

# THE FREETHINKER

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## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Ourself and Others—The Editor</i> . . . . .	561
<i>Winn's War Whoop—Mimnermus</i> . . . . .	563
<i>Letters to a Christian Friend—R. H. S. Standfast</i>	564
<i>Some Recent Books—G. H. Taylor</i> . . . . .	565
<i>Jesus and His Women Friends—C. Clayton Dove</i>	566
<i>Conversation Piece—T. H. Elstob</i> . . . . .	570
<i>War and Anti-War—G. Bedborough</i> . . . . .	571
<i>Dolet: The Freethought Martyr—G. W. Foote</i>	572
<i>A Reply to Mr. Kensett—C. S. Fraser</i> . . . . .	573

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

## Views and Opinions

### Ourself and Others

We are quite sure that most of our readers will have read the article by Mr. Du Cann, which appeared in last week's *Freethinker*, with considerable interest. It raises issues that call for a reply, and helps readers to appreciate the reaction of an educated mind to a first contact with the *Freethinker*. But we are quite sure that the writer will appreciate the statement that in spite of his being used to "weighing cases" his acquaintance with the *Freethinker*, and with the Freethought movement as a whole, is still that of a comparative outsider, and, as a barrister, he will understand the danger of passing judgment on a case when one side of it is partly unknown. But it is this very absence of complete familiarity with Freethought that makes his statement more interesting and more valuable. Freethinkers are enabled to see themselves as others see them; and that is always healthy. I am afraid that we shall not be able, in the course of a single article, to deal with all that Mr. Du Cann says, but none of our readers will be bored by taking what we have to say in two instalments.

After his experience with Messrs. Smith & Co., whose agent informed him he could only get the paper to order, and the impudent remark of a clerk that the *Freethinker* was "not the kind of paper to leave about," he will appreciate some of the difficulties we have to face. Messrs. Smith & Co. are among the wholesale agents who distribute the *Freethinker*, and it is supplied to them on sale or return. There is, therefore, no reason why newsagents should not keep it on view—no reason but one, and that is the activity of Christian bigotry. But here I must say a word in defence of newsagents. Many are not averse to selling the paper, but Christian bigotry is very active in this country, and very cowardly. Newsagents who display the paper find themselves threatened with a loss of custom if the *Freethinker* is kept on show, and in many cases they are compelled to resort to the rule of "taken only to order." It is this silent, cowardly, but carefully carried out campaign of boycott that is

mainly responsible for the fact that in its fifty-eight years of existence the *Freethinker* has never been able to pay its way. There must be something very weak about a system that with about thirty thousand professional defenders and some millions of followers is yet afraid of what may be said against Christianity by the *Freethinker*.

There are two results that follow from this carefully maintained boycott. The first is that the overwhelming majority of Christians have no real conception of what Freethought stands for. All they know is that the *Freethinker* does not agree with them, and therefore it is something very wicked. The second result is of a more serious character. Moral cowardice is a common thing, and when it is wed to imperfect understanding it is one of the most demoralizing of mental complaints. The Christian method of fighting its enemies by slander and boycott has been a favourite one from the earliest times; and it has resulted in bigotry and ignorance among its own people, and hypocrisy with many who are not with them. These latter ones go through life with a mask of semi-conformity, the consequences of which rob them of the value of much of the truth they have assimilated. Mr. Du Cann is not quite correct when he says of the class to which he has referred that they "have never faced the mental challenge of God or no-God." They have faced the challenge, but they have lacked the courage to pick up the gauntlet. They are living examples of the direful effect of Christian belief on the human mind. It breeds hypocrites and offers them as tribute to the God whose command to man was to forbid him to eat of the tree of knowledge.

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### The Clergy and Religion

I agree with Mr. Du Cann that believer and unbeliever should know each other's case. On what other ground can they legitimately claim to have any opinion of all? If I do not understand my opponent's case, how can I claim to understand my own? But there are two reasons why Mr. Du Cann's good advice has not the pertinence when it is given to the *Freethinker* that it has when given to the believer. The first is that a very large majority of Freethinkers have been believers in some religion, and had they not been earnest religionists they would not have been earnest Freethinkers; for earnestness of mind and character is something that one possesses quite independently of what one believes, and the sincerity that expressed itself yesterday in religion will express itself to-day in connexion with Freethought. I think Mr. Du Cann accepts this view in his remark that "the Atheist side is better acquainted with the religious side than vice-versa."

What does the average parson, or even the exceptional one know about Freethought? Substantially nothing. He approaches it, not as something to be understood, but as something to be destroyed. He

sees Freethought only through a fog of misunderstanding and interested prejudice. And, mark, I am not speaking of uneducated preachers but of the highest placed and the most "cultured" members of the priesthood. In this respect there is little difference between the Archbishop and the village curate.

Does the believer in religion—professional or lay—understand even religion? How can he? A clergyman may know the history of particular doctrines; he may have learned all the arguments—most of them irrelevant—in favour of religious doctrines; he may know those against Freethought—mainly beside the point or products of deliberate misrepresentation—but the one thing he does not understand is religion. He does not realize—assuming his complete honesty—that a knowledge of the origin of religious ideas completely destroys their credibility. And note it is the obvious, often the avowed, aim of the priest or parson to see that his flock knows no more about religion than he does himself. The clerk who told Mr. Du Cann that the *Freethinker* was not "the sort of paper to leave about," was a true representative of ninety per cent of believing Christians. If Mr. Du Cann had taken part in as many discussions with Christian believers as I have during the past fifty years, he would realize that one of the chief tasks of the *Freethinker* is to teach believers what religion really is, and to realize the truth of Freud's description of it as a "great illusion."

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#### Freedom True and False

Mr. Du Cann thinks the Secularist's task is made harder by the "sincere but misguided belief" that all discussions of the truth of religion is felt by deeply religious folk to be wrong in themselves. He points out that Christ and St. Paul could "discuss unbelief," asks "Why should their followers be more squeamish," holds quite firmly "unbelievers should have the entire freedom of religionists to proclaim their unfaith and to discuss or proselytize as religionists," and concludes he would "permit either Satan or Judas to state his case as freely as the greatest saint that ever lived."

This is very liberal, but, to use a common but rather misleading expression, it does greater credit to Mr. Du Cann's heart than to his head. For, in the first place, neither Christ nor St. Paul *discussed* unbelief. They *denounced* it, and that, while it involves speech does not of necessity involve discussion. Jesus placed the sin of unbelief as first in the calendar, and Paul denounced anyone who failed to preach Christ and him crucified. Neither of these figures permit belief to depend upon logical reasoning, but insisted that salvation depended upon an act of faith. What both Paul and Jesus did, taking the New Testament story as it stands, was to pit one form of religious belief against another, and as they were, theoretically, in a very small minority, what else could they do? They had to discuss non-Christian belief in order to establish their own teaching, but that is as far as they went. And so soon as any considerable body of believers existed the Christian Church, in its earliest known form, damned men and women in both this world and the next for even suggesting that unbelief might be met with argument.

Finally, while one may readily accept Mr. Du Cann's statement that he would give to others the freedom he demands for himself, that I must assume is because he is not a full believer in Christianity, if he has any belief in it at all. If he believed in it, and if he believed that man's well-being on earth and his eternal happiness hereafter depended upon right religious belief, and if he were interested in saving as many "souls" as possible, then he would, because

he cared for the welfare of others, act as good Christians always have acted. He would suppress unbelief, and deny its right to a hearing because he considered man's immortal salvation as something to be secured at all costs. It is one of the counts against religion in general and Christianity in particular that it uses the best feelings of man for the most monstrous and even immoral ends. I admire Mr. Du Cann as a man because I think so little of him as a theologian. But if I admired him as a theologian I am afraid I could think but little of him as a man.

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#### Religion and Life

Mr. Du Cann has a suspicion that we have blundered very badly when we call ourselves Freethinkers. He says,

Is your mind really free? Is not the very finest mind—even a Shakespeare's for example—bond slave to its inherited temperament (not to speak of its acquired bias, its accretions of prejudice, obsession and environmental thought? Certainly no ordinary mind can be free in its thought? . . . I should say that Chapman Cohen's mind . . . is no more free than the Pope's mind or the Archbishop of Canterbury's mind. My mind or the mind of the average man in the street may be freer. But they are not completely free either.

I am sorry Mr. Du Cann wrote that paragraph. It is a blot on an interesting article; for it turns on a misunderstanding of "free." No one has ever disputed the statement that the mind of man, from the moment of birth, is subject to all kinds of pressures and influences. It is the secret of all education, whether that education be considered good or bad. These pressures are as responsible for the criminal as for the wise and the good. They are as much responsible for my Freethinking as they are for the slipperiness of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the stupidity of the retiring Bishop of London, the genius of an Einstein, and the power of a Shakespeare. The laws of mental acquisition are the same throughout from the idiot to the genius. Mark, the "laws" of mental acquisition. But "laws" imply causation, and causation implies the possibility of reducing a fact to analysable factors, as when the fact of water is reduced to the factors of oxygen and hydrogen. If, therefore, Mr. Du Cann means that the state of mind of anyone—whether Christian or Freethinker—is at any time, and in relation to any subject determined by thinkable conditions, no one would dream of disputing it. It is the datum of the Freethought position. Only—this has nothing whatever to do with the meaning of "Freethought." It is a statement of the condition of thinking, whether that thinking is "Free" or otherwise.

Are we then, as is so often said, merely quarrelling over words? Not at all. Just at the moment there is a row on, and before this is in print, there may be a war on with regard to the "free" city of Danzig, and if Germany has its way that would end in the country of Poland ceasing to be a "free" nation. But that would not mean that either Danzig or Poland would not be subject to "laws" just as it is at present, it would not mean that the movements of Poles would not be determined by muscular action, or certain mental promptings, and so forth, for however different the actions might be, the machinery would remain substantially the same. Wherein, then, would lie the difference? The sole distinction would be that the control of Polish action would be determined by a force from without, and it would be an illegitimate force solely because the compulsion came from without the country instead of from within.

Now that is exactly the meaning of "Free" applied to thought. The laws of thought remain what they are, they operate as they do whether thought is

free or otherwise. Freethought has no necessary connexion with accuracy of thought, only with the factors of its formation. And the important factor here is authority. The man who takes as final the opinion of a Church is no more capable of Freethought than a country can be called a free country when its laws are imposed on it from without. Freethought is not a denial of causality in thought, it affirms it. It is a denial of mere authority in thought that constitutes the essence of Freethought.

I have argued this at some length for a reason that Mr. Du Cann will, I am sure, appreciate. I am arguing before a jury, and I must be sure that my case is stated so that the jury will appreciate it. Next week I will deal with the other points raised in Mr. Du Cann's article.

CHAPMAN COHEN

## Winn's War Whoop

Whether Socrates got as much happiness out of life as Wesley is an unanswerable question; but a nation of Socrates would be much safer and happier than a nation of Wesleys; and its individuals would be higher in the evolutionary scale.—Bernard Shaw.

MR. GODFREY WINN is a well-known journalist who writes for a number of newspapers, and whose literary output is esteemed by editors and readers alike. Possessing charm and a ready pen, he can be relied upon to write upon almost any subject at very short notice. All is grist that comes to his mill, for he turns everything to prettiness. No one in the London popular press excels him for picturesqueness. He writes charmingly of the poverty of poor folk, and he writes with equal charm of the glamour of rich people. He could write prettily of the derelicts on the Thames Embankment, and, one feels, with similar glamour, of a poor wretch in a condemned cell. A fine sunset will rouse his literary activity, no less than a Sunday School outing, or a temperance meeting.

Unfortunately for Mr. Winn, life is not all lilies and languors, roses and raptures, beer and skittles. And, sometimes, mere prettiness annoys when it does not cloy. I remember once hearing a fair American describe Dante's *Divine Commedia* as being "charming." The great Florentine's masterpiece is anything but charming. So, when Mr. Winn writes, as he sometimes does, on religion and philosophy, with that sugary way of his, a critic may be pardoned for noticing how syrupy is his language, and how shallow his ideas.

In the *Sunday Express* (August 13), Mr. Winn, still writing beautifully, gets out of his depth. As a protest against militarism he suggests that, in the event of another war, all Christian burial should be denied to the dead, no matter to which earthly cause they adhered. Then, he continues:—

I do not believe that any country can exist without a living religion. I do not believe that such a ban could be ultimately ignored, even by Russia, let alone by Germany. I do not believe that you who are reading this page can live out your life without some kind of controlling faith in your hearts.

Mr. Winn should curb his emotions. From astonishment to contempt is but a step, and someone should warn this popular journalist that such writing may prove hazardous to his literary reputation. Innocence is a rare and fragrant virtue in the very young, but ignorance is to be deplored in the not so young journalist. Besides, innocence is not inconsistent with truthfulness. When Topsy, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was asked who made her, she answered: "I dunno. Expect I growed." Mr. Winn should really try to remember that he is growing up.

The startling suggestion that Christian priests should refuse "by a decree, solemn and unchangeable" to bury the dead is quite in keeping with orthodox tradition. The Roman Catholic Church always refused to bury their opponents. Even Adrienne Lecouvrier, the great French actress, who incurred this Church's displeasure, was so dishonoured. The Church of England did the same thing with the early Nonconformists. This virtuous Oriental idea of allowing their enemies to be buried "like dogs" was a commonplace of historic Christianity. Yet Mr. Winn so imagines that it is a novel idea, and a good one, that he wishes the practice to be extended to friends and foes alike. It almost appears as if some charming writing can cover ideas which are prehistoric in their crudity, and utterly inapplicable to the times in which we live.

This is only a part of our indictment. Mr. Winn writes beautifully, but his articles resemble nothing so much as a dictionary with the diarrhoea. He uses words without regard to their meaning or significance. And his pretence at filmy-eyed innocence is over-emphasized. Where, for instance, did he get the idea that no nation can exist, no individual can live, without religion? Has he attended so many tea-meetings, listened to so many sermons, read so many tracts, that he must himself talk like a young curate fresh from college? He did not get this bald-erdash from Fleet Street. Even the bright boys who write for the *Sunday Companion*, even the leader-writers on the *Rock* and the *Church Times* do not talk in this way when they relax over a cup of tea and a bun. Mr. Winn must have got it from the chatter-boxes at the churches, who think that General Franco is such a gentleman, and that Mr. Stalin is a very awful man, because the parson tells them so.

Mr. Winn is a journalist, working in Fleet Street, the liveliest thoroughfare in the world, and not a recluse in a monastery on the top of Ben Nevis. He should be a man of the world, with a wider knowledge of his fellow-men than most. He must know scores of men and women without religion, who are as good as he is himself. Many of his fellow journalists are irreligious. Why does he dissemble his knowledge, and write like a nit-wit, born in a ginger-beer bottle, and who has never looked over the edge? If he talked in this silly, evangelical strain in Fleet Street itself, his listeners would shrug their shoulders, and leave him. Mr. Winn knows this; why should he write bosh not worth listening to?

Such writing is not the result of innocence, or ignorance. It is pure, unadulterated impudence. When Mr. Winn suggests that Germany and Russia are both without religion, he must know, as a trained journalist, that it is simply not true. There are millions of Catholics, and millions of Protestants, in Germany. Hitler himself is a religious man; his own book, *My Struggle*, proves this. As for Russia, it was the most religious country in Europe before the Revolution, and it is hard to believe that one hundred and sixty millions of people have been converted to Atheism in twenty years, during which time the country has endured the agonies of civil war, and a most difficult social reconstruction. Mr. Winn is far too hasty and impulsive. If he saw in the toy-shops of Italy six times more picture-postcards of Shirley Temple than of the elderly Signor Mussolini, would he conclude that the countrymen of the Mafia and of Macchiavelli were peaceful people and very fond of little children?

Mr. Winn is obsessed with the idea of a "living religion." In the heart of the City of London he will find fifty places of worship, nineteen of which have been ear-marked as derelict. He will also find a resident population of Jews, policemen, and caretakers.

He will find, further, that there are fifty clergymen, each drawing about £1,000 yearly for ministering to a beggarly array of empty benches. This happens, be it noted, in the heart of the Metropolis of the British Empire. Is this Mr. Winn's idea of a "living religion," and does he think that the bottom will fall out of the Empire as a consequence?

All over England there are half-empty churches and chapels, and redundant places of worship are continually being closed. Sunday-school attendance is everywhere dropping. Many of the Free Church clergy are turning to politics as a more money-making career. Is it not apparent that this "living religion" is dying, and all Mr. Winn's saccharine tablets will not delay unduly the process of decomposition? And when it does die men will not tell quite so many lies to their children.

As a young reporter, I once referred to a doctor's wife, a large lady with a large family, as "Miss." When I faced my irate editor, he shouted: "You have disgraced the paper, you have brought me into contempt, and you have risked a libel action." Recalling the sad story, one cannot help wishing that the editor of a great, so-called "national," newspaper was as careful of his paper's reputation as the editor I worked for. If this attention to accuracy is no longer "the London way," so much the worse for the Metropolis. To conduct a great newspaper with the gay irresponsibility attaching to *Comic Cuts* may add to the gaiety of a nation, but it cannot add to the dignity of the press, which boasts so loudly of being a source of education and enlightenment.

MIMNERMUS

## Letters to a Christian Friend

### (14) FAITH AND THE FAMILY

MY DEAR CHARLES,

One of the more exquisite lies so frequently told, and believed, on behalf of Christianity—usually by those with little or no real knowledge of history—is that Christianity raised the status of marriage and the family, and that Jesus brought a new outlook on these things.

Did he? Then by all means let us examine it.

In Micah vi. 5-6 we find: "Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house."

And Jesus tells us:—

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household (Matt. x. 34-36).

I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? (R.V., and how I wish that it were already kindled!) But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division (D.V., separation); for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law (Luke xii. 49-53).

Here, of course, Jesus is not saying that he came for the purpose of setting families at variance, but that the members of the new faith can expect little toleration (the Jews were the most intolerant people of the old world). They will be delivered up, probably to death, even by their own parents, children, brethren and friends, and will be "hatred of all men for my name's sake"; but "there shall not an hair of your head perish" (Luke xxi. 16-18), and "he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. x. 21-22).

Jesus, however, adds:—

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me (Matt. x. 37).

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple (Luke xiv. 26).

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 an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life (Matt. xix. 29).

And that—apart from the indissolubility of marriage and the question of divorce, which we considered in my last letter—was apparently all that Jesus had to say or do with marriage and the family. Except, of course, for cryptic remarks to or about his own mother, for the statement that in heaven there is no marrying, for references to weddings in parables, for answers to questions on the Jewish law, and for turning water into wine for the guests at Cana. Hardly a "new outlook" of staggering social importance!

I do not suggest that Jesus in the above quotations teaches that the Christian must actually hate his parents, wife and children; but he does teach that faith in him (Jesus) is far more important than any such human ties, and that the Christian does well to shun or break those ties for the sake of the faith.

Human marriage and the human family are obviously founded on human ties. They are the deepest of all such bonds, the love between husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister. But Jesus says that *his* teachings and the faith *he* preaches should come before all these, even if it means sacrificing those ties, even if it means the break-up of homes and families, the turning of love into hatred, and persecution by one's own flesh and blood. And we know that in fact is what has happened in thousands and thousands of cases.

Religious zeal such as this breeds intolerance and often fanaticism. It has destroyed, and still destroys, homes and families and human loves and loyalties and happiness, because of the intolerance of a faith that must have first place.

Again, I must ask you, are these the "great social teachings" that you would have us follow in trying to build a better, freer and happier world?

We know that when these teachings were put into practice, marriage under Christianity and a dissolute "celibate" priesthood sank more and more into degradation, from which it had to be rescued by the rediscovery and re-establishment of its human qualities. Was this degradation any wonder when we look back at the teachings of Jesus, and at the ignorant religious zeal with which they were held?

Jesus gave the highest praise to voluntary celibacy when undertaken for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, and further damage to marriage as an institution was done by the contemptuous attitude and teachings of St. Paul. "The time is short" until the coming of Christ as the Messiah, according to Paul (1 Cor. vii. 29), and the procreation of children is thus a matter of little importance, while the married care more how they may please their partners than how

they may please the Lord (32-34), but at the same time "it is better to marry than to burn" for the sin of fornication:—

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. . . . For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn (1 Cor. vii. 1-2 and 7-9).

Despite Paul's long list of nice behaviour for husbands and wives to observe towards each other, it is hardly an elevating view of marriage that it is mainly an institution to prevent unlicensed fornication, nor of sex that it is something in itself unholy and degrading, which view became the dominant attitude of the Christian Churches, especially among Protestants and Puritans.

Jesus, we are told, raised marriage to a sacrament. *But how? When? In what words?* That seems rather important, but the Christian cannot tell us with any certainty. He has to appeal finally not to the words of Jesus, but to those of Paul, of all people!

With full-blooded Catholic confidence, we are told in Hart's *Student's Catholic Doctrine* (4th edn., 1921, p. 341): "Till the coming of Christ marriage was but a purely natural contract; but when Christ came into the world, He gave to what before was a natural contract a supernatural character by raising it to the dignity of a Sacrament." But no specific evidence of this wonderful occurrence is offered. Later (p. 343), in a reference to Christ's words on the indissolubility of marriage, "Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh" (Matt. xix. 4-6, D.V.), we are told: "It was most probably when he uttered these words that our Lord raised Matrimony to the dignity of a Sacrament." "Most probably!"

Nor can the late Pope Pius XI. get any nearer in his encyclical letter on *Christian Marriage*; he also has to fall back on the words of St. Paul.

Is the indissolubility of marriage a "lofty" view of that institution, as has so often been claimed? I don't think it is. Nor in the long run does it teach respect for marriage as an institution: experience shows that it creates not only unhappiness, but hypocrisy; not only contempt, but neglect of such "cast-iron" moral laws. No real and lasting morality, stability, or happiness can be built on fear and compulsion. Human beings need understanding, not chaining.

Obviously there must come times and cases when the needs of individuals and society alike demand that marriage shall not be regarded as an indissoluble bond. Obviously the claim of indissolubility lies not in those needs at all, but in purely religious (superstitious) taboos and dogmas. And obviously any regulations we impose upon social relations such as marriage in our "brave new world" should be based not on these non-social, non-human taboos and dogmas of religion, but on the social and human needs of the people themselves.

Once more we find that "the greatest social teacher the world has ever seen" has far too much of a heavenly squint for us to have confidence in him as a guide along the humbler—but more tangible—paths of this earth.

Goodnight to you, Charles, and all yours. Affectionately.

R. H. S. STANDFAST

No man can live happily who regards himself alone; who turns everything to his own advantage.—*Seneca*.

## Some Recent Books

"THE BACKGROUND OF SPIRITUAL HEALING" A. Ikin; Allen and Unwin, 1937). Miss Ikin is a religious psychologist working under the Archbishop of York's (Dr. Temple's) committee of clergy and doctors, for the purpose of spreading "spiritual healing." As an employee of the church she has a (subscribed) salary quoted at £500 per annum. She is well aware of the successes claimed by psychotherapy and sets out to find what religious treatment can do that psychotherapy cannot do. She then arrives at the peculiar notion that there is a distinction between moral disease and "sin," and that, while the former may be cured, the correct treatment for the latter is "conversion." Psychotherapy is thus only suited to the former. In the absence of any evidence that, given moral disease, another category is required for "sin," we are not here disposed to follow out her conclusions from that premise. Miss Ikin takes pride in having taken the unusual course of concentrating on psychoanalysis at her University. But no exponent of psychoanalysis has yet, I think, claimed that psychology is nothing more than the field of his system. The notion of free will, disclaimed by one psychologist after another, plays an essential role in Miss Ikin's exposition: sin is voluntary wrongdoing, we are told, unlike alcoholism, which, we learn, is merely moral disease.

The author makes some use of Dr. W. Brown (*Mind and Personality*), and would be hard pressed to name one more eminent psychologist who has something really favourable to say of Christianity. And even Brown himself (*Science and Personality*) casts doubt on the doctrine of survival. There is much in Miss Ikin's book to arouse suspicion as to the breadth of her outlook, and we shall remain sceptical if such remarks as "the development of the sciences of biology and psychology as independent sciences, not necessarily bound to the mathematical basis of the physical sciences . . ." and such ideas as "the movement away from materialism within the medical profession," are not supported on authority other than that of Miss Ikin. Columns of the *Freethinker*, for instance, could be, and have been, filled bearing evidence against the former. One might even say that the branch of science known as genetics would be impossible without mathematics, and it is a part of Biology.

She opines that although psychotherapy "plays its part in healing" it can only get the best results by "virtue of genuine contact with the reality of God, whether it admits this or not." The Christian God is apparently preferred; Freud, being a Jew, did not "know Christianity from the inside," and it is significant that his view that religion is an illusion is based very largely on the relation of the child mind to the dominant father, all powerful and all controlling, which is reminiscent of the stern God of Judaism rather than the all-loving Father of Christianity.

It is a serious defect that Miss Ikin does not deal with Prof. J. Leuba's *God or Man*, covering the same subject and arriving at vastly different conclusions, and published several years earlier.

*Preface to Faith* (Prof. L. A. Reid; Allen and Unwin, 1939; 214 pp., 6s.). What is the salvage? In other words, what is left that is acceptable after the inroads made by science and criticism? This is the question posited by Prof. Reid. He is satisfied there is a residue which will withstand attack, a core of unassailable truth. There is, for instance, an infinite source of love and strength from which we finite beings may draw.

One of the most remarkable, though sound, points

he makes is that the dependence of mind on bodily processes rules out the possibility of its survival after death. Immortality is a myth. From this Prof. Reid takes a step further. Christ died. Therefore Christ is no more. Only God persists, and so Christ is not God. This, he contends, is not fatal to Christianity.

He also finds "no clear and certain knowledge of God," and states moral objections to the doctrine of a Fall and Redemption through Christ.

Prof. Reid began by asking what was left of Christianity after the inroads of science. Some other Christian ought now to tackle the question as to what is left after the inroads made by Prof. Reid.

*Science for the Citizen* (Prof. Lancelot Hogben; Allen and Unwin, 1938; 1,120 pp., 12s. 6d.). This huge work has been the subject of much praise from such as Prof. Laski and H. G. Wells, who rank it, together with Hogben's *Mathematics for the Million*, a companion with the same purpose, as one of the "books of the century." It was running to the 33rd thousand (English) and 40th (U.S.A.), and has been translated into French, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Polish and Italian. The five parts represent the story of the human conquest of (1) Reckoning and measuring (Time and Space), (2) Substitutes, (3) Power, (4) Hunger and Disease, (5) Behaviour.

Sir James Jeans wrote a book which topped the 60,000 mark. How many of them found in it what they thought they might find is not known, but Hogben takes the view that the scientist's job is to educate the public, not mystify them. At any rate, we seem to discern a sly dig in the following observation by Hogben (*ibid*): "The nonsense that the scientific worker has no time to be a socially responsible adult, exercising his social responsibilities as a citizen, is due to be debunked. No one lifts an eyebrow if he embraces the ready-made reading public of the Gifford Lectures when he has passed the age of 60. He is then at liberty to demonstrate that the Deity is a B Star Wrangler with a mathematician's contempt for the bread and butter problems of the plain man, and a mathematician's indifference to the imminent possibility of the next war. No one is alarmed except the professional theologian, who generally knows his own job rather better."

It is only to be expected that some of Hogben's subject matter will overlap to some extent with other works by him. He again illustrates how progress in physiology has rendered redundant the Kantian mind. "A German philosopher called Kant had devised new tests for identifying spirits. One was that they are not bothered about punctuality and have no respect for clocks." But the electro-magnet has made it possible to find "whether the nervous impulse is a genuinely Kantian spook." The layman who has been initiated into the mysteries of the McDougall animal mind will have a refreshing mental bath in following Hogben's conclusion that "the problem of animal behaviour is to find out where the switches and self-starting devices are placed, where the fuse boxes are located, how the wires are connected, and what kind of work each machine carries out."

The work of Pavlov and others has, he maintains, made it possible to specify rules about how dogs remember and make decisions, and points to the fact that mental decisions are not merely the private affair of the isolated philosopher. It is here that Eddington comes under criticism. It may be recalled that Eddington's circle of forces ends with "matter—known by Mr. X" (*The Nature of the Physical World*). But "Eddington's external world ends where an important part of the external world of a psychologist or a biologist begins."

In his book Hogben takes a definite line regarding

behaviourism, not noticeable in his *Nature of Living Matter*. In exposing its limitations he remarks, "It is rather a pity that the word behaviourism has become identified with a school of psychologists who pay more attention to the common characteristics of animal and human behaviour than to the special characteristics which distinguish human behaviour from that of other creatures."

The only point of criticism is the optimism expressed in the title. The average citizen has left school at 14 and not bothered about further education other than vocational. He will therefore be unable to follow at least large portions of the mathematical sections. And it is quite "on the cards" that he has never heard of Kant. Whether many could make an intelligent statement about Eddington is questionable; some will have a job to distinguish between Epstein and Einstein. It would be most instructive to find on what grounds Laski and Hogben base their optimism.

G. H. TAYLOR

(To be continued)

## Jesus and His Women Friends

(Continued from page 540)

MATTHEW (xxviii. 1-10) says that early on the Resurrection morn, Mary the Magdalene, and another Mary, came to the sepulchre of Jesus, and were told by an angel that Jesus was risen, and were sent by him to tell the disciples that Jesus would meet them in Galilee. Then on their hurried flight to bring the disciples this good news, Jesus himself met and saluted them; and they took hold of his feet. He then bade them to have no fear, but to tell his brethren to meet him in Galilee. Mark (xvi. 1-8) says that Mary the Magdalene, another Mary, and Salome, visited the tomb at the end of the sabbath, and found therein a young man, clothed with white raiment, who told them Jesus was risen, and bade them tell his disciples and Peter to meet him in Galilee. But, being afraid, they fled trembling, and made no report. In the next verse, however, Mark says that, upon his resurrection, Jesus appeared first to Mary the Magdalene, who reported the appearance, but was disbelieved. Luke (xxiv. 1-11) says that the Magdalene Mary with Joanna, and another Mary, and other women (whose names he omits), visited the tomb at dawn, went into it, found it empty, and were told by two men in dazzling apparel, that Jesus had risen in fulfilment of his words. They reported this experience to the apostles and others, but were disbelieved. John (xx. 1-18) says that Mary the Magdalene, coming early before daybreak to the tomb and finding the stone gone, ran to Peter and another disciple with the news; and that they hastened to the tomb, found it empty, and went back home. Then, Mary weeping by the tomb looked in and saw two angels, who asked her why she wept, and when she had replied, she turned and saw Jesus but did not recognize him [perhaps because of the darkness]. He asked her why she wept and whom she sought. Taking him for the gardener, she asked him for the corpse, offering to remove it. He spoke her name [evidently with a familiar expressiveness]. She cried, "Master!" He said "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father." Then he bade her tell his brethren of his approaching ascension. She duly made report to the disciples, but their response is not recorded.

It is a high testimony to the importance of Mary the Magdalene that, whenever she is named by the

evangelists with any other woman, or women, her name always stands first, except in the single instance where John after naming the mother and the aunt of Jesus, as witnesses of the Crucifixion, names her as another witness. The presence of the mother of Jesus at his execution is ignored by the rest of the evangelists. This is very remarkable, but it is still more remarkable that none of the four Gospels says that Jesus ever appeared to his mother after his resurrection, although it might well have been expected that she would be the earliest to whom he would appear. Her omission to visit his tomb is explicable on the theory that she may have been completely crushed by his death; but in this case there were even stronger reasons why he should have afforded her immediately the consolation of his re-appearance. She must have been deeply pained by his unfilial conduct; especially by his paying more respect to other women than he did to her, his own mother. The Fourth Gospel, and it alone, vouches for the fact that he got her a home with an unnamed member of his disciples; whilst the author is usually taken to imply that he himself was the disciple. But a mother's heart needs more than material comforts.

There are only three occasions when Jesus is reported as speaking to his mother, and on all three he addresses her in a rough manner.<sup>5</sup> Once, when speaking of her, he exclaimed, "Who is my mother?" This harsh expression is reported by Matthew (xii. 46-50) and by Mark (iii. 31-38), the last-named adding some preliminary information as to the circumstances which evoked it. He says that the friends of Jesus, hearing of his conduct, believing him to be mad, "went out to lay hold of him"; and that, whilst he was sitting among a crowd, the word came, "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee," whereupon he exclaimed, "Who is my mother and my brethren?" and then, looking at the people surrounding him, he declared them to be his mother and his brethren, because whosoever did God's will was his sister, brother, and mother. Such a declaration obviously cast a slight upon his own proper family, and involved a denial of his filial and fraternal obligations.

Luke, who gives a shortened and softened version of this incident, places it in the chapter at the opening of which he tells how Jesus and his apostles travelled about in the company of Mary the Magdalene and many other women who supplied them with sustenance. (viii. 1-3, 19).

III. Mary the Bethanian. This woman resided with her sister Martha, and her brother Lazarus at Bethany, a village near Jerusalem, and, although the Evangelists never give her the qualification of Bethanian, she certainly deserves it, because Bethany is forever associated with her name.

John is the one who refers to her as living there, and who reports the most striking facts about her and her kinsfolk. Luke, however, had previously mentioned Mary and her sister Martha, but without mentioning Bethany as their home. In fact, judging from the point at which he introduces them, we might be led to suppose that they lived far to the north of Bethany. For he represents them as entertaining Jesus when on his last journey to Jerusalem, and he places the entertainment long before the arrival of Jesus at Jericho, and his departure thence for Jerusalem by way of Bethany, two miles distant from it. But, it should be noted that between chapter x. verse 51, where he records the steadfast setting out of Jesus for Jerusalem, and chapter xix. verse 29, where he says that Jesus halted at Bethany, Luke inserts various things which Matthew refers either to an earlier or to a later period. Moreover, the part in question con-

tains a great deal of matter which seems to have been put there because its proper place was unknown. It is therefore permissible to suppose that the particular visit of Jesus to Martha and Mary, which Luke relates, occurred at Bethany, and was paid on one of the former occasions when Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Luke (x. 38-42) says that at the time he refers to, Martha, being grieved because Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, and left her to do the service, asked Jesus to bid Mary help at the work; whereunto he replied that whilst Martha troubled herself with serving, there was only one thing needful and Mary had chosen this better part which should be hers forever.

John (xi., xii.) tells us far more about Martha and Mary. He first introduces them on the occasion when, according to him, Jesus brought their brother Lazarus back to life, after a sojourn of four days in the tomb. This incident has sundry details which have led more than one critic to regard it as a pious fraud. The account says that "many" of those present believed in the miracle; but, that "some" went away and made the Pharisees a report. Thereupon, the Jewish authorities held a council, and at the instigation of Caiaphas, the high priest, they decided to have Jesus executed as a person likely to embroil the Jews with the Romans. Learning their intentions, Jesus took refuge at a city called Ephraim, which lay near the wilderness to the north of Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile steps were taken for his apprehension. These measures afford indisputable proof that the above authorities did not believe in the genuineness of the alleged miracle. For they would never have sought the arrest of Jesus had they credited him with the power of restoring life unto the dead. If we are here confronted by a pseudo miracle, skilfully contrived and carried out, we may well conclude that the detection of this fraud embittered the authorities against Jesus, and thus paved the way for his death. Thus the affair of Lazarus, incredible when taken for a miracle, is not without credibility when regarded as a natural occurrence.

C. CLAYTON DOVE

(To be continued)

<sup>6</sup> Raumer's *Palestina*, p. 189.

### Reflections

I've known the peaceful solitude  
While lying on a grassy bank  
'Neath Summer sky, where none intrude;  
And, borne on the air, comes the musical clank  
Of chains, as the countryman guides his team  
In line unmerring o'er brown soil.  
And, lying there, with the sun's warm beam  
Aslant my face, all thoughts of toil  
Are gone—instead, the soft caress  
Of grasses on my cheeks and neck . . .  
Delight of the cool, sweet earth—no less  
Than Paradise . . . Nought else I reck  
But pleasant scent of num'rous flowers,  
A winging choir in heaven, cascade  
Of flowing streams . . . these cause the hours  
To pass as in a dream . . . to fade . . .

. . . And, borne on breeze of scented song,  
A distant bugle . . . louder . . . long . . .  
Calling to me lying here  
To bid goodbye to things loved dear;  
To rack with bomb and gas and shell  
This earth I cherish, love so well;  
To slay my brothers of like blood  
Who pant for peace and freedom's good.

CHARLES PEARCE

<sup>5</sup> Luke ii. 48, 49; John ii. 4; xix. 26.

## Acid Drops

We are writing this on Tuesday morning (August 29) and the situation is far from clear. But we believe that the indications are in favour of a continuation of the armistice—it is an abuse of language to call it "peace." It is, at present, as we have said before, not a choice that lies before us of peace or war, but between war and something that is worse than war. And we hope if war comes we shall have none of the stupidities about the noble character that is framed by war, the heroism that is created by war, and so forth, a series of statements that did more than anything else to make a reasonable peace impossible. Let us go into it, if we must, knowing that war settles nothing of a permanent character. It brutalizes all who are brought into contact with it, but there are positions where a man has to choose between two things, both of which are bad, both of which lower human nature in the scale of civilization, but which protect us from something that is even worse than war. If we bear this in mind we may avoid the aftermath of the "Great War."

Meanwhile we have been awaiting the reaction of the Christian portion of Hitler's "fifth column" in this country. Many of these, retired generals, men and women in high society, some members of the House of Commons of the pitiful Captain Ramsay type, with the help of the Roman Catholic press, have been protesting against any form of alliance with "godless Russia," that should be aimed at checking the moves of the German gangsters. It must be remembered that the line taken was not that Russia could not be trusted—the popular line outside the group mentioned—but that as a Christian people we could and should have nothing to do with Russia. We are waiting to see this "fifth column" plainly condemning Hitler for the alliance. Up to the present they have been strangely quiet. Perhaps they think their work has been done as well as it could be done in the circumstances.

Bishop McCormack, at a meeting the other day, deprecated references to the "leakage" going on in the Roman Catholic Church. He thinks in many parts of the country the leakage is only 10 per cent, and he pointed out that of children over seven 86 per cent regularly attend Mass; and between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one, 71 per cent. But the figures for Catholics of a maturer age were not given. The truth is that young Catholics are far too much in the grip of the Church to think for themselves, and it cannot be expected that many of them will have the pluck to desert the Church under which they were brought up. It is later when the young people come in contact with the world—and the discoveries of science—that they commence to think for themselves and that is fatal, as any priest will tell us. Blind credulity and faith make up the spiritual food of the Catholic. When he ceases to take it, he becomes one of the many "leakages."

Most lies are said to resemble the fabled cat that had nine lives. But a religious lie leaves even that kind of cat stranded, for it gets as near immortality as it is possible for anything to get. We were under the impression that the old story about Bradlaugh pulling out his watch and giving God the opportunity of proving his existence by striking Bradlaugh dead was on the list of Christian lies that are really dead. But the Rev. Dr. Rattenbury revived it during an address at Trinity Methodist Church, Southport. We fancy that anybody is quite safe who wishes to try the experiment. There was a time when the Christian God did, according to his followers, strike people dead or blind, or otherwise acted like a German Nazi in a concentration camp full of helpless prisoners. But that was a long time ago. Now he does nothing, and that makes sensible folk wonder what it is that justifies his existence. We give it up, but we invite some responsible Christian to enlighten us—if he can.

The old Christian teaching that an Atheist was a very, very wicked individual, who became an Atheist to escape the reproach of his conscience, is no longer possible, but not because the average Christian preacher is more particular as to the truth of what he says, but mainly because Atheists are now very common, and his lie would be staring him in the face. It should be said that this kind of Atheist generally got converted towards his end, or he died raving of his regret at giving up God, and died with a kind of burning feeling. He was a very useful kind of Atheist this, because he could be used to frighten fools who were in no danger whatever of disbelieving in Christianity.

Atheist number two was the man who was not a black-guard so far as one could see, but he was miserable, pessimistic, and generally unhappy. That was a little more difficult to disprove—to a Christian—because if the Atheist said he was quite comfortable, the Christian smiled and said he knew better than that. So the Christian had the poor Atheist either way. If he said he was not miserable the Christian simply said he was telling a lie. If he looked happy, that was merely to deceive the onlookers. The Christian said no one could be completely happy without Jesus, and offered himself as absolutely convincing evidence. The Christian position is such a strong one that it is impossible to disprove it. And in any case there is always the next world in which the Atheist will be quite sure he is not happy, and the Christian will, as St. Thomas pictured, look over the battlements of heaven, watch the Atheist roasting in hell, and then, say, with a smile "Well, he can't pretend to be happy now."

What we have just said is to illustrate the obvious truth that the historic Christian liar is always with us, although nowadays he has to be a little more careful. So the Rev. F. W. Moyle, Vicar of Chilvers Coton, in a sermon in the *Nuncaton Observer* for August 4, serves it up in this fashion. There is, he says, "very little theoretical Atheism in this country," but "there is in many homes and individual lives that sense of futility and aimlessness and disillusionment which is, I am certain, the direct result of practical Atheism which is extremely widespread at the moment." There is, one observes, no theoretical Atheism (it would not be easy to disprove, so the better plan is to deny its existence), but there is a practical Atheism, which leads to futility, etc. Ask Mr. Moyle to prove it and he will say it is not possible to disprove it, but it is there, and in the fact of something there that cannot be detected, or disproved, we are driven back to Mr. Moyle and his God. Really we prefer the old-fashioned Christian slanderer. He at least had the courage to tell a good thumping lie. His present-day representative can only offer a lie which he cannot substantiate. One ought not to be surprised at the steady deterioration of the quality of the pulpit.

The *Daily Mail's* pet religious reporter who calls himself "Inquiring Christian," is very depressed at the poor attendance in the City churches. At two of them, on a recent Sunday, there were exactly 13 worshippers! As there are some 46 churches in the vicinity, even "Inquiring Christian" has to ask himself the painful question of what earthly use was this keeping up such expensive luxuries for congregations whose numbers were a huge joke. These churches may have had their use when London was not much bigger than the City is nowadays, but very few people have their homes there now. It can only be a question of time when the City churches will have to be pulled down to make room for more necessary buildings.

As a matter of fact, the question of these churches was carefully gone into some twenty years ago, and the Commissioners recommended the removal of 19 of them, the site value of which was estimated at £1,695,620. For the site of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East £250,000 was offered alone. It is particularly interesting to find that the measure for disposing of the churches was approved by the House of Lords but rejected by the House of Commons. Truly is religion the opium of the people!

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

J. PRICE.—We thought we had made our position quite clear concerning Conscription. It is that a State regulation should apply to all alike. An army should rest on a voluntary or a compulsory basis. To permit a conscientious objection to State regulation is to have neither a complete voluntary nor a compulsory service. To permit another person to say whether we have a conscientious objection is simply ridiculous. The judge here must be the man himself. If a man feels that it is his duty to defy the operation of a law, then he must be prepared for the consequences. And when he does this he is giving a valuable demonstration of the power of the individual against collective compulsion. There is no analogy here with Church attendance. That is voluntary, because the individual has the right to say whether he shall go or stay away. It is not the case with Conscription.

"PELMAT."—See reply to J. Price. You are far too obsessed with a single idea to perceive the relevance of other considerations. Our point is a simple one. This is that Government regulation, without considering its goodness or its badness should apply to all citizens alike. It is an absurdity for a Government to say that citizens shall be compelled to do this or that—provided they do not object to doing it. We admire very much those who stand up against a law because they find it, in their judgment, wrong, but it is another thing for a Government to say it will not oppose their doing so. There is nothing noble in defying a law when no penalty is attached to the defiance.

J. T. BRIGITON.—Next week. Arrived too late for this issue.  
G. WALLACE.—You are a little out in your dates. Our natal day is September 1 not November 30.

W. W. SMITH.—Thanks for addresses. We are not surprised the visit was not repeated. As a convert you would be distinctly unprofitable.

J. COONEY.—Thanks for good wishes.

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

## Sugar Plums

Ruskin said that the women of the world could stop a war at any time if they only would. He suggested that if they would only wear black during the duration of war they would do much to bring home its real nature to the world. Unfortunately women, when war is imminent, are

among its most energetic advocates, and have done even more than men to idealize it. One can hardly help feeling that the glittering fashion of the military uniform is not unconnected with its attraction for women. Today uniforms have perforce to be of duller character, but the woman still plays a great part in keeping the military spirit alive.

We are reminded of the power that women all over the world might exert on the world by the fact that a "Woman's World Congress for Peace and Liberty" is to be held in Cuba from January 5, 1940. In connexion with this a public meeting will be held at the Town Hall, Hampstead, on Tuesday, September 26, at 8.30. Among the speakers will be Dr. Elizabeth Jacobs and the Hon. Anne Freemantle. It is hoped that delegates will attend from as many women's organizations as possible. The expenses of a delegate to the Cuban Congress will be £35. Those who wish for further particulars should apply to Mrs. Marjorie Battock, 92 Adelaide Road, N.W.3.

We are pleased to note that a volume is about to be published which will be a simple factual relation of the British Government's part played in the role of *non-intervention* in Spain. We anticipate that the actual help given to the *Nationalist* cause in Spain by our Government will need no elaboration and no adjectives. It is a dreadful story.

## AN INTELLIGENCE TEST FOR ANTS

I constructed four miniature houses of worship—a Mohammedan mosque, a Hindu temple, a Jewish synagogue, a Christian cathedral, and placed them in a row. I then marked fifteen ants with red paint and turned them loose. They made several trips to and fro, glancing in at the places of worship, but not entering. I then turned loose fifteen more, painted blue, they acted just as the red ones had done. I now gilded fifteen and turned them loose. No change in result; the 45 travelled back and forth in an hurry, persistently and continuously, visiting each fane, but never entering. This satisfied me that these ants were without religious prejudices—just what I wished; for under no other condition would my next and greater experiment be valuable.

I now placed a small square of white paper within the door of each fane; and upon the mosque paper I put a pinch of putty, upon the temple paper a dab of tar, upon the synagogue paper a trifle of turpentine, and upon the cathedral paper a small cube of sugar. First I liberated the red ants. They examined and rejected the putty, the tar and the turpentine, and then took to the sugar with zeal and apparent sincere conviction. I next liberated the blue ants, and they did exactly as the red ones had done. The gilded ants followed. The preceding results were precisely repeated. This seemed to prove that ants destitute of religious prejudice will always prefer Christianity to any other creed.

However, to make sure I removed the ants and put putty in the cathedral and sugar in the mosque. I now liberated the ants in a body, and they rushed tumultuously to the cathedral. I was very much touched and gratified, and went back in the room to write down the event; but when I came back the ants had all apostatized and had gone over to the Mohammedan communion.

I said that I had been too hasty in my conclusions, and naturally felt rebuked and humbled. With diminished confidence I went on with the test to the finish. I placed the sugar first in one house of worship then in another, till I had tried them all. With this result; whatever Church I put the sugar in, that was the one the ants straightway joined. This was true, beyond a shadow of doubt, that in religious matters the ant is the opposite of man, for man cares for but one thing, to find the only true Church; whereas the ant hunts for the one with the sugar in it.

Mark Twain

## Conversation Piece

(Scene: Tea-table. Anywhere.)

SMITH: I was listening in the Park this morning and a chap said—

Robinson: You've got bats in the belfry, old man, listening to all that cackle. I can never make out why you waste your time listening to that tripe. The first man you listen to tells you that the world looks like being lost because it is turning its back on Christianity; the second man tells you it is because mankind is neglecting the *right* brand of Christianity; the third man spends his time in denouncing that right brand as the cause of all the trouble; a fourth tells us that we never have had Christianity at all; it has never been tried. You come away feeling that there is no certainty about Christianity at all. God revealed it, but revealed it so badly that no one can tell what it means. What's the good of all this gas, that's what I want to know? If I had my way, I'd not allow it. It just unsettles people. What is wanted is just one or two speakers at the most. Now if all were as sensible as the man who said that what we wanted was a return to the Sermon on the Mount, that would do no harm.

Brown: But the man *I* liked best was that little fellow who spoke about the Sermon on the Mount. He "went for it" for the most part. I thought he talked common-sense. I would vote for that man, if only one were to be allowed.

Mrs. Smith: *That* chap! He ought to be in gaol.

Wilson: I like the political speakers. The first one tells you that Russia leads the way in everything that matters. The second one says that men want disciplining and telling what to believe; then one would get a move on. Another one says that what was good for our fathers ought to be good enough for us; another one says: Let go the painter. We're in a log, and the main thing is to get out of it. With a fresh start, things couldn't possibly be as bad as they now are.

Robinson: Jabber, jabber, jabber!

Brown: Is there no sense amongst all the nonsense? When you say it is all jabber, one assumes you mean that these men could be talking sense, but are unfortunately talking nonsense. Now, if *you* were one of the speakers—

Mrs. Robinson: Ha! I'd like to see him busy.

Brown: Well, Jack thinks it possible to talk sense even in public places. Or he wouldn't have said that if all the speakers had had as much sense as the one who said that what was wanted was a return to the Sermon on the —

Robinson: Yes. That would be all right.

Brown: You would be satisfied if all the speakers were saying the things that you believe to be sensible. But, Jack, you ain't God.

Mrs. Robinson: Ha, ha, ha!

Robinson (visibly annoyed): Who said I was God?

Brown: Well, Jack, if you think you are the only one who can settle what is sense—

Robinson: Who said so?

Brown: You would be content if all the people in public places took the position that Christianity hadn't been tried and advised a return to the Sermon on the Mount. But you object to the man who advises nothing of the kind. You would be pleased if he were denied the privilege of free speech. You would be prepared to settle what should be and what shouldn't be allowed. In other words, you—

Robinson: Oh, I'm not the only one. There's lots and lots of people who think like me.

Brown: And there's lots and lots of people who think differently. The only way they can compose their differences can be by discussing their ideas with those who think differently. That is *if* they wish to change their ideas. Do you want to change your ideas, Jack?

Robinson: Well! Who does want to change their ideas for that matter?

Brown: Most people are prejudiced in favour of their own ideas. Most people hate change. Most people think they are the salt of the earth. But there are some who think that ideas must change, or institutions can't change. In other words that things will stay as they are if we don't think. Are you prepared to take the position that things should stay as they are?

Wilson:

"The dust on antique time would lie unswept  
And mountainous error lie too highly heap'd  
For truth to o'er peer."

Brown: Thanks, Bill.

Robinson: I don't believe in standing still, but I believe only in slow motion.

Brown: Well, there's some sense in that. But even slow motion can only take place under the influence of ideas. Ideas are really the things that matter—

Robinson: And are you going to put over to me that you are likely to get new ideas by listening to Park Orators?

Brown: It is possible. I think I remember you saying that if the idea of having a proper respect for the Sermon on the Mount were popularized, it would have a good effect.

Robinson: But there are ideas and ideas.

Smith: Of course. And what I sez is "Listen to em." Many open-air speakers talk nonsense, but it's difficult to talk nonsense all the time. Sense may come from any platform. If you listen to a man for a quarter of an hour telling you he believes this, that, and the other, and forgetting to tell you why he believes in this, that, and the other, then he doesn't know his job, and it's just as well to pass on to the next. When a man tells you he believes this and that because of this reason or that, the chances are he is taking his job seriously, and he may have something to tell you, some little fact which doesn't fit into the map of your present opinion, and which may, in the course of time reshuffle whole areas of your ideas. The fact that you don't quite like the direction in which the new fact appears to be leading you is the reason above all reasons why you should pause awhile and give it intellectual hospitality, for it may be just in that direction that self-discipline may be necessary, and an obstinate prejudice so got rid of. There's no difference between speaking freely in the Park and speaking round this tea-table. When Robinson tells me that Christianity hasn't been tried I think (after all these years of power) it's the same thing as saying it has failed, but *he* don't think so, and I never think of bringing the teapot down on his napper because of his opinion.

Mrs. Smith: And, what about another cup of tea, all of you!

T. H. ELSTON

Science is the great instrument of social changes, all the greater because its object is not change but knowledge.—A. J. Balfour.

The laughter-later soon learns to dignify this dislike as an objection in morality.—Meredith.

## War and Anti-War

It is no part of the Freethinkers' mission to attack the enemies of war. The phrase "enemies of war" includes all who hold with Wordsworth that

War is passion's basest game

—not only the extremest of pacifists, but those who agree with the poet quoted who thought that War could be justified by a disinterested love of "Freedom's holy cause."

The attitude of Freethinkers towards war has always been a detestation of war as irrational and evil. Romilly's phrase "uniformly averse from war" represents the annals of our cause. Thomas Paine, pioneer author of the "United States of America," aimed also at a "United States of Europe." Charles Bradlaugh led more than one campaign against a British Government which was establishing its "Empire" on lines which we all now oppose when it is being practised by Japan, Italy and Germany. Our first editor, G. W. Foote, by his work for the Humanitarian League and his admirable pamphlet: *The Shadow of the Sword*, instanced the stalwart work for Peace for which the N.S.S. has always stood.

Chapman Cohen, in one of the most convincing arguments ever adduced on behalf of international understanding, shows that "in international relations we continue to use methods of controlling pugnacity or settling disputes that are in social life discredited over the whole of the civilized world." Mr. Cohen's pamphlet, *Humanity and War*, is not just an appeal to mental and physical laziness or a reliance on slogans ancient and modern. "We need," he says, "a moral substitute for war."

Put war at its very highest level of utility and the utmost it can be credited with is that of defeating one group of nations, or one nation, that aims at dominating another nation and preventing that freedom of movement upon which the development of a society depends. War has no creative capacity, and no power of lifting civilization to a higher level.

But there is another kind of war which uses the same qualities of courage, loyalty, comradeship, and also gives a discipline that moves on an altogether higher plane. It is the warfare of competing ideas and ideals which demands a far higher and rarer form of courage than that expressed on the battlefield. It is less gaudy than the conflict to which militarism invites us, and therefore it attracts less attention. It represents the fighting impulse of man raised to the higher ethical and social level. It is a war in which theories replace rifles and bombs give place to ideas.

A few days ago the B.B.C. broadcasted a Sermon by the Rev. "Pat" McCormack. It was difficult to treat the discourse with serious attention. The parson evidently desired a reputation for patriotism, rearmament, and in certain contingencies, war. But at the same time he appeared to regard all this as something to apologize for as a lamentable lapse from Christianity. He seemed to say—there are times, you know, when one must really forget one's religion—even a Christian has to be practical. He thought we may really have have to fight this Hitler man, but it was not quite consistent with the high standards of a religion of peace.

Mr. McCormack need not be so fastidious. There has never been any war of any kind, which his church (and all rival churches) have not blessed—praying, of course, for the success of their own side and the destruction of their enemies. Mr. McCormack is unduly concerned. Objection to war has never been taught or implied by the Bibles, the Creeds, the Catechisms,

the Articles of Religion, or any Doctrine—or practice—of any Church.\*

Mr. McCormack's predecessor—"Dick" Shepherd—believed as Mr. McCormack believes—that Christ opposed war. Shepherd added that his own objection to war was based on the (we think very irrational) ground that the God of Moses said: "Thou shalt not kill."

The problem of war is far too vital to be dismissed by an appeal to what Moses said (ignoring by the way all that Moses did). Sir Norman Angell says:—

The question is not what the early Christian or the Pacifist whose conviction rests on a religious basis would do in the matter of the use of force. It is which of two parties, neither of whom shares his views, is the less dangerous. (*Must It Be War*, p. 110).

This remark goes to the root of to-day's difficulty. If a majority of us were insane enough to decide literally "not to kill" anything or anybody, our national life would be quite unimportant. Soap and sanitation would disappear, animals inimical to mankind might occupy our country, and the worst type of violent tyrant rule in triumph—unless, of course, God disobeyed His own (alleged) law against killing, even more than He does already. Somehow or other we must turn to science and commonsense to find our way out of a ghastly situation. We must not deceive ourselves; religion will not help us; the gods are dead; man must find a way out of the quagmire which man has invented, or which man's ignorance has permitted other men to create.

President Kruger was a very pious fundamentalist, but by no means a non-resister. Lord Baden Powell told the story (*What I Believe*, p. 17), that in the Boer War, one of the Boer C.O.'s was discussing with Kruger the merits of artillery. Kruger assured the officer that "If God wills us to win this war, we shall win it, whether we have artillery or not." Napoleon, of course, believed that God was "always on the side of the bigger battalion." The religious pacifist will probably reach the conclusion that artillery and soldiers may be of no use at all, but as they won't actually hinder God's co-operation, it may be as well to have the best we can get.

The real criterion by which we must all be judged is what efforts we have made during peace-time to convince our fellow-man that war is a horrible waste—and prevention—of civilization. We intend to continue our propaganda against the root-causes of war and the advocacy of peaceful methods of settling inevitable international problems. We do not, however, believe that peace is worth having if it necessitates our sacrificing the lives and liberties of weaker nations.

It is a distinct encouragement to violent ways if we yield to threats of violence against ourselves—illustrated by invasive tyrannical force put into operation against once independent nations.

We recognize the fact that for many years all the lovers of peace have failed to secure so powerful an organization of anti-war groups in the world—with an active programme for the assurance of peace—such as might check aggressors and foil a union of aggressors.

We must have the courage to begin again. But we dare not ignore the undeniable facts, nor can we find refuge in monstrously misleading policies like the attempt to save mankind by non-resistance to the violent suppression of liberty, or by the vain quotation of meaningless texts such as "Thou shalt not kill."

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

\* The Christadelphians are an honourable exception. The Quakers—some of whose members "joined up" in the World-War—have always distinguished themselves as friends of peace and still continue to do all they can to abolish war.

## Dolet: The Freethought Martyr \*

(Concluded from page 557)

### VII.

DOLET'S character has already been largely described in the course of this biographical sketch. But a few more touches may be added. His disposition was somewhat proud and turbulent, liable to make enemies, and not apt to conciliate them. Yet his quarrels do not seem to have been personal, and we must make great allowance for his vehement language. The age was not remarkable for urbanity in discussion, and even a century later we see by Milton's invective against Salmacius that literary manners had not much improved. Longfellow has humorously hit off this temper in a well known passage:—

*Seraphic Doctor*—

The Lord have mercy on your position,  
You wretched, wrangling culler of herbs!

*Cherubic Doctor*—

May he send your soul to eternal perdition,  
For your treatise on the irregular verbs!

Dolet must not be made responsible for the common failing of his time. If he had, as Mr. Christie alleges, "serious faults of temper and temperament," he nevertheless "excited the affection, the admiration, and the respect, and obtained at least for a time the friendship of every man of learning and virtue with whom he came into personal contact." He never penned an unkind word of any man who had once been his friend, and we have to learn the story of his quarrels with intimates from other sources than his own writings. Mr. Christie confesses that the exalted estimate of Dolet's character, with which he began his researches, has been lowered in their progress; and he frankly states his opinion that the great printer had faults of head, and perhaps some of heart, which contributed to his misfortunes. But who is perfect? It is surely enough that "with all these drawbacks he remains a man possessed of many most admirable qualities, of high talent, an intense desire after knowledge for himself, and equally intense desire of communicating it to others, an intense sympathy with every kind of intellectual progress, and an intense hatred of ignorance, bigotry, superstition and priestcraft."

We should judge Dolet, says Mr. Christie, as a scholar and a man of letters. And he continues:—

If we cannot place him among the two or three foremost names of his contemporaries, he is certainly entitled to a high position. . . . His Commentaries was one of the most important contributions to Latin scholarship which France had as yet given. His "Formulæ," his criticisms on Terence, and his translations, are all among the most meritorious works of their kind. . . . Nor must his services to the French language be forgotten. He was one of the few scholars of the day who had formed a true conception of its importance, and of the method of treating it scientifically. His grammatical tracts and his translations afford us proofs of this and add to the many other indications of what he might and probably would have done had a longer life been allowed to him. For in judging of his talents and abilities we must not forget that he had only attained the age of thirty-seven years at his death, and that the last four years of his life were almost wholly passed in prison.

Mr. Christie points out something beyond and above all this. He notices that both in his Latin and in his French verse Dolet "rises to a height of pathos,

\* Etienne Dolet, the Martyr of the Renaissance: A Biography. By R. C. Christie. Macmillan & Co. A review reprinted from the *Freethinker* of 1881.

vigour, and imaginative power rarely, if ever, to be found among the poets of the day, and which certainly induce us to believe that, had he devoted to French verse the labour and pains which he gave to elaborating and polishing his Latin prose, he might have equalled any of his contemporaries, and surpassed all except Marot."

Was Dolet an Atheist? Mr. Christie affirms that nothing in his published works warrants the belief that he was. He wrote as a true Catholic, and submitted to the authority of Mother Church. But so did Rabelais, Desperiers, and nearly everyone else. Mr. Christie tells us that Dolet was held to have been executed as a relapsed Atheist, and although it is not so stated in the sentence, he "inclines to think that this was its effect and intention, and that the almost universal belief that he was a Materialist, or (for the words were then and afterwards used as synonymous) an Atheist, was shared by his judges." If not really an Atheist, it seems pretty certain that he was put to death as one.

But let us hear some of his contemporaries. Scalliger, in a brutal ode written after Dolet's death, calls him "Atheist," and says that he was "filled with an arrogant madness which, being armed with the most consummate impudence, would not even confess the being of a God." Franciscus Floridus, after charging him with plagiarism, adds—"This fellow asserts the soul to be mortal, and the highest good to consist in bodily pleasure." Bernard Bochetel, Bishop of Rennes, said that Dolet "fell in a short time into the most execrable blasphemies I ever heard." And lastly, the sweet-mouthed Calvin wrote, soon after Dolet's execution—"It is a matter of common notoriety that Agrippa, Vilanovanus (that is, *Servetus*), Dolet and such-like *Cyclopes*, have always ostentatiously despised the Gospel, and at length they have fallen into such a depth of insanity and fury, that not only have they vomited forth execrable blasphemies against the Son of God, but, as regards the life of the soul, have declared that it differs in no respect from that of dogs and pigs." It is probable that Dolet gave freer vent to his scepticism in his conversation than in his writings. This view is borne out by the words of Floridus in his reply to Dolet's defence. "The opinion," he writes, "of your impiety, which is everywhere held, cannot be got rid of by any extracts from your 'Genethliacum,' for I hold this to be certain, that what you believe concerning God and the soul you would speak of cautiously and not openly to all, lest you should be immediately seized and put to the torture."

Such a general belief must have had some foundation. Dolet did not take much interest in theological controversy, nor was it likely that he would show his heresy in his works, except "between the lines." In that age men wrote, so to speak, with the halter round their necks and the faggots at their feet, and the slightest indiscretion was dangerous. When the bloodhounds of persecution were on their track, Freethinkers who had no desire for death were obliged to imitate the cunning of the fox. A Rabelais, with infinite strategy and wit, might contrive to avoid being burnt for the love of God; but fervent impetuous natures, like Dolet, were almost sure of an evil doom.

Mr. Christie concludes that Dolet was "a sincere Theist." We do not dispute it, but we say that the evidence is incomplete. Mr. Christie himself admits that Dolet's avowals of orthodoxy are "ostentatious," and that "they do not strike the reader as proceeding from the writer's heart, but as being inserted rather as a matter of form than of actual belief."

With respect to the immortality of the soul, he was at least dubious. His ode, already cited, on the death of his friend Villanoyus, proves this. And there is

another short Latin poem in the same volume, which concludes: "Do not be terrified by the arrows of death, which will cause you either to be deprived of sensation, or else to be sheltered in happier regions and to be in a joyful condition, unless the hope of heaven is vain."

In his "Commentaries," on the word *Mors*, he breaks into a noble strain of panegyric on immortality, but the immortality there meant is the immortality of fame. After quoting the names of great scholars, poets, warriors, and statesmen, he says that "the works of men of such excellence, consecrated as they are to immortality, are clearly beyond the power of death, and will, I am certain, never perish, but rather the sharpness of death and of time, which tramples all things under its feet, will be blunted by their virtue." In this immortality he was, as Mr. Christie allows, in his heart of hearts a believer; and he hoped, by passing his life "nobly and courageously," to participate in its glory.

"To say that he was a Christian," writes Mr. Christie, "as the term was then used or accepted equally by Protestant and Catholic, would be undoubtedly to say what is not the fact." As M. Henri Martin remarks, "Philosophy has alone the right to claim on its side the illustrious victim of the Place Maubert, whom the Reformation has denounced as impious by the voice of Calvin."

Dolet sided neither with the Church nor with the reformers. His religion, to use Mr. Christie's apt language for the last time, was "a religion of duty in relation to this world only, and troubling itself not at all with the future, as being a matter of which nothing can be certainly known, and concerning which it was useless to reason or to speculate." What an admirable summary of Secularism! Dolet was with us, and we claim him as a martyr of Freethought, another name on the noble list of our sacred dead.

G. W. FOOTE

### A Reply to Mr. Kensett

To say that Mr. Kensett's currency scheme is not original is not to condemn it. To say that it is not workable is to repeat what experience has long ago emphasized. Mr. Kensett's chief fault, however, lies in his confusing currency (the symbol of wealth) with currency backing (or the commodities which constitute wealth). At least the conditions, which he declares are fulfilled by wheat alone, are in some cases applicable only to currency, and in others to currency backing.

If we are to get straight about this currency question, the distinction between the symbol (currency) and the thing symbolized (wealth in the form of commodities) must be made quite clear. Currency is the outcome of trade in commodities. So long as trade confines itself to barter, or the direct exchange of one form of wealth for another, currency is not required. But such direct exchange has long since proved cumbersome and restrictive. Hence the growth of trade by means of currency, in which any form of wealth may be exchanged for a symbol (valueless in itself), which may in its turn be exchanged for any other form of wealth. Mr. Kensett admits the need of these valueless symbols, even in his own scheme, when he says, "wheat can be represented by coins or paper." But when he says that "wheat is the only one commodity in the world which satisfies all," the conditions he names as applicable to currency, he is confusing the valuable article (or item of wealth) with the valueless article (or symbol of wealth).

It should be particularly noted that currency (the symbol) is, in itself, intrinsically valueless. And, between the symbol and the wealth its symbolizes, there exists an unbridgeable gap. The gap is unbridgeable because it is impossible to establish any but a conventional, or fictitious, relationship between an intrinsically valueless

article, and one that has intrinsic value (in the sense that humanity requires it for sustenance or demands it for other purposes of existence). So whatever wealth a piece of currency may be said to represent, it does not, and never can, be wealth or be of value in itself. This, however, does not prevent the valueless symbol from being useful. And the usefulness of currency lies in the fact that, once it has been agreed to accept it as a symbol of wealth, it can be used by parties to the agreement as though it were actual wealth. From this it follows that the wider the agreement, the wider the use of the symbol. And the larger the number of commodities for which the symbol can be exchanged, the more useful the symbol.

These are essentials in the working of any efficient currency system. Nevertheless, since agreement on anything is dependent upon the vagaries of human temper, even the most efficient currency system can be upset by repudiation on the part of any considerable section of those who were party to the agreement. This is what happened after the last war, and was the cause of the disorganization of the gold standard.

Mr. Kensett admits the inefficiency of barter as a method of trade under modern conditions when he speaks of "wheat notes," and says that "wheat can be represented by coins or paper." But the only difference between his scheme and the scheme at present in force is that he chooses a different position for the unbridgeable gap between currency and wealth. The gap in Mr. Kensett's scheme is between his currency and wheat. The gap in the present scheme is between our currency and all commodities which comprise the actual wealth of the world. It seems that the comparative failure of the gold standard, combined with the multiplicity of commodities which serve as its backing, has misled Mr. Kensett into thinking that our present currency has no real backing at all. So he selects wheat as a tangible and valuable backing since it is a form of wealth or value which the majority of people can appreciate. If this is not the reason for his choice of wheat as the sole form of wealth to back currency, then the only other possibility must be that he imagines a currency backed by a single valuable commodity to be more practically useful than a currency backed by all forms of wealth.

In either case the crux of the argument is this: whether it is better that the conventional value of currency shall be backed by one particular item of wealth (wheat), or whether it is better that it should be backed by all forms of wealth. The answer lies in the words I have already written: "The larger the number of commodities for which the symbol (currency) can be exchanged, the more useful the symbol."

Apart from this, the advantages claimed by Mr. Kensett on behalf of wheat as a backing for currency are largely illusory. For example, he declares that wheat can be produced in unlimited quantities, if wanted. This is not true of any commodity in the whole world. Nor is it true that "every nation prefers wheat to any other food, and therefore to any other article." Millions of human beings prefer rice, or maize, or even milk. Besides, one could not, even if one would, grow wheat everywhere to the exclusion of other foodstuffs and necessities of life. Again, it may be true that "two or three years' consumption for the wheat consuming nations is always in store now, and more could be, if required." (Incidentally this is a tacit admission that every nation does not prefer wheat.) But all the wheat which it might be possible to accumulate at any given time would not constitute a fraction of the backing necessary for the world's currency—unless a value were given to wheat alone, which would be out of all proportion to its value as compared with other essentials of life.

"It should be possible to produce it in many parts of the world so that none can monopolize it," says Mr. Kensett. Perhaps it should, but it isn't. Wheat producing countries would have an enormous advantage over others which cannot, or which find it difficult to, grow wheat, especially since wheat cannot be stored indefinitely for future emergencies. If war broke out, monopoly would inevitably be resorted to. Monopoly of wheat might even be resorted to for other reasons and thus be a cause for war. It should be noted in this connexion that a monopoly of currency (whether gold, silver or what not)

cannot incommode anyone so seriously as a monopoly of its backing. The more commodities, therefore, which back a currency, the more difficult does it become to control that currency by an attempted monopoly of its backing.

"It should be possible to store quantities of it sufficient for currency," says Mr. Kensett. But where? With universal everlasting peace this problem might be solved. As things are, has Mr. Kensett actually calculated how much wheat would have to be stored in this country alone in order to provide a reasonable backing for the wealth which is at present represented by the currency now in circulation?

"There should be no inducement to hoard or keep out of use more than the quantity needed for currency." This is questionable. Is no one, or no nation, to be allowed to store against future emergencies? In any case there is nothing in the nature of wheat itself (other than its perishability) which makes it a commodity that does not induce hoarding. On the contrary, see my comments about "monopoly" which is merely a special form of hoarding. As for its perishability even this would not deter from hoarding. It does not require a vivid imagination to visualize many conditions in which the withholding of wheat from use (even to the extent of its rotting) could serve as a lever by individuals or nations upon each other.

Mr. Kensett seems to have overridden all these objections in his "details which can be settled later." Unfortunately it is just these very "details" (an international bank, a League of Nations depot, and a guaranteed deposit of wheat by all nations) which must be settled *first*, before any currency system is going to prove universally efficient. As I have pointed out, a currency system which is to function widely and effectively must be backed by gross wealth (i.e., all commodities which mankind demands). Even this will not work unless and until there is universal and permanent agreement as to its use. So there is no simple solution to any currency problem, and there never will be until universal and everlasting peace has been established. Meanwhile the present system, with its backing of all kinds of wealth, is a far more practical and far less dangerous one than a system backed, as Mr. Kensett suggests, by only one article of value.

C. S. FRASER

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF NATIONS

I find it quite impossible to draw an indictment against a whole people . . . because I should expect to find in Germany large numbers of people who detest war and tyranny as much as I do, and who simply do not believe that their troops have been guilty of barbarity. And if they do not believe it one cannot well charge these people with a love of cruelty and savagery; their offence would lie rather in the direction of credulity. The phrase that puzzles me is "the psychology of the Hun." What does it mean? So far as I can see the psychology of a brute means no more than the nature of a brute, and it matters not whether he be a German brute or any other variety. A brute is a brute whether in Berlin or Paris or London. If I lived in Berlin I should not expect my appreciation of the causes that make men kind or brutal, loveable or hateful, honest or dishonest, to be vitiated by the fact that I had gained my experience in London. It is one of the first principles of psychology that the human brain functions everywhere in an identical manner—functions, not expresses, and, indeed, it is a first principle of understanding human action under any condition. It seems that we shall have to transfer Shakespeare's "Hath not a Jew eyes," from the Jew to the German. And it is surely worth remembering that about a century ago the psychology of the Frenchman was supposed to be made up of revolutionary frenzy, with a perfect mania for chopping off people's heads and a complete disregard of all ordinary rules of morality. And at the same time the psychology of the Hun was that of a very domesticated, dreamy, hard-working, simple-minded individual.

CHAPMAN COHEN in the *Freethinker* for June, 1916.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON

#### OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.15, Mr. L. Ebury.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) : 7.30, Mr. E. J. Page.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. 3.30, Parliament Hill Fields, Messrs. W. G. Fraser and J. L. Lewis. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 7.0, Sunday, Mrs. E. Grout. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mrs. N. B. Buxton. Liverpool Grove, Walworth Road, 8.0, Friday, A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 8.0, Wednesday, Mrs. Buxton and Mr. Carpenter. 8.0, Thursday, Mr. Saphin. 8.0, Friday, Mr. Barnes. 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Tuson and Collins. 7.30, Sunday, Messrs. Barnes, Dunne, Tuson and Wood.

### COUNTRY

#### INDOOR

SOUTH SHIELDS (St. Michaels Church Hall) : 8.0, Tuesday. Debate—"Christianity is the Religion for To-day." Apr.: Cambridge University Selected Candidate. Neg.: Mr. J. T. Brighton.

#### OUTDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Covered Market) : 8.0, Friday. Haymarket, 8.0, Saturday. Park Entrance, 8.0, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Well Lane Corner, 8.0, Wednesday. Park Entrance, 8.0, Thursday. Covered Market, 8.0, Friday. Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture each evening.

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

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound) : 7.0, Mr. Frank Smithies—"Fraser and Freud on Moses."

FATFIELD (The Bridge) : 8.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road) : 8.0, Tuesday.

Minard Road, 8.0, Thursday. Rose Street, 8.0, Friday. Mr. T. L. Smith will speak at these meetings.

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

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Rocles Market) : 8.0, Friday.

Bury Market, 7.30, Saturday. Ashton Market, 7.30, Sunday.

Chorley Market, 8.0, Tuesday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at these meetings.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Stevenson Square) : 7.0,

Messrs. G. H. Taylor, C. McCall, Junr., and S. Newton.

TRAWDEN : 7.45, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market) : 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

STOCKTON (The Cross) : 8.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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