

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN ■ ■ EDITOR 1881-1915 G.W. FOOTE

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

VOL. XLVI.—No. 43

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1926

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

Scotching a Myth.

We noticed last week the nice little bombshell Bishop Barnes had dropped into the midst of the celebrations connected with St. Francis D'Assisi. The Catholic Church has always understood and practised the art of exploiting the sentimental side of human nature by the aid of some figure more or less mythical, and more or less admirable. Of late years a certain type of sloppy-minded Christian has been quite ready to accept a ready-made picture of some of the saints of the older church, without considering that if they were suddenly confronted with their ideal to-day they would be the first to feel disgusted at his presence. What Bishop Barnes did was to point out that the saint was dirty and scrofulous, and that if he was studied from the point of view of medical science there would emerge details of a "repulsive" nature. Now that is the kind of plain speaking concerning Christian saints that believers do not like. What they prefer is the picture of them as so many men filled with love towards their fellows, brimming over with human kindness, and if they are socialistically inclined, wroth with the rich, and desirous of establishing something in the nature of a Socialistic commonwealth. And all that is about as far from the truth when we are dealing with "saints" as one could possibly get. They knew nothing and cared less about the establishment of a Secular commonwealth; they were kind to others, not usually because of an intense desire to benefit those who needed benefiting but mainly because it was a way of purchasing paradise for themselves. Their ideal was just about as selfish and as useless as one could imagine.

The Real Saint.

Now, St. Francis D'Assisi is one of a crowd, and among the least repulsive of the crowd. He lived at a time when the ascetic mania was declining and when the world was recovering a little from the nightmare of early Christianity. But of most of those whose names have come down to us, it would be correct to say that not merely would the medical details

show us men whose minds were disordered by their self-inflicted tortures, or whose mental aberrations gave them the initial bias towards sainthood, but that what Bishop Barnes says of the habits of St. Francis applies to most of the others. And the historians of the saints do not disguise the facts. On the contrary, it was on account of the things that disgust the modern mind that they were praised. To live on a handful of food and a few drops of dirty water a day, to forsake home and social life, to wear, without change, a single garment, until it dropped from their body, to avoid cleanliness as they would the devil, to be careless of disease; all these things were the hallmark of their heavenly avocation. They were valued because of these things, and those whose healthier instincts shrank from such a life were counted inferior beings. The typical Christian monk and saint, so well depicted by Lecky as "a hideous, sordid, emaciated maniac, without patriotism, without natural affection, passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture," is far nearer the truth than that of the gentle loving being filled with intense love towards God and man, which is drawn for us by present-day exploiters of popular ignorance and sentimentalism.

* * *

The Real Jesus.

Bishop Barnes offered the world a picture of the real St. Francis as he would appear to modern eyes if they beheld him for the first time to-day. He would be locked up as a public nuisance, and committed by a magistrate to some institution, where he would be compulsorily disinfected and washed with strong antiseptics. But why stop at St. Francis? Why not apply the same principle all round? Why not apply it to the figurehead of the Christian religion, to the Jesus of the New Testament, and instead of looking at him through the spectacles provided by centuries of Christian tradition and teaching, why not look at him as he would appear to one who had come across him for the first time to-day, and who was free from the narcotizing influence of Christian tradition? Personally, we do not believe there is enough evidence to establish the existence of Jesus, and the existence of the mythical Christ is a clear absurdity. But suppose we were to take the New Testament account as it stands, and as it would look to one who had been brought up apart from Christianity, but who was willing to read it in the light of present-day knowledge. First of all, he would see one who looked upon himself as a messenger from the Gods. He would certainly find nothing strange about that. History is littered with similar persons with similar claims. He would find legends related of his doings, and he would find nothing either new or strange in that. He would find him teaching a number of things, not one of which would strike him as either new or strange, because he would find them also

related of other people who preceded him, and who were his contemporaries. We do not suppose that one could find a human society anywhere in which one could not find certain teachings concerning kindness and brotherhood, etc. They are the commonplaces of social life, without which society could not exist. And if he were not surprised at the alleged excellencies, he would not be astonished at other things related that are not excellent—the bursts of temper displayed in the cursing of the fig-tree because it did not bear fruit out of season, the narrowness shown in wishing to save only the lost sheep of Israel, the fanaticism in the disowning of his mother, or the superstition displayed in the belief that insane people were possessed of devils, that legions of angels could be placed at his service, or that he engaged in actual conflict with a personal devil. He would have come across all this kind of thing in numerous other connections, and he would find them all of a piece, all parts of the human story throughout the ages. And he would also see that the basis of all this was not social and moral, but purely theological. The basic aim was to save men's souls in the next world, not to benefit their minds and bodies in this. Apart from that there was with Jesus no reason why men should deal kindly to each other. They are to do good solely that their father in heaven might reward them; they are to give in secret so that they might be openly repaid; they are not to bother about suffering here, because they will, on that account, enjoy greater happiness hereafter. And St. Paul drew the legitimate moral of this teaching, that if there is no after life, then let us eat, drink, and be merry; nothing matters. The morality of the teaching is all the time accidental. It is the selfish superstition that is its essential.

False Lights.

The truth is that there is not one man in a thousand who can look at the New Testament Jesus through genuinely modern eyes. He looks at him through spectacles provided by the Church, and finds excellencies there because he has always been taught they are there and lacks the independence to look for himself. He either does not, or will not, see that the true modern analogue to the New Testament Jesus—if he ever had an historical existence—is an itinerant ascetic preacher of the East, living upon the alms of believers and carrying his message from God to all who would listen. And even those who see through a large part of this tragi-comedy of the Christian religion are so far under the influence of inherited teaching that they must needs find some excellence in the human character of Jesus, even when they have dispensed with the supernatural Christ. They must discover that he was aiming at this or that social reform, or moved among men with the sole desire of making their lot on earth happier, when the whole truth is that the New Testament had this no more in view than has the Hindoo fakir torturing himself for the greater glory of God. And as we have the figurehead with us to-day, if we would only see him, so we have the early saint so far as modern conditions will permit his existence. We have not got him in his full excellence, modern ideas and modern sanitation would not tolerate this, but we have him in the religious fanatic all over the civilized world—if a world that looks up to such figures has the right to be called civilized.

Getting at the Facts.

So we are waiting for someone with the courage to prick this bubble of the Christian God-man, as Bishop Barnes attempted to prick the bubble of the

saintly St. Francis. We are waiting for some heretic of the standing of, say, Mr. H. G. Wells, to cease looking at Jesus through the spectacles provided by the Church, and in the act of educating their fellows give this superstition a new lease of life, but to draw quite plainly the real character of Jesus, if he ever existed. It should not be difficult to do so. Human nature has not undergone any fundamental alteration during the past two thousand years. If we take the religious fanatic to-day in relation to his environment, and see how he reacts, we can see how the religious fanatic of two thousand years ago would have reacted to his environment. Either Mr. Wells or Mr. Shaw should be capable of doing this. But the row would be great. Jesus Christ is the figurehead of an established religion. He always was that—to be paradoxical, he was that even before he existed. For there was an established superstition before Christianity, and when the revised form of that superstition came into existence, it followed the old paths and retained the familiar outlook. That is why we can have volume after volume written telling us what Jesus taught, and what he meant, with no two interpretations of teaching or meaning in agreement. When a man of standing has the courage to take the life of Jesus and interpret it in the light of the knowledge of to-day applied to the environment of two thousand years ago, we shall have a life of Jesus that is really worth the reading. But to do this requires two things—knowledge and moral courage. And of these two the latter is the more important, and the less common.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Authority in Religion.

THIS is an extremely trite subject on which, one would think, nothing new can be said, and yet it was one of the subjects discussed at the recent meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Two well-known divines had been chosen to deal with it. Of course, all Christians believe in religious authority of some sort, but different communions are by no means agreed as to where it is to be found. Very appropriately, therefore, the Congregational Union considered "the place of Authority in the Christian Faith." Principal Sydney Cave, M.A., D.D., of Cheshunt College, is generally regarded as a proficient theologian. He began his paper by declaring that the old infallibilities had been completely abandoned and that present-day believers cannot rest their faith either on an infallible Church, Book, or Creed, and in consequence many find it impossible to hold the Christian faith at all. The Principal is reported in the *Christian World* of October 14 to have said:—

In that poignant story of a Congregationalist who had lost his faith, *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*, we read that once, long after he had left the ministry, he was in St. Paul's Cathedral, and he pictured that vast auditorium full, and himself the preacher. He was thrilled with the thought until he remembered that all he would have to say would be this, "Dear Friends, I know no more than you; let us go home." Is that our plight to-day as Christian people? Like Mark Rutherford, must we, too, confess our ignorance and inadequacy? Or is there an authority in Christian faith which enables us to proclaim to the world, not mere surmises, but a Gospel which is every man's concern, and to stand before men, not as those who expound their ingenious theories, but as those who speak as the awed yet confident ambassadors of God?

We are in full agreement with Mark Rutherford, and can say to Principal Cave, "You know no more than we do, let us shake hands and cease to speculate about the supernatural figment." We are quite sure the reverend gentleman is convinced that he does possess positive knowledge of God and the invisible world. We readily admit that he *believes* on an illimitable scale, but we firmly deny that he *knows* any more than we do, which is nothing.

But let us examine the Principal's claims. He claims that he has "a Gospel which is every man's concern," and that he and his brethren "stand before men as those who speak as the awed yet confident ambassadors of God"; but on what authority does he make such a stupendous claim? He candidly concedes that he does not indulge in it on the authority of his religious experience, and on this point his argument is at once valid and convincing. He says: "When we say that our authority is the authority of Christian experience, we obviously cannot mean that Christian experience is creative of truth, or can in itself provide a revelation which we must obey. Unless experience is illusion, experience presupposes something that is experienced." Again, Dr. Cave does not believe merely on the authority of Christ. There are presentations of Christ which to him are, not only inadequate, but false and misleading. He refers sarcastically to the presentation of him as "the greatest teacher, the supreme religious hero." That he described as "praise that kissed his Godhead away." That may be true enough; but can the Principal tell us what exactly he means by the Godhead of Christ. Of his orthodoxy there can be no doubt, but there are many very grave doubts as to the truth of orthodoxy.

Now Dr. Cave's central argument as summed up in the *Christian World*, is as follows:—

Christ is our authority; but he must be a Christ who is the full revelation of God. We have come to the parting of the ways where compromises can no longer serve. If we believe that there is authority in our Christian faith, and that that authority is Christ, it can only be because we know that in Christ we have our God revealed so that our faith in him is one with our faith in God, and in Christ's life and death we have the secret of God's character and rule.....Our authority is Christ. Yes, but Christ is our authority because in him God has shown what he is and how he deals with men. So, in submitting ourselves to the authority of Christ, we are not falling into idolatry, for we are submitting ourselves not to a religious hero or a demigod, but to God revealed in him.

Such is Principal Cave's argument, and its ingenuity is amazing. It is orthodoxy in its purest and most undefiled form. But is it or can it be true? What the reverend gentleman supplies in his eloquent paper is nothing but an ingenious theory. If the Gospel Jesus ever existed it is a certainty that he died; but the meanings and purposes which different schools of theology attach to his death are only theories, all of which may be false. In fact, all Christian dogmas are so many "Fables of the Above," as Meredith so adroitly calls them. Fables are intensely interesting and instructive so long as they are not taken for facts. Even Dr. Cave's theological theories are entertaining to unbelievers, though they cannot help wondering how a man of the Principal's education and intelligence can accept and teach them as veritable truths. They are survivals of the ignorance and superstition of the Ages of Faith, entirely out of date in this era of scientific knowledge.

The other appointed speaker on the subject of authority was the Rev. Dr. R. F. Horton. This popular Hampstead preacher has never shone as a deep

theologian, though at the commencement of his career he promised to become a Biblical critic of some note. His popularity is largely due to his sentimental pietism. Following Principal Cave he repeated and emphasized several of the former's points. He, too, discards the old infallibilities. To him only two objects are infallible, namely, God and God's truth. Dr. Horton cherishes a very low opinion of the value of conscience. He said:—

Even conscience was very far from being infallible. "We never," as Pascal said, "do wrong so heartily as when we do it for conscience's sake." The Church, corrected by the Bible, the Bible estimated by the conscience, reason proving the conscience—these things as long as they were not thought infallible, held a great degree of true authority. The man who rightly used them would not go far wrong. Why seek any other authority than God in Christ?.....You want an authority sufficient for life? You will not find it by setting up a Pope, or by Bibliolatry, or by the idolatry of a swollen conscience; but only by abiding in Christ.

The *Christian World* informs us that Dr. Horton "was satirical at the expense of some contemporary Secular 'authorities'—Bernard Shaw, who has to tell us we must live as long as Methuselah in order to be wise; or H. G. Wells, with his revelation of a poor God doing his best, and needing the help of Mr. Wells." Is not that kind of talk empty claptrap, or an appeal to an ignorant and prejudiced gallery? Is the Christian God doing his best in Hampstead, and needing the help of Dr. Horton? If he is he must be pronounced a very "poor God" indeed, for the results are meagre in the extreme.

God has never exercised authority in any quarter of the globe, and the belief in him has never proved of real benefit to the human race. His non-existence is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that scarcely any two people have ever held identical views concerning him. No two religions have even been agreed as to his character and work, while Reason has continuously assured those who patiently listened to its voice that there is no God at all either in Christ or out of him, Reason itself being, by right of nature, the supreme arbiter of human destiny. Religion has always done its utmost to dethrone and incarcerate it, and unfortunately by the exercise of tyrannical power, unrighteously won, it has had alarming success in its nefarious mission. Happily now at last Reason is slowly rising, as though from the dead, and mounting once more its rightful throne, and when the sceptre is securely in its hand, religion will die a natural death and never again hinder the progress of the world. Swinburne tells God that his death is now upon him, and then adds:—

And the love-song of earth as thou diest resounds through the wind of her wings—
Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things.

J. T. LLOYD.

It is true that we cannot use our eyes or ears without getting some kind of knowledge. But *what gives power is the deeper knowledge called Science*. People may see, and hear, and feel all their lives without really learning the nature of things they see. But reason is the mind's eye, and enables us to see why things are, and when and how events may be made to happen or not to happen. The logician endeavours to learn exactly what this reason is which makes the power of men. We all, as I have said, must reason well or ill, but logic is the science of reasoning and enables us to distinguish between the good reasoning which leads to truth, and the bad reasoning which every day betrays people into error and misfortune.—Prof. W. Stanley Jevons, ("Primer of Logic").

An Archbishop at Large.

Most men do not know that any nation but the Hebrews have had a scripture.—*Thoreau.*

AMBROSE BIERCE, the American humourist, once declared that crabs, woman, and priests had one thing in common. When an onlooker thought that they were advancing, they were actually retreating, and when an observer imagined they were going to the right they were travelling full speed in the opposite direction. By a quaint freak of the memory I was reminded of this jest whilst reading the newspaper reports of the Anglican Church Congress at Southport.

It was no common report that forced itself on my eyesight, as Sam Weller would say. It was the pontifical utterance of His Grace the Archbishop of York, the second dignitary of the Church of England, by law established, the first being the present tenant of Lambeth Palace. The report was well displayed, with all the added attraction of the editor's catchy headlines and saucy sub-titles. Editors are very wicked people, and they possess uncanny powers. They put the froth on the beer, so to speak, or they make it a flat, stale, and unprofitable brew. They can describe a man as the greatest personality on earth, with portrait, complete, or they can degrade him to the position of a microbe, almost unworthy of small type. On this occasion the editor chose to describe the Archbishop as making a fervent appeal to the Church for a greater sincerity, which greatly aroused my curiosity, for, in my innocence, I had always associated priestly appeals with money, and spot-cash at that.

This time, on my honour, the cash-box and the alms-dish were not even mentioned. So I had no need to keep my hand in my pocket. His Grace frothed of other things, and he led off thusly: "The Church has sometimes looked with great indifference, if not distrust, upon the free movement of the spirit of man in science, literature, art, and politics."

I rubbed my eyes, and felt like Alice in Wonderland. What word-jugglery was this? No Old Bailey special pleader ever put his case with greater assurance, or strayed further from facts. Science, indeed! There is a well-known volume to be found in almost every library worth the name, which bears the title, *The Conflict between Religion and Science*; and every person with sufficient learning to read a newspaper must have noticed of late columns reporting the antagonism between scientists and priests regarding the theory of evolution. Yet His Grace bleats of the Church merely looking at these things with mistrustful, or indifferent, or watery eyes.

So with literature, the Church is credited with an impartiality which never yet belonged to that, or any other religious body. It was an Anglican Bishop who attacked publicly Mr. H. G. Wells's novel, *Anne Veronica*, and it was a Christian priest who made a bonfire of the same author's *Outlines of History*. And, if it be pleaded, that Mr. Wells is an awful Freethinker, the same cannot be said of Bishop Colenso, whose criticism of the Pentateuch caused the Anglican Church dignitaries to do more than look with indifference or mistrust, for they deprived Colenso of his position, in the same splendid spirit of Christian charity as they would have burned him to death a few generations earlier.

As to the position of the Church with regard to politics, the Bishops' votes in the House of Lords shows the so-called "indifference" of the clerics to have taken the form of a most active hostility to all progressive legislation. This, mind you, was no isolated action of some disgruntled bishop, dis-

pointed of an archbishop's mitre, but the action of a whole Bench of Bishops, comprising no less than forty right-reverend Fathers-in-God in the direct line of Apostolic succession, if the Church writers are truthful men.

As for art, what has the Anglican Church of to-day to do with it at all? No Church Congress postponed its doxology to permit of a resolution of protest at the Jack Dempsey fists which Mr. Epstein placed on his sculptured figure of "Rima" in Hyde Park. For years past the Anglican Church has mainly built jerry-built places of worship, and tin mission halls. Her latest activity was to hand to the housebreakers nineteen City of London churches, which architects declare are masterpieces. Whether they are so, or not, is an open question, but enough has been said to show that the Archbishop's opening sentence was even more flamboyant than the first sermon of a spring curate.

The Archbishop's peroration is in a different key, as it had need to be. I almost blush to transcribe the saponaceous sentences:—

Let the Church show itself to the young not as a severe governess laying down her lessons and resenting questions but as a loving mother, old in years and experience and ever young at heart, encouraging her children to take her into their confidence and rejoicing when they tell her frankly all that is in their minds.

"All that is in their minds!" How the Anglo-Catholic priests must have grinned when they heard these words. For the High Church priests use the confessional as do the Roman Catholics, to whom they play the sedulous ape. Not only do the High Churchmen imitate the "Romans" in their dress, but in their steady hatred to progress. Their "spiritual home" is the sixth century, with its ignorance, filth, and feudalism, and not the twentieth century at all. This attitude is reflected in their sermons, and literature, if indeed, such rubbish deserves so dignified a name. If anyone cares to visit an Anglo-Catholic bookshop that person will soon discover that the "loving mother" Church, of whom the Archbishop prates, is but the centuries-old hag in a new dress, dressed to deceive the innocents, of whom, unfortunately, there are far too many.

It is not the soft-soapy addresses given at Church Congresses that reveal the real mind of the Anglican Church. This is shown by what the thousands of priests teach in the vestry halls and Sunday schools, which, by the way, is a vastly different thing from the invertebrate nonsense which the clergy contribute to the newspaper and periodical press, or utter on platforms on those rare occasions when they can be persuaded to oppose Freethinkers.

Once upon a time the Anglican Church could claim to be the national church. She then could boast of her scholars, and her orators; and with her "High," "Low," and "Broad" schools of thought, could command sympathies in many directions. To-day, all this is altered. The Anglican Church is now sixty per cent. Anglo-Catholic, and preferment usually follows in that direction. And Anglo-Catholicism is as like Roman Catholicism as margarine is like butter. The best description of Romanism is Thomas Carlyle's biting phrase, "The great lying Church," and the whole of Western Europe, with its spoof relics and faked miracles confirms the accusation. "Rome" flourishes on ignorance, and her priests are simply one-eyed tyrants among the intellectually blind. It is a sad sight to visualize a church full of poor, misguided peasants, kneeling in adoration before a stone statue of the Virgin, weeping tears of real water; but what is to be said of the petticoated priest handling the water-jug behind the statue?

And what is to be said of any organization which has done this sort of thing for centuries? Beside the priests of such a church a Chicago gun-man is a saint.

MIMNERMUS.

The March of Materialism.

IV.

(Continued from page 652.)

WHEN Lamettrie, about 180 years ago, published his *Man a Machine*, it caused such a scandal that it was publicly burnt, and orders given for the author's arrest, but every advance in biology, physiology, and psychology has only confirmed the verdict of this great French physician.

The heart is simply a pump for circulating the blood. The lungs are simply bellows for supplying air. The arms and legs are simply levers, operated by muscle and sinew, for purposes of locomotion and doing work. The stomach and intestines are a laboratory for turning foodstuff into heat, energy, or nerve force, flesh, fat, and muscle. The glands produce the subtle chemical substances known as hormones, which control the growth, the health, and mental powers of the body. If any of these glands cease to function, then illness, and often death, ensues. On the other hand, if they are too active we suffer in other ways quite as detrimental.

Take, for instance, the thyroid gland, situated in the neck and draped about the Adam's apple. The disease known as Goitre, or "Derbyshire neck," in which the neck swells to a great size, sometimes hanging down like a pouch, is caused by the swelling of the thyroid gland. Upon the discovery of the new antiseptic surgery by Lister, certain surgeons in Switzerland—where the disease was extremely prevalent—performed the operation of removing the thyroid gland altogether in cases of goitre, with disastrous results, for the thyroid is a highly important chemical organ. For, says Dr. Berman:—

Should the thyroid then function poorly or inadequately, the effect is, in extreme cases, a creature of horror, reminding one of an African idol. Stunted, gross, and yet puny, the eyes hidden behind swollen lids peering like an owl's, narrow-chested with bulging abdomen, the lower extremities rickety but covered with rolls of fat and loose skin—these are some of the details of the grotesque picture produced by lack of thyroid in a baby. A peculiar coarse and repulsive aspect is given the expression of the large rolling tongue, which keeps the mouth open and drooping always. There is a mental deficiency, and there may be deaf-mutism at the same time; the only words learned and articulated may be "ma" and "no." This gargoyle of creative chemistry was once considered, as late as 1892, a hopeless idiot and defective, for whom nothing could be done.¹

Following upon the disastrous results of surgical operation upon the thyroid gland, a search was stimulated for the cause and cure of goitre. In our own country Murray transformed the personality of a woman, forty-two years of age, to all appearance incurably degenerated both in mind and body, who would probably have died in a few years, by first injecting and then feeding her with thyroid. She lived to the age of seventy-four. During the last thirty years of her life the thyroid glands of 870 sheep were administered to her.

The researches went on until Kendal succeeded in isolating, in crystalline form, the active substance of thyroid secretion, which was found to contain a very

high percentage of iodine. The function, then, of the thyroid gland is to extract the iodine contained in our food, and combine it with indol, another complex chemical substance, and introduce it into the blood as required. It all depends upon the efficient working of the thyroid gland whether a child is bright and intelligent, or a dull-witted clod, an imbecile, or, in extreme cases, an idiot with no mind at all. He would need to be an extremely clever metaphysician to adapt the theory of Parallelism, of a mind apart from and governing the brain, to the facts as we now know them. It only requires a small proportion of iodine in our food to prevent goitre altogether, and iodised salt can now be obtained at any chemist's shop. Its use is compulsory in Switzerland.

The powerful effect of some of the chemical substances produced by glands may be illustrated by the fact that Pituitrin, a product of the post-pituitary gland, "has been shown to be active in eliciting its effects in a concentration of one part in a hundred million of blood or water."²

Of the pre-pituitary gland, says Dr. Berman: "After puberty it has much to do with the growth and proper maintenance of tone of the sex glands throughout life. So when it fails to act during maturity the sex glands atrophy, the hair of the face is lost, as is that in the arm-pits, and strength departs" (p. 109). It is the cause of that frigidity which results in many an unhappy marriage. On the other hand, over action of the sexual glands results in satyriasis and nymphomania, to which the records of our mental institutions could bear terrible witness. A striking instance of this came under my personal observation. Many years ago, when we were living in the provinces, we had as a neighbour a widow and her family. One of her sons, a bright, intelligent lad, as he approached the age of puberty, began to suffer from satyriasis, and eventually became so bad that he had to be put away in an asylum. The mother was allowed to visit him at stated intervals. Upon the first occasion she, naturally, did not like the idea of making the visit alone, and, as she had no relative able, or willing, to accompany her, I was appealed to upon the ground that I knew the lad very well, and I consented to go.

Upon arriving at the asylum we were shown into a room and the poor boy was brought in, but he was hopeless. All he could talk about, even to his own mother was to do with sexual matters. It was a painful scene. The poor mother, with the tears running down her face, said: "He doesn't know what he is saying; he doesn't know what he is saying." She would rather have seen him dead than in that condition; and, in fact, that was the best thing that could happen to him, poor lad. In the Middle Ages, his disease would have been described as the obvious work of the devil, and they would have proceeded to flog the devil out of him. No doubt the scientists will some day discover the chemical constituents of the pituitary glands, as they have those of the thyroid, and control them in a similar manner.

But to return to Dr. Berman, who observes that, according to religious teaching, "the soul was a spirit, a species of ghost which inhabited the body, moved it to breathe, to move, to act in various ways, good and bad, and yet to be independent—to depart at the time of death because itself was possessed of immortality." But science has abolished this fundamental indestructible soul. He continues:—

To a modern mind; that is, to a mind acquainted with the details of real knowledge concerning the

¹ L. Berman, *The Personal Equation*, p. 73.

² *Ibid*, p. 109.

relations of the body and mind available at the beginning of the second quarter of the twentieth century, and imbued with the intellectual integrity which created that knowledge—the doctrine is exploded. The logical case in its favour was never unassailable, was in fact a house of cards erected upon sand. What we know to-day of the relations of mind and body makes of them purely analytical concepts, conveniences of speech, as one distinguishes the inside of a house from the outside, though the house itself is one organic unity of parts. It would be better always to speak and think of body-mind or mind-body, except where one is specifically aware of considering different aspects of the same reality.³

Science has no need of the hypothesis of a soul, any more than it has for that of a god. Both ideas were born during the ages of ignorance. Both disappear in the light of knowledge. W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

Acid Drops.

Concerning the "Hell" controversy—we had almost written the hell of a controversy, a *Daily Express* correspondent informs the world that "Hell" means in old English a covered place, and that in Lancashire they still speak of "helling" potatoes. So that all the Christian hell meant was that one would be comfortably covered up. And when one man invited another to give a third party "hell," all he meant was give him something to cover him up—an umbrella, or an overcoat. One can get quite a lot of information out of life if only one goes the right way to work.

No one who knows the type ever expects truth from the majority of Christian evangelists where the interests of their preaching is concerned. And probably the standard of truthfulness in the Salvation Army is as low as it is anywhere. But the *War Cry* for October 9 supplies a gem, which illustrates both the type of character of those who manufacture these stories and the type that swallows them. Here is the tale. There was a man named Addison, who for sixty years of his life had been an Atheist. He had preached Atheism in Bolton in and out of season; he was, in fact, known as the Atheist of Bolton. But he met his Waterloo in the person of Captain Simmons, who put this question to him: "What shall I say to a young man who, a student of Atheism, has almost accepted its teaching? He has asked my advice." That was enough. The Atheist was settled, for he made this very remarkable reply: "Tell him from an old man who for sixty years has taught against the Bible, that if he wants true happiness to bring himself to accept the simple truths as contained in the simple Word." Those who can swallow this kind of foolish piffle, are far more numerous than most people would imagine. It is an illustration of the kind of mental atrophy that sets in with a certain kind of Christian belief. We rather fancy that the historian of the future will thank the *Freethinker* for keeping alive these examples of "lying for the greater glory of God"—and the coffers of the Salvation Army.

Mr. Wells is getting into hot water with a certain class of people because he has ventured to criticize the King. If people were inclined to act honestly in this matter there could only be one rule—that is, either to say nothing about him, good or bad, or to permit straight criticism on either side. But to welcome criticism so long as it takes the form of fulsome praise, and to denounce it the moment it takes on the other kind of thing, is simply silly. It is too much like the religious attitude towards God Almighty, which welcomes calling

God good and all his actions wise, but shrieks "Blasphemy" so soon as it is suggested that he does not act wisely and that his actions are not always good. But worship of the God and worship of the king are historically and psychologically connected, and, as we know in other directions, it takes a long while for people to outgrow these primitive impulses.

A more rational line of criticism is that the King cannot reply, and it is unfair to criticize where no reply is possible. There is much more in this, and the fact should make the critic more careful in what he has to say. But it must be also borne in mind the King is an institution, and unless we are to be permitted to criticize all our institutions we do not see how improvement is possible. The fault really lies in those journalists and preachers, who, in order to tickle the ears of the gaping crowd, record the performance of the most ordinary event—the King shaking hands with an old pensioner, the Queen patting a child on the head, the birth of a baby, the settling of the baby's name, etc., as events of world-wide importance, or as evidence of the quite unapproachable character of our royal family. If newspapers and others would deal with the Royal Family as ordinary human beings with whom we must expect the usual measure of human strengths and infirmities, there would be no room and no need for the kind of criticism passed by Mr. Wells. And a very important thing omitted by his critics is that his remarks applied far more to the empty-headedness of the public who are attracted by the kind of thing we have outlined than it had to do with the Royal Family as individuals. And with that aspect of the matter we are quite in sympathy.

"I cannot dance," laments the vicar of Exhall, "I only wish I could." The reverend gentleman should build himself a sacred ark. Then perhaps the spirit will move him to emulate the joyous antics of the godly King David.

Gipsy Smith does not appear to be having an unchallenged time with his mission in New Zealand. We published last week some caustic comments from *Truth* on the financial aspect of the business, and this week we print, in another column an article from the *Eden Gazette* on the same topic. In addition, he has been getting interruptions during his addresses, and as these are, we understand, carefully rehearsed, and performed, much as an actor goes through his part; interruptions throws the preacher off his balance. According to the *New Zealand Herald*, the Gipsy declared that these interruptions had kept him awake for four nights, and that he intended to have a policeman at each of the doors in future to look after interrupters. Which appears to place little reliance on the power of prayer.

The *Bournemouth Daily Echo*, in the course of an article dealing with Bishop Barnes and St. Francis, remarks that on an invitation being given to Mark Twain to hear Ingersoll lecture on the "Mistakes of Moses," he replied that he would not give a cent to hear an address by Ingersoll on Moses, but he would give a thousand dollars to hear Moses on Ingersoll. We should very much like to know in which of Twain's works or recorded conversations the expression is to be found. We know of none. Twain, it is well known, was a Freethinker himself, had a very high opinion of Ingersoll. The comment is not of very much importance, save so far as it serves to make Twain belittle the great American Freethinker, and doubtless the editor thinks he is quite safe in making this kind of remark about one who is not a Christian.

A writer in the *Outlook* makes the statement that the religious movement in Germany, as yet unorganized and without clear aim, is based on a fundamental idea common to Catholics and Protestants. This appears to be about as sensible as referring to the well-known mixing properties of oil and water.

³ Berman, *The Personal Equation*, p. 268.

There is a woman in Abbots Morton, Worcestershire, who has, on the authority of the Rev. Harold Lawson, committed "a deadly sin," a "terrible act of infamy," and "a gross sin against the Holy Ghost." It seems that a certain person came to the village to hold an open-air service. But the Lord sent down rain, and a Mrs. Bishop permitted the preacher to hold a service in her house. So the gallant and manly Mr. Lawson went crawling round among the children trying to find out who had attended the service and told them what a terrible infamy, etc., had been committed. He explained to the organist of the church, who had attended the service, that he could no longer blow the organ in his church, because he could no longer have "our music going up to heaven from one who has not God in his church." That is very considerate. Consider the awkward position of God if he had sat listening to music beating time on the arm-rest of his throne, or humming an accompaniment to music blown by one who had attended an unauthorised service! And yet the Rev. Harold Lawson considers himself quite a civilized being, and he has a vote.

A notice outside a Yorkshire Nonconformist Church runs thus:—

6.30. Rev. E. W. —
Cursing and Swearing.
Don't miss this.

The Wesleyan paragraphist who records this, comments: The Rev. E. W. — might be admonished of the fact that it is never wise to set people laughing. When folk laugh at you they are not likely to come and listen to you. That is true. Many men have ceased going to hear the parson after they have been set laughing by Freethinkers at childish religious dogmas, claims, and arguments.

The same writer mentions that a short report of a service was couched in these terms: "The Rev. S. T. — based his discourse on the Foolish Virgins. A large number were present." He remarks: That is good reading. There is hope for the foolish when they throng the churches. We, on the other hand, think this last statement would be nearer to the truth if it were to read: There is hope for the parsons when the foolish throng the churches.

A generation is growing up forsaking our Sunday schools, and with little or no reverence for the Lord's Day. This can only spell disaster for our Empire. Thus runs the lamentation of the Lord's Day Observance Society in a advertisement for a new book entitled *Hold Fast by our Sundays*. The book is published with the object of stemming the tide, and to help to save the rising generation from the perils of Sabbath-breaking. We hope the rising generation, or that portion which has the good fortune to read this wonderful book, will also read some account of the other side of the picture, when Sabbath-breaking was not. We can get a glimpse of this side from a recent statement by a lady writer. She asks: Do you remember the dreadful Sunday depicted in "Buntly Pulls the Strings".....the drawn blinds, hushed voices, long faces, the Sunday when children were kept indoors, and all reading was strictly confined to the Bible? That kind of Sunday, which is supposed to have built up the Empire, doesn't seem any too inviting. And we rather fancy the rising generation will say so too.

"Providence" appears to have been having a rather hectic time recently. In Mexico, a tropical tornado wrought great disasters resulting in hundreds of casualties. Hurricanes in Brazil and Paraguay have killed over three hundred people. There have been great floods in Switzerland. A typhoon in Macuo, near Hong Kong, is reputed to have wiped out 2,000 lives. A violent cyclone has raged over a wide area in Italy, and there have been whirlwinds in Lisbon. We hope Providence hasn't been too busy to look after the sparrows while it has been attending to these matters of less importance.

To stop the leakage between Sunday School and church a pious contemporary suggests the forming of branches of a "League of Young Worshipers," and it is willing to supply certificates of membership and of merit at 1s. 4d. per dozen and brooches at 3½d. each. We admire our godly friend's optimism in thinking these methods will arrest the exodus from the churches. Unfortunately the young are ceasing to believe in creeds or dogmas or ecclesiastical organizations. And that being so, we fear there will be no great rush for certificates and brooches.

What a lot of humbugs there are about! Most people who know anything at all about Parliament know that some of the members are occasionally the worse for drink. In an assembly of over 600 there is no very great cause for surprise in this. But Dr. Salter says publicly what every newspaper man in London knows, and, accordingly, the papers at once—in the language of moviedom—register surprise, and indignation, and incredulity. And they do this with all the solemnity of a number of parsons pretending to believe in all they preach. But Dr. Salter explains that the "elevation" of certain members does affect the conduct of business because "very few votes are taken on individual judgment." Which means that, drunk or sober, the members vote exactly as they are told by their party leaders, although they all go through the solemn farce of pretending to consider the business before them.

A get-ready-for-Jesus weekly informs us that in our beloved land a century ago there were grave moral and social evils, created in part by the industrial revolution. And it was no accident, but a God-ordained arrangement, that there should have arisen such a man as Lord Shaftesbury spending fifty-eight years of his public life for the public good. After reading this let no man doubt the wisdom of the Almighty. God notes that somehow or other an industrial revolution is happening and that certain evils will be the inevitable outcome of the revolution. He therefore causes to be born a Lord Shaftesbury endowed with reforming talents in order that in due course the evils may be mitigated. Ordinary stupid mortals might fancy that the best way of going about the business would have been to influence the revolution so as to prevent the incidence of the evils. But God knows better than man. That way of doing things would have left Christians with nothing to praise God for and no Lord Shaftesbury to admire. And how unhappy Christians would be were they unable to do that!

The religious condition of Britain, says the *Sunday School Chronicle*, gives no justification for complacency, though there is ground for the scare headlines that have appeared in the press. There is no wisdom in panic nor in a foolish glazing of unpleasant facts. The Editor adds: "Christ has many other sheep who are not of our fold, and we define Christianity in a way broad enough to include on our side all who are not against us." The old tag used to run: Those who are not for us are against us. Religion must indeed be in a bad way when the editor of a religious journal has to reverse an ancient proverb in order to revive the flagging spirits of his readers!

Over thirty years ago a census of Church attendance was taken by the *Daily News*, and the result was that only about ten per cent. of the population was found to attend a place of worship. Now Dr. Harold Spender, in his posthumous work, *The Fire of Life*, makes known the fact that ten years later when the paper tried to repeat the experiment, the results were so bad that the heads of all the Churches implored the paper not to publish them. And the figures were not published. The confession is interesting as showing the readiness of the heads of the Churches to mislead the public when they can, and the pressure they can bring to bear upon the daily papers when they care to do so. Our "free" press is one of the jokes of the day. The *Freethinker* is one of

the very few genuinely free papers that exist in this country.

Apropos of this, we may make public a little bit of secret history in connection with this journal. Early in 1916 we received a visit from two gentlemen, whom we found out later were associated with the Government's propagandist organization. Although they were unknown to us, and to any other well-known Freethinkers, so far as we could discover, they professed to be anxious to promote the purpose of the paper, and made a definite proposal to buy the *Freethinker*, and turn it into a public company. The purpose, we concluded from the conversation that followed, was to turn the paper into a war organ as representing the Freethinkers of the country, and after—it would have been good-bye to the paper. So we quietly informed them that with every appreciation of their benevolence as business men in sinking their money in the *Freethinker*, the sale price of the *Freethinker* was twopence per copy (the price had not then been raised), with a reduction for quantities. I also told them it was not for me to say that neither the editor nor the paper was for sale, but the price asked was so high that we quite despaired of ever getting anyone to toe the line.

The Rev. Luke Beaumont asks whether the Churches have anything to set up in opposition to Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Life Force*? Well, it has the Athanasian Creed. What is the matter with that? We admit that point for point it would be hard to determine which is the more ridiculous, or which is the greater bundle of verbal nonsense, but it is enough to show that Mr. Shaw cannot have all the running.

It seems almost farcical to speak of the Christian clergy and principles, but it is one of the professed principles of Nonconformists that the State should have nothing to do with religion. It is true that in practice this has never meant anything more than that all Christian sects should be equally supported by the State, and that envy of the Established Church lies at the root of the opposition offered by the Nonconformist ministry. But the profession of principle remains. Still, we are not surprised to find the Chairman of the Congregational Union in his address at Leicester advocating that in a reconstructed House of Lords at least twenty Free Churchmen should be appointed by the King to sit side by side with the Bishops of the Established Church. And, really, stranger things than that have happened. It would satisfy Nonconformists, and it would also diminish the opposition of Nonconformists to the Established Church. All that the Nonconformists are really after is a share of the public plunder, and we do not think the proposal would meet with much opposition from the Labour Party in Parliament. They were usually too much concerned with getting hold of the Nonconformist vote to trouble about such trifling things as religious equality, or of separating the State from all the Churches. We see this in the attitude adopted in relation to religion and municipal functions.

The Education Committee of the National Council of Women of Great Britain has passed a resolution to the effect that no child under sixteen should be allowed to see any cinematograph film unless it had been passed as suitable by a special board of censors, composed of men and women, and appointed by the Government. The suggestion sounds well enough in theory. But in practice what would happen is that a gang of Puritans and prudes would get themselves appointed to the board of censors. And one can imagine the "improving" and goody-goody type of film that would be forthcoming were such people to do the censoring.

Dr. Walter Seton, speaking at the St. Francis celebrations, offered some defence of St. Francis, in reply to the criticism of Bishop Barnes. He says the difficulty of replying to the statements about St. Francis's avoid-

ance of washing, and his verminous condition is that they are substantially true. In that case one would think the best thing would be to plead guilty, or to say nothing. But Dr. Seton has a try, and his defence gives even more away than did Bishop Barnes. He says that the habits of St. Francis were the habits of his age. Now that is not quite true, for the better class layman was not nearly so filthy or so verminous as were some of these saints, and, in any case, they did not count their filthiness as marks of righteousness. And Dr. Seton might have remembered that the claim made for men such as St. Francis is that they were better than their fellows. And when we remember that the people of whom Dr. Seton says they were commonly dirty, scrofulous, and verminous, were inhabiting countries that under Paganism had baths everywhere, it looks as though he would have done well to have kept his mouth closed. But Dr. Seton was talking to men and women who were out to praise St. Francis, so that he probably felt it was quite safe to say anything.

Dr. Norwood recently addressed a meeting of the "League to Abolish War." We should not abolish war, he said, by appeals to reason, nor if we merely insisted upon the horrors of war. He added, we had to spread the conviction not only that war did not tend to self-preservation, but that it tended to self-destruction. What we should like Dr. Norwood to explain is how a "conviction," and especially the conviction he mentions, can be spread other than by an appeal to reason. Dr. Norwood also said that it was a mistake to imagine human beings, individually or in the mass, were guided by reason and calculation. They were almost invariably guided in moments of crisis by instincts and emotions. That is true. But for this state of affairs the blame must be put upon the churches. Have they not consistently belittled reason as a guide, and directed all their appeals to emotion and primitive fear for the past nineteen hundred years?

The *Daily News* is to be congratulated for allowing an article to appear by Mr. George Sampson, entitled, "Are We Suffering from Mental Indigestion?" he states: "The daily lapping up of printed opinion produces the worst effects of mental indigestion—repletion, incapacity, irascibility, foul tongue and mental flatulence." There is not much difference between the catchwords of the press and the meaningless jingle of theology; a lack of critical analysis is all that is necessary for their acceptance.

In an address on "Sound and Unsound Mind," Dr. Bernard Hollander said that nearly all insane people were "born worriers." He advised his hearers who were inclined to waste energy by needless worry, to interest themselves in other people and to take as their motto, "Don't worry." We wish our bawling Salvationists would take the latter part of this advice to heart. They are everlastingly worrying about their immortal souls. But we shouldn't mind this, if only they kept their silly worry to themselves instead of proclaiming it to all and sundry, and if they refrained from officiously interesting themselves in the immortal souls of other people, and thus making themselves a public nuisance.

One reason why people are ceasing to believe in the value of religion is that, in times of real adversity, they realize what a poor kind of help or consolation the usual pious dope furnishes them with. A reader writes to a religious weekly: "I am thoroughly down-hearted. I can't help it. My boy is out of work, and my husband is very weak in health. Food is an awful price, and I am tired of everything." The editor tells her to remember that Jesus is on her side, that she may safely lean on him and allow him to carry her load. "Christ will carry your troubles as well as you." She is advised to turn to certain Psalms and dwell on them. Just fancy anyone's expecting that this pious guff can possibly remove the causes of the poor woman's depression.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust and Sustentation Fund.

We are making progress with this Fund, although the inflow is not quite so rapid as we could wish. It is, of course, the worst possible time to ask for money, the state of trade all over the country is preventing very many subscribing who would like to do so, and is cutting down the subscriptions of those who do. We are the more indebted to those who have made the subscription list what it is.

One of the subscriptions, it should be noted, that of Mr. W. Pugh, is a quarterly subscription. Mr. Pugh made the promise last year of contributing £5 quarterly, and is doing so. Mr. Macconnell, in sending his subscription, is of opinion that the whole sum required could be raised quite easily and quickly if each reader of the *Freethinker* would contribute a very modest sum. For his own part, he has placed upon himself a levy of 1s. per week for the sixty-two weeks remaining between now and December 31, 1927. Between now and then he promises to send on the sum of 62s.

Meanwhile we must remind our friends that there is still about £2,600 to be raised if we are to secure the £1,000 offered by Mr. Peabody and the £100 offered by Mr. Easterbrook. Securing that £1,100 is dependent upon our raising about £2,600 within the next year. I am quite sure it can be done, and the sooner it is done the better. To place a Freethought paper in a position of financial security is to have accomplished something never before even attempted in the whole history of the Freethought movement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

	£	s.	d.
Dr. A. W. Laing	20	0	0
"In memory of my late husband, Tom White"	20	0	0
G. Smith	10	10	0
J. Sumner	10	10	0
J. Davie	10	0	0
W. Pugh	5	0	0
T. C. Kirkman	3	0	0
W. J. Lamb	1	10	0
D. Macconnell	1	1	0
C. F. Simpson	1	1	0
J. B. Palphryman	1	0	0
E. A. Bullock	1	0	0
D. Shee	1	0	0
H. Bayliss	0	10	0
A. M. Wright	0	10	0
J. G. Finlay	0	10	0
J. R. White	0	5	0
T. C. Riglin	0	5	0
S. Hoffman	0	2	6
J. Brodie	0	2	0
	87	16	6
Previously acknowledged ...	336	9	6
Total	£424	6	0

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.

The measure of any man's virtue is what he would do if he had neither the laws, nor public opinion, nor even his own prejudices, to control him.—*Hazlitt*.

To Correspondents

Those subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

MRS. J. WRIGHT.—If the clergy had been nearly so interested in getting decent houses for the people as they were in building elaborate churches in which to carry on their own business, such reports as the one you enclose would not now be possible. Scattering a little seed by the wayside is certain to do some good.

S. A.—We are not surprised at what you say. But a man who sets up as a reformer must expect a rough time. If everybody welcomed reforms, reform would be unnecessary. This may sound paradoxical, but it is a mere statement of fact.

T. ASHTON.—We already send the *Freethinker* to a number of public libraries without any charge whatever, and are ready to send to more.

F. MANN.—See "Sugar Plums." It would have been better to have sent us the note in time for last week's issue, as many may not get their copies of the *Freethinker* in time to avail themselves of the information.

J. R. WHITE.—We are sending the paper to the addresses given. Much obliged for your interest in the matter.

C. SMITH.—The American Association for the advancement of Atheism is certainly very active, and the conviction of success will go a long way towards achieving it. Anyway you have our best wishes. Courage, energy, and straightforwardness should carry the Association far.

J. MORRISON (Perth, W.A.).—You would have to depend upon getting a secondhand copy. It has been out of print for some time.

E. ANDERSON.—We have nothing to do with politics in these columns. Our rule is in all cases to mention the fact when a known Freethinker is standing for election, and then leaving it to readers to act as their sympathies with the candidate's policy leads them.

D. SHEE.—It is impossible to say just how much the churches and chapels avoid paying by being relieved of all rates and taxes. But if one thinks of the number of them, with the value of the ground upon which they stand and the value of the buildings themselves, it will be realized that the sum thus cast upon the shoulders of other ratepayers annually amount to many millions.

H. BAYLISS.—Pleased you are so "delighted with our weekly organ." We do our best to keep it up to the mark, and hope with you that before long its financial security will be fully assured.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy beings.—*Ruskin*.

Sugar Plums.

The Manchester Branch made a capital start with its winter lectures on Sunday last. Mr. Cohen was the lecturer, and in the afternoon the Broughton Town Hall was comfortably filled, while in the evening it was rather uncomfortably crowded. There were a number of newcomers present, and there were many questions asked at the end of each lecture. Some little amusement was contributed by a young Christian, who had heard Mr. Cohen teaching Immorality to children in Southampton this summer—a place he has not visited for some years, and never addressed children there at any time. That young man, we should say, would make a good evangelist, and, with a stroke of luck, might become a bishop. Mr. Mouks occupied the chair at both meetings, and made a strong appeal for new members and for general support.

On Sunday next (October 31) Mr. Cohen will visit Glasgow, and on the Monday evening will lecture at Motherwell. That will mean an all-night journey to London in order to be at the *Freethinker* office to get out the paper for that week.

To-day (October 24) Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, at 6.30, on "Nature, God, and Man." We hope that Leicester friends will see that the hall is well filled. Those who were present on his previous visit will need no pressing to be there.

The trial of Bishop William Montgomery Brown, of Arkansas, U.S.A., for heresy, attracted considerable attention in the United States, and the Bishop took very good care to see that the public was well informed on the matter. Now, under the title of *My Heresy: the Autobiography of an Idea*, Bishop Brown publishes a readable and interesting volume of about three hundred pages, giving a brief sketch of his life and an outline of the heresy trial. The Bishop's main attempt during the trial was to get the prosecution to say just what doctrine he had broken, and to establish the right of the bishops and clergy of the Church to reinterpret the Church doctrines in a way agreeable to modern knowledge. So far as the first is concerned, the Bishops and those others who sat as judges were careful not to be drawn. They decided the Bishop had been guilty of heresy, without any formal statement as exactly what the heresy was. For the second point all that one can say is that Bishop Brown's reading of Christian doctrines left precious little of Christianity to bother about. Jesus became a symbol of reforming humanity, the Pope is a symbol of a Human Father presiding over the secular welfare of humanity, God is a symbol of the "All in all," etc., which, combined with a belief in Marxian economics, Darwin biology, and readiness to accept all that science has to tell concerning the reign of religion and of man, would have meant in fact a rejection of all the actual teachings of every branch of the Christian Church. We do not wonder that Mr. Brown was formally "deposed from the sacred ministry," or that one newspaper should report it the "scared" ministry.

Bishop Brown has a keen sense of humour, and the sketch of his life from poor farm boy to Christian preacher is told in racy language, with some apt digs at theology in general. Taken from farm life by a wealthy lady, and placed in a theological seminary, he graduated from it a well-equipped "theologue."

To be sure, I did not know anything, but that is no disadvantage to a theologian. It was a positive advantage. One who does not know anything can believe whatever he finds most convenient, until the time comes when he has to check up; and checking up time never comes to a theologian.

It is a theologian's business to get people to heaven; and if he performs the work to his own satisfaction, there is no possible way of proving that he has not

succeeded.....Obviously, then, the most sensible thing a theologian can do is to become self-satisfied, and to read nothing and learn nothing that will interrupt his self-satisfaction.

This self-satisfaction kept Bishop Brown busy with Church work for some time until he was advised by his doctor to read Darwin. Then the collapse began, and as his reading took a wider range so his theology began to drop away. The book is the story of a pilgrimage, and one would like to have had more of this, even at the sacrifice of some of the space spent on the trial. For the Bishops were quite justified in their charge. And it is certain that Bishop Brown's dream of uniting the Churches in a kind of ritualistic humanitarianism will never be realized. There is only one way to cure the Church, and that is to end it. Whether Bishop Brown intends this or not, what he has done will have helped to that end.

Glasgow readers will be glad to learn that on Friday, October 22, Mr. W. H. MacEwan, Vice-president of the Glasgow Branch, will open a discussion on "Will Secularism Benefit Humanity?" before the Young Peoples' Union of the Govan Congregational Church, 10 Elderspark Street, Govan. The chair will be taken at 8, and there will be questions and discussion, which will be led, for the opposition, by Mr. Black, a police-court missionary. Admission is threepence, and we hope there will be a good muster of Freethinkers and Christians.

The wet weather of last week came very near to spoiling Mr. Whitehead's meetings at Plymouth. As it was, several had to be given up altogether. Still, some meetings were held and some good work done. Mr. McKenzie, the Secretary of the Branch, was, as usual, very energetic in doing what could be done to make the meetings a complete success.

Christianity Up To Date.

"SINCE 1914, Rationalism has made great strides," so says a reviewer of some volumes recently, or about to be published in defence of Christianity. The critic says so, therefore it must be true. The modern reviewer would never dream of "lying for the greater glory of God."

Yet we must not be too credulous. Perhaps the same reverend gentleman, when dealing with the subject from another angle, might come to a totally different conclusion. He would argue, then, that Rationalism was a decaying industry, an effete superstition. Powerful, of course, during the last century, but now, owing to a wider outlook, well—really out of date; hardly worth the refutation.

So, you see, our pulpiteers have it both ways. Heads I win, tails you lose. If a book has to be puffed up, rationalism is a growing danger. In Young Men's Mutual Admiration Societies, it becomes a worn-out fetish of twenty years ago.

There are five volumes in the series, published at the reasonable figure of one guinea each. Thus fishermen or agricultural labourers will find these scholarly volumes well within the compass of their slender resources. I say fishermen, for we must always remember they formed the bulk of that thoughtful section who first jumped at the idea of promulgating this peaceable faith. Old salts they were—therefore *cum grano salis*.

The editors are both Doctors of Divinity, and the preface is written by Dr. Temple, the Bishop of Manchester, so that the interesting patient is well doctored. Their combined efforts may bring the battered invalid into a happy state of convalescence. Truly Rationalism has done some effective work since 1914.

"Christianity's first hundred years." "The Church's struggle for existence, A.D. 100-323." "The New Christianity, 323-523." "Days of storm and stress." "The Church Dominant, 1050-1417." "The Decline of Mediævalism, 1417-1527," are some of the vital aspects dealt with. These are also dealing with the world 2,000 years ago, and "The Accomplishments and Vision of Christianity," as well as "Christianity To-day and To-morrow."

Thus, you see, these earnest book-producers have taken quite a wide field for their labours. "They didn't know everything down in Judea," but our modern divinity doctors mean to redress the balance.

It will be interesting to hear their versions of the Neronian persecutions, the forged passages of Tacitus and Josephus, and it will be curious to know how "the leaven" saved our civilization during the period, say, between 1417-1527.

Pray do not suppose this herculean task is laid merely on the shoulders of gentlemen I have named. No, there are more than one hundred original experts from all parts of the world. Even benighted America contributes her share. Dayton has not been built in vain.

H. G. Wells in his *Outline of History* has, I think, prompted the endeavour of these well-meaning scribes. Wells' account of the rise of Christianity was coloured by certain convictions, which are, in fact, alien from Christianity. Perhaps Wells may turn out to be a Mithraist. This will never do. One wonders which particular bethel receives the patronage of Mr. William Clissold.

One may speculate on what Jesus Christ himself would say, were he to return, like Alan Cobham, after his long flight. If the Scriptures speak truth, Jesus was not much of a penman. Certainly the Trinity jointly is credited with being the authors of a wonderful book that has kept the commentators conniving for hundreds of years, but that, I think, was a collaboration. Pens and ink, or papyrus, or even bricks, were not the implements used by the second person alone. History deplores that he did write once, but his exercise was on the ground. This primitive method of caligraphy may have been a warning to future historians. If Gibbon had taken the hint, he might never have had the presumption to "sap a solemn creed by a solemn sneer."

ALAN TYNDALL.

The Holy Bible.

A Paper, abridged, read before the Barnsley Branch of the N.S.S.

THERE is very little historical basis for the bulk of the Egyptian legends told in the Bible, although, possibly, certain tribes may have travelled there or have been taken captive. Their chief pursuit, apart from brigandage, was the breeding of cattle, sheep, and goats, and thus for the selling of produce their best routes would be along the valley of the Euphrates to Babylonia, Chaldea, and Persia, and along this well-known highway of civilization must have come the greater portion of their knowledge and beliefs.

That this is so we find on examining the records of these other nations. The Persians, or Elamites, were city dwellers, and were growers of most kinds of produce, were manufacturers, etc., and had penetrated to India and far "Cathay" or China. The Phœnicians were the greatest sea power of the world and had penetrated to the South and West of Ireland, and even to "Ultima Thule," or Iceland. The Arabs were amongst the first of astronomers,

Khaldea is well up with the times, the Khaldeans are known as "philosophers, naturalists, or soothsayers, whose principal employment was the study of mathematics and astrology, by which they pretended to know the destiny of men born under certain constellations."

The Egyptians at the presumed time of Moses made a canal connecting the Nile with the Red Sea, Babylonia was the chief trade mart of the world, whether as Babylon, Bagdad or Basrah, until modern times. On the North was an endless chain of mountains, to the South the Arabian desert; thus the natural outlet was to the South-east, and there is no wonder we find the poetical and ethical myths of these countries appropriated by these ignorant tribesmen and rendered literally.

The connection between pagan myths and belief in the Bible is plainly evident throughout the Scriptures. Not to speak of the pagan names of the days and months, there are innumerable things still to be seen or heard from church bells, the shape of churches, gargoyles, the altar, the vestments of priests, shaven heads, the dates fixed for festivals, Lady Day, Easter, St. John's Day, Christmas, Shrovetide, Lent, Bishop's mitre and crook, and in many kinds of architecture, also we find it in the remains of stone circles (Stonehenge, etc.), the Irish round towers, the stones erected on high places and in the many name traces of Bal, Ball, or Bally in Ireland and the Isle of Man, and Kingstone and similar names amongst ourselves, etc., kissing the Pope's toe, first fruits and harvest festivals, the anointing of bishops and kings, birth, burial, and marriage customs, foundation stone laying, the christening of ships, Baal fires on St. John's Eve, November fires, worship of wells and springs, libations to apple trees, the firing of guns over growing crops (Kent and Devon), All Hallows in Scotland and Ireland, the melting of wax effigies and other magic along with the innumerable superstitions still in vogue, ghosts, the legends attached to national heroes and saints, St. George (sun), St. Patrick (sun serpent), Sigurd, Thor, Beowulf, our own British myth hero, Arthur and his round table, Robin Hood, William Tell, even Alfred the Great, Charlemagne, and the Christian Saints, nay, even Edward the Confessor, Thomas à Beckett, and Charles the First "of blessed memory," all show unmistakable signs of their whole or partial translation to the heavenly host of gods, thus showing gods in the making.

We find that the Gods of the Old Testament possess most of the attributes of the gods of the surrounding nations and that their legends are all paralleled by the much earlier and more poetical and ethical traditions of their people. Moses possesses many of the common attributes of these deities as war god, fire god, serpent god, water god, sender of plague and disease and miracle worker. Noah, the saviour of mankind, water god, wine god, reproducer, etc., is a faithful copy of Atvar the Indian Dionysius, even to the Ark. Enoch is translated direct to the skies, Elijah is undoubtedly a first class water god, his name is a compound of the names of the two first Gods of the Bible, Eli or El and Jah or Jehovah; he has the power of life and death; he divides rivers; he is fed by ravens, does magic with the cruse of oil, has a fight with an opposing god of fire, and conquers, naturally, is miraculously preserved for forty days and nights and is translated straight to Heaven in a tempest of thunder and lightning. Elisha, on whom his mantle falls, is a copy but rather weak, possessed of similar attributes and doing similar things, but the myth is rather spoiled by the tale of the children (old bald-head and the

bear). Jonah is a copied water and sun myth. Samson also has his parallel in other sun and hero fables, and so with all others.

The moon is worshipped by the Hebrews as Mene, and there are many instances of planet and star worship. Sirius, or the Dog Star, is worshipped as Nebo from Anubis, the Egyptian deity. Wine is worshipped and used as a libation to the gods and poured on stones, etc. Idols are mentioned under the names of Chiun and Chiven, Baal, Peor, Baal Shaliza, Baal Gall, Huzza, Teraphim, and Star of their gods made by themselves.

Of dreams we have Laban's dream, Jacob's dream, Joseph's dreams, Pharaoh's dreams, Daniel's and others.

Astronomic.—The month of Abib, or Nisam, is equal to March and the Passover corresponds with our spring equinox.

The month of Tammuz is equal to June, and the women weeping in the temple are doing so at the summer solstice, or defeat of the sun, the many times 12 is used, the way the tribes are described by Jacob on his death-bed, all bear an astronomical significance, also the number 7 is used similarly for the planets.

Nature.—Nature worship is shown in many ways and places and covers a very wide ground, and to one interested in the subject there is here a very fruitful field, in addition to the groves and green trees there are many other allusions.

The Creation Story is a myth of mixed sun, etc., water and winds, serpent and nature worship, and is equalled in nearly all countries and tongues. The Jewish religion is a worship of the male principle, and this accounts for the very few goddesses in their pantheon, and also for the state of subjection of women and of the religious and civil laws made against them.

As showing common attributes we have God as a tailor (Gen. iv. 21). As a stonemason (Ex. xxxiii. 16). As a chemist (Ex. xv. 25). As a tabernacle maker and architect (Ex. xxv. 6). He is shown as a fire-god on Mount Sinai (Ex. viii. 19). The Lord sends fiery serpents on those who complain and many people died (Numbers xxi. 4). Nadab and Abisher offer strange fire and are consumed (Lev. x. 1). A smoking furnace and burning lamps (Gen. xv. 17). As a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, "And there came a fire out from before the Lord and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat, which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces" (Lev. ix. 24). The Lord says, Thou shalt not make gods of gold or silver against, but shalt make burnt offerings to me (Ex. xx.).

There is a perpetual fire on the altar. He appears to Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel amongst others, as a flame; Daniel says a fiery stream issued from him. The Psalmist says his chariot is a flame. Moloch the opposition fire-god is forbidden by Moses (Lev. xviii. 21 and xx. 1). Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 3) makes his son pass through the fire, also Chronicles xxviii. 3, and many others, including Sodom and Gomorrah.

Moon and Stars, etc.—(Isaiah xlv. 1; 2 Kings xvii. 31; Deut. xxxiii. 14; Isaiah xlv. 2; Jeremiah vii. 18). The moon is worshipped as Astarte, our Easter is governed by the moon (Ezekiel viii. 14); also as menior, measurer, etc.

Phallic Worship is very noticeable: David dancing before the Ark. The Golden Emerods (1 Sam. vi. 1-18). The allegories of hands, horns of altar, posts, rods, bows, staffs, contents of arks, testimonies, covenants, circumcision, and others too numerous to mention.

Human Sacrifice as a propitiary rite to the god or to strengthen a building as a temple, bridge, or gate is practised (mentioned in Isaiah xxvii. 16.; Psalmist lxviii. 22; Genesis xxii). Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits and thy liquors, and the first born of thy sons shalt thou offer unto me. Likewise thou shalt do with thine oxen and thy sheep, seven days it shall be with its dam and on the eighth thou shalt give it me (Ex. xxii). All the first-born are mine, mine they shall be, I am the Lord (Num. iii.). There are other confirmations (Ex. xiii. 2; xxxiv. 20; Num. xviii. 15; Lev. xxvii. 28).

Idols are mentioned in many places and connections, the Golden Calf is called, the God which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt (Aaron says he put the gold into the fire and the calf came out). Idols are mentioned (Amos v. 25; Jeremiah iv. 4; vii. 20; xiv. 22; i. 2; 2 Kings xvii. 16; xxi. 3; xxxiii. 5; Joshua xi. 17; Nahum ii. 7; Isaiah xlv. 1; Hosea x. 10; Micah; Judges ii. 13; iii. 7; vi. 28; x. 6). Ahab builds temple to Baal. Moses says the Israelites worship strange gods who have given them nothing (Deut. xxiv. 26).

Woman is to be subjected to man (Gen. iii. 16). Woman could not divorce a man, but he could divorce her on very slight grounds and cause her to be stoned to death, and many other customs mainly brutal.

The story of the Levite (Judges xix. and xx.) is an illuminating example of these people and their ways. Jacl and Sisera, Jephtha's daughter. In fact, you could hardly open the book at any point without finding evidences of their brutal nature.

In passing we must not forget that most of the things noted belong to the region of myth, and therefore we can to some extent excuse, but the old saying, "And man created God in his own image, male and female created he them," still holds good, and a brutal god is born of a brutal people. It may also be said that their priests and prophets spoke against certain evils, but this only tends to prove that these things were done by the mass of the people, that their Kings built altars and temples to them, and, in any case, it is doubtful whether the gods of the priests differed in any great degree from the gods of the people. The Levites were mainly concerned with ceremonials, tithes or tenths, first fruit and sacrificial offerings, and general power over the people.

The character of El or Jah looked at from a humane standpoint shows us a boasting, vainglorious, cunning, irrational, easily led and easily provoked god (always trying to go one better or circumvent an opposing deity) and a merciless and bloody tyrant.

All gods have human attributes (says a writer); if so, what shall we say of the Jews? Petronius says: "Fear made the gods," and the Jews must have been badly scared. Dr. Pison says in his book on Australia: "The more I see of savage tribes the more I am convinced that among them the ancestors grow into gods."

Whatever we may think of the book as a subject for study, showing mankind in the making, we cannot allow that it is a guide or an inspiration in any sense suitable for the needs of to-day. I will conclude with a passage from J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs*, which sums it up very well:—

Now, we have seen that in the last pages of the Old Testament canon the religion of the Jews is tribal, trivial, narrow, and it is the historic fact that to the day of the final fall of Jerusalem it remained tribalist and localist: a gospel of racial privilege and a practice of barbaric sacrifice; a law of taboo and punctilio, proclaiming a God of ritual and

ceremonial, dwelling unseen in a chosen house, with much concern about its furniture and commissariat. There is no ethical principle in its whole literature that is not to be found in the sacerdotal literature of Egypt, Persia, India, or in the non-sacerdotal literature of China and Greece, and with the Hebrew ethic there is almost constantly bound up the ethic-destroying concept of the one God as the patron of one people who only through them consents to recognize the rest of the human race.

TOM WHITE.

Preaching the Gospel.

As many people seem thoroughly satisfied that the cash aspect of Gipsy Smith's (Com)mission is no detriment to the good Christianizing work he is alleged to be doing, it is something of a mystery to us why the full facts should not be made known.

Who are the persons comprising the syndicate "running" the Gipsy? and, where does the money go if Mr. Smith does not get it?

In the absence of any financial statement from those responsible, or, indeed, any preferred information whatever on the subject, we are compelled to make our own calculations in order to help satisfy public curiosity and earnest enquiry.

If neither Mr. Smith nor his "backers" are prepared to divulge any secrets as to the amount of cash they are getting out of the present (com)mission, they cannot blame the *Eden Gazette* for compiling and presenting the following estimate of cash takings and expenses:—

Estimated Receipts for one Month (24 days' "Gospel" preaching:—

	£	s.	d.
Average daily attendance at Town Hall, 3,000.			
Admission tickets sold in 24 days, 72,000 at 1s. 6d.	5,400	0	0
Estimated profits from sale of 25,000 hymn books, cost 1s., and sold at 1s. 6d.	612	10	0
Estimated collections apart from admission fees	1,200	0	0
Total receipts for 24 days' "Gospel"	7,212	10	0

Estimated Expenditure:—

Newspaper Advertising	120	0	0
Hire of Town Hall, 24 days at £10	240	0	0
Tram and poster advertising	40	0	0
Printing Tickets	60	0	0
Taxi hire and hotel expenses, £1 daily	24	0	0
Sundries, £1 daily	24	0	0
Total expenditure	508	0	0
Balance profit earned	6,704	10	0
Total	£7,212	10	0

The above is quite an honest estimate of the "business" transacted by the Gipsy Smith (Com)mission during one month's soul-cleansing and purifying operations in Auckland City. As Mr. Smith declares he gets nothing we presume that someone gets the profits.

We have no hesitation in declaring that such transactions have been entered into for the sole purpose of making money; but what we should now be glad to know is what is the cost per soul actually "saved." Further, how many of the followers of the "saviour" will realize within a month after the Gipsy's departure, that they have been sadly but very cleverly tricked?

For this kind of commercial salvation we would not give a dust-cart-load of fish-offal. It is not Christianity; it is hypocrisy of the first magnitude. If not, then let the Gipsy and his friends tell the truth about the money haul and just exactly where it has gone. Secrecy and bluff wont symphonize with either Christ's teaching or His manner and methods of propounding it.—*The Eden Gazette* (N.Z.).

Drama and Dramatists.

In "The Wild Duck," Ibsen's hero succeeded in upsetting everybody and everything in his attempt to "do good." There is a technique in this difficult art as also in the business of scientific burglary. If, however, there is introduced in the very laudable idea of doing good, an appeal to speculative ideas associated with religion the matter becomes complicated, and the result often brings about broken furniture, broken hearts, and an appeal to the police. Schopenhauer, who never went far from the essentials of life, was content to exchange hope for insight in the search for the right path; Voltaire's philosopher, Memnon, lost an eye in pursuit of perfect philosophy, and then realized the impossibility of being perfectly wise, perfectly powerful, and perfectly happy. Maxim Gorki, in his four act play, "The Lower Depths," produced at the Gate Theatre, 28 Floral Street, Covent Garden, riotously and generously flings at us a lesson in tolerance from the unsavoury atmosphere of a miserable lodging-house for all the misfits of a respectable world that eats beef and cannot slaughter an ox.

When hens have nothing to peck, they peck each other, and the normal conduct of the house, with its jangling and brawling and the loud moanings of a dying woman was undisturbed until the arrival of Luka, a pilgrim, an old man with a tin kettle attached to his coat-tails. Here was the fly in the ointment; here was the mixture that would set the figures dancing to another tune. Into the satirical, ironical, and bitter environment of outcasts was an apostle of kindness. He comforted the dying woman during a fight in which he asked why they fought. She replied that she thought it was because they were fat and healthy. He touched the heart of a thief; he rapped the knuckles of the pious doss-house owner, Mikail Kostilyoff; he impressed Satine, a waster; he gave hope to the actor whose organism was poisoned with alcohol; he encouraged Nastya, a street walker, to tell her romantic story of her lover who did not exist, and with the technique of a master, Gorki made us view our brothers and sisters with sympathy, kinship, and a feeling that all is not utterly lost, but the difficulty of reclamation is not an easy matter.

Is Gorki one of the immortals? Under the cloak of Gogol he acquired the art of writing that has the clang of a blacksmith's anvil; he succeeds in saying in a sentence what many authors cannot say in a book. And out of a mass of complexities, of bones of contention, quibbling, philosophical bickerings, and metaphysical bewilderment he extracts the marrow of common sense. If the modern stomach is too proud for its reception, that is not his fault. As in Dostoeffsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* there is the recurring decimal in the form of the question, "Is there a God?" but Gorki does not stress the importance of this too much. He is more interested in his characters and their reaction on one another. The thief has put this question to the Pilgrim, who replies, "If you have faith, there is," but what is appreciated most in the play by the supporter of forlorn hopes is the fact that we are kept to the earth of realities with all the characters.

In the company there is a Baron who makes the confession that he has lived all his life doing nothing but changing his clothes. He recounts his former position of rank and privilege, and Nastya then turns her derision on him, the company laugh, and she reminds him of the misery of being disbelieved. There is a fight, a murder, and the Pilgrim disappears; and the last act is a recollection of the old man, who, out of the lessons of his long life, had touched the human part of all. And Satine, a card-sharper and exponent of terrific and penetrating unanswerable satire, says of him: "The damned old fool—he bewitched the whole gang of us." But in an atoning outburst he also says, "To lie—it's the creed of slaves and masters of slaves! Truth is the religion of the free man," which proves that Schiller still lives.

Mr. Peter Godfrey and Miss Molly Veness have an enthusiastic band of young artists, eager, capable, and ambitious. Within the limits of a small stage the effects are a triumph over difficulties, and, as yet, com-

mercantilism has not stepped in to measure public wants by the pay-box. When the great public, flattered and flouted by interests, have finished gulping the east wind, it is possible that there will be a return to plays such as this one by Gorki. The Russian genius remains true to his species, and the faint light of ultimate good is visible on the horizon telling us that man is neither a beast nor an angel, nor, for that matter, a strutting figure in a boiled shirt beloved by flappers.

The Gate Theatre company is to be congratulated on the masterly interpretation of this play. All the members revelled in their parts, and it gripped until the climax. There was an entire absence of star parts, of the painful fuss and long drawn-out intervals that stamp a visit to most theatres as a waste of time. This particular play is as stimulating as any of Nietzsche's books; it is universal in its appeal and is a flashlight of common sense at a time when our newspapers have almost reduced the public to the state of Gardarene swine and appendages of ear-phones. It is to be hoped that Mr. Peter Godfrey and Miss Molly Veness will be induced to present it again for, even if we hope in vain, a fortnight has not exhausted the number who are interested in something that comes home to our nearest thoughts.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

DOES ANYONE REALLY BELIEVE IN HELL?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is surprising that, while the great majority of Christians profess to believe in eternal torment, and also that by far the greater number of their neighbours and mankind will inherit this doom, including, probably, their own children, they never dream of limiting their offspring on that account, although if they really credited such a menace, and possessed even the slightest love for them, they would surely remain childless rather than expose a single one of them to the remotest possibility, far less the high probability, of such an appalling fate. The very fact that no such consideration ever seems to appeal to any potential parents is the plainest proof that no decently humane person can hold any practical faith in this terrible doctrine whatever.

By the way, while warning readers against all forms of superstitions and arbitrary beliefs, the *Freethinker* never gives them any hint as to what, in its opinion, should be the form of their eschatological creed, or which of all the sects and theorists comes nearest to it.

EVACUSTES A. PHIPSON.

North London Branch N.S.S.

Mr. George Bedborough lectured at the St. Pancras Reform Club last Sunday on "Love and Its Implications." Expressing his indebtedness to a forthcoming book by E. F. Ruedebusch on "Love Culture," he succeeded in arousing much curiosity about a book which he said would prove a very important contribution to a perennially popular subject. Mr. Bedborough's main contention was to differentiate between love and sexual desire or consummation. As, however, Mr. Bedborough, unlike many so-called moralists, is in no sense puritanical and realizes to the full the immense value of sexual happiness, the lecture was unusually interesting and evoked a lively discussion. Next Sunday Mrs. M. L. Seaton Tiedeman lectures here on "The Need for Courts of Domestic Relations (Family Courts)." A very good discussion is sure to follow, and we hope for a good audience.

K. B. K.

It is Galileo's spirit of going direct to Nature, and verifying our opinions and theories by experiment, that has led to all the great discoveries of modern science.—
Prof. W. Stanley Jevons.

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.

ESSEX HALL (Essex Street, Strand, W.C.): Friday, October 29, at 8, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "The Evolution of Life." (Lantern Lecture.) Tickets 1s. each, apply, enclosing stamped addressed envelope, to Mr. F. L. Monnaie, 87 Ashbourne Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey.

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, Mrs. M. L. Seaton Tiedeman, "The Need of Courts of Domestic Relations (Friendly Courts)."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. William Kent, "George Eliot—A Study in Religious Evolution."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Dr. Marion Phillips, "Centres of Unrest."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Does God Exist?" Thursday, October 28 at 7.30, at the above Hall, a Debate between the Rev. C. H. Claxton and Mr. H. Cutner on "Is Christianity True?"

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture; (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 28, at 8, Mr. Guy A. Aldred, "Spinoza." 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. W. M. Thorn, "Mistakes Secularists Make." Questions and discussion invited. Silver Collection.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "Nature, Man, and God."

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