliver a course of lectures, their example might have had some influence. But even that is doubtful. It is probable that the law might have been invoked to set aside that part of the will as being against public policy.

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#### Other Examples

Of course, the deliberate setting aside of an essential part of the intentions of Lord Gifford is not the only example of its kind. Of minor kinds, the example I recently gave of Lord Morley's funeral is one. The expressed desire by his father that Bertrand Russell was to be brought up without any religious instruction, is another illustration to the same end. Many of the educational charitable bequests that date back centuries, and which were originally intended to include "poor" people have been so administered that only children of the "better" classes benefit. So far as Freethinkers are concerned we have the introduction of theology into the London University, although it was founded by Freethinkers and for the express purpose of keeping religion out—except so far as it might be discussed from all points of view. To-day no Professor would dare to preach open and explicit Atheism in London University.

America provides us with an even more glaring example of this misdirection in the famous Girard Trust. Stephen Girard was an avowed unbeliever. A very wealthy man, he left large sums for charitable purposes. The Girard estate is at present valued at about forty million dollars. One of Girard's bequests, consisting of over five million dollars, was left to build a college for orphans. By express provision, no ecclesiastic or minister of any sect whatever was to be permitted to enter the college. The children were to receive a secular education, and left to do as they pleased when they grew up with regard to religion. These provisions have been completely ignored. It is one of the most scandalous cases that America has to offer, although we can provide very many similar ones in this country.

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#### A Word to the Wise

I was led to refer back to the Gifford case because I was recently asked to give my opinion of the provisions of a will intended to provide for lectures on much the lines of Lord Gifford's will, but more

strongly expressed. I am not at liberty to disclose the name of the donor, but he is a personal friend and I believe his intentions will be carried out. After looking at the will I said that it seemed quite good, so far as I could judge. But at the same time I felt bound to point out that it was not possible to draw up a Trust, Articles of Association, or a Constitution of a Society that did not ultimately depend for their loyal discharge upon the character of the men and women who administered the Trust, or Articles. Men who are intellectually honest will do what they can faithfully to carry out the intentions of the deed they administer. But place in power those who think that anything in which they believe must either be protected from attack, or may be attacked in the name of the trust they administer, and who will seek, by twisting words into conformity with their own ideas, to justify a distinct abuse of their trust, and almost anything may happen. I can imagine a Trust that is essentially religious being controlled by a certain type of unbeliever, and using its money to circulate the *Freethinker*, on the ground that it is good to let religious people see what an evil thing Freethought is. In a similar way, no matter how carefully rules are formed or Trusts devised, it will always be possible for them to be diverted from their proper purpose. And where money is in question, or ambitions are concerned, such attempts at diversion are bound to occur. In every case it is the men and women who administer a trust—whether it be a legal or a moral one—that matters. I think nearly all the Christian Nonconformist bodies are governed by a Trust, but the vast majority of them are to-day indulging in teachings that are out of conformity with them. And if the founders of the Nonconformist Trusts could be made conscious of what teachings are being set forth in the names of the chapels they founded, it would be enough to make them turn in their graves.

It is always the men and women in control that matter. However careful one may be in drawing up rules or in drafting constitutions, the conscientious execution of them depends upon the human material with which one has to work. That is one reason, and I think a good one, for calling attention to the misuse of the Gifford Trust. The Trustees have done nothing against the law. No one with any right to speak can say that the trust has been legally misused. From the religious or party point of view it has not been misused. But nevertheless the intention of the testator has not been realized. And what has been realized could have been realized—was being realized—without it. If the will had provided that a given proportion of the selected lecturers should have been avowed disbelievers in a God, then the Gifford lecturers might have discussed the belief in God just as one discusses an ordinary question. But even then I am not sure that human ingenuity for acting dishonestly might not have found some way out of the straight and narrow path of intellectual rectitude.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### HOW HE FELT

A London newspaper recently gave, under the headings: "Contempt for Religion," "Funeral Ceremony Banned in Will":—

Mr. Edwin Chappell, of Westcombe Park Road, Blackheath, an employee in the Admiralty Research Laboratory, and formerly a lecturer at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, wrote in his will:—

"Having had a lifelong contempt for religion and everything connected with it, I desire that no form of religious ceremony be in any way associated with the disposal of my body."

He directed that his body should be given to a hospital for dissection, or be cremated.

## A Flashy Friendship

"The only absolute good is the progress towards perfection; our own progress towards it, and the progress of humanity."—*Matthew Arnold.*

"The eagle never lost so much time as when he submitted to learn of the crow."—*Blake.*

AFTER the Markham Shale colliery disaster, in which there was great loss of life, the Bishop of Derby motored over, and led the waiting crowd in prayer. This is a characteristic clerical manœuvre. Whenever any event occurs, from which publicity can be extracted, the clergy are always in evidence. In the ordinary course of events, the salaried sons-of-god do not display much affection for miners and other workers. The onerous conditions of their employment never aroused their sympathy. Yet the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are amongst the very largest owners of coal-royalties in this country, and have always been as ready in levying a tax on miners' labour as they have been in imposing a sacred tithe on farmers.

When the disaster had occurred, the Right-Reverend Father-in-God appears. There were eighty dead men in the pit. The recital of the bishop's abracadabra made no difference, except that his Church got a cheap and undeserved advertisement. It is the Trade Union that has bettered the condition of the miners, reduced their risks, raised their pay, and lowered the hours of work. But, observe, it is the Church that is posing as the friend of the miners.

The clergy, like the showmen, simply love the lime-light, and cannot have too much of it. Mr. Lloyd George has told us how, during the Great War, he was astonished to find the Archbishop of Canterbury present at a meeting of the Cabinet. What happened must have been an unpleasant memory for the Prime Minister, for he was not welcomed again. More recent events, such as ecclesiastical interference in the case of the abdication of King Edward VIII., are still fresh in the public memory.

During their fifteen centuries predominance the Christian clergy have entwined themselves in the national life like poisonous ivy. They obtrude themselves everywhere. At births, marriages, and deaths, their greedy hands are extended for their fees. Should the country be at war, some of these sons-of-god serve as army chaplains, with officers' pay, whilst the others console those left at home. They remind one of sleek, handsome cats, lying in the sun all the summer, and extending before the fire all winter. Men who think the same at sixty as they did at sixteen should be handsome.

The clergy are not so concerned with principle as with interest—particularly self-interest. A sermon on Jehovah as the god of battles falls as easily from their lips as a tirade on the Prince of Peace and the blessings of the Beatitudes. At a Conference of Labour Women, it was stated that thirty-two clergymen, including bishops and archdeacons, have shares in armament companies, and that a prominent official of the Young Men's Christian Association had twenty thousand shares in a battleship-building company. (*Daily Herald* (London), May 12.)

The so-called Church of England, which is the premier form of religion in this country, has never been in sympathy with the workers. It has been in touch with the aristocracy, it has toadied to Royalty, it has sympathized with the middle-class, but it has always treated the workers with high-sniffing contempt. At the opening of the nineteenth century the Rev. Sydney Smith said: "the clergy have no more influence on the people at large than the cheesemongers of England." This Anglican Church had be-

come the maid-of-all-work of the governing class. So consistently and so uniformly were the clergy opposed to all schemes of political or social amelioration that the parsons were called the "Black Army" by the workers.

The Bishops in the House of Lords incurred such hatred as only a perusal of their votes can explain. Guided by "Providence," they defended slavery, and the cruel penal code; and they were the resolute enemies of every political and social reform. Throughout the nineteenth century these Right-Reverend Prelates resisted all change. They could not be brought to see that it was horrible to hang a man for stealing five shillingworth of goods; that it was brutal to flog a woman publicly; that it was unwise to exclude Non-conformists and Freethinkers from political power.

This opposition of the Anglican clergy to all forms of progress proves conclusively that these sons-of-god identified themselves with the propertied classes. The record of the bishops' votes in the House of Lords has done more than anything else in the last hundred years to convince honest people of all opinions that the separation of this Church from the State would be a real benefit to the nation. Indeed, this union with the State actually serves to expose the humbug of religion. For example, the clergy wish people to think that bishops are selected under the inspiration of the "Holy Spirit." In plain fact, these prelates are nominated by the Prime Minister, who may or may not be a member of the Church of England. Similarly, with regard to the Bishops' votes in Parliament. If, as they contend, these men are acting under alleged divine inspiration, it proves that the political views of "Providence" resemble nothing so much as the views of any retired Anglo-Indian colonel. Which, as old Euclid puts it, "is absurd."

This opposition to all progress on the part of the Bishops was not due to political bias only. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the penal code was savage and bloodthirsty, despite near two thousand years of Christian influence and predominance. To steal a few shillingworth of goods, to pick a pocket, to kill a sheep, no less than for murder, treason, forgery, and robbing with violence, death by hanging was the penalty. The bishops opposed all efforts to ameliorate this savagery of the law. The campaign of Romilly and Mackintosh, and others, was a struggle for the recognition of human life as a thing more precious than the goods in a shop, or an article of jewellery, and it was a battle for civilization. When the State placed so little value on human life, what value would the populace place on it? To restrict the hangman's trade was to discourage bloodshed, and to carry us a step further in progress. Rare was the vote given by these Bishops for the Bills for the saving of human life, and for the removal of bloodthirsty laws hateful to decent, honest men. Indeed, the loyalty of the bishops to "the altar and the throne" was not more conspicuous than their loyalty to the hangman's horrible trade. The poor and needy were strung up in batches in those "good, old days," but the Fathers-in-God were deaf to the cry of pity. That was the keynote of the action of the bishops right throughout the Ages of Faith and ignorance.

War has been waged by Britain in every quarter of the globe these last hundred years. The Christian Bishops in the House of Lords never condemned them. As a fact the clergy have actually identified themselves with Militarism by consecrating regimental flags, by christening battleships, and by acting as army chaplains. Indeed, they have never emerged from the darkness and ignorance of Feudal Times, a period in which the aristocrats strutted like peacocks, and ordinary men and women were slaves. The clergy's

point of view to-day, in this twentieth century, is still that of the old-fashioned "Northern Farmer":—

"Tisn't them as has money that breaks into houses and steals,  
Them as has coats to their backs and takes their regular meals :

No, it's them as never knows where a meal's to be had  
Take my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a lump is bad."

The day will come when the people of England will pass judgment on these Bishops of this Established Church, and in that day strip them of money, power and place. Well would it be for these proud prelates in that hour of trial if they could call on men and women to bear witness to their gentleness and mercifulness. There cannot be much doubt about what game these clergy are playing. By a very belated and assumed friendly patronage, they hope to convince the mass of the people that they are friendly to the workers. It is a characteristic piece of duplicity, but, as the old tag expresses it, "in vain is the net placed in full sight of the bird." The Church has no more real sympathy with the workers than she has with unbelievers. It knows of only one real virtue—"right" belief. Absence of that justified every injustice.

"the whole of the world's tears,  
And all the trouble of her labouring ships,  
And all the trouble of her myriad years."

MIMNERMUS.

## Belief

"Ye worship ye know not what." (John iv. 22.)

SOME are born to believe, some achieve belief—and some have beliefs thrust upon them.

Heterodoxy cannot eradicate an inborn disposition to believe.

Fifty years ago, when applying for a situation, if the applicant could first achieve the belief of the manager, or a foreman, who had the disposal of it, he had a good chance of securing it. To crown courtship with success, it was often necessary to achieve the belief of the girl. And to-day beliefs are still achieved for these and many other reasons.

The variety of beliefs thrust upon us in our green and callow youth goes to justify the following definition of a believer: "One who believes or gives credit to anything." "The 'will to believe,'" says a German philosopher, "lies at the root of belief." And Prof. Bain considers that belief largely depends on the will (*Emotions and the Will*, p. 524). But whether one wills it or not, belief implies doubt. Not the "honest doubt," with faith living in it! that Tennyson discovered—*In Memoriam* xcv.—but the lawful doubt of Hooker—"Even in matters divine, concerning some things, we may lawfully *doubt* and suspend our judgment, inclining neither to one side or other, as namely, touching the time of the fall of man and angels." (*Ecclesiastical Polity*.)

Hooker (1554-1600) and Locke (1632-1704), in their day, questioned many beliefs which were rooted in the imagination then, as now. For example, Locke: "Whatever God hath revealed is certainly true; no doubt can be made of it. This is the proper object of faith: but whether it be a divine revelation or no, reason must judge; which can never permit the mind to reject a greater evidence to embrace what is less evident, nor allow it to entertain probability in opposition to knowledge and certainty. There can be no evidence that any traditional revelation is of divine origin, in the words we receive it, and in the sense we understand it, so clear and so certain as that of the

principles of reason: and therefore nothing that is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the clear and self-evident dictates of reason has a right to be urged or assented to as a matter of faith, wherein reason hath nothing to do." (*Human Understanding*, Book IV. Chap. 18, Sect. 10.)

A reasonable statement, surely. If God made us in His own image, we must all have similar brains to God. And to ask us to flout the thinking of our God-like brains and believe in a book which some ignorant savage thought to be his God's word, a few thousand years ago, is too blasphemous for words. Let me repeat: "Nothing that is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the clear and self-evident dictates of reason has a right to be urged and assented to as a matter of faith, wherein reason hath nothing to do."

Can any rational being object to that? We have nothing but reason to guide us now. It was different when miracles were so common. But miracles would not do to-day!

Fire that did not consume anything would prove the ruin of Insurance Companies; trumpets that could blow down walls would not please the makers of armaments; the division of the Thames to provide an escape for jewel thieves would not meet with the approval of Scotland Yard, and the sun, so astonished to see them, and many more things that might be mentioned happening, would stop—never to go again! Besides Theologians could not have miracles to-day without first getting a permit from the British Association. On the other hand: "When reason or scripture is express for any opinion or action, we may receive it as of divine authority: but it is not the strength of our persuasions can by itself give it that stamp. The bent of our minds may favour it as much as we please; that may show it to be a fondling of our own, but will by no means prove it to be an offspring of heaven, and of divine origin." (Book IV., Chap. 19, Sect. 16, *Ibid.*)

The preacher to-day dawdles his fondling—an infant crying in the night—and imitates its helpless cry, and with conjuring tricks, which can still be traced to the medicine-man, earns a comfortable living. His firmness of persuasion—his proof of truth—satisfying many weaklings. Many examples of this firmness of persuasion and its futility might be given. One must suffice:—

St. Paul himself believed he did well, and that he had a call to it, when he persecuted the Christians, whom he confidently thought in the wrong; but yet it was he and not they who were mistaken. Good men are still liable to mistake, and are sometimes warmly engaged in errors which they take for divine truths, shining in their minds with the clearest light. (Book IV., Chap. 19, Sect. 12, *Ibid.*)

So it becomes our duty firstly to examine all that comes before us with our reason. But reason has always been divided as an evil anti-religious thing. As Locke puts it: "For men having been principled with an opinion that they must not consult reason in the things of religion, however apparently contradictory to common sense and the very principles of all their knowledge, have let loose their fancies and natural superstition; and have been by them led into so strange opinions and extravagant practices in religion, that a considerate man cannot but stand amazed at their follies, and judge them so far from being acceptable to the great and wise God, that he cannot avoid thinking them ridiculous and offensive to a sober, good man. So that, in effect, religion, which should most distinguish us from beasts, and ought most peculiarly to elevate us as rational creatures above brutes is that wherein men often appear most irrational, and more senseless than beasts themselves." (Book IV., Chap. 18, Sect. 11, *Ibid.*)

A few great men—notably Prof. Howard Moore and Mark Twain—were of opinion that we are “More senseless than the beasts themselves.”

A heretical old friend—one born to believe—thinks that everything organic and inorganic is the result of a great unconscious force; that all things are mediums through which this force finds expression—the nature and quality of each expression being conditioned by the peculiarities of the particular medium—; this force he thinks indestructible; that as soon as his body is worn out, the force now resident in it will find another medium, and so *ad infinitum*! I hope I have given a brief and an intelligible account of what he is pleased to call his “comfortable Philosophy”!

Now had he tried to construct something out of, say the English version of New Testament history, instead of his own head, what success would he have met with? This version professes to be a translation from the original Greek. But, from which of the many manuscripts? We have some 2,339 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, and not all of these are of the same text, for there are probably 200,000 different readings. Are they all inspired? And which, if any, is the inspired text?

One finds in the English version things not found in any of the Greek Manuscripts. For example, the verse relating to the doctrine of the Trinity, 1 John v. 7. This verse first crops up about the year 400 in Latin Manuscripts in Spain. It was allowed to remain by the Latin Church because the doctrine it contained was considered sound. “The Church,” says S. B. Slack, M.A., “was not guided by principles of criticism, but by the claims of orthodoxy.” How many passages have been added, struck out, and altered? Who knows?

Now, what sort of comfort could my friend get from a mess like that?

People especially trained from their youth up, with the same God-like, God-made brains cannot all agree about any creed made from it!

So, each thoughtful individual is thrown upon his own resources. Each of us can find measureless content by our own efforts—“The aim if reached or not makes great the life.” To the persistent seeker after truth there can be no such thing as failure—“Success is naught, endeavours all.” Reward is certain, and it will be proportioned exactly to the effort put forth. Let us, therefore, work while we may. If we do so:—

“We shall  
Live long and happy, and in that thought die  
Glad for what was.”

GEORGE WALLACE.

## Spotting the Winner

DERBY DAY is again upon us. Many people are putting their brains in steep in order to obtain a bonus upon their intellectual alertness. On the course, however, other handsome prizes are offered the humble for a minimum effort. You may be asked to choose the thimble under which the pea is concealed. If you manage, the reward offered is handsome. You are asked to “prick the garter,” that is, you stick a pin between the folds of a rolled piece of elastic, and if the elastic is entrapped by the pin (which it never is) when it is pulled away, more wealth is promised you. You are asked to “spot the lady,” that is, you must guess which of three cards, turned downwards, is the Queen. Again a huge reward! You are asked to put coin of the realm upon a division of a rickety roulette table, the destination of the revolving pointer being decided by the operator's foot. The bonuses, it

will be noticed, are always *handsome*. They may as well be, for they are never given—except, it will be noticed, on most exceptional occasions, to act as a decoy in order to lead on to a *grand coup*.

Derby Day, on the Course, is, in short, a Flat-catcher's Paradise. Even the wariest find a difficulty in avoiding the pitfalls. You may be thirsty if the day be hot, and pay sixpence for what looks like a delicious and substantial slice of pine apple. The slice you receive has been cut by a bacon-slicer to a width of an irreducible minimum. You may hear mysterious and yet perfectly audible conversations between people looking like knowledgeable sports, from which you gather that Phizz at 66 to 1 is going to be “slipped” that day. And you may see men tumbling over one another to put what look like five-pound notes on Lively Lizzie. Not that information so gained has not a certain negative value. You can certainly eliminate Phizz and Lively Lizzie as possible winners of the Big Race.

The Course then is an assembly, in the main, of Sharps and Flats. A reasonably common-sense individual soon finds that out. It is too obvious. But there is little there in essence that differentiates it from other reputable (!) avenues of life. Good Business, for instance, both prays for a plentiful supply of flats, and preys upon them greedily when they arrive. The competition for their hawbees is so keen and unscrupulous as to cast a doubt upon the old adage “Honour among thieves.” Good Commercial Life knows full well the financial advantages which accrue from offering Something for Nothing. This is an euphemism for Nothing for Something. “O Lord, send us millions of the credulous greedy” goes the prayer. And the Lord, as is expected of him, being on the side of established institutions and good business, sees to it that the Fool Crop is perennial, or (as they put it over the herring-pond) that a sucker is born every minute.

Spotting the Lady is an easy business compared to finding the correct Church; the bonus for doing so is similarly alluring, and out of all proportion to the merit attached to it. For, if the cleric is to be believed, to reach the Pearly Gates one has only to accept the religion one learnt at Mother's knee, and this surely is an easy and unmeritorious way of achieving eternal bliss. On the race-course, if you eliminate the thimble or the card which you feel is the right one, and choose one of the other two, then you have at least an even chance. It may be argued by a theologian, eager to put up a superior case for his craft, that even if you do manage to pick the winner that way you will be defrauded of your gains. Correct! An unfortunate accident such as an overturned table or a disturbance in the rear will occur and prevent your bonus materializing. But the Church's prizes, the Church's prizes *materialize*. Do they, indeed? What is quite clear is that there is, in the case of the Church, no solitary case of a dividend having been paid. You have to die to find out—and *dead men tell no tales*.

The parallel between the Race Course and the Theological Arena can be pointed out in scores of directions. Listen to that threadbare individual who has his little crowd round him (collected in 45 seconds by searching for an imaginary object on the turf). What is his thesis?

“I have stood on this racecourse now every Derby Day for donkey's years. Thousands of people have bought my tips and made pots of money. (A Voice: You're right.) Thank you, sir. There are scores of others standing around here telling you the tale. They are, so they say, jockeys. *Jockeys!* The only horse they have had anything to do with is the horse their mother dried the clothes on. (Laughter). I don't

tell you that I am a jockey, although I am only 5 stone 6 lbs. in my stocking feet. (Laughter). I know enough about the crowd who come upon these Downs to know that they cannot be imposed upon that way. All I say is that for the 3.30 I have obtained a piece of information—the horse is a real snorter. Nothing can go wrong. How have I got to know this? That's my secret. If you don't believe me, if you are one of those clever ones who suspect everyone, keep your hobs in your pocket. I am speaking to sportsmen, and I say, if this horse doesn't win, and if the price isn't more than a hundred to eight, I shall be at this same spot at 4 o'clock and their money will be returned. Thank you, sir, Thank you, sir, Thank you."

Let us put this address another way to apply to one of our Highly Reverend Institutions.

"The Old Firm, The Old Firm! We have told the tale now for Two Thousand Years, and millions of the human race will testify to our telling it well. What do we offer you if you support this Stand! Life Eternal, Pearly Gates, Streets of Gold, the Peace of God, and Music and Song—My God, what Music and what Song! Up aloft, we will meet again, brother, and if you have any criticisms to offer of my prospectus, I shall then be glad to hear them. *The Old Firm. The Old Firm.* Thank you, Sir, Thank You, Oh Thank You, Sir.

"There are others standing here who tell you wonderful tales, children. Oh, wonderful tales! They say *they* have the Keys to the Pearly Gates. What bunk! In the language of the revered head of our Firm they are but Thieves and Robbers. You, my children, with that strong vein of common-sense which has characterized our Church all these centuries, will not, we feel, listen to them. In fact, I should not be surprised if the insult they offer to your intelligence is not of such a kind that it may lead to a Breach of the Peace. In which case, they only have themselves to blame, for your feelings, my children, are sacred things. Hang up that banner, George! Where's that rattle? B'rhh, B'rhh, B'rhh! The old Firm! The Old Firm! Thank you, Sir, Thank You, Indeed, Sir!"

T. H. ELSTOB.

### "The Human Fear of Death"

THE human being need not have any more fear concerning death than he has concerning birth, because in both cases, one is unconscious of the proceeding. Death is not an enemy, but a friend—the "liberator" and twin-brother of sleep.

Some people consider death to be sweet, while others are not courageous enough to even think about it. But no "mortal" can escape it. When one becomes old, the cells of the body atrophy. This is most strikingly noticed with the brain, when every thought and word tires it. Then gradually one begins to forget and gradually become indifferent with the coming on of old-age, experiencing neither joy nor sorrow as deeply as before. The capability to form judgments becomes dull and nature gradually—almost imperceptibly—transports one into a new state. Then finally one becomes so tired, that it is impossible to live. Like a lamp in which the oil is gradually consumed.

Death on account of ill-health is only, under certain conditions, more difficult than that of old-age. With apoplexy of the heart, the heart ceases to beat; the brain suddenly ceases to function; then, a complete state of coma, and the patient dies without any imagination of anything which has taken place. With chronic heart-trouble, the blood circulates slower and slower through

the lungs, which suffer from lack of oxygen and an excessive quantity of carbonic acid. The consciousness is lost in a hazy cloud, and the senses become so affected that finally the patient feels nothing. The attacks of suffocation during difficulty of breathing often appear to be terrible, but in fact, they are more painless than they appear to the bystander. One colleague, a doctor, dying from such a complaint of the lungs, said to his friends who were present: "Tell your students that the attacks are not as bad as they appear."

With "consumption" the membranes of the lungs gradually wear away. The patient considers himself to be much healthier than he really is. One professor had a patient in the last stages of consumption, and one day while making his rounds realized that it was only a matter of hours before death would take place. Shortly after his visit, the professor received a telephone call from the patient—a female—which he expected to be her last wish, but these were her words: "I only wish to consult you concerning the health-resort I shall choose for next summer." For five minutes the professor waited at the bedside, when she died without anguish and pain of any kind.

With every illness the approach to death is the same. Cancer, for example, is painful at first, if it attacks a nerve; but if not, it causes no pain. Cancer is not incurable if an operation is performed in time, and in every case where an operation would be useless, the doctor always at his disposal effective remedies to allay pain, and does not hesitate to use them, when and where necessary.

Death caused by an accident is also painless. The nerves are suddenly paralysed, and due to this, no pain is felt. Livingstone relates, for example, how he was once attacked by a lion and mauled like a rat by a cat. He lost consciousness and experienced everything, as in a state of sleep, without fear or pain. It is precisely the same with those who die from hunger, thirst, or frost. They fall asleep.

The death agony frightens many people. Some dying people put up a fierce resistance and struggle against the approach of death, sometimes trying to jump out of bed or expressing the delirium in some other manner. The dying are, however, unconscious of such movements, which are caused by an impairment of the spinal system and of the brain. There is actually no perception of agony to one who is dying. Only in very rare circumstances is death accompanied by pain, and the physician always has the means of allaying it, in such cases. There is nothing to fear about death; it is our nearest and dearest who suffer, not the dying person. One leaves life in the same way that one enters it, and as unobtrusively. It is a pity that people have any fear of death. Possibly the fear is the result of a faulty education. *Death is not our enemy. It is our friend and twin-brother of Sleep.*

(From a lecture by Prof. Elis Essen-Møller, from the "Sennacieca Revuo.")

### THE TWO DEATHS

The sky was murky-hued, a leaden gray:  
The sullen lowering wind, that fell and rose  
On leafless branches, whined an eerie lay:  
The sluggard winter's day dragged to a close.

The lonely stone-knit manse defied the wind,  
And all-encroaching shadows of the night;  
Here solemn Death had left his card behind,  
Intending soon to claim his neophyte.

The parson's foam-flecked lips moved to and fro,  
But soundless, as he waited for his Host;  
The doctor shook his head, and rose to go;  
The watcher wept, remaining at his post.

A swift collapse as Death's grim reaper sighed,  
And with the final expelled breath—God died.

## Acid Drops

In his Diocesan Journal the Bishop of Liverpool raises the question of whether the mass singing of "Abide with me" is suitable at football meetings. He thinks it is not. We have our doubts. On most football grounds there are very many religious terms in use. The name of "Christ" and "God" are often used, and there is no ignoring the genuine feeling that lies behind such expressions as "O Christ," or "Gawd blimey," and when a man does badly he is often referred to as a "God forsaken"—all of which leave no doubt as to the religious instincts of masses of the people. There is a spontaneity about the use of these expressions that is very impressive. On the other hand, we would concede to the Bishop that the majority present are more concerned about the accuracy of the coupons they have filled than with what are usually regarded as heavenly things. But, surely the aim of introducing a religious hymn is merely to get the crowds of people made thoroughly familiar with religious phrases and so create a serviceable "conditioned reflex." It is a continuation of the policy that begins with children.

With all sincerity we suggest to the Bishop a modification that he is at liberty to adopt. We have recently had a Report on Doctrine that aims at stabilizing the opinions of Christians about their own religion, and which suggests modifications in hitherto accepted beliefs. Why not revise the particular hymn in question on something like the following lines? :—

Abide with me, my luck of late is sore  
Without thy aid I feel I cannot score.  
Inspire my pen, endow it with thy might  
Help me, O Lord, to get my forecasts right.

We feel certain that if this form was adopted the revised hymn would be sung with as much energy as the present form is sung, and with an obvious sincerity that is at present quite absent. And a list of the names and addresses of the successful singers would be a valuable help to the Archbishop's "Recall to Religion."

Amongst the many tributes to John Wesley, in the press this week, only an occasional reference is made to his utterly atrocious creed, which included an assurance which he never tired of preaching, that all who disbelieved the dogmas he taught would be tortured eternally in undying flames of Hell. And none of his flatterers has dared to quote Wesley's phrase that "to disbelieve in Witchcraft is to disbelieve in the Bible." The fact is that Wesley, like all his contemporary clergymen, was one of the reactionaries who lured men to superstition in an age when Reason and Humanity were suffering bitter persecution.

Of course, any amount of nonsense has been written and preached about the influence of Wesleyanism. But Miss Bowen, in her *Wrestling Jacob*, brought down abuse from Methodists as a consequence of the light she let in on Wesley to those who were not familiar with his character. And many years ago "Q," in his *Hetty Wesley*, did the same thing on a smaller scale. That Wesley was a big man in his way is indisputable, but the form of religion he advocated was narrow, intolerant, and did much to perpetuate and stereotype the intolerance and narrowness of some of the Nonconformist sects. His social gospel amounted mainly to exalting belief and obedience, with a denunciation of the more obvious vices and ills of human nature. He was intensely superstitious, accepted hell and heaven in all their literality; mistook obviously pathological mental states for evidence of the divine action, and although he disbelieved in slavery, that disbelief was not common to Methodists. In America, indeed, the Methodist bodies were strong in their denunciation of the anti-slavery movement. Wesley's great follower, Whitefield, was a strong supporter of slavery in America, and was one of the main causes of its introduction into Georgia. An orphanage that he purchased in Georgia for the use of the sect had seventy-five slaves, and

he received money from two great supporters of Wesleyanism, Lady Huntingdon and Hervey, for the express purpose of buying negroes. Another follower of Wesley, Newton, was actually engaged in the slave trade for some years, and has placed on record the confession, that while on his slave-ship he never knew "sweeter or more frequent hours of divine communion."

As to the social influence of Wesleyanism, without dwelling on the ill done by the scenes of revivalistic insanity that took place at Methodist meetings, and its ill-effects in that direction, there was small sympathy shown towards the efforts of those who were struggling to abolish political and social injustice. Wesley himself was ready to attribute all kinds of illnesses to "the hand of God," and, of course, God always operated to the support of John Wesley. But early Methodist organizations not merely showed themselves indifferent to the attempts to gain social or political or economic justice, they took special pains to prove to the authorities that they were not supporters of those who were doing so much to disturb "social orders." Of course, there were men who were Methodists who worked for reforms, as there were members of the Church of England and other sects. But there is no question that the Nonconformist sects were until the first quarter of the nineteenth century had passed, hostile to the reformers, and often on the confessed ground that so many of them were "Infidels," and that few of them held the right views of Christianity.

It is very easy to praise Wesley for his good qualities, although it is worth noting that this praise of Wesley has for its main purpose the furthering of a religious campaign that will lead to an unenlightened praise of the Churches for the part they are assumed to have played in the development of social reform. That, of course, is totally misleading. Wesley's revolt was against a Church that in one form or another had been in existence for centuries. The evils against which he protested had grown up under the influence of Christianity. From that point of view, whatever was socially good in his life was an indictment of the Christian Churches. From another point of view, it is quite plain to those who really study Wesley's life, beginning with his earliest years, that his intense superstition, his clinging to such teachings as eternal damnation and witchcraft, with his harshness to those who opposed him or differed from him, were qualities that were developed under the influence of a Christian environment. One day we should like to see a really scientific study of Wesley and one or two other leading figures in the religious world of the eighteenth century. They are not difficult figures to explain, provided one has the necessary equipment for the work. To call such men stupid, only proves the stupidity of the commentator. To think of them as self-seeking—in the ordinary sense of the word—is to betray one's own character. To look on them as unexplainable marvels is but to show that one has not yet outgrown the religious frame of mind. In the light of modern science they are to be handled on the lines that every problem is handled by a man of ability and understanding.

The *Church Times* is disturbed by the marriage of Christians with non-Christians in India. It is not marriage between Hindoos and English to which objection is taken, although whatever objection there is on this ground rests on a basis that is made up of colour and "national" prejudice. The objection of the *Church Times* is to a Christian Hindoo marrying a Hindoo who is not a Christian. It says "on purely natural grounds" such marriages are to be deprecated. On "natural grounds," no such objection can be raised. A Hindoo couple as such cannot have their relations to each disturbed, nor can the quality of their offspring be affected by the religious opinions of the parents "on natural grounds." The obstacle arises here entirely on religious grounds. It has no other basis. A man and woman may love one another—in the case of two Hindoos one of whom is a Christian and one of whom is not—the evidence for mutual affection is greater than in other cases. It is religion alone that creates the difficulty, and the bigotry of

religion—Christian or non-Christian—is enough to distort and even destroy the strongest of human affections. We do not know of a stronger argument for the anti-social nature of religion in general than this complaint of the *Church Times*. Religion is powerful, we admit: and there is hardly anything that it is not able to pervert to evil uses, and in a vast number of cases does so operate.

Canon Peter Green, who is writing a series of articles in the *Church Times*, although quite willing, we presume, to admit that many so-called miracles are no more than expressions of ignorance and credulity, yet puts in a general plea for miracles. For instance, he says that "historical evidence for the Virgin Birth is as strong as it possibly could be." But how on earth could there be any evidence at all for such a thing? The only one who can know is the mother of the baby. Everybody else can only hear about it. It is the one thing in the world for which evidence is absolutely impossible. What Canon Green means, we imagine, is that millions of people have believed it. But millions have believed every kind of stupidity and superstition that has ever flourished. They could not have flourished otherwise. We would like Canon Green to give us a plain answer to a plain question. If he had met with the story of a virgin birth for the first time to-day, would he have accepted it? If not why should he rate as impossible or incredible an event to-day, which he says he believes actually occurred a couple of thousand years ago?

A special article in the *News-Chronicle*, author, John Stewart, discusses the question of teaching children to repeat prayers. The main point considered is the amusing conclusions to which children come when hearing and repeating prayers, such as "He sat upon a bunch of spiders" ("He suffered under Pontius Pilate"), and "Our Father in charge heaven hell-o-be thy name." But he finally decides that children need to be trained in habits of "reverence or worship," and that "the ritual of prayer and praise should surely not be denied to the child on the ground that the words are quite beyond youthful intelligence." The more artful of religious propagandists will not thank Mr. Stewart for his advocacy. It too openly gives away the game. It is only too true that if children are taught ("forced to cultivate" would be the right phrase here) certain mental habits they will become, like performing animals, accustomed to manifest certain emotional reactions on hearing certain phrases. It is a process of developing "conditioned reflexes" on the lowest and least valuable social level. It is the technique of Fascism, and of the Churches, and of all who wish to create a mob-mind that shall react unintelligently to particular slogans. It is the most effective safeguard against genuine education that anyone can imagine. It has been beloved by all the Churches in every age, and by Dictators everywhere. It is one of the greatest and most contemptible crimes that one can commit against children. But it is very religious.

Mr. Stewart in reply to those who object that to train children in the way he suggests will "breed superstition or what not," that the "the Mystery of Creation [note capital letters!] is not superstition; it is realism." It is not. It is just simple unadulterated religious nonsense. To "reverence," really reverence anything, implies understanding. How can one reverence a man unless one knows something about him? How can one reverence a work of art or a book unless one sees them, and to some extent appreciates their nature and quality? There is no such thing as the "mystery of creation," (we are merciful to Mr. Stewart, and assume that by "Creation" he means Nature). There are problems associated with life in general, but the proper line here is to seek understanding, to cultivate the intelligence of the child, to teach it to question, and to refuse to behave like an educated parrot. That is the method of the wise parent and the good teacher. Its opposite is that of the lazy or incapable teacher, the medicine-man of all ages, and the parents who would be, socially, more profitably engaged in breeding pigs than rearing children.

A writer in the *Church Times* says that "The New Testament contains our only record of the Birth, Life and Death of our Blessed Lord." Now that is true, or untrue, just as one cares to take it. If one takes this record of a god who came to earth to be incarnated in a man, and who afterwards was ceremoniously sacrificed for the salvation of the race, and who during his life worked many miracles, and who after he was dead rose from the grave and ascended to heaven, if this is meant, then it is not true that the New Testament is the only record of such a life. Similar records are to be found in many directions in Egypt, in India, and elsewhere. The Christian believes one of them only; the Freethinker, knowing them for what they are, believes in all equally—as variations upon a common theme that is part and parcel of the world's mythology.

But, if we are asked to believe that the New Testament record is historical in the sense of being a record of a series of objective events, then the fact of the New Testament alone containing this account is suspicious. There is no corroborative evidence. And what man in his senses would believe the New Testament narratives without corroborative evidence? There are not merely the personal miracles attaching to the Christ of the New Testament, there is the darkness that overspread the earth on the death of Jesus, there is the massacre of the children in the hopes of killing Jesus, and so forth. Why, as Freethinkers have been pointing out for centuries, if these things ever occurred they would have been known and recorded throughout the whole civilized world. Elaborate evidence should not be required to-day to prove the whole story to be mythological in character. It stands as such on the face of it.

And let us again point out, once this historical basis goes, and Christianity takes its place among the mythologies of the world, the talk that one gets about Jesus the moral teacher, is just so much sentimental "bunk," or unintelligent chatter. The very people who drop the Christ the god, and bow before the moral teacher, Jesus, admit that the moral maxims placed in his mouth are found in other places and times, and have no necessary connexion with the New Testament. People do not go about the world bowing down to the name of Confucius, or Buddha, or Plato, or Epicurus, merely because they gave utterances to wise and good maxims. They accept them as part of our racial inheritance, and as the product of social growth. There is only one reason why those who have given up Christianity still prostrate themselves before Jesus, and that is, it serves as a form of protection against religious and social bigotry. Meanwhile others who refuse so to disguise themselves are left to pay the price of their boldness.

### Fifty Years Ago

UNLESS report belies them, the old monks "cheered" themselves and all the Holy Spirit they had most plentifully. What a blasphemous wit they must have possessed to call a certain brand *Lachrymæ Christi*—the tears of Christ! Perhaps the idea was, "Christ's tears are precious, and so is this choice wine. Let him weep and let us drink. *O la dive botelle!*" Yet it is curious that the monks of La Chartreuse, who grow the finest wine in Europe, are very abstemious. This, however, may be on the principle that cooks are poor eaters. There are many sons of God to make up for their deficiency.

Church of England parsons notoriously affect port. The gravity of their profession is alien to more volatile liquors. A sober, solemn sermon could scarcely be composed on hock or champagne, and sherry might give it an acid flavour. Port is solid and orthodox. A parson who drinks it may be a scholar, but never a heretic. Nor is he likely to be excessive as a wit. We would wager that Bishop South drank Madeira.

# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- H. J. TAYLOR.—Thanks. We have already a notice in type. Will appear in next issue.
- E. PAYNE.—The meetings of the World Union of Freethinkers will be held on September 9 to 13 inclusive. We shall publish details in good time.
- C. M. TARLING.—Pleased you find the *Essays in Freethinking* a good tonic after reading some particularly stupid exhibition of theological exposition. Mr. Cohen hopes to get a fifth volume out before the year is up.
- T.R.—Received and shall appear. But we are overcrowded with "copy" at the moment.
- T. MOSLEY.—Your card has been sent on. You will probably hear from the party concerned.
- MRS. HENRY DAMAN.—Of course, we cannot take words placed in the mouth of the New Testament Jesus as evidence for his actual existence.
- WILLIAM ROGERS.—Pleased to place you among our "Roll of Honour" of fifty-year readers.
- T. B. JONES.—Much obliged for cuttings.
- F. SMITHIES.—Sorry your report crowded out; will appear next week. Your Branch appears to have had a very successful week. Congratulations.
- S. W. JAGGER.—The address of the *Bombay Reason* is 12 Queen's Road, Bombay. Best wishes.
- J. DAVIDSON.—Thanks for the report of Sir Thomas Allen's speech. It is quite a good one. Regret we have not space for a reproduction of part of it.
- H. DRAKE.—Received and shall appear.
- C. O'CONNOR.—Shall be glad to hear from you at any time.
- C. A. MORRISON.—Thanks for information. We did not notice it, but will bear the fact in mind. It may have been an exhibition of political caution.
- W. McNEIL.—Some years ago we circulated 100,000 copies of a large pamphlet similar to the one you suggest. It was called *Facts Worth Knowing*, and we are sure that something of the kind would prove useful to-day. We should like someone to attempt it. We would give whatever assistance we could.
- O. T. SMITH writes—"I have not been reading the *Freethinker* for fifty years, but I can claim twenty-one years. I am still reading it with undiminished interest and profit. Your own 'Views and Opinions' have been to me a constant tonic and guide." Thanks.
- E. P. RAUTELA (Finland).—Thanks for information that an article on "Cursing and Swearing," by Mr. A. R. Williams appeared in issue dated June 6, 1915. Perhaps some reader has a copy of this issue which they could spare.
- H. MORRISON, J. HUMPHRIES AND J. CLOSE.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

## Sugar Plums

Members of the N.S.S. who are attending the Conference at Glasgow, and who arrive in that city on Saturday evening, will please make their way to the Grand Hotel, Charing Cross. A reception will be held there at 7 o'clock. On Sunday morning the Conference will open at 10.30 sharp. It will sit until 12.30, and again at 2.30. A lunch will be provided in the Hotel for members and delegates at 3s. each. The Conference is for members only, who must show their current card of membership. Members who have paid their annual subscription, and who, for some reason, are without their card must apply to the General Secretary.

On Sunday evening there will be a public meeting in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, at 7. This will give Freethinkers a good opportunity of bringing along their friends and introducing them to the movement. The President will take the chair at both the business and the public meetings.

With regard to the excursion to Loch Lomond on the Monday, this, including lunch, at the Hotel, Loch Lomond, will be 7s., not 6s., as we were previously informed. It is a cheap day's outing, and through some magnificent scenery. Further particulars can be obtained at the Conference.

The Rev. F. H. E. Harfitt, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, writes to the press (the cutting reaches us without the name of the paper being given):—

The action of the Roman Catholics of Aberdeen, and the reply of Sir Murdoch Macdonald have been closely watched by this Society, who would be prepared to back what Sir Murdoch has said. It is evident that no action by the Government is possible.

The strange thing about this protest is that although agitation has been proceeding regarding a Congress in London, no notice is being taken of a far more serious matter—i.e., that of the Lord Provost and members of the Corporation giving a civic welcome to an Atheistic Conference which is taking place in Glasgow during Whitsuntide.

I refer to the Annual Meeting of the National Secular Society, one of the Societies responsible for inviting the Conference of the Freethinkers of the World to this country during September.

It would interest me very much to know why no protest has come from Christian people in Glasgow.

We agree as to the seriousness of the matter from the Christian point of view. From the point of view of a common citizenship, Freethinkers should share in whatever social amenities exist in the community to which they belong. From the Christian point of view, we admit that such fairness to non-Christians is very, very, unusual. It is indeed unique of its kind. But the Lord Provost and Corporation of Glasgow have set an example of fairness, and displayed a sense of justice that other public bodies might well follow.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Aberdeen requested Sir Murdoch Macdonald, M.P., to "protest against the action of the Government in not prohibiting the anti-God Congress to be held in London." Sir Murdoch refused on two grounds, (1) Complete freedom of thought is allowed to the individual in Great Britain. (2) "Action by the Government will only still further advertise a silly movement by grossly misled people which will die of inertia, as all such movements have hitherto died, if left to the ridicule of the general public." Sir Murdoch adds a third reason, which is that the Government has no power of interference.

It is rather a pity that Sir Murdoch Macdonald, should have lessened the value of number one by numbers two and three. They may have been due to political caution, which hampers honesty of speech with all and secures it with many. Perhaps also, Sir Murdoch had an eye on both types of characters in his constituency, the liberal

and bigoted, and thought that he might advance himself in his political career, if he gave a reply that suited both parties. He has very high political authority for so doing. But it is something that it is recognized that the Congress cannot, as we have said many times, be prevented.

But it is too ridiculous to say that such movements as those represented by the World Union of Freethinkers have hitherto died if left to the ridicule of the public. Of course, they never have been so left, but we would like to know what Freethought movement during the past century and a half has ever ceased to exist, either through being laughed out of existence by believers or suppressed by force. The latter has been tried often enough, and the consequence is that Freethought is to-day stronger and more influential in than it ever was in the whole course of British history. And as for believers killing anti-Godism by ridicule, the absence of a fitting sense of the ridiculous is one of the main reasons why religion persists to the extent it does.

Consider the demand to use the police because holding a Freethought Congress in Britain is "an insult to God Almighty." Cannot God Almighty look after himself and his own honour, without the help of the moronic supporters of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Aberdeen? Does God Almighty really need a policeman and Sir Samuel Hoare to guard him from disappearing before the assaults of an "Anti-God Congress." What on earth, or in heaven has become of the thunderbolts that God used on such occasions as a gathering that doubted his presence. What has become of his powers to strike men dead, or blind, who scoffed at his power? Really, Really, the God of the Universe fearing annihilation at the hands of a gathering of Freethinkers! It is worse than the British Empire fearing destruction at the hands of the principality of Monaco. Sir Murdoch Macdonald must be giving an exhibition of his own sense of humour, and relying upon the dullness of the general public not to notice it.

### Itself it cannot Save!

IN the desperate effort to force Religion again upon the people, innumerable "stunts" and tricks of all kinds are being employed. There are many other aspects of this campaign to save Religion, which ought to interest every Freethinker and Scientific Atheist. One bad feature is the careless—or worse—use of language by people who are not themselves Professional Godists. This is particularly noticeable in politics and Journalism. The cause may be mere unthinking utterance of phrases in common use by Godists: it may be Fear; for there is no Political Blackmailer like Religion: it may be a desire to appease Religion; forgetting that you can no more do that, than you can appease a crocodile: or it may be some other variety of vain attempt to dodge a difficult dilemma. Whatever the cause or motive may be; the results are bad, and the practice is to be deplored. There are far more than enough of Professional Apologists for Godism—"Parsons"—without political or journalistic amateurs joining in the almost indecent display of untruth and historical misrepresentation.

Speakers and writers of more than one political party have commented upon, and condemned, the British Tory Government for giving way to Mussolini, just when that gentleman is in such difficulties as to be in danger of collapse. Of course, those who watch—with a Scientific eye—what happens on the stage of world affairs understand why Chamberlain, Halifax & Co., have done what they are doing. It is not difficult to understand *that*. Yet, many of those who condemn Chamberlain, Halifax & Co., for the help given to Mussolini, are doing just the same kind

of thing in relation to religion. "The intellectual sincerity and logical consistency," urged by J. M. Robertson, is often "far to seek"—with "Progressives" as well as with "Re-actionaries."

If we are justified in asking why Chamberlain & Co., want to save Mussolini from collapse; we are ten times more justified in asking why so many "Progressive" Politicians—Liberal, Labour, and Communist—are trying to save Religion from *its* collapse. In this case, the collapse is Intellectual and Moral—not Financial. With the immense Financial Interests of Religion, it is safe—at present—from collapse in that direction. Perhaps that is the cause of the desire to help to save religion. Whole issues of the *Freethinker* could be filled with proofs of this intellectual and moral collapse. The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine is an open—one cannot call it "clear"—admission of the intellectual and moral bankruptcy of the largest section of the Christians in Great Britain.

Another declaration, by the "Council of Active Christian Democrats," May 12, 1938, says "not 15 per cent of the people attend any church." And again, "We are deeply concerned about the prospects of organized religion."

The attitude of "Parsons"—in *all* sections of Christianity—to marriage, divorce, birth-control, a Free Sunday, Peace, War, etc., etc., exposes the complete collapse of their Godism in actual fact. While—as yet—no section of the Christians has accepted Labourism, Socialism, or Communism, officially; numbers of "Parsons" have done so. To say—at *this* time of day—that the Communism of Karl Marx has much in common with the Communism of Jesus Christ is again an admission that their God has failed. They realize the truth of the pitiful words supposed to have been used by their God, as he died; and so, they turn from their canonical Gospels to the Communist Manifesto!

At the same time, the authorities of the Roman Catholic section of the Christians—still, the largest—rejoiced at the success of Mussolini's filthy frightfulness in Abyssinia, and called it a great victory. The same authorities, and every journal of the Roman Catholic section in Great Britain, approve and applaud Franco and his terror in Spain. Also, Chamberlain, and that Honourable and very Christian Gentleman, Lord Halifax, glorify the Great Deeds of Mussolini. Before the "Great War," it was said that Christianity was, "an organized hypocrisy." What words can we find, fitly to describe it—now?

The pity of it is that, just when we have reached this stage, just when there is some prospect of science, the great civilizer, taking the place of religion in ethics, sociology, economics, and politics: many quite well-meaning folk of both sexes, by their silly chatter, help to prolong the evil influence of religion in the social sciences. Let us look at one instance of how, frequently, help is given to religion by the mere unthinking repetition of Orthodox Untruths. The evil effect of all this is all the more, when it is quite innocently—if thoughtlessly—done. "More evil is wrought from want of thought, than ever from want of heart." (I quote from memory.)

Mr. Herbert Morrison is a man whom many of us admire. The very fact that we *do* admire his work, makes us regret his failure when he slips into a quite unjustified attempted defence of one type of Christianity.

In *John Bull* of December 11, 1937, he had an article on Intolerance as the "World's Worst Evil." Much in the article was admirable; but one of the concluding pars. was—logically—"off the mark," altogether. He began the article by these two pars.: "Intolerance makes me not merely wild but furious.

"Of all human states of mind, it is one of the most ugly, poisonous, degrading, devastating."

He worked through various types of intolerance; and then came towards an end with a terrible anti-climax—which is grossly untrue, according to the "facts of the case."

"Believe what we tell you or be tortured to death and eternally damned." Such was the watchword of some of the earlier leaders of Christianity.

"Yet if there is one figure in history who we all know would have been instinctively averse to such an attitude, it was the great figure of Jesus Christ. He would never have been a party to physical torture and violence as a means of imposing His opinion upon others."

Misrepresentation so gross as that, *almost* makes me "not merely wild, but furious"! Only philosophic imperturbability saves one from being intolerant to that!

Regarded scientifically, or logically, what are the facts of the case? Times without number this false apology has been exposed in the columns of the *Freethinker*. Still, as long as apologists for the mythical Jesus Christ of the canonical gospels continue to tell their old old "story"; we must continue to expose it. "La Verité oblige."

In the last analysis, the belief in any God, or Absolute, or Perfect Being, is something beyond reason. Scientific proof of its existence is impossible. So, the more sincerely the belief is held; the less amenable to reason is the Believer. That explains the number of WEE DICTATORS whom we meet! It also explains how difficult a thing it oftentimes is, to preserve unity in a political party. Intolerance—explicit or implicit—is inherent in Godism.

Apart from that, Christianity is, historically, one of the most intolerant of religions. And so it still continues—in Protestant, as well as in Roman Catholic, sections. Mr. Morrison evidently recognizes this, in some of his paragraphs. He fails to see that the very intolerance which he quotes is actually a part of the Jesus Christ depicted in the canonical gospels. For good or for evil, there is nothing that was new in the teaching attributed to Jesus Christ. It is simply grossly untrue to say that, "there is one figure in history who we all know would have been instinctively averse" to this intolerance. That is worse than "Bunk," and is unworthy of Mr. Morrison. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." That is part of that "old old story"; and, what an infinity of human anguish has arisen from that horrible intolerance of the Gospel Jesus Christ!: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

Just as bad in promoting intolerance, has been the teaching of non-resistance against evil, and the beatifying of poverty, taught by the Gospel Jesus Christ. To turn one's cheek to the smiter and to consider poverty, blessed, is to invite intolerance from the tyrant. When we remember that that teaching has been drilled into generation after generation, we do not wonder that the Labour Party finds it difficult to arouse the people against poverty and tyranny. Let us rejoice that the Christian Sunday Schools are on the decline!

Long before the Great War, I had described the influence of religion in the defeat of Chartism. That is being more widely recognized, to-day. Religion also was a serious factor in the decline of Liberalism. The German "Naztis" used the, almost legendary, figure of Hindenberg to capture and enslave the German people. So, more than once in our rude island story, has the pale figure of a suffering Jesus Christ been used to divert and disintegrate any determined effort

for freedom. The British "Tories" still hope that that old old "story" may serve them well again.

The Labour Movement contains Christians of every kind, people of all religions, Atheists of different types, and hundreds of thousands who are deliberately indifferent to religion. All can work together for the common secular purpose; but strength and Unity can never be preserved by intruding, on to any Movement, the religious or anti-religious opinions of a section. That way lies disaster for the people and victory for the tyrants and their terror.

H. STEWART WISHART.

## Christian Socialism

A NUMBER of the leaders of the Labour Party in Britain are often at pains to point out that the ideals of their Socialism accord with the ideals of Christianity. This form of self-deception need not be regarded as surprising in a political party, many of whose spokesmen are Methodist local preachers and class leaders. But one would expect that Freethinking members of the Labour Party are honest enough to warn people generally that it is a deception—for any student of world movements must realize that the ultimate objective of Socialism is essentially different from, and indeed antagonistic to, that of Christianity. Christianity upholds private property and the continuance of money. Socialism asserts the necessity for the nationalization, and finally the internationalization of all property, including the means of production, distribution and exchange; and on the latter being realized necessarily money will be abolished as obsolete and useless.

What is the ultimate objective of Christianity? One can get varied ideas from the Sacred Books of the Christians because these volumes are noted for contradictions. It would pass the wit of the ablest jurist to reconcile the chaotic ethics advanced in these books while their science and law are childishly ante-diluvian. Of course professing Christians attribute the origin of their Sacred Books to Supernatural authority, and when the contents of them are challenged or questioned, they take refuge in allegory or parable; and even when stumped on glaring inconsistencies in Holy Writ they declare that the All Wise will make all things clear one day. "When the mists have rolled away."

The main tenets which are urged for acceptance in the Bible are distinctly insulting to human reason at its highest. And in point of fact "Christian Socialism" is a phrase which is a contradiction in terms. Socialism is—or ought to be—based on reasonable conclusions from ascertained facts. Christians found their creed on vain imaginings wholly irreconcilable with proofs drawn from experience. You cannot mix oil and water. But then God can do anything. He actually made all things out of nothing in the space of six days—and all very good. And if Freethinkers question the goodness of such things as poisons and the germs of disease the Christians sing them down with hymns of praise to the omnipotent disease spreader.

Nay, it is the mind of enlightened man that has discovered the balance of nature, and has devised the means of protection for the comparative safety of mankind against the divinely created evils in Nature. Many a sentimentalist parson cries out that behind Nature we are to find Nature's God! Well, is it Nature red in beak and claw, or the glory of trees and sunsets? Harvest Thanksgiving services are organized in many churches, at which a supposititious

deity is praised for giving us the fruits of the earth. In point of fact it is the tiller of the soil who should be praised—not this mumbo-jumbo beyond the skies, for if the fruits of the earth were left to production by him, we should have diabolically poor harvests!

The fact is that God—whoever and wherever he is—is not so white as he is painted; and man—the individual you and I meet every day—is not so black as he is painted. The wily writers of divine records have ever insisted on fear as a beneficial influence; but as knowledge overcomes ignorance, fear is exposed as the debasing and degrading thing it actually is. It pines away in the Radium of Reason; and ecclesiasticism and clericalism pine away also. It is amazing that "Socialist" Christians cannot see that by maintaining superstition they buttress and fortify all ecclesiastical institutions, the greatest of which have been the bitterest opponents of social and political reform.

A Socialist friend once said to me: "Nothing is to be gained by attacking religion." Probably it was *votes* he had in mind. But in opposition to such a short-sighted view, we Freethinkers retort with all the earnestness and emphasis of which we are capable: "Everything is to be gained 'by attacking religion.'" The timid opportunists of the Labour Party apparently have not the perspicacity to understand that by yielding to expediency and deferring to belief in the supernatural and the practices flowing from it, they are really strengthening clerical control and the other forces that withstand great constitutional, political, or social changes. Some ardent reformers pointed out twenty years since, that even then Labour in this country was partly bourgeois; and seeking to get its nose into the national trough. If Christianity cannot compel, it will cajole and bribe; and by these methods inflict upon the community a gang of these unnatural and impossible hybrids called "Christian Socialists." Who shall dare to put limits to Liberty? Mental chains and slavery are more to be abhorred than all the fetters that can be fashioned for human limbs. Alas, the old names of "Liberal" and "Radical" have fallen from their former high estate! But, courage brothers, Liberty shall come into its own again; and conventional shackles shall be removed from the mind of man!

IGNORUS

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## Responsibility

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To what extent are our actions and thoughts free, and why is it that Freethinkers are generally Determinists in philosophy? One of the stock arguments against the Freethinker used to be—if as you say you have no free-will, then you cannot be a Freethinker. If thought is not free, how then can you think freely? It seems a plausible argument on the surface—but arguments are not always what they seem.

It is an old argument, but ever new to many, the struggle between free-will and determinism. Some people mistake freedom of choice for freedom of will. We all have the freedom to choose, but not the freedom to choose what we shall choose, or the choice of conditions which determine our choice. To a philosopher of the Middle-ages, Free-will seemed a natural and inherent faculty in man, in the twentieth century with our knowledge of the unity of nature and history, the idea of free-will becomes absurd.

Because I have the choice of kippers or eggs and bacon for breakfast, therefore I have free-will according to one argument. But, did I determine the conditions that made that choice possible? Did I select

the different economic forces that made kippers or eggs and bacon possible as a breakfast dish? And suppose at some time in my infancy I received a shock whilst eating one or the other of these dishes, would the choice then be free or determined?

Mr. Bernard Shaw in giving a talk at the B.B.C. a few years ago, on "Freedom," after enumerating the losses our bodily energies make—the time spent in eating, drinking, sleeping, etc., said, "Therefore don't imagine you are free because you are not," the implication being apparently, that if we were disembodied spirits, supposing such things could exist, we should be freer than we are cooped up in flesh and blood. Nothing could be further from the truth. Because the body is not only the prison of the mind, it is the instrument and tool of the mind. How could a disembodied spirit implement its thoughts? What freedom of action without a tool with which to act? None at all. A mind without a body like a body without a mind, would both be useless.

As we had no choice in the selection of our ancestry, or the material conditions animating them, we cannot say we have free-will. Other men made our history, countless lives have been lived and helped to determine our present condition. It might even be that the future will be governed by a greater or lesser extent by our actions. The present is always determined by the past, so we are not always free to try and determine the future.

Does it mean that we are not free to be Christians or not? Yes, we have the choice between Christianity and Freethought, but only that choice. It is only Christianity or Freethought. If the French had been defeated by the Moors in that battle in the South of France, it might have been Mohammedanism and Freethought, but as it is it is Christianity and Freethought—any of the two or three hundred odd, and some of them are remarkably odd, varieties. So therefore, the choice is extremely limited.

The choice of Christianity or not was determined for us, and what Christianity consisted of was determined for us. If we had been born before the Renaissance, we should have had in Europe, no choice but Roman Catholicism. But we would have the free-will to accept or reject? Not when you were taught from infancy that the greatest sin and crime was heresy, and saw the result of non-compliance on the scaffold and at the stake. Christianity which is always so vehement in giving man a free-will, has taken the most pains to stop him using it.

And besides, what use is free-will without full knowledge? The Christians argue that as no one can assert with conviction that Christianity is untrue because no one has the knowledge to disprove it, and as no one can disprove it they can go on believing. If no one has the knowledge to prove or disprove it, then no one has any free-will about the matter. How can a man have free-will? Free-will is the attribute of a god.

Men's minds change slowly; there is always a time-lag between events and realizations of those events. The invention of printing, for instance, did not create much of a stir, but it was a cardinal point in world history. If the governors and priests of that period had foreseen its development, they would surely have had the early machines destroyed and the printers proscribed. This invention has altered the whole balance of social relations. The direct contact between those who lead and those who follow was broken. Where one person had learned to read formerly, now a hundred could do so.

Another event that altered the course of history was the capture of Constantinople by the Turks. The dispersal of the Byzantine scholars spread the old Greek language and knowledge. It brought back

something lost from European thought for a thousand years, curiosity in things natural. It produced the mental background necessary to the beginnings of organized science. No longer was theology the only subject of thought, the humanities and nature came into their own.

Religion still goes on pretending that it counts, and talks endlessly of its "message" being necessary to the modern world, when in fact its message has no meaning in these days. It goes on pretending there is no real conflict between science and religion, and at the same time attacks science for being dogmatic, etc.

The New Psychology has given us an explanation why, when everyone agrees a thing is wrong, nothing is done to stop it. We know now that thought is only rationalization of what we want. That is why it is so difficult to stop war. No one admits the real reason for going to war. Instead we have a mass of slogans and shibboleths, empty, loud and insincere. That is why the materialist conception of history is such a safe guide, not because the economic factor is the only one, neither Marx nor Engels ever claimed that, but because few people ever admit even to themselves what they are actually after. The individual can always disclaim responsibility for what the mass is doing.

It allows the religious apologist to plead that the martyr burned at the stake, was executed by the secular arm. True in substance, but does that absolve the church from responsibility? These terms, the mass institutions, the Church, the State, etc., are used by the individual to ease his conscience. The Church is supported in the name of morality and human decency; the "safety of the State" enables the individual to escape responsibility for many things he would shrink from doing privately.

Sometimes the exigencies of the social system become so pressing that measures have to be forced through without the flourish of phraseological truntpets that generally heralds most legislative changes. Then truth for a few fleeting seconds shows herself, and then drops back to her age-long seclusion in the well. For a few minutes, hours, or days as the case may be, men face each other stripped of their garments of make-believe, but not for long. They hasten to dress again in the old familiar garments. It happens most frequently in international affairs. Diplomatic language is changed for gas-bombs and high explosives. Superficially studied, such a change can hardly be credited; carefully examined, it is obvious. In spite of the web of words spun across international relations, in spite of the intoxication of phrase-drunk fools, there is only one way to solve these problems, to patiently study and find causes. That is the only way.

IDRIS I. ABRAHAM.

#### BUDDHISM

The first principle of Buddhism is that everything that exists must have a cause, not only for its existence, but for its existence in that particular way.

Second, that everything is a combination of elements brought about by the law of construction, Sankhara.

Third, that all these Sankhara are subject to the law of destruction.

Fourth, that existence means the process of constant change.

Fifth, that consequently there can be no real or permanent happiness or satisfaction in them. All pleasures are momentary and unreal.

Sixth, there is no permanent or eternal ego or soul.

Seventh, all our weal and woe are the result of our conduct, partly in this and partly in former existences. This is the Doctrine of Karma.—Copied from a speech by the Ven. Siddartha, at the 13th birthday meeting of the Buddhist Lodge, London, November 19, 1937.

## Everybody Acts like an Atheist

ANY religious doctrine takes it for granted that God not only is the creator of the world, but that He also governs it, and continually intervenes into the course of things. The believers say, accordingly, that God can work miracles at any time, can change the natural, usual course of the phenomena; i.e., alter the laws of Nature.

To believe in miracles and in a supernatural intervention, means to believe in absurdities. This is proved by our entire practice, by all our worldly, scientific and any other experience.

In order to live, one must act. And in order to act with success, one must *understand the relation of different phenomena*. In this Science helps us. It says that there is nothing arbitrary in the World.

All is *regular* in the world. This means that equal causes under equal conditions call forth equal results. Were it not so, life would have been impossible. For every act we perform can be reasonable if considered to be leading to a result *previously determined*. Thus, we sow rye in the persuasion that in sowing rye seeds we shall get rye corn, and not, for instance, turnip, or some other plant. Again, we knead dough and put it in an oven, being sure to take out a loaf of bread, and not a melon.

Our calculation is correct, because nothing proceeds hap-hazard in Nature. Supposing that an engineer at a soap-works, or a baker, should believe that God can intervene, at any time, in the process of soap-boiling, or bread-making, how could he then act?

If miracles were possible, there could have been no question of technics, or industry, or life experience, or of exact mathematical calculations in construction.

Science and technics have the task to subordinate Nature to human necessities.

However, how could a conscious changing of Nature be carried out, if one would admit that everything in the world is under the indivisible power of some almighty being, of a God, who is supposed to have the capacity of "doing miracles," i.e., to bring the most unexpected changes into the course of natural phenomena?

A believer says that everything comes from God. But if he thinks it in point of fact, and if he can think logically, he should reject science and technics and do nothing but pray to God.

For instance, why should one study carefully the properties of soil and their influence on the growth of plants, why should one labour the earth properly—according to the knowledge acquired, if the crop depends on God? It would be sufficient just to pray to God asking him to send the crop. This is exactly what the Gospel recommends—to live like the birds of the air that do not sow, do not reap, nor gather into barns. But the peasant is well aware of the fact that if one does not sow, no gods will help, and that there will be no bread, for he "reaps what he has sown."

Any machine puts God aside, makes Him useless and worthless. For as soon as man resorts not to a prayer, but to a tool he has made, it proves his admitting that Nature with its regularity, but not God, is the active force. In industry, in agriculture, in medicine, people put forth not on God, but on their own capacities, knowledge and experience.

This is to be seen, for instance, from the fact that the believers will not sow on stones, because they know that no prayer will make the corn grow there. On the other hand, the believers are always glad to profit by the attainments of the farming science—of agronomy.

Even those who have a profound belief in God seem

to forget about him in practical activity, and to depend only on their work.

The fact that the believers plough, manure, reap, not limiting themselves by prayers, shows that in life, they act as if they were Atheists. For, if one believes in the existence of an omnipotent God, then why not admit that He can make a seed grow on an untilled virgin soil? Why not believe that God may fill the barns of the people who never sow, just by his miraculous power?

Thus, it follows that in his practical activity, the believer acts like the godless do! And this proves perfectly the justness of the scientific conception that rejects the existence of God and the miracles.

All human practice confirms the justness of Atheism and the falseness of religion.

G. A. GOUREY.

## Correspondence

### SABBATARIANISM IN WALES

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

SIR,—Twelve months ago Risca Council (Mon.) discussed the question of the opening of the Public Baths on Sunday. After a long discussion, the Sabbatarians won the day. This year, Councillor Coote, who raised the question last year, again moved that the Baths be opened, but to get unity on the resolution, he specified that the Baths be opened for *two hours*. This was, after a heated discussion, turned down by the casting vote of the Chairman, who afterwards invited the Councillors to join with him in Divine Service at Bethany Baptist Chapel. (I hope they wont dive in the Batling Pool.)

During the discussion, Councillor Roberts, Baptist, stated that he did not want the Sabbath desecrated, and we fought to retain the liberties our forefathers fought for (viz., attending Chapel.) Some time ago the Superintendent of Police asked for the Council's permission for the use of the Council Chamber for Sunday Lectures on Air Raid Precautions as Sunday was more convenient than any other day. The Sabbatarians were willing as they did not want to clash with the Police, but they thought that it should not interfere with people attending Chapel, and they wanted to specify certain hours. Eventually it was decided that the police should use the Council Chamber as they thought fit.

I may say that our Urban Council is composed of an Independent (Majority of one) Council, the rest Labour, and it is in a distressed area. Risca Pit employ about 2,000 men and boys, and, on Sunday, it is quite common to see hundreds of men going to and fro to work on this "desecrated Sabbath," and Councillor Roberts, who is an official of the South Wales Miners' Federation, deacon of Moriah Baptist Chapel, and member of the Mon. County Council, has never raised a finger to stop this form of "desecration of the Sabbath."

(Councillor) ERNEST COOTE.

## Obituary

JOHN PRITCHARD

On Thursday, May 26, the remains of John Pritchard were cremated at Golders Green. An early convert to Free-thought, he retained those opinions until the end, reading the *Freethinker* regularly, and admiring its work. A large number of relatives and friends attended at Golders Green, where a Secular Service was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

Every separate act of a religious ceremony becomes a fraud and a criminal satire, when performed by a cultivated man of the nineteenth century.—*Max Nordau*.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON

#### OUTDOOR

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, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Bbury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 6.30, Sunday, Mr. F. A. Ridley. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday. Mr. F. A. Ridley. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, A Lecture.

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

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Well Lane) : 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. D. Robinson.

BOLTON (Town Hall Steps) : 7.30, June 2, 3, 4. Wigan, 7.30, June 5 to 10 inclusive. Mr. George Whitehead will speak at these meetings.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound) : 8.0, Thursday, Mr. F. Smithies—"Evolution's Revolutions."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road) : 1.0, Thursday, Muriel Whitefield. Albion Street, Friday, 1.0, Muriel Whitefield and Arthur Copland.

GREENOCK BRANCH N.S.S. (Grey Place) : 1.0, Wednesday, Muriel Whitefield.

NELSON (Chapel Street) : 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

SABDEN : 7.0, Thursday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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