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Views and Opinions.

The Advance of Materialism.

Materialism and Atheism are the two most dreaded enemies of all forms of religion. The latter cuts clean across any form of the belief in deity, the former strikes at every form of supernaturalism. And with neither is any compromise possible. You cannot have a genuine religion without the supernatural, and there is no halfway house between Theism and Atheism. In these circumstances lies the reason for the bitter opposition a religion such as Christianity has always shown to both Atheism and Materialism. And it also explains the cause of the shrinking so many show from calling themselves either Materialist or Atheist. The social prestige of religion is still such that many fear to openly set themselves at variance with its fundamental postulates. To some extent it has become fashionable to oppose certain forms of Christian belief. In doing so the objector can shelter himself behind some of the so-called advanced clergy, and one runs no great risk in affirming belief in evolution or in denying the historical accuracy of the Old Testament, or the perfect character of the Bible God. But to unequivocally affirm the truth of Materialism and Atheism, to say without any sort of apology that the whole idea of the supernatural is absurd, and that the idea of God is based upon a delusion, that is the consideration which gives many pause and makes them tamely bear the established absurdities they have rather than face the inconveniences of their plain repudiation. Man is a curious animal. He will be found facing the most frightful forms of death and danger with calmness and courage, and the next moment will be found trembling before the frowns of an association of intellectual nobodies.

Materialism and Science.

Those who do not understand Materialism—and their name is legion—are fond of the periodical assertion that Materialism is dead. Those who understand Materialism and scientific method—a far more important thing than loading one's mind with mere catalogues of facts upon which science builds—know that Materialism is the very heart of science and that all scientific progress means a further vindication of it. From both parties the address of the President of the British Association, Professor Sherrington, will attract considerable attention. That address, coming

from one of the greatest living British physiologists, will create as much uneasiness in the camp of the vitalists as did the address of Professor Schäfer before the same body a few years ago. Like Professor Schäfer's address that of Professor Sherrington is a whole-hearted pronouncement of Materialism. It could not be otherwise. Indeed, in this respect we may say of the genuinely scientific portion of all the addresses that they either endorse or remain neutral towards Materialism. For the essence of Materialism is not, as is so often assumed by both its friends and its enemies, dependent upon some particular conception of "matter," but is in essence the affirmation of a principle which may be briefly defined as universal determinism. The significance of Professor Sherrington's address is that it is completely shorn of quite unnecessary sops to Cerberus in the shape of vague mystical yearnings, affirmations of our ignorance concerning this or that, with the implication that as we are ignorant in certain directions, therefore, the religionist—who is quite as ignorant as anyone else—may after all be right. Professor Sherrington deals quite plainly with his subject in terms of Materialism, and leaves unsettled questions to be dealt with along the same lines, with the implication that when they are settled they will fall into line with the work already accomplished.

* * *

'Mind' and 'Matter.'

The portion of Professor Sherrington's address that will receive the greatest amount of attention in the Press and from the general reader will be that dealing with the relation of mind to the nervous system. This is not because it is the most important part of the address, but because neither the Press nor the average man is at all interested in scientific research, both regarding that as more or less of a hobby—except when it can be used for manufacturing some new or more deadly explosive—their interest being roused only when a scientific pronouncement threatens some vested interest or some established and endowed theory, as is the case with religion. On this point the address holds out no hope to the Spiritualist, either of the table rapping or the philosophical variety. Mind is treated throughout the address as a function of the nervous system, and only to be understood as something arising from it. The characteristics of the nerve-system and of "mind" agree in their general behaviour. A great many of the bodily movements occur independently of mental operations; on the other hand "the phenomenon of fatigue is common to both, and imposes similar disabilities on both. Nervous exhaustion and mental exhaustion mingle.....there exists in both the amenability to habit formation, mere repetition within limits rendering a reaction easier and readier. Then, and akin to this, is the oft-remarked trend in both for a reaction to leave behind itself a trace, an engram, a memory, the reflex engram, and the mental memory." One may safely say that but for the fact that the supernaturalistic theory is strongly entrenched by tradition, and acts as the support of powerful vested interests, the plain inferences from what is actually known of the

operations of the nerve-system and mental phenomena would leave no doubt as to the truth of the Materialistic position.

* * *

A Noteworthy Utterance.

That portion of Professor Sherrington's address which will provide material for controversy, and on which the supernaturalist will attempt to make a stand, is contained in the following passage:—

Taking as manifestations of mind those ordinarily received as such, mind does not seem to attach to life, however complex, where there is no nervous system, nor even where that system, though present, is quite scantily developed. Mind becomes more recognizable the more developed the nerve-system. Hence the difficulty of the twilight emergence of mind from no mind, which is repeated even in the individual life history. In the nervous system there is what is termed localization of function which shows mentality, in the usual acceptation of that term, not distributed broadcast throughout the nervous system, but restricted to certain portions of it, among vertebrates to the forebrain, and in higher vertebrates to the relatively newer parts of that forebrain. Its chief, perhaps its sole, seat is a comparatively modern nervous structure superposed on the non-mental and more ancient other nervous parts. The so-to-say mental portion of the system is placed so that its commerce with the body and the external world occurs only through the archaic non-mental rest of the system. Simple nerve impulses, their summations and interferences, seem the one uniform office of the nerve-system in its non-mental aspect. To pass from a nerve impulse to a psychical event, a sense-impression, percept, or emotion is, as it were, to step from one world to another and incommensurable one. We might expect, then, that at the places of transition from its non-mental to its mental regions the brain would exhibit some striking change of structure. But no; in the mental parts of the brain still nothing but the same old structural elements, set end to end, suggesting the one function of the transmission and collision of nerve impulses. The structural interconnections are richer, but that is a merely quantitative change.

There is only one inference that can properly be drawn from this passage. And read in the right light it is evident that Nature follows the same paths here as elsewhere. She seldom creates something absolutely new, always it is the refashioning of old material, the manipulating of existing forces, the turning of an old organ to new uses. And it is only what one would expect to find that in the emergence of the living from the non-living, and the mental from the merely living, Nature is following the path she has always followed. We are not witnessing the emergence of something absolutely new, but a more complex structure of those forces which meet us elsewhere in simpler forms. And if that is not so all hopes of a sane science must be abandoned, and all attempts to build up a coherent account of the universe must be dismissed as an idle dream. For you can have neither science nor coherence where a supernatural power is introduced to account for any change in the form presented by natural phenomena, or to cover whatever gaps exist in our knowledge of things. "God" is not an explanation, it is a narcotic.

* * *

Clearing the Air.

There is a sentence in the passage from Professor Sherrington's address which I foresee is going to form the ground of a good many obscurantist religious arguments. This is that, "To pass from a nerve impulse to a psychical event, a sense-impression, an emotion is, as it were, to step from one world to another and incommensurable one." We shall see this used to buttress the familiar argument that mind has nothing in common with nerve-action, and that you cannot

translate the one into the other. I have dealt with this argument in my *Other Side of Death* and in *Theism and Atheism*, but I may be permitted to deal with it again here. In the first place there is nothing in causes giving rise to unlike effects. Far from that being strange it is the invariable rule. Effects cannot be identical in form or quality with their causes, or the two would be indistinguishable. Next, a quantitative increase does create a qualitative difference. Given a sufficient intensification in the rate of vibration and we have a quite new phenomenon produced in the shape of heat, and one which is qualitatively different from what has gone before. But no one would be so absurd as to say that, because the sensation of heat cannot be described in terms of physical vibration, therefore, one cannot arise out of the other. The truth is that there is a stage in the interplay of forces where a new phenomenon presents itself and fresh terms have to be used, new laws expressed in order to describe what occurs. Naturally, therefore, one cannot hope to describe mental phenomena in terms of pure biology. If we could there would be no distinction between biology and psychology. These are distinct categories, as are physics and biology. But to say that because of that the one does not arise from the other, or is not due to a more complex arrangement of pre-existing forces, is to say something that is hopelessly absurd. The truth is that we see the change from the non-living to the living, from the physiological to the mental going on under our eyes and every hour of our lives. The "how" of the change is what may properly occupy our minds, but the fact of the change is beyond question. And, as usual, the religionist hopes by emphasizing our ignorance of the "how" of much that goes on, to impose upon us a conception of things that is without a single shred of evidence in support of its truth, that explains nothing, and cannot even be adequately represented in thought.

* * *

There have been a number of newspaper articles and other comments on Professor Sherrington's speech, all designed to prove that there is still hope for the theist in what Spinoza well called the asylum of ignorance, and with these I will deal next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Lord Byron.

III.

THAT Lord Byron was not a Christian, in any generally accepted meaning of the term, is an absolute certainty, and it is equally undeniable that he never made a definite profession of Atheism. Writing to Gifford in June, 1813, he said: "I am no bigot to infidelity, and did not expect that because I doubted the immortality of man I should be charged with denying the existence of God." Macaulay states that Byron "attacked religion," which in a literal sense is not true. At the same time it must be admitted that the influence of his poetry is on the side of unbelief. In a little song entitled *Eulhanasia*, death is depicted as the final end of man's life:—

"Ay, but to die, and go," alas!
Where all have gone, and all must go!
To be nothing that I was
Ere born to life and living woe.

When he wrote that poem he was in one of his too frequent fits of depression, and ended on this melancholy note:—

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er the days from anguish-free,
And know whatever thou hast been
'Tis something better not to be.

The idea of death as the end-all recurs again and again, as in *Remind Me Not, Remind Me Not* :—

Then tell me not, remind me not,
Of hours which, though for ever gone,
Can still a pleasing dream restore,
Till thou and I shall be forgot,
And senseless as the moulding stone
Which tells that we shall be no more.

Byron's characters are but echoes of himself. He created them in his own image, and after his own likeness. A true and beautiful character in *Sardanapalus* is a Greek slave called Myrrha, whose devotion to the king is a burning passion, of which she is at once ashamed and powerless to extinguish. His majesty has had a rather horrid dream which he relates to the poor slave. Even in his dream, however, he longed unspeakably for Myrrha, all else being "a chaos of all loathsome things." Then he says :—

I can fix nothing further of my thoughts,
Save that I long'd for thee, I sought for thee,
In all these agonies,—and woke and found thee.
Myr. So shalt thou find me ever at thy side,
Here and hereafter, if the last may be.

Nobody is sure of anything beyond or above the present world and life.

Whether, or to what extent, Byron believed in God it is impossible to ascertain with any degree of exactitude. All references to deities are extremely vague. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* contains some startlingly revolutionary verses bearing upon supernatural beliefs. Dodona was the most ancient and important religious centre in Greece, because it was there the supreme God, Zeus, was believed to reveal himself to special agents. In verse liii., in the second canto of the *Pilgrimage* Byron says :—

Oh! where, Dodona, is thine aged grove,
Prophetic fount and oracle divine?
What valley echoed the response of Jove?
What trace remaineth of the Thunderer's shrine?
All, all forgotten—and shall man repine
That his frail bonds to fleeting life are broke?
Cease, fool! the fate of gods may well be thine;
Wouldst thou survive the marble or the oak?
When nations, tongues, and world must sink beneath
the stroke!

The same idea occurs in *Sardanapalus* (Act II., Scene I.), uttered by Belesia, a Chadean soothsayer. He is a sun-worshipper, indulging in a strange reverie, mostly addressed to the King of Day, and ending thus :—

I have gazed on thee at thy rise and fall,
And bow'd my head beneath thy midday beams,
When my eye dared not meet thee. I have watch'd
For thee, and after thee, and pray'd to thee,
And ask'd of thee, and thou hast answer'd—but
Only to thus much : While I speak he sinks—
Is gone—and leaves his beauty, not his knowledge,
To the delighted west which revels in
Its hues of dying glory. Yet what is
Death, so it be but glorious? 'Tis a sunset;
And mortals may be happy to resemble
The gods but in decay.

Unforgettably mordant is the satire in *Cain* (Act I., Scene I.), spoken by *Lucifer*, who says that spirits and men are :—

Souls who dare look the Omnipotent Tyrant in
His everlasting face, and tell him that
His evil is not good. If he has made,
As he saith—which I know not, nor believe—
But, if he made us—he cannot unmake;
We are immortal—nay, he'd have us so,
That he may torture—let him! He is great—
But, in his greatness, is no happier than
We in our conflict! Goodness would not make
Evil; and what else hath he made?

A subtler argument against the Creator was never used; but a still more damaging assailing of Jehovah's character is put into the mouth of Japhet in *Heaven and Earth* (Part I., Scene III.). The subject of this mystery play, is the traditional deluge, as re-

corded in the Book of Genesis. Jehovah's purpose to destroy the world he made is known to Noah and his sons, who, with selected specimens of all living things, are to be saved by means of a specially constructed boat. Japhet is one of Noah's three sons, and, being in love with Anah, who is to perish with the wicked world, he is broken-hearted. Naturally he rebels against Jehovah's sovereign rights which to him seem arbitrary and unjust. Thinking of the girl he loves he says :—

And can those words "no more,"
Be meant for thee, for all things, save for us,
And the predestined creeping things reserved
By my sire, to Jehovah's bidding? May
He preserve them, and I not have the power
To snatch the loveliest of earth's daughters from
A doom which even some serpent with his mate,
Shall 'scape, to save his kind to be prolong'd,
To hiss and sting through some emerging world,
Reeking and dank from out of the slime, whose ooze
Shall slumber o'er the wreck of this until
The salt morass subside into a sphere
Beneath the sun, and be the monument,
The sole and undistinguish'd sepulchre,
Of yet quick myriads of all life?

Assuming the historicity of the Flood we can see the pertinency of the *Spirit's* following address to Japhet :—

Son of the Saved!
When thou and thine have braved
The wide and warring element;
When the great barrier of the deep is rent,
Shall thou and thine be good or happy? No!
Thy new world and new race shall be of woe—
Less goodly in their aspect, in their years
Less than the glorious giants, who
Yet walk the earth in pride.

Thomas Moore, in his exhaustive *Life* of Byron, regretfully admits that, unfortunately, the poet was infected with "the canker" of scepticism "in the morn and dew of youth," when the effect of such 'blastments' is, for every reason, most fatal—and, in addition to the real misfortune of being an unbeliever at any age, he exhibited the rare and melancholy spectacle of an unbelieving schoolboy" (p. 59). Moore, being hopelessly prejudiced against Free-thought, gives two addresses to the Deity, which the boy Byron had composed, but never published, one containing the following lines :—

To thee, my God, to thee I call;
Whatever weal or woe betide,
By thy command I rise or fall,
In thy protection I confide.

and the other :—

Forget this world, my restless sprite
Turn, turn thy thoughts to Heav'n;
There must thou soon direct thy flight,
If errors are forgiven.

No doubt Byron did not publish those pious hymns because he no longer cherished the sentiments embodied in them, or because, as Moore put it, he learned "to revel in the fatal discovery which he imagined himself to have made of the nothingness of the future, and the all-paramount claims of the present." On what ground that discovery could legitimately be characterized as "fatal" is not explained; and surely there is no justification whatever for the gratuitous observation that "by singular ill fortune" Byron's most intimate college chum, Matthews, was as notorious an unbeliever as himself. To us, as to Byron, Shelley, and Keats, the present life, being the only known life, is all important, and its claims are positively imperative. Byron was steeped in Hellenism. Theism, whether he believed it or not, is completely ignored in his works. He knew no Deity that governed the Universe, and not a few of his characters who believed in Jehovah or the Christian God so speak of him as to utterly rob him of every trace of an upright and noble moral disposition. He was a poet of this world

alone, a passionate lover of Nature as she is, and of man as man, apart from all artificial trappings; and the fine lilt and music of his best lyrics fascinate us. The following is a sample:—

She walks in beauty like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meets in her aspect and her eyes,
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face,
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek and o'er that brow
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow
But tell of days in goodness spent,—
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent.

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

The Madonna of the Airmen.

We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions. —G. W. Foote.

The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies.

—Lucretius.

A NEWSPAPER paragraph states that a new statue of the Virgin Mary has been manufactured for the famous church at Loretto, Italy, the former statue having been destroyed by fire eighteen months ago. At the restoration services, the Pope, who is the chief ecclesiastic in Christendom, will be represented by Cardinal Gasparri, and the ceremony is being well advertised. The Virgin of Loretto has latterly been proclaimed "the Madonna of the Airmen." Doubtless, the Roman Catholic hierarchy hope by this action to give additional popularity to a very famous and very profitable shrine.

The riddle of Loretto needs the pen of a George Borrow to explain it. It is amazing folly to all but Roman Catholics, who are the most credulous of human beings. The faithful are actually invited to believe that the house in which the Virgin Mary brought up her family at Nazareth remained there for thirteen centuries. This in itself is an astounding story, but Roman Catholic credulity is capable of an even greater load. The story continues that some angels at length became alarmed for the safety of the old house, and, failing an appeal to the landlord, they intervened on their own sacred account. One never-to-be-forgotten day the house vanished, leaving not a brick behind. The angelic house-removers had carried it right across the Mediterranean Ocean to the coast of Dalmatia, where it remained for three years, whilst the angels recovered their second wind. Then the angels again pulled together and took the house on another journey across the Adriatic Sea to Loretto, where it was fixed without a chimney-pot being out of place.

Of course Loretto possessed not only the House of the Virgin, but a doll representing the Virgin, which was almost as old as the building. The story goes that the image was carved by an old friend of the family, better known to the outside world as "Saint Luke," and the reputed author of one of the gospels. Its shrine became one of the religious show-places of the world. Among other adornments the image had a gold crown with over three hundred diamonds and eighty-eight rubies, the gift of the pious and wealthy Queen Christina of Sweden. During the French Revolutionary wars the shrine was sacked, and the image taken away. This time there was no angelic

intervention. The image itself was restored when Napoleon made terms with the Pope.

A few years ago the revenues of this shrine were estimated at £12,000 a year. The Loretto image has been credited with very many similar "miracles" to those of Lourdes and other popular shrines, which miracles can be explained by those who have made a study of the psychology of faith healing. In this connection it is pleasant to note that all miracle-workers stop short at the restoration of an amputated limb.

This child-like credulity is passing wonderful in grown men and women. To attempt to study it is to essay an inquiry into the psychology of a crowd, and an ignorant one at that. Let there be no mistake on this point. Roman Catholics are mainly ignorant folks, Roman Catholic countries are ignorant countries. The faithful are not allowed to read any books or publications criticising their religion. They are told that by doing so they are in danger of eternal damnation. Even colporteurs of Protestant Bible Societies are ill-treated in Roman Catholic countries, for a zealous Papist will no more read a Protestant Version of the Bible than he would read the theological works of Dr. Martin Luther. The Roman Catholic Church is a church of the superstitions, and ignorance is the mother of all superstition.

To obtain a further lease of popularity for a money-making shrine the Roman Catholic clergy have not hesitated to dub their doll, "the Madonna of the Airmen." This new bid for advertisement shows their methods. Few worse misfortunes can befall any people than this of possessing a powerful ecclesiastical institution in its midst that saps the very springs of morality and intellectuality, that permits mental and moral confusion, and that constantly hinders and hampers the wheels of progress in the way that the Roman Catholic Church does. It is a survival from the Middle Ages, and the enemy of democracy, and must be fought until it is no longer a power for evil. For the story of the Loretto Shrine shows clearly that old Thomas Carlyle was right in describing this religious body as "The Great Lying Church." It only thrives by the dissemination of falsehood, and the fostering of ignorance.

MIMNERMUS.

Religious Psychology.

III.

(Concluded from page 582.)

I HAVE, as is evident, no religious interest to defend. From the viewpoint of the mystic I will be classified as irreligious, or anti-religious. I believe that I am impelled merely by a desire to understand religious experiences and the interpretations of such experiences by the religionist, as a problem of the behaviour of the psyche; not as a problem of the behaviour of a God or of a ghost; not in terms of theology or teleology. I am impelled to study the data of religious experience, in order that I may interpret it by a more thorough correlation to that which is already understood of nature and her ways. I study the multifarious variety in the data of religious experience to discover the elements of their unification, as manifestations which are to be interpreted in terms of something else already known or knowable, concerning the human machine. As seen from my present study and stage of development, the one element of religious unification is the attempt to "Spiritualize" love by dissociating the psychologic aspects thereof from its physiologic component, and by ascribing to the psychologic part a super-human cause. The next problem is to discover the factors of likeness and unlikeness between the spiritual love of religious mystics and the psychic aspects of the fleshy love of those of

us who have been labelled "strangely perverted" human beings.

Now other problems arise. How, for instance, is the fact to be explained that religious experiences differ in intensity? Is the cause of this difference transcendent or immanent? In either case, is it a matter of greater "spirituality" or of sensuality? Then, just what is the differential psychologic essence of such spirituality? Are these differences co-related to the differences in the degree of the repression of human cravings, based upon or expressed in differences in organic sexual tension? Or in psycho-erotic necessity? We find a great variety in the results and in the processes by which human beings intellectualize and rationalize religious experiences which in their psychologic aspect seem to be much alike and are similarly described. What then are the factors which determine, or predetermine, these particular and varying intellectualizations? Why, for example, does one person ascribe to God an experience undistinguishable from another experience that he explains as merely a part of the machinations of the body? Let us present the matter concretely. When Professor Coe and I look upon a "soul struggling to reach the ear of God," he may see therein a manifestation of or a craving for divine or spiritual love. I may see in it only a more or less unconscious urge or craving for a sex mate, or for a psychic orgasm. Then the psychogenetic problem between us may become this: What differences of sexual indulgence or repression, of fear, shame, contentment or unsatisfied longing—what differences of erotic sensitiveness, or of feelings of inferiority resulting from any of these past states or experiences—are there between us which make "his own soul's desire mingle with that of the suppliant" and leave me cold and unmoved? As between religionists giving to similar religious experiences various and conflicting interpretations, what is the psychogenesis of these differences of interpretation? What is there in the way of differences in affective disturbance in the past which continue to operate in the present and which determine these choices of interpretation or determine the necessity for a "spiritual" interpretation? By "spiritual" we mean something superphysical or extraphysical in contrast with the mere psychic aspect of the physical functioning of the human machine.

Assuming that our previous researches have disclosed the psychogenetics which compel such diametrically opposite predispositions for persons viewing identical religious phenomena, then new problems are presented. How can we co-relate and unify the conflicting viewpoints and interpretations of scientific observers? I hope that persons whose souls desire to mingle with the suppliant struggling to reach the ear of God are just as human as the rest of us who are said to have a "strangely perverse" nature. If they are, then these very diverse temperaments must have some human elements of unification. Our problem then is to find those elements of unification. To that end we must acquire a common yardstick by which to classify such varying temperaments. What shall the yardstick be? Many pious souls will answer: "The word of God is the only standard." I ask which of the many conflicting words of God?

Here a new problem presents itself. Psychogenetically why is one person compelled to accept and another to reject a given utterance as the word of God? Again, our answer is, the aversions and cravings, the variety, quantity and complexity of the usable cultural material, as well as the mental processes involved in the intellectualizations and rationalizations of human cravings and human religious experience. Thus we may find the elements of unification between the interpretation of religious experiences by persons of scientific endeavour and by

those of wholly mystical predispositions. Then we may compare these with other desires and mental processes. By studying and comparing these as they occur in the course of racial and of individual development, we may form a concept of the past evolution of desires and of mental processes, and the materials employed therein, and the uses to which these are put. From a concept of retrospective evolution thus formed, we may also formulate a tentative hypothesis of the prospective evolution of the desires and of mental processes. This larger evolutionary concept will probably yield us the criteria for arranging the materials of a comparative study of the religionists' interpretations of religious experiences. In this process we may achieve a like standard for the evolutionary classification of secular thinking, and even of religious psychologists. The same evolutionary yardstick may enable us to make an evolutionary grouping of all religious processes as compared with some secular methods. So far as my studies in this direction have enabled me to see, this line of investigation tends to the conviction that *all* religion, even at its highest evolution, is still the product of relatively immature desires and of immature processes, when compared with the desires and mental processes involved in the work and achievements of the more advanced of the material scientists.

Having organized the existing diverse religious mentalities, by means of an evolutionary concept of the psyche, we are prepared for the next step. From a concept of retrospective psychic evolution, we may be able to construct a tentative concept of prospective psychic evolution, in desires and in mental processes. This of course will at first be crude and very tentative, and will need very much correction as time and further observation supply more data to be co-ordinated into a single synthesis.

Thus we will also come to a more refined and clarified view of the scientific method, through viewing it in part as a problem of the psychogenetics and of the psycho-evolutionary status, evidenced in the particular ways of conceiving and of using the scientific method. This will inevitably lead us also to an evolutionary classification of the mentality of scientists. Surely, it must be of importance for us to be able to determine the relative development and evolutionary grouping of men like Oliver Lodge and Ernst Haeckel. It is possible that persons professing the same beliefs about religion, as for example Robert Ingersoll and Herbert Spencer, may be found to be as far removed from one another in an evolutionary scale as St. Paul is perhaps more infantile than Professor Coe.

It has been found by many that insanity is the most fruitful field for observing mental mechanisms. Because of its morbid, exaggerated undeveloped intellectualizations of present day infantilisms in religion and politics, we may find in insanities the best example of how our desires and mental processes have functioned in the retardation of human progress. So also we may possibly find in religion, and perhaps better than elsewhere, examples of how our mental machinery should *not* function, if we really desire to accelerate mental evolution, in the sense of maturing our desires and our mental processes. It is from such considerations that I esteem the psychogenetic and psycho-evolutionary study of religious experiences, their development and their interpretations, as data of the very highest importance. These then are the main difficulties, problems and prospects that I can see for the workers in the field of Psychology of Religions. From such a viewpoint I have come to look upon religion in its social relations, as being wholly a problem of mental hygiene.

THEODORE SCHIROEDER.

Truthseeker (New York).

Are We Anti-Christian ?

IN a recent issue of the *Daily News* a "perplexed parson" asks the question placed at the head of this article. Assuming that he is really desirous of discovering the truth, and not merely seeking confirmation of what he believes, I think I can supply the answer to the question he poses. I do not think the majority of people are so much anti-clerical as they are indifferent. Most of us are brought up in the same traditions as regards the churches and regarding religion. Most of us when we grow up make the discovery that the opinions we hold are untenable in the light of our experience and the discoveries of science. We are compelled, most of us reluctantly, to give up one by one the beliefs of our childhood. We discover, in the language of Dryden:—

By education most have been misled,
We so believe because we so were bred;
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And so the boy imposes on the man.

Nor is the aloofness, of which the perplexed parson complains, due to any personal antipathy. Many parsons I know (and I work with some in public administrative duties) are very admirable in many respects; but in their official capacity they have taught, or if they have not taught, they have suggested a superiority over the rest of mankind. The least sacerdotal of them, consciously or unconsciously, have implied by their teaching and conduct, by their attitude generally to others, that they regarded themselves as different from the ordinary run of men. It is not necessary to give details under this head as every reader and observer knows them. The majority of men discover sooner or later that they are not different from the rest of us, morally or intellectually. And those brought most intimately in relationship with them make the discovery first, and often with the surest judgment.

That the Church has no message for the age requires no demonstration. It is spiritually dead, except at times when it is fitfully galvanized into activity by some special effort, or some extraordinary national event. In the last nineteen hundred years Christianity has witnessed every possible form of evil flourishing before its eyes. It has seen but has not prevented them. Indeed, it is safe to say that the majority of wars and revolutions in Christendom have been inspired by and conducted in the name of Christ. The Kaiser is by many believed to be chiefly responsible for the Great War. Not only is he himself a devout Christian, but he commanded his soldiers to remember that they, too, were Christians.

History teems with illustrations of the wide divergence between precept and practice of the Churches. As Benjamin Kidd remarks:—

The fighting male of the West has steamed across Europe in successive waves of advance and conquest, vanquishing, exterminating, overwhelming.....In all our institutions is the spirit of competition, contest, and war, and the belief that force is the ultimate principle of the world. Through all this he has professed a religion that is the utter negation of force. He has openly accepted the tenets of a religion which condemned strife and war, and he has openly set aside and gone forth to the fight, slaying, conquering, capturing, and holding the world by force—the negation of his accepted religion.

I am not so foolish as to hold the Church or the clergy wholly responsible for this. This would be to concede to them a power that the most aggressive Sacerdotalist would hardly claim. But the Church has been helpless to prevent these horrors or modify them. We naturally identify the clergy with the activities of the Church they represent, and noting their helplessness

and hoplessness, we treat them with indifference rather than active opposition; with aloofness rather than oppugnancy.

GEORGE E. QUIRK.

Acid Drops.

The kind of piffle that is served up to newspaper readers was amusingly illustrated by the *Daily Chronicle* of September 7. It did not give its readers even an outline of Professor Sherrington's important address as President of the British Association but it gave nearly a column of clotted bosh about the way in which the address bore out a New Testament "revelation." In the course of his address Professor Sherrington had pointed out that as a biological fact the growth of animal life was towards interdependence, and that with the development of mind there came an extension of this principle to social life, which extended finally to the human race. This part of his address—if we may be permitted to say it without being accused of conceit—might be read as a comment on and an endorsement of the second chapter of Mr. Cohen's *Grammar of Freethought*. But the *Chronicle* man saw in it some allusion to what he called a New Testament "revelation," and so all the people know of Professor Sherrington's address—so far as the *Chronicle* readers are concerned—is that the President of the British Association endorses the New Testament. Of course he does nothing of the kind. There is no likeness whatever between the growth of an international humanitarianism through biologic, economic, and psychologic integration, and the fanciful ideal of a universal society of religious believers. But that is probably all the *Chronicle* interviewer understood of the address, or the editor thought his readers ought to know. And now we expect to see it served up in religious papers that the British Association endorses the New Testament. And we should like the professor's private opinion of that interviewer. He will certainly smile at finding an address that is a fine defence of Materialism converted into a vindication of the New Testament.

A long distance walking competition took place recently from Nottingham to Birmingham. The Bishop of Birmingham accompanied the walkers—in a motor-car. Things have looked up since Jesus entered Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey.

The Church of England owns, through the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, five per cent war bonds to the value of £2,273,000. Now it has converted these into 3½ Conversion loan to the value of £3,685,000, which adds another £15,000 a year to its income. We may trust the Church for getting all it can out of the nation and profiting as much as it can from the war. And meanwhile the Archbishop of Canterbury is at Geneva holding up his hands in pious horror at the thought of Christians going to war. No doubt he finds some comfort in the thought of that £3,685,000 3½ per cent war bonds. Without the war the gain might not be nearly so much.

There has been an outbreak of faith-healing mania in South Africa, and we are not surprised to see in the papers sent us from there the usual accounts of marvellous cures from diseases that have baffled doctors. So far as "faith-healing" can operate they are exactly the class of cases that would yield more readily to the antics of a faith-healer than to the ministrations of many a doctor. Hysteria, and hysterical conditions, lie at the base of many illnesses, and it may well be that the feeling engendered by some ignorant or crafty—or ignorant and crafty—evangelist may well effect an improvement in a certain class of people. But there is nothing new in this, and among the natives in Africa the preachers of the gospel would find many similar cures placed to the credit of their medicine men, and with equal truth. But we should like to see these faith-healers deal with a well established case of some definitely known organic disease. Faith-healers do sometimes venture on this, but the patient usually dies as a consequence. But the vogue of these pious charlatans prove how little headway has been made in dispelling the ignorance of the mass of the people.

The cause of universal peace is progressing. From

America comes news of a gigantic airship that will launch huge aerial torpedoes from a distance and explode them under wireless control. This is intended for use against cities and civilian populations. We are rapidly overcoming our horror at the German bombing of civilians. Not to be outdone, the British Government are preparing giant airships that will convey troops from point to point, and which can also release tremendous bombs over civilian populations. And at Geneva the League of Nations continues its talks for the ending of war, without offering a definite condemnation of all these preparations which make war an absolute certainty. It needs a Swift to do justice to the situation.

We suggest that the League of Nations will always be ineffective so long as these preparers for war are allowed to have any voice in its debates or control of its gatherings. It is the old gang of European diplomatists operating under another name. And what is the use of that? If these men knew how to intelligently prepare for a world peace there would be no need of a League of Nations at all. They could do so in their ordinary meetings and conferences. But to form a League of Nations, and place in a position of power and importance the same men whose policies brought about the last war, and who are responsible for the present state of Europe, is playing the fool all round. If the League of Nations is ever to be an effective force the old gang must be kept out of its councils. Then it may have the wisdom and the courage to educate the world along lines that may make peace—real peace—a matter of probability.

The Whitehaven Pit disaster is another terrible reminder of the cost at which communities under modern industrial conditions purchase so many services and comforts. But think of the character and personality of the men and women who, in the face of such occurrences, thank God for the harvest, or for their recovery from an attack of rheumatism! Think of the official, prescribed, prayers for the royal family, of the appeals from both sides for success in the war, of the supplications "for those in peril on the sea!" Then ask yourself what sort of favour you would accept from such a deity.

Ten of the victims of the disaster were buried on September 8 in one big grave in Hensingham Cemetery. Church comrades bore the bodies, and all denominations were represented at a united service in the parish church. Six hours after the recovery of another of the victims, the widowed wife gave birth to a child. The *Morning Post* (September 9) reports these details. A leading article in the same issue betrays some anxiety over Dr. F. C. Eve's attempt to explain, before the British Association, the origin of life on the earth. The "explanation" only leads to the antechamber of the great First Cause, and the house in which is hidden the Great Secret. Perhaps the Whitehaven Pit leads to one of his death-dealing chambers. He appears to have a considerable number.

The Rev. Stanley Kettlewell, who went "home" recently, left estate at £30,902. His shares and debentures in Nell's Brewery, Cardiff, he left to his three sons.

Religious lies die hard, and the legend of George Muller having run his religious institutions on money received solely in answer to prayer, did duty again in the *Daily News* for September 7. Muller, it is said, never asked for money save in prayer. The truth is that George Muller appears to have been a very artful gentleman. He never asked for money save through prayer, but he always well advertised the fact that he was praying for money, and left it to the readers of the advertisements to see that he got it. Now we wonder how much he would have got had he prayed in secret and left his "father in heaven" to attend to the rest?

The *Church Times* (September 8) is not much more enthusiastic than the representatives of infallibility in regard to the Archbishop's Geneva sermon. It is seriously perturbed lest the use of a Calvinistic building may be taken as evidence of the Protestant character and sympathies of the Establishment. The *Church Times* repre-

sents the Anglo-Catholics, to whom Protestantism is anathema. They are in the direct line of Apostolic succession, and consequently have nothing to "protest" against. The devotees of God and Christ seem to be precisely the right sort to usher in that New Era which is to recognize the oneness of humanity.

By a vote of thirty to five the Northampton Town Council decided against permitting Sunday games in the parks. The opposition was led by the President of the Northamptonshire Free Church Council, sermons against games were preached in most of the churches, and petitions were signed and sent in to the Council. Members of the church organizations packed the Council Chamber. The result was as stated.

Now it seems to us there is a lesson from this which should be taken to heart by all. The churches represent a number of very effective organizations for any purpose where their own interests are concerned. They cannot combine for any single useful purpose, but they can and are ready to combine for anything of a reactionary or intolerant character. In fact one may say without hesitation that whenever the churches are agreed upon a subject it is one that decent men and women should set their faces against. And it is quite probable that the vote of the Council against the playing of Sunday games did not represent the real opinions of the members of the Council, or that it represented the opinions of the majority of the people of Northampton. The vote is the outcome of the pressure the churches were able to bring to bear upon the Council. It was a religious reign of terror.

The only reply to this kind of thing is for the friends of a rational Sunday to get to work. We have often pointed out that a large part of the strength of the churches nowadays is derived from the inactivity of those who stand outside its ranks. And while Freethinkers and others are content to stand passively by we shall always be seeing a determined number of religionists ruling the roosts. If the people of Northampton want enlightened opinions to obtain they must set to work. Let them make their wishes known to the Council. Let others realize the nature of the impertinent claims of the Churches, who not only wish to spend Sunday in the way they like, but also want to prevent others doing as they like. Let it be made clear that these churches would rather see the youth of the nation demoralized than allow healthy games which would mean diminished church attendance. If this is done the members of the Council will realize that others besides the Sabbatarians have votes, and it will help to relieve the Town Council from the religious reign of terror that is so easily set up. It rests with others to put these impertinent religionists in their place.

The *Weston Mercury* is still frothing at the circulation of "infidel" literature in the town. It gets almost hysterical over the distribution of *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, and demands that the local powers should no longer tolerate the scandal "that has grown up in our midst." It admits that when the tract describes certain things as being sanctioned by the Bible, it gives a definite text for the statement, but instead of arguing for the suppression of the Bible, it wants the suppression of those who point out what the Bible teaches. That is the way of ignorance and bigotry in all ages. It cannot reason, it has no wish to be instructed. It can only scratch and snarl like an angry ape. But perhaps the editor of the *Mercury* does not really think as he writes. Great pressure can be brought to bear upon the editors of these local papers, and it may be that the poor man cannot help writing as he does.

We find no fault with the following from the *Church Times* :—

No man has been more responsible than Calvin for setting the nations of Europe by the ears, for by his teaching he persuaded one set of Christians to despise and hate their Christian brothers as idolaters. The upas tree of Calvinism produced that very militarism which the Primate from Calvin's pulpit eloquently condemned in the name of Catholicism.

But we should like to add a little by way of commentary. And, first, why is this indictment restricted to Calvinism? Where and when has it been the case that Christians of one sect have not hated and despised Christians of other sects? We should be deeply obliged for a date and a place. Why, from the earliest date at which Christianity made an historical appearance the tale has been uniform in the hatred and ferocity that has been developed under its auspices. Calvinism in this respect was no worse than Romanism, no worse than Episcopalianism. The warlike nations of the earth have never been wanting in religion, and the people who have made war the brutal and poisonous thing it is to-day are Christian, so far as they profess any religion at all.

The *Liverpool Weekly Post*, of September 2, contains a review of Mr. Cohen's *Other Side of Death*, which we welcome as evidencing the fact that in spite of the boycott from which works issued by us suffer this is one which some feel cannot be safely ignored. Naturally the writer does not agree with the thesis of the book, but he has either read it very carelessly, or is careless as to the statements he makes when he reminds Mr. Cohen that the dealing with spirits is much older than modern Spiritualism, and adds that the author "selects weak or fraudulent testimonies," and, of course, has no difficulty in ridiculing them. Those who have read the book know that part of Mr. Cohen's case is that the practices of Spiritualism connect with the most primitive forms of thought, and that the question of fraud is not discussed, it is merely dealt with in passing. What Mr. Cohen does is to take certain happenings in connection with Spiritualism as granted and then show that modern scientific psychology can explain them without any reference whatever to spirit agency. And, after all, that is the form of attack which tells most. Not merely that a thing is false, but how people came to accept it as true. That done there is no room for further credulity.

The *Catholic Herald* (September 9) contains an article on "Perplexed Methods," which must make unwelcome reading for some of the champions of the Protestant ideal of "spiritual freedom." The text of the article is the recent reply of the Methodist Conference to the appeal for reunion issued by the last Pan-Anglican Congress. The leading Methodists could not even agree upon a reply. Our contemporary considers that this only affords another proof that thorough-going Protestants appeal to the Bible, but cannot prove that they understand it. The Roman Catholic Church has proved very conclusively how clearly God has revealed himself and his character to the one and only infallible institution.

Darlington Town Council rescinded a resolution to issue summonses against certain shopkeepers for Sunday trading because it would mean the town losing money. The magistrates could only impose a fine of 5s., and it would cost 5s. 6d. to carry the business through. That means "hang goes saxpence" on every prosecution. Upholding the Lord's Day at sixpence a time is too much for the Darlington Town Council. It is a queer way of arriving at a good end.

The Recorder of the City of London during the course of one of the trials at the Old Bailey had handed up to him a certificate as to the mental state and family history of a postman charged with theft. His comment was that it was just what one would expect from a professional psychologist, and it was a good thing that the administration of justice was left in the hands of judges and not of professional men. That is the kind of ignorant comment one is getting quite used to from the Bench. The Recorder is evidently under the impression that "Justice" is served, and the welfare of the community furthered when offences are proved and punishment handed out with a yard measure. Such an offence, so many months or years in prison. It strikes us that dispensation of that kind of justice could be achieved by anyone falling short of absolute idiocy. And its failure is seen in the fact that when a man once goes to prison, in a very large number of cases he returns again, and so becomes a permanent charge on the community.

After all, crime is a question of psychology and sociology—that is, it is the outcome of the co-operation of a certain type of mind with given social conditions. And as there can be no question of that it follows that both factors must be considered if we are to tackle the problem of crime with any hopes of real success. And how can anyone hope to deal with an offender without some detailed knowledge of the man and of both his individual and family history? This knowledge ought to be at the command of a judge before ever he passes sentences, and the kind of sentence passed should be determined by that knowledge. Otherwise we have nothing left but what we have called the yardstick method of punishment, and that is of all the most stupid and the most ineffective. But of course, to bring this about our judges would require a training other than a knowledge of case-law. We can only say, to paraphrase himself, that the Recorder's remark is just what we should expect from some of these *uneducated* judges of ours.

Another comment of the Recorder may be worthy of a word in passing. Dealing with a case in which the charge was one of obtaining money under false pretences, he said the case "illustrated the extraordinary credulity with which people handed over valuables without proper enquiry." Quite so, but is it any more wonderful than the credulity with which people hand over millions of money, year after year, to the ministers of the various religions without proper enquiry? Millions are handed over to the Catholic priesthood for prayers for the dead without proper enquiry as to whether it does the dead any good or not. The ease with which people are swindled out of money by workers of the commercial confidence trick is nothing to the ease with which the spiritual confidence trick is worked by these pious international operators. And you really cannot encourage credulity in the one direction without running the risk of credulity being manifested in others. But perhaps this is getting too scientific for the Recorder to follow.

Some people like to know that there is an institution divinely appointed to declare what beliefs are fundamental. It sets limits to discussion. The much-derided Methodists might reply to the *Catholic Herald* that from the beginning of Christianity's history there were schisms and differences of doctrine. They might go further and point out that the tone of the Roman Catholic organs, which contrast their assured tranquillity with the storms raging outside the fortress, by no means reflects the radiant joy one might expect from the Bride of Christ. For all that, we are prepared to concede that Rome really is anxious to share her experience with others. She is the universal Church, and the existence of millions outside the fold does not disprove her claims. Schismatics are not part of the true Church because they seceded; they seceded because they were not part of the true Church. Logic is essential to anyone who is, or has been, in direct communication with God. And the logic of the Roman Catholic Church is *kolossal*.

The *Catholic Herald* is somewhat distressed at the fact that the Archbishop of Canterbury preached to the delegates of the League of Nations on the occasion of their third meeting. Most of the nations represented are Roman Catholic, not Protestant. Besides, most Continental "Protestants" are either Agnostics or Freethinkers. In the same issue of our contemporary Cardinal Faulhaber says that world-peace cannot come from Versailles or Genoa, but only from Rome. The world has already had some experience of Rome's achievement in the way of establishing "God's Kingdom" upon the earth. Our British imperialists will guarantee peace to a world that is prepared to accept the *Pax Britannica*, and our Gallie neighbours will do the same if the whole world will subscribe to their "civilizing mission." Germany's "culture" was framed on similar lines. The only preliminary condition is to submit to some form of universal conscription. Rome's conscripts, however, owe allegiance to a purely "spiritual" authority, and in return for their services will save their souls. It is indeed fortunate for some people that they belong to a "lost" race. They should hold out both hands to accept their fate.

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

C. BAKER.—Thanks for what you are doing. The gentleman you name in your letter of August 8 is already a subscriber to the *Freethinker*.

J. HEWITT.—Sorry for delay, but your card has been overlooked. The publisher's of Mr. Dan Griffith's *The Real Enemy* are the International Bookshops, Ltd., London (10 Johnson's Court) and Manchester (24 New Brown Street). The price is 1s. 3d.

A. STROUD.—Your friend wrote a few weeks ago asking that the paper should no longer be sent through the post as he had arranged for his and your copy to be sent through a local newsagent. We have therefore placed the postal orders for £2 to the credit of the *Freethinker* Sustentation Fund, which is at present in a state of suspended animation, and which we should be only too pleased to tell our friends was quite dead, and without the possibility of a resurrection. Thanks for your appreciation.

E. BUTLER.—The number of people who can be taken in by these transparent religious stupidities almost passes comprehension.

W. A. GEORGE.—Hope you will have no trouble in getting your *Freethinker* regularly from your newsagent. Thanks for finding new readers.

S. PATTERSON.—The address of the secretary of the South Shields Branch is Mr. J. Fothergill, 12 Strahan Terrace, Tyne Dock. The secretary of the Newcastle Branch is Mr. A. Bartram, 107, Morley Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne. If you will glance again at p. 80 of Mr. Cohen's *Determinism* you will see it stated quite distinctly that while ignorance of the law is not a legitimate legal excuse, the law presumes that all citizens know the law. This is of course, not the case, but the law assumes it.

The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to the office.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—

The United Kingdom.—One year, 17s. 6d.; half year, 8s. 9d.; three months, 4s. 6d.

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Sugar Plums.

To-day (September 17) Mr. Cohen will lecture twice, afternoon at 3 and evening at 7, in the Shop Assistants' Rooms, Duncan Street, Leeds. We understand the hall is situated in a very central position, cars passing it from all parts of the City. One purpose of these meetings is to bring together all the Freethinkers of Leeds and to conduct an intensified propaganda for the rest of the season. Meetings will be held there regularly, and we hope that

all Freethinkers in the district will do their best to support the Branch in the effort they are making. There will be every opportunity for discussion at these meetings, which are free, although, we suppose, there will be the usual collection.

We are pleased to see in the *Friend* (South Africa), a letter from "Searchlight" calling attention to the value of Mr. Cohen's *The Other Side of Death* as an "illuminating explanation" of Spiritualism. Here the work, as is usual with books of an uncompromising nature which attack the whole subject of belief in a future life, has been generally boycotted in the Press. Still, the book is doing its work, and we are glad to say is one of the steadiest selling books published by the Pioneer Press.

The Executive of the N.S.S. at its last meeting had before it the case of Mr. J. W. Gott, recently liberated from a nine months' sentence for blasphemy. As we said a fortnight ago he is in a very bad state of health, and the Executive believed that it would be the wish of the Freethought party that means should be taken to secure him a few months' rest in order to get him back as nearly normal health as is possible. Complete health is not likely in his case, but the doctor reports that several months' rest is essential. We are waiting further information as to the form that help shall take, and we mention the matter now to show that it has not been overlooked. For the moment Mr. Gott is in no immediate need. A fuller statement will be made as soon as possible.

Mr. A. B. Moss has been lately worrying the Camberwell Council with a view to getting the *Freethinker* placed in the reading room of the public libraries. He now informs us that the application has been refused by the Library Committee by eight votes to seven. It is worth noting that if the Labour members had voted in favour of the proposal it would have been carried by a good majority. We wonder when this party will stop kowtowing to the chapel, and when it will realize that liberty of opinion and of publication is among the greatest assets of any party working intelligently for social reform? Anyway, Freethinkers in the Borough must try again, and if possible raise the issue at the next election. We thank Mr. Moss for his efforts.

We noticed in Wednesday's *Star* that Mr. Moss had a column on the late Mr. George R. Sims. Mr. Moss has been intimately associated with "Dagonet" for about forty years, and we suggest to him that an article on the latter's attitude towards religion would be acceptable to readers of this journal. Mr. Sims had a religious funeral, but that may mean anything or nothing. The churches do not pay much attention to a man's opinions in this connection. They have a distinguished record as corpse-snatchers.

It is not often that an article from this paper is reprinted in a Church magazine, but that happened to an article by Mr. Andrew Millar on "A Visit to the Manse," which appears in the *Ardrrossan Parish Magazine* for September. As the article states, the minister has a very high opinion of the *Freethinker* and its editor, and is evidently not afraid of letting it be known.

We are glad to have an excellent report of Mr. Corrigan's lecture on Sunday last. Everyone was delighted with the address, which we are told by one of his hearers touched a very high level indeed. We hope to see Mr. Corrigan very active in the future in the Freethought cause.

The Glasgow Branch is holding one of its Rambles to-day (September 17). The place selected is Whangie, near Milngavie. Members and friends who intend joining the party will meet at the corner of Trongate and Glassford Street, at 10.30 prompt.

Freethought and Birth Control.

WHEN I was a small boy, I was most assiduously drilled to believe that Christianity was far and away the greatest factor for good this world had ever seen. Every great reform in morals, ethics, politics, medicine, science, art, literature—in fact *everything* for good one could name was due entirely to Christianity. Conversely, everything in the way of reaction—the bad elements in politics, sociology, literature, all the revolutions in history with their attendant massacres and assassinations, the inferior position of women, slavery—in fact, everything that was really bad was due entirely to the infamous infidels with their campaign against God and His Holy Son. I was well on in my teens before I found some flaws in these statements—though often I was hard put to refute many obviously absurd claims on behalf of religion, and it was only when I was hopelessly beaten in argument by Freethinkers that some glimmer of reason began to dawn on my confused mind. One by one I saw that the great reforms which I honestly thought were due, if not to Christianity alone, to the profound belief in God which every human being (so I was told) possesses in his heart, had all along been bitterly opposed by all the Churches in the name of God, Christ and Christianity; and that if these reforms were finally adopted it was due to the extraordinary tenacity of a small but devoted band of, for the most part, despised infidels who in the teeth of the blackest persecution carried on their propaganda in the name of justice and humanity.

I do not think it unfair to claim that these remarks apply particularly to the movement now known as Birth Control. Looking through its history, particularly during the last century, one finds the greater number of its exponents in the ranks of militant Atheism, and they were subject to the most cruel and infamous treatment at the hands of devout followers of Christ. No slander was foul enough to lash them with, and charges of horrible immorality and filth were constantly being brought against those who were convinced Birth Controllers and who felt that the "good tidings" should be known to the poorest and meanest in the land. I am not concerned in this paper with the truth or falsity of what were known during the nineteenth century as the Malthusian or Neo-Malthusian economic doctrines. Plato, Voltaire, and in particular, Condorcet, all recognized that the population question had to be seriously dealt with in any work on social and political economy. It is to the credit of a Christian clergyman, the Rev. T. R. Malthus, that the first serious attempt to grapple with the problem in a scientific manner is due—though it would be difficult to find any work from a professed Christian with so little real Christianity in it and so much of the spirit of Secularism. Malthus did not have a happy time at the hands of his Christian brethren, and his book was also bitterly attacked by Socialists very much as the modern Communist contemptuously refers to Malthusianism as an exploded and antiquated doctrine. However, whether there is or is not a tendency for population to grow faster than means of subsistence as Malthus held, does not really matter for the moment. What I am specially concerned with is the attitude of Freethinkers towards the problem of population and (let me stress this) the rights of women as a body to live their lives as human beings and not as mere breeding machines. Malthus's remedy for over population was late marriage. This showed great optimism in the perfectibility of human nature but little knowledge in the needs of the physical body. Made as we are, marriage or its equivalent is necessary for our health and happiness soon after the twenties are reached and sociologists have to recog-

nize the fact. But early marriage means in the vast majority of normal healthy human beings large families and consequent increase of population, and the only way to prevent this, apart from the natural checks of war, disease, poverty, epidemics, etc., is the right use of artificial preventives. This briefly is the remedy for over-population proposed by the Neo-Malthusians and was first put forward (about 1821) by Francis Place, the "Radical Tailor," as he was then known, and convinced Atheist, as J. M. Wheeler tells us in his invaluable *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. It was from Francis Place that brave old Richard Carlile got the idea of writing his famous *Every Woman's Book* in 1829, one of the first charters of liberty for women and which, if it had not been so foully assailed by Christians, would have done a tremendous amount of good. As it was, it must have succeeded in its mission of enlightening thousands of women on the most important questions bearing on their sex, and it certainly caused two books to be written in America on the same subject both by militant Freethinkers and both profoundly influencing the fight for liberty of thought so fiercely opposed by Christians of all denominations and so ardently struggled for by their opponents during the greater part of last century. These two books were the *Fruits of Philosophy*, by Dr. Charles Knowlton in 1832, and *Moral Physiology*, in 1830, by Robert Dale Owen, the famous son of a more famous father, Robert Owen. Dr. Knowlton suffered the penalty of imprisonment for his courage—so I gather from Wheeler—but it was not till 1876 that his name became world famous through the splendid fight put up by Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant in one of the greatest epoch-making trials in the history of freedom of thought. Robert Dale Owen acknowledges his debt to Richard Carlile in the preface to his book but he little thought that over forty years afterwards that fine old Freethought bookseller, a man of splendid courage and high ideals, the late Edward Truelove, would be eventually ruined and imprisoned for selling his work. The older generations of Freethinkers will remember Mr. Truelove's publications with gratitude. It was he who re-issued Robert Taylor's once famous works—now, alas, nearly forgotten—the *Diagnosis* and the *Syntagma*, a fine translation of Voltaire's *Romances for half-a-crown*, Evan Powell Meredith's *Prophet of Nazareth*—surely one of the most painstaking and drastic criticisms of Jesus ever written—and a host of other Freethought works of the highest value. In addition he had the courage to issue the then anonymous work entitled the *Elements of Social Science*, in 1854, a book which seems to me to have anticipated many modern conclusions on sex and sex life.

The *Elements* was written by Dr. George Drysdale, a young doctor of only 27 years of age, and it advocated the boldest reforms in matters of love and marriage in the plainest language. His contention that the physical expression of love between men and women was something apart from the reproduction of the species and that the desires of men and women should have every chance of being fully gratified, made his book the centre of some of the bitterest discussions that ever took place between Neo-Malthusians and those who opposed their doctrines. But as it was written by a convinced Freethinker who believed in the essential holiness of our bodies and nothing at all about our souls, and as it was recommended and favourably reviewed by Charles Bradlaugh, George Jacob Holyoake and G. W. Foote (none of whom, of course, agreed to all its doctrines), it can be imagined how the book was received in Christian circles. For over thirty years Charles Bradlaugh bore on his broad shoulders the brunt of the attack on this "Bible of Secularists" as it was called, and even now I have heard extracts from its provocative pages read out to

Christian audiences as samples of Atheistic teachings. The *Elements* was whole-heartedly Malthusian—its author claimed Malthus's epoch-making work as one of the greatest ever written, but early marriage was counselled and small families insisted upon as the best means to remedy the great evils existing in the world—poverty, war, and disease. In the attacks on the book the economic side was nearly always ignored and its opponents quoted with the greatest glee Dr. Drysdale's views on sex and the remedies for sex unhappiness as if they were shared by those Freethinkers who insisted on the right of free discussion on these matters. Bradlaugh was thus attacked not only by those Christians who hated him for his militant Atheism but by a section of Freethinkers who hated him for his politics, or his popularity, or other reasons. A pamphlet, ostensibly written against the *Elements* called *Sexual Economy*, by one Peter Agate, M.D., was really a covert attack on Bradlaugh in the high and mighty name of morality, and I have never been able to understand how a brilliant writer and poet like the late Stewart Ross (Saladin) could have lent his pen to the other enemies of the great "Iconoclast" (as Bradlaugh loved to call himself) and written those bitter pages at the end of the Agate pamphlet.

It would take too long to go into all the details which led up to the prosecution of Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant through their determination to publish and sell the *Fruits of Philosophy*, their famous trial and still more famous speeches before the Lord Chief Justice (Cockburn). I do not think Mrs. Besant ever spoke better in her life or showed more courage, and I can understand how the Freethinkers of her generation loved her and how hard hit they were when she left them and their great cause for ever, to bolster up the superstitions of Theosophy. But in those days she shared with Bradlaugh his great popularity and influence and their trial together, their brilliant fight, and, after being sentenced to six months' imprisonment for selling an "obscene" work (ye gods!), their subsequent acquittal, proved a tremendous triumph not only for the basic principles of Freethought and speech but also for the right of the poor to freely obtain information on birth control, denied to them because of their poverty but which could be obtained by anyone rich enough to pay for it handsomely. It was a case similar to Paine's *Age of Reason*, which was attacked as much because it was sold at a price cheap enough for anyone to buy as because it opposed revealed religion. Mrs. Besant after the trial, felt that in some respects the Knowlton pamphlet was too crude for present needs and so wrote another to take its place—the *Law of Population*. This had a tremendous sale but was withdrawn when its author forsook her old comrades and ventured into pastures new. Mr. Arthur B. Moss (himself a determined warrior in the cause) at the Birth Control Conference held this year told us why it was withdrawn. It seems one of the great tenets that makes Theosophy so popular among its adherents is the doctrine of reincarnation—that our souls never die but are passed on again into other earthly bodies as a punishment or reward for our sins or saintliness. The same number of original souls must therefore have been created, but as population does increase the question was asked Mrs. Besant where do the extra souls come from? As she couldn't answer, she withdrew the book—and no wonder.

If, however, the *Law of Population* was allowed to sell, the writers of other Neo-Malthusian works were constantly being prosecuted and fined. On the flimsiest pretext a book was labelled "obscene" particularly by benches of unpaid magistrates consisting of a mixture of the "nobility and gentry" and retired butchers or drapers. For proof of this take the case of Mr. J. R. Holmes who had to pay over £140

in fines and costs because a few of these gentlemen labelled his book *True Morality* "obscene" on the strength of a quotation therein from *Milton*! Milton, of all people in the world! This is what they said, but the real reason is simply that the book was sold at a penny in order that it might reach the poor and to give any information that would lighten the lot of the poverty stricken and lift even a little of the burden off their shoulders is a fearful crime in the eyes of so many of our kind hearted Christian "judges." If the culprit is a medical man guilty of writing plain instructions on preventive measures in a book sold for sixpence, then the high minded Medical Council who could see in Sir H. A. Barker only a quack, make full use of their right to strike him off the medical register—the fate of Dr. Allbutt for selling his *Wife's Handbook* so cheaply. One could extend the list, but I am not writing a documented history of the movement. Sufficient has been said, however, to prove that the pioneers of birth control had to fight for every step they made in their propaganda. And I want it to be particularly noted that practically all of them, though subscribing wholeheartedly to the economic doctrines of Malthus, fought for the rights of women in the matter of birth control pure and simple—a point which seems to be overlooked by those who talk and write as if Neo-Malthusians were nothing but cold and heartless economists.

H. CUTNER.

(To be Concluded.)

Mountain Climbing.

A NEW and revised edition has just been issued of *Cambrian and Cumbrian Hills*, by Henry S. Salt, and published by C. W. Daniel, Ltd., 3 Tudor Street, E.C.4, at the price of 5s. Mr. Salt is exceedingly well known to Freethinkers as the author of the *Life* of James Thomson, the poet of Freethought, and of several other books. In the present work he is seen at his best both as to matter and style. A born lover of Nature, Mr. Salt was bound to become sooner or later an ardent lover of mountains; and it is as such he reveals himself in this delightful little book. A pleasing vein of wistful and inspiring poetry runs through it, which gives it special value and charm for born mountaineers, who in no country are a great host. How very true is the following passage:—

A mountain is something more than a thing to climb. To the many who, on a fine summer day, swarm up Skiddaw or Snowdon by the well-known pony paths, it is pure holiday-making; to the few who (in another sense) swarm up the Scafell Pinnacle or the Napes Needle, it is pure gymnastics; but between or beyond these two classes there are those—pilgrims I call them—who find in mountain climbing what only mountains can give, the contact with unsophisticated Nature, the opportunity to be alone, to be out of and above the world of ordinary life, to pass from the familiar sights and surroundings into a cloudland of new shapes and sounds, where one feels the fascination of that undiscoverable secret (I do not know how else to name it) by which every true nature-lover is allured (p. 18).

The book is divided into seven chapters, entitled: The Pilgrim of the Mountain; At the Shrine of Snowdon; At the Shrine of Scafell; Pleasures of the Heights; Wild Life; The Barren Hillside; Slag-Heap or Sanctuary? They are all intensely interesting, most of them are instructive, and a few delightfully inspiring. To the present reviewer, born and bred at the foot of a famous mountain, who in childhood almost daily climbed that mountain, the chapter on "Pleasures of the Heights" is specially entrancing. It quotes Elisée Reclus who says "that of all forms of travel to travel upwards is the most instructive, for

by climbing a few thousand feet we enjoy more novel experiences than in a lateral journey of as many miles." All mountaineers know how profoundly true that statement is. Besides, the mountain has its moods, in some of which we dare not approach it, thereby subjecting its lovers often "to a chilling ordeal, days and weeks of denials and disappointments"; but a time comes when the faithful are richly rewarded for their patient waiting.

Climbers often lose themselves in a fog, and when that occurs the most experienced sometimes are hopelessly bewildered, and have to act with the utmost caution. Mr. Salt says:—

A friend of mine, who was lost on Snowdon in a mist, made his way down, as he thought, towards Llanberis, with the intention of thence walking rightward to Pen-y-Gwryd; he reached a road which he took to be the pass of Llanberis, and duly turned to the right. Not until he had walked some miles did he discover he was on the way towards Carnarvon, having descended, without knowing it, on the wrong side of Snowdon and into a different part of Wales (p. 77).

The following is one of the most exquisitely delightful experiences that fall to the lot of the climber:—

More inspiring is the effect of climbing through and above the clouds, as one sometimes can do, until one looks down from an upper land of sunshine on a sea of mist below, from which the rocky peaks and promontories emerge like islands. It sometimes happens, when some high ridge is bathed in clouds on one side and in sun on the other, that a climber, standing on the edge of the gulf, will see a small circular rainbow projected on the mist, with his own head forming the centre of it—a rare and curious experience for the wayworn pilgrim thus to find his image, like that of a saint, with a halo round his head, emblazoned on the mountain vapours (p. 73)!

That marvellous spectacle reminds the present writer of a most thrilling spectacle witnessed by him and a friend on the summit of a mountain in the Eastern Province of Cape Colony. Early on a hot summer day we left the little village in the valley, and it took us several hours to make the ascent on the other side from the houses. When we reached the top and looked down we beheld, not the beautiful valley with farmsteads dotted here and there, but a mass of black cloud, magnificently illuminated every second or two by electric flashes, sometimes followed and sometimes partly accompanied by crashing noises. All the time we were bathed in lovely sunshine; but when we descended into the valley we found that a deluge of rain had fallen in our absence, and our friends told us of the terrible thunder storm they had experienced.

This book abounds in sparkling gems which nature-lovers will thoroughly enjoy. The last chapter is an earnest "plea for the preservation of mountain scenery from the vandalism by which Snowdon is already disfigured, and other localities are threatened." We wish this little but most valuable work the widest circulation and a long career of usefulness. CELTICUS.

What am I to think of such things, how can I praise the gods for them when I find that their ways are evil?—*Sophocles, "Philoctetes."*

No one can study the development of the Italian ecclesiastical power without discovering how completely it depended on human agency, too often on human passion and intrigues; how completely wanting it was of any mark of the Divine construction and care—the offspring of man, not of God, and therefore bearing upon it the lineaments of human passions, human virtues, and human sins.—*J. W. Draper, "Intellectual Development of Europe."*

Correspondence.

UP TO DATE.

AN UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The *Freethinker* has specialized on one subject, with variations, for well on to half a century now: to the casual or careless eye one issue is much like another; to some people it is blank as their own minds; to some it is intolerable. Some minds the paper illuminates as by a flash, kindling the torch of enthusiasm for truth and sanity, ending in smoke in some, enduring in others as the constant light and heat eternal of life's highest impulse and purpose. To some, even of the intelligent and understanding, the weekly issue may seem at times monotonous and wearisome, but in this the reader's mood is to blame and not the matter or the message. The reader may be "sleepy headed" at the moment, "fed up," distracted by a score of extraneous worries, coming on the top of which the poor *Freethinker* is looked upon as an enemy rather than a friend—at least an irritation. As a constant, and as he hopes, discriminating reader of the *Freethinker*, one who does not "batten," and certainly does not fatten on it, the writer is flattered and encouraged to think that after a quarter of a century—alas, those vanished years!—he was never more *en rapport* with the paper and its editor than at the present moment. If the *Freethinker* moves slowly, and as some think (*who do not think*) monotonously and to little purpose, so does progress. The paper not only keeps abreast, but is far ahead of so-called civilization, the true pioneer, making the rough places smooth for those who follow—those of the Press, and even of the Pulpit, now following the trail of the original "rotten egg men" (as a friend has happily called the Bradlaughs, Footes, and Cohens) with all the moral unction and pompous eclat of daring and initial discovery! The story of the *Freethinker*, like that "sweet story of old, when Jesus was here among men," or that other one of the way of a man with a maid, or *vice versa*, is old but ever new. Even its present editor, who has said so much, and said it so long, so often, and so well, who one might be excused for thinking had said all one man could say, or needed to say on one subject, has, one fancies, but one regret: the lack of time and opportunity to say all he has to say still, and that the world needs to hear. The theme is inexhaustible; its significance immediate, vital, inescapable; vast is the need for Freethought in the world around us, even in ourselves, where the old Adam of unreason is so fain to stay—Freethought in no narrow, lexicon sense, but the full, free, all-embracing philosophic, logico-scientific atmosphere of its best and broadest, ripest teaching.

An ordinary article by our Editor (F. 9.3.22) was the occasion of this, I fear irrelevant, outburst. Dealing with a passage from Lord Morley's *On Compromise*, he was able (as Paine did Burke) to put that great man right. Lord Morley is a man we can love, even reverence, but we must not overlook even his mistakes. Incidentally Mr. Cohen throws a great light on what is Truth when he writes: "The truth (of the Roman and Reformed Churches) shall make you free," did not mean the large and unfettered truth such as is proclaimed by science, but the doctrinal 'truth' embodied in some highly debatable sectarian dogma." But the whole article is illuminating, and Freethinkers might do worse than read it again. Written in our editor's simple, lucid, logical, sensible way, it proves what I set out to say and have only succeeded in saying now: While there may be nothing "new" to us in the *Freethinker*, it is yet an ever-growing and intensifying force. The truths do not change, but in implica-

tion and application are being weekly adapted to modern instances ; flashed upon us with all the lightening effect of a truth discovered for the first time—and are, indeed, by most of us so apprehended.

We must not grumble at our *Freethinker*. Like a certain Railway Company's trains it is "true to time," and always up to date.

Your old friend,
THE CONSTANT READER.

WHAT ENGLAND GIVES US!

SIR,—It is said that many of the preachers in America are starving—but anyhow we are fortunate (?) in getting pedlars of the pious whid over here from foreign lands, and Great Britain is sending us a full quota.

Gipsy Smith is one of these, and will be here for several weeks. During this time, he will cavort a few days in New York at "Old Tent Evangel," which runs a rotten bunk shop for three months during the summer. Bro. McPherson, the Big Chief, introduces this great evangelist, on his first appearance, as Gipsy Smith of "England," but the Gipsy promptly removes the spots from his ermine by a reproof to the chairman, and wishes it distinctly understood that he is not from "England"—but a Scotsman born. I was thinking that a Christian was "meek" enough, he would be only too glad to belong to any race however lowly—but there seem to be some exceptions to this rule among certain of our exalted clergymen.

"I'm a preacher to-night without a text," says Gipsy—and the word of God goes all to waste. "Bro. Ham, of Atlanta, Georgia, will assist in the services here tomorrow, and I'm glad to have him for I have not seen ham and eggs for a long time." Not for the last thirty minutes at least.

Gipsy Pat Smith is a lecturer—and a poor one—but good enough for the Lord who is not very particular, and is somewhat averse to an intelligent person espousing his cause. Gipsy tells of the "conversions" in England, and the great luck he and the Lord are having in bringing degraded "Englishmen" to Christ. A religious craze is sweeping over Britain: "It's a fine thing to see a man when he realizes he is a lost man"—and catch him in the Gospel net.

Last year "the miners remained idle for eleven weeks, and there have been over a million men idle ever since." That strike "has ruined British commerce." Disasters never come singly—so they say. "British commerce" is "ruined," and the people are downcast and heart-broken—all earthly hope is gone—there is nothing left for them but to lean against a spook. Adversity and Christianity go hand in hand. "Servants be obedient to your masters," says good old St. Paul—and Gipsy concurs. This is the excellent advice of a well fed and nicely groomed Scotsman to the grovelling "Englishmen" who have lost all hope of anything in this life, and like drowning men catch at straws.

Gipsy was going to stay eighteen months in darkest America—but there is such a demand for salvation among the lowly and degraded "Englishmen" that he is going to return very soon. Evangelists are better paid in the States, and he will lose seven thousand dollars thereby. Indeed, this is a great sacrifice—and I'm sure no minister but who would consider seven thousand as a great loss. Gipsy is a good money getter—he seems to have no physical disabilities—although his mentality is not of the highest order, it is plenty good for the "English." And there are many imbeciles in America who will be disappointed when this "Ambassador of Jesus Christ" (as he styles himself) leaves our fruitful shores.

"I am glad I was born in a tent, its awfully common to be born in a house." Gipsy was born twice (in Glasgow), first time in a tent, second time in a hall, and he'll have to be born a time or two more before that portion above his ears will approach the standard of some cultivated Scotsmen that I have seen outside the pulpit—and with whom an abundance of grace does not overshadow all trace of intelligence.

Gipsy is the best tool of the "vested interests" that I have ever heard in the pulpit—and if Wall Street would only raise the bid high enough I'm sure he could be induced to stay and serve his master in the U.S.A.

In my reports of the churches and ministers it occasionally becomes my sacred duty to say a kind word for the sky pilots who have come from across the seas. I trust it will not arouse your vanity when I tell you we have just as good theological *quid nuncs* as you are sending to us. If you have any good Englishmen that you want to be rid of—would be glad to greet them—but your gypsies and D.D. slummers would do the world a great service to drown themselves on the way over.

Yours in Christ,

New York.

WALTER MARCHANT.

"DARWINISM IN THE LIGHT OF TO-DAY."

SIR,—In the article "Darwinism in the Light of To-day," Mr. Mann is mistaken in saying that Mr. Bernard Shaw wages war against the evolutionary view. Mr. Shaw is a great supporter of evolution and has treated this subject very finely in his latest book of plays, *Back to Methuselah*. Mr. Mann calls evolution "Darwinism," and in doing so I presume he means evolution by the Theory of Natural Selection, as expounded by Charles Darwin. Mr. Shaw, on the other hand, talks of creative evolution as originally put forward by Buffon, Lamarck, and Erasmus Darwin. The late Samuel Butler devoted several of his books to the comparing of Darwin's (Charles) theory of natural selection with that of Buffon, etc., and shows that Charles Darwin's theory gives way at many points, whilst Buffon's theory is much more likely to hold. Mr. Mann evidently has not read these comparisons, which, as far as I can gather, remain unchallenged to this day.

The difference between Mr. Shaw and Mr. Mann is therefore only as to the method of evolution. I suggest that Mr. Mann should study the creative evolution theory, and if in disagreement with it, give his conclusions as an article in the *Freethinker*.

In concluding, I might mention that Mr. Shaw's opposition to science and scientists in principle is because the so-called scientists have become as dogmatic as the theologians, and the readers of the *Freethinker* are well aware of the absurdities of dogma. HERBERT LORD.

IDLE CHARON.

The shores of Styx are lone for evermore,
And not one shadowy form upon the steep
Looms through the dusk, as far as eyes can sweep,
To call the ferry over as of yore ;
But tintless rushes, all about the shore,
Have hemmed the old boat in, where, locked in sleep,
Hoar-bearded Charon lies ; while pale weeds creep
With tightening grasp all round the unused oar.
For in the world of Life strange rumours run
That now the Soul departs not with the breath,
But that the Body and the Soul are one ;
And in the loved one's mouth, now, after death,
The widow puts no obol, nor the son,
To pay the ferry in the world beneath.

—Eugene Lee-Hamilton.

GIORDANO BRUNO.

A martyr's crown we bind around thy brow ;
Yea, though unworthy be our halting strain,
Thy glorious death shall not be sung in vain ;
Brave men have died, yet who so brave as thou !
O noblest Bruno, what could thee endow
With strength to speak those words of bold disdain—
"Bear ye the blame as I will bear the pain !"—
What, but the truth ? Therefore to thee we bow !
From thee was wrung no weak despairing cry ;
Thou didst not falter for thy life's dear sake ;
Retract thou wouldst not, nor thy faith deny ;
Nor could death's doom thy steadfast spirit shake ;
Let falsehood tremble, and let false hearts quake,
Truth ever lives, and Bruno shall not die.

—Samuel Waddington.

Stockport Branch N.S.S.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S mission in Stockport has, from the point of view of attendance and interest displayed, been very successful. Collections and literature sales have been fairly good considering the bad state of trade in the town. Some hostility was shown on Thursday evening when the subject of the lecture was "Crimes of Christianity," but beyond the knocking off the platform of a parcel of literature and a vast amount of howling and sulphurous language from the followers of the "meek and lowly" one, no damage was done, for which happy ending we are indebted to the tact of the speaker and the chairman (Mr. H. I. Bayford). On Friday evening the howling was continued, but despite strong appeals from the speaker no one attempted to occupy the platform, and there is no doubt that a great majority of the audience were not only sympathetic to the lecturer but frankly disgusted at the foolish behaviour of the interrupters. Interest in the Secular movement has certainly been created, and it is hoped that a fair number of new members will be recruited. The branch committee wish to thank all members who assisted at meetings, and especially Messrs. D. Mapp and H. I. Bayford, of Manchester, who were untiring in their efforts. ROBT. A. CRANK.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON
SEPTEMBER 7.

THE President (Mr. Cohen) in the chair. Also present:—Messrs. Corrigan, Lloyd, McLaren, Moss, and Rosetti; Miss Pankhurst, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The financial statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for Manchester, Newcastle, and Plymouth Branches and the Parent Society.

Re Resolution No. 10, remitted from the Annual Conference:—

That in view of the fact that the funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed, this Conference requests the Executive to make this information known as widely as possible among Branches, individual members, and friends of the Society.

The President read a digest of the Trust Deed, and it was resolved to ask the Editor of the *Freethinker* to insert it in the paper and that it be printed afterwards for general circulation.

Two reports of the Propagandist Committee were received and adopted. As an addition to their recommendation that classes for speakers should be held, the President suggested a Discussion Circle, due notice of which would be given in the *Freethinker*.

It was reported that Mr. Whitehead's present tour would finish at Manchester, on September 30.

The President and Secretary reported an interview with Mr. Gott, since his release from prison, and that his medical adviser had ordered him immediate and complete rest for six months, which his financial circumstances did not permit.

It was resolved unanimously:—

That this Executive, having learnt of Mr. J. W. Gott's critical condition of health on his release from prison, necessitating immediate care and rest, resolves to take steps to provide the necessary funds for this purpose.

It being reported that the Committee for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws was in need of funds, it was resolved to make a grant of £10.

Grants for propagandist purposes were also made to the Birmingham, Glasgow, and North London Branches.

Other matters of routine were dealt with, and the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

It may be said generally that duties towards God are the reverse of duties towards mankind; and that it is very easy to make up for lack of good behaviour towards men by adulation of God.—*Schopenhauer, "Religion."*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON:

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.2): 11, Joseph McCabe, "Impressions of the Sick Lands of Europe."

THE "LAURIE" DISCUSSION CIRCLE: Every Thursday at the Laurie Arms Hotel, Crawford Place, W. Social reunion at 7.30 p.m. Chair taken at 8 p.m.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park): 6, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "Religion and Science."

PECKHAM RYE.—11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, A Lecture; 6.30, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15 and 6, Mr. F. P. Corrigan lectures.

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