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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>The Mythical Jesus.—The Editor</i> - - - -	417
<i>Richard the Lionheart.—Mimnermus</i> - - - -	418
<i>Plume and Song in Gardens.—T. F. Palmer</i> - - - -	419
<i>"Who Moved the Stone?"—H. Culner</i> - - - -	421
<i>Fables Founded on Fact.—C. S. Fraser</i> - - - -	422
<i>The Treasure—Hunters.—C. V. Lewis</i> - - - -	426
<i>The Holy Shop.—C. R. Boyd Freeman</i> - - - -	427
<i>A Gift to Youth.—C-de-B.</i> - - - -	428
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

The Mythical Jesus.

SOME time before his death, the late E. Belfort Bax came into my office with an article dealing with the life and character of Jesus Christ. He had written it at the request of a certain editor, but, after consideration, it had been refused because the editor feared it would give offence. He brought it to me because he thought it would be acceptable. I looked over the article and found it to be a plain, but not startlingly drastic criticism of the teachings and character of Jesus Christ, and it subsequently appeared in two parts in these columns. It appears that no objection would have been raised to a criticism of the mythological character or the divinity of Jesus, but to criticize the feebleness of the New Testament character and the quality of his teachings was too much.

This incident was recalled to my mind on reading *The Pathetic Fallacy*, by Llewellyn Powis (Longmans & Co., 5s.) The work is an interesting one, to a Freethinker, so far as it is a clear rejection of Christianity, and indeed of all religion by a well-known writer. It is an indication that the revolt against Christianity is growing, and one wonders how long it will be before this class of writer will find enough courage to say in volumes of this description all that is now being said week by week in the *Freethinker*. Not so long, we fancy as it has taken them to say what was said by Freethinkers several generations ago.

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The Passing of Christianity.

In saying this much I do not wish to take away any praise that is due to Mr. Powis. He writes with grace, and where his opinions are definite, with force. It is a book that will reach many who will not read the *Freethinker*, and who would not buy a work written by one who is a "whole-hogger." It is to

be hoped that the taste for heresy thus encouraged will develop to a more virile and a more thorough condition. Such sentences as the following should at least awaken doubts, and doubts to a healthy mind, are the prelude to enlightenment:—

Christianity has held the field 'for a time, times, and a half.' This moribund religion interferes with a clear and enlightened vision of life. We have pretended long enough. Christianity is but a dream of savagery and pitifulness . . . In hours of deep emotion, in hours when danger threatens those we love, we chatter out uneasily the names of invented gods. We were wiser and we held our tongue . . . A few generations of human beings may be buried with their arms crooked upon their breasts, but the practice with its tender associations has had no significance outside our village boundaries. Generations will pass, centuries will pass, and Christianity will dissolve back into mist. Even though we are frightened, even though we are broken, even though our heads are bowed, it is prudent to disregard it. Christianity is impotent.

This is well said, although there is too much here of the conventional and sentimental pose of living in a world forlorn when one has given up Christianity. As a matter of fact the heads of those who have given up these superstitions are not bowed, their hearts are not depressed, they are not frightened. They see more brightness and cheer in a world without God than ever they did in a world with one. This regretful attitude is sheer pose, and it is high time that Freethinkers ceased to flatter Christians by professing a "wistful" regret that they have regained sanity and common-sense.

* * *

Jesus a Myth.

The Pathetic Fallacy is the work of a literary man, who has not yet mastered the critical approach to Freethought. A consequence of this is that in spite of his recognition of the falsity of the Christian religion, he is ready to talk vaguely of the truth for which Christianity stands, of the difficulty of doubting the veracity of the main outlines of the crucifixion, of the way in which the Pagan world was impressed by the lives of the early Christians, and above all, of the sweet and gracious character of Jesus. The stories of the Christians in the arena, the absolute authenticity of all the inscriptions in the catacombs, are accepted. The author, in brief, makes the fatal mistake of accepting the Christian version of history, while completely repudiating the religious side of the story. He does not realize that if Christian ingenuity, or Christian credulity, could fashion or deliberately invent such an impossible event as Herod's massacre of the innocents, there is nothing to prevent the gospel stories owing their origin to the same source. Christian history was invented or fashioned to support the mythology, and a sanely intelligent

rejection of the one must lead to a very careful criticism of the other.

This is of first-rate importance when we are dealing with Jesus Christ. I admit that it is a consideration seldom borne in mind. It is curious, but in this laudation of the character of Jesus a great many non-Christian writers appear to be following a line indicated by professional exponents of Christianity. It is an interested superstition of quite modern date that the ancient world was conquered by the sweet humanity of Jesus. The Jesus that was enthroned by the early Church, and whom the early Christians followed was precisely the one that Mr. Powis finds ignorant and full of foolish ideas and idle superstitions. But by the time that mankind had recovered sufficiently from the poison with which Christianity had inoculated the world, the name of Christ had become sufficiently "polarized" to be of value, and the apologetic clergy were astute enough to shift the issue from the only Jesus that was of real value—the supernatural one—to the ethical teacher and social reformer. This also provided a very comfortable halting place for those who had parted with real Christian beliefs, but who had not yet advanced far enough to break entirely with Christian forms. It is in this way that we enter upon the era of the ethical Jesus, a theory that carried with it the equally fantastic notion of an early generation of Christians who were captured by his lofty teachings, and whose purity of lives commanded the admiration of the Pagan world. This is the real "pathetic fallacy" of Mr. Powis' otherwise excellent work. It does not recapture the atmosphere or recreate the conditions in which such a character as the New Testament Jesus is actually born.

* * *

A Pathetic Fallacy.

On the whole, the man who accepts the orthodox Jesus is on more reasonable ground than the one who rejects the traditional figure, but professes belief in a teacher who, in spite of his acceptance of all the most ignorant superstitions around him, in spite of his being credited with beliefs of the most childish character, yet claims that he impressed the world by the profound truths he uttered and the lofty morality he taught. Take away from the New Testament figure the miraculous birth, the working of miracles, the incarnated deity, the power to save men from the fires of hell, or to reward them with a safe seat in heaven, and what is there left? Simply nothing on which a Church could have been built, nothing that would have attracted the attention of the people to any greater degree than a street corner Christian evangelist would attract the attention of an English audience in 1930. Wandering preachers were as common in the East a couple of thousand years ago as they are to-day, wandering miracle-workers were even more so. The teaching of love towards one another was well known then as now, and received as much, or as little, attention then as now. It has been shown over and over again that every one of the moral teachings attributed to the New Testament Jesus were commonplaces in the world of that day—nearly all are to be found in the Old Testament. And yet we have men who have plainly rejected the religious Jesus, mouthing about the sublime moral teachings of Jesus, of the greatness of his character, of the way in which his teaching affected the world around him, and the world that came after him. And all the time there is the fact staring one in the face that once we let go of the mythological character we have nothing on which to hang the ethical teacher. The ethical Jesus is as much a myth as the god-incarnated saviour. The latter actually existed as a conception that dominated a type of mind, as the belief in

the existence of Thor, or Krishna, or Osiris dominated other minds. But the Jesus of the sublime moral teaching never existed outside the imagination of modern apologetic Christians, and those half-emanipated non-Christians who cannot bring themselves to cut themselves quite adrift from the world's greatest superstition.

We have reached a stage when it is quite safe to avow disbelief in the mythological Jesus of the New Testament, to smile at miracles, and to laugh at the teachings of Jesus concerning heaven and hell. But the Church created superstition of a Pagan world dead to goodness, which somehow fell before the grandeur of a simple Jewish peasant still obtains among those who really ought to be able to see through the imposture. In a society where the majority have fully grown tails, it is thought advisable to cultivate at least a little one, and to attempt to demonstrate its equality with the other tails by wagging it as vigorously as possible. And those with the fully grown tails acknowledge the performance of the small-tailed variety, not by admitting equality, but as a recognition of their own superiority. I am waiting for those who see the uselessness of all tails to say so. They might even turn the tables on the long-tailed variety by insisting that a caudal decoration is really proof of arrested development.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Richard the Lionheart.

"I have done the State some service."—*Shakespeare.*

"Write me as one that loves his fellow men."

Leigh Hunt.

"The old guard dies, but never surrenders." The famous saying leaps to the mind at the mention of the name of Richard Carlile. The story of his struggles is a part of the history of Freethought, and it is a romance of a hero fighting at fearful odds and leaving an imperishable name. Carlile's was the true soldier's temperament, supported by principles without which no great purpose can be achieved. No misfortune disconcerted him; no defeat cowed his indomitable spirit. He could not be bullied or frightened, although Freethought was then fighting for bare life. Superstition, disguised in the horse-hair and rabbit-skins of the judge, was strong, and contemptuous of the little band whose evangel has revolutionized knowledge, and rewritten the intellectual history of the world.

Think of it! Carlile himself suffered nine and a half years' imprisonment for championing freedom of speech. His wife and other members of his family, and shop assistants, divided among them half a century's confinement in gaols. And what a man was the leader, that vivid, vital, radiant, dynamic personality, all aglow with enthusiasm, who diffused energy all about him, and whose very presence caused stimulation.

Like George Foote, Carlile was a son of the West Country. As a boy, he collected faggots to burn in effigy Tom Paine, whose virile writings were in after life to influence him so greatly. For he was twenty-five years old before he began to read Paine, whose books roused Carlile like a trumpet calling to battle. Henceforth he was the dauntless champion of Freethought and the rights of man. Taxes were then placed on knowledge, and fine and imprisonment faced all who presumed to speak or write of religious or political liberty. Owing to taxation, ordinary newspapers cost sevenpence each, and so bad was the service that news of the Battle of Waterloo only reached the general public a fortnight after the event.

England was then ruled by a profligate court and a more than usually corrupt government, and social conditions were ten times worse than at present, after a world upheaval.

Like so many Freethinkers, Carlile was a dreamer. To him the press was not a mere purveyor of sensationalism, dirt and scandal. It was a vehicle of ideas, a platform from which truth could be proclaimed. He once and for all made up his mind to vindicate the freedom of the press, and he did his part manfully.

Carlile was the very man to carry a forlorn cause to victory. Handcuffed and imprisoned, he roused the public conscience, and compelled Authority to cry "halt." It was impossible to suppress him, short of death itself. It was but punching a pillow. When a score of his assistants had been dragged to prison for selling Freethought literature, the books were sold by a slot-machine, probably the first of its kind. When his stocks were seized and destroyed, Carlile read nearly the whole of *The Age of Reason* in his speech for the defence, so that publicity should be given to the very matter which was sought to be suppressed. Nor was imprisonment and confiscation the only punishment inflicted, for fines, amounting to thousands of pounds, were imposed.

To annoy his persecutors, Carlile dated his letters from gaol "the era of the carpenter's wife's son." Superior folks may lift their eyebrows at such audacity, but the fiery courage which accounted for it is a quality which the world can very ill spare. What it can achieve needs no record, it is written in the names of Carlile, Southwell, Holyoake, Bradlaugh, Foote, heroes as brave as any recorded in the immortal pages of Plutarch.

Fighting against odds of a hundred to one, facing enemies entrenched behind money-bags, the victory remained with the poor man. Writing from gaol in the sixth year of his imprisonment, he was able to say: "All the publications that have been prosecuted have been, and are, continued in open sale." What superb courage! "The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of barbarians." Small wonder that the two greatest poets of that time, Keats and Shelley, recognized Carlile as a hero battling for the rights of man.

Carlile's victory over his opponents was so complete that his later years were spent in comparative peace at Enfield, where he died. True to the end in his devotion to his fellow-men, he bequeathed his body for the purpose of dissection and the advancement of knowledge. His funeral at Kensal Green Cemetery was the occasion of clerical spite. At the interment a parson appeared and insisted on reading the Government Religion Burial Service. "Sir," said the eldest son, Richard, "We want no service; he lived in opposition to Priestcraft, and we protest." The priest persisted, and the last insult of the Church was hurled at the dead body of the man whom she could not subdue whilst living.

Thus ended the career of one who, as Browning has it, was "ever a fighter," strenuous, unsparing, often bitter and hard, but he had, as was said of Byron, the "imperishable excellence of strength and sincerity." Such heroism could scarcely fail of results. Twenty-three years after Carlile's death organized Freethought was an accomplished fact, and the National Secular Society was founded under the leadership of Charles Bradlaugh. Under his leadership, and that of his brilliant successors, this Society has ever been in the vanguard of progress, sheltering behind it all the weaker heterodox people, who otherwise had been crushed by the weight of Orthodoxy. Behind militant Freethought all forms of advanced thought have advanced to some measure of freedom.

Carlile's dream is being realized, and the National Secular Society must share with him a lasting place in the history of intellectual progress in this country.

MIMNERMUS.

Plume and Song in Gardens.

THE avian population of London has increased considerably in recent years. In springtime the cuckoo sings at Hampstead and Highgate. The gentle coo of the ring-dove pleases the ear in all our parks and open spaces. Blackbirds, thrushes, finches, linnets, robins and other song birds dwell with us. The nightingale's song may be heard on the northern heights in secluded places, and even the hooting of the melancholy owl may disturb the silence of the night within half a mile's distance from Pentonville Prison.

Those happy few who cultivate their gardens in the several areas embraced by the administrative machinery of the London Council Council, both north and south of the river, enjoy many opportunities for studying the wild denizens of Nature. Not that all visitors or permanent residents of gardens are welcome to the cultivator of flowers, fruit, or ferns. Slugs, snails, woodlice, and other noxious organisms may become a serious menace. The earthworm does small injury to vegetation and serves the useful purposes of loosening and fertilizing the soil. The aphid or greenfly, among other pests, may prove a serious eyesore to the grower of roses and other plants, while the ravages of the caterpillars of moths and butterflies are apt to assume grave proportions. One ally of the horticulturist is the ladybird, a winged beetle that preys on the aphid; the insect which secretes "cuckoo spittle," and other enemies of vegetation.

The finest friends of husbandry are the birds. Even the mischievous sparrow destroys large numbers of insects, as its young are chiefly fed on their larvae. A supremely useful bird is the starling. Not by any means eminent as a singer, this bird is nevertheless one of the most interesting and intelligent members of the feathered family. The starling is a consummate mimic of the strains of other birds. It has been noted that there is something suggestively reptilian in its movements, and this resemblance is intensified by the scale-like texture of its plumage. As all birds are the descendants or close kindred of reptiles this would indicate a larger retention of ancestral features than most birds display.

The starling's favourite food consists of slugs, weevils and wireworms in gardens, and it renders many additional services to the farmer. It is, indeed, an interesting spectacle to watch a flock of starlings eagerly hunting and devouring the "ticks" which infest the wool of the living sheep, while noting the contented look on the faces of the browsing animals, as if they were aware of the birds' beneficial activities. Complaints are sometimes urged that starlings have become so numerous that they have modified their original feeding habits to so great a degree that they are already seriously destructive to corn and fruit alike.

This bird certainly appears more numerous and widespread than it was a couple of generations ago, when it was by no means so common in northern and western England, Ireland and Wales, as it is to-day. In London itself, as the night comes on, great flocks of these birds may be seen journeying towards their common roosting-places, one of which lies near the banks of the Thames.

The domesticated sparrow is the most common native bird. Wherever human habitations appear

there will the house sparrow thrive. An omnivorous bird, it devours enormous quantities of grain and seed. Still, even this Arab among feathered bipeds destroys immense numbers of flies and other injurious insects, so that despite its indifferent reputation, something may be chronicled to its credit. The sparrow is a prolific breeder, and in the absence of the cats that kill so many of its young, the town sparrow would be more numerous than it is. Even now, the sparrow population of London must exceed a quarter of a million. Its geographical range in natural conditions is extensive, and this has been substantially increased by the well-meaning if misguided interference of man. The introduction of the sparrow into America and Australia has proved a blessing, as doubtful as that of the transportation of the rabbit to the great Island Continent under the Southern Cross.

The most resplendant of our native finches is the chaffinch. The plumage of the hen bird is comparatively sober, but the cock is splendidly coloured. Its song is modest but musical, while the chaffinch's nest is a miracle of loveliness. As one surveys it in a hedge-row in spring, reposing like a finely fashioned cup amid the sprays of the newly unfolded leaves of April or early May, one marvels at the exquisite artistry of its builder. Composed of grass, moss, wool, and at times a few feathers or strands of fine hair, which line the interior of the nest, its exterior is usually decorated and adorned with lichens held in position by delicate spiders' web. This beautifully constructed nursery stands out in striking contrast with that of the chaffinch's relative finch, the dingy and slovenly sparrow, whose nest is a tumbled mass of litter thrust into any serviceable crevice. An insectivorous bird, the chaffinch varies its diet with fruit-buds and seeds, but in general its presence proves beneficial to the garden and the farm.

Another common native bird is the greenfinch. It consumes large quantities of seeds and berries, but the little harm the greenfinch does is more than atoned for by its beauty and its sweet if somewhat monotonous song. As its popularity as a cage-bird proves, the linnets' pipe is pleasing to the ear. Its garden activities are mainly useful, for it devours many noxious insects and pestilent weed-seeds.

The goldfinch is seldom seen in urban gardens, but the bird has been seen in Ken Wood, and in the neighbourhood of avian sanctuaries. The goldfinch is a beautifully plumaged bird, and although until recently its numbers sadly declined, there is now reason to believe that the bird is recovering its lost ground. The bird displays both beauty and utility. It destroys innumerable weed-seeds, those of the vigorous thistle forming its favourite food. The nest is nearly as perfect as that of the chaffinch, while the goldfinch's song is far superior. A further garden visitor is the bullfinch, which is accused of inflicting damage in the orchards in vernal time, but on the whole the bird may be regarded as beneficent.

The yellow hammer is another charming bird. Its ditty, which is restricted to a constant repetition of what sounds like "a little bit of bread and no cheese" may be heard from April till the moulting season, when all the feathered choir sink into silence. As its name suggests, the predominant colour of its plumage is yellow. Moreover, its call note sounds like the chink of a small hammer. Ornithologists prefer to term the bird the yellow bunting, but yellow hammer is its most popular name. Its usual nesting ground is on or near a bank, where its neat nest reposes with its from three to five quaintly patterned eggs. The bird ranges throughout Britain and extends far further north than most of our native

species. Indeed, it occasionally breeds in the Shetland Islands themselves.

The several tits are partial to gardens, where they sometimes make their nests. A hole in a decaying fruit tree is the most likely place in which to discover their nest. The great tit is a very interesting bird, but the smaller blue tit, with its pretty plumage and curious habits is more attractive. These birds may be admired while they fly from the nearby bushes to nibble cokernut placed on the top of a pole, or to eat pieces of fat suspended from a wall or tree branch.

Although usually in the vicinity of gardens, the robin is seldom conspicuous save in winter, when the earth is frozen, and the snow lies on the ground. This wild bird seeks food from the hand of man in seasons of dearth more tamely than any other. Despite the redbreast's truculent attitude towards smaller birds, it is everywhere regarded with affection. He is certainly a bright little creature, and his ruddy breast, debonair manner, and above all his remarkably beautiful eye, prove prepossessing to every lover of avian life.

In the open country robins select hedge banks or closely clustering ivy as their nesting sites. When dwelling near the haunts of man, empty flower pots, discarded kitchen vessels, or even drain pipes may be utilized. The bird's repasts consist of insects and worms, cereals and seeds sometimes serving as supplementary food. The robin enjoys a far-flung habitat and breeds as far north as the Orkneys and Hebrides. It is distributed throughout Europe, Northern Africa, the Canaries, Madeira, and the Azores. Its notes are sweet and plaintive, but are of little range, and are heard to the best advantage in autumn in soft, calm, hazy weather.

But the feathered singers that eclipse all others in orchard, garden or homestead are the golden-billed blackbird, and the thrush with the speckled breast and glistening eye. The unrelenting enemy of snails and other garden pests, the thrush proves a useful ally of the cultivator of the soil. The mavis' song poured forth from a leafless bough on a mild February morn is a hopeful herald of approaching spring. A striking feature of its well constructed cup-shaped nest is the inner lining of mud upon which its blue-grounded and spotted eggs are laid. Only after the young are hatched do the birds furnish the nursery with a coating of soft material.

The mistle or missel-thrush is a larger and more powerful-bird than the mavis or song-thrush. An early breeder, the missel-thrush revels in wild and stormy weather, and when the March winds blow he sings at his very best. This characteristic has earned the bird the name of storm-cock in rural areas. Also, his notes are louder and less musical than those of his near kinsman the song thrush. In the aggregate a useful bird to the husbandman, the mistle-thrush manifests a marked fondness for orchard fruit.

The thrush and the nightingale apart, for the latter's song sets him in the heaven of heavens of plaintive music, the native bird which transcends all others in melody is the blackbird. Its song may lack the variety and compass of the thrush, yet there is something so emotional and passionate in the darkly plumaged singer's outpouring that it seems animated by feelings sad and wistful withal. The blackbird devours an enormous number of earthworms, and checks the ravages of various insects. But it bears an evil reputation as a dire depredator where pears, cherries or strawberries are grown. Human nature being what it is, few indeed are the fruit growers, when the cherry trees are despoiled, despite the most realistic scarecrows, who can sincerely recite the poet's lines:—

"O blackbird! sing me something well:
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

"The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and park:
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall."

Nidification occurs in early spring, and a strongly constructed nest is placed in the hawthorn, holly, laurel, and occasionally on the forked branches of trees. Four or five mottled eggs are deposited, and on an average two broods are reared every spring. Many other feathered creatures could be described, but space, or the lack of it forbids. To the writer, at least, bird life is one of the most interesting and pleasurable studies, and it is gratifying to note that there prevails a great and growing solicitude for the preservation of the songsters of the grove.

T. F. PALMER.

"Who Moved the Stone?"

I.

I THINK it was Arnold Bennett, in one of his recent literary reviews, who pointed out that most books were "dead" in six months—certainly most novels; and I myself heard a distinguished novelist, who had spent nearly two years on a very fine historical novel which was most enthusiastically praised in all our literary journals, deplore the fact that three months was all the life it had with the public and in the libraries.

Well, it is more than three months since Mr. Frank Morison published *Who Moved the Stone?* It was most extravagantly praised in the press. It had quite a number of distinguished men of letters laying their hands on their hearts and telling us in the most reverential manner they could muster, that here at last was the great work on the Resurrection; that this great event in the history of the world, which some sceptics doubted ever took place, was at last vindicated; that history, logic, and evidence had all been requisitioned by Mr. Morison, with the result that the most wonderful thing which ever happened in the Universe must now be accepted as "sheer history" and the Resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (or to make it more impressive, Christ Jesus), did really take place exactly as narrated in the most marvellous biographies ever written.

After having carefully read *Who Moved the Stone?* I can only express my extreme wonder that such a book could have fooled anybody at all with any idea of the value of evidence. There have been quite a large number of books written on the theme (to be precise no fewer than 879,632) during the past 2,000 years, and one would naturally think everything has been said that could have been said on the Resurrection. But Mr. Morison must have thought otherwise, and with his book before me I am compelled to ask, why was it written? For whom? For surely it could not have been written for believers. They already believe, they want no further proof. No number of books, however unanswerable could have any effect on them. Mr. Chesterton, who devoted a whole page in the *Illustrated London News* to an eloquent and enthusiastic eulogy of Mr. Morison, could not even be strengthened in his belief of the Resurrection. His typical Roman Catholic slave mind, like Mr. Belloc's, is ready to swallow an unlimited number of far sillier fables so long as they are backed up by his Church. The doubter will not find in

Who Moved the Stone? anything whatever to remove his doubts, because he is bound to ask himself a fundamental question, Is such a thing as the Resurrection possible at all? The complete unbeliever knows it is not.

No amount of evidence or logic or discussion could prove anything which in itself is utterly absurd. What evidence, for example, could prove the Virgin Birth story? The evidence of Mary herself? The evidence of the Angel Gabriel or God Almighty?

And here let me point out that granting the existence of God, as defined (however indefinitely) by Christians, of course we must assume that with Him, everything is possible: not only the whole of the Bible, but of every Bible; not only all the Bibles, but of every scrap of mythology and of every fairy story. If the Resurrection is true because God exists, then the story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp is true. For dare any believer say that God could not make Aladdin's lamp and all its attendant wonders?

Thus, if one is going to prove the Resurrection, and one believes in God, a book is really not necessary. The only logical way is Mr. Chesterton's way: "I believe in God and the Catholic Church. I don't care how silly are the things I'm asked to believe—they must be true because the Church says so, and that's that!"

Now those of us who prefer doing our own thinking know the Resurrection is quite impossible. We know it just as we know that two shillings are not half a crown. We might be interested in a logical paradox from the point of view of literature or amusement. But we require no evidence to convince us a thing is true when we know with the whole strength of our being, it just cannot be true. Mr. Morison's book for the only people for whom it could possibly have real value, the complete unbeliever, is just a piece of sheer (I use the word "sheer" because he uses it also) waste of time. It is a waste of time for the complete believer and for the "doubter" surely it could have no effect one way or another. Mr. James Douglas went in lyrical raptures over it—though, if I remember rightly, he seemed more concerned with the wonder of Christ Jesus than with the wonder of the Resurrection. I may be wrong, but I have an idea that he does not really believe in the Virgin Birth, the marvellous miracles or the rapturous Resurrection. And if this be the case, I would lay any wager that *Who Moved the Stone?* did not convert him. All that emerged from his *Daily Express* article was the eternal wonder of Jesus, and he had that in all its glory before he read Mr. Morison's book.

How many people are now reading it anyway? How many of the clergy are recommending it? How many theological colleges have taken it as their chief text book on the Resurrection? Or to put it in another way, isn't *Who Moved the Stone?* as dead as the Dodo? I want to resurrect it for the purpose of these articles, not because the case against the Resurrection has not been put before, but because I want to show how little there is in this latest attempt, to bolster up a preposterous fable in spite of the chorus of almost universal applause; and I hope Mr. Morison will not be afraid to come from his stronghold and defend himself in the interests of what I am sure we both hold sacred, of truth itself. First of all, Mr. Morison takes for granted at least, the substantial truth of the four gospels. There may be passages here and there which he would not care to defend, but these do not matter. St. Mark, St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John, wrote four almost perfect biographies, and throughout the whole of his book, it is difficult to find that Mr. Morison questions a single legend about them. Moreover he

always adds "St." to their names; this is not merely due to his reverent faith, but to the fact that "Mark," for example, does not look as if he could write the truth quite as well as "St." Mark. This "window-dressing" is most impressive, and helps to foster the idea which Mr. Morison does his best to convey: it would be just impossible for St. Mark (or the other saints) to write down a lie. The narratives are so wonderfully direct, so simple, so matter-of-fact, so — well as many other "so's" as you like to add—for them to be anything but "sheer historic truth." Besides, John Mark was just the right person to write "St. Mark." It bears the stamp of his personality, don't you know, on every page. And the idea of St. Mark writing anything but "sheer fact" is simply impossible to think about. And Mr. Morison does not hesitate to give you "his personal assurance" or what he personally feels about these questions. The Resurrection narratives *must* be true, because he feels them personally to be true. And I submit this is as good an argument as any other.

Sometimes Mr. Morison does not find the whole of the argument in the four gospels. With their vivid, brisk, truthful narratives and their deliberate economy of words, the four saints somehow or other just fail now and then, to back up Mr. Morison's indisputable arguments. So he turns, with that triumphant air of the winning general, to the Apocryphal Gospels. And therein he finds the missing link. For example, the Gospel of "St." Peter provides him with quite a wealth of proofs that the Resurrection is a "sheer historic fact," and that many circumstances, only hinted at in the four gospels, really did take place. For, naturally, how could "St." Peter tell a lie? The question of the veracity or authenticity or credibility of the Apocryphal Gospels, Mr. Morison brushes disdainfully aside. We have to prove, he says in effect, the truth of the Resurrection, and if St. Peter's Gospel helps me, then it must be true. Curiously enough, the dear Christians who wrote these extra Gospels had precisely the same idea in their minds. They did not discover everything in the crowd of Gospels floating about, so they wrote up the missing things themselves and most of them would be surprised if they were with us now, to find Mr. Morison's brothers in Christ, believe only in four picked out of a hundred at least, God knows how. Of what use "St." Peter's Gospel is, let me quote the ultra orthodox Dr. Salmon. He says: ". . . pseudo-Peter's story differs so much from that of our Evangelists, that we must conclude that if he knew our four Gospels at all, he must have had such small reverence for them as to have no scruple in ornamenting or distorting their story."

A precious document, anyway, to go to prove "sheer historic truth!" But what neither Mr. Morison nor Dr. Salmon seems to see is that the authenticity of Peter is just as evident as the authenticity of Mark. They both belong to a host of similar fairy stories, and if vouching for the "canonicity" of one is worth anything at all (which it isn't) then the other comes absolutely into the same category. They are both true or both untrue, and so far every scrap of evidence discovered about their origins prove them to be myth and fable alike, and nothing else.

H. CUTNER.

(To be concluded.)

We must not always judge of the generality of opinion by the noise of the acclamation.—*Burke*.

It is often easier, as well as more advantageous, to conform ourselves to other men's opinions than to bring them over to ours.—*La Bruyere*.

Fables Founded on Fact.

THE LORD AND THE LIMOUSINE.

A VERY long time ago there was a very rich country with a very large Capital called Nodnol.

The curious thing about this Capital was that it was divided into two distinct parts. Inside the Walls was the business part, and this was called The City. Outside was the part where everyone lived, and this was called The Suburbs.

Every morning everybody used to come into the City to work, and every evening they all went back again to their homes in the Suburbs. You can quite imagine what a crush there must have been on the main thoroughfares during certain hours.

As time went on things got so bad, that the traffic had to crawl at a walking pace on all the main streets.

Then the Rulers of the City got together and seriously considered what they ought to do to put matters right.

Said one of them: "If we build more roads underground, our Skyscrapers will collapse. Besides, there would be no room for drains." (Hear, hear.)

Said another: "If we build more roads overhead, or widen them further, we shall be all roads and no skyscrapers; which, as our Logicians would say, is absurd." (Hear, hear.)

Said a third: "It's no use building faster vehicles, because even the present ones have to crawl. Besides, it would be a pity to kill off the few specimen pedestrians we have left." (Hear, hear. Loud applause.)

"Well, then," they all said together, "what shall we do?"

"I know," said the youngest and brightest Ruler (he was about seventy years old, and only weighed fourteen stone including his gold watch-chain) "let us send a man out to study the question on the spot."

And the whole Assembly echoed with one voice, "On the spot!"

So they sent a man out. A very clever young man he was. He wore the letters B.A.A. after his name and had solved quite a number of Crossword puzzles. And presently he came back and reported.

"There are two solutions to this almost insoluble problem—and only two," he said with great impressiveness. "The first is to reduce the population."

There was a gasp of horror from the assembled Dukes, Lords, City Magnates and Bishops—especially the Bishops.

"Impossible! Absurd! Don't be an ass! The man's daft!" they said, one after the other. "The greatness of our Nation depends upon the greatness of our Population. Think of something else."

"The second solution is to move the City into the Suburbs, and the Suburbs into the City," replied the wise young man. "Or at any rate, as much of the one as will go into the other—and vice versa."

"Pooh! Ridiculous! Futile!" they all said. "Why, the greatness of our Commerce depends upon the greatness of our City. And the greatness of our City depends upon the—well, it depends upon the—er—unsurpassed Uniqueness of its incomparable Situation as a Super-Centre of World-wide and International Intercommunications." The speaker paused for breath.

Then raising a threatening finger, he wagged it at the poor young man, and in a thunderous voice uttered these devastating words: "And where—where, I ask—would all *these* be if you scattered the City into the Suburbs?"

So the clever young man put his tail between his legs (I forgot to mention that tails were the fashion in that country) and slunk out of the Assembly Room.

Then the brightest and youngest of the City's Rulers spoke again and he said: "Look here, that silly ass we sent the first time was too almighty clever to be practical. Let's send someone else a trifle less smart and see if he can find some solution."

"Oh, all right," replied the rest of the Assembly in a tired voice. "Try anything you like."

So they got a man from the street, just an ordinary sort of working man he was, and they put him on the job, and presently he came back and reported. And this is what he said:

"As things are the City cannot expand in any direction. Under the most favourable circumstances, it will not hold more than four million workers. Therefore, however much the population may increase, the City cannot grow beyond that capacity. Do you agree with me?"

"Huh!" said most of the Rulers. But one said, "Ah, but supposing the Suburbs expand?"

"You would not on that account be able to squash more workers into the City—unless, of course, they sat on each other's laps."

There was a murmur from the assembled company, and one Duke was heard to say: "How vulgah!"

"The City, then, cannot hold, and never will be able to hold, more than four million workers," continued the man, "and for this number there are now one hundred main thoroughfares; and you cannot build more or wider roads than you have done. Is that not so?"

Such of the Rulers as were not asleep replied: "Huh!"

"That makes an average of forty-thousand persons per thoroughfare, and the shortest distance that any of them have to travel is four miles. Now, if you spread forty-thousand persons along four miles, you get an average of less than six per yard. This is by no means an impossible number for our wide roads to hold. Do I make myself clear?"

There was another murmur (much quieter than the first) and a voice was heard to say: "Isn't it nearly tea time?" which immediately woke everyone up.

"Now assuming that all the people in the Suburbs were to start from the four mile radius and walk in batches, there would be . . ."

"Look here, my lad," interrupted the oldest and largest Lord amongst the Rulers, "if you think I'm going to walk all the way to my office of a morning, you're blinking well mistaken. What's my high-power, gas-cooled, twenty-cylinder, silent, self-starting, self-centered, self-oiled limousine for, eh?"

"No, no, your Word-ship!" cried the man, using inadvertently an incorrect, though highly appropriate form of address. "Far be it from me to suggest such a terrible thing. I merely wished to point out that even if everyone were compelled to walk, there would be ample space to do it in. Nor, as things are, would it take them much longer to reach their destinations. The fact that we have numbers of swift vehicles to assist us ought, therefore, to enable us to cover the ground more conveniently than is at present the case."

"Yes, but it doesn't!" they all howled with one accord.

"No, it doesn't," agreed the man, "and the reason is that there are *too many vehicles which hold few persons as compared with those which hold many.*"

"Well, what's the idea?" they asked, bewildered.

"The idea is perfectly simple," replied the man, "and I arrived at it in this way. I took note of one hundred private cars that were going into the City between nine and half-past nine o'clock one morning, and I found that they held a total of one hundred and fifty-two persons, including drivers, although they could have held over four hundred persons. Eight public vehicles, which take up only a little more room than eight private cars, would have held this number. Now, I suggest that unless four-fifths of the accommodation of each private car be occupied during the rush hour, it should be forbidden to use the main thoroughfares, just as . . ."

An indescribable uproar ensued upon this remark.

"Bolshie! Socialist! Break his neck!" they all bellowed.

But the man was, luckily for him, able-bodied and fleet of foot. And it only took him six and a half seconds to bolt from the Assembly Room and become a real Man in the Street once more.

Im-Moral.—Self-denial is a Blessed Virtue—for those who can least afford it.

C. S. FRASER.

Acid Drops.

The Archbishop of York complains that "We have become tainted with the horrible modern and most poisonous idea that religion is a private affair between a man and his Maker." We can quite appreciate the complaint. If religion is to be a private affair, where do the clergy come in? The power and prestige of the clergy has been built up on the belief that the parson is someone who has to introduce man to God Almighty, and who stands as his official representative. But if man is to get into touch with God all on his own, what part is there left for the parson to play? The parson, from Archbishop to curate, from savage medicine-men to a modern Cardinal has always a keen eye for his professional interests.

There is one other reason why religion must not be taken as a private affair—particularly in civilized, or semi-civilized society. Here religion is largely a matter of fashion, and of compulsive fashion. Of the number of people who go to Church, probably half go because others go, or because they wish to set an example to others. The truth of this is seen in the fact that when Churchgoers are away from home, in a large number of cases, they stay away from Church altogether. So, once the teaching is encouraged that religion is not a matter of going to Church, and not a matter of public concern, but quite a private and individual affair, the next step will be that Churches and parsons are unnecessary. And what will the parsons do then, poor things! We quite understand the position of Dr. Temple.

Rarity, says a journalist, is a vulgar standard of value. This may be true generally, but not in connexion with all things. For instance, mental courage is a rarity, but only men of high standards appreciate it at its true value. As a footnote may be added the reminder that the Christian Church has done its devilish worst to make such courage extinct—with the Christian weapons of torture, stake, banishment and boycott.

The sensibilities of the "quite nice" received a rude shock at Wimbledon recently. Some women played tennis with their legs bare. The heavens did not fall, nor the earth open or swallow them up. And so it is safe to infer that the revelation of portions of feminine anatomy is not really displeasing in the sight of God. Nevertheless, the "quite nice" will probably petition the Wimbledon Committee to issue a taboo.

The Primitive Methodist Sunday Schools have lost 10,000 scholars, according to the Annual Report. The Conference Secretary deplored the fact that scholars and teachers were lost simultaneously, and he wondered whether the scholars went, because the teachers had failed. We should say the same cause operated in both instances—both teachers and scholars faded away because they weren't interested in religion.

Parenthood is in danger of becoming a lost art, declares a Scottish minister. From the rest of his wailing, we gather that gloom has settled on his chest because the "repression" and prohibition system of Calvin for training the young is fast disappearing. More intelligent people will wish it "God-speed" to the dust-bin of religious rubbish.

The British people, according to a daily paper, are the most spontaneous and generous givers in the world. Well, the parsons, having known the fact for hundreds of years, have exploited it very thoroughly. They could not have done so if the "most generous givers in the world" had been trained to be more discriminate.

Dr. Eric Law, of Northampton, says that the true function of doctors one day will be to teach people to develop good physical and good mental habits. We may add that this instruction, vitally important as it is to happiness and well-being, will not be supplied by re-

ligion and the priests. Their God has never "revealed" it. It has had to be carefully compiled by scientific observers. Meanwhile, God has said nothing and done nothing but watch the appalling amount of preventable suffering among the ignorant creatures he created. People worship and praise a God like that. What a queer taste they have!

Ice-cream carts have been forbidden to stand in the market-place at Retford on Sundays. The prohibition is, we understand an experiment in safeguarding the local parsonic industry. For the parsons feel that, after 1900 years of use the magnetic power of Jesus is now far too feeble to stand against ice-cream competition.

John Bull says that "the British idea of marriage is not a business contract, but a friendly arrangement." We are afraid the Christian Churches won't agree to this definition. To them, marriage is a contract unbreakable except by the death of one of the parties. Whereas, a "friendly arrangement" should be capable of being broken off by mutual consent of both parties or by the wish of one, and without any social stigma being attached to either or both. If the British idea of marriage really is a "friendly arrangement," the sooner this country's laws are amended accordingly, and the sooner the present evil Christian influence is eliminated, the better for the happiness of many thousands of British people.

But there is something more, after all, in marriage than a mere friendly arrangement. Friendship, and something more than mere friendship, should enter into marriage, and when this no longer exists, real marriage is ended. But there is always the fact of the children to be considered, and it is there that the ground for the extra safeguards, or provisions connected with marriage come in.

A woman at Sunderland told the magistrate that she would not take the oath unless she was permitted to tell as many lies as the policeman, who had given evidence against her. We do not think the proviso was necessary. Everyone knows that people lie quite as readily with the oath as without it, and no judge in the country places any greater reliance upon the witness who takes the oath than upon one who does not.

The latest ghost of which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle gives an account is that of Lenin. In a certain house the ghost of an elderly man with an evil face had been seen. So in the company of Mr. Horace Leaf, who is a medium, a seance was held, and the spirit duly reported that his name was Lenin, and he desired to communicate in order to express remorse for deeds done. That is very convincing, although it is just possible that had the medium been a Communist, there would have been no remorse expressed. A very illuminating touch about the narrative is in the statement that the medium had no recollection of what Lenin's face was like. These things are very, very convincing.

According to the Rev. A. E. Belden, prayer is universal. Prayer is an instinct as fundamental as hunger or thirst. Prayer is fundamental to human nature; man is so made that he must appeal from his evident limitations to some Greater Power. If Mr. Belden is right, then Freethinkers must be superhuman. They never pray nor feel any urge to pray. On the other hand, if they are as human as other folk, then the reverend gentleman's all-embracing generalization is untrue. As there is an exception which upsets his theory, he had better be content in future with merely affirming that large numbers of human beings pray, but not all. To be more illuminating, he could add that a large number of people are ignorant and are beset with superstitious fears; therefore they pray. No one will contradict that.

The Rev. Dr. J. Parton Milum wishes that the original distinction between Modernism and Liberalism in theology should be restored and maintained. He explains the difference thus:—

With "liberal" thinkers, when "revealed" truth and reason appear to clash, reason is given the preference. With Modernists properly so called, on the contrary, the axiom is that when the Catholic doctrines of Christianity are in apparent clash with reason, judgment should be suspended until more light dawns.

From this one gathers that it would not be unfair to the "Liberal" theologian to suspect him of having a little more intelligence than the "Modernist." But both appear to have one thing in common; they hope desperately that "revealed" truth will win the battle. What we are thankful for is that such a handicap is not inflicted on scientific thinking.

Fairfield, Liverpool, has a new Vicar. He announces that he is an ambassador from God, sends greetings to his parishioners, and hopes for a continuation of their custom. Actually, his words are that in his church those who come will get comfort and peace and will be heartily welcomed, but it is the same thing in the end. And we have only his word that he is an ambassador from God. There are no other credentials than that.

A witness in the Essex County Court, New Jersey, U.S.A., was refused a hearing by the Judge because, as an Atheist he declined to take the oath. Several such cases have occurred lately in the United States, and it is high time that America brought itself into line with the right of affirmation as it exists in this country. Perhaps when both countries are sufficiently civilized they will abolish both the oath and the affirmation. This would mean taking it for granted that a witness would tell the truth, instead of assuming that he would tell a lie save under special pressure. Prosecution for perjury would still remain.

The Rev. W. Younger, a Primitive Methodist parson, wonders whether the world takes the Church seriously. Unfortunately, there are a very large number of people who continue to do so. But well-informed and genuinely intelligent folk gave up doing a long time ago. They know that the antics of the medicine-man in a civilized country is sheer buffoonery. Sometimes they smile at him publicly, sometimes they smile privately. But the smile is there. And when one begins to smile at religion its day is done.

Better be careful a thousand times than crippled once, declares a Safety First motto. This advice is for intelligent people. The other sort can put their trust in Providence and wear a crucifix or other mascot for "luck."

The *Methodist Times* says:—

Christ wrote no book, gave no definite and final directions as to the organization of his Church . . .

This was rather unwise of Christ. With his divine insight, he ought to have realized that, human nature being as it is, some men would be sure to utilize his superstitious beliefs to persuade others to provide them with the means for escaping from the human bondage of productive labour. How our priests and parsons must bless that omission of Christ!

Is Church-membership dull? is the question asked by an Anglican parson. His reply is that the fault lies with the members. We are not so sure about that. Since the Church has allowed Hell-fire to die down into a mere flicker, there is no real exhilaration in being "saved." But quite naturally there can be only dullness and no joyousness among members who are not quite certain about what they have been "saved" from.

The hardest thing in life, declares Lady Power, is "to keep on keeping on." Well, assuming the ability to do this is virtually essential, one wonders why the Creator withheld the ability from so large a number of his human creatures. But perhaps it is all according to the Divine Plan. Church charities need justification for their existence, and the Lord God, in his own wise way, provides one.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. B. MOSS.—We hope to be able to get a brief holiday about the end of July. That will not mean freedom from work, but it will give change and a little more leisure.

S. MARTIN.—The religious lie about Darwin's death-bed was fully exposed soon after it was put into circulation. A full account appeared in the *Literary Guide*, the date of which could be, we presume, obtained from the office, 5 Johnson's Court, E.C.

D.P.S.—We do not know that we seriously disagree with what you say, but fear is a thing that operates in many ways, and if some assumed the stand of conscientious objectors because they lacked the courage to join the army, it is equally true that some joined the army because they lacked the courage to stand against popular opinion and face the legal and other consequences. On another question, you have evidently overlooked the fact that the Zoo is open every Sunday, but to members only. We believe anyone may become a member on payment of the fee. There is an agitation being made to get the Zoo open to the general public on Sundays.

J. CLAYTON.—Please send title of paper with cuttings. They are useless for reference without.

J. C. KEAST.—The excellent letters from yourself and others in the *Evening Chronicle* should be productive of good. Very pleased to see them.

The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to 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 connexion with *Secular Burial Services* are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

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.

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.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. J. G. Lupton writes:—

Freethinkers will perhaps be interested to hear of the formation in Spain of a society called "*La Liga Laica*" (The *Secular League*).

Information thereof was contained in a recent article by Americo Castro, a well-known Spanish scholar, in the newspaper *El Sol*, in which he replied to attacks by the paper *El Debate*, which had, incidentally, accused him of preaching "free-love," whereas he had merely asserted that Cervantes was in favour of a woman having "free-choice" of her future husband, and not being forced into marriage.

The purpose of the Society is the assertion and defence of the right of Freethought in religious and political matters.

The writer said that the urgency of action on behalf of tolerance could not be denied. Spain was very backward. Tradition was so strong that non-Catholics feared to be known as such; many sending their children to be educated in religious institutions, through fear of public opinion, and because that was the way to social success. Baptism, and religious marriages and funerals were acquiesced in for the sake of appearances, for Spanish religious faith had been reduced to that.

In all other parts of the civilized world persons of various beliefs could live together, and Spain, because of the harshness and rusticity of its people, was the only country in Europe where it was impossible for Jews to settle.

In England and Germany Catholics suffered no hindrance in their worship, but Protestant Churches in Spain existed shamefaced and disguised. One of the most urgent tasks of democracy was to ensure freedom of belief, so that social life might become more civilized.

The opponents of tolerance desired to stifle Freethought and extinguish the light of reason, in case the gleams of the latter should reveal the mental disease of those who had been the intolerant masters and educators of Spain for four centuries.

An outing to Hampton Court has been arranged by the West Ham Branch for Sunday, July 13. To obtain special rates the party must travel together on the same train. All those wishing to join the party must be at Bow Road (Underground) at 9.15 a.m., for the only train available. Lunch to be carried. Tea at 1s. 3d. each will be served at the Court and Palace Gate Restaurant, Hampton Court. All Freethinkers and their friends will be welcomed.

Messrs Watts have just issued the first three volumes or another new publication, *The World of Youth Series*. They are beautifully printed and bound, with an attractive dust cover, and are a marvel of cheapness at 1s. 6d. each. Mr. F. J. Gould's *Great Sons of Greece*, with illustrations by Walter Crane and C. G. Dixon, is the first volume, and no finer account of Lycurgus, Solon, Pericles and many others first made immortal by Plutarch's magic pen, could be given to young readers. Mr. R. McMillan's, *The Origin of The World* is the third volume written "by an old man for a young Australian girl who had become curious about the 'how,' and 'why' of the world." It can be heartily recommended to girls and boys of all countries.

The second volume is by Mr. E. Royston Pike, the genial Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association, is entitled *Temple Bells or the Faith of Many Lands*, and is particularly designed to give young readers a simple and concise account of some of the principle religions of the world. Mr. Pike has a fluent and agreeable style and has accomplished his task well. But he does not seem to have adequately prepared the minds of his youthful readers for that larger scepticism which is so desirable.

No one reading his account of the Christian religion, for example, would imagine, that the chief details of the life of Jesus as recited in the Gospels, had ever been questioned by sceptics; and indeed, Mr. Pike finally clinches the matter by asserting that some of our greatest Christian writers found their inspiration, not in the "story of," but actually "in a young Jew, who nearly twenty centuries ago made tables and chairs at a carpenter's bench." Mr. Pike says, "that scattered as they are, homeless and often persecuted, Jews have kept their religion pure and whole." If this means that Jews have always asserted their belief in one God and one God only, it could pass. But if it means that Jews never disagreed among themselves on the details of their religion, we can only say that Mr. Pike knows very little of the controversies aroused by, say Maimonides, and the Kabbalists in the Middle Ages, right down to Dr. Claude Montefiore of our own day. Still *Temple Bells* is written in an interesting way and will prove most acceptable to young people.

The *Nottingham Journal* for June 28, publishes a letter from H. Bayliss, in the course of which she lays down the following propositions:—

1. That religion engenders hypocrisy, intolerance and sectarian strife.
2. The wealth drawn by the churches from land, mining royalties, slum rents, tithes and exemption from rates should be expended usefully.
3. The spiritual support to militarism provided by

the blessing of instruments of slaughter should be withdrawn.

4. The time, money and energy of thousands of paid clergy and unpaid laity in dilating upon the bliss of a mythical heaven and the horrors of an equally mythical hell should be more usefully employed.

The editorial comment is "We believe there is a complete reply to every point set out above, but a useful purpose may be served by having the philosophic bases of modern Atheism plainly stated." Probably the letter will lead to a correspondence on the subject.

A reader has a number of old copies of the *Freethinker* and will send them to anyone willing to distribute them. Send name and address to Pioneer Press.

Birmingham Freethinkers are reminded that Mr. G. Whitehead will address meetings in the Bull Ring from Sunday, July 6, until Friday, the 11th, times will be found in the Lecture Notices Column.

Mr. Franklin Steiner writes from New York to our old friend, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Forty-three years ago, when I began to read the *American Truth Seeker*, your articles appeared there, and were among the first to make me a Freethinker." The message is gratifying to one who is now mainly resting in the contemplation of a long and active life.

The Treasure-Hunters.

THE HOLY HOAX.

WHAT is religion? An apparently simple question. The world has been soaked in religion for thousands of years; it has had plenty of time to find out what it is. But apparently there is a snag somewhere; for if you take a mixed selection of Christian priests from various sects and propound the riddle, you will find that hardly any two of them agree. (Unless, of course, you include Roman Catholics who have stereotyped beliefs fixed for them by the infallible big-wig of the Vatican, and are bound to agree among themselves on pain of excommunication, anathematization, or some such hocus-pocus.) These reverend gents., be it noted, gain a living (a pretty fat living, too) by expounding religion; yet none of them appear to be able to fix this elusive entity by a satisfactory verbal definition. But taking the whole gamut of Christian sects into our purview, we see that they are agreed on one point—namely, that religion ("true" religion, of course) must be extracted from the Bible. This process of extracting the pure gold of "true" religion from the Biblical ore has been in progress for nearly 1900 years. Up to very recent years it was carried on by Christian priests in the interest of their profession, and mightily indeed did they wrestle with their pious task. Latterly, however, there arose in a few daring minds a vague suspicion that this holy treasure-hunt was a fake, and amongst the more enlightened portion of the populace the prestige of those pillars of the Church who were most successful in extracting (and marketing) the product has fallen in our day almost to zero. Nevertheless, their successors, like the poor and the tax-gatherer, are still with us, full of lugubrious censure of their impious but triumphant critics; and even to-day, apart from an Established Church which has its beliefs fixed for it by a secular Parliament, we have umpteen tiny little fancy sects, each triumphantly exhibiting as the fruit of this Biblical excavation a tiny little nugget of belief, every tiny little nugget differing from the rest, and every single one, the one-and-only genuine real goods. It doesn't matter that they find it a hard job to unload their goods on a long-suffering public; they actually have got the goods, and if you are willing to listen they

are always willing to show it you, provided you pay your pew-rent or drop a coin in the "offertory-box." Not a single one of these dug-up credal relics of an ignorant past is of any use to the modern world; not one can give us any real assistance in solving the thousand-and-one vexatious problems of life. On the contrary, it is only since the world has begun to reject these quack platitudes for the rubbish they are that men have seriously come to grips with the real problems of existence. When we see a multitude of fancy religions all claiming their "divine authority" from the same source, it is only natural to suspect that there is some hanky-panky about that source. This suspicion proves to be well-founded.

Now, although an Atheist, I find pleasure in reading the Bible, which testimonial I freely present to the Bible Society, to use as they wish, provided they make it plain that it comes from an Atheist. My pleasure is due to the fact that I do not vex myself with trying to extract from it supernatural truths which it does not contain, and so I avoid the disappointment and disillusionment which would otherwise be inevitable. I read it simply as literature. There is wisdom in the Proverbs, thought-provoking cynicism in Ecclesiastes; and scattered through the fanatical rhapsodies of the Prophets I find passages of true poetic beauty. Still, even when most impressed by the diction, I remind myself that the moving language and rhythmic beauty of these passages are the results of translation into the dignified and stately Elizabethan English of King James's translators. The original Greek and Hebrew of the Scriptures, I am told, is often rude; though here I cannot be dogmatic, for Greek and Hebrew are both Greek to me. But even if it could be shown that the Bible was originally written in so lofty and poetic a style that no writer, ancient or modern, could be expected to match it, it would require very much more than that to justify its being accepted as a divine and infallible guide in the affairs of human life. A supernatural revelation should have substance as well as form and style. What helpful philosophy does the Bible contain? What rational guidance does it give in human affairs? Apart from a few flashes of worldly wisdom in the Old Testament, none! Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, and a host of other books, written on earth by flesh-and-blood human beings claiming no authority higher than intellect, industry, and sincerity, have given new orientations to human affairs, opened doors to vast avenues of progress, and done more for human enlightenment than a million copies of the Christians' hotch-potch of alleged divine revelations.

For 1900 years this fetish-book has wielded almost unlimited influence over European thought. Drilled into the plastic minds of children, thundered into the ears of an unenlightened populace by a parasitic priesthood, whose whole authority rested upon the insane dogmas of Biblical Inspiration and Apostolic Succession, all these long centuries it has sterilized independent thought and hindered progress to better things. Now, quite apart from the intrinsic worthlessness of Biblical philosophy, what has modern scholarship to say, after 1900 years, of the Inspiration and Infallibility of the Bible? In a word, the notion is utterly discredited. Looked at in the light of sober reason, it may appear inconceivable that dogmas so inherently absurd should require such vast labour to demolish. But tradition dies hard; priests have still the opportunity and the power of instilling into childish minds the intellectual poison which costs so much effort to remove in later years. Only the widespread diffusion of modern knowledge

and the different educational system for which Secularism is fighting can better this state of affairs.

It is manifestly absurd that the beliefs and standards of 1900 years ago should be expected to apply to the modern world. In the past, when the absolute authority of Scripture was accepted by the overwhelming majority of all classes, such unconditional submission might reasonably be demanded; but not to-day, when it is more and more plainly seen that religion is nothing but an anachronism, a survival from the pre-scientific animistic theories of primitive man. We have acquired a more reasonable view of ourselves and the world we live in. To those timid souls who may dread the effects of such drastic changes in human standards, it should be made plain that Secularism has a sound rationalistic and constructive conception of life and conduct to offer the world, far saner and more inspiring than the old pious scheme based on fear and ignorance; a rational code of ethics and conduct based on the verifiable findings of half-a-century of intensive scientific and psychological research. A sound secularistic philosophy is what the world needs; not "revealed" religion, and not the Bible.

C. V. LEWIS.

The Holy Shop.

"MONEY, ever money." This was Froude's aphorism in regard to Roman Catholic priests. Yet monks are vowed to poverty, and all priests, from Popes downwards are supposed to be successors of the Apostles who left all and followed a leader who had not where to lay his head, and who both preached and practised poverty.

Jesus offered his "water of life" freely and without price, but Roman Catholic priests sell their muddy imitation of it at an exorbitant price as they can squeeze out of their dupes. They are inveterate cadgers, sellers of worthless goods, tricksters, parasites on society, do not stop at thieving and blackmail and even murder, employ slaves (*i.e.*, unpaid labour) and are just about as undesirable members of society as can be found. They call their concern or firm Holy Church. The Italians long since altered this to Holy Shop; you take the word "shop" literally and "holy" in a very sarcastic sense. It is the biggest multiple shop in the world—and the most profitable. To think of it is enough to make a financial magnate's mouth water. The various establishments are put up at the customers' expense, and when up are let off paying rates and taxes. The customers also actually endow the business so that the principals get salaries whether they attend to business or not. The principals are all men, but a great many of the employees are women. Before taking service these women hand all their money to the firm in order to have the privilege of serving for their keep, and no wage. They have also handed over their entire liberty so that the male members of the firm can do just as they like with them. They are herded in barracks (called convents) and one of the rules is that they must never be a night away from barracks.

The goods, which the firm sells, are purely imaginary, and the customers pay very fancy prices. Even delivery of the goods is (mostly) to a place which exists in imagination. It sounds like the dream of a deliriously, but gloriously drunk captain of industry. But it is no dream. It is real, and so are the profits. The head of the firm lives in a great palace, and literally hundreds of the higher officials also live in palaces. It is inadequate to call these men million-

aires. They are often referred to as Princes of the Shop, beg pardon, Church.. A more accurate term would be to call them Chiefs of the Confidence Tricksters.

Descriptions of the tricks of their trade could be extended to many volumes. There are some weird details, and in future articles we hope to describe a few typical ones. For the present a general summary must suffice.

The chief methods by which the great swindling firm rakes in the money may be tabulated as follows:—

1. Alms—laity to Holy Church.
2. Selling shadow goods—masses for souls, remission for sins, indulgences, pardons, etc.
3. Exploitation of the slave labour of monks and nuns. Many monasteries are practically factories. Liqueurs (*e.g.*, Benedictine) are common products. Under other arrangements monks and nuns are practically let out on hire *e.g.*, as teachers or nurses.
4. Sponging on the community or State as in the case of tithes, Peters Pence, getting grants for education, etc.
5. Charges for ceremonial purposes at weddings, funerals, etc. In some countries these are a vested interest, and are very onerous.
6. Investments and accumulation of wealth with concomitant power.

There was a good deal of altruistic charity about Jesus and his apostles and immediate successors—and also in regard to many pious people ever since. There is, however, no altruism about a scheming priesthood. But priestcraft knows how to use piety to its own ends. It annexes the reputation of the good simple souls, taking the credit to itself. Also it takes good care to have the charity translated into alms to Holy Shop—any charity that Holy Shop is mixed up with must be of benefit, financially, to the Shop. But it does not depend on the charity of the pious. Very early in its career it found means to ginger up things. It went on the principle that for 999 persons out of 1,000 the main object of charity is Number One, let those individuals disguise it to themselves as they will (and they are very ready so to delude themselves). Charity (especially that which takes the form of alms or other payment to Holy Church) is preached up, oh beautifully. But the dupes are also given to understand that all such beautiful charity is good for the giver, and this not in just a general sense, but in a very particular personal sense. Charity, says the proverb, begins at home. Holy Shop's variation on this is that Charity goes first to Holy Shop and returns to the giver a thousand fold—in shadow goods. The dupes get the idea that in practising such charity they are very very good, and to this comfortable feeling is the added but subconscious gratification that they are doing exceedingly well for Number One.

To effect this comfortable consumption it is evident there must be some skilful telling of the tale—confidence trickery is, of course, almost entirely a matter of telling the tale. All Holy Shop's ritual may be considered as part of its blarney, but the essence of the whole thing is the tale about Hell and Purgatory. We have given some description of this before, but here we wish to emphasize how Holy Shop reduces it to a matter of book keeping—the parallel is really closer than can be guessed.

According to Holy Shop theology, every child born has an account with God—or God has an account with it. The Heavenly Father starts off every new born child of His with a tremendous *debit* on account of an apple in the Garden of Eden. Every "sin"

the child commits adds to the debit, and if it ultimately dies in debt, hopelessly insolvent, then its Heavenly Father (according to the priests) will torture that child of His. The only way for the child to "wangle" the account is by being a customer of Holy Shop. Any child of God who does not patronize the Shop (e.g., a Protestant) will be tortured in Hell-fire for ever and ever. Even if a customer, the Shop does not guarantee an absolute miss. But it guarantees a reduction in time, and an ultimate release to a sort of holiday home. It will sell remissions in large or small quantities—from a few days to a few thousand years. With every pound of tea, a present. Make no error, my blunt statement is a statement of fact. The miserable dupes believe the trickster's tale and the horrible debit is for ever on their minds. The tricksters see to this very carefully, for it is the main foundation of the Shop's business. Each dupe feels to be in such an awful situation that he cannot but be selfish—his own "salvation" is so desperately important that it affects his whole life. All his alms and charities, all his religious performances, his payments and services, have, for conscious or subconscious motive, this one overwhelming concern—to reduce the debit. Selfishness, largely camouflaged to look like "charity," and spurred on by fear—result, colossal profits for the Shop.

Deferring, for the moment the weirdly silly details of the business as carried on over the shop counter, we will glance at the last item in our list of activities—the investment by the Shop of its surplus profits. In some respects this is the most subtle and dangerous of the Shop's activities. The priests are out to control everything, to have all the wealth of the world in their possession and all the power that goes with it. Their aim is nothing less than for their organization to be ultimately the sole capitalist of the world. It sounds fantastic? Historically speaking it is only when this branch of the activities of the Shop has got to an unbearable stage that Governments have started to act. At the time of the Reformation the Shop owned one third of England—and other countries were in as bad a state or worse. In Mexico, in this present century, Holy Shop owned nearly two-thirds of the wealth of the Mexicans—and when the Government took up the position that all that wealth was only in trust for the Mexican people, the vampires of the Vatican squealed like a lot of cats. In the eighteenth century the Jesuits were in absolute control of an area of 50,000 square miles in Paraguay, and for 150 years the natives there were in every sense of the word, chattels. So there is nothing fantastic about the idea of the Shop having in view an ultimate position of 100 per cent ownership of all wealth. The Vatican gang has more swelled heads than any set of men ever had—and more unscrupulousness in attaining its ends. They are blackguards. Don't forget it.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

Consistency is the bugbear that frightens little minds.
Emerson.

A Conservative is a man who will not look at the new moon, out of respect for that "ancient institution," the old one.—Douglas Jerrold.

Obstinacy and vehemency in opinions are the surest proofs of stupidity.—Helvetius.

Were we as eloquent as angels yet should we please some men, some women and some children, much more by listening than by talking.—Colton.

A Gift to Youth.

CARLYLE, among the pages of *Heroes and Hero Worship*, tells his deafened readers that we must get rid of fear. Excellent counsel, but the advice lacks a suggested method of attaining this end. Hobbes in his *Leviathan* pricks many bubbles that are blown by word-jugglers; he writes: "The seventh, to names that signify nothing; but are taken up and learned by rote from the schooles, as *hypostatical, transubstantiate, consubstantiate, eternal-now*, and the like canting of Schoolemen." Hobbes, with sympathy for his time and place, was digging at the roots of fallacies, and, if errors are exposed and expunged, the upper storey of man will have more room for the housing of truth.

A naturalist, experimenting with caterpillars, found that these insects would blindly follow one another up the stem of a plant to fall off one by one into a pail of water. Man may be all that Shakespeare or the ancient Christian saints describe him to be, but he is not a caterpillar. Taking him in the bulk, he is neither a fool, nor a wise man, but, in some respects, in his beliefs he is very often like a caterpillar. He does not always stop and ask where he is going, and to the one behind, where are you pushing me to? Those lovely middle and dark ages, so beautiful in retrospect to the savages in our midst, had a singular way of dealing with such interrogators. The glimmering of a dangerous question brought death at the hands of those who were assured of reward from their heavenly father in the life to come. I will not say that they, the unfortunate martyrs of thought, were sure that the foundations of religion were of sand, but in everyday language, they rightly suspected that there was a catch in it. Dante lived in a time when it was reckoned that a man could know all there was to be known. Since that time, research, experiment, the amenities of free discussion, the printing press, and other avenues for acquiring knowledge have given the thoughtful many advantages, and the result is, that the question is not why people believe in religion, but how they came to believe in it. The answer is known, though history has taken its toll of inquirers by prison bars and abuse. Even Ingersoll was derided for taking away from Christians the fear of hell, but this is where the muse of Comedy makes a grimace as much as to say, "My poor children, I should like to knock your heads together."

These, and many other thoughts occurred to me as I read a lecture delivered by Mr. Chapman Cohen before the Fellowship of Youth, at Manchester College, Oxford, Monday, April 21, 1930. In book form, entitled *The Foundations of Religion*, it takes on a most intimate style, persuasive, discursive, humorous, and always retaining that touch which stamps a man as having well and truly decided to accept the human family, and the world as the best we know. The lecturer knew his case, and with sly humour, at the outset, makes an offer to help his opponents—the Theists. I have not the slightest doubt that this lecture was delivered without notes; Mr. Cohen has lived in an atmosphere of debate for a good part of his life. He has had many opportunities of giving the gentle answer that turneth away wrath, and most commendable of all he has voluntarily chosen the hard path of fighting for an unpopular cause. His life can be epitomized in his own words: "I recall also the strong and indignant protests that were raised, and rank these among my earliest lessons in the difficulty of making the unready mind recognize the obvious." He has, without doubt, learned many ways of not doing it; in this lecture, where intellect has been allowed a freedom from the high pitch necessary in a debate, he discourses freely and easily, taking at will names that have secured a firm footing in the world of science. In an armchair style, he finds, as I have reason to think, his listeners in a receptive mood.

Much matter may be found compressed in the following brief extract; "Religious ideas are formed in ignorance and fashioned in fear. That is one of the most widely accepted and most solidly based generalizations of modern anthropology." I remember, many years

ago, being in a hotel up in the Midlands. The dinner was late, after a hard day's work, and when it was over, a few friends, along with myself, were discussing Kipling, woman and the theatre, and towards twelve o'clock I found that the talk had steadily centred on to Eastern religions. Opinions were freely expressed, and I noticed that one young man, his face red and showing perspiration—it was a hot night—turned to his neighbour, and half whispered, "the Pope is not infallible." It was said as though he had had to receive Dutch courage before he could relieve himself of something that had to be suppressed in his calmer moments. This incident—I believe it was in 1922, has steadily remained in my memory; it is a good subject for psycho-analysis, and ratifies the elementary truth so ably presented in the lecturers words above. Let us get rid of fear by all means—but it will not be done by reading Carlyle. Rhetoric is very nice in its way, but hard study, and a fearless attitude towards what a search for truth may bring is much better. Consider the waste energy of human beings, gone for ever in puzzling over the conundrums thrown up by speculations on what cannot be proved. Consider also, the religious retreat to the castle of faith. And again, note the evacuation of the castle to the clouds of a belief in personal immortality. If there were no human problems it would not be so reprehensible; the whole army of Archbishops, Bishops, Popes and Cardinals cannot invoke heavenly protection against death and injury in the streets—6,696 people killed in Great Britain in 1929 and 170,917 injured. Here was one of their best chances of getting something useful done.

The Foundations of Religion is a book for reference; it is also an admirable example of wise and humane thought for those who do not want more than one world at a time. It is the utterance of a man who can use the most powerful weapon of all—simplicity, but this gift is not one easily acquired. The Gods sell us all they give us, and, in the words of Arnold, it needs happy moments for such skill—as, for instance, when men can differ without going black in the face or calling in the police. The appendix of illustrative material has been well chosen, and the book is Freethought in essence. There is one misprint on page 37, but this is forgiven for the great amount of clear thinking in a few words that can be had at a reasonable price. It is to be hoped that Cambridge will now follow the example of Oxford, and extend an invitation to the lecturer. Cambridge produced Christopher Marlowe of "the mighty line"; it housed Milton who was a link with Galileo, at a time when the Copernican theory was not acceptable to educated English intellect in the seventeenth century; surely it can invite one who has voluntarily undertaken the task of trying "to make the unready mind recognize the obvious."

C-DE-B.

Little House of Dream.

BESIDE the moonlit door,
Lingering, I watch your curtain;
And evermore,
With pleasure sweet and certain,
My heart shall store
Your shadow outlined clearly:
Because at my heart's deepest, truest core
I love you, oh! so dearly!

Beside your moonlit door,
One moment hesitating,
I hold once more
The thought: "Just waiting, waiting!"
By Love's bright gleam
Me from the world you singled—
Soon passers-by our Little House of Dream
Shall see our shadow mingled!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Nigeria.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR ARTHUR KEITH'S ATHEISM.

SIR,—In company with others, I am not a little mystified over the editorial comment on Mr. Macconnell's letter in your issue of June 29, as I cannot find any reference in that letter to any *private* statement by Sir Arthur Keith.

According to the *Daily Herald*, Sir Arthur states publicly that "we must postulate a Lord of the Universe"; according to you he states publicly that he does not believe in a God. Is such a man entitled to the honourable description of Atheist?

I fancy most of your readers would say No, but it would be interesting to have their opinion.

A. W. COLEMAN.

[We are sorry that a hasty reading of the letter published in our last issue, led us to assume that the reference was to a private letter of Sir Athur Keith's. The idea that we must postulate a "Lord of the universe" is, if taken literally, a grotesque absurdity. One would like to know what exactly Sir Arthur means by it, or whether he meant anything at all.—ED.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JUNE 27, 1930.

THE President, Mr. Chapinan Cohen in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Moss, Wood, Silvester, Corrigan, Easterbrook, Hornibrook, LeMaine, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, Miss Kough, and the Secretary. Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted, monthly Financial Statement was presented.

New members were accepted for W. London, Bethnal Green, West Ham, and Bradford Branches, and Parent Society.

Reports from Messrs. Whitehead and Clayton concerning meetings held and future work, were before the meeting and approved.

Motions submitted from the Annual Conference were dealt with, new members were elected to the Welsh and Scotch areas.

The Executive's Annual Report, ordered by the Conference to be printed, was reported as ready for circulation.

A number of questions arising from correspondence were dealt with and the meeting closed.

R. H. ROSETTI.

General Secretary.

Society News.

MEETINGS in Wales are seldom without interest. This week Mr. George Whitehead addressed altogether eight meetings, and with one exception all proved successful. Those held in Swansea provided the larger crowds, and the appreciation usually associated with Mr. Whitehead's visit here, and the help of a number of sympathisers, led by Mr. Moore, made propaganda pleasant. Except for a meeting held near the Park Gates, which lasted until 10.30 p.m., the opposition was good tempered; the exception gave a fine opportunity of demonstrating how little Christians know of the contents of their Bible.

On the Thursday, attended by a band of sympathisers from Swansea, we invaded Neath, and found Welsh excitability much in evidence. A large crowd assembled with fanatics carrying banners having Scriptural mottoes inscribed thereon. No interruptions developed until question time, when matters got quite lively, and the usual charitable sentiments were loudly and offensively voiced by a number of noisy bigots. Singing was tried, but an appeal to the fairer-minded section soon

stopped that. Although police permission had been obtained, next evening we were informed that owing to half a dozen complaints having been lodged with the police, permission for the second and any other contemplated meetings were withdrawn, in spite of the pitch being regularly used by religionists. After some argument with the police, we were relegated to a large piece of waste ground outside the usual orbit. A huge crowd had gathered on the old pitch, and this we led to the new one, where it listened without interruption, and even with appreciation to the lecture. Two opponents then occupied the platform, for one of whom Mr. Whitehead had to appeal to the crowd for order! Our speaker's reply was subject to much interruption from a small number, which interruptions were resented by the audience, and the meeting terminated amid intense excitement. Next week we try our fortunes over again in Neath. The presence of a good muster of friends helped to keep order at Neath, as it does elsewhere, unless the friends are too apathetic to attend meetings held in the camp of the enemy.—G.W.

All our meetings have been well attended this week. Nothing untoward happened at Higham, but at Hapton, on Wednesday, we had the village out. Roman Catholics were prominent in kicking up a row, and our speaker had his character painted in crimson by some of the "ladies" present. At Crawshawbrook, on Friday, the usual big crowd was awaiting us, complete with the parson, who always turns up in opposition. We were listened to quietly for an hour; then the fun started. We had police interference because the fringe of the crowd was obstructing the footpath. One local Freethinker coming to my assistance would make this interference impossible. The two meetings at Blackburn drew exceptionally big audiences. In the evening we had a lot of Catholic opposition and crude questioning.—J.C.

Obituary

WILLIAM RUDD.

By the death of William Rudd, in his eighty-sixth year, Freethought has lost another of its veterans, and Luton, one of its best known and respected citizens. He imbibed his Freethought from the giants in the old Hall of Science, and became a worthy and life-long disciple. A born fighter for human welfare and progress, pious Luton kept him busy, but in spite of all forms of opposition, he lived to see the results of his efforts taking definite shape.

He was buried at Luton General Cemetery, on Wednesday, June 25. Beside members of the family, and representatives from various local organizations, a large number of townfolk assembled at the graveside, where a Secular Service was read by R. H. Rosetti.

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

MAN and wife (foreigners) wish to be received as paying guests, week-ends, anywhere outside London, farm-house preferred (if Freethought has penetrated thus far). Wife vegetarian, will bring her own food.—LYCEUM, 85 New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1. Telephone: Temple Bar 4040.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Mechanisation and Civilized Life."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): Thursday, July 3, Social and Dance at 101 Tottenham Court Road, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—A Lecture. The *Freethinker* can be obtained from Mr. R. H. Page, 15 Blackstock Road, Finsbury Park.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road): Saturday, 7.30—Various speakers.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. E. C. Saphin—A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, 11.30, Wren Road, Camberwell Gate, Mr. J. Payn; 7.0, Stonehouse Street, Clapham Road, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Wednesday, Rushcroft Road, Brixton, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Friday, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Mr. L. Ilbury.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Mr. James Hart and Mr. A. D. McLaren; 3.15, Messrs. E. Betts and C. E. Wood; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, B. A. Le Maine and E. C. Saphin. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and J. Hart; every Thursday, at 7.30, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and Charles Tuson; every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine and Mr. A. D. McLaren. The *Freethinker* can be obtained after our meetings outside the Park, in Bayswater Road.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.15, Messrs. Charles Tuson and W. P. Campbell-Everden.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

ACCRINGTON.—Sunday, 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton.—A Lecture.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture in the Bull Ring on Saturday, July 6, at 7 o'clock, and from Monday until Friday, at 7.30 p.m.

BURNLEY MARKET.—Sunday, 3.15, Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-op Street, Chester-le-Street): Saturday, July 5, at 8.0, Outdoor Lecture—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Balloch. Meet at Queen Street Station at 11 o'clock prompt.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) Branch N.S.S. (corner of High Park Street and Park Road): Thursday, July 10, at 8. Messrs. A. Jackson, D. Robinson and J. V. Shortt. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale. Sunday, July 6, a Picnic will be held on the shore at Waterloo. Meet at South Road Station, Waterloo, about 2.30 p.m. Own refreshments to be brought.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7.0, Mr. J. C. Keast—A Lecture. Chairman, Mr. J. T. Brighton. Literature on sale.

WHEATLEY LANE.—Monday, 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton.—A Lecture.

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