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Views and Opinions.

Pathological Religion.

It is not far off thirty years since we first drew attention in these columns to the significance of a study of abnormal and pathologic mental states for a correct understanding of religion. Since then very many books have been written on the subject, and there is now at the service of the student a fairly large literature. Many of the works published, while they dwell upon the connection between religious frames and pathologic states, also hasten to put in something in the nature of a saving clause on behalf of religion which, when accepted, is apt to leave the uncritical reader with very little real enlightenment. We went over the whole subject in our book, *Religion and Sex*, but a recently published work may usefully serve to add something to what was then written. *Religiosity and Morbid Mental States* is a slim volume of 120 pages, published by Methuen & Co. (5s.), and consists of a series of lectures delivered by Dr. H. J. Schou, the head of the Hospital for Mental Diseases, Dianalund, Denmark, to an audience of priests. If they had grasped the full significance of what Dr. Schou placed before them, their faith in religion would have been considerably shaken. That it was not shaken was partly due to Dr. Schou himself, who often gives his facts an explanation that is forced and useless. But if he had been willing to place the true significance of the facts before his audience it is highly probable that he would not have been permitted to give the lectures. Or if he had, we should not have been likely to see the lectures in an English dress. Our own work was refused by several well-known publishers solely on the ground that its publication would offend many of their "patrons." For the benefit of the timid the publisher announces on the cover of Dr. Schou's work that the author of the book is "at once a psychiatrist and a Christian." So every Christian is assured that the book is quite safe.

Christian Science. * * *

Dr. Schou says it is lamentable that young priests, seeing that they will have to encounter so many people who are suffering from mental trouble, are sent out quite ignorant of the elementary principles of psychiatry. In accounting for this Dr. Schou

stresses two points. First, he points out that during the Middle Ages the clergy ministered to a mind diseased, and, second, because of the medical materialism that has grown up "many of our leading authorities on mental diseases being out-and-out materialists." But to go on to say that doctor and priest have much to learn from each other, and should therefore work together, is to miss the real point at issue. Leading authorities on mental diseases are bound to be materialists because it is only on lines of materialism that they can deal with the cases before them. And the care of the mentally distressed was taken out of the hands of the priests because they were far more likely to drive men to insanity than to effect cures. Dr. Schou knows perfectly well that the methods of the monks were the methods of the Jesus of the New Testament. The insane were possessed of devils, and these were to be expelled by fasting, by whipping, or by incantations. Right up to the end of the eighteenth century the situation of the insane in every country in Europe was most deplorable, and it was the Christian Church that was almost wholly responsible for this. The true moral of the situation is that never until "medical materialism" took charge of the matter was lunacy or mental disease generally treated and studied with profit, or were mental sufferers treated with decency. As in so many other instances the clergy lost power because experience proved they were totally unfit to be trusted with it.

* * *

Sex and Religion.

The nature of the subject compels Dr. Schou to call attention to the close connection existing between religion and morbid mental states, as in the following passages: "It may be of importance to note that in practically every form of insanity we may find fixed ideas of a religious character.....No other class of ideas is so permanently represented in a mental asylum as the ideas of religion—unless it be those of a sexual character." It is a pity that Dr. Schou did not dwell upon the close relation that exists between certain forms of religious mania and sexual abnormalities, although that might probably have taken him beyond what he considered his immediate purpose. Had he done so he could hardly have missed throwing some light upon the ecstasies of some of the great Christian figures. I have shown elsewhere that if one analyses the utterances of many of the Christian saints there are plain evidences of sexual perversion, and the very suppression of healthy sex feeling by Christian teaching, the interpretation of the phenomena attending adolescence as workings of some spiritual power, the taboo which was placed upon a healthy discussion of sex subjects, could not but result in an emotional and mental strain fatal to the health of large numbers of people. The number of cases cited by Dr. Schou are full of significance in this connection, although it is to be doubted whether, in the absence of plain statements, many of the priests who listened would better understand what was happening under their very eyes. Still, the asso-

ciation of morbid mental states with strong and overpowering religious feeling is clearly brought out, and that may well set some travelling farther along a road of enquiry that will lead them to startling results.

* * *

Religion and Insanity.

One of the questions asked by Dr. Schou is "Does Religion drive People Mad?" On the face of it the question, from a strictly scientific point of view, lacks "reality." There is no subject under the sun which may not act as one of the causative conditions in the production of insanity. Given a certain mental constitution and a man may go mad through intensive brooding, or undue strain in connection with art or politics or any other question. What is clear is that religion offers greater dangers to weak-minded people than do many other subjects, because there are fewer intellectual checks in its pursuit. Dr. Schou's treatment of the subject is not very illuminating. He says that figures do not prove religion to be a cause of insanity, and asserts that religious treatment of the insane is beneficial. But as religious treatment turns out to be kindness, sympathy, with an avoidance in most cases of purely religious topics, the use of the word "religion" begs the whole question. And in proof of the constant association of religious ideas with various forms of dementia, he says:—

We need only think of melancholia, the commonest of all psychoses, especially if we include its slighter form, depression; how often do we not find here religious anxiety and ideas of being eternally lost?.....Or take, again, paranoias, chronic dementia, where more than anywhere else, we find "systems" with a religious colouring. The man who calls himself "God's prophet So-and-so," or the decent hard-working little fellow who has suddenly become the Messiah for whom the world has been waiting, and who is now destined to renew heaven and earth. Even in juvenile dementia, or advancing cerebral paralysis.....we may meet with phrases of a pronounced religious character, with God and the Devil, and the "spiritual" army under heaven pursuing and tormenting unhappy sufferers. Later, in the more advanced stages, it is mostly religious fragments and futile religious Utopias which dominate the scene.

* * *

Primitive Traits in Religion.

The association of the two things is thus fairly constant. How are we to explain it? There are, clearly, two ways of doing this. The one relates to environmental influence, the other to the nature of primitive thought. Of these two Dr. Schou notes only one, and that unsatisfactorily. The frequency of religious ideas in cases of insanity, he says, "is related to the primitive character of religious life." So far so good, so also is the remark that in the case of mental disease we have removed the repressive force which most of us exercise during sanity. But it is not very illuminating to tell us that religious life becomes powerful in cases of mental disease because religion is "a primitive tendency, a natural inclination, an instinctive craving," which may be suppressed in everyday life but which breaks forth violently in cases of disease. There is nothing more hopelessly unscientific than to explain things in terms of natural inclination, or primitive tendency, or even instinctive craving. To say that certain things act in such and such a way, and to say that they have a natural inclination so to act, is to add nothing to the original statement. It is saying the same thing over again, while giving nothing whatever in the shape of a rational explanation. It is the existence of certain things that have to be explained, and we do not explain them by saying that they are natural

or instinctive. The question of the conditions of their naturalness or their instinctiveness still remains. Dr. Schou's explanation reminds one very much of the medieval explanation of the wetness of water as being due to the principle of aquosity.

* * *

The Revival of the Savage.

And yet all the time Dr. Schou was very near the true explanation of the persistence of religious frames of mind and of religious ideas in cases of mental disease. To begin with, he is quite correct in speaking of religious ideas as being of a primitive character. They belong properly to the earlier strata of civilization. In the next place, it is true in all cases of disease which affect the central nervous system that qualities drop off in the reverse order of their acquisition. This is only what one would expect, seeing that compared with the history of the race the civilized portion of it is but of yesterday. Thus, while man is feeling to the full the pressure of civilization the more intellectual aspect of things rule. But once a weakening of that takes place, the more primitive expressions, intellectual and ethical, find vent. We see this is the case in the stress and strain incident to war. Life reverts to its more primitive aspect, because the inhibitions imposed by civilization are weakened. Life is back again in its more primitive manifestations. In a way Dr. Schou says this much, but it is said in a way that divests it of its scientific significance. Of course one must remember the publisher's announcement that Dr. Schou is a Christian, and also that he was addressing a company of priests. And in such circumstances one must expect an interpretation of the facts such as will fit in with religious prepossessions. There are one or two other aspects of the subject with which I will deal next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Concluded.)

Does Christianity Work as Leaven?

In the *Church Times* for April 30, the "Anglo-Catholic Pulpit" is represented by Canon B. J. Kidd, D.D., Warden of Keble College, Oxford, in whose sermon Christianity is likened to "a city set on a hill" (St. Matthew v. 14) and also "unto leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (St. Matthew xiii. 33). In the first text the Kingdom of Heaven is stated to be conspicuous, arresting attention, and in the second, to be all penetrative, pervading or passing through the whole extent of human society. A city set on a hill, Canon Kidd tells us, symbolizes the visible Church which, of course, being visible, cannot be hidden. He says:—

Organized, or institutional, Christianity cannot be ignored any more than a city set on a hill. At present it is out of favour; especially since we took up with that habit of self-depreciation in the National Mission of 1916, and forgot that it was meant to be a movement of repentance and hope.

The Canon is radically mistaken. The Church not only can be, but has been repeatedly, and is being openly ignored in all directions. Was it consulted at all prior to the breaking out of the world-war? Did it exert the least ameliorative or humanizing influence over the conduct of that long and bitter conflict? Why, it never once lifted up its voice in condemnation of it. On the contrary, the Bishop of London, for example, described it as a glorious day of the Lord; and he also, with many others, confidently

predicted that as soon as it ended and our victorious soldiers returned, God would be all in all from one end of the land to the other. To-day he sorrowfully admits that his estimate of the effect of the war on religion was fundamentally false, London, his own diocese, being now considerably less religious and less given to churchgoing than it was twenty-five years ago when he became its Bishop. Canon Kidd contends that the Church is at present out of favour because some ten years ago it got into the bad habit of depreciating itself. We have noticed no sign whatever of its being the victim of such a habit. As a rule, the clergy are guilty of egregiously over-estimating the Church's influence and power, exulting in its past triumphs and its future unlimited possibilities. The Bishop of Durham stands almost alone as depreciator of the Church's achievements and capacities.

The Warden of Keble College makes amazing admissions in this discourse, and his explanations of them are more amazing still:—

The usual things that are said in disparagement of organized Christianity, while they have an element of truth in them, are neither very original nor very convincing. The Church is divided; but it often has been. It is out of date; but it belongs to all the centuries, and not only to the twentieth. It has lost ground; but was the ground ever occupied? It has proved a failure; but only where it has never been given a serious trial. It is concerned with another life: why not? if there is one, and this is a preparation for that. Or again, its ministers. No one can say that they are, as a rule, too well off; but they do say that theirs is "a mug's game," that they are concerned with things that do not matter, or that they minister to a minority. Or, once more, the very presence of organized religion is unwanted.

When we critically examine the various statements in that passage we find that Canon Kidd does not shine as a Christian apologist. If the arguments advanced in derogation of organized Christianity are largely true, what advantage is there in dubbing them "neither very original nor very convincing"? It is the truth in them that tells. Certainly, they are not original, for most of them are as old as Christianity itself; but to an ever-growing number of people they prove tremendously convincing. When we say that the Church is divided, the Canon's retort is, "But it often has been." Surely this is to beg the question with a vengeance. It is true that the Church has been divided from the very commencement of its history, but to make this admission necessitates another admission, namely, that the Church is not and never has been what it so ardently claims to be. Had it been a supernatural institution established by the Divine Christ, with the Holy Ghost perpetually dwelling in it as in a temple, is it conceivable that it would or could have been split up into so many bitterly hostile and irreconcilable factions, the stronger of which took keen delight for many ages in cruelly persecuting the weaker? It is the history of the Church which so completely damns all its claims. Dare the Canon deny that it has lost ground which once it so strenuously occupied? Has it not lost ground in France, which not so long ago it so proudly and tyrannically held? The Bishop of London humbly confesses that it has lost ground here during his tenure of the diocese. But does not this admitted loss of ground, of influence and power, definitely prove that the Church is a stupendous failure? Canon Kidd maintains that it has proved a failure "only where it has never been given a serious trial"; but will he kindly inform us where it has been given a serious trial and proved a success? Was it in Spain during the benign reign

of the Christ-like Inquisition, whose commission was "to discover and bring to judgment heretics lurking in towns, houses, cellars, woods, caves, and fields," and which succeeded, between 1481 and 1808, in the land of its birth and elsewhere, in bringing to judgment three hundred and forty thousand persons, of whom nearly thirty-two thousand were burnt? If not in Spain and the Netherlands, where and when? Certainly not in Great Britain, not even in London, the largest city in the world, which is ruled not by Christ, but by the police. We agree with the Bishop of Durham in pronouncing the Church a gigantic failure, and we go further still and call Christianity itself fully as false as any other supernatural religion. Even the Warden of Keble College admits that "it looks like a failure for all the effect you can see," and then irrelevantly adds, "but never to all seeming was there so appalling a failure as when our Lord died upon the Cross."

We now come across a most remarkable passage, which sets the weakness of the case for Christianity in an exceptionally clear light:—

So let the Christian character, as embodied in Christian institutions, be accounted a failure. We have only to think how much worse the failure would be without a visible Church, and to ask what its use is, in order to perceive why our Lord intended that the Christian character should be embodied in an institutional or organized form. And nowhere has the purpose of a visible Church been so clearly set forth as by Bishop Butler. Without it, "Christianity," he says, "must have been, in a great degree, sunk and forgot in a very few ages. To prevent this appears to have been one reason why a visible Church was instituted: to be like a city upon a hill, a standing memorial to the world of the duty we owe to our Maker."

Butler was in many respects a great man, and his *Analogy* was regarded for several generations as a masterly exposition of the truth of Christianity, and an unanswerable refutation of the Infidelity so prevalent in his day; but many of his arguments are now recognized to be essentially faulty. In the short extract given by Canon Kidd he gives expression to the view, evidently shared by the Canon, that Christianity was in existence before the institution of the Church, the purpose of which was to prevent it from dying out. But such a view is utterly false. Christianity, as we know it, is the creation of the Church. Whether the Gospel Jesus actually lived and taught or not, it is an absolute certainty that Christianity came not from him. The makers of this religion have been innumerable from Paul down through all the General Councils. It is the Church's offspring, and the multitudinous crimes laid to its charge are crimes committed by the Church in the name of its purely imaginary founder. Even Christ as now preached, as well as the religion that bears his name, owes his existence to the Church's imagination.

Now both the Bishop of Durham and Dean Inge frankly concede that up to the present time the Church has not conquered the world, but the latter seem to be convinced that eventually it is destined to do so, which conviction is fully shared by Canon Kidd. Leaven, we are told, does its work very slowly. So it does, no doubt, but then Christianity has been in the world for two thousand years, and it cannot honestly be claimed that the world is morally much, if any, better now than it was in the first and second centuries. This is beyond dispute, and this is what the Canon conveniently ignores. It is easy enough to speak as follows:—

It is as leaven that Christianity has the promise of ultimate victory before it. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole

was leavened." Once there, though unobtrusive itself, and unrecognized by others, the Christian character, whether exhibited in a person, or embodied in an institution, will eventually reach every particle of the whole mass, and nothing can escape its uplifting power.

By itself that sounds exceedingly fine, but it deliberately ignores the all-important fact that the so-called leaven of the Christian religion has lain in the meal of human nature for nineteen hundred years and that so far it has scarcely exerted any uplifting power whatever. Was this country ever in a worse and more hopeless condition than this in which it finds itself at this moment? Economically and industrially we are living in a veritable hell, and there is nothing to indicate how and when we shall be drawn out of it. The Church is wholly ignored, which is due to the fact that it wholly lacks power. Christianity is impotent because it is dead, and both because there is no truth at the core of it.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Pathology of Piety.

O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods!
Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all
knees bend,
I kneel not, neither adore you, but standing, look to the
end.
—Swinburne.

If a man is unhappy, remember that his unhappiness
is his own fault.—Epictetus.

CERTAIN aspects of the Christian religion are purely pathological. The tyrannical Puritan tradition in this country is but the tail-end of a diseased form of religionism which runs like a scarlet thread through the centuries. The early Fathers of the Christian Church, the finest collection of fanatics ever found outside an asylum, hated all forms of amusement with a venomous, narrow-eyed hatred which was in itself a proof of their diseased minds. The Puritans merely carried on the same evil traditions, shorn of its worst features. It was allied to fanaticism, pure and simple, and its devotees show the same symptoms to-day as they did in Eastern Europe many centuries ago. Dr. Robert Horton, who was one of the fiercest opponents of the music-halls thirty years ago, actually admitted that he had not visited one. He preached against them, wrote against them, and denounced them with the whole vocabulary of theological abhorrence, but, as Artemus Ward puts it, his mind was quite "untrammelled with any acquaintance with his subject." Horton was really in a worse condition than the young and innocent shop assistant, who "found Jesus" overnight, and made open confession at an evangelistic meeting. "Last week," she chirruped, "I was a child of Satan. I used to smoke Woodbines and go to the pictures."

This apostolical fervour has quaint results. It causes the Roman Catholic Church to dictate to its followers what they shall read, and it causes the Puritans of the United States to dictate what other citizens of the Republic shall drink. So impressed was a Frenchman by this contradiction of the Republican ideals that he dubbed the great Republic of the West, "the Benighted States." Another foreigner, seeing the gigantic statue of Liberty in the Bay outside New York, said, as he took off his hat, "So the Americans also raise monuments to the illustrious dead."

Nor are the "saints" the only sinners in this respect. These holy monomaniacs, with birds-nests in their whiskers, often carried asceticism to the outside limit of human endurance. Their utmost idea of enjoyment was either to meditate among the tombs, or hunt heretics. But the priesthood, the

clerical caste which in reality perpetuated the Christian superstition, exploited this sunless side of life. Think! The very symbol of their religion is the figure of a dying man nailed to two pieces of wood. In Roman Catholic countries this sorry figure confronts the visitor as often as public-house signs in England, and is not so pleasing.

Since the dawn of the Christian era the fear of death has been exploited by the entire clergy of Christendom. Unfortunately they have had an easy task with dwellers in great cities, for town folk necessarily acquire their knowledge of Nature from books, or from superficial and fleeting observation. For five months in every year Nature is represented in the towns by fog, rain, and artificial lighting. Dwellers in streets have little chance of meditating on the rigid processes of natural law.

The clergy exploit this ignorance. Death is, according to these pastors and masters, the king of terrors, the enemy of all. They heighten the effect by appealing to the fears of their hearers, and use the Devil and his fireworks as a useful lever. The terror such stories inspire is largely owing to the gross ignorance which surrounds the subject of death. "Men fear death," as Bacon says, "as children fear to go in the dark." The fear of the night can be dispersed by a little light. Death would be no bugbear if it were known better. And nobody tells people except a few Freethinkers, who are cursed by all the churches of Christendom. The sermons from the clergy, pathological in thought and inflated with unscientific nonsense, deal in verbiage and exaggerations. "The wages of sin is death," is their idea of wisdom, and "sin," with them, often means omitting to drop money in the collection-bag. The clergy are hopelessly out of touch with modern ideas. Their churches have long been emptying of men; and now even the women are beginning to realize that the clergy actually teach antediluvian ideas concerning the relation of the sexes, and many other matters.

The clergy are simply exploiters of the ignorance of suffering humanity. They do not want people to have more freedom, they want them to have none, and to look to them for guidance. They do not want people to have more laughter and happiness, because it interferes with their conception of a sinful world and a suffering deity.

Their mentality is that of vicious degenerates. They think that men should be driven like animals, robbed, if necessary, merely in order that they may perpetuate an antiquated superstition. For thousands of years priests have chanted the sad refrain of death as an enemy, and of pleasure as a snare of the Devil, but the Freethinker knows better. Death is the universal law of Nature, which befalls all living beings, though the majority encounter it sooner than mankind. Reasonable pleasure is the spice of life; and the natural compliment to work.

How small, mean, and contemptible such a creed as Christianity appears, after all, in comparison with such a rational system as Secularism. Were Gotama Buddha to reappear upon the earth and see great nations professing to believe in hell, devils, and eternal torture, he would wonder what blight had fallen upon the human intellect after the lapse of twenty-five centuries. Hear what the wise old Pagan said, as rendered by Edwin Arnold:—

Pray not! The darkness will not brighten! Ask
Nought from the silence, for it cannot speak!
Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains!
Ah! brothers, sisters, seek
Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn
Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits and cakes;
Within yourselves deliverance must be sought,
Each man his prison makes.

This perpetuation of superstition proves conclusively that the priestly leopard does not easily change his spots. "The old, old story" is still told in the old, old way, which some of us hoped had been discarded by all decently-educated people. It will not do. Many years ago it was decided by the Court of Arches that disbelief in the Devil did not invalidate a man's right to be a member of the Church of England. Lord Westbury, in the matter of the heretical *Essays and Reviews*, in addressing the jury, uttered the weighty and memorable words: "Gentlemen, your verdict kills the Devil and puts out hell-fire." The verdict of the jury of the entire civilized and educated world is now dead against Satan and his flaming abode. This is a verdict that brings relief and delectation to all except those reactionaries who use the lever of fear with which to force open the doors that they may rob and exploit their less educated brethren. Fifty thousand men in this country alone get a sorry living by this constant harping on death, this gloating on hell, this insistence on the sufferings of a Galilean peasant who is alleged to have died twenty centuries ago. If all this morbidity were not associated with a superstition imparted to children in their tenderest years, it would be seen to be simple pathology and the symptoms of neurotic minds.

MIMNERMUS.

My Friend Stewart Headlam.

STRICKEN with mortal illness though he was, I can fancy Headlam smiled when he received a letter of benediction from the Archbishop of Canterbury. At any rate, he said to his nurse, "I feel now that I have won." That is to say, Headlam—a clergyman of the Church of England, enthusiast for Shakespeare and ballet-dancers, Socialist, enemy of the Blasphemy Laws, and friend of Bradlaugh—had been at last recognized as a man and a brother by the head of the Church which had mistrusted and scorned him. He died on November 18, 1924, and Education lost one of its finest latter-day prophets.

So far back as 1880, I had seen and heard Mr. Headlam at the Sunday evening discussions over which he presided at Leonard Street, Shoreditch. I never talked with him till a November day, 1890, when I called on him, not without anxiety. To-day, in 1926, I recall with gratitude his kindness to me. I tell the story now because it bears upon the question of the relation of heretical teachers towards the "Religious Instruction" given in English Elementary Schools. When I heard that Mr. F. G. Bettany was preparing a biography of Headlam, I offered him a brief record of the facts here told; but Mr. Bettany's recently published book (which is quite good in its way) contains no notice of them.

In 1890, the School Board for London (superseded in 1902) directed—as it had done since 1871—that:—

In the schools provided by the Board the Bible shall be read, and there shall be given such explanations and such instructions therefrom in the principles of morality and religion as are suited to the capacities of the children.

To-day, and partly, perchance, because of events with which I was associated, the phrase runs: "Principles of the Christian religion and of morality." Under the rule just cited I had, as a Board-school teacher, given Bible lessons from 1870 to 1887, and then, having been correctly accused of writing articles in a Freethought paper, I had been exempted from the duty of imparting "Religious Instruction."¹ Beautiful as the exemption looked or

¹ The present London County Council's regulations state that "enquiries shall not be made into the religious beliefs of teachers."

paper, in actual practice it inflicted unhappiness, since another teacher in the school had to perform the duty in my stead. Each morning, the Bible was opened, and I retired from my class-room to a remote corner of the school, and a true believer took my place for the space of thirty or forty minutes. Ere my singular experiences closed, I had thus retreated before the incoming of the Bible more than one thousand times (in 1888-1896, in which last-named year I abandoned the teaching profession).² My silent flight, day after day, at the mere sight of the Bible, constituted one of the miracles of modern times. Truth compels me to testify, however reluctantly, to so extraordinary a series of events.

When Mrs. Annie Besant was elected to the School Board, it seemed natural to tell her of my difficult situation; so I expressed satisfaction at her election, and shortly related my story, and she kindly replied:—

19 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood.

November 30, 1888.

Dear Sir,—Thanks for your note of congratulation. Your position is certainly an uncomfortable one, and if at any time I can be of any use to you, I shall be pleased to be of service, if you will let me know.

Sincerely,

ANNIE BESANT.

After three years (1888-1891) I was weary of the beautiful exemption, and begged one of the Board's inspectors, Mr. MacWilliam, to enquire if, by chance, I could be given employment in the Board's office. He enquired, and then said no opportunity was in sight; but, if an opening did offer, I could only hope for a £60 a year clerkship. I contemplated the fair vision, and then remembered I had a wife and children. It was at this crisis that I went to see the Rev. S. D. Headlam, member of the School Board.

Headlam had kindly eyes, smooth face, and the set priestly mouth that seemed to say: "Brother, I admonish you." To him I narrated all that had happened since 1887, and how I faintly trusted to reach a post in the Board's office. As to the post, he shook his head, and he went on to say:—

"You tell me that Mr. Diggle, Chairman of the Board, taxed you with writing certain articles, and prompted you to apply for exemption from Bible-teaching."

"Yes, that is so."

"He had no right to interfere with you in that way. The Board's regulations require the teaching of morality and religion. Very well, you can teach any form of morality and religion that is derivable from the Bible. You have power to criticize any part of it in school hours, or out of school."

"This is new to me," I said. "What shall I do?"

"I advise you," replied Headlam, "to request the School Management Committee to let you resume Bible-teaching."

To this plan I agreed, and the friendly priest, on my behalf, handed the following letter to the Committee:—

December 15, 1890.

To the Chairman of the S.M. Committee:—

Sir,—Three years ago, I applied to the School Management Committee for exemption from the duty of giving Religious Instruction. This step was suggested to me by the Chairman of the Board, who told me that his attention had been drawn to the

² Note, I abandoned the "profession." As, since 1896, I have talked with children innumerable times in Ethical, Secular, and Socialist Sunday-schools, and addressed young folk, on public occasions and in day-school assemblies, more than 1,200 times, in Great Britain, India, and the United States, I may still claim, however poorly qualified, to be a teacher of some sort. And I may stammeringly add that my books for juvenile readers number nearly twenty.

fact that, while teaching from the Bible in the ordinary course in school, I was publishing articles attacking certain Biblical doctrines.

The Committee granted the exemption asked for, and transferred me to my present school, where the Scripture lessons are given to my class by Mr. Flack, the head teacher. This is an arrangement which necessarily causes inconvenience to the head teacher, and embarrassment and annoyance to myself, and is not calculated to promote harmony in school work. I have on several occasions expressed myself to this effect to the Board's inspector, Mr. MacWilliam.

After reflection, I have decided to ask the Committee to permit me to resume the duty of giving Religious Instruction. Though I am an Agnostic, I am not aware that there is anything in my view of the Bible which would render me incapable of teaching, reverently and intelligently, the principles of morality and religion.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

FREDERICK J. GOULD

(Assistant Teacher at Northey Street School).

It may be as well to explain here that, ever since I had come under the influence, in 1881, of Frederic Harrison and other Positivists, I had readily accepted the general conception of the Religion of Humanity, indicated in the maxim: "Love for principle, and Order for basis; Progress for aim."

Important also is it to remark that very few of the people I consulted, or who discussed the problem which I raised, really knew the daily ins-and-outs of a practical teacher's life.

I hastened to confide the situation to Mrs. Besant, and I copy her answer:—

December 22, 1890.

Dear Sir,—I very much doubt if the S.M. Committee will grant your request. Personally, I should not like to support it, as it seems to be an impossible position to take up—that of an Agnostic teaching that which he does not believe to be true. On the other hand, it is obvious that, if you are to show that you do not "believe in the Bible God," you cannot be allowed to teach the children, as you would then be really teaching unbelief. As Christianity and the Bible have to be taught, I cannot honestly say that I think an unbeliever should be allowed to teach them.

Sincerely,

ANNIE BESANT.

In the course of my reply, I observed that Mrs. Besant's view would imply that (1) all the Board's teachers must believe all the Bible, and (2) all the teachers did actually believe it all. I added that, if my application was refused, it could be said, in comment: "Here is a teacher who is ready to do his best to teach the children in matters of honesty, temperance, truthfulness, mutual kindness, and so on, and yet, because he does not believe in miracles, etc., he is to be forbidden."

In January, the Committee, on the advice of a small preliminary group, or "Rota," declined my request, and Headlam described to me what had happened at this "Rota":—

I was hopelessly beaten at the Rota, owing to the action of Mrs. Besant. In my innocence, I specially asked her to stay—she had not noticed that it was coming on—and then found that, as she said, she was "dead against me." Until she spoke, the Rota was in an undecided condition, as the Board members are more or less afraid of her. But when she spoke against you, they swooped down with a will. Copeland Bowie³ and I were absolutely alone in supporting you. Her line is that the Bible teaching necessarily means all the Protestant nonsense which all the best Church of England clergy have long ago given up, and that it is "dishonest" for anyone

to teach the Bible if they teach anything else..... She also says I do *you* harm by raising the question, and that you should be willing to suffer for your opinions—forgetting that, though that may be so, there is no need for her to vote for the persecution..... Stanley [Lyulph Stanley] is opposed to me for raising a "hornets' nest."

Headlam then planned to confront the open Board with the issue on February 5. Meanwhile, I had asked the opinions of Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. G. W. Foote, and Mr. Allanson Picton.

F. J. GOULD.

(To be Concluded.)

Drama and Dramatists.

It would be difficult to reckon national or international stupidity in terms of horse-power, gallons, or miles. How great a part dogmatism on the unknown, or wrangling about a belief which cannot be proved has played in the total of this present-day legacy will never be known. In the sweet by-and-by (if any) it may be considered policy to teach men and women to stand on their own feet instead of relying on authority, which is modern language for "Thus saith the Lord." The world is divided into sheep and shepherds, and the Freethinker's grievance is the quality of the shepherds and the rightness of their counsel. Since the last war, an anxious lookout has been kept to note the closing down of the professional businesses that, with one accord, told the bleeding world that the mechanical scrimmage was a "holy war."

Our enthusiasm over the two plays, "R.U.R." and "The Insect Play," was indulged in as far as the limits of this paper would allow; like someone who had made a discovery and did not want to keep it to himself we praised and praised rightly, we hope, the efforts of Mr. Karel Capek to show the world (and London) what a roaring fool it was. The author was no Don Quixote; he went straight to the point and made an impact with authority. We do not know if the sheep were ready for a change of diet; the two plays did not last for long, and the spirit of the new age, the new world, the land fit for heroes, brooded over the troubled waters of the old with its saturnalias of Easter and Christmas, varied by the usual vivid descriptions by journalists of murders, tennis matches and ceremonies in connection with war memorials. The spirit of childhood was invoked and master minds, with the song, "Here we go round the mulberry bush," were troubled what to do with the glut of things on the road; society settles down to the pre-war world which does not exist. And society rejects the two plays that are beacon fires of the new world. Their message was—think for yourselves.

"Fear thou not much, and hope thou not all," is a strange injunction, but, with a faint flicker of hope within us we made our way to see "The Land of Many Names," a play in three acts, by Joseph Capek, translated from the Czech by Paul Selver. In this play the brother of Karel Capek has taken the new world idea further, and, with satire as savage as Swift's, tried to burn his message in the mind of spectators.

A mighty rumbling is heard at the beginning, the stage is in darkness, an earthquake is suggested, and the time suggested to us was four years. The light appears and two street sweepers are discussing life in language of simplicity that should scare Bergson or Mr. Vale Owen. A drunkard joins them—he has a metaphysical approach to the subject of the earthquake, which recalls some of our choice egoists in

³ The Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, Unitarian.

word spinning—the world revolves round me. Then appears Elan Chol, who is wisdom—or as we would prefer to call him—a grown-up man. He is, however, not above learning something from road-sweepers. Then follow three old women discussing the terror—but they are down on the earth about the price of things. Following these, Pieris, a poet of the older school, discourses on his past work—for he is out of date. Other characters appear and gradually the talk turns to the discovery of a sixth continent. The convulsion has forced up a new land and everyone expresses a desire to go there. Dollarson, whose name is a symbol, is intent on commercialising the new country—he will arrange trips, and also arrange to have God there. Vandergold, a co-partner, is anxious for a name for this place and he is supplied with about twenty from the crowd.

In the third act three soldiers are talking about their experiences; one is blind. A name suggested by one of them for the new country is Hell. Whilst they are gathered together two aeroplanes pass over and signal that the new continent has disappeared, and the poet turns to the people and tells them that if the new world is anywhere, it is here. Vandergold was killed on the "home" front; the lover returns to find his beloved married to another, a distracted mother will not believe her son was killed, and with the same objectivity of Tchekov, the author simply makes a sketch and allows the spectator to bring to it with his mind anything he likes.

It was a sad play in parts, filled with mockery at the trumpery nonsense called progress as defined by newspapers blessed by Parliament, and believed in by all the "best people."

By the apathy of the audience at the Gale Theatre Salon, Floral Street, Covent Garden, it did not appear to be good form to laugh at the palpable hits, or applaud the terrific blows at the ugly face of stupidity. The Cassandra in the play was greeted by one of the stage crowd with "This is clericalism." She had unloaded on their heads the usual rigmarole that one associates with the vocabulary of theology, meaning nothing.

Mr. Joseph Capek tells us in this play to think for ourselves—this is nothing new to Freethinkers who shoulder the burden with a good conscience, and in so doing find the key to many locks that baffle those who take with humility the message of authority. It did not receive a very warm reception, although the company gave of its best in its efforts to tell us that the human race is of more importance than Dollarsons, Dogma, and Despair. There is a note of simplicity and directness that comes through Mr. Selver's translation; there are also passages of real beauty in the Poet's speech which are no doubt due to the translator's affinity with poetry—for which we are grateful.

There has been the usual tonnage of religious talk this Easter about love, redemption, resurrection—and, as you please, fill in the rest. Aeroplanes above tell us that the sixth continent has disappeared. Wireless tells us that we are all living in a little house and that the last war was a civil war. And the churches for their effectiveness in introducing a little common sense to their followers may just as well use the word Mesopotamia as any other. In peace and war they attempt to prove their indispensability, when all grown-up men know that their trade is a few degrees less important than the painting of spots on rocking horses. And statesmen, beset with problems and torn with interests might do worse than carefully consider the Capek Brothers as their allies. They bring common sense, and the only church they serve is the vast one called the world wherein the sons and daughters of men live for a little space and then pass on the torch of life. We

commend their message to all good men, for there will be nothing left for the world to trouble about if only aeroplanes are used in the next great scrimmage picturesquely called war. And it is precisely because the Freethinker will not say "nitchevo" or "Heaven is our home" that he should, in our opinion, give his attention to the Capek Brothers' message of this world, this life, and that mysterious time called "now."

WILLIAM REPTON.

Acid Drops.

Mr. James Douglas, in the *Sunday Express*, enlightens his readers as to what enabled us to pull through the "Great Strike." It was, he says, the power of prayer. "Prayer saved us.....The power of prayer sustained and guided our statesmen." And having done so much, "Prayer will bring peace for it will bring both sides together." The worst of this powerful instrument is that it is never brought into operation till the mischief is done. How much better and more convincing it would be if the power of prayer could prevent these troubles occurring! However, one gathers that all that is necessary now is for the employers and the employed to hold a series of prayer meetings, and peace will descend on us all. Mr. Douglas appears to be running the Bishop of London hard in the race for saying ridiculous things at every conceivable opportunity.

Mr. Douglas's silliness is emphasized by an occasional—one assumes unconscious—lapse into common sense. He says: "The General Strike has settled nothing. The coal quarrel remains. We are as we were. Mine-owners and miners are still far apart. They have been wrangling for years, and unless public opinion stops their wrangling they will wrangle for ever." So prayer does not appear to have done so much after all, and it is public opinion that is left to do the job. Mr. Douglas leaves one marvelling at the very easy job the average newspaper writer has. He can set down the first thing that comes into his mind—so long as it does not threaten to offend certain interests, he can put in a couple of paragraphs half a dozen absurd and contradictory opinions, quite sure that those who look to him for entertainment will never detect the absurdity or the contradiction. It is one of the easiest trades in the world.

If Mr. Douglas showed any capacity for seeing to the roots of affairs he might reflect that the Great Strike exemplified, not the power of prayer, but the strength of the social consciousness and the capacity of human nature to work for an ideal. On the one side there was the readiness of those not implicated in the Strike to do what could be done to make things easier for all, and to see that the people suffered as little as possible. About that plenty has been said, and there is no need to add more here. But on the other side, the readiness for so large a number of working men and women to expose themselves to loss of money and hardship for what they considered right, is certainly something that should give our Christian pessimists cause for reflection. It is not a question of whether Trade Unionists were mistaken in what they did, or whether they were wrong in what they did. It is a question of the capacity of human nature to do and to sacrifice for what it believes to be right. The real and the enduring lesson of the Strike is the enormous capacity of human nature for right action, once it is properly educated and wisely directed. More than ever one feels it is not an emphasis on the sickly sentimentality of "Christian love" that the world needs, but on the Freethought message of enlightenment and wise direction.

We wonder whether Mr. Douglas, or any other of our daring journalists would have the courage to start a

campaign for the taxation of Church property? The country is pressed for money, taxes are excessively high, the labour trouble threatens to make them still higher, and yet there are hundreds of millions of pounds' worth of property relieved from taxation. This means, of necessity, that everyone of us is compelled to pay a portion of the rates and taxes which churches and chapels should be compelled to pay. The Nonconformists, who profess to be opposed to the State patronage of religion, grasp eagerly at State subsidization of their places of business, and Rome on the Rates is thus equalled by Nonconformity on the Rates. But our reforming newspaper writers remain silent on one of the scandals of to-day. It would offend too many people. When Free-thought agitation has aroused public opinion to the extent of making this reform and act of justice almost inevitable, we shall have newspapers coming in—as usual.

In connection with the coal dispute, it should never be forgotten that the Church of England draws about £400,000 annually from mining royalties, but we have not observed that the Church authorities have offered to lighten the burden on coal industry by offering to forgo this. And if ever the mining royalties are bought by the nation we may rest quite assured that the Church will see to it that it gets the utmost possible penny. This was the case with slavery. The Christian Church held on to its slaves to the last, and made what it could on the business side all along.

A verdict of suicide while of unsound mind was recorded by the Essex coroner at the inquest on Elizabeth Dawson, cook, who was found hanged at the Rectory, Wickford. The rector's wife said that Miss Dawson had been greatly affected by revivalist meetings at Southend, and had latterly been religiously depressed. This incident reveals one of the blessings of religion and of revivalist meetings about which the clergy are discreetly silent. These meetings, by engendering a morbid sense of "sin," unhinge minds that are unstable. Hence it is a common thing after these emotional orgies to find medical men having to consign some good few persons thus unbalanced to a mental hospital; and instances of suicide are not infrequent. But we suppose this sort of thing will continue until the doctors summon up sufficient courage to condemn revivalism and to speak of the evil it causes.

It may be in the process of time that the majority of mankind will give up God-chasing and find themselves. In this matter progress is slow but we welcome the help that will at last knock off a load from the shoulders of those who are carrying useless burdens. It is a pleasure to note the efforts of the clear-sighted writers who dispense with ambiguity and come to the point, and we commend the following extract from *Authors Dead and Living*, by F. L. Lucas. He writes:—

The whole march of science has been occupied with hunting down and exterminating everything anthropomorphic in our ideas of the world about us. The process has, indeed, been slow and desperately resisted by the human imagination. Long after men had realized that there was no reason for attributing to God a human beard, they continued and continue to think that there must be some reason for crediting Him with a human mind and feelings.

This is the gentle art of disassociating ideas the best representative of which is Remy de Gourmont.

"Tallyman" in the *Saturday Review* recounts the story of an officer in the Indian Police who telegraphed "New God on Frontier, am in pursuit." This method of keeping the first commandment, we are told, averted both a little holy war against Great Britain and the murder of the Messiah by believers who desired to have his sepulchre in their village. In a balance-sheet of the

Empire the accountants must often be at a loss as to which side must appear the activities of missionaries.

A new film is announced as dealing with the Biblical deluge. We presume it will be, in accordance with the wishes of the parsons, treated "reverently," but it may have the same effect upon the minds of many that the Christian story had upon the mind of Bishop Colenso's Kaffir. It is only intellects that have been narcotised from infancy, and so have lost the capacity for reasoning where religion is concerned, that can see in such stories either a narrative of fact or a profound spiritual allegory. The first merely indicates stupidity. The second betokens an alliance between that and mental crookedness.

Canon F. Partridge, in a parish magazine, recently had something to say about the creating of new dioceses and the appointing of new bishops. One argument, he says, against the practice was given at the Church Assembly. It was urged that it would be a very unfortunate thing for the Church if the number of bishops was so much increased that they would lose their importance in the eyes of the State and of men generally; and that therefore the influence of the Church over great questions of life and morals would appreciably decline. The solemn absurdity of all this is really rather funny. We are left in doubt whether these clerics assembled on the Lord's business are unconscious humorists or merely undiluted egotists. They do not appear yet to realize that their importance in the eyes of men could hardly be diminished much more than it is at present, even by the creating of a thousand new bishops. Their importance and influence largely disappeared when men ceased to regard bishops as semi-divine personages. And as for the Church's influence on life and morals, that is just about as near nothing as anything could be. Which is all the better for rational morality, and sound social relationships.

"Sabbatarian Humbugs" is the title of an article by the Rev. H. G. Wilks, M.A. He says he detests Sunday, not, be it understood, the preaching and the services, but the artificiality assumed by respectable churchgoers. He objects also to their special Sunday clothes and funereal countenances. Mr. Wilks adds:—

The depressing effect of a British Sunday, so often felt by healthy-minded folk, is largely due to a deeply-rooted misconception of what God desires in his creatures. The hidebound self-restrictions of the Sabbatarians have no part or parcel with the spirit of a vigorous creator.

The Sabbath, he contends, was made for man—not man for the Sabbath. That is all very well, but Mr. Wilks is ignoring the fact that the churches have always taught the people to believe Sunday is a day specially set apart for the Lord—in short, that it is a taboo day. The Sabbatarians assert that Sunday is a "sacred" day which should be kept sacredly. In this respect they are quite consistent with their creed, and so are undeserving of the epithet "humbugs." We would remind the reverend gentleman that if there is "a deep-rooted misconception" about the use of Sunday, then the men of his cloth it is who are to be held responsible for that misconception.

Our Christian friends shed bitter tears over modern irreligion and dwindling Sunday-school attendance, and prophecy great evil as the result. Seemingly, however, the youth of to-day appears not to be worsened; one might almost fancy it was improved. Says a shining light of the Sunday-school world, Mr. G. H. Archibald:—

Modern youth is more sincere than youth of fifty years ago. The mental outlook in this particular is better; there are fewer hypocrites. The modern boy or girl are open and frank about the things that those of yesterday did under cover of secrecy. The outlook is fresher and more free from humbug and cant.

Special.

THERE was, as all are aware, no *Freethinker* issued for May 9. But up to dinner-time on Friday, the 14th, we had hopes of getting a double issue—dated May 9-16—out for the week-end. So soon, however, as the paper was on the machine, and after about a quarter of the usual issue had been run off, another dispute occurred, and the machine men came out again, leaving us “in the air.” We were accordingly unable to do more than to distribute what we had, and newsagents could receive only a part of what they required. This will explain why some subscribers received their copies and some did not. At the time of writing there is still trouble with the large distributing houses, and, while this continues, the delivery of the *Freethinker* will be irregular and uncertain.

The rest of the edition has now been printed, and we hope that all our readers will see to it that they secure the missing number. It is one number they will be missing, not two, as none was issued for the week ending May 9.

In any dislocation such as has occurred, some financial loss must be incurred, and ours was—in view of our slender resources—heavy. There is also the possibility of a loss of subscribers owing to interruption of supply. May we therefore ask our readers to do what they can to make good that loss and to introduce this paper into as many fresh hands as is possible. We are still open to send the paper to any address for six weeks on receipt of threepence—the postage—in stamps. This secures many regular readers, and is an inexpensive form of help.

We can only say in conclusion that recent happenings must have emphasized the value of a journal that stands for freedom of opinion and a rational organization of social life.

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.

W. KERR (Buffalo).—The paper you mention did not come to hand, but the post has been greatly interfered with of late owing to the general upset. Thanks all the same. Friends who send us anything they think will prove interesting confer a favour always. Without their help many interesting and even important happenings would escape notice.

H. MURRAY.—The argument is absurd. Why should a Christian's testimony in favour of the help his religion gives him be of greater value than the testimony of the follower of another? If there is anything in it, it proves that all religions are equally true or equally useful. And in that case it does not matter a hang what religion a man has.

S. LEWIS.—The belief is quite a religious one. John Wesley in a sermon on “The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes,” laid it down that sin was the moral cause of earthquakes, whatever their natural cause might be. He held that God unchained natural forces in order to punish men for their “sins.”

R. MATTHEWS & F. WILLIAMS.—Thanks for the trouble you have taken. We will make use of your account in our next issue.

L. MARTIN.—There was no *Freethinker* on sale for May 9. One dated May 9-16 was issued on May 14, but there are difficulties in getting the paper distributed, and about three-fourths of the issue lies at this office waiting the chance of distribution. The fate of further issues is doubtful, but they will be printed, and the back numbers can always be secured.

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

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

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

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

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to “The Pioneer Press,” and crossed “Midland Bank, Ltd.,” Clerkenwell Branch.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The National Secular Society holds its Annual Conference to-day (May 23) at Birmingham. By that time the train service is expected to be normal, and the usual week-end tickets will be available for those attending. We do not know how far the recent upheaval will have the effect of preventing some coming who intended being present, and it will not be difficulty of transit that will operate. But we hope to be able to report next week that the attendance was at least up to the normal.

The Conference will hold its morning session at 10.30 and its afternoon session at 2.30 in the Imperial Hotel, Temple Street. These are business meetings, and are open to members and delegates only. They should bring with them their cards of membership. A luncheon, price 3s., will be served in the Imperial Hotel at 1 o'clock. The President, Secretary, with other members of the Executive, will be in the Hotel on Saturday evening from 7 o'clock to receive members and friends.

Following the business meetings there will be a public demonstration in the Scala Theatre, Smallbrook Street, at 7 o'clock. A full announcement will be found on the back page. Owing to the Strike the posters cannot be on the walls more than two or three days before the meeting, and it may not be possible to get them up at all. (We are writing this on the 18th, and cannot say with certainty.) There is the more reason for local friends taking up the task of advertising the meeting as widely as possible. There are a number of advertising slips available and friends may assist in circulating these on the Saturday, or even on the Sunday morning.

Sir Arthur Keith is to preside at the next Conway Memorial Lecture, which will be delivered on May 27, at 7 p.m., at South Place Institute, Moorgate, E.C., by Dr. Leonard Huxley, his subject being “Progress and the Unfit.” Admission will be free.

Mr. George Whitehead, who is running the usual summer campaign, under the direction of the Executive, deserves congratulating on having been able, despite the Strike, to hold seven meetings in South London during the past week or two. He is at present lecturing at Plymouth for a fortnight—ending May 30—and we hope that all local friends will do what they can to lend a hand in making the meetings a success.

A God in Disgrace.

OLD Jahveh—the Jehovah of the Old Testament—is in terrible disgrace at the present time. The most cultivated among the Christian clergy to-day have turned their backs upon him. They will not even own him. They rarely mention him; indeed, they prefer to ignore him and treat him with silent contempt. Some years ago, when the Rev. R. J. Campbell was preaching his "New Theology" at the City Temple, he described "the Bible God" in the following terms:—

The ordinary pre-suppositions of evangelical Christianity are utterly absurd, and every one of us must have felt their unreality from time to time. The fact is we seem to have two Gods, whom we call one, but who by no possible stretch of the imagination could be combined in one person.

The first is a *sort of old woman* who made the world and man as though he expected everything to go right and no evil or mischief to mar the work of his hands. But he laid his plans so badly that the whole scheme went awry and heaven has been mourning ever since. Poor God! He is not to blame, the theologians tell us; it is wicked man, more especially woman, who has put everything wrong. God has done his best, and the result has been untold ages of chaos and unimaginable suffering. All God can do is to provide a Redeemer to save a few out of the wreck and to keep on pleading with humanity, "O prodigal child, come home." You will, I am sure, forgive me the seeming irreverence of saying that that kind of God is a *fool*. And the other God, or God with the other face, is not much better. The other God has prepared a hell for poor helpless victims of what is called his righteous wrath. He has made it big enough to contain the whole race and into it the whole race will have to go unless they repent in time and avail themselves of the sufferings which he has graciously inflicted upon somebody else for their benefit. He has been sitting up there in heaven ever since creation first went wrong, brooding darkly over what he means to do to perverse and rebellious man when the time comes.

This is an extract of a report of a sermon delivered by the Rev. R. J. Campbell and reported in the *Daily Chronicle* on January 10, 1908.

Freethinkers reading this for the first time would be inclined to think that it was the utterance of some Freethought lecturer pouring ridicule upon the Christian God instead of the deliberate utterance of one who has always professed and called himself a Christian. And the worst of it is that, blasphemous as most Christians thought it at the time, it is nevertheless, every word of it, true; and the whole passage forms a very strong indictment against the Christian faith.

Since the Rev. R. J. Campbell gave utterance to these sentiments, however, he has reverted to the Anglican Church, in which he was brought up and ordained as a priest, but to the best of my belief he has never apologised for these utterances, or confessed that he was mistaken when he gave expression to them. And now a large number of Christian clergymen are prepared to give up some of the most important stories of the Old Testament such as the alleged Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden, the story of the Flood, and other equally absurd stories, the belief in which was regarded as essential a few years ago to the making of a true Christian. But why this change of front? Have they only just discovered that the Hebrew God cannot be defended either from a moral or an intellectual point of view?

John Stuart Mill told us in his *Autobiography* (page 44) that

he had a hundred times heard his father (James

Mill) say "That all ages and nations have represented their gods as wicked in a constantly increasing progression, that mankind had gone on adding trait after trait till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise and have called this God and prostrated themselves before it. This *ne plus ultra* of wickedness he considered to be embodied in what is presented to mankind as the creed of Christianity.

And unquestionably the old Jewish God *Jahveh* was about as wicked as any of them. And what was the character of this God? He said himself that he was "a jealous God and visited the sins of the fathers upon the children unto a third and fourth generation." Moses described Jehovah "as the Lord God of the Hebrews," and he is frequently called "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" in various parts of the Pentateuch; so that he had the best credentials that he could secure at the time. But this God Jehovah not only made a stupid blunder in the creation of Adam and Eve out of the dust, and in the case of Eve, out of a spare rib, but he allowed the devil in the form of a serpent to seduce them into eating of the forbidden fruit and thus not only brought about their fall but the damnation of the whole of the race unless they believed they could get redemption by the sacrifice of somebody who was not born until nearly four thousand years later. When the people began to increase and multiply they became so bad that Jehovah could think of no other way of reforming them than by a cold water process—a deluge—which not only decimated the whole population with the exception of eight persons—destroying alike men, women, and children without mercy, at one fell swoop; he even killed off at the same time all the lower animals who had done him no wrong. Further, this God instructed the Israelites to make slaves of the heathen round about them; he also commanded them to slaughter inoffensive and undefended people. In Exodus xxxii. 26-28) we find Moses asking: "Who is on the Lord's side?" in these words:—

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said: "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto him. And he said unto them, "Thus saith the Lord of Israel. Put every man his sword by his side and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp and slay every man his brother and every man his companion and every man his neighbour." And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

And in Numbers xxxi. 7-18 we find Moses warring against the Midianites, killing all the males and all married females and directing that the virgin women should be preserved to gratify the lusts of a horde of soldiers. These are only a few samples of the doings of Moses and others under the alleged instructions of the Hebrew God. No wonder many cultivated clergymen have become ashamed of such a God, and many laymen also. Yet they must have known of the character of this God for many years; then why have they remained silent so long? Have they been waiting for the members of their congregations to revolt against such teachings, or has it been simply fear on their part that has caused their silence? And what about the God with the other face—the God who made a hell fire in which to burn for ever the vast majority of his children? It was only this year that Dean Inge and Father Adderley told us there was no such place as Heaven or Hell; that, as a matter of fact, Heaven and Hell were within us. The fact is the intelligent clergy cannot hold on to their illogical, nay untenable, position much longer. The work of the great pioneers of Free-

thought is bearing fruit day by day, and with the growth of education among the masses the Christian superstition will be doomed in due course and consigned to the oblivion its history, morality, and absurdity so richly deserve.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Philosophy of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.¹

The philosophy of Marcus Antoninus is contained in a small work commonly named *Meditations*. The original title (if there were any) is lost. Only one complete MS., the Vatican, is in existence. Other Vatican MSS. and three Florentine MSS. give selections. The first edition appeared, together with a Latin translation, at Zurich, in 1558 (8vo.). It was prepared by Xylander from a MS. now untraceable; and was descriptively entitled, *The XII. Books of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus written for himself*, which closely agrees with the designation applied in the MSS. of the selections before mentioned. Each book is distinguished by a letter of the Greek alphabet; and divided into sections also marked in that way. The theme is the moral aspect of conduct. The matter is fragmentary and disconnected. The work has the appearance of having been composed for the author's private use, and not for publication. The parts were probably written at very different times. The first Book contains a reference to the wife of Marcus being still alive; and ends with the words, "Among the Suadi at Granua." The second Book has the termination, "This at Carnuntum." Elsewhere the author, addressing himself, observes: "Thou art an old man (ii. 2). "Every man's life is sufficient. But thine is nearly finished." (ii. 6). "Short is the little that remains to thee of life" (x. 15). Marcus died in his fifty-ninth year. This age is not patriarchal; but as he had passed through much trouble, weariness, and pain, he might well feel old before attaining it, and even expect to die shortly. The circumstances mentioned would readily explain certain inconsistencies of thought and ambiguities of expression into which he falls at times. The great charm of the work is the writer's profound and affectionate intimacy with his subject. In this respect it resembles *The Natural History of Selborne*. For Marcus Antoninus gave to right actions and right motives, the same close observation that Gilbert White gave to creeping things and flying fowl. In both cases the study had occupied a life-time, and the results are imparted with the negligence of overflowing knowledge. Here, however, the resemblance ends; for, whilst the style of the naturalist is always easy and graceful, that of the moralist is in general rough and clumsy; but its habitual rudeness is mitigated by occasional touches of great beauty. The intellectual characteristics of Marcus, together with his prejudices, or, as some might call them, his prejudices, have to a great extent determined his way of writing. Referring to himself, he says, "Men cannot admire the sharpness of thy wits"; and he finds consolation in the power to exercise virtue, adding, "if in truth thou canst be charged with being rather slow and dull of comprehension, thou must exert thyself about this also, not neglecting it, nor taking pleasure in thy dulness" (v. 5). Of his master Rusticus, he says, "From him I learned not to be led astray to

sophistic emulation, nor to write on speculative matters.....and to abstain from rhetoric and poetry, and fine writing" (i. 7). Of the gods, he says: "To them I am indebted.....that I did not make more proficiency in rhetoric, poetry, and other studies, in which I should perhaps have been completely engaged" (i. 17). But his splendid education had given him the inclinations and the habits of a lettered man. He quotes freely the Grecian sages, and even the Grecian poets and dramatists. He finds it necessary to cry, "Throw away thy books; no longer distract thyself.....cast away the thirst for books that thou mayest not die murmuring" (ii. 2); and he reminds himself that he will not get to read either his own memoranda, or the selections compiled by him for his old age" (iii. 14). These facts explain sundry peculiarities of the work, such as the inconsecutiveness, the preference of concrete to abstract thought, the lack of critical enquiry, the fulness of practical wisdom, and the occasional presence of eloquence in an unpretentious style.

After the above observations, the reader will not expect to find that Marcus gave his thought a systematic arrangement; but, it would be incorrect to infer from this that he had no system. For certain principles that recur in a desultory fashion throughout the work, have a natural connection which can readily be traced. Moreover, as the practical instructions relate to these principles, they have a value which independent aphorisms could not possess.

For the sake of convenience we shall select the chief problems of philosophy, and reproduce in each case the answer of Marcus.

I. The Universe.—The radical idea of Marcus, and one singularly prolific in consequences is, that all existing things, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, are the co-ordinate and co-operative members of an organic universe. One intelligent principle manifests itself throughout this scale of being; and, agreeably to the respective elements, furnishes adjustments and motion, supplies animation, and imparts reason.

Constantly regard the universe as one living being, having one substance and one soul (iv. 40). There is one common substance, though it is distributed among countless bodies which have different qualities. There is one soul, though it is distributed among infinite natures and individuals (xii. 30). Observe.....how all things act with one movement, and how all things are the co-operating causes of all things that exist; observe too, the continuous spinning of the thread and the contexture of the web (iv. 40). For things have been co-ordinated to form the same universe (vii. 9). The things without sensation.....the intelligent principle holds together (xii. 30). All things are implicated with one another, and the bond is holy (vii. 9).

II.—God and the Gods.—It is clear from the preceding section that Marcus reduced existence to two principles, namely, substance and intelligence; and that he did not believe either of them to have produced the other in any way. Thus he was neither a Pantheist, nor a true Materialist, nor even a true Theist. Nevertheless, his intelligent principle has the chief qualities of a deity; and it might appear that such a being would suffice for every religious necessity, but Marcus evidently thought otherwise, for he encumbered his system with a mob of inferior deities, which for all practical purposes are like the fifth wheel to a coach. He speaks of "the sunand the rest of the gods" (viii. 19); and, on one occasion he gives a very curious account of their relationship to the Most High:—

Wilt thou convince thyself that.....it will be well whatever shall please them, and whatever they shall

¹D. *Imperatoris Marci Antonini Commentariorum Quos sibi ipsi Scripsit.*—Libri xii. Curavit Jo. Matth. Schultz, Lipsiae. 1901. *The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.* Translated by George Long, M.A., London, 1919.

give for the conservation of the perfect living being, the good and just and beautiful, which governs and holds together all things (x. 1).

He refers to the providence of his deities, and once he says:—

If they have not determined about one individually, they have certainly determined about the whole at least, and the things which happen by way of sequence in the general arrangement I ought to accept with pleasure and be content with them (vii. 44).

The gods of Marcus are well-natured beings, never angry, jealous, or vindictive, like some that could be named; but, on the contrary, always wise and benevolent, just as the good man himself desired to be. They inspire confidence, not fear:—

To go away from among men, if there are gods, is not a thing to be afraid of, for the gods will not involve thee in evil.....In truth they do exist and they do care for human things, and they have put all the means in man's power to enable him not to fall into any real evils (ii. 11).

He asks in all simplicity:—

As to doing me harm, why should they have any desire towards that? For what advantage would result to them from this, or to the whole, which is the special object of their providence? (vi. 44).

Truly he would have been much surprised to hear that, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 31). 'The gods should be worshipped, but as Antoninus Pius worshipped them, "without superstition" (i. 16; vi. 30). "On all occasions," they are to be invoked. Length of time is no question, "for even three hours so spent are sufficient" (vi. 23). Prayers, however, must not be for the aversion of things feared, or for the adduction of things desired, but for strength to overcome the fear or the desire (xi. 40). Thus sweet honey is obtained from very homely flowers. Alas, there are things that cannot be touched without defilement; and hence it was that the just and kindly Marcus once so far forgot himself as to class deniers of the gods with traitors and chamberers (v. 16). The only excuse is to say that he was a tied thinker. The gods and their worship formed the national religion. The emperor held the office of Pontifex Maximus. Thus it was part of his official task to support the faith, and to perform, at any rate on State occasions, its supreme rites. Being extremely conscientious, Marcus would regard it as disloyal to question these traditions, and the exclusion of enquiry, aided by the effect of practice, would foster the will to believe. But he was not free from haunting doubts, for he often envisages the possibility that the universe is due to the activity of atoms, in order to show that even on this melancholy hypothesis virtue is the best course. Once he exclaims, "If there is a god, all is well; if chance rules, do not be thou be governed by it" (ix. 28).

It is noteworthy that, although brought up among the Salian priests, and initiated at a mature age into the Eleusinian Mysteries, he never talks of expiation of propitiation, of purification, or of any other mystical way of approaching the deity, and that he never mentions the gods in terms of affection after the manner of exalted pietists. With him, to profess religion was a part of his public duty, like keeping up the army, and leading it in time of war. He was so punctilious that, according to Dio, he used to offer sacrifices at home on days when they were not appointed to be offered in public (L. 71, c. 34).

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be Continued.)

The Theological Attack on Education.

It is a well-known fact that a tree disfigured in its earlier stages carries the deformity with it into maturity, and is rarely able to overcome its defect. The churches have never been slow to perceive the accuracy of the analogy in human affairs. The high degree of impressibility which is the heritage of youth makes exploitation pitifully easy; the pliable mind may be moulded to any shape, political or theological, which the educator thinks good. So the churches have always found in the school their best recruiting ground. Children are ignorant and, of necessity, tyros in reasoning; they are accustomed to defer to authority; their minds are, as Byron said, as wax to receive and marble to retain. All these qualities are most sought for in a neophyte, so no wonder the Church of England strove to retain her hold on education, no wonder the Nonconformist bodies stoutly disputed her claim to monopoly!

The end of the struggle was a compromise, which resulted in the Cowper-Temple clause. Religious instruction in the State schools was to be undenominational, and in fact was to consist almost solely in Bible reading, with explanation, but without special comment. The Sunday-schools, having no *raison d'être*, were converted into institutions for inculcating the particular tenets of each sect. Out of the conflict of opposing tyrannies, says Gibbons, comes the spark of freedom, and the Cowper-Temple clause was a spark of this kind. It has been for many years the safeguard of English children from dogmatic theology and sectarian exploitation.

The Churches also seem to have perceived this, and now a determined attack is being made on this very clause. A concordat has been reached, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, between the local education authorities and the representatives of the Church schools, and, as a result of this, theological instruction, in accordance with a scheme approved by the Council, will be given to the unfortunate children every morning from 9 to 9.30 o'clock. As the *Christian World* rightly says: "We are in the presence of an attempt to reverse the educational policy for which the Free Churches have always fought, and we feel we should not be doing our duty if we failed to call attention to it." The Anglicans are to meet with the other trinitarian sects to prepare a syllabus of theology which teachers must teach and children learn. We shall see a revival of the teaching, described by Sir Leslie Stephen in the life of his brother, which consisted largely of interrogations in this fashion: "Gurney, what is the difference between justification and sanctification? Stephen: Prove the omnipotence of God!" There will be rigid theological tests for teachers, which will debar all but the most orthodox from teaching in the State schools. The system itself will avoid the points of controversy between the sects, and will represent the highest common factor of the *official* tenets of all. Such a minimum cannot well be less than the Nicene creed. The Bishop of Durham informs us that, but for the timely introduction of such a syllabus, we should fast become, in large part, a nation of educated savages, so following the footsteps of the United States.

Thus is the Christian Church about to lay to its account another violation of human justice. It is futile for Christians to say, as they so often say, "What are you grumbling at? No child is compelled to attend theological instruction if its parents wish otherwise." A remark like this merely makes the Freethinker wonder whether Christianity does not tend to dry up, in its adherents, the very springs

of justice. What the parents wish does not matter twopence. No child should ever be told that anything is absolutely true, which is a mere matter of opinion. Religion is a personal matter, and no religious or other body should hamper in any way a child's capacity for making an honest and unbiased decision when he comes to maturer years. If the Christians are not open to appeals to justice, perhaps an appeal to their own interests will make them agitate a little less for the introduction of their syllabus. One volunteer, runs the proverb, is worth ten conscripts. *Verbum sapienti sat'est.*

In working for the greater end of secularisation, we must not forget the immediate task. The recision of the Cowper-Temple clause, except in favour of complete liberty, must be resisted to the uttermost. There is a great danger that, with their minds full of the economic crisis, people will neglect to notice this dangerous movement of the Churches. That this is an attack on what liberty we have in education must be brought into the circle of the public consciousness. The Secular Education League has issued a leaflet entitled "The Growing Menace to Religious and Civic Equality," but it is dubious whether any single organization, without ample resources and widespread membership, can do much that is effectual to stop this insidious measure. It can only be done if every just and reasonable citizen will bring its full significance to the notice of his neighbours, if he will shout it from the housetops as loudly as may be. All should unite to determine that no such measure shall ever disgrace our Statute Book.

F. CAROL MUNDY,

Secretary of the Rationalist Education Circle.

Primitive Christians.

MR. LLOYD, in an article on Dr. Glover of some months back, appears to accept the myth which depicts the child-like simplicity and purity of the early Christians, as well as the tales of their being flung to wild beasts in the arena. Before setting down a few desultory notes as to this estimate, I must observe that the method of publishing long extracts from the pernicious drivel of modern Christians seems to me a somewhat questionable method of Freethought propaganda. You cannot touch pitch and be undefiled. In reading the articles I purposely skipped the drivel because reading the muddle-headed fallacies of these individuals is itself mentally injurious. However, to come to the question of the primitive Christians, surely modern criticism, even of twenty years ago, has cast the gravest doubts as to these stories of official persecution, which Sienkiwicz, Whyte Melville, and others who padded profitably to the orthodox world by accepting them blindly, have more or less rehabilitated. So far as I am aware, there is not a single allusion to these supposed facts in any contemporary writers worth trusting. There is not a hint of anything of the kind in *Virgil, Horace, Catullus, Suetonius, Juvenal, or Martial*, and the latter has a book of epigrams dedicated exclusively to the arena. Hatred, quarrelling, and a delight in cruelty appears to have marked the Christian religion from the very first. This may be inferred from the extremely few allusions to the new sect in respectable writers of the day. The horrible punishment of burning alive so dear to Christian Holiness is a good illustration.

Certainly down to the time of Domitian, and most likely much later, it was applied only in very heinous cases of parricide. No doubt it formed a grand attraction in a gladiatorial show that was fortunate enough to exhibit it.

After Constantine had established Christianity as the only religion that was to be tolerated, it was occasionally applied by governors of provinces.

There were two cases during the reign of Julian, the great Pagan Emperor.

As Christian barbarism gradually got most of the power into its hands, the Faithful applied it more frequently to one another, *i.e.* to heretics of different forms of belief, till in the Middle Ages the inhuman practice was thoroughly identified with Christianity. *A priori*, it is extremely unlikely that the seedling of primitive Christianity should be all honey and the milk of human kindness and the full-grown tree the very opposite. Let us take a concrete case, that of the notorious fanatic and loose thinker, Paul of Tarsus. He seems to have been a real personage.

In his *Diegesis* Taylor represents Lucian the satirist as having actually conversed with the notorious Apostle. I think there must be a mistake here because the date of Lucian is put down as 176 A.D. The Galilean—in the Latin version the actual name Paul is given—is described by the satirist as that bald-headed, hook-nosed fellow who went up through the air into the third heaven. Sculptural and pictorial evidence is said to tally with Lucian's description, and he was invariably represented as pot-bellied and with a hook nose. In addition to all this, like Calvin, he was diseased. One of his maladies being an unmentionable one. People may be judged by their companions. Paul's followers are described by the same writer "as a set of tatterdemalions almost naked, with fierce looks, and the gait of madmen who moan and make contortions.....predicting a thousand misfortunes to the Empire and cursing the Emperor. About a century later another writer, who died 273, classes this Paul among some of the less noted Greek philosophers, and concludes: "I consider him to be the first setter forth of an improved doctrine." Evidently the myth of his wisdom and sanctity had been developing since Lucian wrote about him. The Christians are wonderful at converting sinners. Paul of Tarsus was a murderer and from the description of him a good deal like Fagin in *Oliver Twist* (see Cruickshank's picture of him in the condemned cell). One cannot help suspecting that his zeal for the Christian superstition, as in the case of the other notorious Christian murderer, the Emperor Constantine was due to the whitewash of forgiveness of his crimes the Christians were ready to apply to his uneasy conscience. He is represented as a tent-maker by trade. Another apostle, one Simon, is represented as being a tanner. In one of his foolish letters our Tarsus Fagin insists upon the propriety of men wearing their hair cut short. This injunction may perhaps have been dictated by spite due to the fact that he was as bald as a bat himself. But there is nothing more likely or possible. Paul was a Roman citizen and a tent-maker. Now we know that the tents of the Roman army were made of raw hide. Putting two and two together it seems highly probable that this individual, this Roman citizen of Tarsus, furnished the army with tents made of raw hides. Now the Roman soldiers wore the hair short, so as not to risk being caught hold of it by the enemy and despatched to a better world. There may have been other motives for making short hair a part of his religion, but this I take it was the primary one. People who chose trades involving the killing and skinning of animals and manipulating raw hides are likely to be fond of bloodshed, or they would not have selected such a livelihood.

I do not know to what extent our Tarsus Fagin swindled the Roman governor, but another army contractor, one George of Cappadocia, robbed and cheated right and left, and that did not prevent him

from acquiring the odour of sanctity and from becoming, ill-natured people will say, the highly appropriate patron saint of the great English people. Ultimately the Church further varnished our Tarsus Fagin with an eloquent martyrdom. The inventor of the legend must either have been a hardened cynic or devoid of a sense of humour, for the legend states that when this sanguinary fanatic's head was cut off instead of blood nothing but milk gushed out. Also a good Trinitarian, the head made three hops and where it touched the ground three fountains of pure water sprang up with miraculous healing properties.

Given this miraculous power of the Christian Church of converting sinners into saints by the power of faith and the word without materially affecting the lives and characters of the converted as exemplified by the case of this Paul of Tarsus, to say nothing of the garter saint, Cyril of Alexandria, the murderer of Hypatia, Carlo Borromeo, and many others, there is not the least reason to assume that the Church's picture of the early Christians corresponds to what they really were. Gibbon pooh-poohs the idea of their occasionally eating children sacrificially, but there are reasons to think they did. Some details are given somewhat watered down by Robertson in his *Pagan Christs*. And there is a hackneyed passage about children in the Christian revealed word of God their New Testament strongly favouring the latter view. The child is set upon a pinnacle as an object of imitation and at the same time terrible denunciations are fulminated against those who maltreated them. Now in a religion of saintly nature and good sense, there is no necessity for such a denunciation. There is nothing of the kind in Buddhism. Again, although the Romans were a somewhat cruel and bloodthirsty people, there are no denunciations in all their classical writers of cruelty to children and not a few testimonies to their kindness even towards the children of their slaves. Consequently there must have been something peculiar to the Christians rendering such denunciations necessary in their case. But where the bloodthirsty Christian superstition finds a congenial soil, child labour, and child torture are rampant. Could an ordinary Roman of the early Empire be resuscitated, he would hardly believe that the most religious and self-righteous people in Europe down to the year 1833 judicially murdered children of the common people for stealing a few coppers off shop counters—children of ten and eleven years of age.

Another illustration of the brutish and bloodthirsty character of the early Christian fanatics is the immense extension they gave to the barbarous practice of castration. One would have thought that people who believed themselves to be created by God himself and that their bodies were temples of the Holy Ghost, whatever that may mean, would have been chary of mutilating God's handiwork. Buddhism, which is a relatively sane religion, excludes Eunuchs from its pale, and the last of the twelve great Roman Emperors passed laws to prohibit human castration. This may have been one of the causes that excited the rancour of the Christians against him. Anyhow, according to Suetonius, his murderer was a pettifogging Christian lawyer, of the name of Stephen, who for all I know may have been the original of the first martyr. As soon as they felt secure in the saddle after Constantine the Christians revived and developed the practice to an enormous extent, and it was these "adjusted" Christians that largely brought about the fall of the Roman Empire and hastened the long night of the Dark Ages. If we may believe Voltaire, for a thousand years these monsters of Christian Holiness castrated three or four thousand Italian boys annually.

We may be pretty sure that the brutal and fanatical Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries were simply the primitive Christians writ large, as soon as power and privilege enabled them to carry out the murderous desires of their hearts, which in primitive times could only be indulged in clandestinely, though even then the respectable part of the Pagan world would seem to have regarded them with abhorrence.

La Paz.

W. W. STRICKLAND.

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 postcard.

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INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. William Kent, "A Humanist's View of John Bunyan."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—No meeting.

OUTDOOR.

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

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Every Tuesday and Thursday at 7.30; Sunday at 11, 3.30, and 6.30; Lecturers—Messrs. Hart, Howell Smith, B.A., Hyatt, Le Maine, and Saphin.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—No meeting.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3 and 6, Mr. A. D. McLaren will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside the Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. J. Hart, "Why I am an Atheist."

COUNTRY.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission, May 17 to 30.

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SPEAKERS:

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ROSETTI, F. E. WILLIS, CLIFFORD WILLIAMS,
Mrs. R. H. ROSETTI, and Miss MACAULAY

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