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Views and Opinions.

Christian Morals.

We think it impossible to say how many times during our career as Freethought writer and speaker we have dwelt upon the low moral nature of Christian teaching, but as we are always coming across fresh illustrations of it, it is likely it will be said many times more before we pass on. Of course, we do not mean that Christian teaching has openly advocated the breaking of the commonplace virtues. On the contrary, no body of men have ever had their mouths better filled with moral exhortations than have Christian preachers. And yet, side by side with the stream of moral exhortation, often illustrated in the same person, there has gone on very frequently the manifestation of some of the most dangerous of anti-social qualities, and at all times the setting forth of a teaching that amounted to a practical denial of morality altogether. Or, still further, it takes very little study to make plain the fact that the exhibition of Christian virtues has often served as a cloak for the expression of qualities that, apart from the disguise of religion, many would have felt heartily ashamed of. You can be thoroughly venomous to your neighbour, provided you do it in the name of Christian love and brotherhood. You can lie without stint, provided it is done in the name of zeal for religion. You can exalt persecution to the rank of a social duty, so long as it is done in the interests of a Church. It may well be that non-Christians exhibit all the ugly qualities that Christian records so plentifully display, but in none are they so excused and made easy by religious conviction.

* * *

A Real Christian.

The latest illustration of the truth of the general proposition just stated comes in an article published in a recent issue of the *Referee*, which one of my readers has been good enough to send me. One does not go to the *Referee* for instructive essays on the more serious aspects of life, but every now and again one of its writers makes an excursion into the realms of theological philosophy, and this is generally done on the apparent assumption that any kind of nonsense does when one has anything to say in connection with religion, provided it be orthodox

nonsense. Thus a Mr. Michael Temple, dealing with the Marquis de Sade, of unenviable notoriety, takes occasion to present his readers with a piece of what he evidently imagines to be quite good moral philosophy. And his conclusion is that we might all be so many de Sades; in fact, we should be, if we did not happen to believe in some kind of an Almighty policeman who has us always under surveillance. The passage is worth while giving as it stands in the chaste columns of the *Referee*. Mr. Temple says:—

Given the belief that all is finished with our death, and that there is nowhere a Judge to approve or blame our actions, that we merely pass into nothingness, and there is no reason whatever, except the activity of the policeman, why you or I should not indulge in any bestial suggestion made to us from our lower nature.

There it is! It contains Mr. Temple's philosophy of morals, and if we had to draw up an indictment of Christianity considered exclusively from an ethical standpoint, and submit it to a jury of enlightened men and women, we should be content to put Mr. Temple forward, just as he is, as a natural product of Christian teaching.

A Policeman God. * * *

It will be observed that in Mr. Temple's Christian philosophy, all our indecencies, real and alleged, are explainable, even justifiable, if there is no God keeping his eyes on us. Mr. Temple believes in the dignity of human nature—so long as it is watched. Man will be honest—so long as there is a policeman about, but no longer. It invites Ingersoll's retort to the man who explained at great length that if he did not believe there was a God who saw what he did he would steal and murder, and commit every crime in the calendar. And Ingersoll, after looking him over, replied, "Well, after a casual examination of you, I should say you would." Mr. Temple can see no ground for decency save the existence of a judge who will punish us if we behave indecently. If there is no Almighty Judge, then Mr. Temple can see no reason why we should not be as indecent as we feel inclined to be. In passing, I may observe that taking men generally it is probable that most of them are pretty nearly as indecent as they feel inclined to be. Mr. Temple's mistake lies in assuming that *all* would be indecent if there were no Almighty policeman keeping them under guard. He looks round at men and women, and seeing that they do manage to behave themselves tolerably well, he reflects that as they must feel inclined to be indecent, the only reason why they are not must be because they are afraid to be so. The possibility that morality has some cause other than the fear of a policeman never dawns upon his Christian intelligence.

* * *

Religion and Morals.

Mark, we are not accusing Mr. Temple of not being a good Christian. On the contrary, we assert

that he is one. You will find exactly the same teaching in St. Paul. He says, with Mr. Temple, that if there be no future life then do what the devil you feel inclined to do while you are here. If there is no account to settle in the next world, then nothing matters. You will find it stated to the same effect in the official Christian creeds, and you will find it expressed—in a less open and a less honest manner—in the writings of many modern preachers and Christian writers. In this respect, indeed, the balance of credit lies with the older theologians. So long as man's salvation was made to rest wholly and completely on an act of faith, theologians were ready to admit the existence of what they called "mere natural morality" while stressing the belief that this alone could not save man. But as faith lost its power, and as Christians found themselves compelled to justify their creed from a more common-sense point of view, and were forced to admit the existence of a quite healthy morality apart from Christian belief, they began to dwell upon the existence of certain ethical "values" in the universe which offered lodgement for a diluted supernaturalism. But whether in the crude and ignorant form such as is stated by Mr. Temple, or in the more sophisticated, but equally absurd, form stated by men such as Dean Inge, the same principle is there. There can be no healthy morality apart from religious belief. And that amounts to a disbelief in the capacity of human nature for behaving itself without its being under strict police supervision, with orders to report regularly to the Almighty policeman's official representatives.

* * *

Saints and Sinners.

Mr. Temple, having been nurtured on Christian teaching, repeats it here without the slightest apparent conception of its frightfully demoralizing consequences. He is only concerned with holding a particular individual to reprobation as a means of endorsing the Pauline teaching that if there be no after life and no policeman to face, then let us have what a Christian calls a "good time," which means in the religious vocabulary, being as big a black-guard as it is possible for one to become. And as, from his point of view, not behaving like a black-guard involves a certain amount of self-denial, Mr. Temple naturally asks, "Why should I thus deny myself if I am not to receive a benefit in some future life?" Of course, the answer is that to a sound character there is no greater self-denial in behaving decently than there is in eating a good meal instead of a bad one. Pre-Christian and non-Christian moralists have all along taught that as all actions carry their consequences, it is this direction that we have to look for any "payment" we may receive. Pursuing this line would, however, carry Mr. Temple into a region with which he is probably quite unacquainted, so we must content ourselves with pointing out that while we do not regard the example of a Marquis de Sade as not threatening society with any danger worth bothering about, Mr. Temple's religious philosophising carries with it elements that are distinctly harmful to all who are weak-minded enough to be influenced by it. It is not the man with obviously bad teaching or with unmistakably bad actions who endangers social stability, but the "good" man with a teaching that strikes at the foundations of healthy conduct. Ten thousand de Sades could not have inflicted upon the European stock a thousandth part of the injury done by the fanatics who foisted upon the world the Christian ideal of celibacy. We do not suppose that anyone was ever more immoral as a consequence of de Sade having lived than he or she would have been had

he never lived at all. But the Christian teaching in the name of morality and religion succeeded in surrounding the question of sex with an atmosphere of obscenity from which we have not yet recovered. No man was ever made more brutal by reading of the plainly brutal conduct of another. But the intolerance preached by Christianity and the persecution practised by it, enabled men to gratify a brutal passion by giving it a religious and moral covering. The bad man carries his own danger signal, and the evil dies with him. But the "good" man, the religious man preaching evil in the guise of goodness, entraps and misleads, and his influence lives on after his death in the institutions he has helped to create. Against legally "bad" men Society has always been able to protect itself with tolerable ease and success. It is the preachers of a righteousness of the kind championed by Mr. Temple against whom Society has been comparatively ineffective. If society could only protect itself against its "saints" it need not seriously disturb itself over its sinners.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christian Apologetic Up To Date.

(Concluded from page 404.)

THE author of the essay entitled "The Vindication of Religion," Dr. Alfred Edward Taylor, being Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, ought to be specially qualified to deal with the subject assigned to him, and it may reasonably be taken for granted that his defence of religion will be the very best that can be provided. All are aware, friends and enemies alike, that religion has been the biggest and most important factor in human history in all ages and countries; but what is it in its inner nature, and what have been the consequences of its sway in the world? At the very outset of his masterly communication, Dr. Taylor makes two vastly important admissions, the first being that religion is solely an object of belief, and the second, that being such its truth cannot be proved by demonstration. He says:—

There is no suggestion that the Christian believer should expect to be able to demonstrate the truth of his convictions as one may demonstrate a proposition in mathematics. No doubt we should all like to show that it would be as absurd in a rational being to deny the truths upon which we base our highest hopes for ourselves and for the world as it would be to deny the statements of the multiplication table, or of an accurately calculated set of logarithms. But just in so far as a man could succeed in doing this he would be converting "faith" into knowledge and hope into vision.

That is a position for the truth of which this journal has been persistently and vigorously contending for many years; and it is in the highest degree satisfactory and encouraging to find it so confidently conceded at the very outset of his argument by an eminent Anglo-Catholic divine. Curiously enough Dr. Taylor admits that the evidences of religion are not of universal application. "Whatever they may turn out to be," he says, they "must not be expected to produce much conviction in the man of thoroughly irreligious temper who has done nothing to counteract that temper, the merely sensual or ambitious or proud or inquisitive"; and yet that is the kind of man in whom they should be able to produce complete conviction. It is but a futile commendation of them to say "it is sufficient that they should be found adequate by those who have within them at least the making of "holy and humble men of heart," who feel the need of something they can love and adore without any of the reservations which clear

insight sets to all our devotion to friend or wife or child or country." We have never yet met a man who needed to set any reservation to his devotion to friend or wife or child or country, though we are familiar with the fact that the Gospel Jesus is represented as saying that if any man came unto him and hated not his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yea and his own life also, he could not be his disciple, which is the very acme of absurdity.

Dr. Taylor's essay is divided into three parts, entitled From Nature to God, From Man to God, and From God to God. As the reviewer in the *Church Times* puts it: "The main argument of the essay is based on St. Bonaventura's contention that consideration of what is around us, what is within us, and what is above us, are three well-marked and successive stages of the intellectual ascent to knowledge of God, not three routes but three distinguishable stages on the same route." Let us critically examine each of them. The first stage, "From Nature to God," exists only in the imagination of certain believers. Cardinal Newman was incapable of arguing from Nature to God. "It is a great question," he said, "whether Atheism is not as philosophically consistent with the phenomena of the physical world as the doctrine of a creative and governing power." To him the argument from design was inconclusive, and he stoutly maintained that a contemplation of the world would naturally lead to Atheism, Pantheism or Polytheism. But Dr. Taylor is of an entirely different frame of mind. He declares that "Nature inevitably points beyond itself as the temporal and mutable to an 'other' which is eternal and immutable." This is sheer dogmatism, and no evidence whatever of its truth is advanced. The following seems to be Dr. Taylor's nearest approach to an argument:—

The spectacle of movement and change which we call "Nature" at least suggests the presence of some "transcendent" source of movement and change which is strictly eternal, being above all mutability, and having no succession of phases within itself, and is omnipotent, since it is the source of all "becoming." The orderliness and apparent purposive "trend towards intelligence" in Nature similarly at least suggest that this omnipotent and eternal "supernatural" is a wholly intelligent Will. The force of the suggestion seems to have been felt by man in every stage of his history so far as that history is accessible to us. It is noteworthy that the more intimate our enquiries become with the "savages" who by our estimate stand nearest to a pre-civilized condition, the clearer it becomes that even those of them who have been set down on first acquaintance as wholly "godless" turn out, on better knowledge, to have their traditions of a "maker of life," and the like.

Of course, there is a sense in which the physical universe may be called both infinite and eternal, though not in the sense which Dr. Taylor attaches to those adjectives; but there is absolutely no indication that Nature's movements and changes imply or even suggest the activity of supernatural forces. In Nature as we know it there is no trace whatever of omnipotence. That word was manufactured by the metaphysicians, and Nature knows nothing at all of it.

"From Man to God" is a phrase equally devoid of intelligible content as the one we have just dismissed. The essayist says:—

Nature, we have urged, on inspection points to the supernatural beyond itself as its own presupposition; if we look within ourselves we shall see that in man Nature and supernature meet; he has both within his own heart, and is a denizen at

once of the temporal and of the eternal. He has not, like the animals, so far as we can judge of their inner life, one environment to which he must adapt himself but two, a secular and an eternal. Because he is designed ultimately to be at home with God in the eternal, he can never be really at home in this world, but at best is, like Abraham, a pilgrim to a promised but unseen land; at worst, like Cain, an aimless fugitive and wanderer on the face of the earth.

Nothing worse than that ever fell from the lips of a sensational religious revivalist. Whole pages are filled with that wretched kind of perfervid rant. Take the following sentences as a sample: "The final peace of man, if it is to be found at all, can only be found in a God who is eternal by nature and imparts by his grace a 'participated' eternity of perseverance to the other party to the relation. Our true, final good thus lies not in the world of Nature, but in that other-world of the supernatural which everywhere interpenetrates and sustains Nature and yet absolutely transcends her." That is undiluted nonsense, which only a few here and there regard as true, and not one literally acts upon.

We now come to the third phrase, "From God to God," and our first wonder is what the words signify. Let the divine explain it:—

Here, if the phrase stands for anything real, we have clearly done with mere suggestions; we are dealing with the interpretation of a direct manifestation of the divine and super-temporal, within the limits imposed by the finitude and temporality of the human recipient. To use phraseology which is more familiar to us to-day, we have to consider the worth of the so-called religious experience as testimony to the reality of its own object, and there is no line of argument which lends itself more readily to abuse. Every kind of faddist and fanatic will appeal as readily to experience for testimony to his own pet fancies as the credulous appeal to the "evidence of their senses" for proof of the existence of ghosts or the reality of sorcery.

Now, we seriously ask, can religious experience be justly looked upon as reliable testimony to the reality of its own object? Can the joy-giving and heart-uplifting experience of communion with God be taken as conclusive evidence of the existence of God? Benvenuto Cellini was by no means a good man, but his piety was undoubtedly genuine enough. He was constantly on his knees praying. In his *Memoirs* he tells us that, when he had to keep his bed with a broken leg, there was nothing he enjoyed so much as prayer. "I worshipped God the Father," he says, "surrounded with a host of angels, and Christ rising victorious over death, which I had drawn upon the wall with a piece of charcoal that I had picked off the ground." On one occasion, when out of favour with the Pope, he was tempted to commit suicide, and this is what he wrote: "Just at this juncture, the invisible being that had prevented my laying violent hands upon myself, came to me, still invisible, but spoke with an audible voice, shook me, made me rise up, and said, 'Benvenuto! Benvenuto! lose no time, raise your heart to God in fervent devotion, and cry to him with the utmost vehemence.'" In all generations, Christian believers have had more or less similar experiences, and they are being enjoyed to-day by many highly emotional people, but instead of being a testimony to the existence of God they only serve to prove that practically nothing is impossible to strong faith. Religious experience is the outcome not of actual contact with a super-human being, but of the all-conquering power of impassioned belief. God exists only to those who believe in him, while to unbelievers he is utterly unknown. J. T. LLOYD.

The Tradesman's Touch.

The Salvation Army makes such a noise that innocent people are likely to think it is a foreign invasion.—*G. W. Foote.*

Full of sound and fury.—*Shakespeare.*

WHAT James Boswell did for stout old Dr. Johnson, Mr. Harold Begbie has sought to do for William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army. The result is a two-volume biography, issued by the firm of Macmillan, and published at 12s. 6d. net. The original edition was produced some years ago, and, presumably, there is a demand for a new issue.

Doubtless, it will have a good sale, for it is written in that perfervid and emotional style which Mr. Begbie has made his own. Clever in its way, it belongs to the realm of journalism rather than literature. And the journalist usually is a fluent penman who is ready to write on any subject under the sun at a moment's notice, and for the usual consideration. As an example of Mr. Begbie's literary worth we may quote his sober estimate of William Booth: "Likely to remain for many centuries one of the most signal figures in human history." It fairly takes one's breath away, to use a popular colloquialism. And it loses nothing by being published on the same day as the newspapers announce that Spurgeon's Tabernacle, once the Mecca of English-speaking Nonconformists, has been transformed into a Jewish Synagogue.

The two men, indeed, were widely different, Spurgeon was an orator, and he possessed in his earlier years, before gout sobered him, a pleasant wit. His sermons, written in the plain, blunt English of the working classes, shorn of the slang, had a bigger circulation than any contemporary preacher. And clergymen in country villages and the Colonies found it cheap and profitable to expend a penny in the weekly issue, thus saving them much fever of the brow and giving them a reputation for variety pleasing to their small and select congregations. The sermons ran for a period of forty years, and Spurgeon's books were extraordinarily popular, yet he lived to find himself the chief of the theological backwoodsmen, and his cause doomed. As for William Booth, he was so much behind the intellectual movements of his day that he never had any real idea that there were any theological difficulties at all.

The egregious Mr. Begbie will have it that Booth represented the "direct antithesis of Darwinism." He might have considered the claims of the great Roman Catholic Church, which, at least, possesses a history of some degree of consequence. It is quite safe to say that the majority of the scientists of the civilized world had as much respect for the Salvation Army as for the dusky Christians of Abyssinia, who possess the distinction of being one of the most pious and least cultured people. If any of them were interested in religion at all, it could scarce be that form of military burlesque united with the drums and cymbals of savagery.

Booth was not a religious genius like Swedenborg, or John Wesley, to quote only two examples. He was a showman just as much as Barnum, only he selected the bizarre features of the Christian Religion for exploitation, instead of the more familiar features of dwarfs, giants, and freaks, and the largest circus on earth. Mind you, he did it all very cleverly. He caught the more emotional disciples of British Nonconformity, and got them to deal with the firm of William Booth instead of allowing them to patronise the tin-tabernacles and ugly buildings of Methodism.

The Salvation Army is as much a trading concern as the ever-popular Penny Bazaar, which flourishes in spite of a price-list far exceeding the licence of the title of the firm. Clothes, tea, children's toys, books, musical instruments, an emigration bureau, and even fire-insurance figure among the trading activities of this spiritual body, thus justifying the jest that Salvationists are insured against fire in both worlds.

It is even said that William Booth started his business career as a pawnbroker's assistant. We can easily believe it, for there was always a suggestion of the New Cut, Lambeth, underlying the perfervid oratory, and melodramatic manners, of this extraordinary non-military army.

Mr. Begbie is never tired of lauding the so-called "spiritual" significance of Booth and his intellectual babies. Like the schoolboy's terse description of snakes in Iceland, "there ain't any." Booth's love letters to his wife prove this beyond all cavil and dispute. If the love effusions of Abelard and Eloise represent one end of the scale of amorous correspondence, those of William Booth are at the other. Only one further stage is possible, that of two young rustics who walk miles simply holding hands, altogether illiterate but happy.

The tyrannical superstructure of the Salvation Army, which required William Booth to be the owner of everything the organization possessed was only a manifestation of his masterly and overbearing character. He cleared everybody out of the Salvation Army who opposed him, and he quarrelled with members of his own family for no better reason than that they wanted to express themselves, and not merely be echoes of their master's voice.

To talk of the activities of the Salvation Army having changed the face of England, as Mr. Begbie clearly implies, is simply silliness. The submerged tenth, which the Army professed to rescue are still to be found "on the dole" and feeding from the hands of relieving officers. The drink evil, which the Salvation Army has always fought tooth and nail, is still with us, more wealthy and insolent than ever. The much-advertised list of conversions, published in the *War Cry* weekly for many years, is as big a joke as the vaunted salvation of suicides. If the weekly lists be added together they would amount to more than the population of the country, which, as old Euclid puts it, is absurd. The bulk of Booth's converts were attracted from other religious bodies by the picturesque method of propaganda. Their loss was Booth's gain. It was as spiritual as the tactics of the Standard Oil Company mopping up its rivals. As for the welfare of the working man, no Trade Unionist would get excited over the generosity of the Salvation Army with regard to the salaries of employees. The Emigration Department, too, is another money-making venture. The Army acts like any other emigration agent, and pockets the commission from the railway and shipping companies.

As for the religious significance of the Salvation Army, it must be confessed that it is hopelessly out of date. It was out of harmony with the times when it started, and merely succeeded because William Booth was clever enough to catch customers from other gospel-shops by means of blaring brass-bands and bedizened uniforms. The Wesleyans and Methodists were becoming respectable at that period, and all who loved excitement in their religion rallied to the noise of the trombones and tambourines. Now, in its turn, the Salvation Army is becoming a commonplace, and in its training-colleges it is beginning to pursue the old, old path trod by preachers of so many religious sects. The next few years will see

great changes in such an organization. Its founder will probably be remembered in the large company of exploiters of fancy religions. His best claim to remembrance lies in the fact that he was a tradesman, with a touch of fanaticism. Probably, he knew nothing of Omar Khayyam, but the old Persian's lines: "O take the cash, and let the credit go," sums up pretty accurately the total of the "spiritual" activities of William Booth, pawnbroker and evangelist.

MIMNERMUS.

Palestine Exploration and the Bible.

It seems extraordinary, considering the immense volume and variety of our knowledge of the ancient empires of the East, that a hundred years ago we knew nothing of it except the few unreliable scraps of tradition and hearsay preserved by Greek authors and the legendary tales of the Old Testament. It was not until the year 1822 that Champollion announced he had solved the problem of the Egyptian hieroglyphics; the Babylonian Cuneiform writing was not solved until about thirty years later. Of course, long before this, the pictorial scenes, sculptured and painted upon the tombs and temples, had been made to testify—falsely as we now know—to the truth of the Bible.

The first book I can remember was an immense family Bible containing hundreds of illustrations, along with a running commentary at the foot of each page, explaining the sacred text. I can remember the illustrations, taken from the Egyptian monuments, to illustrate the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt. There were the Israelites—the Commentary assured us they were Israelites—making bricks without straw, which, by the way, was the usual Egyptian manner of making them. Another scene showed them building the "store cities" for the Egyptian corn, all under the whip of the Egyptian taskmaster. Another illustration was that of an Egyptian ruler giving audience to a deputation, of semitic appearance, which did duty for Joseph's brethren coming to Egypt to buy corn. These scenes were taken from the Egyptian monuments right enough, but we now know that they were sculptured more than a thousand years before the time they are alleged to have occurred, according to the Bible.

The Hebrew language was held to be the first and original language of mankind, from which all others were descended. The Chevalier Palin, in 1802-4, asserted that the Egyptian papyri contained the Psalms of David in hieroglyphics. Lenoir, in 1810, considered them to be Hebrew documents. Another author thought that the inscription of the portico of Dendera contained a translation into hieroglyphics of the Hundredth Psalm! Of course the announcement that Champollion had succeeded in translating the Egyptian hieroglyphics aroused great interest and expectation. It was thought by the pious that now, at last, the Bible would be vindicated, and infidels like Voltaire and Paine once for all silenced. These great expectations were not fulfilled. No reference to any of the events related in Genesis and Exodus has been found in any of the multitudes of translations made from the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Later, when the cuneiform writing of Babylonia was deciphered, it was again confidently expected that confirmation of the early books of the Bible would be found; and when George Smith, in 1872, deciphered a Chaldean account of the Deluge, says Mr. St. Chad Boscawen, "By the orthodox it was hailed

as a most startling confirmation of the Hebrew record, and duly discounted as such. Still further hopes were raised when, a few years later, the brilliant discoverer published his fragments of the Babylonian Creation legends."¹ These hopes remained unrealized, for further research established the fact that these records were only copies of ancient originals, reaching back to the very beginnings of Babylonian civilization, long before the Bible was written, or, indeed, before the Israelites existed as a nation. In fact, it is now recognized the Biblical writers were indebted to the Babylonians, and not the Babylonians to the Bible.

To explain this most perplexing and disconcerting absence of corroboration of the Bible, it was said that the Egyptians and Babylonians had deliberately ignored the Hebrews; that what was really needed was an exploration of Palestine, the "Holy Land." So, in 1864, the Palestine Exploration Fund was founded in London, and has been at work ever since, organizing parties and sending them out, chiefly for the purpose of unearthing Biblical sites. Let us see what has been the result of this over sixty years of work. Fortunately we shall not have far to seek, for there has just been issued from the press a book entitled *A Century of Excavation in Palestine*, by Professor Macalister, who was appointed director of excavations for the Palestine Exploration Fund, and has personally superintended many of the excavations carried out by the Society. No better witness could be found. In addition to which, the book is published by the Religious Tract Society.

Many explorers of Palestine seem to have set out with a determination to find corroborations of the Bible at all costs, and Professor Macalister throws some light upon this failing. He observes:—

Excavation is a very expensive pursuit, and depends on the support and goodwill of subscribers. It must be confessed that, to the majority of subscribers, pure science, as such, makes but little appeal. If it were advertised that investigation was contemplated in some Palestinian mound which it was as yet impossible to identify with a Biblical site, the public would take the announcement rather coldly. Closed would be the purse-strings that would open to an appeal to examine some place connected with Abraham or with David, even though this might hold out less promise of important results than the other. It is melancholy to have to add that any legitimate undertaking would be less widely and generously supported than something crudely spectacular, such as an expedition to find the Lost Tribes, or the Ark of the Covenant, or Joseph's coat of many colours.²

In fact, the explorer found himself confronted with the ultimatum, "No Bible corroboration, no money." No wonder that under this pressure they often professed to find corroborations, which everyone with the least acquaintance with the subject now knows to be false. The Professor tells an amusing story of an American gentleman he knew who was fired with an ambition to excavate in Palestine, and tried to raise the funds from a wealthy relative of known religious sympathies, by telling him that he hoped "to prove the truth of the Bible." However, the relative was cautious; he was not buying a pig in a poke, and replied, "Yes, but suppose you prove the Bible isn't true, what then?" However, such a question would have been unthinkable to the average Englishman of a hundred years ago.

Anyone who has visited the British Museum must have been struck with the immense quantity and

¹ Boscawen, *The First of Empires*, p. 10.

² R. A. S. Macalister, *A Century of Excavating in Palestine*, p. 78.

magnificence of the treasures taken from ancient Egypt and Babylon, which fills several rooms. The uninitiated visitor looks for the treasures from the "Holy Land" and finds a few cases, mostly consisting of rough pottery and a few scarabs. What small objects of art have been found have been imported from Egypt or Babylon. As our author remarks: "It must be admitted that very little except potsherds was found during Petrie's excavation..... Petrie's successor in the service of the fund, Dr. F. J. Bliss, who was on the site for the greater part of two years, had the like experience. As we turn the pages of his book we can see only too clearly "the nakedness of the land" (pp. 45-46). And he adds: "All the subsequent excavations have only confirmed this conclusion" (p. 47).

W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

Acid Drops.

Mr. Lloyd George's opinion as to what would happen if Christ came to London has provided the *Daily Express* with some columns of letters from its readers, who say exactly what one would expect them to say. Naturally, Mr. Lloyd George thought that if Christ came to London he would support Lloyd George, and that appears to be the note struck by all the others who have taken part in the correspondence. Miss Marjorie Bowen says he would find good and evil in the same places and in the same proportion as he found them in Jerusalem. That surely is equal to saying that his influence on life has amounted to just nothing at all, although we expect that is not what Miss Bowen intended her remark to mean. Still it is about as near the truth as the next. What alterations occur in the balance of good and evil in the world have about as much to do with Jesus Christ as they have to do with the man in the moon.

One writer thinks he would have visited the poor and said words of praise for the Salvation Army. This one does not say as much, but we suspect it comes from a member of the Salvation Army. Probably it might be held that he would join in working the Salvation Army plan of emigration, by which the Army draws a very considerable sum in the shape of commissions, or in getting work done at the lowest price paid in the labour market. There is no telling.

What does emerge from all this vapid letter writing is the utter uselessness of Christ as a leader for anyone. People of the most divergent views are quite agreed that Christ would agree with all of them, and it never seems to strike them that a man who can be made to agree with everybody is useless to anyone. And above and beyond this is the glaring absurdity of harking back to a probably non-existence Jewish peasant of two thousand years ago for leadership in the adjustment of the complex social, ethical, and economic developments of to-day. With so little intelligence displayed by people in general there is small wonder that affairs are as they are.

Dr. Percy Dearmer, in an address on "The Professional Spirit in Religion," said that the clergy have not realized how many things they teach are really due to the gradual pressure of interested motives that came from the professional spirit. Put bluntly, the Doctor is telling us that the priests habitually teach things which serve their and the Church's own ends. But he wishes us to believe the priests are unconscious of this bit of professionalism. That unconsciousness, however, we find difficult to credit, especially when the Doctor talks of "interested motives." Motives that are interested are unlikely to be unrealized by those who harbour them.

Do not let us be afraid to recognize, Dr. Dearmer said later, that what the Churches have taught is in many cases different from the teaching of Jesus. Oh! According to this, the servants of the churches, claiming to be inspired by God and in direct communication with him, have, it seems, gone astray in interpreting God's wishes and Christ's teaching. If "men of God" can err thus, what hope is there for ordinary mortals to interpret the Gospels aright? Evidently the simple Jesus teaching is none too easy to grasp. And how are we to know that any new interpretations put forward by the Churches is the right one? God-inspired men who have erred once are just as likely to go wrong again.

It is time that sex-education was taught in our elementary schools, declares a reader of a popular weekly. Historical piffle such as how King Alfred burnt the cakes is instilled into the child's mind, but any attempt at enlightenment as to the wonders and beauty of human nature is taboo, and even regarded by many parents with something akin to disgust. We don't see why this reader need be surprised at such a state of affairs. That which he deplores is merely the outcome of the parents and teachers holding the unclean orthodox Christian view of sex. Possibly when Biblical nastiness has lost its hold on people and public opinion becomes better informed, something will be done towards imparting rational sex-instruction to youth.

An empty prison in Wales has been used as a public kitchen for unemployed miners and their families. Perhaps some day we may hope to see the churches put to as useful a purpose. One thing strikes us as curious. Emptying prisons is coincident with emptying churches; yet the parsons expend much breath assuring us that neglect of religion will result in widespread depravity. Seemingly the parsons' judgment in this matter is a trifle faulty.

"A blow is not a constructive exercise; a thought or argument is," declares Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. We commend this utterance to our Christian opponents who believe that a "blow" at Freethought should consist in clapping the Freethinking critic in prison. While they are digesting this first utterance, they might as well consider another from Mr. MacDonald: "Freedom is the best treatment for error; penal measures are the worst."

As we have Sunday tennis, football, and cricket, why not Sunday boxing? asks a *Daily News* reader. The first boxing contest he witnessed inspired him, he says, to pay more attention to his physical well-being. And if Sunday boxing at the Ring provides a similar inspiration to other men and lads, it is doing a great deal of good. The spectators at the Ring would probably be only loafing about the streets or getting into trouble were they not attending these Sunday contests. Christian ideals and Sunday boxing, he contends, do not conflict. What this correspondent says about boxing doing good is right enough. Nevertheless, we fear our Sabatarians will not welcome the suggestion of Sunday boxing. For the good that results happens not to be the kind of good the Christian is interested in; and he has never, at any period of history, advocated the acquiring of a sound body as an essential accompaniment of a sound mind. Such pagan notions were anathema. Man's body was vile; filthy and diseased-smitten fathers of the Church were saints; interest in the animal side of man's nature was "unspiritual," and therefore of no concern to the godly. As Christian ideals were based on some such notions as these, and as these notions still influence the Christian mind, we are afraid the *Daily News* reader will find few others to agree with his contention that Sunday boxing and Christian ideals do not conflict. What he appears to have forgotten is that, for the truly pious, only one kind of exercise on Sunday is permitted. And this is, knee-bending in a building from which fresh air and sunlight are excluded as far as possible.

There existed 50,000 years ago men who, if they came to earth again, could walk along Bond Street without attracting attention, says the Abbé Morceaux. And we should say that if any of these men were asked to give their opinions about God and the universe, they would echo most of what we learn from the pulpit to-day.

"We find it impossible to believe," says the Bishop of Southwark, "that God would send plagues and pestilences to the innocent and the guilty.....We can no longer believe that all sickness is sent by God." Quite reasonable, only coming from a Bishop of the Church of England the statement places belief and honesty in direct opposition. For the Church of England's articles says very definitely that whatsoever our disease we may know certainly that it is God's visitation. If the Bishop does not believe this, we would like to know what he is going to do about it? In most occupations when a man does not believe what he is paid to teach he would resign. But one does not expect the canons of ordinary honesty to rule in the Church, so the Bishop will go on drawing a salary for preaching one thing, while deliberately teaching another.

Perhaps, however, the Bishop would be good enough to tell us if disease does not come from God, where the devil it does come from? And if this comes without any help from God, why not other things? And if other things why not all things? If disease has not a supernatural origin, why should it have a supernatural cure? And if not what is the use of praying to be cured from illness? The earlier religionists may have been wrong in their assumptions, but, granting their premises, they were not wildly illogical. They said the world was God's world, and they acted as though they believed it. The modern preacher tries to make his religion reasonable and succeeds only in making it ridiculous.

"A Priest and a Liar" is the heading to one of the columns of the *Western Morning News* of June 25. It appears that the Rev. Jack Durnall, whose name has been prominent in West of England papers of late, stated that Lord Rothermere controlled the *Western Morning News*. That being denied, Mr. Durnall made enquiries as to whether he was right in what he said, and found he was wrong. He was only brought to acknowledge his error after some trouble, hence the heading of the article.

The *Western Morning Mail* says it hesitates to call Mr. Durnall "Reverend" because of his untruthfulness. But why? The association of lying with parsons is not more unusual than it is with members of other professions, and the habit of making statements, and then, when challenged, seeing whether they are correct or not, is quite a common habit with the clergy of all grades. Truthfulness, as we have so often pointed out, is not at all a characteristic quality of the clergy, and their whole training makes for carelessness of statement. We are surprised the editor of the *Western Morning News* is not well acquainted with the fact.

After cutting a way through the baser side of news and undue importance by the Press to such subjects as the "Mystery of the Strangled Boy," it is possible to find the item of news of a more elevating character. Out of 300 Borstal boys put on their honour to behave like men only four failed to live up to the confidence reposed in them—but probably this has no news value. The news placards are advertisements of the fact that "original sin" is a paying proposition.

To point out a moral and adorn a tale, we find in the "Notes" of the *New Age*, the announcement that Swinburne was an Atheist. It appears that Mr. William Kyle Alexander, at a Presbyterian Assembly at Belfast,

was upset about the insane craze for pleasure and amusement among young people. Well, what does this gentleman want the young to do? Go to the meat teas provided by his supporters or worry their young heads about the dour and uncouth creed which he expounds? There is a pleasure in preventing pleasure and his germ is active in the Christian mind; Mr. Alexander appears to have lived five centuries too late, and is ill-equipped to gather any instruction from the verse entitled "A Child's Pity" and printed by the above paper.

Dr. Matthews, Dean of King's College, London, is anxious that Christian thinkers should present the doctrines of their faith in the evolutionary idea. He is optimistic, and we must encourage him, for he will bring more problems to Christianity than it possesses already. A process of evolution that has produced man is nothing to shout about—it has been long and painful and no scientific thinker would saddle God with the responsibility.

It was an American who, in the usual grandiose manner, in producing the "Passion" was going to have a gross or so of apostles. America also, we are informed, contemplates buying up England, forty feet deep, and removing it to Yellowstone Park. From these remarks it will be gathered that America thinks chiefly in mass. At Mundelein (Illinois) the Twenty-eighth Eucharistic Congress was held and the attendance was colossal, but in the midst of the procession of the Blessed Sacrament a million spectators were drenched. Simple people might well ask if fine weather could not be provided by an army of priests for an event of this kind.

There are crickets on the hearth, and, according to reports from the Wesleyan Conference, there are critics in the pews. The pew is well-informed and critical, we are told, and boys and girls attending Sunday schools are frequently in advance of the teaching from the pulpit. Another danger is that of using old sermons. From all this we may note the pathetic plight of outworn doctrines struggling with the new and broader ideas of the rising generation. Those ministers will be wisest who accept the new conditions, and, as there never can be too many good men in the world, they will also have fields for their activity by converting their centres of worship into meeting-houses for discussion of this world. Dr. Glover, a wise veteran, by his writings is already three parts gone to meet the young spirits of the future; in his articles, his Christianity is only occasionally brought out like a curio, and his difficulty with the fourth part may be explained by his loyalty.

The Bishop of Birmingham appears to be a fish-bone in the throats of the hundred per cent. orthodox. In a letter to the *Daily News*, the Rev. E. J. Pizey is very concerned about the Bishop's appointment, and in the form of a mild protest concludes his suggestion by saying: "The Church of England would be safeguarded against the misfortunes which have befallen her by the consecration of unsuitable men to her highest office." Apart from the fact that the rev. gentleman has not produced his credentials for being any authority in the matter, his remarks are further proof of that perfect love, etc., usually associated with religion. How very human are they all when the loaves and fishes are given out.

In the same newspaper Eva Skinner is afraid that the teaching of Christian ideals will not stand the opposition of boxing contests on Sunday afternoons at the Ring, Blackfriars. The complaint may be diagnosed to the effect that workers in the vineyard are protectionists; they want to be on the side of privilege and no opposition, and whilst we hold no brief for the reminder of our cavemen ancestors, it shows a singular

lack of faith on the part of those who profess to be on the Lord's side.

A Welsh preacher, just dead, claims to have preached over eleven thousand sermons. We hazard the common sense contained in the eleven thousand might comfortably have gone into half a dozen. Of course, we may be wrong, but we feel inclined to chance the judgment on our knowledge of what the average sermon is like.

It takes so little to satisfy in the Christian pulpit. For example, a nineteen year old preacher is gaining a reputation at Reading on the strength of his faith in Biblical prophecies. He says the pestilences and earthquakes foretold in St. Matthew are seen in the famine in Russia and the recurring earthquakes in Japan. It is really marvellous that someone living a couple of thousand years ago should have said there will be pestilences and earthquakes! They have always been such rare things. And we are not surprised at the admiration of Reading Christians in having in their midst such a marvellous preacher. On the whole, however, the case might be cited in support of what we have just said about the eleven thousand sermons.

Not so many years ago Puritan readers would have pined indignant protests on encountering in our prim contemporary, the *Daily News*, a recommendation of dancing. To-day, however, Dr. Saleeby can write in praise of dancing—preferably in the open—as a health-giving recreation for all, and not receive a single adverse comment. Indeed, one reader is so taken with the idea that he suggests portions of public parks should be set aside for the pastime. To this suggestion we will add another—that the parks be open for dancing on Sunday. And if a goodly number of the weedy patrons of the churches could be induced to use the parks on that day for this purpose, we should say the health of the nation would greatly benefit, both physically and mentally.

That blessed word, "Religion." It stands for anything that some people care to make it stand for, but generally with an entire ignoring of its historical significance, for whatever one happens to believe in. And when it is not this, it is little more than an attempt to evade unpopularity, as Professor Huxley explained his coining of the word "Agnosticism" because he wished to have a tail, and so be in line with other people. So Miss Clemence Dane, speaking at a public function connected with the stage, remarked that the prospects of the drama to-day were very bright, and that no nation possessed a great theatre at a time when it was not "in the widest sense" a religious nation. In its widest sense? But what the deuce is meant by that? If it means the belief in God, or in the supernatural generally, then it is quite clear that in spite of the vogue of very gross superstitions, that is less true to-day than it ever was. If it means belief in the value of art, then Miss Dane is only saying that no nation ever had a great theatre unless it believed in that for which the theatre stood. And when one comes to look at it that does not seem such a very profound saying after all. So it seems most probable that Miss Dane was, after all, saying just nothing at all. Just the kind of empty verbiage which so long as it is used in connection with religion, goes down quite well.

The fact is that nowadays very few people among the educated classes dare to be very definite about their religious beliefs. For to be definite may not only cause oneself to think of the exact meaning of what one is saying, but it may also force one's hearers also to consider its value. Definite and exact statements brings one up against facts, indefinite and vague ones leaves one free to grope, to wander round in a region of half-formed notions and unsubstantial ideas. To such people "religion in its widest sense" is a "God-send." It prevents them thinking things out, and it lulls their

hearers into a sense of comfortable security. It is Abracadabra spelt in another way.

Dean Inge says, with truth, that a world Church is absurd, and that "the power of the Catholic theocracy has been uniformly odious and detrimental to human welfare." "From the Albigenses to St. Bartholomew, and from St. Bartholomew to the extermination of the Asiatic Greeks at the institution of France and Italy, the story has been the same." The evil of any theocracy is written plainly on the face of history, and is in itself a reply to those who argue that a belief in the government is necessary to human welfare and progress. The truth is that it is only when religious beliefs are held in control by non-religious forces that they are tolerable.

But the *Church Times* in noticing the above has a very curious word of apology for the action of the Catholic Church. It says, "No one with the smallest instinct of fairness can read the story of the Albigenses without realizing the infinite patience of St. Dominic and the amazing efforts of the Church to turn those people from their heresy before force was used at all." Now no one who knows the history of the Church would dispute that it frequently tried to induce people to give up their heresies before resorting to extreme measures. Even the Christian Church was never stupid enough to believe that killing people was the best method of increasing the number of its followers. It is not the question of whether the Church did or did not try to convert people before murdering them that is at issue, but that the Church should have slaughtered for no other offence than a difference of opinion. The motives of the Church have nothing to do with it. The more unselfish the greater the indictment of Christianity. For it was just that Christianity made cold-blooded persecution a moral and religious duty that stamps it as one of the deadliest enemies of real civilization.

There is here, too, in the apology of the *Church Times* the admission that the paper has no objection to the suppression of un-Christian, or even heretical, opinion, if it can be profitably carried out. It would, of course, reason with the heretic or unbeliever, first of all, but if the reasoning failed to convince, there is the prison or the executioner as a last resource. And if anyone complained, the *Church Times* would rebuke him, as it rebukes Dean Inge, by pointing to its infinite patience and amazing efforts to convince these obstinate offenders. The assumption that a Church has the right to suppress an opinion which it believes to be wrong is the crowning act of impertinence, and of villainy of the Christian Church.

Lord Beaverbrook, we are told, is writing a life of Christ, and to be in the fashion Mr. John Middleton Murray has finished his life of Jesus, and he declares that "the time had come when it was urgent upon me to make up my mind about Jesus. For reasons which concern myself alone, I desired, if I could, to make Him wholly real to myself." This is a somewhat hazy excuse, but we trust he has quoted copiously from Josephus—yes, copiously.

For those who look on the world as a bundle of hay, and for those who cannot quite square the blood lust in fox-hunting and stag-hunting by people who ought to know better, we commend the following: A driver of a motor-bus in trying to avoid running over a dog crashed into a confectioner's shop at Hassocks. There is no prize offered for a solution or the discovery of a moral.

In his impressions of the United States, Sir Charles Higham stated that, in God's own country, as they call it, "nearly everything can now be bought on the instalment plan, and it is." That may explain why America can afford so many plain and fancy religious.

The National Secular Society.

THE Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

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.

"FREETHINKER" ENDOWMENT TRUST.—W. Pugh (quarterly subscription), £5.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Sorry we were unable to find room for your letter, but we had so many just then dealing with the same matter, that we were compelled to make a selection of those that touched on the more varied phases of the controversy. It was quite impossible to publish all, and we acted as we imagined in the best interests of all concerned. Pleased to know that you are better.

F. MANN (Glasgow).—We are pleased to hear that your Branch had so enjoyable a time on Sunday at Bardowie Loch. That there was an increase in numbers is good from other points of view.

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

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 need of the West Ham Guardians for funds is notorious. So, on June 17, at a meeting of the Guardians, there came before it an application from the Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Nonconformist parsons for the Board to supply other parsons for temporary work while the appointed ones took a holiday. On this Councillor H. B. Price moved that, seeing the Guardians were in financial difficulties, the Board of Health should be approached with the request that the

Minister of Health should approach the different denominations asking them to take over the payment of their own ministers, and so save the Board £1,114 annually. This strikes us as a very sensible proposal, and the Board would have acted wisely had it fallen in with the suggestion.

As it was, the motion met with strong opposition, and was defeated by an overwhelming majority. Councillor Killip excused his opposition by saying that if Mr. Cohen or Mr. Lloyd wished to visit anyone in the institutions under the control of the guardians they would be permitted to do so—which was quite beside the mark. If Mr. Cohen or Mr. Lloyd paid a visit to any Freethinker the last thing they would dream of asking would be that the Guardians should pay them for doing so. The protest was against these parsons having paid jobs at the expense of the ratepayer, and then having the impudence to ask that others should be paid for doing their work while they took a holiday. We congratulate Mr. Price on having raised the issue. He has served to make plain, not merely the nature of the arrangement that now exists, but also how much afraid some of these very advanced people are when it comes to opposing members of the Black Army.

A little later than we ought to have been in making the announcement, but through no fault of our own, we have pleasure in saying that our very occasional—too occasional—contributor, Mr. H. Farmer, has just received his degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Glasgow University. It is not long since he took his M.A., and this, connected with his professional work and his researches into out-of-the-way paths in the history of music, bears testimony to an industry and ability on which he deserves the warmest congratulations. We shall hope to see his name figure in these columns—as contributor—in the near future.

In another column Mr. George Whitehead reports having some lively meetings at Hull, where he has been experiencing a form of Christian rowdyism that has not been very common of late. Judging from Mr. Whitehead's report, he does not appear to have received the support he should have had from the local Freethinkers, and it is unfair to a speaker to leave him unsupported and at the mercy of a band of Christian hooligans. We hope that when he visits Hull again, a large number of friends will attend the meetings. There are quite enough Freethinkers in Hull to make the disturbance of a meeting impracticable or unprofitable.

Mr. Whitehead also complains of the action of the police. In many parts of the provinces the police seem to be much more officious than they are in London, and take to themselves powers which we fancy would hardly be justified if they were tested. Mr. Whitehead has a perfect right to hold a public meeting in the open-air provided he is not causing an obstruction or inciting to a breach of the peace. Taking the speaker's name and address is a mild form of terrorism which may be intended to frighten timid people, but there is nothing more in it. And if the police proceed to sterner methods, Mr. Whitehead may rest assured that he will have the support of the N.S.S. so long as he is lecturing on its behalf. What with the action of the authorities at the one extreme, and a number of ill-advised others at the other end, both of whom seem to be developing a growing fondness for interfering with meetings with which they do not agree, it seems as though the National Secular Society will soon be about the only body in England which believes in freedom of opinion irrespective of the opinions that are being promulgated.

We are asked to announce that a meeting of the Swansea Branch of the N.S.S. will be held at 3 Carmarthen Road, to-day (July 11), at 6.30. It is requested that all members make an effort to be present.

An Old Fight for Freedom.

My old and good friend, Mr. F. J. Gould, recently told us in these columns the story of his fight to maintain his position as a schoolmaster under the old School Board and the difficulties that arose on account of his avowal of disbelief in some of the teachings of the Christian religion. It was, indeed, a very interesting fight, and one that has become quite historical in relation to the position of teachers in giving religious instruction in schools.

With the kind permission of the Editor, I should like to give an account of another fight under the old School Board in which I played an important part. In 1888 I wrote a polite letter to the late J. Richards Kelly, M.P., for North Camberwell, asking him to be good enough to vote for Mr. Bradlaugh's "Oaths Bill" then before Parliament—an Act to substitute Affirmation in place of taking the oath for those who had no belief in the Christian Faith, and also for those who had a conscientious objection to taking an oath.

Unfortunately for me, I was indiscreet enough to write on one of my forms in which it was stated that I was a Freethought lecturer and author of certain books and pamphlets of an anti-theological character. Mr. Richards Kelly got a political agent who knew me to find out that I was a School Board officer, and having got this information, although I was one of Mr. Kelly's constituents, he sent my letter to the Rev. J. Diggle, Chairman of the London School Board, and asked him whether a man holding such opinions as I confessedly did, was a fit and proper person to hold a responsible position under such a body. In due course I was called before the Bye Laws Committee and asked to explain my position. In a brief speech I explained that I only lectured on Freethought on Sundays, upon which day I was not in the employ of the Board—and, further, that I considered I had as much right to give my views on religion on Sundays to those who cared to hear me, as some of my colleagues had to teach in Sunday schools or even to preach in certain chapels. I also answered a number of questions, one of which was whether I undertook to give the whole of my time to the service of the Board. I replied that in my judgment the whole of my time did not mean Sundays, and only a certain number of hours during week days. When I was asked to explain some of my beliefs, I startled several of the clerical members of the Board by declaring that I agreed with Lord Brougham that a man was no more responsible for his belief than he was for the height of his stature or the colour of his hair. After the Committee had heard me at some length they passed a long resolution prohibiting me from lecturing on Sundays, and from publishing or selling any of my pamphlets.

A few months later a new School Board election took place, and Mrs. Besant was returned as member for the Bethnal Green Division. This fact seemed to me to afford an opportunity of getting a revision of the resolution affecting my position; consequently I wrote to the Clerk of the Board, asking him to put the matter before the Committee with a view of getting the objectionable resolution rescinded. In due course the matter was brought before the new Committee, and I was again called before the members to explain my position. I did so with perfect frankness and without any sort of mental reservation, and Mrs. Besant, in a brilliant and powerful speech, moved that the said resolution be rescinded. Some of the members, however, wished to get rid of the matter by moving the previous question; that is,

that the question be not now put; but Mrs. Besant succeeded in defeating that and bringing the whole question before the full Board. After a long and animated discussion, the matter was ended in my favour, and I received the following kind letter from Mrs. Besant:—

March 14, 1889.

Dear Mr. Moss,

We carried the rescinding resolution to-day, and you are again free to lecture. We had a long fight, but I defeated the previous question by about 30 to 18. Finally they carried Mr. Rutson's amendment (which had a preamble that your work has not suffered by your lecturing, etc., while mine was a bare rescinding motion). You had better be extra careful that they can't find fault for a bit, as they are sure to try.

I ought to add that a number of the clergymen on the Board voted with me, though they were taunted with following the lead of an unbeliever, and we ought to give them full credit for their liberality. I congratulate you heartily on your recovered freedom.

Sincerely,

ANNIE BESANT.

One of the clergy who spoke most vigorously on my behalf was our much respected friend, the late Rev. Stewart Headlam, who was always a champion of intellectual liberty for those who differed from him. Some of my most bitter opponents were lay members of the Board. I was always a great admirer of Mrs. Besant's extraordinary talents and great ability, and I thank her once again most sincerely at this distant date for what she did on my behalf, and though she has gone far away from the cause we love to-day, I thank her still more for the great work she accomplished for intellectual freedom during the many years she was associated with our movement.

A short time after this, I had an opportunity of repaying Mr. Richards Kelly for his unkind action towards me. When the General Election took place and he again offered himself as candidate, I spoke and worked for the Liberal candidate, Mr. E. H. Bayley (Mr. Kelly was a Tory), and had the satisfaction of returning the Liberal with a very substantial majority.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Christian Healing, Spiritualism, and the Bible.

II.

(Concluded from page 406.)

THAN the selection of evidence there is no more dangerous method of adducing proof. It is, in all its futility, the method adopted without exception by every Spiritualist who seeks to prove the truth of his creed by evidence culled from the Bible; it is the method adopted in every case where a theologian attempts to destroy Spiritualism with evidence culled from the same source. What both classes fail to realize is that they are attempting the impossible: they cannot demolish the one without demolishing the other, for the simple reason that Spiritualism and religion are indistinguishable. No better example of this falsity of reasoning can be instanced than that afforded by the Bishop of Durham's recent criticism of spiritual healing.¹ The learned ecclesiastic points out with force and sagacity that the cures of Mr. Hickson are indistinguishable from those of any psychotherapist. "Spiritual healing" means no more and no less than mental healing." Here the bombastic bishop very nearly hits the bull's eye—he

¹ *Hilbert Journal*, April, 1925.

only overlooks the fact that in consequence of its greater emotional appeal the faith-healing that carries with it a religious atmosphere is of greater significance. It is a good deal easier for a yokel to work up the necessary mental excitement, surrounded by robed priests, helped by prayer and with Jahveh or Christ behind the thing than where the scene of the miracle is an ordinary upholstered surgery with no other presence than one who is plainly indistinguishable from the local doctor. It is, however, quite plain that the Bishop of Durham would a good deal prefer, in a moment of sickness, to avail himself of the best skill that orthodox medical science can provide; and that he looks upon Hickson's revival of the apostolic healing ministry of the New Testament as little removed from charlatanic usurpation of a divinely ordained office.² For he says:—

The Person and Ministry of Jesus were unique and the circumstances in which, and the methods by which, that Person was "manifested" and that ministry fulfilled in Palestine nineteen centuries ago cannot be reproduced.....When, therefore, we are asked to recognize in Mr. Hickson's healing missions a modern transcript of the Ministry of Jesus as described by the Evangelists, we must point out that the implied claim is altogether inadmissible.

And precisely why? Because, as the Bishop points out by quotation from another clerical writer, "We regard the miracles of Christ as unique manifestations of His unique personality." Because, "He claimed to be superhuman, and the claim required substantiation to gain a hearing." Now this would be all very well and good if it were correct, but it isn't. Indeed, it is precisely here that the Bishop's thesis breaks down. He overlooks the fact that these miracles of healing were not confined to Christ. True enough the disciples received their instructions from Jesus. But in addition there was St. Paul. There are for the finding many instances of Paul's powers: one will suffice here:—

And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in and prayed and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed.

Now Paul had never so much as set eyes on Jesus: he no more knew Christ personally than did James Moore Hickson, but in point of fact received his divine powers in a precisely similar way. The comparison is interesting:—

From Acts xxii. 6-10:

And it came to pass that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou

From "Heal the Sick," p. 5.

May I share with you, dear readers, a vision which was granted to me at a time when I felt discouraged and all seemed labour in vain? I went into my sanctum to lay my troubles before the only One Who could help me, and as I prayed my spiritual eyes were opened and I saw Our Lord and He revealed Himself to me as the Lord of all Power and Might, and His

persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, what shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

message was: "Go forward, I am with you, be faithful, and fear not."

Each is, of course, simply the story of an ecstatic visionary hallucination. But the point is that the theologian cannot question the reality of Hickson's vision without questioning that of St. Paul. The evidence is no stronger in support of one than of the other. Similarly, it is absurd to deny the healing power of Paul. To do so is to deny the miracles of Christ himself. If, therefore, because of these miracles Christ was superhuman, then of a surety Paul was superhuman, too. And similarly a hundred others.³

Half a century ago, Huxley, with his scarifying logic, ridiculed this self-same puerile eclecticism. In their efforts to fraternize religion with science the leaders of the clergy have extended this eclecticism and developed a polymorphous exegetic paronomasia. In all that is to be found in the Scriptures nothing is more certain, more frequently attested, than the belief in demonology. Nothing is more certain than that Jesus, the accepted Son of God, the one man who, as no theologian has ever denied, was most likely of all who have graced this earth in two thousand years, to actually know the truth, was convinced of the existence of evil spirits: nothing is more certain than that he attributed fever, epilepsy, deafness, blindness, and every other disease known at that time to the incarnation in the affected person of such spirits. If the New Testament is to be believed at all, this is undeniable. Reject the theory of evil spirits and you reject all the evidence of the existence of Christ himself. There has never existed a tribe of savages the world over that has not believed in evil spirits. The testimony they have provided is every bit as strong as that provided by the Bible. It is, moreover, equally credible. Away through the ages this belief continued. The demonology of the Middle Ages was every whit as widespread as was the demonology of Biblical times. The witch trials of England and other

³ Vespasian, by the application of his spittle to the cheeks and eyes, cured a blind man in precisely the same way as Jesus healed.

Pliny tells of similar cures effected by medicine men in all the countries of southern Europe.

Eleazar did the thing in style, according to Josephus: "God also enabled him to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science useful and sanative to men. He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return, and this method of cure is of great force unto this day; for I have seen a certain man of my own country whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: He put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he abjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed. And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon as he went out of the man to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man."

² Contrary to the Bishop's thesis, the Consecration of Bishops by the Church confers upon them the power of spiritual healing: "Receive the Holy Ghost, for the Office and Work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost....."

".....Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost."

countries furnish for everyone who cares to make the search evidence a hundred times stronger in support of the existence of evil spirits than all the Gospels of the New Testament. This past century has seen the rise of a new theory of spiritual life, in which opinion is divided between the idea of spiritualism *per se* and the idea of those theologians who, if they admit the existence of spirits at all, maintain they are evil ones. The evidence presented by spiritualistic writers is a thousand times stronger than anything in the recorded witch trials of three centuries ago; ten thousand times stronger than the most evidential cases recorded in the Testaments, Old and New. In its puissancy, the tale of D. D. Home's levitation knocks that of Elisha's axe into splinters; the ghost of Katie King as observed by Sir William Crookes is in its evidentiality a million times firmer than the materialization of Samuel's spirit by the Witch of Endor; the phenomena of Eusapia Palladino make the spirit writing in Belchazzar's palace seem infantile in comparison; the miracles of Lourdes and the healing of J. M. Hickson, while well-nigh rivaling in spectacularity those of Christ, are, in the matter of evidential value, a hundred times better supported.⁴

There is no getting away from the merciless logic of all this. To deny Spiritualism, to deny witchcraft, is to deny the demonology of the Bible, the teaching of Jesus, the miracles of Jesus, the healing of Jesus. To deny these is to deny the whole structure on which Christianity rests: the existence of the Lord God Jehovah himself. Is there any need to continue? For sheer evidentiality nothing in the Bible is in the same street as the phenomena of modern Spiritualism. And this phenomena, as is easily proved, rests on a mass of conjuring tricks, mental delusion and hallucination. The inference is obvious.

GEORGE RYLEY SCOTT, F.Z.S., F.Ph.S., F.R.A.I.

The Unfolding Genius.

WHEN I was a young member of the Church of England, and daily saw the Eternities reflected in the mirror of the Bible, and daily poured out my prayer to the throne of the Almighty, I had a sure confidence in the working of God's Providence through the ages. I thought of the divine genius as unfolding a grand purpose in spite of the opposition of the "Prince of this World" (Satan), and the tumults of the infidels and the heathen. I have long ago passed beyond such doctrines. Yet, in a certain basic sense, the idea of an unfolding genius remains. It now takes shape as a conception of the unfolding and heroic energy of the human race through many centuries, releasing itself from ignorance, and continuously achieving new science and new applications of science for the enrichment of life. Auguste Comte, who had a highly-trained scientific mind, also had a profound appreciation of poetry. He classed the Greek Homer, the Italian Dante, and the English Shakespeare as the premier singers of civilization. Yet he thrilled with the thought of social and intellectual evolution. His early volumes of *Positive Philosophy* swarm with the term "evolution," from the year 1839 onwards. This immense idea, then beginning to inspire the Nineteenth Cen-

⁴It may be advisable to indicate anticipated theological criticism. It will be said, as the Bishop of Durham has affirmed, that Christ was a superhuman person, the son of God. All these others were not and are not. But on what grounds is the assumption made of Christ's supernormality? Simply as a result of these very visions these very miracles, these very exorcisms.

tury consciousness, must influence poetry. Comte said that, in due time, a poet should arise to celebrate, in an epic story, the struggle of humanity through the ages to realize the master-values of love, order, and progress. The word "order," it should be noted, connoted science as well as moral law and harmony.

The epic writer, on so splendid a scale, has not appeared. But I think it is proper to recognize that an honourable approach to the epic has been accomplished by Mr. Alfred Noyes in his *Torch Bearers*, a work which, so far as I have observed, has not been given its just welcome in the Freethought world.¹ I say this, notwithstanding the fact that Noyes maintains a relic of the ancient theology. Ever and again, he tells of a universal divine essence. Speaking of man's thought, he says it is—

The imponderable thought that weighs the worlds,
The invisible thought that sees; thought that reveals
The miracle of the eternal paradox—
The pure unsearchable Being that cannot be,
Yet is, and still creates and governs all.

That is a cloudy hint at God. Noyes describes a fine human drama of thinkers and discoverers, and, at the back, he spreads a vast and shadowy curtain, and he often lifts his hand towards it, and solemnly advises us that the Inscrutable One, who is the hoary Creator, and yet always "grows young," industriously labours for our good behind the veil. It is possible (I am not sure) that Herbert Spencer might have nodded approval. I am certain that Comte would not; for Comte unweariedly repeated that whatever is noble in the universe can only be expressed to us in the guise of the love, order, and progress of humanity—the Gods fading into figures in the silent hall of history. All the same, Noyes makes a stride towards the ultimate human view. As a record of intellectual travellers and voyagers, his poem has many shining values.

The first volume surveys the Watchers of the Sky, the Astronomers—Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, William Herschel, and John Herschel. You get the general spirit of his survey in Galileo's commentary to a friend on the new telescopic vision of the moons of the planet Jupiter:—

"The moons of Jupiter," he whispered low,
"I have watched them as they moved, from night to night;
A system like our own, although the world
Their fourfold lights and shadows make so strange
Must—as I think—be mightier than we dreamed,
A Titan planet. Each begins to fade
And dwindle; yes, the heavens are opening now."

In truth, it is the mind of man that is "opening now." The Torch-bearers call, and the doors swing back. All along the human way, fresh horizons are revealed, not by forces that move the horizons towards the human eye, but by the human valour that will not rest on the floor of Yesterday, and invincibly presses to the field of To-day, and smiles at the threshold of To-morrow. And the soul of man has no deeper joy than the exhilaration of the thought that To-day has shot so triumphantly past the humble conquests of Yesterday. Isaac Newton examined the rainbow colours by means of his prism. That scientific movement led on to the wider revelation of the spectroscope:—

.....Could Newton dream
When, through his prism, he broke the pure white shaft
Into that rainbow band, how men should gather
And disentangle ray by delicate ray
The colours of the stars—not only those
That burn in heaven, but those that long since perished,
Those vanished suns that eyes can still behold,
The strange lost stars whose light still reaches earth
Although they died ten thousand years ago!

¹Two volumes, 7s. 6d. each, published Blackwood, vol. i. in 1922, ii. in 1925.

Such reflections, intensely passionate with a feeling of historical progress, provide a motive-power to young pioneers as they face the mysteries of the future.

The second volume touches the work of physicists and biologists—Greek, Arab, Italian, French, Swedish, German, English—hence that section is entitled *The Book of Earth*. I am very glad to see that Mr. Noyes has found a place for Leonardo da Vinci, the Italian thinker and artist, whose genius is all too unfamiliar to people in England and America. The poet pictures an amusing and instructive conversation between Da Vinci and a painter. Near the city of Florence, a painter, Giulio, is sketching a landscape, in whose rocks lie fossils. A stranger wanders that way, stooping and collecting fossils, and eagerly examining them. A talk ensues, and Giulio easily settles the problem of marine shells lying on mountains by alleging that they were thrown up these slopes by Noah's Flood! Leonardo da Vinci, the fossil collector, ventures to suggest that the shells were signs of earth-deposits from a sea that rolled for ages where the dry land of Italy now existed; in fact, Leonardo threw out a hint of modern geological science. When Giulio scornfully retorted that these new-fangled notions did away with the free glories of "art," Da Vinci replied that the exact knowledge of skies and earth which man's science won by patient search would make art itself more artistic, and lend new conviction to the labour of the limners of beauty:—

I am no moralist, but I must confess
That, in the greatest art, I have always found
A certain probity, a certain splendour
Of inner and outer constancy to law.

Noyes has here presented an important thought. No doubt, the science which was so enthusiastically proclaimed by the Nineteenth Century was too often rendered dull by highly technical manuals, and a pedantic mode of exposition. We are doing better to-day. We are learning to combine the discipline of obedience to scientific "law" with poetry and imagination.

Noyes offers an admirable portraiture of Charles Darwin moving about in his Kentish garden:—

A tall, lean man, wrapt in a loose dark cloak,
His big soft hat of battered sun-burnt straw
Pulled down to shade his face. But I could see,
For I looked upward, the dim brooding weight
Of silent thought that soon would shake the world.²

What was Darwin doing? He was investigating with an extraordinary patience unsurpassed in the annals of human perseverance and insight:—

He paused to watch an ant upon its way.
He bared his head. I saw the shaggy brows
That like a mountain fortress overhung
The deep voracious eyes, the dogged face
Where kindness, and patience, knowledge, power,
And pain quiescent under the conquering will,
In that profound simplicity which marks
The stature of the mind, the truth of art,
The majesty of every natural law
.....had set their seal.

Though, indeed, we should never know this "majesty" of "natural law," if it were not for the majesty of the courageous human intellect that enquires, and goes on enquiring.

The epic writer of the future will set a larger stage, crowded with a larger variety of actors, and decisively excluding that idea of a Divine Personality which will then be regarded as weakening our science and poetry of the universe. Meanwhile, and making fair allowance for his obscure theological accessories, I think Mr. Alfred Noyes has effectively led the way in the poetry of man's unfolding genius.

F. J. GOULD.

² The poet obviously refers to the well-known picture of Darwin, painted by the Rationalist, John Collier.

Correspondence.

THE SUN AND THE SOLSTICES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am disappointed that Mr. William Clark has neither reconciled his criticism of the statement I made in my article with the elementary principles of planetary and astral mechanics, nor withdrawn it. As I do not admit that the statement was even a "slip," as Mr. Strickland generously termed it, until Mr. Clark substantiates his stricture, I am entitled to one or the other.

By the bye, there were two misprints in my letter. The term "component" was in one place printed "compound," and in the last paragraph an "of" was printed "or." But probably the reader made the necessary correction as he proceeded.

KERIDON.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

SIR,—I am sorry to have to join issue with Mr. Yeldham again, but when my accuracy is called into question I can do other.

When I said that Capital Punishment is not inflicted in nine out of every ten cases of murder in England and Wales I meant what I said and I said what was true. There were not 60 cases of murder in 1922, but 145. During the five post-war years ending 1923, there were 788 murders in England and Wales known to the police. During this period 514 persons were tried for murder, 132 sentenced to death, and 70 actually executed. This is less than one in ten. The fact that many of the other cases were dealt with in other ways than by the infliction of the Death Penalty does not alter the fact that the convicted persons so treated were not executed.

The figures I have quoted are from a return furnished by the present Home Secretary, Sir William Joynson Hicks, M.P.

E. ROY CALVERT.

SIR,—Mr. Yeldham rightly suggests that I am indeed interested to know the stages by which he has reached his present views. The fact that he takes the enlightened view that Capital Punishment should be more restricted than at present brings us very near to agreement. I am quite sure that public opinion even now is fully prepared for such restrictions as Mr. Yeldham favours. I am equally certain that abolition is the logical as well as the humane "way out."

Bernard Shaw (*English Prisons*, Preface, p. lxx.) insists that "Society claims a right of self-defence, extending to the destruction or restraint of law-breakers." I do not see how we can quarrel with this abstract right and I do not think it inconsistent with the *practical* abolition of Capital Punishment. Society is bound to protect itself. Mr. Yeldham and I are Eugenists, and we agree that society ought to do a great deal more than it does to prevent the "production of potential murderers."

Where the opponents of abolition go wrong is in clinging to the antiquated idea that severity of punishment prevents crime. (Mr. Yeldham does not say this.) All experience shows that prevention and detection are the only sure measures against crimes of a deliberate kind. If criminality did not "pay," there would be few habitual criminals. Crime "pays" when detection is unlikely, so long as your social institutions and your religious teachings encourage deception and fraud. In so far as murder is ever part of a criminal career, like that of the old highwayman, we must hope for clever honest police to make all such crimes unprofitable. But the murders which are either mere insanity, or the temporary incapacity for control of temper will only be cured by Eugenics and sound ethics. In any case, Capital Punishment offers no general solution to the problem.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

RELIGION AND CASH.

SIR,—Having ascertained that £1,114 each year is paid from public money for the services of Chaplains in the

Union area of West Ham, the West Ham Branch of the N.S.S. sent the following resolution to the Guardians:—

In view of the strained financial resources of the Guardians, the great cry for economy, and the enormous amount of poverty in the area, all allowances for the services of Chaplains be discontinued from public funds, and that the religious denomination providing the Chaplains shall make financial provision for the same.

The motion was before the Guardians at their meeting of June 17, and rejected.

Out of fifty-six present only three voted in its favour.

Two interesting points are thus brought out: (1) The enormous sum which must be drawn by the clergy from public funds each year over the whole country as Chaplains. (2) A stock argument of Labourites is that the N.S.S. is flogging a dead horse, and here we have the spectacle of Labour Guardians of the poor unable to give what they consider a decent scale of relief for acute distress, but voting £1,114 of public money per year for a dead horse.

R. H. ROSETTI.

Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

Mr. Whitehead writes:—

The week in Hull was reminiscent of a football match with the lecturer in the position of the ball. The first two meetings found the audience too apathetic even to put questions, for they melted away at the conclusion of the lectures. The pitch was then changed to the other end of Hull and crowds of an opposite character were attracted. Aided by four "drunks" and a number of ladies whose vocal organs functioned in an inverse ratio to their fondness for soap and water, I was bombarded after the lecture by a shower of questions, answers to which were interrupted by impolite personalities which would have withered one less inured to this typically Christian method of attack. The next evening the charity took the form of rushing the platform, half way through the lecture, ripping down the banner and pushing, threatening and, so far as the younger element were concerned, mildly kicking the speaker away from the pitch. An exaggerated report appearing next day in the local press, the police took a hand. A successful meeting was followed by complaints from residents, and, after being moved from two other pitches, the police finally took my name and threatened prosecution if I attempted another meeting. My chairman for the week then decided, as we were getting practically no support from the Branch, that he had had enough excitement for the present, so the last day of the visit being Sunday, it was observed according to God's intentions, as a day of rest.

I have to thank Mr. and Mrs. Bell, who attended on alternate evenings, and Mr. Friend, who "chaired" and carried the platform all the week, under very trying circumstances, for all the help I received on my visit to Hull. This occasion seems appropriate for reminding all members of the N.S.S. that it is not fair to the lecturer and a handful of enthusiasts to allow them to bear the whole brunt of these out-door meetings. Besides undermining the zeal of the one or two who are left to do all the work in each Branch, the members' failure to attend meetings encourages rowdiness from opponents, most of which would never occur if our platform were supported by even the presence of those who claim to be organized opponents of religion.

From Hull, Mr. Whitehead goes to Birmingham for a week and then to Swansea for a fortnight.

E. M. V.

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LONDON.—INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Heaven and Hell."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, 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. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

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. E. C. Saphin, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (19 Lowerhead Row): 3, Members' Meeting.

SWANSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (3 Carmarthen Road, back entrance): 6.30, a Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission, July 5 to 11.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Branch of the N.S.S.).—Ramble to Corkindale Law. Meet at foot of Glassford Street at 12 noon. Members and friends are asked to be punctual.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Square): 7.30, Mr. L. Davis, "The Church and the People."

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