

# THE FREETHINKER

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Views and Opinions

Why Religion Lives

ONE feature in the culture and maintenance of the belief in religion was unconsciously stressed by the Rev. C. Ensor Walters, an ex-President of the Methodist Conference, in an address given in Hull. He said:—

When you pass through the country and see the brilliant cinema and the modern public house, the Methodist chapels are like the dilapidated citadels of a defeated army. It is idle for us to imagine that you can attract people in these days of beautiful buildings to some of our churches.

Now that, in the language of the film-folk, is saying a mouthful. It tells us more of a very powerful ingredient in the maintenance of religious belief than does a score of elaborate articles on the "unceasing search of man for God." I do not believe for a moment that Mr. Ensor Walters sensed the significance of his statement. If he had done so he would never have made it. But it is as difficult for a professional theologian to avoid saying something really sensible as it is for a professional politician always to avoid speaking the unadulterated truth.

Things gain in value by comparison. The value of a large house containing more rooms than any one family can conveniently or profitably use, is partly derived from the fact of the majority having to live in houses which, if only for the sake of comfort, they would like a little larger. Part of the importance of the great man comes from the physical form of the state in which he lives. A Rolls Royce owes some part of its attractiveness to the fact that thousands can never aspire to anything higher than an Austin seven or a Morris ten. Part of the attraction of golf is that it is an expensive and, therefore, an exclusive recreation. Even the game of darts only became fashionable when certain public characters adopted it. Nineteen-twentieths of the Majesty of a King is drawn from

his palaces and his exclusive pomp; and even the greatness of a Judge owes something to his wig and gown. If military officers dressed exactly as do privates, army discipline would be seriously weakened.

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Man and his Gods

Let it be granted that the origin of decorating special buildings or places had its beginnings in the desire to treat with respect the gods to whom these buildings and places were "sacred." In this matter, primitive humanity treated the gods exactly as a powerful chief was treated. Things that were good enough for ordinary men and women were not good enough for these exalted personages, whether they were actually gods or semi-deified human beings. A priesthood whether primitive or modern would be quick to see the advantage these "sacred" places gave to their order, and the more advanced the stage of culture, the greater the advantage gained in this way. The people would feel they were gaining protection, the priests would know they were gaining power. Quite obviously Mr. Ensor Walters did not see the implications of his complaint that people would not be attracted to the Churches where they compared unfavourably with buildings devoted to non-religious purposes.

Consider the influence of the larger and finer churches, where the surrounding architecture is of a poor quality, and where the homes of the people are little better than hovels. I remember visiting one of the oldest villages in Switzerland. The houses were miserably poor, raised on piles, with heaps of manure before their fronts. In the whole of the village there was not a single building that one would glance at twice, unless it were to wonder how people could live in them—although it is quite probable that if the denizens of these Swiss cottages visited some of our English slums they would marvel—with equal justification—how civilized people could dwell in them. But in the whole of this Swiss village there was only one building that caught the eye. This was the Church. It was built of stone. Inside there were pictures, statues of saints, and numerous other decorations. And one missed the universal dung-heap from the front entrance. As I stood looking at the doorway an Englishman, quite unknown to me, as I was to him, said, unasked, "Well, I think if I were the priest here I wouldn't hold that lesson up to the people." I saw what he meant, and merely remarked, "There is a great historical lesson in the contrast." I don't think he caught my meaning, for he said that, in his opinion the money would have been better spent in improving the conditions of the people.

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Dope

To those who could read it, that comparatively magnificent Swiss Roman Catholic Church stands as a

lesson in economics, in ethics and in religion. When man first made gods he believed in the products of his own fears and hopes. His first thought was for them, because his main thought was for himself, and everything for which he hoped depended upon them for its realization. The place in which the tribal gods lived were sacred, and surrounded with special honours so that man might continue in the favour of those in whom he believed. He fed the gods with sacrifices, and for all he gave expected a profitable return. But as his knowledge and mastery over natural conditions grew the inevitable tendency was to rely more upon himself, and less upon the gods. At this stage mankind had to reckon with the greatest of vested interests—a priesthood. In the name of the gods better and better housings for the gods were demanded. No gifts could be too great, no building too fine, and no priesthood too powerful. Even the person of the priest became as "sacred" as the god. The more marked became the separation of the "secular" from the religious, the greater became the need for the "sacred" place of the gods to overawe mankind. That perhaps is the reason why those modern sects that have aimed at simplicity in ritual and in their meeting-places have never made very much progress. Quakers and similar sects cannot hold their own with the elaborate ritual and costly buildings of the other Churches. The Roman Catholic cathedrals in Liverpool and London do far more to commend the Roman Catholic creed to strangers, and to retain those followers the Roman Church might otherwise lose, than any amount of argumentation. In such places the careless ones who listen and view are not looking at a fine building, they are impressed with its "sacred" character. They are not listening to a piece of music, the equal of which they might get elsewhere, they are listening to a religious service, and unconsciously are giving to God the credit due to the musician and architect. Their state of mind is hardly above the level of mankind when it looked upon all things as due to the tribal joss. The lesson of history does not trouble these people, the background which these fine buildings and this elaborate service should suggest to them does not exist. There is an old Greek story of a man who went into a temple and was shown the memorials to the gods given by those who had been saved from shipwreck. He asked, "Where are the memorials of those who were drowned?" So in Roman Catholic Cathedrals the crutches of those who have been cured of their lameness by God are exhibited to all. But there is no account kept of those who, in spite of their prayers, still use their crutches.

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#### The Christian Background

When a special pleader such as Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who when he is writing on behalf of his Church, can write as dishonest history as an Hitlerian historian, points to the Roman Church as providing all that the mediaeval world had in culture and refinement, I am inclined to accept—to some extent—the fact, without endorsing his interested interpretation of it. Properly looked at, the plea is on a level with one who instances the fact of a couple of million people in this country—one of the wealthiest in the world—being dependent upon unemployment pay and poor relief as indicative of the greatness of English Society. The picture of magnificent churches and cathedrals, of men and women devoting themselves to God, has its attractive side—to those who have not imagination enough to picture the background in which these things were set. They do not see the squalor, the mental and physical degradation in which these elaborate Churches grew. Nor is it merely the fact that the vast majority of people were living like cattle, and as

ignorant as cattle, when these magnificent "houses of God" were built, that is of the most serious significance. The chief fact is that the Church was largely instrumental in perpetuating the ignorance, the superstition, the degradation of the people. The Church preached contentment when it should have advocated revolution. To the poor it held up another life as a reason for putting up with the injustices of this one. From the rich it accepted tribute as compensation for the means by which riches have been acquired. If the money that the Christian Church has gained in this way had never been paid the grandeur of its buildings to-day would not be what they are. It is the background of these things that matter. And for those who can recreate this background, just as the anthropologist sees during a Church service the robe of the priest falling away and the paint and feathers of the medicine-man taking their place, as he sees the walls of a cathedral giving place to a forest clearing and the peal of the organ to the beat of the tom-tom, so the sociologist has his vision of the background of the stately church buildings of the world. He can hear the groans of the oppressed rising above the peal of the organ, see the gloomy hovels as a background to the Church, and the cloud of the incense smothered by the smoke of the *auto da fé*. One must have imagination inspired by knowledge to read history aright. Fortunate it is for all the Churches that few have this necessary qualification.

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#### Professional Competition

I think if the Rev. Ensor Walters had perceived the significance of his remarks, they would have remained unspoken. For the final deduction from his complaint is that to-day religion, if it is to live, must enter into competition with other forms of *entertainment*. I use that last word advisedly. No one may to-day successfully claim that religion can hold its own in the region of science. Religion has given up the pose of law-giver to science, and is satisfied if it can be proved that religion is not in conflict with it. Religion offers testimonials from scientists to its harmlessness with all the satisfaction that a quack publishes testimonials to the value of his wares. It has nothing to tell the world of science, it can only cry ditto to what its old enemy has to say. Neither has religion anything to offer in ethics and sociology. In these departments also, religion repeats what others say without any religious impulse or instruction. There is, in fact, not a single department of modern thought or modern life, in which religion is not strictly on the defensive. What then is left for it? I think Mr. Ensor Walters has said the right thing here—at least he has indicated the right thing. With ethics, science and sociology taken over by the non-religious side of life, what remains? The field of entertainment only. The Churches must be well-built, well ventilated, the services must neither agitate nor depress. They must provide in well-constructed buildings, entertainment pure and simple. Of course, it will not be called entertainment. The performance will be called a service, the concert party a choir, the performer "Reverend," the audience will be a congregation. But the Church must provide an entertainment, if it is to live. Mr. Ensor Walters is right. The Churches are to-day reduced to a competition with places of entertainment, if they are to make headway. And I see no reason why the Churches should not put on some quite entertaining performances. Why not? It is probable that the New Testament is only an old-time miracle-play posing as history. Now that the history is worn thin, there is nothing for it but to get back to the show business.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## A Fast

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast . . . let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar!"

("To be read every day in Lent," C. of E. Prayer Book.)

FROM Ash Wednesday onward, during the six weeks of the Lenten-fast the poor priests must have been, in the phraseology of Scott, of Bowden:—

"Begrutten sair and blessed wie tears!"

They had, of course, periods of rest. Sundays are never fast days. And as six Sundays deducted from six weeks (forty-two days) leave only thirty-six days, it was decreed, in the ninth century, that the four days before the first Sunday in Lent be added to make the fast forty days, to correspond with the miraculous fasts of Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 28), of Elias (1 Kings xix. 8), and of Christ (Matt. iv. 2).

Thus were the weeping priests granted six intervals in forty-six days.

The Jews, if judged from the observance of their festivals, were not a morbid people. Only the Day of Atonement, enjoined by the law of Moses, was a fast, (Four smaller ones were adopted later). The rest were all joyous observances.

The Pagan method of celebrating festivals appealed to people generally, and the attempts of the fathers of the Church to transform them—make them Christian—were from the first doomed to failure.

Little difference, in this country, was ever observed between fast, feast, or festival. All were spent as merry-making holidays:—

"Voice, fiddle, or flute  
No longer was mute."

Games of all sorts were played. Bear-baiting, cock-fighting, dancing, football, horse-racing, mystery plays, etc., were all resorted to. The Solar rite of the New Fire, stolen like all the other rites of the Church, found expression in Easter Bonfires. Feasts were always more common than Fasts, except the Feast of Reason which, unfortunately, was not even so common as fasts.

The eating of flesh (a survival of cannibalism) was abandoned after Collop Monday—the Monday before Shrove Tuesday. The Lenten-fast was spent in preparation for the resurrection of a God. This God was not only the second person in the Trinity, but also the first and third—"And yet there are not three Gods: but one God"—"not three incomprehensibles: but one incomprehensible"—"one altogether; not by confusion of substances: but by unity of Person." And yet for having miraculously given birth to this Trinity in Unity, Mary—the Mother of God—had to undergo the humiliation of "Purification."

Following this comes, in this case, a strange rite—the rite of circumcision! And we are asked to pray—"Almighty God who madest thy son to be circumcised!" Did that offending piece of flesh—against which the Almighty had not fixed his canon—thaw and resolve itself into a dew? What became of it? I have examined lists of relics, but have found no trace of it. And the last one I thought—at last?—but no! I give two or three items of the twenty-four given: (1) A finger of St. Andrew. (2) A finger of St. John the Baptist. (3) A tooth of our Lord. (4) A rib of our Lord, or as it is profanely styled, of the *verbum caro factum*, the word made flesh. (5) A feather of the Holy Ghost. (6) A feather of the Holy Ghost. (7) A feather of the angel Gabriel. (8) A phial of the sweat of St. Michael when he contended with Satan. This is an interesting and significant list. I perspired, like St. Michael, on reading it expecting every moment to find the Missing Link, but alas!

But, to our Collops! The Monday bearing this

Christian name was the last day of flesh eating before Lent. Fresh meat was cut into Collops, or steaks, for salting or hanging up till Lent was over. The day is still celebrated by egg and collop dinners.

The feasts of Bacchus were celebrated with similar rejoicings. Brand tells us that the boys of Eton, on Shrove Tuesday, wrote Bacchanalian verses, in all kinds of metre, which were affixed to the College Doors.

Shrove is an old Saxon word, of which Shrove is a corruption. Shrove Tuesday, therefore, meant Confession Tuesday. On this day Church bells were rung at 10 a.m., or earlier, in order that people might have a chance of getting absolution before indulging in the many sinful games played in its celebration. "Men ate and drank," says an old writer, "and abandoned themselves to every kind of sportive foolery as if resolved to have their fill of pleasure before they die."

The mid-day meal was devoted to pancakes, or fritters. Pasquil tells us (Pallinodia, 1634) that on this day every stomach:—

"— till it can hold no more  
Is fritter-filled as well as heart can wish  
And every man and maide doe take their turne,  
And tosse their pancakes up for fear they burne;  
And all the kitchen doth with laughter sound,  
To see the pancakes fall upon the ground."

Small wonder is it that this day is known as Pancake Tuesday!

A customary dinner on Shrove Tuesday, in Scotland, was crowdie—a mixture of meal and water—with all ranks of people, just as pancakes are in England. A ring was concealed in the crowdie, and the person to whom it fell was to be married before any of the other unmarried persons present.

In the Highlands, on Fasten's Tuesday—Shrove Tuesday; or Fasten's E'en—the evening before Lent—a ring was put in "brose" made of the "bree of a good fat jigget of mutton." This being consumed with the assistance of "The Lord's mercies" in liquid form! the *Bannich Junit*, or "sauty bannocks," were brought forth. The sauty bannocks contained a hidden charm, and the lucky person to whom it fell, if not already married, was to be married before next anniversary. The *Bannich Brauder* or "dreaming bannocks" followed. Each person got one. If these were laid under the pillow, sweethearts appeared in dreams.

On Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, ashes were made from the branches of trees consecrated on Palm Sunday, the year previous. They were cleaned, dried, and sifted, and after the priest had given the people absolution, he sprinkled the ashes with holy water, and perfumed them three times with incense. The people then knelt before him, and he made the sign of the cross on their heads with ashes.

The reading of "a commination"—a denouncing of God's anger and judgments against sinners—appointed to be used by the Church of England, was introduced at the Reformation as a substitute for the Catholic ceremony of sprinkling the head and making the sign of the cross with ashes.

But who can doubt the salutary effect of ashes, or curses, or both? All seems now to have gone "as merry as a marriage bell," until the fourth Sunday in Lent—Mothering Sunday. Servants and apprentices on this day gave presents to their parents, or as in some parts, visited their mother for a meal of fruit, or to receive cakes from her with her blessing.

Offerings were made to-day to *Mother Church*, is a Roman Catholic explanation!

At Seville—"a city famed for oranges and women"—boys paraded the streets, gaily dressed, making a din with rattles and trumpets and cries of "Saw down the old woman." At midnight they concluded their

orgy by sawing the old woman—Lent—in two.

The Sunday following is known in the North of England as Carlin Sunday. Entering a hotel, in North Yorkshire, on this day, fifty years ago, I was given a plate of Carlins—fried peas. Every customer, indoor or outdoor, was given a similar quantity. The landlord told me that he never cooked less for this ceremony than one bag (20 stone) of peas. The giving of beans, or peas on this day explains much. And its proper name, doubtless, is Carl, or Carlin Sunday.

On Palm Sunday, boughs, or branches were carried in procession in imitation of those strewed before Christ when he rode into Jerusalem. In this monkish procession the host was carried upon an ass, branches and flowers strewed upon the road, the richest cloths laid down, etc.

It was an old Roman Catholic custom, on Palm Sunday, to draw about the town a wooden ass, a figure representing Christ riding into Jerusalem, and the people strewing branches before it. This wooden ass was afterwards hired by boys, who made begging processions through streets and lanes.

Maundy Thursday sounds interesting. The Saxon word *mand*, which afterwards became *maund*, is a name for a basket, or any gift or offering contained in the basket. Shakespeare thus uses it:—

"A thousand favours from her *mand* she drew."

Good Friday is famous chiefly for its Hot Cross Buns. Some very superstitious people believe that if one is hung up for twelve months, until it is replaced by a fresh one the house will not take fire.

It is also believed that the straight stripe down the shoulders of the ass, intersected by the long one from the tail, is a cross of honour conferred upon it by Christ.

Holy Saturday was spent in cooking flesh and fowl, making savoury dishes, baking cakes, etc., in preparation for the midnight feast.

That, after a few hours eating, drinking and carousing, only one Sun was seen dancing on Easter Day seems very remarkable!

Easter is a historic event regulated by the moon, believed in by *luna-tics*! Shakespeare, had he been asked if he believed in it, would have replied by asking a pertinent question:—

"Thinkest thou I have no more wit than a Christian?"

The Resurrection festival has not even a distinctively Christian name. "It has an ancient and fish-like smell."

The sermons preached in the sixteenth century were full of ludicrous stories and jokes designed to provoke Easter-laughter.

In conclusion, the following little story will, I hope, illuminate the foregoing:—

After a lesson on Christ's forty days fast, a teacher asked her scholars various questions in trying to find whither they had profitted by her talk or not. For instance:—

*Teacher*: Why did Christ go into the wilderness for forty days?

*Pupil*: 'To laugh!

GEORGE WALLACE.

---

When hot for certainties in this our strife.  
Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul

*Meredith.*

---

Sunday School Teacher: "And what does your father say before you commence your meal?"

Small boy: "Steady on with the butter, you kids, it's one and four a pound."

## Boy Scouts—Religious Policy

WHILE staying at a Norfolk sea-side resort, I was canvassed by the Boy Scout Movement to buy a copy of the local *Docking and District* official *Scout News*. The cover gives the Editor's name and address—the Rev. S. L. Davis of Hunstanton.

The first item in this local *Scout News* to attract my attention was a paragraph flattering a rather shabby "saint," the Butcher called St. George:—

The Patron Saint of Scouting is St. George of England. He is the pattern and the ideal of the Scout. He who exemplifies for us the spirit of Christian chivalry and adventure: of loyalty even unto death to the Faith of our Fathers. Every Scout sets out to live worthy of the Patron, St. George.

In the next column on the same page I read the following in an article headed "Religious Policy:—

Every Scout must belong to some religious denomination and must attend its services.

In a "Controlled" Group the boys are members of one particular form of religion and the Controlling Authority will arrange for their religious observance and instruction.

In an "Open" Group the boys may be members of various denominations. Their Scoutmaster will see that they attend the services of their own particular place of worship.

Combined Church Parades of Groups of different denominations are not allowed.

Every Scouter realizes that, beneath the ebb and flow of things temporal, stands the Eternal Reality.

It is only upon this Rock of the Eternal Reality that Scouting can stand.

So every Scout knows that the fundamental basis of his Scout life is his very first Promise: "To do my Duty to God." The first duty of creature to Creator is to render the homage of our Worship.

It struck me that I had seen recently an appeal for funds to assist this widespread movement. Also that the Appeal I had seen did not conspicuously advertise that "Every Scout MUST attend" religious services. Then again there are seen in every newspaper allusions to the work of the Scouts, but where can you find a reference to this compulsory piety? Pictures of some aspects of Scout Duty are seen constantly—but one misses photographs of paragraph Three: "The Scoutmaster will see THAT BOYS ATTEND." And this "contribution to physical culture" is not referred to in the *Times* from which the following "unsolicited testimonial" is quoted on the cover of the "Appeal" called: *The Future of Scouting Is Under a Cloud*:—

The greatest single contribution to physical culture which the modern world has seen is the Scout training.

Thinking that possibly the Rev. Mr. Davis might have been exaggerating the importance of the trade or business or profession he himself belongs to, I wrote the Boy Scout Headquarters for their official literature. I received a generous supply, including the Appeal above referred to, which is quite silent as to this compulsory religion.

But the *Policy, Organization and Rules* volume of the B.S.A. (Incorporated by Royal Charter) appears to confirm Mr. Davis's almost incredible frankness. He is apparently supported by the Section headed "Religious Policy," which, however, is not exactly as definite in phrasing as Mr. Davis's. It says:—

It is expected that every Scout shall belong to some religious denomination and attend its services.

We imagine that if Mr. Davis or other clerical boss says he expects a Boy Scout to do something, there is little option left to the Scout. Indeed, a new rule

was added to the Book of Rules as lately as 1937. It says:—

Rule 77. *Add new section:* (ii) Where the Controlling Authority of a Church Group expresses himself dissatisfied with a Scouter of the Group, the L.A. and D.C. shall give effect to his views, provided that the objection is based solely on the ground that the Scouter is not fulfilling his religious duties either by his example or precept. Where, however, any other question, such as moral character or technical efficiency is involved, the matter must be dealt with in accordance with Rules 76 (3) and 88.

From this it would appear that the boss of a Church group of Boy Scouts can expel from the ranks—whatever the General Rules may stipulate—any young ranker who “is not fulfilling his religious duties.”

There are over three million Boy Scouts, according to the latest Report. It is not wonderful that the Churches should be eager to exploit these bands of youths at a time when Sunday Schools and Churches are gradually losing the support of all but a small percentage of the people. The B.S. Association Balance Sheet deals with over a quarter of a million pounds—the excess of expenditure over income being shown as £7,117 8s. 3d. for the year 1937. In this recent Appeal to the public it states that “a deficiency of £22,500 has had to be met in three years,” and it asks for “at least £25,000 a year” “to provide an income for the future.” Is the money coming from churches which are already bewailing their own financial hopelessness? Or is the Boy Scout Movement simply playing the Churches’ game—letting in religion (in a compulsory form too) on the supposition that it is for what the *Times* calls a “physical culture” movement?

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

## Loisy and the Jesus Problem

Of the many theologians of our day who have occupied themselves with the question of Christian origins, the most famous, perhaps, is the ex-abbé Loisy. Though now over eighty years of age, his mind seems as vigorous as ever, and he is still a great force to be reckoned with, not only by orthodox Christians, but by those Freethinkers who do not agree that the battle against religion and superstition is won.

Loisy, born in 1857, became a priest in 1879, and was soon pre-occupied with the problems set by biblical criticism. In this he was first influenced by the Abbé P. Martin, but soon struck a line of his own. He wrote two books on the Canon of the Old and the New Testament, and then another dealing with the Inspiration of the Bible. This work got him immediately into trouble with his Church so he tried writing under pseudonyms. However, a new book, differing from the position taken up by Renan, entitled *The Religion of Israel*, was censured by his Cardinal and condemned by the Pope. So were other works; and Loisy was faced with the alternative of either submitting to the Church as many other religious thinkers had done before him, or working out his own salvation by the publication of his views on the Bible and Christian tradition irrespective of consequences. It is to the credit of Loisy that eventually he defied the Church, and was, as he expected, duly excommunicated. This penalty, which in the Middle Ages was received with horror, but nowadays merely provokes laughter, enabled Loisy to accomplish his life work in the shape of valuable commentaries of the Gospels. They are valuable because his keen analysis led him, in spite of a strongly religious predilection, finally to

give them up as divinely inspired records of the Son of God, and to recognize them as myths and legends for the most part, written up and gradually added to as the needs of the early Church required. Loisy’s position is what is known as the “modernist” one, though the term “modernism” is very elastic, and seems to require a new definition with every new modernist.

Loisy, like Renan, was unable to go the whole length, and to throw in his lot with militant Freethought. Although his work on the Gospels compelled him to see that they were neither histories nor biographies he still clung to Jesus as some kind of “divine” man. He would never admit that there was any foundation for the theory that Jesus never lived at all, that he was a sort of epitome of pagan gods evolved from Greek and Jewish thought with a background of mysticism and allegory. He would, it is true, admit allegory for some of the stories of Jesus; he would admit symbolism and myth for other parts of the Gospels; but he strained every nerve to preserve some sort of historicity for the general outline of the life of Jesus Christ as a person, who lived and suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Loisy spent years of study on the trial and crucifixion of the central figure of Christianity. Indeed, he was, in a sense, forced to do so because he recognized that once it is admitted that these events cannot be proven one might as well give up the whole thesis. If Jesus was never tried, if that pitiful event, the Crucifixion, never happened, there was absolutely no ground to believe anything in the Gospels. By hook or by crook one must preserve these things, and Loisy worked desperately hard to prove they must have happened. There must have been a “Personality” of some sort to account for the birth and spread of Christianity—that was Loisy’s position, and it is to-day. Yet it is only fair to add that the ex-abbé had to abandon many Gospel stories as quite unhistorical. He has been obliged to do this in the teeth of his own opposition to those who deny any actuality to Jesus, with the result that he has few friends in either camp.

Loisy does not, of course, believe in the Virgin Birth, nor the Resurrection, nor in the miracles. Jesus was for him (as Dr. Inge notes) an “apocalypticist who believed that divine intervention was coming in the very near future to terminate the existing world-order and inaugurate a ‘kingdom of God.’” If Jesus lived at all, this description is as good as any other. The worst of all these attempts to describe the “real” Jesus is that often they merely reflect the writer’s own inhibitions or prejudices; and Loisy, quite like Renan, is no exception to the rule. The only Jesus we know anything about is the one described in the Gospels, and he is certainly a God. Directly one attempts to do away with some of the scenes described in the only accounts we have of this God, one might as well throw up the sponge, for there are no other materials from which to form a biography. What the historian now has to do is to account for the coming of Christianity, and for the fact that with it, we have such a full-length figure of a deity like Jesus Christ.

Readers of Freethought literature are aware, of course, of the many attempts that have been made to get at the solution of the problem by our own writers; and it may be that they all arrived at some truth, though possibly not at the whole truth. Dupuis and Robert Taylor pinned their faith on the Sun-myth; Robertson on some sort of a mystery drama for the Trial, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. Drews felt that there was a pre-Christian Jesus, as did W. B. Smith; and they all agree that myths and legends and allegories have been added to the stories, together with mystic symbolism.

Loisy is in full agreement with some of the theories put forward; but he insists on the fact that behind everything was a real man; and in this he has come up against the work of Dr. P. L. Couchoud, the author of a book published some years ago entitled *The Enigma of Jesus*. Couchoud has now written another work entitled *Jesus the God Made Man*, and it has provoked Loisy to come out again to do battle for his own ideas. *Did Jesus Exist?* is the title of his criticism of Dr. Couchoud, and from the part published in the April number of the *Hibbert Journal*, one can see that the old theologian has lost little of his keen analysis and criticism. Loisy has to fight for a lifetime of work, and he realizes, in spite of the pool-pooling of so many of our theologians, that there is a pretty strong case against those who assert that there *must* have been a Jesus. The arguments of Couchoud and his precursors have to be met, not ignored.

It is quite impossible to reduce Loisy's detailed analysis of many of Couchoud's positions to a paragraph or two. The old theologian knows his Church history too well, is too familiar with Bible texts and their meanings, to permit Couchoud to make statements which can be contested, or are dubious deductions which may be only matters of opinion. The debate is to go on, and I hope in a future number of this journal, to deal more in detail with some of the arguments used on both sides. The problem is and always has been, a fascinating one; and it is all the more interesting when the disputants have reputations like Loisy and Couchoud.

H. CUTNER.

### The Frustration of Nature

RECENTLY, we had in Australia a Catholic Prelate, Dr. Downey—from England, I think—who was sent here on a sort of proselytising, propagandist mission. Members of his own church, it would appear, were in sore need of a little stirring-up and at the same time the opportunity could not be missed of telling the rest of the world how straight it was heading for hell-fire damnation. All this did Dr. Downey do with the fervour and fire of the raving zealot.

Among those from whom the visitor's fulminations brought a protest was "Zadig," the pen-name of Wallace Nelson, who in his earlier years did a lot of Freethought platform work in Britain; who, later, was very prominent in the same capacity in Australia; and who—for a long time now, following a period as a member of the Legislative Assembly in West Australia—has been a Sydney (N.S.W.) pressman.

"Writer-author" would, perhaps, be the more correct designation.

Among the books Mr. Nelson has written is one in reply to the aspersion cast upon Australia by John Foster Fraser—a work that was so highly esteemed by the West Australian Government that it sponsored the placing of copies in the libraries throughout Britain. Highly distinguished, too, are Mr. Nelson's press contributions, particularly the page he conducts from week to week—under the heading, "After Business Hours"—in the publication with which he is immediately connected. But in this sphere, of course, he has to exercise considerable restraint as regards his rationalistic views.

All this is in the way of a preliminary to the page Mr. Nelson has just devoted to Dr. Downey.

He does not mention the cleric by name. Dr. Downey is referred to as "a lecturer," and "the lecturer." This had to be done, it is safe to assume, in deference to the paper in which the article appeared, and the public for whom he was writing. Still, there must be very few of Mr. Nelson's readers who failed to realize the identity against whom the remarks were directed.

Let us have, then, a few examples of Mr. Nelson's dissections and exposures of Dr. Downey's fatuous, fanatical outpourings.

"The lecturer," writes Mr. Nelson, "is reported to have said, 'In their heart of hearts every man and woman knows that artificial birth-control is a frustration of Nature.' That is quite true. But what else has man been doing from the days of savagery to the present hour but frustrating?"

"Does he not frustrate Nature when he has his appendix removed? Does he not frustrate Nature when he goes to the dentist to have his decayed teeth extracted? In doing this, does he not kill bacteria instead of permitting bacteria to kill him?"

"Does not the lecturer himself frustrate Nature when he goes to the barber to have his whiskers shaved off his face and his hair cropped short to his head? If he did not frustrate Nature, would he not run the risk of having whiskers long enough to reach his knees, and hair on his head hanging in great masses down his back?"

"Do we not all wear clothes in order to frustrate Nature, and prevent her from destroying us by her biting winds and rain and sleet and snow? What is the chief object of all modern science? Is it not to prevent Nature from mastering man by enabling man to master Nature?"

Mr. Nelson, it will be conceded, very convincingly justifies what Dr. Downey deplores—the frustration of Nature. Need it be added that, in doing so, he frustrates Dr. Downey himself; or, in other words, pulverises him to dust? But Mr. Nelson has a lot more to say.

"I know of no nobler example of the frustration of Nature than birth-control," he writes, "for it is capable of doing more to make the homes of the poor wholesome and happy than anything yet suggested by the wit of man. Imagine a working man, earning about seventy shillings a week, having a large family, say a family of ten children. How in the name of humanity can such a home be anything but a tragedy?"

Mr. Nelson pictures, in detail, the conditions of life for a family thus circumstanced.

"Every man," he then proceeds, "has a right to his opinion. But I would rather frustrate Nature ten million times over than permit, if I could prevent it, a single human being from being doomed to such a fate. To call such a place a home is an outrage. To call it hell would be almost an insult—to hell."

A direct, topical touch is introduced by Mr. Nelson in a reference to Dame Enid Lyons, wife of Australia's Federal Prime Minister—J. A. Lyons. Dame Enid, he points out, "has been telling the world how happy she has been—and is—with her twelve children. She is certainly a fine woman; but surely she must know that what has been a joy to her would have been a tragedy to thousands of others. Imagine what the consequences would be if every mother, however weak in constitution and however poor, had a family of twelve children."

Mr. Nelson adduces statistics, particularly in regard to England and Wales, showing that a lessened birth-rate has meant, proportionately, a greatly reduced death-rate.

"Surely," he continues, "it is more humane to limit population by having small families, likely to reach maturity, than by having large families, most of whom are likely to perish in infancy or in youth. Large families, especially in the case of the poor, spell poverty, misery, and death. The Lyons family is a rare exception. In less than twenty-five years, the inmates of the home increased from two to fourteen—a sevenfold increase. If the population of Great Britain increased at the same rate, in twenty-five years it would number 315,000,000, and in fifty years 2,265,000,000—far more than the population of the whole earth. It is quite clear, therefore, that—except in special cases—large families would be a menace to the welfare of the world."

Finally, a well-merited rebuke is administered by Mr. Nelson that will be very heartily endorsed—that is, outside Dr. Downey, the Lyons family, and others of the Catholic faith who reject birth-control. Reject, did I say? Pretend is the correct word. For the plain fact is that there are endless numbers of that persuasion who, while hypocritically protesting, unflinchingly practise it.

Mr. Nelson quotes Dame Enid Lyons as saying that "the purpose of marriage is to bring children into the world."

"In my opinion," he concludes, "the purpose of marriage is higher and holier than that. Its purpose is—ought to be—to bring healthy children into the world."

and to so love, house, feed, clothe, and educate them that they may become worthy citizens of a worthy nation, sound in body and in soul; and, in order to realize that noble ideal, the number of children brought into the world should be determined by the parents' capacity to discharge to the full that sacred trust—that supreme duty."

FRANK HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

### Acid Drops

The Parochial Church Council of Cheltenham is disturbed on account of the play of "Jonah and the Whale," which is being performed outside Tewkesbury Abbey. The Council thinks the performance is "in the nature of blasphemy and is a hindrance to the furtherance of religion in this land." The Vicar of Tewkesbury, the Rev. E. P. Gough, replies:—

They have accused us of blasphemy because we have not hesitated to use the prologue of the play in which it is said that God laughed. . . . If it be said that God cursed or was angry there would have been no complaint.

There is a great deal in what the Vicar says, but the implications are different from what he intends. Of course there is no reason why God should not laugh occasionally. If he has any sense of humour he must smile hugely at the antics of some of his followers. And it is quite true that the Pagans did not hesitate to make some of their gods laugh, some of them were jolly looking fellows who looked as if they enjoyed every hour of existence. If the Pagans had gods of gloom they had gods of brightness and laughter, and if one compares the gods with which the Pagan religions furnished the world with those the Christian world gave us, one may realize how much—from the god point of view—the world lost in changing one set of gods for the other.

But the Vicar does make a point, he really says more than he imagines he says. Of course, no good Christian would be surprised to hear that his god cursed. He was always at it. It was one of his specialities. Look at the plagues of Egypt! Was there ever a finer series of curses than these? Or the comprehensive manner in which God cursed all women in child-birth because Eve ate the forbidden fruit! And what fine cursing was done in the Bible under God's direct inspiration! Why there is as much space taken up cursing in the Bible as there is with any other subject. And the Church followed suit with its official curses levelled against heretics and unbelievers. Someone might profitably compile a list of all the curses in the Bible.

But in one thing we are not quite at one with the Vicar. He says he believes that God has a sense of humour. Of direct evidence in the Bible I cannot recall any. It is true that God constructed a number of fantastic forms of life, and so soon as he made one animal with the means of its getting a living he manufactured another form that was calculated to end the other one's existence. He created a specific disease in one part of the world, and then planted a cure for it in another part that man was not able to discover for hundreds of thousands of years. But this kind of thing argues freakishness, or an unrestrained hooliganism, rather than humour. I admit that by implication one might argue that the fact of God "calling" to his service many of the parsons he does call may have been done in order to give him, and the more intellectual of his followers, something to laugh at. But as for him indulging in laughter himself—well, that is very much open to question. And when God looks at the kind of people who have gone to hell, and the kind that have come to him in heaven, it looks as though he is more likely to cry than to laugh. That spectacle would certainly give him a good reason for cursing long and deep.

The public has a very short memory, but the row that went on a few years ago in connexion with Russian pro-

paganda in England can hardly have been forgotten. It will be remembered that the Government refused to enter into diplomatic relations with Russia until the propaganda was abandoned. It is the more curious that the very active propaganda going on in this country from both Germany and Italy should have passed unnoticed in the general press. So we read with the greater interest the following from the *Church Times*, not at all a "Red" journal, on the question:—

We have been for years familiar with the efforts of German agents to affect the policy of independent newspapers. Sometimes the efforts—they include threats and the suggestion of bribes—are crude; sometimes they are ungracious. But our information is that the organization in England is widespread and heavily subsidized. Even more active is the pro-Franco propaganda, and, on the whole, more successful. Here our experience has been extensive and startling, and we have accumulated a mass of information which it is impossible to publish. Suffice it to say that there is to-day a persistent attempt, by one way or another, to stifle English criticism of foreign affairs, which would have been thought impossible even five years ago.

We have no objection to propaganda at all, but the silence of the press in this matter where Germany and Italy are concerned, and their vociferous denunciation of foreign propaganda where these two Fascist countries are in question, causes one to wander.

The following is taken from the *Melbourne Herald* of June 8, just to hand. It gives an account of the visit of one of Hitler's representatives to Australia. When Count von Luckner reached Sydney he was asked whether he would receive a deputation carrying an address of welcome. The Count willingly agreed, is it not part of the policy of Germany to cultivate friendship with Lord Halifax, Mr. Chamberlain, and the rest of the British Empire? So the deputation came on board and read the following address to the Count. The address was hardly commenced when the Count protested, but it was read through to the end. Here it is:—

In the name of the tens of thousands of political prisoners incarcerated in German concentration camps, in the name of tens of thousands of victims who have been treated with unspeakable barbarity in Brown Houses, in the name of tens of thousands of prisoners victimised by German sadists, while "attempting to escape," in the name of the flower of German literature, science and the arts who have been driven from their Fatherland into honourable exile, in the name of true German nobility who have been denaturalized by Nazi policy, in the name of the tens of thousands of Pacifists, Socialists, Liberals and Jews who have been condemned to slow economic strangulation in Germany, in the name of the stricken soul of Germany which lies bleeding and prostrate, in the name of the true Germany which ultimately will sweep away the gang who misgoverns the Third Reich, the School of Modern Writers welcomes you to our free and democratic Australia.

For and on behalf of the School of Modern Writers, in the year of our civilization 1938. (Signed)—H. Collingwood.

The deputation was not made up of Jews and Communists. It was intended to enlighten the Count, and we think if the German *people* really understood what decent people all over the world think of the Hitler gang, and how they are dragging the very name of Germany in the mud, the owners of the new Slave State might find things beginning to run very hard for them. Count von Luckner says he was surprised, and it was a dirty trick to work on him. We imagine that hearing anything approaching truth would cause surprise to a good Nazi. But Count von Luckner can hardly be ignorant of the crimes of the Nazi Government.

We hardly expect to get this kind of thing from the *Sunday Express*:—

Then there was the Archdeacon of Cardigan, who said:—

"If golf is to be allowed, then football, cricket, tennis, bowls, and darts must also be sanctioned, and Sunday in Aberystwyth will outdo Paris and give points to Madrid."

But perhaps the best remark was made by the Rev. C. N. Ensor Walters at Hull.

Complaining of the new flats which have replaced the old slum dwellings, he said:—

"In the old slums the people were homely, whereas these barracks lack human touch. In some of these flats you cannot get at the people, and we are finding it very difficult to get them into the churches."

If he had said "hound them into the churches" the observation would have been nearer the truth. He would also have avoided the repetition of the word "get."

As it is, we must be thankful for the phrase "get at the people."

One of the many reasons why the poor are indispensable to all so-called civilizations is that they are defenceless. They can be used for political purposes, they are the excuse for charitable organizations, and they can be driven into empty churches because refusal sometimes means that Little Willie won't get a new pair of boots at the next share out from the profits of the church bazaar.

This is the first time it has been admitted that the clergy has played the part of ferret, burrowing down the slums and chasing the inhabitants into their darkest corners.

Of course we have been pointing out this kind of outrage on human reason and decency for many, many years, but to find it in the columns of a paper issued on Sunday, and on which the presiding spirit is "Jimmy" Douglas, is almost too much for our sensitive nerves. Next thing we shall get will be an invitation to the editor of the *Freethinker* to supply a column of paragraphs on current religion. We think it would be a "draw," and it would be supplied free.

Professor Frederick Wolff Ogilvie, new Director-General of the B.B.C., is, like his predecessor, Sir John Reith, a Scottish Presbyterian. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who yields strong influence over the Corporation's activities, is another Scot. It is about time that the poor Sassepach started a Home Rule Party of England. Still, we really have no objection to the canny lads from over the Border taking all they can get, if only they wouldn't import their Kirk habits with them. We shall be having a continuance of the preferential treatment of religion on the wireless—unless Professor Ogilvie's cultural knowledge and attainments are higher than his attachment to superstition: for we read that he is "a regular church-goer."

Reviewing *Without Apology*, a book by Lord Alfred Douglas, Mr. Howard Spring, in the *Evening Standard*, questions the author's "taste that rolls a dead man in the mud." The man referred to was T. W. H. Crosland: and Douglas drags up the story of Crosland's drinking, his fecklessness, his unthoughtfulness to his wife, and his badgering by bailiffs asserting that "He was not a good chap. He was treacherous and utterly unscrupulous, and if ever there was a man who deserved the appellation of a 'fair-weather friend,' it was he." After which, this kindly author writes: "I have forgiven him, of course, because as a Christian and a Catholic I am bound to do that." Which "turned my stomach," comments the reviewer; "Coming just where it does, that phrase seems to me to stink of formal phylacteries." Of himself Douglas writes in the manner of an insufferable prig. "Christian and Catholic" all through, evidently.

We trust the Government have taken due note of the Roman Catholic pilgrimage to Canterbury, and will consequently prepare to cancel orders for armaments. Four thousand Catholics have set Saints Thomas of Canterbury, John Fisher, and Thomas More to work in heaven for peace on earth. At least, that was the purpose of their service of intercession, the other day. If peace doesn't ensue there is always St. Midas to comfort the organizers of these futile affairs.

The recent Methodist Conference condemned the 1936 Education Act because it "unfairly subsidises sectarian education." Dr. Scott Lidgett explained that the Conference Resolution

aimed at ending the dual system of education. The Methodist Church and the Free Churches generally were committed to an educational policy which desired to end the dual system. They could end the dual system within a very short time, were it not for the tremendous political stumbling-block of the Roman Catholic Church. They would be willing to end the dual system provided that no purely secular system should be established, but the claims and needs of Biblical and religious education should be safeguarded in the arrangement by which the dual system should come to an end.

In other words an acknowledged injustice can be remedied by increasing the number of the "Receivers" who share the unjustly acquired "swag." But this would not "end the dual system." That can only be ended by the proposals of the Secular Education League.

We heard a pale young curate at the seaside recently, taking a busman's holiday. He was preaching as if holiday-makers regarded sermons as part of the nigger-minstrel and other entertainments. He pointed to the incoming tide which was rapidly causing the collapse of many sand-castles. He quoted a well-known text about the superiority of a rocky foundation over a sandy one. "And that rock," said the curate, "is God Himself." He omitted to say that a million prayers to "Almighty" God would not stay the ravages of the sea. He ignored the fact that the Sea and the Sand are as much God as the Rock, and that even Rocks can be "blasted" by man if man desires it.

In the *Evening Standard*, Mr. Stephen Williams pays deserved tribute to Flora Robson and Edith Evans for their admirable standard of speech on the stage. Mr. Williams has very little praise for anybody else on the stage, in the pulpit, or even in the street. We agree too much with the writer to cavil at his sweeping condemnation. But we dare to write in defence of the poor clergy. Mr. Williams says:—

I seldom go to church. But whenever I do I am disgusted to hear the noblest words in the language enunciated by a mouthing, bleating enunciation.

"The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. . . ."

The "noblest words in the language," indeed! They are far from anything approaching nobility of speech. The clergy may be as bad as Mr. Williams thinks. But the Shakespearean actor is far more to blame, for he has an opportunity of uttering greatly written English, compared with which Mr. Williams's quotation is the merest superficiality. Mr. Williams is to be commiserated on his proof-reader's errors. A comma misplaced in his "noblest words," and, still worse, Wordsworth is misquoted—he certainly did not say "we are spring!"

### Fifty Years Ago

THE Rev. Robert Collyer writes very amicably from the Unitarian standpoint in the *North American Review*. He deals with a very important fact, which Shelley noticed long ago in Italy, where he found religion was often a stimulus but never a restraint. Dr. Collyer shows that the Bible itself is invoked to justify or condemn all sorts of causes.

The conclusion of his article is really striking. Some years ago he was riding across the prairies with a missionary fresh from Egypt, and asked him, "Tell me truly who was the very best man you found there?" The missionary answered, "My Mohammedan teacher of Arabic, he was the noblest and best man I found in the valley." Dr. Collyer asked, "Then what will become of him if he dies in that faith." The answer was prompt and unhesitating—"He will go to hell, sir, because he would not accept the terms of salvation found in the Bible." Dr. Collyer calls this a mean and vile dogma.

*The Freethinker*, August 5, 1888.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

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**E. EASTWOOD.**—There are enough books written tracing the origin of the idea of God to fill a good sized public hall. There also are many thousands of pamphlets written on the same subject. The Pioneer Press will be pleased to send you literature dealing with the subject.

**C.W.**—We saw the article, but had no time for comment this week.

**E. THOMPSON.**—Mr. Cohen has dealt with the matter, as you will see. Thanks for the interest you show and the offer made, but for the present at least we prefer to take the will for the deed.

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## Sugar Plums

We print on another page the full programme for the Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers. There will be reserved seats for the Public Demonstration on the Sunday, which will be held in the Scala Theatre, and we advise those who wish to avail themselves of this privilege to write at once, either to the Secretary of the Congress at 5 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C., or to the N.S.S. Offices, 68 Farringdon Street. The same advice holds good for members who wish to secure tickets for the business meetings of the Congress. These will be held in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

We must apologize for the delay in getting out the new edition of Mr. Cohen's *Materialism Re-stated*. The delay has been owing to the author having given his work a thorough over-hauling, and he has added two quite new chapters in addition to enlarging the old ones. Other work compelled putting the book on one side, but he has spent the holiday week hard at work, and now it will be printed and published as soon as possible. There are many demands for it. The price will be 3s. 6d.

The General Secretary of the N.S.S. will be on vacation from August 6th until the 20th, and during that time only matters of pressing importance will be dealt with.

A friend writes us from the West of England saying how useful he has found our edition of Paine's *Age of*

## SPECIAL

THERE is nothing wonderful in living to be seventy years of age. Many thousands have accomplished the feat, and a large number who have done so have gained increased discredit with every revolution of the earth round the sun.

But some of my friends in the country have a different opinion, and I have received several letters of late, making enquiries about a proposed celebration, on September 1, the seventieth anniversary of my birth.

So I take this opportunity of saying definitely that, apart from the reference a little while ago, I know nothing whatever of the matter, and have no desire to know anything about it. I fully appreciate the kind intentions that have animated those who think that to reach seventy years of age is a great accomplishment, but wish to say, very emphatically, that I desire the matter to rest there, and am decidedly opposed to anything further. I shall remember the kindly thoughts that inspired the suggestion when the date comes round. Meanwhile the matter will rest where it is.

But if anyone, or a number of anyones, wish to celebrate September first—partridge shooting commences on that day—I will suggest a way in which they may do so. Let them mark my birthday by a determined effort to bring new subscribers to the *Freethinker*. That is a way in which the whole of the Freethought cause in this country will benefit. Besides, conditions are not getting easier. The cost of production—composition, printing, paper, wages, are much higher than they were, and the income from the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust investments, owing to cheap money, is not what it was. Making ends meet gives me far more to worry over than anything else, and an increase in sales would be the best kind of birthday gift I could have.

If my friends put their backs into this job, well, next year I have an anniversary of which I shall really be proud, and others may then celebrate it as they please. For I shall then have completed fifty years work in the Freethought movement. That is really a record for continuous service on the Freethought platform. And I am very proud of it. As also I am of the warmth of friendship displayed by the proposal I am definitely "turning down."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

*Reason* in introducing Freethought literature to "chance" acquaintances. We pass on the suggestion to others, with an expression of the opinion that no better value for money and effort has ever been issued than this 250 well-printed pages for the price of fourpence. Bought for the express purpose of free distribution, it will, from a propagandist point yield good results.

Shades of Jerome K. Jerome! Newnes have recently brought out a new publication entitled *To-day*, which in matter and gaudy "make-up," would have made old Grub Street and Fleet Street squirm. A re-hash of the royal princesses' activity is given display in the issue of the 10th inst, and the Teddington "Lady Godiva" episode is an excuse for depicting the semi-nude attractions of the 13-years-old schoolgirl who played the part. But a perfect gem of humbug appears in a special page by "The Editor," decrying the gossip of American and French journalists concerning the future husband of

Princess Elizabeth. Under a cloak of righteous indignation, "The Editor" takes full advantage of the opportunity to repeat what he condemns, even to mentioning the names of certain titled grown-up MEN—whose portraits are reproduced—as the prospective candidates for the CHILD'S choice! Vulgarity could sink no lower, although we know such topics to be the subject of a section of "society" and many clubs.

The education question in Liverpool is as far from settled as ever. It will be remembered that the Conservative Council refused to allow any grants for the upkeep of purely Roman Catholic schools, and it now transpires that the Board of Education has decided to withhold £180,000 a year from its efficiency grant to the Council for Elementary Education. The Board is not satisfied that the provisions of the 1936 Education Act have been properly tackled. The immediate result is that there is a deadlock on the question, and though the Roman Catholic leader in the Council wants a "round-table" conference, this has so far not taken place. The whole position is a complete muddle, and justifies in every way the cry for the absolute secularization of State education. It is the only fair policy, and one to which the country must assent some day.

Worthing is certainly asking for it, that is, asking for people with sense—and a sense of humour—to shun it these holidays as if it were a genuine devil, and not the theatrical hocus-pocus of Christianity. Its Town Council demand that on Sundays there should be no bathing, bands, buses, car parks, beach chairs, and presumably, no laughter, or joy of any kind; only one long, ghastly, Puritanical gloom so that God's day may be properly kept. We hope it will; for only by such a pious example will it be shown how Sunday used to be kept by our forefathers, and why secular light and sunshine has, in most places, banished the Christian Sunday for ever. A taste of the old horror would not be a bad thing; it might lead citizens to get rid of two evils—the real old Sabbath where it still exists, and the funny, but far from harmless, Sabbarians.

## Economic and Social Patterns in Early Christianity

(Concluded from page 486)

MONEY-VALUES were what "crucified the poor to the world." Therefore the hope of release used the money-idiom to express itself. What was wanted was not incidental sums which would enable one or two or a hundred slaves to be redeemed. What was wanted was a "purchase" which would buy out the whole system of oppression; a payment which could not only destroy the whole system, but also make a return to it impossible. The peasant revolts, the attempt to return to clan-Communism (as in Sparta), had proved of no avail; nothing happened except the creation of new bases of commercialism. All the *Leges Agrariae* had further proved the sad fact that there was no way of sharing out the land so that it did not at once fall into the hand of the monopolists again. Yet the hope remained, seeking an imagery of satisfaction in a world which utterly mocked and denied the hope. Hence the emotion that help could come only from someone entirely outside the scheme of constituted things, someone entirely innocent, entirely untouched by the system. Take the following exposition by Chrysostom of the way that the Devil, the Prince of This World, is cast out:—

A man demands payment from his debtors, beats them and sends them to prison. He treats with the same insolence one who owes him nothing. The latter will take vengeance both for himself and the others too. This Christ does. He revenges what he

has suffered at the devil's hands, and with himself he revenges us too.

But that none may say, "How will he (the devil) be cast out, if he overcomes thee?" Christ adds, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." How can he be overcome, who draws others unto him? <sup>34</sup>

Only the man *entirely* free from debt can repudiate the system which attacks him as well as the others. (Note how the creditor is considered without question a vile enemy, a devil.) But how is this entire freedom from debt to prove itself? By the drawing of all men together, by human unity redeemed from the money-nexus.

Baffled of all earthly hope, the hope of release turns to the death-image. Death redeems the "soul" from the body's "enslavement." The purchase-money of death buys for the faithful an eternal living on the piety invested. "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil. i. 21). Gain is the technical term for profit. Out of numberless other examples, the following from S. Patrick will suffice. After praying in his Confessio that he may be martyred and eaten of dogs, he says that in such a death "I have gained a soul with my body." *Lucratus sum. Lucror* means "I make as profit."

It is important to note that throughout this idiom there is no rejection of the things of the world as bad in themselves. They are bad only because they are transitory, liable to fade away and leave the owner stranded on shame and terror. Always the stress of the idiom lies in the promise that the faithful will gain the lost things a hundredfold, in conditions where the disadvantages are eliminated, where the man who trusts will not be betrayed.

For instance, S. Paulinus of Nola, in reply to the objections of his friend Ausonius, put in the clearest possible terms the hope of getting back the "good things" on a new level of stability and unity:—

The aimless surge that storms about our lives  
in toils to which we're born  
ends when the faith in life-beyond arrives,  
Good things we do not scorn  
as things profane in use or cheaply vile.  
We bank them, I protest,  
to grow more valuable in God awhile.  
He's promised interest  
on things despised or (rather) merely placed  
in usury to-day.  
A banker, free from craft, and stably based,  
a vaster sum he'll pay.

But though the financial idiom is thus directly used, it would be a mistake to say that the Christian merely wanted a share of the good things in his existing world. S. Pauline had been a rich man, who gave up all his possessions when converted. What is wanted is a transformed world based on unity, on men all drawn together. Only in that world will the increase in plenty be acceptable.

Turned back into the individual, this wish for a new level of unity produced all kinds of theological contradictions. For instance, the Calvinist creed that once a man had grace he could not lose it. Grace was the sense of redeeming unity; to be actualized it needed a whole world surrendered to brotherhood. Thwarted and canalized into a symbol of individual salvation, it still kept its claim of a new unpervertible level despite the plain facts that conversion had most unstable results.

### VIII.—CONCLUSION

The Gospel message was that a man should trust in unity and in nothing else, and that if he trusted he would be given all things. The compromise of the

<sup>34</sup> Hom. Ixvii. 2.

Church tended to invert this proposition, and to declare that the man who had the big share of the good things was the man who was blessed of God. Three statements by Clement will show the way in which the inversion was worked. First the question of poverty.

Poverty compels the soul to withdraw its interest from things which are needful, from contemplation, I mean, and sinless purity. It drives a man, who has not entirely dedicated himself to God through love to spend his time over ways and means.

This is the diametric opposite of the great message of the Beatitudes, which declared that only the dispossessed could be saved since in them lay the clue of unity.

Next, slavery:—

So shall they who have been ransomed from uttermost slavery be good masters of servants.

Clement means that the men who have been "spiritually" released will be those blessed by God; they are the men who will be "good masters," and therefore deserving of the position of exploiter. It is only a step to announcing that exploitation is necessary and good. And this proposition is inherent in such declarations as the following:—

All things, both universally and in particular, are ordered by the Lord of the Universe with a view to its welfare.

All things are administered from above for good.

The operative phrase is "from above." There is to be no questioning of authority. Thus the emotion of the Pauline epistles that social status does not matter in view of the impending world-end come to the point of sanctifying authority.<sup>25</sup>

We have now given a skeletal account of the social and economic pressures apparent in early Christianity.<sup>26</sup> But it must be emphasized that the account is brief and deals only with the main issues; also that it almost entirely ignores the complex cultural relations and merely touches cursorily on the psycho-analytic problems of the underlying animistic ideas. Splendid work has been done as to the myth-origins of Christian belief, but little on the more complex as-

<sup>25</sup> Stählin 573 (ii. 257-22-26); 84 (i. 76. 23-77. 2); 835 (iii. 9. 26-28; 369 (ii. 55. 15-16).

<sup>26</sup> One warning is necessary. In disentangling the essential Christian belief (the irreducible element which cannot be found elsewhere) one is not claiming to produce an exact chronological scheme of the way that Christianity developed. All the material at our disposal shows an accretion of ideas and attitudes covering many decades, and the business of dissecting this confusion is highly controversial, though main lines are emerging. In taking, for instance, the Beatitudes in *Luke* as basic, I am not declaring crudely that they were a kind of first creed round which the other elements gathered. The origins of Christianity were extremely complicated; and it is more than doubtful if there was ever such a moment as would be constituted by abstracting the Beatitudes as a primary nucleus. From the start there must have been an eddying of forces and impulses, a confusion of orientations. All that we can do is to take the mixture as it emerges into the light of history and analyse its elements, discarding some as obviously later accretions, tracing certain main lines of ritual, myth, and creed to a hypothetical focal point at which pre-Christian ideas become Christian and take on new powers of growth and accumulation. What I seek to catch is the basic note of the *Evangelium* which was undeniably something new, something radically distinguished from the tones of the other saviour-cults and mysteries; the element which proved decisive for Christianity's victory over those other competing cults (the Isiac and Mithraic in chief). As Christianity triumphed, it necessarily absorbed its competitors and turned into its own opposite by approximating to the oppressive state. Yet by no other process could it have triumphed.

pects of the economic relationships involved; it is hoped that this essay at least opens a few trails of fruitful suggestion.

JACK LINDSAY.

## Dollar Dictators

"Sing a song of sixpence."—*Nursery Rhyme*.

"God will knit and break religions."—*Shakespeare*.

FOR many years the Bishop of London has been harping on the terrible financial burdens of the clergy. His lordship has told us harrowing tales of their sufferings, and he has even said that the longer he draws his episcopal salary of £10,000 yearly, the worse his own financial position becomes. So persistent has he been, that one begins to wonder if he quite remembers the reputed blessings attendant upon poverty, and the woes of the rich. Or, it may be a trick of the trade, a mere rhetorical flourish, calculated to open the hearts and the purses of the people in the pews.

The Bishop of London, who is a bachelor, enjoys a yearly income of £10,000, or £200 weekly. In addition, he has a palace and a town-house. He is, therefore, able to lead a comfortable existence, and indulge in such innocent and agreeable recreations as golf and foreign travel. And, should he live right up to the limit of his comfortable income, his position should be an enviable one. Not, perhaps, so showy an existence as that of Cardinal Wolsey, another bachelor prelate, who once lorded it in Hampton Court Palace, but still far better than most men ever attain to. Even to suggest that such an existence is an embarrassment, is a flight of paradox which might have provoked the talent of the author of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Lamb said that Coleridge's metaphysics were "only his fun." If that is the case with the Bishop of London's garrulous pleas on behalf of the alleged destitution of the clergy, it is not appreciated by everyone. His brother-in-the-Lord, the Bishop of Derby, has expressed the opinion that a parson's income should be sufficient for his bare needs. And he adds the advice that clergymen should not buy motor-cars. "There's richness for you," as Whackford Squeers said. For really poor men cannot afford motor-cars; often cannot afford to ride in a bus.

"We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us." What are the facts? The diocese of the Bishop of Derby supplies an answer. The Bishop of Derby himself enjoys an income of £3,000 a year from his See. Of the subordinate clergy, six have incomes ranging around £1,000 each, annually. Twenty-eight receive about £750; sixty-one receive about £500 a year; and ninety-five get £400 a year or less. Even the curates are not starving, for they nearly all come from families with sufficient money to have their sons educated at a university, which costs far more than the total income of a working-class family.

These salaried sons-of-God are not below the poverty line. The clergy are not starving, and are not at all likely to do so. The only case I can recall in many years of a clergyman being "broke to the world" was the reverend gentleman who exhibited himself in a barrel on Blackpool front, but he was no worse off than many other showmen. Anyone who cares to consult Crockford's *Clerical Directory* can see that the average "reverend" enjoys a comfortable livelihood. It is notorious that the clergy live in decent houses, often far nicer than most of their neighbours, and that they enjoy lengthy holidays in the pleasant summer months.

The clergy protest, somewhat too loudly, to be entirely uninfluenced by financial motives. The higher

ecclesiastics, however, have no objection to feathering their nests. Forty Anglican Bishops share £182,700 yearly between them. The remaining two hundred and sixty bishops enjoy salaries varying from £1,000 to £2,000 yearly. These men identify themselves with the governing class, and are, socially, far above the armies of the homeless and unfed. So are the thousands of owners of fat livings, and the pluralists, who hold several positions, each with its attendant salary.

Indeed, this so-called Church of England, so far from living from hand to mouth, is actually one of the biggest businesses in the whole country. It is one of England's principal landlords, owning immense properties, ground-rents, mineral royalties, beside other fruitful sources of revenue. For many generations farmers have paid them a "sacred tenth" (the tithe), and toll has been paid by coal-miners on every ton of coal brought to the surface. In 1935 the total income of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who manage this Church's properties, was £3,420,998. In their last report Government and other securities amounted to £32,474,654, and cash assets to £34,516,233. The two added together make this Anglican Church, not only a really gigantic business corporation, but also a powerful tyrannical oligarchy.

All this money is being used in the service of superstition, and in furthering reaction. In the House of Lords, the Bishops have opposed all progressive measures for over a century. By controlling education at the Universities and public-schools, priests have made the scholastic ideal "brawn, instead of brains." It is this wealth which so frequently results in buying talent for the Church, for some can always be found to prostitute their intellects in return for a good salary, a comfortable existence, and the chance of a bishopric.

Priestcraft in practice is a triumph of sheer charlatanism. Jonathan Swift was right when he said that religion was "nothing but a trade." The fact is "gross as a mountain, open, palpable." This Anglican Church poses to-day as a national institution, yet it is now but a purely sectarian body, and its communicants number only a very small percentage of the population. Its hypocrisy is proverbial. Preaching a gospel of poverty, it remains the wealthiest church in all the world. Posturing as a friend of Democracy, it remains the deadliest of all the enemies of progress. Pretending to be the custodian of truth, it lives by retailing falsehood. Recall what the world pays teachers and discovers, and compare it with the £15,000 yearly, and two palaces, of the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the £10,000 annually of the Archbishop of York, or the four-figure salaries of the higher clergy, for retailing rubbish, only paralleled by the nonsense of their coloured prototypes in savage nations.

The whole question of this State Church requires urgent reconsideration. The present unsatisfactory state of affairs means that superstition and savagery are subsidized to the tune of millions of money, and that power is concentrated in the hands of the most determined enemies of Democracy. The Black Army of priests is not to be ignored. The matter cannot be evaded much longer by Labourites and Socialists if they desire the emancipation of their fellow-men and women. Just as there can be no Republic worthy of the name until Priestcraft ceases to be a predominant power in education, and the holder of the balance of power in the House of Lords, so there can be no serious opposition to this continuance of Feudalism until the Democrats make the Disestablishment and Disendowment of this State Church a plank in their political platform. The Democratic desire for common justice and brotherhood cannot be other than a

cry, whilst it is thwarted and opposed at every turn by Priestcraft, which is sympathetic to the aristocrat, sympathetic to the class which exploits the workers, and misrepresents all things Democratic. The Church is the very antipodes of Progress; it is the democracy of the dead:—

What may this mean,  
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon?"

MIMNERMUS.

## Is It An "Instinct?"

"RELIGION is not an instinct in the sense in which the chick cracking the shell out of which it emerges, or the young mammal sucking its mother's teats, is said to be moved by instinct," Professor Leuba tells us (*God or Man?*). "Religious behaviour is the outcome of a learning process, itself made possible by the presence of an instinctive foundation. In this respect religion does not differ from such other forms of activity as magic, business, or science, which are learned activities based on innate tendencies."

We can see for ourselves that there is no special or distinctive religious emotion. Awe, fear, reverence, dependence, exaltation, ecstasy, and any other emotion experienced by the worshipper are just as clearly experienced outside religion. They are not religious emotions; they are common emotions applied to religious objects, just as they can be applied to non-religious objects like politics, drama, and social life.

Examine the breed *homo sapiens*, whether in his primitive ignorance or in his civilized ignorance, read what his students and specialists have to say about him, and one makes an interesting discovery. Like most truths isolated against the background of conventional belief, it sounds a paradox. Briefly, that although religion is claimed by the religious to be an instinct, man has not got an instinct for religion. In the range of our instincts there is not a single one that relates to any institution other than human, to any world other than the one we know, or to any origin other than social origin in humanity's evolution.

If the priests of religion were honest enough to practise what they preach by leaving men to "come to God" simply "by instinct," it would be all right. Because then there would soon be no religion—and no priests. But they are wiser than that. With Professor Leuba, they realize—although they deny—that religion is but the outcome of a certain form of education, a deliberately woven pattern.

Many authors have stressed the dependence of religion upon religious education and "cradle-snatching." Horace Smith, a keen observer of human affairs, remarked in *The Tin Trumpet*:—

Throughout the world belief depends chiefly upon localities and the accidents of birth. The doctrines instilled into our infant minds are, in almost every instance, retained as they were received—without inquiry; and if such a passive acquiescence deserves the name of an intelligent belief, which may well be questioned, it is manifest that we ourselves have no merit in the process.

While more recently Dr. Bernard Hollander (*Seeing Ourselves in the Light of Modern Psychology*) is one of a number of psychologists to elaborate the same point:—

We are heavily fettered both by our heredity and our environment. No one can choose his birthplace, his religion, or his hereditary trend or type. No one can choose his parents or his teachers. Therefore, by the time a youth reaches adult years his mind is

fully formed before he can assert his will.

The way ancient theological beliefs . . . are kept alive is by children being brought up in accordance with the creed of their parents, a creed in which the parents themselves may no longer believe, yet which the child is taught to accept in full, and in regard to which he acquires complexes which, however much they may be assailed by the facts of science, are difficult to dislodge.

Religion, although the outcome of learning, and not itself an instinctive tendency, nevertheless becomes closely associated with some of the most powerful of the primitive emotional urges rooted in us, such as those for food, sex, comfort, security, or escape from danger, for notice, admiration and superiority, and the communion and sympathy of one's own kind. There is, in connexion with those urges, a big emotional kick to be got out of believing in an all-powerful, all-wise god who, in all his power, can stoop to listen to you personally, to take an interest in your affairs, to reward you or give you a kick in the pants, to give you special attention and admiration, to exalt you in superiority, to shower special honours on you after death, and, above all, to love you and receive your love. And it is in these powerful emotional factors that there lies the real strength and endurance of religious belief and practice, not in their truth or otherwise.

As Lord Balfour put it, the human mind, being a product of the struggle for existence, was essentially a system to seek food, and therefore is no more necessarily an apparatus for finding truth than is the snout of a pig. This view from the historical aspect is supported on the practical side when psychologists bring us the calculations of their observations of the imperfect apparatus of the human mind at work; Hollander, for instance, points out that with many people "it is not a question whether a doctrine is true or not, but whether it makes them comfortable. Rationalists are moved by a desire to know. The man who trusts to faith alone has no natural zest for knowledge. He dreads a scientific inquiry for fear the result might deprive him of the crutches of his false belief. The disadvantage of such fixed complexes is that they stunt the growth of the mind."

We can thus understand more clearly why such importance attaches to the emotional bases of religion described above, rather than any question of abstract truth. What matters for the effect of those emotional factors is not whether the God exists or not, but whether the worshipper believes that the gentleman exists. There can be much power in a delusion. The power is not divine, but human.

But why go on with the fool's errand of looking for the instinct on which the Churches claim their religion is based, when the Churches themselves admit quite frankly that their aim is to get hold of the children at their most impressionable and most uncritical years?

Cardinal Hinsley, when he came back from the Vatican some time ago, summarized Christian educational policy quite bluntly:—

The duty of securing a Catholic education for all Catholic children, and of safeguarding the young after school age, remains the most pressing of our problems. On the successful solution of this problem depends the whole future of Catholicism in this country; it is in a very true sense a question of life and death. (*The Universe*, January 14, 1938).

These people who are always telling us that religion is an instinct, and that every child is born a believer in God, these same people turn round the next moment and plead, "If you don't let us dominate the minds of the children at their most receptive and pliable age; if you don't build us schools and pay our teachers, and give us grants so that we can teach the

Bible and fix our beliefs in the young children's plastic minds, they're all going to grow up atheists.

Why, with the Churches' policy, you could soon have this nation believing in fairies and hobgoblins, or witches, or the godhead of Karl Marx, or the virgin birth of Chapman Cohen, or any other damned nonsense you pleased. The Churches, like their modern rivals, the Nazis, the Fascists, the Communists, and other ideologists, are out to get the children by fair means or foul, and the child suffers every time; so that we have what G. K. Chesterton once described that we have (what G. K. Chesterton once described tradition as) the most obscure democracy of them all,

How on earth can you call anything like religion an "instinct," when the Churches have to go to such trouble to put it into children's minds—at a time when they get very little chance of saying no—and to take such pains to keep it there once they've planted it?

Religion, itself neither an instinct nor an originator, seizes upon and colours in one way or another the emotions, instincts and forces that are already present in man. At its best it is a sublimation of those forces—psychologically on the same plane as art or literature, and a sublimation often socially useless. At its worst it is a perversion of instinct and morality; moreover, it is an agency that intensifies its own and other perversions by giving them divine sanction, and the pages of human history are full of cruelties, sadisms, persecutions, morbidities and immoralities, all justified and intensified when conceived as religious duties. Witchcraft, inquisitions, and puritanism are only outstanding examples; the complete list is very long.

It was two Christian authors, Sidney Dark and R. S. Essex, who emphasized in their book on *The War Against God*, that "history teaches that the bitterest persecutions have been those of one body of Christians by another"; and again that "the venomous hatred of Catholic for Protestant and of Protestant for Catholic has had no parallel in human history." Unless it be the fanatical persecution of Jews, which was Christian in origin and religious in explanation. It was the Christian Rev. G. A. Studdert Kennedy, who declared: "In history religion has very often been the most damnably bad of all bad things. . . . The vilest and filthiest crimes have been committed in the name of religion, and the religious history of mankind contains passages obscene in their stupid cruelty. . . . *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*. Lucretius would have accumulated more reasons for his rejection of religion if he had lived on and seen what the Christian Church could do." (*Religion—Blessing or Curse?*)

So the evils of religion make even the religious ponder. And we must set the whole of mankind pondering another question, a question that is now pondered here and there, but from the few will eventually, inevitably, be taken up by the many. In view of the money and subsidies poured into Christianity (in its various forms) in the fight to keep it alive, in view of the way it is supported and buttressed by authorities, in view of its vicious moral censorship and social obstruction, is all this money, power, effort, and moral and social obstruction worth while to keep in existence something that can add so little to the good that is in man, and so much to the bad?

R. H. S. STANDEFAST.

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The deliberate cultivation of the gift of putting yourself in the other person's place is the beginning of wisdom of human relations and the foundations of permanent good humour.—*Arnold Bennett*.

## Correspondence

### "PHYSIC" INVESTIGATION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I was extremely interested in your very clever leading article, "Commonsense and the Supernatural," in which my book *The Mystery of Versailles* is reviewed.

As an entirely independent investigator, I largely share your reviews, but in view of the minute proportion of reported supernatural occurrences, which cannot be explained as yet by any rational process, psychic investigation still appears highly justifiable.

Mr. Harry Price has had to admit that *some* of the phenomena that he has witnessed remain inexplicable, and to ignore this fact would not be in the true traditions of scientific approach. That the whole psychic movement is 90 per cent conscious or unconscious fraud, no impartial observer will deny, and the rationalization of such a mystery as that of the Trianon, must at least tend to clear the air. It may, therefore, have been worth while. It is manifestly impossible to probe into the cesspool of credulous imaginings which pour into and out of the psychic press, whilst it is possible from time to time to pin down publicly one or other of the better-known illusions which form the classics of this deplorable literature.

J. R. STURGE-WHITING.

[We do not think Mr. Sturge-Whiting has quite caught our point. This is that approaching the same class of "psychic" wonders time after time, with implication that they may be manifestations from another world, encourages all who believe they may be genuine. The expression that "some of the phenomena witnessed remain inexplicable" is an illustration of this. How a trick is performed is not so important, as an understanding that it is a trick. I have seen men do marvels on the stage without making the assumption that my inability to say how they were done is any ground for assuming that flowers were actually conjured from the air by the wave of a wand.

How many cases of demoniac obsession does one require to investigate before deciding that it is not the presence of demons, but the mental state of the obsessed that requires study? How many ghosts must be interviewed before deciding that a new ghost is just as much an illusion as the old ones were? And how many real believers in Spiritualism have even been converted by the detection of a multitude of frauds? The improbable is one thing, the impossible another; and it is sheer fallacy to assume that in science anything is possible. The advance of science is marked by creating a category of the reasonably impossible.—C.C.]

## National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JULY 28, 1938

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Hornibrook, Bryant, Wood, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Silvester, Bedborough, Horowitz, Griffiths, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Kingston, Liverpool, Birkenhead, Swansea, Glasgow, North London, West London Branches, and the Parent Society.

Lecture arrangements for Greenock, Liverpool, Birkenhead, and Manchester were sanctioned. On the question of a Hall in London, suggestions were made and discussed, and an appointment fixed. The Chairman outlined the general arrangements for the International Congress in London in September.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Thursday, August 25, and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

## 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, Mr. L. Ebury.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Saturday, Mr. H. C. Smith, Sunday, Mr. Barker.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, Mrs. E. Grout. Rushcroft Road, Brixton, 8.0, Tuesday, Miss E. Millard. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Miss H. 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, Mrs. N. Buxton. Friday, 7.30, Mr. G. Barnes.

### COUNTRY

#### OUTDOOR

BURNLEY MARKET: 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

ECCLES (CROSS): 8.0, Friday, A Lecture.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound) 7.0, Muriel Whitefield, Glasgow N.S.S.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Minard Road): 8.0, Thursday, Muriel Whitefield. Friday, Albion Street, 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton. Sunday, Albion Street, 8.0, Muriel Whitefield. Tuesday, Albert Avenue, 8.0, Muriel Whitefield.

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

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

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (High Park Street and Park Road): 8.0, Thursday, Messrs. Parry and Thompson. Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths, 8.0, Sunday, Messrs. Thompson and Ashby. Garston, Tram Terminus, 8.0, Wednesday, A Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Market): 8.0, Friday, Bury Market, 8.0, Saturday. Stevenson Square, 7.30, Sunday. Chorley, 8.0, W. A. Atkinson will speak at these meetings.

NORTH EAST FEDERATION OF N.S.S. BRANCHES (Harbour View, North Shields): 7.0, August 7. August 8 and 9, 7.30, South Shields, Market, 7.30, August 10 and 11. Hetton, Main Street, 7.30, Mr. G. Whitehead will address each meeting.

OUAKER BRIDGE: 2.45, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

WHEATLEY LANE: 7.0, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS.—Vacation Competition for young people between 14 and 18. Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals will be offered for the Three Best Essays on *Religious Toleration*. For particulars write Editor, 26 Buckland Crescent, London, N.W.3.

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# WORLD UNION OF FREETHINKERS INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

LONDON—FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, TO TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1938

**A**LL sessions will be held at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, except that on Sunday evening. This Congress is convened for the promotion of Freethought, and tickets will be issued admitting to its sessions on the distinct understanding that the holders are members of the Rationalist Press Association, the National Secular Society, the South Place Ethical Society, or the Ethical Union, or are sponsored by a member of one of these societies and are in sympathy with the aims of the Congress.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 9	... 7 p.m.	... ..	Reception and Social Evening.
SATURDAY, SEPT. 10	... 10.30 a.m.	... ..	Opening of the Congress by Dr. M. TERWAGNE (Belgium), President of the World Union of Freethinkers.
	Morning Session	... ..	<i>Subject</i> : "The Present Religious Reaction and the Menace of the Vatican." <i>Speakers</i> : JOSEPH McCABE, PAUL BRAUN (Belgium), A. LORULOT (France), A. FLANDERS, J. P. GILMOUR (Chair).
	Afternoon Session : 2.30	... ..	<i>Subject</i> : "Youth, the Schools, and Freethought." <i>Speakers</i> : Dr. F. H. HAYWARD, W. B. CURRY, M.A., B.Sc., R. STRIVAY (Belgium).
	Evening Session : 7	... ..	<i>Subject</i> : "Science and the Churches." <i>Speakers</i> : Dr. DAVID FORSYTH, Prof. J. B. S. HALDANE, F.R.S., Prof. H. LEVY, B. ZAVADOSKY (U.S.S.R.).
SUNDAY, SEPT. 11	... Morning Session : 10.30	... ..	<i>Subject</i> : "The Reality of a Secular Ethic." <i>Speakers</i> : J. P. GILMOUR, CHAPMAN COHEN, F. G. GOULD (Chair).
	... Afternoon Session : 2.30	... ..	Regional Reports; South Africa, West Africa, India, China and Hong Kong, United States, etc.
	... Evening : 7	... ..	Demonstration. <i>Subject</i> : "Freethought and the Struggle for Peace and Liberty." <i>Speakers</i> : CHAPMAN COHEN (Chair), G. D. H. COLE, Prof. LANCELOT HOGBEN, F.R.S., JOHN LANGDON-DAVIES, and others.
			Separate tickets for reserved seats will be issued for this meeting, the place of which will be announced later. It is hoped that members will bring as many friends and sympathizers as they can.
MONDAY, SEPT. 12	... Morning Session : 10.30	... ..	Conclusion of Reports, Resolutions.
	... Afternoon : 2.30	... ..	Tour of London with W. KENT (editor of <i>Encyclopaedia of London</i> , author of <i>London for Heretics</i> , etc.). Cost, 3s. including motor-bus and tea.
	... Evening : 6.30	... ..	Reception and Dinner at the Trocadero. <i>Speakers</i> : CHAPMAN COHEN (Chair), Dr. C. E. M. JOAD, and others.
TUESDAY, SEPT. 13	... ..	... ..	Visit to the Bradlaugh Tomb at Brookwood leaving the Necropolis Station at Lambeth at 11.40 a.m.

*The names of other speakers will be announced later.*

The following have promised to speak, to send messages or reports, or otherwise to support the Congress—

President of Honour, Edouard Herriot, Président de la Chambre des Députés, France. Prof. Bouglé, Marjorie Bowen, H. K. Brailsford, Gerald Bullett, Prof. G. E. G. Catlin, Prof. V. Gordon Childe, Chapman Cohen, Dr. Stanton Colt, G. D. H. Cole, Dr. P. L. Couchoud, Prof. F. A. E. Crew, W. B. Curry, Dr. E. J. Dingwall, Prof. Sargent Florence, Prof. J. C. Flugel, Dr. David Forsyth, J. P. Gilmour, S. A. Gimson, Prof. M. Ginsberg, Prof. C. Guignebert, Dr. A. C. Haddon, Prof. J. B. S. Haldane, Dr. F. H. Hayward, J. A. Hobson, Prof. Lancelot Hogben, Laurence Housman, Sir W. van Hulsteyn, Dr. C. E. M. Joad, M. and Mme. Joliot-Curie, Sir Arthur Keith, Prof. H. J. Laski, Prof. H. Levy, Prof. L. Lévy-Bruhl, G. Macdonald, Prof. Malinowski, Miles Malleson, Joseph McCabe, F. S. Marvin, Somerset Maugham, Prof. Molengraaff, Prof. G. E. Moore, H. W. Nevins, Prof. C. J. Patten, Vivian Phillips, Eden Phillips, Llewelyn Powys, Dr. H. Roger, Bertrand Russell, Prof. F. C. Sharp, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Mrs. Winifred Whalley.

There will be no charge for admission to the Sessions or to the Demonstration. The Dinner will be 10s. 6d. and the fare (3rd class) to Brookwood 2s. return. Early application for all tickets will help the Organizing Committee.

This is the twenty-fifth International Congress held under the auspices of the World Union of Freethinkers, formerly known as the Federation of Freethought Societies. This body was established in 1880 at Brussels. Its first Congress was held in London, and the seat of its Council was for four years in London. The last Congress it held in England was in 1887, when it took place in London.

All inquiries and applications for tickets should be addressed to the Organizing Committee, World Union of Freethinkers International Congress, 4, 5, and 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.