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Views and Opinions.

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Faith and Credulity.

For some time the papers have been busy with paragraphs concerning the alleged discovery of the lost historical books of Livy. It turns out to be a myth, but some newspaper men let their imaginations loose and tacked on to the original story another concerning a new life of Christ written about the year 60. Then some of the clergy let themselves go and began to talk about the revolutionary effect this would have on our conceptions of Jesus Christ; it was hinted that it would create a revival of faith, and unbelievers were warned by implication that their reign was nearly over. One eminent parson remarked as to how little we knew about the life of Jesus, and said how much we should like to know the kind of life he led in the family circle, and how Joseph acted towards the son of his wife, of whom he was not the father. That is a matter on which many besides Christians would like a little information. Joseph may have been a very easy-going man, but, on the other hand, it is not every husband whose wife presents him with a son born of a mysterious ghost. In any case there need not have been this fuss about a life of Christ written in 60 A.D. There are much earlier lives of Christ than that. There are lives of Christ that were written many years before Christianity was heard of, and long before the Romans entered Judea. They were not all called the life of Christ, but that is a detail. The life was there—the miraculous birth, the Virgin mother, the conflict with the Devil, the miracles, the execution, and the final resurrection. Gerald Massey's fine pamphlet, "The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ," is one such pre-Christian life of Christ, and it can be bought at the *Freethinker* office for the trifling sum of sixpence.

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Christian Evidence.

But this talk of an early life of Christ, as though its discovery—provided it corroborated the New Testament story—would establish the truth of Christianity, may be taken to illustrate two things. First, the way in which Christian apologists spend their time in establishing something or other which quite fails to prove what they wish; and, secondly, the change that time and better knowledge has worked in regard to reli-

gious belief. Those who are acquainted with the history of Freethinking controversy will remember the immense amount of attention that was paid to the question whether authentic-meaning contemporary-evidence could be found of the life of the gospel Jesus. A great many very scholarly books were written for and against, all interesting enough, but which are today of no more than historical or psychological interest. It was quite natural when criticism first set to work upon the Christian legend that the first question should be whether there was any evidence of the existence of such a person as the New Testament Jesus. And it was also assumed that if contemporary, or nearly contemporary, biographies of such a person could be found, and if these bore witness to the miracles performed by him, such testimony would provide *prima facie* evidence of the truth of the gospel story. Accordingly, the stress of the arguments brought forward was as to the reliability and the age of the written traditional evidence produced. Hence the chortling of some of the clergy when it was rumoured that an almost contemporary life of Christ had been discovered. As usual, the professional exponents of Christianity are a generation behind their time.

Missing the Point.

* * *

Now it would not be of the slightest value as evidence of the truth of the New Testament story if it could be shown that the four evangelists were actually companions of Jesus, that they wrote their accounts of him immediately after his alleged death, that Joseph himself wrote an unquestionable biography of his wife's son, and that he accepted all that is said in the New Testament as absolutely true. The Freethinker who knows his case might grant the Christian all this, and yet prove that it was all quite beside the point, and that the real issue had not even been touched. The study of religious beliefs moves to-day on a quite different level. If there is one thing in the history of human belief that could be established on the strength of mere testimony it is the reality of witchcraft. There is available a mass of contemporary testimony as to its existence, and men and women, not always the most ignorant of men and women, testify on their oath that certain persons most certainly did have dealings with the Devil and by the aid of his power did certain evil things. Christians are as certain that they or others have had communications with the Devil as they are that they have had communications with God. And if the evidence of Christians is reliable on the one side one would really like to know from some modern parson why it is not equally reliable upon the other. In early days Christians never questioned either, and that was quite logical. The only new feature of the situation is that the Devil has gone out of fashion and the deity has not. So to-day "liberal" parsons treat the feeling of communication with the Devil as a delusion, and that of communication with God as a reality. The Freethinker merely places both on the same level. Against his will the Christian has come into line with the Freethinker on the one be-

lief. It is only a question of time for him to agree upon the other.

* * *

Belief and Fact.

A little digression, the latter part of the last paragraph, but not a useless one. To return to the question of evidence. Why is it that without the slightest hesitation we set on one side the mass of "evidence" brought forward on behalf of the truth of witchcraft? The sincerity of those who gave it is unquestioned and unquestionable. It is because we know that the evidence is absolutely unable to prove what it is intended to prove. It is not so much that it is weak as that it is irrelevant. We know what are the causes that give rise to the belief in witches and wizards, and once we know that, if the "evidence" were multiplied to infinity it would not prove what it is intended to prove. All it proves is that very many people once believed in witches, and about that there is no question whatever. Now exactly the same is true of the story of Jesus. If the testimony were contemporary and unquestionable, it would no more prove the truth of the gospel story than the evidence of Sir Thomas Browne proved the truth of witchcraft. All it would prove is that some people, honest and sincere people, believed in the divinity of Jesus, etc. And about that there has never been any question. It is no longer a question of that kind of evidence, because the ground of our understanding of the nature of religious belief has changed. The issue has become psychological instead of historical. We know that the New Testament story of Jesus is not true, not that is, historically and objectively true, because we know the conditions under which such legends come into existence. It is not a question of "Are the stories which Christians have believed for centuries true?" but "What are the conditions, social and psychological, which led Christians to believe they were true?" That is the essential issue, and it is one to which the Christian apologist never by any chance addresses himself.

* * *

The Natural History of Religion.

This is the great and striking change which has come over the study of religion, and it is one which Christians, and often others who are not Christians, hardly appreciate. It is hard to make the Christian realize that to the genuinely scientific enquirer he and his beliefs are turned about and studied with the same curious interest with which one studies the beliefs of a crowd of savages indulging in practices that rouse the laughter of more civilized onlookers. Where previous ages asked, "Do people get an answer from God to their prayers?" the enquirer now asks, "What is it that causes these people to believe they get answers to their prayers?" When the Christian begins to talk about the evidence for and against miracles, the scientist rejoins that it is not a question of believing that Jesus, or anyone else, ever performed miracles, but only a question of the conditions under which people will believe that Jesus, or a Shaman, or an African medicine man can work miracles? And the answer to one is the answer to all. It is not a question of whether the objects or subjects of religious belief are true, but of how men and women came to believe them to be true. The ignorant may still be satisfied with empty talk about the mighty works of old, of the power of God over the human soul, of the uplifting influence of the belief in religion. The scientific enquirer has before him the same problem that he has when someone sets him the question of deciding how and why children believe in Santa Claus or in a world of fairyland. The whole issue is that of understanding the fact

that given certain mental states there are certain to arise beliefs corresponding to those states. And in the case of the belief in God, a soul, a future life, in angels, devils, miracles, etc., we know how they came into existence, the nature of the conditions that foster their growth, and the causes of their ultimate decay. There is a natural history of religion, of interest to many, and full of instruction for all. But the question of discussing whether such a series of events as those narrated in the New Testament are actually and objectively true, belongs to the very twilight of scientific enquiry.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Continued.)

The British Empire and Its Religion.

It is commonly taken for granted by ignorant and prejudiced followers of the Lamb that the religion of the British Empire is Christianity. For example in the Index to *Whitaker's Almanac* for 1924, we are directed to page 90 for an account of the Religions of the World, and to page 484 for that of the Religions of the British Empire. We are not concerned just now with the religions of the world at large, but exclusively with those of the British Empire. What *Whitaker's Almanac* understands by the term the British Empire we cannot tell; but turning to page 484 we are astounded to read the following strange passage:—

The Church was disestablished in Ireland in 1869 and in Wales in 1920. There has been no religious census since 1851, but many of the religious bodies publish estimates of membership, the Church of England having 2,250,000 communicants in England at Easter, 1920, the Roman Catholic Church claiming 2,000,000 members in England and Wales, 540,000 in Scotland, and 3,242,670 in Ireland (1920). The language of the people is English, with a large proportion of Welsh-speaking people in Wales, many of whom are bi-lingual. Attempts have been made, under *Sinn Fein* auspices, to revive the Gaelic language in Ireland. Gaelic is still spoken in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, there being 10,314 persons speaking Gaelic only, and 151,159 speaking Gaelic and English at the census of 1921.

That is all *Whitaker's Almanac* for 1924, published at the high price of three shillings net, has to say about the "Religions of the British Empire." Are we seriously expected to infer that the British Empire, upon which, it is frequently and loudly boasted, the sun never sets, embraces only the British Isles and Ireland, or that, if it extends beyond these ludicrously limited regions, the rest of it is without any religion whatever? Taking the passage quoted as a fulfillment of the promise made in the Index there is no escape from the conclusion that it is not only an inadequate statement, but a wicked misrepresentation of the facts.

Fortunately there has been held in London, during the last two weeks in September, a Conference on the Religions of the British Empire. Its first meeting was held on September 22 in the Upper West Gallery of the Imperial Institute. It may be of interest to mention that it is under the auspices of the School of Oriental Studies and the Sociological Society. The inaugural session was under the chairmanship of Sir Denison Ross, director of the School of Oriental Studies. The inaugural address was delivered by Colonel Sir Francis Younghusband. According to the report in the *Times* of September 23 Sir Francis said that:—

Included in the Empire there were more Mohammedans than Christians, and at least twice as many

Hindus as Mohammedans; also many millions both of Buddhists and of adherents of primitive religions of every grade.

With much of the Colonel's speech we are in fundamental disagreement, but we heartily welcome his frank admission that there are numerous religions in the Empire, several of which are much more widely spread than Christianity, and that it is the duty of the Empire to treat them all with the utmost impartiality. Pandit Shyam Shankar, the representative of orthodox Hinduism, also spoke, but his speech was not reported, beyond the statement that he "drew a hearty cheer from the audience when he said that such a conference was a token of the religious toleration of the British Government, which deserved the appreciation of the world and a tribute from that Conference."

It is not our present intention to follow the proceedings of the Conference any further. The official representatives of the various religions of the Empire will expound and extol the principles of their respective creeds, and endeavour to show wherein their claim to superexcellence consists. Already Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism have had each its field-day. The pity is that the reports of these discussions in the daily Press are so exceedingly meagre. The best reports we have seen are supplied by the *Times*. The most important fact about these religions is that they are in a perpetual state of flux. Even Islam has split up into many different sects, and Buddhism is undergoing endless changes. As Mrs. Rhys Davids well said while Buddhism was under review: "The creed that could not change was doomed; it was as a stranded ship left high and dry. Buddhism was alive to-day just because it had grown. It had taken up into its old doctrines the ethical ideals of the new world. It had made central in those doctrines truths which were not central originally." How amazingly true this is of Christianity. Especially in the Protestant sections of it it has undergone innumerable changes within the last sixty or seventy years. Some of us are old enough to remember the bitter controversies caused by Bishop Colenso's unanswerable attacks upon the Pentateuch in five or six bulky volumes. Colenso was Bishop of Natal, and Bishop Gray, of Cape Town, did his utmost to depose him from his see; but in March, 1865, the Privy Council pronounced the deposition null and void. It is now impossible to imagine the violence of the storm of abuse and persecution that went on for years darkening the religious sky. Then there was comparative quietness and peace. Mr. T. R. Glover tells the story in his article in the *Daily News* of September 20:—

A half-century ago a Cambridge college was dedicating a new chapel. At the opening service a bishop preached the sermon—a man of colonial experience newly appointed to an English see, and for some reasons evidently popular among Anglicans. In the course of the service he desired the prayers of those present for the absent members of the college, "with one exception—the recreant bishop." A dinner followed, and the Master rose in due course to propose the health of all absent members of the college, and—with a short sentence of scarcely needed explanation—he added that with the toast he coupled the name of Bishop Colenso. It is on record that it was received with great cheering. But what a striking episode!

Not so striking either, for such has been characteristic of the Anglican Church for fifty years. Then the majority of the bishops were ignorant and bigoted and bitter, believing for the most part in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, whilst the scholars of the Universities were instinctively inclined, and consciously compelled, if their courage

failed not, to take Colenso's part. But to-day the Bishop of Natal's views on the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua have all but completely won their way to general acceptance. In fact it is now a truism that yesterday's heterodoxy is to-day's orthodoxy, and judging rightly it is almost as certain that to-day's heresy will be to-morrow's true faith? The theological way of expressing this undeniable truth is to say that religion, like everything else, must grow with the times; but curiously enough, religion grows by deletion rather than addition. To keep abreast of the times the present-day theologian must go on dropping things formerly held as absolute essentials. With every increase of scientific knowledge the poor fellow must strike off something from his fondly cherished faith, and if he fails to do this he is instantly labelled "A Back Number." Dr. Glover, in the *Daily News'* article says:—

A great deal has happened since the other bishop denounced Colenso in his own college. Year by year education has been changing the outlook of educated England—the criteria by which men and women judge, their standards of value, their perspective of truth. But the Kings of Israel and Judah are hardly yet dethroned. Literalism is still being preached by some as the only loyalty to the Word of God. And people—loyal people whose education was over long ago, and was perhaps short and out of date, wonder that young men and women sit loose to the Bible and religion.

Can it be possible that Christianity grows by loss and not gain, by surrender rather than acquisition? It is not possible, the truth being that Christianity is growing steadily smaller instead of larger, is slowly losing, not gaining, life; and that unless something utterly unforeseen happens, the time is coming when it, like many other religions, shall have had its day and ceased to be for ever.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Dogmatic Don Quixote.

Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.—
Shakespeare.

Broad ideas are hated by partial ideas; that is, in fact, the struggle of progress.—*Victor Hugo.*

EVERY Bishop, it appears, must have his biography; and there have been episcopal biographies which must have driven some of their readers to bad language. Hence, it is not surprising that leading lights of Non-conformity should not more frequently "relate themselves to paper." Justification is to be found in such a volume as Dr. Robert F. Horton's *Autobiography*, which is the intimate record of a very full life, told with obvious sincerity. Earnestness, indeed, is its outstanding quality; and the wonder is that after so many years tilting at windmills, this dogmatic Don Quixote should retain his crusading spirit unabated.

Dr. Horton is one of the last of the "hot gossellers," but he has stronger affinities to Newman Hall than to Spurgeon and Billy Sunday. Indeed, Spurgeon regarded Horton as one of the heretics in the great "Down Grade" controversy of the last century. The life-like portrait Dr. Horton has painted of himself emphasizes most clearly the outstanding differences between himself and the former Boanerges of the Newington Tabernacle and the playboy of the Western World. Dr. Horton has a veritable passion for "crying for the moon," and has always set himself seriously to the solving of some of the social problems of the age. He has not hesitated to say frankly what he thinks; he has even shouted his views. By doing so he has offended many susceptibilities. The most interesting quality

of Dr. Horton's *Autobiography* is, however, not the pious prejudices of the author, but the light thrown on the religious and social life of our own time.

Reared in a Nonconformist home, young Horton was eyed with some suspicion in his schooldays. At Shrewsbury School he was appointed crier, which compelled the holder to end announcements with the pious adjuration: "God save the Queen, and down with the Radicals." Horton only escaped the unpleasant consequences of refusal by being removed to Oxford University, the seat of learning which expelled Shelley and canonized "General" Booth the First. It will be news to many to learn that Horton rowed in the Oxford Eight for five years consecutively. Still in his study hangs the oar which helped the boat up in 1887; and his section of the victorious vessel is now a cupboard to hold books.

Robert Horton was fortunate with his friends and acquaintances, and he watched the celebrities he met with a critical eye, and jotted down his impressions with determination. He tells an amusing story of Professor Bywater, who was always talking of Plato: "When I was a child I was vaccinated and christened; neither of them took." The talented and unfortunate Oscar Wilde was a student in Horton's time, and sat for his examination with the future Nonconformist minister. Horton says:—

I see him now, with his flabby face and ruffled hair, striding up to the desk for fresh paper after the first hour; then handing in his book half an hour before time was up. He was a genius, and for him to pose was second nature. Of course, he was in the first class; he reached by sheer ability a position which I had gained only by the concentrated and interested labours of two years.

These recollections of Oxford University, the "home of lost causes," as Matthew Arnold calls it, have more than a passing interest. "Milner," he says, referring to the Union debates, was the speaker of that time who made the greatest mark afterwards. He had a somewhat foreign accent, and never struck his fellow students as being quite English, but his intellectual mastery was never in question, and was a prophesy of his famous career. Dr. Horton adds a very caustic comment on the intelligence of the governing classes:—

My Union experiences were not without value in opening my eyes to the nature of English public life. When I was president my predecessor and successor were Lymington (now the Earl of Portsmouth) and Brodrick (now Lord Middleton). Thrown a good deal into their company, I found out the slender equipment with which the governing classes, by the weight of their traditions, could be carried to the highest places.

Robert Horton decided to adopt the ministry, as his father and grandfather had done. "I knew that in Dissent," he writes, "it is absolutely impossible to obtain a distinction which gives you any acknowledged place in the national life." This is a hard saying in a civilized country, for Horton belonged to the Congregationalists, one of the oldest, wealthiest and most reputable of the Free Churches. Always a "whole hogger," Horton announced his intention of declining the title of "Reverend," and refusing to adopt the dog-collar and peculiar clerical dress. "I shall wear," he declared, with a plentiful lack of humour, "no clothes to distinguish me from my fellow Christians." The young Oxford "barbarians" made rare fun of this remark, and caricatured the austere Horton stark naked and soaring to the sky.

There are more serious things in the book than these academic trifles. Dr. Horton's first speech at the Oxford Union was in defence of the rights of Nonconformists to bury their own dead with their

own rites. A Free Church minister had lost his wife, and when he brought the coffin to the churchyard he found that the place allotted to her by a fellow Christian priest was a rubbish heap. It was bigoted happenings such as this which really determined Horton to enter the Congregational ministry. Had it not been for these outbreaks of pure fanaticism, he might have entered the Church of England, and, to quote his own words, "even have risen to be a canon." And, as canons go, he would have been a good one.

Dr. Horton's honest indignation at the Church's conduct towards Nonconformists was only natural; but it must be remembered that the Church's attitude towards the working-class was equally objectionable. What sixteen centuries of the rule of the Bishops of the Established Church had done for the common people has been told in unforgettable language by Joseph Arch, the first agricultural labourer who became a Member of Parliament. In most moving words he described the conduct of Christian Churchmen towards their poorer brethren:—

First up walked the squire to the communion rails; the farmers went up next; then up went the tradesmen, the shopkeepers, the wheelwright and the blacksmith, and then, the very last of all, went the poor agricultural labourers. They walked up by themselves; nobody else went with them; it was as if they were unclean—and at the sight the iron entered into my heart and remained fast embedded there. I said to myself, "If that is what goes on—never for me!"

There is a Torquemada strain in Dr. Horton, which shows itself in his many attempts to impose Puritanism on his fellow-citizens. This is curious, for Congregationalists, as a rule, are more broad-minded than some Nonconformist bodies. Dr. Horton's crusading methods are, it is to be hoped, rare. Once he determined to preach in support of a crusade against music-halls. "Then it occurred to me," he says, very simply, "that I had never been to such a place." So he screwed up his courage, went, and found the performance decorous and commonplace. "It was deplorable," in Dr. Horton's view, "that human beings should find pleasure in things so banal, stupid, and insipid." However, to his credit, he recast the notes of his sermon.

Dr. Horton's personality is worth attention, for it could neither have grown nor thriven outside the British Isles. It is one of the oddest of blends, for it includes a good deal of Paul Pry, a touch of Pecksniff, and a large amount of Sunday-school teacher. In the bad old days of Faith and absolute monarchy it was a law with all good citizens that "the King could do no wrong." This adage Dr. Horton has applied to himself. He denounces, magnanimously, all those who dare to utter a word that might not profit the boys and girls of that Hampstead conventicle he so long adorned. Dr. Horton's theology, be it noted, is more liberal than that of very many of his fellow Christians. However liberal it may be it has not yet reached the level of Freethought, nor can it ever do so until it ceases to be theology and becomes simple Secularism. For any purpose connected with the real welfare of the people, the Christian religion might as well be dead and buried with the religions which preceded it. It will be when the people of this country are sufficiently educated to see the truth that Democracy is now crucified between the two thieves, Priestcraft and Kingcraft.

MIMNERMUS.

True belief is founded on knowledge. God is simply a name for the unknown.—R. C. Trowbridge.

Whence Came Civilization?

SAID the inscription over the ancient Greek temple: "Man, know thyself." Though the Greeks were a very intelligent race, I do not think they were able to realize this advice up to its full value. Not many individuals truly know themselves. Nor do many nations. Nor does humanity as a whole.

What does "humanity" mean? Not merely a mob of humans. It means that genius for civilization—arts, crafts, science, social order, law, letters, etc.—which certain races have developed sooner than others, and to which all nations and all individuals (except the insane) contributed and contribute in large or small measure. Where did civilization begin? How shall we capture the answer to this question?

A simple method of search for it was to open the Hebrew Bible, and read a few verses in Genesis, and then say, "Eden!"

The method was suspiciously easy. Of course, we must not aver that no truth can be reached easily. The famous French entomologist—the "Insects" Homer—J. H. Fabre, tells how, as a small boy, he developed scientific tastes, and his first quest was whether he received sunlight with his eyes or his mouth. He shut his mouth, and kept his eyes open, and saw sunlight. Then he shut his eyes, and opened his mouth, and saw nothing; and he ran in to tell his grandfather and a lot of other relatives; and they all laughed. Nevertheless, he had discovered the truth. But, apart from the simplicity of the Garden of Eden theory, we meet the special difficulty that practically no educated person now believes it. I am certain Mr. Asquith does not, nor Stanley Baldwin, nor J. Ramsay Macdonald.

Let us look at the more difficult method. A group of persistent searchers have shifted our pious gaze from dear old Eden to the valley of the River Nile; that is, to Egypt. The searchers' names should be noted—G. Elliot Smith, W. J. Perry, and the late Dr. Rivers.

To begin with, take the problem of the Americans. I do not mean the ice-cream eaters and Ford car-riders as we know them, in their glory, in Chicago or St. Louis. I mean the so-called Indians, or Red Men. If you look at old sculptures from Mexico, such as may be seen in museums, you notice singular animal shapes, very much mingled with scrolls and twists of stone, and hinting at the shape of elephants. But elephants do not naturally live in America. How could the carvers think of such forms, never having seen the living animals? Elliot Smith's answer fascinates us by its novelty and its wide sweep of view. He bids us take a map which shows us the southern part of Asia, where elephants haunt the jungles, and the western coasts of America; also Arabia and the Persian shore, and Egypt on the extreme west. He spreads before us a great many reasons for thinking that, in canoes, nearly two thousand years ago, men (perhaps families) drifted from the islands of South Asia (to-day the East Indies), across the largest of all the oceans, and past its many clusters of islands, to the coasts of America. They took with them carven images, and also those images we call memories; they carried the elephant idea to Mexico; and, as the centuries passed, artists who descended from these wanderers still carved from old copies, and still varied the first models and early memories, till these elephants became grotesque and almost mystical; and the conclusion appears to follow that this art came from across the water. It is also to be remarked that, in the American regions where this kind of art has left its remains, explorers have found objects of gold,

pearl, turquoise, etc.; and all this indicates a type of culture superior to that of other natives of America. Further quest reveals that, ages ago, sea-wanderers followed a quite distinct line of voyage, and, when the chain of facts is complete, it is seen that the line of voyage stretches from the Red Sea to India, from India to New Guinea, and Solomon Islands, and Fiji, and Samoa, and Tahiti, and so to Central America. What was the allurements that drew men from West to East? Perry replies that they were seeking life, and whatever substances could give life; not merely food, which was eaten at a meal, and was followed by a new hunger, new meals, new hunger, and so on. They sought shining substances, whose gleams threw out a magical beauty and power for supporting life, and averting disease. Hence, these objects were "Givers of Life." And just as to-day men go to theatres, exhibitions, races, gaming-tables, saloons, and to herbs and drugs and inoculations in order to ward off death or to catch the thrill of joyous life, so, in ancient centuries, the keen voyagers hunted for gold and pearls, and for stuff that made tools useful in the hunt. Perchance, as they travelled, some of the more imaginative ones would dream of a place where Givers of Life richly abounded; and such a place would be a Paradise. In any case, the eager voyagers, who thus dared the perils of unknown lands and seas, were of a superior type of humanity. From them, as they passed, or when they settled here and there, the humbler tribes would learn, more or less according to their natural capacity. Perry names the following items among the ideas, achievements and characters of these far-back Egyptians and their offsprings: Agriculture by means of irrigation; use of stone for pyramids, dolmens, and stone-circles; pottery, metal-working, especially copper; two ruling classes, the first called Children of the Sun,¹ and war-leaders; mummy treatment of the dead; worship of mother-goddess, and tracing of descent through the mother; totem-worship, etc. And the objects connected with search for life-givers are gold, pearls, copper, iron, turquoise, obsidian, etc. Whatever objects the Children of the Sun—the wayfarers and explorers who set out from Egypt—took with them, or shaped by their craft, were regarded by the inferior people among whom they passed as possessing marvellous powers. Perry tells us:—²

The most widespread of all these objects is the polished stone celt [chisel, wedge-shaped], the characteristic implement of the archaic civilization from Ireland to America. Wherever it is found, it is certain that this civilization has exerted its influence. For the polished stone celt was only made in definite cultural circumstances. It is not an implement invented independently by different peoples, for the men of the Palæolithic Age lived for tens of thousands of years and never thought of making it.

The children of Egypt never forgot the monuments of stone in their fatherland; and their road over continents was marked by stone columns and rings and other such structures; and many of these are still to be seen in Britain, France, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, North Africa, Syria, etc., as well as in the lengthy series of settlements from India to Mexico.

If we ask for more knowledge of the old Egyptians—the fathers of civilization—we shall find the latest light in G. Elliot Smith's *Ancient Egyptians*.³ The first folk in the Nile region of which we catch glimpses were short, reddish-skinned, long-headed; and their kindred were scattered along North Africa,

¹ Hence the title of Perry's book, *Children of the Sun*. Methuen; 551 pp. 1923.

² In *Origin of Magic and Religion*. Methuen. 1923.

³ Published Harper. 1923.

and the shores of Southern Europe, and the island (the very important island for European history) of Crete. These people, at first users of stone for tools, learned how to get and employ copper; and the power imparted by this metal rendered the race yet more intelligent and influential. As pioneer Egyptians went towards the north-east in their search for copper, and any good thing the world could yield, they encountered a race whom Elliot Smith terms Armenoids, and whom he traces to a spot east of the Caspian, and now named Turkestan. Armenoids came into Egypt and mixed with the copper-using inhabitants. The mixed population performed the acts and achieved the results which we recognize as "Egyptian History"—pyramid building and the rest. Certain Armenoid folk, possessing copper weapons, and therefore gifted with advantages, conquered their way to Sumer, at the mouth of the Tigris-Euphrates river. And other Asiatics, who also learned the copper secret, wandered into Europe, and of course subdued the weaker tribes, who only knew tools and weapons of stone. Copper had now been combined with tin (perhaps lead or zinc) into the harder substance, bronze. Phoenician voyagers also carried bronze into many regions. This vast drift in Europe, however, was a movement in which Egyptians did not share. The Egyptian seamen, or seamen who learned from them, as I have already noted, worked their way westwards to the British shores, and eastwards to America. One of the traces of the movement is the practice of irrigation (water-channels) in agriculture. Incidentally, the quest for gold as a spell-binder raised it to such value that at last the idea arose of coining it for money. Elliot Smith even goes so far as to assert that "gold became the chief incentive which led to the diffusion of civilization throughout the world." He sums up his case thus:—

The Egyptians created civilization, and devised its fundamental arts, crafts and beliefs, as well as the scientific doctrines of which it was the material and intellectual expression.

My beloved teachers, in day and Sunday-schools sixty or so years ago, never taught me these things. They only unfolded to me the sweet story of Eve and Adam. Even now I tremble at the awful choice: Am I to accept Elliot Smith's word and Perry's word against theirs?
F. J. GOULD.

To love justice, to long for the right, to pity the suffering, to assist the weak, to forget wrongs and remember benefits, to love the truth, to be sincere, to utter honest words, to love liberty, to wage relentless war against slavery in all its forms, to love wife and child and friend, to make a happy home, to love the beautiful in art, in nature; to cultivate the mind, to be familiar with the mighty thousands that genius has expressed, the noble deeds of all the world; to cultivate courage and cheerfulness, to make others happy, to fill life with the splendour of generous acts, the warmth of loving words; to discard errors, to destroy prejudice, to receive new truths with gladness, to cultivate hope, to see the calm beyond the storm, the dawn beyond the night; to do the best that can be done and then be resigned—this is the religion of reason, the creed of science. This satisfies the brain and heart.—Col. Ingersoll.

The older view of idealistic dualism (God and nature) is breaking up with all its mystic dogmas; but upon the vast field of ruins, rises majestic and brilliant, the new sun of our realistic monism which reveals to us the wonderful temple of nature in all its beauty. In the sincere cult of the true, the good, and the beautiful, which is the heart of our new monistic religion, we find ample compensation for the anthropistic ideals of God, free-will, and immortality, which we have lost.—Haeckel.

Acid Drops.

China is having an internal war, and Western Christians are greatly amused at the fact that these heathen Chinese do not appear to take kindly or seriously to the art of butchering each other. Their misfortune is that they have never been thoroughly Christianized. What little they have learned of the splendour of the art of collective killing under General this or that has been learned from Christians, and Christians are now looking down with considerable contempt on a people who in spite of all appear to place a higher value upon the amiabilities of life than they do upon warfare.

The war in China serves Mr. Lloyd George as a text for an article in the *Daily Chronicle* for September 27, and, bearing in mind Mr. George's religious views, some of his comments are rather striking. The Chinese, he says, are "as industrious, frugal, intelligent, courageous and honest a race as dwells on this globe." And not Christians! Some of our preachers will be looking with suspicion on Lloyd George if this kind of thing goes on. But there is worse to follow. The Chinese "bowed to the pacific teaching of their great prophet," and so became "an easy victim for skilled barbarians from other lands." But they are being forced into the paths of militarism by the action and the example of Christians. Where have they got their arms from? Mr. George asks, and replies, "As usual, from the countries that send missionaries.....the Bibles and the bombs have come from the same resourceful and adaptable nations." Quite so. The supporters of the missionaries are not quite such fools as some believe.

The best Chinese army, that is the one that is most murderous, is commanded by General Feng-Hu-Hsaing. "He has trained his army on the most modern Christian principles. They alone know how to drive home an argument with the bayonet. I assume they are all true Protestants, for they pride themselves on being called Ironsides. In the war of 1922 the eminent Christian warrior who leads this phalanx is reported to have ridden into Houan on a bicycle and gone straight to the Y.M.C.A. In his reply to the address of welcome naturally tendered him by his fellow believers he described himself as a Christian, and said it was his aim to do his duty as a Christian should." Apparently he acted up to his word. There was one great military vice in the Chinese character. When the two armies met there was a tendency for the men to get together and to see if they could not arrange a peace on reasonable unchristian terms. No Christian general could tolerate unchristian conduct. In the recent war in Europe any Christian found fraternizing with his fellow Christian in the opposite army, even at Christmas time, was promptly shot out of hand. At any rate, this Christian general is expected to put an end to this kind of thing, and to train his soldiers to behave in the face of the enemy as Christians should do. The stupid tendency to talk things over instead of fighting it out is thoroughly un-Christian, and there is no wonder that our Christian general has, so says Mr. Lloyd George, decided to stamp out the practice. But we should like to have Mr. Lloyd George's honest and straightforward opinion about Christianity, and also the opinion of some of the Welsh preachers on Mr. George's article.

As a rule Christian ministers fight very shy of Atheists. Years ago, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, of the West London Mission, professed to have captured a specimen, which, on being placed under a microscope, proved to be something very different. Now, the Rev. J. F. Rattenbury, of the same mission, states that wicked Atheists attend the mission-meetings, and are allowed to state their dreadful opinions. Mr. Rattenbury makes these awful allegations prior to leaving for the United States, the land of tall buildings and tall statements.

Reviewing the attitude of the Church to industry at the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and

Citizenship ("Copec"), at Bradford recently, the Bishop of Bradford, Dr. Perowne, declared that in the industrial world the majority of employers were to-day striving to apply Christian ethics to industry so far as they could. If the Bishop would first explain to us what he understands by Christian ethics we should be in a better position to adjudicate upon this piece of sentiment. Whatever attitude an employer of labour may take towards his employees he can find justification for it in the Bible. If, like the American slave owners of old, he believes in chattel slavery, he can quote Holy Writ in support of that belief, and can point out that the Word of God lays down specific rules for regulating the relationship between master and slave. Also, of course, he can quote St. Paul's bland "Slaves, be obedient to your masters." If, however, in spite of being a Christian he has sense or decency enough to think that a wage earner is preferable to a slave, he can still find justification in Holy Scriptures for dealing in any way he chooses with his employees.

The pious Wilberforce could grow sentimental and denunciatory about the coloured slaves of the British Empire, and still oppose the attempt to give statutory protection to kiddies of seven and eight years of age employed in factories for twelve or fifteen hours a day, during the heyday of the Industrial Revolution (and, he noticed, the heyday of Evangelical Christianity, in this country). He could urge the wretched victims of the early factory system to be content with sweated labour, to be content with such meagre wages that perforce their children went to work at the earliest possible age to supplement the family income, to be content to see their children toiling wearily among unprotected machinery, often to be maimed or killed by it, and to be content to be deprived of all the amenities of life, and come, as often as not, to a pauper's death. It had pleased God to call rich and poor to their respective stations in life, this deeply religious man preached and wrote, and it was impious rebellion against His infinite wisdom and compassion for men to seek to alter what He had ordained by getting together in trade unions, or by forcing factory legislation through Parliament. Carnegie, coming to more recent times, was another pious soul who was able to reconcile sweated labour and Christianity. Indeed, we have never heard yet of any ruthless captain of industry who was not deeply religious, and in the habit of reading the Bible in the intervals between crushing out trade rivals and forcing down the wages of his employees. The truth of the matter is, of course, that the Bible represents the ideas and reflections of a variety of different men, living in different ages, and it is always possible to find in it sentiments in accord with one's own.

What Dr. Perowne is confusing with Christianity is the awakening spirit of humanism, which is affecting even industry. No man, religious or unreligious, can escape altogether from the spirit of the age in which he lives, and industrialists, like everyone else, are coming to accept the new ideas concerning social justice, and the right of every individual to be treated as one who is entitled to a certain measure of material comfort. Religion has nothing to do with that idea. If anything, it is in opposition to it, since Christianity at any rate (and that, of course, is what the Bishop of Bradford is concerned with), tends to degrade men and women as creatures who, inherently ignoble and unworthy, are doomed to eternal damnation except they throw themselves on the pity of their Creator. Furthermore, the ages of real Christian faith and power were the ages of human degradation, of slavery and thralldom. As any student of social and industrial history speedily perceives, it is not because of, but in spite of Christian teaching that social progress has been achieved, and loftier ideals of the value of human life and personality have been evolved, and are slowly establishing themselves as guiding principles in the industrial and business world of to-day.

At the same C.O.P.E.C. Conference, Professor E. S. Price (United College, Bradford), who also addressed

the assembly, unwittingly put the case against Christianity in a nutshell. "They (Christians) had to combine their loyalty to Christ with their lesser loyalties in the social order," he declared. That phrase succinctly sums up the Christian attitude to social and industrial progress. A man's loyalty is first and foremost to a being who lived (possibly) a couple of thousand years ago, and gave utterance to many vague sentimental opinions regarding human relationships. Faced with any modern social problem, the genuine Christian must first consider what the uneducated Nazarene carpenter would have had to say concerning it, and what St. Paul might have said. And since neither of these men could possibly have had any conception of the complexity of modern civilization, with the tremendous problems which it presents to the would-be reformer, it cannot reasonably be expected that the Christian will have any clear guidance from their dicta as to how he is to face the social world of to-day. The result is that a number of well-meaning Christians seeking to reconcile the New Testament with modern progressive ideals, or seeking in their Bible for guiding principles in social affairs, become hopelessly muddle-headed, and are usually entirely impotent in the face of the problems that puzzle the society in which they are living. In addition, of course, there is the curse of the excessive selfishness which Christianity inculcates—the first thing is the salvation of one's own soul, since this world is only a preparatory course for the enduring life to come. Christian apologists may be wise in seeking to associate their creed with humanitarian ideals, but no thoughtful person is likely to be deceived for long. Christianity and all other systems of organized make-belief never have and never can help to make the world a better place for the mass of humanity. Only a resolute facing of facts can do that, together with a desire to make the best of this world for all of us, as the only life of which we have any knowledge.

Dr. T. R. Glover, who writes a weekly column of—well, of the kind of stuff that suits the *Daily News* religion, complains that many Christians are dull. That is, of course, a domestic matter, and we have no desire to interfere. But, as is quite common with the preacher who first of all looks round to see what certain classes want, and having decided that it is quite safe to give it to them, lets himself go, Dr. Glover says that dullness is a refusal to follow God, and asks "how else would you define Atheism?" The argument is thus complete—Atheism is a refusal to follow God. Dullness is a refusal to follow God. Therefore, dullness is Atheism. When one sees this kind of thing dished up as advanced Christianity, and by one who is hailed by sections of Christians as one of their leading thinkers, one begins to wonder whether that creed is fit for anyone outside a home for idiots. But, after all, if one takes away from the modern apologist the privileges of being stupid and slanderous, what is there left for him?

At Clayworth, near Doncaster, it has been suggested that special intercession should be made for fine weather for the ingathering of the crops, which are threatened with ruin by the incessant rain. This suggests a splendid method of bringing about the long-promised religious revival. Let the clergy provide us with a week's summer weather next year, by special request, and they will probably convert everyone back to Christianity.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron has followed up his account of the beautifully religious nature of Patrick Mahon with the copy of a letter which was written to him by Mahon on the morning of his execution. It makes capital copy for the editors of Sunday papers, and they probably pay more for this kind of thing than they would for something really worth reading. The letter is worth placing on record. Here it is:—

MY DEAR WALDRON,—I got your very kind note late last night. It was thoughtful and kind, and much appreciated.

I shall die quite resigned and happy now, and I look upon it just as a release.

My wife's wonderful love and devotion have given me a glimpse of what *Divine Love* can be, and I understand what "God is Love" really means at last. I want to thank you for all you have done and all you wanted to do. That it was not successful in one sense doesn't matter now.

The spirit behind it is the thing that counts. So I say *au'voir*, knowing that can never be destroyed. God bless you.—Affectionately yours,

PAT MAHON.

That is quite a Christian letter. There is no doubt about that. There is not one word of regret for the incredibly brutal murder he committed, or for the wife he deceived. But he is quite happy. He knows what divine love is, that his spirit can never be destroyed, and he is, apparently, quite certain of a good seat in heaven, and that is all that matters. The egotism and the brutality of the letter are staggering. And not the least interesting feature is that the late Vicar of Brixton should take the letter as a compliment to his creed and to himself. We do not doubt that Mahon was a Christian. Hardly any other creed could have so satisfied such a nature. And when he does get to heaven he will find plenty of the same kidney awaiting him. If there is a heavenly reprint of earthly journals, we should say the *Newgate Calendar* should have a good circulation.

Speaking of the *Newgate Calendar*, our copy of that work once belonged to the famous Francis Place, and bears his bookplate. Taking a volume haphazard, and taking the cases as reported, we find that Mahon is in the true apostolic line. Thus, Captain Smythe, executed for the murder of a woman whom he had seduced, died with a display of devotion, crying "To thee, O Lord, I resign my soul." Captain Goodhere, hanged for the murder of Sir Goodhere, his father, said he did not mind dying so long as he could have a Roman Catholic priest to prepare him. John Vicars, executed for murdering his wife, spent his last moments singing hymns. Thomas Wildford, who murdered his wife, exhibited signs of "true penitence." There are many more cases of this kind, but it is quite evident that neither Mahon and Vaquier will feel at all lonely in their heavenly home.

Is it too much to expect the average clergyman to be honest and well-informed concerning his religion? It would almost seem that it is. Here, for example, is the Rev. E. W. Coltman, of Sherwell, who is reported in the *Western Evening Herald* as saying "that Jesus Christ gave woman an altogether new value," not differentiating her because of sex, and consequently in the early Church she had a prominence she had in no other institution." That is not alone untrue; it is gratuitously untrue, since the preacher was in nowise compelled to say what he did. Jesus among the twelve disciples selected did not choose a woman. The only way in which he placed a value upon women was to allow them to wait on him. Pagan institutions gave woman a higher position than the Christian Church ever gave. She was permitted to officiate as a priestess, and the Church never allowed her to become more than a doorkeeper or to hold one or two of the humbler offices. And after a little while even these were taken from her. These are all facts that must be quite well known to Mr. Sherwell, but he probably counts on his congregation not being aware of them.

We are continually coming across evidence of the comfort and the moral benefits which Christianity gives. Here is one from New York. The Moderator of the Church circuit in Southern Illinois was charged with poisoning his wife and inducing a lady member of his congregation to poison her husband. He explained that the two fell in love and agreed to get rid of their partners and marry. The woman poisoned her husband first, and then the Moderator, L. M. Hight, poisoned his wife. He told the court that he stroked her hair while she was dying and administered "Christian comfort." He also preached the funeral sermon over the body of the poisoned husband, and prayed for "peace for his troubled soul." Before the man died they prayed

together for hours. The congregation considered the sermon the best that Hight had ever preached. We hope Freethinkers will note that nothing but Christianity could have given Hight the strength to preach the sermon and administer "Christian comfort" to the dying wife. Such things almost silence criticism of a religion that can give strength in such circumstances.

A Melbourne telegram states that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia has decided not to proceed with the question of Church union, but has agreed to the appointment of a committee to arrange for effective Christianity unity among the evangelical Churches of Australia. Reconciliation among the many Christian sects is a slow and grudging business, only forced upon them by the instinct of self-preservation. And whether, supposing any big amalgamation takes place, it will delay their final extinction appreciably, is exceedingly doubtful. It is merely a case of choosing between a number of distinct organizations hickering and quarrelling continually, and a single organization split into rival camps. It would be extraordinary if Christianity were, untrue to all its traditions, to introduce the spirit of unity and amity in human affairs.

From a newspaper report we learn that Lord Jellicoe, Governor-General of New Zealand, attended morning service at the Wanganui Anglican Church. The preacher, in a lengthy sermon, condemned racing and bridge. Lord Jellicoe had arranged to attend evening service, but in the afternoon the preacher was telephoned that the Governor-General and his family would be absentees if the sermon was going to be anything like the morning one. The diplomatic preacher, with enough horse-sense to see the butter on his bread, cut the sermon short, and everything ended happily. If cats can laugh, this is enough to make 'em.

An interesting sidelight on Wagner, and also a point for speculation was his love of beer. In the publication of his letters to the late Dr. Richter, we find the wizard of melody stating that without a cask of beer his inspiration runs dry; and we must be thankful that the composer of masterpieces preferred the products of the hop to communion port or a foaming cup of cocoa.

Mr. Stephen Walsh, Secretary for War, is to be congratulated on a few tentative remarks that sound like the coming of spring for mankind. Speaking at a luncheon to welcome the delegates of F.I.D.A.C., he mentioned that those who had seen hell face to face have realized more deeply than before the essential *unity of humanity*. This or the next generation may never live to see it, but it is a worthy goal for mankind that must not forget what Christianity has done in the past to retard mankind as one family living in a little house—called the earth.

Under "Court and Society" news we are informed that in Mar Forest, Prince Arthur of Connaught brought down two fine royal stags. This kind of news would have appeared much better in the Middle Ages, yet it certainly justifies a special prayer for the Royal Family.

The Nicobar Islands, in the Bay of Bengal, seem to have missed the missionary's eye. Sir Richard C. Temple was Chief Commissioner for many years of these Islands and has a foreword to a book of travel in which we learn of the native that:—

He never lies, because he has no reason to be frightened of telling the truth.

He is honest, because there is no temptation to steal.

He is fond of sport, and his kindly nature pities the loser while jubilating with the winner.

These appear to be three good reasons for sending a ship-load of the breed who are unfortunate at home, to civilize these silly people, and fit them up with prisons, asylums, barracks, guns, and aeroplanes in order to teach them the ways of progress taken by professed followers of the Prince of Peace.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

The re-opening of this Fund will not come as a surprise to those who appreciate the difficulties of carrying on a propagandist paper in these days. Under even the most favourable circumstances it has been found impossible to do this without some kind of a subsidy, and I think it may safely be said that the nine years during which I have been responsible for the carrying on of the *Freethinker* have been among the most trying of its lengthy existence. A severe depression in trade has followed the trying years of the war, while the costs of production show no sign of lessening. They are now more than twice the amount they stood at nine years ago, and, in addition, there has been an increase in office rent during the past year, which, all told, will run to about another £100 annually. It is fair to say that the rent is even now—for a City rent—very reasonable, and a new lease has been secured, for which I am personally responsible.

Probably, all things considered, we may congratulate ourselves that the customary deficit of between £300 and £400 has not been exceeded. So far we are a little more than holding our own. But the deficit has to be met if the paper is to continue, and the present is the only way of meeting it—until some wealthy person takes it into his head to endow the paper and so remove what must always be a source of constant anxiety to those responsible for the continuation of the paper. Perhaps, in view of misunderstandings, it is advisable to say again that the *Freethinker* benefits in no way from gifts or bequests to the Secular Society, Limited, or to the National Secular Society. Neither does it receive payment for advertising the work of these societies. This is not said by way of complaint, but only to clear up misunderstandings which I know are abroad.

My readers have now the black side of the picture, so to speak, in a lump. And it is all there is. There is nothing else that need give rise to the least anxiety or discouragement. Our troubles are financial only. If my correspondence may be taken as a fair indication of the general feeling there was never a time when the *Freethinker* stood higher in the esteem and affection of its readers. The ideas for which the *Freethinker* has always worked and fought go bravely on from conquest to conquest. They are making rapid headway, and it would be false modesty to refrain from placing much of the progress that has been made to the credit of the old paper. The *Freethinker* is very widely read, it goes to all quarters of the English-speaking world, and its influence may be detected in quarters that seldom acknowledge their indebtedness. It is not too much to say that Freethought in this country would not be where it is but for the fight which the *Freethinker* has carried on for now more than forty years. That forty years of struggle has involved many anxious hours, but the object has been worth it. For my own part, I look back upon my thirty years' work in the *Freethinker* with both pleasure and pride. If I had to begin over again I would do it all over again. It has been enjoyable work in the best of causes.

After all, a deficit such as we have to face ought not to be regarded as a very heavy burden on the shoulders of the Freethought party, when it is borne in mind that we are fighting one of the most powerful of established superstitions, and one of the most rigid of boycotts. Only those in immediate touch with affairs know how sleepless and how strict that boycott is. In its way it is a compliment to the paper, but we pay for it. Still, I fancy that our deficit is not so great as that of many other journals

that are fighting unpopular fights, and it is not more than many spend on their personal pleasures. And the propaganda that pays is most likely not worth the while of any decent persons bothering about it. Freethinkers of earlier years had to purchase the right of advocacy with the sacrifice of liberty and sometimes of life. We are fortunate in being able to carry on on far easier terms.

There is only one bit of writing I do for the *Freethinker* I would gladly avoid, and that is the present one. I should add that this is quite a personal feeling, the friends of the paper have never yet given me cause for complaint when asking was necessary, but I regret the occasion none the less, perhaps the more, because the response is usually so ready and so generous. That the *Freethinker* should have maintained itself for a longer period than any other Freethinking paper in Europe has ever done I take as proof of the value of its work and the affection and esteem felt for it by its readers. They have never failed in their support when it was required, and I have every confidence that the present situation will be met as others have been.

After all, there is only one *Freethinker*. It has always been distinctive, and I hope will continue so. I should be glad to say it has had imitators, but the way it treads is not comfortable enough to tempt much in that direction. We are all, I think, proud of the old paper, of its traditions, of its strength, and of the contribution it has given to the great cause of human liberty and progress.

I leave the matter now in the hands of my readers. The rest lies with them. Subscriptions should be addressed to me at the *Freethinker* office, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and will be acknowledged as received.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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.

Mr. D. F. Gloak, a very old and valued subscriber, writes us that he never found the *Freethinker* more interesting than it is at present, and he finds this to be the general opinion among those readers with whom he is acquainted. We are delighted to hear it. All we can say is that we put the best of which we are capable into the paper, and have always done so. And we fancy that to sustain readers' interest after nearly thirty years' writing in the same paper is a record of which one may justifiably feel proud.

JOHN ROBINSON.—Your account quite agrees with what we know of the person to whom you refer. But, after all, he is not the only parson who, while recognizing the falsity of his creed, makes no move towards getting out of it.

L. SANSOM.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." One almost despairs of veracity in the pulpit. It certainly falls below even politics in its regard for truth.

J. POOR.—We quite agree with you that the better plan is to order the paper through newsagents, and if they refuse to get it, remind them that it can be obtained elsewhere—along with other supplies. But we used the term "subscriber" as covering all who took the paper regularly, whether from the office or elsewhere. We note your suggestion that the question of Freethinkers in districts abroad letting their names and addresses appear as a means of bringing groups of Freethinkers into friendly relations might be adopted at home. We shall be quite willing to publish names and addresses as we get them, and make a start with your own—The Dingle, Wellington Road, Crowthorne, Berks.

G. MANNING.—We quite appreciate your motive in writing, but it is better to let contributors have as free a hand as is possible. There is no question that some people find themselves benefited by what is called Christian Science, but it has nothing whatever to do with what the Christian

Scientists believe in. Faith in repeating "Om," or Mumbo-Jumbo would do just as well.

W. REPTON.—Pleased to have your congratulations on our "Views and Opinions." We may go over a number of instances illustrating the same point. The unearthing of fallacies is interesting and instructive. Sorry we missed you last week.

C. E. PELL.—Sorry your letter came to hand too late for this week's issue. Will appear next week.

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

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

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

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4., by 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.

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

It is a long time since there were any special Free-thought lectures in North London. This has been mainly owing to the difficulty of getting a suitable hall. But the Parkhurst Theatre, at the juncture of Holloway and Camden Roads, has been secured for the last Sunday in October, and Mr. Cohen will lecture there. The place is a large one, and we trust to have the full help of North London and other Freethinkers in filling the place. There will be a limited number of reserved seats at 1s., but admission will be free. The tickets may be obtained at either the *Freethinker* or the N.S.S. offices, and early application is advisable. Mr. Cohen will be the lecturer.

It is solely owing to the difficulty of securing suitable halls that there are not more London lectures during the winter. Some of our friends may help by informing us of suitable places of meeting. The difficulty is not always a cash one; often the conditions imposed are such as the Society cannot submit to.

A very old member of the National Secular Society, Mr. J. L. Vickery, has presented the Secular Society, Limited, with a donation of £500. Mr. Vickery is evidently one of those who prefers to see the use made of his help to the best of causes, and although he is in his ninetieth year, his health is such that he has every prospect of seeing the work of the movement for some years yet.

To-night, October 5, the Debating Circle which is conducted by the North London Branch, N.S.S., will hold its opening meeting. Mr. C. E. Pell and Mr. T. F. Palmer will debate the question: "Can the Existence of God be Scientifically Demonstrated?" Those of our readers who have read Mr. Pell's articles on Birth Control recently published in this paper, will know that, whatever his point of view, Mr. Pell's arguments will be ably and interestingly presented. Mr. Palmer needs no introduction to London Freethinkers. They know how excellent he is in debate. It is to be hoped that the

audience will be worthy of the occasion. The St. Pancras Reform Club, 5, Victoria Road, Kentish Town, is within easy reach of the North London and Tube, Camden Town Stations.

The Leeds Branch opens its winter season to-day (October 5) with a social meeting that will include humorous and dramatic recitals. On the following Sunday Mr. Lew Davies will lecture on "By their Gods ye shall know them," and will be followed by Mr. Vincent J. Hands. The meetings will be held in Youngman's Restaurant, Lowerhead Row, and it is hoped that all local Freethinkers will give the meetings their best support.

Mr. Lew Davies held some very successful open-air meetings in Hull last week, and the Branch is now trying to secure a suitable hall for a visit from Mr. Cohen. There must be a large number of Freethinkers in Hull, and with proper attention and work the new Branch should have a prosperous career.

Owing to the signal success of the open-air meetings held by the West Ham Branch this year it has been decided to continue the meetings during October. We hope the weather will be on its good behaviour during this month—although it appears to have forgotten what good behaviour is.

Bradlaugh, Oh, Dangle! Bradlaugh.

Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

MILESTONES in human life are fixed in many ways. The first reading of a book is, with some, such a mark. As one looks back along the long—or short—vista of life, every here and there the eyes of memory can see some book standing out clear and distinct above the path that has been trod. No two individuals see the same milestones—nor the same sort; but that life must be poor indeed, and brief indeed in all that counts, if there be never a mark made by a book. In *that* case it is a case of "Brief life is here our portion." Many happy memories are mine when some activity of the "memory cells" reveals again to mental sight some of the points in life which are marked by the first reading of a book. The marks made by books are of more value than those made in them many though they be. Life can never be a fool one; if it be full of such memories. Glad am I that my short life has been gloriously full—in this respect.

Thus the first reading of a book may mark indelibly an increase of life in height, in breadth, in depth, and in content. In a similar way, the first discovery of a journal or a magazine may mean a wonderful extension of mental and social life—the only real *human* life. Finding that a journal expresses one's thoughts better than one can one's self—that it consciously sets out ideals which may have been dimly generating in one's mind—that it vindicates these thoughts and ideals weekly, in no weakly way—that it supplies the information and the inspiration that we desire—and that it is fighting and working as we should like to fight and work;— THEN that paper may become a real part of one's life, and our life may merge into the life of the paper. Among the many—in that way—the old *Freethinker* is easily first to me. I can well remember the event when I first found the *Freethinker*. Never was Moses, when he never received the tables of stone from JeHoVaH, so elated; and I certainly had better cause for rational elation. My discovery did not take place until I had reached almost the end of my mental travel and travail—in 1891; but, from that time on, the *Freethinker* has been to me the finest force in the age-long fight for Freedom, Truth, and Right,

I cannot deal here with all the journals that have made marks in my life—any more than I can with the books. Our Editor might object—if no one else did. The *National Reformer*—long since dead—I only found when J. M. R. was editor; but I know my sorrow when it died. The *Literary Guide*, the *Truthseeker* (N.Y.), and *Justice* still maintain their vitality, and help me to maintain mine. Not having exercised my Free-will in time, I was born too late to remember the birth of the *Freethinker*; but I *did* see the birth of the *Clarion*. That is one big mark—sure—among the many; and joyfully have I enjoyed it since. Many of “our” readers must have been glad to see that that “old rag” has got out of Queer Street—financially, while regretting that some of its pages are still in Queer Street—mentally. Still, its life is being renewed, with Dangle as the Editor and Guide; and that brings me to the point for which I drew my pen.

A few weeks ago, in describing what the *Clarion* is trying to do, Dangle referred to the articles by “Minguam,” Mrs. Besant, Mr. Thoresby, and others, including himself. Now I have always regarded Dangle as the first of *Clarion* writers—at least so far as rationality, sanity, sobriety of judgment are concerned. That made the surprise all the nastier when he referred to Bradlaugh’s “attack on conventional Christianity.” Oh Dangle! Charles Bradlaugh’s philosophic but fighting Atheist an attack upon conventional Christianity! Bradlaugh’s militant Radicalism an attack upon conventional Christianity! Bradlaugh’s rational Republicanism, his fearless fight for the Indian people, his forcible advocacy of Birth Control, his life in short, cut short as it was, an attack upon conventional Christianity!! Oh! Dangle, Dangle!!!

Such an attack by innuendo *might* have been expected from a writer ruled by emotion, feeling, or superstition; but never from the Dangle we once knew. Dairymaids, exercising the initiative and referendum, would not descend to slur a heroic character in that unworthy way. Pooh-poohing the magnificent work of him who cleared the way by voice and pen, and laid the sure and solid foundation for all who followed, does not add to the fame or value of any living reformer. Rather the reverse. Were Minguam dead—I hope that that may not happen for many years to come—some younger writer might make reference to his life. Should such a person say that Blatchford had helped the Labour Movement in its earlier days by his “attacks on conventional commercialism,” it would be taken as a mean slight upon the character and work of a great English gentleman. Rightly so. A thousand “Clarionettes” would be out for vindication—if not for blood; and Dangle’s pen would be foremost in the fray. Much greater justification is there for this mild protest to protect the memory of the most heroic figure Britain has seen upon the scene in a century of years.

I fear that few of the younger generation know—much less appreciate—the debt we owe to Charles Bradlaugh. Fewer still have any idea of the importance of the fight in which he engaged, and in which he was victorious. The strength of the great “God” superstition, along with the other Christian superstitions and absurdities, in the seventies and eighties of last century, is not realized by any but a very, very few of the younger folk. The power and the evil influence of these superstitious HAD to be broken before any real advance could be made by the people in political and social progress. There had been Philosophic Atheism before Bradlaugh; but that had been mainly in expensive form for the favoured few. There had been propagandists of Freethought before Bradlaugh; and there were some contemporary with him; but Bradlaugh brought the principles of Philosophic

Atheism right down direct to the people by his platform campaign, by penny pamphlets, and by cheap books, which *all* could read and understand. That was his crime—in the eyes of the orthodox. The necessity for Atheism, and the gains of humankind from “Unbelief” were spread by Bradlaugh throughout the land as they never had been before. His unrivalled dialectic powers, his eloquence, his almost super-human energy, his great personality, made him the leader against all the powers of darkness, religion, tyranny, and superstition. He was the leader—in a real sense. He did not organize from behind; he went into the fight and said, “Come on.” Never before, in Britain, had the God belief and Christian superstition been attacked so trenchantly. Never have they recovered from it. Bradlaugh won the fight, and cleared the way. The victory can be seen to-day in the great sway of Secular principles throughout the whole of our life. That victory of Bradlaugh, of Atheism, of Secularism, can be seen *inside* the Christian churches as well as outside. The Gods have been modified into still more gaseous form; and the parsons pay, at least, lip-service to political and social reform.

Some of my friends sometimes smile when I associate together the names of Bradlaugh, Hyndman, and Keir Hardie. Some do more than smile. A few don’t smile at all; they hold up their hands in (not wholly) holy horror. Yet there is a real connection between the three. They were all in the same direct line, in, virtually, the same fight—the same work; and more was done by Bradlaugh than ever is acknowledged. Bradlaugh’s fight for Philosophic Atheism cleared the way. In a way, it killed God. The *positive* side of that philosophy—Secularism or Rationalism—made foundation for “Co-operation,” “Socialism,” and “Independent Labour Representation” as a political method. That Humankind should be guided by Reason and Knowledge: that divine guidance or control should be ignored: that supernatural hopes and fears should be excluded: that happiness should be our aim, and usefulness our moral guide: that progress is only possible through Liberty; and that we should strive for the fullest *equal* Freedom of Thought, act, and speech. (The whole can be read on another page.) These principles constitute the finest philosophy that ever was. More than that, they *are* the solid basis on which alone all permanent achievement in social progress can be built. Even the success of the Labour Party—so far as it has been successful—has been built on Reason and Knowledge. (Electioneering victories through appeals to supernaturalism, or from the votes of desperate and despairing people, do not make for any permanent gain.) On the other hand, the failures of that party can be traced to—the other thing. One Minister, in himself (or in his acts), illustrates this. Mr. Wheatley was guided by Reason and Knowledge, fundamentally, in his Housing Scheme, and scored for the Labour Party. In the matter of Birth-Control-advice-in-Public-Clinics, he was not guided by Reason and Knowledge, but by the other thing—and he was scored by the Labour Party. The Women’s Section of the Labour Party said so—and *they* know. And that is but one instance out of many.

Objection may be raised to the effect that Bradlaugh was an “Individualist,” a Radical, in politics; that he opposed Hyndman and other “Socialists.” In one way, that is true; but it does not contradict my contention. All the political reforms for which Bradlaugh fought so strenuously were practical ideas which “Socialists” could not—and can not—but support. For some of these reforms, “Labour” is still fighting; but, I fear, less vigorously than did Charles Bradlaugh. The “Socialism” that was then in debate was largely a matter of theoretic argument. Much of it was Utopian. That which was “scientific” had Utopian

¹ This is written from abroad. Hence the delay.

aspects. Bradlaugh, with his passion for freedom, saw the danger of tyranny in State Socialism; and, even in the form of theoretic argument, fought against the possibility. Many Social-Democrats to-day recognize that danger. Would that there were a few in the political field now inspired by but a fraction of the zeal for liberty that Bradlaugh had. Progress would be faster and surer. In any case, at that time, the "socialization of the means of Production, Distribution, and Exchange" was not a practical, political, proposition. Now, matters of nationalization or socialization are not questions of theoretic argument, but of practical administration—practical politics. Economic development has brought us to a point where Nationalization of any specific industry or property is urged as an essential of practical administration on behalf of the people. Industrial Democracy grows out of Political Democracy. Political Republicanism to-day is of little value (if any) without Economic Republicanism—as can be seen across the Channel and across the Western Ocean. Just as in Political Democracy, so in Industrial and Social Democracy; Bradlaugh's fight cleared the way, while the principles of his Secular Philosophy provide the only sure foundation and the only sure guide. So Hyndman was in the battle where Iconoclast had led; and he was building on the Secular principles laid down by the same great man.

The same holds true of the political method of "Independent Labour Representation," always associated with the name of Keir Hardie. Both the man and the method owe far more to the work of Charles Bradlaugh and Secularism than has ever been admitted. Even when the debt has been denied; the denial has but added proof. That (then) new movement towards political freedom and economic security was essentially based upon Secular philosophy. That movement, like the Co-operative movement, was "Practical Atheism" in its very essence. Its nature was seen in the gusto with which the (then) young Independents sang from their song-book:—

Hold fast your own ideas of right and wrong;
Don't listen to the Gospel-grinding band;
For what they tell to you is very seldom true;
And what is true, they do not understand.

That was the Secular fighting spirit by which the "Great Labour Movement" was inspired—when it was independent, and it *did* fight. The influx of parsons, and others of that ilk, into that political party—now that it is at the point of success—is no gain in quality; but it is additional proof that their superstition has failed, and that Secular philosophy has won once again. Secularism spreads—even where and when it is derided and denied. The supremely efficient political organizing secretary himself, who has brought the Labour Party to where it is, built and worked upon Secular principles. The name of "God" may have been used for vote-catching purposes; but that was but secularizing "the good old German God"—presumably in the interests of a political party. It was another triumph for those very same (and sane) Secular principles! "God" was turned to useful purposes.

Happy, happy, they whose life has happened in a time when they could take their part in such a fight, or in such a period of such a fight—the battle for Freedom, Truth, and Right. Happier still are those who have been privileged to serve, in that Great War, along with three such heroes. They may have been but common troopers, or independent cavaliers, doing the best they could; but what an experience they have had! What more could life offer worth having, unless it were the chance to serve, still in the same struggle, with another such a man? For that, one may hope; but, as yet, there is no sign of his entrance

on the field. Still, it is not wise to be too greedy, when life has already given us so much. The great victorious attack for philosophic Atheism and practical Secularism came first. Then arose the banner of Social Democracy. After that, through the victory and based upon the Secular principles, came the political army of occupation.

Bradlaugh, Hyndman, Keir Hardie: and the greatest of these is Bradlaugh.

He lives in the memory of those whom he inspires to-day, whose lives are braver for that memory. He lives, still more, in the well-nigh universal triumph of that philosophic Atheism and practical Secular philosophy which he so brilliantly—and at such a cost—led to victory.

Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;
The wheel is come full circle.

The oldest hath borne most: we that are young,
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

ATHOS ZENO.

Genius in the Grotesque.

FALSTAFF.

TRUTH conveyed in allegory is the highest form of art and poetry. Falstaff as a creation of Shakespeare and a projection of his genius is a figure to rank with equal merit by the side of Michael Angelo's "David." When we say that the fat Knight is a figure of comedy, a subject of or for laughter, a romantic Sancho Panza, we have not said all. Genius will not submit to categories, to compartments, or measurement by a draper's yard-stick.

The marble from which the "David" was chiselled may have served no worthier purpose than that of adorning the banqueting table of some rich Venetian merchant—to be paradoxical, genius gave it life. Humour, coarse, refined, shallow, deep, in every shade and nuance, was as plentiful in Shakespeare's time as it was scarce in Milton's period. Green, Lyly, Jonson, and others used it as craftsmen, as talented artists; it was left to Shakespeare to immortalise it in the creation of Falstaff. Sancho Panza lives or dies with Don Quixote; Falstaff is a private character living with or without light from others. The creations of genius partake of the same living breath as genius itself—that of kinship with eternity. When human thought, working through the "eternal spirit making for righteousness" shall be as profitable as the present traffic in half-truths then it may have the leisure to turn to discover why Shakespeare chose the grotesque—or why Shakespeare wrote at all. Family fame and fortune is not good enough as a solution; the best in history is beyond price; the greatest things in life have been works of love, and it is not without significance that the art of healing was one of the noblest according to Plato—and beyond price.

You may hate life with the same intensity as Flaubert; you may seek to divine its mystery by prayer, faith, or humility, and make a reconciliation with it. You may accept it with the Epicurean frankness of Landor, or you may scourge it with fasting or a hair shirt. A genius will divine all these attitudes to life; a Shakespeare in one mood or humour will place Falstaff as his affirmation to life. And what we see on the surface of this character is the grotesque—the paunch, the drinking, the brawling, the talk of fighting and incontinency. Deeper down we shall get nearer to the heart of humour—underneath the grotesque shell of appearance, we shall find the warm blood of life pulsating of an affirmation to life. Did not Erasmus, in his famous grotesque, "In Praise of Folly," say all that he had to say against his

enemies? With Wilde, we must learn to respect the truth of masks, for the great majority of onlookers only see the obvious.

Coleridge, with his usual subtlety, sees in Falstaff the attempt to make the intellect superior to moral considerations. Further, he says that the Knight is no coward. Falstaff depends on his intellectual resources to extricate himself from difficult positions. And in his famous rebuff from the Prince, Falstaff is brought to see that his influence over the King's son was not so strong as he imagined it to be. All these are interesting speculations—there is truth in them, they bear closely on the subject, but they assume Falstaff to be a real character, whereas this gross body, this tun of flesh, was but a vehicle for the representation of Rabelaisian humour. Maybe it was Shakespeare's intellectual revolt against human moral standards—maybe it was humour as a "wandering voice" like the pathetic figure of Edgar in "King Lear," or a protest in the pageant of kingcraft, statecraft and priestcraft with all its blood-spilling and brutality.

But this we do know: Falstaff is an immortal creation, partaking of the nature of the genius from whence he came. May we call him the laughing philosopher, or Omar in Western dress without his depth? Laugh or cry at life, beat at your prison bars with hatred, philosophize over it as did Richard II. in prison, or Byron's Prisoner of Chillon, we come to an end of this thing we know as life. If one has lived to the end of it with intelligent laughter—the laughter in the "comedy to one who thinks" one has got no farther than another who weighted his life with the negation of the will. Whoever Shakespeare was, we incline to think that Falstaff was his affirmation to life; his many-sided attitudes—obvious and concealed, tell us that here we have matter by a genius to examine. In the same manner that the *Pilgrim's Progress* is an inspired tract, the *Faery Queen* a defence of Protestantism, so is Falstaff the Olympian laugh at life by Shakespeare. By the use of the grotesque, Falstaff is saved from going the way of all obscurities of other dramatists of his age who lacked the touch of genius.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

LYNCHING SPENCER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Arthur Lynch in dealing with Spencer might have mentioned that he was born in 1820, more than a hundred years ago, and died in 1903, at the age of eighty-three.

Also that *The Principles of Biology* was published sixty years ago.

Would Mr. Lynch kindly tell us how much was known about the structure of amoeba sixty years ago?

When he writes about the functions of the amoeba and says "these functions imply rudimentary analogues to the circulation of the blood and the activities of the nervous system," one would like to know whence he gets his biological knowledge of Amoeba.

Can Mr. Lynch give a better formula of evolution than Spencer's? The only one I can find in his article reads thus: "The number of variables exceeds that of the equations from which we are supposed to determine them."

What Spencer offered was a genetic description, not a law of nature.

He took the amoeba and man as illustrations sixty years ago.

Considering the state of biological knowledge of that time they were singularly appropriate.

If Mr. Lynch had pointed out that Spencer failed to appreciate "the all-sufficiency of Natural Selection" and built his biology and psychology on the belief in the transmission of "acquired characters," he would

have shown why a great deal of Spencer's work is now obsolete.

Mr. Lynch reminds me forcibly of those who fancy they have answered their opponents by calling them "bourgeois," "Captain of Industry," "Big Manufacturer," etc.

Did not Burns re-write "My love is like a red, red rose" many times; and if Spencer "not without sweat and heat" evolved his evolution formula, all the more honour to him.

HENRY SPENCE.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 25.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Corrigan, Moss, Rosetti and Samuel; Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough and the Secretary. Minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly Cash Statement and pass-book were produced.

New members were received for Finsbury Park, Hull, Newcastle, and the Parent Society.

Correspondence with Finsbury Park and Birmingham Branches was dealt with.

The report of the Propaganist Meeting was received, discussed and adopted.

The report of the Sub-Committee elected to deal with the Lecture Scheme was presented, and, after its various recommendations had been discussed, adopted. Mr. Cohen kindly undertook to supply a list of books to be recommended and also expressed his willingness to personally conduct a weekly reading class for students resident in London, desirous of equipping themselves for the Freethought platform, provided a sufficient number intimated to the Secretary their willingness to avail themselves of this offer. It was also agreed that a circular letter with further details of requirements should be issued to those who had already replied to the questionnaire.

The Secretary reported the termination of Mr. Whitehead's successful provincial tour on September 28. It was unanimously agreed that his engagement be extended throughout October.

An invitation had been received from the International Freethought Bureau to attend a Congress at Brussels on October 11, to be followed by a meeting commemorating the Martyrdom of Ferrer. It was agreed that fraternal greetings and cordial good wishes be sent to Brussels, together with an expression of regret for the Executive's inability to send a representative on this occasion.

It was further reported that the Parkhurst Theatre, Holloway Road, had been booked for October 26, and Stratford Town Hall for November 23, for lectures from Mr. Cohen.

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

E. M. VANCE,

General Secretary.

Obituary.

The Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. has sustained a severe loss through the death of its much esteemed president, Mr. James McGlashan, who died on the 18th inst. after an illness of many months. Mr. McGlashan was a man of rare and enviable qualities, generous, sincere and upright in character, he endeared himself to all who knew him. His wide sympathies and interests gave a perfect balance to a unique personality. Chief among the many interests he had in life was his consistent, continuous and loyal advocacy of Freethought principles. President of the Glasgow Branch for the past thirty-five years his endearing personality had a continuously stimulating and elevating influence on its activities and its efficiency. The gap which his death will make in the ranks of those whose human sympathies make for the betterment of mankind will not be readily filled. Mr. McGlashan's remains were cremated on Saturday last, following a Secular service in his home. The sympathies of the Glasgow Freethinkers go out to his devoted wife and to his family.—T. R.

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.—The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday, at 8, at the "Lawrie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15, Victoria Road, N.W.): 7, Debate—"Can the Existence of God be Scientifically Demonstrated?" Affirmative, Mr. C. E. Pell; Negative, Mr. T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham): 7, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, "The Poverty of our Local Philosophers."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, R. Dimsdale Stocker, "The Old Adam's Second Chance."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Right Hon. J. M. Robertson, "Modern Humanists Reconsidered: V.—John Stuart Mill."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner, Islington): 8, Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture every evening.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, Mr. G. Whitehead, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—Freethought lectures and debates every evening in Hyde Park. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Beale, Brayton, Hyatt, Harris, Hart, Keeling, Knubley, Saphin, Shaller, Stephens, Dr. Stuart, M.A., Mr. Vincent, B.A., B.Sc., and Mr. Howell Smith.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. G. Whitehead, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

COUNTRY. INDOOR.

BOLTON SECULAR SOCIETY (Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street): 2.15, Mr. George Black, Continuation of "Scientific Phrenology."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dramatic Performance of Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors," by Secular Dramatic Society. (Silver Collection.)

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Youngman's Restaurant, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 7, Humorous and Dramatic Recitals.

THE GLASGOW BRANCH will open their Winter Session on October 5 with a Musical Evening by Mr. Lancaster in No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street. (Silver Collection.)

LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION BRANCH

The First Meeting of the Season will be held at **SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE** on **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7.**

MR. C. DELISLE BURNS

will speak on the subject of the League of Nations, the League of Nations Union and the work of our Branch. Commence at 8 sharp. All are invited to come and bring their friends.

SPRING Cleaning, Vacuum Cleaning, Carpet Beating, Floor Polishing, Window Cleaning. Private Houses, Offices, etc. Efficiently and Economically. Send postcard to **MR. LATIMER VOIGHT**, the **GREAT METROPOLITAN CLEANING CO., LTD.**, 75 Kinnerton Street, Knightsbridge, S.W.1. 'Phone: Victoria 4447. And he will call and estimate for your requirements. Agencies arranged. Freethinkers help each other.

ISAAC INTERVIEWING Rebecca at the well was not done in his working clothes. He was tremendously anxious to look his best, and a like aspiration on your part is just what we cater for. You can get good clothes from good Freethinkers, supporters of the good cause, if you will be good enough to let us tell you how by asking us to send any of the following:—*Gents' AA to H Book, Suits from 54s.; Gents' I to N Book, Suits from 99s.; Gents' Superb Overcoat Book, prices from 48s. 6d.; or Ladies' Absorbing Autumn Book, Costumes from 60s., Coats from 46s.* Write to-day—**MACCONNELL & MARE**, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY

TO the Freethinkers in Glasgow and District.—For about seventy years there has been in Glasgow a Secular Society which in spite of many difficulties has kept the principle of Freethought before the public. The measure of its success may be obtained if we look around and see the numbers of people in the parks, art galleries, museums, and other places on Sundays, and during Kirk service times at that. The outcry of the kirks and missions about Sabbath desecration, the non-observance of the Lord's Day, Sunday broadcasting, etc., coupled with the continual demand for a return to the Scotch Sabbath, show that the leaven of Freethought is pervading the mass of the people much to the disgust of the kirks, auld and new alike.

But there is much to be done. The question of opening an art exhibition in a Corporation hall on a Sunday was discussed the other day at a Corporation meeting. The request was carried, but the die-hards of the Lord's Day forced a vote. "Antic Hay" has been withdrawn from the "Free" Libraries. It was unsuitable!

There is, as the above instances show, a great number of self-appointed censors and guardians of public morals whose first Commandment is Thou shalt not do anything that appears sensible or rational or likely to make people happy but thou shalt only do or read that which is approved by thy masters and pastors. Their second and last commandment is Thou shalt not think.

The Glasgow Secular Society are this winter giving another series of propaganda lectures. Room No. 2, City Hall ("A" door), Albion Street, has been taken for the Sunday evenings, October to May. The session will be started on October 5 with a Musical Evening by Mr. Lancaster and friends. The Grand Hall has been taken for meetings to be addressed by Mr. Cohen and Mr. MacCabe. We hope that you to whom this open letter is addressed will give us your support. All this means money, and although your personal donations may be small, they all count. Your moral support by advertising these meetings among your friends, by coming yourself and bringing the waverers with you, will be welcomed.

THE COMMITTEE,
The Glasgow Secular Society.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, Ltd.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 62 Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.

Secretary: MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society. Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £—— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that

a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage ¼d.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS? Price 1d., postage ¼d.

THE JEWISH LIFE OF CHRIST. Being the Sepher Toldoth Jeshu, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. With an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes. By G. W. FOOTE and J. M. WHEELER. Price 6d., postage ¼d.

VOLTAIRE'S PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY. Vol. I, 128 pp., with Fine Cover Portrait, and Preface by CHAPMAN COHEN. Price 1s., postage 1d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage ¼d.

WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage ¼d.

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