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Views and Opinions.

Wanted, an Epidemic.

If honesty of speech and sanity of thought were to become epidemic on the widest conceivable scale, how long would organized Christianity endure? The period would hardly be a lengthy one. For Christianity persists in this country because clear thinking and honest speaking so seldom run together. On the one side we have those who never subject their religious beliefs to a careful examination, and so do not feel how indefensible they are; and on the other hand we have those who seek to veil their dissent from Christianity by language which conceals rather than reveals their true opinions. A belief in Deity means a belief in a vague abstraction which bears no reasonable relation to what people understand by God. Faith in Christ means a belief that he was a good man, a well-intentioned social reformer. Or people say they believe in religion, but not in theology; in Christianity, but not in the Churches. And so on through a number of formulæ, all of which serve to disguise the fact that, while there is no real belief left, there is wanting the courage to avow the fact.

* * *

Some Questions of "Ignotus."

There is not, nor is there likely to be, an epidemic of clear thinking and honest speaking in relation to religion; but, on the whole, the complaint grows. And there is an instance before us while we write, which, indeed, is the cause of our writing. For some time past the *Manchester City News* has made a practice of publishing some exceedingly well-written articles on religious subjects by a writer who veils his personality under the pen-name of "Ignotus." These articles have attracted much attention, and they are now reprinted in book form.¹ No claim to originality is made by "Ignotus." It expresses, says the author, "all the doubts, fears, surmisings, defiances, excuses, surrenders, that are associated with the many religions of mankind." The

¹ *The Questions of Ignotus.* Chapman & Hall; 5s. net.

value of the book is that it is symptomatic. All that "Ignotus" says has been said over and over again in these pages in an even more drastic and less compromising form. The appearance of these articles in the columns of a daily paper, with their subsequent reissue in book form, is evidence of the growth of our opinions and of the efficacy of our propaganda. For the newspaper press is abnormally sensitive to the pressure of public opinion. It publishes only what is more or less acceptable to its readers; and the real success of our persistent work is seen, not so much in actual organization, as in the extent to which we force the outside world to adopt the main ideas for which Freethinkers have fought and suffered.

* * *

Miracles.

The Churches are empty, and they are empty because people have lost, or are losing, faith in those things for which the Churches stand. That is the burden of *The Questions of Ignotus*, and in defence of his thesis he brings an unanswerable indictment against current Christianity. Here is a specimen of "Ignotus" in his assault on the belief in miracles:—

A miracle, despite all the arguments of modern apolo- gists, must be supernatural.....Abandon that claim, and what remains? Why trouble to talk about miracles at all? Why declare that Moses, Aaron, Elijah, Job, and even the Messiah himself, and all his Apostles, were different from other men if they could not do more than other men?.....As long as superstition exists, miracles linger. When science comes in, miracles go out.

Now, that is a good thumping knock at miracles, and it is one to which the Churches have really no reply. Two or three writers do attempt to reply to "Ignotus," and these are published with the original articles. But they are wide of the mark. For they fail to realize that neither the acceptance nor the rejection of miracles is a question of evidence. It is only a matter of his- torical psychology. Given a certain low stage of culture and belief in the miraculous is universal. As Spinoza said, anything is possible because nothing is certain. With advancing certainty the realm of possibility contracts. To-day we know *why* people believed in miracles. We know also why they outgrew the belief. We do not argue that dead men were not brought to life, or that water was not turned into wine. We know such things never did and never will happen. As "Ignotus" says, "Common sense gives the death-blow to the super- natural, and grown men emerge from dim superstitions and the mystery of the marvellous just as children grow too wise for fairydom." * * *

The Truth About Religion.

The Questions of Ignotus does not claim to be a sys- tematic treatise on religion, but there is plenty of evidence that the author has read widely and thoroughly. Witness the following on the origin of religion:—

The religion of primitive man originated mainly, if not wholly in fear. He experienced pain, he beheld the mystery of death; he wondered whence the one pro-

ceeded and how it might be averted; and he dimly speculated on the meaning of death, and the possibility of an after existence with rewards and punishments. He seemed to be the sport of gods and demons. Gradually a crude system of ethics was evolved, and in his desire to placate the demons and win the favour of the gods he decided on a course of life which he deemed would be pleasing to them.....If he thought the gods and demons would delight in blood, he gave these blood; preferably that of his enemies or of those who did not think as he did."

That kind of writing is much to be preferred to the vague foolishness written about man's yearning for companionship with God. Fear and ignorance are the true mother of the gods of primitive life, and our own gods, howsoever refined, are their lineal descendants, and have no better claim to reality. And he who knows how the gods came into existence is in no doubt as to the conditions of their departure. That which ignorance breeds knowledge destroys. The tree of knowledge was the only one, the fruit of which God commanded man not to eat. To eat of that tree is always fatal—to the gods.

* * *

An Exchange of Errors.

But while quite appreciating much that "Ignotus" writes, we do not at all appreciate the distinction he draws between religion and theology, nor his laudation of an ideal Christianity "as taught in Galilee." There can be no religion without a theology, that is, if religion is to be of use to anyone. If religion consists in the belief in God and a future life, theology is, after all, only a reasoned statement of man's assumed relations to God and a future state, and if he believes in these things, man is certain to argue them out, and in that case we have a theology. And the ideal, moralizing Christianity of Galilee, which could "unite in morals, virtue, and hopes the whole rational world," is as much a myth as anything that "Ignotus" throws overboard. Putting on one side the fact that the Jesus Christ of the New Testament is an obviously mythical figure, the purpose of primitive Christianity was as far as is possible from that of uniting people in virtue and hopes and rational endeavour. The Jesus of the New Testament is saturated in supernaturalism. He is supernaturally born, he works miracles, he believes that epilepsy and insanity are caused by supernatural agency, he has supernatural visitations, and his aim is to save men from the terrors of a supernatural world. There was not a superstition of the ancient world against which early Christianity set itself. It accepted all, and it strengthened many. The Christianity which makes much of a moral life and of social Christianity is not primitive at all. It is a concession to modern forces too strong for Christianity to altogether crush. If "common sense gives the death-blow to the supernatural," this is as true of the supernatural New Testament Jesus as of other supernaturalisms. And once this goes, we have no other Jesus and no other primitive Christianity that the world will trouble about for long. * * *

A Defence of Thomas Paine.

"Ignotus" has a very interesting chapter on Foreign Missions, which contains a deserved condemnation on this greatest of modern Christian impostures. And there is a quiet humour in his pointing out the folly of sending missionaries to convert Jews abroad when we have so many at home, with that "very obstinate case," the Chief Rabbi. There is also a fine defence of Thomas Paine, and a rebuke to the slanders on great Free-thinkers, which we cannot forbear quoting:—

Think of the lies that have been built up on the dead bodies of renowned unbelievers. Think of the slanders on dying men—how Voltaire passed away in a torment

of remorse; how Paine died drunk and blaspheming; how Renan recanted; how Huxley repented in his last hours of all that he had said and done in his life of thought and research.....I think of Thomas Paine..... I wonder what foul deeds this miscreant committed? It happens that I have his biography before me, and I find that he was a humanitarian, a hero on the battlefield, a valiant reformer, a high-minded philosopher, a self-denying practitioner of the Golden Rule, one who loved his neighbour, and devoted his strength to, and risked his life for, his fellow-men.....Paine was the author of the sublime appeal to the American nation to abolish slavery, and he fought heroically that the black man's fetters should be struck off.....But he wrote the *Age of Reason*, and "Tom" Paine, the righteous man, has ever since been marked out for unsparing condemnation by other righteous men, who forgot the Christian precepts of mercy, toleration, and forgiveness.

We know not by what right mercy, toleration, and forgiveness are called *Christian* precepts. Christians did not originate them, and it has practised them even less than other religions that might be named. But we are left wondering why a man, such as "Ignotus," who has clearly surrendered everything distinctively Christian, should still cling to the name! Far better to make a clear break, and join the growing army of men and women who find in humanity the inspiration for, and the reward of, their finest endeavours.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Newest Apologetic.

I.

THERE is evidently a strong feeling abroad among Christian teachers that their religion stands in great need at present of a fresh defence. No apologia of the past meets the requirements of to-day. Theological defenders, like the late Professor A. B. Bruce, and philanthropic champions, like Mr. C. L. Brace, author of the once popular work, *Gesta Christi*, are now completely out of date, and there is a general cry for some effective confutation of the anti-Christian arguments which now seem to be exerting such a mighty influence throughout the length and breadth of Christendom. In our own land, in particular, this need is most keenly felt; and we are informed that, at the instance of the Christian Evidence Society, a series of evidential books is being drawn up, one of which, *The Achievements of Christianity*, by the Rev. J. K. Mozley, B.D., and published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, is now in our hands. This little volume, of less than a hundred pages, is described as a popular but scholarly answer to the question: "Has the World Been Made Better by Christianity?" The author bears an honoured name in the theological world; and in a short review in the *Church Times* it was pronounced an exceptionally able and efficient piece of work. It must be candidly admitted that Mr. Mozley is, on the whole, one of the fairest apologists we have ever come across; and yet there is no escape from the impression that he is playing the part of a special pleader who is professionally holding a brief for Christianity. He warns us against expecting a perfect apologetic on the score that the Christian record is woefully incomplete, as well as "far too complex to allow, even within its limits, of the immediate emergence of an apologia for the Christian faith." He tells us that the historical reforms, which in *Gesta Christi* are proudly recited as directly due to Christianity, "certainly look well on paper," but fail to carry conviction to any fair-minded reader. Side by side with such vaunted reforms the Christian Church must shoulder the burdens of religious intolerance, the Inquisition, the religious

wars, and, in fact, all the things done by Christians which appear specially scandalous." Mr. Mozley is also much juster in his reference to the pre-Christian Pagan world than most of his brethren. He says:—

There has been a reaction from the picture drawn by Matthew Arnold, how:

On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell—

and there has been a tendency to insist on the amount of solid personal worth and quiet domestic happiness to be found in the Empire, especially in the provinces, which were less corrupt than Rome.

We desire to give Mr. Mozley due credit for the fairness he displays, however reluctantly. It is truly refreshing to find him characterizing as "over-lavish" Brace's ascription to Christianity of "improvements and humanities which any unbeliever in Christianity, who at the same time confessed himself a believer in progress, could easily attribute to the tendency of the human heart to improve." Again, one rejoices at the frank admission that "the sharp divergence sometimes drawn between the Christian spirit and the Christian Church may be held to lead to the conclusion that the Christian spirit is only a specialized representation of the universal spirit of kindness and benevolence." We congratulate Mr. Mozley on his candour and courage, and only regret the absence of such noble qualities from the works of most other apologists.

At the same time, our own sense of fairness compels us to declare that our author's fairness is more apparent than real. Take the following sample:—

It was in virtue of the faith of Christ, and of that alone, that the position of women was bettered, and respect for women increased, in the later Roman Empire and in the dark ages that followed, that the exposition of children was fiercely combated, and that slavery was practically extinct in Europe by the fourteenth century (pp. xiii., xiv.).

We deliberately contend that on those three points Mr. Mozley is entirely mistaken. On the subject of slavery he is altogether at sea. We do not know what he means by saying "that slavery was practically extinct in Europe by the fourteenth century" in virtue of the faith of Christ. By the fourteenth century it is true that a great change had taken place; but all available evidence clearly shows that it was a transition from one name to another rather than from one state to another; and in any case, the faith of Christ in no sense contributed to the change. It is true that in the fourteenth century there were nominally very few slaves in Europe, but that is chiefly because slaves were then called serfs. It is also true that the Church was instrumental in effecting some degree of improvement in the condition of both slaves and serfs, but she was inspired more by economic and political than by religious motives. There may be some technical justification of Mr. Mozley's statement; but from the purely religious point of view there is nothing that can be said in its favour. And in the securing of any improvements in the social life of Europe from the fourteenth century onward, we have to apportion due credit to the influence of the renaissance, which was largely of an anti-Christian character. But we shall return to this point in a future article.

Mr. Mozley asserts that under Christianity "the position of slaves was made more tolerable, and freedom was more easily won"; but Roman historians testify that in some respects the lot of the slave grew worse. Lecky says that for some centuries there were more slaves under Christian rule than there had been under Paganism. What Mr. Mozley fails to mention is that even under the Republic it had been customary to grant certain

slaves their liberty, and that under the Empire the freedmen rose steadily in influence and were held in high esteem. They often "obtained provincial governments, and were appointed to offices in the imperial household which virtually placed them at the head of administrative departments. As Dr. J. K. Ingram well says:—

Freedmen of humble rank filled the minor offices in the administrative service, in the city cohorts, and in the army; and we shall find that they entered largely into the trades and professions when free labour began to revive. They appeared also in literature; we hear of several historical and biographical memoirs by freedmen under the Republic and the early Empire; many of them were professors of grammar and the kindred arts, as Tiro, the amanuensis of Cicero, and Hyginus, the librarian of Augustus; and names of a higher order are those of Livius Andronicus, Caecilius, Statius, Terence, Publius Syrus, Phaedrus, and Epictetus (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Tenth Edition, vol. xxii., p. 133).

Under the Empire, in particular, in the second century of our era, the institution of slavery was condemned by emperors and philosophers alike, as contrary to nature. Seneca denounced it in the name of reason and humanity. He laid it down as a rule that slaves should be treated as "humble friends." Dio Chrysostom, Trajan's adviser, was a Greek writer, and was in full agreement with Seneca on the subject. The Pagan emperors, Nero, Diocletian, Hadrian, Antoninus, Pius, and others, showed their appreciation of the teaching of the philosophers by legislating in favour of the slaves and against the cruel tyranny of many of their masters. Indeed, it is incontrovertible that the trend of the Empire was towards liberty, and that some of the Pagan emperors went as near the abolition of slavery as it was possible for them, in the circumstances, to go. This is candidly admitted in Dr. Ingram's article just referred to. Now what a striking contrast there is between the Pagan attitude to slavery and the Christian. As late as the nineteenth century, Christian divines defended slavery in the name of God; and in the United States of America it was not abolished till the latter half of that same century, and then only in spite of the most determined opposition of the Christian Churches. Presbyterian Synods and assemblies, Wesleyan Conferences, and Baptist Unions passed resolutions in which slavery was justified as a divinely ordained institution.

Is it not absolutely undeniable, then, that the emancipation of the slaves cannot legitimately be claimed as one of the superb achievements of Christianity? Indeed, Mr. Mozley does not even attempt to prove that it can, but contents himself with the bare assertion that such it was. We claim it as one of the most brilliant triumphs of Humanism, which for several centuries has been slowly undermining the Christian faith.

J. T. LLOYD.

Wilfred Gibson.

In our fat England the gardener, Time, is playing all sorts of delicate freaks in the hues and traceries of the flower of life, and shall we not note them?—*George Meredith*.

So many people, not wholly illiterate, believe that in the scientific and commercial age in which we live, good poetry is impossible, and the poets themselves help this delusion by seeking their subjects from the past. Instead of drawing inspiration from the world around them, they find subjects in classic literature or mediæval legends. Thus we have the sham antique school of poetry, which appeals far more widely to readers than the work of those poets who have embodied in their verse the new material gathered by science, or have expressed the new conditions of industrialism. The average writer of to-day maintains

usually a high level, and this is saying much, for poetry is not so easy as it once was. The public is more exacting, and will not tolerate a singer who merely chants in mellifluous accents that the sky is blue or that the grass is green.

Among the singers who have responded to contemporary impressions, Mr. Wilfred Gibson's work arouses our curiosity. In his books, *Daily Bread*, *Fires*, and *Womenkind* (Elkin Matthews), he draws his material from everyday life, and succeeds admirably in infusing the spirit of poetry into the most unpromising phases of industrialism. The area of proletarian labour is almost an untilled field so far as the muses are concerned, and a successful attempt to deal with it as literature deserves encouragement. Indeed, the singer who can transmute the dross of the unpoetical into the pure gold of poetry has adventured to some purpose. Add to this that Mr. Gibson succeeds in endowing the commonest things, the most trifling actions, with a new dignity. It is only a high imagination which can so relate and ennoble things, and the mere fact that he has relied upon life itself, instead of picturesque association and pasteboard romance, is worthy of commendation. Like Walt Whitman, he does not hold to the theory that the tunes and cadences of other centuries are better fitted to express modern thought and feeling than music made to-day. A poet who sings of the flower-seller in the streets, of the printer at his trade, of the charwoman at her work, is somewhat of a novelty among the poetasters of the day.

According to the popular standard, the sword is more poetical than the rifle. Cavalry may be mentioned, but to introduce torpedo boats into poetry is to attempt too much. That a poet should use astronomy is taken for granted, but that he should sing of biology and chemistry is rank heresy. There is real need for contemporary poets bold enough to bridge the gulf between literature and life. Attempts to reflect contemporary life have been made many times. Years ago Walt Whitman made his hearers thrill with his realistic impressions of phases of American life. Tennyson, too, tried to reproduce contemporary thought in his clear-cut verse, as did Sully Prudhomme in France. Passages from *In Memoriam* and *The Two Voices*, as well as from *La Bonne-heur* and *La Justice*, express scientific theories or metaphysical arguments as accurately as a treatise, and prove that it is unnecessary to be false in order to be poetical. What beauty and force the metaphors of science may give to literature has been shown abundantly by Maeterlinck, but it requires a master hand to use the crude material of life or science. The average poet masks his incapacity by using words and thoughts which he knows are poetical because poets have used them for generations.

Mr. Gibson's muse deals with social life, and a large number of his verses record the struggles of the workers. A poem in *Fires* portrays the emotions of a sweated printer:—

He was so dazed that he could hardly keep
His hands from going through the pantomime
Of keeping even sheets in his machine—
The sleek machine, that, day and night,
Through those glaring, flaring hours
In the incandescent light,
Printed children's picture books.

In another vein the poet gives us a realistic and humorous portrait of an old charwoman:—

Suckler of a score or so of children—
"Childrea! Bless you! Why, I've buried six, sir."
Who, in forty years, wore out three husbands,
And one everlasting, shameless bonnet.

A finer example of Mr. Gibson's method is found in *Geraniums*, which depicts an old street flower seller, and

the emotions roused in the poet by the blazing red of the blossoms against the black background of a London night:—

And yet to-morrow will those blooms be dead,
With all their lively beauty; and to-morrow
May end the light lusts and the heavy sorrow
Of that old body with the nodding head.
The last oath muttered, the last pint drained deep,
She'll sink, as Cleopatra sank, to sleep,
Nor need to barter blossoms for a bed.

Mr. Gibson does not restrict himself to phases of metropolitan life. There is a fine piece of tragedy in *The Night Shift*, in which a collier's wife, who has given birth to a child, has delirious premonitions of disaster to her husband. The mother speaks:—

There's no hope,
For she hears something—
Something that I cannot.
The wife's heart hears
What the old mother's may not,
Because it beats too loudly.

This is weighty and significant work. Mr. Gibson has done well, for he has attempted to extend the bounds of poetry, the finest flower of the literary art. Maybe he occasionally passes over the boundary of poetry into prose, and even into the prosaic, in his free use of the unconventional. He is not the "Bobby Burns to sing the song of steam," whom Kipling calls for. He is not a poet of the people like Beranger, or a writer of music-hall songs. But he differs from most literary men in that he has caught a glimpse of the new poetry which our time demands. His success should stimulate our poets to develop the deeper meaning and hidden beauty of contemporary life until we all feel—

The mighty being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion, make
A sound like thunder, everlastingly.

There is room for the Jean Francois Millet of literature, the Millet who will paint many other things beside "The Angelus." The poet who could sing of the life of our great cities with imaginative power, intellectual energy, and with wide sympathies, will inscribe his name among the great writers, for he would have modern life for his inheritance, "New and yet old as the foundations of the earth."

The unthinking and uncritical amiability of the modern newspapers, which find great poets are as common as roses in June, does a heavy disservice to literature. We are, in the words of Henry James, "a generation so smothered in quantity and number, that discrimination, under the gasp, has neither air to breathe nor room to turn round." A generation ago William Ernest Henley was scorned and insulted because he chanted the glories of the greatest city of the world. To-day he would be overwhelmed in a flood of flattery needlessly poured forth for the sapping and destruction of his genius. The poet should work his hardest for the present, and for the rest await in confidence the verdict of posterity.

MIMNERMUS.

Thomas Paine.

THOMAS PAINE was born in England on January 29, 1737, and is best known to the world as the author of a book of which most people have heard, but comparatively few have read. For over one hundred years *The Age of Reason* has been selling by a few thousand copies annually, though few Christians have read it, and most parsons denounce it as blasphemous, and its author as a rabid Atheist, without having ascertained the contents of the one, or the beliefs and character of the other. As a matter of fact, Paine had a stronger belief in God and

immortality than many a preacher in orthodox pulpits to-day, and it would not be easy to differentiate his religious views from those of the new Bishop of Hereford.

We are not, therefore, concerned with the religious views of Paine so much as with his political views and the great work he did for the achievement of liberty. In 1774, the American War of Independence was fast approaching, although the colonists were still loyal to the English monarchy, and had hardly begun to think of the rights of man. Then Thomas Paine arrived and wrote *Common Sense*, the first of that wonderful series of revolutionary tracts called *Crisis*, which spread like wildfire through the country, stimulating the courage and endurance of the soldiers, and inspiring the American public with renewed confidence.

It is well known that he also assisted Thomas Jefferson in drawing up the celebrated Declaration of American Independence, and it is to the lasting shame of Washington, who owed him so much, that he yielded so easily to religious prejudice and neglected the author of *Common Sense* because he afterwards wrote *The Age of Reason*.

In 1787, Paine went to France, where he took an active part in the Revolution, for unlike La Fayette, who said, "Wherever liberty is, there is my country"; Paine said, "Wherever liberty is not, there is my country." He was elected as a member of the House of Deputies, and in one of the reactions of those stormy times he was thrown into the Bastille, where he wrote the second part of *The Age of Reason* while actually under the shadow of the guillotine, from which he escaped by the accidental chalking of the door of his cell on the inside instead of on the outside. Had he then been engaged in writing a defence of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, this escape would have been hailed by Christians as a striking proof of Divine interference and special protection of the righteous.

Some time afterwards he returned to England, and in 1802 he went back to America and lived in and about New York till his death in 1809 at the age of seventy-two.

Now the chief characteristics of Thomas Paine were his love of liberty, his stainless integrity, and his devotion to the welfare of his fellow-men; yet everything has been done by the Church to brand him as a corrupter of youth, to conceal his great services to humanity, and to cheat him of the gratitude of posterity. The ordinary man lives only for the petty interests of himself, and the small circle in which he moves. All his little thoughts are about his little self and his little prospects. He wonders how much money he can make in the next six months, by hook or by crook. He carefully considers everything he says or does, solely in the light of what effect it will have on his own little prospects, and is, therefore, orthodox in his social and religious sentiments. It does not pay to think, speak, or act differently from the "respectable" people around him—to think out and follow the truth when the conclusions it leads to are unpopular. Such men have no beliefs worth considering, and would abandon whatever principles they profess for a mess of pottage at any time. Men whose whole philosophy of life is contained in looking after number one, and who make use of religion to get on in business and society. And nine out of ten of such people will tell you that "Tom" Paine was a blasphemer and a very dangerous character. Yet Thomas Paine never considered his personal interests where any large social question was at stake. He was capable of rising above his personal affairs, and becoming one in whom the interests of the workers found a voice, a hand, and a heart.

I do not say that he was not pursuing his own happiness in acting thus, but his kind of selfishness which finds

gratification in promoting the happiness of the downtrodden, is miles above the catchpenny greed that would let his fellow-men go to the Devil rather than spend a dollar or an hour's work in trying to save them. In time of war some men risk their lives and limbs, while others lend their money at a high rate of interest. Thomas Paine was one who freely risked his life in the cause of human freedom, and he is maligned by many whose patriotic zeal takes the form of patting the soldiers on the back and making a big fortune out of a contract for their supplies. But there is one thing in the life of Thomas Paine to which I would specially direct the attention of Freethinkers. Many of them confine their attention to the discussion of purely religious questions, and ignore the social problem that is now forcing itself to the front, just as the question of American independence forced itself to the front in the days of Thomas Paine.

More Freethinkers to-day are, I think, engaged in trying to demolish Calvinism than in trying to abolish industrial slavery; to destroy the Church than to destroy the infamous monopolies of banking and land which impoverish and imbrute the workers. I do not wish to underrate the importance of destroying the popular beliefs in an omnipotent and good God, or in a future heaven of eternal bliss, because these two great superstitions have been such strong bulwarks against popular discontent with unjust conditions of life. But many Freethinkers do not seem to understand that there are economic and political superstitions just as baneful as any religious superstitions can possibly be. Thus we have British and German Freethinkers who are firm believers in royalty, a landed aristocracy, and the secret diplomacy of an aristocratic Foreign Office; and we have French and American Freethinkers so steeped in economic superstition that they think the bottom would fall out of the universe if there were no monopoly of land or banking, so that nobody could take any wealth without doing some useful work.

Most of Thomas Paine's life was spent in fighting against political superstition, and it seems to me that there is a great incongruity between this man whom Freethinkers so much admire and many Freethinkers themselves.

Many a Freethinker to-day is heartily in agreement with the monopolists who enjoy great unearned incomes at the expense of the workers, and the laws which make that sort of thing not only possible but respectable. But Thomas Paine would never have been content to see a great social struggle going on between the toiling, defrauded, and degraded workers and the wealthy idlers, while he spent all his time and energy in exposing and agitating against a decrepit religious system. When Camille Jordan made a report against the priests, public worship, and church bells, Paine wrote to him as follows:

It is want of feeling to talk of priests and bells while infants are perishing, and aged and infirm poor in the streets, from want of necessaries. The abundance that France produces is sufficient for every want, if rightly applied; but priests and bells, like articles of luxury, ought to be the least articles of consideration.

These words ought to ring in every Freethinker's ear. I believe in fighting against the Church, because she is hand in glove with the monopolists; but the sewing women and half-starved children and underpaid workers in every trade are matters of far more pressing concern than all the false religious creeds. And the Freethinker who is content to hold aloof from the present struggle for industrial freedom and general wealth has no right to call himself a follower of Thomas Paine.

If the Church did not stand in the way of the abolition of poverty, by enfeebling the minds of the workers

and supporting every form of legal chicanery, I would not bother my head about her. And I want to see the day when the professed admirers of Thomas Paine will love their fellow-men more than they hate Calvinism, and fight against the Church, not so much because she teaches belief in fables, as because she helps to enslave the workers.

Shortly before his death, Paine wrote to a friend as follows:—

A thousand years hence, perhaps in less, America may be what England is now. The innocence of her character, that won the hearts of all nations in her favour, may sound like a romance, and her inimitable virtue as if it had never been. The ruins of that liberty, which thousands bled to obtain, may just furnish materials for a village tale, or extort a sigh from rustic sensibility; while the fashionable of that day, enveloped in dissipation, shall deride the principle and deny the fact.

Little more than one-tenth of a thousand years has passed since those words were written, and they are nearly fulfilled. The American "fashionables" of today, "enveloped in dissipation," care nothing for equal rights; they do deride the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and deny the fact that all men should be free and equal as to opportunities and rights. In the wide territory of the United States, where there is ample room for the whole population of the world, there is poverty as widespread and slums as squalid as any to be found in England.

To free humanity from all that is false and tyrannous in economics, politics, and religion was the life-work of Thomas Paine, and it should be that of every Freethinker.

It is a good thing to drive away the bats and moles of mediæval Christianity, but it seems to me even a better thing to exterminate the modern economic rats which threaten to destroy the ship of State. Let us not only cease to bow down to Jehovah, but also emancipate ourselves from the bondage of the landlord, the money monopolist, and their obsequious servant, the politician.

G. O. WARREN.

[We do not care to comment on a contributor's article, but we feel that Major Warren has, quite unintentionally, done Freethinkers an injustice. Freethinkers do not, as a rule, any more than did Thomas Paine, "stand aloof" from political and social work. They are, in fact, amongst the keenest workers in the country in all advanced social and political work. Major Warren himself is evidence of this. What the convinced and informed Freethinker realizes, is exactly what Paine realized—the Age of Reason must precede the Rights of Man. Mental Freedom is the only guarantee of any other freedom worth having.—ED.]

The Scottish Oath.

THE administration of the Scottish Oath in Courts of Justice sometimes causes a good deal of merriment. On one occasion a Baillie in a County Court requested a female witness to swear, and went on encouragingly, "I swear by the Almighty God," but the witness only smiled and nodded her head. "You are to take the oath," explained the officer in attendance, to which the woman replied with another and more emphatic nod. "Say, I swear by the Almighty God."

"Yes," was the immediate rejoinder of the witness.

"No, no," expostulated the officer, "repeat the words after his Honour."

This was acknowledged by a third nod, and after explanation, the exact words were at last, to the great relief of the Court, repeated by the witness, and the case proceeded with.

On another occasion, a witness varied the final part of the oath, which calls for "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," by repeating softly "and anything but the truth," which, after all, considering the quality of her evidence, was the more correct rendering of the oath so far as this witness was concerned.

Snow Waters.

A COLD title for the time of the year, but everything in its season, and some things are always in season. A draught from a crystal streamlet that came laughing and tinkling from under its coverlet of snow inspired this pencilling. High up in the hilly neighbourhood are the reservoirs—natural and artificial. What sojourn, in what solitudes, what ooziings—slow dropping "seepings" in the brown, old earth, what refinements in the chemistry of Nature, what maturings in the cellars of Time, ere those precious but plentiful drops distil from the domestic tap! Let us be thankful—not to God, but man—Mother Nature, if we will have a deity.

As fine, and as far come, and as necessary, and, "thank God," as plentiful as the mountain dews, are the wise words of the wisest man. The hills are brown and solemn, almost sad in their eternal immobility and indifference, varied with sprawling patches of slowly melting snow, or in further recesses and higher eminences under the hasty driving mist, gloomy and forbidding in black and shaggy heath. Out of such unpromising material man has created fields and gardens. He had to. Direst necessity was the mother of all his inventions. Coarsened with the coarseness of his toil, he yet made refinement possible. Refinement enjoys, but is not too grateful for his gifts; and brawny labour still digs and hews more than its share, because the light it has created has never yet illumined its own brain. Who will pioneer for the pioneer?

A man loses himself on these moors—and finds himself. He thinks of the food and the home comforts awaiting him. No superflux from any Garden of Eden, but wrung by horny hands from the stubborn clod. And a man, if he be not a worker, and have a little sense of justice, feels small and mean and contemptible; and yet feels not so small and mean and grovelling as the worker himself, so unconscious of his kingship.

As Mark Twain said, these thoughts sadden me. I will to bed. But who has not at sometime looked in that faithful mirror of King Lear and learned, for the moment at least, its salutary lesson. Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel.

Such are the waters of wisdom, even if they be snow waters.

Such is the Sermon of the Mount. There are other considerations; not so wise, perhaps, if more persuasive. Change is required. Up here one doffs the gas-mask of convention, and, gasping, gladly gulps the free untrammelled air. One has left behind the little hates and hypocrisies still inseparable from communal life; the flattery, familiarity, contempt, disdain. One thinks of that little swaggering patriotic Hun-exterminator, elevated with something less innocuous than snow water, how it checks up, half-drunk, to one wholly sober; who tells you what he would do with you if you were a German, and, even as a true-born Britisher, you don't feel quite safe before such indiscriminating zeal. Apart from nationality, there are all sorts of curious animals in our streets. It would be of such that G. W. Foote was thinking when he said (in almost his last, if not his very last lecture), "They say God made man! Well, if he did, it was not always a very creditable piece of work!But when he made Shakespeare, one might say, well done, Boss! you've done something at last that does you credit." The abnormal are still more abnormal in these abnormal times; and sometimes the solitude is the only sanctuary. Miles of moorland have been traversed; and followed afar over snowdrift and heath the windings and undulations of an interminable weather and time-beaten boundary wall; past the still wood, bearing traces

of savage storms; beyond and below the inclement seas, where insect man, swift or slow in his craft of destruction or commerce, ploughs the wave. Storm clouds are gathering behind the wind; there is a new menace in the hills; a roadway is reached; the sun sets on civilization—a sweet radiance in the sullen cloud—at least, the sunset was civilized.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Acid Drops.

The truth about the soldiers' attitude to religion is leaking out slowly, and it is found to be something radically different from what the Bishop of London and Dr. Horton declared that it was some three years ago. The godliness of the young fellows at the Front impressed his lordship so favourably that for weeks after his visit he could speak of nothing else, while Dr. Horton, judging only on hearsay, was astounded at the almost incredible work of grace going on daily on the fields of battle. "There is no Atheist in the Trenches," he kept on repeating, believing it to be true, no doubt, with as little evidence as he believed in the reality of the angels of Mons.

But both the Bishop of London and the Hampstead divine were absolutely wrong. Three books have recently been published in which the true state of affairs is honestly but sorrowfully presented, namely, *The Church in the Furnace*, being essays by Seventeen Temporary Church of England Chaplains on active service in France and Flanders; *Can England's Church win England's Manhood?* by an Army Chaplain; and *As Tommy Sees Us: a Book for Church Folk*, by the Rev. A. H. Gray, a Presbyterian chaplain. The Church of England chaplains have been "simply staggered" by the fact that, "while an overwhelming majority claim a nominal connection with the Anglican Church, the things for which she stands mean little or nothing to them." The opinion courageously expressed is that the Church, as at present constituted, is incapable of winning the respect and allegiance of thoughtful young men.

The Presbyterian Chaplain's testimony is as follows:—

On the whole, the average male Britisher of to-day has not much respect for the Church. He does not like or admire the Church. He does not belong to it, and does not want it. It is not among the national institutions that stir his pride. He neither fears nor loves it. It has for him no voice of authorityTo his virile nature it makes no impressive appeal.

Lo and behold, that revival of religion, once so confidently spoken of, has completely vanished from the earth. It began in Great Britain. Those in the South of the island declared that it was manifesting itself most gloriously in the North, while those in the North had not felt it, but were quite sure that the South was ablaze under its glorious influence. Further inquiry disclosed the fact that it was in France, not in our land at all, that the Holy Ghost was performing his mighty miracles. Then it was discovered, chiefly by Dr. Horton in Hampstead, that the real religious revival was to be seen among our own soldiers in France and Flanders. And now, at last, we are authoritatively told that, on the whole, British soldiers are not religiously inclined, but look down with something like contempt upon the Church and her services. What a stupendous amount of lying the men of God indulge in *so long as they can with comparative safety do so.*

The Spaniard who escaped from prison and took sanctuary at the Spanish Embassy has been returned to gaol with compliments. In the Ages of Faith the Church gave sanctuary to outlaws, and the secular authorities were powerless to reclaim them. Nowadays, the Church offers sanctuary to her own clergy, and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot get these men into the Army.

The Young Men's Christian Association is still advertising for bagatelle boards, athletic outfits, music, musical instru-

ments, and other articles for providing amusement. Obviously, the pill of religion wants heavily coating in these days.

The Rev. John Godsall Prentice, Rector of Tollerton, Notts, has been sentenced to six weeks' hard labour for defrauding the Church Army. The restraints of Christianity are not conspicuous in this instance.

A London newspaper suggests that "beef, beer, and the Bible made England." It is customary in religious circles to place this responsibility on the deity.

The American Young Men's Christian Association is just as secularistic as the native organization. It has opened an "inn" for American officers at Cavendish Square, London.

The pious *Daily News* published recently a lengthy leading article on "Our Daily Bread." It is significant that no mention was made of the Lord's Prayer.

The Salvation Army knows how to combine the advantages of Christianity and commercialism, and is now advertising for waste paper. Religion is supposed to be "without money and without price"; but waste paper is now fetching record prices.

We were pleased to see the following in the *Ayrshire Post* for January 18:—

So we are being warned that the decisive factor in winning the war will be food. And that is what the glory and greatness of war comes to in the face of hard facts. Can the Germans and Austrians starve the women and children of the Allies until they bring the men-folk to peace? Can the Allies starve the women and children belonging to the enemy until he sues for peace? So much for the chivalry and greatness of modern war! A competition as to which can starve the other soonest! If hard facts like these don't disgust the world with militarism, and show it for the mean, brutal thing it is, nothing will.

It was given as a quotation, and as "worth producing." All that was wanted was the acknowledgment of its being an excerpt from our "Views and Opinions."

Owing to a printer's error, a provincial paper reported recently that "a god weighing thirty pounds has been caught at Lynmouth, Devon." Pious readers may have thought this had some association with the overdue revival of religion.

The opposition against Dr. Henson's election to the bishopric of Hereford has fizzled out ignominiously, for Dr. Henson has scored effectively over the heresy-hunters by giving an assurance of his belief in the Apostles' Creed. As the position carries with it a salary of £4,200 yearly, the new Bishop has weighty reasons for his belief.

Dean Inge declares that the arguments presented for birth control are unanswerable. He would do well to press this view on his clerical colleagues, for the clergy observe the divine injunction to "increase and multiply."

A writer in the *Daily Chronicle* has been quoting Lord Wolseley on the Chinese: "To me they are the most remarkable race on earth, and I have always thought and still believe them to be the coming rulers of the world. They only want a Chinese Peter the Great or Napoleon to make them so. They have every quality required for the good soldier and sailor." We commend this to insular, ignorant Britishers, who regard the Chinese as "scum." The Chinese are neither Christian nor are they consumed with lust for dominion. Their love of peace is a reproach to Christian Europe.

Many of us have suffered from heartache on reading the reports of "charitable" societies at the beginning of this year. The conditions they reveal of the silent, subdued poor

are the most eloquent condemnation of Christianity that can be found. Oh, for the reign of Humanism!

It has been decided to erect a chapel in St. Paul's Cathedral in memory of Lord Kitchener. How the dear clergy do love to exploit notable men in the interest of the Church.

The recent Intercession service have not affected seriously the playfulness of Providence. Floods have occurred in many parts of the country, many rivers have overflowed their banks, and thousands of acres of land inundated.

The recent very inclement weather has produced evidence tending to show that, in Scotland, the temperature of hell has been reduced to less than normal. Upon more than one occasion recently a Scot has been heard to remark: "It's hellish cauld."

Freethinkers are the last people to minimize or ignore social evils, but the attitude of the clergy to these things is deplorable. Very much that we hear from them about other members of the community deserves to be denounced as unpatriotic, ungrateful, and graceless abuse. These men cannot deny that the land they censoriously sit in judgment upon has been very kind to them; but their attitude to their own land is very much like that of the unspeakable cad who could bring himself to parade the fact that his mother is given to drink and shoplifting.

Government departments will have to look to their laurels as generous exporters of paper. It is reported that the National Bible Society of Scotland in 1917 "distributed 2,880,870 Scriptures in Belgium, Brazil, China, France, Japan, Korea, Spain, and in the homelands."

The following is from *Punch*: "Lady (displaying costume in which she is to appear as the Queen of Sheba in 'Biblical Beauties' tableaux at Charity Matinee). 'Rather sweet, isn't it?' Friend: 'My, dear, absolutely topping. It makes me feel I ought to be doing war work too.'"

"In an avalanche which has occurred in the Nugata Province of Japan thirty-two houses and 173 persons were buried." This should stimulate Christian missions to Japan. "He doeth all things well."

Les Nouvelles reports that a number of Allied aeroplanes flew over large areas of occupied Belgium and dropped copies of President Wilson's famous speech to Congress. At Liege, thousands of these copies were picked up. This will give the Germans another reason for thinking that the Allies are Atheists. The supreme authority with the Germans is the Word of God, which they are asked to discard for the word of Wilson.

In a weekly paper we read that a cinema has been secured for use in the camps surrounding the Holy City. We wonder whether Saturday or Sunday will be selected by the regulators of people's morals there as the day upon which the cinema is to be prohibited?

The Marquis of Tavistock says he is afraid Christian people are sometimes snobs. The "sometimes" strikes us as modest. We have seldom met a sincere Christian who was not a "spiritual" snob. And those who are not sincere are simply humbugs. Christianity, as a matter of fact, breeds intellectual snobbery, and encourages, by its terrorism, hypocrisy. We quite agree, however, with another remark made by the Marquis. "So long as a boy is a sportsman and plays the game, it does not matter if he is not religious." That hits the nail on the head. A decent person can do without religion; and if he is not decent, religion will be very little help.

The Bishop of Exeter is distressed. He finds there is a tendency to treat Christianity with contempt. People no longer love to read their Bibles, or look forward to Sunday

to come and pray to God. Worse than all, the Trade Unions "would not hold out a finger to save religious education." Naturally, therefore, the Bishop is distressed. He sees himself left with a shopful of unsaleable goods, and the refusal of the Trades Unions to help religious education means that he cannot count on being able to breed customers who might one day purchase his stock.

Sir Arthur Yapp has been subjected to much heckling at the meetings he has addressed on the subject of food economy. He will not find his present work so easy as when he used to talk of the "Bread of Life" to devout congregations.

"The gospel of the New Testament was a gospel of revolution," says the *Daily News*. It forgot to add that it was also twenty centuries out of date.

"All great truths begin in blasphemy" is a sentence which occurs in a new play produced at the London Coliseum. This is almost a truism; but, unfortunately, it is one that many repeat without in the least learning toleration for new ideas.

Into the melting-pot, say many, with monarchies, secret treaties, matrimonial misfits, and Holy Writ; and now some dreadful person in the *Commonwealth* proposes to throw in the Bishop's gaiters! Revolution can hardly go as far as this. The *Manchester Guardian*, in a leading article, makes a stand against such a painful innovation. "Surely if there be any offence in a Bishop, it is not in his gaiters, which are often the best of him"; and the editorial ends: "Abolish the Bishop, if necessary, but before he goes let us find someone to wear his gaiters." These pleasantries appear in the first number of the *Guardian* at its increased price of three-halfpence, and as long as they can be continued no one is likely to grudge the extra halfpenny.

Miss Lena Ashwell, we read, has been saying, "Thank God for the queues." We think that this particular type of religious fervour can safely be left to the Bishop of London. We could have understood it if she had been referring to the theatre queues.

How To Do It.

WE are out for another thousand new readers, and by some means or another we mean to get them. But we cannot get them without the help of those readers we already have. Therefore, here are a few suggestions as to how it may be done:—

1. Show or lend your own copy to a friend.
2. Take an extra copy for posting to a likely new subscriber, or send on your own when done with.
3. Get your newsagent to display a copy along with his other journals and newspapers.
4. Send us the names of addresses of those to whom you think specimen copies of this paper would be acceptable.
5. Get copies into clubs and reading-rooms wherever possible. There is no reason why the *Freethinker* should not have all the publicity that is given to other papers.

Any or all of these plans may be adopted, and they nearly always result in new subscribers. We are fighting to keep the *Freethinker* at the same size and price for the duration of the War, and an increased circulation is the best way of meeting the steadily increasing cost of production.

So let us have that thousand new readers as soon as possible. And when we have them we will cease troubling for more for—well, for at least a month.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester; March 3, Sheffield; March 24, Manchester; May 5, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 3, Failsforth; February 10, Swansea; February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—R. Allen (N.Z.), £1 10s.; J De B. and Wife, £1 1s.

A. G. ROYSTON.—Thanks for efforts to promote *Freethinker* circulation. We have handed your subscription to Miss Vance, who will send your membership form.

A. V. EVANS.—Murray's edition of the *Origin of Species* is published at 2s. 6d.

T. C. PERKINS.—We will look up the matter, and see if we can find any record. Up to the present we have not been able to find what you require. The Act is only another illustration of religious bigotry. Pleased you think the *Freethinker* the best twopennyworth published. So do we.

C. PINWELL.—A discussion on Socialism v. Malthusianism is a little outside the scope of the *Freethinker*.

F. C. W.—Not at all a bad idea—that of publishing letters which our "free press" refuses to insert. We are quite in accord with you on the subject of flogging. To flog children in order to make them kind to animals is about as absurd a policy as one could imagine. It is quite equal to those amongst us who hold that war civilizes.

EMBRYO FREETHINKER.—Naturally, we quite agree with what you say about the religion, or rather the non-religion, of the average soldier. We also agree that large numbers of people are terrorized into silence concerning religion by public opinion. The world lacks moral courage most of all. An hour of moral courage and mental honesty, were it universal, would end the reign of the Churches—and a great many other things as well.

W. L.—Suppose God does bring good out of evil, that doesn't make the evil less real. The question to be met is why God permits evil at all. To argue that it is his way of getting good doesn't meet the issue. It leaves us wondering at the blundering of God and the stupidity of man.

B. EVANS.—Certainly we will come to Pontypridd or Aberdare if a hall can be secured. There is no reason why there should not be a strong Branch of the N. S. S. in both places. There are plenty of Freethinkers there; of that we are quite sure.

MR. J. PARSONS.—We know nothing of Corporal John Roberts, or his alleged conversion from Atheism to Christianity. But as John Roberts says he was a speaker for the National Secular Society, we can only say that he has a lively imagination. That statement we know to be a pure falsehood.

STOKER W. PALMER.—Literature for distribution is being sent. As you are home on leave, we are sending to your home address.

ONE of our readers asks for the name of a soldier, on service, to whom a weekly copy of this paper would be acceptable. Please write this office.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Monday evening's air-raid has interfered somewhat with this week's paper. On returning home from Swansea on Monday late in the afternoon, Mr. Cohen dealt with a number of letters that had been sent down from the office, and posted so that it should be delivered early in the morning. The letter was not delivered, and a number of paragraphs and replies to correspondents that should have appeared are omitted. Most of the paragraphs deal with letters received on Saturday and Monday. Tuesday's post is also disorganized. Some may be dealt with next week.

Mr. Cohen had two fine meetings at Swansea last Sunday. The hall in the evening was too full for comfort, but better than empty. The proceedings were made the more interesting by some courteous and pertinent criticisms by two clergymen, and the lecturer's replies were accepted with much appreciation and applause by the audience. Food is not so plentiful at Swansea as it might be, but we were pleased to see the enthusiasm for Freethought stronger than ever. We have great hopes of young South Wales.

This evening (February 3) Mr. Cohen lectures at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham. His subject is "Christianity and the Logic of Life," and if ever Christianity was being hammered by the logic of events it is now. Mr. Partidge, the Secretary, writes that he is expecting a "bumper house." We hope that the expectation will be realized, although, judging by previous experience, we have little fear on that head.

A letter from Mr. Wildman, Secretary of the Southampton Branch of the N.S.S., was recently sent to the General Purposes Committee of the Council asking that the *Freethinker* be placed in the Public Library. This was refused, but on the matter coming before the Libraries' Committee, Mr. Howard strongly objected to this refusal on the quite proper ground that the paper represented the opinions of a section of the ratepayers, and the *Freethinker* had as much right to be in the Library as any other journal. Finally, a resolution was moved and carried that the *Freethinker* be purchased for six months in order to see whether there was any demand for it. We have no doubt that the demand will quite justify the purchase, and we congratulate the majority of the Libraries' Committee on its sense of justice.

The death of Lance cpl. Evans, noted in our last issue, had a sad sequel the other day. It is pretty obvious to those who know the facts of the case that this young man was physically quite unfitted for the Army. Application had been made to the local tribunal for exemption, in the days when tribunals were less careful than at present, and refused. Overwrought by his son's death, the father made his appearance before the tribunal, and told the members that but for their action his son would be alive to-day. The chairman told him to "get out" and, says the local paper, assisted the caretaker to forcibly eject him. It was, of course, quite useless going to the tribunal on such an errand; but those who bear in mind the now admitted fact that thousands of men were passed into the Army who were quite unfitted for the life will have considerable sympathy in this case.

There is a good report of Mr. Cohen's recent lectures at Southampton in the local *Times* for January 26. The reporter notes that "the meetings were of a very successful character, being well attended, and the lecturer made an excellent impression by a masterly exposition of his subjects, an evidently wide reading, and clear thought, relieved by flashes of caustic humour."

Our note in this column on the need for organized work in South Wales has brought a response from Pontypridd and Aberdare. An attempt is to be made to secure halls in both places, and if these can be obtained Mr. Cohen will pay a visit at as early a date as is possible. We hope that all Freethinkers in these districts will do their best to help these endeavours, and that other parts of South Wales will soon get into working formation.

The Orb of Day.

III.

(Continued from p. 59.)

THE great and glorious light radiated by the sun is assuredly one of the most marvellous facts of Nature. No artificial illuminant can remotely compare with the light lavished by the lord of day. And all this light travels to us through a space of 93,000,000 miles. Dispensed in all directions from its surface, our orb sheds only one two-thousand millionth part of its effulgence on the earth. Yet, during the immeasurable periods in which our planet has been the abode of life, this stupendous process has been in unceasing operation; while through the course of countless ages which preceded the appearance of organic phenomena, and even before the earth assumed a solid form, the mighty sun sent forth his beams into space with apparently reckless extravagance. For, so far as mortal mind can divine, solar light, like solar heat, is mainly dissipated in the abysses of space.

Although the dense darkness of a sullen winter midnight is so markedly different from the magnificence of a summer day, familiarity with the sun's pure light serves to render us insensible to the real brightness of the solar beams. Any ordinary comparison between the power of artificial illuminants and that of sunlight is futile. Sir Robert Ball, however, in his fine monograph, *The Story of the Sun*, has drawn a comparison which answers this purpose very effectively. In the manufacture of the celebrated Bessemer steel, the molten metal, when it flows at a white-heat from the furnace, is poured into a huge vessel estimated to hold about ten tons of the liquid iron. When this immense vessel—the converter—is full, the process of transforming iron into steel begins. "Air at high pressure," we are told,—

is driven forcibly into the bottom of the converter, and bubbles up through the molten mass. It might at first be thought that the act of blowing cold air through the heated iron must tend to cool the glowing liquid, but such is not the case. There is a certain quantity of the element carbon in the cast iron, and as the air bubbles through it its oxygen combines vigorously with the incandescent carbon, and heat is developed by this chemical union throughout the entire mass. The heat thus generated is far more than sufficient to neutralize whatever cooling effect might be the natural consequence of blowing volumes of cold air through the hot material. In fact, hot as the air must have been when it was first run from the furnace into the converter, the temperature of the molten metal rises continuously during the twenty minutes or so that the blow continues.

The state of the flames rising from the converter assures the operator that the transformation of iron into steel has been completed. When the liquid steel is turned into the mould, as it is in the next stage of manufacture, its temperature is so exalted that the fluid metal glows with an intense whiteness. This is probably the greatest incandescence obtainable on any considerable scale on our globe, and the glow is dazzlingly brilliant. But this remarkable glow, intense as it is, pales into insignificance when compared with the light of the sun. That gifted investigator of solar physics, the late Professor Langley, declared that the intrinsic effulgence of the sun is fully 5,000 times as bright as an orb of the same magnitude would be were its entire surface composed of molten metal emerging from a Bessemer furnace.

Travelling at the tremendous velocity of 186,000 miles per second, light journeys to us from the sun through the ether of space. Tyndall likened this elusive vehicle of light and heat to a highly attenuated jelly.

Other physicists have pictured the ether as a fluid-like substance of inconceivable subtlety and tenuity. Whatever it be, the ethereal medium serves as the conductor of the waves which emanate from the sun, or any other luminous body, and which announce themselves to human consciousness as light.

Sound is propagated by vibrations conducted by the atmosphere, and the presence of the atmosphere is essential to its transmission. Light is also conveyed by waves or undulations; but, quite unlike sound, light is transmitted, not by the atmosphere, but by the ethereal medium. Ethereal waves possess both length and amplitude, or height. Their wave-length determines their colour, while their amplitude discloses itself in the form of brightness. The white light received from the sun is popularly regarded as colourless. Yet, as a matter of fact, it is really the resultant of a complicated combination of all the shades and colours of the rainbow—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. And not merely does the analysis of white light reveal all the colours of the spectrum, but that coloured ribbon of light which we produce by using an ordinary prism is also characterized by the presence of an array of dark lines. With every refinement of spectroscopic research, or the added purity of the spectrum under analysis, these dark lines constantly increase in number.

The meaning of these dark lines was unknown until Kirchoff and Bunsen, in 1859, observed that they corresponded in position to certain bright lines which appear in the spectra of metals in a state of vapour. As Professor Abbot, the Director of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory tells us, in his recent volume on *The Sun* :—

If metallic sodium or any of its compounds, like common table salt, is thrust into an alcohol lamp flame, the spectrum of the flame shows two brilliant yellow lines which agree in place with two prominent dark lines in the yellow part of the solar spectrum. Not only so, but if an incandescent oxy-hydrogen calcium light, whose natural spectrum shows neither dark nor bright lines in the yellow at these places, is caused to shine through an alcohol-lamp flame charged with sodium vapour and placed before the spectroscope, the two dark lines like those in the solar spectrum will appear instead of the two bright lines of the sodium-charged flame itself. Other chemical elements, also, emit bright spectrum lines, and the vapours of these elements, if placed in a beam of white light, absorb the rays they themselves emit. If their own emission is *more* intense than the emission they absorb from such a transmitted beam, the effect will be *brighter* lines in a continuously bright spectrum. If their own emission is *less* intense than the emission they absorb, the resulting spectrum will be crossed by *dark* lines.

This last phenomenon is displayed by the spectrum of the sun. The emission of a vapour declines rapidly as the temperature falls. It is, therefore, evident that the dark solar spectrum lines are caused by the metallic clouds of the solar surroundings, for these vapours radiate their heat into space. The solar vapours are cooler than the sun's inner layers, and are consequently incapable, through their own emission, completely to replace the rays they absorb.

All solid bodies, when heated to a state of incandescence, display their special spectra. The problem presented by the discovery of the dark lines which cross the solar spectrum was solved when it became known that a definite correspondence existed between the bright lines of one spectrum and the dark lines of another. When the solar spectrum is compared with the spectrum of iron obtained by heating that metal to incandescence with the electric arc, the correspondence between the dark lines in the former and the bright lines

of the latter, clearly denote some close relationship. Even if a single conspicuously bright line in the spectrum of iron occupied the position of a prominently dark line in the solar spectrum such a coincidence would be remarkable. But it was proved that hundreds of such striking correspondences existed, and, as we now learn from the researches and inventive ability of Professor Rowland, there are at least 2,000 coincidences of this character between the dark lines of the sun's spectrum and the bright lines of iron. The presence of iron in the sun is consequently certain. Still, it seemed difficult to explain the circumstance that the lines were dark in one spectrum and bright in the other. But, as already indicated, the mystery vanishes when we realize that surrounding the glowing surface of the sun there exists an atmosphere sufficiently heated to sustain iron in a state of vapour, although its temperature lies below that of the intensely heated atmosphere from which the solar light is chiefly radiated. A vast sum of light issues from the photosphere, which, in its passage outwards, is constrained to traverse a cooler encircling atmosphere in which relatively non-luminous iron vapour is suspended.

We must now note a very significant fact. It has been established that the iron vapour of the solar atmosphere arrests the progress of certain rays of the light travelling outwards from the interior. The interception is selective, for while the greater number of the light rays pass without obstruction, certain rays are absorbed. In truth, the atmosphere of iron vapour proves almost opaque to these special rays, while it remains transparent to all other kinds. Interest in this phenomenon increases when we discover that those particular rays intercepted by iron vapour possess precisely the same refrangibility as the rays emitted by iron vapour at a stated temperature.

When in a vaporous condition the molecules of an elementary substance oscillate in a certain period of time, and if these are acted upon by vibrations which harmonize with the undulations of other molecules part of the energy of the passing vibrations will be taken up by the molecules, and these will then oscillate with increased rapidity. But in the absence of this correspondence of movement the passing vibrations continue their journey with undiminished speed. This accounts for the fact that the vapour of iron in the cooler atmosphere enveloping the sun arrests and appropriates the energy of those outgoing undulations which vibrate in sympathy with the molecules of iron. As a result of this arrest, the outspeeding undulations suffer a serious diminution in their light. Hence, the dark lines, or rather, the lines which appear dark in comparison with the dazzling illumination which environs them.

At least thirty-five terrestrial substances have been detected in the sun. In addition to iron the spectrum yields over 200 lines of carbon, and seventy-five of calcium, while aluminium, zinc, copper, silver, tin, lead, cobalt, and numerous other planetary substances have been discovered. Professor Rowland failed to find some fifteen of our elementary bodies in the sun, while the presence of others awaits complete confirmation. But Rowland cautions us against the conclusion that because the existence of some terrestrial elements in the sun remains to be clearly demonstrated, and the presence of a few others cannot be proved that, therefore, these undiscovered substances are absent. Quite to the contrary, as research advances, we anticipate the discovery that, were our globe heated to the temperature of the sun its spectrum would be little, if at all, different to that of our luminary.

T. F. PALMER.

The Professional Touch.

PRINCIPAL FORSYTH delivers, in the *Saturday Westminster Gazette* of January 12, 1918, a lecture to the teachers of England on Education, under the rather incongruous title of "Reconstruction and Religion." Let us say at the outset that the Principal is gifted with a good deal more candour than many of his professional brethren. But his very candour—his unequivocal statement of clerical claims—reveals him as a reader of the signs of the times who does *not* understand. Having ears, he heareth not; having eyes, he seeth not.

Principal Forsyth seeks to support the conclusion that Christianity "is the moral renovation of Humanity." His position is "that our first interest in education, secular or religious, is to rear men and women *as citizens*; citizens of the State and of the Kingdom of God." We are not concerned to contradict the Principal when he argues for improvement in the position of the teacher, or when he contends for a better general education for the child. There is probably force in several of his objections to what he calls "premature specialization." What we are concerned to point out and emphasize is, that Principal Forsyth and his professional brethren are content to agree to any kind of curriculum so long as they can have that curriculum well peppered and impregnated with religious doctrine. *There* is the true professional touch. Principal Forsyth lets the cat out of the bag when, in one of his frank outbursts, he says, "I would put up with almost anything rather than see education severed from religion." This bears out to the letter what the present writer maintained in his article, "Better Than Nothing!" in the *Freethinker* of September 23, 1917. Principal Forsyth says we need a religion whose spirit is moral before it is mystical. We contend that such a religion is impossible. Notwithstanding all that has come and gone, we hold that, by saying this, Principal Forsyth is merely echoing one of the discredited watchwords of the "New Theology." Religion was always, is always, and so long as it exists, ever must be, mystical before it is anything else. Religion is, first, obedience to commandments, without question, without any exercise of the mental faculties of the commanded to inquire whether the commandments are moral or immoral. For this reason the Bible remains unexpurgated. But when the individual mind asserts itself by testing the validity of commandments, it makes a claim to the freedom of forming its own religion, or doing without one altogether. And that is an end to the traditional and professional authority of the so-called "men of God." "I would put up," says the Principal, "with almost anything rather than see education severed from religion." Indeed! This may be interesting as throwing light on the psychology of Principal Forsyth; but the advocates of a secular solution of the education problem may be permitted to observe that centuries of association between education and religion have bequeathed to us the evils from which civilization suffers, culminating in a world war. And they may also be permitted to ask why the preferences of Principal Forsyth and those who think with him should be shoved down the throats of those who differ from him. It is painfully and historically true that whenever the "Idea of God" becomes associated with any phase of secular activity, it is a clog on the wheel of progress. Christianity has been demonstrated to be a ghastly failure. It has failed because its claims are false.

There is something to disturb the gravity of Free-thinkers when they contrast the attitude of this temerarious apologist of a moribund faith with that of the men of the generation which has just arrived. Many

(To be continued.)

of the latter doubtless render lip service to the *dicta* of their elders, but by their actions (always more eloquent than words) they betray the attitude of persons whom a lawyer once described as "recalcitrant beneficiaries." The testamentary schemes of the Almighty Father do *not* appear to them to be acceptable. They prefer their own natural rights. Once alive to these rights they regard the will of God as a mere form of words.

We have every desire to believe that Principal Forsyth does not intend to sneer. But we cannot pass over the form of his suggestion for a heightening of the *status* of the teacher. He says: "His combinations should carry the seal of a profession and not the stamp of a trade union." If that does not contain a sneer it is at least a remarkable example of arrogant professional complacency. The Principal's candour is surpassed by his professional consciousness. But we venture to warn him that the men of the generation which has just arrived will regard it as a sneer, and will smile at it for such. Much has mankind suffered from the three professions, and from their satellites and parasites. The beginnings of emancipation are marked by the appearance of such things as trade unions.

One is not surprised to find such an ultra-superior mind claiming (for Self and Co.) that they only can take "long views of life"; that they only have "the final key to the moral situation." Long views of life! Christians think in centuries—Freethinkers in æons. To men, like Principal Forsyth, their precious religion comes before education. Education "is the public interest that comes next to religion." "The teacher ought to be taught to regard his profession as the true national clergy, as a clergy bearing a relation to the nation parallel to that of the ministry of the Church." Why? Because *he has more effect on the public at its plastic time than the ministry has. There is the whole clerical position confessed in a nutshell. There is the professional touch, if you please. If we clergy do not get directly in touch with "the public" at its plastic time—it would scarcely accord with our dignity if we did—we will do what we can to inoculate the teacher with our doctrines, and so mould the public mind. Observe the professional reference to "the public" as if they were a flock of sheep to be led, guided, goaded, driven, or controlled en masse. How often have expert educationists had their schemes frustrated by pottering preachers? And just because of this repression of individuality which inevitably results from religious interference.*

Principal Forsyth says that we need a moral education. But any education worthy of the name is bound to be moral. You cannot divorce ethics from ethnics.

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

NEO-MALTHUSIANISM V. SOCIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My deliberate challenge to Socialists has had a most interesting result. Only four have written in defence of Socialism from the most heinous accusation which could be made against it in the eyes of a Freethinker—that it is a faith—the Christian faith *redivivus*—with "beneficent Nature" as God and the wicked Capitalist as Satan. Of these, Mr. Marriott roundly charges his fellow Socialists with opposing the Malthusian doctrine; Major Warren adopts the tactics of the *odium theologicum*, and merely attempts to provoke sentimental dislike of that doctrine regardless of its truth, or of the humanitarian work of the Neo-Malthusian; Mr. Streimer indulges in Marxian's rhodomontade, which, to do them credit, the intellectual Socialist's have already discarded; and the only serious critic is Mr. Robert Arch, who admits the im-

portance of family limitation. When I contrast this with the experience of twenty or thirty years ago, when the Socialist leaders were holding up Malthusianism and family limitation to ridicule and contempt, and were telling the people that smaller families would mean lower wages, it almost shakes my disbelief in miracles.

A few words will be sufficient concerning Mr. Arch's point. The Malthusian doctrine reinforced by vital statistics leads to the conclusion that the present total production of food upon the earth is insufficient for the adequate sustenance of all its inhabitants, and this is the chief source of that poverty which Socialists wrongly ascribe to human institutions. Mr. Arch claims that, if this is so, the food ought to be equally rationed, and that it could be increased by Socialistic effort in the place of production for profit. From both these contentions I absolutely dissent. Competition is the great source of progress, as both economists and biologists have recognized, and the Socialistic mistake lies in condemning competition, instead of avoiding too many competitors. However brutal it may seem to say so, it is better in the face of shortage that the competent should be fully fed, and we must regard as the most competent those who have succeeded best in the struggle. Production for profit means production of the things for which the community shows its desire, and there is no better incentive to production, and no better criticism as to what to produce.

My remarks concerning the effect of destruction of capital seem to have been misunderstood. I was not accusing Socialists of disregarding capital, but was replying to Major Warren's repetition of Henry George's fallacy that wages are paid out of the produce of the labour for which they are paid. Capital may not "employ" labour, but labour cannot be exerted without previously existing capital in civilized countries.

Mr. Arch's claim that Socialism will bring about family limitation among the poor by raising their status has been a favourite one among a certain section of Socialists for the last few years, and has its humorous aspect. What it comes to is: Give the poor Socialism and they will imitate the despised bourgeoisie, and adopt that family limitation which the bulk of Socialists have declared to be unnecessary. And it has another defect. How is Socialism to improve the condition of the poor? Primarily, at least, by further taxation of the educated classes, who will further restrain their already low birth-rate in consequence, thus intensifying the present reversed selection.

Against Mr. Arch's assertion that propaganda will not induce the poor to adopt family limitation, we have the definite experience of the Malthusian League. This experience has shown that there is nothing that the poor are so anxious and so grateful for as advice concerning the methods of family limitation, and there is no doubt whatever that direct neo-Malthusian propaganda will effect far more than any secondary results of Socialistic bounty, and will enable the poor to participate automatically in the benefits of capital by becoming themselves capitalists.

CHARLES V. DRYSDALE.

The Massacre of the Innocents.

I HAVE never been able to see how the cause of true religion, of true Christianity, of the acceptance of Christ's mission and teaching can be helped by the perpetuation of myths and fables and falsehoods.

Mr. McCurdy, who writes in your issue of December 28 on the old fable of Herod's massacre of the male children of Bethlehem, has evidently never taken the trouble to read up the subject (or in general the whole question of the nativity of Jesus) in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Had he done so he would have learnt (1) that so far as anything is certain in the early history of the Redeemer, He was born at Nazareth and not at Bethlehem, and (2) that Herod the Great died wholly ignorant of the son born to Joseph and Mary, and innocent of such a horror as the massacre of the male infants in the town of Bethlehem. If there were any truth in such a legend as the killing of these children lest one amongst them should be the Messiah, the deed would certainly have

been recorded by Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, who was a contemporary of the Herods, or by Josephus, who has written so fully of this period in his "Antiquities of the Jews"

The only reliable Gospel is that of St. Mark. In the others, not composed in their present form till the second century, the life of Christ prior to His emergence as a teacher is shown with fabulous events simply for the purpose of "fulfilling" Hebrew prophecies and thus converting Jews to Christianity. Of these myths the Massacre of the Innocents is one, adduced or invented (only in the Gospel attributed to Matthew) merely to justify the prediction: "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentations and weeping..... Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted....."

But in religion, as in everything else in this present period, what those who write for the edification of the people loathe or avoid is the statement of the plain truth. Legends and fiction distributed broadcast are thought in some way to help us towards victory in this struggle, to keep us content with mismanagement, and to stave off the terror of real Education.—*Sir H. H. Johnson, "Daily Chronicle."*

Society News.

South London Branch, N.S.S.—The South London Branch has arranged a debate to take place at the Trade Union Hall, 30, Brixton Road (near Kennington Oval Tube Station) at 7 o'clock this (Sunday) evening. The subject: "Did Jesus Ever Live?" will be opened in the affirmative by Mr. Noah Bailey (of the C. E. S.), and negative by Mr. Howell Smith, B.A. It is hoped that there will be a good attendance at this lecture, and that Freethinkers will take with them some of their Christian friends, to whom the subject should be equally important and interesting. The Trade Union Hall is easy of access—from North London by Tube as above, and from West London by L.C.C. tram from Victoria to Kennington Church, each about three minutes walk from the hall.—*W. HANMER OWEN, Hon. Sec.*

West Central Hall, London.—An interesting lecture was delivered by Mr. A. D. Howell Smith to a good audience last Sunday afternoon. A closing remark of the speaker's on Christian Idealism brought an avalanche of opposition, which was ended by an invitation being given to Mr. Smith by the chairman to make this the subject of another lecture at an early date.—*E. M. VANCE, Gen. Sec.*

North London Branch N. S. S.—An animated discussion followed Mr. H. V. Storey's address, which was freely criticised, on the reconstruction of the Freethought party. Tonight, Mr. George Ives will open on "Early Man." North Londoners who have already heard Mr. Ives are looking forward to a most interesting and stimulating address.—*H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec.*

NIETZSCHE AND CHRISTIANITY.

After three years of War, and three years in the Army, I am proud to have this opportunity of confessing publicly that I am still a convinced Nietzschean, that I still hold Nietzsche's attitude towards Christianity, and that recent events have not moved me one inch from the position I held in the spring of 1914. In the ferocity, brutality, and impudence of the Germans, in the megalomania that induced them to imagine for one moment that they were entitled to world-dominion, I see the inflating bellows of Pauline arrogance in their assumption of right. I see those seditious doctrines of equality and of immortality granted to every Tom, Dick, and Harry, which ultimately leave poor, hitherto modest, Tom, Dick, and Harry with vertiginous notions as to their own altitude! In the commercial rivalry which occurs as a sort of rumbling bass throughout the cacophonous uproar of the world conflict I see the fatal suite: Catholicism, Protestantism, Puritanism (mother, daughter, and abortion); and since a form of government may be judged by the revolutions it provokes, the ugliness and versatile stupidity of Protestantism, together with the appalling sordidness and commercial cupidity of Puritanism, stand for all time as the most convincing condemnation of the stronghold of traditional Christianity.—*Zarathustrian, "New Age."*

The Blank Wall.

THE human brain has arrived at one great confidence; the confidence in money, and in money values. No other confidence rivals it. There is much more real and revoltingly sincere confidence in the power of the dollar than in "God" or man, or the possibilities of human life. There is more true faith in pounds, shillings, and pence, than in humanity.

This confidence in the commercial reality of money values is the solid basis, as it were, of the continued existence of the vast majority of "Civilized" men and women. Destroy the confidence enjoyed by the people in cash values and civilization would become an even greater manifestation of chaos than it already is. There would be no faith in anything at all! No faith in man, "God," reason, science, or art. The most effective power that man is possessed of would appear to be a genius for commercializing everything that emanates from his brain! If a thing or idea can be commercialized then the people will believe in it. Religion will perish when it ceases to be adequately subsidized; war stops functioning when, by its own nature, it makes commercial success impossible.

Destroying this great and almost supernatural confidence of humanity in money would destroy the only balance in the human brain which works effectively. Unfortunately, there seems no chance of the money confidence being destroyed. Hope may be permitted, however, because the possibility of directing the money power into less insane channels does exist, and it is conceivable that a more rational populace would see to it that its cash was invested in those things which promise and intend the betterment of the race. In a sane world there would be more subsidy for a "Prevention of War" society than for the Army and Navy. Unfortunately, the people put their money on the wrong horse and lose everything. In time, the people may learn which investment is the most advantageous.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Obituary.

The older members of the Bristol Branch of the N. S. S. will see with regret that Mr. J. W. White has passed into the shades. The deceased was a personal friend of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. G. W. Foote; these frequently stayed in his house in their visits to Bristol thirty years ago. Mr. White was one time President and Secretary of the Bristol Branch in its active days. The deceased was a teacher of navigation, and many noted seamen passed under his teaching. He held three medals from the Royal Humane Society for saving life. Once, when the writer expressed his admiration for this work, Mr. White replied: "Oh, it is nothing. If I saw a dog drowning I should plunge in to save it." At Exeter, many years ago, he was publicly presented with the Royal Humane Society's medal by the then Lord Bishop Temple, afterwards Archbishop. The Bishop expressed his thanks to Mr. White, and said he ought to thank Almighty God for giving him such splendid gifts of saving life. Mr. White thanked his lordship, but shocked the audience by adding, "Perhaps his lordship ought to send the medal to God." When the deceased was Secretary of the Licensed Victuallers at Bristol, he was publicly thanked by the Chairman of the Licensing Committee for his efforts to lessen drunkenness. He was capable of casting three columns of figures at one time, sharing this wonderful power with the late W. E. Gladstone. His mind was so active that he could cast a sum as quickly as it was written; he had second sight. A man of kindly disposition, he was called the poor man's lawyer. Once the writer knew of a man so poor that at Christmas time he had no dinner at home. Mr. White had a parcel of food—puddings and rabbits and fruit—sent round to the man's house, he not knowing who his benefactor was. He was a most earnest Freethinker, and desired that his remains should be cremated. He has passed into the great unknown, and one can think of him as surely "he cannot be ugly in his death"; for his life was brave and frank, and many would desire to lay a tribute on his bier. A good, great man has passed away, and the memory of a life well spent remains to us all.—*T. A. W.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. George Ives, M.A., F.Z.S., "Early Man." Open Debate.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Debate, "Did Jesus Ever Live?" Affirmative, Mr. Noah Bailey (Christian Evidence Society). Negative, Mr. Howell Smith, B.A.

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road): 3.15, Mr. H. Snell, "Palestine and the Founding of a New Jewish State."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Christianity and the Logic of Life."

LEICESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Percival Westell, F.L.S., "The Wonders of Insect Life." Lantern Illustrations.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, Mr. J. Hammond, "The God of Mr. Wells."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. Greenall, "Shelley's Queen Mab."

FAILSWORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Sunday-school, Pole Lane, Failsworth): 6.30, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "The Message of Secularism to the Times."

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