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Views and Opinions

(Continued from page 17)

The Pull of the Past

THE main subject of this series of notes is the persistence of primitive ideas with both those who avow their acceptance of religious beliefs, and those who believe they are completely free from their influence. From the latter group one may expect a very strong reply of "not guilty," but no one ought to be greatly surprised at finding that the statement indicates an important and general truth. We are all born into a society where institutionalized religion forms an important part of our environment; and the majority of Atheists have been fervent believers until they reached maturity—or at least until they had almost outgrown their adolescent period. In addition our language is deeply impregnated with animistic implications, and many of our social customs are non-understandable if religion is left out of account. In the circumstances there is almost as little ground for astonishment on finding that a child bears a facial resemblance to its parents as there is for surprise that our recently acquired scientific outlook is vitiated by the prevalence of primitive frames of mind.

The conflict between Atheism and Theism has for long had as one of its chief features the question of a dualist universe. Existence was made up, said the Theist, of "mind" and "matter," not merely as different aspects of experience but as ultimate facts. The Atheist, of course, never disputed the existence of phenomena called "mind," what he denied was the thesis that "mind" was causally independent of material conditions. Neither Theist nor Atheist denied the actual association of mind and matter, but the Atheist insisted that the relation between the two was that of cause and effect, whilst the Theist admitted the association but denied the causal connexion. I think a great deal, if not all of the confusion was ultimately a question of a right or wrong conception of causation. It is the views held of this

that serve as a striking illustration of the persistency of primitive ideas, almost consciously by the Theist, and quite unconsciously by the Atheist.

* * *

Body and Mind

The Theistic position as once very generally expressed, and still, to a great extent, current, was that "What is in the effect must be in the cause, and that as mind is mind and matter is matter, and as one cannot trace mind in any analysis of matter, it is impossible to derive one from the other." The Atheist was challenged to show trace of either life or mind by an examination of material substances. Sometimes the animal structure was likened to a piano (a favourite figure of Sir Oliver Lodge) where the wires and hammers played the part of a channel for the melodies that eventuated; sometimes the organism was pictured as a mere channel for "soul" or "spirit." At death, the medium of communication was broken and the "spirit"—the real person—had to be contented with occasional manifestations at a Spiritualist gathering, or a night out at some haunted house seeking whatever comfort could be derived from a series of moans and groans.

The retort of the ordinary Freethinker was that vital and mental phenomena were always associated with material conditions, and that the relation of mind and body was that of structure and function. Moreover the association of life and mind with material conditions was invariable; it was an indisputable fact, and it was for the Theist to prove that the two could be decisively separated. In this discussion (still in being, although nowadays disguised by a great splash of technical terms) the Theist represented a direct connexion with the most primitive ideas of uneducated mankind. Take away the modern phraseology, and there is nothing substantial in the position that would not be familiar and acceptable to present-day savages. But the Freethinker too often showed that his emancipation from early religious teaching was not quite so complete as he imagined.

It may be noted that between the two there was a little recognized agreement. They were agreed that in actual fact "mind" and "matter" were always associated. The difference lay in the Materialist usually insisting that life and mind were products of material forces in such a way that one day one might reasonably hope completely to describe them in terms of physics and chemistry. (Personally I have often wondered why physics and chemistry. Why not physics alone?) The Theist declined to admit even the possibility that there could be more than an instrumental connexion between mind and matter, and so fell back on that asylum of ignorance—God. So long as these positions continued without a further analysis of the situation, it looked like a deadlock. And all the time the idea at the base of the statement as set

forth by numerous Materialists, actually reached back to the most primitive conception of causation.

* * *

Cause and Effect

I have dealt with this question of causation at length in my *Materialism Restated*, and must confine myself here to the minimum of exposition required to make the position clear. There is no question that the primary conception of "Cause" is directly derived from the push and pull associated with human effort. It is in order to get rid of this confusing association that writers such as Bertrand Russell desire to get rid of the word "cause" altogether and substitute mathematical symbols. But in that dense atmosphere of superstition in which human thinking begins "cause" stands for the activity of that riot of ghosts or gods that is a universal feature of primitive life. A cause is a cause because it is something set in action by a spirit, a ghost, or a god. Something passed from the cause to the effect, and the something that passed was the "mana" of the unseen agents by which man was surrounded.

In some form that notion is still in being. Nearly all the defenders of the Roman Church use this argument, not, of course, stated as plainly as I have stated it, but from Aquinas down to Belloc it is the essence of their position. There is still the position that there can be nothing in the effect that is not in the cause. They must keep to this theory, because once it is given up the logical case for a God breaks down. But it was this notion of something passing from the "cause" to the effect that Hume set himself to demolish, and after a careful examination he decided that all we had to go upon as a basis for our belief in causation was invariable succession. When one event is uniformly followed by another we call the precedent, the cause and what follows, the effect. But there was no ground whatever for concluding that anything passed from one to the other, and no other ground from which we might logically infer causation.

So far as Hume's aim of destroying the primitive idea of something passing from the cause to the effect was concerned, his analysis was brilliantly successful. But it left the position so far unsatisfactory. It could not prevent the Theist still obstinately defending the primitive conception of something in the nature of spirit passing from the cause to the effect, and it left the Materialist defending a substantially negative position. This became the position of the vast majority of Atheists until but yesterday.

* * *

The Meaning of Causation

To put the matter colloquially, both the Theist and the Atheist were barking up the wrong tree. When the Theist argued that the Materialist to prove his case must show that the elements of life and mind may be detected in material substances, he was committing the same blunder as did the Materialist when he said that one day science would be able to explain life and mind in terms of Physics and Chemistry. They were both looking for something that was not there. In science, "laws" are framed in order to describe accurately and completely the behaviour of certain groups of phenomena, and a "law" is valid only so far as it covers the phenomena under consideration. But, if causation is no more than unbroken succession, if there is no intrinsic compulsion (a bad word, but it will best bring home the idea I have in mind) then the invariability of succession might reasonably be held to be the consequence of something approaching the Theist's god. Again, the Theist often met the Atheist with the complaint that when he said that no trace of soul or spirit was ever found by analysing the human body, he was trying to seek in analysis what

was the result of synthesis. This was met by the Atheist retorting, with equal cogency, with the same argument, but with the indefensible assumption that wider knowledge might enable us to express life and mind in terms of physics and chemistry.

Curiously enough when Atheist and Theist were taunting each other with the foolishness of trying to find in analysis what was only possible with synthesis both had come within easy distance of an understanding of the true nature of causation, an understanding that had been hindered by the persistence of the primitive notion of cause. As that very sane thinker, and Freethinker, Professor John Dewey, says in his fine work *Experience and Nature* (1929):—

The view held, or implied, by some "mechanists," which treats an initial term (cause) as if it had an inherent generative force which it somehow emits and bestows upon its successor [effect] is all of a piece with the view held by teleologists which implies that an end brings about its own antecedents. . . . From the standpoint of causal sequence, or the order with which science is concerned, qualities are superfluous, irrelevant and immaterial [that is, the attempt to trace the qualities of the effect in the cause is quite beside the point at issue] We could never predict their occurrence from the fullest acquaintance with the properties that form the objects of knowledge [in the cause] . . . Psycho-physical does not denote an abrogation of the physio-chemical, nor a peculiar mixture of something physical and something psychical, it denotes the possession of certain qualities not displayed by the animate.*

When the Theist challenged the Atheist to find in material condition any trace of life or mind, the adequate reply would have been, not to say that one day we hope to be able to do this, but to reject the proposition as nonsensical, and to insist that in every true effect there is always something that by no conceivable amount of knowledge would we ever be able to deduce from the cause. No amount of knowledge concerning the properties of hydrogen and oxygen would enable anyone to forecast that together, under suitable conditions, there would originate wetness. And what is true of this particular phenomenon is true wherever we are dealing with a true case of causation. As I have said hundreds of times, water does not follow the mixture of H. & O., water *is* that combination. Men have been looking for succession where they should have been noting a combination or co-operation. The cause of an effect is the factors considered separately, the effect is the factors in combination.

Life and mind, then, presents us with nothing new in the nature of causation in general. When we have indicated *all* the concerted conditions from which life and mind emerge, we have all the knowledge concerning causation that is possible. We have discovered the *cause* when we have stated all the conditions necessary to the emergence of the effect. Once the product of a combination is known we can in future count upon a repetition of the effect. If attention had been concentrated on the facts of the situation, instead of the view of the problem being confused by the primitive notion of the nature of "Cause," one of the most prolific causes of philosophic controversy would have been avoided.

Next week I will carry the matter a step further in considering the case of emergence. Meanwhile I must commend readers who wish to study the question further to my book on *Materialism*.

CHAPMAN COHEN

* The words in brackets are mine; they are inserted to make quite clear the meaning of the selected passages. I may add that I am more pleased to find a view of causation for which I have been contesting for nearly fifty years, not merely advocated by this great writer, but making rapid headway among writers on the philosophy of science.

The Dusk of Dogma

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Keats.

"The future is not in the hands of fate, but in
ours."—*Jusserand.*

RELIGION is decaying rapidly. So far as this country is concerned, this means that the Christian Religion is dying, for that is the particular form of superstition which has received State recognition here. It is now, roughly speaking, just over a century since organized rebellion against this Oriental creed began to be manifested. The intellects of men began to revolt against a system which left out of account some of the most crying needs of humanity, and some of the grimmest facts of human life. Certain people, of real ability, asked themselves whether a two-thousand-years-old Eastern religion could be reconciled with, not only the teaching of science, but with ordinary common sense, and the ideals of Democracy.

Men who approached the consideration of this problem found themselves in an unexpected and unwelcome position. They had approached the subject from a purely intellectual and humanitarian point of view, and they were confronted immediately by the bludgeon of brute force. They sought to free their fellow men from priestly tyranny, but they soon found themselves in jail. Priestcraft seemed omnipotent, and the individual quite powerless. Yet the critics were as determined as they were clear-sighted, and they pushed their criticism to its inevitable conclusion. Reform meant intellectual liberty for the ordinary citizen, but the priests would have none of it. With the wrong-headedness of Cave-men, these clerics sought to perpetuate the reign of the Stone Age.

It was only to be expected that priests should be in love with their own opinions; that they should pretend they were right and all others wrong. But they had only to look up from bibles and hymn-books to notice that their creed was undermined, their dogmas were questioned, and that their religion was being explained away. The critics were logical, clear, consistent, and confident. Thomas Paine, Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, Huxley, Frazer, Strauss, Renan, and Haeckel, with their colleagues and disciples, formed a phalanx of criticism which was invincible. Such solvent forces could not fail to have a serious effect on thoughtful laymen. The critics did their work only too well. To-day, no one worth mentioning is so Orthodox, so cocksure in religious matters, as most men and women were a century ago. Indeed, in intellectual circles, the very conception of an absolute right and wrong has perished from common thinking.

Yet some curious happenings follow this crisis in religious affairs. Defeated in argument, worsted in logic, exposed as survivals from the days of Stone Age Ignorance, and faced with wavering loyalty from their congregations, Priestcraft still maintains a bold front. In their vestries they may say, "Who's afraid?" but in the pulpits they still recite their abracadabra with the old, saucy assurance, and brazen-faced confidence. What is the explanation of this discredited institution still existing in a state of suspended animation? Only one person in nineteen regularly attends a place of worship, yet the priests still play the sedulous ape to a vanished authority, and still pretend that

"God's in His heaven.
All's right with the world."

and take the silver collections as they have always done.

The answer is that religion is a business, and has

never been anything else. Priests are living on the huge reserves of a gigantic vested interest. In short, they possess tons and tons of money, and in many directions they are actually getting richer. For example, there are fifty churches in the heart of the City of London, nineteen of which have been earmarked as being derelict, and the remainder have great difficulty in getting congregations. But the comfortable salaries of the priests-in-charge are still paid with regularity, and the site-values of these churches have increased many times over during the past century. Similarly, whilst the actual number of priests has decreased, the number of bishops has increased from sixty to three hundred, all with four figure salaries. Some of these appointments are purely farcical, such as the Bishopric of North and Central Europe, the actual area where Jewish pogroms have taken place, and where their inhabitants never heard of the Anglican Church. The duties are pleasant, for they mean visiting Continental holiday-resorts during the best part of the year, and ministering in each place to a handful of English people travelling abroad.

It is the colossal wealth of the Anglican Church which makes it so formidable a force for Reaction. The Black Army has its soldiers in every parish in the country, and even scouts and spies in the Socialists' ranks. It has its representatives in the House of Lords, where they never did anything except oppose all forms of progress, from reforms of the franchise to the provision of seats for tired shop assistants. It is actually the money that attracts candidates for the priesthood. So long as there are heavily-endowed churches, the Christian creed will be preached, defended and adapted by men who are willing to sell whatever brains they have in return for a comfortable salary, and a still more comfortable existence. It is common knowledge that the Anglican Church is one of the largest landlords and property owners in the country, and it is a curious coincidence that some of the worst slums are to be found in cathedral cities, where the magnificence of the "house of God" and the size of the vicarages mock the dwellings of the poor.

Think also of the devious ways by which the Black Army raises its money. Not long since church-goers were scared nearly to death by the statement that St. Paul's Cathedral was about to fall into Paternoster Row. Another artful business-like move was the suggestion to sell the derelict City of London churches on the plea of providing the outer suburbs with more places of worship, and to cadge money from church-goers to provide more cash for further missionary work in the Metropolis. Not a word that each of the sites of the derelict churches was worth a king's ransom, and that there was money in the deal for their own firm.

Indeed, the more one studies the actions of this Black Army of priests during the past hundred years the more one is convinced that separation of the Anglican Church from the State would be a good thing for the commonwealth and the cause of progress. Time has proved that the Anglican bishops as legislators are far behind and against the best spirit of the age, blindly suspicious of aspirations and desires which democracy approves. Such a proceeding would be entirely constitutional, for the Irish and the Welsh Churches have been disestablished. And, truth to tell, disestablishment has been proceeding almost unnoticed, during a little over a century. The decline and fall began with the repeal of the Test Acts in 1828. Since then have followed in natural sequence the emancipation of the Roman Catholics; the legislation of marriages in Free Churches; the withdrawal of matrimonial and testamentary jurisdiction from the Ecclesiastical Courts; the admission of Jews and Free-

thinkers to Parliament, the abolition of church rates; the abolition of University tests; the admission of Nonconformist funerals to National churchyards. Beyond all doubt, each and all were steps in the dissolution of the union between the Anglican Church and the State. The mere recital of these happenings must fill an intellectual with hope. In spite of inconsistencies and of menacing troubles, the Freethought Cause is slowly and steadfastly checking the mischievous activities of the Abacadabra Racket, the oldest business in the world.

MIMNERMUS

Nature Notes of a Freethinker

THE sun takes a turn about December 22, and although I have a friend who can draw an atom and speak with confidence on it, and explain the mating season by it, I retain what the wise old Montaigne called, suspended judgment. We may know all about it some day; in the meantime personal observation will be a guide to facts. The cock chaffinch, one of the prettiest and most companionable birds has his song, which I translate: In a little little time we shall have the wheat here. A light ruddy-breasted cock, on Dec. 24, was heard to get as far in his song as "shall have." On the same day the sparrows were noisy; I could hear the beginning of their mating chatter, Is it? Is it? yes! Is it? Is it? yes! The wren was heard with his shrill song; the starling too was gurgling a medley of many bird's songs, and in spite of a good depth of snow about, the cock robin began to get friendly with his mate—he sang her a little song on the doorstep—as dramatic a setting for him and her as Covent Garden stage—and he chased her through the trees. To-day, December 27, the sun has shown us how sturdily he has clambered out of his cradle; there is running water, clear and sparkling from the hills, ground ivy leaves, hedge parsley, ivy, all washed fresh and clean, light up the banks of the stream after their appearance from under the melted snow.

No doubt in common with other readers, I keep a mental index of books to be read. Although *The Dynasts* of Thomas Hardy was on the shelf for years I did not read it until recently. "Old Tom Hardy," as they knew this man in Dorchester, was, according to some professor writing lately, "self-educated"; that may explain why the genius never allowed himself to be educated out of his common sense. That he was self-educated prevented him from becoming some obscure professor willing to profess anything at so much a line. *The Dynasts* is a drama to be read; it is planned on an olympian scale, and, after a close reading of it, to me it becomes unforgettable. This self-educated man, with his chorus of spirits, his understanding of Kings, Emperors, and all the ranks in between, down to camp-following women and common soldiers and deserters, leaves one in wonder how he could know so much—and so much accurately. The preface to it was written in 1903; the author, knowing that wars cannot be conducted without men, records Napoleon and Wellington being asked frantically for re-inforcements and both refusing; and Hardy, ignorantly termed a pessimist, finishes on a note of hope. In Act VI. Scene VI., we read "It is a cloudless mid-summer evening, and as the west fades the stars beam down upon the city, the evening-star hanging like a jonquil blossom." I think the comparison perfect—for Hardy had done his own observing.

The gypsy-woman had left her caravan in the fields and come to the market town. An old beggar standing in the gutter near the Post Office was selling laces; "Hello!" the daughter of Romany, said, "You here again." She dived into the pocket of her capacious skirt and produced some coppers and gave them to the beggar for a pair of laces. You either like Chopin's music or you don't. And the same opinion is true of gypsies. If you are "done" once or twice, still give them the benefit of the doubt; shrieks of Olympic laughter would greet any intelligent man sitting in judgment on earth's wanderers. "Golden Sovereign," although given as a tip for the Derby by them, did not win; neither did the others except one; this of course is no different than Catholics getting a wet day when they have prayed for a fine one. Leland gives fourteen "stock" formulas for fortune-tellers;—here is one for amusement:—

"It is safe in most cases with middle-aged men to declare that they have had a law-suit, or a great dispute as to property, which has given them a great deal of trouble. This must be impressively uttered. Emphasis and sinking the voice are of great assistance in fortune-telling. If the subject betray the least emotion, or admit it, promptly improve the occasion, express sympathy, and 'work it up.'" This is the structure of an everyday and knock-about religion—a little lower perhaps than the "metaphysics of the poor" but quite as reliable.

In Norfolk, I came in with three gypsies on the road; they were Serbian. The old woman looked like some eternal Cassandra who had lived on earth since the days of Plato, the daughter was handsome and attractive, and was busy making her excellent teeth meet in an apple. The man, dark and swarthy, was leading a small horse that was pulling an automatic piano, playing, with plenty of drums to the music. On the top of the piano was a monkey. And I suppose my guess as an answer would be as near as anyone's, about the little incident I noticed. An English-woman left her two friends and ran after the old woman to give her money. It was probably done on the spur of the moment, impelled not a little by the music—it was perhaps the result of some early recollection of her youthful days, when the figure of Romance was gracious and comely to look upon, and when gypsies had played a memorable part in it. Anyway, with Borrow, I would not willingly agree to the abolition of the Cuckoo or the Gypsy. Nor would I agree to the abolition of poetry or prose about the Gypsy—who, in the words of Richard Jefferies, "will not dance to the pipe ecclesiastic, sound it who may—Churchman, Dissenter, priest, or laic." In *Swift Wings*, Songs in Sussex, Victor B. Neuburg, there is an excellent poem, "Gypsies," which qualifies in every respect for inclusion in the next Gypsy Anthology. Here is the last verse, but not the last word on those who will not leave our civilization:—

"And here you are, under a Sussex coppice
Cursing and boozing round a smoky fire,
Familiar with old starlight: earth, whose top is
Nowhere, still claims you for your old
desire

Of wandering and wandering. What stop is
Possible for you now? Oh, gray as granite,
Stronger than steers, perpetual as poppies,
You ramble roughly round an old, worn
planet.

NICHOLAS MERE

Justice resides in truth alone, and there is no happiness apart from justice.—Zola.

Of Charms

Charm ache with air, and agony with words.
(*Much Ado*, Act V. Sc. I.)

TYLOR thought that the theory of prayers may explain the origin of charms: "Charm-formulas are in very many cases actual prayers, and as such are intelligible. Where they are mere verbal forms, producing their effect on nature and man by some unexplained process, may not they or the types they were modelled on have been originally prayers, since dwindled into mystic sentences." (*Primitive Culture*, Vol. II., Chapter XVIII.)

Snake charming is fairly well known and needs no comment, but the effects of music on disease-spirits and devils is not so well known. "Disease-spirits," says Tylor, "may be extracted by chants, one departing at the end of each stave. When a little painted stick made for it is flung on the ground, and some patients may have as many as a dozen ghosts extracted, for here also the fee is so much apiece." (*Ibid.*)

As demons could be given, as well as extracted, business must have been kept fairly steady.

Long after the physician had renounced his priestly part, the priest was called in with the physician. Both believed that maladies were caused by demons, and that no cure was possible till the evil one was cast out. Exorcisms and conjurations were not only spoken over the patient, but they were also written on slips of consecrated paper, and applied like a plaster to the parts specially affected. The cause of the malady removed so fairly well, the doctor then stepped in to cure its ravages.

Sinnett used to tell us that "we (the Occultists) were possessed of certain powers over Nature, which the narrower study of Nature from the merely materialistic standpoint has failed to develop." And who can doubt it?

The Bible is still used as a charm. Indeed, it is a useful book. It may be used as a plant-stand; to sharpen razors on; for making cigarettes, etc. It has a great utilitarian value! As a charm it is used from January 1 to December 31. On the first day of the year it is blindly opened, a finger placed upon a verse, then it is blindly read with both eyes open. And so throughout the year it is used to find whether this or that will prove favourable or not, and, charm it never so wisely, it retains its power. For fortune-telling it is of great value, and is used in many curious ways. One simple way is to look at the last chapter of Proverbs, and at the verse with the same number as your birthday, and you will find your future foretold. The Lord's Prayer also has its uses—an evil spell may be put on anyone by repeating the Lord's Prayer backwards. Then we have the Gadarene swine. Pigs have always been assumed to be peculiarly attractive to devils. That explains why the devils besought Jesus to send them into the swine—there were about 2,000 of them (Mark v. 13). The devils evidently thought they could find a lodging among them, but Père Bougeant informs us that the swine, being already possessed, and not being able to harbour more than one devil at a time, were "driven to suicide by having an intrinsic and superfluous demon conjured into them."

The dust from off the feet of the holy may be used as a charm. Church dust, if applied to the head of a dying person, is said to ease a painful and a lingering death.

But my nose itches and as the illuminated know, that is a sign that I am going to be kissed or cursed.

Cursing is more likely, so I will be brief. At the last, best! Be brave and patient!

Keeping a potato in one's pocket is a certain cure for rheumatism.

To conclude with birth charms: If a boy is desired, expectant mothers must trim the coming baby's garments with blue ribbons, and with pink if a girl is desired.

Birth stones are much sought after—Lucky stones for each month—Jacinth for January, and so on to Torquoise for December. The stone given for August is Onyx, which is surely an ominous one. There is supposed to be a demon imprisoned in this stone, which terrifies sleepers who wear it. The demon lies dormant in the day-time.

Protective fetishes for childbearing are used among the native races. Charms written on consecrated paper are used in the country for the same purpose. The following "revelation" was all that a friendly doctor received in payment for a confinement—"This revelation was made by the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ, to those three saints, viz.: St. Elizabeth, St. Clare, and St. Bridget, they being desirous to know something in particular of the blessed passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

'First, I received 30 cuffs; secondly, when I was apprehended in the garden, I received 40 blows: thirdly, I journeying to Annas's house, got 7 falls: fourthly, they gave me 444 blows of whips upon my shoulders: fifthly, they raised me up from the ground, by the hair of my head, 330 times: sixthly, they gave me 30 blows against my teeth: seventhly, I have breathed 8,888 signs: eighthly, they drew me by my beard 35 times: ninthly, I received one mortal wound at the foot of the cross: tenthly, 666 blows they gave me when I was bound to the pillar of stone: eleventhly, they set a crown of thorns upon my head: twelfthly, they spitted at me 63 times: thirteenthly, the soldiers gave me 88 blows of whips: fourteenthly they gave me gall and vinegar to drink: fifteenthly, when I hanged on the cross I received five mortal wounds.

'All men and women that will say seven paters, seven aves, and a creed daily, in honour of the blessed passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the space of 15 years, they shall obtain five graces: first, they shall receive plenary indulgence and remission of their sins; secondly, they will not suffer the pains of purgatory; thirdly, if it happen they die before 15 years be ended, they shall obtain grace as well as if they had suffered martyrdom; fourthly, in point of death, I will not come myself alone, to receive his own soul, but also his parents, if they be in purgatory; finally, I will convert them into everlasting bliss.

'This revelation hath those virtues, that whosoever shall carry it about him, shall be free from his enemies, neither will he die of any sudden death; and if there be any woman with child, she shall feel no pain in child-birth; and in whatsoever part of the house this revelation shall lye, it shall not be infected with any contagious diseases, or any other evil: and whosoever shall carry it about him, the glorious virgin Mary will show herself to him 46 days before his death.'

GEORGE WALLACE

I can find no evidence that seriously militates against the rule that the priest is at all times, and in all places, the enemy of all men. . . . If there is one lesson which history forces upon us in every page, it is this: Keep your children away from the priest or he will make them the enemies of mankind.—*W. K. Clifford.*

Can Scientists make Life?

A FAIRLY familiar religious argument is: "Science can make machines, but it cannot make a single living creature. That is something only God can do."

But the question is, can *nature* make life. If it can, and has done, then the religious case is nothing more than the assertion that clever human beings have so far been thwarted in their efforts to imitate nature in this direction. The logic might be thus exposed:

1. *Premise.* Life is made either by God or in the laboratory.
2. *Premise.* It cannot be made in the lab.
3. *Conclusion.* Therefore God made life.

The first premise is false, the second without foundation, and the conclusion thus hopeless. No intelligent religionist would advance the argument in such a transparently unsound state, and only their muddled thinking prevents them from understanding its irrelevance.

Nevertheless, the expectation that living creatures will be made in the lab. is sane prediction (see J. S. Huxley's *Essays*, Prof. R. S. Lull's (and others), *Evolution of the Earth and its Inhabitants*, among many other works of science). This view is admitted even by Lodge and other non-materialist writers.

As to how nature makes life various theories, with much in common, are held. The element Carbon is known to be indispensable, and without touching the realm of biochemistry, the evidence from astronomy and chemistry strongly suggests that life is a function of very definite material conditions. As to the alleged operation of design, it was shown by Jeans in his *Mysterious Universe*, that from the whole of natural process there are the strongest reasons militating against the idea that life was specially designed as an important product. In his latest work, *Eos*, Jeans describes life as the accidental end of a chain of by-products. While only Carbon favours the essential production of life, there are three elements (26 to 28) ready to promote magnetism, and no less than ten (Nos. 83-92) in favour of radioactivity. And if the amount of sun-radiation be slightly upset, life disappears. At a temperature of 46°C. birds and mammals cease to exist; at 56°C. all life is gone. But the great bulk of animate existence disappears at 25°-30°C., below human blood heat.

The view that life evolved from inanimate matter is general among men of science. As Sir P. Chalmers Mitchell remarks, "The advance of knowledge has made matter a more probable, not less probable, substratum for life," which "fades down as it is traced through the simpler and simpler forms in which it is associated with simpler and simpler structure, until it passes into a set of processes all familiar in the inorganic world." The appearance of the bacteriophage makes it difficult to designate any boundary between what is living and what is not. (The bacteriophage brings about the lysis, or solution, of bacteria, and is then capable of multiplication like the viruses which can reproduce in living cells.)

Prof. B. Moore, R. Bentner, J. B. S. Haldane and others have held theories as to how life was first made possible in nature. None holds the theory that God did it by special acts of intervention. "The stellar evidences of the synthesis of matter and the creation of worlds leave the position entirely untenable that life once came by a single, creative, unrelated act" (Moore, *Origin and Nature of Life*). His contention as a biochemist is that "When matter has reached a certain complexity in structure, and become tenanted by certain types of energy, life must come,

and having come must evolve into higher and higher forms." He considers, moreover, that "Life is at present originating in countless other worlds." Some authorities (e.g., Mitchell, R. J. Allen, Sharpley-Schafer) consider that life is appearing anew on our own planet. That is, that instead of appearing *once*, life repeats itself in its primordial stages.

Prof. Moore details the stages by which life appears on the surface of planets. Starting with the ether he proceeds to its product, the electron. As his book was written prior to the discovery of other atom-constituents such as the neutron (by J. C. Chadwick), one might at this stage interpose the electron, proton, positron, neutron and dipton, so as to provide sufficient furniture for the atom, which now paves the way for the proto-elements, then the inert gases of the helium group and hydrogen, and then the elements, by various unions of the proto-elements. At a territory deeper than the microscope reveals Moore finds the brink of life away down among the "colloids." The word colloid (Lat. *colla*=glue) was introduced by Prof. Graham about 1863, to denote a dynamical state of matter which was the "probable primary source of the force appearing in the phenomena of vitality." The properties of molecules of inorganic colloids approximate to those of organic. With the help of the sun's light the transformation is effected in the green cells, and according to Moore, life comes via chlorophyll (the green colouring matter). "All energy of all living beings is dependent on green plants, and they in turn are dependent on sunlight" (*Ibid.*).

The inorganic colloid becomes an organic molecular being with simply a higher store of energy, by transforming the energy received from the sun into chemical energy. More complex organic molecules follow. He formulates a Law of Complexity: "Matter, so far as its energy environment will permit it, tends to assume more and more complex forms in labile equilibrium. Atoms, molecules, colloids and living organisms arise as the result of the operation of this law, and in the higher regions of complexity it induces organic evolution and all the many thousands of living forms." (*Ibid.*) He adds that at still higher levels it forms the basis of social evolution. The law operates at different levels, and in the province of various departmental scientists. For instance, "the living cell consists of a combination of colloids existing in dynamic equilibrium with one another, and carrying on an exchange of energy phenomena peculiar to living matter with one another and with their environment. The study of these energy changes forms the province of physiologist and biochemist." (*Ibid.*).

At no point in the scheme visualized by Moore is the hand of God invoked. Some of the utterances of this distinguished scientist might have issued from a religious mystic, yet as a scientist he is driven to admit that "there does exist the fundamental difficulty of building up a system of thought on anything else than a materialistic basis." (*Ibid.*)

In a later article I propose to discuss what success meets the scientists' attempts to manufacture life in the laboratory.

G. H. TAYLOR

The more subtle effects of persecution remain with the living. They are not screwed down in the coffin and buried with the dead. They become part of the pestilential atmosphere of cowardice and hypocrisy which saps the intellectual manhood of society, so that bright-eyed inquiry sinks into bleary-eyed faith, and the rich vitality of active honest thought falls into the decrepitude of timid and slothful acquiescence.—G. W. Foote.

Acid Drops

German and Italian Fascism is more than a national question to-day, and far more than a political one. It is a movement which not merely aims at converting Italy and Germany into permanent slave States, but with its megalomaniacal glorification of force, with its avowed intention of keeping no promise and honouring no undertaking that it pays to break or ignore, and with its complete denial of the civil rights of men, women and children, has become one of the greatest of historic threats to whatever of civilization it can influence or control. Neither Germany nor Italy now even take the trouble to hide the fact that it means to get what it can by a process of blackmail, and by the time it can no longer make headway by that means, both countries hope to have developed sufficient strength to simply take what it desires. That is the plain fact of the situation, and its discussion is no longer a question of politics, if it ever was such; it is something on which the salvation of a large part of the world depends.

In the circumstances every liberal-minded man and woman will welcome the message which President Roosevelt placed before the United States Congress. During the period which Mr. H. G. Wells aptly described as the time of the "propaganda of terror," which had its significant expression in the Munich Pact, which, in turn, gave Hitler far more than he ever dreamed of getting for some years to come in the shape of plunder; which made Germany the supreme power in Central and Eastern Europe, and encouraged his co-operator in plunder and brutality, Mussolini, to increase *his* demands, President Roosevelt sent two letters to Hitler in September last. Although in form an urging to peace, we said at the time that these were more than letters, they were ultimatums, a declaration to the world that if Hitler was stupid enough to go to war (it is generally admitted now that it was no more than a piece of bluff) America would join in the fight against world slavery.

Those letters we never took as more than an act intended to prepare the people of the U.S.A. for taking part in the European struggle. Of course, the enormous probability is that Hitler would have climbed down as he has always done in the face of firmness. Or, alternatively, if he had gone to war, with Russia (which was ready in spite of Lord Winterton's deliberate misrepresentation) France, several of the smaller States of Europe, Czechoslovakia (with its strong strategical position) and backed with the help of America, the fall of Nazism would have been assured. From that fate he was saved by Mr. Chamberlain concluding an "agreement" that was dictated by Hitler, and which has made vast numbers of people realize that the choice was not between the Chamberlain policy of surrender and war, but most probably the choice of running a slight risk of war with the greater probability that the aftermath of Munich would have been spared the world. The real choice was between war and something worse than war.

Not the least important announcement of President Roosevelt was that Congress would have to consider the question of an amendment of the United States Constitution. He said, quite truly:—

Our neutrality laws may operate unevenly and unfairly, may actually give aid to an aggressor and deny it to a victim. The instinct of self-preservation should warn us that we ought not to allow that to happen any more.

The American neutrality laws to which the President referred, are of a slightly different character from ours. But in the case of our neutrality we saw the Government of the day, first, with regard to Abyssinia, forsaking our treaty to furnish the Abyssinians with arms should they be attacked. And in the case of Spain, our Government rigidly prevented the Spanish Government getting from us, by purchase, the arms it was entitled to get by inter-

national law, and stood quietly by while Germany and Italy poured arms and men into Spain in a steady flow, Mr. Chamberlain all the time professing ignorance of a state of affairs that were openly published in the Italian press. And at the time of writing we have Mr. Chamberlain paying an official visit to Mussolini. For what? Is it another Munich? Or is it to make certain of the isolation of Russia, which, if successful with regard to this country, carries with it the possibility of a huge trade agreement between Russia and Germany, and which will be aimed against this country? The only thing we can be certain of concerning "personal contacts," by these secret arrangements with the Dictators, is a further curtailing of freedom in the democratic States. And that is a question, not of politics, but of human progress.

Those religious folk who are opposed to Nazi brutality and robbery, but who persist in calling Germany "godless" will have had a shock if they read the *Daily Telegraph* for January 5. They will find there the information that Himmler, Chief of the German police, and who out-Hitlers Hitler in the brutality of his character, is not merely religious but a Christian, and not merely Christian but a pronounced Oxford Grouper, one of that peculiar lot of pathological exhibits of whom the chief is Dr. Buchman.

Dr. Buchman, too, it must be noted, is an admirer of Hitler, and that brings one to a consideration of the German propaganda that is going on in this country. In this connexion one recalls the indignation caused by Russian propaganda leading to a breach of diplomatic relations in this country. In the case of Germany the propaganda is open and avowed. The instructions given to Germans in England are easily obtainable—even Mr. Chamberlain, who seems ignorant of the most advertised facts concerning Italian and German Fascism, can easily obtain full details. German subjects are held in strict obedience to Hitler while they are in this country, and Hitler holds their parents and families, with their belongings, as guarantee for their obedient behaviour. The contrast between the violent indignation against Bolshevik propaganda here and the almost open welcome given to German propaganda is very striking.

What has happened to Mr. Garvin and the *Observer*? After giving the Prime Minister unqualified praise, and glorifying Munich, in its last issue Mr. Garvin writes in his weekly "special" that,

the sequel of Munich has been a bitter tale. The ink was hardly dry on the Munich agreements before the Utopian hopes of a moment began to fade and vanish. They were replaced by a worse state of feeling than had existed before. Announcing its intention to maintain a permanent ascendancy of force, the dictatorship for the first time began to threaten the foundations of democracy in its own sphere.

But one should be just, even to Dictators. Hitler had never ceased to preach force, and both Hitler and Garvin proclaim themselves fools if they ever expected anything to follow than what has happened. And it is quite wrong to call Munich an "agreement." It was, in its most favourable aspect to Mr. Chamberlain a dictation, as surely as was the Versailles Treaty itself. And, in the circumstances, anyone may be excused the suspicion that on Chamberlain's side its only triumph was that it weakened, almost to the point of complete rupture, the Anglo-French-Russian Alliance and the Franco-Russian Alliance. The further triumph of Munich was that it saved Hitler from the loss of prestige if he had given way to any degree, a certain and rapid disaster if he had been foolish enough to go to war.

The *Manchester Guardian* is one of the smaller number of papers that carries on the tradition that a newspaper exists for a purpose other than catering to the prejudice of its readers where downright criticisms of religion are

not concerned) or playing on their ignorance. So it is the more regrettable to find in a recent issue of its weekly edition a notice of Lord Morley, which ends with an exhibition of downright Christian dishonesty. The writer (G.J.) runs through some phases of Morley's life, and confesses that he can find no indication of his repudiation of Christianity in anything he has written. So he concludes by saying that he will answer the question of "was Morley a Christian?" by asking, "Is there such a thing as unconscious Christianity?" and, of course, replies that there is, and Morley was an example of this. This is a very old form of Christian lying, and also a truly pious way of insulting a man's intelligence and besmirching his character. Where religion was concerned Morley was no great example of mental courage, but he hardly deserved thus pillorying as a hypocrite, a fool, or a mixture of both. The *Manchester Guardian* ought to know better.

The Spens Report on Education upholds, as one would expect, the teaching of religion in the schools, and with regard to the Bible says that it should be taught "primarily with a view to the understanding of what the Bible is in fact intended to mean by their authors." We do not for a moment believe that the Report means what it says. If it did we would support it. For what the writers of the Bible meant when they said that they who went after other gods should be stoned to death, and they who broke the Sabbath should be treated in much the same manner, that God caused the Sun to stand still while the Jews defeated their enemies, that languages came into existence instantaneously and by the direct act of God, that God caused waters of the sea to divide so that his followers might march across on dry land, they meant exactly what they said. Teach the Bible so that it says exactly what the writers mean and the clergy would be the first to expel it from the schools. At present it is the Freethinkers only who make the Bible mean what it says. And they have often been imprisoned for teaching it.

An Englishman married a Russian lady. The lady was imprisoned, in Russia, charged with having committed a political offence. After trying to get her liberated, the husband flew to Russia, and was arrested, charged with landing without permission and fined. The papers were busy with the case. In the end the wife was liberated, and the husband allowed to bring her home to England. The husband said he had been well-treated while in prison. So had the wife.

Now suppose the case had occurred in Germany, with the husband an anti-Hitlerite and the wife charged with the grave offence of thinking disrespectfully of Hitler. Would the pair have been treated as well by the friends of Lord Londonderry, Lord Astor, Lord Halifax and Montagu Norman, as they were in Russia? We doubt it. German gangsterism does not work in that way—Humanity and Fascism do not run together.

Bishop Morrisroe of Achonry said, the other day, that "there is an erroneous impression that the primary schools in Eire are Catholic. Thanks to the teachers the schools are Catholic in practice, but technically and legally they are neutral and undenominational. For this reason, the Holy See tolerates, but does not approve of them. Neither would the Holy See give approval to mixed education nor the amalgamated schools where the sexes are co-educated." In other words, the Catholic Church does not like any attempt at a rational education of any kind; and the only education it really approves of—as apart from the kind it merely tolerates—is that in which the Church is blindly followed, body and soul. We do not often encounter such plain speaking, and Bishop Morrisroe must be warmly congratulated. He makes the case for Secular Education quite fool-proof.

Mr. D. B. Wyndham Lewis, the Catholic writer, is appalled at the way in which Mayfair has taken to "swinging" sacred Christmas carols, dancing their holy words

to jazz tunes, and sending Christmas Cards of dogs or film actresses instead of reverent pictures of the Holy Babe. Or to put it in another way, it is the Pagan festival of Yule which is superseding the Christian one of Christ. But is not this as it should be? After all, more and more people are beginning to see that these so-called Christian feasts are nothing more than the old, more or less, universal Pagan ones, and that the only things tagged on by Christianity were the doleful faces and general misery of its professors. Easter, Whitsun, and Christmas should be celebrated with happiness and laughter, feasting and song. That was the Pagan way, and, thank heaven, it is the modern way—in spite of Mr. Lewis.

Pious readers will not like Mr. G. H. Richardson's *Biblical Archaeology*. Instead of proving the truth of the "Scriptures," the people who have devoted their lives—and, mostly, other people's money—in digging in and around Palestine have only unearthed records of its inhabitants; and Mr. Richardson seems to have made mincemeat of the extravagant claims of Christian archaeologists. As one reviewer of his book puts it:—

Archæology has peopled a world that was almost empty, with embassies, armies, busy cities, and long lines of traders passing to and fro between one centre of civilization and another, but that apart from supplying background and atmosphere, it has done nothing to recall or certify the Biblical heroes themselves.

Shades of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Jonah, David, and Solomon! Not a line or a word about any of them has been discovered anywhere—yet Christians get quite angry when we Freethinkers declare these famous Bible characters are just fictions. Mr. Richardson must thank his lucky stars he was born in an age when boiling oil was not the penalty for scepticism.

Mr. Ritson, M.P.—to be fair to him—is decidedly on the side of the Penal Reformers, and in his speech supporting Sir Samuel Hoare's new Bill, he showed that he had a genuine sympathy with its objects. He approves of the abolition of corporal punishment. But he made a curious admission. His mother thrashed him in his youth, and he still has an idea that she was right. He said:—

My mother believed in the spiritual injunction "Spare not the rod, spoil not the child." As sure as I stand here, if everyone kept their spiritual injunctions as she kept hers, they would be in Heaven without any doubt at all.

Mr. Ritson falls into a common error of imagining that the words he misquotes are Holy Writ. It was Butler's *Hudibras* which said "Spare the rod and spoil the child." In any case to call birch, or whip, or cat, a "Spiritual" business is historically interesting owing to the fondness of Christians in all ages for the lash—even in monasteries.

Fifty Years Ago

MR. FREDERICK HARRISON seems to imagine that Atheists have no ideal beyond that of attacking theology, but a moment's calm reflection would show him the absurdity of this fancy. He might as well suppose that the pioneers of civilization who hew down virgin forests have no conception of the happy homesteads they are making room for. We go farther and assert that all this talk about negative and positive work is *cant*. To call the destroyer of superstition a negationist is as senseless as to call a doctor a negationist. Both strive to expel disease. The one bodily and the other mental. Both, therefore, are working for health, and no more positive work is conceivable.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- To Circulating and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—T. Dixon, 5s.; C. Beesley, 5s.
- D. FISHER.—Next week. Crowded out of this week's issue.
- G. H. PEATE.—Thanks for your account of the manner of your introduction to the *Freethinker*. We are expecting many other replies to our invitation, and hope to make use of them at a later date.
- S.S.M.—We shall look forward to meeting you at the Annual Dinner, along with many other London and Provincial friends with whom we are not at present personally acquainted.
- J. BARKER.—We do not regard the question of intellectual freedom as in any sense a party-political question. The N.S.S. has always welcomed the co-operation of any person or party in an attempt to realize freedom of speech and publication, but that surely need not mean support to a particular party programme. If it did it would land us in the absurd position of supporting parties which were mutually antagonistic in their general aims.
- ARTHUR TOWN.—Sorry we cannot do as you request, but, as we said, the report was issued some time ago. It has been withdrawn, and we have not a copy in our possession.
- S. TOMLINSON.—Mr. Cohen is flattered by your high praise of his Manchester lecture coming from a new *Freethinker* reader. We trust your appreciation will be translated into steady support of the movement. That is the kind of appreciation we value most.
- H. ROSE.—We quite appreciate your desire for articles in the *Freethinker* written for young people, and would welcome suitable ones. But writing such articles is one of the most difficult things to accomplish successfully. With regard to your withdrawal of children from religious instruction we think the fear of the children suffering as a consequence is greatly exaggerated. In our own case, our children usually had reading to do in another room until the religious lesson was over, and actually became objects of envy to the other children. We should say that your teacher friend is far too timid.
- G. F. LAWS.—We cannot accept a dictionary definition of Epicureanism which identifies it with sensual pleasure. That is a very common religious misrepresentation, but the best authority is the philosophy of Epicurus and his school. One ought not to rely upon a Christian description of Atheism.
- WILL C. L. Rawlinson be good enough to send his address to the Editor? The letter from which we cited in our issue for January 8 has not been preserved.

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

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

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

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.

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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

We have just a fortnight between the date of this issue of the *Freethinker* and the Society's Annual Dinner on Saturday, January 28, and we again impress upon all the advisability of making an early application for tickets as is possible. There will be the usual first class "Cabaret" entertainment, in addition to speeches, etc. The price of tickets is 8s. 6d. which includes all extras; and a vegetarian menu can be provided for those notifying the Secretary when ordering tickets. If we are to arrange special tables for groups of provincials, it is necessary for those who are coming from a distance to write in good time.

Those who require hotel accommodation over the weekend must write to the General Secretary stating the attention required, with the duration of their stay. There will be a number of special trains running for the weekend, and information for these can be obtained on application. Arrangements are well in hand; all that is needed to make the Dinner the usual success is for members and friends to make up their minds that it shall be so. This year's proceedings take place in the Waldorf Hotel, Aldwych, W.C.2, which is centrally situated and easily accessible.

There was a "full house" at Manchester on Sunday last, and there were a number of visitors from a distance. Mr. Cohen was pleased to meet and exchange a few words with some new-comers to the movement, whose adherence was secured through the medium of the *Freethinker*. Mr. Taylor, our ever-welcome contributor, made a very efficient chairman, and we are glad to know that he and his wife are as active workers as ever.

The Manchester Branch is making efforts to secure new subscribers for this journal. We wish them all success, naturally, for, apart from new subscribers making the financial burden a little lighter than it is at present, it is the best method of strengthening the Freethought movement in this country. The Branch is also making endeavours to secure a good representation at the Annual Dinner on the 28th.

At the close of Mr. Cohen's lecture the chairman announced, for the benefit of strangers, that cards had been prepared which, on signing and posting, would secure free specimen copies of the *Freethinker* for four weeks. We understand that many availed themselves of this offer, and we hand on the plan to other Branches for use at their meetings.

Of all the examples of "How not to do it," the finest we have met for some time has been furnished in connexion with the schoolboys' exhibition at the Horticultural Hall. Schoolboys are invited to fill in a form saying whether they like or dislike their school and to pass a general criticism. These forms are to be placed unread in a sealed box which will be opened in ten years time. The organizer of the exhibition, a schoolmaster, points to this provision to encourage boys to say what they really think about their school. The schoolmasters will know what their pupils think about them—when many of them have retired, and few will pay the least attention to the forms.

It is a capital idea that schoolboys should make their teachers acquainted with what they think about them, and that teachers should know how they stand in the opinion of their pupils. But why wait ten years to encourage honesty in the pupil and intelligent understanding of their job by the teachers? If it is said that the reading of the forms is delayed because many of the boys would realize that much of their criticism is unsound, the reply is beside the point, because it is important that the teachers should know how their general behaviour affects their pupils, and whether the pupils are justified in their criticism has nothing to do with that important question.

We fancy that the main objection to the criticisms of the boys being made known is fear for that bogey of the incompetent and idol of the lazy: "discipline." The boy must not dare to criticize his teacher (openly). He knows best, and for a schoolboy to commit the crime of expressing (honest) opinions about his master as to how he is being taught is unpardonable. If this worship of the discipline of attitude and speech does not really stop boys criticizing, it only turns them into sharp-witted hypocrites, or enables a discontent to flourish that might otherwise be removed. No healthier thing could be done in any school than for teacher to invite, now and again, the real opinions of the pupils concerning the place in which they spend so much of their lives.

Atheism, and Other Addresses comprises a series of addresses, including two broadcasts (Freethinkers in the U.S.A. have at least one advantage over us), by Joseph Lewis. Nearly all of these addresses have been separately published, but they are well worth issuing in volume form. Those dealing with Abraham Lincoln, Franklin, Jefferson, Burbank, are specially interesting. The lectures on religion in the schools, and on the influence, for harm, of religion in Mexico, also supply much useful matter. Two of the reprints in this volume include discussions with Christian ministers. The book is published by the Freethought Press Association, at 6s.

Mr. H. G. Wells writes in the *Sunday Chronicle* on "The Future of the Jews." He will "offend" a great many orthodox Christians as well as orthodox Jews by his candid attempt to tell the whole truth about Old Testament acclamation of the Jews as "God's chosen People." And Mr. Wells's remedy is the Secularist remedy:—

The only way out from the present human catastrophe for Jew and Gentile alike is a world-wide, conscious educational emancipation.

In books, universities, colleges, schools, newspapers, plays, assemblies, we want incessant, ruthless truth-seeking about these old legends that divide and antagonize and waste us.

We want a great massacre of stale beliefs and ancient grievances and claims if we are to avoid great massacres of human beings.

In other words, the way to end the Jewish question is to end the Jewish religion, and the best way to end the Jewish religion is to end all religion; which is saying that the existence of a completely civilized humanity depends upon the eradication of all religion. We would like Mr. Wells to develop this thesis. But that is, perhaps, expecting too much.

Discovery and Invention in the Eighteenth Century

PRIMITIVE man protected his person with skins and furs of animals he hunted for food. The weaving of wool into cloth came later, and presupposes the domestication of sheep and the use of sharp instruments for shearing purposes. The prehistoric lake settlers were acquainted with the art of converting flax into cords. Later, this plant was employed in the production of linen, but wool continued to be man's staple in the preparation of wearing apparel in Europe until the eighteenth century.

Cotton clothing was almost universal in India in times very remote, and remains so to this day, and the inception of the great cotton industry in Lancashire was the outcome of England's contact with that vast Eastern land. While European peoples remained dependent on their native soil for all the food they consumed the Western Continent could sustain a sparse population only in comparison with the teeming millions of India. But it is claimed that the intro-

duction into Europe of Indian cotton fabrics removed a serious obstacle to the rapid increase of population in that Continent. Indeed, Lionel Curtis in his *Civitas Dei* (Vol. II., Macmillan, 1937), contends that: "It largely accounts for the fact that the population of Europe has increased by more than 350,000,000 since the eighteenth century."

As the seventeenth century closed, the East India Company met with an extensive sale in England for cotton fabrics woven in India, and the use of this import for underwear and feminine adornment menaced the monopoly of wool, the staple textile of South Britain.

This threat to the supremacy of the woollen industry gravely concerned landowners and other interested parties, and in 1700 and 1721 the use of cotton was forbidden by law. But this legislation proved futile, for spinners and weavers began to import raw cotton and soon mastered the art of manufacturing cotton cloth superior to the original product of the East.

Yorkshire has long been the chief centre of the woollen trade, but the humid atmosphere of Lancashire proved peculiarly favourable for the production of fine cotton fabrics, and Manchester soon became the citadel of the industry. So in 1736 the home production of cotton was legalized and cotton goods began to be exported abroad. Then in Europe generally the cultivation of cereals began to replace pasture for sheep and other grazing animals, and the increased yield of foodstuffs eventuated, above all in England, in a rapid rise of population; while instead of being deemed a luxury, cotton clothing was regarded as a necessity of civilized life.

For many centuries the British Isles were screened by the encircling sea from molestation, and there was little need for a standing army, and in consequence, a much larger percentage of the people could be devoted to industry than in Continental communities perpetually desolated by armed conflict.

Our native population enjoyed the advantages derived from the instruction of the French and Flemish refugee artificers who had escaped to England from religious persecution abroad. These settlers introduced a superior technique in the weaving art. Yet, so late as 1730, it is asserted that "there was scarcely an industry of importance in which England was not excelled in some other continental country. By the end of the century British producers had a dominant position in most of them."

Spinning was still a domestic occupation, but the production of yarn was now chiefly in the hands of those who worked in their cottages for a money wage. Calico was in constant request, while the demand for yarn exceeded the supply. Labour and commodity costs increased so greatly that a mechanical device for the reduction of charges became imperative. A machine patented in 1738 proved a commercial failure. But in 1767 Hargreaves had constructed a machine which enabled nearly a score of threads to be spun by a single operative. Then the Lancashire barber, Arkwright, adapted an earlier invention to practical use. In 1779 Crompton produced a hybrid construction by combining the principles of Hargreaves' and Arkwright's inventions, to which the significant name of "the mule" was applied.

With the successes gained by these inventions further improvements were made. Kay's flying shuttle and the mechanically operated loom of Cartwright completed the evolution of the industry.

It was now obvious that human labour might be supplemented if not superseded by energy derived from mechanical sources. Horse labour was introduced, but the industrialists noted that descending water, long and successfully utilized by millers when grinding their grain, would serve their purposes better

than animal labour. Factories were erected wherever running water would automatically drive their machinery. Hence the term "cotton mills" and the description of Arkwright's contrivances as "water frames." But still further facilities were requisitioned, and as the eighteenth century neared its close the inventions of Watt developed those of his predecessors.

For a protracted period charcoal was indispensable in the extraction of iron from ore. With the exhaustion of the woodlands which furnished the charcoal burners with fuel, smelting was suspended in England. But the industry was revived when Darby's discovery that iron may be melted with coke became public. As British coal measures were rich and abundant, Darby's invention decreased the cost of iron while sustaining a national industry.

With the development of coal-mining, it became necessary to delve more deeply into the earth to obtain its dark diamonds, while the problem of freeing the pits from flooding became acute. Newcomen therefore invented a method, the working model of which is now exhibited in the South Kensington Museum, which pumped the unwanted water to the surface.

Where coal was scarce, as in the vicinity of the tin and copper mines in Cornwall, the cost of the fuel necessary to work the Newcomen engine was practically prohibitive. So the reduction in the quantity of fuel required to operate this mechanism was a task undertaken by Watt.

It is stated that in Newcomen's contrivance "all but 5 per cent of the potential energy of the coal was wasted. . . . In Watt's engine one ton of coal would do the work which had needed no less than twenty tons in Newcomen's engine. The economy in fuel was enormous, greater perhaps than has been achieved by any one subsequent invention."

The mechanical system of spinning and weaving customary in the cotton mills had been by 1790 generally adopted by the older and less progressive wool producers. In 1804 the use of steam power had become well nigh universal in the textile trades, but the rapid development of these industries disclosed many difficulties awaiting solution. Raw materials and fuel were in constantly increasing demand in the factories, and their finished products found eager purchasers in every part of the globe.

Streams and water courses were converted into canals, but horses were still required to transport heavy burdens from one waterway to another. Rails were laid to facilitate the passage of heavily-loaded vehicles, and it was soon evident that rails could be manufactured of sufficient strength to withstand the strain of an engine driven by steam power. An engine with flanged wheels was in consequence constructed by George Stephenson, and in 1825 a railroad running from Stockton to Darlington was opened, which enabled long trains of waggons driven by a steam locomotive to transport the burdens of several hundred horses at a speed of fifteen miles an hour—the pace of the swiftest mail coach.

It then became possible to construct steam-propelled vehicles traversing the public roads. At this startling proposal, the Squire Westerns in Parliament assembled, passed an Act which required a man to proceed in front of such steam-driven vehicles, carrying a red flag to indicate danger, which would restrict their travelling to less than four miles an hour. It is cogently contended that this childish enactment, only recently repealed, prevented England's leadership in the evolution of the remarkable motor car industry.

With the rapid extension of the use of steam power urban centres dependent on railway services for the delivery of their daily requirements sprang into exist-

ence, and the increased population was no longer able to subsist on home-grown food. The first steamship that crossed the Atlantic (1838) voyaged at a time when iron was being substituted for timber in ship-building, when steam superseded sails, and ocean freights became lower than those of land transport. By 1850 trade with foreign countries was more expeditious than commercial transactions between English towns and rural districts had been a century earlier.

Coke for smelting purposes was prepared in heated ovens, and in the course of its conversion from coal, inflammable gas was released. In 1799 Murdock ingeniously utilized this illuminant to light the yards at Boulton and Watts' works in Birmingham. This experiment soon led to inside lighting, and by 1808 a few London thoroughfares were illuminated with gas, and its use in shops and houses gradually became general.

Although man is still the pigny instrument of the blind forces of Nature, his adaptations of physical and chemical phenomena to economic and social life have been little short of marvellous during the past two hundred years. The acts of legislators are little, when compared with the changes and improvements wrought by science. But the subtleties and complexities of the modern State are now so intricate, that the wisest and most far-seeing hesitate in any prediction concerning even the next stage in human development. Curtis is perhaps right when he avers that: "The power of men to control natural forces has greatly outrun the power of men to control themselves, and thus to control society as a whole. We are now beginning to realize how much more easy it is to change the physical conditions under which we live than to adjust our own habits of mind to the change."

T. F. PALMER

Flashbacks on Tyneside

PETER WATSON kept a mean shop in a mean street in Newcastle-on-Tyne. You could buy from him "advanced" literature, penny packets of stationery, aniseed balls, and wee twopenny boxes of magic salve for skin eruptions. Peter's life was made considerably less bearable than it need have been by mischievous children deriving amusement from purchasing a half-penny worth of "bullets" at nine a penny, and returning to explain to him that four for a half-penny was bare-faced robbery. Peter's philosophy was hardly equal to this situation, though he took graver and more subtle problems in his stride.

I had glued my nose (about forty years ago) to Peter's window trying to obtain free mental sustenance from the front page of a paper called the *Freethinker*, which always contained an article from a man who signed himself G. W. Foote. At length I raked up the requisite courage (and the twopence) to see what lay beyond the first page. There were three or four people in the shop discussing world affairs. It was the first step that counted; afterwards I bought my *Freethinker* and progressed from conventional conversations to heart-to-heart talks.

Peter was Scotch, dour and high-principled. Free-thought was his passion, and it was Free-thought. He was of the stock of Richard Carlile. You could purchase from him *The Wife's Handbook*, *The Elements of Social Science*, anything with a spice of heterodoxy or danger in it. Courage was so natural in him that it required no effort. The bonfire or the stake he would have welcomed as gladly as any Christian in the past welcomed martyrdom as a chance of eternal bliss. So Peter remained extremely honest and, naturally, extremely poor. Men like George

William Foote, Malcolm Quin (the Positivist Missionary in Newcastle at that time), Dr. J. L. Speirs, of Gateshead, saw in Peter one of the great ones of the earth. They honoured him and honoured themselves in doing so.

Peter was a block of granite in Newcastle, and on that rock Novocastrian Freethought built its Church. Through him, this neophyte now writing was put in contact with Jack Bartram, a man who ate, drank, worked, and slept, Freethought. It was impossible to escape the clutches of Jack Bartram if heterodoxy ran in your veins. With him I walked and talked, and through him I was introduced to others. He eventually persuaded me to become Secretary of the Newcastle Branch of the National Secular Society. I was Secretary of that Branch for eight years, if I recollect aright. Jack was Secretary when I joined the Branch; he became Secretary again when I left Newcastle. Bartram was frequently "looking for another Secretary"—he did not find the work too easy—but always cheerfully accepted the *inter-regna*. *The Old Flag must fly*.

Bartram was plain-spoken and fearless, and spent his life dedicated to what he conceived to be a great mission. He gained the respect of all the Freethought advocates of his time. His respect for them was more difficult to obtain. Never was a man more critical of his friends. For a lecturer to obtain his imprimatur was praise indeed. His standards were high, but rather uncomfortably rigid. I well remember his slating of Harry Snell for what he considered unjustifiable praise of Jesus of Nazareth. He could send, and did send, short pertinent letters to the local press whenever Freethought and Freethinkers were being subjected to unfair criticism. He generally met with fair treatment for the name of Bartram had gained local respect. When he died his funeral surprised many by the response a steady uncompromising attitude even on unpopular lines could make on public opinion.

The Freethinkers on Tyneside at that time were qualitative. George Wetherel of Gateshead had easily the biggest and choicest library I had at that time seen. He gave evidence of having assimilated its contents as well—a rare phenomenon. I think he was capable of giving the thesis, at least, of every work he allowed place on his shelves. In talk his method was suggestive rather than argumentative. Every Freethinker on Tyneside sooner or later found his way to Wetherel's house. There he was lucky if he could find a chair, for although Wetherel had a large library he had also a large family.

Ralph Chapman, at that time, was Secretary of the South Shields Branch. He was as earnest and as hardworking as Bartram, and they were alike in never knowing discouragement. Ralph is still, I believe, in this vale of tears. He can look back on years and years of seed-sowing; work that no vicissitudes of fortune to come can altogether upset. He was a pioneer in other matters besides Freethought. I can recollect a lecture of his on "Marriage in Utopia," in 1903, which would give pause to many who think that partial emancipation from sex tyranny only came after the Big War. Ralph worked for Freethought all round. You would find him at the N.S.S. Lectures at Newcastle, Stanley, Hetton-le-Hole, anywhere, always ready to give a helping hand. To him, it was the mickle that made the muckle. Life's shining pages contain the names of just such as Ralph. The books that retail biography are consistently neglectful.

Then there was William Wright (Alan Tyndal), still, also, happily with us. He and his wife had been staunch Presbyterians, but had seen the light in time. It is difficult to estimate which of the two has made the most amends for early sins. Wright, under the

pseudonym of Wylam Gael, has graced uncountable pages of Northern newspapers and periodicals and has never made his passage easier by pandering to superstition or consciously writing the sentence with two meanings. As for his wife, unlucky was the milk-boy or insurance agent who escaped from the friendly doorway without a back number of the *Freethinker*. Any assistance she could give to aid their escape from the pit was more than cheerfully rendered. What hope is there for any Recall to Religion when any growth in that direction is noted and pounced upon in every village in England by people so pertinacious, so thoughtful, so tolerant and so kindly, as Mr. and Mrs. William Wright?

Other memories crowd upon me. Carlile and Spedding, Spencerians both, with minds acute and manner and deportment irreproachable. Carlile alas has finished his life's work, but Spedding still looks up at the Southern Cross and spares a moment, I sincerely hope, to think of his old friends on Tyneside who discussed interminably and mingled, I have no doubt, much nonsense with their sense in their scores upon scores of rambles over the Newcastle Town Moor.

And there looms up the figure of A. L. Coates—Internationalist, logician, *bon-vivant*. A man of infinite story, and jest. He had lived in all the great capitals of Europe; most of us were content to sit and listen, for his conversation was rich. He too could write vividly and pungently. The columns of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* contained much from his pen for his style and matter had value. Crowds of reminiscences of Coates come to my brain but they are out of place here. I knew him many years and I never knew him to repeat himself. Not that he was not loquacious, but he always kept a tight hold on the tablets of memory, and those who had the fortune to listen to (say) his adventures in a Salvation Army Shelter were never called upon to listen to the story again. The most difficult of all pitfalls for ageing humanity is to avoid becoming a bore and Coates was never in any danger of that.

T. H. ELSTON

(To be continued)

Liberal Christianity on the Spot

TO-DAY various Christian churches in desperation to survive, are cutting up some interesting didos; and the sincere worshippers in the pews (for there are many such) are being sadly taken in by certain forms of propaganda, the source and purpose of which they rarely comprehend.

Theologians choose strange allies. This was seen in the late World War. Just now the Catholic Church is making a big noise for God and Capitalism. Despite the fact that God and Capitalism have been pretty generally accepted up to our present economic deadlock, we are now told we must preserve the Capitalistic system at all cost *because* Socialism leads to Communism and Communism to Atheism. This is the meaning of the popular slogan "100% Americanism," (or "100% democracy"), when used by zealous members of the Catholic hierarchy; an organization which has never been 100% American or 100% democratic in all its history.

The Catholic system is (and always has been) an ecclesiastic dictatorship, choosing its servants from the people, to be sure, but deriving all authority from sources above. Let us beware of appearances. Catch phrases and popular slogans are often loaded with hidden meanings. The Fascist States go only a step further when they frankly denounce democracy itself as the subtle poison that leads to Communism or anarchy. We are here far from denying that Capitalism

may be worthy of another trial, but hardly as the sole preserver of the Christian faith.

One does not have to go far afield to observe in Protestant bodies certain reactionary tendencies. Formalism, Symbolism and Ritualism are being revived, even in the more liberal churches, so that it is often difficult to judge from the service whether one is in a Unitarian, a Methodist or an Episcopal Church. Talk with the pastor (privately) and you find him liberal-minded and well informed, but you would never suspect it from the church service—any more than his own congregation suspects him of heresy. The Apostles' Creed and other traditional forms still go politely unchallenged.

On the other hand, there is reversion to "evangelical methods" based on the assumption that the Bible is the veritable "Word of God." This assumption, unjustified from every standpoint of modern scholarship, leads to conceptions as unscientific, irrational, grotesque and horrible as anything that can be found in the annals of history. "The Bible says so and that settles it." Immediately all appreciation of moral values becomes secondary—all sense of reason, justice, love and mercy are side-tracked and perverted by the victim of this strange cosmogony of the Scriptures.

There is no arguing with these people because, on spiritual grounds they are right. They know their Bible and they develop marvellous memories which they use effectively in place of the reasoning faculty. They can match any text you may bring against them; or by a subtle system of symbolism and sophistry, which passes for superior scholarship (how they love to quote Greek!), they can so twist any text out of its obvious meaning, that literally (to them) there are no errors or contradictions in the entire canon of Scripture; And they prove it all by the "Word of God."

There are several popular groups among this class of Christians, tremendously active at the present time, distributing vast amounts of propaganda literature in the form of books and pamphlets, in house to house canvasses, and in broadcasts over nation-wide hook-ups. (Curious how every religious crank gets on to the air with no one to question his claims.)

According to these modern Bible forecasters we are now living in the "last days," and the coming World War of "Armageddon" will make the last war look like a scrap over a back-yard fence; this is to be followed by the second coming of Christ to "avenge his enemies," and "rule the world in judgment." The "signs of the times" all point to the coming of the Son of Man "in the clouds of heaven"—with the sound of a trumpet and with a great shout—ushering in suddenly and without warning the "day of vengeance of our Lord."

Now the worst part of this theory is that it is all true—according to the Bible; and Christians who have been brought up on the "Word of God," and haven't the courage to say, as did Wendell Phillips (when told that the Bible supported slavery) "so much the worse for the Bible," are genuinely troubled; young people are bewildered or disgusted; while the better educated clergy are lambasted for not preaching the "Word of God." Indeed, these violent (and withal logical) propagandists seem at times to be putting the modern preacher decidedly on the spot. It is all very embarrassing to say the least.

These would-be-liberal and somewhat persecuted members of the ministerial profession are thus being forced to a fundamental decision. The religious radicals are Fundamentalists. The name is well chosen. They stand for dictatorship—not of a Pope, but of a Book. Liberal Christianity is at the cross-roads in the same sense as are the Democracies. Shall the voice of the people be respected? Shall the people be allowed to think? Are we willing to

give them all the facts, and trust to the general verdict of mankind as to the principles of truth and justice? Or shall we uphold the principle of political or spiritual dictatorship? The Second Coming of Christ, as preached by these enthusiasts, implies the latter necessity.

Reduced to its simplest terms this irrational and on the whole grossly materialistic form of Bible cosmogony seems objectionable for the following reasons:—

1. It is a counsel of despair, implying the utter defeat of moral and spiritual forces.
2. It involves a resort to force, hardly consistent with the teachings of Jesus.
3. It places God in the category of an ancient despot, and his prophets little better than second rate fortune-tellers.

(1) As a counsel of despair, these doctrines not only imply the defeat of Jehovah at practically every point in Jewish history (which indeed is not far from the truth), but more important, the utter failure of the Gospel of Christ as we have conceived it. We have been led to believe in the ultimate triumph of the principles enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount. If now, after all the centuries, nothing but a colossal massacre will suffice to bring about the kingdom of God's love in the hearts of men—well, *we know the last war didn't get us very far*. Perhaps it wasn't big enough; and so we must resort to Armageddon! In the words of the street: It simply "don't make sense!"

(2) The teachings of Jesus, as a whole, were against force. Has "our Lord" changed his entire views on this matter? From the days of John the Baptist, he observed, violent men have sought to take the kingdom by force. What was true then is true to-day. Jesus says in effect, the Kingdom of God is within; violence only arouses violence. Therefore resist not evil—let your light shine—plant the seed and give it time to grow—give more than is asked—return good for evil—hold no malice—forgive seventy times seven. Don't go to the altar (or to church for that matter), bearing a grudge. Settle with thine adversary quickly. Exercise the same good will toward others as to yourself, on the one hand, and your creator on the other.

A counsel of perfection, to be sure; but there it is—the Christian ideal; and we can't forget Jesus' last words to his disciples at his arrest when Peter was prepared with his new-bought sword to lay down his life in defence of his Master: "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all those who take the sword shall perish by the sword." I often wonder what weapons they will use at Armageddon. "Fire from heaven" sounds like bombing-planes, sure enough! In the name of the Lord!

(3) And finally, let us ask: What moral or spiritual values are involved in this divine *coup d'état*? Is it so important, therefore, to prove that the prophets of Jehovah were first-class fortune tellers? Or, in fact, that divine Power wins over human frailty! Infinite strength over finite weakness? In what sense has this grotesque culmination of world events any moral purpose except to prove that the Bible is just what these ignorant fanatics choose to say it is? That *their* god is God, indeed! That they only are right—dead right; and all reverent scholarship, in our better institutions of learning, is wrong—dead wrong. Again in the words of the street: *So what?*

And finally, with such shining lights as "Happy Jack" Smith, Father Coughlin, and Judge Rutherford constantly on the air, unhampered by any critical analysis of their claims whatsoever, isn't it rather odd that no sponsor has appeared with the same notion of promoting a source of broadcasts on

Bible literature as taught in every first class educational institution in the land? It is possible that no professor from Harvard, Yale or Columbia is qualified to speak before the great American people in a manner not reeking with sectarian propaganda or emotional fanaticism? Is it possible that no Christian Church would back such a movement? Perish the thought!

Such a course is urgently needed, and would be appreciated by the rank and file, regardless of race, sect or creed. It is safe to say that the sane *approach* of advanced scholarship to Bible literature is an avenue little travelled by the average layman. The dignity of our universities surely commands the respect of thinking people everywhere, yet few laymen are actually familiar with what is commonly *accepted truth* among recognized scholars.

"Ye shall know the truth and truth shall make you free." Have modern Christians lost faith in the truth? *Or must they submit blindly to a spiritual dictatorship which will lead just as surely into spiritual violence as political dictatorship is leading into paths of war?*

WILLIAM WIRT HARVEY, M.D., Ph.B.

Boston, Mass.

Correspondence

OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Re your remarks in "Acid Drops" in the issue of December 25 last, page 824, referring to the appointment of Sir John Reith to the B.B.C. and then to Imperial Airways.

At a recent meeting with a very high Official on the technical side of Imperial Airways, I asked him how they liked St. John's appointment? By way of reply he shrugged his shoulders, adding: "Well, he has the ear of the Prime Minister. Can get him direct on the phone any time, and can get things done."

Does this explain how Government or Official appointments are made, and the sort of qualification (sic) necessary? I have not the ear of the P.M. of this Government, or the P.M. of anything else, but I have been an active Aviator now for 26 years and do know the job throughout. I am, however,

UNEMPLOYED

[We print the above letter for what it is worth. It comes from one known to us, and we have every reason for accepting its trustworthiness. There are also good reasons for respecting its anonymity.—ED.]

MAN'S GOODNESS TO GOD

May I, my dear Lord, express the opinion that all things considered your followers have treated you with extraordinary kindness. They have been more gracious and more forgiving than you appear to be. You made the world and then blame your followers because it is not as perfect as it might be. And in his infinite compassion for your distress man accepts the blame for *your* mistakes. Man looks at the world, notes its evident imperfections, tries to make it better, and then offers praise to you for the improvements he has made. It is not man, but you, who say that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children to the third and fourth generation; man does what he can to correct the unkindly workings of the law of heredity. Man drains the swamps that you left, he tames the passions with which you have endowed him, he kills off where he can and how he can the noxious insects that you have created. Human skill and knowledge tames the forces of nature. And when man has done this, and more than this, he praises you for the progress that has been made, and even accepts the theory that you really did all things well, but man himself has

set the whole scheme of creation awry. He even flatters your vanity by explaining that in what he does he is a fellow-worker with you, and that together you are building a better world. Man has nowhere else shown the same compassion that he has shown to you. He has racked his brains to invent many excuses for what you have done. In this effort he has tried every excuse save the one that alone would completely exonerate you—that, after all, you may not exist.

From "Letters to the Lord," by Chapman Cohen

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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, Archibald Robertson—"Life and Work of Karl Marx."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4) : 7.30, Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman (The Divorce Law Reform Union)—"The Divorce Act Muddle."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Dr. C. E. M. Joad, M.A.—"The Controversy about Pacifism."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.) : 7.30, Debate—"Are Liberty and Socialism Compatible?" *Affirm.*: Allan Flanders. *Neg.*: Capt. B. Acworth, D.S.O., R.N.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane) : 7.0, W. Bain (Liverpool)—"A Social Creditor's View of the Function of Democracy."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools) : 7.0, Mr. Russell—"Pagan Origin of Christianity."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Jubilee Assembly Hall, Market Hall, Blackburn) : 8.0, Monday, January 16, Mr. Jack Clayton—"The Provost's Beliefs and Freethought." Literature for sale.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Kirkgate) : 7.0, Debate: "That Sanity is Not an Attribute of Man." Pro.: Mr. D. F. Franks (Mexborough). Con.: Mr. J. F. Corina (Bradford).

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh) : 7.0, Mr. George Whitehead (London)—"Science the Saviour."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow) : 7.0, Mr. A. B. MacKay—"Robert Burns and His Works."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mr. Reginald Bishop—"Freedom in the U.S.S.R."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, entrance in Christian Street) : 7.0, J. V. Shortt (Liverpool)—"The Christian Libel."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (King's Café, 64-66 Oxford Road, Manchester, near All Saints Church) : 7.0, Mr. Edwin Monks (Manchester)—"The Oath and the Truth."

TEES SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (Jubilee Hall, Leeds Street, Stockton) : 7.30, Mr. H. Dalkin.

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