

MORE BUNKUM FROM THE BISHOPS.

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

Views and Opinions.

More Bunkum from the Bishops.

THE report of the Lambeth Conference does not improve on further reading. Those who imagine we are prejudiced, or err in judgment in what we have said concerning the poverty-stricken mentality of the present-day parson would do well to read this report carefully. If that does not convince them of the truth of what we have said, nothing will, particularly when it is borne in mind that this report is written by a body of 307 Bishops after "solemn prayer and Eucharist"—that is they not only prayed to God, but actually swallowed him—and for five weeks devoted themselves to prayer and meditation. Something very startling ought to have resulted from all this.

Something startling did result. Thus, on "The Christian Doctrine of God," the Church is called to give its witness to God "as Ultimate Reality, to God in his Majesty as Creator, to God in even his greater Majesty as Redeemer." To that hotch-potch one can only say, "Good God!" If God is the "ultimate Reality" and all else is only appearance, then everything—good and bad, right and wrong, angels and devils, are ultimately God. If God is the creator, then he created everything, and in his character as Redeemer he can only be redeeming the world from the mess into which he as creator has plunged it. A body of men who can solemnly pen such unadulterated nonsense after five weeks' prayer and living with God, and eating God, would be well advised to see if they could not produce something more intelligible with the aid, say, of a child's Encyclopedia and a couple of volumes of Edgar Wallace. This statement about God may well go with another remark that "It is no part of the purpose of the Scriptures to give information on those themes which are the proper sub-

ject matter of scientific enquiry." Well, well, but the origin and nature of man is a proper subject of scientific enquiry. So is the nature of morality, so is the nature of social life, the nature of mental processes, the origin of the world, and also the origin and nature of religion. This being the case one wonders what the Bishops mean when they express "our conviction that the Christian doctrine of God . . . supplies the guidance which our perplexed generation so supremely needs." Guidance on what? On their own showing there is nothing on which the Church can give any guidance at all. They have already asserted that they have nothing to say on anything that comes within the domain of science, and science covers everything that man knows, and all that he may yet know. It looks as though these God-eating bishops are left solemnly meditating on nothing at all, and directing humanity's steps along a non-existing road.

* * *

Science and Religion.

It is something to be assured by a congregation of 307 Bishops in the year 1930 that in view of scientific knowledge "the popular interpretation of the Biblical account of creation cannot be accepted literally," but it would have been a trifle more straightforward if it had been pointed out that the popular interpretation is the one that previous generations of priests have forced on the people, and which is only now admitted to be wrong because no one with any pretence to scientific education believes in it. Note the following:—

Certain sciences, whose boundaries were for generations indeterminate, have in recent times united to give us a consentient view of the process by which the world as we know it has come into being. From this view has emerged an account of the order of creation upon which all instructed opinion is now agreed. Physics and astronomy, geology and biology, anthropology and archaeology united to give us a description of the ordered sequence of creation.

So that it is not the "Christian doctrine of God," that has given us this "ordered sequence of creation, nor was it given by the Church, which was "the trustee and repository of a revelation of God given by Himself." The real knowledge was given us by those who had no revelation at all, and who left God outside their calculations. What was the revelation God gave to the Church? Was it the useful information that there would always be enough fools ready to swallow any kind of balderdash that a council of Bishops cared to prepare for them?

But this endorsement of Science must not be carried too far, and the dissent is expressed with a degree of muddle-headedness that even Mr. Joad would find it hard to better. Thus:—

Some men of science . . . have reached the as-

sumption that all changes in the known universe—and from this man is not excluded—could be expressed in terms of invariable sequences. This doctrine excludes the possibility of human freedom, and implies that all the higher aspirations of man are illusory.

We are afraid that most men of science will not properly appreciate the gravity of their basic generalization being disapproved by the Lambeth Conference, and may even suggest that a much more important ecclesiastical authority once denied that the earth moved round the sun, or that man had been evolved from the lower animals. And having once repudiated any intention or any authority to interfere in such matter as come within the province of science, on the clear ground of having nothing to say about such things, one would like to know on what ground the Conference disagrees with the assumption made by all science, and in the absence of which science is impossible?

* * *

The Folly of Prayer.

Her is another gem of episcopal wisdom:—

Man, as a spiritual being, inevitably seeks God in Prayer. But prayer must be in no sense the selfish seeking of personal ends. It must be always subordinate to the universal purpose of God. Hence its true aim is not the effort to induce God to change his mind, but the bringing of the desire of man into harmony with the mind and purpose of God, thus making possible the fulfilment of His purpose.

That is interesting, if true, since it shows man as not asking anything from God, but as really trying to help Him, out of the difficulties he has got into. After God having made man and the world, and creating both with a purpose, which same purpose appears to have been frustrated, somehow, it is good for man to come to help God out of the hole he has got into by praying and thus "making possible the fulfilment of his purpose." Instead of thanking God, it is clearly God who should thank Man. We have said more than once, that it is quite easy for Man to exist without God, but how is it possible for God to exist without Man? The Conference appears to agree with us. Thus the cry of prayer throws some light upon an otherwise cryptic utterance that "Man's value in God's sight depends upon the extent to which he can enter into communion with God." God has no use for man save as he can use him.

On the other hand man has no use for God save as he can use *him*. I do not believe for a moment that man prays because he is anxious to get God out of trouble. When the Church offers up prayers for rain, or sunshine, or for the health of the Royal family, or for victory in war, are they really praying so as to help God fulfil his purpose, or they are reminding God that he might do something which without the reminder he would not do? Was the purpose of God really dependent upon the Duchess of York, or Mrs. John Smith, being safely delivered of her baby? Would his purpose have been frustrated if prayers had not been offered for the recovery of King George from his recent illness, and the King had died instead of recovering? Let the Bishops say plainly to their congregations that they are only praying to help God out of trouble, or that they must not expect things to be different because they pray, and see how long the practice of prayer will be carried on. Praying because one believes that God will answer the petition, and that things will be different in consequence of God doing something he would not otherwise have done, has a sen-

blance of sense. The Lambeth Conference makes the whole thing a screaming farce.

* * *

Religion and To-day.

The two sections of the Report dealing with the ministry and what is known as the "Revolt of Youth" may be taken together, as they are, indeed, closely connected. The figures published show that while at the opening of the war there were 20,000 clergymen engaged in the Church of England, the number at present is just over 15,000. At present the number ordained annually falls short of the number that die or resign. Often enough this shortage of parsons is excused on the ground that the salaries attaching to the office are not large enough. That is not quite the case. As a body the clergy are not badly paid, and there are some rare "plums" in the profession. But even if the salaries were lower than they are, other things equal, the position of a parson should command service. For it showed a calling that carried with it place and prestige, and where the belief is genuine the salary should take a subordinate place. But the other things are not equal. The times are passing when men and women look up to the clergy with respect, although they may tolerate their presence. The Committee recognize this in the following passage:—

The causes of the decline in the number of Ordination candidates are intimately connected with the general state of the Church and of society. Materialistic tendencies in modern thought and life joined with the loosening of the hold of religion in the home are both the cause and the consequence of the shortage of ordinands . . . Men have turned to other fields of social service and to other posts of leadership . . . Another difficulty lies in the region of intellectual misgivings. This difficulty concerns some of those best fitted for the task of the ministry. Science and criticism have disturbed the minds of many men, and to some at least the quest for truth produces obstacles to the acceptance at an early age of what seems to them cut and dried formulae. Until the present unsettlement is passed, there can be no remedy for this state of things.

With regard to youth it is admitted that "a not inconsiderable section is alienated from the Church and from all organized religion," but an attempt is made to minimize this by the Committee protesting:—

Emphatically against the contention that the youth of to-day are, as a whole, less moral or less religious than youth of previous generations. On the contrary, we see on all sides most encouraging signs in their responsiveness, their interest in good causes, their passionate desire for social justice and their humanity, which often shows itself in acts of sacrifice and service. All the world over they are taking a conscious and active part in the great movements of the time to an extent which perhaps has never been equalled before.

But religion is one thing, and social service and the demands for justice and humanity are other things, and while it is very artful of the Bishops to confuse the two, it will not do. These Bishops do not believe that the mere demand for social justice is what they understand by religion. If they did they would have to place nearly all the famous Atheists of the world under the head of "religious." I do agree that never in the history of the world has the youth of the world shown such an eagerness for social justice as at the present, and it is highly significant that this should occur side by side with the decay of belief in genuine religion.

The truth is that the same cause that is responsible for the decline in the number of men offering themselves for the priesthood, and the decline in the

quality of such as do offer, is also responsible for the falling away of youth from religion. On the one hand there has gone on a steadily increasing intellectual disqualification of religious beliefs. This is recognized under the heading of "materialistic tendencies in modern thought." Naturally, also, this has affected those best fitted for the task of teaching. The more ignorant, men with the lower capacities, still offer themselves, but the better ones decline. And at the same time the development of interest in social affairs, as such, opens up avenues of employment to which the better mental and social types turn. In this way the environment becomes increasingly unfavourable to religion. The Church is left facing a falling market. It is left with fewer men and with a poorer type. And there is only one way in which this process of deterioration can be stopped. This is not by placing new readings on old religious teachings. The dishonesty of this method can only impose on the foolish and the knavish, and thus hasten the process of which the Conference complains. The only hope of a genuine and permanent revival of religion is to reverse the process of civilization. The history of the world shows that this is not impossible, but it is not very likely to happen.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Massey's Mission.

"The genius that can stand alone
As the minority of one,
Or with the faithful few be found
Working and waiting till the rest come round."

Gerald Massey.

WHEN George Foote was in durance vile for "bringing the Holy Scripture and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt," Gerald Massey, poet and Egyptologist, wrote to Dr. Edward Aveling, and, referring to Foote, said: "I fight the same battle as himself, although with a somewhat different weapon." The distinguished scholar wished clearly to be reckoned as a fellow-soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity. Yet, at his death, the sycophantic press concealed the fact that the scholar-poet was a Freethinker. One specially "Liberal" newspaper proudly claimed Massey as a "Christian Socialist." The plain truth was, that he spent half of a very lengthy life in showing the mythical nature of the Christian Superstition.

Massey had a very interesting career. To use Browning's expressive phrase, he was "ever a fighter." He fought every day of his long life, which was prolonged beyond the usual span, and his sword was in his good, right hand until the day of his death. Massey's early life is the grimmest of comments on the "good, old days." The son of a barge-man, he was born in the grip of poverty. At an age when more fortunate children were at school, he was working in a mill for eleven hours daily at the weekly wage of one shilling. This was not the worst. He became a straw-plaiter, and for three years was half-starved, and often ill. Writing of that early life of his, he said afterwards, "I had no childhood." Think of it! The author of *Babe Christabel* and *The Mother's Idol Broken* "had no childhood." It is a tragedy "to deep for tears."

Nevertheless, young Massey learned to read and to write, and became familiar with *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Brave, old Bunyan and "unabashed Defoe" are not bad schoolmasters for a quick, intelligent boy, for they wrote their books in the two languages of literature and life. At fifteen years of age Massey came to London and became an

errand-boy. In the Metropolis books were procurable, and his literary appetite was voracious. He read everything he could lay his hands on, "going without meals to buy books, and without sleep to read them." What a picture of the past, the old days of storm and peril, when the soldiers of freedom arose almost every day to meet a new danger. For Massey lived right through the heroic age of English liberty. It was during that stirring period that he laid the foundations of that encyclopædic knowledge which made him one of the noted critics and scholars of his time.

The revolutionary movements of 1848 greatly impressed Massey, and many of his verses are the direct outcome of this period of struggle. Republicanism was in the air, and he became a Republican. At twenty-one he was editing *The Spirit of Freedom*, a revolutionary publication, mainly written by himself. Then he contributed to Thomas Cooper's *Journal*, and other democratic papers.

Massey's first book of verse was issued when he was but nineteen. Later came his *Voices of Freedom*, which showed a notable advance. Hepworth Dixon, of the *Athenæum*, was greatly attracted by the fiery "Song of a Red Republican," and recognized it as the work of a man who had something to say, and could say it well. Among the admirers which Massey's poems won for him were Landor, Ruskin, Tennyson, and Lytton. "George Eliot" paid him a fine compliment, for she made him her model for the hero of her novel, *Felix Holt*, which was better than a poor bust in Westminster Abbey.

It was *Babe Christabel* which made Gerald Massey really famous. With this he stormed the bastions of success. The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny roused the poet, and he never sang so finely as in his "War Waits." In this work he was never so near being a great poet. One of his poems, "Scarletts' Three Hundred," indeed challenges comparison with Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade."

In the maturity of his poetical powers, Gerald Massey deliberately put aside the laurel-wreath, and devoted himself to the nobler work of the emancipation of his fellows. He turned away from verse-writing and put all his energies to a scholarly and philosophical exposure of the Christian Religion, the greatest theological fraud of all the ages. His books, *The Book of Beginnings*, *The Natural Genesis*, *Ancient Egypt*, *The Light of the World*, have had to be reckoned with. For Massey proved that the holy mother and child—the one a virgin, the other a god—were worshipped in ancient Egypt many centuries before the Christian era. It was there that all the dogmas of early Christianity, and all its myths and legends, were manufactured. In a memorable passage in *The Natural Genesis*, Massey says:—

The writer has not only shown that the current theology is, but also how it has been, falsely founded on a misinterpretation of mythology by unconsciously inheriting the leavings of primitive or archaic man, and ignorantly mistaking these for divine revelations.

It was not an easy task that the poet-scholar had imposed upon himself. In the noble dedicatory verses to *The Natural Genesis*, he shows, with a rare pathos, the isolation of a scholar's life. He compares himself to a diver in the depths of the sea, whose friends watch anxiously for his return:—

"A willing slave for years,
I strove to set men free,
Mine were the labours, hopes, and fears,
Be theirs the victory."

Gerald Massey did a noble thing in devoting himself to scholarship, and he also did wisely. The instinct of Massey's maturity, which led him to forsake poetry,

for Freethought, was a perfectly sound one. For his poetry, although mellifluous, belongs to the past, but his scholarly impeachment of the claims of Priestcraft has helped, materially, to hasten the dawn of Freedom.

MIMNERMUS.

Pioneers of Science in Ancient Times.

THE Greeks of antiquity inherited many facts of science from the Egyptians and Babylonians. But the Greeks were the earliest people who made a painstaking attempt to erect a philosophy of Nature on purely physical principles. Complete success was impossible, yet it remains their imperishable glory that this intellectually fearless race ever desired to exalt the genuine authority of truth above the spurious truth of authority and earnestly sought through rational methods of inquiry to probe the problems of the universe.

Yet the arresting hand of the mystical and superstitious past still held the people in captivity. The populace then, as ever, was ruled by magical and religious legerdemain. Still, when we recall the tiny population of antiquity's City States, it seems marvellous that so many mental giants adorned the various Greek settlements that studded the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

The ancient Greek communities never attained a national status. This lack of unity proved a permanent weakness, and finally contributed to their overthrow. As seafaring and commercial communities, the colonies arising from emigration, although they continued the laws and customs of their mother-city, immediately established themselves as independent States. Moreover, each little community worshipped its own local divinities. Just as there existed no national spirit, there was no national religion. The local cults remained relatively insignificant. No powerful priesthood prevailed, as in other ancient lands that was able to conserve the higher culture to a caste, or to make permanent time-honoured traditions and beliefs. And it has been contended that the weakness of sacerdotal influence and authority proved an important factor in the rise and progress of Freethought in old-time Greece.

Yet, several of the earliest thinkers seem to have been Pagan priests, or the offspring of priests, but their intellectual outlook was chiefly secular, and the City State occupied the position in men's minds, which in other nations was accorded to the gods, or their sacerdotal or royal representative. Bigotry and persecution were not entirely absent as witness the judicial murder of Socrates. Still, the Greeks were the earliest apostles of Freethought and liberty of utterance, and inquiry reached a position never recovered in Europe until quite recent times.

The slaves remained unlettered, and the instruction provided for the ordinary citizens was very elementary. Even in Athens in the peerless age of Pericles the education furnished by the State was rudimentary. In Sparta, it is said, the common people continued almost illiterate. The higher culture was confined to a small section of the community. The more amazement then, at the remarkable achievements of a gifted and privileged few.

Influenced by the civilizations of the Orient, the earliest Greek philosophers arose in the colonies established on the coast of Asia Minor. These were the Ionian thinkers, whose cities became opulent through their commercial relations with the East. Again, their knowledge and wisdom increased through their

intercourse with traders and travellers from distant lands. A passion for natural investigation arose and developed among the refined and leisured classes.

Their speculations from the standpoint of nineteenth century science, both theoretical and applied, seemed vague and conflicting. Yet with all our vaunted advances in more recent decades, some aspects of scientific speculation have in certain quarters become as mystical and fantastic as the wildest dreams of metaphysical schoolmen. For the practical business of life, however, this recent obscuration proves immaterial. The applications of science continue unconcernedly to rest on the discoveries and inventions of the materialistic experimenters who made them for the service of man.

Thales of Miletus, even in antiquity had become a shadowy figure. Like Socrates and Buddha, he left no written record. All agree, however, that he meditated on the causes of things, and regarded water as the primordial element. And not one or two, but every ancient philosopher acclaims him as the first natural investigator of Greece.

A second outstanding thinker is Thales' fellow citizen and disciple Anaximander, who died about 546 B.C. He composed a poem upon Nature, but nothing of this has come down to us save quotations made by subsequent writers. Anaximander's philosophy assumed an evolutionary form, and his theories respecting the development of living matter, despite their slight grotesqueness, faintly foreshadow the science of a far later day. He made his name immortal in striving to explain man and the universe in terms of natural causation. This indispensable postulate—the constant linking of cause and consequence—provided a firm foundation for all future scientific investigation. Anaximander represents an epoch in the history of human thought.

Anaximander's mantle descended to Anaximenes, who continued the work of his master. Unlike Thales, Anaximenes held that air is the primary cause of phenomena. For from air all material things were created by compression. It is one of the tragedies of history that the Persians captured and destroyed Miletus, the home of Thales and Anaximander, in 494 B.C. But the fame of its philosophers perpetuated the name of Miletus, and long after the city itself had become a memory, the light of science kindled by the Ionian school spread to the rest of Greece, and still illumines the minds of men.

Not Diogenes the Cynic, but Diogenes of Apollonia carried on the good work of his predecessors, and produced the earliest work on anatomy so far discovered. Diogenes regarded the sun as the parent of life, while his theories concerning sexual reproduction were strikingly modern, and were probably derived from careful experimental research.

Pythagoras speculated upon the structure and motions of the solar and planetary bodies, and to some extent anticipated the later Aristarchus in the latter's theory that the sun is the centre of our system. This great truth perished in Greece, and was destined to await the advent of Copernicus, Galileo, and others in long subsequent centuries. Some of the doctrines of Pythagoras have proved less fruitful and have served the cause of mysticism and superstition.

The eminent rationalist philosopher Xenophanes was a disciple of Anaximander. He was one of the first to correctly interpret the meaning of fossil animals, and adumbrated some of the conclusions of modern geology. An advocate of pure theism, he poured scorn on his countrymen's belief in manlike gods.

Empedocles was a thinker highly esteemed by his contemporaries. He proclaimed the theory of the gradual development of the more perfect from the

less perfect with a periodical return of evolved existence to its original simple state. From this condition the material universe slowly re-emerges to repeat the unending cycle. The story that Empedocles posed as a deity lacks evidence. The tradition that he flung himself into the crater of Mount Etna so that his sudden disappearance should strengthen the belief in his divine descent appears to have been the begetter of Lucian's tale that the volcano contemptuously rejected the sandals of the vain philosopher, so that the common report of his divinity might suffer discredit.

Heracleitus of Ephesus expounded the doctrine of the mutability of matter. The universe is governed by natural law, but all things flow and are subject to transformation. These views exercised considerable influence on his contemporaries and successors.

But the great protagonists of scientific materialism were Leucippus and his apostle Democritus. An ardent lover of knowledge, Democritus travelled extensively, and carefully collected the writings of earlier philosophers. A man of wide culture and a writer whose style was praised by Cicero and used as a model by Pyrrhon, a few fragments only of his various compositions survive. Leucippus and he were the fathers of the atomic theory. Nature, Democritus asserted, is the outcome of countless combinations that were formed as a consequence of the motions of indivisible corporeal particles. Democritus rejected the theory of design and proclaimed the reign of universal law. Chance, he ruled out from his philosophical scheme. The term *chance* is merely an alias for human ignorance. Life and mind are both built up from an assemblage of the most refined particles or atoms. The philosophy of Democritus was subsequently developed by Epicurus and Lucretius. In antiquity his character stood high, and even those who came to scoff at his doctrines remained to pray. Aristotle mentions Democritus with the greatest respect even when he dissents most strongly from his biological doctrines. And it has long been demonstrable that Democritus was in several instances correct in his conclusions where Aristotle went entirely astray.

T. F. PALMER.

Frederich Nietzsche.

DIED AUGUST 25, 1900.

FOREVER SUNWARD soaring Icarus,
Illumining from dusk till dawn
All the hidden, dark ways of the soul,
With piercing words that purge
Pain into ecstasy and beauty
Into a power beyond life's scourge;
You showed humanity where gods and men
Unite in courage,
Drawing with dionysian thirst,
Strength from the Elements,
Your lust for righteousness flares like a torch
Thru the dense darkness of our consciousness,
Where we kept captive Christ for centuries,
As in a dark cell with stone walls set
By St. Peter, John and Paul.

RUDOLPH GILBERT.

New York, U.S.A.

Liberty for each, for all, and forever. No person shall rule over me with my consent. I will rule over no man. Enslave the liberty of but one human being and the liberties of the world are in peril.—W. L. Garrison.

If there is anything that cannot bear free thought, let it crack. Nothing but Freedom, Justice and Truth is of any permanent advantage to the mass of mankind.

Wendell Phillips.

The State and Marriage.

SINCE my article appeared in the *Freethinker* of July 13, I find that many Freethinkers are rather in the dark as to the nature and administration of the various laws of marriage, and are inclined to think that the State is not sufficiently represented in the making of the marriage contract. In view of such apparent confusion, an explanation of the Acts and facts governing marriage in this country, together with a little relevant history, may not come amiss.

Prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century marriage was entirely a matter for the church. That institution held the sole responsibility for the performing of the ceremony and the keeping of any records in relation to it. The rules of marriage were, in the main, based on the canon law of the Roman Church, although certain modifications and alterations were introduced as a result of the Reformation and the later puritanical upheavals.

The idea that the State had any interest in marriage whatever was born with the French Revolution, whereby the then Government of France produced a change, the effect of which ultimately reached every European country and even beyond. It is within the bounds of possibility to suggest that had the drastic Cromwell lived a few years longer, England might have had this distinction for that worthy was thorough, and marriage ceremonies were performed by lay officials in those parishes where, for various reasons, the clergy had ceased to function during the Commonwealth. The business of the mace gives us his views on "symbolism."

In consequence of the general trend of opinion, England began to feel that the State ought to be more in touch with the populace in relation to the marriage contract, and as a result, an Act was passed in 1823, which placed marriage under State control in the Churches. At the same time, however, all marriages, with the exceptions of those of Jews and Quakers, had to be solemnized in Churches. The two sects named were enabled, under this Act, to supervise their own contracts and perform the ceremonies in their own buildings. No relief in this direction was offered to any other body of opinion.

Such a condition of affairs could not go long unchallenged, and the Dissenters, supported by Freethinkers, forced their claims to such an extent that the Registration Act of 1836 resulted. This Act forms the foundation of registration in England and Wales as it stands to-day, and, amongst other things, places the performance of marriage under full State control, inasmuch as it provides Registration Officers who are directly responsible to a State official, and who draw parts of their remuneration from various public funds. The Act of 1836 also provides for the establishment of Register Offices throughout the country, at which marriage may take place without any religious ceremony whatever. This was the first step in the direction of sanctioned buildings, the explanation of which follows.

It must be understood that as the law stands, and because of the Act of 1836, no marriages can take place except in buildings sanctioned by the Registrar-General, and all such buildings will be found in the Official List published by the Stationery Office. This list is normally issued at five-yearly intervals, but circulars containing additions, alterations and expunctions are also published at frequent intervals.

In deference to Nonconformist opinion, the principle of sanctioned buildings was made wide enough to permit of the inclusion of certain places of worship not belonging to the Church of England, but such places were, and are, nothing more than branches of the District Register Office. The presence of the Registrar is necessary to legalize any marriage celebrated and, irrespective of any religious wording which may be used, the prescribed declaration must be made by the parties at some period before the signing of the register.

It must not be assumed that all religious houses are thus open for the solemnizing of marriages. Application has to be made by its trustees or congregation for the placing of any chapel upon the marriage list in addition to the registration for religious uses. After such application is made the Registrar-General decides upon

the suitability or otherwise of the building. Thus, again, the last word is with a State official. Over and above this, notice must be given to the Superintendent Registrar in exactly the same way as if the marriage were due to take place in the District Register Office. Although no notice is given in the case of a marriage in a church, every church in which marriages can take place has to be licensed, and because a building is used for worship in the manner laid down by the Church of England, it does not follow that the matrimonial knot can be tied there. St. Paul's Cathedral is a case in point, and there are hundreds of "Chapels of Ease" scattered throughout the country where the same applies.

In course of time, the number of sanctioned buildings increased very considerably. It became the fashion for all sorts of sects to wish for marriages in their own buildings. Now, it will be readily understood that where a Registrar has to run round to a dozen different buildings, he cannot be so readily available as when all marriages take place in one spot, and this led to a further agitation for more Registrars.

This agitation culminated in the passing of the Act of 1898, which allows a Nonconformist congregation to submit to the Registrar-General the name of one of its members to act as Registrar for its own particular sanctioned place of worship. If such a nomination is accepted by the Registrar-General, the person named becomes the Authorized Person for that registered building. The Authorized Person may be the minister in charge for the time being, the secretary or treasurer of the church or any member of the congregation, but, whoever he is, he cannot act until his appointment has been approved by the Registrar-General, and such approval does not extend beyond the particular registration district of his appointment. To illustrate the point. The Rev. Blank, Vicar of St. Jink's, Chelsea, can conduct a wedding at St. Jump's, Highgate, if agreeable to his brother parson, but the Rev. Mr. Blink, who marries many couples in his own Wesleyan Church at Cardiff, cannot do the same in a building of his denomination at Norwich, as he is not the Authorized Person for the latter place. Further, he cannot act, even in his own district, except in premises to which an Authorized Person has been appointed. Here he is unlike the official Registrar of Marriages, who can act at any building registered for marriages, excepting those belonging to the Church of England.

In addition, the prescribed declaration must be made at some period before the signing of the register, and the notices must go through the hands of the Superintendent Registrar before the marriage can take place, *i.e.*, twenty-one clear days in the case of a marriage without licence, and one clear day in case of a marriage by licence. It is quite wrong to think that two people can walk into a dissenting chapel and be married without more ado than the reciting of their usual "mumbo-jumbo." Of the number of Nonconformist buildings registered for worship, about 50 per cent are sanctioned for marriages, and only about 15 per cent have Authorized Persons attached to them.

All clergymen in charge of churches, and all Authorized Persons have register books issued to them by the Registrar-General for the purpose of registering all marriages taking place in their buildings. These registers must be open for inspection at all reasonable times, and in the case of those held by Authorized Persons, are subject to examination by an Inspector of Registration. Upon the completion of a register, it must be delivered to the Superintendent Registrar for storage in the District Register Office. Also, such clergymen and Authorized Persons must, at the conclusion of every quarter of the year, make an exact copy of every marriage entry for that quarter, and, in due course, these copies reach the Registrar-General at Somerset House. For the service of making the copies the person responsible receives, from public funds, a fee of sixpence for each entry. If no marriages have taken place during the period, a return to that effect must be made, and these conditions apply equally to registering officers of the Society of Friends and secretaries of Synagogues. Thus it will be seen that a State duty is imposed upon all these people, irrespective of creed or opinion. Whilst on the subject of Authorized and other acting Persons, it may be as well to put forward the view that the clergy-

men of the Church of England is also an Authorized Person in view of and by virtue of his ordination. No other person than an ordained clergyman can conduct marriage in a building of the Church of England, and thus the parson automatically becomes a State servant for this one purpose.

I have mentioned above that there is a prescribed form of declaration, and it may be as well at this point to note it, for the repetition of the words it contains, and that alone (in church, chapel or elsewhere) completes the State contract. Each party has to say, "I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I (name) may not be joined in matrimony to (name)." You will observe that it is only a question of "lawful impediment." The spiritual side of the matter is of no concern to the State. When both parties have recited these words, each has to say "I call upon these persons here present to witness that I (name) do take thee (name) to be my lawful wedded wife (Husband)" and the job is done as tightly as if the whole Bench of Bishops, the Pope, the Chief Rabbi and the Caliph had all been present at the same time. The "these persons" mentioned in the declaration are the witnesses to the ceremony, who are called upon to sign the register in that capacity. The minimum (and usual) number is two, and they may be obtained from anywhere. As a matter of fact I have often obtained the maidservants from the houses on either side of the Register Office to act when couples who have been unaware of the law have arrived. As far as the State is concerned, there is no question of any "giving away" or "best man," whilst the blessing of the bride and the attempt to make her fruitful by the throwing of confetti is usually frowned upon by the Superintendent Registrar, who has to pay for the cleaning up of the mess. If one or both of the parties be Welsh and unable to speak or comprehend the English language, there is an authorized Welsh translation for use. Deaf and dumb persons may be married either through an interpreter, or by the contracting parties both writing out and signing the declaration as a proof of their understanding and assent.

By the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894, any master of a ship to which an official log is required, can perform the marriage contract, but every such marriage, together with the names and ages of the parties, must be entered in the log. It would appear that this condition would apply only to high seas, *i.e.*, outside any territorial waters, in view of the condition applying to His Majesty's ships on foreign station, whereby a marriage can take place only when the commander is provided with a warrant of a Secretary of State authorizing him to be a marriage officer.

It has always been a principle of English law that a marriage contracted abroad is legal if conducted according to the law of the country and it must be understood that this applies to any country, Christian or otherwise. Providing it is a monogamous marriage, Christianity has no say in the matter whatever when it comes to the point of the recognition of the marriage so that it would appear that a certain decision was erring in its reasoning regarding a marriage in Russia.

It has been suggested that England might follow the example of various other countries and permit marriages to take place in Town Halls or other such places, but that would appear to be but a matter of time. With the transference (under the Local Government Act, 1929) of the functions of the Guardians of the Poor to the County and County Borough Councils, it is possible that these bodies, in the interests of economy, will centralize their properties, with the result that the District Register Office, which now stands so often in the office of the Clerk to the (now defunct) Guardians, will be removed to the Council Offices. This would seem to be all the more probable in view of the fact that in the future the duty of the selection of Superintendent Registrars and Registrars will devolve upon such Council, subject, as always, to the approval of the Registrar-General.

I trust that I shall have "cleared the air" somewhat for those who have previously been in doubt as to how the matter stands, even if such a clearance has resulted in a rather wordy explanation. At the same time, it may be as well to issue a warning to all and sundry. These rights which we now possess must be guarded as rigor-

ously as any others, or they will be filched from us by those easy stages of which we are so well aware. Let every Freethinker stand firm to his principles and not sacrifice them by yielding to the desire of a prospective partner for the "rites and ceremonies of the Established (or any other) Church." For surely does that way lie the germ of the cancer of filching, the cultivation of which is now a supreme art with the religionists, whatever their sects or creeds. To-day the Law permits, and it is up to every one of us to stand by such a law in order to protect ourselves.

A PLAIN MAN.

Blether About Birth Control.

In a report that the *News Chronicle* describes as "facing with unflinching courage some of the most critical and perplexing questions of the day," has been issued the result of the five weeks' secret sittings of the Lambeth Conference. Astonished by the headline announcing a majority of Bishops in favour of Birth Control, I turned to the actual resolutions passed.

What unflinching courage in tackling the question is revealed by the following? "Where there is a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood the method must be decided on Christian principles. The primary and obvious method is complete abstinence from intercourse (as far as may be necessary) in a life of discipline and self-control lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, in those cases where there is such a clearly-felt moral obligation to a limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles. The Conference records its strong condemnation of the use of any methods of conception-control from motives of selfishness, luxury or mere convenience."

Here is a clear lead for the fortunate member of the Church of England. Now he knows just what to do. Having an unmistakable feeling that he is under a moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, he must decide on a method on Christian principles. As he might still feel a little at sea faced with such a problem, the Bishops courageously tell him what they mean and what, I presume, they do. "Complete abstinence from intercourse (so far as may be necessary)"—how I love the bit in brackets—is "the primary and obvious method," they tell him. "Go and tell that to your wife."

"What! not satisfied with a life of discipline and self-control lived in the power of the Holy Spirit?" Although pained at the thought, the Bishops, it appears, were not unprepared for the contingency; and bravely meet it by agreeing that "where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, other methods may be used, provided that it is done in the light of the same Christian principles."

Bravo! But that's as far as they will go. "No more details, Mr Church-goer; you must do whatever you do in the light of Christian principles, and be grateful to us for the advice."

So it is up to the Freethinker to tell the Church of England member just what his Bishops mean. And, as usual, the Freethinker is quite ready to give a logical interpretation of a typically vague piece of religious advice. Choosing your method of Birth Control on Christian principles can only mean one thing. Go home and write for all the catalogues of Birth Control requisites you can find. Then say your prayers, and God will tell you which of the many mechanical and chemical articles to order.

Blasphemy? Not a bit of it! Merely a piece of episcopal teaching, clarified for Christian enquirers.

But I must quote another resolution of the Bishops, and I do it in the interests of the Churchman who has decided to take his Bishops' advice and choose a method on Christian principles. "The Conference presses for legislation, forbidding the exposure for sale and the unrestricted advertisement of contraceptives, and placing definite restrictions upon their purchase."

So I advise the Christian in question to hurry up and send for those catalogues.

P.V.M.

Acid Drops.

A very serious question, at present agitating certain Christian circles in the United States, is whether the evangelist Aimee McPherson broke her mother's nose as a result over money matters, or did the mother merely fall. The mother says it is the handiwork of her daughter, the daughter says her mother threw herself on the floor and damaged her nose. There the matter rests. Meanwhile Aimee is said to be threatened with blindness as a consequence of beautifying operations on her face. This is not one of the topics with which the Lambeth Conference dealt, but it has a greater bearing on an understanding of modern religion than had many subjects that came before that august body.

The other day at Wimbledon a constable chased a man who was about to break into a private house. The policeman overtook the burglar, who gave in with a "It's all right gov'nor. I'm beat." It reminds one of the Lambeth Conference deciding in 1930 that the story of creation in Genesis is not scientifically sound. The only difference is that the burglar showed a little more regard for intellectual honesty.

"The Nation," says the *Church Times*, "is in open revolt against the Christian Faith and Christian morals." This is what one may call quite obvious proof of the revival of belief about which so many of the clergy have been telling us.

The best time to pray, says a writer, is in the morning on rising. Undoubtedly; one always ought to render thanks unto the Lord for kindly refraining from not murdering one in the night. And it is the duty of a Christian to be thankful for even the smallest of mercies.

According to a prophet, scientists will, within the next fifty years, create a new world. For Christ's sake, and the priests', we hope it will not be a better one. If it should be, nobody will long for the Christian "next world," and eternal bliss as compensation for sufferings endured here below. And this will be exceedingly bad for the trade carried on by the costermongers of Christ.

A pious journal thoughtfully presents a report of last month's weather, as recorded by the Meteorological Office. Unfortunately, there is not appended any comments as to what effect prayers by the faithful for "seasonable weather" had on the actual result. And so we are left uncertain whether any gratitude for benefits achieved by prayer is due to God or not. This is most unsatisfactory, both to believers and non-believers. We hope the clergy will see that the error of omission is not noticeable when next month's report appears.

The President of the National Sunday School Union wants one million new scholars for the Sunday schools. He and his merry men had better try to get them now. It may be difficult later. For there is much talk of improving the standard of secular education. And, according to all accounts, the better secular education is, the harder becomes the difficulty of securing interest in the crudities of religion.

The properties now held by the National Trust are estimated to be worth about a million pounds. A few centuries ago such properties would not have become a national possession for the enjoyment of all. Some artful priests would have influenced the benefactors to give the properties to "God" for the benefit of the Church. And so one may infer that the waning of religious and priestly influence has had, in at least one direction, a beneficial result to the nation.

Sir Ernest Benn, the publisher, declares there are far too many people putting things right. He might have added that, in this respect, these people who are certain God has inspired them to put things right are the biggest nuisances. Nearly always they either try to put right the things which aren't wrong, or else endeavour to put

right the things which are wrong by means of wrong or stupid methods. From a survey of Christian history, the student might be pardoned for inferring that the "inspiration of God" has proved to be a disadvantage rather than an advantage to mankind.

It is suggested by a weekly journal that municipal galleries of art might well be open in the evening when most people are wondering how to occupy their leisure hours. For a similar reason the galleries ought, we suggest, to be open all day on Sunday. For people have most leisure then. The would-be seeker after culture is entitled, as a ratepayer, to something other than the Christian alternative of "pub" or church on Sunday dictated by Sabbatarian bigots.

A Member of Parliament has been saying a good word for travelling showmen. Someone might now vouchsafe a little praise for the showmen of the Christian circus. Let it not be forgotten that as workers in holy magic and as jugglers with truth they have never been surpassed.

Someone is trying to make stockings from banana skins. He should be encouraged by the thought that the world has a number of things ingenuously contrived out of waste. For instance, there are thousands of churches, costly cathedrals, and parsons' houses, as well as "safe" jobs, all created out of an ancient myth.

There is no drunkenness whatever in Portugal, says Dr. Arthur Shadwell. Still, if only the tactics and methods of our English "Temperance" reformers could be introduced there, this rather unsatisfactory state of affairs could no doubt be altered for the better.

It is, declares a well-known politician, "so fatally easy to think that freedom means doing what you like." On the other hand, it is fatuously futile to think that freedom is consistent with doing only what certain bigotted persons and narrow-minded cranks believe you ought not to do. As things stand to-day, what the citizen is suffering from is far too much curtailment of individual liberty, engineered by such persons on a plausible plea of social necessity.

The Rev. Percy Hicks says, in the *Christian Herald*, that:—

These are days of strange happenings! The unparalleled intellectual unrest among men and nations has its counterpart in the physical commotions of nature, expressed in earthquakes, typhoons, cloudbursts, hurricanes, tidal waves, unusual thunderstorms, and other abnormalities.

It appears, according to Mr. Hicks, that these and other strange things foreshadow the imminent end of the world. What doesn't strike the reverend gentleman's intelligence is, how curious a God of Love, his God, must be to allow all the horrors mentioned to inflict the godly as well as the bad. Again, people would have a kinder feeling towards God if he ended the world quickly, and without any horrors, by just announcing the fact and putting everyone to death painlessly.

The resolve of the Anglican Bishops to "lift the whole subject of sex into a pure and clean atmosphere" has led a pious weekly to say:—

It is generally agreed to-day that the attitude towards sex which prevailed in the last century was a dangerous one. It was to a very large extent a "hush-hush" policy. The subject was treated almost as if it were unclean. Vital facts were kept from young people, and they finally acquired this knowledge, if not in a positively unwholesome fashion, at least in a haphazard way, often with disastrous results. Even to-day sex needs to be put on a more satisfactory basis.

Undoubtedly the attitude towards sex, which prevailed during last century, and many previous Christian centuries, was a dangerous one. It was also an unclean

and stupid one. But it was truly and exclusively Christian. No other attitude was possible while the Christian Bible furnished the inspiration for such attitude. Anyone who imagines that the Church, Bible in hand, is competent to put the subject of sex "on a more satisfactory basis" is fit only for a mental home.

Those soulful gentlemen who are seeking for some sort of Christian religion without dogmas should get in touch with the Rev. Ernest Braham. He declares there can be no Church without doctrine. Christianity without doctrine, says he, is like a body without the boney structure. He avers that the Christian religion is a system of truth, and contains certain definite ideas about God. Furthermore, it also teaches certain ideas about man. It is those two sorts of ideas, we may add, which are embodied in Christian dogmas. Therefore, what the aforesaid soulful gentlemen are seeking would appear to be a Christian religion without any Christian ideas in it. They are unlikely to discover it this side of doomsday. If they are genuinely seeking such an impossibility, they must be woefully ignorant of the nature of the Christian religion. And if they are only pretending to be looking for it, they are merely pandering to popular ignorance.

Apropos of the Church's failure to capture modern youth, a religious journal says:—

Modern youth, if not better than its fathers, is certainly no worse. The fields are white unto harvest; if we cannot bring in the sheaves it is because something is wrong with our harvesting methods, or much more probable, something was lacking in our earlier cultivation.

Only a short time ago the megaphones of the Church were blaring out against youth denunciation, accusation, and defamation. Now, it would appear, there is really nothing wrong with youth. In fact, the admission is made that the moderns without the Christian religion are as good as a past generation with religion. After that, the moderns will be pardoned for wondering what possible advantage religion could confer on them. This aside, we hope the tears of the parsons weeping over the failure of their birdlime to snare modern youth will not cause another Deluge.

What the Sunday school teachers, says one of them, are trying to establish in the child's mind is the habit of expressing in life what he learns in the Sunday school. This teacher adds:—

Not knowledge about the Bible, nor even the facts of Christianity, are so essential as the habit of expressing in daily life and practice those principles for which Christianity stands.

For our part, we hope the modern Sunday scholar's "expression" of Biblical notions will not be quite so thorough as that of Christian people during past Christian centuries. The one thing noticeable about their "expression" was the thorough manner in which they persecuted, burnt, tortured, or banished those who committed the crime of differing from them. That this was all done in the name of a pacifist Christ and a God of Love should not prevent one from appreciating how thorough the Christian tuition must have been to engender so determined an "expression." However, the modern child is unlikely to repeat the crimes of religious expression for which his forefathers are infamous. His tuition has a milder flavour nowadays. And for that improvement the thanks of humanity are due not to God but to Freethought criticism.

Lovers of cricket will be interested in learning the secret of Bradman's efficiency as a batsman. The Rev. W. E. Bennet, who is here from New South Wales, has made public the fact that Bradman is a staunch Methodist. Ambitious youngsters at the game will now have within their grasp the secret of success, and Freethinkers will have yet another argument to meet in favour of the truth of the resurrection.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. WEARING.—We presume your enquiry is "writ sarcastic." The character of the *Freethinker* is too well known to need explaining.

R. F. TURNEY.—We have been intending to call attention to Professor Mitchell's lecture on Materialism and Vitalism in Biology, as well as to one or two other recent works, and will do so shortly. We share your appreciation of the lecture, particularly as it approximates so closely to the position taken up in *Materialism Re-stated*, as does the most recent work of Professor Andrade.

C. F. BUDGE.—We are obliged for your weekly batch of cuttings. They are always useful.

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.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen's new work, *War, Civilization and the Churches*, will be on sale on September 1. We venture to press this book on the attention of our readers as one that should be of good service in many directions. The work will be issued at 2s. paper, 3s. cloth. Postage 2d. extra.

Mr. Cohen has arranged to give a course of four lectures in Liverpool on "God and Man." The titles of the four are—"The Coming of the Gods"—"The Reign of the Gods"—"The Passing of the Gods"—and "The Coming of Man." The first of the course will be delivered in the Picton Hall, the other three in the Transport Hall, 41 Islington. There will be a limited number of reserved seat tickets at 1s. each, course tickets 3s. 6d. Those wishing to secure tickets should write as early as possible to the Branch Secretary, Mr. S. R. A. Ready, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool.

Apropos of what we said last week as to the popularization being almost entirely the work of Freethinkers, we are glad to note that Mr. Norman Himes, who is preparing a complete history of the Birth Control Movement in this country, has just issued a reprint of the *Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population*, by Francis Place. There is no question of the Freethinking of Francis Place, and there are few men of the early nineteenth century to whom the English people owe more. Place was the first to issue cheap publications for the education of the working classes on this subject. The work of Place has been generally neglected because of his anti-Christian opinions. That has made it very easy for others to come along and claim credit for advocating opinions which but for the work of Freethinkers would not be where they are to-day.

We shall be obliged if those who send us notices of meetings to be held will send them separately, and not enclose them in batches of newspaper cuttings. When these reach us in the hurry of press day they stand a very good chance of being overlooked, and sometimes are not discovered until too late to be of use.

Mr. J. Brighton has been delivering several addresses in Darlington, winning approval from Freethinkers and disapproval from Christians. So we take it that he has been complimented by both sides. Quite a number of letters have appeared in the *Northern Dispatch* on the subject of the lectures, including a frantic appeal to good Christians to show that Darlington has no place for Freethought. We should not like to slander the place in this wholesale style, although it is quite possible that many local believers have no place in their heads except for the old-fashioned stupidities. Still, common sense is catching, even though it may not be so resistant a change as religious belief.

There is a row going on in Stalybridge over the holding of meetings in the market square. The particular quarrel has arisen over meetings of the Labour Party. We presume that no question would have been raised had it been a meeting of the Salvation Army. Our advice to those who wish to hold the meetings is to go on holding them, and leave the Town Council to do their damndest. A little courage on the part of those interested would soon bring the Council to something like common sense on the subject. The Market Square, it should be remembered is public property, and there is a legal check on what a public body may do with it.

We are asked to announce that Mr. C. T. Shaw has a large-sized room at 6b New Street, Aston, Birmingham, where those interested can purchase Freethought and other publications. Freethinkers are invited to give the place a call.

Mr. George Whitehead will be lecturing in Manchester from August 30 till September 12. On Saturdays, August 30 and September 6, he will be speaking at the Alexandra Park Gates, at 7.30. On Sundays, August 31 and September 7, at 3.0 and 7.30, at Platts Fields, Wilmslow Road. From Monday to Friday, September 1 to 5, and September 8 to 12, at the corner of Seedley Road and Langworthy Road, Salford. Will local friends please note the dates.

The Manchester Branch has mapped out a good programme of work for the winter, but it is sadly in need of funds if this is to be carried out with efficiency. Propaganda is an expensive thing to tackle in these days of high prices, but there are enough Freethinkers to find ten times the money needed if they will only do each what he or she ought to do. The Secretary's address is Miss W. Black, 33 Southbank Road, Kingsway, Didsbury. This note should be quite enough to see the Branch through its difficulties.

The *Glasgow Forward* reprints in full the report of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's speech in support of Secular Education, and which is reprinted as a leaflet by the National Secular Society. This is the only report of the speech in print, and we again ask the help of all our friends to give it as wide circulation as possible. We shall soon have another Education Bill brought forward by the Government, and nothing but a strong public agitation will prevent more concessions being made to the churches and chapels. The present Government, like previous ones, appears to think that so long as the religious sects are content nothing else matters.

Should this meet the eye of Mr. F. A. Richardson, at one time residing in Childeric Road, New Cross, and Westcliff-on-Sea early in 1926, will he please communicate with the Secretary of the N.S.S., 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. We shall be grateful for any help from our readers who may happen to know Mr. Richardson's address. The matter in hand is very simple, but important to the Society.

The Biological Gospel.

THERE has just come into my hands a book by Mrs. Charles A. McDonough (U.S.A.) entitled *God's Plan of Redemption*, which bears the intriguing sub-title of "The Gospel from a Biological Standpoint." (I see some of my audience smiling. Just wait!)

The purpose of this book is—or was—to assist Bible teachers to "counteract in a logical, convincing manner, the destructive work of infidel teachers, and to save the young from their subtle snares." Bible teachers, as we all know, are a rapidly vanishing race; and I have no hesitation in saying that this earnest booklet has, all unwittingly, done much to accelerate the good work of extinction.

But that is by the way. My purpose in dealing with the book, which was written eight years ago, is not a serious one. For, despite the huge sales hinted at in the Introductory Note (or, perhaps because of them), I do not suppose anyone would be able to obtain a copy through the ordinary channels now. *God's Plan of Redemption* is, I venture to guess, as dead as kippered herring. And who would want to discuss an eight year old kipper seriously?

No, my purpose here is not serious. But I realize that the copy in my possession is probably a rare specimen. So, having noted your preliminary smile, I consider that it would be mere selfishness to deprive you of a share in the priceless gems of biological argument which the book contains. I can do no better to entertain you than to quote from it verbatim. My own comments, always in brackets, will, I trust, not be considered unduly verbose. Between each paragraph you must imagine that I have skipped a page or two. Here goes!

* * *

In starting a Bible Class do not spend time in the endeavour to prove the Bible to be the Word of God. (Quite right. Sheer waste of breath.) Take it for granted that the persons who have gathered for study (!) believe the Bible to be *God's Written Word*. If there are any present who do not believe this . . . do not argue with them. (Just knock them on the head with a poker.) . . . The most logical way to read a book is to open to the first page (No! Not really?); therefore, without further apology, ask your class to read the first five words of Genesis: "In the beginning, God created." (I protest! The first word should be enough. I always stop at the "in.") Call attention to the fact (!) that God, the Creator, was not created. (He just happened.)

The expression "when the morning stars sang together" is not merely wonderful poetry, but it indicates a fact (!) that scientific discovery has brought to light. (And another fact, which scientific discovery has not brought to light, is that they sang to a saxophone accompaniment. I know, because I was there—with the saxophone.) How much more satisfactory is this description of a created planet than the theory of a "bit of fire-mist evolving a confusing mass of primal elements"—and *how did* the primal elements originate? (Ah, how? And *how did* God originate, dear Mrs. Doughnut? Oh, I beg your pardon! I forgot that we were gathered for study!)

The devout scientific man might refer to sentence after sentence of this remarkable chapter in Genesis, that antedates the discoveries of science by thousands of years: e.g., who would have supposed that verses 22 and 23 had any connexion with some of the high explosives of modern warfare. (Who, indeed! But perhaps you mean chapter iv. 22, 23? Even so, 'tis a trifle vague, meseems.) Yet devout scientific men now understand the allusion. (Or do you mean "illusion"?)

We now approach a subject of great importance, but little understood—the origin of Sin. A terrible discord arises in the harmony of the Universe. (No, it was not my saxophone that went wrong.) We find the cause of this set forth in Ezekiel xxviii. The Creator is saying to one whom He addresses as "anointed cherub" . . . "Thou hast sinned." What was his sin? Let us turn to Isaiah xiv. (For fear lest the reader should get dizzy, I have omitted some dozen previous "turns." Evidently the logical way to read the Bible, after the first five words, is to keep on turning.)

This then was the origin of sin, and in Lucifer we behold the first sinner. We see that the modern teaching concerning sin as being merely a belief of the human mind in erroneous; for sin originated untold ages before the mind of man was created. (How simple it all is. It wasn't Adam and Eve at all. It was the cherub Lucifer.)

The question may be asked, "How could this bright anointed cherub, created without iniquity and having no being to tempt him, become a sinner?" This is a mystery. It is *the* mystery. (No, no, dear Mrs. Doughnut; not such a mystery after all. Let me explain. The cherub's name was Lucifer, was it not? Well; Lucifer means "match," does it not? Clearly, then, the brat had been playing carelessly with a box of matches. Q.E.D. Why, it's as plain as a pike-staff.)

In verse 26 we read (Our turning has brought us back to Genesis, chapter i. again—but hang on tight!) "And God said, Let us make man in Our image." How much is expressed in this short phrase. First, the plural pronoun calls attention to the fact (!) that God is a Triune Being. (Not, mark you, the two of us, nor the four of us, but exactly the three of us. Wonderfully precise, is it not.) The word "triune" signifies "three in one." Dr. Haldeman suggests the three light rays (which three?) as an illustration of the Trinity, as follows: "Light is constituted of three rays. These rays are distinct from each other. They do not form three lights, but three rays and one light. No one ray, without the other two, is light; etc., etc." The scientific mind will perceive the analogy at once. (Attaboy! Give 'em real science all the time! Hats off to Haldeman the Scientist! But may I, with my unscientific mind, suggest an analogy more easy to digest? What about when someone asks you to "have another" after your second. There's "three in one" for you!)

Man's tri-partite being—spirit, soul and body. Spirit, the seat of God-consciousness, the soul the seat of self-consciousness, and the body the seat of sense-consciousness. (There seems to be a "seat" or two missing here. I mean, what's race-consciousness going to sit on? Or even poor old unconsciousness?) Caution the class in reference to a careless use of these terms. Avoid the phrase "body, soul and spirit," as it inverts the Divine order of arrangement. To illustrate: the spirit may be compared to the mistress; the soul, to the housekeeper; the body, to the servant. Invert the order and the result is a disordered household. (Well, I don't know so much about that. There are some households I know of, where—but no! I must refrain.)

We are inclined to look down from the heights of our fancied superiority upon Adam and Eve, as pitifully ignorant of all that the ages have bestowed upon us in accumulated knowledge. Alas, how mistaken we are. (Oh, alas and alack!) Notice that the Lord God brought the various animals that He had created to Adam "to see what *he* would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." Where is the scientific man of to-day who could perform this feat of classifi-

ation? (Well; if calling things names is "classification," I wouldn't have minded having a shot at it. But the question remains: how did Adam actually "classify" the ichthyosaurus?)

We come now to Genesis iii. 1-7. What is the meaning of this strange temptation scene? (Ah! What?) Who is the tempter? (Ah! Who?) . . . As we read the words of the serpent, we realize that this reptile cannot be the real tempter. We must look elsewhere. Eliminating the entire animal creation, we ask, "Who can the tempter be?" (Ah! Who?) Is there any other human being present? . . . Most certainly not. Would God tempt them? . . . Unthinkable. God tempts no one. Who can the tempter be? (Ah! Who? No; you're wrong—guess again. What a game this is!) The careful student of psychology would suggest at once that the language of the tempter bears a strong resemblance to that uttered ages before by Lucifer. (Dear, dear! How stupid of me. Of course there's no mistaking the language—Hebrew. So it was that little cuss of a cherub after all!)

The teacher should now call attention to the penalty attached to the prohibition (imposed upon eating the fruit of the tree of good and evil. Not the other sort of prohibition.) God had said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." What did He mean by this? Surely not immediate dissolution of the body, for Adam and Eve lived many years after their fall. (Of course not. How absurd to expect God to say what He means—even though He does use the word "surely.") The scientific definition of death helps us to perceive His meaning. It is as follows: "Death is the falling out of correspondence with environment." (Help! Bury me, please, somebody!)

Bearing in mind the thought that reproduction of life is the extension of God's creative act, it is not difficult to perceive that a law has been established by God Himself, from which there can be no deviation. Each form of life will be reproduced "after its kind" so long as the reproduction of that life continues. (Well, then; I'm off to hunt the Dodo. Or do you perhaps mean that each form of life will reproduce as long as it will reproduce? No; that would be much too tame a way of describing a law established by God, would it not?)

God is an absolutely holy Being. He cannot tolerate or excuse sin. We could not worship a God who would treat sin lightly. Impress upon the class the awfulness of sin, but in such a manner as to enable them to perceive that there is a law of sin which, like any natural law, is followed by inevitable results. Do not permit them to indulge in the weak, illogical reasoning of many persons who say that God is too loving to punish sinners. Is it lack of love in God that permits a person to fall when he has thrown himself over a precipice? No, the force of gravity is irresistible. Is it unloving in God when the hand that has deliberately been held in the flame is burned? (Of course not! Who would dream of blaming God for earthquakes, typhoons, plagues and the like! Having once established a law, it is obvious that "almighty" God is powerless to control it—poor Fellow!)

The Resurrection is said to be the best attested fact (!) of the Gospel Record and this indicates its importance, for without the Resurrection, there would be no positive (!) proof of the efficacy of His death. (Hear, hear! "Said to be" is correct.)

Another subject must now be introduced. Not only must the believer manifest his identification with Christ in His death to sin, but he must also manifest his victory over Satan. Many Christians fail at this point because they do not plainly see that the victory

over Satan really HAS BEEN WON. (Extraordinary, isn't it! You give God's most powerful enemy the K.O., and yet you don't know it. Where's the referee?)

Says Dr. Haldeman (that famous Scientist) in his recent (scientific) book, *Can the Dead communicate with the Living?*—"Scripture teaches us that a certain class of the dead do come back, enter in and possess the bodies of the living. These are called 'devils,' but the word should be 'demons.'" A Bible Student points out the possibility of this statement being misused by spiritists, and that the truth appears to be that evil spirits *personate* the dead, as in spiritism. But there are prophetic writers who say that at the "time of the END," in which we live, some of the wicked dead, e.g., Paine, etc., will come back and take hold of similarly wicked men. It seems best to keep an open mind. (Indeed it does! If you're not sure whether the demon is Paine or just another liar who says he is Paine, it is much the best to keep an open mind—as long as it isn't too open to admit of the ghastly possibility that Paine isn't a demon at all.)

Dogmatic assertion ill becomes a Christian who is looking for the Coming of Christ; therefore the teacher should not insist upon the acceptance of any particular view as to those who are translated in the First Rapture. (Too true! Second Raptures are often best. As for myself, having finished the book, I find myself mercifully, yet mirthfully, emerging from the Seventy-seventh Rapture—I mean, Rapture!)

C. S. FRASER.

The Book Shop.

IN Schopenhauer's *Art of Controversy*, the reader will find much that is amusing and more that is instructive. Although it has ironical passages there is always in the background that sound sense built on the foundation of logic. He plays with his subject, shows all the shoddy tricks of the trade, defines the difference between logic and dialectic, and, I think, he gives the touchstone of the matter in the following passage:—

"Controversial Dialectic is the art of disputing, and of disputing in such a way as to hold one's own, whether one is in the right or the wrong." I was reminded of Schopenhauer in reading *Papal Infallibility*, a Public Lecture delivered at the Guildhall, Cambridge, by Dr. G. G. Coulton. The price of the booklet is only two-pence, but for value to the Freethinker it is worth more than the price of six month's newspapers. The lecturer's inability to catch Catholic fish is illustrated in his preface:—

"Early last July, having approached Cardinal Bourne in vain to the same effect, I sent the following letter, by registered post, to the seven writers mentioned in it. Two received it in silence; all the rest refused it at once; Mr. Chesterton alone played with me for six months, under different excuses, and finally declined." The names of the seven are mentioned as: Messrs. G. K. Chesterton and Belloc, the Jesuit Fathers, H. Thurston, C. C. Martindale, Leslie Walker, and F. Woodlock, and the Reverend Barnard Grimley, D.D., Ph.D. The letter then follows, and is succeeded by the lecture. Case-hardened Freethinkers will find in Dr. Coulton's opponents all the frowzy shifts and turns that have been used in the past, and are used in the present; they will also find historical ammunition brought to bear on the controversy by a scholar who has placed the thinking world in his debt with his numerous books on the middle-ages and kindred subjects. One comes to the melancholy conclusion that the fundamental parts of Catholicism explains its horrible history; if it had had truth on its side there would have been no need to perpetuate it with war and massacre in the past. The publishers of the booklet are Simpkin Marshal, Ltd., London.

The enterprising publishers, Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., have an occasional book, price threepence, entitled *Now and Then*. It covers the current publication of its own books, and, what we may term as Freethought in the publishing trade may be found in the Editorial section. The subject is General Crozier's book: "The barrage put up by certain heavy batteries of the Press to cut off General Crozier's book failed. The staff-work was poor; the bombardment opened prematurely; the attacking forces were not agreed upon their exact objective; and General Crozier's position, on examination, turned out stronger than we expected. The episode may perhaps teach certain editors that the currents of public opinion often run deeper and stronger than they imagine, and that these currents cannot be turned this way or that by violent, ill-informed attack." *A Brass Hat in No Man's Land* supplemented *Retreat*, it let in unpleasant truths about the incongruous position of chaplains during a war, and, if the reader of these notes will accept the symbolism of the sword and the lily for the Church, a reading of history will confirm that it has used each invariably in the wrong place. One exception may be noted quite recently, and that was when the Archbishop of Canterbury was the miner's champion against the Premier, Mr. Baldwin, who could have put mineowners and miners right by telling financiers to go to hell.

The strenuous student of almost any branch of inquiry realizes what immense fields there still remain to be tilled as soon as he thinks one subject exhausted. Presuming a no more profound study than that of wild-flowers, he will find that geographical location brings fresh specimens to light, and a new joy in discovery. The Lesser Celandine in February is a quietly acknowledged harbinger of Spring, ever welcome to the pagan who refuses to be bothered with first causes. In August, if the searcher for beauty continues his quest he will find on a dry shady bank in Sussex, the Greater Celandine which has no relation with its spring brother. You may say, this is not much to write about, but through Columbus discovering America we are in her debt in a sense that is not desirable, and I maintain that, relatively one discovery is as good as another. It is not my intention to extol the joys of remaining true to earth; its compensations are obvious, peace of mind, resistance, vigour, clarity—these are but a few of the gifts that nature will give if striven for. In the nature of a new discovery I must recommend Maeterlinck's *Buried Temple*—a series of essays on justice. The Freethinker will not find theological man-traps in these essays; instead, he will know that, in reading them, he is walking by the side of a wise man who has that terrific and dynamic quality of disinterestedness. Maeterlinck emphasises the "preponderating importance of thought," and explains the belief of the idea of justice and its practice as existing outside ourselves. That Maeterlinck has the honour of being on the black list of the Catholic Church is sufficient to recommend him to those who do not forget the brave thinkers of the past. Neither will they forget the despicable part played in history by the worst of all gaolers—the gaolers of the intellect—the Roman Catholic Church—the Uriah Heep of the human race.

For 10s. 6d. net, Faber and Faber, you can buy *Anabasis*. A poem by St. J. Perse, with a Translation into English by T. S. Eliot. I have already mentioned the plague of books that makes one wonder why on earth they were published. A reviewer gives me a sample from bulk of this half-guinea tome; here it is:—

"Select a wide hat with the brim reduced." And that should make the reader plank down a guinea for two copies, and then again, it should not. *The Anabasis of Xenophon* is accessible in a cheap form to any serious-minded reader. It treats of the education of Cyrus, the son of Alexander; I remember in it, a remarkable phrase—"To speak the truth and aim straight." This thought also occurs in Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and it also appears in Milton's *Essay on Education*. One turns in disgust from the mush that is churned out by the publishers, and if St. J. Perse must write let him get a useful job at taking down bus numbers in the almost insufferable streets of London, where stupidity pours three quarts into a pint pot and then blawts about a problem. If that job is not to his liking there is always

the litter of newspapers to be picked up in parks, open spaces and the countryside. And it is suggested that the author wears the hat mentioned during the job.

C-DE-B.

A Freethinker Faces Death.

RELIGION has added unnatural terrors to death, which, being the opposite to life, must needs be a matter of aversion in proportion as life is strong in its hold *i.e.*, when we are healthy in body and contented in mind.

Pretending to give comfort and assurance, religion fails through its unreality and the conflicting nature of its theories.

For faith is not a natural endowment and has to play a secondary part where realities are concerned. The earnest Christian may sing of the "land of pure delight," but he does not hasten there, and will give all that he has to retain a hold on this life. Why? Because this is the only life of which he is SURE. Deep down in his consciousness he is aware of this and will admit to wrestlings with "unbelief," "doubts," and "fears."

But to the man who recognizes that death means "end" in his case as it does in all others, and faces the fact with equanimity and courage, the bogie will appear less odious. His reason tells him that he is one with the "all." All are born, all must die, and the law is universal.

I think it well that a man should accustom himself to the thought that a day will arrive when he will have ceased to be. The sun will shine, the streets will be full of busy people, trams and trains running as usual, the daily papers appearing—all these things which his egotism would appropriate to himself as part of his life—all these still in action, and he, nothing.

And if he is a wise man this consideration will not make him morbid. He will face life with greater zest, for here and now is his only chance. Wise words of philosophers, ancient and modern, will recur to him. Here are two from the East:—

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Writer of the *Book of Ecclesiastes*.)

"Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend."

Omar Khayyam.

And a modern thinker—Clifford—strikes a high note in the declaration:—

I do not say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But I say "Let us join hands and help, for to-day we are alive together."

A. H. MILLWARD.

THE PASSING OF TRADITIONALISM.

The development of human societies was a development of traditions. Usage, justified by mythology, was the method of human association for scores of centuries. But the different conditions under which our widely diffused species was living in different regions of the world forbade the establishment of any uniform usage and mythology. By wars, raids, and the clash of traditions, the spirit of comparison, disputation, and enquiry was fostered. Undirected thinking gave place here and there in a few minds to a more sceptical, sustained and efficient process. The climatic fluctuations that brought the Semitic and Aryan-speaking peoples down upon the primitive civilizations opened the human mind to the possibility of alternatives in tradition. Men asked "What is truth?" Inventions in thought and method no longer awakened the same effective distrust and opposition. Plato's Utopias display the full-fledged realization that tradition could be set aside and a social order still exist. Aristotle embodies the release of the human mind towards new knowledge and power. These are the pioneers of modern thought and effort. How their initiatives lost force and were renewed again in the birth of modern Science, the historian must tell.—"*The Science of Life*," by H. G. Wells, T. Huxley and G. P. Wells.

The Bible Again— In Schools and Elsewhere.

(By the Author of "The World-Story of 3,000,000,000 Years.")

I.

PROBABLY many of us who were brought up in an orthodox but not entirely unintellectual atmosphere became familiar with the old notion that the only needful books were the Bible and Shakespeare—a notion which is but one removed from the Mohammedan estimate of the Koran: "Burn the libraries, for their value is in this book." It was evident, however, forty or fifty years ago, that the idea was passing; and in my own case the only taboo was the reading of "secular books" on Sunday. Even this died away rather rapidly; and I was then free to read such dreadful books as those of Darwin and Spencer on Sunday without serious protest.

But, in view of the slowness of the demise of theological and allied beliefs, it was not altogether surprising to meet with a revival, with some modification, of the one referred to. Mr. Lindsay, the Master of Balliol, when lately speaking of books, is reported to have said that he had a feeling that if we could retain the Bible, Shakespeare, Plato's *Republic* and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, all the rest might be burnt.

We may take it that the suggestion was not a very serious one. But as it was disseminated by the public press, we may well regret that this well known intellectualist (a professional philosopher, but known to be interested in other subjects) did not include in his short list one book that would furnish a small body of dependable and up-to-date world-knowledge and ideas: that is to say, a résumé of the main facts and conclusions of scholars, and more especially of scientists and historians, concerning the universe, the world and mankind.

Perhaps there is yet no ideal single book of this kind. But an approach is made by many, including Wells' *Outline of History*, where we find a useful account of astronomical and geological evolution, of the evolution of man, of his progress during the prehistoric era and the rise and development of civilization, and a brief presentation of world-history, including something of the growth of knowledge and ideas.

Probably it is to the spread of such information that we must look principally for the further rationalization of thought and practice. The appeal to reason, in conjunction with common knowledge and experience, has been useful; but it has produced much less effect than we hoped and expected. As Professor Laski has lately pointed out, there is "a more easy acceptance of the stupidities that arise from the acceptance of supernaturalism, than has been the case over a very considerable period of history." This probably applies to about 75 per cent of the people of this country, while the remaining 25 per cent may be regarded as rationalists, in the sense that they reject Christian theology, refuse to hold merely traditional and unexamined beliefs, demand some evidence for the doctrines they hold, and are not prepared to accept the mutually exclusive propositions of current theology on the one hand and of science and history on the other.

The further rationalization process will obviously go hand in hand with the further breakdown of bibliolatry, which still forms one of the chief bulwarks of superstition in the West, and has probably become more widespread and intense, as well as more articulate, during the past ten years. For though a few religionists deprecate belief in verbal inspiration, or in miracles, or point to the magic and other primitive elements which are contained in the Bible (and persist in the beliefs and practices of the churches) or refer to the "grotesque, hideous and immoral" in the Old Testament, it remains the fact that they or others insist on the uniqueness of the Bible, the importance of its study by teachers and others, and its use in schools. A writer in the *Hibbert Journal* has made the astounding statement that "properly understood and seized upon, the four gospels are

veritably the teacher's *vade mecum*, his best handbook of method." The Divinity Lectures Committee tell us that the book is "a mine of ancient history," and others of the "wonderful way" in which the recent archaeological-historical excavations in the near East has "confirmed the truth of the Bible."

It is therefore hardly surprising that in New Zealand, where purely secular education has for some time been established, the agitation of the Bible in Schools Propaganda Committee has been so effective that a Bill to restore the use of the book in the schools was defeated in 1925 by only one vote, and that the Committee has just applied, by means of a questionnaire, to the National Union of Teachers, with a view to gaining support for their movement from this country.

J. REEVES.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH.

SIR,—Canon Donaldson preaching at Westminster Abbey recently, is reported by the press, of telling the congregation that "The Bible will be understood henceforth, for what it is, a series of writings not infallible, but containing records of a continuous revelation."

Here we have a clean case of an eminent divine, cutting away the very foundation on which Christianity rests. The statement to the effect that the Bible contains records of a continuous revelation is sheer humbug, unless it has an infallible foundation.

All that it means is, that the march of time has put all theology out of date, and men drawing fat stipends are now telling us that the inspired Word of God is not infallible. When I think of the treatment that has been meted out to the pioneers of Freethought, and the horrors that have been suffered for saying exactly what Canon Donaldson is saying, let us sincerely hope "that the Bible will be understood henceforth for what it is," as some of us have understood it for more years than we care to count.

C. W. STYRING.

"INSIDE THE ROMAN CHURCH."

SIR,—I was much interested by Mr. C. R. Boyd Freeman's article reviewing my book entitled as above. I quite agree with him that the book does not deal with all aspects of the subject. How could it? The matter available is so great in extent that a library would not exhaust it. One can only make a selection.

Mr. Freeman says, "Another subject on which Mr. Poynter is almost silent is finance. We hear of a £2,000,000 Cathedral for Liverpool; a £250,000 one for Leeds, and a £250,000 scheme at Edinburgh. How is the money raised?"

One difficulty in dealing with that subject is that the laity have no control over Church finance; or very little. Balance sheets of churches, etc., are not published. Except in special cases, therefore (such as legally-incorporated charities, where audited accounts are compulsory), verifiable details are hard or impossible to obtain. Thus, had I attempted to deal with the matter, I should have had to confine myself mostly to generalizations. However, I can say this: Every possible means is used to extract money from the laity. Most churches have "outdoor collections"; a list of the families in the parish, and a number of collectors delegated to go round to them week by week. In many churches there are two collections at one service. In most churches men stand at the door for offerings for seats (though this was nominally forbidden by Pope Pius X). Many boxes for money are found in all churches: money for The Souls in Purgatory, for the Poor, for the Altar, etc. Each church has a stand (or stands) of holy candles, which are to be lit as a pious offering; and the stands have boxes for money. Special appeals for money are constantly being made. In short, opportunities for the laity to practice the

virtue of almsgiving are never lacking. In fairness, however, I would say that the Church maintains many excellent benevolent institutions. Also, it must be remembered that few Roman Catholic Churches in England are paid for when built. Most are built on borrowed money.

No doubt Mr. Freeman was struck by the moderation of my book. That is only natural. After all, eighteen of my best years were spent in the Roman Catholic Church, and I cannot forget the many noble features of it. I left it with reluctance, and only because I could not condone the spirit of obscurantist tyranny which controls it. Also I have never lost the fundamentally "religious" bias. My moderation is accounted for by those facts.

J. W. POYNTER.

Society News.

This week Mr. George Whitehead addressed seven meetings in Liverpool. The opening meeting on Islington Square attracted a good number, and except for the noisy interruptions of a local raunter who had finally to be removed, everything passed off satisfactorily. The other three meetings on this pitch were quite good, but on the Friday a loud speaker used by a rival meeting made the place reminiscent of a boiler factory. The Sunday evening at Queen's Drive resulted in a very attentive meeting. This pitch would be worth cultivating as the audience seem of a better type than is sometimes found. A good meeting took place at Beaumont Street, the sympathy being obvious. When we arrived at High Park Street, we found a fanatic had anticipated us in order to keep Mr. Whitehead off the pitch, the police only permitting one meeting at a time. We went to another pitch and succeeded in obtaining a good crowd. Before we had finished, the dog-in-the-manger arrived, and tried to create a disturbance, but found the crowd in complete antagonism, whereupon he subsided. As Liverpool has recently been the scene of much acrimonious rowing between Orangemen and Catholics, we were probably lucky in escaping any trouble worth mentioning.—G.W.

LECTURES have been given this week at Higham, Hapton, Enfield and Blackburn. The crowd at Hapton was remarkable for the number of ladies in it, and although one of them voiced the opinion that we ought to be boiled, we had on the whole a good hearing. Many questions were put at the close.

At Blackburn the crowds were, as usual, good. There were a few interruptions at the afternoon meeting, but the persons responsible sung low when question time came.—J.C.

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

JOURNALIST (Freethinker) desires loan (£80), repayable by instalments, including interest as arranged. Reason, long illness. References: address "IGNOTUS," c/o Freethinker Office 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

FINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.—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. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mrs. Grout—A Lecture.

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 HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—A Lecture.

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

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 B. A. Le Maine, and E. C. Saphin. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Mr. C. E. Wood; 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.

MR. GEORGE WHITEHEAD will lecture under the auspices of the Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. as follows: Saturday, August 30 and Saturday, September 6, Alexandra Park Gates, at 7.30; Sunday, August 31, and Sunday, September 7, Platts Fields, Wilmslow Road, Manchester, at 3.0 and 7.30; Monday to Friday, September 1 to 5, and Monday to Friday, September 8 to 12, Corner of Langworthy Road and Seedley Road, Salford, at 7.30.

CRAWSHAWBOOTH.—Friday, August 29, at 7.30—Debate—Mr. J. Clayton and Rev. Clennell.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. Mr. George Whitehead, Thursday, Aug. 28, High Park St., Friday, 29, Islington Square, Messrs. A. Jackson, D. Robinson and J. V. Shortt; Monday, September 1, Beaumont Street; Thursday, September 4, High Park Street. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale at all meetings. Reserved seat tickets for Mr. Chapman Cohen's course of lectures in September and October will be on sale at all outdoor 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, Mr. J. C. Keast. Literature will be on sale.

PRESTON.—Sunday, August 31.—Mr. J. Clayton will lecture in front of the Harris Art Gallery, at 3.0 and 7.0 p.m.

WHEATLEY LANE.—Monday, September 1 at 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton.

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