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

Views and Opinions

Holy Frauds

I SOMETIMES clear my desk of its pile of letters, newspaper cuttings, and other odds and ends. It is usually done under domestic pressure, and means, in sum, that after looking through the pile, I transplant the mass to another resting-place. And as it is not the same resting place, the domestic rule under which we married people live, and pretend we do not like it, is appeased, and things go on as usual. But while engaging in giving this domestic peace-offering I came across a fine example of religion "true and undefiled." My discovery consisted of a piece of white cord, about a yard and a half in length, containing seven knots—seven, as most people know, is one of the "sacred" numbers. With the cord was a four-page leaflet, published by the Roman Catholic "Mission of the Immaculate Virgin." This is not an ordinary mission, it was, so far as this cord is concerned, blessed and sanctified by Pope Pius IX. in 1859, and some further touches of "holiness" was given to the wearing of the Cord in 1883.

The history of the cord is as follows. St. Joseph's cord was first made and worn in the seventeenth century by an Augustinian nun, Sister Elizabeth. She was suffering from a disease that no physician could cure. So she turned to St. Joseph for help. She made the cord, "girded" herself with it, and prayed before the image of the saint. While praying, her petition was granted and she rose completely cured. There is an historic record of this cure, but nothing further was heard of the cord till 1842. Then the Virgin Mary—the wife of Joseph, who was not the father of the Virgin's son—probably finding her husband had been neglected, appeared to Sister Catherine of Paris in 1830. Mary told Catherine there was to be a boom in the cord of St. Joseph, and there was. Then Pope Pius, having instituted enquiries in order to see whether everything was right, solemnly blessed

the cord, and pronounced the "Mission of the Immaculate Virgin" to be of the "First Order."

Other benefits were bestowed, including indulgences. There was a plenary indulgence for the day on which the cord is first worn, and on the day of festivals to Our Lord, His blessed Mother, and St. Joseph. In all this, God the father is as completely neglected as is a human parent when a baby is born about whose parentage there is no doubt whatever. But one must go to Church to get the benefits of the cord, and no one would go unless they gave something to the shrine. The devotee is to repeat the following:—

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you.

Say one of these, and you get 100 days' Indulgence. Say two and there is 200 days' Indulgence. Say the whole three and there are three hundred days. There is no reduction for quantity.

* * *

An Old Christian Custom

Now one has to remember that this belief in the magical influence of prayers and objects and the repetition of prescribed formulæ is very deeply implanted in all established forms of the Christian religion. The tract I have been citing is published in New York, but pick up a Roman Catholic paper wherever there is a large non-Catholic population, and not a strong Protestant influence, and there will be found letters from believers that read like the wildest kind of patent medicine advertisement. One writes that after buying (from the Church, of course) a candle and burning it in honour of this or that Saint, a rise in wages is secured, a job found, a house sold at a higher price, a recovery from some disease (a doctor is conveniently found to declare the disease is incurable), a lost child recovered, and so forth. Pilgrimages to such places as Lourdes is another form of the same racket. Perhaps "racket" is rather a hard word, because to the competent psychologist it is not difficult to believe that there is no dishonesty in many cases, on either the part of the priest or the worshipper. In religious bamboozlement the best cases are those where operator and subject are both labouring under a common delusion. But that there is a tremendous amount of deception, from Pope to peasant, and from Cardinal to customer, there can be no doubt.

Consider this case. Once every year the Church of St. Blaise in Holborn, London, is crowded with men who come, straight from their places of business, to make another deal with the Lord. They gather in one of the old city churches, and after going through the magical process of prayer and benediction (I am unaware whether there is an actual touching of an effigy of St. Blaise) they depart fully convinced that

they have fortified themselves against a sore throat for the next twelve months. If the priests had sold a magic belt to these people for the cure of rheumatism they would have been run in and charged with imposing on the credulity of the public. Being Christians, and bowing before a Christian priest the principle of obtaining money under false pretences, does not apply. But let one try to obtain money by persuading anyone that they can be cured of consumption by wearing a leather belt round his waist, or caught trying to work some form of the confidence trick, and a term of imprisonment is likely to follow. The priest is more cautious. In affairs of this world he leaves it to God and hopes for the best. If one gets what one wants, then God is kind and forgiving. If one does not get what one wants, then one must try again. Get more spiritual physic and pray for more spiritual comfort. If, however, the favour asked for is a relaxation of the stay in purgatory, then, as the tract on the Holy Cord says, you will receive 300 days less in Purgatory, or the favour will be granted to the one for whom you are praying. In fact, if one is wealthy, and repeats the whole of the three prayers every day, one might look forward to quite a long spell in—wherever these people when they are not in hell, or heaven, or purgatory hang out.

* * *

Newspaper Religion

When one is done with the Roman Catholic world, he may turn to the Protestant one. And here I may deal with one whom I read every week because he serves the use of a living "case-book," and I delight in him as a doctor does over a first-rate testing operation. As I have so often explained there is a great deal of light cast upon the normal if one will study the abnormal. And by a close study of our weaker brethren one may the better understand the nature of the stronger ones.

Mr. Beverley Nichols supplies the readers of the *Sunday Chronicle* with a couple of columns of stale saws, and misunderstood instances week after week, which often state facts, but quite miss their application. Thus in the issue of the paper named for June 23, he discovers that after the Peace of Versailles there came "a vast religious revival," which was "pledged to make the word of Christ practical politics." We are quite unaware of anything strikingly new in the matter of a "vast religious revival." If Mr. Nichols will cease his scribbling for a few weeks and devote himself to a study of the history of the Christian Churches for the past two or three centuries, he will discover that there has been any number of these revivals. They have come and gone, and so far as the religious revival is concerned they have petered out leaving the state of religion weaker than they found it. They have served to strengthen this or that Church, for the moment, but in the end the Churches have found themselves weaker than they were before the revival set in. Some of these revivals have, unconsciously, contributed to an increase of strength of movements for a better social state, and have often enough, sometimes deliberately, made for a weakening of the social revolution that was in course of operation. If Mr. Nichols will study such books as those of the Hammonds, dealing with the state of England during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth, he will discover how much these religious revivals did to prevent due and proper attention to the remedying of the social evils that existed. If Mr. Nichols were to take his history direct from the facts, instead of living in a kind of quasi-fairyland, he might see some significance in the fact that in most of the social revolts of the past three centuries the people have almost in-

variably attacked the established forms of religion. That, to say the least of it, is very significant.

As to the attempt "to make the word of Christ practical politics," I do not think anything could better introduce chaos into practical life than this very, very stale clap-trap. What is the word of Christ that would result in practical politics? Is it the Christ that walked about in the guise of some wandering Eastern Dervish, mouthing familiar ethical generalities, or the incarnate god of mythology? Even such forms of the "social" question that presented themselves in the time when Jesus is supposed to have lived, were left untouched by him, save for the utterances of one or two commonplaces that suited anyone who cared to take hold of them. The man who has any intelligent desire to grapple with social problems must have something more solid than pretty aspirations, or vague talks about the "word of Christ." In our own revolution in the seventeenth century it is a notable fact that it was the established Christian Church that went to the New Testament to find a sanction for its condemnation of the revolutionists and, in the greater revolution of 1789, inspiration to liberty was found in the examples of ancient Greece and Rome; the Old Bible and the New Testament were profitably ignored.

* * *

Revivals and Reaction

Mr. Nichols, as though to emphasize his misunderstanding of the social consequences of the effect of the religious crusading passion on the world says that after the crusade following 1098, "Mayfair became a paradise for clairvoyants. Shops in the slums of Glasgow came out in a rash of lucky charms. Astrologers had a boom," etc., etc. I suppose it is useless asking Mr. Nichols what else could he, with good reason, expect, for an understanding of historical processes hardly runs his way. In any case I am not sure that there was any actual increase in the passion for these religio-magical things after 1098. It was only that the religious crusade served, as religious crusades always serve, to foster a more open manifestation of hitherto comparatively quiescent tendencies. When royalty favour mascots, why should not the "lower" folk adorn themselves with charms? When there is an outcry in favour of the value of human salvation by supernatural means, why should not all kinds of primitive ideas feel themselves strengthened, and less ashamed of their manifestations. What after all is the difference between the pseudo magic-worker in the pulpit declaring that human progress is impossible by dependence upon science and mere human feeling and intelligence, and the appeal to astrology, clairvoyance, and the power of charms and mascots?

Mr. Nichols throws in a remark about Gibbon's picture of "the civilized Roman Empire overrun by a variety of superstitions and cults and bogus creeds." A more scientifically-minded student than Mr. Nichols would have recognized that it was just this olla podrida of superstitions that became Christianity, and which lived to supplant both the Roman and Greek civilization. He might also have reflected that after many centuries it was only by getting back to the remains of the Greek and Roman culture, with the addition of Mohammedan science, that Europe began slowly to recover from that variety of superstitions and cults and creed which had by "a vast religious revival," become crystallized as the Christian creed.

But I take it that Mr. Nichols realizes that he is not writing for readers who are given to test what he says in the light of science or history. And he is, so far, quite safe. So is the knotted cord industry which I have described in the opening of these notes. In times of comfort, when things run easily, we do not

feel the incentive to examine causes; we are content to wonder. But we do not find the way out of our troubles by encouraging outbursts of religious frenzy. Rather do we find the cause of our difficulties in the perpetuation of those primitive beliefs and savage customs on which the Christian religion is based.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Swinburne once More

Master who crowned our immelodious days
With flowers of perfect speech.—*Watson*

The publication of a selection of Swinburne's poems and prose in the popular *Everyman's Library* (Dent, 2s. 6d. net) must arouse mixed feelings. Had the book been issued during the poet's life it would have gladdened his heart; as it is it will but add a wreath upon his tomb.

Nothing can be sillier than the attacks upon the great nineteenth-century writers by the tiny scribblers of the present day. The critical reaction against the Victorian era, however, largely passed by Swinburne. For, like Shelley, he was so much in advance of his own time that he seems to belong to the present day rather than to the century that has passed. Swinburne had moods in which he could be flat, phases in which he could be intellectually tiresome. But when all this has been admitted there remains a body of solid, artistic work which only a great poet could have written. Brought up in a sheltered home, and educated conventionally he was yet man enough to be keenly alive to the revolutionary movement of his own time and to voice its aspirations.

Mr. Richard Church, who edits the present volume of selections, has done his work extremely well. Possessing an almost impeccable taste, he has, within narrow limits, gathered a really representative collection of Swinburne's prose and verse, not forgetting "Before a Crucifix," and the "Hymn of Man." It includes a goodly representation of the best from *Songs before Sunrise*, the three series of "Poems and Ballads," "Atalanta in Calydon," and "Eretheus." The two prose extracts are from the poet's studies of Blake and Shakespeare. But Mr. Church has done even better in the too-short introduction. In emphasizing that Swinburne was a major poet and that his verse is saturated with his personality he deserves the thanks of all lovers of literature. Despite the opposition of the clergy, and the boycott of the libraries, Swinburne was popular among "Intellectuals." His vogue became extraordinary. Some idea of the poet's influence may be gathered from Scott-Holland, who said that university undergraduates and other young men shouted Swinburne's poems, sang them, flung them about to the skies and winds. Then he quotes:—

Dream that the lips once breathless
Can quicken if they would;
Say that the soul is deathless;
Dream that the gods are good,
Say March may wed September,
And time divorce regret;
But not that you remember,
And not that I forget.

Not only University men were affected by Swinburne's impassioned and audacious verse, for G. W. Foote has told us how the poet's lyrics roused him like a trumpet blast. One memorable day, the future Freethought leader, then a young man, recited Swinburne's "Mater Triumphalis" on the hills outside Edinburgh, while his life-long friend Joe Wheeler, lay on the grass and applauded.

Mr. Church finds a parallel between Shelley and Swinburne. He asserts that both differed from their

ancestors and relations, both had high-pitched voices, both possessed extreme volubility, and a fever of the intellect which removed them from reality. But I may add there are very important differences. Swinburne was handicapped by deafness for many years, and became a recluse. But Shelley, however he might soar in his poetry, always kept his feet on the earth. He even attended a London hospital so that he could be better equipped in helping poor sick people. The concluding lines of "The Cenci" show that the young poet had a very good knowledge of human nature, and, in this best tragedy since Shakespeare died, his own intellect was maturing. No less a critic than G. W. Foote has acutely observed that Shelley's untimely death was the greatest loss English literature ever sustained. For, if Shakespeare had died so young as Shelley we should scarce have heard of him.

Mr. Church says that Swinburne had a "mania," and "a divine insanity of words." Surely, this is a verbal infelicity on the part of his present-day critic. As a singer, Swinburne deserves the tribute of George Meredith, that he was the greatest of our lyrical poets. From the simplest measures he ranges through the most elaborate. He can charm you with a lyric, such as "The Ballad of Dreamland," inspire with his majestic elegy on Baudelaire and he can thrill with the great war-song in "Eretheus." Above all, other English poets he is the singer of the sea. He was also a rare critic and an accomplished scholar. Observe his masterly essays on Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, and his translations from Francois Villon and others. Swinburne could write a lovely Northern song, with the perfume of the heather in it, and he could lower his high cadences to the ear of children without loss of style. One quality of Swinburne's writing leaps to the eye of the dullest reader. It is his enthusiasm for Liberty, in which he surpasses other poets:—

The very thought in as how much we love thee
Makes the throat sob with love, and blinds the eyes.

Swinburne being asked which of the English poets had the best ear for verbal music, replied: "Shakespeare without doubt; then Milton; then Shelley; then I do not know what other people would do, but I should put myself." This was no idle boast, for there has been no such metrical inventor in a thousand years of English literature. He enlarged the frontiers of poetry, although men of rare genius had ransacked verse for centuries before he was born. Compared to Swinburne, Keats and Coleridge are poor of resource, limited in range, timid in execution. This is not to say that Swinburne has excelled them in ideas or melody, only that he was a master in the use of a far wider choice of instruments.

An avowed Freethinker and an unashamed Republican, Swinburne always stood in the forefront of the battle. In his lyrics we find the most magnificent expression of the claims of the indomitable human spirit which stands erect in the presence of adverse fortune and bids defiance to fate. It was a most animating message that the leaders of the great French Revolution bequeathed as a legacy to posterity. Equally inspiring is the message which this great poet of the nineteenth century brought to the twentieth as a gift.

Swinburne had some admirable traits in his character, although so many critics regard him merely as a bookworm who wrote poetry. I like his story of his encounter with two ragged children, each about the height of his knee, who demanded a ha'penny and received twopence, and trotted after him. "Well, what do you want now?" "Want to kiss you." "I needn't say whether or not I squatted down and opened my arms, and first one and then the other put her bits of arms up to my neck and kissed me so affec-

tionately that I felt once more how much too good little children are to us."

When Swinburne died in 1909 there was stilled a voice that had sung melodiously and with freshness for half a century. But for his outspoken views on priestcraft and monarchy, he must inevitably have succeeded Tennyson as Poet Laureate. He was the last of the great poets who dominated the imagination of our countrymen:—

Our glorious century gone
Beheld no head that shone
More clear across the storm, above the foam,
More steadfast in the fight
Of warring night and light,
True to the truth whose star leads heroes home.

MIMNERMUS

Christians and Freethinkers. Their Everyday Morals!

'Tis the habit of many religious folk to strut around our chaotic World, claiming to be the pets of their God, and the monopolists of Morals.

They fill the pulpits and press with bewailings of the decadence of morals in "the rest of us."

We won't go to church! We won't say our prayers! Or sing our hymns! And generally speaking, we are dancing our way adown the primrose path to the Devil.

Even the children won't go to Sunday School!

Dearie Me! How dolefully dreadful! Well did grim old Carlyle say: "May the Lord preserve us from cant!" For all this pulpit talk of the absence of morals in the lives of Freethinkers—is just churchy cant.

The average man and woman who have found more truth in honest doubt, and who have lost faith in Oriental Theology—will compare in morals more than favourably with the average Bible Banger.

Because Freethinkers do not go to church, it does not mean that they have lessened in their love for the Truth and Beauty that Life holds for those who seek.

Never was there so much zeal or sacrifice for the social and economic betterment of Humanity, and in the van of those brave men and women who are searchlighting the new paths—Freethinkers supply more than their quota of pioneers.

The real test of morals is not in shouting pulpit platitudes or in posing stained-glass attitudes—the home is the true test of morals—and to Freethinkers mother, wife and children are just as dear as they are to churchgoers.

Christians sin like other folk! break laws! find their way to divorce courts, despite all the frantic prayers that ascend to the skies.

After all! "the proof of the pudding is in the eating"—and the records of our police courts and jails are sufficient evidence that the "pets of God" and other Christians, contribute their full share to crime, despite all their preaching and prayers.

In a recent report of the Board which has the wide survey of prison life concerning a population of 130 millions, it states that "Comparative to the rest of the population, ministers of religion contribute more than their quota to crime and prison life," and further stated that "they were worse behaved than the average prisoner."

These are professional Christians in the continuous environment of daily prayer and religious exercise, who preach and proclaim the alleged virtues of their faith, and claim too, Divine inspiration.

Then turning from the shepherds to the sheep:

The Roman Catholic chaplain of the Sing Sing Jail—one of the largest criminal prisons in the world—in writing recently to the U.S.A. *Weekly Commonwealth*, stated: "Of the total of 1581 prisoners now in Sing Sing Jail, 855 were Roman Catholics, only 8 were of no religion." He continues: "There was no special advantage in choosing the Roman Catholic ticket."

So of 1581 criminals, over half were alleged Christians of one faith only, there were 718 who professed other religions, and only eight unbelievers.

So much for the comparative morals of Believers and Unbelievers.

Let us look up from the pits of criminal despair to the great thinkers of Humanity, to the moral leaders who are endeavouring to pioneer Mankind to better social conditions of life.

Here in the van of progress and truth—Freethinkers lead.

Does not Professor Einstein know as much of the Heavens as the Pope of Rome?

Is not H. G. Wells as true a prophet as the Archbishop of Canterbury?

And does not Sir Arthur Keith, as President of the British Association of Science, shed as much light as the President of the Methodist Conference?

Has not the People's Jester—George Bernard Shaw—contributed as much wisdom and enlightenment as the gloomy Dean Inge, or even merry Aimee McPherson, the gospel actress?

And did not lovely Marie Curie, who made life richer for ever with Radium, contribute as much to save suffering as a whole calendar of Christian Saints?

Wherever one looks—whether in Science, Art, Literature, and the highest form of Morals—the great Freethinkers of yesterday and to-day have blazed the paths.

Humanity's hope and progress lies in Freethought.

The Freethought Mind has thrown aside the blinkers of Dogma—it is not shut up in the gloomy prison of a static creed, where the very walls of its dungeon are the limits of its victims' mentality, and the reach of its own chain the full stop of its intelligence—where every thought or action must be patterned to fit the narrow cell of Creed, or be rejected as impious.

Whether in Religion, Economics, or rabid Nationalism, the rusty chains of orthodoxy must be broken—our hope is in Freethinking, to adventure, search, find and bring to our tangled world a better system of life.

So many Gods, so many creeds,
So many ways that wind and wind;
Whilst all this old world needs
Is just the art of being kind.

New Zealand

HENRY J. HAYWARD

I had set out on a journey, with no other purpose than that of exploring a certain province of natural knowledge. I strayed no hair's breadth from the course which it was my right and my duty to pursue; and yet I found that, whatever route I took, before long I came to a tall and formidable-looking fence. Confident as I might be in the existence of an ancient and indefeasible right of way before me stood the thorny barrier with its comminatory notice-board: No thoroughfare. By Order. MOSES. There seemed no way over; nor did the prospect of creeping round, as I saw some do, attract me. True, there was no longer any case to fear the spring guns and man-traps set by former lords of the manor; but one is apt to get very dirty going on all-fours. The only alternatives were either to give up my journey—which I was not minded to do—or to break the fence down and go through it. . . . In fact, the fence turned out to be a heap of dry sticks and brushwood, and one might walk through it with impunity: the which I did.—*Huxley*.

A Further Reply to Critics

MR. ROBERTSON sets himself the task of proving he is not "an ignoramus about Critical Realism." But I never set him any such task. I hold no brief for Critical Realism as such, but only, as I said, for the materialist development inside it. My charge was, and is, that Marxists have not followed that development, culminating in R. W. Sellars; nay, further, they show no signs of knowing about it.

Mr. Robertson apparently refuses to deal with Sellars, preferring to take Santayana. But this is an old debating trick. I explicitly pinned my case on Sellars (following several references in previous articles), and Mr. Robertson seems aggravated. "Dammit, sir," he seems to say, "Here am I with an absolutely stunning case against Santayana, and out of sheer cussedness you back Sellars." He would like me to hoist my flag, as it were, to Santayana's mast, where he would proceed to rip it into shreds with a devastating attack on the "animal faith" of Santayana (whom I dealt with 10 years ago in these very columns.)

As I opened the proceedings, if Mr. Robertson wishes to take me up in *informed* opposition he had better at least study Sellars' chief work at first hand. For obviously, when I take my stand on Sellars I cannot accept as valid debate any amount of talk about three other Critical Realists. And if Mr. Robertson had taken the trouble to master Sellars' contributions he could not have referred to Critical Realism, in his extract, as a sort of unhealthy retreat from Neo-Realism. If, then, he will acquaint himself with the neo-materialist case as I advance it, just as I have acquainted myself with the chief literature on his form of materialism, he will be able to meet me without his present handicap. I hope he will not take it amiss, but it is hardly conducive to a satisfactory discussion when one side does not know the other's case, and is thus reduced to an attempt to nudge him away from it on to a different case (Sellars himself criticizes Santayana). Thus, when I refused to accept Drake and Strong as my witnesses, he tries to foist Santayana on me. No: the time has come for Mr. Robertson to consult the witness I offer, and to study the case, as I put it; the time has *not* come to display our respective academic qualifications.

Meanwhile, one would expect his Greats at Oxford to have prevented him from falling into the following elementary error:—

I said (June 9) that the failure of dialectical epistemology meant that "philosophy had to pass through the subsequent stages of Idealism." He replies (June 23) that this is "nonsense," because Idealism was in existence "before Dialectical Materialism came on the scene."

What divine Marxist innocence! He naïvely assumes that I think D.M. actually gave rise to Idealism. Surely, if words are to mean anything, "subsequent stages" mean stages subsequent to an event, and not first or primary stages. In the average Communist speaker we could let it pass, but as he took Greats at Oxford the temptation to rub it in is, I confess, very great.

And finally, since he repeats his point that Bradley's treatment of time and space leads to a dead world, I can only repeat the answer I had already given, namely, that I was not concerned with what position Bradley could logically be driven to, but only with what the metaphysician avowedly holds about the nature of change, and I stated Bradley's view.

I thank Mr. Robertson and Essai for their attention, but regret to find the latter's effort so coloured with emotional phraseology as to suggest he is hardly in

the frame of mind conducive to a calm and rational investigation of the fruits of Critical Realism. There was also obscure analogy and cryptic reference. What on earth was my "pontifical pronouncement" about

metaphysical-formal-logical-thinking not admitting that becoming is being and not being at the same time?

It looks so marvellous in print, and rolls so beautifully from the tongue, that I now deeply regret not having made a pontifical pronouncement about it. I share the sorrow of Mark Twain: "Gentlemen, I haven't got the Ascot Gold Cup. I never had a chance."

Nor am I given any chance with the following specimen of logic: Since I mentioned only three of Stalin's four assertions "it is demonstrably clear that Mr. Taylor has not read in full Stalin's essay." My nefarious omission of the fourth (on p. 9 of a 44-page essay read in full) was simply because it involved dialectical terminology which I could not fairly foist on metaphysicians even by way of denial.

Essai then makes three statements about metaphysics. The first two are untrue, and for the evidence of which I had already offered Mr. Robertson the whole history of philosophy, and the third (the "how") is for science, not metaphysics. Then Essai threatens that if I do not accept these statements, so pontifically given, then "it simply argues my inability to grasp the essence of metaphysics." Very probably; but what I *do* grasp is the very ready ability of Essai to gulp down any version of metaphysics that proceedeth from the mouth of Stalin—Stalin who pigeon-holes metaphysics and mechanical materialism together in the way I have shown without any attempt at refutation by Essai.

And so I say again that Stalin displays no philosophical breadth, but is the mere victim of his Marx-Lenin flattening. Geography, not any wide search for truth, decided his philosophy. He is "nobbut a local lad."

I can see it is no use recommending a study of American Realism to either Stalin or Essai. Their minds are made up, and they are prepared to defend Marxist intolerance because of the harm the Bukharins might do. And the same line of argument, I suppose, could be used by the Bukharins, should they ever find themselves in power, and by the Borgias, the Torquemadas, and the Nazis.

Meanwhile "the bourgeois countries can only attempt to resolve their difficulties in rivers of blood"—with one of the contestants abetted by the U.S.S.R., who thus hope to postpone their own turn for the bath. In the meantime they themselves inflict a war on a weaker neighbour, just a little blood-bath to be defended perhaps on the lines of the maid's defence of her illegitimate baby; it was only a little one.

Essai concludes by suspecting that Freethinkers too "have a fear for the removal of the old and the establishment of the new." In some respects this is for me an understatement. I am an unashamed diehard for the conservation of many old things, such as conserving the chance to fight for freedom of speech and publication, and thereby conserving the chance of enlightenment for those peoples whose present outlook is compressed in the philosophy of their self-appointed leaders.

G. H. TAYLOR

The Maories of New Zealand have become civilized and learned how to lie and swindle quite like civilized people; they have become Christians and got drunk and moribund.—*Rev. H. R. Haweis, in "Travel and Talk."*

The only Christian in England

RECENTLY, on a dark and stormy night in a wind-swept street—it was Old Church Street, Chelsea to be precise—I encountered an elderly man. He was standing outside the church-door—which, being the house of God was, of course, kept locked and bolted and barred, lest God himself should enter. For only the Verger is allowed to go in on weekdays, unless there is a Society wedding on and the proper fees have been duly paid.

The weather was so dreadful that the blind King Lear himself might have sought shelter with his unnatural daughters. So, ignoring the convention of England that one does not speak unless one is properly introduced, I said to the old man:—

“Why don't you go home?”

“Because I have no home.”

This was such an adequate reason that I was silenced for a moment. Then I said:—

“There are other places.”

“Yes. But this one's locked.”

“This is a church,” I expostulated, shocked to the depths of my Christian upbringing. “Of course you can't go in on a weekday late at night. You might even steal a hymn-book or a hassock or a threepenny-bit out of the alms-box, which is intended for other poor than you. Do be reasonable.”

“But this is a Christian Church,” he rejoined mildly. “Why may not a Christian enter? That the children of God (such as I was declared to be at my baptism) should not enter their Father's house seems unreasonable to me.”

“Do not take these things literally,” I urged, “Metaphors are only metaphors. If Jesus Christ himself came to Chelsea Old Church, unless it was a fashionable marriage such as that of Cana in Galilee, where the wine flowed so freely, he couldn't be allowed except at the appointed hours. The verger would be horrified—very properly too. You know what vergers are.”

“I still think”—he began.

However I refused to discuss the matter further in that dreadful weather, and I begged him to come with me to some shelter. In a Christian land I could not, of course, take a ragged old rascal like that into my home: I should have been looked upon as a lunatic by every Christian in it, and it would not be in accordance with Christian principles as practised in our time. So remembering the poet Blake's lines about an alehouse, I took him to the “King Charles's Head,” not far away, and provided him with a stoup of liquor, namely a pint of ale.

“Thank you,” he said. “Do you know to whom you have the privilege of showing hospitality?”

“No indeed.” I said smiling. “But although it does not matter, who are you?”

“The only Christian in England.”

Again I was deeply shocked.

“Nonsense,” I said. “There is Cardinal Hinsley and his flock. There are the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and their joint flock. There are the sheep-folds of Dissent and their sheep, black, white, and grey. There are our gallant Armies all fighting for Christianity as Lord Halifax tells us—and Lord Halifax, like Brutus, is ‘an honourable man.’ You, the only Christian in England, indeed!”

“Do you call such folk Christ-followers?” he demanded.

I evaded the question.

“Some of them profess and call themselves Christians,” I replied.

“Yes. But,” What's in a name, as Shakespeare's Juliet said. They are pretenders. They

are false disciples. I am the real thing—the only Christian in England.”

“I have observed before,” I said mildly, “that Christians are fond of denying the title to each other. No one hates a Christian so much as a fellow-Christian.”

“As the only Christian in England I feel very lonely sometimes,” he continued ignoring my aspersions on his creed. “Do you know how to tell the sham Christian you have spoken of from the genuine article like myself?”

“No.”

“Remember Christ's words. If you go to Lambeth Palace and smack the Archbishop on one cheek, a policeman will be called to take you to Lambeth Police Court. But if you smack me on one cheek, I shall turn the other. . . . Would you care to try?”

“Thank you. I'll accept your word for it.” I replied.

“And if you ask me for my coat,” he went on, “I will give you my trousers also. Go on: ask me.”

I pointed out that I had a coat and trousers of my own, and that I never asked any man for clothes except my tailor.

“If I asked you for your coat would you give me your trousers also,” he enquired.

I indicated an emphatic negative.

“Then you are no true Christian. Yet because you have given me a drink of beer, thereby obeying Christ's command, you are not nearly as wicked as any Cardinal or Archbishop or other High Priest. Those priests are whited sepulchres; hypocrites; a generation of vipers; and the various other abusive names Christ called such folk. As for the rich men of England—not one of them shall get to heaven.”

“Hush,” I remonstrated, scandalized at such naughty talk about the great, and remembering that freedom of speech was not what it was once in England's pleasant land.

“Christ had nowhere to lay his head,” said the old man. “Nor have I. And I take no thought for the morrow—what I shall eat or drink or be clothed with. I have four pockets and not so much as a farthing in one of them. I do not even own a piece of paper. Except for these old clothes in which I stand—a gift of God from a dustbin—I have nothing. Tell that to the Princes of the Church in their cathedrals and palaces. For what they try to explain away, I put into practice.”

“With what result?” I enquired, becoming interested.

“I starve. You see: I am a solitary figure. The only Christian; and the pseudo-Christians have no use for me. Occasionally, a kindly Laodicean or Free-thinker or Buddhist or some other non-Christian gives me an alms. Also some policemen are very kind. Others are naughty. One was naughty the other night.”

“What did he do?”

“He kept moving me on. I said ‘You are my enemy: I love you.’ And he said, ‘If you have the damned cheek to love me again I'll love you into the Station’—so I loved him harder than ever. You can guess the result—14 days ‘without the option,’ for being found by night without visible means of subsistence, a crime in Christian England. And another seven days for ‘obstructing a policeman in the execution of his duty.’ The magistrate was most impolite about me, and when I mentioned that Christ said, ‘Judge not that ye be not judged,’ got quite violent.”

“Well,” I said, “It seems a tactless remark to make in a Christian Court of Justice. Nearly as bad as refusing to take an oath on a book which says ‘Swear not at all.’”

“Yes,” he said. “But Christ never showed the

Acid Drops

Lord Lloyd is Secretary for the Colonies, and with that lack of social, and even moral, responsibility that marks the Christian in office, he is not above using the prestige of his position to advertise his religious opinions. He says that religion should be studied in schools. Now it is quite clear that by that Lord Lloyd does not really mean the study of religion in a scientific or even general sense because that would mean studying the nature of religion, or at least making the pupils realize that there are other religions with as good claim to notice religions as Christianity has. What he means is that the *Christian* religion should be taught in schools, and by teaching he means just "a telling of 'em." The pupils are to be taught *what* to believe. If they are taught that there are other religions with as much claim to attention as Christianity has there would be an outcry from the Churches, and Lord Lloyd would join in that outcry. In other words, what Lord Lloyd is voicing is just so much religious humbug. In the British Empire we actually have more believers in non-Christian religions than we have believers in Christianity. So Lord Lloyd says that we must give to peoples under our control or direct influence the best our civilization can offer. Well, if Christianity is the best we can offer them, the outlook is black indeed. It is really time that that minority of Christians with a sense of justice and fair-play protest against this insult to other religions, and also to public men abusing their public position by boosting their own superstitions. What would be said if a Mohammedan or Hindoo, or Buddhist, or Freethinker used his office to the same end as Lord Lloyd and other Christian officials use theirs? We all know what would happen. They would be deposed.

May we comment on the double inaccuracy contained in the use of the word "pagan" by Christian speakers and writers, from the Archbishop of Canterbury downward—or upward. "Pagan" originally meant no more than a villager, and it was because the non-Christian religions lingered on in villages and remote country places, that a "pagan" to Christian ears became synonymous with a disbeliever in Christianity. And then as Christians have always been adepts in slandering non-Christians, the transformation of "pagan" into a man of low or bad character followed. Many of the people in this country are old enough to recall a time when that kind of teaching was still current with the Churches, and it exists by implication to-day. "We are fighting against Paganism" is still a favourite war-cry. We are doing nothing of the kind. The intolerance displayed, the exaggerated brutality with which the war is being conducted by the "enemy"—quite apart from the brutality that must accompany all war, whoever wages it and for whatever cause it is waged—is an example of what religious wars were and are. As we have said over and over again the German crusade is essentially a religious one. That they may camouflage it with various other cries and pleas will not hide that from the scientific historian of the future, even though it may be so evident to many as it is to us.

This is the way the Secretary to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool feels, according to the *Catholic Herald* of June 21. "Cease to worship God and you become worse than beasts." We wonder who this man has in view when he speaks in this way. As he was addressing Roman Catholics he must have had his own congregation in mind. We must do him the justice of saying that he did not attribute this rapid decline of character to men and women in general. He was addressing Catholics. And he told them that if they did not worship God they would become worse than beasts. On behalf of Roman Catholics we beg to question the truth of the statement. We have never found Roman Catholic parents so bad that the right treatment of their children, or the decent behaviour of husband and wife, depends upon the belief in God. We see no reason for believing that, left alone, Roman Catholics would be any worse in their general behaviour than would Freethinkers. We

least tact when confronted with priests or pharisees or tribunals or anybody he didn't like. Why should I? No: I leave that to the pseudo-Christians who behave with the most perfect conventionality in courts of law and deny their Master there with the thoroughness of Peter."

"I have noticed that," I said.

He gazed at me very earnestly. "Come," he adjured me abruptly. "You are not without brains and a heart. In spite of your existence of sham and convention and folly and artificiality there is still a divine spark aglow in you. Would you not like to inherit eternal life? To live in the real sense of the word? And for ever?"

"Yes," I said, "I believe in life."

"Then give up your life," he said with explosive energy. "Have you a wife? Repudiate her. Children? Disown them? A home? Leave it. A duty? Ignore it. Sell all your goods and give them to the poor. Not for the sake of the poor, but for your own sake. Leave your fishing-nets or your books or whatever your tools of trade are. And come: follow me."

"Your words are familiar," I said musingly.

"Will you do them? Not explain them away and do the opposite like the pseudo-Christians?"

I hesitated. You will agree that I might well. I was ready to give this man a drink of beer, but to give up everything at his request: well, really! Still, strange as it may seem to you, the idea of being freed from all material things (the things which eat away one's life and self) was not without an attraction for me. Complete freedom, complete irresponsibility are marvellous gifts, and few of us indeed can attain to them. So I temporized.

"And after I have done these things?" I enquired.

"There will be two Christians in England. You will starve to the greater glory of God. And in hunger and thirst and rags and homelessness we will seek the Kingdom of our Father which is in Heaven. We will see visions and dream dreams. And then they will take us and despitefully use us and put us in prison and put us to death. Do you know who I really am?"

"No."

"I am Jesus Christ. The King of the Jews. The Son of God. The Son of Man. The Word made flesh."

There was no time to reply to this startling claim, for the door of the public-house opened and three men came in. I recognized the leader as Inspector Lawson of Scotland Yard. Of course he knew me at once.

"Excuse me, sir. We have business with this guy here."

While the other two led away my interesting companion, Lawson whispered: "Escaped from Colney Hatch. Very dangerous. Convicted of blasphemy, sacrilege, insulting words, sedition and breaking into places of worship. Didn't expect to find him in your company."

"He says he's Jesus Christ, Inspector."

"Many of them do sir. I expect you know that."

"But suppose this one is Jesus Christ."

The Scotland Yard man faced me squarely.

"Well sir," he said cheerfully, "You and I know the law, and you and I know the world. If he's really Jesus Christ England has no place for him except in jail or a lunatic-asylum. We must face up to things as they are. Christ is all right to talk about in Church, but even you couldn't get him off at the Old Bailey. Thank you sir: I will have a drink—mine's a gin and lime. Good health sir."

are quite sure that if this preacher had told them that in direct language they would probably have broken his neck. The probability is that, if any of them realized what was being said about them, they would think it applied to the "other fellow."

At the Methodist Conference, held in Belfast the other day, the President told his audience he felt that with regard to the war with "the British Army, the British Navy, the British character and God, we shall not fail." We rather like the sequence. We feel quite confident about the first three, but the last gives us some anxiety. Bearing in mind that with each invitation to God to take a hand in the business some set-back has occurred to our cause, God seems a rather doubtful and undependable item. But perhaps what the President really meant was that in spite of God's interference the British Army, the British Navy, and the British character, would prevail. There have been wits in the pulpit before, and perhaps the spirit of Swift still hangs over the Green Isle.

Mr. Athelstan Riley, who, we suspect, has said the Lord's Prayer more perhaps than any other living man, has now discovered that it is wrongly translated in the Authorized Version. As a glance at the Revised Version will show anyone, the "true" translation has about half the number of words of the one which is rammed down our throats on every possible occasion. However Mr. Riley now sees that the correct version of the words "deliver us from evil" is "deliver us from the Evil One," and as these are the words of "Our Lord," there must be an Evil One—or even Evil Ones. Who are they—capitals and all? Why Hitler, Stalin, and Co. And Mr. Riley asks the pertinent question, "Is it a case of direct action of the Prince of this world?" Alas, we do not know.

After trying to hide the fact as long as it could, the Roman Catholic organ the *Universe* has been compelled to admit, in an answer to a correspondent that Hitler is a Catholic. But it adds:—

We do not regard him as a good or a practising one. As to the question why the Pope does not excommunicate him, the answer is that presumably his Holiness does not think any useful purpose would be served by doing so.

What is a good or practising Roman Catholic? Not one who never "sins"; that much is evident. The Church has an elaborate machinery for securing forgiveness. And Hitler has so far done nothing to debar him from receiving the forgiveness of the Church. He has slaughtered men and women and children. He has lied, stolen, broken promises, robbed on a wholesale scale. And he has never attacked the Roman Church, as such. All his offences have been committed by Catholics who have afterwards died in the odour of sanctity. Really if all Catholics were "good" individuals, from a human point of view, the Church would find a great deal of its income depleted. The Church denounces sins, but lives largely on their existence. We should like the *Universe* to explain. It is beyond our poor wits. And at the same time one would like to know whether Hitler was a good practising Catholic when he sent his bombers to shoot down the women and children of Spain? The Church found no evil in him there. And, after all, if the Church had stood against Mussolini in Abyssinia and Hitler in Spain the present situation of Europe might have been very different.

The Rev. Archibald Fleming explains to us why Christians should not blame God for the war, or for the state we are in. It is a consequence of our free-will that we chose to be unprepared while the enemy was forging weapons for our destruction. But "when some of the cost, direct or indirect, has been paid then God may have something to say." One often wonders whether these prominent parsons who explain things this way are rogues or just plain fools.

Who are the "we"; who chose to be unprepared? Is it our representatives in Germany who saw all that Germany was doing in the way of preparedness? Was it the Baldwins and Hoares and Simons and Halifaxes, who worked so hard to permit Mussolini and Hitler to continue the "forging" which so many saw could end only in a world catastrophe? Was it the authors of Munich which gave Germany so great help in "forging" that war became absolutely inevitable? In any case God watched the one preparing and the other assisting by inaction or positive help; he listened to the days of prayer that were staged by the King and the Archbishop, and still did nothing. But one day God will have something to say? When and how will he say it?

But it is not only those who "chose to be unprepared" who will suffer. Millions who were not in a position to suffer have paid the utmost price in misery and outrage, Millions who urged "preparedness" will also suffer. But God still does nothing, or, if he does anything, it is against us and in favour of Hitler and Mussolini. What is one to make of a God of that kind? Or, alternatively, what is one to make of the fools or knaves who tell us that God can do nothing because of our free-will, but— one day—in spite of that same free-will, he will have "something to say." If there is a God, it will not be for him to do the saying—the saying will be done by man. The best are saying it to-day. They are saying that this world in which such scenes as have transpired during the past six or seven years are possible, is bad enough, terrible enough, but a world created and governed by a being such as religion pictures is an unadulterated horror. If such a being existed we might have to count with him, as we have to account for other terrible things. But to induce men and women to go on their knees and praise him for his goodness and wisdom is surely the last word in human degradation, a degradation greater than anything that Hitler, and his Jackal, can possibly inflict.

The Rev. Archibald Fleming concludes with "These are high matters; who can understand them?" Come out of the pulpit, man! There are other ways of getting a living, and, if they are not all honest ones, there are some at least that do not involve such almost criminal chatter as that which we have just noted.

The latest pronouncement of Evolution by a Catholic authority is:—

The Catholic Church allows one to accept the theory of evolution so far as plants and animals are concerned, but she insists that the human soul is not the product of evolution, that the first woman was formed from the first man, and that all mankind has arisen from a single pair.

Overboard goes, therefore, the delightful story in Genesis that God "created great whales and every living creature that moveth" on the fifth day; though it is impossible for any Christian sect to give up Adam and Eve seeing that it was only through their sin that Jesus came to save mankind. Still we must not grumble. Evolution was opposed altogether in the past by the Christian Churches. That even the Catholic now accepts the theory as far as plants and animals are concerned in spite of Genesis, is at least some advance, and proves that even the Church can move with the times.

That God must be angry about something is shown by the result of an earthquake which took place recently in Peru. It was the most violent that had taken place there for over 50 years, 200 people were killed, over 500 injured, while many famous churches were destroyed. The list is a long one, including some with the holy names of Jesus and Mary. It is astounding that God in this way has demolished so many of his own shops, for few peoples in South America are more ardent believers in prayer and the Church than Peruvians. In fact, driven out of their collapsed homes into the parks they went on reciting the Rosary without ceasing. One can understand God being angry with England and France for their unbelief, but why hit poor Peru? Even the residence of the faithful Archbishop was damaged. How mysterious are God's unsolvable ways!

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D. DALE.—Capital work. Keep it up.

MRS. H. O. O'CONNELL.—Pamphlets for the People No. 1 is out of print, but we are reprinting, and hope to have some ready soon.

W. R. ANGEL.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.

OUR thanks are due to the many of our readers who have responded to our "Special" and sent on their addresses for emergency purposes.

S.N.—We cannot say for the moment, but as things are, plans are bound to be subject to change.

G. MASON.—Sorry, but your article moves along what we consider the wrong lines. Religions may be used by individuals or Governments to promote their own interests, but neither create them. Gods are not invented, they just happen, and one day there is another happening, and they disappear.

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Sugar Plums

We have to thank the very large number of readers who have been good enough to send their names and addresses in order to compile a complete register of our subscribers. This is a measure of precaution in view of conditions that might arise before the war is over. If these conditions do not emerge so much the better. We have also to thank very many of the writers for their very warm appreciation of what we have been able to do for the "Best of Causes."

By 28 votes to 13 the Cambridge Town Council decided to make an order in favour of the Sunday opening of Cinemas. Thirteen is an unlucky number, as is shown by the fact that so many die after reaching that age. Many die before, but that is probably due to an unconscious awareness of the unlucky character of the age that is approaching. One of the Cambridge Councillors said that nothing should be refused the soldiers when one thought of what was before them. But Lord Caldecote, that curious character once known as Inskip, would tell the council that no worse crime could be committed than to desecrate the "Sabbath," and that to break the Lord's Day was the worst kind of preparation for the battlefield. Might we suggest that one way of testing the matter would be to open Cinemas and Churches on the same terms—that is either the same charges to attend both, or open them both without charge. The number of attendants at churches and picture palaces might then be taken as an indication of the real wishes of the public.

SPECIAL

WITH a view to meeting circumstances that may arise with a prolongation of the war, we should be greatly helped if each subscriber to the *Freethinker* would be good enough to send us his, or her, name and address. We refer only to those who procure their copies through newsagents. Those who order direct from the office have their addresses already on our books.

The circumstances we have in view may never arise, but it is well to be prepared for all kinds of difficulties. We have, so well as we can, guarded the future of the paper in many directions, and this suggestion represents the last contingency of which we can think—at the moment.

All that is required is just a name and an address on a postcard or in a letter. We shall know to what it refers. Our readers have assisted us so willingly, and in so many directions, that we do not hesitate to ask this further help.

CHAPMAN COHEN

A debate between the Rural Dean of Kingston-on-Thames, the Rev. T. B. Scrutton, and Mr. R. H. Rosetti will take place in the Market Place, Kingston-on-Thames, this evening (July 7). The subject is, "Does the Bible Reveal a Worthy God?" and the proceedings begin at 7.30. The local N.S.S. Branch is hopeful that the debate will attract enquiring Christians from a wide area.

During the hearing of a case at Stockport, in connexion with the rationing regulations, the solicitor asked one of the parties charged with the offence, "Are you an Atheist?" We cannot gather from the newspaper report why the question was asked, but we are certain that a judge would have ruled it out of order. The question was objected to by the solicitor representing the man to whom the question was put, but the clerk of the court ruled that it was relevant—again we do not know on what grounds. On the face of it the question was whether the accused person sold more sugar to one person than he was justified in selling, and we are quite certain that had the question been put to a Roman Catholic or to some other band of Christianity the question would have been disallowed.

But we are really curious as to why the Clerk of the Court thought the question relevant. Did he have some sort of a notion that only Christians had the right to come within the clutches of the law? In that case we can assure him that he is wrong in law and wrong in fact. We admit that not quite the same proportion of Atheists are charged before the courts as those that have no doubt as to the existence of "Gawd," but human nature is human nature, and Atheism must be allowed to have some wrong-doers. If the Clerk doubts this we can supply him with instances. We would not insist for a moment that prejudice played any part in this curious question, but, as we have said, in a higher class court it would have been disallowed at once.

From the *Sunday Mercury*:—

It was the Americans who were first (after the early Christian fathers) bold enough to advertise religion as blatantly as soap or any other commodity. They felt that a good thing ought to be made known. And they were right, of course.

That certain religious denominations in this country have not been neglectful of the American example is demonstrated remarkably by the Salvation Army, which seems to have fallen heir to the American genius for pithy admonitions, slogans, aphorisms, and what not.

But there can be danger in advertising religion. I recall the occasion when, on the Stratford-Birmingham road, new posters appeared simultaneously outside a couple of chapels not 500 yards away from each other.

On one notice-board appeared the admonition: "Beer is mankind's chiefest enemy." And on the other notice-board was a poster reading: "Love thine enemy as thyself."

The Q Document

WHOEVER wrote the Gospel of Luke admitted that there were already a number of other "declarations" in existence, mostly claimed as from "eyewitnesses" and "ministers of his word." His own was written because he had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first"—a very cryptic statement, but taken to mean that the writer was *not* an eyewitness.

The Gospel of Matthew, on the other hand, has always been claimed as that of an eyewitness, the writer being the "publican" Matthew, mentioned in the Gospel, though it has always puzzled the pious why he did not see some of the things seen by the other "canonical" biographers; for example, the Ascension at which he was present but did not deem necessary or important enough to report.

One thing, however, is considered certain by many of our orthodox commentators, and that is that both Matthew and Luke used, among others, the same document as authority for some of their statements. Another thing almost accepted by all theologians is the priority of Mark, considered therefore to be the oldest and most reliable account of "our Lord." But if this is so, how comes it that there are many sayings of Jesus in Matthew and Luke not found in Mark? And why are some of these sayings found only in Matthew, or in Luke, and not in both? The more the perplexed commentators reflect on the problem, the more haggard they become, and the more they wish to rely solely on faith. For there is actually no positive solution to the difficulty.

Of course, the professional theologian can give some weighty reasons why Mark should be given priority over the other Gospels. It is the shortest of the four, it contains no Virgin Birth story, and it even misses out the Sermon on the Mount as well as such a Parable as that of the Prodigal Son. Moreover, a good deal of Mark is found in Matthew, and as there are many elements common also to Matthew and Luke, the question is put—was there a simple document behind all three, and if so, what was it like, and what did it contain? By supposing a "source" from which the three evangelists drew their common facts was a solution which, in the main, was grasped by our professional theologians with a great sigh of relief; it solved, so to speak, many intricate problems.

This precious document is designated "Q" by Professor Welhausen, from the German word *Quelle*, and it is often referred to as if it had really existed, instead of merely being a convenient hypothesis to get over very grave difficulties. There may have been a Q document, of course; it would not be a miracle if there had been. On the other hand not a trace of such a work has ever been discovered, nor is it ever referred to in early Church history, nor is it at all acceptable to the humble and all-faithful believer. He had always been led to conclude that the four Gospels were literally "inspired," that they were God-given and veritable histories of events that had actually happened, and that there were four Gospels because God allowed the writers to put the case for Jesus from various angles. It comes as a thundering shock to find that three of the Evangelists had all cribbed from the same document, adding other things in each individual case as seemed right, but without any authority as far as can be ascertained.

But was there ever a Q Document?

Harnack came to the conclusion that it was the "Logia" of Papias. This gentleman is always trotted out as an "authority" by theologians, though actually all we know of him is through Eusebius writing at least 200 years after Papias is supposed to have lived. He is said to have written a treatise in five

books entitled *Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*, which, except for some fragments, is completely lost. These fragments are quoted by Eusebius, and they have been thought to be so important that they have occasioned large treatises in which his words have been rigidly scrutinized; and, as one authority states, "what is less reasonable in the case of a book of which so little is known, arguments being built on the silence of Papias about sundry matters which, it is supposed he ought to have mentioned and assumed that he did not." (Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.)

What Papias said, according to Eusebius (we have no means of testing the veracity of Eusebius in this matter) was, "Matthew indeed in the Hebrew language wrote down the Logia and each interpreted them as he was able." But how did Matthew know the Hebrew language, considering it was neither spoken by the Jews at the time of Jesus—nor, for that matter, did Jesus himself speak it? There is no authority as far as I know, who declares that Jesus knew Hebrew as well as, let us say, Rabbi Hillel, or that he delivered his Sermon on the Mount in Hebrew. Did Matthew carefully take down the Logia, and as carefully translate them into pure Rabbinical Hebrew?

At all events such a famous theologian as Professor Burkitt in his *Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus* says, "What the work is to which Papias alludes is very doubtful; it is certain that our Gospel according to Matthew is a Greek work based upon Greek sources, one of them being in fact our Gospel according to Mark."

But is Mark a "Greek" Gospel? Prof. Burkitt, in the same work, tells us that it was derived from an Aramaic original, and he adds:—

Apart from the questions of language and purely literary criticism, the three Synoptic Gospels might be translations from the Aramaic. The main ideas of the Synoptic Gospels, the fundamental phrases round which move the thoughts belonging to the Gospel, all have their explanation and illustration from contemporary Judaism.

If the Gospels were translations from the Aramaic, no one seems to know who made the translations, or how capable were the translators. But it is not unfair to say that when the Veritable Words of the Living God are quoted in our pulpits or by a layman not many people know that they are the translation of a translation, and it would be a miracle indeed if they literally reflected the thoughts of the speaker. Language at the best is a difficult instrument with which to convey precise and accurate thought; how it fares after two translations from difficult languages I leave to the reader to settle.

But it would never have done to discuss the Q document in this way. To have it accepted by Christendom meant to put its case in such a way that the "teachings" of Jesus would still be considered the greatest ever given on this earth. Prof. Burkitt recognizes this for he immediately credits Q with nearly everything that is beautiful and noble in the Gospels—as thus: "In any case, the material comprehended under the sign Q includes very many of the most precious jewels of the Gospel. When Justin Martyr in the second century wished to exhibit to the heathen Emperor the characteristic ethical teaching of Christ, nine-tenths of his examples came out of the passages derived from Q."

The Professor enumerates many of what he considers to be the "precious jewels"—"Turn the other cheek," "Consider the lilies," "Be not anxious," "Love your enemies," and so on. And, "Most important of all, it gives light and shade to the somewhat austere lines of the portrait of Jesus sketched in the Gospel of Mark."

Needless to say, this is unadulterated conjecture for which there is simply no evidence whatever. That there may have been a Q document or several Q documents is quite possible, and we can therefore allow as much wishful thinking as we like. But when an able theologian like Prof. Burkitt calmly choses for its contents the "precious jewels" which are only precious because he and people like him consider them precious, and quite as calmly rejects many sayings which he considers are not precious, we simply get the same old theologian we all know.

Some further considerations on the problem must be reserved for a future article.

H. CUTNER

Drifters

VERY few of us ever have either the inclination or the courage to sit down, quietly, and take mental stock of ourselves. If we did the majority of us would be forced to the conclusion, by the logic of the facts, that we are mere drifters—that is: men and women who have, so to speak, been thrown out on to the sea of life without any special direction or qualification, and who have, in consequence of that and our own lack of initiative, so far led fairly aimless, almost jelly-fish, lives.

That is not a reproach, but a plain statement of the case which need not, for the moment, cause us to blush with shame. What we do later, when we appreciate the position in which we find ourselves, is quite another matter.

To begin with: we are not free agents as to whether we will or will not be born; on the contrary: we have no voice in that affair or as to our up-bringing; indeed, just as (for example) fish are hatched out on the bed of the ocean and thenceforth have to find their way about as best they can, in the waters upon the earth, until the end of their time, so are we human beings delivered into the world and have to grope our way along, year after year, in a more or less haphazard manner. And with most of us it happens that we can no more control, much less direct, the influences which affect us while we are here than we could shape our course before we arrived.

A man—any man and every man—is, of course, the product of a countless number of biological and social forces, and his life is largely predetermined. If he is the offspring of poor parents, and is born in humble surroundings, his inheritance will naturally be vastly different from that of the man born at the opposite end of the social scale and brought up in the lap of luxury. But each of them, during his passage from the cradle to the grave, is much more likely than not to adapt himself, unquestionably, to his environment, and to do what those around and about him say and do. We are—the great majority of us—mere mimics and copyists from the beginning to the end of our career; we do things and go to places because it is the prevailing fashion, and we seldom challenge the existing order of things. To do so—to be different from our neighbours, and to ask the why and the wherefore of this or that—is, we know, to bring ourselves into disfavour, and we hesitate for fear of social ostracism.

If we are affronted by such a charge, and we wish to excuse ourselves we may perhaps say that we had no alternative but to accept the world as we found it, and that the order of the day was to be orthodox; we were not taught—let alone encouraged—to challenge anything or anybody, hence the present pass. And if we are argumentative and really on the defence we may

even try to justify ourselves by pleading poverty, lack of opportunity and what not; but to do that is to cut the very ground from under our feet, because to argue thus is in effect to admit that the charge is true. To be conscious of a defect is to be in a position to remedy it. Awareness is half the battle.

In point of fact, in these days there is really no defence for anyone who is possessed of an inclination to forge ahead and yet stays put. True there are some folk—perhaps a good many—who just cannot, for one reason or another, settle down for two minutes on end to serious study, but let us face the fact boldly—none can live a single day without adding a little to his mental stature. Consciously or unconsciously we each and everyone of us add, daily, some little tit-bit to our storehouse of knowledge, and even in that way and to that extent our information becomes accumulative. With a fixed determination to gather together a few facts of life through the numerous channels that are now open to us all how much more can be accomplished. . . .

But we drift—that is the truth of the matter, and like coastal drifters we only—and obviously can only—catch what comes our way. Deep-sea trawlermen get a much bigger and better haul than driftermen, and a greater variety of fish in their nets, simply because they use a different kind of "gear," and go after what they want; in other words: they are more persevering, better equipped, and they go much further afield for what there is to be had with a better foresight and effort. If we follow their example in the matter of living and learning the results will be similar in effect.

It is, of course, quite within the bounds of possibility that as we float along through life we may bump against something—some idea, for example—which may change our course and send us either into a back-water, amidst a lot of muck and mire, or into the open sea and sunshine. Anyone who has watched a river emptying itself into the ocean will have noticed how the flotsam and jetsam gets carried hither and thither—according to the play of the varying currents and eddies.

In principle, it is much the same with us mortals: someone or something—a chance remark even—may quite likely send us scurrying either this way or that way—for there are cross-currents and swirls in the sea of life just as there are in the rivers and oceans—and we stand to gain or to lose by what we come up against and by what we do in consequence. We are, in a way, very like fish—in which, so it is said, consciousness first made its appearance: if we keep the scales over our eyes we hit something and are caught, but if we are wide-eyed and aware we miss the obstruction and grow to maturity.

GEO. B. LISSENDEN

Fantasy His Imminence

THE Fuhrer died and, trailing clouds of glory,

Arrived at last outside the Heavenly Door.

Proudly erect, he told the Guard his story;

Gave the salute: "Heil Hitler" as of yore.

Then, as the door swung open, lowly bowing,

With both hands crossed on breast he walked inside.

His job was done, he sought no more kowtowing,

He'd done with pomp and power and place and pride.

But white with terror, good St. Peter called him:

"Hi Fuhrer, what on earth's your little game?"

Goose-step it out, come, pull yourself together,

Give your salute once more, shout out your name.

Draw swastikas upon the walls of Heaven,

Slide on the Golden Floor, stand pat and cheer.

For Heaven's sake, man, show some animation,

WE WANT NO PEACEFUL PENETRATION HERE?"

S.O.B.

The Character of a Sea-Chaplain by Ned Ward (1707)

(Concluded from page 413)

IN foreign Countries he takes care to hide his Light under a Bushel; his Coat, Sword, and Neckcloth make him pass current for a High German Doctor; and one would swear him one indeed, by his Physical Notion of Things; for a thorough Debauch, he will tell you, is like a Fresh in a River, sweeps away all the Mud and sandy Banks of our Microcosm, and a sound Wench cools the Blood in hot Countries, and keeps the Flesh from warring against the Spirit.

Hence it is, that he envies not at home the Country Vicar, with his Tythe-pigs and Plumb-puddings, since here he can whore with Security, and get drunk like a Gentleman, without Scandal.

One might well believe him a good Commonwealth's Man, for he loves dearly to propagate his Species, even in the very Lands that know him not. If he chuse to perform this great Work in a blind Corner, and not on the House-top, it is to shew himself one of no Ostentation; and truly he is a Person of so much Self-denial, that with great Resignation he patiently lets others have the Glory of fathering his Labours.

It were great Malice to say he is a Man of no Principles; for all know him an everlasting Adherer to that sovereign one of Self-Preservation; and no one ever found him to flinch in that Principal of Life, a good Stomach.

He has so good an Opinion of his own Parts, that he fancies to do you a Favour, in giving you his Company at all Entertainments, and would take it as an Affront to Heaven and Learning, to let him contribute a Mite towards it.

He flies at all Game, whether it be the Flesh of Fowl, or the Flesh of Fish; wheresoever he fixeth his Pounces, she's his own, Bones and all, if any way practicable; for 'tis too much Loss of Time to make a Separation.

The only Way to overcome him at Argument, is here; for he had much rather let the best Syllogism in the World grow cold than his Victuals. To keep his Grinders from moulderling against each other, he supplies both Sides with Grists at once; if his Tongue chance to pop in the Way, the Lord have mercy on it; for his Jaws know no halting.

The Captain, when he has got a super-ordinary Dinner, sends for him to give the Benediction; and truly he thinks it a very good Benediction to be there to give one. He makes no long-winded Graces, because he loves to keep his Breath to cool his Pottage.

He's the Captain's trusty Comerade at a Game, or so, on a Sunday Evening; for there's no Playing with a Lay-Brother on that Night, for fear it take Wind, and fly to the Board sooner than the News of a Victory; but they play not so deep as they drink, for a hearty Bowl prevents the spiritual Food of the Day from lying heavy in the Stomach, there being no better Digester of good Doctrine, than good Liquor.

He's a compleat Scholar, that's evident, because for these many Years he has given over all Study. Sometimes he pores upon a Pack of Cards, or so, and makes learned Animadversions on the History of the four Kings and the Knave of Clubs.

Tho' he speaks much better English than Latin, you'd take him for a downright Irishman by his Countenance, which is the choicest Looking-Glass in Christendom for a Country Corydon to prim his Phiz by.

He's neither Saint nor Apostle, that he will own, but his Modesty cannot deny, but that his bare Shadow

has cured many a poor Creature of the Simples. Some will have it, that none now-a-days, but the Society of Jesus, are endowed with the Knack of Exorcism, yet all must allow, that our Protestant Hero is capable of outfacing the Devil at any time.

To lose a Pretension for Want of Assurance, he reckons as scandalous a Blot upon his Gown, as the Loss of a Garrison, for Want of Courage, would be to a Red-Coat. Old Nick will never kidnap him, if he is to catch him blushing.

He gapes after Vacancies as early as a Campaigning Whore does for dead Mens Cloaths in a Battle; and tho', to human Appearance, he loom to be a bulky heavy-ars'd Christian, yet he is perpetually attempting to leap over the Heads of his Brethren.

Now, one would conclude him to be a High-flier; and the Truth is, he never willingly suffers any to fly above him, Passive Obedience in his own Temporals, griping him worse than sour Wine or small Beer.

He hates your Low-fliers as bad as Jews do Swines-Flesh; yet he's not so stiff for the towering Party, as a Turk is for the Alcoran. Rather than overset himself, or be obliged to throw away any of his Groats over-board in bad Weather, he will suffer two or three Riefs of Discipline to be taken in.

He never swears but in his Cups, and then he does it with such an Air of Authority, as fully bespeaks him to have the Plenipotentiary Powers of an Heavenly Ambassador.

Tho' he guide others to Heaven by the plain-sailing Rules of the Gospel, yet he shapes his own Course by the nicer Rules of casuistical Divinity. Hence it is, that he shall preach you in the Morning about giving Cæsar his Due, and the same night run Commodities ashore for Sale, without wronging the Rule of the Gospel; for Cæsar, he cries, wears no Petticoats.

In fine, he's the very Reverse of what he professes, and there's as great a Difference betwixt the Man and the Priest, as betwixt the Duchess upon the Stage, and her behind the Scenes. He is a downright Paradox, greater than any he ever learnt at the University; or, to speak all in a Word, he is the Devil's grand Temptation, for by his openly sinning under a sanctify'd Habit, he openly burlesques God Almighty.

(Contributed by DONALD DALE)

It's all in the State of Mind

If you think you're beaten, you are!
If you think you daren't, you don't!
If you'd like to win and think you can't
It's almost a cert that you won't;
If you think you'll lose you're lost,
For out in the world you'll find
Success begins with a fellow's will—
It's all in the state of mind!

Full many a race is lost
Ere ever a step is run,
And many a man will fail
Ere ever his work is begun;
Think big, and your deeds will grow
Think small and you're left behind,
Think that you can and you will,
It's all in the state of mind!

If you think you're outclassed you are!
You've got to think big to rise;
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You ever can win a prize;
Life's battles don't always go
To the better or finer man.
But soon or late the man who wins
Is the fellow who thinks he can!

(AUTHOR UNKNOWN)

Hymnomania

In furtherance of their investigations, scientists and others have, not infrequently, probed at the very point of death. An eminent scientist of our day has several times taken that risk, including confinement in a lethal-gas chamber. After going through the 638 hymns comprising the volume known as "Hymns: Ancient and Modern," in the service of the Church of England of his youth, the present writer feels that he has experienced something of the sensations those ardent investigators underwent.

And yet, as a former orthodox member of the Church, he should have been inured to such a large dose of "holy spirit." For long years he had been given small doses, occasionally large doses, under a treatment called "Faith," unaware that the "medicine" produced effects similar to opium, cocaine, and like chemical drugs.

Cure for the terrible habit of holy spirit injection is almost as rare and difficult as cure for the chemical absorption. Fortunately, the writer came across what proved to be an infallible remedy. Its name is FREETHOUGHT. "Faith" no longer troubles him, and its effects have been eradicated entirely and permanently.

Examining "Hymns: Ancient and Modern," by newly-awakened Reason, however, one experiences another kind of stupefaction. The sense reels at the thought that those hymns are still mouthed (that word best expresses the fact) by a considerable section of society accounted sane if not normal. Mental excitements, excessive desires, fantastic hopes, and mad phantasies presented in language a cross between the archaic and pure gibberish, can only be considered seriously as a form of monomania. So "Hymnomania" seems an apt title for these articles.

Street-corner evangelists and ranters are not so common nowadays as they used to be. Except in places like Hyde Park and tin tabernacles, one does not often meet the "clap-handy," "glory be"-ing, "Hallelujah"-ing types of salvationists. Even the Salvation Army itself has modified some of its vulgarities, and the tambourine and drum have declined in popularity. Yet the coarse crudities of hymn compositions remain. Education has not yet advanced enough to bring about a general revolt against their evil-working influence—an influence only to be compared with that of the old patriotic music-hall songs sung by drunken riff-raff in public-house bars.

What can be said of, or for reputedly educated and intelligent people who, in the light of knowledge and experience to-day, continue to sing the woeful stuff? How can men, presumably refined by higher education and the learning of universities, be found to adopt a life career—the clerical, comically called "holy orders"—to maintain and advance the balderdash voiced in "divine service"? Surely those who do so to acquire the rich plums the Church is able to bestow, thanks to the public pocket, have no greater claim to refinement or probity than other fraudulent financiers and rogues. And those who take up "orders" from belief in the words they preach and sing, stand in odious condemnation against whatever education they had. In the sphere of religious services and rites, right-reverend D.D.'s and reverend M.A.'s are on the same intellectual level as the ransomed Bill Sykes.

One may well pause aghast at the sickly, unearthly (true word!) sentiment oozing from every page of Hymns A. & M. Outstanding is a picture of prostrate mankind, against which the worn stands an upright figure, the whelk becomes a pattern of courage, the barnacle a model of grace, and the crab a straightforward advancing pioneer of progress. Man is shown

as not worth creation, and, being "created," not worth preservation. Fear and hopelessness are the dominant mournful strains of most hymns, flatly contradicting the confidence and hope they pretend. Were congregations and Christians *actually* to trust in what they chant, they could not find the world tolerable, progress acceptable, and success enticing—as they positively do. They continually plead for an early departure from this "vale of tears"—but has anyone met a professing Christian in fair health who would not and does not do everything to delay that departure?

If only Christians could detach themselves from the paraphernalia of church, the deception of its symbols, and the self-hypnotism therefrom induced, and bring normal minds to bear upon the words they utter, few could remain "believers." Moreover, honest judgment would convince them that *theirs* is the only "blasphemy," inasmuch as they set up a "divine" being for worship whom they portray as a greater lunatic than any to be discovered in human asylums and a greater villain than ever the world produced. "Almighty" is beseeched to re-adjust his works entirely, they have gone so far awry; a "loving father" is entreated to be merciful to faults a human father would overlook—if he ever noticed them; a "just judge" is coming "*like a thief in the night*" to catch people unawares; and a "saviour" who "died" to ransom the whole world is called upon to—yes; to ransom the world!

This dear, kind father wishes his children *every day* "A death to die for Jesus' sake," and to contemplate his mutilated "human" body for their salvation. Not merely the "children of God," but real human infants—babes—are thus adjured. This befouling of innocent childhood is the vilest crime of churchism. Medical men know well the physical and mental injuries religion often inflicts and develops, especially among the young. But, like some "scientists," they become arrant cowards when it is a question of holding to their findings against the social and financial forces of religion. The glaring eye illuminating the text, "Thou, God, seest me," has followed many a child round a room and up to a bed of nightmare. Some of the hymns "for children" are enough to drive children into convulsions. Unlike their elders, they cannot be soothed by theological interpretations, metaphors and allegories. Fundamentalists would not, of course, have even the grace to damp down hell-fire for the sake of infancy.

Let us review some of the "Hymns for the Young," so classified in the hymnal referred to above. It is in No. 331 where the little ones on the threshold of life are enjoined to die daily "for Jesus' sake," and "A weary war to wake with sin." But maybe only children of the poor should take the ordeal, for the hymn opens with the words: "We are but little children weak, *Nor born in any high estate.*" (Italics will be ours throughout). Could any priest or prelate choose hymn 331 when officiating before royalty or society and their offspring? No. 342 must confound the child used to its daily bath with nice clean soap and water, by suggesting its "cleansing" in blood. Now hearken to the lisping of No. 564 (for Sunday evening): "We thank thee for this rest from earthly care and strife." Poor blasé little things! Far better to croon "Bo-peep" in mummie's arms or hug a dear dollie than murmur or "care and strife" in the "arms of Jesus."

Proselytising priests can listen unmoved to toddlers singing of "The wicked souls that tremble" (565) and "O, my God, I fear thee" (567), but parents who permit their children to have their spirits broken by terrifying words which can only have some *literal* human meaning to a child, give cause to inaugurate a

new branch of the N.S.P.C.C. Though a fitting penalty on all such priests and parents would be to be chained up for life in Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors.

A. G. DUNN

(To be continued)

The Making of a Myth

STUDENTS of religion are familiar with the way in which a myth may be constructed by one generation, and be related by a later generation as sober, everyday fact. Yet these explanations may sometimes appear to be rather far-fetched and unconvincing. Examples of myth-making, however, are not restricted to the distant past, nor are they only to be found in the religious field. A modern example of the making of a myth is dealt with in some detail in a lecture entitled *The Dowson Legend*, delivered to the Royal Society of Literature by Mr. John Gawsworth, F.R.S.L., and included in the volume *Essays by Divers Hands*, recently published by the Oxford University Press.

For those not familiar with the history of English literature I must recall that Ernest Dowson was one of the small company of poets who formed the Rhymers' Club in the nineties of the last century, and that he perished tragically at an early age—which seems to have been the fate of poets at all periods. Since his death he has been everywhere represented as a drunkard and a profligate, who rejoiced in mixing with the lowest company in the most sordid surroundings. Such well-known commentators as Mr. Arthur Symons, Mr. R. H. Sherard, Mr. Morley Roberts, and Sir William Rothenstein all testified to these typical traits of Dowson's character, and attributed his downfall to that fact. Yet, as Mr. Gawsworth shows, none of these witnesses has produced any real proof of their onslaughts on Dowson, who was, in his early years, as "respectable" as any literary man of the 'nineties could be.

The late Edgar Jepson, who was a close friend of Dowson, said, in his *Memories of a Victorian*, that "Dowson wore a frock-coat from Savile Row and a masterpiece of Mr. Henry Heath, and, more beautifully dressed than any poet I have known, was fit to walk Bond Street."

Other friends of the poet's youth are also quoted in Mr. Gawsworth's interesting lecture, all of them proving that Ernest Dowson was a much-maligned person.

Now, I am not suggesting that Dowson was a Freethinker. He was, indeed, in many ways a religious person. But I am suggesting that Freethinkers can learn something from his story. If the short period of forty or fifty years is sufficient for such a completely false conception of a man to gain all but general acceptance, how are we to be sure that the reverse process—the whitewashing of a scoundrel and his portrayal as a saint—has not frequently taken place in the history of religious evolution? Personally, I am sure that it has often happened. Poets, after all, infrequently find defenders. In this case Mr. Gawsworth is himself a poet of some distinction, and so finds pleasure in rescuing the reputation of a brother artist. Religious folk may find equal joy in portraying a "spiritual genius" as a saint in human form. We must always beware in accepting even contemporary or near-contemporary evidence unless it is well backed up by irrefutable fact. Myth-making is a popular pastime which many people have engaged upon. It is only the sceptic, in literature as in religion, who succeeds in placing such matters in their correct perspective.

S.H.

Correspondence

THE "FREETHINKER"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I recently received a copy of the *Freethinker* by post, I presume someone thought I should be a likely reader; if it had arrived 60 years ago, I should have been pleased, and it would have saved me about 10 years darkness. When I was 25 years old a friend gave me a *Freethinker*; I was so impressed by the common-sense reasoning in it that I placed an order with a newsagent, that order has never been altered; and I was 76 years old last year, and during all those years I have never missed a copy, never destroyed one, and for several years before the Great War I took three copies, one I sold when I could, one I gave away, and one I kept for myself. I have passed them on to all sorts of people, including parsons. I have made quite a lot of staunch friends, and was only snubbed once.

Many times I have been to Leicester to hear Mr. Foote and the late Dr. Allinson, also yourself, and was always delighted. Letter writing is not my strong point, so please excuse these disjointed notes.

W. JUDD

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 11.0, Dr. R. H. Thouless—"Christianity, Buddhism and Scientific Naturalism."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. W. G. Frazer.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Debate between Rural Vicar of Kingston-on-Thames, the Rev. T. B. Scrutton and Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Does the Bible Reveal a Worthy God?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond): 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Sunday, W. Fraser. Highbury Corner, 7.30, Friday, T. H. Elstob.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 7.30, Thursday, Mr. E. C. Saphin and supporting speakers. Sunday, 3.0, until dusk, various speakers.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Ruslicroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. F. A. Ridley. Liverpool Grove, Walworth Road, 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. Half-day Ramble. Meet at the Dudley Zoo entrance, by the station, at 3 p.m.

BRIERFIELD: 3.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

DARLINGTON (Market Steps): 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.30, Mr. Smithies. A Lecture.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Clarion Rooms): 7.0, Executive Meeting. Members welcome.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Bury Market): 7.30, Saturday. Stevenson Square, 3.0, Sunday. Ashton Market, 7.30, Sunday. Blackburn Market, 7.15, Monday. Chorley Market, 8.0, Tuesday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at these meetings.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Stevenson Square): 7.30, Messrs. G. Taylor, C. McCall and S. Newton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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