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

**Views and Opinions.**

**Bishops and Bunkum.**

We have not yet read the Report of the Lambeth Conference, but the Encyclical Letter issued with copies of the Resolutions submitted to the Conference are enough to show the general nature of what took place. And the proceedings are pitiable enough in all conscience. Three hundred and seven Bishops assembled from all parts of the earth. Each of them asserts that he was specially called by God Almighty—whether on account of his wisdom or the reverse is not stated—to the post he occupies; each of them will assert that he is guided by God in what he does, all assert collectively in the document just issued, that the Church to which they belong is “the trustee and repository of a revelation of God, given by Himself,” and yet there is not a single question with which the band of bishops dealt on which they can be said to have thrown any light, not a single thing which would not have gone on just as well had the bishops remained at home. And as to the rest of the world, well, one can safely say that a much greater interest was shown in the Test Match than in the proceedings of God’s representatives.

Three hundred and seven men picked out by God himself—for their intelligence or for want of it—trustees of a revelation from God himself, which they say they “are bound to transmit to others,” ought to have had some authoritative and some original message for the world. But after weeks of praying and talking and “wrestling with the Lord,” all they can do, is to give a timid assent to things that are already actual facts, and agree with conclusions that no one outside the Church questions. What they do say is that:—

In view of the enlarged knowledge gained in

modern times of God’s ordering of the world, and the clearer apprehension of the creative process by which he prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ, there is urgent need, in the face of many erroneous conceptions, for a fresh presentation of the Christian conception of God.

On which all that one need remark is that the “erroneous conceptions” are those that were authoritatively laid down by the Church, and that “the enlarged knowledge” of the world has been gained, not by the revelation of which the Church is the trustee, but by methods alien to the Christian Church, and by men who for the most part had to fight the Church to secure a hearing. Which leaves one wondering whether the world would be any the worse if the 307 were suddenly to disappear into the ether, and the Church and its revelation relegated to a museum of antiquities.

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**Birth Control.**

A great deal of attention will be paid to the pronouncement of the Conference on the subject of Birth Control. But here the gallant 307 has only given a timid sanction to a practice that has received its justification long ago from all liberated minds, and is now so universally practiced, both within and without the Church, that nothing but the asinine gravity of a congregation of bishops could stand discussing it as though anyone was waiting for their permission to act in accordance with what is plain common-sense. But by 193 to 67, the Conference decided that conception control might be practised for good and sufficient reasons—which, unless married couples are to get permission of a parson, means “do as you darn well like.” But the Conference hopes conception control will not become a general practice—that is it hopes that the practice will not become general.

In passing, it may be noted that the *News Chronicle*, which in spite of its change of name, retains its Christian characteristics, congratulates itself that its campaign of a year ago concerning Birth Control has been crowned with success. The occasion was an invitation to a number of eminent men to write in its columns on the subject. But both the *News Chronicle* and the Conference is a trifle late. Victory in the Birth Control campaign was gained nearly two generations ago as a result of the historic fight of Bradlaugh and Besant. That contest was, it may also be noted, a continuation of the fight inaugurated over a century ago by another Freethinker, Richard Carlile. From beginning to end, the education of the public in this question, and the right to disseminate cheap publications on the subject, were carried on by Freethinkers. After the Bradlaugh-Besant fight, the possibility of preventing the dissemination of information on conception control became impossible; propaganda became safe, and being safe others than avowed Freethinkers



became its advocates, with a complete ignoring of those who had won for them the right of free speech. In this respect the history of Birth Control has followed the main lines of the history of many other reforms.

It is true that the revelation which God has given the Church is a very elastic one. It can vary between the "Be fruitful and multiply" of the old Bible to the celibate ideal of the New Testament, and on to the characterization of marriage as a legalized adultery of the Early Church. All the same it is strange that the larger views of God's working should be so continuously forced upon the Church by Freethinkers. Perhaps one of these days the same pressure will lead Christians to discover that part of God's revelation is that the idea of God is pure illusion.

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#### Clotted Bosh.

Three hundred and seven Bishops, gathered from all parts of the globe, representing the cream of the wisdom of the English Church, called by God to be where they are because of their special mentality, and as a result—a bundle of commonplaces and futilities that will leave things exactly where they were. They talk of "Christ's standard of marriage." But what is "Christ's standard of marriage?" He was not married himself. He said that while the children of this world marry and give in marriage, they who would inherit the next world neither marry nor are given in marriage. In the New Testament as a whole there is a striking absence of teaching concerning the family, and no recognition whatever of the socializing and humanizing value of family life. A phrase of that kind can only be intended as food for fools. The Bishops inform the world that "divorce is unnatural," but so are lawn sleeves, and dog-collars, and gaiters, since in a state of nature these are as non-existent as divorce. Another contribution to our historical knowledge is that "Empires have perished before now because the dry rot of laxity and corruption in home life set in." Again, we should be under an obligation to the Bishops, or to anyone else, for information as to the Empire that came to an end from that cause. Perhaps the knowledge came to the Bishops as part of the revelation God gave the Church.

The Conference announces its awareness "of the extent to which the very thought of God seems to be passing away from the minds and hearts of many in even nominally Christian nations," but lest this should discourage anybody too much, it is followed with the soothing remark that there is not a revolt against the Gospel, but only against the presentation of the Gospel—which is a bit of a reflection on God Almighty for his not having, when he gave the Church his revelation, seen to it that the men he gave it to were capable of presenting it properly. The Encyclical letter proceeds, "We cannot, and we would not, blind ourselves to the fact that a large number of the younger men and women of to-day (including many of the most high-minded) are alienated from the Church and from organized religion," but in case this should displease the more old-fashioned folk, who like to think of the non-Christian as wallowing in vice, there is as a set-off against the "high-minded" who do not believe, the statement, "We know but too well that the root of the failure to behold . . . is sin; that what we have to deal with is, primarily not imperfect thinking, but evil wills." So if so many of the leading thinkers of to-day and yesterday do not accept the revelation God has given to the Church, this is not because they cannot rise to the clear thinking of these 307 Bishops, but because of their sin and evil wills. If they were only as good as the Bishops they would believe at once. There does not seem anything very

new about *that* statement. Slander in the name of Christ and him crucified is just about as old as Christianity.

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#### More Bunkum.

Much more might be cited of just about the same intellectual character. There is, for example, the declaration that the government of one race by another can only be justified when the highest welfare of the subject race is the constant aim of the government. Certainly! Germany, Spain, France, England, America, have never governed a race yet save for its benefit. If anyone doubts this they need only read the statements made by the government of each country, and note the approval of the Christian clergy in each case. Or the delightful statement with respect to war, that peace will only be achieved when international relations are controlled by religious and ethical standards. Meanwhile, the clergy of the Established Church will go on blessing battleships, encouraging military parades, and when war does break out, provide sermons to prove that the war is God's war, and that the wickedness of the other party has forced the war upon us.

I may return to the subject after reading the full report, but for the present it is not too much to say that if any three hundred educated men had been picked out of the street haphazard, and asked to draw up a report dealing with the social issues raised at the Lambeth Conference, they would have produced a document that would have been intellectually more respectable. Outside the Church I do not imagine for a moment that anyone will give five minutes serious consideration to what the 307 have to say. There is indeed not a single subject raised in which general educated thought is not well in front of the conclusions reached by the Bishops. They have nothing to say that is worth listening to on any subject that is of real importance to mankind. They did well to hold their meetings in private. They would have shown greater acumen had they kept the reports of their proceedings equally secret.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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### Watson's Way.

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"Song is not truth, not wisdom, but the rose  
Upon truth's lips, the light in wisdom's eyes."

Wm. Watson.

"I claim no place in the world of letters, I am, and will be, alone, as long as I live and after."—Landor.

THE exclusion from the Laureateship of William Watson was an undeserved slight of the foremost of contemporary poets. Official recognition apart, nothing is more gratifying in these days of exaggerated and bubble reputations than to note the steady path along which Watson's fame has advanced. He owes his good fortune solely to the sterling merit of his work, for no one has done less to advertise it. Those who look back to the best reviews of the past generation will be surprised to perceive how noiselessly his verse has crept into the hearts of lovers of real literature.

No one can read these poems from *The Prince's Quest*, published half a century ago, to the collected edition of his writings, without being struck with the amount of work of the essential classical quality, of which there can be no question. To begin with, they are a golden treasury of jewelled aphorisms. Take, for example, the following felicities of expression:—

"The mystery we make darker with a name."  
"Not in vague dreams of man forgetting men,  
Nor in vast morrows losing the to-day."



"Now touching goal, now backward hurled  
Toils the indomitable world."  
"And set his heart upon the goal,  
Not on the prize."

The most austere of poets, he always sings with dignity on matters of high moment. It is not too much to say that *Wordsworth's Grave*, *The Tomb of Burns*, *In Laleham Churchyard*, and *Shelley's Centenary*, will be linked indissolubly with the memory of those great ones they celebrate, so penetrating is the insight into the genius of each. Maybe, Watson's finest effort in this direction was his *Lachrymæ Musarum*, which made so noble a stir when Tennyson died. It must rank as the noblest elegaic poem we have had for many years, for the great theme of august death was handled right worthily.

In nothing, perhaps, is Watson's genius so bright as in his description of Nature. When we recall what Catullus, what Lucretius, what Wordsworth, what Meredith, what innumerable poets have sung in praise of Nature, we might well despair of hearing a new note. But Watson holds his own. Here is a picture of a commonplace scene:—

"Where, on the tattered fringes of the land,  
The uncounted flowers of the penurious sand  
Are pale against the pale lips of the sea."

How fine, in its way, is the following sea piece:—

"I beheld the waters in their might  
Writhe as a dragon by some great spell curbed  
And foiled; and one lone sail; and over me  
The everlasting taciturnity;  
The august, inhospitable, inhuman night,  
Glittering magnificently unperturbed."

Above all, Watson's humanity is beyond question. In *The Purple East* and *A Year of Shame*, he impeached Abdul the Damned with real passion. Was ever tyrant attacked in such sonorous lines, with such sinewy rhetoric, sounding declamation, pictorial richness? These sonnets, written under the stress of emotion, echoed in the heart and memory of the men who read them. For Watson never lacked courage, witness his *Freethought*, "four square to all the winds that blow." It is playful in *The Eloping Angels*, a satire in the saucy Byronic manner, and it is serious in *The Unknown God*:—

"A god whose ghost in arch and aisle  
Yet haunts his temple—and his tomb;  
But follows in a little while  
Odin and Zeus to equal doom;  
A god of kindred seed and line:  
Man's giant shadow, hailed divine."

In a fine sonnet, addressed to Aubrey de Vere, the poet, he expressly voices negation:—

"Not mine your mystic creed; not mine in prayer  
And worship, at the ensanguined cross to kneel."

In one of his latest volumes *The Man Who Saw*, Watson wrote on the subject of the World-War. It is a tribute to his powers to say that he is neither rhetorical nor dull. Compared to Austin's later crudities, Kipling's hysterics, and the tin-trumpets of minor poetasters, the dignified lines are, at least, readable. Few real poets could write about politics, and remain poets. Even Swinburne and Tennyson, living in an era of greater men, did not do this thing with impunity, and their political verse represents but the excrements of their genius.

The trouble is that it is well nigh impossible at present for a man to write exactly what he thinks, as a man, about men in authority, and yet print what he writes. Recall Swinburne's fiery sonnets on the persecution of the Jews in Russia, and the questions asked in Parliament concerning the prosecution of the author. It is this sort of thing that makes political poetry possible, but improbable, and gives point to the gibe that there is less freedom in Britain under the Guelfs than in ancient Rome under the Cæsar's.

Watson's singing days are nearly over, for he has passed his seventy-second birthday. In his time he has given us of his best, and that is the highest kind of poetry. Unlike his younger rivals, who elect to carve cherrystones, he has chosen to hew granite. He is one of the singers of the English race who has held his ear close to the movements of the modern world, and brought away with him some sounding echoes of its music. This is a very different kind of writing from the banjo-Byronics indulged in by young University men, and other elegant triflers, who cannot write limericks without a stammer. For it is well to remind these cross-word competitors that, in the last analysis, noble writing is based on noble thinking, and that all else is as ephemeral as thistle-down.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Morning Twilight of Science

MODERN indebtedness to the prehistoric races who laid the foundations of physical science is rarely realized, much less acknowledged. As Frazer has always insisted, the magical practices of the uncivilized constituted their philosophy, and served them in place of that partly unified knowledge which we term contemporary science.

Emergent man's speculations concerning life and death must have been influenced by his mode of existence, as well as by his particular environment. Differences of outlook are traceable, but every savage stock displays a deep and permanent interest in life and, above all, in its grim companion death.

So perplexing did mortality appear that lowly peoples till this day assign man's decease to the sinister agency of sorcery or magic. No one dies a natural death, and the execution of those who evilly contrive the ending of life prevails throughout the savage world. But even when death and decay were plainly apparent, the departed came back in dreams to the survivors. The misunderstood phenomena of visions and dreams; the puzzling manifestations of epilepsy, catalepsy, and other morbid states, with the mystifying echoes and shadows everywhere in evidence all contributed their quota to the spiritualistic philosophy of primitive mankind. Spectres and goblin entities innumerable, which bemuse the undisciplined mind of the savage become the subjects of adoration, worship, or appeasement.

Some of these weird spirits were friendly in disposition, but most were regarded with doubt and misgiving. Hence the elaborate and costly burial ceremonies common to all stages of human culture from the lowest to the highest. Some races cremated their dead, not for hygienic reasons, but to preclude their reappearance among the living. Others carefully preserved the remains by embalming the corpse, presumably with the desire to gain the deceased's good will. The preservation of the skeleton, again, incidentally served to teach the truths of anatomy, while physiology profited by the observations occasioned in determining the cause of death.

In his fine monograph *The History of Biology* (Kegan Paul, 1929), Erik Nordenskiöld opines that: "Men learnt to note the heart-beat and to connect life with its continuance or cessation, and thus the heart itself was regarded as the organ of life. Breathing was also observed to be an essential condition of life, and in particular the deep expiration which indeed so often attends the actual moment of death gave rise to the idea of life as having something of the nature of air, being dependent upon the respiratory organs and leaving the body through them. In



medieval church paintings this belief reappears in a particularly naive manner: the soul of the dying is seen to leave the body in the form of a little child creeping out through the mouth. Likewise the words of the biblical story of the creation to the effect that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life testifies to the same kind of idea."

Early man was ever confronted with animal enemies. Some he hunted, and magical means were employed to secure man's safety, or to obtain them as food. Certainly the folk tales at all times bear witness to the fear, interest and wonder of man in relation to lower animal life. Totemism displays the adoption of animal kindred, where the ancestor of the tribe is said to have been an alligator, a lion, or a bear. This suggests anxiety to exist on terms of amicable relationship with animals. The guardian spirit of the people is frequently an animal. Certain creatures are deemed sacred. Animal worship prevailed among the most refined races of antiquity and traces of zoolatry persist among the rustics of Catholic Europe. Doubtless the close kinship assumed by aboriginal races between man and the lower organisms awakened interest in their habits, and thus contributed to the genesis of the natural history sciences. Moreover, the minute inspection of the internal organs of animals utilized for purposes of divination made men familiar with their skeletal and visceral structures.

The slaughter of wild and domesticated creatures for provender or for sacrifice served to increase knowledge. The surgery of the savage, originating from endeavours to palliate or heal accidental injuries, expanded knowledge of anatomy.

All maladies were once attributed to evil spirits. To the savage a supernatural causation was essential for all the ills to which flesh is heir. The sufferer was afflicted by wizardry or some other form of sinister influence. This delusion flourished in Babylonia, Egypt, Greece and Rome, and survives to-day. Some of the blackest and most deplorable pages of Christian history relate to the superstition of demonology and witchcraft. Nor is this baleful delusion extinct even in England, for it lingers in the more benighted districts of Devonshire, and retains the allegiance of many devotees in rural Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Everywhere in savagery the dawn of what was destined to become medical science may be discerned in the magical rites and ceremonies conducted for the purpose of alleviating or remedying the evils sent by the incensed spirits. These ghosts of the dead employ the potent spells of sorcery against mankind. In consequence it becomes imperative to utilize the arts of spellbinding to frustrate their evil propensities. But even so, men slowly gained experience of the outbreak and development of disease, and the more thoughtful and intelligent medicine-men and chiefs began to note the connexion of cause and consequence in human ailments. A crude physiology and pathology resulted, while another advance was made when the magicians, utilizing plant life in their enchantments, observed the remedial and poisonous properties of their herbs and simples. Thus a rude but useful pharmacology was evolved. Knowledge thus acquired would tend to be treasured by sorcerers and priest-magicians. This enhanced their reputation for holiness and wisdom with the common people.

As the centuries sped on the law of the division of labour asserted itself. The necromantic and kindred rites became the province of the priest, while independent lines of inquiry pursued by natural investigators, passing through various phases in Babylonia, Egypt, China, India, Greece and Rome paved the path for that marvellous birth of scientific and philo-

sophical genius which made immortal that tiny Greece of old. For the mental power of the Greeks did not arise *de novo*. Hellas became the mouthpiece and the eternal monument of those unrecorded earlier students of Nature who lived and laboured in Africa and Asia. But more than any other race, the Greeks, and notably those of Athens, emancipated themselves most completely from supernaturalistic and mystical misconceptions. They were brave and noble pioneers and made a permanent impression on their Roman successors.

With the fall of Rome and the triumph of barbarism and religion, intellectual darkness as sombre as death or night descended upon Europe. For centuries the light of science was preserved in Europe by the Moslems in Spain alone. Then with the reawakening of Catholic Christendom from its dogmatic slumber, natural truth slowly spread from the Iberian Peninsula and Italy to the rest of Europe. The ancient Greek manuscripts were in part recovered. Philosophy and science were reborn. The groundwork laid by the Greeks was utilized so that the scaffoldings of a scientific edifice might be made secure. After a long and bitter conflict men of science were at last free to utter the truth, as the fearless pronouncements of many modern thinkers bear witness.

Yet a giant's task still awaits the hands of science. A truly humanistic physical and social science remains the supreme desideratum. The crowning glory of the application of organized knowledge will be the development of a serene civilization in which the more serious economic anomalies of modern life have been mastered, and the reign of political and social justice established among men.

T. F. PALMER.

## The Criterion of Atheism.

WHAT exactly is it that constitutes an Atheist?

If one had to decide whether a man were an Atheist or not, I suppose the usual way would be to ask him, "Are you an Atheist," to which he might reply in the affirmative or negative. And this would be the correct method of obtaining eminently unsatisfactory results.

A better way would be to ask a series of entirely different questions, without mentioning the word Atheism at all. A still better way would be to study him behaviouristically;<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, watch his behaviour. And in order to gain really certain information we should need to be able to "look into his mind." But the behaviouristic method would yield very useful data.

The best study of our subject would be guided by questions such as: Does he systematically kneel down and pray to God? Is his prayer accompanied by the mental state known as expectation? Does he look for an answer to his prayer? Does he live in accordance with the doctrine of an after-life? Does he refrain from stealing on account of the terrors of Hell? Does he support his children in the hope of a heavenly reward? Does he observe the Sabbath under the impression that he is thereby ensuring a place among the Chosen? Does he privately think it essential to attend Church on Good Friday morning in preparation for enjoying a football match in the afternoon? And so forth.

Basing our verdict on the answers to the above we could then approach him, not with the question, "Are you an Atheist?" but with the statement, "You are

<sup>1</sup> This does not imply that I unreservedly accept Behaviourism.



an Atheist," or "You are a Theist," as the case might be. We should not be arguing with him. We should be telling him.

I wonder how far wrong it would be to assert that in the majority of cases a verdict of Atheism would be returned. Imagine the consternation of the British nation on being confronted with the headline in its morning press, "We are living lives of Atheism!" And yet the likely truth is that the dominant popular philosophy of the day is pragmatic Atheism.

The question arises, if the man we have specified is an Atheist in practice, why not in theory too? Why does he profess to believe in God? The answer is simple. He does not believe. He acquiesces.

Another point occurs. Is he to be admired for having overthrown the faith of his childhood? Or is he to be censured for his intellectual laziness? Or both? Shall we applaud his declaration of independence against priestcraft? Or shall we condemn his passive attitude in permitting it to burden the finances and shackle the intellect of his country? Or both?

To us the whole business emphasizes the importance of the case for secular education. We conclude with a comparison.

In England the child is told to believe in God, etc., and is told what to do to please God. In later years he may live a life which leaves God out of account altogether. But he would not think of questioning the existence of God, and might not even dispute the privileges of the Church. His belief has given way to acquiescence.

In Russia the child's teaching is pragmatic Atheism (Theism is not refuted, but God is not an object of reference). At eighteen the Russian youth may take up Theism if he wishes. He is then able to ask himself: Is my belief an improvement? I already know what life is without a God; is life with one a more workable proposition? Does "God" add anything? Does it supply a want? Are heaven and hell greater incentives to virtue? Does "God" respond? And so on.

In other words, he would be properly equipped for testing Theism as a working hypothesis.

The moment secular education is established the National Secular Society will see realized one of its biggest ambitions—though even then I suppose it will need looking after.

G. H. TAYLOR.

### Sky Pilots.

WHAT with Kate Pickard and Lord Mayor of Leeds,  
Lay preachers both, with large but shallow minds,  
Out-bulging with bedevilment and creeds,  
Their fustian fury not illumines, but blinds!  
The darkness deepens, and we fear the worst,  
The soul is baffled and the sore heart bleeds,  
Their minds, in childhood have been poison'd first;  
Now choke the wheat, and propagate the weeds.  
A Man must worship! says the lady. Why?  
Where does she get such nonsense from withal?  
We would not dare: or rather, dare to die,  
Than utter such a puerile "parrot-call."  
The Lord Mayor says that we're too secular;  
We lack religious base and inspiration,  
With "LEEDS" across his soul, writ specular,  
For hours, he weeps for Leeds in tribulation.  
We're sorry for the gentleman's affliction:  
Would strongly recommend him to confine  
His soul to Labour, and without restriction  
To his devotion, let him weep and whine.  
Why, let the stricken dears go weep and bleat,  
Worship their image with feet of clay;  
Still, some must watch and all must sleep and eat,  
Therefore Drink! And be merry while you may!

B. L. BOWERS.

### The Spirit of the Jesuits.

My dictionary defines the word "Jesuit," as a "member of a famous religious order, the Society of Jesus: a crafty or insidious person, an intriguer."

That being so I welcomed Rene Fulop-Miller's book *The Power and Secret of the Jesuits*, published by Putnam's, at one guinea.

To be sure the book does not tell us anything about the secret of the Jesuits, but it does about the power . . . power which, let it be said at the outset, exists no longer.

Indeed the book might well have been called the Failure of the Jesuits, for if ever any organization had such mighty falls after such remarkable rises, I have yet to hear of it.

When reading the book I marked hundreds of passages, but should need several issues of the *Freethinker* to comment on them.

The first part of the book deals with the spirit of Jesuitism, and explains the book-keeping method adopted by the Jesuits of making entries regarding their sins, and gradually watching how day after day their sins grew less.

But the real spirit of Jesuitism is given away on page 17, where the author says "The Jesuits have been true to their principle of always adapting themselves to given circumstances." Throughout the book one finds references to how the Jesuits altered their methods according to the circumstances in which they found themselves . . . there is none of that proud proclaiming of beliefs which marks out such men as the early Freethinkers.

The story of the conversion of Ignatius Loyala is well told but unconvincing. We all know those great lights which suddenly illumine the world, but not all of us, seeing visions of three organ keys would be convinced that this was the Holy Trinity, nor that a lighted sphere a little larger than the sun was Jesus Christ.

His whole life was a series of miracles, according to himself. He wanted to enter Venice, but a strict quarantine prevented strangers finding their way into the plague-fearing city. Ignatius went to sleep, and when he woke was allowed to enter without hindrance. This was the miracle, but in fact the quarantine had been lifted for a day because of a fair which was attracting traders.

When the Society was founded the members wanted to distinguish themselves above all other monks. They succeeded, but not in the way they intended, for what they considered noble deeds seem to us merely filthy. Thus Rodriguez spent the night in a hospital at Ravenna, and the bed sheets offered to him were wet with the pus of a sick man.

Rodriguez could not help shuddering, but to punish himself he laid himself naked in a bed in which a man had just died of pediculosis, and which still swarmed with vermin. Xavier went even further, for when he felt squeamish at having to clean out an abscess he put his self-control to the extreme test by thrusting his hand covered with loathsome putrescence into his mouth.

Theological Perplexities.

In those days men discussed gravely the most ridiculous questions and problems. It was early seen that if man was a free agent, then God was not omnipotent, and if God was governor of even the slightest emotion in the human soul, then man need not trouble to look after himself for God had planned out his life. The professors discussed these and similar matters, and invented all kinds of ingenious explanations. But as theory after theory was expounded the professors themselves were bewildered, and so professors of Louvain had to send messages to the Pope asking, "with all due reverence to be informed of the position in which the Holy Father desired the comma to be inserted."

Thus a Pope's comma caused a quarrel, and in reply to this request the Pope sent the professors a copy of the bull in question without a single comma in it at all!

This left the quarrel open, and then along came another genius, Luis Molina, who explained that in certain circumstances God would grant man that grace of faith which was essential for his salvation. This grace would



be granted if the free will of a man told him that he wanted it. "Divine help was necessary to give an impulse to the act of volition, but when the impulse was given it was a matter for man to decide whether he would accept of the heavenly grace."

But Molina thought that this rather curtailed the glory of God's omniscience, so he added that although God gave this freedom of choice, God knew exactly how every human being would behave from birth to death, and therefore knew which men would choose the grace and which would reject it.

After discussions and meetings lasting several years Molina was condemned for his heresy, but a political incident saved him and his fellow Jesuits from disaster.

In the section devoted to the moral philosophy of the Jesuits there is a great deal about the manuals which told confessors how to deal with all sorts of "crimes." These crimes ranged from showing too much flesh when wearing dance dresses to murder, and debated such matters as whether it was right for merchants to sell cheap knives and mirrors to ignorant savages at high prices, or whether a prisoner was justified in making his warders drunk if he wanted to escape.

Outside their own country the Jesuits rapidly rose to power, and had magnificent opportunities in almost every country in the world, but they over-reached themselves and were expelled from every country where they were established, and were suppressed as a society by a Pope in 1773.

As missionaries the Jesuits explored and surveyed Mexico, Canada, Brazil, Tibet and the Mississippi, but everywhere their "holy cunning" ultimately led to their downfall.

They had many converts, of course, but the converts simply exchanged one set of superstitions for another, and always returned to their original belief sooner or later.

Indeed the author must have had his tongue in his cheek when he described how the converted Japanese accepted Christianity.

"Instead of constantly pronouncing the name of the god Amida as heretofore, the neophytes baptized by Xavier were just as constant in the repetition of the names of Jesus and Mary. In place of the holy water in which the emperor had bathed his feet they honoured the holy water blessed by Xavier; instead of the Buddhist rosary they used the Catholic. Whereas formerly they had been wont to receive from their priests for money given in alms, pieces of paper on which they were assured that in another life the expended amount would be doubly and trebly returned, they were now just as eager to obtain Roman indulgences."

The Jesuits were expelled from Japan because a trader when asked why Spain ruled over so large a part of the earth said, "Our rulers begin by sending priests to the country they intend conquering. When the priests have converted a part of the people, troops are sent to join forces with the new Christians, and then the whole country is brought under the domination of the Spanish crown." Many of the priests were executed, many being crucified, a form of execution which the Japanese had learned from the sermons delivered by the Jesuits themselves.

In China part of the early success of the Jesuits was due to the fact that when the Emperor was in danger of being defeated in battle by the Tatars, the Jesuits taught the Emperor the truly Christian art of casting guns and training soldiers.

The book is well worth placing on the library shelf, for with its excellent bibliography and index it forms a reference library in itself to Jesuitism, and the Freethinker will find in its five hundred pages, plenty of support for his belief that religion has been the greatest brake on the progress of mankind which the world has ever known or is likely to know.

NECHELIES.

Labour rids us of three great evils: irksomeness, vice and poverty.—*Voltaire*.

The people never give up their liberties except under some delusion.—*Burke*.

## Lost or Found.

ONE night recently in our Ayrshire Gallilee, where miracles are still performed, I was standing in sinner's way marvelling at and lamenting the black art that can transform good coin into certain doubtful liquids, piously resolving to withstand the wiles of the wizard on my own scant cash as much as possible. Beside me was the village Carpenter, a sturdy, decent fellow, who, on some inspired impulse, magnanimous, or it may be just disgruntled, tapped me on the shoulder and asked for "one of those papers." The *Freethinker* being indicated, I made him a present of the first copy and accepted his order for the rest. It transpired that a worthy forbear of his had been fond of reading Foote and Ingersoll, and towards the end was rude to the clergy and died unrepentant. Ah, thought I, it runs in the blood; this is no sudden conversion, but an old fire coming to life again. Followed some weeks later a reprimand from the magician, and a later meeting with the missionary (my poor self). "Don't," said the carpenter, as a long bit of wood-lining wobbled on his shoulder, "don't send me any more of yon books—a lot a' d—d balderdash, just like John Bull—You're an Atheist," said he, "an Atheist!" You could a' knocked me down with a feather. Six weeks of the *Freethinker* and he had just discovered it taught Atheism. And yet some advocate a milder *Freethinker*! I am still puzzling out this psychology. So far the carpenter has not joined the Salvation Army, so I know not yet if he is lost or found.

A.M.

## Acid Drops.

The *Christian World* is responsible for the statement that when Mr. Ramsay Macdonald was leaving the Passion Play at Oberamargau one of the bystanders was heard to remark, "Peace is secure while that religious man remains in power." We should rather like to know from Mr. Ramsay Macdonald just what his religion is. He appears to have been striving of late to give the impression that he is some sort of a Christian. We imagine that his "religion" is of a very nebulous character, and would hardly command the support of many members of any of the Christian Churches. But in these days it does not pay the churches to be too critical, and any public man may capture them with vague phrases.

Some Christians really do learn. Thus, the Annual Address of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference points out that attacks on Christianity are now passing from an examination of its origin in history to a questioning of the reality of the experience which led people to believe it. We have been dwelling upon this point for well over thirty years, and are glad to see that its force is now admitted. Dealing with the historic truth of the Christian story is beside the point. We know that it is not true. There is only one question for serious discussion, and that is the cause and nature of the mental states which have led so many to believe in the truth of Christianity. When that is settled, everything is settled.

The *New Chronicle*, a Sunday-school weekly, reprints "with the greatest pleasure" and appreciation an article by "Candidus" of the *Daily Sketch*, on the "Need of the Sunday schools."

Some Sunday school superintendants have complained about parents sending infants of two or three years of age to the school, the argument of the parents being that the sooner the child starts at Sunday school the better. This might appear to indicate a very real interest in religion on the part of the parents. But, as a Sunday school expert points out, what the parents are really concerned about is getting a little peace and quietness on Sunday afternoons, and they merely regard the school as a nursery.



The Governor of Wandsworth Jail has invited the Rev. F. W. Jarry to address the prisoners on missionary work in India. Whereupon we wonder why the invitation was given, seeing that by no stretch of the imagination can missionary tales be classified as reformatory, instructive, educational, cultural, or even amusing. Still, they may, by the Governor, be regarded as a humane form of punishment.

"Prison," says the Recorder of Manchester, "is of no use as a reforming agency." The reason for this is, we suggest, that the persons responsible for prison treatment are still dominated by Christian notions concerning "sin" and punishment, human depravity and "wickedness," and other upside-down ideas which modern psychologists have no use for in their science. Quite naturally, the prison chaplain can be fitted in with that scheme of things. And quite naturally, also, prison will continue to be of no use as a reforming agency while such notions are held. Prison treatment will not improve greatly until it is less Christian and more scientific.

Four Jewish synagogues and 250 houses have been destroyed by fire at Borsa in Rumania. The fire is officially described as an accident. But many people declare that it is attributable to anti-Jewish agitators, inspired by the Christian religion of Love and Brotherhood. Just to disprove this suspicion, the Christian residents of Rumania, and of Borsa in particular, should organize a fund to help rebuild the synagogues and houses.

A passenger in any aeroplane, says Lady Elibank, should wear a parachute. Our Archbishops, looking for further evidence of the baneful penetration of Secularism into the affairs of life, should note the ungodly implication in this advice—Do not trust in the Lord. And we daresay any priest travelling by aeroplane is prepared to follow the advice and ignore the impious implication. This Secularism is infecting even the most pious.

The National Association of Boy's Clubs declares that "for half our boys the Street Gang is the only possible club." One may add that where a boys' club is available, it is often repellant to boys because of the hymn-singing and pious addresses invariably associated with it. What some philanthropist might well do is to start boys' clubs with a more wholesome and robust basis than that which is common to clubs organized for client-catching by the churches or chapels.

Flying is simple, says an airman. We can quite believe it. Does not the Bible record the fact that some holy men mastered the art of flying after they were dead, and then ascended into Heaven? There was also a certain man named Jesus, whose exploits at "looping the loop" are annually celebrated by the Christian Church.

Mr. T. W. Marriot, in a weekly journal, says that years ago, the religion taught to children was founded on fear; the morals were based on the idea that pleasures were sinful; and the great watchword "Duty" signified something hard and unpleasant. But all this has been changed during the past twenty years. Mr. Marriot omits to mention what has brought about this improvement. Obviously not the Churches. For the Bible still contains ample justification for that kind of religion, that basis of morals, and that notion of "Duty." What we can affirm is that it is the popular propaganda of militant Freethinkers which has contributed most towards this change. And society in general is considerably more wholesome mentally and morally for the improvement.

The Very Rev. D. S. Cairns, D.D., Principal of the Church of Scotland College, Aberdeen, has been talking about earthquakes in general and the Southern Italian one in particular. Dr. Cairns sees an earthquake as something surmounted by the Cross of Jesus, with the hand of a Benevolent Deity behind it, dealing out sorrow,

suffering, frustration of hopes and death, to make men and women better. The Very Rev. gentleman had in his audience some very irreverent men, one of whom asked him, if an earthquake had occurred at Dr. Cairns' home, destroyed it, and blotted out his family, would he have turned up at the meeting a better man? The Rev. Doctor seemed to think this was carrying an earthquake too far.

Dr. Cairns only raises a question, which has been raised after every earthquake, since Voltaire raised it after the earthquake of Lisbon. It was raised again after earthquakes in Italy, San Francisco, Messina, and Japan; the question of Cosmic Government. But why wait for an earthquake? What is an earthquake but the sudden multiplication of what goes on daily? What of the loss of lives by normal disease and sudden death by accident, in every part of the world, every instant of the day? Thousands of Italians, most of them Dr. Cairns' fellow Christians, patiently laboured in sowing and building, hoping for a measure of success and well being, in the endeavour to maintain their homes and feed their children. In a few minutes an earthquake spreads ruin and death around. Surely it would be a cruel and senseless mockery to tell those poor people, that their calamity came from the hand of a Benevolent Deity, to make them better men and women, and that those who had been killed had gone to a future life of unalloyed bliss, where there are neither earthquakes, nor death; a future life which they cannot possibly conceive from personal experience.

What guarantee have those people, or any people, that Dr. Cairns' Cosmic Governor, won't govern the doctor's next world, on the same old, bad lines, as here? Dr. Cairns is the exponent of a discredited and discreditable traditional creed, which affects to solace humanity by the disparagement of human life, as in itself a worthless thing; and by suggesting, as in this instance of the earthquake, that partial evil is universal good. To adopt Dr. Cairns' philosophy of life, is to adopt a cynical and ignoble estimate of humanity.

Fortunately the spirit of the audience showed that men are becoming more intent on the only life and the only world that they know anything about. Science has established the conception of Universal Natural Law; and not all the medicine-men or reverend doctors, can alter it one jot.

Writing to a Methodist paper on Sunday observance, a reader says he thinks it advisable to use in support of such observance a contention which is "broad and humane rather than legal." In local argument he has found this better than the "ultra-Sabbatarian" contention. We gather that our friend professes deep concern about Sunday labour, in the interests of Sunday workers. And he keeps in the background, as far as possible, the real religious argument that Sunday is a taboo day on which only religious matters are legitimate and on which to enjoy oneself is "wicked." This contemptible manoeuvre is typical of the modern Christian shuffler. He has discovered that the real religious contention makes no impression on people outside the churches, and so he falls back on a hypocritical shuffle to secure support for his pious attempts to interfere with other people's Sunday freedom and recreation. It is contemptible because he knows quite well that the hardship of Sunday employment can be removed quite easily by means other than that of compulsory Sunday closing.

According to a pious contemporary:—

The problem of general press publicity for the Church is one which bristles with difficulties, and on the whole the Church may fairly complain that it does not get a fair show, at any rate in the ordinary daily papers. Too often religion is dealt with in a sensational or "stunt" fashion, while the general routine work of the Church is more or less ignored.

What the Press is doing is to follow popular opinion.



The man-in-the-street ignores the Church and has a poor opinion of it. The Press reflects this attitude. Of course the popular papers serve up sermonettes and religious articles. But this is merely because the papers want to keep on the right side of their religious readers. For all that, the attitude of the Press is a good indication as to the low estimation religion and the Church is held in the public mind.

A weekly paper says that the members of the Cabinet of the Chinese Republic are mainly graduates of America, British and German universities, and :—

They are mainly men with a Christian outlook, trained under Christian auspices. Is it not significant that, while only one man in a thousand in China is a Christian, one man in six in the Central Political Council [or Cabinet] is a Christian, while several other members are Christian in sympathy and spirit.

Knowing that Christian writers have a penchant for terminological inexactitudes, we should like these alleged facts confirmed by some non-Christian Chinese authority, before we can appreciate how "significant" they may be. The probability is that they originated in the brain of a Christian missionary.

People have a way of going through life, says Mr. Norman Angell, with the most fundamental arguments turned upside down. Well, no one need be surprised at that. Has not the Christian Church been dominating people's minds for nearly two thousand years? The Church's fundamental ideas concerning man and human society and institutions are all upside down. They are not based on scientific observation and experiment, and scientific thinking. But on the crude guesses and speculations of a race of ancient shepherds in Palestine.

Three years ago Hugh Salmon, of St. Helens, was struck on the spine by a fall of roof in a mine. This year he was carried to Lourdes in order to be cured. On his return, in the same state as when he left, he was carried straight to a Liverpool hospital, and died ten days after admission. The Coroner's Court returned a verdict of accidental death. But why not "Died through God's neglect." To those who really believe in Lourdes, that is what it amounts to.

Bishop Charles Mrzena, of the Czecho-Slovak Orthodox Catholic Church, has been found guilty of conspiring to violate the Prohibition laws by diverting sacramental wine to "bootleg" channels, says Reuter. It was alleged by the prosecution that the bishop had made £8,000 a year from the traffic in wine, at the rate of a dollar a gallon. Bishop Mrzena went to the United States from Prague several years ago.

The Rev. Prebendary Carlile says that the meeting of so many Bishops at Lambeth to discuss the grave problems of the present day religion shows a desire to become a real power for good. Mebbe! But to a great many it will appear as though the real desire was to determine how much of the old myth may safely be retained in the face of what the general public *know*, and of what it suspects may be the whole truth.

Dante, in his time, had extensive and peculiar knowledge of hell. The place, so we are told, has improved of late, since it has been taken over by a prominent catering firm, but now, new terrors are added to it. Mr. Little, a District Justice in Dublin, when dealing with a complaint of noise, delivered himself as follows :—

There will be a particular department in Hades, and there will be nothing in it but jazz bands, gramophones, loud-speakers, and motor horns all going at the same time.

People who had these things in this world will be listening to them for all eternity.

A jazz band, is a form of Hell.

We trust that medieval-minded Catholics in our midst will not excommunicate Mr. Little for bringing hell up to date,

The *News Chronicle*, in a leaderette, accepts the next war in tones of resignation. It states :—

No one really knows what the reality will be like. The one thing certain about it is that it will bear no sort of resemblance to the imitation.

Well, the *News Chronicle* can set about the job of educating the public straight away; there is nothing to stop it. A few thousand Nonconformist divines might be induced to understand the causes of war instead of preaching about speculative matters. The causes of war are known; spots on the sun have nothing to do with the question.

In the absence of religion, says the *Manchester Guardian* "Society will waste itself in war, torture itself with hate, strangle itself with prejudice." It is strange that when once the word "religion" is used it appears to act as a toxin to everything sensible. It should be quite superfluous to point out that nothing in human society does so much to excite hatred and prejudice as does religion. The most religious societies are those in which these qualities flourish most, and they are the principal causes of their activity to-day. But where religion is concerned a writer appears to have a licence to act as though he were qualifying for an idiot asylum.

The following from the *Daily Express* :—

One of the best established facts in history is that old women once flew on broomsticks. Thousands of witnesses, as honest as any of us who are living to-day, swore to it. The matter was probed into in hundreds of courts by brains as subtle and experienced as any we have among us in the present year of grace and enlightenment. It was the accepted and unquestioned belief of millions who were certainly not greater fools than we of 1930. The moral is that facts are not always facts.

We wonder how many times we have used this illustration! As Lamb said of one writer, the *Freethinker* is damned good to steal from, but on no account must its name be mentioned.

The New Church of Canada has just issued a new hymn book, and with a view to remind the Lord of recent developments it has inserted a special hymn asking for the protection of those travelling by air. If the Bible is to be trusted God Almighty got frightfully angry once upon a time because he found people building a tower that would reach to heaven. That, however, was in pre-scientific days, and he may have thought they could get there, so that he should be under no misapprehension on that head to-day. But it is very thoughtful to remind him that people now travel by air, and will he please keep an eye on them. We suggest it is about time that something was done for motorists—and pedestrians.

The *Daily Telegraph*, August 9, publishes particulars of the will of Mr. Frederick Stokes, Hartington Road, Sherwood. The deceased was a business man, and attributes his success to the fact that he was kicked out of Sunday School. We publish, with pleasure, the following bequest made by him out of gratitude :—

£25 to the United Methodist Free Church, Palm-street, New Basford, "with my thanks that a hot-headed teacher in the Sunday school kicked me, literally, out of the school some fifty years ago, my crime being that I was talking to another boy, with the consequence (small thanks to him) that instead of being 'taught' by him, I set to work and studied hard on my Sundays, and thereby probably laid the foundations for such success as I have had in life.

This is a splendid unsolicited testimonial for favours received. The dead hand in this case has given a black-eye to Nonconformists.

The Lord must be very busy these days as the ecclesiastical robes of the Bishop of Kobe fell off the back of his motor-car and were lost.



## National Secular Society.

THE Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- R. ANTHONY.—Thanks for cutting. Young University students are apt to go in for some form of dissipation, and religion will get them into less ill-favour, but probably do more real harm, than anything else.
- H. MARTIN.—We presume that the reason why we hear no more about the killing of thousands of innocent priests in Russia for going to Church is that this particular lie is now worn too thin for even the credulous readers of the *Morning Post*.
- L.T.G.—You have been misinformed. Mr. Cohen has never at any time held any public discussion with the Rev. R. J. Campbell.
- J. PEARSON.—Sorry, but we cannot inform you as to your legal position in the matter you name.
- W.R.S.T.—We appreciate your position, and sympathize with your decision. It is a matter on which each must decide for oneself.

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.

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.

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

Dean Inge has created another disturbance in religious circles by suggesting that men condemned to death should be permitted to select their own form of death, and administer it, and also that he sees no wrong in a man stricken with a lingering disease committing suicide. The first suggestion will upset Christians, since it would deprive them of the gratification of the feeling for revenge, and the sadistic contemplation of an execution. In the latter suggestion Dean Inge is but following in the steps of another famous Dean of St. Pauls, whose "Declaration of that Paradox or Thesis that self-homicide is not so naturally sin that it may never be otherwise," was published at the close of the seventeenth century. But Donne was one of the masters of English speech, and wrote at a time when the Church still retained men of ability, and therefore, a little common sense from the pulpit was not so striking as it is to-day.

We confess to getting more amusement from abuse than we do from compliments, and we are indebted to the *Harrogate Herald* for the following:—

*The Foundations of Religion* is the text of a lecture delivered by Mr. Cohen before the Fellowship of Youth at Manchester College, Oxford, on April 21 of this year. It is published by the Pioneer Press (cloth 1s. 6d., paper 9d.). Once again the old, old arguments are put through their paces; most of them are fit matter for an undergraduate evening in the late 'nineties, when it was very much the mode to indulge in idol-breaking. Surely the author lags considerably behind the times when he observes: "Most believers in religion do not want to know what can be said against their beliefs, but only what can be said for them?" Are we really as stupid as Mr. Cohen imagines? Must Atheism claim all the brains? This is a stupid essay. It shows more mental arrogance, more downright intolerance, and a great deal more ignorance than we should receive from the most ultra-orthodox of our acquaintances.

Stupid, intolerance, out-of-date, mental arrogance, more ignorance than the most ultra-orthodox, what could one ask for more in any nice "derangement of epitaphs"? Someone or something must have upset the *Harrogate Herald*. Harrogate is a place where people go to drink the waters—and other things. But perhaps the notice is designed to get religious readers to buy the lecture. They certainly would not do so if they were told that the lecture was a deadly attack on religion. And we still believe that most religious people do not want to know the other side.

Everyman has invited readers who are parents to send an account of how they are educating their children as a preparation for the future. A London Freethinker, signing himself as "Polaris," sent the following:—

At the age of eight my boy asked me, "What do you say when you say your prayers?" and when I told him that I did not say any prayers at all, I had without fully realizing it, begun a relationship of complete openness between us which had led me far, both with him and his younger sisters; and which has convinced me that freedom of movement is quite as important for the mind as for the body in early years.

I share my agnostic view of life with my children, and I treat money and sex just as I treat health and food, namely as subjects for easy, casual, but accurate and honest talk as occasion arises. I cannot hope for the beginnings of sound judgment in children from any other course. They must know what we know, and learn what we have experienced, and hear what we think about religion, money and sex, if we are to prepare them adequately for life.

We are asked to announce that Mr. J. Clayton's debate at Crawshawbooth, arranged for August 22, has been postponed until August 29. Another debate with Mr. Clayton has been fixed for Accrington on September 6. These two debates should serve to introduce Freethought to a number of people who would not otherwise come into contact with it.



## God the Invisible Banker.

THE question has been put before: Can a convinced Socialist be a sincere believer in Christianity? The Socialists demand such a complete change in the social and economic system, that it is clear the human society they have in view is in all essential principles diametrically opposed to the existing system which is based on private property and private enterprise, and which in the Christian view is sanctioned, sustained and buttressed by the Christian God.

We cannot say that the reports of what happens in Parliament accurately reflect what is happening throughout the country. There can be no doubt that during the last thirty years appeals and arguments for a humanistic organization of society have had great effect. More people are now equipped intellectually to grapple with the great sociological problems; and a greater number of humanistic organizations testify to the increase of gentleness and unselfishness. These facts contain solace and satisfaction for Freethinkers who have been battling so long for the spread of knowledge without reservations. Lasting and beneficent reforms can only be brought about by spontaneous action on the part of the great mass of the common people. The policy of political adventurers—and particularly militarists—is to maintain contention and divisions among the common people because they know that the clear demand of an enlightened and united democracy is irresistible. Personally I think that public opinion is ripening for great organic and radical change in the social structure; and matters that once were regarded as outside the purview of Parliament are now being brought within it.

In a small and select company of abandoned Atheists, a discussion (clouded only by tobacco smoke) took place with the gist of the foregoing exordium as the text. The fiercest member of the company refused to agree that any rich man was a sincere Christian. If he were, he said, why didn't he demand that the Christian Church should revert to the communism it began with? No, the only God of the rich man who professed to be a Christian was gold.

"Ah," observed our laconic and licensed wag "there's an 'L' of a difference you know between God and gold."

But our fierce friend was not to be deflected. (I do not know whether he is a member of any Socialist body or not; but, if he is, its meetings are likely to derive ginger and electricity from his opinions). He contended that the adoration of gold was the most powerful factor in hindering social emancipation. It was childish, primitive, savage. And all sorts of expedients were resorted to by the Christian Churches to show that their prosperous members got their prosperity from God. Kentucky Christians might be fundamentalist in precept; but British Christians were fundamentalist in practice. Theologians in Britain were engaged in producing futile treatises on such mythical topics as the virgin birth, the miracles and the resurrection. Intellectually they were the real fellows with the muck rake typified in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The greater vision of humanity and of the universe afforded by the study of geology, botany, biology and astronomy escaped them as they grubbed away among the records of the fathers. "In the name of all that is sacred and secular," he exclaimed, "what in the world does it matter whether we can identify the person who wrote the Gospel according to John or not? Myriads of our fellow beings are existing and labouring under the most sordid conditions for the barest pittance—in reality they are slaves—while these rapid and unhelpful theo-

logical debates are proceeding. The professors and preachers of divinity, however, are all assured something even better than a living wage. Rich Christians see to that. They must have men of God to keep alive the old superstitions, and with the promise of mansions in the sky to keep the masses contented with the styes, hovels and rookeries in which they eke out a sordid life. It is all so much intellectual and emotional power run to seed and waste. If it could be hitched and harnessed to the stars instead of coiling itself in the musty and worm-eaten controversies of the old bad days, what could not be done to clear away the poverty and wretchedness of life? Ay the clerics and their constituents are badly in need of a "change of heart!" It pays them to enlarge upon the complexities, intricacies and difficulties of modern life which they themselves made. But after all the central principle of a good and happy as distinguished from a bad and miserable life is simple and easily grasped. Make humanity, and not gold, adorable. Common justice, common sense, common decency, require it.

"But all the time the stupid pursuit of personal gain and the feverish fear of personal loss grip the souls of so many! "With all thy getting get riches," is the maxim approved by the leaders of the Churches, and their allies the teachers of the dismal science. What evidence, even in 1930, is there that any considerable number of people accept the Ruskinian definition of wealth as healthy and happy people?

"The pessimists say you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's lug; and the traditionalists say what has been will be. What a poor, low, contemptible idea of the potentialities of human beings! Whatever its machinery of social or political organization, the country which has a large number of illiterate, poverty-stricken and degraded citizens has no title to be described as "civilized," whatever Christians may say. Ah, we are to have the poor with us always, are we? Three of the most religious countries in the world have each huge numbers of depressed unemployed men. And—"God's in his Heaven—all's right with the world!" What an infernal idea! And what a God! What an economic director and distributor to be cursed with! Isn't it high time that this invisible banker got the sack? A guinea-pig would be a better God than he!" Our fierce colleague was now really so fiery that most of our pipes were by this time put out and the adjournment was moved by our laconic and licensed wag, who, it is to be hoped, will next night contribute to our symposium some new epigrammatic gems for the coining of which he is famed.

IGNOTUS.

## The Legend of Aleister Crowley.

### A FAIR PLEA FOR FAIR PLAY.

THE portly and voluminous poet, mystic, magician, explorer, scholar and publicist, Aleister Crowley, here has his Legend\* given to the world before the trifling formality of his death.

It is at once the strength and the weakness of this decorously-tempered panegyric that it is the work of an instructed advocate rather than of an impartial judge.

In considering, criticizing and appraising this unique and bulky figure we have to bear in mind—and it is only fair that we should thus bear in mind—the character, or rather the characteristics, of his countrymen.

Critics of life so diverse as Jonathan Swift, Dean of

\* *The Legend of Aleister Crowley*. By P. R. Stephensen, Mandrake Press, 2s. 6d.



St. Patrick's, and Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay, have in their several ways noted the proneness of the English mob to single out an object of hatred, and to howl at that unfortunate figure until they have either slain it, or cast it into the limbo of unreturning exile.

For us Freethinkers, it should suffice to recall the names of certain of our own heroes and martyrs who have thus enjoyed the favour of this distinguishing mark of approbation at the stone-filled hands and patriotic voices of their grateful fellow-countrymen, who never forgive genius, originality, or independence of thought. Byron, Shelley, Richard Carlile, Charles Bradlaugh, are names among a score or two that might be given that indicate what are the real feelings of the man in the street towards his saviours and benefactors. Mob psychology is an inferiority complex magnified to the *n*th power; and in England, at least, there are not enough people of exalted temperament to prevent the martyrdom of the "sports" and leaders among mankind.

At one time we knew Aleister Crowley pretty well, as is plain from this book; and although in some respects he was perhaps "not quite nice to know," as the slang phrase goes, we do not think that it is quite fair to charge him with murder, cannibalism, black magical practices, moral aberrations, treachery, drug-gery; as is the custom amongst the cunninger and more degraded jackals of Fleet Street. We know something of journalists, but we know very few members of the newspaper craft who would not sell themselves for twenty guineas down if it were quite "safe." Rigid moralists, like the good Horatio Bottomley and the Almost-Reverend James Douglas, it seems to us, really protest too much in their religious and disinterested efforts to keep England pure and holy; and for this reason, differing as we do from very much that is taught and advocated by Aleister Crowley, we respectfully decline to join the howling mob of interested pietists who every now and then raise the wind in the Silly Season by shrieking with inspired vituperation at the poet under discussion.

If a tithe of the charges brought against Crowley be true, he should be exiled from every country in the world, and, after the judicious application to his person of various Chinese tortures, he should be hanged, drawn and quartered first, broken on the wheel afterwards, and the remains sown with salt before being cast into the infernal pit; but somehow we have an instinct against accepting the unsupported assertions of the professional moralists of our popular journals, and we do not know that Mr. Douglas, Mr. Bottomley, and the lesser lights of cheap journalism have ever proved their case up to the hilt. In these circumstances we venture publicly to record our opinion that the poet might be allowed to follow his path in comparative peace until something definitely criminal is proved against him, when the police, no doubt, will be quite capable of dealing with the case. Crowley is at least as important a figure as the late D. H. Lawrence and Mr. James Joyce, both unquestionably men of genius; and when we remember the kind of thing said about these artists in our cheaper prints, we hesitate to acquiesce in the Sunday Newspaper verdict on Aleister Crowley.

Mr. Stevensen gives an amusing and interesting, if one-sided and partial, account of his subject; and the book will have its place when the history, literary and social, of the early twentieth century comes to be written.

A final note; we ourselves differ profoundly on many points—on most points, indeed—from Crowley; but we do not see why he should not have a fair show; this notice therefore is written solely in the interests of fair play, by one who is in no respect a follower or

partisan. It is a plea for ordinary human toleration, addressed by a Freethinker to his fellow Freethinkers. Those of them who feel inclined to quarrel with our estimate of Crowley's genius might inform themselves by glancing at his latest published book, *Confessions*. This work, now in course of publication, is, in our considered judgment, the greatest autobiography that the world has ever seen. We have not the least doubt that posterity will endorse this finding.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

## Fables Founded on Fact.

### THE GOLDEN GIBBET.

GOOD AFTERNOON, girls and boys! Good afternoon children! I am now going to tell you a frightfully thrilling story. How do we begin? Let me see—ha, hum—oh yes, of course—how stupid of me to forget.

Well, once upon a time about a couple of thousand years hence—

Oh! Before I say anything more, I had better make it quite clear that the characters in this story are *entirely* imaginary, and that if the names happen to belong to or resemble that of some real person; this must be regarded as *pure* coincidence. Absolutely pure.

Once upon a time, then, there was a very intelligent race of people called the Thirstians. They had no Superstitions at all. None whatever. But, of course, they had a Religion. I mean to say, they couldn't have been intelligent without a Religion, could they? Yes, of course not.

Well, the chief God of their Religion was called the Lord Why-zed, and the chief Symbol of their Religion was the Gibbet. This Symbol was very Holy, and a great many Thirstians used to wear it round their necks or on the front of their motor-cars like those things we call Mascots. Sometimes they would have a little figure of a man dangling from the Gibbet, which made it still more Holy. It was then called a Gibbifix. Why was it called a Gibbifix, you ask? Well, don't you think that the word Gibbifix sounds much more holy than just plain Gibbet? Quite right; I don't either.

Anyhow, this Religion was so old that everyone had completely forgotten what connexion there was between the Lord Why-zed and his Gibbet. Which was, perhaps, just as well. Because in the Good Old Times, when Thirstians *did* remember the connexion, they were always finding Gibbets, or Bits of Gibbets, which the finders declared was the One, True Gibbet—or a Bit of It, as the case may be. And in order to test their respective claims quite a number of the poorer or madder Thirstians were strung up on to the respective Gibbets, or to more modern contraptions which had Bits of the One True Gibbet stuck in them somewhere. This, of course, was all right for the other Thirstians, but it wasn't great fun for the poorer and madder ones, was it? No, perhaps not.

Now let's get on with the story. The Lord Why-zed was, as Gods go, not half a bad sort. Believe me, or believe me not, he was just like a great big Thirstian himself, only a good deal thirstier. And all he really cared about was to be left in peace with his Ukelele Choir and a foaming pot of Celestial Nectar.

Occasionally he would give a hurried glance at his wonderful Creation. It is reported on good authority that, as a result of such inspections, he would be heard to mutter: "G. Whyzz! Wot-a-botch!" But these words (if words they be) are in the nature of a metaphysical mystery, so they have never been really understood by anyone, though many of his



priests have claimed to. They are part of that great Inner Meaning which is the Ultimate Reality or Last Gasp, if you understand me. No, I don't. All right, never mind.

Anyhow—one fine day the High Priest of Thirstidom, whose name was Archie Bishop, said that it was up to the Thirstians to build a whacking big Temple to the Lord Why-zed. His idea was that if they could build something bigger than any other temple, it would prove that the Lord Why-zed was the Only True God, and all the other deities (with a small D) of all the other religions (with a small R) would have to take a back seat in the pit.

Talking of the pit—I ought to have mentioned before that in the Good Old Times the Ancient Thirstians also believed in a sort of Shadow of the Lord Why-zed. This naughty chap was the cause of everything bad and they called him the Great Sat-on. I can't think why. (No, no! You needn't tell me. I don't want to know.) But in the times I am talking about they were much more Intelligent, and realized how footy it was to fear a shadow. You see, they had become much more scientific, so they said: "Since the Lord Why-zed is the source of all light, He can't possibly have a shadow. Q.E.D." So they didn't believe in Sat-on any more. And that's that. At least, it was—as we shall see later.

Well, anyway—Archie the High Priest, who incidentally had an income of ten thousand starlings a year, and who could, therefore, put up a pretty good show of roast bird at a dinner-party, declared he was much too poor to give more than half a brace of starlings towards building the temple. "So," said he from his pulpit, with a humility out of all proportion to his income, "I call upon every true Thirstian to donate more than he, she, or it can afford towards the building of this temple to the Eternal Glory of the Everlasting Why-zed. Amen." Which they did, the poor mutts—er, I mean—the noble fellows. And so the Temple was built. And so, also, according to custom, it was crowned on top with an enormous Gibbet made of solid gold, which could be seen for miles around when it wasn't night time or foggy.

"And what," you may ask, "did the Lord Why-zed Himself think of all this?" Well, I don't mind your asking—not a bit—because I know all about it and I'm going to tell you.

At first the Lord Why-zed didn't notice the building going on. You see, He had got so used to building operations on His jolly little earth, ever since the Thirstians began to believe that Increase of Infants was Proof Positive of Progressive Prosperity. It is true that occasionally, if He wasn't careful about what cloud He sat upon, He would receive an unpleasant reminder from the point of some new church spire. But He had grown quite wary of late and scarcely ever came down to Thirstidom near enough to risk a miracle. But when this Temple grew higher and higher, He got nervouser and nervouser. And when at last He saw His very own Symbol in pure gold on top, He began to sit up and take serious notice.

"G. Whyzz!" He exclaimed, as was His wont, "We will have to do something about this. We can't allow these priests of ours to waste gold like that. Why, that Gibbet must have cost thousands of starlings, and what good do We get out of it, We ask you? None whatever. Quite the contrary. So it seems to Us that We must make our Thirstians realize how foolish it is to build Gibbets of Gold, when there are millions of poor Thirstians who could do with a starling or two of its cost."

Well, He worried about this quite a long time, poor old thing. Several million years, I think it was—but I'm not sure. Actually it was only a few

seconds, of course, because that is the way time works. At any rate, that is the way time worked at that time, ever since a man called Ine discovered that time was a relative of his. Because since that time, time was some time, any time or no time, according to the time you timed it. So, to make it all perfectly simple and easy they just called it Ine's time. And that settled that—for a time, at any rate.

Anyhow, poor old Why-zed came to a decision at last, and He came at it in this way. Quite logical it was really. He said: "We can't destroy the temple, because we don't want to hurt anyone, and there's always someone messing about inside it. We don't want to spoil the gold of the Gibbet, because we want them to use it for the poor. But we must point out to them that we don't want the Gibbet as it is. So what's the answer?"

For a while He could think of nothing but a lemon. Then suddenly He shouted: "Eureka! Got it! We'll send a flash of lightning which will just twist the Gibbet without spoiling the gold or hurting the temple." So He said: "Let there be lightning," and it was so. And the evening of the morning of the first opening ceremony was when it happened.

On the day after the ceremony, when Archie Bishop, the high priest, opened his morning paper as he lay snugly in his little beddy-by sipping a cup of hot coffee, he was thunderstruck to read that the Golden Gibbet had been lightning struck. So he called an Assembly of the Upper House of Lords Spirituous to discuss the matter. "I don't see how we are ever going to collect the insurance money," he said, with tears in his eyes. "For there isn't the slightest doubt that this unfortunate—er—accident will be called an act of Why-zed. Personally, I am convinced it must be an act of Sat-on, since it is inconceivable that Our Lord Why-zed should strike a blow at His own temple."

"But," objected a younger Prelate, "your High and Mighty Spirituosity seems to misremember that we are no longer living in the twentieth century, and that Sat-on has been a myth for some considerable time."

Archie scowled at the speaker with a beatific smile.

"Ah-hum! Hum! Yes, yes, of course," he said. "It had slipped my memory for the nonce."

"For the *what*?" queried the puzzled Assembly.

"The nonce," repeated Archie calmly, "the-er-the-er-the whatchermacallit . . . In any case I think the matter calls for earnest prayer. So I propose, here and now, to give you a sample of the kind of thing I think we ought to include in our Alternative Book of Worship."

"Hear, hear!" said some of the Prelates, though it is rumoured that some said: "Dear, dear!" But since it is only a rumour, I wouldn't advise you to give it too much credit.

Well, the prayer lasted about two and a half hours, and as it was just too, *too* beautiful for words, there's not much use in repeating it. And the upshot of the whole thing was that on the very next Sunday all the prelates preached sermons that were too, *too* beautiful for words—and made a collection for the restoration of the Holy Gibbet. In due course a Golden Gibbet twice the size of the first was put up.

Needless to say, when the Lord Why-zed spotted the thing He felt pretty hipped about it, and He wasted no time in giving the new Gibbet a hefty biff with His heavy artillery. Seeing that Archie and his Compeers had banished Sat-on from the dictionaries, the only logical thing they could tell the Thirstians on this second occasion was that the Lord Why-zed was simply not satisfied with the size and magnificence of His favourite symbol. So they kept on collecting more money and putting up bigger Gibbets



than ever. They even went so far as to put knobs on the last pattern. But the same thing happened every time. Indeed, the more magnificent the Gibbet became, the worse was the wreckage the following morning.

Eventually it dawned upon the mind of one ultra-modern and extra-philosophic Prelate, called Binge, that something must be wrong with their logic. So he began to express his own views on the matter, and he informed his congregation that although in the past the belief in Why-zed had had its uses, it was in modern times really nothing less than a sign of softening of the brain. And he added that Why-zed had no more to do with the lightning than he, Binge, had. "In other words," he roundly declared, "it is all Bunk!"

Well, this was a pretty hard knock for the Ancient Order of Holinesses. But they took it with surprising sangfroid. You see, they were perfectly safe. Their salaries were all guaranteed by the State, so it didn't really matter what dear old Binge said.

Gradually, however, all the Thirstians came round to the gloomy Binge's views. In parentheses I might say that the heretical Binge was gloomy for no other reason than that he had corns on his little toes, which he had unsuccessfully tried to remove by a course of Psycho-analysis. But that is, as one might say, *ultra vires*, or *non compos mentis* (I'm not sure which). Anyhow, the result was that all the Thirstians took Binge quite literally and began to worship the Great God Bunk. So much so that, ultimately, they disestablished all the other Prelates and gave the gloomy Binge complete charge of the temple. Whereupon he, true to his profession, removed the Gibbet and set it up again *upside down*. And since the shape it now presented was not unlike the letter L, this suited the native-born inhabitants of the Metropolis down to the ground, as they were constitutionally unable to pronounce the letter H.

But, sad to relate (as they say in the Comics) when the Great Day of New Inauguration and Sanctification arrived, and the assembled crowd were about to storm the doors of the temple in their religious fervour, an extra-deafening thunderclap was heard. No one was hurt. But when the crowd had recovered its senses, it was seen that the Great Golden L had been knocked all edgeways.

For a moment there was an ominous silence. Then the crowd raised up their voices with one accord and bellowed: "To L, with all the Gods!"—which was their terse equivalent to our modern saying: "We prefer to let reason sway our judgments rather than to be swept hither and thither by irrational and emotional beliefs."

The end of this story is rather tame, I'm afraid, because the Thirstians simply took down the Golden Gibbet, built a hospital out of the proceeds, and turned the temple of the Great Supernatural into the palace of the Great Supercinema. And old Why-zed has gone permanently to sleep upon its now perfectly rounded dome.

\* \* \*

*Im-Moral.* Though every horrid Atheist may declare that we can know nothing about God, there is always *one* thing which we *can* positively say we *do* know about Him, and that is—nothing

C. S. FRASER.

Exile and death are terrible but to the wicked.—*Cicero.*

Long life is denied us; therefore let us do something to show that we have lived.—*Cicero.*

Rayformers, Hinmissy, is in favor iv suppressin' ivery-thing, but rale pollyticians believes in suppressin' naw-thing but ividence.—*Mr. Dooley.*

## A Nocturne.

THERE is beauty all around, the peace and quiet of the Summer night, the faintest sighing of the breeze in whispering shrubberies round darkened windows and sleeping doorsteps, the hushed murmur of the sea; the gamins have gone from the streets and their elders, wise, normal, nondescript; one Freethinker still awake, wandering, pondering, his frets, cares, forebodings yielding to the spell of midnight and the stars, of the mellow moon setting there, softly intermittent in glowing wisps of light and shade, leaving the dim wood sombre and lonely, lighting the horizon sea. A dumb-driven sheep is bleating wistfully from coralled exile nearby—the prey of the butcher in the morning and his Christian customers, who will smack their lips complacently over this sacrifice of the Lamb, thanking their God for his goodness to them, and for his Lamb of God, whose death was no more tragic than that of the silly sheep and, so far, much less useful. Even the Freethinker, shamefacedly, is not a vegetarian, but the Lamb died for the Christian—and is he worth it? Let Alexander Pope conclude the reverie:—

While man exclaims—"See all things for my use!"  
"See man for mine," replies the pampered goose:  
And just as short of reason he must fall  
Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

But even here facts and philosophy are still obscure. It is but the commercial Co-operative, "All for each and each for all." Let the Popes, poet and papa, try again!

COHA.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

RELIGION AND THE CHILD.

SIR,—I thought you might like to have the experience of one who actually was withdrawn from religious instruction in a National School in a country parish fifty-eight years ago.

My father was a Unitarian with strong religious convictions and an equally fervent faith in freedom of thought and action. I and my younger brother were sent to the school as the master was a good and conscientious teacher, but my father withdrew us from the religious lesson which consisted principally of the Church Catechism. I was given some other lesson to learn while the remainder of the children were taught; but as I was seated next to them and they were taught orally, at the end of the lesson you may guess I had paid more attention to what they were doing than to my own work and knew more of their lesson than of my own or than they did of theirs. However, I came under their displeasure as a newcomer, so far a stranger and as a nonconformist. I can well remember though now so long ago, for then I was only ten years old, how the other boys and girls chased me home from school, half a mile, throwing mud and stones at me and calling me "old Methody," and still it brings the tears to my eyes as I recollect telling my father how I had been treated, and how he showed me the texts in the Bible, which showed the unity of God and the manhood of Jesus. It certainly helped to comfort me as well as to give me an interest in controversy, which I should scarcely have got in any other way. I have no doubt I had a strong will of my own then as now, but the experience gave me more power to stand alone; which is always a benefit.

Of course, I soon weathered through the storm, my father was a shopkeeper, a man of intelligence who helped us to learn, and thus we often rose to the top of the class, and a warden, in virtue of which high office I even assumed a position of authority over the other scholars.

In short, I am for ever grateful to the memory of my father for allowing me to share in the trials which he no doubt often had had to endure; and to the chapel which



I still help to support though I cannot attend services in which I no longer believe. And I wish you, Mr. Editor, every success in trying to get your readers to withdraw their children from religious instruction, while they themselves take their own share of whatever discomfort is to be endured. Without they do this their children will curse instead of reverencing them.

WALTER W. KENSIT.

SIR,—Some time ago you referred to your articles as letters to your readers, and in this week's letter you refer to the advisability of withdrawing the child from the scripture lessons at school. It may be true that the parent does not agree that scripture should be taught, but you must think of the child. Should a child have a teacher who is a religious fanatic, the child will undoubtedly suffer. Such a teacher does not take the same interest in an Atheist's child. Knowing religionists as I do I cannot trust them, so I would rather do all I can in my own way to counteract those religious lessons than to jeopardize the child's future, knowing that it is most essential for the child to pass the examination in order to go to a secondary school.

I suffered for my opinions. I know one has to suffer for his opinions in an uncivilized world. In the Army I had extra fatigue work on Sunday because I was honest and not a hypocrite. I joined as an Atheist. On one occasion my job terminated sooner than it should have done because the foreman was a bigoted Christian. He saw me read the *Freethinker* during lunch hour, and I did not hide my views on religion. I am not sorry to have acted as I did, and I always thank "God?" I never believed in him. This is my greatest happiness. But, where the child is concerned the kindness of withdrawing it from the scripture lessons may in this uncivilized world turn out to become the greatest unkindness ever done.

JOSEPH ALMOND.

### Society News.

THE concluding meeting at Bolton passed off very satisfactorily a large crowd being in attendance. The local press, which has ignored our efforts for the past eight years, in consequence of the intervention of the Vicar of Bolton, devoted three quarters of a column to a garbled report of the incidents mentioned last week. But the meeting, with only six dissentients, passed a resolution condemning the bad manners of the clergyman. As it is not certain that he appealed to the police to stop our meeting, we had better give him the benefit of the doubt; but it is certain that besides unmannerly interruptions he tried to make capital out of the fact that Mr. Whitehead was not a local ratepayer, the inference being that this is a drawback in any speaker venturing to address a Bolton crowd. This, from one whose church exists as a burden on the rates might be termed the limit. The rest of the week was spent in Nelson, and a number of meetings was fairly successful, but the rain prevented the week as a whole from being completely satisfactory.

G.W.

LECTURES have been given this week at Great Harwood, Worsthorne, Trawden, Burnley and Accrington. Excepting Worsthorne all were well attended, the crowds being very large at the first and last named towns. We had a local preacher on the platform twice, at Accrington. He started off by informing the audience that his old father, although only a little man, would have been able to double our speaker up inside one minute. This gives some idea of the intellectual level that his opposition moved along. He was also very abusive, and continually interrupted after perfect silence had been given to himself.—J.C.

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. L. Ebury—A Lecture.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road): Saturdays, at 7.30. Wednesdays, at 7.30, Effie Road, opposite Walham Green Station. Various Speakers.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Arlington Road, Park Street, Camden Town): Every Thursday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Sun., 7.30, Stonehouse St., Clapham Road, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Wednesdays, at 8.0, at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Fridays, at 8.0, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Mr. L. Ebury.

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

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.15, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and C. E. Wood; 6.30, Messrs. C. Tuson, H. J. Savory, A. H. Hyatt and B. A. Le Maine. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and W. P. Campbell-Everden; every Thursday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and E. C. Saphin; every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* can be obtained outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

INDOOR.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): Thursday, August 28, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, Social and Dance, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s. 3d.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN MARKET.—Sunday, August 24, at 3.0 and 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

COLNE.—Monday, August 25, at 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. George Whitehead will lecture each evening at 8 as follows: Thursday, August 21, High Park Street; Friday, 22 and Saturday, 23, Islington Square; Sunday, 24, Queen's Drive (opposite Baths); Monday, 25, Beaumont Street; Tuesday, 26 and Wednesday, 27, Islington Square; Thursday, 28, High Park Street; Friday, 29, Islington Square. Current *Freethinkers* will be obtainable at all meetings. Reserved seat tickets for Mr. Chapman Cohen's course of lectures in September and October will be on sale at these meetings—one shilling each or three shillings and sixpence for the course.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7.0, A Lecture. Literature will be on sale.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S.—The monthly Branch Meeting will be held in The Bakers Hall, Forbes Place, on Wednesday, August 27, at 7.30.

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