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Views and Opinions.

Bigotry in Birmingham.
 On September 23 the Birmingham Education Committee had before it a recommendation from one of its sub-committees that the schools should be let to the National Secular Society on the same terms and conditions as apply when rooms are let to any other organization. There was considerable discussion, with which we will deal later, and the recommendation was eventually referred back to the Committee, which is almost equivalent to a rejection. Bigotry triumphed—for the time being—by a majority of two in a meeting of thirty-two. Behind that vote lies a history, and it is necessary to go back a little in order to understand the present situation. Prior to 1899 the Birmingham Branch had been holding some very successful meetings in the Bristol Street Board School. Had the meetings been unsuccessful, it is probable that nothing would have been said of their being there. But the hall was frequently crowded, and a good class of people were being attracted to the lectures. So complaints were made to the School Board concerning the presence of wicked Freethinkers on public property. Then what was considered a crowning outrage occurred. A gentleman, Mr. Sale, was advertised to lecture on the subject of "Did God make Man, or did Man make God?" The question was, apparently, too direct for a section of Birmingham Christians. Otherwise it is the question that is being discussed all over the world, and the latter half is being answered in the affirmative by some of the foremost scholars in every civilized country in the world. There is nothing in the language itself that could be counted offensive; it is only to the *idea* itself that objection could be taken. And the man who objects to that question being publicly asked and answered simply refuses to permit the scientific side of the case being put forward. It is the most naked form of intolerance.

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Pulling the Strings.
 Anyway, the matter came before the Board; it was brought up by the Catholic Bishop of Coventry, and those who objected to the Freethinking citizens of Birmingham having the same privileges as Chris-

tians had no difficulty in getting other Christians to write a few postcards objecting to Freethinkers being allowed in the schools. There was the usual talk about "immorality" being taught, which may usually—where Christians are concerned—be taken to mean something to which they are opposed. There was not, it should be said, a single man or woman who came forward to say publicly that they had ever heard at the Freethought meetings anything to which reasonable objection could be taken. But it is not often, where public bodies are concerned, that Freethinkers can count upon getting a "square deal." The bigots have ways of "pulling the strings," and threatening or bribing members of public bodies in a way that makes the administration of justice rather difficult. In the end the Freethinkers were refused the use of the schools for twelve months, and the prohibition has been continued ever since. It has not stopped the propaganda of Secularism in Birmingham, it has only served as a perpetual reminder of the injustice meted out to unbelievers by Christians. It should be stated that this veto was carried by ten to five, and among the five, two clergymen, the Rev. J. A. Sharp and the Rev. J. Wood.

* * *

A Chance for Justice.
 The motion before the Education Committee on September 23 was that the minute shutting Freethinkers out of the schools be rescinded. And in introducing this recommendation, Mr. Bethune Baker made a curious slip. He said that at the time when the veto was applied there was "no doubt the Society was distributing immoral literature." Now this is simply not true. The Society was not then, nor has it at any time during its history, been engaged in distributing what could even plausibly be called "immoral literature." "Immoral" is one of the most abused words in the language of controversy, and in the mouth of a Christian it seldom means more than something that does not agree with his creed. When it is borne in mind that the Catholic Bishop of Coventry picked out from the Society's "Objects" "a reform of the marriage laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce," as a sample of the shocking teaching of the N.S.S., one may fairly gauge the quality of the opposition. It is to be regretted that Mr. Bethune Baker should have been so misled by the use of a word as to seriously slander the National Secular Society. He explained that he was out of sympathy with the Secular Society, and it is charitable to assume that better acquaintance with it would prevent the repetition of such statements as the one mentioned.

* * *

Stupidity in the Saddle.
 Now let us look at the grounds on which the recommendation of the Committee was rejected. The mover

of the amendment that it be referred back was Mr. Dixon. He said it was still very undesirable that the Society's literature should be distributed in buildings administered by the Committee, and the reason given—the only reason—was that "the main reason of these publications was to throw ridicule on religion, on Theism, on the belief in God and immortality." There was no mention of immorality, and the purpose is clear. Mr. Dixon objects to the open criticism of the belief in God, Theism, and immortality. His reason for the Committee not permitting it is as curious as his outlook is narrow. He said: "Everyone was agreed that some form of religious instruction should be given in the schools, and that this was one of the most important subjects. It was, therefore, undesirable that propaganda opposed to this teaching should be permitted in the same building." We may say, in passing, that everyone in Birmingham is not agreed that religion should be taught in the schools, and that it is one of the most important subjects. Mr. Dixon must be curiously ill-informed as to the state of public opinion in Birmingham not to know that there is a fairly large number that believe in a policy of Secular education. The majority may agree with religious instruction, but that is all. Sir George Kenrick properly reminded Mr. Dixon that what went on in the day time had no connection whatever with lectures delivered in the evening, and the Chairman of the Education Committee also pointed out that the Committee would be landing itself in endless difficulties if they made themselves censors of the opinions of their tenants. That is quite a proper view of the matter. The Committee lets its rooms to Socialists, Labourists, Spiritualists, and to others. Are we to understand that nothing is said at these meetings that at all contradicts the teachings of the teachers during the day-time? Besides, it is not the children who attend the Council schools who are invited to the lectures. The Council does not pay the lecturers or arrange the lectures. If it were proposed to hold a Freethought meeting in a Catholic Church it would be objected that the building was a "sacred" one. Is that also held of the schools? Is it believed that something said on the Sunday evening concerning the existence of God will affect the teaching given to the children on the Monday morning? Does it cling to the walls like an infection? Bigotry always has its ridiculous aspect, and Mr. Dixon has not failed to emphasize it. That argument removes the last shred of doubt as to the sheer bigotry that underlies the whole of the opposition.

Pure Bigotry.

Mr. Hickinbottom also said it was inconsistent to let the Secular Society have the rooms and yet spend public money on teachers who were paid to impart religious knowledge. If there is anything in that, it means that in Mr. Hickinbottom's opinion no public building should be let to anyone or to any society which contradicts the religious teaching given in the school. And that would bar, not alone Freethinkers, but Spiritualists, Jews, Mohammedans, and others. Logically carried out it would mean the silencing of all but Christians, and, if possible, of all but one sect of Christians. Both Mr. Dixon and Mr. Hickinbottom appear to forget that the City of Birmingham is made up of all sorts of people with all sorts of opinions. And if religious belief went with a conscientious discharge of public duties, both these gentlemen would realize that their duty—their moral duty—is not to stand for the overriding of one section by another section, but to hold the scales level and to see that every section of the community

has justice done it. Freethinkers are asking for no favour; they are praying for no special privilege; they are simply asking that they shall have the same privileges as other people. They are ratepayers with others, they do not give more trouble than other people, their lives are as clean and as honourable as those of other people. On what ground, then, are they excluded from the same rights as other people? Solely on the ground that they differ from Mr. Dixon and Mr. Hickinbottom on matters of religion, who may be, one may be pardoned suspecting, merely the cats'-paws of others who remain in the back-ground.

* * *

A Curious Position.

There was one very important point raised by Sir George Kenrick. He said it was difficult to justify the Committee's continued refusal to let the schools to Secularists in view of the fact that the Town Hall had been let to the same people on more than one occasion. Quite so; the Town Hall has been let to the N.S.S. every year, and sometimes more than once a year, during the whole of the time the Society has been shut out of the schools. And during the whole of that time there has never been the slightest reasonable objection raised as to the lecturers or the lectures. Of course, there has been plenty said to which Christians object, but that is inevitable where Freethinkers and Christians meet in open discussion. The suggestive fact is that while the old School Board and the Committee do not think the Secularists ought not to have the schools, they are allowed to lecture in one of the finest municipal buildings in the provinces, and no one is a penny the worse for their doing so. Why is this so? Well, the answer is that the letting of the Town Hall on such occasions is in the hands of the Lord Mayor, not in those of a committee, where responsibility for a decision may be divided or evaded, and where members may be got at by underground influences. The rule has been to let the Town Hall to every established body in the City in turn. And, so far, every Lord Mayor has discharged that part of his duties in a fair, honourable, and gentlemanly manner. He has taken it that it is his duty to behave with equal justice to all citizens, careless of whether they be Jews, Christians, or Atheists. Individually he may have thought their opinions quite wrong, but that was not his business. His business was to deal out justice to all. And we wish to say here how much the Freethinkers of Birmingham have appreciated his impartiality in this respect. He has dealt with others as he would have others deal with him. But we would like the people of Birmingham to face the question—If lectures can be delivered in the Town Hall without danger to public order or public morals, on what reasonable grounds can they be shut out of the Council schools?

* * *

Hopeless.

What is at issue in Birmingham, what has really been at issue, during the past twenty-seven years, has been the right of freedom of discussion. It is not to the point to urge that Freethinkers were not prohibited from meeting elsewhere. What the Dixons and the Hickinbottoms did was to shut Freethinkers out of the only buildings over which they could exert control. And they would have been inconsistent in their bigotry had they refused to silence them altogether if they possessed the power. Their intolerance expressed itself as far as it could. If they could not do more, it was only because they lacked the opportunity. Shutting Freethinkers out of the schools twenty-seven years ago did not prevent them carrying on their work. They

have carried it on without a single break ever since. They will continue to carry on in the future, whether the Education Committee act with justice or not. What the Committee has done is to inspire all lovers of freedom of discussion to renewed efforts. It is a matter that should appeal to all who believe that orderly progress can only be achieved in an atmosphere of open discussion, and who are resolved that all opinion shall be heard whether they believe a particular one to be right or wrong. And, after all, the Education Committee is not immortal. It is a fluid body; there are such things as elections, and better and more open-minded men may take the place of those now in power. Those with a proper sense of historical perspective know how difficult it is to kill an opinion by persecution on the grand scale; it is practically impossible to do so by the methods of the seventeen on the Birmingham Education Committee.

A Claim for Justice.

We should be probably doing an injustice to the people of Birmingham if we were to assume that the seventeen who voted for an act of gross injustice to the Freethinkers of that city faithfully represented the feelings of even the majority of its citizens. We have been a constant visitor to Birmingham for the past thirty-five years, we have lectured many times in its handsome Town Hall, and have never yet had cause to complain at the readiness of the public to listen to opinions to which many of them were opposed. It is better to take that as representative of the better side of Birmingham's intellectual outlook than the action of a handful of bigots who are elevated to a position of temporary power by the chance of the ballot-box. We may be wrong, but the justice of the claim made by the Freethinkers is so clear that if the people of the city were fairly consulted on the question we believe their answer would be that there should be no discrimination between one group of citizens and another group. And, after all, if it is their own opinions this handful of bigots are fighting for, it is the civic honour of the whole of the city, its reputation for justice and fairness it is jeopardising. Freethinkers are not asking for favours. They are not asking that they shall be given better or cheaper facilities for bringing their opinions before the public. They are asking only that which is granted to Socialists, Spiritualists, Labourists, and others shall not be denied them. Their demand is for justice. They ask for no more than that; they would be doing less than their duty to the cause of truth and civic cleanliness if they accepted less.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Lone God.

I HEARD a preacher eloquently dwell
On God's solcitude—and then did say
How He was lonely in th' Eternal day,
And felt an overwhelming passion swell
His proud immensity. He was alone,
With none to love Him and to wish Him well,
E'en there where His Omnipotence held sway:
Said He: "I will make Man, and thus atone
For my Divinity"; but, strange to tell,
He took Man's rib, and made the funny bone.
The God was sold when Woman came His way;
His song of victory ended in a green;
She toppled Heaven's throne; she was the birth
Of Man's Divinity, and reign on Earth!

W. J. LAMB.

Christian Evangelism.

IN any serious attempt to understand and explain the religion of the Cross, the first difficulty encountered is that of reconciling the two different and apparently conflicting versions of it contained in the Bible. In some passages it is represented as God's plan of seeking and redeeming his children who unfortunately have forsaken him, and gone their own wicked way, and their supreme guilt is shown to consist in their deliberate and persistent refusal to respond to his loving appeals. In Jeremiah xxxv. 17 we read: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold. I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered." In the New Testament salvation is described as a gift which God bestows upon whomsoever he wills. In Romans ix. 23 he is said to "make known the riches of his grace upon vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory." In verse 18 of the same chapter, Paul says: "So then he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth." It must be admitted that those verses do not shed the most favourable light upon the Divine character; but that is not our point just now. In other passages everything is made to depend upon man's will. While the Heavenly Father is depicted as governed by compassionate love, in the strength of which he sends his only begotten Son into the world to offer himself up as a sacrifice for sin, yet two conditions are set down with which a man must comply before he can be saved, namely, he must believe and be baptised. Men are solemnly exhorted to seek the Lord while he is near, to put their trust in him, and to yield their hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ, and upon doing all this they are assured of salvation, which means eternal life. Paul puts this very succinctly in Romans x. 13-15: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How, then, shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" Whether true or false, those words are at least perfectly logical; and they also explain why Christendom is crowded with preachers. As a matter of fact, the sole business of the clergy is to do work which God cannot or will not do himself. The Bible tells us that God does call all people, but that he cannot make them hear his voice. Curiously enough, however, ordained ministers claim that they do hear the call, and they make it a fairly profitable profession to act as sounding boards for it, so that all may hear it and respond to its appeal.

At a recent meeting of the Free Church Federal Council the Rev. Dr. J. C. Carlile delivered an address which, according to the *Christian World* for September 30, has been much discussed, the subject being "Evangelism for the Present Day." Dr. Carlile is an exceptionally able and popular Free Church minister, and is regarded as an exceedingly advanced theologian. As reported in the *British Weekly*, of September 30, Dr. Carlile said:—

A new way of approach must be found. The old appeal to fear, while it may not be discarded, has nothing like the force it possessed even five-and-twenty years ago; the theological conception of the future life is in chaos. It is seldom a preacher has anything to say about Heaven or Hell. Perhaps it is true that the pulpit is as much confused upon these subjects as the pew.

William James has convinced the modern world that there are *varieties of religious experience*, but in doing so he represented religious people as peculiar and abnormal, and left the general impression that they were the eccentric rather than the healthy-minded.

How profoundly true the whole of that extract is, and how innocently apt the reference to William James, who was such an influential American Atheist, as all students of his works well know. Does Dr. Carlile himself think of religious people as "peculiar and abnormal," or as "eccentric rather than healthy minded"? He certainly does not, judging by what he claims for them later on in his address. Take the following eloquent utterance:—

Life is a tremendous thing, throbbing with possibilities and opening into undreamed realities. It may be lived wondrously or meanly. The soul may feed upon the heavenly manna, or sit down to a meal of dust and ashes. There is grace to attain to the ideal that seem unattainable. It is not given to man by nature to rise above his own level. To come up to the Christ standard one is driven to find that power not ourselves that makes for righteousness.

We fully agree with the statement that "life is a tremendous thing, throbbing with possibilities," and that "it may be lived wondrously or meanly." We do not believe in the existence of "heavenly manna," though we are painfully aware that "a meal of dust and ashes" is far too common a reality; but we wholly repudiate the irrational notion that "there is grace to attain the ideal that seems unattainable." Grace, like sin, is a theological figment, which possesses no reality whatever save in the metaphysical imagination. It is its unreality that enables men like Dr. Carlile to talk about it with such dogmatic confidence. No man has ever risen above his own level by any means whatever. Denying the existence of a personal God, Matthew Arnold took refuge in the absurd idea that there is somewhere a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness, which William James called a stream of tendency. Nature knows nothing of any such power or stream bringing people up to the "Christ standard," whatever that may be.

Dr. Carlile's next point is a highly practical one, which we let him state in his own words:—

There is the appeal to those who have failed, who have made a muddle of their lives and are conscious that they have missed their aim. Is there any gospel that speaks deliverance from the past? We are familiar with the philosophy of Determinism, which is the old Calvinism with God left out. Can the modern evangelist offer any chance to the man or woman who has fallen? If not, what is the meaning of the Cross? These lines of approach may be destitute of some of the dramatic elements of the old preaching, but they are real and enable the evangelist to get there. They compel the preacher to go back to the sources of Christianity, to the deeper things which necessitate an atonement. Whatever theory may be held, the fact of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself is essential to the evangel.

Surely Dr. Carlile cannot be ignorant of the fact that there are social layers so unspeakably low upon which no reforming forces can exert any redemptive influence whatever. The only hope of ever doing away with them is by getting hold of the children at their earliest years and securing for them a wholesomer environment and the means of a true education. Why are there such wretched slums in all our Christian cities and towns? Why have they not been completely swept away long ago by the Christian religion? It cannot be denied that the Gospel is utterly incapable of effecting their abolition. Of

course, there are numerous instances of persons who have fallen rising again and reaching higher altitudes of character than they had ever occupied previously; but the fact remains, nevertheless, that the past cannot be blotted out. Whether good or bad, it is bound to have its bearing upon the present. "Be not deceived," Paul says; "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The power of the past upon the present is absolutely inescapable. Dr. Carlile asks, "What is the meaning of the Cross?" Well, so far as the world as we know it to-day is concerned, the Cross is an entirely meaningless word. If the Gospel Jesus' alleged description of it had been accurate the existing social conditions could never have arisen. There would have been no slums, and the present bitter conflict between Capital and Labour would have been a literal impossibility. The truth that must be faced is that Christian Evangelism is a miserable farce and has never been anything else, despite the fact that many of its advocates are undoubtedly perfectly honest and sincere.

J. T. LLOYD.

Shakespeare's Humanism.

Good soldiers may fight, pillage, and violate under a banner, and yet, in truth, shall not be able to read and interpret the legend emblazoned on it.—*Douglas Jerrold.*

In the days of his vanity Mr. Bernard Shaw made a violent attack on Shakespeare on the ground that the greatest of all poets was undemocratic. Seemingly it upset Mr. Shaw that Shakespeare chose to make Hamlet a prince instead of a plumber, and Lear a king rather than a cats'-meat-man. It may be that Mr. Shaw would also have preferred that the old roysterer, Falstaff, should have dined off a carrot and a glass of water, rather than the fleshpots of Egypt.

Shakespeare lived, it is well to recall, at a time when the monarch might claim divine right, and people who felt inclined to laugh were stopped by the thumbscrew and the gibbet. He wrote in days when Democracy in its modern sense was as unknown as the aeroplane or wireless telegraphy. Shakespeare's detachment from the furious theological turmoil of the spacious days in which he played and wrote ought, in themselves, to supply a guarantee that he could suspend his judgment in matters political, no less than religious. Shakespeare has few things more valuable to say than that party is a natural bane. That message is implicit, and to discerning readers, explicit, in his works, beyond cavil and dispute. There is no need of tearing text from context in the plays, and fathering the views of his puppets on Shakespeare himself. As well might we make Shakespeare a murderer because he was the author of "Macbeth," or a lunatic because he wrote "King Lear."

George Foote, who was a keen critic, pointed out that Shakespeare often states both sides of a question by various utterances placed in the mouths of his characters. This is a distinguishing mark of his mind, for it is few men who can do this, and still fewer poets. It was this extraordinary power of holding the scales firmly that excited John Ruskin's admiration, when he declared the Master to be unapproachable. The angry utterances put in the mouth of a man-hater like Simon of Athens, or the splenetic outbursts of Coriolanus, do not prove that Shakespeare himself was hostile to the people. Nor do they make Shakespeare inferior to Milton as a poet, because Milton was a fiery Republican, whilst Shakespeare introduces aristocrats among his puppets.

Shakespeare stood for no class. He is the poet of all, rich and poor alike. He cannot legitimately be made to support the people against the aristocrat, the sovereign against the citizen. All may learn from him; the monarch the necessity of good government; the people that the king is a human being, and not always to be envied. The statesman may learn that popular verdicts are unstable, and the agitator that order and contentment are essential to a country's prosperity. Shakespeare did think about political matters, but the artist was always stronger than the politician.

Shakespeare was quite democratic in his treatment of women in his plays. Indeed, he was far in front of his contemporaries in this respect, for he depicts women as being in every way the equals of men. The brilliant and witty Beatrice is more than a match for the smart Benedict, and Emilia holds her own against the villainous Jago. In the play of "Macbeth" it is the woman who has the controlling mind, and her husband is as clay in her hands. What comradeship, too, there is between Cæsar and his wife, and Brutus and Portia. What tribute there is in the welcome given by Coriolanus to his wife, quite in "the high Roman way." As Robert Ingersoll well says, "Shakespeare has done more for women than all the other dramatists of the world."

Consider, too, Shakespeare's broad view of mankind. As in the case of Shylock, the Master rose superior to religious prejudices, so, in the case of Othello, he ignored prejudices concerning race. In the "Merchant of Venice" he condemned the folly and wickedness of torture, which was then quite common in the jurisprudence of Christendom. Where else is there a similar protest in contemporary literature? At a time when western Europe was a shambles in the name of God and religion, Shakespeare was publicly praising the quality of mercy, and the appeal lost nothing by being placed on the lips of Portia.

Shakespeare had, too, a democratic dislike of men who, having before gored the gentle bosom of peace with pillage and robbery, make wars their bulwark." "How soon mightiness turns to misery" could be taken as a motto for all Shakespeare's historical plays. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" is Shakespeare's as well as Henry the Fourth's comment. The Master's political aloofness is shown in the words:—

While I am a beggar, I will rail,
And say there is no sin but to be rich,
And being rich my virtue then shall be
To say there is no vice but beggary.

What searching criticism is in the passage:—

How quickly Nature falls into revolt
When gold becomes her object.

A similar idea is in the following:—

Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.

Only a humanitarian, as well as a poet, could have pictured the storm in those suggestive lines in "King Lear":—

Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire.

In "Titus Andronicus" he has some lines on the killing of a fly, which shows the gentle nature of the man:—

But how, if that fly had a father and mother,
How would he hang his slender gilded wings,
And buzz lamenting doings in the air?
Poor harmless fly!
That with his pretty buzzing melody
Came here to make us merry; and thou hast killed him.

How tender are his lines on the wounded stag in "As You Like It":—

Come, shall we go and kill us venison,
And yet it viks me, the poor dappled fools—
Being native burghers of this desert city—
Should, in their own confines, with forked heads
Have their round haunches gored.

These lines justify the title of "the gentle Shakespeare," bestowed on him by his contemporaries. Three centuries ago Shakespeare was a humanitarian. The quality of justice was as little strained in him as the quality of mercy. The profound and intimate knowledge of mankind which went to the making of his matchless genius was not unmixed with pity. In an age when knowledge was rare, he was great and good enough to say, "There is no darkness but ignorance." Shakespeare stands for Humanity, which existed before all party and political shibboleths, and will survive them all. That is really the secret of his influence and of his popularity, for, in the last analysis, more writing means noble thinking. More than mountains of gold these things count in the heritage of a great people.

MIMNERMUS.

The March of Materialism.

II.

(Continued from page 619.)

THE Spiritualists make great play with the "subconscious mind," or "subliminal self." They claim, that besides our conscious mind, we have another unconscious mind; and that, as in an iceberg, the part we see above water is only a very small portion compared with the part submerged and out of sight; so our conscious mind forms only a very small part, compared with the subconscious mind. The Spiritualists also claim that this subconscious mind can make contact with other minds by means of telepathy; that it can be tapped by means of hypnotism, trances, and dreams, while the conscious mind is asleep, or suspended. And, further, that it is able to draw upon sources of spiritual information not available to the conscious mind, as in the revelations of trance mediums. And that of the two, the conscious and the subconscious, the subconscious mind is by far the most important.

Considering that the mediums, who claim to have tapped this "subliminal mind," have never revealed anything of the slightest use in science, or even unravelled a crime mystery—their efforts in this direction have been mere guesses and very wide of the mark—they have not even given a correct answer to any of the many test messages which have been left behind from time to time by departed Spiritualists. The recorded messages, said to have been received from the mighty dead, consist, for the most part, of some of the most utter drivel ever committed to print. Of so puerile a character, indeed, that it would seem that instead of ascending to a higher sphere of intelligence, the departed spirits have descended to a lower, and are suffering from senile decay. Considering all this, the claim for the superiority of the subconscious mind is extremely ridiculous.

There is, however, no need for any supernatural explanation in the matter. The Materialist can give an explanation of all the facts without any appeal to spiritual forces. Among the ten thousand million neurons, of which the human brain consists, are stored those multitude of mental pictures which have been impressed upon them like a photograph upon a sensitive plate—to use a rough illustration—

by the sights, sounds, and other sensory impressions we have received during life, and which constitute the memory. These impressions remain quiescent until revived, or recalled, by a suitable stimulus. Dr. McBride explains the subconscious mind as follows:

We have assumed the existence in the adult brain of innumerable pictures, or patterns, of myelinated neurones, each pattern being normally linked up and directly or indirectly connected with every other. Such patterns, we suggest, remain quiescent unless stimulated by nerve impulse from one or other of the nerves of sensation. The consciousness at any given period is represented by the cerebral pictures which happen at the time to be stimulated by nerve impulse. The others capable of being stimulated and producing mental pictures, but for the moment not in action, we may, if we like the term, call the subconscious mind. To postulate any other form of unconsciousness, as has been done by psycho-analysts, brings with it the difficulty of framing an hypothesis which would allow of a physiological analogy. In short, it seems easier to assume that parts of the brain only are active at any one time, and that the resting parts explain most, if not all, of the phenomena ascribed to the subconscious.¹

The same materialistic explanation would explain cases of multiple personality. That is of an individual possessing a personality of differing kinds, at different times. In such cases, says Dr. McBride, "It would be perfectly conceivable that by some process of cutting off connections between certain neurones and reopening other paths for nerve impulse, a different chain of thought might be entered upon. External stimulus might reach brain cells by different routes and thus produce different images, just as we have suggested may be the case in dreams and hypnotism" (p. 24). And, as he further points out, some such process must be at work in those cases of hysteria, blindness, and deafness, which often disappear as suddenly as they come, just as do the different personalities.

We meet, says Dr. McBride, "with two distinct types of mentality. On one side are those who honestly cannot bring themselves to believe that mind can ever be explained in terms of nerve activity, while to many of their opponents it seems extraordinary that anyone with an elementary knowledge of physiology and its methods should for a moment doubt that what has been proved true for the spinal cord should not be equally true concerning the *cortex cerebri*" (p. 149). And, as he further remarks:—

It requires a metaphysician who is at the same time a skilful dialectician to make the theory that mind exists apart from matter even seem plausible. The acceptance of this doctrine, moreover, necessitates that a sharp differentiation should be made between reflex action, instinct, and thought, while a careful analysis teaches us that each runs into the other, and that the acme is attained in reason. What we witness in the gradual evolution of the child's mind, in the ascending amount of mentality as we pass from lower to higher animals, and in the comparatively small mental differences between the lowest man and the highest animal, allowing for the fact that the former has the advantage of some form of speech, all leads us unerringly towards the materialistic hypothesis and away from the mystical belief in a separate mind. (*The Riddle of Personality*, p. 150.)

In spite of the constantly growing strength of the Materialistic position, when we look through the literature of to-day we constantly find references "to the overthrow of the Materialism of last century." But, as Dr. McBride observes: "When we come to seek definite arguments leading logically to this con-

clusion, it is found difficult to discover them." Again, it is often stated that the theory which attempts to explain the physical basis of mind is old-fashioned; but, as he remarks, "the question is not exactly one of fashion. It is rather what hypothesis is best adapted to appeal to intelligent people who rely more upon common sense than upon dialectic?" (p. 181).

The opponents of Materialism also declare that man is the only being in this world endowed with reasoning powers, but Dr. McBride gives many instances of reasoning among animals. He cites from Mr. Kearton, the famous photographer of wild animals and birds in their native haunts, the reasoning powers of a chimpanzee, described by Mr. Kearton in his book, *My Friend Toto*, who, when his master was ill, was found to be an efficient attendant, as follows:—

Toto made himself my nurse. He would not leave me. All day he would sit beside me, watching with a care that seemed almost maternal, and anything that I wanted he would bring me. He would go to the medicine chest when I told him to do so, and bring the bottle of quinine, and then he would fetch a glass of water. When I wanted a book he would go to the shelf and stand in front of the eight or ten books that lay on it. He would put his finger on the first and look at me. "No," I would say, and then he would touch the one at the opposite end of the row. "No," I would say again, and he would touch all the books in turn till I said "Yes." Then he would bring the book to me. (*My Friend Toto*, pp. 98-99.)

There is no difference in kind, only in degree; and this applies all along the line of life. Dr. McBride cites Stewart Paton as saying (*Human Behaviour*, p. 10): "We now know that there are no specific differences of kind, but only those of degree between the reflex activities of the Protozoa and the highest mental processes of man"—a view previously expressed by Ferrier." The protozoa are microscopic, one-celled organisms found in stagnant water, the lowest form of life.

W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

Acid Drops.

The *Sunday Chronicle* has been publishing a series of articles on "The Religion of To-morrow," but they, as usual, are entrusted to hands that will make sure of some kind of a religion "to-morrow," and that the religion will be some kind of Christianity. Bishop Welldon, for instance, makes sure that in the future the Christian Church will stand as the personification of all that is good against the combination of all that is evil. All that is Christian is good, and all that is not Christian is evil. What more can anyone want? The classification is plain and satisfying—to a Christian Bishop.

It is noticeable that in all these prophecies about the religion of to-morrow the parson always places himself as in some way or other the centre of the picture. Whoever else is absent he has to be there. The medicine-man has always been there, so the medicine-man always will be there. So runs his reasoning. It never seems to dawn upon him that although the medicine-man has always been with us, his function in life is a steadily diminishing one. Once upon a time he did everything, or was responsible for everything, now he does little and is responsible for nothing. He no longer cures disease, or sends the rain, or wins wars, or blasts men for unbelief. And arguing from the past to the future, one would assume that his status would go on diminishing until he disappears altogether. But that reasoning is too plain for the parson. He believes the parson to be indestructible—perhaps it is because he believes stupidity to be immortal.

¹ McBride, *The Riddle of Personality*, pp. 21-22.

After all, why should the future have any religion? If the *Sunday Chronicle*, instead of playing the usual newspaper game of fooling the public, by asking only one set of men to write articles on these subjects, were to get a genuinely representative body of opinion together, there would be found many writers who could advance some very cogent reasons for believing that the society of the future would be quite without religion, but with a strongly developed social sense and a mass of solid knowledge concerning man and the universe that would make all the religions as ridiculous as a pantomime and as useless as the coracle of an ancient Briton in an Atlantic race. But that would never do. So the *Sunday Chronicle* plays the old game of fooling its readers by giving it one side of the case only and pretending there is no other in existence. When one sees how much newspapers do to befool and mislead public opinion, and how little they do to enlighten, they appear to be a questionable benefit after all.

Thirty years ago there had been great alarm in the Church as to what science and biblical criticism were going to do with the Christian faith, recently declared Dr. Hughes, Principal of Wesleyan House, Cambridge. The Church, however, had quietly worked its way through the disturbance; people had learned to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential in Christianity. We like the Doctor's "quietly." That is a queer epithet to apply to the acrimonious and scurrilous arguments which greeted the "disturbance" of orthodox views. If those indicate a Wesleyan's notion of quiet working, we hope we shall be spared a noisy one! Christians, Dr. Hughes tells us, have now been enabled to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. This is equivalent to admitting that the one true faith, given to man for his guidance for all time, was presented by the Almighty in the form of a jigsaw puzzle. And the puzzle, we are to understand, has taken nineteen hundred years to fit properly together before the message could be rightly deciphered. And during these many centuries people have been taught to base their conduct on the puzzle. No wonder the Christian era has seen so many very unlovely incidents! By the look of things, God must have been suffering from brain-fag when he presented his wonderful jumble of essentials and non-essentials, with no clue to which was which, for the guidance of his faithful people. And yet, Christians ask the Freethinker to treat with respect a God who could do a thing like that!

A Russian princess, in a daily paper, sets out to defend "tradition." Traditions have been branded, she says, with a tendency to perpetuate stale ideas. But, in her opinion, stale ideas have never stopped the birth and growth of new ideas; the beneficial moral influence of good traditions is far greater than many people suppose. If this good lady wants an instance of how tradition has stopped the growth of new ideas, she need only take a glance over Christian history. She will see there an account of Christian tradition suppressing and fighting the new ideas of science—a merry little game that even yet is not over with. As for the beneficial moral effect of good traditions, the trouble has always been to separate the good from the bad. What has generally happened is that the vested interests which thrive on bad traditions—interests such as the Churches and the aristocracy—have used all their power to make the people believe that bad traditions are really good ones. And it is because Freethought has always been active in getting people to scrutinize traditions in the light of reason, that we find vested interests ever on the alert to suppress Freethought and the Freethinker.

"The truth of Christ," declares Canon Peter Green, "that has come down to us from the beginning has in it nothing to be apologised for, and nothing to be withdrawn." We should think not, indeed! Much of what once passed for "the truth of Christ" is now seen to be something quite other than that. And the modernist's way with this is to explain and rehash or reinterpret it,

so that the "truth" in the lump, as it were, resembles that which the original writers taught, and millions of Christians have cherished, about as closely as chalk resembles cheese. The modernist doesn't apologise for the ancient Christian egg. He merely serves it up scrambled instead of hard-boiled.

In jocular mood a weekly paper tells us that some things are to-day cheaper than they were 150 years ago, and prison is one of the things. William Cobbett had to pay seven guineas a week for his rooms in Newgate; but to-day you can go to prison for nothing! Well, to that we say it is not necessary to commit a crime to enjoy the free benefits of a prison. You only need to insult a policeman's God, and then a judge will call it blasphemy.

A Chinese witness at a London police-court took the oath by extinguishing a lighted candle, indicating his belief that if he did not tell the truth his soul would be similarly extinguished. This strikes us as being a rather more hygienic mode of taking an oath than is the Christian method. The Christian slobbers over the germ-smeared cover of a fetish book, which proves how much more highly civilized he is than the benighted Chinaman. But we have never noticed that the practice succeeded in making a Christian liar tell the truth.

Great are the uses of advertisement. Dressed as an Eastern shepherd, the Rev. J. R. Quarterman, a vicar of Leicester, spends each year twelve hours in his church on its "birthday," receiving as contributions to the church's funds the hard-earned coppers of the gullible. From this one may infer that the kind of person who can be cajoled into paying something for nothing is still plentiful in religious circles. We hope the pious will not omit to "whip round" for a purse of money to enable this hard-working vicar to take a little holiday after the strenuous labour for Christ.

"To proclaim religion is an advertising man's job," declares the Rev. Dr. Charles Steidle. To put this theory to the test an executive committee, comprising a hundred clergymen and representatives of the American advertising association, are to conduct a church advertising campaign. The religion that was to conquer the world must be in a bad way when it requires to be "boosted" like bottled beer and face powder. The American cleric evidently believes that there is more magic in dollars spent on advertising than there is in prayers to the Almighty.

A pageant of Faith and Freedom has been enacted by the London Free Churches at the New Scala Theatre. The scenes, we fancy, depicted more faith than freedom. About the only kind of freedom the Protestants have been interested in is the freedom to be intolerant to others not of their faith. And this intolerance is, of course, the result of too much imitation of the intolerant mendicant preacher Jesus.

In "The Problem of a Career," Mr. J. A. R. Cairns has collected the views of their own careers of some well-known professional and business men. Writing about the Church of England ministry, the Bishop of London offers the anxious parent the following helpful hint. "For the first fifteen years in Holy Orders there is no profession in which a man can find more useful scope for all the athletic prowess he has developed at school and university than in the ministry of the Church." And the ministry, mark you, is supposed to be one of the intellectual professions! We hope the Bishop will not object to our pointing out that his profession is the only one in which athletic prowess would be regarded as a recommendation for candidature. The other professions ask what are the candidate's intellectual attainments. They prefer good brains to well-developed muscles. They afford scope for some ability

to think; whereas the clerical does not. It requires of its members merely the capacity to memorize a collection of dogmas and to repeat them like a parrot for the rest of their professional life. Seemingly, there is no "problem of a career" for parrots.

The Rev. Edgar Joslyn is none too optimistic about the state of his calling. He says: "Men ministers have nearly let the copyright of Christianity run out." This statement was made at a meeting where women ministers were vociferous in their claims to preach. Lady Barrett produced an unanswerable argument to the effect that it was extraordinary that women should not be allowed to preach, seeing that they formed the bulk of the congregations. For our part we feel sure that privileges of this kind will be freely given to the ladies when preaching ceases to be a paying concern for the men.

On the authority of the *Outlook* we are informed that there is an ecclesiastical storm raging in Scotland. It threatens grave injury to the proposed union of the Established and United Free Churches. Now a storm of this magnitude must have an important cause, and as the Scotch variety of Christianity would put fear even into a clothes-horse, it is well for the world to know the cause of this disturbance. There is no concealing the fact, the truth must be bawled from the house tops: The Crown has conferred an ecclesiastical title on a Presbyterian minister; to wit, the minister of St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, and the gentleman may now be known as the "Very Reverend." The fat is in the fire, and outsiders who are not impressed with the stretching properties of the religious elastic-sided boots will find in this skirmish another proof of how these Christians love one another.

You get a lot for twopence when you buy the *Outlook*, and so does the British Government. This body, in an article entitled "Europe or the Empire?" is gravely taken to task for abandoning the historic policy of the Balance of Power for a too literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. Where are we now? Are we a Christian country? Can we be a too Christian country? We live in hope that the British Government will lend its ears to the *Outlook* and take in a hole or two in its belt for a too literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount.

Continues, this Caveman in our midst, in a strain that would have made Bottomley green with envy: "We are not living in the days when wars would be won by small mercenary armies: for an army to have any hope of victory in modern warfare it must be large, and to be large it must be national, and to be national the cause for which it is to fight must be popular." This lusty ink-spiller has apparently not heard that all the crippled of the last war are not yet fitted up with wooden legs—in that war when the Lord gave us the victory and we don't know what to do with it.

In the *Universe*, a Catholic paper that is a misnomer as long as there is a single Buddhist in the world, Mr. G. K. Chesterton has rushed to the aid of his brother, Mr. Hilaire Belloc. The devotion of these two medieval knights is wonderful, and we can only conclude that Mr. H. G. Wells has now had ample advertisement through our bat-eyed papers denying him access. It would be jolly if Cardinal Bourne would join in to prove the impregnability of the faith, and Mr. H. G. Wells' example in plain speaking might be followed by many other public men who can easily afford the luxury of saying what they think.

Religion, plain and fancy, is now in the grip of the noodledum of newspapers, and this may give it a little unhealthy stimulus to carry on for a few more years. There will follow the newspapers, patting each other on

the back for their omnipotence. O, my brethren, what a falling off is there! A snippet is taken from the Bishop of Bristol's article in a Sunday paper—a sort of John the Baptist announcement of his lordship's burbling in the *Weekly Dispatch* on the "After-Life." It is the old, old story, jam to-morrow but never to-day, and a long string of assertions in the mystical style that cannot be proved.

God is this, that, or the other. Christianity is likewise anything a believer cares to make it. That is the situation nowadays, so one is not surprised to find Dean Inge declaring that "God is no torturer, Christ never meant the fires of hell to be taken literally." All we can say is that it is a thousand pities that Christ did not manage to express himself so that he could have been properly understood. All his followers understood him to preach a literal hell. All the Christian leaders for centuries believed when he said hell he meant it. The lives of millions of people have been darkened and terrified by the teaching, and all because—if Dean Inge is correct—the Christian Church followed a man who did not possess the ability to say what he meant clearly and distinctly. And the most curious thing of all is that it is those who did not believe in Jesus Christ at all who did most to clear away this horror from decent human society.

But, said the Dean, while he did not believe in hell fire, he did not think "we had the right to assume that all would at last go to heaven. Everybody had met many people who would be very much out of place in heaven at any time." With that last sentence we quite agree. What on earth would strong, upright characters like Bradlaugh do in the Christian heaven? Any decent man or woman would get sick and tired of the place and the people in less than a week. As a matter of fact, we do not suppose the Christian heaven would ever have had any attraction for even believers if they had not also believed there was a hell to keep out of. And if there is no hell, there seems no need to bother about heaven. And we should dearly like to know what reason has Dean Inge for accepting heaven and rejecting hell? There is the same authority for both places, and just as much evidence for the existence of the one as there is for the existence of the other. The growth of common sense has made Dean Inge ashamed of the Christian hell. He really ought to have enough intelligence to give up the Christian heaven. Brimstone and treacle is an old-fashioned purifying mixture. Dean Inge offers us the treacle without brimstone, and that will not do at any price.

The *Daily News* can spare a generous column for "The Poltergeist Girl," who has been brought from Vienna to an establishment with the imposing name of the "National Laboratory of Psychological Research," South Kensington. The young lady is a big eater—she eats three times as much as other girls, and the experiments, we gather, after wading through a lot of twaddle, produced the letter I, on a piece of white painted metal from nowhere. Why not be useful and produce a few knobs of coal? And, of course, your bullet-headed Freethinker would say a thing like that as he is not psychic.

With the following packet of problems one wonders when the Church will reach the plain man who blows his nose and eats bread and cheese: "The main subjects discussed were the relation between the doctrines of Creation and of the Incarnation, the relation between the doctrine of Incarnation and Evolution, the Person of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the Trinity, the Idea of Providence, and the Problem of Miracle." This is the Bishop of Manchester's statement on the discussions of the Commission on Doctrine. Outside the circle of interested parties in the business it does not appear to have any more importance than the stick used to keep the heads in motion of those funny figures for sale on the pavements of London streets.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust and Sustentation Fund.

LAST year we made the first attempt to place the future of the *Freethinker* on a secure financial basis. This took the shape of a Trust, which was composed of Five Trustees, of whom the Editor of the *Freethinker* must be one, the remaining four being Mr. H. Jessop, Mr. C. W. Bush, Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook, and Mr. E. D. Side, all of them gentlemen of position who have for a long time taken a very close interest in this paper. Their interest was further shown by each making a very handsome donation to the Fund of the Trust.

The object of the Trust was to secure sufficient capital which, by investment, would yield the sum of £400 per year—the estimated deficit incurred in the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. The Trust Deed is carefully drawn up, and the duties of the Trustees well defined.

The result of last year's appeal was that up to August 31, 1926, there had been collected £3,901 4s. 10d., and on behalf of the Trustees, I have pleasure in publishing the following Certificate of the Accountant, who has checked all receipts and investments:—

We certify that the whole of the sums received, as acknowledged in the *Freethinker* to August 31, 1926, amounting to £3,901 4s. 10d., has been placed to the account of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust at the Midland Bank, Ltd., and with the exception of the small balance standing to the credit of the Trust on that date, the whole has been dealt with in accordance with the terms of the Trust Deed.

H. V. THEOBALD & Co.,
(Incorporated Accountants)
Auditors.

This was a very handsome start, and established a record in the history of the *Freethinker*. It is also the first attempt made to give the movement an endowed organ, and it enables donors to feel that when they give, their gifts will carry a permanent benefit with them. Already that has been done. There has not been a full year for the investments to bear fruit, but, to date, with interest to hand and due, it is calculated that the sum of £150 has been secured. This means, I may point out, a permanent return on last year's contribution, and it also means that this year, so far as the Sustentation Fund is concerned, that the sum of £250 only will be required. All above that sum will go to swell the capital of the Trust, which will augment the yearly income and so gradually wipe out the necessity for these annual appeals. This is not merely a splendid object at which to aim, but the result, so far, is one of which all concerned may well feel proud.

One of the subscribers to the Fund last year was Mr. Philip G. Peabody, another very old friend of the paper. He subscribed £100, but is so interested in the scheme that he makes the Trustees the following very handsome offer:—

September 11, 1926.

Provided the sum actually paid into the *Freethinker* Endowment Fund shall have reached the sum of seven thousand pounds (£7,000) by December 31, 1927, I promise to pay to the above Fund the sum of One Thousand Pounds (£1,000) to be expended by the Trustees in the manner directed by the Trust Deed of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, dated August 25, 1925, the certificate of a qualified Accountant to be conclusive as to substance and fact, such payment to be made within thirty days of formal notification thereof.

(Signed)

PHILIP G. PEABODY.

In making this offer Mr. Peabody's sole aim is to see the Fund completed at as early a date as possible, and I know him well enough to say that no one would be more pleased than he to be called upon to write the cheque at once. The money is there, and it remains for all interested to see that it is collected as soon as possible.

Last year I know that a good many who could afford but a small sum felt that their possible contribution would be too small for such an ambitious scheme. I hope that will not be felt this year. If each reader of the *Freethinker* would give what he or she could, the £1,000 might be secured in a week. And, as I have often before said, I would much rather see a thousand people send £1 each than one person send £1,000. But all should remember that this year their contribution, large or small, will be increased 25 per cent. by the terms of Mr. Peabody's offer. Mr. Peabody's offer turns every £1 subscribed into £1 6s. 3d. It is a sporting offer, and I feel sure that *Freethinkers* will see that full advantage is taken of it.

I am entering this phase of the campaign with every confidence of achieving our aim. During the past very trying twelve years every call on behalf of this journal has been promptly and generously met, and if I have not been over effusive in my thanks it is not because I have lacked appreciation of the loyalty shown. These annual appeals have been the least pleasing part of my work, but they had to be made, or the *Freethinker* would have ceased to exist, and that would certainly have been a disaster to the Freethought movement in this country. I can only say that I have done what I could to keep these calls to the smallest possible point.

I do not think it is necessary for me to say more. My own work in the lecture field and on this paper is known, and the value of the *Freethinker* to the cause of religious mental freedom is generally recognized. It is the oldest existing Freethought paper in Europe, and the only weekly representative of Freethought in this country, and I am quite sure that if twice ten thousand pounds were being asked for to ensure its disappearance, the sum would be quickly subscribed by those who hate it for its plain speaking. Some time ago some friends approached me with the suggestion that I might receive some practical recognition of the value of my thirty-six years' work in the Freethought party. My reply to them, and I repeat it now, was that the only thing I desire is to see the *Freethinker* placed in a position of security, and myself freed from the continuous worry of making sixpence do the work of a shilling. I have always given my best to the paper, and have counted no labour too great where it and the movement were concerned. That is my contribution to the work of "carrying on." Others can help in other directions, and one way is now before them. It will be a proud day for all of us if we can say that for the first time in the history of Freethought we have a journal placed beyond the fluctuations of financial fortune. This ought to have been done years ago, but it is never too late to recognize and repair an error.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and addressed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Every contribution will be acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Who, then, is free? The wise man who is lord over himself; whom neither poverty nor death nor chains alarm; strong to withstand his passions and to despise honours, and who is completely finished and rounded off in himself.—Horace.

To Correspondents.

F. MANN.—Mr. Cohen has sent subjects for October 31, and is writing you on the other matter. Pleased to know that your Bradlaugh Sunday meeting was so successful. We hope it will inspire many to push on with the work.

C. D. MENTE.—Pleased to have so hearty an appreciation of the *Freethinker* from a comparatively new reader. We are also obliged for cutting. The activity of "Fundamentalists" and their kind is evidence that there is very much to be done by those who have the courage and the determination to do it.

H. YOUNG.—Reporting the *Freethinker* as dead is an old trick. The wish is father to the thought. The worst of it is that some enquirers take it as true.

C. L.—The statue of Bruno still stands where it was placed in Rome. We have no doubt that the Church would like it removed, but even that has to bow to the spirit of the age.

C. THOMAS.—*Pagan Christs*, by J. M. Robertson, will probably give you what you require.

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.

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.

To-day (October 10) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. The lecture commences at 6.30, and the subject will be "Freethought, Religion, and the Press." Next Sunday Mr. Cohen pays a visit to the Manchester Branch, and will lecture, afternoon and evening, in the Broughton Town Hall, Duke Street. There should be good meetings there.

It is only what we expected to find that Birmingham Freethinkers are being stirred into renewed activity by the recent scandalous decision of the Education Committee to shut them out of the schools while permitting all sorts of other people to use them—so long as they do not attack Christianity. Two capital letters from the pen of our old friend, J. Breese, appears in the local press, and we expect others will follow. Displays of bigotry are not uncommon where a certain type of Christian is in power, but persistency on the part of those who have a just claim to bring before the public is never without its influence.

We deal with the matter at length in our "Views and Opinions" in this issue, and, as we prophesied last week, there will be more copies of the *Freethinker* distributed in Birmingham as a consequence of the action of the Education Committee, than has been the case for some time. If that was one of the objects of the Committee, they have achieved it. The Secular Society, Limited, at its last Board meeting decided to take one thousand copies for free distribution in Birmingham, and we have no doubt that many Birmingham friends would also like to take extra copies. Anyway, we are having a large number of extra copies printed, and Messrs. Dixon and Hickinbottom, with the remainder of the seventeen survivals of the Dark Ages, will have a better advertisement than they have had for some years. We hope they will appreciate our efforts in bringing them before a larger public than they are accustomed to.

Most of the Birmingham papers have been discreetly silent on the matter, and in such a case, silence may be taken to mean that the indecency of the thing forbids support, even though sufficient courage is not forthcoming to protest against it. But the *Town Crier* says that

in these days of enlightenment most citizens will be amazed to learn that this senseless ban has been imposed for over twenty years.....We believe that the Secular Society has done good service to the cause of true religion by exposing many of the crude, harmful doctrines which most advanced thinkers in the religious world have long since abandoned.....It is a poor sort of religious belief that cannot stand the ordeal of honest criticism. The spirit in which the ban was imposed is not far removed from that which caused innocent men and women to be burnt at the stake for witchcraft, and it is high time that this kind of bigotry was laughed out of existence.

In a subsequent issue, the *Town Crier* discusses the decision of the Education Committee in an article of about two columns. It says quite frankly that men with such views as those who voted against the sub-committee's proposals are unfit to sit on the Education Committee, and suggests that quite a lot of books will be found with some quite serious attacks upon Christianity, and that the next step should logically be with the Education Committee, who might emulate the fanatics who burnt Mr. Wells' *Outline of History*. The other Birmingham papers, it is charitable to assume, are too ashamed to say anything at all. But we shall be surprised if the more decent members of Birmingham society do not have something to say on the matter.

When dealing with the questions on religion put by the *Daily News* and the *Nation*, we said that although Mr. J. M. Robertson was said to be one of those "consulted" as to the list, we had our doubts as to his responsibility for such verbalistic nonsense as the "Impersonal, purposive, and creative power, of which living being are the vehicle corresponding to the Life Force," etc., and the nonsensical one, "Do you believe that the basis of reality is matter?" We have too great a respect for Mr. Robertson's ability to credit him with such questions. They sound much more like Mr. Bernard Shaw and Bishop Gore. So we are not surprised to find Mr. Robertson writing in the *Literary Guide*, and repudiating responsibility for them. He says they are "idle." This is a very mild description. They are worse than idle, they are simply unintelligible, and characteristic of much writing on philosophical and scientific topics by public men who simply lack the mental balance and outfit to enable them to state a philosophical or a scientific proposition clearly and intelligibly.

This leads us to say a word on another matter. Very much has been said, and not too strongly said, as to the harm done to public opinion by a group of newspapers "boosting" a particular view of things. People, whose main reading consists of the scrappy current newspaper, read these things in different journals under the impression that they are reading the considered opinion of so many different "authorities." But it would be interesting to calculate how many of the men who are posing to-day as leaders of public opinion owe their reputation mainly to having a number of friends on the press who, in turn, boom each other. There is hardly need to mention names, but some will occur to every informed reader. To find men such as Mr. Chesterton or Hilaire Belloc hailed as thinkers, while a man like Mr. Robertson is writing for a comparatively small audience, is enough to make one look round for someone to kick. To create a reputation with the ordinary newspaper one must first of all have friends, and next he must pick out some subject on which no established superstition is seriously challenged. Then if he can write a number of commonplaces with an air of profound wisdom, and put the unexpressed thoughts of very ordinary men and women into not too lengthy paragraphs, his future with the newspaper reader is assured.

Enough to Make an Eskimo Laugh.

THIS is what the *Daily Express* says has been proclaimed in a Manifesto to the Eskimo people:—

KNOW YE.

The King of the Land commands you, saying :
"THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER."

Why does he speak thus?

Long ago our God made the world and He owns the world.

The people also He made, and He owns them.

The King of the land is commanded by God to protect the people well.

The white people and Indians and Eskimos have him for their ruler. He is their ruler, therefore he commands, saying :

"THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER."

But if a man kills a man, the King sends His servants, the police, to take and kill the murderer.

But ye do not kill the murderer, nor cause him to be killed. This only the King's servants, the police, ought to do.

But when a man commits murder, at once tell the King's servants, the police, and they will take and bind the murderer and the ruler will judge him.

Thus our God commands us so that you are to follow the King's command.

DUNCAN C. SCOTT,

In charge of Eskimo Affairs, Ottawa, Canada.

GEORGE R.I.

The same newspaper, with great enterprise, prints the manifesto in the original (Eskimo) language. I am insufficiently versed in Eskimo to challenge the accuracy of the translation.

The logic of the manifesto is a different matter.

We must all welcome the attempt to give reasons for new laws. It is an excellent departure, but I imagine it will not be imitated in laws for home consumption. If it ever is done, I hope something more reasonable will be attempted.

I should like, for instance, some attempt made to explain acceptably the real reason for Blasphemy Laws; I should like to know why we maintain "bishops, priests, and deacons" at so great a cost. The logic of our marriage laws would occupy clever lawyers many years of explanation. Sunday Observance, and the laws against selling sweets at night, to say nothing of the regulations against selling literature in the London parks, would all tax the resources of our wisest apologists.

Probably "Duncan C. Scott" has a simple folk to be "in charge of." It is unlikely that Mr. Scott allows any discussion of his manifesto. It is possible that Eskimos accept all that Mr. Scott, in the name of King George, gives them. After all, he "in charge of Eskimo Affairs," a fact susceptible of easy proof to any infidel Eskimo.

I do not for a moment pretend that my own questionings are prompted by these simple folk, or that I am opposed to laws against murder, or that the signature, "George R. I." will not be perfectly well understood if "our" Eskimo people associate the name with the guns and aeroplanes and ships behind the cryptic signature.

The simple Eskimo will do well to raise no question as to how King George became "King of the Land." After all, the words "the land" might mean anything. On the other hand it may not. In any case, no wise Eskimo will raise a most unprofitable discussion which does not concern him. A handful of natives in a land rich with seal and reindeer must expect that *somebody* will be "king of the land."

But "why does he speak thus?" The answer is as relevant as the proverbial lemon. Murder must not be done because "long ago our God made the world."

"Our God" seems to suggest an imported deity. It is evidently the God of the English, not your local Eskimo deity. "My God!" the Eskimo probably ejaculates, but he is wrong. *His* God apparently does not object to murder; anyhow, he does not write manifestos about his prejudices. How is the Eskimo, simple as he is, to grasp the connection between a foreigner making a world "long ago," and the fact that murder is wrong? Of course, *we* know it, but then we have been taught the Ten Commandments, by which we learnt that in God's sight it is equally wrong to murder, to steal, to tell fibs, to wish we were married to the other lady, or to go to a cinema on the seventh day of the week when we draw our wages.

But suppose we had never known anything about the divine origin of the world, is it certain that, on learning that a god had made it, we should at once see the connection between moral law and the theory of creation?

Suppose we had lived for many hundreds of generations in ignorance of this theory, is it not reasonable to think that we should still have evolved some objection to being murdered? Is Mr. Scott quite certain that the percentage of murders is higher amongst ignorant Eskimos (who have to be taught by posters that a god made the world), and, let us say, Chicago or London, where divine-creation is said to be believed in? Has Mr. Scott never heard of murderers who believed in God? How many murderers have been Atheists?

"The King is commanded by God." The Eskimos must be even simpler than usually thought, if they accept this story as true. The Eskimos are commanded by Mr. Scott; they know Mr. Scott, and they hear his voice; and if they can read, and if the manifesto's language is more accurate than many of the Bible Society's "native tongues," these people can grasp this new "command" that they must not murder anybody. But won't they ask for at least a poster signed by God? Here is a new dilemma! The Eskimos apparently continually commit murder because they have no knowledge of "Our God." But how can they be impressed by somebody telling them not to do something because he who orders it is commanded to do so by somebody they don't believe in?

It would seem easier on the whole simply to tell the Eskimos not to commit murder! In the end this seems to have been Mr. Scott's decision. Suddenly he drops the "divine" business while he explains to the Eskimos that the police intend to take matters into their own hands. God drops out of it and a man in uniform is going to do all the work as usual, God coming in at the end to get all the glory, of course.

Another dilemma for the poor native. He is told that God doesn't like killing.....but if a man kills anybody God is going to command somebody to kill the killer. It looks contradictory and seems as if God is following a very bad example.

A final inconsistency. The last paragraph says: "Thus our God commands us," and one would imagine the sequel to be that Eskimos and others should do what God tells them to do. But no, the *non sequitur* reduces the whole thing to absurdity, "so that you are to follow the King's commands." This is sane enough. Those who officially talk glibly about God's orders are only too well aware that they dare not allow mere simple natives to do what they think God would command. Mr. Scott is conscious of some curious misconceptions arising from any sort of reliance on any sort of revelation. Creeds, Bibles,

and visions all lead nowhere (or worse). "Our God" according to the Bible most certainly believed in killing, whether the victims were criminals, generous enemies, blasphemers, witches, the old, the young, or anybody standing in the way of those who were "commanded by God."

Mr. Scott had better cut religion out of his arsenal. "George R. I." is far more powerful as an influential force for (and against) civilization. If British morals are superior to those of the Eskimo, it ought to be easy to prove it. To say that civilization depends on subservience to "our God" is to invite ridicule from any Eskimo with a grain of humour.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

On the Tying up of Sage.

AMONG the dead leaves in the garden the robin flutters, and, for the exception of movement and an occasional glimpse of his ruddy breast, he cannot be seen. There is a clarity in the air after rain that would make everything transparent. The robin's cheery note—a laugh almost—tells us that Proserpine has nearly retired to her underground cavern, and Demeter will have to renew the search for her daughter. The golden rain that swayed so proudly in all its rich glory has now turned to russet brown; the magpie moth has had its brief span of innocent pleasure and is no more; the blue-tits with terrific industry are ransacking trees for food and making enough noise for a flock of geese. The shoots of blue-green sage must be gathered; it's a very trivial affair—cut them, tie them up, and have done with it. You tie up things with string—anybody knows that—down to children who bring problems in arithmetic to you about cubic inches of water and how much floor remains uncovered after a man has spent £8 on linoleum at 3s. 6d. for three-quarters of a yard. Ibsen, in the *Enemy of the People*, plainly showed us how a town was tied up with hypocrisy; the plaster cast industry shows us how that occupation is tied up with systematic appeals to people sitting on the fence between fear and hope, but this brief essay on tying up things refers especially to the gathering and tying up of sage.

What memories are stored in the brain to be awakened by perfume! By bruising a leaf of sage, a bridge was made between the present and our first love of some forty years ago—the earth. There was no pain in the return. Kindly pictures of sunlight on the edge of a wood, with the delicate flowers of the scabious, tall and frail emblems of autumn glory, with the close earth-clinging betony and the little garden that held some of the magic of Esculapius. It must have been love at first sight, for it has never played false, nor wearied us, nor made us promises that have been broken. There are choicer perfumes than sage, but, in some strange manner, this herb has taken by gentle force, entire possession of our tenement. It is king of the memory and no monarch has a chance of dethroning him.

If ever we should catch a breath from the corridors of Heaven, what must it be like? The foundations of the wall of this city, we are told, are garnished with precious stones; the first jasper, the second sapphire, the third a chalcedony, the fourth an emerald. Then follow consecutively sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasus, a jacinth, an amethyst. And there shall be no night there. It sounds something like a jeweller's shop, and neither will there be any sage there. What, no sage? Incredible. Here boy, scrap those labels off our baggage, and hand me Paxton's *Botanical Dictionary*. In Mexico, Spain, Siberia, Persia, and Greece, together with other countries, we may find sage. Somewhere on the earth.

Remy De Gourmont, who for the time being has elbowed away our other loves has many acute observations in a volume of essays entitled *Decadence*. In "The Roots of Idealism," a closely written essay with every phrase well turned and weighted with sense, he

writes: "Man, devoid of science, took himself as laboratory. None was surer. He acquired, by this means, certain parts of his knowledge which have proved useful to humanity and to the domestic animals."

Here, the outline of history may be viewed from another angle. In the beginning, sage, when it put forth the tender shoots of hope in its own particular book of genesis was unknown, unclassified, and a stranger. Someone had to experiment. One of our illustrious ancestors to whom roast duck was unknown (the truth will out) had to take on the responsibility of using his body as a laboratory. By absorption, then, our man of the woods and caves would prove whether sage was harmless. At a later date, its medicinal properties would have to be tested and proved. And, in our more complicated present of the last thousand years, the student of belly furniture would ultimately connect it with the stock-pot and the oven, and a bird, whose language is the braggadocio of the farmyard. In the process of experiment throughout the ages, we may view, therefore, the human laboratories in countless numbers that were destroyed in the process of man settling down to the earth on the physical side only. Mr. Robert Nichols, one of our modern poets, describes poetry and science as the noise made by man in settling down to earth. That is, of course, in the purely intellectual sense, but the casualties in the physical world, all the result of experiment by absorption, give us material for ancestor worship. There would be no need for trial of heavenly ambrosia; angel's food was always ready in abundance, but the story of man's pilgrimage on earth—which has not yet ended, and, on the whole which has never been sympathetically written, is the chronicle of events that we cannot read without admiration, pity, and wonder.

A strand of raffia grass shall be used—there is a bouquet fit for a king, but, in the tying up of it, tenderly and carefully we have renewed contact with the invisible past which is ours and yours, reader. The fabled Eden has held the field too long; it is possible that man would have had more respect for his kind if his history had not been rivetted on an assumption that withholds the terror and turmoil of man's becoming which is linked up with the present, including a bunch of sage,

WILLIAM REPTON.

The "Odious Request."

THERE are certain exaltations of the mind, common to people of a reflective and sensitive nature, induced often, as in the present instance, by certain poignant experiences, mental and material, such as may happen to one, say, on a holiday in strange places, on a sentimental, romantic, or quixotic journey: in a word, in the search for satisfaction of the mind's unrest, of its curiosity, its desire for change and enlargement.

In such a search the element of adventure gives zest to the excursion, while chance happenings may lead to serious complications; to sufferings, endurances, chastenings, exaltations of the spirit; even as one has been shaken from the frying pan into the fire. We are just home from such a holiday, replete with impressions of two large cities (London and Manchester), with their sharp contrasts, of art and ugliness, poverty and riches, squalor and splendour, happiness and misery, wisdom and folly; terrifying journeys in railway trains and other transportations, that may, and do, come to grief now and then, that *must* in the very nature of things, and so there is always the element of danger and adventure at home or abroad, even cautiously crossing a city street, overtaken on a country road; and amid all this "dreadful activity" of life there sounds—let not the hard-shell Atheist or Christian-smile—"the still, said music of humanity," born of, and here and there distilled in sweetest essences from, those very calamities that human life is heir to. After such a striving, even if defeated, holiday we sit at home again in some grand mood of mild magnanimous resignation, and resolution, from all fanaticisms far removed, deep in the very folly of wisdom itself; a mood that we know will pass

again, but that we know, also, will temper with richer atmosphere all crudities to come, and that may be one more faltering but certain step towards what best stage of culture life may give or allow. Into this mild aftermath comes the visit of the parson, where he is welcomed as a man, even as a priest, in the tolerance of the over-soul, the wider, wiser view. But he, good, friendly, fussy man, is quite unaware of this higher atmosphere, the infinitely nobler culture of the moment, even of this fireside! The visitor is merely on a temperance mission, surely a noble crusade, and we are neutral rather than sympathetic, but talk and joke happily and give our name to the list. And then, ever so gently insinuated, came the "odious request" (*vide* Clarinda's rebuke to the amorous Burns), the minister asked if he could engage in prayer. Perhaps a little penitence mingled with and enriched the mood referred to, a little memory, a little hallowing from those persuasions of the past, a little desire to do penance for shortcomings—but these not remotely connected with the parsonic idea of sin.

We let the good man pray, and wished we had done so with a better grace. Dropping on a humble knee beside our little table he possessed us all immediately in the scope of his priestly jurisdiction, commending us to the God of his particular superstition—and Him to us! We remembered not a word, but only our repugnance at such abject and childish savagery in the mind and method of a decent, educated man. He, on his part, seemed greatly pleased at having delivered himself: we thanked him and showed him to the garden gate, over which the moon shone brightly, which we both admired, he repeating appropriate lines from Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*, to which we added a "Simile" from the same author—but how widely differing in interpretation! And so we parted; indeed, we had never met, and never would in this world, and the chances are all against our meeting in another. There is hardly the remote shadow of a probability. Not even the wish is father to the thought. What hopes we have, on earth and not in heaven do dwell. We shall cherish them to the last, even as in Byron's beautiful lines on Hope, written on the brink of his despair:—

White as a white sail on a dusky sea,
When half the horizon's hidden and half free;
Fluttering between the dun wave and the sky
Is Hope's last gleam in man's extremity.

Such hope is of the imperishable wine of mortal life,
even in its lees; the priests' concoction but a degrading
drug.

A. MILLAR.

Correspondence.

THE CONTINENT OF ATLANTIS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In his article on "Civilization," Mr. Anderson has mentioned the continent of Atlantis, and he says, "there are no geological or archæological records of this story by which it can be corroborated." He presumably means that no records are known to himself, which is an entirely different statement. Probably the following remarks may be useful and interesting to him, as well as to your readers in general:—

In 1915, M. Pierre Termier, member of the Academy of Sciences, Director of the Service of the Geologic Chart of France, delivered a lecture before the Institut Oceanographique of Paris on the lost continent. He pointed (1) that the eastern side of the Atlantic Ocean is an area of intense volcanic activity. This assertion has been recently confirmed by the upheaval of the ocean bed north-west of the Cape of Good Hope and also in the Bay of Biscay.

2. In 1868 a ship, dredging for a cable five hundred miles north of the Azores, brought up pieces of lava from a depth of 1,700 fathoms. The bottom of the sea was mountainous, and there were oozes only in the valleys. The colloidal nature of the lava was due to solidification under low pressure—presumably atmospheric. The sharp edges of the lava showed no signs

of weathering, and the conclusion was that there had been an outflow of this matter accompanied by a sudden submersion. I may say it is well known to those who have studied petrology that the molten plutonic rocks when cooled slowly under pressure assume the crystalline and not the colloidal form. Under a microscope, with a polariscope attachment, the crystalline nature is unmistakable.

3. The Pulmonata Mollusc lives only in the West Indies, Florida, the Azores, Canaries, Madeira, and the Mediterranean basin. It has a pelagic life of only four days, and its distribution by slow moving currents to places so far apart is therefore ruled out. There must have been consequently in past times a continuous land mass from Africa to America, or groups of islands close together.

The lecturer gave many other instances in support of his theory and he finally remarked, "The Cataclysm is undoubted. Did then men live who could withstand the reaction and transmit the memory of it?"

In addition to the above evidence I may add:—

4. "The dead shells of the 'Yoldia clay' cover wide areas at the bottom of the North Atlantic at depths of from 500 to 1,300 fathoms, though the same mollusc is now found living in the Arctic seas at a depth of 5 to 15 fathoms. This has been looked upon as a proof that in the N.W. European region the lithosphere stood 2,600 feet higher than it does now."—J. A. Howe, Curator of the Museum of Practical Geology, Jermyn Street.

It appears to me that, if the submersion had been slow, the dead shells would have had a considerable covering of ooze, and I can only infer that the submersion was suddenly performed.

5. The breakage, or uplift, on the Barbary Coast is said to be of recent origin.

6. The Basque language, which is unrelated to any other European form, is comparable only in its intricate agglutinations to the languages of the North American Indians.

I fail to understand why the mediæval writers should have learnt the tradition of Atlantis from Arabian geographers, seeing that it is fully set out in the dialogues of Plato, and also in Celtic literature. Thus Tennyson writes:—

Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt.

The old myths, of which the destruction of Atlantis is only a part, were utilized and painted around a real or fictitious Celtic hero; in a similar manner the myths of Greece, Babylon, and Egypt relating to the same catastrophe were painted around Jesus by the Alexandrine Jews. Every nation has done the same, hence we find striking agreements between the myths of all nations and the religions which are based on the myths.

There are no archæological records of Atlantis, and it is improbable in the circumstances that any will be discovered, though one writer holds a contrary view. We have, however, in the Pacific Ocean groups of sculptured figures on Easter Island, which seem to indicate that this island was once the centre of a high civilization which suddenly disappeared beneath the waves.

WILLIAM CLARK.

THE "DAILY NEWS" QUESTIONNAIRE.

SIR,—One point seems worthy of notice. Of those who took the trouble to send replies, 71 per cent. attended some church or chapel. Now we know that the attendance of the general population is nothing like that (though I forget what the figures are), we may therefore include, either that the *Daily News* (which I take in regularly) has an unusually large circulation among the Nonconformists of England, or else, that only those who were really interested, replied to the questionnaire. I think we may also assume that each party did its best to rally its followers, very likely including the school children of the family.

TAB CAN.

By doubting we come at the truth.—*Cicero*.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 30.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Moss, Quinton, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, and Wood, Mrs. Quinton and Miss Kough. The Secretary was still absent through ill-health, and apologies for non-attendance were received from Messrs. Coles and Neate.

Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The financial statement was presented and adopted, and the pass-book produced.

Several new members were received for the Parent Society.

The refusal of the Birmingham Education Committee to grant the use of their schools to the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. on the same terms as to other societies, on the ground that literature sold by them was immoral, was discussed, and much indignation expressed at the revival of this scurrilous charge, which emanated from the old School Board of 1889.

Various cuttings from the local press, reporting these proceedings, were read, and it was stated that in appreciation of Mr. Cohen's forthcoming article on the matter in the *Freethinker*, the directors of the Secular Society, Ltd., would undertake to supply a given number of copies of that issue for free distribution.

Reports from various delegates showed that the difficulty of securing suitable halls for indoor propaganda still obtained, and the Secretary was instructed to make application for the East Ham Town Hall, and a hall in South London, and Mr. Rosetti undertook to make arrangements for Stratford Town Hall. It was further agreed that, whenever practicable, special advertising should be done.

It was reported that Mr. Whitehead's successful provincial tour would close with a week's mission at Plymouth.

Pleasure was expressed on hearing of the satisfactory progress of the Secretary, and the meeting closed.

K. B. KOUGH.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

The opening meeting at the St. Pancras Reform Club was well attended, and the debate between Mr. Palmer and Mr. Ratcliffe gave rise to a most interesting discussion. Much diversity of opinion obtained, but the proceedings were characterised by the utmost good humour. Mr. Bedborough, who comes from the other side of London to attend our Reform Club meetings, took the chair. To-day (October 10) Miss Ettie Rout will give us one of her stimulating addresses, and we hope that she will have an equally good audience.—K. B. K.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

The fine weather enabled us to finish the summer campaign at Birmingham in grand style. We accordingly addressed seven meetings, all of which were successful and well attended. A little platform opposition added to the interest. Seven or eight new members gave in their names and quite a number of sympathisers requested we should have more outdoor propaganda in Birmingham. As usual, Mr. Dobson was energetically useful at every meeting, and I have to thank also Miss Dobson, Miss Cooper and Mr. Terry for their assistance.

GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

Everywhere and at all times it is in your power to behave justly to those who are about you.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

Words are but the current tokens or marks of popular notions of things.—*Bacon*.

Obituary.

I regret to report the death of our friend, Mr. W. J. Young, of 165 Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh, which took place on Friday, September 24, and the funeral on Tuesday, September 28. There was a very large and distinguished gathering at the Portobello Cemetery, where the Secular Service was read by Mr. George Berry. Ever since I can remember, Mr. Young was a sincere, devoted, and uncompromising Freethinker, and in face of all opposition in season and out of season, always upheld the banner of Freethought fearlessly. He was a well known and highly respected member in political circles, and never disguised the fact that he was antagonistic to the Christian religion in any shape or form. In his earlier years he was a very active worker in the Cause, and many Secular reforms have been due to his influence and activity. Along with a few devoted friends he was instrumental some years ago in getting the Edinburgh Tramway cars to run on Sunday, which was a great achievement in those days. Those who knew Mr. Young will agree that the loss to progress will not easily be made up. He was one of the rarest characters, and would sacrifice everything for his principles, a model husband and father, and the best and most devoted of friends. As he lived, so he died, true to what he considered the truth to his very last day. He leaves a wife and family, who agreed and sympathised with his ideals and who carried out his wishes to the last letter.

A. DAVIS.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.—INDOOR.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (Emerson Club, 14 Great George Street, Westminster): 3.30, Lecture in French by M. Manchon, "L'Affaire Calas et Voltaire." All invited.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road and three minutes from Camden Town Tube Station): 7.30, Miss Ettie Rout, "Ecclesiastical Interference with Marriage."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Miss A. Neilans, "Moral Standards of Yesterday and To-day." Questions and discussion invited.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Chekhov as Dramatist."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. Hyatt, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Thursday, October 14, at 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "The Old Testament." (Lantern Lecture).

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, Mr. S. Hanson, a Lecture.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30 and 3 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Botting, Hart, and Peacock.

COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

GLASGOW (Bakunin House, 13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow): Thursday, October 14, at 8, Mr. Guy A. Aldred, "Newton and Whiston." Questions and discussion invited.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Fred Mann, "The Rev. Mr. H. G. Wells." Questions and discussion invited. Silver Collection.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Freethought, Religion, and the Press."

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