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Views and Opinions.

Religion in Russia.

Dean Inge is one of the ablest of modern parsons—although the average clergyman is of a kind which will prevent that judgment being considered extravagant flattery. It is true that his orthodoxy is of a very doubtful nature, and his opinions on Christianity would have got him into serious trouble had he not the advantage of living after several generations of fighting Freethinkers had made it possible for Christians to be a little more honest in the expression of their beliefs than would otherwise have been the case. But a parson is a parson when all is said and done, and in his dealing with events we must expect him to present them in a way that is favourable to his creed. So in the *Evening Standard* for April 25 we are not altogether surprised to find Dean Inge joining hands with those who are using Russia as a bogey to keep people off Freethought. If we were to form our opinions from Dean Inge and from many other of our journalists we should believe that religion in Russia is being sternly suppressed by the secular power, that ministers of religion are being butchered wholesale, and Russian Christians, so says Dean Inge, are “passing through a worse trial than the most cruel of Roman governors ever devised.” To clear the ground, let me say at once that I am not writing in defence of the form of government which exists in Russia. I have no faith in the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of anyone else. Orderly and profitable progress does not lie along that road. Still less do I believe in any government, no matter what it calls itself, interfering in the expression and publication of opinion. The *Freethinker* has the right to say this because it has stood for the rights of Christians against their fellow believers as well as for the rights of Freethinkers against Christians. But we may be excused being a little suspicious of these Christians who are so vocal in their championship of free speech in Russia but who remain quite unmoved by the fact that in Spain no public exhibition of any other religion than that of the Roman Church is permitted, that in Italy in the name of religion Freethinkers and Radicals of all sorts are being harassed and suppressed, and that in other parts of Europe Freethinking is a source of danger to those practising it. Dean Inge himself, I may note, when only a little while ago a man suffer-

ing from an incurable disease was sentenced by a vindictive judge to the savage sentence of nine months hard labour, and who died directly after serving his sentence, remained silent and unmoved. And I have yet to learn of his support for the Bill now before Parliament for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws.

* * *

What Are the Facts?

Now the first thing for us to be certain about is the facts. Is it true that there is a suppression of religion in Russia? If there is, no clear evidence of it is before the public. If the Government of Russia will not tolerate the practice of religion in Russia, if Christians in Russia are experiencing a more cruel persecution than those recounted in the Christian fables of the Roman persecutions, there should be clear and unmistakable evidence forthcoming. But there is no pretence of any such evidence being at hand. No one has said that any person in Russia has been fined, or imprisoned, or executed by the Government for the practice of religion. No one has produced any law or regulation to that effect. We do know that the Russian State has been secularized, religion has been disestablished, the property of the State Church—not, be it noted of other Churches—has been taken for State purposes, a course of action that would be quite legal if our own Government cared to do the same with the property of the State Church here. We know also that there are no schools but State schools in Russia, and that in these schools no religion is taught. All this we know, and we also know that those priests who are imprisoned or who have been punished, have suffered for an alleged secular offence, not for being Christians. There is no evidence of there being anyone who has been punished on other grounds. I am not trying to justify the charge but only trying to see the facts clearly, and to my mind the one fact that stands out quite clearly is that men like Dean Inge are using Russian affairs—as they used the war—to frighten people away from Freethought. They cannot justify their own religion on positive grounds, but perhaps if they explain what horrible things may happen without it, many may keep to the old creed.

* * *

A Christian's Testimony.

I do not believe in Providence, or I should say that quite providentially, only two days after the article of Dean Inge appeared, there was published in the *Daily News* the report of a speech by the Rev. Dr. Rushbrooke at a meeting of the Baptist Union. Dr. Rushbrooke, who is Baptist Commissioner for Europe, has recently paid several visits to Russia, the last only two months ago. Dr. Rushbrooke said that the report had just been made to him that some leading Baptist evangelical Christians had been arrested by the Russian Government. He did not know whether the reports were true, but if they were “They are the first instances I know of.” And this, it must be remembered is from one whose business it is to keep in touch with Russian affairs, who visits the country, and who has no reason to suppress the truth. Dr. Rush-

brooke points out that—as one may expect in seasons of upheaval:—

Many wrongs have been done to our people, as to others, by local administrations. Some have fallen martyrs to murderous attacks in country districts. But it would be unjust to suppress the testimony which leading Baptists personally gave me in Russia that their appeals to the Central Government generally had been successful in securing redress.

Dr. Rushbrooke suspected that the arrested persons had been merely detained for enquiries and hoped they would soon be liberated. That does not quite fit in with the picture drawn by Dean Inge, and we are still out of sight of the savage persecution by Atheists who are determined to suppress religion and who are "martyrizing" the Church.

* * *

Is There a War on Religion?

The direct lie is given to Dean Inge by the following facts. Again I cite Dr. Rushbrooke as a witness from the religious camp. There are a million members of the Baptist Church in Russia, and this represents a "community strength" of three millions. They are not interfered with. The *Christian World*, which ought to know better, talks of the "war on religion" in Russia. Yet Dr. Rushbrooke reports, as a result of his just ended visit to Russia:—

Non-hierarchical, non-political, and evangelical Christians had not been subjected to "savage persecution." Great gatherings of worshippers take place unhindered.

As a matter of fact Churches of all kinds are open in Russia, and these have far more liberty than they had in the days of the Czars. There are churches open, belonging to all kinds of sects, there are great gatherings of religious people in churches and chapels for open and public worship, and the only evidence to back up the charge of a war on religion and the pursuit of a persecution worse than the unrestrained imagination of Christians attributed to the Roman Emperors, is that some people have been charged with political offences, and high-placed Churchmen have been accused of trafficking with the enemies of the country. The one thing that appears plain is that in Russia religion is free. But it has no privileges. The last statement may explain a lot.

* * *

Letting Out the Cat.

I fancy that an explanation of much may be found on reading between the lines of the following from the speech of Dr. Rushbrooke:—

There are perils in the attitude of the Russian Government. Its policy of secularist education may be so applied as to forbid Sunday-schools. Its fiscal policy, which includes a tax upon professional men, may bear harshly upon ministers of religion.

There is much in Russia that you and I as Christians would deplore. The anti-religious demonstrations would shock our feelings. Yet alongside this great gatherings of worshippers take place unhindered. They are zealous for Atheism in Russia.

Now there is a deal to notice here. Religious instruction in the schools is abolished. Clergymen may be taxed just as ordinary individuals are taxed. Anti-religious demonstrations are permitted side by side with religious demonstrations. They may "shock" the feelings of Christians, but they must put up with that. These are the only things mentioned by Dr. Rushbrooke, and we may add to them what we know from other sources, that the State revenues formerly applied to religion are now applied to other purposes, and the property of the State Church, which is legally State property, is taken by the State for uses other than that of religion. It is understandable that to a man such as Dean Inge, and to the *Church Times*

and the *Christian World*, all these things amount to a war on religion. We heard the same things when the Church was disestablished in Wales, and we hear the same thing when it is proposed here that the schools shall be secularized. Dean Inge is living in a country where the Church occupies a highly privileged position. He is in the habit of seeing its revenues drawn from mining royalties, and way-rights and tithes, its buildings exempt from taxation; he sees its taboo day protected by law and men punished for breaking it; he is in a country where men may be imprisoned for shocking the feelings of Christians, while Christians may outrage the feelings of other people without restraint. Naturally he does not like to see religion deprived of these privileges. It is persecution, it is war on religion, the Church is being martyred. And if the picture is just a little over-coloured, and if writing as he does leads ill-informed readers to assume that in Russia Christians are not permitted to practice their religion, if all this is not strictly in accord with facts, that does not matter. Lying for the glory of God is a very old game, and it has the highest religious sanction. And then there is the Freethought movement in this country. It cannot be crushed by argument, but it may be slandered out of existence. If everything that is bad in the Russian Government is attributed to Atheism, people may keep off Atheism here. In any case to label a thing as bad and disreputable is enough to make many who may think themselves liberal-minded steer clear of giving it support. Dean Inge is a very shrewd publicist, and he knows his audience. But all the same we invite Dean Inge and others to give us some of the facts upon which their attempts to discredit Freethinking in this country are based.

* * *

Dean Inge has many things to say of persecution in general, and with these we will deal next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

What is Civilization?

LATELY, in the London Press, both secular and religious, a great deal of attention has been paid to the subject of civilization. For example, in the Literary Supplement to the *Times* of March 29 there appeared an original and interesting article entitled "The Peril of Civilization," and the *Church Times* of April 20 devoted a long and elaborate leading article to a discussion of the question "Will Civilization Continue?" These two articles contemplate the subject from entirely different points of view, and their conflicting conceptions of the nature of civilization are radically irreconcilable. According to the *Church Times* writer, the *Times* article "fails because it ignores religion and identifies civilization too largely with material forces and scientific ideas." In our opinion the *Church Times* article fails because it advocates a false doctrine of civilization, and this again results from cherishing a fundamentally untrue view of human life. Curiously enough, in criticizing the *Times* writer the *Church Times* makes the following illuminating admission:—

The old classical civilization in the first two centuries of the Christian epoch was a force far more powerful than the author imagines. What is more, it possessed for its conquered subjects a fascination far more attractive than the modern imperialism of any modern nation can present. Consider the case of Gaul. Within a century of its conquest by Cæsar Gaul was Latinized in a sense that even Wales has never been Anglicized. If the march of the Legions blotted out national liberties, it gave the conquered

in return a great civilization. The young provincial, as Signor Ferrero observes, learned in his State-managed school not only to speak the Latin tongue but to assimilate the thought and spirit of Greco-Roman civilization. The young provincial felt himself in the presence of a civilization which showed him what seemed the noblest of ideals. The Roman citizenship became the object of his ambition. For the conqueror who had civilized him and taught him virtue he felt a loyalty which to us is incomprehensible.

That hymn of praise, let it be borne in mind, is in honour of a Pagan, pre-Christian civilization. Professor Gilbert Murray is in full agreement on this point with the *Church Times*, and the eulogium he pronounces upon Athenian culture is most remarkable:—

There has been, perhaps, no period in the world's history, not even the openings of the French Revolution, when the prospects of the human race can have appeared so brilliant as they did to the highest minds of Eastern Greece about the years 470-445 B.C. To us, looking critically back upon that time, it is as though the tree of human life had burst suddenly into flower, into that exquisite and short-lived bloom which seems so disturbing among the ordinary processes of historical growth. (*The Athenian Drama*, p. xxi, xxii.)

Lecky is equally enthusiastic in his admiration of Pagan and pre-Christian civilization, saying:—

Few men who are not either priests or monks would not have preferred to live in the best days of the Athenian or the Roman republics, in the age of Augustus or in the age of the Antonines, rather than in any period that elapsed between the triumph of Christianity and the fourteenth century. (*History of European Morals*, Vol. II, p. 15.)

In depreciation of classical civilization the *Times* writer stated that "the Roman Government had no machine guns," the weapons of the Roman Legionaries differing but slightly from those of the barbarians. Commenting on this statement the *Church Times* says:—

It is true that the Roman Empire, or to speak more correctly, the Roman Imperial Republic of the Antonines, did not possess machine guns or telephones, but in the enthusiastic loyalty of its subjects it had a far stronger defence. It stood in the eyes of its subjects, if we except the Jews, for virtue and self-sacrifice, and it was not indifferent to their social well-being.

We are delighted to find a Catholic Christian who has the honesty and courage to write in terms of such warm approbation of classical civilization. He acknowledges frankly and ungrudgingly the greatness and goodness of such Emperors as Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian, who worked for the true welfare of their subjects. At this point, however, the *Church Times* writer gets more or less befogged as he attempts to trace the decline and fall of classical civilization. Following Signor Ferrero he attributes the collapse to other factors than the strain of frontier defence. In addition to the strain of frontier defence there occurred many civil wars between rival claimants to the imperial throne. For fully a century such conflicts happened with the inevitable result that the best men were constantly absent from their homes, large numbers of whom were slain, and that physically and mentally inferior men became the fathers of the new generations. According to the *Church Times* the chief cause of the fall of Pagan civilization was the breakdown of Senatorial rule and the imposition of barbarism upon nations who had learned their political philosophy from Aristotle and Cicero. But so-called barbarians had virtues peculiar to themselves, such as chivalry and honour. The great fault of the Pagan culture was that it desired and strove to establish a perfect State in this world which, according to the *Church Times*,

is not attainable. The leading article states the case as follows:—

And then Christianity came, with its message. The world was broken in heart because of the failure of a philosophy that had centred all its hopes on the formation of a perfect State. Christianity laid down the new principle that in the world the Christian has no abiding home, that the government under which he lives is of secondary importance though the powers that be are ordained of God. The aim of the individual was to be his own perfection, and this perfection could be obtained in great measure, even in an evil State, so long as he obeyed the Divine revelation.

That is an excellent statement of the true nature and object of Christianity in its relation to the present world. It is essentially and almost wholly another world-religion. The old religions of Greece and Rome were being discredited because of their obvious failure to redeem their pledges. Their great and precious promises, so confidently made to their adherents remained notoriously unfulfilled. Then Christianity appeared on the scene with its great scheme of *post mortem* rewards and punishments. In this world all it gave were promissory notes, made payable in the next world. This was an eminently ingenious, far-seeing, and safe policy, for no denizen of the next world ever visits this to prove or disprove its truth. It was Paul who gave about the first definite expression to this brilliant policy in Romans viii, 24: "For by hope were we saved; but hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not then do we with patience wait for it." Christianity cannot meet its liabilities, or redeem its pledges here, so it trains its professors to walk by hope firmly fixed upon the world to come.

But let us look at Christianity in its relation to this world. The *Church Times* writer says:—

Christianity came too late to save the Roman Empire. It came in time to break its fall. The laws and the armies of the Empire might perish, but Christian morals and the tradition of the older culture guided mankind through the long night of the dark ages.

This is a deliberate falsification of history. There is not a word of truth in that extract. Lecky informs us that for some time after the triumph of Christianity the condition of slaves grew considerably worse. Morals were conspicuous only by their absence, and deeper and deeper became the social degradation until we reach the tenth century which Baronius, a Catholic historian, who wrote his *Annals* at the request of the Pope to confound the Protestants, thus characterizes: "The tenth century was an *iron* age, barren of all goodness; a *leaden* age, abounding in all wickedness; and a *dark* age, remarkable above all others for the scarcity of writers and men of learning." Is not the *Church Times* aware that this period in the history of the Church has been stigmatized as "the Pornocracy?" And yet it assures its readers that "Christian morals and the tradition of the older culture guided mankind through the long night of the dark ages." The most illusory of all guidance that must have been! Why are the ages of faith called dark, if it be true that during them "the world made progress, slow but certain?" J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

No act of piety is it to be seen again and again with veiled head turning to a stone, approaching every altar, falling prostrate to the ground, spreading out the palms before the statues of the gods, sprinkling the altars copiously with the blood of beasts, and linking prayer to prayer. Rather is it piety to be able to look on all things with a mind at peace.—*Lucretius*, "On the Nature of Things."

The New Renaissance.

Souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

—Matthew Arnold.

There is nothing in history but the fight between
freedom and tyranny.

—Arnold White.

OVER sixty years ago the great Charles Darwin demonstrated that man had attained his present state through a gradual process of evolution from a lower and less perfect state. The general admission of this truth sweeps away at once the old Oriental legends which men have been so long accustomed to consider the beginning and end of wisdom and a sufficient explanation of all things. The legend of a Golden Age, and the twin legend of a fallen race, at once disappears, and with it goes the myth of the Devil, and all other strange and monstrous explanations that were thought necessary to harmonize the theological theory put forth. With these also goes the worship of a fetish-book, which, like so many other idolatries, has served to chain and encamp the human intellect, and to ensure the triumph of priestcraft. The Bible of the ancient Hebrews must now descend from its lofty pedestal and take its rank on the library shelves among the many so-called sacred books of other and older nations.

Nothing more momentous has taken place since the Renaissance, which followed the thousand years of intellectual darkness of the Middle Ages. And, strangest of all, this intellectual lever, which will finally overthrow the power of Priestcraft, came among us so silently that many scarcely noticed its approach. Bitter opposition there was, as there is to all new truths; but, compared with the momentous issues at stake, the opposition was trifling. Silently and steadily for three generations Evolutionary teaching has been resistlessly pushing its way till few educated persons now attempt to contravene it. There was no bridal birth of thunder peals while this great thought wedded fact. To the clergy and their congregations, whose intellectual innocence will not permit them to follow intelligently the course of scientific thought, the new ideas now current must appear like Banquo's awful ghost to the amazed Macbeth. They look up suddenly from their crosses, candles, and prayers, and see the fearful shape before them. Adam and Eve, the Lord God and the Serpent-Devil, are driven out from the Garden of Eden, not by any angel with a flaming sword, but by Charles Darwin with the more potent weapon—a steel pen.

Since Darwin's death, the majority of the clergy, who are past masters at the gentle art of camouflage, have, hypocritically, claimed him as one of their flock. They buried this particularly black sheep in the sacred precincts of Westminster Abbey, and calmly pretended that the teachings of Evolution are wholly in accord with that of the Church of Christ and the Bible. Only two religious bodies have been at all honest in this matter. Poles asunder in so many respects, the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have remained faithful to ignorance and to intellectual darkness. On no condition will they part with Adam and Eve and the apple, and the talking snake. Roman Catholics and Salvationists are the die-hards of religion. Both bodies profess to believe that Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and their distinguished colleagues, are suffering the tortures of the damned. These uncultured folk look to their reverend pastors and masters for instruction. They no more believe in Evolution than they understand the alphabet of science.

The clergy of other denominations, however, are trying to effect a compromise between the irrecon-

cilables, religion and science, from the suave Archbishop of Canterbury to the glib speakers on Pleasant Sunday Afternoon platforms. They pretend to assure their hearers that the great truths of Evolution are all in harmony with the fairy tales of religion, and that the discoveries of science are a real assistance in correcting the mistakes of the writers of the Bible.

All this Christian camouflage might succeed in hampering the growth of knowledge were it not for the fact that people have now so many other sources of information than the pulpit and platform utterances of their spiritual pastors and masters.

Slowly, with lapses into its "loved Egyptian night," mankind is shaking itself free of the last desperate clutches of superstition and priestcraft. Bewildered by the new light, missing at first the guiding hands of the priests, it stands troubled on the threshold of the future. The fundamental question of man's place in Nature has been solved, and the wide acceptance of evolutionary teaching has already begun to bear fruit in all practical affairs of life. Sooner or later it will lead mankind to a happier, more consummate condition of life, and to loftier ideals.

MIMNERMUS.

Luther in the Light of To-day.

IV.

(Continued from page 261.)

Luther used the weapons of faith to slay reason, lest perchance reason should lure faith to her destruction. But who can tell what might have been the effect upon the Reformation, and the subsequent development of the intellectual life of Europe, had Luther put himself boldly at the head of the larger and freer thought of his time, instead of using all the force of his genius to crush it.—Beard, "Hibbert Lectures on the Reformation," p. 170.

THE fact that Erasmus, with his keen intellect, had singled out for attack the most vital point in his teaching was very bitter to Luther. He declares:—

It is true that to crush Erasmus is like crushing a bug, but he has mocked and insulted my Christ, and he shall be punished. If I live, I will, God aiding, purge the Church of this vile creature.¹

He charges Erasmus with being a follower of Democritus, Epicurus and above all of his dear Lucian the mocker. With holding the belief in immortality to be a mere fable, and belief in God the Father and God the Son an absurdity, declares him to be "the most dangerous enemy Christianity has encountered for the last six centuries, the personal enemy of God, who will avenge Himself on him."²

Erasmus, for his part, saw all his dreams of reform, with the peaceful spread of knowledge and culture, shattered and fall to the ground. Catholics were burning Protestants, and Protestants were pulling down monasteries and convents. He saw them sharpening their swords for the terrible thirty years war which ensued. He shared the usual fate of the moderate man of being denounced by both parties. The Catholics declared that Erasmus was as much to blame as Luther in bringing the Reformation about by his ridicule of the monks in his *Praise of Folly* and his devotion to Pagan literature. The Protestants cursed him for not joining forces with them. From being the most idolized man in Europe, Erasmus found himself the most abused. From his retreat at Basle his sarcasms flashed out. Describing a riot and the burning of an image of a saint, he said:—

They insulted the poor image so, it is a marvel

¹ Michelet, *Life of Luther*, p. 196.

² Murray, *Erasmus and Luther*, p. 229.

there was no miracle. The saint worked so many in the good old times.³

We may here touch on the quarrel between Luther and Henry VIII. At the time of Luther's break with Rome, Henry VIII was still a dutiful son of the Church; his demand for a divorce from Katherine of Arragon—the refusal of which by the Pope caused his break with Rome—was not made until seven years later. Directly the edict of the Diet of Worms against Luther was known in England, the king ordered the Pope's Bull against the books of Luther to be rigorously executed. Not content with this, Henry himself descended from his throne into the theological arena and attacked Luther in a book entitled: *Defence of the Seven Sacraments, against Martin Luther, by the most invincible King of England and France, Henry, the Eighth of the Name*. In this work he declares: "I will throw myself in front of the Church in order to save her. I will receive in my breast the poisoned arrows of the enemies who assail her." A few years later he was vigorously attacking the Church himself, confiscating its lands and emoluments, pulling down the "rookeries" as he termed the monasteries. The king treats Luther with the utmost contempt. He says:—

This man appears as if in the labour of childbirth; he makes desperate efforts, and then is delivered of nothing but wind. Take away the audacious covering of superb words with which he surrounds his absurdities like a monkey clothed in purple, and what shall we see?.....A miserable and empty sophism.⁴

The book was rapturously received by the defenders of the Church. "The whole Christian world," says Cochleus, "was filled with admiration and joy." Henry sent a copy to Rome, with which Pope Leo X was so pleased that he bestowed upon Henry the title of "Defender of the Faith," a title still seen on our coinage to-day.

Luther read this royal screed with a disdainful smile of impatience and indignation. His reply was more than a match in vituperation, in fact the tone of the dispute was more appropriate to a quarrel between a couple of bargees than a disputation between a king and a religious reformer. Here is a sample of Luther's flowers of speech taken from his reply:—

The king, that fool, lies and gibbers like the filthiest of prostitutes, and that merely to defend the Pope and his Church, who are after all nothing more than pimp and procuress, and the devil's own dwelling.

All this abuse is crammed into a few pages. To conclude, the king, according to Luther's dictum and description, has been fitly consigned to "the dung-heap with the Thomists, Papists and other such-like excrements."

The king he politely describes as a crowned donkey, an infamous knave, an impudent royal windbag, the excrement of hogs and asses. The king, according to him is more foolish than a fool. His majesty ought to be pelted with mud; he deserves nothing better, this stupid donkey, this Thomistic hog, this lying rascal and carnival clown, who sports the title of king. He is a nit which has not yet turned into a louse, a brat whose father was a bug, a donkey who wants to read the psalter but is only fit for carrying sacks, a sacrilegious murderer. He is a chosen tool of the devil, a Papistical sea-serpent, a blockhead, and as bad as the worst rogues whom, indeed, he out-rivals; an abortion of a fool, a limb of Satan whose God is the Devil—and so forth.⁵

The dungheap was a favourite place of consignment for Luther's enemies. He says of Hoogstraten, another opponent: "He ought to be set to hunt for dung-beetles on a manure heap." Upon being asked how to behave towards those who had never been inside a church for twenty years, he replied: "Let them go to the Devil, and, when they die pitch them on the manure heap."⁶

With Luther excitement, confusion and war, were a second nature. He did not believe in offering flowers and fruits to his opponents. He declares:—

The anger and rage of my enemies is my joy and delight, in spite of all their attempts to take it from me and defraud me of it.....To hell-fire with such flowers and fruits, for that is where they belong!⁷

Yet when it was argued that the command of Christ, that when smitten on the right cheek we were to turn the other also, was a mere counsel of perfection not intended to be taken literally:—

Luther will have it that Christ, even here, gave the strict command to allow ourselves to be smitten on the left cheek.⁸

Luther himself never turned his cheek to the smiter, but rejoiced in returning every attack with four-fold violence.

Luther was saturated with superstition. His belief in a personal Devil was as firm as his belief in God, to whom in fact he seems (in Luther's estimation) to be little inferior in power and knowledge. Grisar says that in Luther's collected works "Demonology occupies altogether a very large place. Ch. 59, 'On Angels,' comprises hardly four pages." In Luther's commentary on Galatians he declares:—

It is plain that Satan rules and governs the whole world, that we are but guests in the world, of which the Devil is Prince and God and controls everything by which we live: food, drink, clothing, air, etc.

Luther himself was quite familiar with the Devil and had many long disputations with him. It is true, says Luther, that the Devil has not taken his degrees, "but he is very learned, very expert for all that. He has not been carrying on his business for thousands of years for nothing."⁹ Luther tells us:—

When I wake up in the night, the Devil immediately comes to me and disputes with me and gives me strange thoughts until, at last, I grow enraged beyond all endurance and give him ill words. "Bah, beast," I say, "the Lord is not irritated against us as thou sayest." Early this morning, when I awoke, the fiend came and began disputing with me. When the Devil comes to me in the night I say to him, "Devil, I must now sleep, for it is the command and ordinance of God that we labour by day and sleep by night.".....The best way of getting rid of the Devil, if you cannot do it with the words of the Holy Scripture, is to rail at and mock him. He cannot bear scorn.¹⁰

(To be Continued.) W. MANN.

An amusing incident occurred in connection with the Shed of Truth, the meeting place of the Battersea Freethinkers. Some coals had been ordered, and the lad who brought them, not knowing exactly where the Shed of Truth was situated, instinctively took them to the parson's house close by. "This is not the Shed of Truth," says the parson, "it's a place under the railway arch where the wretched Freethinkers meet." That coal-boy won't go to the parson for Truth any more.—*Freethinker*, January 11, 1891.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 213.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 215.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 166.

⁹ Michelet, *Life of Luther*, p. 328.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 330-332.

⁴ Froude, *Short Studies*, p. 107.

⁵ D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*, p. 608.

⁶ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 152-153.

Freethought in Economics.

QUITE recently an anonymous writer, in reviewing a book entitled *A Study in Moral Problems*, by B. M. Laing, pointed out that, as morality is a sign of health rather than a cause of it, "neither precept nor exhortation is demanded by the genius of progress, but a clear insight into the material things and the non-moral forces upon which our moral and physical hygiene depends." He went on to point out that we wasted time in "building up a science of ethics"—we should rather "concentrate on the search for modifiable conditions."

Morality has been recently defined as:—

Simply an effort to regulate individual appetite in the general interest.....an effort of fragile and sensitive creatures so to adjust their social relations as to reduce the chances of suffering, and increase the chances of well-being, in a world in which the material requisites for well-being have always been limited.....and often inadequate.

In considering the state of Europe to-day, after four years of so-called peace, with the war-clouds looming nearer, Freethinkers will do well to bear in mind the above remarks in their efforts to discover the conditions, modifiable or otherwise, under which whole nations are drifting nearer and nearer to war—nations composed almost entirely of individuals who detest war, and wish for nothing more earnestly than peace.

In spite of abounding goodwill amongst individuals of all nations, international relations are becoming ever more embittered. What are the forces and the conditions which are fostering these strained relations between whole peoples? Are the forces moral, and is a "change of heart" the real remedy? Or are these forces non-moral, and the conditions susceptible of modification by administrative mechanism?

For the benefit of those Freethinkers whose studies have as yet lain outside the realm of economics, it may be stated that a most interesting analysis of the position has been made, since the Great War, chiefly by Major C. H. Douglas and Mr. A. R. Orage (late editor of the *New Age*). In their books, and in a number of lesser and explanatory works published by the Credit Research Library of 70 High Holborn, W.C.1, it is shown that the crux of the problem is resident in finance.

Further, the case is ably stated, and the war danger clearly exposed, in a manifesto recently put forward by the "League of National Awakening," having offices at 26 Palace Chambers, Westminster.

Briefly, the root of the trouble lies in the inability of the purchasing-power distributed by industry to buy the products of industry when marketed. Socialists have for years past declaimed against the *inequality* of the distribution of purchasing-power, but the "New Economists" proclaim the *inadequacy* of it, even if fairly distributed. This inadequacy is a result of the time factor in modern large-scale production, and the problem is a dynamic one. The total product of industry can only be bought by means of additional purchasing-power issued through the agency of loan credit.

The full deductive proof will be found in various works by Major Douglas, but the experimental proof is the demonstration given since 1921 of the results of restriction of this credit. As Major Douglas pertinently asks:—

If wages, salaries and dividends, would buy the product, and when recovered in prices would pay for product to replace it, then why did an avalanche of bankruptcy, unemployment and semi-starvation follow the restriction of credits in 1920-21?

The failure of our present financial system lies in distribution. Production, as a problem, has very

largely been solved. But the distribution of goods and services to the people who want them, which is the *raison d'être* of modern industry, is failing—and increasingly failing.

Though production is being carried out more and more by lifting the work of the world off the backs of human beings on to the backs of machines, and so displacing human labour, yet purchasing-power is still being distributed only in respect of the work of human beings.

To-day, through the agency of scientific discovery, we can use tools and processes, and harness the forces of Nature to an extent which should mean wealth for all; yet we see the large majority of the population of industrial countries living under conditions of poverty which are a disgrace to our so-called civilization.

The result of this inability of purchasing-power to buy our products is seen in the fierce competition for foreign markets. But the world fills up. Countries which used to buy our products are now increasingly manufacturing such products for themselves, and whilst the foreign markets diminish the need for them amongst industrial nations grows. And the international struggle thus produced can have but one end—war, the finest market in the world, and the only one which can absorb all the products of industry under present conditions.

As to the remedy, let it be said at once that Socialism is of no use here. Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Webb, in their recent book, *The Decay of Capitalist Civilization*, define Capitalism as a system under which the worker is divorced from the ownership of the means of production. Major Douglas further defines Capitalism as a system under which prices of goods vary from a maximum of "what they will fetch" to a minimum of cost plus sufficient profit to induce production. It is a system under which all costs—including depreciation, waste, establishment and development charges, etc.—are charged to the consumer in prices; and in so far as capitalism entails these inherent defects, it is the same system which the Socialists propose to administer.

The real remedy requires a true understanding of the nature of Real Credit and of Financial Credit, and in all considerations of this subject it is necessary continually to think in terms of goods and services, and not in terms of money. Money—the bankers to the contrary—is not a commodity; it is a tool—an economic tool—designed to facilitate barter and exchange.

The "New Economists" show that our National Credit is a communal possession, which we have allowed the banks to monopolize; they show how bankers actually create *new* money; and they preach the urgent necessity of the control of the National Credit by the community. Given that, credit can be issued to the *consumer* by selling goods—ultimate products for personal consumption—at a fraction of cost, the fraction being represented by the ratio of the consumption of National Real Credit to the production of National Real Credit; the difference between this selling price and cost being made good to the producers by drafts upon the National Real Credit.

Under the scheme drafted by Major Douglas for the mining industry, but applicable to industry in general, readers will see how the competition between nations for export markets will be eliminated, because the consumers will be in a position to buy the products of their industry or exchange them in friendly co-operation.

This scheme includes the formation of Producers' Banks, in which all workers, by hand and brain, in a given trade or group of trades would be shareholders, and the ultimate result of the financing of new developments of industry to a growing extent by these banks

will be that the dividend will to a large and increasing extent supersede the wage, and an era of comparative leisure for mankind will dawn.

It is at this point that many orthodox Socialists join issue with the new economists. They tell us that "if any would not work neither should he eat" is both a law of Nature and a law of God. Fortunately, it is not a law of Nature in the sense that the heat generated by the passage of an electric current through a conductor varies as the square of the current is a law of Nature. The whole trend of modern applied science is to eliminate the work of man, and make machines do it instead. It has been estimated that, even under present conditions, less than three hours work per day by all adults, properly organized, would be ample to provide everyone with all the necessities and a goodly share of the luxuries of life. So this so-called law of Nature is seen to be one which we can modify in spite of Nature. And in so far as it is claimed to be a law of God, Freethinkers will agree that this is merely a more impressive way of saying that it is an ordinance of man. Man modifies his gods from time to time, and the laws of these gods suffer corresponding changes at the hands of man.

So the preachers who never tire of dinning into our ears that a "change of heart" must take place before mankind can attain to peace and goodwill are seen to be a most unhelpful crew.

What is needed is a change in our financial system—a change in the non-moral conditions. Six months of Freethinking in Finance and Banking would do more to bring about an era of real peace than all the efforts of pacifists in other directions in as many years.

But let no one imagine that the subject is one of primarily academic interest. The time still left to us before our present financial system crashes in Red War or Red Revolution is rapidly shortening. We are verily standing on the brink of the Inferno—and of the Golden Age.

Is there time to modify the conditions ere it be too late?

A. W. COLEMAN.

FAITH AND FACT.

There is the difference that there is between fiction and falsehood, and poetry and perjury. Miracles are probable only in the far past or the very remote future. The present is the property of the natural. You say to a man, "The dead were raised 4,000 years ago." He says, "Well, that's reasonable." You say to him, "In 4,000,000 years we shall all be raised." He says, "That is what I believe." Say to him, "A man was raised from the dead this morning," and he will say, "What are you giving us?" Miracles never convinced at the time they were said to have been performed. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. He was cast into prison. When Christ heard of it he "departed from that country." Afterwards he returned, and heard that John had been beheaded, and he again departed from that country. There is no possible relation between the miraculous and the moral. The miracles of the Middle Ages are the children of superstition. In the Middle Ages men told everything but the truth, and believed everything but the facts. The Middle Ages—a trinity of ignorance, mendacity, and insanity! There is one thing about humanity. You see the faults of others but not your own. A Catholic in India sees a Hindoo bowing before an idol, and thinks it absurd. Why does he not get him a plaster-of-paris Virgin, and some beads and holy water? Why does the Protestant shut his eyes when he prays? The idea is a souvenir of sun-worship, which is the most natural worship in the world. Religious dogmas have become absurd. The doctrine of eternal torment to-day has become absurd—low, grovelling, ignorant, barbaric, savage, devilish—and no gentleman would preach it.—*Ingersoll.*

Acid Drops.

The Baptist Union passed a resolution protesting against the opening of public parks for Sunday games. The Rev. W. H. Haden, who moved the resolution, said they did not fear competition with their places of worship. What then do they fear? They cannot fear that the effect of playing games on Sunday will lead to demoralization. The testimony of the police and of responsible people all over the country is that there is a marked improvement in the behaviour of the younger members of society as proper opportunities are provided for Sunday entertainment and games. The protest destroys itself. There is no other purpose in protesting against Sunday games than the religious one. Mr. Haden said that "Labour" was with them in the protest. Mr. Haden must know that this is not true. A few of the Labour leaders, ex-local preachers, and those who look to the chapels for support at the polls are against Sunday games, but the majority of the representatives are in favour of them, and it is quite certain that the majority of working-class people are in favour of them also. There is nothing in the opposition to Sunday games but the fears of the clergy that it will keep people away from their places of business.

The Registrar-General's mortality returns for 1920 show that the death-rate was lower than it has been since registration was instituted. This happens in spite of the legacy of disease left by the war. It is a triumph of sanitation and sewerage, and, in the last analysis, pure Secularism.

In their efforts to capture Labour, Church apologists continually refer to the "Christian Socialists" F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley. The only drawback to their hymn of triumph is that Maurice was not very much of a Christian, and Kingsley was not very much of a Socialist.

Some burglars at a Beckenham clergyman's house got away with 150 threepenny bits. We doubt if they will attend a place of worship to dispose of them.

We see it reported that the Australian Customs have prohibited the importations of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. We presume that this is on account of its presumed indecency. For our part we pity the person who cannot read the *Decameron* without being oppressed by its "indecentness." We quite agree that this is all that some people see in Boccaccio's great work, but in this matter one has to reckon with the unclean imagination that so many centuries of Christianity has developed. For our part we do not believe in "bad" books, although there are very many "bad" readers. And with a book as with life, one gets from it pretty much what one puts into it.

We see that the latest thing with American Hotels is for chapels to be built therein. As America has gone "dry" we can foretell great success for these if the sacrament is administered frequently, and the proper kind of *vino sacra* is used.

A correspondent of the *Daily Herald* finds something incongruous in seeing a film depicting the death of one of the French kings, "struck down in the very midst of his evil life," with the orchestra at once playing "Nearer My God to Thee." But if Christianity be true, the kind of life a man leads has nothing to do with it. It is all a matter of whether he repents in time. And how many murderers go straight from the scaffold to the arms of Jesus? It is merely silly, this film music. But one cannot have a religion in full swing and have it sensible.

On the word of the Rev. J. Philip Rogers, a congregational minister, we are told that he had heard that even boys at Rhondda Valley Chapels would bet on the

numbers of the hymns given out. This we understand must be some sort of proof that children are naturally religious.

"Books We'd Like to Burn" is the title of a *John Bull* placard. It sounds as though the Bishops were editing that organ of light and learning. This childish pastime was and is (in another form) the action of people almost smothered in the physical world. In other words, there are no greater carnal materialists than those whose history tells us that they burned live men in the name of Christ or the Virgin Mary to dispose of an idea.

The Rev. Cuming, Vicar of Addlestone, does not like herrings. This admission, we gather, has come to light through the agency of a parish magazine. Now if there is one thing that parsons ought to eat it is fish for traditional, historical, physiological, and blusterophilical reasons. If they feed on anything else, it ought to be goats, locusts and wild honey, and people who cannot see that the priest is a living mummy, and one only, made of wax, should be kept in the British Museum.

The Bishop of London is a weekly joy in a dull world. His latest dictum is: "The brotherhood of the trenches only lasted a week." If so, it lasted seven days longer than the brotherhood of Christianity.

The world is full of curious people. A friend sends us along what is evidently a card prepared for those leaving hospital which contains an invitation to attend church on the following Sunday to thank Almighty God for relief experienced at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. There is a space left vacant for the ex-patient's name to be filled in—so that "Almighty God" may make no mistake as to who is thanking him. Ambrose Bierce said that camels and Christians were the only two animals that took their burdens kneeling, and the truth of the saying is evidenced by a man thanking God for helping him to get over the disease which, on his own theory, God himself brought about. Religiosity is an incurable complaint with many people.

Deaths from consumption in England and Wales last year were 42,777, or an average of 117 a day. Christian Evidence lecturers should note this fact.

Nine children were burned to death in a fire that destroyed the Japanese Mission School at Sacramento, California. As the hymn says: "There's a friend of little children above the bright blue sky."

A Barking Nonconformist chapel advertises a children's performance of Balfe's opera, "The Bohemian Girl." More rigid chapel-goers will regard these Barking Free Churchmen as being Bohemians themselves.

We said last week that Mr. W. J. Bryan, who has visions of yet becoming President of the United States, had many people in this country with him in his ignorant championship of the Bible story of creation against the theory of evolution. One of our readers sends us a page from the *Christian Herald* containing an article signed "M.A. Cantab.," attacking what he calls "the evolution craze" and, of course, taking up the Bryanite point of view. We have no wish to take the *Christian Herald* as representing the best of Christianity in this country. It caters for the most ignorant type of believer, and it gives them exactly what they want, and as a result it is blessed with a very large circulation. We only cite it now in proof of what we then said, that those persons who do not grasp the fact of the enormous mass of gross superstition still current in the country are living in a fools' paradise, as they may one day discover. The number of liberal-minded believers are still in a minority in relation to the whole body, and in that fact lies the real danger to our present civilization.

If we fancy ourselves living in the second century of this era, we can imagine some cultured Roman looking at the learning current and at the unmistakable crumbling of the Pagan creeds and saying that the old religions were dead, and the day of the reign of superstition was over. And yet events went to show that the old religions were not dead, they were merely being transformed into the new form of Christianity, and instead of the reign of superstition being over, it was to enter upon the most disastrous period of conquest that had ever troubled humanity. Beyond the glamour of the conquests made by Freethought there is always before the thoughtful observer the immense mass of superstition still current, which may one day break out into fierce and dangerous activity. That is the real danger that civilization must be on its guard against.

There is still one other point of resemblance between ourselves and the rise of Christianity to power in the Roman Empire. Christianity became ultimately the religion of the Roman Empire because a crafty emperor saw in it a suitable instrument for the establishment of autocratic power. It was the political factor that helped to decide the issue, and to-day we have again the same factor at work. Churches and chapels are strongly organized, and they have that unity of aim which vested interests usually display in action, and which reforming interests so often lack. We have almost universal suffrage, which includes the votes of women. Churches and chapels have a fine field of operation here, for the vast majority of voters are but poorly educated, and women form the bulk of church and chapel attendants. In the political field candidates keep an eye upon the religious vote, and cater to religious sentiment as a means of advancement. The consequence is that we have duplicated many of the conditions which gave the most ignorant form of superstition the chance to overcome the culture of the Roman civilization, and the only safeguard against this is a strong and uncompromising Freethought propaganda. It is in the direction of compromise that danger lies, for that means we are ceasing our watchfulness, and of that the enemy will not fail to take full advantage. All through the war we were warning Freethinkers that the time for extreme watchfulness would be when the war was over; that it was not the conduct of the war but the management of affairs when the war was over that called for the greater wisdom. And all that has happened has served to justify the warning.

The Rev. F. Shippam, a Hornchurch clergyman, has been acting as cook to the local Boy Scout troop. Presumably, he was a better chef than the prophet Ezekiel.

How to Help.

There are thousands of men and women who have left the Churches and who do not know of the existence of this journal. Most of them would become subscribers if only its existence were brought to their notice.

We are unable to reach them through the ordinary channels of commercial advertising, and so must rely upon the willingness of our friends to help. This may be given in many ways:

By taking an extra copy and sending it to a likely acquaintance.

By getting your newsagent to take an extra copy and display it.

By lending your own copy to a friend after you have read it.

By leaving a copy in a train, tram or 'bus.

It is monstrous that after forty years of existence, and in spite of the labour of love given it by those responsible for its existence, the *Freethinker* should not yet be in a sound financial position. It can be done if all will help. And the paper and the Cause is worthy of all that each can do for it.

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.

- R. SMITH-KRYLE.—Pleased to know that our letter was of use. The only way to really serve the Freethought cause is never to lose sight of the great end it has in view, nor to lose heart in advocating its principles. It makes its appeals to the better part of one's nature, and for that reason will never command the immediate response that is given to causes that appeal to a sense of material gain, or to such disguised egotism and selfishness as is inherent in Christianity. After more than thirty years of work in the Freethought cause we can honestly say that we know of nothing that gives the same sense of satisfaction in the doing.
- H. LENWARD.—We have very many suggestions for improving the circulation of the *Freethinker*, but most of them require money to be carried out, and that is a fatal objection to them at the moment. The best way we know of in which those interested can help, is by passing a copy on to a friend who is likely to become a regular subscriber. The majority of our new readers have been gained in this way.
- C. BAKER.—We believe the card of membership was sent you. One must expect Christians to make all the capital they can out of Russia. You will see we have dealt with the matter in this issue.
- R. ANDERTON.—We have no knowledge of the society you name. But it is not uncommon for these crank societies to adopt some very high sounding title that may deceive the unwary. The superstitions indicated are but another example of what a deal there is to do before the world can be considered safe from a recrudescence of that master-superstition which, as Clifford said, destroyed two civilizations and came very near to wiping out a third.
- J. W. POYNTER.—We are always ready to consider articles on subjects that are pertinent to the purpose of the paper. We are obliged to those who submit them whether we accept them or not.
- A. MITCHELL.—Shall appear as early as possible, but we are very crowded with articles just now. Pleased to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*. We can only say that we give it of our best. We cannot do more, and we try never to do less.
- J. W. WOOD.—Thanks for good wishes. We are looking forward to again seeing both you and your wife one of these days, but our nose is kept too tightly to the grindstone at present for relaxation. You are right. One never knows the results of good, plain speech at the right moment. We have large numbers of friends if we could only bring them together.
- J. A. TOMKINS.—As you will see, we have dealt with the matter. There is quite evidently some pretty tall lying going on somewhere, and Freethinkers above all should not lose their heads. We may depend upon Christians doing what they can to injure Freethought, but we do not better ourselves by subscribing to what they say in order to gain a good will, which we have never had, and shall never get.
- A. MILLAR.—Thanks. Your articles are always welcome, but we are terribly crowded just now.
- H. MARSH.—Sorry for the delay in replying, but Mr. Cohen has only one pair of hands, and some things are in consequence delayed. If we could only think letters, articles, and paragraphs into existence, we could get through much more than we do.
- W. A. HOLROYD.—Shall hope to see you, with many friends, at the Conference.
- W. STURGESS.—It is a set rule with us never to commend goods advertised in this paper. All we are concerned with is to see that the advertisement is a genuine one, and then leave the rest to the purchaser and the seller. We know there are papers that puff advertisers, but this is the *Freethinker*, and much as we could do with a good advertising revenue we prefer the other plan.
- 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.
- The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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 the 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.

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

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.

Foreign and Colonial.—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

A fortnight hence (May 20) the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will be held in Leeds. The meetings will be held in the handsome Town Hall, and we are hoping to see a record gathering of friends and members. Leeds is geographically very central, and there should be no serious difficulty in anyone getting there who cares to do so. Those wishing for entertainment over their stay in Leeds must write Mr. R. H. Youngman stating what their requirements are, and he will do his best to meet their wishes. In another part of this issue will be found the Agenda of the Conference.

The course of lectures at South Place came to a very successful end on Sunday last with a lecture from Mr. Cohen on "The Psychology of Faith." There was a very good audience, and the lecture was listened to with evident interest. Mr. Moss occupied the chair, and the audience appeared to agree with his regret that for the present the lectures had come to an end.

The West Ham Branch commences its open air work to-day (May 6). It will hold meetings every Sunday evening outside the Technical Institute at the corner of Water Lane and Romford Road, at seven o'clock. Mr. A. B. Moss will give the opening lecture, and his subject will be "The Bible and Modern Thought." Last season the Branch held some very successful meetings at this spot, and with the help of members and friends there should be still greater successes during the coming summer.

The Bethnal Green Branch also begins its open air work to-day (May 6). It holds its meetings near the bandstand, and lectures will start at 6.15. Local Freethinkers will please note. The lecturer for the opening date is Mr. E. Burke.

We are sorry that in our announcement in last week's issue of the Birmingham "Ramble" the fixture should have read "Saturday, May 6." It was, of course, intended for Sunday, May 6, but we daresay most readers will have corrected the error. The destination is the Botanical Gardens, and members and friends will meet at the entrance at 3 o'clock. Mr. C. H. Smith is to act as guide, philosopher, and friend to the expedition.

Mr. F. P. Corrigan will visit Failsworth to-day (May 6) and will lecture twice in the Secular Hall, Pole Lane, Failsworth, at 2.45 and 6.30. His subjects are "The Material Basis of Morals," and "Humanity in the Making." We have no doubt but that the attendances will be, as usual, good ones.

The open air work will soon be in full swing. Mr. R. Atkinson began his open air work on Tyneside on Sunday last with two lectures in Newcastle-on-Tyne. For the next month or so he will be moving about the district seeing what can be done in getting audiences together and, if possible, starting new Branches of the Society. In London, Mr. Whitehead commenced his summer propaganda with a lecture in Finsbury Park on Sunday evening last. There was a deal of interest shown in the lecture and some new members were made. To-day (May 6) Mr. Whitehead will lecture in Regent's Park at 6 o'clock, and on Monday (May 7) he commences a week's lecturing in South London. Particulars will be found in the "Lecture Guide."

Freethinkers all over the country should bear in mind that the Executive is only too willing to help forward the work wherever opportunity offers, but it cannot be everywhere in person, and must be dependent to a very considerable extent upon local effort and help. Those therefore who care to co-operate, or who think they see opportunities for work in their locality should write at once to the general secretary giving what information and what promise of help they can.

Richard Carlile.

(Continued from page 267.)

IV.—CHRISTIAN JUDGES.

It will not be out of place at this stage of my all-too feeble appreciation of Richard Carlile's work and merit to consider the temper of his persecutors. This is indicated most remarkably in the case of Carlile's shopman, named Davidson, who was indicted, together with Jane Carlile, for publishing the ninth number of the *Republican*, the first number of the *Deists' Magazine*, and Richard Carlile's *Life of Thomas Paine*. This cause was heard at the Court of King's Bench on Monday, October 23, 1820.

Mr. Gurney opened the case by stating that it was a prosecution of the "pernicious doctrines" promoted by Richard Carlile and insisting on the "absolute necessity of prosecutions to protect the best interests of society." The indicted publications declared the existence of an equitable code of laws to be incompatible with the existence of the Christian religion, and pretended to refute alleged falsehoods, absurdities, and impossibilities set forth in the Bible.

Davidson said that although no two of the jury could agree upon the system which they proposed to support, they would all agree upon the propriety of finding him guilty. All sects had been persecuted in the first instance and afterwards tolerated. The same would happen to Deists and Atheists. Let the jury remember that at one period they would have been tortured for professing that very Protestant faith which they were now called upon to defend by imprisoning him. They should reflect that his prosecution had been instituted by that remorseless inquisitorial feeling which had lighted the murderous flames in the days of Queen Mary and filled the dungeons in the reign of Elizabeth.

It had been said that the man who pleaded his own cause was a fool. But it was better to take that course than hire a barrister to make a sham defence, and no counsel could be prevailed upon to set up that which was the honest defence.

Mr. Justice Best would not suffer so scandalous a charge to be brought against the gentlemen of the bar.

The Defendant: My Lord, you must not interfere with my defence.

Mr. Justice Best: Mr. Davidson, I should be extremely sorry to use the power with which this seat invests me. If you think that my power extends only to removing you from the Court, you are mistaken; I have the power of fining you whenever you trans-

gress the bounds of decency, and I will do so if you presume again to offer any insult to me or the profession.

The Defendant: If your dungeon is ready, my Lord, suffer me to give you the key.

Mr. Justice Best: I fine you £20 for that expression.

The Defendant continued: The Deists were entitled to issue a magazine of their own, and they were entitled to treat the Bible as a work destructive to the honour of God and to the best interests of society, if that was their belief.

Mr. Justice Best: I cannot endure this. I will not sit in this place and hear the religion under which I am sworn to administer justice scoffed at and insulted. I fine you £40 more, sir, for that offence.

The defendant maintained the *Deists' Magazine* was a work dedicated to polemical discussion. Its columns were open equally to either side of the argument. Deists were no worse citizens than Christians. Did not murderers die in Christian principles? Did not thieves often declare themselves Christian because they were afraid to urge their right to think for themselves? Were there no infidels and sceptics among the bishops?

Mr. Justice Best: The defendant is asserting that which he knows to be false, and I am determined not to hear these calumnies. Justice, shall not in her own sanctuary, be insulted and defied. I add £40 more to the £60 which I have already fined you; and remember, whatever becomes of this cause, those fines must be paid.

The defendant resumed. He was not worth £10 in the world; that he should pay the fines was impossible; but he must go on with his defence. He would not offend the learned judge if he could help it.

Mr. Justice Best: Do not suppose it offends me. It is too contemptible.

The defendant concluded his remarks to the jury with extracts from the works of Heine, Gibbon, Shaftesbury, Burgess, and Bolingbroke.

Mr. Justice Best addressed the jury. It was necessary that a judge should keep his temper, but there must be a limit to forbearance. He had thought it his duty to inflict four severe fines upon the defendant. The object of those fines was answered and they were now remitted. Enough had been done to show the power of the Court.

Every man had a right to state that such and such a tenet, whether held by a particular sect or the Established Church, was an erroneous opinion, and to support his assertion with argument. But he must not treat received or tolerated opinions with contempt. Persons were at liberty to put their own construction upon texts of Scripture, but they must not dispute the truths of Scripture. Men could trust to the truth of a religion which had endured eighteen centuries and been trusted and professed by Newton, Locke, Boyle, and Johnson. Christianity was the foundation of every national institution. Even Hume, Gibbon, Bolingbroke, and other writers of that kind admitted the moral excellence of Christianity.

The man who libelled religion found a satanic pleasure in reducing others to the same lost, ruined, desperate condition in which he himself was so unhappy as to stand.

The jury must decide whether the indicted works were specimens of fair argument or fraught with scurrility, abuse, and vituperation against the established religion of the country.

The prosecution then asked for the defendant's committal, and the latter asked for bail pending sentence.

Mr. Justice Best: I shall require you to enter into your own recognizance in the sum of £500, and to find two sufficient securities in the sum of £100 each. I

further inform you that I shall require this bail for your good behaviour as well as for your appearance, and if you sell any libellous work, your recognizances will be estreated. I do this in mercy to yourself.

The defendant declined bail upon such terms, and went to prison.

On Wednesday, November 15, of the same year, Mr. Cowper moved for a rule in the Court of the King's Bench to show cause why this verdict should not be set aside and a new trial granted. He held an affidavit from the defendant which stated that he was interrupted in his defence in three instances by Mr. Justice Best, who fined him to the amount of £100, and so menaced his proceeding with important arguments relevant to his case.

Mr. Justice Best objected to the reception of the affidavit on the plea that the defendant being a Deist, no reliance could be placed on the truth of it.

This objection was over-ruled by the other judges.

The Court maintained that there was a power vested in judges to impose fines when there remained no other measure to restrain a defendant from converting his defence into an attack on the law and institutions of the country. They granted a rule in order to consider if the exercise of that power had hindered a legitimate defence. This rule was discharged ten days later by the same court.

Mr. Gurney, for the Crown, opposed the rule being made absolute, and asserted that the imposition of the fines had not prevented a legitimate defence. The bold and undaunted manner in which the defendant added one offence to the other was at once sufficient to show that no great load of intimidation weighed on his mind. The defendant in the most unembarrassed manner had continued to pursue for three quarters of an hour the same line of argument without the least symptom of intimidation; he even on the judge's interrupting him from holding forth what he considered indecorous matter, turned round to the jury and said, "he was not to be interrupted in his defence; that the judge was only placed there to tell them the law of the case and to record their verdict." What would be the effect of granting a new trial? What assurance had their lordships that the same line of defence would not be pursued? Unless their lordships were prepared to say they were bound to sit on the Bench to hear themselves grossly libelled and the established religion called in question, they would, he thought discharge the rule.

Mr. Cowper, for the defendant, contended that it was most dangerous that such a power as that claimed by Mr. Justice Best should be vested in any set of men. The defendant should stand erect and undaunted before the Court, and the judge, instead of intimidating, should give him every encouragement. Coke had laid it down that a prosecutor was not to be intimidated or deterred from instituting a proceeding. If it was right to shield a prosecutor, how much more necessary was it to the ends of justice that a defendant should not be intimidated while making his defence. At the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh for high treason, the charge was supported by one witness where the law required two. Raleigh exclaimed: "I am being tried by the Inquisition, and not by the law!" The Attorney-General insisted that this was a treasonable speech, but no fines were imposed.

Mr. Justice Bailey attacked this speech for the defence and upheld the fining. The Chief Justice held that the judge who did not fine a defendant who persisted in a defence of irreligion and blasphemy was guilty of a dereliction of duty. Christianity was part of the established law of the land, and according to their oaths the judges were bound to maintain it. Prisoners could not offend with impunity. The other judges concurred.

Three days later, Mr. Justice Bailey pronounced judgment on Davidson. He dwelt upon the truths and merits of the Christian religion, and sent Davidson to Oakland Gaol for two years. He ordered him to find sureties, himself in £200, and two others in £200 each, for his good behaviour during a term of five years.

Which illustrates excellently the temper of Carlile's persecutors and their utter absence of humour. That persons who could dilate on the sufferings of the early Christians and study the records of the various martyrs should be incapable of seeing themselves as others were bound to see them in the light of history, passes all sane understanding. Were they stupid or only callous? Or did sentimentalism and piety render them both callous and stupid? There are times, when dwelling on the worth of Carlile's struggle and that of his shopmen, one would like to understand.

Abridged from Carlile's own writings by

GUY A. ALDRED.

(To be Continued.)

The Singer's Resignation; Or, A Study in a Minor Key.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be.....

—Swinburne.

A SLENDER volume entitled *Last Poems*,¹ by Mr. A. E. Houseman, has fallen into our hands. Less bitter than those of Mr. Thomas Hardy, they represent the outlook on life of one who has grown satisfied with everything as it is and looks through the window of experience as we should take a view of the setting autumn sun. Who would erase from the picture the black clouds losing their sullen countenance in grey and silver fringes as they approach the monarch of the heavens? Who would wish to arrange differently the fierce golden beams striking the purple prows of the ships above? It is as it is. We could not add one stroke to the picture—by tears or laughter; and the arrangement of colour and light may be as determined by necessity as our own individual existence.

Until man is consulted about his birth and given a choice, he will always be handicapped, and for this reason alone, supernatural speculation is but the emptiest form of vanity. As man becomes older and wiser he attains discrimination; his contentment increases as he becomes less possessed by his possessions. This is finely expressed by Mr. A. E. Houseman in his poem, "The West." Pitched in a minor key, but having a virility of defiance, he declares that if life's enchantments fail, when this is recognized, although it may be a warning to the living, nevertheless:—

O Queen of air and darkness,
I think 'tis truth you say,
And I shall die to-morrow;
But you will die to-day.

When illusion has faded, when it no longer deceives, the snake is not killed, it is only scotched. It appears in another form to take revenge on those who have abandoned it. Pessimism and despair may fill the void, but this our author will not have. He seems to sit quietly in the background without weeping or complaining, and makes a jest of that which moves the pessimist to futile rage. Of one who died and was buried he is content to say:—

.....made of earth and sea
His overcoat forever,
And wears the turning globe.

¹ Grant Richards, 8 St. Martin's Street, W.C.2.

Reminiscent of Omar Khayyám, in his ninth poem we find stoicism well expressed in the plainest language. Happy are they who do not trouble to know the origin of the world. But not quite so fortunate are they who are struggling with what we might describe as the popular conception of the creation of this round mass of earth and water. This flying ball is explained in the popular vein, by the one word, "God." But we require an explanation of this explanation. The two men in the tavern, drinking ale, do not help us by wondering whether the Creator was a brute or a blackguard:—

The troubles of our proud and angry dust
Are from eternity, and shall not fail.
Bear them down we can, and if we can we must.
Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

"San fairy Ann," ce ne fait rien, Nitchevo, Kismet—what are these all but the curse at unalterable things? If philosophy would cease to be written in choctaw and become disassociated from irritable professors hanging on to the class whose chief subject of conversation is the horse-power of motor-cars, we might be led to the path that would make unnecessary these gestures of despair.

We confess to a love for the fighting spirit in this slight collection of poems. Action is the only attribute to give meaning to life. Contemplation completely is only a narcotic and a withdrawal from the battle. It is the monastery, the convent, the castle of selfishness; readers of the *Bhagavid Gita* will remember that the book may be summed up in the one word, "action"—not the bustle and noise of the illiterate evangelist, nor the fussy frothings of bishops, nor the bellowings of those lower in the scale of evolution who decide that wireless concerts shall not commence on Sunday evenings until half past eight. It is action of and by the Seer, who is the self emerged from illusion, and chooses his actions as carefully as a poet chooses his words. Eight lines in this collection might be suitably used against the wretches of joy who glory in talking about death in a vulgar manner peculiar to the Salvation Army, Spurgeon, and the rabble who conspire to make Sunday a day of bell clanging. We quote them, and give thanks to Mr. A. E. Houseman for a few hours of quiet, intellectual refreshment:—

I took my question to the shrine that has not ceased from speaking,

The heart within, that tells the truth and plain;
And from the cave of oracles I heard the priestess shrieking
That she and I should die and never live again.

Oh priestess, what you cry is clear, and sound good sense I think it;

But let the screaming echoes rest, and froth your mouth no more.

'Tis true there's better booze than brine, but he that drowns must drink it;

And oh, my lass, the news is news that men have heard before.

There is an esoteric meaning in the once popular song, "We all go the same way home," but to be shrieked at "Prepare to meet thy God," is only adding insult to insolence, and as you will see by the above, poets can tell of these matters in language used by Nature's gentlemen.

WILLIAM REPTON.

As a matter of sober fact there is often no more deadly an enemy to a child than its own parents. The child is almost helpless in the power of the parent, which is almost absolute so long as there is not obvious ill-treatment. So the parent commences with loading the child's mind with things that are most probably not true, and some of which are demonstrably false. And in after life these inculcated notions stand in the way of the acquisition of real knowledge, or are only shaken off with difficulty and pain. And by a refinement of stupidity the child is brought up to revere the author of all its trouble.

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

THE TOWN HALL, LEEDS.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 20, 1923.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.
Motion by Bethnal Green, Manchester, West Ham, and North London Branches:—
"That Mr. C. Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
5. Election of Secretary.
Motion by the Executive and the West Ham, North London, and Manchester Branches:—
"That Miss E. M. Vance be re-elected General Secretary."
6. Election of Treasurer.
Motion by the Bethnal Green Branch:—
"That Mr. C. G. Quinton be elected Treasurer."
7. Election of Auditor.
Motion by the Executive:—
"That Messrs. H. Theobald and Co. (Incorporated Accountants), be appointed Auditors."
8. Nominations for Executive.
SCOTLAND.—Mr. James Neate, nominated by Glasgow Branch.
WALES.—Mr. J. T. Lloyd, nominated by Swansea Branch.
N.E. GROUP.—Mr. C. H. Kelf, nominated by Newcastle Branch.
Mr. A. B. Moss, nominated by South Shields Branch.
N.W. GROUP.—Mr. A. D. McLaren and Mr. R. H. Rosetti, nominated by Liverpool and Manchester Branches.
MIDLAND GROUP.—Mrs. C. Quinton (Jnr.) and Mr. J. G. Dobson, nominated by Birmingham Branch.
SOUTH LONDON.—Mr. F. R. Corrigan, nominated by South London Branch.
NORTH LONDON.—Miss K. B. Kough, nominated by North London Branch.
EAST LONDON.—Mr. H. Silverstein, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.
9. Motions by the Executive:—
(a) "That the words, 'and accompanied with an entrance fee of one shilling per member,' be added to clause 1, section 3, of the Constitution and Rules."
(b) "That clause 5, section 17, of Constitution and Rules read, 'All motions to be submitted to the Annual Conference must be forwarded to the General Secretary at least six weeks before the Conference. The complete Agenda to be issued two weeks before the Conference.'"
(c) "That the Executive be empowered to fill any vacancies that may arise between Conferences, and that it be further authorized to appoint other members as it may find desirable, provided that the number so appointed does not exceed one fourth of those elected at the Annual Conference."
10. Motion by Mr. A. B. Moss:—
"That this Conference desires to call the attention of all educationalists to the danger of the continuous bargaining going on between the different religious bodies with regard to increasing the measure of religious instruction given in State supported schools—a bargaining that has received encouragement from the last and the present Government, and again affirms its conviction that the only wise and just policy is that of confining the education given in the State schools to subjects defined as 'secular' in the

Code, leaving parents and Churches free to provide whatever religious instruction they desire at their own cost and in their own way."

11. Motion by Mr. Cohen:—

"That in view of there being before the House of Commons a Bill for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, this Conference strongly urges upon Freethinkers, and all lovers of religious liberty throughout the country, to call the attention of their Parliamentary representatives to the measure; it further impresses upon them the need for giving the fullest possible publicity to the existence and operation of the Blasphemy Laws, and so bring to an end the existence of laws which owe their being to principles that are repugnant to every enlightened intelligence throughout the civilized world."

12. Motion by South Shields Branch:—

"That this Conference calls the attention of Freethinkers engaged in political and social work to the importance of placing in the forefront the principles of intellectual liberty and religious freedom, being of opinion that any sacrifice of these principles on the altar of political expediency must be fraught with disaster to the cause of human progress."

13. Motion by South London Branch:—

"That in view of the organized attacks being made on Sunday games, and also of the need for healthy recreation, this Conference strongly protests against any interference with the opportunities already existing, is of opinion that these opportunities should be increased as rapidly as possible, and urges Freethinkers all over the country to press this policy upon local authorities."

14. Motion by Greenside Branch:—

(a) "That this Conference protests against the constant efforts of the clergy to interfere in the civil and political life of the nation, and calls special attention to the opposition shown to Sunday concerts, Sunday games, the withholding of Broadcasting concerts on Sunday till after Church time, and is convinced that a strong expression of opinion from individual Freethinkers to those responsible might result in the recognition of the fact that the population of this country is not wholly made up of the Christian clergy and their supporters."

(b) "That Freethinkers everywhere should avail themselves of their rights under the Education Acts by withdrawing their children from religious instruction in public schools. This Conference is of opinion that if such withdrawals were generally practised it would serve as a valuable lesson to the religious world, and whatever inconveniences experienced would be negated if there existed some sort of combination between Freethinkers in different areas."

15. Motion by Manchester Branch:—

"That the words, 'The abolition of the death penalty for the crime of murder,' be added to the Immediate Practical Objects of the National Secular Society."

16. Motion by Leeds Branch:—

"That each Conference shall decide the place at which the next Conference shall be held."

17. Motions by North London Branch:—

(a) "That in order to bring each Branch into more direct touch with the Executive, the present system of grouping be abolished, and each active Branch nominate its own representative, such nominations to be made 21 days before the Annual Conference."

(b) "If any member of the Executive shall fail to attend three consecutive meetings, the Executive shall, after informing the nominating Branch, declare his position vacant and appoint a substitute."

18. Motion by Birmingham Branch:—

(a) "That this Conference recommends that Branches throughout the country should prepare a Programme of meetings at the commencement of

each session, and that efforts be made to include in such programmes debates between representatives of the various Churches and N.S.S. lecturers, and that there should be an exchange of platforms wherever possible with the established religious bodies."

(b) "That this Conference, noting the lack of opportunities for intercourse between Freethinkers, urges upon Branches the desirability of promoting social and musical functions as a means to that end."

During the afternoon session papers will be presented to the Conference by the South Shields, Birmingham, Plymouth, and Manchester Branches.

The Conference will sit at the Town Hall. Morning session, 10.30 to 12.30; afternoon session, 2.30 to 4.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the doors. Members, the current card of membership. Only members of the Society are entitled to be present. A public demonstration will be held at 6.30 p.m. in the Town Hall. Luncheon for delegates and visitors at the "Guildford" Hotel at 1 p.m., price 3s. 6d.

By order of the Executive,

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

C. COHEN, *President.*

Correspondence.

PERSECUTION IN RUSSIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Permit me to express a hope that the *Freethinker* and the N.S.S. do not in any way endorse the disgraceful "anti-religious" methods of the so-called Government of Russia—in reality a gang of ignorant and brutal tyrants who have usurped their power by sheer force, and are maintaining it by a system of terrorism and cruelty unsurpassed in history. One can understand and find a sort of logical—though not ethical—justification for a despot who, born into a position of power and honestly believing in autocracy and "divine right" as principles of government, puts those principles into practice; but one can feel nothing but contempt for this horde of miscreants who, while prating loudly of freedom and democracy, have over-ridden the very principles of liberty and justice, and have brought their great country to the verge of ruin.

Freethinkers should be among the first to denounce the methods of religious persecution adopted by these people who, by calling themselves "Atheists," are bringing true Rationalism into obloquy and contempt. Do not Freethinkers constantly proclaim the right of free speech and free propaganda, and have they not unceasingly maintained that laws which seek to deprive civilized communities of these fundamental conditions of social welfare and progress may be properly resisted? But free speech in Soviet Russia is dead. The only offences definitely proved against the recently executed Archbishop seem to have been that he continued his religious teachings and ministrations in defiance of the orders of the Soviet authorities, and that he refused to give up the Church property entrusted to his charge. The real truth of the matter is difficult to arrive at, but in any case the brutal penalty was out of all proportion to the offence, and the sympathy of all decent people must have gone out to the aged victim of this judicial murder, who met his fate with such a serene and noble courage.

It is idle to keep on repeating that religion has persecuted Freethought with equal or even greater brutality, and would perhaps do so again if it had the power. This may be perfectly true, but it is for us to show that ours is a higher ethic than that of Creeds or Churches and demands a higher standard of conduct. Else why take all this trouble to propagate it? So it is to be hoped that the Freethought movement throughout the civilized world will denounce these Bolshevist atrocities with no uncertain voice, or that in England at any rate Freethinkers will emphatically repudiate any sympathy with them.

A. E. MADDOCK.

[We have inserted Mr. Maddock's letter, although we hope it will not be taken as the occasion for an attempted dis-

cussion on the merits and demerits of the Russian Government. We are not at all concerned with the form of government which the Russians either adopt or have forced on them, and if there is religious persecution in Russia, or the coercion of opinion in any form, no condemnation of it can be too strong. As we point out in another part of this week's issue, there is not only no evidence that official persecution is taking place, but we have an authoritative statement from the Baptists, with their large community in Russia, that there is no persecution of religion by the Government. And while we are concerned in dealing with those Christians who are using Russian affairs to attempt to discredit Freethought, we have no intention of denouncing people without adequate evidence merely as a measure of protection against the slanders of Christians. It seems to us that the best sign of Freethought on such occasions is to maintain a level head and a balanced judgment in the face of so many inducements to the contrary. We may also point out to our correspondent that there is no evidence that the Archbishop was charged with continuing his religious teaching. That teaching is going on in thousands of churches undisturbed—EDITOR.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON
APRIL 26, 1923.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Corrigan, Moss, Neate, Quinton and Rosetti, Miss Kough and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. New members were received for Manchester and West Ham.

A letter was read from the Board of the Secular Society, Ltd., offering to collaborate with the Executive and contribute towards the extension of the Lecture Propaganda. The Secretary was instructed to acknowledge the letter and remit the matter to the new Executive.

The Annual Balance Sheet was read and adopted, and the Conference Agenda, prepared by the Committee, also read, adopted, and ordered to be printed after publication in the *Freethinker*.

The Secretary reported arrangements for a Freethought Mission by Mr. Whitehead in London during May, commencing on April 29, also that Mr. Atkinson would conduct a similar mission on the Tyneside starting on the same date.

Other minor matters of business were transacted and the final meeting of the present Executive closed.

E. M. VANCE,
General Secretary.

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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.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.1.): 8, Social Evening. The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, W.1.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2.): 11, Right Hon. John M. Robertson, "The Ethics of Population Control."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. F. Burke, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the fountain): 6, Mr. George Whitehead, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3, Mr. Shallor, a Lecture; 6, Mr. E. Baker, a Lecture. Mr. G. Whitehead: Monday, May 7, Rushcroft Road, Brixton (opposite Town Hall); Tuesday, May 8, The triangle, Clapham Common (opposite The Plough); Wednesday, May 9, Hercules Road, Kennington Road; Thursday, May 10, White Horse, Brixton Road; Friday, May 11, Rushcroft Road (opposite Town Hall); Saturday, May 12, The Triangle, Clapham Common (opposite The Plough). Questions and discussion after address cordially invited.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Modern Thought."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FAIRSWORTH SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Sunday-school, Pole Lane): Mr. F. P. Corrigan, 2.45, "Material Basis of Morals"; 6.30, "Humanity in the Making."

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Newcastle Town Moor, near North Road Entrance): Mr. F. Carlton, at 7, "Christianity and Industrial Problems"; Wednesday, May 9, at 7 p.m., "The Aims of Secularism." Discussion invited. Should the weather be unfavourable the Sunday meeting will be held in the Collingwood Hall, 12a Clayton Street.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 11, Mr. R. Atkinson, a Lecture. Tuesday, May 8, at 7, Mr. Atkinson will lecture in the Market Place.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll; 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* G. W. Foote; 7. *Advice to Parents*, Ingersoll; *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 1s. per hundred, post free 1s. 2d.

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