

THE FREETHINKER

▪ EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN ▪

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

Views and Opinions

Freethought and the Child

I READ these notes "Freethought and the Child" for a special reason. I wish to discuss, not the usual question of how to bring up a child without religion, so much as how may we best bring up a child so that we have done all that could be done that it shall be a "Freethinker." And I am doing so in consequence of a conversation with a friend, who lamented the difficulty of protecting children against the influence of religion. I think that when he talked about "influence" what he had in mind was "impact," for his complaint was that a great difficulty which faced one who wished to bring up a child without religion was that, in spite of all one could do, one could not prevent the child becoming familiar with such terms as "God, Jesus, the Bible," etc. And even though one were to withdraw a child from religious instruction in schools, the child would still become acquainted with religion whenever it cared to "listen-in" to the singing or the religious lesson. He also thought that Freethinkers should so bring their children up that they would read Freethought literature, attend Freethought meetings, and eventually become a member of the National Secular Society as their parents had been.

I obviously have no objection to children growing up Freethinkers, I raise no bar against them attending Freethought meetings and reading Freethought literature, and ultimately becoming members of the N.S.S. It has been one object of my life to bring about all these things—provided—! But as expressed there seemed something wrong about the picture, the programme did not seem wide enough or varied enough, and the child seemed to get lost in the adult who, perhaps by a series of chances, had become the parent. The whole seemed to result in making the child a secondary interest instead of the primary and the most important part of the picture.

* * *

The Freedom of the Child

First of all, is it really a matter of great difficulty to

bring up a child so that it may have a bias (a bias, mark, not a prejudice) in favour of Freethought? The first duty of a parent, leaving on one side the provision of food and shelter, is to protect a child against forces that threaten its well-being. Again, leaving on one side physical violence, we are mainly concerned with forces that threaten the child's intellectual well-being. Unfortunately these attacks may come, unknowingly, from the parent as well as from outsiders, and it may be based on a mistaken concern for the child as well as upon designs of a more selfish nature. Usually the question arises in a direct form when school age arrives, and the question of religion or no religion has to be decided. And, certainly so far as large centres of population are concerned, the difficulty in most cases comes from the parents. I have a fairly wide acquaintance with teachers, and the general position is that the child when withdrawn from religious instruction is given a task in another room, and there the matter ends. My own opinion expressed more than once, and actually verified in cases I know intimately, is the parental dislike to letting their religious neighbours know that their children are minus religious instruction. In such cases it is the child who serves as cover for the parent, not the parent who stands as a protector for the child. These cases are much on the level of those who explain that while they do not belong to any religious body they still have a "religion" of their own, and those who, being without belief in a God, protest that they are not really Atheists, they are Agnostics. There is such an important difference between not believing in a God and being without one!

In any case I think it is only in the face of very serious considerations that the child should be permitted to receive religious instruction in school. Provided everything is being done that is possible to create an atmosphere of genuine mental independence, it can do the child nothing but harm to live in one atmosphere in the school and another at home, or to find its parents conniving at its receiving teaching which is openly set aside at home, but which their teachers place before them as unquestionable truths.

I think it highly desirable that every child should be so trained that the influences to which they are exposed will make it possible they will become staunch Freethinkers. But I do not mean by this that it is the duty of parents to see that their children shall become members of a particular Society, or anything of that kind. I have a very strong objection to using children as the unconscious objects of an avowed propaganda, whether the propaganda be religious, Atheistic, Agnostic, Socialistic, Communistic, Fascistic, or a fine crusted Toryism which learns to shudder at advanced ideas in any form. Most of us parents are doubtless admirable people, but few of us are so perfect that our children may not in time pay us the

compliment of being wiser and better than we are. If I had a dozen children I should ask of fortune but one thing. This is that they should grow up convinced of the importance of opinion in moulding life, that the right to an opinion is something possessed by all, and that a child should be encouraged to have and express an opinion even against both parent and teacher. In such circumstances the child would often be wrong, quite frequently he would be a devil of a nuisance to the said parents and teachers—with an almost certain benefit to both. There will be no guarantee whatever that the opinions reached are "right," but the social value of free opinion does not consist in opinions being right, only in their being encouraged and heard. It may well indeed be questioned, if "opinion" can truly be said to exist when not formed in the presence of conflicting ideas.

* * *

Impact and Influence

I have already said that when my friend spoke of the influence of religious ideas on children, what he had in mind was their impact. Against the influence of religious ideas the training of children should offer all the protection that can be given. But to protect children being exposed to the impact of religious or other ideas is to do what we can to prevent their having any opinions of their own at all. Given parents of ordinary intelligence and moderate courage, the influence of religion may, in most cases, be combated. Of course, if the parents are afraid, from whatever cause, to let their own opinions be known to their neighbours they can hardly expect their children to grow up with the intellectual self-respect they should have. In such circumstances the religious influences operating outside the home meet the little resistance or correction from the forces within the home. Just as lack of nutrition may prevent the child resisting physical disease, so the influence of religious ideas is strengthened when the child grows up with an atrophied sense of the value of opinion in life. Given the right home environment there should be developed quite enough immunity for the development of the child not to be seriously affected.

But this does not mean that the child must be brought up in complete protection against the *impact* of religious or other ideas. From that source little but good can result. The ideal of keeping the growing generation protected against the impact of unauthorized ideas is the policy of the Churches, from one end of the world to the other. It is the policy of the modern dictatorships all over the world. So far as any of these succeed, whether on the secular or the religious level, the method is the same and the consequence is the same. Those within the ring are protected against the influence of "undesirable" ideas by not permitting the people, beginning with the child, to be subjected to the impact of any ideas but the authorized ones. To say that as a Freethinker I must not permit my children to be exposed to the impact of religious ideas is to repeat the policy of the dictators, the hard-shell conservative, and religious organizations all over the world. A Freethinker who is a Freethinker, and who is not a mere anti-Christian, should not only welcome the impact of ideas on the mind of his child; he should seek them, and if they are not forthcoming from without they should be supplied from within. They should be to the mind what training is to the body. The *influence* of false ideas and dangerous teaching should be fought, but you cannot fight them with the weapons of the Fascist or the religionist. They must be fought by the impact upon a mind that is being trained to be a little more than a member of a particular organization, even though that organization may be fighting under the flag of Freethought.

I hope I have made it quite plain that by protecting the child against religious influences I do not prevent the impact of religious ideas. It is the home influence—expressed in silence, rather than in set lessons or verbal expressions—on which I would count most. There should be going on with every child a process of mental "toughening" that should go side by side with the process of physical toughening that is highly recommended and so generally practised.

* * *

Evolution and the Child

I do not agree then that the way to bring up a child as a Freethinker is to sequester it from contact with ideas which parents or teachers may decide, with a certainty and accuracy of judgment which is manifested only in their circles, are "wrong." The child should as early as it is possible be made acquainted with the fact that not only are there differences of opinion upon subjects of importance, but that it is well that they should exist, and with growing years the further and final lesson should be gained, not only that these differing opinions exist, but that the very development of man make them inevitable and desirable. And it is mainly through the medium of the home that this lesson should come. No great scholarship or profound intelligence is required to bring this about. No more is required than a moderate degree of intelligence and a little more than the average amount of moral courage. No child was ever the worse for being exposed to the impact of outside ideas. Sooner or later, unless he is to go through life with a stunted mind and a false face, he must awaken to the fact that there are many diverse ideas in the world, and that if he is to play the part of a man he must express himself and expose himself to the impact of ideas. In a child this exposure to new ideas, and the preparation for that exposure is mainly an affair of the home, and no child was ever the worse for it. The recognition that these differences exist, the petty spite that even children may display, mainly, again, because of home influence, may be taken as part of the toughening process for which we are all of us the better. There may be something in the late Augustine Birrell's opinion that "children would rather be wicked than singular," but properly trained singularity may even become something of which one may grow to be proud. After all, we have not noticed that children display any great fondness for sheep.

So I cannot agree that we ought so to bring up our children that they will come to all our meetings, read our literature, join our society—in a word, become mere copies of ourselves. For I think that the best of us may be improved, and the wisest of us have yet to learn. But if our children come to our meetings, if they read our literature, and join our society, so far, good. But it must be of their own volition, because they have been able by our training to withstand the influence of "wrong" ideas, and not because they are with us because we have prevented their ever knowing anything different. And, if they, as they reach maturity, travel along other lines from those we traversed, then let us hope they will sometimes pause and reflect, "Well, I am not where my parents were, some of their ideas I have found to be wrong, others I have carried further than they did. I see blunders where they did not, error where they thought they had undiluted truth. But in this I am applying the lessons they taught me. They made me strong and independent. I should not be where I am if they had not been what they were." I can think of no more magnificent tribute to any parent. And if one can imagine the wraiths of the parents looking down on their child, I can imagine them fading into nothingness with the words "All is well!" on their ghostly lips.

CHAPMAN COHEN

The Revival of Religion

Like snow upon the desert's dusty face
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

Omar Khayyam

A tale of little meaning, though the words are strong.

Tennyson.

REVIVALS form an interesting feature of religious history. Just when English Nonconformity became "respectable," the Moody and Sankey revival catered for those Free Church folk who liked the noisy, irresponsible methods of the corybantic Christianity of the earlier days. It was an attempt, successful in its theatrical way, to import smart American missionary methods, which were then a novelty in this country. Sankey sang lively tunes and Moody shouted fire and brimstone orations. Years later, there was another attempt to recapture the earlier financial success, but the Torrey-Alexander Revivalist Mission was anything but a "spiritual" victory. Later still, the Oxford Group broke fresh ground, with but indifferent results. Driven by desperation, even the Anglican Church ecclesiastics have tried a revival, but John Bull is not so sensitive to clerical cajolery as he used to be. He no longer worries about his "soul." Indeed, he is not so sure that he has a "soul" at all to save.

It is as it should be. The peril of the democracy in all countries, and in this as much as any, is that it is so easily fooled by the machinations of Priestcraft, which never abandoned a principle because it never had a principle to desert.

The much-advertised "recall to religion" made with the blessings of the Archbishop of Canterbury has not so far resulted in a revival of positive religious faith. On the contrary, the first broad effect of the post-war period has been to stimulate criticism of all the Churches, and to raise doubts as to the truth of the Christian Religion itself. The decline in influence of all the churches is as plain as a pikestaff. Not only the plutocratic Established Church, but all the great Nonconformist Bodies, are suffering from loss of revenue, shortage of members, and decline of authority and influence. A widespread popular sentiment regards religion, not so much with antagonism as with growing indifference.

Even professedly religious folk have been affected by this intellectual ferment. "The failure of the Churches," the "break-down of Christianity" itself, are phrases in constant use in these days. Surely professing Christians should have done something to combat the reign of brute-force, and the recrudescence of the militarist idea. The responsibility of the failure is laid, rightly, at the doors of the Churches. Further, the complicity and complaisance of the Churches with the more conservative side of the existing social order preclude any hope for their future.

Anyone who has read the utterances of the clergy themselves, and their feeble apologies, in the pulpits and in periodical literature, will perceive that they are conscious that their influence and power are waning. It has been the brazen clerical boast that the Christian Religion has civilized Europe, and none, except General Franco and his flamboyant Romish supporters have the courage to claim that the Spanish civil-war is in harmony with the principles and the ideals of the Christian Religion. Where is this boasted brotherhood and peace, now that the big stick of brute-force has been thrust suddenly into the mechanism of religion? The wheels cease turning, and the hymn-tunes die into a silence, broken by the roar of guns, the groans of the dying soldiers and civilians, and the cries of children. Not only religion, but culture,

philosophy, literature, science, and art are suddenly arrested. Chaos has come again. At one stroke, as it were, Spain is given over to barbarism and savagery, and tens of thousands of brave men are emulating bloody baboons. The labour of yesteryear, nay, of very many yesteryears, is being destroyed as by a gigantic earthquake. Once again has humanity been betrayed, and just too late the clergy discover the state of affairs, and apologize for them. Just as if apologies were not a disguise for hysterical emotionalism at the surrender of a fair country to chaos and old night. O most impotent of all conclusions! If Christians can only apologize for the Moloch of Militarism, small wonder that Christianity as an ethic has failed, and failed utterly. So long as men's theological conceptions remain rooted in the cruel times of the Middle Ages, so long as no real humanism flames into being with a passionate sense of brotherhood, and a new scale of ethical values, so long will men seek lasting peace in vain. Christianity itself is a great imposture, hence the clergy fail invariably to get to grips with vital affairs. In this nightmare of civilization the comfortable theory that

God's in his heaven
All's right with the world,

bears no relation to the facts of existence.

The failure of organized Christianity is too complete to be glossed over by the glamour of false sentiments and pinchbeck heroics. The clergy are so obsessed by their own ancient dogmas that they cannot be forced to admit publicly that brute force has usurped the place of reason. We, whose fathers built up in generations of toil and suffering this fair fabric of Western civilization, can no longer rely on a two-thousand-years'-old Oriental superstition as the last utterance of wisdom. Let the clergy leave the people to work out their own salvation, without the fear and trembling of an outworn creed. For the conscience of the race is rising steadily above the old-world dogmas of Eastern misbeliefs, and civilized man is better than the mythology of decadent and neurotic superstitions.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, who issued this recall to religion, retains the titular leadership of the so-called Church of England, but his audiences are dwindling, and the ordinary people are passing him by with indifference. They may not openly scoff at him, but they are no longer interested in a recall to religion, or even in religion itself. They distrust his too-ready obedience to all social and political winds that blow, and have ceased to get enthusiastic in a conundrum which to them seems to have no solution. This Primate is without a policy, with a crumbling following, without a purpose. He has nothing left but a crown and the flashy robes of his office. And the robes are but the needlework of Noodledom, and the crown but tinsel. He is not unrelated to the Vicar of Bray, although he wears the trappings of circumstance. How could such a man cause a revival of anything? He thinks only in terms of the aristocrat, and is, indeed, a member of the House of Lords. With a palace, a town-house, and robes costing near a thousand pounds, he preaches the gospel of poverty. It is all as remote and unreal as the imaginative picture on a stained-glass window in a Norman Church. Such a figure cannot hope to unfold a new chapter in the eternal drama of things. At his best and bravest he can but base his calculations on the foibles and follies of his fellow-men:—

We know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers;
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester.

MIMNERMUS

The Evolution of Intelligence

It is now generally recognized that feeling or emotion is a "faculty" that is developed relatively early, and that it is the great drive to action. It seems equally clear that intellect, a later feature, is the great guide to action, and at the same time constitutes the fundamental instrument for the formation of a rational "world view" or "philosophy of life."

The advance of intelligence in the animal series can now be followed in outline. But this aspect of evolution has not yet taken its due place in books on the general subject. The need for disseminating the knowledge we possess is not infrequently shown, even by educated people. E.g., in recent correspondence in the *Schoolmaster* and in a local paper, a teacher in each case tried to defend the alleged talking (in intelligent human fashion) of Balaam's ass by adducing the talk of the parrot. It is quite certain that neither ass nor parrot is intelligent enough to talk like Balaam's ass, and that the parrot's speech, though articulate, is merely imitation of sounds heard. The bird never says anything "of its own"; and, as the writer on Comparative Psychology in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, says, "It goes without saying that an understanding of the words on the part of the bird is completely excluded."

Of course Descartes was quite wrong in denying mentality to animals. Some of the sounds they make evidently have a more or less definite significance to themselves, their young, their opposite sex, and to members of the herd of gregarious species in general.

It is probable that "animal language" began in the Carboniferous Period (say 300,000,000 years ago) when the amphibians appeared. These animals were the earliest to possess vocal chords and a movable tongue, and produced therefore the first voice; and the first "word" is likely to have been a sex call, something like the croak of a frog. Such language evolved to a considerable extent in the higher animal orders; but (except in the case of some birds) it has remained inarticulate to the top of the subhuman series.

Intelligence, however, in a tolerable sense of the word, seems to have dawned among the invertebrates. Ants have been trained to use a small bridge to get to their nest when other access was artificially prevented. But insects are in the main "bundles of instincts"; and they have very little power of origination or of dealing with new situations. The limitation has been well illustrated by the following experiment: A wasp, with the grub (larva) of another, were put in a cage without food; the adult was evidently soon concerned about the (instinctive) feeding of the young one; but, finding nothing, it bit off the hind end of the grub and offered it to the mouth end.

Small advance is shown by fishes, amphibians and reptiles, which are known to possess some power of learning and remembering. E.g., a long glass tank was arranged with an attractive corner in which food was placed. Fishes were put in at the other end, and they at once tried to get to the more inviting locality, but were prevented for a time by glass partitions, each with a hole, but in a different position. After a number of trials, however, the animals got through; and they were subsequently able to swim directly to the goal.

Further advance is made by birds, though less than we might expect in view of the fact that like mammals they evolved from reptiles, and thus may, in a sense, be regarded as a parallel order. A thrush learns to crack the shell of a snail by dashing it against a stone. But some pigeons when their eggs have been removed will sit on nothing for a long time. (An-

other kind of pigeon will, however, retrieve the eggs.) And, a young pipit, ejected from its nest by young cuckoos and caught on a branch quite near, was seen to be fed (as it cried out and opened its mouth when its mother appeared), but no attempt to rescue it was made.

The main evolution of intelligence has occurred in the mammalian series. E.g., a hen separated from visible food by a suitable length of wire netting merely dashes wildly at the obstruction; but a dog will go round; so also will a child of five or six years. Dogs learn to get in and out of cages to secure visible food by pulling a string or lever, or by sliding a bolt. But we have to reject most of the "anecdotal" accounts of dog and cat intelligence. The limitation of the former has been shown by turning round such a cage as that mentioned, when the dog is completely nonplussed, and has again to learn to perform the operation by scrabbling around, as he did at first.

It is hardly necessary to say that the highest subhuman intelligence is found among apes—as those who have seen or read of the apes' tea-party at the Zoo will have concluded. Without teaching they pile boxes on one another, use sticks, and even fit together, fishing-rod fashion, prepared bamboo canes in order to secure food otherwise out of reach. They have been taught to thread needles, skate, cycle and recognize numbers to five. Here therefore we not only have superiority in learning but the simpler (perceptual) kind of inference or reasoning and a "foreplan of action" that are beyond the capacity of any dog. And in view of what we hear about the wonderfully intelligent actions of some peoples' canine pets, the following from Wells and Huxley's *Science of Life* may be quoted: "It is probable that no animals below apes can call up images of past events as we can; a dog probably is incapable of remembering and reflecting about the absence of his master, though he recognizes him at once on his return."

The evolution of intelligence of course proceeds closely with that of brain, and that of the dog is considerably inferior to that of the ape. We are informed by zoologists that the latter has all the formations of the human brain, and that the only distinctive feature is a quantitative one. Hence, as the writer of the article mentioned above states, the apes have won a "foothold on the lower rungs of the ladder of human intelligence."

The ascent of the higher rungs of the ladder—the advance to conceptual inference or reasoning in the stricter sense—is evidently only possible to mankind. And the progression of mentality from birth to maturity exhibits Recapitulation, that is, the appearance of ancestral (vestigial) features or stages comparable to those that are so well known in physical development. Indeed, Prof. McDougall tells us that the evidence for recapitulation is as cogent on the psychological as on the biological side.

J. REEVES

DRIVING IT HOME

Scotland has had a record rainfall this year, and in many places the corn is still lying in the flooded fields. But an Ayrshire minister decided to hold the Harvest Thanksgiving service as usual and began with the hymn:—

"Come, ye Thankful people, come,
Raise the song of harvest home,
All is safely gathered in,
Tire the winter storms begin;
God, our Maker, doth provide
For our wants to be supplied;
Come to God's own Temple, come
Raise the song of harvest home."

Heil Hitler!—Heil Jehovah!

Just why Hitler objects to the worship of Jehovah is not difficult to understand. The very first Commandment explains that. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

In times to come, perchance, Germans, bowing down to the traditional Hitler, much as the Jews now bow to the traditional Jehovah, will have become a "peculiar people," hated of all nations for their blind allegiance to a mythical figure whom they worship as their Saviour; and one whom all enlightened races will remember for his unspeakable brutality, cruelty and despotism. Only in the ancient Hebrew scriptures will be found his parallel.

Most modern Jews, like modern Christians, know very little about this historic monster, Jehovah, because they take their Bible in homeopathic doses from priests and rabbis who read from the pulpit just those selections best suited to their spiritual needs. This perhaps is well on the whole. The congregations unconsciously outgrow the creeds they profess to believe, and the hateful images they profess to worship.

It must be admitted, however, that ancient Jehovah had at times, vague notions of right and justice. "Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deut. xxi. 24), was humane, compared with the recent pronouncement of the Nazi leaders: "A thousand Jewish eyes for one German eye, and a thousand Jewish teeth for one German tooth."

But, as a humanitarian, Jehovah rarely carried out his good intentions. He was a jealous God (Deut. xx. 5), and like Hitler, wanting in humour. When one poor ignorant follower committed a *faux pas* by peeking into the sacred ark, the great god of Israel flew into an uncontrollable rage and slaughtered thousands in reprisal. (1 Samuel vi. 19).

Again and again, in the sacred code, occur these words: "Thine eye shalt not pity them." Should your child, your wife or your friend go inside a gentile church (or words to that effect), thou shalt surely kill him, "neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him." (Deut. xiii. 6-10). (And all this in spite of the sixth commandment!)

But the comparison with the Hitler code reaches a high spot in the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, from which we take the following quotations:—

And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them. . . . If thou shalt say in thine heart, these nations are more than I; how can I possess them? Thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shall well remember what thy God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt. Moreover the Lord shall send the hornet (?) among them, until they that are left and hide themselves from thee be destroyed; . . . for the Lord thy God is among you a mighty God and terrible. And the Lord thy God shall put out those nations before thee, *little by little; thou mayest not consume them at once*, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But the Lord shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. And he shall deliver their Kings unto thine hand, and *thou shalt destroy their names from under heaven*; (Moses speaking, not Hitler) there shall no man be able to stand before thee until thou have destroyed them." (Italics mine).

In the light of recent events, let us quote the words of Hitler, as uttered in 1932 (see Kurt Luedike's *I Knew Hitler*). "Once we hold power, Christianity will be overcome and the Deutsche Kirche established. . . . We don't need to declare the fight too openly. . . . It would be political stupidity to show the masses too many enemies at once. The political victory can only follow if the fight is concentrated against the fewest

possible number of enemies—for the time being, the Marxists and Jews. Then will come the turn of the Reaktion, and the end of that will mean the end of the Christian Church—and the opening of our own temples and our own shrines." (Who says Hitler is not religious?) Later he refers to "this abominable levelling mania, this cursed universalism of Christianity which denies racialism and preaches suicidal tolerance. . . ."

So that is what Hitler doesn't like about Christians, Jews and Communists—"universalism" and racial "tolerance!" Well, we have been flattering ourselves that we had, in some degree, outgrown the barbaric racialism and intolerance of the Mosaic code. We have been thankful for it, and thought we were getting more civilized. But according to Hitler it's all our mistake.

The issue, however, is clearly stated. Tolerance and good-will versus intolerance and hatred. Take your choice. We don't have to discuss on which side stand Hitler and Jehovah. They should be standing arm in arm, for they have so much in common; but it must always be remembered they are both *very jealous gods*. "Thou shalt have no other god before me," precludes any lasting friendship between them.

So it is better also that the name of Jehovah be pulled down altogether, in Germany, as someone might discover by accident just where Hitler got his Big Idea.

In closing may I ask the reader to note in Deuteronomy xxviii., and following, the delightful array of tortures invented by its author, and wished upon the Chosen People in case they depart *one iota* from the laws and statutes laid down in this precious book. I commend the entire chapter to any modern worshipper, Jew or Gentile. What is in store for him at the hand of Jehovah, must make the ordinary concentration camp seem, by comparison, a vacation in dreamland. When he thinks of *cooties*, let him remember the blessed promises of Jehovah-God as delivered by his minister of propaganda, Moses:—

And the Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods (bubonic plague) and with the scab (small pox) and with the itch (scabies) whereas thou canst not be healed. And the Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness and with astonishment of heart. . . . etc., etc.

So now we know why the Jews have to be persecuted. They haven't kept *all the laws and statutes* (674 in number, according to a Jewish authority); and Hitler doubtless has arisen to carry out the will of the very god whom they profess to worship.

The Jews are certainly *on the spot*. They may *Heil Hitler* as much as they like, but it won't do any good, for Jehovah is indeed a very jealous god, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children into the third and fourth generation. . . . (Deut. xx.)

And all the while we doctors are actually curing the very diseases sent by Jehovah as just punishment for their disloyalty! What ridiculous nonsense!

Is it not high time that both Christians and Jews frankly disowned these barbarous codes which to-day are being kept pretty much alive by decadent priests and their moronic followers who either don't know, from ignorance, or are just too dumb to appreciate the hideous significance of the words they so blithely repeat? It only requires that they approach their Bibles from the standpoint of modern scholarship and use a modicum of common sense. Then they can tell the world that Hitler is simply reviving the ancient Hebrew code which all thoughtful Jews and Christians (let us hope) have repudiated ages ago—and—*What a capital joke on Hitler!*

WILLIAM W. HARVEY, M.D.

The Sabbath Day

A PREVIOUS article under the above heading brought me a letter from Belfast, asking for further confirmation of the quoted statement that the Roman free worker laboured only about 170 days in the year, compared to the British workman's 300, in the days when Christianity ruled our industrial life. In answer to the information supplied, my enquirer said it seemed to him an extraordinary thing that with all our scientific knowledge we should be compelled to work twice as long as the Roman worker. It would appear that so far as the well-being of the worker is concerned Christian civilization had been steadily progressing—backwards.

Another letter from Stockton-on-Tees, enclosing a leaflet entitled, "Are Sunday Games un-Christian," may be of interest to the reader. The sincerity and candour of the writer is rather refreshing in these days of wholesale religious lying; and some parts of it might lead one to suppose that our friend is not far from the kingdom of heaven. The credit side of his ledger is in a comparatively healthy condition. For instance, he is a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, and admires its stand for freedom of speech. He listens at times to Mr. Brighton at Chester-le-Street, who, along with Mr. Watson, has stood against priestly interference in political affairs. We should never forget, he says, the murder of men like Senor Ferrer, who believed in children being educated free from clerical control. He is also an enthusiastic admirer of Bradlaugh, whom he heard when he was a boy; and is free in his contempt for the Christian hooligans who recently desecrated his tomb. He is also in agreement with that part of my article which alleged, notwithstanding the claims that are made for it, that the "Christian" Sabbath has no religious sanction, and is in no way related to the Jewish day of Rest. The leaflet enclosed is written specially to combat such an idea, and gives ample evidence from Christian clerics themselves, who admit the truth of our contention. It quotes Sir Wm. Donville as saying: "Centuries of the Christian era passed away before the Sunday was observed by the Christian Church as a Sabbath." Canon Eyton of the Church of England says: "The observance of Ash-Wednesday or Lent stands on exactly the same footing as the observance of Sunday—into the rest of Sunday no divine law enters." The Rev. R. W. Dale, D.D. (Congregationalist), says, There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday. Cardinal Gibbons (Roman Catholic), tells us: "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday." (From his book, *The Faith of Our Fathers*).

Here my friend and I part company and go our different ways. In reference to this Jewish law of the Sabbath, John Wesley said in No. 25 of his Sermons: "Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind and in all ages." And it is this fundamental error that lies at the root of all the Christian confusion in regard to the Sabbath day. The Israelitish tribes, when they weren't away in captivity in some foreign land, occupied part of the land of Canaan; but both in Palestine and in the surrounding countries there were other Semitic tribes, who did not recognize either Jehovah or his Sabbath. These "heathen" tribes, with whom the chosen people were constantly at war, had gods of their own, and priests and laws of their own, as is evident from the Old Testament. The assumption that the Jewish Sabbath law was ever intended to have a universal application must have sprung from the fertile brain of some of the Christian

Fathers, who let loose upon the world a farrago of theological nonsense. If this Sabbath law was still in force, then the penalties for breaking it would be in force also, seeing that they have never been rescinded, or even modified. Do the believers in the real Sabbath think the stoning to death of persons found guilty of gathering a few sticks on Saturday a just or humane punishment? If not, why not? Then again, the institution of the Sabbath seems to have been only an afterthought. According to Hebrew chronology many, many centuries must have passed away before Moses came down the mountain bringing the two tablets of stone with the commandments chiselled on them. When Jahweh walked in the garden with Adam in the cool of the day, there is no record of the Sabbath ever having been discussed. The ancient Egyptians, who had been a highly civilized nation for ages, were not beholden to any such law for their attainments in knowledge and virtue, or their excellent social achievements.

Our friend, in his letter, thinks that some kind of religious observance is necessary to maintain the moral stability of the community; but I think the evidence of the past is all against such a supposition.

JOSEPH BRYCE

A "HELL," OF A POEM

JUST what is meant by this word "Hell"?
Sometimes they say "It's hot as Hell."
When it rains hard, "It's Hell," they cry;
It's also "Hell" when it is dry.
"It's cold as Hell" if it should snow;
And "blows like Hell" if it should blow.
So "how in Hell" can anyone tell
"What in Hell" they mean by this word "Hell."

This "married life is Hell," they say;
If you get drunk "there's Hell to pay!"
"It's Hell" when you've the kid to nurse,
Which "yells like Hell" to make it worse.
"It's Hell" when you get doctors' bills
That "grow like Hell" for calls and pills;
And when you pay "you kick up Hell"—
But what is meant by this word "Hell"?
"Hell, yes," "Hell, no," and "O Hell" too;
"The Hell you don't," "the Hell you do";
And "what in Hell?" "the Hell it is,"
"To Hell with yours," "to Hell with this."
Now "who in Hell?" and "O Hell, where?"
And "what the Hell have I to care?"
To this I'm sure, you "give it Hell,"
But don't know "what in Hell is 'Hell'?"

When out of work your "life is Hell";
You've "hunted round and walked to Hell,"
An "hope to Hell you'll strike a job—
It's Hell to be without a bob."
You get the "luck of Hell" on you
And don't know "what the Hell to do."
"Now who the, what the, how the Hell"
Can you explain to me this "Hell"?

The cost of living "rose like Hell,"
And wages they have "dropped to Hell!"
There's such a lot of "Hell" about,
"It's Hell" for me to make it out.
You "pay like Hell" for what you buy,
Then "curse like Hell" the profit guy.
Now tell me, since you've "played up Hell,"
"In the name of Hell" what is this "Hell"?

"I wish to Hell" you made it clear
About this "Hell" we often hear;
"It's hard as Hell" to understand
How this word "Hell" has took command.
"I try like Hell" to keep it out
Of "what the Hell" I talk about;
But back it comes, and "sure as Hell"
It has me beat—"I'm all to Hell!"

Transport Workers' Song Book, New Zealand.

Acid Drops

If one wishes to get some fine specimens of cock-eyed reasoning, suitable for a note-book that is to be used as a store of examples illustrating how one ought *not* to do it, one cannot do better than read Beverley Nichols in the *Sunday Chronicle*. One wonders how the editor passes it, unless he believes that there are some who buy the paper for Beverley Nichols. That seems a terrible thing to say of any body of people, but we can reach no other conclusion. Of course, he is not the only one in his line of paragraph writing. There are several writers of the same class, and one must conclude that so long as one can travel about, spend a small fortune in expensive dinners and expensive tours, meet with miraculous consistency everyone who is "in the news" (providing he is of some standing) and interlard these contacts with a few titles, there are plenty of editors who will exploit the snobbishness and foolishness of a section of the British public for all it is worth.

For example, in the *Sunday Chronicle* for February 12, Mr. Beverley Nichols, who appears to have been travelling in South America, writes of one of the *Republics* that has, he says, just passed one of the "longest, bloodiest, and most ruthless dictatorship since the Middle Ages. The population was kept in acute ignorance, poverty and servitude." After that he goes on to say, as a moral to be learned from what he has seen, "When next you hear that the Prime Minister of N.Y. or Z. has shaken his fist in the face of Hitler, don't take too much comfort from it." And describing some of the brutalities which the people have undergone, and which reminds one very much of Nichols' semi-idol, Hitler, he says that after these experiences "Democracy does not seem such a cure-all as some of us are apt to think."

It is to be hoped that not many of us think as Mr. Nichols does, and take as a sample of a democracy a people who have been without power and in "ignorance, poverty, and servitude," probably because the Dictatorship behaved as he describes, and may have called itself a democracy. After this clotted rubbish, one can understand Mr. Nichols' admiration of Hitler, and also appreciate the timeliness of this piece of unintentional self-revelation,

It is not the publicity that disturbs me, but the fact that it is the outward and visible sign of a quite appalling state of affairs.

That is what we have been trying to say through these paragraphs. If we had to write the confession we could only put it, "please do not be disturbed at my philosophy, consider that it is an evidence of a quite appalling state of affairs." Mr. Nichols may be welcomed as a doctor might welcome a patient who represented an almost perfect specimen of a disease he was doing his utmost to destroy.

Sir Thomas Inskip has now more time to "devote" to the subject on which he is more expert than the mere Defence of the Realm. He has been belauding the glories of the old-fashioned Sabbath Day. He laments its decadence:—

Nowadays attendance at "public worship," as the phrase went, is falling into abeyance. In a quarterly magazine concerned with the work and history of Westminster Abbey, the Bishop of Durham in a recent article goes so far as to say that the cultured class has generally ceased to go to church, and he couples this with the decay of Sunday Observance. Whether or not this is too sweeping a statement, it is too near the truth to be disregarded.

Sir Thomas intends to do his darndest to restore the happy days when women were burnt alive for gathering sticks for the fire on Sunday. We imagine that like his last job, the new one will be ineffectively handled and terminated abruptly and without praise or appreciation.

A good deal of discussion is going on as to whether there is likely to be a Pope with Fascist tendencies or not. A great deal of the writing we have seen on the topic appears to move on a non-understanding of the policy of the Roman Church. That Church is based upon the very primitive idea that both the State and the Church are ordained by God, and that obedience to both is the duty of all Catholics provided—? It is with the proviso that the sting comes. Roman Catholic teaching is that the Church is founded by and derives authority from God. But the State also derives whatever legitimate authority it has from God. Therefore the Church orders the obedience of all good Catholics to both Church and State, again provided—?

And here is where the clash comes. In all matters of religious belief, in such matters as religion, marriage, education and morals, the Church is supreme. In political and economic matters the State, also having the authority of God, acts on its own responsibility. It follows that the Church will sanction any economic or political theory, from Communism to high toryism, provided in its operations it does not conflict with the interests of religion. And that is where the snag arises. For it is left for the Pope, who has the Holy Ghost at his elbow advising him, to say whether any particular action is or is not against the interests of the Church. The Church may favour Fascism provided Fascism restricts itself to political and economic affairs, and manages these so as not to threaten Church interests. It may oppose Fascism whenever that happens. But those who think that the Roman Church is tied to any economical or political theory misunderstands the position of the Church.

Of course, the Church decides what is detrimental to religious interests, and when it has so decided, it is the duty of every Catholic to obey. The Church might have come to terms with Hitler but for two things. One is the stupid race theory, a theory that is to-day backed by scarcely one responsible scientific thinker. This cuts across the claim of the Roman Church to be universal—although possibilities of accommodation exist. The other is the control of education. Fascists everywhere know that if they are to create a perpetual slave State, it must commence with the child, and see that it grows up as ignorant as possible, the State must create a generation that not merely submits to slavery, but actually loves it. The Church also knows that the only way to keep people Christian is to make them mental slaves with no idea of freedom, from the very outset of their lives.

We hope that what we have said will serve as an answer to many letters we have recently received. In practice the two greatest dangers to human freedom, and so to human dignity, are Roman Catholicism and Fascism. But it will not do for Freethinkers to believe that the Roman Church is so legally stupid as some appear to believe. That is playing into the hands of the enemy with a vengeance.

Mr. Howard Marshall is responsible for a "feature" parliament in the *Daily Mail*. The public is favoured with a selection of letters, but somehow or the other letters attacking or even offering a radical criticism of religion never appear. Perhaps they are lost in the post, or perhaps the *Mail*, which is never notorious for fair play, thinks that a religious parliament should be moulded on the model of Hitler, one in which only one opinion is to be heard. Mr. Marshall's own contribution is that "In the life of Christ we find the foundations of democracy." We are not surprised. People usually manage to find in the life of Christ anything they are looking for from rigid Conservatism to uncompromising Communism. That is one of the indications of a revelation. We do not know whether Mr. Marshall really believes what he says in so rubbishy a sentence. Perhaps it is just his way of earning his living.

A quarrel broke out at West Rasen, Lincs., between a curate and the relatives of a dead man. The relatives wished to sing a certain hymn at the funeral and the

curate forbade it. The title of the hymn was "Thine for Ever," which we admit may be considered both ambiguous and suggestive. It would all depend upon the kind of religious life the dead person had lived, and who would claim the soul of the departed. The people concerned have threatened to break up the curate's next service by way of reprisal.

Another row occurred at Ryde, I.O.W. In this case the Vicar criticized the singing of the choir, and the choir has threatened to go on strike. In this case the Vicar did but suggest that the singing might be improved, and it is probable that the Vicar was right. But the God Almighty must by this time have been so accustomed to all sorts of singing and howling by way of calling his attention to things, that he probably would not bother about it, and the recording angel may never set it down that the singing of the Ryde choir needs attention. But the curious thing about these cases, and others, is that the followers of Jesus manage to quarrel "all samee" as other folk, and try to get level with each other in much the same manner as do the ungodly.

Cardinal Hinsley who won, such a reputation for lying over the World Union of Freethinkers Congress that it would be unfair to forget his capacity in that direction, says "the Church cannot allow a Secularist majority to discard the law of Christ, or to settle the nature of his Church." Cardinal Hinsley's opinions on this head have "nothing to do with the case," save in the sense in which health has to reckon with dirt, knowledge with the power of ignorance, and honesty with dishonesty. But as a mere historic fact the "law of Christ" has been altered time after time by a prevailing and determined secular common sense. And the Church of Christ and of the Popes have had to submit to it, and, as the film American would say, to like it.

Sir Samuel Hoare is considering, in reply to a question put by Mr. Day, M.P., whether he shall or shall not prohibit in this country a game of cards imported from America. It is called the "Love Game," which is made up of the names of historic characters such as Dante and Beatrice, Romeo and Juliet, etc. Among these are the names of Edward and Wallis, and also that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is, so far as we understand the game, one of the "I forbid the banns" kind of characters. But Mr. Day considers this as an insult to the Royal Family. Why? There is no doubt that Edward and Wallis were in love with each other, and there is no question that it was the Archbishop of Canterbury, with Baldwin, who were directly responsible for the abdication. What then is the objection? Perhaps Mr. Day is impressed by the fact that at the Coronation the King was transformed by the miraculous greasing and incantations of the Archbishop of Canterbury into a God, and, therefore to put the Royal Family into a game of cards would be as blasphemous as writing a love story round the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary. But what a brain must Harry Day, M.P. possess! And how watchful must the Home Secretary be of the proprieties! It almost equals his regrets that he could not forbid the holding of the International Freethought Conference in London.

"Me and God" would be an appropriate title for the Modernist Bishop Barnes's Radio talk recently. He called his subject "Myself and Life," but there is plenty about God and little about Life.

I believe that there is purpose in the process that has produced man. I believe that there is a God in whose Mind the purpose exists. I believe that man's consciousness—may I say his soul, it is a shorter word—has been created as part of a plan whereby all souls in the Universe should make for the greater glory of the Creator, I believe that by our actions we aid or hinder the Divine Scheme. I believe that goodness is of God and that evil thwarts His plans, that our free-will is, in fact, a freedom to choose whether we will serve light or darkness—or, if you prefer the older way of saying things—whether we will serve God or Satan.

Can anybody tell us the difference, the substantial difference, between this and the gabble of the ordinary evan-

gelist? The only difference we can detect is that the primitive religionist puts what he means in simple and less involved language. Re write it as: Mumbo-Jumbo made me, Mumbo-Jumbo is very good and very wise. Mumbo-Jumbo will reward me if I do what he wishes and will punish me if I do not. Everything that happens is due to Mumbo-Jumbo. I trust him and he will make things good for me in return. Bishop Barnes mistakes a difference of words for a difference of thought.

We note that the *Church Times* endorses a statement by Mr. Ellis Roberts, that some of the attacks on the Church are "ignorant, some malicious, many bumptious," and thinks too much deference is paid to the intelligentsia. We would be the last to deny that some of the attacks on the Church deserve what is said of them. But there is no reason, that we can see, why all the stupidity should be on the side of the Church, and we venture to say, first, that the greatest ignorance and malice are shown by Christians, and, second, notice was only taken of the heretical intelligentsia when it was compelled to do so. And even now we should like the *Church Times* to tell us in how many Churches and religious papers are congregations and readers made acquainted with the present-day knowledge concerning religious origins, or faithfully informed of its effect on the Christian religion. The *Church Times* admits that "a good deal of Christian propaganda literature is painfully unsatisfactory," and to that we would only add that while some is unsatisfactory, the whole of it is dishonest in the suppression of facts, and the wilful misreading of evidence.

But we really rubbed our eyes when we read that "there are clear, straightforward, entirely adequate answers to every sceptical contention." All we can say is that after half a century's reading of religious replies to "sceptics," we have never yet found one that could honestly be described as clever and straightforward. Our readers may remember the discussion we had in these columns some years ago with Canon Lyttleton. He was an educated man, a man of ability, and one whom we think had a desire to be fair in his criticisms. And yet to an informed and impartial reader of the discussion it was plain that he simply did not understand the Freethinker's position. And that is the fault of all the attempted answers to sceptical criticisms. The unbeliever has to teach as well as to argue. If the *Church Times* wishes to supply our readers with a clear, straightforward (and) completely adequate reply to any of our own criticisms of religion, our columns are open to that purpose. But we have not the slightest expectation of that invitation being accepted. The cowardice of silence and the knavery of misrepresentation go most harmoniously with the Christian faith.

The Bishop of Windward Islands told a meeting, the other day, that in the West Indies a Bible, a Prayer Book and a hymn book is often the only literature possessed by converts. If the Bishop is well-advised, and wishes to keep his flock intact, he will take care that no other literature is given them. But the Bishop also says that there are forty-six "crazy American religions" striving after converts, and as the natives are "flooded with pernicious literature" it is evident that other literature than that named by the Bishop is available, and can be read. But perhaps the Bishop will not allow his converts to read it, and it is the temptation about which he complains.

Fifty Years Ago

ALL witches must be surely killed,
That God's dear Word may be fulfilled.
Yet though to slay them God doth bid,
They don't exist and never did:
So teacher says at other times,
And calls such deeds most cruel crimes.
Still, witches must be killed, I know,
Because the Bible tells me so.

The Freethinker, February 17, 1889.

THE FREETHINKER

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—J. O'Connor, *Esq.*
J. HUMPHREY.—We do not see what can be done more than you are doing—worrying those responsible to see that Freethinkers receive fair-play in public matters. And to keep on doing it is a case of getting nearer the end with every rebuff.

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

H. STONE.—It would be impossible further to explain in this column the "mysterious substratum," which both the old-fashioned Materialist and the Theist assumed to exist as the "real" and permanent thing of which known forms of "matter" is an expression. We called this an example of the lingering of fetishistic ideas, because historically it is the direct offspring of the "spirit" that was assumed to be responsible for what a thing did. We must refer you for a full statement of this question to our *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought*.

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

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

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

Sugar Plans

The Stratford Town Hall was well filled on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Cohen's lecture on "God and Science." The subject would have been a test of the endurance of most audiences, and Mr. Cohen happened to be in a serious mood. But the enjoyment of those present was made very evident. There were a number of questions at the close. Mrs. Venton took the chair in a very capable manner, and we were pleased to learn that she has almost recovered from a rather serious illness. We fancy there was a good sale of literature, but the West Ham Branch may always be depended on for efficient helpers in attending to the details of a public meeting.

Mr. Cohen is now free from lecturing until the first Sunday in March. He can do with the abstention from travelling, and he has been more than usually busy of late. Apart from normal work, he has written two additions to the *Pamphlets for the People* series, and has also seen through the press a new volume of *Essays in Freethinking*. Correspondence, too, has been unusually heavy.

In the Picton Hall, Liverpool, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak for the local N.S.S. Branch this evening (February 19), at 7 o'clock, on "The Churches and the Threat to Civilization." The subject is one that should attract all who think, and a special effort should be made by every Freethinker in the area to pack the hall. Admission is free with reserved seats at one shilling each.

In the *Observer* for February 12, Mr. Humbert Wolfe asks, "Can one reader of this page lay his hand upon his heart and swear that he has read *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Monk*?" Well, we can answer in the affirmative. We have read all three, and many other novels of the same class. But then we can honestly say that from the time when we were fifteen

years of age of until we were nearly thirty, we read everything that came our way in the shape of printed matter. And as we were always a rapid reader, in those fifteen years we covered some territory. But *Udolpho* and *The Castle of Otranto* were, we think, actually among the early cheap editions that were then appearing. It was a time when the discount bookselling came into vogue. And in those cheap editions one could come across many copies of these old Gothic novels. There were many-volumed editions of eighteenth and early nineteenth century novels about in those days. Not recent reprints, but dating from about the thirties, and forties, we fancy. Still they were about, and we cannot believe that we were the only ones who read them.

Another consequence of an insatiable taste for reading, combined with a very restricted amount of cash to gratify it, was the large number of odd volumes we picked up—to be replaced by complete editions as soon as cash and opportunity permitted. Our first personal acquaintance with Gibbon, Prescott, Motley, among the historians, was made in this way. Many volumes of famous books from the seventeenth century onward were acquired in a damaged condition. We have often regretted that we did not preserve these old and damaged volumes, as an illustration of the easy way in which one may begin collecting books if one really deserves to do so. But that might have led to serious domestic trouble, for our other half long ago, simply, so she says, will not have books in every room in the house. We have compromised on this by having them in most rooms as a temporary resting place.

This last bit reminds us that many years ago we bought at the rate of less than sixpence a volume the first seventy volumes of the *Annual Register*, which began about the middle of the eighteenth century. They were fat volumes, bound in old half-calf, with the binding rubbing off in clouds of fine dust. The volumes were delivered in my absence, and we came home to be greeted by the wife, with murder in her eyes and seventy fat dust-making volumes piled up. "Where are these to be put?" came the ominous query. We temporized, with the remark, "Oh, they will be out of the way," and bolted to our room, then on the first floor up. After due consideration we worked out a plan. We ran through the volumes, made a list of references to things that we might want, trials, etc., and then gave the set to the local library. The librarian was pleased to get them, in spite of the librarian putting Moncreu Conway's *Travels in South Kensington*, under topography and travels, and we were able to consult them when necessary. We got the local council to provide us with a place to keep books free of charge, and domestic peace remained undisturbed. A man should always compromise with his wife,—and to let her have her own way is often the best form of doing it.

From the *Observer* of February 10, 1839:—

At the sitting of the Petty Sessions at Dunmow, on Tuesday last, two defendants were each fined 10s. for travelling on Sunday week, the magistrates declaring it to be their intention to put down Sunday travelling in their district.

Well, we have moved a little in the last century. How happy Sir Thomas Inskip would have been in those days, and what a pity it is that the President of the Lord's Day Observance Society did not live in 1839—or earlier.

Mr. G. Bedborough will speak for the Glasgow Secular Society this evening (February 19), in the McEllan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, at 7 o'clock, on "The Report on Doctrine." Those who have heard Mr. Bedborough on previous occasions will not miss his present visit, and if they will bring friends it will mean an interesting evening to a wider circle.

We require a copy, for office use, of the discussion that took place between Mr. Cohen and the Rev. Canon Lyttleton. Mr. Cohen has not a copy himself, but will be pleased to purchase a copy from anyone who has one to spare.

Letters to a Christian Friend

(5) JEW AND CHRISTIAN

MY DEAR CHARLES,

Where does the saying come from, "The sabbath has been given unto you, and not you unto the sabbath"? No, it is not from the Gospels. It is from the Jewish Talmud (Yoma 85, 2). What Jesus said was, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." (Mark ii. 27.)

Then what about, "Whosoever regardeth even the little finger of a woman hath already sinned in his heart"? Yes, the Talmud again (Berachot 24, 1—quoted by Joseph McCabe, *Sources of the Morality of the Gospels*). Jesus's saying was, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. v. 28). It was, of course, a sentiment common among the ancients; Seneca says, "It is the intention, not the outward act, which makes the wickedness," and "If a man lie with his own wife, imagining her another, he is an adulterer."

You will realize at once that the remark, "If one says, take the mote from thy eye, he answers, take the beam from thy eye," is not the Gospel version, but again comes from the Talmud (Arak. 16b), where it is ascribed to the first-century Rabbi Tarjon. McCabe cites also, "Do thou remove the beam from thine own eye" (Baba bathra 15b). "It seems to have been a popular saying," remarks an *Encyclopædia Britannica* writer on the Talmud. "Similar or related forms of interpretation and teaching are found in the Talmud, in Hellenistic Judaism, in the New Testament, in the early Church Fathers, and in Syriac writers," he states later. "As regards the New Testament itself, the points of similarity are many and often important."

If the teachings that the Gospels attribute to Jesus are mostly, if not entirely, found in the Old Testament and other Jewish (and non-Jewish) traditions on which the Talmud Rabbis also drew, this, of course, does not necessarily discredit them. But the claim that Jesus introduced a "New Law," or that he was in any way an original teacher, does begin to look rather silly. Wherein was Jesus original?

When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment in the law, he quoted the Old Testament thus: "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind' (Deut. vi. 5): this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Lev. xix. 18)." "There is no other commandment greater than these," he adds emphatically (Mark xii. 31), "on these two commandments hang all the Law and Prophets" (Matt. xxii. 40). Paul also considers this the greatest commandment: "For all the law is fulfilled in one work, even in this: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'" (Galatians v. 14). The moral message of Christianity, then, was the Jewish love of God and love of neighbour—two of mankind's oldest moral precepts (but not practices!).

"Love your enemies" (which again is far from a new teaching) is counselled in those words only in Matt. v. 44 (with Luke vi. 27); nor does Jesus himself even attempt or pretend to love his enemies—he curses and reviles his opponents, he assaults money-changers in the Temple, he is going to deny those who deny him, and he threatens unbelievers and the unrepentant with the eternal punishment of hell-fire. (Moreover, there is the stupid incident of blasting the fig-tree—in which, of course, you don't believe!)

And what is the Christian motive of this "love your enemies" business? Significantly, Jesus adds: "For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the heathen so?" (Matt. v. 46-48). The author of Luke likes to be even more certain of his reward; and he has Jesus saying: "But love ye your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great. . . ." (vi. 35)! In the Gospels everyone is concerned about what he is to get out of the faith, and how he is to inherit everlasting life: Peter on behalf of the disciples asks Jesus "What, then, shall we have" for forsaking all and following him, and Jesus confirms this attitude by telling the disciples, "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 28).

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life," continues this great "social teacher" (Matt. xix. 29)—a line of conduct which, if carried out on any wide scale, would have most interesting results on social life!

Again, was Jesus accurate when he stated, "Ye have heard that it was said: Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. . . ." McCabe says that he wasn't:—

Nowhere in the Old Testament is a man told to hate his enemy, and a Jew can hardly have said or written this. Rodrigues calls it a "lying interpolation"; though one might recall passages of the Psalms, etc., where the Jew invokes a curse on his enemies (as Christ does on the Pharisees and on the cities which would not receive his followers). On the other hand, love of enemies is a common maxim of the Old Testament and the Talmud, and of all moralists of the time.

The late Dr. Georg Brandes also comments in *Jesus—A Myth*: "If these were really the words of Jesus, he would have shown gross ignorance of the Law. In Leviticus, ch. 19, where love for one's neighbour is prescribed, hatred towards either natives or strangers is also prohibited." Chapter 19 of Leviticus reads:—

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not bear sin on account of him. Thou shalt not avenge thyself, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (verses 17-18). . . .

And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not oppress him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself (verses 33-34).

There are other injunctions to love the stranger to be found in the Old Testament, as in Deut. x. 19 and Exodus 22, 21: and love of one's enemies is counselled in a very practical form in Exodus xxiii. 4-5, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." Proverbs xxv. 21-22 has, "If thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat; and if he thirst, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord will reward you."

After the injunction to "love your enemies," Jesus continues, "Do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on

the one cheek offer also the other" (Luke vi. 27-29).
In the Old Testament we have:—

Let him give his cheek to him that smiteth him
(Lament. iii., 30).

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to
them that plucked off the hair (Isaiah i. 6).

Thou shalt not take vengeance (Lev. xix. 18).

He that taketh vengeance shall find vengeance
from the Lord (Ecclus. xxviii. 1).

while typical sayings from the Talmud are:—

Thou shalt not hate, not even in thy mind (Mena-
cloth, 18).

It is better to be wronged by others than to wrong
(Sanhedrim 48, 2).

Be thou rather among those that are persecuted
than among the persecutors (Baba mesia, 93).

Harbour not feelings of revenge, not even against
a heathen, not even against a snake (Pesachim, 113).

How is it possible for one that feareth God to hate
a man and regard him as an enemy? (Pesachim,
113).

Such maxims as the following are also common in
the Talmud, and the Christian forms will be familiar
enough to you not to need quoting: "With the measure
with which a man measureth shall it be meted unto
him" (Sotah 8, 2), "Judge not thy neighbour until
thou hast stood in his place," Hillel (Pirke Abot 2, 4),
"Judge everyone as favourably as ye can" (Pirke
Abot 1, 6), "Cast not pearls before swine" (Mibchar
Hapninim 1), "Thou canst not make one hair black or
white" (Sepher Rasiel Haggadol 10, 2), "The Yea of
the godly is Yea, and his Nay is Nay" (Ruth rabba 3,
18—see Matthew v. 37). The question of "golden
rules" we will consider later.

The editors of the Revised Version of the Bible,
hard put to it to find an actual illustration in the Old
Testament of Jesus's categorical statement, "Ye have
heard that it was said: Thou shalt . . . hate thine
enemy," can give only a reference to Deut. xxiii. 3-6,
where Moses gives Israel the commandment of the
Lord that "an Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter
into the congregation of the Lord . . . because they
met you not with bread and water in the way, when
ye came forth out of Egypt. . . . Thou shalt not seek
their peace or their prosperity all thy days for ever."

Then let us see how Jesus compares in such a test.
In sending forth the twelve disciples (Matt. ch. 10) he
declares:—

And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter,
inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye
go thence. And as ye come into the house, salute
it; and if the house be worthy, let your peace come
upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace re-
turn unto you.

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your
words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake
off the dust from your feet. Verily I say unto you,
It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and
Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city
(verses 14-15) . . . Whosoever shall deny me before
men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in
heaven (verse 33).

Following this, in chapter 11, he begins "to up-
braid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were
done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee,
Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! . . . It will
be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of
judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, shalt
thou be exalted unto heaven? Thou shalt be brought
down to hell" (verses 20-24).

The scribes and Pharisees also get it good and
strong—"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypo-
crites! . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers!
How can ye escape the condemnation of hell?" (Matt.
xxiii. 29-33).

There you are, then, Charles, there is the "gentle
Jesu, meek and mild" of our childhood hymn! Did
he love his enemies? Did he forgive seventy times
seven? Did he bless them that cursed him? Did he
do to others as he would that they should do to him?

Best wishes to all. Affectionately,

R. H. S. STANDEAST

The Urgency of Voluntary Euthanasia

BY A VICTIM OF OUR HYPOCRITICAL SUICIDE LAWS

SOME of the readers of the *Freethinker* may recall that
in 1936, an article of mine was published on the above
subject, with illustrations from my own tragic experi-
ence of 1935. To put the matter in a nutshell, whilst
very ill, and suffering greatly in consequence of dire
poverty, and a painful love affair and long estrange-
ment, I swallowed an overdose of 120 aspirins. Be-
cause they did not kill me, the "Christian" authori-
ties arrested and charged me with attempted suicide,
but assured me they would not send me to prison if I
pleaded guilty, and promised not to repeat the offence.
Trusting them, I did so, whereupon, forgetful of
their promise, they pressed the case against me, and
I received a sentence of six months' imprisonment.
As I have since learnt, this method is typical of the
authorities. Just as in international affairs the
bureaucrats frequently thwart the will of the people
by resorting to bluff and trickery (as in the recent
crisis) so in individual instances, where the rights and
liberties of the individual citizen are concerned, are
these discreditable methods employed to cheat him of
his legal right to a democratic trial by a jury of his
countrymen, where, as in this case, the law under
which he is charged has long outlived public opinion.

In order to endeavour to direct attention to the
manner in which I was trapped into prison, and also
to assist by propaganda the growing movement for
Voluntary Euthanasia, and repeal of the existing sui-
cide laws—laws which deny to the poor a right to a
speedy merciful death under a "civilization" which
frequently kills them by slow and painful inches—I
recently adopted a novel subterfuge. Tired of the
vain effort of three years merely orthodox methods of
agitation—upon an ultra-apatetic public, I resorted
to the heterodox.

Having been tricked by the authorities into prison
in 1935—I decided to trick them back again in 1938—
though in my case—the hoax was harmless, except to
involve them in a little work for which they are well
paid by the public. In short, I pretended to attempt
suicide by again swallowing 120 aspirins on Novem-
ber 24, 1938—after notifying the police of my inten-
tion in writing. The fact of my swallowing the 120
aspirins was no pretence—but on this occasion I was
armed with a little knowledge, both of physiology and
law—and was therefore self-assured the aspirins would
not kill me in 1938, as the same number failed in 1935
and was still more positive the authorities would be
unable to obtain a legal conviction against me.

Somewhat to my surprise, in view of their know-
ledge of the 1935 charge, the authorities swallowed
the bait, and arrested me. At my own choice, I was
committed for trial to the Old Bailey, where after
three weeks on remand in custody, my trial took place
before His Honour Judge Whiteley and a jury on
December 12 last. My scheme had succeeded, and I
had contrived another trial on exactly the same facts
as in 1935, except that on this occasion I pleaded
"Not guilty." Without leaving the box, I was

acquitted by my countrymen—thus proving what the public think of such charges. The Learned Judge, however, informed me that, by my action, I had rendered myself liable to a further charge of public mischief—and that the matter would be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Much to my disappointment, however, in reply to my enquiries, in a letter dated January 6 last, he informed me that he had “decided not to institute proceedings.”

Apparently the authorities prefer to let me escape scot-free for fooling them—rather than incur the risk of further acquittal and publicity—as unfortunately for them Public Mischief is also triable by jury, and I should have pleaded that my action was dictated by a sense of Public Duty.

But what a commentary on the existing law, viewed from a strictly legal standpoint! How can the public be expected to respect a law which for precisely the same act, imprisons a person if he pleads guilty and liberates him if he pleads “Not guilty?” Does not my experience prove conclusively that the suicide laws as at present administered place a premium on fraud. Poor ignorant sufferers, who seek a way of escape, fail, and then honestly confess, may receive six months’ imprisonment or even longer. The more subtle and cunning escape by pleading either a hoax or temporary insanity—both of which are good legal defences to this charge. It is quite impossible for the British authorities to obtain a conviction for this “offence” except by the un-British method of using a prisoner’s confession against himself—for how can they possibly read into a person’s mind his real intention—the æid test in law concerning an act committed solely upon himself—unless he himself admits it. Hence the existing law encourages the authorities to adopt the methods of subterfuge and duress, adopted upon myself to secure convictions. Are these methods creditable?

Another highly unsatisfactory feature of the existing suicide law’s administration is the fact that persons are not always charged by the authorities where a prima facie case exists. In proof of this I would refer your readers to a well-known text-book, to be found in many of our libraries, viz., *Vincent’s Police Code and General Manual of the Criminal Law* (16th Edn.) at p. 226:—

“ . . . it is now the practice only to prefer a charge in exceptional cases such as those due to drink or a second attempt. . . .”

There is thus in effect a complete discretion given to the police to charge or not as they prefer. Inevitably the exercise of discretion by the executive means in practice “One law for the rich, another for the poor.” Rarely, if ever, does one hear or read of a rich person with friends being responsible for their well-being charged with this offence. It is poor persons with either no homes or friends, or none acceptable to the police, who fall victims of this old common law.

I am sure, so far as Freethinkers are concerned, it is not necessary to labour the point that to imprison a person for failing to die is both futile as a deterrent and grossly inhuman as a practice. Persons who attempt suicide almost invariably do so as the outcome of dire suffering, caused by either real misfortunes and tragedies in their lives or by the possession of a morbid and self-tormenting mind. How can the suicidal tendency possibly be cured by adding to their sufferings and torment the deprivation of their liberty under the prison system, under which they are perforce compelled to spend long periods brooding on their sufferings and that most unhealthy age-long problem which has perplexed the wisest of men, “Life or Death—To be or not to be?” As I am sure Penal Reformers will agree—“Prison often creates sui-

cides; it cannot cure them.” Methods of kindness and humanity, and redress of grievances where possible, trying to help them forget where impossible, alone can effect cures.

If actual practical proof were required, it is surely furnished by the following official statistics of the rapidly rising suicide rate (a rise far higher than the percentage increase in population)—despite the fact that I understand that we in England and some of our Dominions, alone in the world, still punish this “offence” with imprisonment.

The figures are from an answer given in the House of Commons, by Sir Samuel Hoare, Home Secretary, in 1937, as to the suicide rate for England and Wales:—

	Average No. per Year.	
1909 to 1913	...	3,543
1932 to 1936	...	5,372

But surely even Christians—if in the least degree rational—must realize too that the arguments on which this law is defended are entirely inconsistent with the tenets of their faith. The defence and origin of this crime is given in Stephen’s *Commentaries of the Laws of England* as that “no man hath a power to destroy life, but by commission from God, the author of it.” (See 8th Edition, Vol. IV. p. 59). If God is Omnipotent and a God of anger and hate, is it not strange that He should require poor puny man to act as his agent for retribution for an act which—if it be an offence—is surely an offence against Him who, the Christians tell us, is alone the Creator of all life? Why then is He incapable of punishing this offence Himself—if it displeases Him so greatly? Especially strange is it, having regard to the fact, that on several occasions in history, His Temporal Judges have not hesitated, when tired of life, to terminate their own existence, the most recent prominent example being Mr. Justice Macardie, who not only committed suicide, but openly defended an alteration of the law—also the allied law against abortion which penalizes the prevention of unwanted life before birth.

If, however, as the Modernists tell us, God is not a God of hate and vengeance as was once thought—but a God of love and mercy, their attitude is still stranger. The mediæval judges who originated and propounded this law were also the same judges who sentenced their unfortunate victims to the rack, the thumb-screw, the pillory, the stake, to be disembowelled alive, etc., etc.—doubtless believing they would after death receive a Crown of Glory for so doing. Doubtless these same judges would be very annoyed, could they return to earth, to find that suicide is nowadays only punished when the attempt fails; and that the practice of burying a suicide by the highway with a pike through his body was abolished.

These same judges would doubtless also be highly displeased to find that persons are no longer imprisoned and tortured as in their days for denying their belief that the earth is flat. The suicide law is as illogical, as barbaric, as feudalistic as that belief. Surely if God is a God of love He would not condemn the victims of society for seeking a speedy exit, nor would wish man to prolong their suffering—any more than that of a suffering dog or cat. Surely He would rather place the society that drives its victims to this act, in the dock, and say, “Let Him who is without sin amongst you cast the first stone.”

And what do Christians think of our “Christian” Government’s attitude on this question? While they hold life so cheaply that they allow thousands of Spaniards to be slaughtered sooner than remove the embargo on arms and food whilst they resolutely refuse to increase the miserable pittance granted to their

own unemployed citizens under the dole and Public Assistance, which is insufficient for real life, and barely enables them to eke out a miserable existence—surely in these circumstances to deny Voluntary Euthanasia to those who seek an end of their misery is the very height of hypocrisy and sadism.

It is satisfactory to note that the Euthanasia movement is steadily growing, and that Freethinkers and Progressive Christians are uniting in demanding this most humanitarian reform.

I should be very glad if any of those interested in this question, and my plans to assist the same, will communicate with me, H. Gordon Everett, 59 Southgate Road, Islington, London, N.1.

H. GORDON EVERETT

Pragmatism and Materialism

We may all agree that every man has his own philosophy, and yet do we all feel sure of the distinction between what is understood and what is not, when dealing with facts, and our interpretation of the universe and its problems? The philosopher, we might say, is a person who deals with a greater variety of facts, and who tries to understand the relative significance of these, whereas the ordinary man is not so precise, and therefore more prone to fallacy.

But facts are not always dealt with even by Philosophers, and it is therefore strange that the studious should discover in their enquiries more confusion than ought else in what is sometimes termed that most lofty of all human pursuits. So much is this true that even since Spencer's time we have had as an heritage a maze of conjecture that leaves us with but more to be understood, if it is that we presuppose it possible that such ambiguities are not insoluble.

As an example of the confusion with which we have had to deal, perhaps the most striking within recent years is that of Pragmatism, the name given to a line of thought put forward by such men as William James, Schiller and others, and claimed to bring about that unity in the world of affairs of which we have been in need for so long. It is not pedantic; but is the philosophy of "common sense," as we are told that many of those differences and prejudices to-day would not exist were the Pragmatic method adopted, which implies that pragmatism is something essential to any pure system of logic. But then, of Logic as science, there is an atmosphere of contempt, and of other matters there is much that will make the Freethinker ask, not whether Pragmatism is something so simple to understand; but whether it could not more aptly be described as the most novel and up-to-date form of apologetics. It is however, not without some interest and, perhaps, a measure of truth, so it is wise that Freethinkers should give this the attention it deserves.

By what is indicated to be a "new criterion of truth," we are introduced to this strange philosophy. We are informed that all truth resolves itself into a question of doubt, when we come to examine more closely the nature of belief, or more precisely the way in which all our beliefs are formed. Thus William James, in summarizing the view of Dewey and Schiller, tells us:—

That ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience. *Pragmatism* p. 58.

And proceeds by saying:—

That the observable process by which this conception was singled out for generalization is the familiar

one by which the individual settles into *new opinions*. The process here is always the same. The individual has a stock of old opinions already, but he meets a new experience that puts them to a strain. The result is an inward trouble to which his mind till then had been a stranger, and from which he seeks to escape by modifying his previous mass of opinions. He saves as much of it as he can . . . until at last some new idea comes up which he can graft upon the ancient stock with a minimum of disturbance . . . some idea that mediates between the stock and the new experience, and runs into one another most felicitously and expediently. . . . New truth is always a go-between. It marries old opinion to *new fact* so as ever to show a minimum of jolt, a maximum of continuity. *Ibid*, 59-60-1.

And so from this we must believe the criticism of truth to be that conception formed which reconciles old-established belief with some new original idea. Here we are asked to accept the point of view that all new truth is an apology and not a sound conviction based upon facts. Thus do we find ourselves in an impasse as to the meaning of truth.

Fortunately we are not without evidence to show how absurd and fallacious this argument can be. As it is the *Origin of Species* may be taken as an example of some new idea so far as this was found to be irreconcilable with religious belief; but then it remained a conviction in the mind of Darwin. It had what might well be described as a "stormy passage," denounced by the clergy as a "godless doctrine," but to others it is true that this new idea was welcomed as the more logical and scientific interpretation of man's history. Neither in this direction was there any compromise, as only with the clergy and others theologically disposed was any eventual attempt made at conciliation.

Surely it is not because we are prejudiced that we are wont to reject this new criterion of truth as something profoundly wise, or as an observation that had hitherto been ignored as a result, we are again told, of man's folly in aspiring for mere verbal victories. For actually this new criterion of truth conveys nothing beyond what has always been understood as a certain perversity of mind; and this is explained by saying that *truth* to the religious man is one thing; but that *truth* from the standpoint of Materialism is quite another thing, and as is known the difference is one of the denial of facts and the acceptance of these. It has been said that facts are hard to face, and unquestionably it is this which has given rise to those many stupidities and prejudices to the detriment of man.

The obvious fallacy which our Pragmatists fail to see, however, is implied from the conclusions drawn in its own defence, for truth we now find to be a deceduous or infallible concept, and yet are we not invoked to accept pragmatism as logical and valid, without the option of making any compromise, only at the risk of being charged with inveterate prejudice?

No doubt all this is so much like imploring us to eat of the food which our Pragmatism finds impossible to digest. Moreover are we compelled to question such issues when we come to consider the varied opinions and beliefs of this world, for it is here we find that where truth is simple of itself, ideas and opinions are very complex. It is here that we find truth; but our search is made no easier by adding to the confusion of things.

The "real value" of Pragmatism, however, is not merely claimed upon this new criterion of truth (which is more in the way of an excuse for what follows), but more upon its interpretation of the consequences of belief, accepting that which it considers *practical* or beneficial while rejecting those beliefs or ideas which it considers to be of no value. In this way we are informed that Pragmatism has the peculiar advantage of choice in all philosophical speculations, as it takes

upon itself an attitude of orientation—or, as it were, a judgment seat before which all speculation is submitted, and where censure and approbation is given accordingly.

J. W. PORTER

(To be concluded)

Philosophy Atheistic and Theistic

ATHEISTIC philosophy is based on the conviction that the Universe, whether considered on a scale infinite or infinitesimal, unbounded or limited, is devoid of any expression of mentality. It finds mind not at the beginning, but at the end—so far as this has yet been reached—of the evolution of the life force starting with the amoeba or thereabouts and leading on to the scientist and the genius.

It rejects the tendency of mind to invest origins with its own mentality, and thus to hold a mirror up to its own face.

Theistic philosophy, on the other hand, finds it insupportable to conceive of a mindless Universe, into which mind enters—so to speak—only at the far end, and as a discoverer. It claims that mind was there all the time, and this is confirmed by the discovery that the Universe is run or runs itself on mathematical lines. And as it is impossible, even for the most fervent Theist, to invest mathematics, however abstruse with mind, scientific theism involves the assumption, (1) of a mathematical mind as First Cause, and (2) the conception of the Universe as, to quote Sir James Jeans, "the thought of a mathematical thinker."

But in this outlook the atheistic philosopher can describe nothing beyond the inevitable limitation of anthropomorphic mentality, which in religion frames gods in the image of man, though putting it the other way. "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."

MAUD SIMON

Obituary

VIVIAN PHELIPS

It is with great regret that we received the news of the death of Vivian Phelps, for some years resident in South Africa. Mr. Phelps was best known among Freethinkers as the author of *The Churches and Modern Thought*, and by that, he was known all over the English-speaking world. It was a work written in a very persuasive manner, and must have brought thousands of believers to front a situation they would not otherwise have faced. I am not acquainted with the number of copies sold of this book, but I should not be surprised to learn that it surpassed those of any other modern freethinking publications.

Although, so far as books are concerned, Vivian Phelps' output was not great, he was a constant contributor to South African newspapers, and found plenty of opportunities for helping the cause he loved, and judging from letters that I received from him, his appreciation of the value of enlightened freethinking grew as the social and political situation became more threatening.

My acquaintance with him was mainly by correspondence, but I should judge that he would have made a delightful companion, and one who might with truth have said with Terence, "I am a man and nothing that is human is foreign to me." His interests were wide, and his toleration equally so. His labours in the cause of Freethought were animated by no mean or personal motive, and he had his reward in seeing many of his ideas accepted by those who rejected them with horror when they were first presented.

We offer our sincere sympathy to his family on the loss they have sustained. Nothing can replace what has been lost, but the memory of a good husband, parent, and citizen will in time bring its own compensations.—C.C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

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

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

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

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH (The Cricketers' Arms, Inverness Street, Camden Town, N.W.1) : 7.30, Capt. B. Acworth, D.S.O., R.N. (Evolution Protest Movement)—"Evolution and its Alternative."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4) : 7.30, Debate—"Is Communism an Utopia." *Affir.*: Mr. H. Preece. *Neg.*: Mr. R. Roberts.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Moritz J. Bonn, D.Sc.—"Migration in the Modern World."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.) : 7.30, Mr. T. F. Palmer—"Is Evolution a Discredited Doctrine?"

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane) : 7.0, Rev. A. Myerson (Birkenhead)—"The Persecution of the Jew."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Kirkgate) : 7.15—"A Mock Trial."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : 2.30, Mr. R. T. Crabtree—A letter, being the last confession of faith left by the late Charles McLean. To be followed by the Annual Meeting.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh) : 7.0, Mr. Abdull Mannan, B.Sc. Punjab—"Islam the Saviour."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow) : 7.0, Mr. G. Bedborough (London)—"The Report on Church Doctrine"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mr. George Padmore—"English Rule in Africa."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall, Liverpool) : 7.0, Mr R. H. Rosetti—"The Churches and the Threat to Civilization."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (King's Café, 64-66 Oxford Road, Manchester, near All Saints Church) : 7.0, Mr. G. Thomson (Liverpool)—"Have We a Freewill?"

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street) : 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM affirms that this life is the only one of which we have any knowledge, and that human effort should be wholly directed towards its improvement: it asserts that supernaturalism is based upon ignorance, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism affirms that progress is only possible on the basis of equal freedom of speech and publication; it affirms that liberty belongs of right to all, and that the free criticism of institutions and ideas is essential to a civilized State.

Secularism affirms that morality is social in origin and application, and aims at promoting the happiness and well-being of mankind.

Secularism demands the complete secularization of the State, and the abolition of all privileges granted to religious organizations it seeks to spread education, to promote the fraternity of peoples as a means of advancing international peace, to further common cultural interests, and to develop the freedom and dignity of man.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The Trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

The following is a quite sufficient form for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by legacy:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

THE National Secular Society was founded in 1865 by Charles Bradlaugh. He remained its President until shortly before his death, and the N.S.S. has never ceased to live up to the tradition of "Thorough" which Bradlaugh by his life so brilliantly exemplified.

The N.S.S. is the only organization of militant Freethinkers in this country. It aims to bring into one body all those who believe the religions of the world to be based on error, and to be a source of injury to the best interests of Society. It claims that all political laws and moral rules should be based upon purely secular considerations. It is without sectarian aims or party affiliations.

If you appreciate the work that Bradlaugh did, if you admire the ideals for which he lived and fought, it is not enough merely to admire. The need for action and combined effort is as great to-day as ever. You can best help by filling up the attached form and joining the Society founded by Bradlaugh.

MEMBERSHIP

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name

Address

Occupation

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By the terms of the Trust no Trustee may derive anything in the shape of payment, or emolument for services rendered, and in the event of the Trust being terminated as no longer necessary, the whole of the capital will be handed over to the National Secular Society for general propaganda purposes.

In these circumstances we beg again to bring the existence of the Trust before readers of the *Free-*

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It should be said that the *Freethinker* is, and always has been, an independent property. It is a private limited company with a purely nominal capital. It is able to avail itself of the income of the Endowment Trust only when an official accountant has certified the amount of the loss during the year, and then only to the extent of the loss. Unfortunately the income of the Trust does not meet the deficit.

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