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

Views and Opinions

How Not to do It

I COMMENCED these notes with the intention of illustrating the extent to which even many avowed Freethinkers are still influenced by their early religious training, and to deal with religious and anti-religious arguments that do not prove what they are intended to prove, and often play directly into the hands of opponents. In addition to these illustrations being found among writers and speakers, I find also from my correspondence that many who are taking their first dip in the ocean of Freethought have very strange notions as to what Freethought means, and so never realize the real case against religion. So far as the unconscious religious bias is concerned these newcomers to our movement need not be either surprised or depressed. Many of the faults I have alluded to, and shall have to deal with in succeeding notes, are to be found amongst individuals prominent in the Freethought world, and none would be less surprised than myself to find some acute reader pointing out that I had fallen into some of the blunders I aim at preventing. If they can do so I hope they will not hesitate to write me. "Physician heal thyself," is a quite good reproof, so long as it is not taken as an adequate condonation of one's own shortcomings. Nothing is commoner than the feeling that a flaw in another's argument in some way abolishes the faults of one's own reasoning. It is usually consoling to show that we have companions in our folly, but the folly remains none the less.

* * *

Deity and Development

Let me commence by taking as a good example an argument that illustrates the persistence of religious ideas with those who imagine they have rid their minds of them, and is a statement that is directly contrary to facts. At a certain stage in the development of religious belief where the gods become plainly subject to the influence of ethical ideas, the great task for the theist is to prove the goodness

of God; and as that goodness is not obvious—the need for so much argument to establish it is evidence of this—the doubter is asked to believe that ultimately "god's plan" works out well. On the whole things improve. Goodness tends to overcome badness, etc. This form of argument becomes increasingly prominent in the stage at which a religion based on a study of nature begins to supplant belief built upon revelation.

The theist had said that God was on the side of progress; that there was a moral uplift, Spencer said that progress was not an accident but a necessity, Darwin spoke of the grandeur of the war of nature from which there issued the "most exalted production of the higher animals." The genuinely religious-minded were not slow to take the hint, the timidly heretical followed the line of social safety, and presently all the ethical qualities and powers that had been given to "God" were given to evolution, which was, or might be, the instrument through which God was working out his plan. It was quite a "Munich" kind of settlement, in which one side got everything and the other nothing at all. The godite had his God left with full power—once removed—and the half-liberated unbeliever was able to satisfy his religiously developed feelings, while gratifying his thirst for advanced views.

But it was all so delightfully wrong. In the first place, there is no higher and lower in nature, there is only a series of events which human convenience has arranged in a serial order with moral or intellectual labels of our own manufacture. Nature does not pursue an "end," and it certainly has no moral purpose in view. Neither is evolution a movement that is towards something "higher" or something "lower." Evolution has nothing to do with a leveling up, as such, with a moral end, as such, with a "better" or a worse, as such. All such terms and conceptions as these are a sheer intrusion of religious ideas and sentiments into a sphere in which they have no application whatever. Evolution, as I have said elsewhere, is not a fiat, it is a formula. Fundamentally it is a special application of the principle of causation, about which I may have something to say later.

* * *

Evolution and Progress

The two fundamental facts in nature are change and difference. One is inconceivable without the other. All that evolution does is to give us the "law" of this change. The precise law enunciated may be true or false, that is, it may be borne out by experience or disproved by it. Natural selection may be an adequate explanation of organic evolution, it may be merely contributory, or some other factor may be discovered. But the fact of evolution remains as certain as is the development of every organism from a microscopical cell to the mature individual

And, of course, the alleged beneficial aspect of

natural selection, or of evolution in general, is moonshine. Both Spencer and Darwin stressed this—the former asserted the beneficent character of evolution in the period when he was still avowedly a theist. Darwin's sub-title, "The preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life," ignored the positive aspect of the process he was describing. Spencer's term "The survival of the fittest" was nearer the truth, but theists were quick to seize on the admission, and T. H. Huxley, ready as ever to play with ideas that helped to disguise the strictly logical inference of his position regarding theism, spoke of the "Harmonious order governing eternally continuous progress." But the truth is that there is no necessary advance with living things. Forms of life may "advance" or they may "retrograde." And natural selection does not *preserve*, its positive action is to kill. Animals survive, not because they are "preserved," but merely because their structure is such that it stands proof against forces that wipe out others who are not so armed against the aggressive forces of nature. In addition it is not struggle, as such, that produces the best of which a plant or an animal—including man—is capable. The finest flowers are produced by man protecting them from the severest strain of climatic and other conditions. The best type of human being is produced by keeping the struggle against adverse forces down to a certain level. And that society is most advanced where the individuals comprising it do not expend almost the whole of their energies in the mere task of keeping alive. Industry may provide a dinner, but it takes a little release from the harder forms of struggle to provide liqueurs and dessert. Human society is not the only example where "from clogs to clogs" in a few generations may be seen. The history of life is almost as full of "degeneration" as of "advance."

* * *

Science and the Supernatural

I have space this week for but one more illustration that will serve to indicate the muddled thinking that even theists of repute have exhibited when trying to fit the primitive idea of a God into a modern scientific framework. The belief in God begins in an atmosphere of uncertainty and proceeds to one of miracle. Early mankind begins by attributing "events" to the action of "mysterious" forces akin to his own volition, and, as this becomes personified and regularized, to "gods." I fancy that it is in this stage that miracles proper make their appearance. Everything becomes possible because nothing is certain. Miracle becomes a special indication of the activity of gods, and miracle spells *irregularity* in nature. It was a sound instinct that led priests to fight against the conception of "natural law." Calculable consequences do away with the activity of supernatural powers, and without these religion has no real substance.

But time will tell and the day came when the operation of natural laws could no longer be profitably contested. Then a new stage in the history of Theism was reached. Natural law was admitted, the regularity of natural events was ceded. But some use had to be found for God. He became not merely the creator, but the planner, the controller behind the scenes, he worked through natural forces, and his greatness was shown, not merely in the existence of natural phenomena, but in the regularity of their happening. At this stage the average Theist must have preened himself on being quite advanced, and also pleased to find himself in what he thought was an impregnable position. Forces might be eternal in their existence, and completely dependable in their operations; but this dependability was due to the directive agency of God. (Sir Oliver Lodge, among others has made great play with this idea). The order in nature depends upon

the god who acts as an Almighty Director-General. A once well-known lecturer on Theism, Professor Flint, put it that "granting all the atoms of matter to be eternal, that all the properties and forces which . . . can be claimed for them . . . it is millions to one that they would never produce the simplest of the regular arrangements which we comprehend under the designation of 'course of nature.'"

A most elaborate piece of nonsense, because if all the forces of nature remain as they are eternally, that is, if things behave as they always have behaved, then quite clearly the universe will remain what it is, and it will be infinity to nothing against there being any alteration in the recurring phenomena. But if there be some Director-General behind nature who is responsible for the direction taken by natural forces, then at any time an alteration might occur, and in the case of any alteration in the normal order, we should look, as any scientific experimentalist would look, for a cause outside nature.

* * *

A Suicidal Policy

The Theist has been barking up the wrong tree. Building upon the belief that the order of phenomena was determined by the caprices of supernatural beings, he relied upon the occurrence of incalculable (miraculous) events as evidence of the existence of these beings. When developing knowledge forced him to recognize the simple truth that in the absence of erratic miracles the settled "order" of nature had to be accepted, he then depended upon the argument that it was the directive power of a God that maintained the existing order. But it is not the existence of a settled order that gives rise to the belief in a controller or a director. Things will be as they are unless they are interfered with by something or some one. That is really the first law of thought as well as of motion, and it is an interference with the normal order that makes one look for an operative force outside nature. A chemist does not look any further when the product of a combination follows the usual line. But where the product varies—one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow—he quite properly assumes the existence of an unknown factor in operation. The earlier Theist was quite logical when he relied upon miracles to prove the existence of a God. But he becomes hopelessly illogical when the aim is to prove the existence of God by claiming the existence of universal natural "law." For if "effects" are the calculable consequences of their causes, then anything that may happen with God may also happen without him. If a stone impinging on a man's head causes his death, the chain of events will be exactly the same whether the impact of the stone was due to accident or to my deliberately aiming at the man. I could not achieve this end by "design" unless it were possible by sheer "accident." And this is only demonstrating that—even if we admit the existence of a God—anything that may happen with him may also happen without him. The more plausible the case for theism (on these lines) becomes, the less necessary a God. The unbeliever commits suicide to save himself being slaughtered. In the end the Theist makes his God ridiculous and useless—perhaps one ought to say, ridiculous because he is useless. God becomes the shadow of a fear, a negligible remnant of a discarded hypothesis.

CHAPMAN COHEN

(To be continued)

It seems to me that the bane of our country is a profession of faith either with no basis of real belief, or with no proper examination of the grounds on which the creed is supposed to rest.—James Russell Lowell.

"The Child of Bethlehem"

Even if we think it desirable to carry on with the myths of the creation, the flood, and the chosen people, we have not got the time.—*H. G. Wells.*

MORE rubbish is retailed in newspapers to-day than ever before in the history of printing. In order to carry many advertisements, papers have been increased in size, and, since readers want more than trading announcements, letterpress has to be added. And what letterpress! Advice to married folk, written by spinsters. Horoscopes, presumably concocted by the office-boy. Literary reviews, simply puffs for the publishers. And so forth, and so on, until one finds a very large proportion of the whole paper filled with inducements to gambling under the guise of "sport." But nowhere in this arid desert of ignorance do the journalists display their want of knowledge so profoundly as when they attempt to write upon the subject of religion. Sins of commission and omission are as plentiful as plums in a Christmas pudding. Or else sob-stuff writing forces one to the conclusion that there are more nit-wits outside asylums than there are inmates in those institutions.

The explanation of all this nonsense is simply due to the plain fact that editors "tickle the ears of the groundlings" for no other reason than that they desire huge circulations. In their haste and in their greed, they do themselves harm, for they drive decent readers to more sober publications, and thus reduce their own influence. For the entire population is not composed of cheerful idiots, although the editors act under that presumption. Once, editors of newspapers actually retailed news, but to-day there is more fiction in some so-called "national" papers than in the ordinary novel. They cater for the masses, the mob that has no memory, and only asks for its daily sensation with its daily bread. But the religion of the newspaper press is a strange, inverted thing, a thing at which decent people raise their eyebrows, smile, and pass on. The old, honest journalism is dead, or it lingers only in the pages of a few sober periodicals which do not advertise themselves as the "cats' whiskers," but which have influential circulations, rather than mass production.

Christmas being a national holiday, and religion being a vested interest, the journalists blow kisses to the clergy at that period of the year. They write the most fulsome nonsense, untrammelled by any acquaintance with history or theology. How the clergy must smile in the quietude of their comfortable homes as they read the leading articles. For most journalists, when they air their theological opinions, make more "howlers" than any schoolboy plodding through an examination paper, and they haven't the excuse of beginners.

Here, for example, is what the *London Times* has to chant on Christmas Eve:—

Familiar though they may have become, who can listen unmoved to the lovely gospel narratives of the birth, or cease to marvel at the sheer union of vivid detail and exquisite reserve?

It reads like the gush to be found in parish magazines, and might easily be thought the amateur effort of a young curate. "Lovely gospel narratives!" If any man can find "loveliness" in the tale of the massacre of the innocents, he must have quaint ideas of beauty. Had the writer not seen a New Testament since his schooldays, or did he write the while his tongue was in his cheek?

At the other end of the journalistic scale, the *London Daily Herald* (December 24) breaks out hysterically:—

And give some of your thoughts on this occasion, when we celebrate the birth of a Jewish baby who brought to the world a new message of love and understanding.

What is the "new message of love and understanding"? If it is the so-called "Golden Rule," it was well known long before the alleged birth of Christ. Gotama Buddha, Confucius, and others, embodied it in their teaching. The "Golden Rule" is stolen property, but what is actually novel in Christianity is the horrible idea of a hell of literal fire in which the majority of humanity is to burn for ever and ever. Love, indeed! Christian priests have traded on fear not love for near a score of centuries, and by its means have amassed pelf, power, and position. Think of it! In the legends, Christ is said to have had "not where to lay his head," and to have ended with a felon's death. But Hampton Court Palace, Lambeth Palace, and other palatial buildings, have been residences of his hypocritical representatives.

Not to be outdone in the game of sentimental make-believe, the *Daily Express* (London, December 24) turns out a column of sob-stuff. Here is a bright sample:—

In the message which came that day at Bethlehem, there lurks a reproach that is not silenced . . . A moral sense has come to life which in the end does more than legal codes to stop the evil doer.

Who would imagine that the noblest utterances of Christian morality can be paralleled from the writings and utterances of Pagan philosophers and teachers? Indeed, Christianity does not rest on its morality alone. Why should it? The dogma of the fall and damnation of mankind through an act of petty theft by two individuals may be foreign to modern ideas of justice, but it is an essential part of the Christian scheme of things. As for Non-Christian morality, so glorious is the wisdom of some ancient thought that Plato and Cicero, Seneca and Epictetus, Confucius and Marcus Aurelius, are to-day necessary studies to any man who seeks to be truly cultured.

But the *News-Chronicle*, which caters for race-goers, football fans, and Puritanical Free Churchmen, "out-Herods Herod." It is lyrical in its loquaciousness, and sloppy in its sentimentalism:—

I can remember a night when Christ was born in a New York shelter for down-and-outs, a night when he was born in a London prison, a night when he was born in Glasgow, in a midnight meeting for drunks by the Broomielaw Quay.

These quotations, be it remembered, are from the most widely circulated newspapers, and are supposed to be representative of the intellectuality of the "glorious free press" of a civilized country. They are by no means the worst of their class. Is it not as plain as a pikestaff that the brains are out of Christianity and that men of ability are no longer interested in this two-thousand-years-old Eastern superstition? This present-day association of the Christian religion with sheer emotionalism and blind ignorance is not a compliment to the press proprietors, editors, and journalists who retail such rubbish for mere profit. Nor does it evince a high opinion on their part towards the public they are so hoodwinking. It only shows how absolutely necessary is the antidote of Freethought propaganda when such soothing syrup for intellectual infants can be ladled out by supposedly responsible journals in order to bolster the most reactionary of all vested interests. For it is clear that the popular press is the top of the totem-pole of foolishness:—

Peace upon earth was said, we sing it
And pay a million priests to bring it,
After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison gas.

MIMNERMUS.

Behaviorism

THE term behaviourism is usually applied to the type of psychology advocated by Prof. J. B. Watson of America and his disciples, Weiss, Hunter and others. Behaviorist principles have, however, flourished under different terminology. A Russian school, exemplified by Schmiermann, employs "reflexology." Watson's "conditioned response" is with Pavlov "conditioned reflex"; with Bekhterev, "associated reflex." Hunter (U.S.A.) has suggested replacing the term psychology by "anthroponomy."

Behaviorism's immortal contribution to psychology has been to demonstrate how far the importance of training exceeds that of heredity. Nurture, not nature: that is the maxim. Watson has made extensive experiments with infants and has published some of his findings in such works as *The Psychological Care of Infant and Child* and *The Dangers of Motherlove*.

The animal-trainer knows the value of the conditioned response. In the case of the dancing bear, the animal is made to stand on a heated platform to the accompaniment of music. In the course of time the music alone will suffice to produce the dancing gyrations. The principle is used in a far more sensible manner by the behaviorist, and we need not stay to consider the ethical aspect of distorting the behaviour of animals so as to please a very poor type of human mentality.

What has been termed instinct is in behaviorism "a hereditary pattern-reaction, the separate elements of which are movements principally of the striped muscles." (*Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*; J. B. Watson). But instincts are modifiable by experience, and Watson claims to abolish fear in the babe, first, by discovering what stimuli bring it out (i.e., a loud noise or loss of support) and then by getting these stimuli firmly associated with pleasure-giving experiences. Nurture must improve on nature; training must remedy the defects of heredity. This is particularly possible in the case of man, for he has a comparatively immense fore-brain, and the fore-brain is the structural basis of the conditioned response. Its size in man allows for a great multiplicity of reflex paths and thus frees him from many of the restrictions imposed by heredity on the lower animals. In introspective language man's memory is the best. A man is not like a fowl, and to that extent heredity is relevant. Reared in China, however, he will behave like the Chinese. The musician's son does not "take after his father"; he merely finds himself in a family where he can get the appropriate environment.

The behaviorist's aim is to train habits, definite modes of behavior not hereditary, into organized habit-systems beneficial to society. Watson's psychology, like Freud's, is not something to adorn the pages of a text-book; it is for application in the practical world. Personality becomes, for the behaviorist, the individual's total assets and liabilities of his reactions, the assets being organized habits, regulated instincts, tempered emotions and their inter-combinations, the liabilities being lack of these (see Watson, *Ibid.*, also *The Ways of Behaviorism*).

The Materialist need not be committed to an unqualified behaviorism (cf. F. Aveling, *Introduction to Psychology*), and he will certainly guard against the rather incautious language of its protagonists. We shall not here stay to consider much of its highly controversial matter, whether, for instance, thinking is never more than subvocal talking with very slight musculature, and it would be exceedingly difficult to accept the view that images are mere logical figments, that actually we rehearse things in words. In any

case Watson allows that memory is the rehearsal of what greeted the primary stimulus in words and emotions. So far as most animals are concerned their behavior may perhaps completely be interpreted behavioristically, and we may suppose equal success with human infants, the baby, in behaviorist language, being a piece of protoplasmic matter which squirms to stimulus. Yet, just as chemistry starts where physics ends, so it would seem that there is in the normal human mental structure that for which behaviorism is inadequate. Watson sticks a pin in McDougal's finger and the latter flinches. The next time he does not flinch. (See *The Battle of Behaviorism*, their debate). Perhaps it is a conditioned reflex, the victim having learned to respond quietly. But how is the behaviorist going to predict the responses of a victim who flinches and does not flinch with the utmost caprice, and with the object of thwarting the behaviorist? "Given all the facts," says Watson, we can tell, after watching an act done, the situation which caused it (prediction), and can arrange the stimulus accordingly (control). "Given all the facts" is an assumption of some importance, and we do not know of anything in the behaviorist scheme whereby all the facts relating to complicated responses can be known. If we were meticulous we might also detect some implied introspection in the behaviorist's attitude, in so far as he judges some responses by the analogy of his own feelings. No configurationist (Gestaltist), again, will be prepared to follow the behaviorist in his assertion that "the brain is stimulated always, and only from the outside by a sense organ process," since afferent impulses may be set going from within the organism (e.g., toothache).

In a restricted field behaviorism is probably valid. For the rest an extended data is needed. So long as the behaviorist is dealing with isolated units of response his efforts seem well set for success. But Dr. R. G. Gordon, a physician, has contended in his book, *Personality*, that the relatedness of the elements of an emerged personality, the reflex arc, conditioned reflex and engram, debars them from being studied in separation with any degree of adequacy. It would seem that behaviorist and physiological evidence is incomplete if it aims at giving a satisfactory account of the more complicated responses of mature persons. The behaviorist regards personality as "reaction mass as a whole" (Watson) and tells us he is leaving mind out of account. Let us take him at his word and congratulate him on the modesty of his pretensions. Yet in other passages Watson leads us to believe he is more ambitious for his theories. And in his *Psychology; the Changing Outlook* (1937) Dr. Aveling regards the outstanding points in behaviorism as "its rejection of consciousness, in the sense of the associationists and introspectionists, . . . the limitation of psychology to the study of behaviour, overt and implicit, the explanation of thought in terms of movement; . . . of emotion in terms of muscular, visceral and glandular changes; of memory in terms of renewals of habit responses previously acquired as well as the bringing into play anew of visceral changes; and finally the rejection of instincts together with all inherited mental traits of whatsoever kind."

Some of the pros and cons of behaviorism may be studied in the Watson-MacDougal debate, and despite his sometimes rather coarse form of attack the latter would appear to have taken some points.

G. H. TAYLOR.

We do a great injustice to Iscariot in thinking him wicked above all common wickedness. He was only a common money lover.—*Ruskin*.

The Sawbath Day

It is strange that as you approach nearer to the pearly gates through which you pass out into the Great Beyond, youthful memories often return with a vividness that the passing of the long years has not dimmed. One such instance I recall, although it happened more than half a century ago. I was on a visit to an aunt who lived in a small town some twelve miles beyond Edinburgh. She had a daughter about my own age, a comely girl of seventeen. We went for a long walk on the Sunday afternoon, and my youthful feelings, as the result, I suppose, of having a bonnie lassie by my side, found vent in the whistling of a tunc. Much to my surprise, she stopped dead as if she had been shot, and her face went as white as a ghost. "Cousin," she said, "D'ye ken what ye're dee'in?" I said, "Yes dearie, I'm whistling." With a pained expression, she said, "Well, dinna let the neighbours hear ye." With the assurance that I would not offend again, the blood returned to her cheeks, and her girlish beauty was again in evidence. It appeared that to whistle on the Sabbath day in Scotland was almost a criminal offence.

Another incident, which occurred the following day, I put on record as it was the beginning of the end to the notion of that superior piety which I had been taught was the crowning glory of the ministerial order. I may say that there were three Presbyterian Churches in the small town, and they had combined to engage the services of a well-known travelling missionary to preach on the sabbath, the meetings being held in the largest of them. It was said that this man was paid £1,000 a year by a wealthy widow, to keep the hell-fires burning. My aunt did not attend any of these churches, but worshipped in a village kirk about a mile distant. On the Monday afternoon, my aunt and I were walking towards this village when we met the minister. Without any kind of friendly greeting, and in an imperious tone of voice, he said: "You wus'na at the kirk last night, Mrs. Briggs." My aunt explained that on the way there she had been taken unwell, and had to go into a friend's house until she recovered. "You wus'na hearing the Rev. Jno. Mc Neil, then?" he said. And this holy man of God began such a tirade of abuse against the missionary, that I felt disgusted. His animosity may have been due to the depletion of his own congregation, or perhaps the £1,000 a year had something to do with his ire; but young as I was I thought, "You cad, to speak of any one in such terms, much less a brother minister."

The Making of a Minister is the title of a book I recently found on the Public Library shelves, apparently written by a young aspirant to the holy profession. It had a chapter on the Sawbath, as it used to be observed in Scotland in the good old days. He says:—

It was a day of terror and gloom; for these were considered the equivalent of religion. A country in which they drew down the blinds on that day, in which they used to walk on tip-toe and speak in whispers, and where the Sunday's dinner was a mere pretence. It was rigidly observed after this manner, until the time of a man called Robert Burns. The old Scottish Sawbath is now dead; it died with kilts, the Shorter Catechism, and porridge.

Whether this writer's optimistic view of the change is justified, I know not; but there is no doubt that the humble Robert Burns rendered an incalculable service in improving the Scottish Sabbath for its own good. We can all join the writer in paying tribute to Burns for dispelling its gloom and rationalizing the morbid observances of what must have been a day of profound misery. The Burns' Clubs that are to be

found in every part of the civilized world where Scotsmen congregate are a testimony to the national service Burns rendered his countrymen in freeing their minds from the impositions of a kill-joy religion and the curse of its priesthood.

God created the world in six days, including His masterpiece, Man; and then He made the Sabbath, O. This is the story of Creation adopted by the early Christians from the legends of the Jews. The Jewish priesthood had fenced this Seventh day about with absurd laws and restrictions, to keep it "holy"; enactments which show them to have been a barbarous people. I remember when I was a boy of twelve, passing the house of a Jew one Saturday morning, who asked me inside. The passage gas was blazing away about a foot high; he asked me if I would be so kind as to turn it down, which I did. It was contrary to their Sabbath law to touch such things. The penalty, as we know, for a person found gathering a few sticks to light the fire on the Sabbath, was a speedy death; but I don't know the penalty for turning down the gas. The old Jew evidently hoped to escape such an end, and do further business. Because in thanking me, he said: "Now, ven you vant to buy a vatch, you come to me, and you shall have von cheap." One ingenious Christian writer, who was the Secretary of the local branch of the Lord's Day Observance Society, made a wonderful discovery. He found out, as the result of much patient research, that the fourth commandment—Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy—is the only one of the ten that is introduced by the word, "Remember." Just exactly what he means to imply by this is not quite clear; unless it be that you are at liberty to let the rest go hang, if you don't forget to remember to set one day of the seven aside for religious purposes. In asking the question, Who instituted the "Christian" Sabbath? this audacious cleric says: "It was Christ himself who changed the day from the last day of the week to the first"; but the reasons he gives are not worth consideration. The Jewish law of the Sabbath has never been abrogated, and the very name, Sunday, implies its pagan origin. Its substitution for the Sabbath rests upon no reasonable grounds; besides destroying the very reason that is given for Sabbath observance—that God rested upon the seventh day.

Christian apologists claim that their religion secured to the working man a weekly day of rest; but as Joseph McCabe points out, "The British worker a century ago, when England was thoroughly Christian, worked for about 310 days a year, whereas the Roman worker of pagan days worked only about 170 or 160 days a year." The way in which Christian writers represent the Sabbath as a boon to him, he says, "is grotesque."

When the N.E.R. ran the first Sunday excursion, from Newcastle to Carlisle, a minister in the pulpit denouncing the innovation, declared that it was not to Carlisle these people were going, it was to hell. But the rev. gent. must have been mistaken, as all the excursionists returned safely at the end of the day; while no one has ever been known to return from hell. Since that day, the Sunday exodus has gradually increased, the public using every conceivable means; not only trains, but motor-cars, charabancs, motor-cycles, buses, boats, cycles, hiking—anything to get away from the awful boredom of the so-called Sabbath day.

JOSEPH BRUCE

Mohammedanism, imperfect as we see it to be, met needs and guided faculties, among certain races of men, which Christianity wholly neglected.

Harriet Martineau.

Acid Drops

A certain Dr. Stephenson, who has gained, by saying something quite idiotic, a fame that he would not have had noted by our delightful press had he said something moderately sensible, has expressed the opinion that persons who are guilty of sex offences should be *tried in a lethal chamber*. That is supposed to express very high morality, but what we are curious about is that as others must be present at a trial besides the accused person, why should not the jury and witnesses and judge be put in a lethal chamber as well as the presumably guilty person. But Dr. Stephenson is not without pity, so he says to the guilty persons:—

I hope you will have a *better* time in another world, but we cannot keep you in this.

The italics are again ours. We are, however, rather curious as to the meaning of the "better time." Does Dr. Stephenson mean that in heaven things are permitted that are banned on earth? Or is he casting an aspersion on the character of angels? It is a bit of a puzzle, but that is a consequence of letting loose such a genius as Dr. Stephenson appears to be.

After the Secretary of State (for the Interior) (U.S.A.) had declared that the conduct of the German Gangsters could only be compared with the "darkest period of superstition and savagery," the German Ambassador had the impudence to present a protest by Goering, Hitler and his fellow gangsters to the American Government. The acting Secretary of State sharply refused to accept the protest, and used some pretty straight language on so doing. Now Senator Pittman, who holds the important position of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has followed up what has been said by the following explicit statement:—

The people of the United States do not like the Government of Japan.

The people of the United States do not like the Government of Germany.

The people of the United States, in my opinion, are opposed to any form of dictatorial Government—Fascist or Communist.

The people of the United States have the right and power to enforce morality and justice in accordance with peace treaties with us—and they will.

Our Government does not have to use military force, and will not, unless necessary.

This is plain, straightforward language and behaviour, and it is sadly needed in a situation when our own official representatives appear to find it distasteful to express a straight and unmistakable language, either to the nation they represent or to the mob of racketeers with whom they are in communication.

The statements of the men cited are said to have the full approval of President Roosevelt, and we can well believe it. These men are realizing that one must meet a bully with firmness and a coward with courage. Had this been realized in this country earlier "Munich" would never have fallen to the level of message-carrier for Hitler, and the men who are responsible for the unspeakable crimes of the past three months would have hesitated in their course. As it is they have secured more in a few months than they could ever have dreamed of getting in their lifetime, and have placed upon the rest of Europe a burden that threatens to grow greater with the passing of time, and which will result either in Europe becoming a collection of slave states or a single slave state under the worst despotism the world has ever known.

We strongly commend the reading of one of the latest "sixpennies," *Germany and Ourselves*, by Lord Londonderry. The book has the peculiar feature of being without a clear condemnation of the acts of German leaders that have horrified decent men and women all over the world. Lord Londonderry says that the Germans after the war were treated very badly, and that what has happened is a consequence of the deplorable "peace." We

may say this because our opinion of the Versailles Treaty was expressed when it was published, and we warned the public of what would happen if the treaty was made an instrument for keeping Germany down. We did this when those who are now finding excuses for Hitler were upholding the treaty that gave the gangsters their chance. But all the blunders and evils of the peace, while explaining how such people as Goering and Hitler come to be in power, offer no justification whatever for men proclaiming their high opinion, and boasting of their friendship with men whose crimes touch the lowest levels of human depravity. It offers no justification for our statesmen accepting the promises, or pretending to rely upon the word of either Hitler or Mussolini. In such matters we believe that the strongest weapons are those of plain speech and a refusal to submit to either bullying or blackmail.

Streicher, one of Hitler's friends, and in whose hands lie very largely the direction of the persecution of the Jews, has discovered a reason for turning Jewish children out to freeze to death or die of starvation. This is that the Jews killed Jesus. A more immediate justification might be found in the fact that it was benevolent Jews who brought up Goebbels and paid for his education.

Anyway, truth is always stranger than fiction, and Streicher's reason for Jew-baiting, reminds one of the story of the drunken British sailor who, so impressed with the story just told of him of the sufferings of Jesus, violently assaulted the first Jew he met. "What is that for?" asked the Jew. "Your people killed Christ," replied the sailor. "But that was two thousand years ago." "Doesn't matter," came the retort, "I've only just heard about it." It takes some time for fact to catch up with fiction, but it usually does so.

Meanwhile we may note another point. We see that questions have been asked in Parliament concerning German method of carrying on propaganda, imposing Nazi methods and control on Germans resident here, and also the building of Nazi institutions in London. What we suggest is that our Government will permit these Nazi institutions in this country only on condition that similar institutions are permitted to Germany for the teaching of British democratic principles. No reasonable objection could be taken to this, and it is time the Gangsters gave as well as took.

Just as a reminder of the quality of the "peace" brought us as a consequence of the Munich pact, the severe weather here and on the Continent has meant the freezing to death of many of the children who have been turned out of Germany, with their parents, and who are wandering without adequate food or clothing in the No Man's Land between Germany and Poland. The old people have perished in a similar manner, but we do not stress their demise. We hope that this kind of occurrence will not interfere with Lord Londonderry's affection for his friend Goering the gangster or for the demi-God, Hitler.

One other item is cited only to further our sense of peace. On December 21 the daily papers contained an account of the execution of Peter Forster, who escaped some time ago from one of the worst of the German concentration camps. Forster was charged with killing one of the guards of the camp in the course of his escape. Forster escaped into Czechoslovakia before the Munich peace. The German Government applied for his extradition, but the Government of Czechoslovakia declined to give him up as he was a political prisoner. Now that Czechoslovakia is for all purposes part of the Reich, the new Government was forced to surrender Forster who was executed within twenty-four hours of recapture.

Dean Matthews preached a Christmas Sermon on "The Expectant Church," in the course of which he speaks of "the triumph of God's Kingdom in this world—whether

it be soon or late." We can understand the slight suggestion of petulance in his reference to something which Christ himself assured his listeners would come into effect during the lifetime of some of those present. That particular statement has already proved to be an untruth. There is absolutely no reason whatever to imagine that there will be even the remotest or most belated fulfilment of the hopes—or fears—inspired by the alleged prediction. The Fundamentalists' Poster in Red Lion Square during the Freethought Congress definitely promised that:—

"Jesus SHALL reign
Where'er the sun
Doth his successive
Journeys run."

In other words—whenever the sun begins to travel round the earth again—as it did in Joshua's time.

The *Daily Mirror* is not over-critical about whatever nonsense a clergyman writes for its columns, as witness the following from a letter signed by the Rev. H. G. Tunnicliff of Surbiton:—

The place I most long to visit in the Holy Land is the Lake of Galilee.

So many of the other sacred localities must have changed since Our Lord's days upon earth, and the identification of some is doubtful.

But water is unchanged, so that we come very near to the Master at the Virgin's Fountain in Nazareth, and by the Lake of Galilee.

What charming naïveté such a letter discloses. What an interesting observer Mr. Tunnicliff must be! How delightful are his impressions about the properties of water—"unchanged" for nineteen centuries! Martha would have said of water that had remained unchanged so long (John ii. 39) "Lord, by this time it stinketh."

We are sorry to see Canon Green, usually far less silly than the average cleric, denouncing Football Pools, in reply to a rare excursion into wisdom by Bishop David of Liverpool. Dr. David declared that these Pools are "individually harmless." He suggested a plan of taxation which might be discussed with advantage by those who do not take the view that there is some sort of immorality involved. But Canon Green declares Pools to be "a great evil," and that anybody who expends sixpence thus has "a wrong frame of mind," and that his action is "anti-social in effect and evil in its consequences." May we add that the lack of proportion exhibited in these trumpety puritanistic "moral scruples" is characteristic of religious "thinkers." Imagine anybody in the present condition of Europe and living—or getting a living—in "areas" like Salford, wasting indignation on the "pools."

The German authorities—including Hitler and von Ribbentrop—have issued an appeal to that section of the British public likely to be influenced by it. It is called *Germany Speaks*, and covers almost the whole field of German enterprise, including Art, Production, Education, Propaganda, Labour, Literature, Leisure and Foreign Policy. The gravest omissions are all references to Concentration Camps, Freedom of every kind, and the Treatment of the Jews. It is interesting to read (p. 235), that "the Rationalist foundation of Socialism was overthrown . . . but it was a Socialism grounded in Religion that attained power with the arrival of National Socialism." On another page it is said that "The Government is rooted in opposition to Rationalism" (p. 239). And Hitler's own contribution refers to "the tasks which Providence has set us"—the identical language of our own religious statesmen's allusions to God—under the nom-de-plume of "Providence." We quite appreciate all that has been said by Christian leaders about the indecent brutality of the friends of Lord Londonderry and certain other prominent Britons, but it is really time that these same Christian leaders refrained from referring to the gangsters of Germany as being irreligious.

It has been suggested that as Mussolini is not treating the Pope with respect, and as he is in accord with Hitler,

who is persecuting the Church, the Pope may remove his headquarters elsewhere. Canada, United States, and Australia have been suggested, owing to the large proportion of Roman Catholics in these places. We hope that will not take place, as it will certainly not lead to a bettering of political life, or the furthering of social liberty in any of the countries named.

But we hardly believe the Pope will adopt the policy suggested. If he is firm Mussolini will give way, as Hitler will give way to firmness from the right quarters. Moreover when Mussolini bought the Pope he took care that the payment was invested in Italian bonds, and the Papacy is not likely to risk its capital in Italy at a time when its income from Germany is so much diminished. It will not make the position of the infallible Church with its God-guided head, more impressive if it occupies the position of a refugee from its historic home. So what with one thing and another, we imagine the Pope will stay where he is.

Apropos of what has been said, here is an item from Canada, which makes the position of the Church in politics a little clearer. The *Ottawa Citizen* for December 19, reports a speech by the Rev. Arthur Caron, vice-rector of the University of Ottawa, in which he says that whenever there is a conflict between the ecclesiastical powers on questions of education and marriage, then the State must yield. That is the historic position of the Church, and it asserts its "rights" wherever and whenever it can.

The *Life of Faith* boasts in its issue for December 14, that it was the Lord's Day Observance Society that was mainly responsible for the Glasgow Exhibition not being opened on Sunday. It bombarded the Exhibition Council and all kinds of public personages. So the Exhibition was closed on Sunday, and we note that the Lord, to show his approval, sent a long succession of very wet Saturdays which prevented the Exhibition paying expenses. Now if the Exhibition had been opened on Sunday, and the wet days had also been on Sundays, what would the L.D.O.S. have said? Obviously, that it was an exhibition of the Lord's anger. But it may be that the Lord got mixed up between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday, and so sent the rain on the wrong days. It must be very trying to keep right with his chosen people who keep one day, the Christians who keep another, the Roman Catholic Church which permits members to be human on a part of Sunday, and the Protestants who will not have any humanity at all on the Lord's Day.

The *Life of Faith* says the decision to close the Exhibition gave satisfaction, not only in Scotland, but throughout the Empire. Doubtless. There must be some people in Scotland, England, the Empire, in Scotland Road, and Ratcliffe Highway, or any other district, that would be pleased with any decision. But if the matter had been put to the vote? At any rate there is a deal of difference between not believing in going to an exhibition on Sunday, and preventing others going who would like to do so. Sir Thomas Inskip's Society does not trouble itself with that consideration. If they would be miserable on Sunday, why should anyone be happy?

A new book has appeared with the title, *If I had one Sermon to Preach*. It was written by several authors. From what we know of sermonizers we strongly advise "Don't." If a man has to make a speech he will probably say something sensible in the course of its delivery. But call it a "sermon" and the very name seems to paralyse whatever capacity he has for sensible talk.

The Report of the Wakefield Education Committee proves how a determination to get religion into the schools can be crowned with success. It seems that 279 boys attended the seaside school in Hornsea established by the Authority, and the teachers took good care to use their powers to the utmost and make the unfortunate

boys religious by hook or by crook. Morning prayers preceded all school activities and evening dormitory prayers ended the day. Domestic duties were not allowed to interfere with prayers or religious instruction, while all boys were obliged to attend their particular churches on Sunday morning, and in addition hymn-singing was compulsory on every possible occasion. In fact, if Mr. Wackford Squeers had been in charge compulsion could not have been more in evidence. This impudent religious dictatorship over helpless boys gives one an idea of what religion might do again if it had the power.

The only Catholic paper in Berlin has at last been suspended indefinitely. We hold no brief for the suspension of any journal, but it is only fair to add that if Catholics were in power in this country they would suppress the *Freethinker* almost as a first measure. They should not now complain at the tables being turned upon them. It is in Austria, however, where Catholics have been so predominant for centuries, that the full force of the Nazi persecution is being felt. Scores of Catholic priests and laymen are being arrested and sent to concentration camps, and as we have often pointed out, the most stringent measures are being taken to prevent Catholic influence in the schools. Only "politically trustworthy" teachers will be allowed to teach. It will be interesting to see the sequel to all this, say in a few years time. Will the Church or the Nazi regime triumph?

The Lord is never a respecter of persons, but the way in which he scourges the faithful is often the cause of great and grave perplexity among them. He recently sent a cyclone which wiped out most of the missions in the Kistna district of British India. Why, he alone knows. Sixty chapels and school buildings were destroyed, the rice crop was also completely wiped out, and the local population is now starving. We wonder whether the converts in the district will blame the presence of the chapels and their own conversion, for example? After all, things could not have been worse had they refused God's Blessed Church and preferred their own Pagan rites.

The Rev. Clarence My, Vicar of St. Peter's, Piccadilly, asks whether "Christ would hurl a bomb." Well at any rate he did give people hell, and that is getting on.

An Islington Congregational Church pulpit was occupied by a Hebrew Rabbi. The Service was attended by Christians and Jews; the Jews doffing their hats for this occasion, and the Christians abstaining from the use of the New Testament. We applaud the intention expressed by this act of hospitality, although its incidents strike us as queer. It tends to emphasize the religious aspect of a persecution, which needs most of all to be resisted on grounds of liberty and common citizenship. It is a fact that Roman Catholics are threatened with the enmity of Hitler—who happens himself to be a Catholic. And Catholics begin to protest at that point. But we ought not to forget the historic fact that it was the Christian Church that naturalized persecution for opinion in the Western world. Hitler has, so far as persecution is concerned, plenty of Christian precedents on which to build.

The Rev. J. R. Paget, preaching to the Bedfordshire Darts Players Clubs, chose a text from 1 Sam. xx. 20. One Samuel double-top as the *Herald* puts it. We should have imagined a more appropriate text might have been found after a little research. "Search the Scriptures" is the inspired if not always inspiring advice. How about "the dart cannot hold" (Job xli. 26); in fact this chapter of Job must have given great joy to the local Dart Club. In verse 29 the Sacred Writer tells us that "Darts are counted"—a wise precaution perhaps in some Dart Team Taverns.

Never has there been anything like the theological process for turning black into white. A pearl of an example appears in *The Official Year Book of the Church of*

England. The Bishop of Leicester, after denying that the Archbishop of Canterbury's "Recall to Religion" was a "stunt," claims that it has given "much cause for quiet encouragement." ("Quiet" is good; no call for drum-beating here). The reports from the dioceses are "very impressive when read together." (Naturally the whole being always greater than the part). Yet the Bishop discloses that there has been a steady decline in the number of "confirmations," a decrease in baptisms of infants and in the number of "Easter communicants." "Much cause for quiet encouragement!" Ah yes: of course! Here it is: "Voluntary offerings . . . showed an increase in 1937 as compared with 1936." "God's in his heaven . . ." if all's well with the finance.

Ecclesiastical humour—otherwise foolishness—was well demonstrated in Chester Consistory Court on a question of memorial inscriptions. A vicar applied for a faculty (i.e., a licence: not the personal endowment so lacking among the clergy) to erect a memorial to a church worker, with the inscription, "To the Glory of God." The Chancellor amended this to, "In gratitude to God," in spite of the vicar's protest: "But the memorial is to the glory of God. This man was what he was through the grace of God. It is to God's glory that we wish to commemorate him." On a similar application from another vicar the inscription to a major was changed to "In loving memory." Mr. H. H. King, the Chancellor, possibly to console the applicants who exposed their ignorance as to what properly constituted "God's glory," remarked: "It is impossible for anybody to get the right inscription the first time." But alas! he himself left "God's glory" still as vague as the parsons' "divine inspiration" which so misled them. (Happy thought. Let the first vicar have the church worker's monument inscribed as amended, but in three words only: "Ingratitude to God." That'll larn that Chancellor fellow.)

"See how these Christians love one another!" A specimen is given by Hugh Redwood (the Editor of the Religious column in the *News-Chronicle*) in a letter sent him by a reader:—

Fundamentalists, self-styled, when writing of those they call Modernists, are apt to be highly vituperative, not to say venomous.

Mr. Redwood does not consider that these ideas "represent a Christian attitude." In a sense this is true; the old familiar "Christian attitude" was torture, imprisonment and burning at the stake. But Mr. Redwood must remember that Christian power to murder and maim has been lost to them owing to secular scepticism. After all, it is less harmful to receive "vituperation" than to be slaughtered, although the venomous abuse proves that the spirit itself remains. And could anything be more "venomous" than the orthodox belief that all who would not accept Christianity would spend eternity in hell?

The question of Prayer continues to agitate the Christian world, if we may judge by the number of books issued on the subject. One firm—Hodder's—had a full page advertisement in the Christmas Number of the *British Weekly*, starting with a head-line "OUR FIRST TASK NOW IS PRAYER." We can understand a pious publisher being anxious to unload his big shelves-full of Prayer literature. But need these publishers give the game away QUITE so crudely as when they describe one of these Prayer Books as "A simple book for simple people?" Another book on the same theme is said to be:—

The simplest book the author has ever written, it is yet his *magnum opus*. It is written for Christians who are finding it hard to pray. It is the Gospel of Prayer in its simplest, most warm-hearted and convincing terms. A fine and positive book.

We are not surprised that even a Christian—if he has had an elementary education—finds it "hard to pray." Readers should offer these wavering Christians a copy of our new booklet *Prayer: An Indictment*.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. J. THORNTON.—Technically you are right, it was the Boer Republics that declared war on Britain. Actually the Boers were manoeuvred into declaring war. We think it is now generally admitted that finance was at the bottom of the quarrel.

T. OWEN.—Thanks for copy of letter. It is good to keep these people alive to the fact that "there are others."

T. JACKSON AND L. MORRIS.—Mr. Cohen is well, but in view of certain contingencies he has promised to go slow with lecturing visits that involve long railway journeys. Next season all may be as usual.

J. WILLIAMS.—You will probably find what you want in *Language, Truth and Logic*, by A. J. Ayer (Gollancz, 1936, 5s.). It is a small book but full of meat, and on the whole a good book. We should like to see this author write another book for popular consumption, on the lines of the one we have named.

"CINE CERE."—Thanks for letter. We appreciate what you are doing in your district. If all Freethinkers would do what they could, and all can do something, 1939 would show a very rapid advance.

To Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—S. Beckersley, 3s. 10d.

S. BECKERSLEY, E. PARIENTE AND R. BURGESS.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

T. A. QUINN.—We are obliged for kind wishes which are heartily reciprocated.

G. W. ROCHDALE AND OTHERS.—Will be used later.

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

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

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

Sugar Plums

To-day (January 8), Mr. Cohen will speak in the Picture House, Market Street, Manchester. His subject will be, "The New Science and the New God." Admission is free, but there will be reserved seats at 1s. each.

As announced already the National Secular Society's Annual Dinner will take place this year on Saturday, January 28. A typographical error last week made the date January 26, an error which in the rush of producing two copies of the paper in one week was passed uncorrected. The Dinner this year will be at the Waldorf Hotel, Aldwych. The Hotel is very centrally situated, and both Dinner and Concert will be first-class.

We should much like to see a really good representation from the Provinces and Scotland this year. There will be plenty of cheap rate special trains, and as this is the chief function of its kind in the movement, the attendance ought to be representative of the Society as a

whole. One other point to bear in mind is the fact that an early application for tickets is advisable; it makes arrangements so much easier when the last minute rush is as light as possible.

Members of the National Secular Society are reminded that subscriptions are due on January 1. Also that the subscription is placed at a very low figure, quite inadequate to meet even the expenses of the office. All above the stated subscription is left to the good-will, resources and interest of the members.

In returning thanks for the many seasonable good wishes that have reached us, we venture to take advantage of the occasion by reminding all and sundry that the very best way of cheering us up is by doing what they can to extend the influence of this paper, and therefore of the Freethought movement. There have been many indications of late of the many ways in which Freethought in this country would lose in the absence of an organ such as this one. There is, as we have often said, always a new subscriber round the corner, and we should be on the look out to nab him.

C. L. Rawlinson writes:—

I was too late to procure a copy of the first edition of *Materialism Re-Stated*, but have just finished reading the new edition, and wish to express my thanks for and admiration of the work. It has made a rather difficult subject clear, and illustrates the need for restatement of old positions in the light of fresh knowledge. Otherwise we get what you will call an orthodoxy of heresy, and orthodoxy is always a little dangerous in the best of cases. At least the only exception I would make is in favour of an orthodoxy of heresy.

I must also take this occasion to lay extra stress upon the two chapters on Causation and Emergence, in my judgment the finest and most illuminating chapters in the book. It is a work that places the whole Freethought movement under an obligation to its author.

All we can say of this very flattering letter is that the book is selling remarkably well, for a second edition. But it is, of course, not merely a new edition, but a greatly enlarged and internally new one.

There is one feature of 1938 which those papers, including religious ones, that have given us summaries of the progress made in the past year have shown a striking negative feature. They have said nothing about the progress or otherwise of the Archbishop's "Recall to Religion." This was first enunciated as one means of covering up his and Lord Baldwin's manoeuvrings to get rid of Edward VIII. But it was taken up by the Nonconformists who evidently thought that if any pickings were to be had they might as well share the plunder. A great many special revival campaigns were organized, and the usual great results were announced. But the year has gone, and the Churches are in even a worse plight than they were. Congregations have not grown larger, Freethought is not less active, and worst feature of all (worst that is, for the Churches) the whole "recall" fizzled out so completely that few appear to have noted the absence of any reference to it. So long as we can manage to keep out of this country a Hitlerian rule, however much some of our public men may be disappointed in this direction, there is no chance of civilization receiving such a set-back as would be involved by a substantial revival of real Christianity.

The North London Branch opens its New Year's Syllabus with a debate, "That Christianity is not a Religion of Peace." Mr. I. Ebury takes the affirmative, and Mr. J. Barclay, chief organizer of the Peace Pledge Union, will take the negative. The debate will take place in "The Cricketers Arms," Inverness Street, near Camden Town Station, at 7.30, this evening (January 8). Other debates and lectures have been arranged for each Sunday evening until the end of March.

Mr. G. Bedborough will lecture in the Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead, this evening (January 8) at 7 o'clock, on "Penal Reform." The lecture will represent a Freethinker's attitude towards the treatment of crime and its consequences, and should provide an interesting evening for the local N.S.S. Branch and its supporters.

Dr. Kleiber, formerly General Director at the Berlin State Opera, and now a citizen of Argentina, who is due for a European tour, has cancelled his engagements for the Scala Theatre, Milan:—

I have just learned that the doors of the Scala Theatre will be closed to your Jewish fellow-citizens.

Music is made for everyone, like the sun and the air. Where this fountain of consolation, so necessary in these hard times, is denied to any human being—and that merely because he belongs to a different religion and race—I cannot collaborate, either as a Christian or as an artist.

I must therefore regretfully request you to cancel my contract, despite the great pleasure it would have given me to conduct in that splendid theatre, which recalls the noblest Italian traditions.

If this weapon of social boycott were adopted generally it would affect Germany and Italy far more than "establishing personal contacts," which means more lying on both sides, and expressions of sincerity and esteem that are taken as an encouragement for some of the worst villainies the world has yet known.

Some Old Freethought Journals

The London Investigator

In the number for April, 1856, there is an interesting account of an interview in New York with a Christian old lady, a Mrs. Rider, with whom Thomas Paine had lodged, before his death, for two years. It seems to have been overlooked by Paine's biographers. She was questioned by the reporter of the *New York Express*, and emphatically declared that Paine was one of the best men she ever knew, and that there was no truth in the stories put forward by his Christian enemies that he was intemperate:—

She always found him a very liberal man. She had often known him at late hours of the night to go out and help the poor whom he knew were in distress, and she considered him the Father of this country. At the time of his death, and during his whole sickness she was with him, and she said she never saw a man more reconciled on leaving this world than was Thomas Paine.

Unfortunately no amount of similar evidence could ever catch up with Christian lies. They are still being repeated with the same pious assurance as ever.

In the same number appears a characteristic Manifesto written by Charles Southwell, who had emigrated to Melbourne. He was already considered the "most efficient political orator in the Colony" by the *Melbourne Age*, and he was anxious to be elected on the Legislative Council as the representative of a Party—"the Party of LIFE, MOVEMENT, PROGRESS, LIBERTY," as he put it. In spite of his excellent programme, I do not think he was elected as he went a little later to New Zealand.

It is not easy, perhaps, at this time of the day, to get at the truth of what happened to Southwell in New Zealand. His splendid work for Freethought while in England, has often been referred to in these pages; he has left his own pamphlets, which can still be read, and which are extraordinarily interesting. Yet in the January number, 1857, of the *London Investigator* there is a reprint of an article from the *New Zealand Southern Cross*, which makes Southwell give almost a

recantation of his Freethought views. The date of the paper is July, 1856. Southwell was speaking for "The Freedom of Religion Society," and praised the Bible as a "sacred" work in no unmeasured terms. Robert Cooper seems to have been stung to the quick by this change in his comrade's opinions. It was about this time that Thomas Cooper the Chartist, who had written a poem—*The Purgatory of Suicides*—perhaps now forgotten, but which was very popular for many years, had also gone over to the Christian camp. Robert Cooper wrote:—

Mr. Thomas Cooper has not been long alone in his apostacy. A companion has been found in no less a personage than Charles Southwell. Doubtless the incident will afford an agreeable variety in the renegade camp. The ponderous solemnity of the author of the *Purgatory of Suicides* will be a sober contrast to the sportive audacity of the First Editor of the *Oracle of Reason*. When in the pulpit (to employ a theatrical phrase) Mr. Cooper will unquestionably excel in the "heavy business" and Mr. Southwell in the "light parts." Should there be a revival of religious performances on the stage as of old, Mr. Southwell will make an inimitable clerical harlequin and Mr. Cooper a stolid orthodox pantaloan.

Needless to say, it was with reluctance that the account was reprinted from the New Zealand paper; the "conversion" of a man like Charles Southwell (if this really had taken place) was a matter of great sorrow among his old friends.

In June, 1856, Robert Owen commenced his *Autobiography*, and most entertaining it is, though very much on the brief side. He was actually, at the age of twenty, managing "a new, difficult, and extensive manufactory, and the direction of five hundred men, women, and children employed in it," because, as he said, he acted and thought differently from his fellow-men. At twenty-five, he created another new establishment with similar success; and at twenty-eight, a much more extended establishment with a population of thirteen hundred increasing to two thousand. And he continued this work for over twenty-five years. It is not possible here to give more details of this great man as related in the pages of the *London Investigator*. Owen requires a few articles to himself. But at even his advanced age he was as active as ever, and was elected the President of "The Reformers of the World," in May, 1856. Never was a life more passionately devoted to reform than that of Robert Owen, and to him there can be no doubt that society owes a tremendous debt.

The *London Investigator* continued winning popularity as a fearless journal, and it teems with interesting information on many out-of-the-way subjects connected with Freethought. For example, there is a discussion as to whether William Hone, who through the publication of the Apocryphal New Testament and one or two so-called blasphemous works had been looked upon as a decided sceptic, really was a Freethinker. Hone went over to open Christianity in his later days, and that fearless Freethinker, James Watson, gave an excellent account of Hone, whom he knew well, "though not on speaking terms." Watson claimed William Hone never was at any time a Freethinker, but rather was on the pious side, and when he became the editor of the *Patriot*, a Dissenting newspaper, "wrote a great deal of drivelling cant." Many valuable items of a similar kind will be found scattered through the pages of the journal, and they seem to me to be necessary for any future historian of the Freethought movement from the popular side as distinguished from the purely academic one.

The last number of the third volume contained a sad farewell from the editor. His health had never

been good but the work he imposed upon himself lecturing, debating, and writing, proved too much for him, and it was with the greatest regret that he relinquished his paper. He had worked continuously for twenty years upon very meagre pay—though it is only fair to mention that a Mr. Samuel Fletcher proved a very generous patron, and at his death, left a sum of money which enabled him to work without fear of the future. He finished his *Bible and its Evidences*, and devoted the next ten years of his life to political work, dying in 1868.

Through the pages of the three volumes of the *London Investigator* will be found many articles by "Anthony Collins," the pen name of W. H. Johnson. They make excellent reading, as he could write, and was particularly well versed in the work of the great Deists. The curious reader will find some excellent examples of his style and method in a little book which was later widely circulated, entitled *Half Hours with the Freethinkers*, edited by Iconoclast, A. Collins, and J. Watts. It would not be unfair to say that Johnson's life and work are by this time completely forgotten; yet he certainly played a big part in the Free-thought propaganda of the second half of the nineteenth century. He lived to be an old man, forgotten and despised by many of his former comrades—perhaps with reason. I hope to devote an article to him some day, for at least one episode of his career is not known, and it would help to elucidate the mystery connected with the foul and libellous biography of Bradlaugh properly suppressed by the Courts. This happened thirty years after he undertook the editorship of the paper; when Cooper left, Johnson changed its title to the *Investigator*, undertook to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, and received the same support.

His first number contained a report of the speech made by Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose, at the 120th New York anniversary of the birthday of Paine. This lady was one of the most eloquent of the women speakers on the Free-thought platform, and devoted a great part of her life to the Cause, dying at an advanced age in England. Needless to say, such an advocate excelled herself on her subject. Johnson himself also wrote a great deal, and in an article on Woolston championed that stout old Deist to the utmost. His articles still make invaluable reading.

With the October number of 1857 Johnson decided to reduce the price of his journal from 2d. to 1d., in an effort to increase its circulation; and in the same number commenced the series of "Lives of Bible Heroes" by Iconoclast, republished with great success afterwards in penny pamphlets. But by March, 1858, the *Investigator* passed altogether into Bradlaugh's hands, and was published twice a month. It proved a valuable apprenticeship for his *National Reformer* later.

H. CUTNER

(To be concluded)

If you want to do good in a particular way, and want to know how you can do it effectively, give your heart a rest and your brain a chance.—Lord Justice Moulton.

Christianity has ever been the enemy of human love; it has forever cursed and expelled and crucified the one passion which sweetens and smiles on human life, which makes the desert blossom as the rose, and which glorifies the common things and common ways of earth. It made of this, the angel of life, a shape of sin and darkness, and bade the woman whose lips were warm with the first kisses of her lover believe herself accursed and ashamed.

Ouida.

"The Heavens are Telling—"

The Atheism of Astronomy: A Refutation of the Theory that the Universe is Governed by Intelligence, by Woolsey Teller: New York, The Truth Seeker Company, Price 2s. 6d. post free.

MR. WOOLSEY TELLER is Vice-President, and one of the ablest campaigners of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism in New York. His scientific lectures at the Ingersoll Forum always attract crowds who complain that he does not lecture often enough.

In *The Atheism of Astronomy*, Mr. Teller sets himself the task of proving the Psalmist wrong in asserting that "The Heavens proclaim the Glory of God and the Firmament sheweth His handiwork." Mr. Teller says the Heavens are telling us nothing at all about God, and that those "twinkling points of light called stars" are not:—

For ever singing, as they shine
"The Hand that made us is divine."

Of course to the Atheist—as also to a genuine poet like Thomas E. Brown—"Nothing speaks but Man. . . Him I hear and understand." There has never yet been any God to break "the silence of the spheres."

The battle of Astronomical science was won long ago—not easily nor without sacrifice. The justification of Mr. Teller's stimulating book is that—at least in England—no editor of a daily paper with a great circulation or of any popular periodical will decline to sponsor—or write—about the "Architect of the Universe" and other unscientific godly nonsense.

Mr. Teller's book is an exposition of the futility of "Design" or "Purpose" in the universe. He shows that the observed movements of "the heavenly bodies" testify against—not in favour of—intelligence behind phenomena. In great detail he patiently follows the birth, life and death of immense—and small—"worlds" in space. His facts are fully documented. His descriptions are vivid. His logic is unassailable. His book is a useful antidote to much that is written to-day by "religious scientists" (!) whose avowed object is as Mr. Chapman Cohen says: "to make plain, not the greatness but the impotence of Science."

We should like to commend Mr. Teller's point of view and to tell him he has scored sufficiently well to encourage him to pursue his popular studies into other branches of Science. If, as we believe, this is the author's first long book, we can assure him that he knows how to write an eminently readable book.

Perhaps the following quotation will whet the reader's appetite for more:

The process of planetary birth is exceedingly round-about, and depends upon the most fortuitous circumstances. A nebula must first of all rotate for aeons before it condenses into stars. Now stars are intensely hot, gaseous bodies, and cannot bear life at any stage of their existence; planets alone cool to a point where life becomes possible. But planets, by a bad stroke of cosmic "wisdom," are exceedingly scarce. A star before it can give birth to a planet must approach another star close enough to raise "tides" on its own surface. The chance of any star doing this is infinitely small, considering the vast distances which separate the stars. It is a case of blind man's buff, in which a fortuitous meeting of stars is like the drawing of a single prize from countless blanks. When, by the merest chance, two stars do approach to within about three diameters' distance of each other, a group of planets is born. "The calculation shows," says Jeans, "that even after a star has lived its life of millions of millions of years, the chance is still about a hundred thousand to one

against its being a sun surrounded by planets." Now if life is important to the universe, planets ought to be more numerous than the stars, and their process of origin should depend upon something more indicative of intelligence than a fortuitous meeting of stars. A "hundred thousand to one" chance of anything occurring is not reflective of "plan" or "design." The result is precisely what might be expected in a blind and groping series of events. Even when a planet is born it is not assured of life; and of the nine planets of our system only one is an inhabited world. It is a dismal picture of stellar "wisdom."

And even after a planet is born, it must, in order to be a suitable abode for life, be neither too hot nor too cold, too near nor too far away from its sun. If it is either of these it will remain among the number of lifeless globes. Out of 300,000 stars only a handful of planets has been born, and of this handful only one is known to possess life. The result is even less than what might be expected under the laws of chance or in the spinning of a roulette wheel.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Letters to a Christian Friend

(2) 'THE WORLD'S "FAILURE OF NERVE"'

MY DEAR CHARLES,

In my last letter I suggested the obvious which is so often denied or ignored—that the Christianity of the New Testament cannot be understood unless considered from a religious and individual angle, and not from a social angle. Its motives are religious, its scheme supernatural, its values other-worldly. This again can be properly understood only against its historical setting of emerging Christianity in the Græco-Roman world.

If Christianity had really been an advance by mankind intellectually or philosophically, socially or scientifically, if it had been a progressive step in the way men faced life—this life—its emergence could be more easily accepted and understood. But it wasn't. In Christianity men and women found a way not to face life, but to escape from it. It was not a step forward, but a step backward from that amazing level of joyous, self-confident acceptance, appreciation and development of life which had characterized the greatest periods of Ancient Greece centuries before. However, let us not blame Christianity too much for that, because even in its spiritual decadence it was not original! It was simply one of the later forms taken by the disease of "otherworldliness" from which the Ancient World suffered as its power and secular faith declined.

What was the secret of those great pioneers of Ancient Greece and of later Hellenism who, in previous ages, had taken such a confident grasp of life; and to whom philosophy, science, art, literature, architecture, medicine, political and social idealism, rationalism, Christianity itself, and the whole of modern Western civilization owe so tremendous—and so often unacknowledged—a debt?

Is it not significant that a writer on the side of the angels who agrees that "our debt to the Greeks embraces the whole domain of secular culture," has to agree also that "no race has been so free from otherworldliness or has striven to embody aims and values so entirely in the actual conditions of human experience"?¹ So, too, one must emphasize again that the Greeks of old were never in bondage to either a sacred book or a priesthood.

Prof. de Burgh, whom I have just quoted, also refers to the Greeks' "habit of free inquiry, the confi-

dence in reason, the untiring energy of thought and action, and the delight in the actual world, present before man's eyes as a field for practical experiment, æsthetic creation, and reasoned knowledge."²

Prof. Gilbert Murray³ tells us how "the ancient Greek spent a great part of his philosophical activity in trying, without propounding supernatural rewards and punishments, or at least without laying stress on them, to think out what the Good of man really was"; and how the Peripatetic philosophers "instead of passionately saving souls, diligently pursued knowledge." So Greek thought, "always sincere and daring, was seldom brutal, seldom ruthless or cruel . . . and did not try to compel others to take the same way. . . . We find almost no warring of sects, no mutual tortures, or even blasphemies." It was the spirit of *sophrosynê*—"that almost indefinable spirit that was temperance, gentleness, the spirit that knows itself fallible and thinks twice before it hates and curses and persecutes, the spirit that in any trouble thinks and is patient, that saves and not destroys."

Unfortunately, however, the Greeks were not sitting on top of the world for long. They began to get some nasty knocks, and eventually the world got them down. Then—as so often happens—they gave the world up as a bad job, and turned their attention to the "next world" and the blessings of "life everlasting."

The main rot had set in with Plato, after whom the tendency was away from the outer world towards the world of the soul. At various times thereafter this tendency became intensified among the Greeks, and among the Romans and other inhabitants of the Mediterranean world (as among every other people that has lived), when things seemed to be going from bad to worse in this life. By the time that the Roman Empire was in its decline and Christianity in its infancy, the tendency had reached its height—or its depth.

There had come, says Prof. Murray, "a period based on the consciousness of manifold failure, and consequently touched both with morbidity and with that spiritual exaltation which is so often the companion of morbidity. . . . This sense of failure, this progressive loss of hope in the world, in sober calculation, and in organized human effort, threw the later Greek [and the Roman] back upon his own soul, upon the pursuit of personal holiness, upon emotions, mysteries and revelations, upon the comparative neglect of this transitory and imperfect world for the sake of some dream-world far off, which shall subsist without sin or corruption, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."⁴

In the years of the "decline and fall"—when the Roman Empire was staggering through its period of disintegration, under burdens of heavy taxation, financial exhaustion, economic and military decadence, and civil discord—men in whose hearts mingled apathy, world-weariness and fear turned readily for relief to the flood of new and old saviour, redeemer and mystery religions that poured in from the East.

"Institutions in political, social and religious life which had the prestige of centuries behind them fell to pieces and were obliged to assume new forms."⁵ In this age of easy acceptance, with a multitude of creeds and cults jostling and influencing each other, and influenced in turn by the Hellenic systems of thought, there began a period of religious and moral synthesis and syncretism. When the period was over,

¹ *The Legacy of the Ancient World*.

² *Five Stages of Greek Religion*.

³ *Ibid.*: reference to "(and the Roman)" inserted, as Murray is writing specifically about the Greeks.

⁴ Paul Krüger, *Hellenismus und Judentum im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*; quoted by Prof. G. H. Box, *Early Christianity and its Rivals* (Benn's).

⁵ *The Legacy of the Ancient World*, W. G. de Burgh.

Christianity had emerged not only as the victor of this vast revival and conflict of religions, but also as, in large part, its product.

"Throughout the great Roman world," says another of its accepted historians, Prof. Breasted, "men were longing for some assurance regarding the life beyond the grave, and in the midst of the trials and burdens of this life they wistfully sought the support and strength of a divine protector. Little wonder that the multitudes were irresistibly attracted by the comforting assurances of these oriental faiths, and the blessed future insured by their 'mysteries' . . . Even highly educated men sometimes followed the multitude and yielded to the fascination of the mysterious religions coming in from the East."⁶

Although the spirit of Greece "took captive her rude conqueror" of Rome, and Hellenism had transformed the world and filled life with new and fascinating interests, the glorious chapter seemed over and in vain. It was the age of disintegration—economic, social, political, religious, and moral—and an age of melancholy, of defeatism, and of "escapism." Men sought refuge and escape either in philosophies which attempted to whittle down or deny desires that could not be satisfied in existing conditions; or in religions which transferred those desires and their satisfaction on to the other-worldly plane.

And the result? Here is Gilbert Murray's picture of the process when complete. Significantly he entitles it, "The failure of nerve."

Anyone who turns from the great writers of classical Athens, say Sophocles or Aristotle, to those of the Christian era must be conscious of a great difference in tone. There is a change in the whole relation of the writer to the world about him. The new quality is not specifically Christian; it is just as marked in the Gnostics and Mithras-worshippers as in the Gospels and the Apocalypse, in Julian and Plotinus as in Gregory and Jerome.

It is hard to describe. It is a rise of asceticism, of mysticism, in a sense, of pessimism; a loss of self-confidence, of hope in this life and of faith in normal human effort; a despair of patient inquiry, a cry for infallible revelation; an indifference to the welfare of the State, a conversion of the soul to God. It is an atmosphere in which the aim of the good man is not so much to live justly, to help the society to which he belongs and enjoy the esteem of his fellow-creatures; but rather, by means of a burning faith, by contempt for the world and its standards, by ecstasy, suffering and martyrdom, to be granted pardon for his unspeakable unworthiness, his immeasurable sins. There is an intensifying of certain spiritual emotions; an increase of sensitiveness, a failure of nerve.⁷

What a pathetic contrast to the free and confident humanity that had met us in Greece! But though we have spent our time mid melancholy to-night, Charles, there is a happier sequel. The "Greek spirit" did not die after all. It went on flickering—and then it flamed again. For there came the Renaissance, Humanism, the Reformation, the Revolutions, and the Modern World—man's rediscovery of man and nature. That, too, is what we may call the "Greek spirit." It is with us to-day. It is in me. It is in you, Charles; except that you—quite wrongly—call it Christian. But about that we will quarrel some other time.

With all good wishes to Mary, the boys, and you for 1939.

Yours affectionately,

R. H. S. STANDFAST.

⁶ *Ancient Times*, J. H. Breasted.

⁷ *Five Stages of Greek Religion*.

Correspondence

FREETHOUGHT IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I am glad to report that my friend Mr. Curda Lipovsky has now been released owing to the efforts of his friends. I note that in the mind of your compositor he was doomed, though I would suggest that his situation, though ticklish, was not necessarily laughable.

Readers may be interested to learn that, particularly in Slovakia, the swing back to reaction has been marked in Czechoslovakia; portraits of Masaryk are being replaced by crucifixes in the schools, for example. The Volna Myslenka is the only Freethought Society which has, so far, not been suppressed.

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

FLASHBACKS

SIR,—I was very pleased to read the article "Flashbacks," by Mimmermus, December 25, 1938. It recalled many prominent Freethinkers who fought for the "Cause" through much turmoil and strife. Old Freethinkers like myself will have their memories refreshed. These grand pioneers should not be forgotten, and a book containing a brief sketch of their lives would be very useful for the present generation of Freethinkers, although I knew every Freethinker mentioned by Mimmermus. Yet there are a few more worthy of mention. Dr. Aveling, Charles J. Hunt, J. W. Gott, George Weir, Ernest Paek, John Grange, J. Greevz Fisher, A. Dipper, Touzeau Paris, W. J. Ramsey, etc.

Almost every county in England has had Freethinkers. Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire and Lancashire being conspicuous, and it would be interesting if Freethinkers would send in lists of men and women who fought for Freethought (locally). It would revive old memories.

Sixty years ago I heard Joseph Symes lecture in the Market Place, Crook, on the Design Argument, and have virtually been a Freethinker ever since. Here is a list of men I knew, real Freethinkers, who did not hide their Freethought, and who could always be depended upon.

Michael Stitt, Grocer, Crook, Co. Durham; Hugh Stitt, Grocer, Crook, Co. Durham; John Robinson (Sunnyside), Co. Durham; David Robinson (Sen), (Chester-le-Street), Co. Durham; Thomas Birtley (Chester-le-Street), Co. Durham; Frank Roos, Senior (Sunnyside), Co. Durham; John Hume (Willington), Co. Durham; Thomas Longstaff (Sadler) (Willington), Co. Durham; James Newton (Willington), Co. Durham; Edward Pigford, Miner, (Willington), Co. Durham; William Dunn, William Manuel, James Ditchburn, Joseph Close (Senior), and John Miller, Co. Durham; Joseph Brown (Newcastle-on-Tyne); Samuel Peacock (South Shields); Andrew Shield (Felling-on-Tyne); J. G. Bartram (Newcastle-on-Tyne); Robert Bell (Oxhill, Co. Durham); Martin Weatherburn (Northumberland)..

J. JOSEPH CLOSE, JUN.

A.—B.C.—D.

SIR,—With your treatment of "Our 'Tailed' Minds," and "The Grip of the Past," it becomes evident that there are things more important than "Challenging God" or slaying a religion.

You say: Intellectually, the Atheist has given up this scale of (Christian) values. "Emotionally, he was still in the grip of his early Christian teaching; . . ."

"Freethought speakers . . . were often still under the influence of their early thinking." Again: "Nothing is harder than to outgrow the influence of the education one gets and the impressions one forms in early years."

Not even the great G. W. Foote was immune from "the unconscious influence of early religious beliefs on one who believed he had completely outgrown them." There are always "religious lingerings in the minds of those who consider themselves free from the influence of their early and formally discarded creeds."

You make it crystal clear that we must begin with the child. (The Roman Catholics are wise in this). Catch 'em young!

"Train up a child in the way it should go."

The Freethought Movement exists chiefly for adults. Where is the League of Young Atheists? Where a Secular Sunday School? True there has been a rippling for Secular Education, and you have enjoined upon parents who are Atheists to withdraw their children during "religious instruction" given in the schools.

But, suppose the child is denied the pleasure of hymn-singing, prayer, and Bible-reading; where will he be when he comes to history?

Historians, writers and Atheists still use the hieroglyphics "A.D." and "B.C." after dates, and the young enquiring mind will want to know what these mean. Not one teacher in ten would say it merely means "before or after the 'Christian' era." If an E were added in both cases, and it became A.C.E. and B.C.E., the "Christian" interpretation would still be rivetted on the child's mind.

Left to the imagination of the child, "Anno Domini" could scarcely be="in the year of our Lord." B.C. might be="before Cæsar," or before Columbus"; but let the teacher explain that it means: "before Christ," then there is no question about such a "person" having lived.

"The influence of education"! You have put your finger on the spot, and one shudders to think of the battles that have to be fought.

TOM BENNETT.

THE FALLACY OF RACE

There is widely current a vague belief that the national characteristics of the people of any country are in the main due to innate characters. But there can be no serious question that this popular assumption is erroneous and that national characteristics, at any rate all those that distinguish the peoples of the European countries, are in the main the expression of different traditions. There are innate differences of mental constitution between the races and sub-races of men, and between the peoples of European countries; and these innate peculiarities are very important, because they exert through long periods of time a constant bias or moulding influence upon the growth of national culture and traditions. But relatively to the national peculiarities acquired by each individual in virtue of his participation in the traditions of his country, the innate peculiarities are slight, and are almost completely obscured in each individual by these superimposed acquired characters. If the reader is inclined to doubt the truth of these statements, let him make an effort of imagination and suppose that through a period of half a century every child born to English parents was at once exchanged (by the power of a magician's wand) for the children of the French or other European nation. Soon after the close of this period the English nation would be composed of individuals of French extraction, and the French nation of individuals of English extraction. It is, I think, clear, that in spite of this complete exchange of innate characters between the two nations there would be but little immediate change of national characteristics. The French people would still speak French, and the English people would still speak English, with all the local diversities to which we are accustomed and without perceptible change of pronunciation. The religion of the French would still be predominantly Roman Catholic, and the English people would still present the same diversity of religious creeds. The course of political institutions would have suffered no profound change, the customs and habits of the two peoples would exhibit only such changes as might be attributed to the lapse of time. . . . The inhabitant of France would still be a Frenchman, and the inhabitant of England an Englishman to all outward appearances, save that the physical appearance of the two people would be transposed. And we may go even further and assert that the same would hold good if a similar exchange of infants were effected between the English and any other less closely allied nation, say the Turks or the Japanese.

From "Social Psychology," by W. McDougal.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) : 7.30, A Lecture. Weather permitting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond) : 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Collins, Tuson and Mrs. N. Buxton.

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH (The Cricketers' Arms, Inverness Street, Camden Town, N.W.1) : 7.30, Debate—"That Christianity is not a Religion of Peace." *Affir.*: Mr. L. Ebury. *Neg.*: Mr. J. Barclay (Chief Organizer, Peace Pledge Union).

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4) : 7.30, Mr. H. Boddington (Director, The London Psychic Education Centre)—"Are Ghosts Real?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, W. B. Curry, M.A., B.Sc.—"Peace with the Dictators."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware, W.) : 7.30, Mrs. N. B. Buxton—"Spiritualism."

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane) : 7.0, G. Bedborough—"Penal Reform."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Kirkgate) : 7.15, Mr. J. Backhouse—"The Origin of Christianity."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Soul in the Making."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow) : 7.0, Mr. J. Harrison Maxwell, M.A.F.S. (Scot.) Lantern Lecture—"Prehistoric Scotland."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mr. H. J. R. Lane, M.A.—"Psychology and the Moral Life."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street) : 7.0, Walter Fletcher (Birkenhead)—"The Case Against Christianity."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (The Picture House, Market Street, Manchester) : 7.0, Chapman Cohen—"The New Science and the New God." Admission Free. Reserved seats 6d. and 1s. each.

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