

A RELIGION OF FEAR.

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Views and Opinions.

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A Religion of Fear.

LAST week I indicated my dissent from the assumption of Sir Arbuthnot Lane, that all through the ages mankind had depicted death as something horrible and grotesque. Far from this being the case, I believe the fear of death that developed in the Western world was almost entirely a product of Christianity. It is quite certain that no other religion ever managed to make its followers move in such an atmosphere as did the Christian Church. Among the Hindoos there is no such fear of death as exists among Christians; nor does it exist among either the Chinese or the Japanese. Europeans attempt to explain this by saying that among these peoples life is cheap. That, however, even if true, does not explain the point at issue. The point is not whether people cling to life, but the intense fear of death on which Christians harp, and which they naturally impute to other people. The greatest of Christian preachers, the most prominent of Christian laymen, have dwelt with a sickening insistence on the fact of death, the horror of death, and the fearfulness of what may await one after death. They have not made life cheap, but they have gone a long way towards making it contemptible. And as a consequence of this inculcated fear of death, there has gone up the cry for consolation and comfort in the presence of death, and the need for some assurance of salvation in the next world. It has been one of the great claims of Christianity that it gave this assurance, and it is seen in the emasculated superstition of a Conan Doyle, who presents his particular form of delusion on the ground that it brings comfort to thousands, and gives them consolation in the face of death. There are very few people who once having been Christians, completely outgrow it. Psychologists tell us that early terrors are the hardest of all things to outgrow, and here is a striking illustration of the truth of the teaching.

Non-Christians and Death.

Amongst uncivilized races there is no great fear of death, although there is a very great fear of the ghosts of the dead. If there had not been, none of the many religions of the world would ever have been born. Here are a few illustrations, from Sir James Frazer, of the way in which non-Christian peoples view death. "The Hindoos," he says, "take matters of life and death a great deal more unconcernedly than we do. The absence of that fear of death, which is so powerful in the hearts of civilized men, is the most remarkable trait in the Hindoo character." Among the natives of Anam "the subject of death has nothing alarming for anybody." The natives of Dahomey are spoken of as facing death with the utmost unconcern. The same kind of testimony is forthcoming from most of the non-Christian portions of the world. Even with those countries which show the fear of death, it was hardly present before the establishment of Christianity. In Greece and Rome the attitude of the leaders of thought was as far as possible removed from that which became common under Christianity. It has often been noted that in the funerary inscriptions on Greek and Roman graves, while there is present the sadness that must always accompany the separation from someone beloved, there is none of the fear or sense of impending disaster which becomes so common with Christianity. One cannot imagine a Christian saying as did Socrates "Death either extinguishes life or emancipates it from the thralldom of the body. In the first case it is a blessing, in the last it is the greatest of boons"; or with Epicurus, "Accustom yourself to the thought that death is indifferent, for all good and all evil consist in feeling, and what is death but the privation of all feeling?" or with Cicero, "Souls either remain after death, or they perish in death. If they remain they are happy, if they perish they are not wretched." There is nothing of the cowardice of the Christian, whining about the need of being saved from the terrors to come, lacking the courage to face death with his head up, and also the philosophic outlook that would enable him to conduct his life with dignity and courage.

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The Brutality of Piety.

The Greeks and the Romans taught that death was a law of nature. The Christians held that death was a punishment inflicted upon man for his sinfulness. The Pagan had few terrors connected with after life, if it existed. The Christian had no doubt of the after life, and filled it with all the terrors of a diseased imagination. The terrors of the next world was the one thing on which the morbid imagination of Christians exhausted itself. All the ferocity of the early Christians was let loose in describing the terrors of hell that awaited those who had offended

them or who disagreed with them. Here is Tertullian, one of the most fervent of the early Christians:—

How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs groaning in the lower abyss of darkness, so many magistrates liquifying in fiercer flames than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot fires with their deluded pupils.

Cyprian, Irenæus, Jerome, Augustine, with scores of others draw similar pictures, each vying with the other to enlarge the picture and increase the character of the tortures endured. Centuries later the great Jeremy Taylor said that

Husbands shall see their wives, parents shall see their children tormented before their eyes. The bodies of the damned shall be crowded together in hell like grapes in a wine press, which shall press one another till they burst.

Jonathan Edwards, one of the most logical of Christian writers, said:—

The world will probably be converted into a great lake or liquid globe of fire; a vast ocean of fire in which the wicked shall be overwhelmed, which will always be in tempest, in which they shall be tost to and fro, having no rest day or night . . . their eyes, their tongues, their hands, their loins and their vitals shall forever be full of a glowing, melting fire, fierce enough to melt the very rocks and elements . . . not for one minute nor for one day . . . but for ever and ever, without any end at all.

One is not surprised on learning that at these sermons of Edward's, some of his hearers fell down fainting or foaming at the mouth.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said that,

In fire exactly like that which we have on earth thy body shall lie asbestos-like, forever unconsumed, all thy veins paths for the feet of pain to travel on, every nerve a string on which the devil shall play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable torment."

There was no room for symbology, it was crude literalness, rendered with all the savage ferocity of a completely demoralizing creed. How great was its power of demoralization may be seen from the way it could corrupt the nature of one like Cardinal Newman. He depicts a man brought before the judgment seat of Christ, and priding himself on being a philosopher, a poet, a scientist or an artist; a man whose works are read by others, who pleased or enlightened others. It is all useless; he has committed the unforgivable crime of unbelief. His learning, his ability counts for nothing. "Oh, vanity, vanity of vanities! all is vanity. What profiteth it? His soul is in hell, O ye children of men. While thus ye speak his soul is in the beginning of those tortures in which his body will soon have part, and which will never die." One ceases to wonder at a Spurgeon, when one finds a John Henry Newman writing in this strain.

* * *

A Brutalizing Creed.

"Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy!" In the light of what the tidings were, the statement sounds uncommonly like that of the workhouse master who assured the dying pauper that, considering who he was, he ought to be precious glad that he had a hell to go to. The Christian message was one of glad tidings only in view of the fact that it promised a way of escape from the terrors of the Christian hell. That is why Christian teaching has always harped so consistently and so persistently upon the need for developing a sense of sin, of unworthiness, of the need for finding a way of escape from the terrors it pictured as awaiting nine-tenths

of mankind. If it could terrorize sufficiently, Christianity was certain of obtaining control. And one clear consequence of this was that of making the sincere Christian the greatest of all cowards at the thought of death. I say the thought of death, because so far as the fact of death was concerned the process of natural decay, or the weakening power of disease, or the ties of domestic affection were usually strong enough to overcome the influence of theological teaching. But at other times it was characteristically Christian for the believer to doubt whether anyone could face death without the strengthening feeling that someone would be able to save him from the eternal torments promised him by his religion. Christianity was essentially a religion of fear, based upon the most elaborate of brutalities. All its talk of Divine Love and sacrifice, has to be read in the light of that consideration. The Divine Sacrifice was necessary, only to appease a vindictive deity eager to inflict vengeance upon men and women for being no better than he had made them. Divine Love meant, in fact, no more than the possibility of this deity forgiving man, provided he grovelled sufficiently before him. And it is well to bear in mind that little more than three generations ago this doctrine held practically unbroken sway over the minds of the Christian world. It still dominates the majority. The Roman Catholic Church not alone holds this doctrine in undiminished ferocity, but actually issues for the benefit of children a penny booklet portraying the torments of hell for every day in the week. That represents the very summit of Christian brutality. When one remembers that nearly fifty generations of men and women have been born and reared under the influence of this doctrine, we need not wonder that so much brutality exists in the world to-day. The wonder is that so much kindness has managed to survive.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Wickedness of Christian Egotism.

EGOTISM is rooted in self-conceit, and self-conceit signifies an arrogant, overweening sense of one's own superiority to others, or of the pre-eminence of the class or school to which one happens to belong. Egotism means the outward expression in words and actions of that sense of self-importance. Now self-conceit and egotism are prominent characteristics of those who call themselves Christians. Taking them as a class, they have always, from the very commencement of their history, regarded themselves as superior people, and treated non-Christians with disgust and contempt. From their supreme and yet absurd self-conceit and egotism sprang all the cruel and bloody persecutions which have so deeply stained the pages of their history. Professor James Moffatt, of Glasgow, an exceedingly advanced Biblical scholar, contributed to the *Christian World* of April 28, a remarkable article entitled "The Inquisition." The article is a critical review of a book recently published on the subject. The Inquisition was a tribunal established by the Catholic Church in the Dark Ages, for the arrest and punishment of those suspected of heresy; and we are told by Llarente, the historian, that eight thousand and eight hundred persons were burnt in Spain alone, during the eighteen years of Torquemada's reign as Grand Inquisitor. Professor Moffatt delivers his judgment on the attitude of the Church in the following significant passage:—

The Church is here to give a lead, and the Inquisition unfortunately proves to have been a case

in which the Church gave no lead to the age. On the contrary, the civil authorities of several countries showed a reluctance to allow the Inquisition at all. In many cases the severity came from the ecclesiastics, and the plea for leniency from the civil power.

Some Protestants remind us with great glee that the Inquisition was a Catholic institution, ignoring the undeniable fact that the Reformers were dominated by the same evil spirit of persecution. Luther and Calvin hated heretics quite as fiercely as Torquemada ever did. Nothing in all history is more discreditable than the mean and utterly diabolical method by which the pope of Geneva secured the execution of Servetus. Every unprejudiced student of Church history knows full well with what persistence the religious party or sect that has the power persecutes the party or sect that has none.

But surely religious persecution is now a thing of the past? By no means; it is a real thing of the present, and shall be a real curse of the future, as long as supernatural beliefs endure. In the *Guardian* Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, controls a column, under the general title of "Difficulties of Life and Belief." In the issue of that newspaper for April 29, the Canon deals with a correspondent, a young man, who had sent him a somewhat staggering question. The reverend gentleman quotes rather fully from the young man's letter, and the quotation is as follows:—

I heard a missionary preach such contradictory stuff in church last Advent that I have not been since. His text was "God so loved the world." He said that Jesus Christ was the all important gift of God to all the world. All I have to say is, if so, why did not God see to it that all men got a chance of obtaining it? Fancy God overflowing with love and anxiety to impart a fact of a blessing to mankind, and yet taking such inadequate steps to ensure its reaching mankind.

That may be a crude, blundering statement, and yet it does actually put before us a problem of stupendous importance and insuperable difficulty to Christian apologists. Instead of meeting it calmly and dispassionately, and taking his correspondent sympathetically by the hand, Canon Green loses his temper and poses as a wonderfully superior man, in whom the secrets of knowledge and wisdom safely lie. We confess it is not a pretty spectacle to see a man of God in impotent rage. Listen to him:—

Well, the first thing that I must say, even if it hurts some people's feelings, is that no one but a very young, silly, and conceited man could have raised the objection. A very small acquaintance with life should lead all of us to reflect that, if something which has been accepted and believed by the noblest minds for nineteen centuries seems to us contradictory and absurd, it is far more likely that we have overlooked some obvious consideration than that we are right and all other men idiots. The young man should have asked himself the question—"Is it likely that the saints for nineteen centuries have been utterly without intelligence, and that it has been reserved for me, the first of all mankind, to see the absurdity of the statement."

That passage is, first of all, an offensive and wholly inexcusable insult to the young correspondent, who merely described the inference which he felt he was obliged to draw from certain dogmatic assertions made in the missionary's discourse. The Canon is entirely mistaken when he charges this young man with being the first of all mankind to raise such an objection. Thomas Carlyle was neither young, silly, nor exceptionally conceited when he exclaimed that his only charge against God was that he did nothing. Now can Canon Green prove that God has ever done anything to justify the belief in his existence? Certainly the great antiquity of a belief furnishes no evidence whatever of its truth. The

fact that the belief in Jesus Christ as God's supreme gift to the world, has been cherished by "the sanins" for nineteen centuries by no means guarantees its objective reality. The historicity of the Genesis story of creation and the fall of man, has been "accepted and believed by the noblest minds" for nineteen hundred years, but to-day, as the result of the dissemination of scientific knowledge, not a few dignitaries in the Canon's own Church, openly deny it. Geology has positively demonstrated that it is nothing more than a fairy tale. Until recently the faith in witchcraft had prevailed in Christendom from earliest times. It was vigorously defended not only by the Catholic Church, but equally so by the Protestant Reformers. Luther exclaimed: "I would have no compassion on these witches; I would burn them all." Calvin also expressed the same hostility towards them, and when remodelling the laws of Geneva, he left those on Witchcraft intact. Buckle tells us that "in 1660, the majority of educated men believed in witchcraft." John Wesley, referring to the fact that "the English in general, and indeed most of the men of learning in Europe" had lost their belief in witches and apparitions, wrote in his *Journal*, in 1768, as under:—

I am sorry for it, and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment, which so many of those who believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge that these are at the bottom of the outcry which has been raised, and with such insolence spread through the land in direct opposition, not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations. They well know (whether Christians know it or not) that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible.

Wesley was perfectly justified in writing as he did. The Bible is being given up bit by bit by Christians themselves, while outside all Churches there are millions of people who do not believe in it at all as the Word of God.

Does God work in the world, and how? The Canon's answer to this question brings us face to face with Christian egotism at the height of its audacity. He assures us that, "as a matter of fact God did provide a method, and the best of all methods for spreading the truths of the Gospel. That method is that every Christian should try to make another Christian." Then he sorrowfully adds that "in this, as in so many things, man has failed God." Would it not be truer to say that God has failed man? Our present point, however, is that Christians regard themselves as fellow-workers with God. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. In them alone is to be found the wisdom that is from above. They look down with disdain upon all non-Christians, be their character what it may. It is their prerogative to be the judges not only of the world, but even of angels. In reality and on the whole, they are neither better nor worse than other people, and their self-conceit and egotism are utterly inexcusable, and often lead them down into the bottomless pit of moral degradation and ruin. Their very belief in God and Christ has converted them into the most pitiable of hypocrites.

J. T. LLOYD.

Years ago I had a friend who developed the curious idea that the inside of him was made of glass, and that if he sat down suddenly he would break. He is now in an asylum. About the same time I had an acquaintance who believed that inside of him there was a kind of a little man who "pulled the strings" every time he moved, or thought. He is now in the pulpit. Somehow or the other most people find their level if they are left alone.—*Chapman Cohen.*

Clodd and His Circle.

"Ideas have wings."—Austin Harrison.

"The common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the reliance on miracles must, and will, inevitably pass away."—Matthew Arnold.

"Public opinion is too often public-house opinion."—T. H. Huxley.

FEW men, living or dead, have had such a genius for friendship as Mr. Edward Clodd, for the veteran Freethinker has known most of the leading men and women "intellectuals" during two generations. And through Mr. Clodd's happy idea of committing his recollections to paper we are permitted to meet in intimacy some of the most striking personalities known to our fathers. For he played Boswell to so many Johnsons in his delightful seaside home at Aldeburgh, and in his fascinating recollections we encounter such famous figures as Herbert Spencer and Thomas Huxley, besides Professor Clifford, Sir Richard Burton, George Meredith, George Gissing, Andrew Lang, Samuel Butler, Mrs. Lynn Linton, and a perfect galaxy of genius and talent. And it adds to our interest to find that all these various friends were Freethinkers, united by a common bond to enlarge the boundaries of human thought.

Mr. Clodd is an iconoclast himself. Many years ago he wrote those charming books, *The Childhood of the World*, and *The Childhood of Religions*, and gave pleasure and instruction to tens of thousands of readers. In the evening of his days, when most men enjoy slippered ease, he wrote *Memories*, one of the best books of recollections, which must interest and amuse a younger generation, and inform them of the striking personalities who helped to make the later nineteenth century one of the greatest in British history.

The pages on Spencer, Meredith, and Gissing, are worth quoting in their entirety. So interesting are they that they alone would make the book an abiding delight. But there are other chapters crammed with interest. As for Meredith and Gissing, few men living, not even their own relations, knew them so well as Edward Clodd, and their portraits have been presented most effectively. Indeed, so brilliantly has the author done his work that his book will always be treasured by all admirers of the rare genius who wrote *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, and that other genius, who gave us *The Nether World*, and other powerful studies of democratic life in the greatest city in the world.

George Meredith used to call Mr. Clodd "Sir Reynard," on account of his having, with fox-like cunning, as Meredith professed to think, beguiled him into making his first speech in public. As for his own works, Meredith told Mr. Clodd many things not generally known. Speaking of his masterpiece, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, he said, "Mudie's Library would not circulate it, and all the parsons banned it in the parish book-clubs as immoral." Some of George Gissing's letters are very intimate. In one place Gissing comments, somewhat bitterly, on the small financial gains that came from his novels, and he adds, pathetically, "The fact of the matter is that some men are born not to make money." Mr. Clodd is righteously indignant against the "ecclesiastical soul-snatchers," who pretend that Gissing died in the Christian faith. He declares roundly that the entire story is based on an utter misapprehension. He might have used much stronger language, for Christian priests have never hesitated to lie for the glory of their god, as the alleged conversion of Sir Richard Burton, Jerome Napoleon, and other famous Freethinkers prove beyond all cavil and dispute.

Of the really great names, we hear less of Herbert Spencer, but it must be remembered that the great philosopher was a life-long invalid. Mr. Clodd speaks of his "fussiness," but he also mentions some of Spencer's spontaneous acts of kindness and help. At one of his meetings, Mr. Clodd had a fine object-lesson in the great philosopher's foibles, for Spencer stopped his ears with wool in the middle of a meal, which was, Mr. Clodd thinks, caused by a frivolous remark of his own. There is, however, something uncanny in Spencer's foresight when, refusing to support the League of Peace and Arbitration, he prophesied: "There is a bad time coming, and civilized mankind will, morally, be uncivilized before civilization can again advance." And, be it remembered, Spencer was not a mere notoriety. He belongs to that rare company to whom may be applied the supreme tribute, "Others abide our question; thou art free." Long before his death, men had come to think of him with Plato, with Bacon, with Kant, as one of the great men who mark an era.

Mr. Clodd's book covers much fresh ground, besides adding to our knowledge of the outstanding figures of the Victorian era, and it is extraordinarily bright and fresh. Speaking of Sir George Airy, the Astronomer-Royal, Mr. Clodd recalls that the distinguished scientist was pestered to cast nativities by poor maidservants and blue-blooded dames:—"Every letter was answered and every letter was pigeon-holed under the general heading, "Insanity," with sub-divisions, "Astrology," and "Squaring the Circle."

An amusing story is told concerning Bates, the naturalist, to whom Mr. Clodd was executor, and who was describing to a lady how difficult he found it to keep the collection of beetles in first-class condition. "But how did you feed them?" she asked, artlessly. The book, indeed, is a treasury of anecdotes, but there are also more weighty matters. The opening chapter is devoted to autobiography, and in it we learn how Mr. Clodd himself made the pilgrimage from orthodoxy to Freethought. These illuminating pages have a profound psychological value, for they show plainly that Mr. Clodd's friendship with the really great men of his generation was due to a mutual understanding. His intellectual equipment was of the same order as theirs, and he brought sympathetic insight into his social relationship with them. His own bright books show this clearly, for writing on abstruse subjects, plain men can read him with instruction, and literary folks can read him with pleasure. There is propaganda, too, in the reminiscences. What vigour there is in his denunciation of the barbarities of the Christian Bible. To read Mr. Clodd's relentless questionings is to be reminded of the forthright methods of Secularist advocacy. Mr. Clodd, indeed, shows clearly that the work of the Secularist leaders was not unknown among his circle of friends, for he tells us that George Meredith admired Mr. Foote's uncompromising methods of propaganda. And it is pleasant to remember that the present leader of Freethought is constantly in receipt of encouragement from the foremost writers and publicists of the day.

Edward Clodd is one of the privileged very few who knew these great personalities intimately, and he knew also that their ideas were altering the face of the civilized world. In recalling these high and important matters to present-day people, who are inclined to value their heritage too lightly, Edward Clodd has proved himself a true and devoted disciple of Liberty. So brilliantly and wisely has he done this work that he deserves a niche in the Freethought Temple of Valhalla.

MIMNERMUS.

Christianity's Fight for Life.

NOTHING that has ever been printed can in the slightest degree shake my adamant conviction that every subscriber to religious dogma is either a conscious hypocrite or a man of unsound mentality. The mere fact that the modern theologian rejects the story of the Ark, or the regurgitation of Jonah, or the unswallowable Gadarene swine myth, in itself is nothing so long as the virgin birth of Christ and the Resurrection fable are trotted out as undeniable facts. This, in truth, is the method usually adopted by the so-called scientific parsons. It is precisely the method adopted by the mores who believe in spiritualism. Just as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, after the exposure of some vastly praised spiritualistic phenomenon continues to express belief in another on the grounds that it has so far eluded exposure; so the theologian, as one after another the Biblical non-sensibilities are stripped bare, either grabs hold of an unexposed neighbouring fable or pretends that the text does not mean what it says.

Canon Streeter in *Reality: A New Correlation of Science and Religion*, starts remarkably well, and had he been content to show the fiction which, in its ultimate analysis, lies behind every scientific concept, had he been content to expose the *non sequitor* which is indelibly associated with every philosophic concept, had he, after doing this guffawed at the world as would an Antole France or a Remy de Gourmont, I for one would have been ready to slap him on the back and guffaw with him.

But not for Dr. Streeter is any philosophic libidism. Twenty years' association with Christianity as a profession has had its effects: to-day the learned Doctor is a preacher, a moralist, a mystic. And because of all this he solemnly and majestically ignores the staring fact that the very points he brings out with such damaging effects on the fundamentals of science, in turn paralyse at its very root his own substituted thesis of reality. Science, although admittedly restricted to man's finite and essentially static conception does at any rate express truth in certain circumstances and presents mankind with laws capable of being put to practical use. Science is concerned only with truths demonstrable in accordance with the cumulative experience of mankind. Religion, on the other hand, is concerned with everything that is unexplainable by man's experience: it bothers itself exclusively with the manifestly unknown.

The Streeter formula is merely a glorified edition of the Aristotelian concept that purpose is evident behind the running of the universe; a concept visualized and presented on no more evidential grounds than pure faith. Thus Canon Streeter, on page 221 of this book, says:—

Yet that the Infinite has a purpose, that the quality of Reality in the last resort is good, my mind against all perplexity and basilement continues to assert.

It is difficult to follow the elaboration on such a flimsy basis of the thesis that "Religion, so far as its assertions are about the Whole, is allied to Science." There can be no such alliance. A subject, the so-called truth of which can only be demonstrated by the use of symbols and poetry, creed and dogma, may imaginably take its place as a beautiful phantasy: it can never rub shoulders on level terms with the hard-bitten facts of science. The Bible as a literary work of much beauty deserves infinite praise; as a contribution to scientific knowledge it ranks as the vastest bilge.

What, in effect, Dr. Streeter's thesis amounts to is that because science cannot as yet adequately ex-

plain what is the governing force behind the universe, the theologian's concept of an anthropomorphic god is a likely explanation. Thus on page 314:—

If the Universe is the product of blind mechanical energy, or even of some half-conscious Life-force, then the heart and mind of Jesus is just a happy accident; it is merely the most remarkable of all the unexpected by-products cast up by evolutionary process in its age-long aimless track. But if there is a purpose behind it all, then that life and character are not to be explained as accidents. They are an evidence of what the Creative Mind that wills it all is on occasion capable of producing. But no creative mind can produce something higher and nobler than itself. Therefore the emergence on the plane of history of the man Jesus forces thought to a decision. Either no purpose controls the universe at all and there is no God, or else that purpose is as noble, that mind has thoughts as high, as the purpose and the mind of Christ.

I must make my choice. There are things which make it hard to believe in a living, loving God. But reflection shows that it is harder still to accept the paradox that all is accident. I make my choice. What follows? "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more your heavenly Father." If a human parent would not allow the extinction of a cherished child, is God likely to consent to such a thing?

Here is summarized the only evidence Dr. Streeter, in 200 pages of letterpress, is able to produce in support of his thesis. After the admirable first section of the book, one can only gape and wonder at the seeming miracle of a man of Dr. Streeter's penetration accepting the idea of an anthropomorphic god, of the Christ myth, of the concept of immortality, of the power of prayer. In his horror of pantheism, he even expresses a predilection for an individualized deity such as Jehovah or Allah.

Apart from his heroic attempt to reconcile the conflicting elements in science and religion, Dr. Streeter attempts with even less in the way of success, another difficult task, to wit, the solution of the problems of evil and pain. The principle he enunciates is that the Ultimate Reality, the individualistic Life-force, is concerned with good; that God allows and encourages evil only as a means of bringing out the inherent good in mankind. Here Dr. Streeter merely drops into platitudinous moralism of the Y.M.C.A. brand: in addition, he repeats an obvious fallacy. For, decorate the thesis how you will, the logical result of the existence of evil is the destruction of the underlying ethical principle of the Christian metaphysic. The ethical basis of Christianity, if it implies anything at all, implies the non-existence of sin. Christianity defines as evil, everything which transgresses its own self-constituted rules.

Good and evil are purely arbitrary concepts, eternally changing. Sin and pain exist only because man is monumentally imperfect, which includes as a necessary corollary the fact that if God made man he turned out a damnably imperfect product. All these facts and their implication Canon Streeter consistently ignores: indeed, in a vehement denunciatory criticism of the Nietzschean philosophy he avers that the ultimate result of all endeavour is "Goodness." As one surveys the state of society after 1900 years of Christianity, one wonders!

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

War organizes a body of men who lose the feelings of the citizen in the soldier; those habits detach them from the community; whose ruling passion is devotion to a chief; who are inured in the camp to despotic sway.—*W. E. Channing.*

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of London has returned from his pleasure trip round the world, and has brought back the report, as the result of his observations, that nothing but Christianity can save the world. Now that is really quite a startling discovery for a Christian Bishop, and one of the mental type of Bishop Ingram to make. But we have some notion that he said the same thing before he went and a suspicion that he would have been saying the same thing now if he had remained in London. But the newspapers have interviewed him, and publish the statement as though it is in the nature of an important contribution to the world's affairs. We are afraid the newspapers overdo this kind of thing. Not even journalists could be quite so foolish as these articles and interviews would make them appear.

The whole thing is so touchingly childish. The Bishop arranges for a series of visits to Christian Churches in different parts of the world. He speaks to them; they speak to him, and they both agree that what the world needs is Christianity. In other words, that the world needs them. What kind of an answer would the Bishop have got if he had arranged for a series of visits to leaders of the Mohammedan, the Buddhist, the Jewish and the Freethought worlds? It is just possible that they might have told him that the less they had of Christianity the better. We are not surprised at a man of the type of Bishop Ingram believing this. He is capable of believing anything that is sufficiently silly. But is it possible that even the bulk of Christians are impressed by this kind of self-laudation? If it is, then the country is indeed in a bad state. For all these people have votes.

The Bishop of Lichfield warns the world against the tendency to divorce education from religion. An education that leaves God out is an education which may produce intellectual giants, or world-moving politicians, or millionaire capitalists of industry; but if God is left out, true manhood can never be attained. Naturally the Bishop has no use for the education that ignores the priest. As his notion of "true manhood" is that of men who grovel on their knees before a Big Spook in the clouds, and who obediently do as the priest tells them, we should say that the sooner education is divorced from religion the better for the world and its progress towards adulthood.

A well-known politician attributes much of the culture of Welsh people to the stimulus it receives in Sunday-schools and to the thoughtful preaching of the Welsh pastors. There is, we fancy, another aspect of this Welsh culture business. Mr. Caradoc Evans, the playwright, gave us a glimpse of it that did not appear to please his pastor-cultured countrymen very much.

Truth will out. We have often declared that the various social and athletic clubs connected with the Churches are merely engineered by the parsons to catch or retain clients, and not because the parsons were really interested in the welfare of their flock. Our statement is confirmed by the Rev. J. G. Seaton. When the idea of running a football club connected with Sunday Schools was first mooted, he says, resistance was overcome only because the club was regarded as a fishing net. It would attract young people whose hearts might be captured for the Church. Apparently, the scheme has not worked quite so well as was expected. He adds, plaintively, "Have not the fishing-net ideas often failed because the young suspected and spotted our ulterior motive?" The rev. gent. is a man of discernment. We fear, however, he will need to rack his brains hard to discover a wheeze for outwitting the alert youth of to-day. Possibly the fact that clerical antics

with the "fishing net" can be so easily seen through may account for the pulpit tendency to launch diatribes against modern youth.

According to the Rev. A. J. Howlett, a Chinese missionary, speaking at Manchester last week, the Chinese resented the exploitation of their country as a market, and demanded justice, the rights of fellowship, and friendship as equals. The Chinese, we fear, demand the impossible. To concede rights of fellowship and to acknowledge pagans as equals is asking too much of the Christian peoples. That is simply not done in the best Christian circles. This much should be apparent from the fact that the Christian races send missionaries to the benighted Chinese heathen. One doesn't send instructors in the art of true morality, justice, and fellowship to one's equals, but only to one's inferiors in these principles. The Chinese seem lacking in humility.

A lot is said nowadays about "reunion" of the various Christian Churches. But reunion is, we gather from an article by the Rev. George Jackson (a Wesleyan Methodist), about as likely a thing to happen as the meeting of the North and South Poles. The good man complains that Anglican Church writers still regard the various dissenting sects as having strayed from the parent fold, and refuse to recognize the validity of dissenting "holy orders." They expatiate on the "beauty and duty of coming back to the Mother Church." Anglican priests refuse to administer the Sacrament to Nonconformists. Anglicans and Free-churchmen, says Mr. Jackson, mean by reunion wholly different things. From all this we infer that the religion of Christ still remains a first-class means for separating into various antagonistic camps the children of God, and that a Universal Brotherhood of Christians may be expected about the same time as the arrival of the Millennium. What a pity it is that the Lord Jesus hadn't sense enough nor sufficient command of language to be able so to frame his teaching that all men should interpret them in exactly the same way.

According to the Rev. Henry Smith, a United Methodist, between the years 1907 and 1926, the Wesleyan Methodist Church lost 19,845 members and probationers, and the United Methodist Church 10,206, the decrease of the one being 3.6 per cent., and of the other 6.2 per cent. The average losses for the years 1908-1921, in the Baptist Churches and the three Methodist Churches works out at 5.1 per cent. for each Church. For the same period the Church of England suffered a loss of communicants of 5 per cent. There are, says Mr. Smith, decreases in the Churches generally, and they are due to causes operating upon them all with almost exactly the same pressure. Mr. Smith's percentages are, of course, arrived at by a comparison of actual church membership during the years stated. His figures need taking in conjunction with the growth in population. If that is done, one can realize what a tremendous number of potential clients have escaped the parsons' clutches, and are utterly indifferent to religion. Our newspapers which informed the world that the masses are simply yearning for the Christian religion must be misinformed. They usually are when they go to the parsons for information.

The blessings of poverty mentioned in the New Testament, and the fulminations against the rich are called to mind in reading the two following announcements:—

The Rev. Alfred Redman for 43 years vicar of St. James's' Heywood, Lancashire (net personalty, £29,270) £29,426.

Canon Edward Jarratt Tyser, Ebury Street, S.W., formerly vicar of St. Paul's, Pudsey (net personalty, £22,634) £22,862.

It would appear that the representatives of Christianity have the happy knack of making sure of both worlds. Loaves and fishes may be another term for bank balance, as the meaning of esoteric language has the quality of elastic.

The Rev. Dr. Maltby let the cat out of the bag at the Missionary May meetings at Albert Hall:—

There was a time when it used to seem a good thing that our religion should help our patriotism or our trade. But the missionary cannot be the pioneer of imperialism any longer.

In other words, someone has given the game away, and it can't be worked now; so let us be honest in future!

The House Committee of a Hull Workhouse has recommended the Board of Guardians to ask for the resignation of the Chaplain, because he has not visited several people on the dangerous list, although asked to do so. The Chaplain's reply is that, if they require a full-time chaplain they should pay a full time wage. Mr. Chignell, the Chaplain in question, says that the Guardians are trying to get something for nothing, and should pay a full time salary. Other clergymen in the town agree with Mr. Chignell. We are not surprised at this because "more money" is about the only point on which the clergy do agree. The unanimity displayed at a Church gathering when the need for higher wages for the clergy is introduced, is truly wonderful. The agreement is far greater than it is at an ordinary trades union meeting, where a difference of opinion does sometimes occur; but we have never known differences on that point among a gathering of clergymen.

May we suggest that instead of a "full time salary" being paid, Mr. Chignell draws up a scale of charges. This might take the form of praying at bedsides at so much a dozen, much as some of the professional evangelists work at saving souls at so much per head, or an agreed proportion of the takings. If this were done they might count 13 prayers to the dozen, as is the case with many trades. An extra amount might be asked for for specially hard cases; or a scale of charges for three, five, and ten minute prayers might be drawn up. Yet again, as we believe all prayers to be equally effective, the chaplain might have a scale of charges for all kinds of believers, Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, etc. In the case of Freethinkers, he might ask for an allowance for leaving them alone. The only other method that suggests itself is that of payment by results. But that would mean that some of the guardians would have to go to—the next world to find out. There may be some in Hull who would not object to that. But we do sympathize with Mr. Chignell being asked to offer up an unlimited number of prayers, while being paid for a few only.

All the money spent on advertising religion has been sheer waste. The pews still remain empty on Sunday morning. The great guffaw of publicity has been as useful as throwing a lifebuoy to a drowning fish. But one may discern a faint ray of hope on the horizon, and the Rev. F. C. Spurr supplies it. In order to recover the Sunday morning service he suggested the use of the electric or gas cooker. The problem of filling the churches and chapels is therefore passed on to the manufacturers of cookers, and it is their next move. In line with excuses for the decline in attendance, we commend the following for use at the next session of the Baptist Union Assembly:—Spots on the sun, spots before the eyes, the direction of the wind, the price of onions, the fashion in moustaches, or self-threading needles. These reasons we admit are ridiculous, but the Rev. F. C. Spurr started it, and they all hit the mark as much as his suggestions.

Religious riots at Lahore have resulted in 10 killed and 30 injured for the love of God or Allah. We are glad to say European Christians don't go in for this pastime much in these days. They may slaughter a few hundred Jews occasionally. But that is just an indication of their love of ancient customs. They don't shed much blood among themselves. The pressure of civilized opinion has squeezed out of them the worst of their Christian instincts.

If it be granted that the moon is made of green cheese then there will be no end to the arguments about the colour of the mice that inhabit it. Dr. J. R. Glover, with a brave splash of rhetoric in his weekly article in the *Daily News*, states; "God, I say, made the nations." This is all very well for those who accept the writer's inside knowledge; but like a bubble it bursts with the first contact of reality. Presuming the doctor to be right, God made them all colours, and if that was not enough diversity he made them speak different languages. To further complicate matters he made them dwellers in different latitudes. While the northern dwellers were tearing each other's hair about coal, the tropical dwellers would be worried about water supplies. What Esquimaux is interested in bananas, and what negro would risk his life for a pound of blubber? Come into the ring, doctor; there can never be too many good people who have done with the parish pump view, but for the love of Mike leave your theology at home when you come to the heroic task of making habitable this flying ball called the earth.

The Roman Catholic Church is not backward in seizing the aid of advertisement. A film is being shown at the Philharmonic Hall, and 400,000 people may be seen taking part in the Pontifical High Mass held at that lovely city of culture—Chicago. If batches of this quantity can be counted as followers of the old firm, Catholicism, with its following of 185,000,000 will soon be catching up with the 1,067,000,000 (get these noughts right Mr. Printer) that compose the followers of the Greek Church, Lutheranism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Parseeism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shintoism. Therefore, there remains 882,000,000 to be brought to the bosom of the only genuine article. It would take, at the rate of 400,000 converts per year, exactly 2,205 years to bring the number of 882,000,000 to the right frame of mind respecting baked flour, and as no doubt we have now run out of noughts, we will leave this matter. Just a minute, however, we do know of one man who doesn't believe in the daily papers, and he must not be left out in the above figures, and then again, what are you going to do about the man in the moon?

Most of the reformatory and industrial schools in the county of Durham, 30 or 40 in number, have been closed, says a journal for school-teachers. The cure for this sad state of affairs is—arrest the decline of spirituality, foster Bible reading in the home, and make attendance at Sunday School compulsory, or else devote more time to the Scripture lesson in day schools.

A writer in a Sunday School journal says he thinks that when the Tottenham Y.M.C.A. is crowded with young men of the finest type, and they join in family worship at the end of a happy evening, it is one of the bravest sights in London. We know where can be seen finer types of Christians than these—at any meeting of Sabbatarian bigots engaged in noisily protesting against other people doing as they like with their Sunday leisure time. It is the bravest sight in the world. There ought to be special medals for this species of valour.

The Rev. Frank Rowley had a doleful tale to unfold to some Methodist local preachers at Salisbury. The preacher's task was very difficult to-day, he said, and truth was more difficult to arrive at. The theory of evolution, modern views of the Bible, and the discoveries of natural and physical science had made a great difference to preaching, and people were not so easily moved as they used to be. What Mr. Rowley was trying to convey to his audience was, that modern discovery and thought have made mince-meat of the old, old story and the glad tidings, etc.; and mince-meat has nowadays to be very carefully spiced and flavoured if it is to be made acceptable.

A parson is credited with saying, "Few people are perfectly normal on Sundays." The "few people" must be a misprint for "few Christians."

The *Daily News*, beloved mouthpiece of all good Puritans, is sadly degenerating in these days. A short while ago it came out with a heading, "mixed bathing—a guide for London enthusiasts," under which was a list of public baths where mixed bathing is permitted. This it hoped readers would find useful. We wonder what Councillor Clark, of Tonbridge, that expert searcher after human depravity in seemingly innocent places, said when he noted his decorous daily encouraging sinfulness. We can picture him pinning to his hat his favourite motto, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, and calling on the editor with a petition of protest.

There would probably have been no Labour Day for many years to come, but for the Church, said the Rev. G. A. Langley, a United Methodist, preaching a Labour Day sermon. It was from the pulpits that the great Christian ideas concerning the worth of human personality and the essential dignity of labour had been widely disseminated—and these ideas formed the basis of the legitimate claims of Labour. Mr. Langley appears to have taken the measure of his congregation's intelligence and its ignorance. Exactly what have been the Church's "great Christian ideas concerning the worth of human personality," etc., can be estimated by that choice Christian hymn telling about "the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate." The labouring man might, in the Christly phrase, be worthy of his hire, but the Church never omitted to remind him that he must order himself properly before his "betters." And ordering himself properly didn't include organizing against injustice and exploitation. You may search history a long time to discover signs of the Church giving direct encouragement to Labour's aspirations and "legitimate claims." But you will find plenty of indications that she feared to offend her wealthy patrons, the aristocracy and factory owners, and always sided with them when Labour started asserting its claims. But now that Labour is something to be reckoned with, priests and parsons are conveniently forgetting these facts, and laying on soft-soap with a trowel.

The common Englishman, says Prebendary A. W. Gough, is a natural aristocrat. This may explain why, in an alleged democratic country, the *Daily Mail* thinks an article of instruction on how to curtsy before royalty may interest the common Englishman. The natural aristocrat is presumed to be interested in the quaint antics of the class to which he, according to the Prebendary, really belongs.

Gipsy Smith, at Albert Hall, voiced praise to God "that we are living in a world that wants Jesus." The world must be wanting Jesus rather luke-warmly, since the Churches find it necessary to spend so much money on advertising, and the Press has just been busy trying to boost religion—with no great success.

Mr. George H. Cook, J.P., I.C.C., at the National Sunday School Union Anniversary meeting, thought there was need for selecting hymns that children would not resent singing. It was, he said, unwise to ask sturdy youths to sing, "Jesus wants me for a Sun-beam!" a hymn quite suitable for juniors. Quite so. When modern children begin to grow mentally they object to infantile sentiments. Unfortunately for the Churches, this growth does not stop. Youth perceives that the Churches' dogmas, hymns, and pulpit utterances are only a little less puerile than junior hymns. That is why the parsons nowadays find that their young clients, in early adulthood, contract an alarming habit of giving the Church the go-by.

The Solicitor-General, at the annual meeting of the Shaftesbury Society and Ragged School Union, told of his little son, who, after sorting out some of his toys to be given to poor children, asked: "Why is it these children always have things second-hand?" The answer, we suggest, is—they live in a Christian country where the inhabitants are more concerned about doling out charity than with organizing an equitable social system in which charity is not necessary.

Only those who work and produce, says the Italian Dictator, should have the vote. He is not, we gather, in favour of cardinals, bishops, monks, nuns, and parish curés being permitted to exercise the franchise.

The spread of small-pox at Blaenavon, Monmouthshire, is believed to be due largely to the practice of pious people holding prayer-meetings in the houses of the victims. The Borough Council has decided to publish notices warning the public of the danger of such practices. The Council may warn, but we fear the warning will go unheeded. When pious heads are filled with Christian wisdom there is no room left common-sense to find lodgment.

The all-conquering Church of Christ seems, nowadays, eager to exploit the popularity of any well-known person. So one finds Dame Clara Butt, the popular singer, as a star turn at a Sunday "gathering 'em in" concert, at which the good lady acts gramophone to the Bishop of Pretoria, and his book, *The Returning Tide of Faith*. The "returning tide" would appear to be flowing very sluggishly if concert and music hall celebrities, football heroes, and the like have to be called in to give it a shove along.

A speaker at a Wesleyan Missionary Society meeting offered some advice to those who support the Society. Said he: "Insist only upon essentials in taking the Gospel to 'the world.'" The good man fancies that if the ecclesiastical extras are removed, the essentials may "take." It seems a pity to disturb his optimism. But the plain truth is that "the essentials" have been riddled through and through with Freethought criticism and are not half so attractive as they used to be. That's the worst of these sacred truths—they don't wear well.

Daily papers inform us that a village on the South Coast of Cornwall is in a state of terror, owing to the appearance of a witch in the neighbourhood. Christianity is very strong in most of the outlying districts of Cornwall, so we are in no wise surprised at the news. Nor should we be surprised on hearing that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has set off to the place to bring his expert "psychic" knowledge to bear on the matter. It is, though, as well to remember that the terror which is now localized in a few remote spots was once common over the whole of the country, and that thousands of old women were burnt, or drowned, or tortured, because the Bible said "Thou shalt not suffer a Witch to live," and that noble figurehead, Jesus Christ, upheld the belief in intercourse with demons. There was only one thing that put an end to this universal terror, and that was Freethought. Those who want to know what Freethought has done, might try and remember this one thing, at least.

In practice Christianity has preferred the liar, the hypocrite, and the coward to the brave and truthful unbeliever. It made a bid for the worst, and generally achieved its desire.—*Chapman Cohen*.

If mankind had been born wise instead of ignorant the Gods would never have been known.—*Simple Simon*.

To London Freethinkers.

It is well known that there is a section of members of the London County Council strongly opposed to propaganda in the public Parks. This is not because they have any objection to propaganda as such, but wholly because they do not agree with the lectures delivered, and like all bigots, aim at suppression. "On their own," they tried to stop the collections, in virtue of a resolution, and were beaten. They then tried to stop the sale of literature, and were beaten again—this time in the courts. One hoped they had seen the error of their ways.

Now they have tried another plan. They have induced that pious mediocrity, Sir William Joynson Hicks, to sanction a new regulation, which forbids all collections being taken up at meetings held in the Parks. They hope that this will prevent meetings being held, by cutting off the method followed everywhere of inviting those who agree with them to contribute to the expense. I do not think they will succeed in this, their main object.

The expenses attending these meetings are not large, but they have to be met, and those responsible are mainly poor men. So far as the meetings held under the auspices of the N.S.S. are concerned, the meetings will continue as before. There will probably be more than usual, instead of fewer.

At its last meeting, the Executive asked me, in my dual capacity of Editor of the *Freethinker* and President of the National Secular Society, to invite the contributions of London Freethinkers to a Special Fund which is to be used solely for paying the expenses of London open-air meetings. I do so with pleasure, and have no doubt that the modest sum required to carry on these meetings will soon be subscribed. I cannot say just how much will be needed, but it will be well within the figure of £100. And there are quite enough Freethinkers attending these meetings to provide with ease all that is required.

I therefore formally invite subscriptions to a London Open-Air Propaganda Fund, which should be sent direct to the General Secretary, National Secular Society, 62, Farringdon Street, E.C.4, and which will be duly acknowledged.

We should not be long in showing the L.C.C. how futile is its last cowardly attempt to prevent the exercise of one of the oldest privileges of the people of London.—CHAPMAN COHEN, *President N.S.S.*

To Correspondents.

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

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—Don Walters (5th sub.), £2 2s.; W. T. Hawks, 5s.; J. H. Turner, £1; Ajax, £1 10s. TRISTRAM writes:—"Will you kindly allow me space to express my appreciation of the article, "The Causes of Religious Decay," by Mr. George R. Scott. The writer covers a lot of ground in three columns, and he is to be admired for his efforts in hastening the day when Freethought will be a criticism of Life." We have had similar letters of appreciation from other readers, in all of which we share. We hope to see Mr. Scott's pen more active in our pages in the future.

C. F. RUDGE.—See reply to "Tristram." Occasional only.

J. PEARSON.—Mr. Cohen is writing you, but for the benefit of others, we may say that keeping your child in the class while it is having religious instruction, is not withdrawing it. You should insist upon his being placed in another room during the religious lesson.

A. FOX and R. ALGER.—Thanks for sending the *Ideas* article. Mr. John England is just one more example of the religious liar, who approaches as near indestructibility as it is possible for anything to get in this world. We have dealt, over and over again with the lying tales about Paine's death-bed. Mr. England's remark that Ingersoll tried to prove that Paine died as he lived, an Atheist, is typical. Paine never was an Atheist at any time of his life. The remarks about Ingersoll, Anatole France, and Darwin, prove Mr. England to be quite unscrupulous where religion is concerned. We are surprised that the editor of *Ideas* does not exercise a little more care over the articles he admits in his columns.

R. PARKER.—Thanks. We shall be in Glasgow at Whitsuntide, but not on the other occasion you name. Could not spare the time in any case.

S. L.—We were consulted about the will some time ago, and advised to the best of our ability. We have no doubt whatever that it is quite watertight, and as we are one of the two executors no trouble is likely to arise.

W. SMALLRIDGE.—We are obliged for report, but there does not seem anything in the sermon worthy of special notice.

T. MOSLEY.—Sorry to hear of your wife's illness. Hope she will soon be better.

J. H. TURNER.—Thanks for subscription to Endowment Trust. There is not in the whole of the country a genuinely independent paper so far as allowing the Freethought side of the case is concerned. They are all too much under the petty tyranny of Church or Chapel. Advertising revenue or voting power seem to be the chief considerations.

H. MORLEY.—It is unlikely that Draper's *Conflict* will ever be republished at the price of 2s.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Arrangements concerning the Whit-Sunday Conference of the N.S.S., at Glasgow, are now almost complete. The business meetings of the Conference—10.30 and 2.30—will be held in the Knibworth Hotel, Queen Street. In the evening there will be a public demonstration in the City Grand Hall, at which the President will take the chair, and various speakers will address the meeting. The assistance of everyone who can help to make this meeting a success will be welcomed. The address of the local Secretary is, Mr. F. Mann, 34 Trefoil Avenue, Glasgow.

On Monday there will be an excursion to Lochgoilhead, one of the beauty spots of the Western Highlands. This will leave Glasgow at 9.30, returning at 8.15 in the evening. The cost, including dinner and tea, will be 10s. It is necessary to know as early as possible how many will join the party, and information should be sent at once to either Mr. Mann, or to Miss Vance. Visitors from London will have choice of two ways of getting to Glasgow. The longer way by sea, the shorter way by train. For the latter there will be both the usual week-end tickets issued and special cheap excursions. For the former, a boat leaves the Jetty, London

Docks, every Tuesday, the time of departure varying according to the tides, from 3 to 8 p.m. It calls at Belfast and arrives in Glasgow on the Saturday. The fare, 3rd class, is 25s. single, and 50s. return. The great thing is for headquarters to know as soon as possible how many are going, and what accommodation is required.

Our old friend and contributor, Mr. A. B. Moss, reached the seventy-second anniversary of his birthday on Sunday last. Save for rheumatic troubles, he is in excellent health, and much younger than his years by a long way. Mr. Moss has been writing on Freethought for over forty years, and for by far the larger part of that time was a very active lecturer. His interest in Freethought has always been of the keenest nature, and it remains, now as ever, his greatest love. We hope to congratulate him on just as many more birthdays as finds him with an interest in men and things. He would not wish for more.

Mr. D. P. Stichells, who has been waging war in the columns of cycling journals against the attempt to hold religious services in connexion with cycling groups, writes advocating the formation of cycling clubs amongst Freethinkers, and suggests that if this were done it would be possible for young men to try their powers at a little open-air speaking at arranged points. Much good would thus be done to Freethought, and experience gained in the art of public speaking. We should be very glad to do anything we could to help such a move, which we regard as wholly a good one.

The Hon. Bertrand Russell's lecture on "Why I am not a Christian," delivered at the Battersea Town Hall, under the auspices of the South London Branch of the N.S.S., has been reprinted by the R.P.A. at the price of sevenpence. We have nothing but praise for Mr. Russell's lecture. It is thorough and outspoken, quite refreshing and unusual features in lectures on religion when delivered by public men in this country. Mr. Russell examines fundamental religious beliefs and deliberately rejects them. He declines to be shackled by current talk, even in unorthodox circles, of the nobility of the figure of Christ, and properly places such as Buddha and Socrates on a higher level. The following passage will well indicate the scope and tone of the address.

Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown, and partly, as I have said, the wish to feel that you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes. Fear is the basis of the whole thing—fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear is the parent of cruelty, and, therefore, it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand. It is because fear is at the basis of these two things. In this world we can now begin a little to understand things, and I think to master them by the help of science, which has forced its way step by step against the Christian religion, against the Churches, and against opposition of all the old precepts . . . The whole conception of God is a conception derived from the ancient Oriental despotism. It is a conception quite unworthy of free men.

The pamphlet can be supplied by the Pioneer Press, one penny extra to cover cost of postage.

We are asked to announce that the office of the new West London Branch of the N.S.S. is situated at 62 Bryanston Street, Marble Arch, W. The *Freethinker* and other Freethought publications are kept on sale there, and interviews may be arranged with the organizer and treasurer, Mr. A. B. Le Maine, at any time. The Branch is anxious to get into touch with all Freethinkers in West London, who are ready to help on the work in any way, either financially or by assisting at meetings.

After 35 years of existence the *Clarion* has been forced to suspend publication as a weekly journal, owing to the increased expenses of printing, and decrease in circulation. For some time it has been carrying on at 3d., but those responsible state that the position is

hopeless. It was intended to suspend publication altogether, but in response to the request of many of its readers an attempt is to be made to carry on as a monthly at the price of sixpence. We have every sympathy with those who have been struggling against the position in the printing world since 1914. It was always difficult to carry on a propagandist organ in the most favourable times; since the war it has been, at times, heart and health-breaking.

Mr. B. S. Wilcox writes concerning the proposed beatification of Teresa Higginson:—

"I see that the *Catholic Times* is now publishing a series of articles on the matter, and I would like to recommend them as being veritable gems of erudite philosophy.

I do not doubt that, after an upbringing such as described, when she was entirely under the influence of the grossest superstition, the lady's subsequent life was erratic and different from that of her fellows. Nor do I question the statement that she led a life of peculiar piety. But I cannot think that I am biased if I substitute the word lunacy for the word piety in order to convey a more exact idea of her alleged performances to people who are wicked enough to believe the evidence of their own senses and experience.

It is proudly asserted that "throughout life she gained little from book knowledge: the witnesses are very insistent that hardly ever was she known to open a book." I presume that this is advanced in proof of her piety. One would have imagined that reading all views of a question tends to make one wiser, but apparently the truly pious must only read such works as will increase their "piety." It reminds me of the dentist who assures me that I will succumb to his anesthetic if only I will inhale enough of it.

Yes, as an entertainment, these articles bid fair to rival "Alice in Wonderland"; and if Freethinkers find them too rich for consumption, it is at least interesting to note, elsewhere in the paper, how one section of Christians speak of the others."

Apollo's Lyre.

THE goddess of May (Maia) and the aristocratic god of heaven (Zeus) were parents of a lively boy, Hermes; and this sweet lad, far from suffering "growing pains," may be said to have felt musical all over. Born at dawn, he visibly put on flesh every minute, and, before the sun-god Apollo (his very own brother) had marked mid-day, Hermes had constructed a lyre, with two goat's-horns for side-supports, a tortoise-shell for sounding board, and four strings of twisted ox-gut on which to twang a divine tune. Hermes (whose later name was Mercury) gave the lyre to Apollo in exchange for cattle; for Hermes was a smart business personage from his early hours onwards. Apollo played the lyre. Thus the Light-god and the god of the planet Mercury presided over the birth of a famous musical instrument. I suppose there are some Freethinkers and Christians who, in this year 1927, are so bold as to disbelieve these records from Greek history. They must bear the heavy burden of their infidelity. For my part, I publicly declare that I accept the story quite as implicitly as I accept the story of Balaam's Ass, or the story of the numerous dead bodies which, two days after the original Good Friday, walked about the streets of Jerusalem (Matthew xxvii. 52, 53).¹

Such being my happy, receptive spirit towards the theology of the Early Ages, I have chanced, with extreme interest, upon a learned lecture on music,

¹ Surely the time is ripe for action by the Society for the Suppression of Blasphemous Inculcations; and the Home Secretary's attention should be drawn to the need of discouraging the disgraceful expression, by Christians and Secularists, of unbelief in the sacred myths of the precursors of Greek civilization to which Europe owes so many debts.

delivered last year by Dr. Henry George Farmer;² and I propose to borrow some of his entertainment.

Thousands of years ago, men emerged from the bewilderment and fear of our primitive fathers in the presence of the vastness and menaces of nature, and began to trace relations between human experiences and the movements of the shining appearances in the sky; hence, says Dr. Farmer, in Babylonia-Assyria:—

The planetary system, the deities, the seasons, the months, the days, the elements, the geographical spheres, the colours, and so on, were all linked up in a curiously learned system. Astrological computation involved numbers, and these too were given cosmical influences, whilst the connexion between number and sound appears to have brought music into the scheme, with the result that particular notes were allotted certain elemental influences . . . The character of a note or mode was of the utmost importance to the temple precentor or diviner in Babylonia-Assyria, since a mistake in pronunciation or intonation was quite sufficient to destroy the charm. The word "charm," derived from "carmen" (song) tells us of its musical origin.

In other words, man was beginning to appreciate the idea of *Order* (the Normal); he found order in the rhythms of music, and in the arrangement of numbers (in arithmetic and geometry), and in the procession of the hours and seasons; and he endeavoured to join all these activities together in the conception of government by order-making Gods. The Egyptian priests associated each planet with a note of music. Such notions passed to Syrians and Sabæans, and so to the Arabs. The Arabs had intoned music of a crude sort in order to fetch rain down, to guide the good fortune of a caravan, and to utter revelations granted to select men by the *jinn* (genii) of the unseen world. Akin to the Syrians were the Hebrews, and an eminent harper, in the person of King David, has given lustre to Hebrew history. It is told of David, not only that (as the Bible relates) he soothed Saul's wretched soul by lovely tunes, but he harped so pleasingly that the mountains sang with him, birds chirruped in harmony, wild beasts came to listen, and thousands of men and women died in agreeable ecstasy while hearkening to his minstrelsy.

The Greek Pythagoras (about 570 to 504 B.C.), visited Babylon, and perhaps Arabia, and adopted ideas of the power of Number and of Music, and he framed a doctrine which represented the heavenly bodies as moving in a plan of notes and melody; that is to say, Pythagoras talked of the Music of the Spheres. "Everything is number"—so ran a maxim of the Pythagoreans. The philosopher Plato gave music a noble rank in education, for he considered that virtue and the beauty of rhythmic notes were intimately allied.

Dr. Farmer tells how these Greek notions were developed among the Arabs from the ninth century onwards. Al-Kindi (d. 874) taught that:—

Each note on a string of the lute had its relation in a mode, rhythm and sentiment. These, in turn, were connected with spatial spheres, geographical spheres, planets, constellations, horizon and meridian, winds, seasons, months, days, hours, elements, humours, periods of life, the faculties of the soul and body, actions, colours, perfumes, etc.

The lute had, at that time, four strings for notes A, D, G, C. String G called up ideas of the air, of spring, of morning, of children's blood, of budding intellect; string C, ideas of fire, summer, noon,

youth, thinking, attraction, and courage; string D, ideas of earth, autumn, evening, middle age, conservation, holding-on, and goodness; string A, water, winter, night, old age, ripeness of nature, lingering resistance, mildness. The Arabs of Spain gave the colour yellow to C, red to G, white to D, and black to A. And, of course, medical men employed music in the hospitals, for lightening pain and counter-acting evil influences. A high note suggested shrill anger; a low note, gentleness and knowledge. And we moderns will quite comprehend this Arabian anecdote of a performer on a stringed instrument:—

He played the strings in a way that made everyone in the assembly laugh from the merriment and pleasure, joy and gladness, which entered their souls. Then he altered the strings, and played them in another way, and made all weep from sadness and grief of heart. Then he altered the strings again, and played, and made everyone go to sleep.

Many other details of the Arabian attitude to music are given in Dr. Farmer's lecture; and I would incidentally remark that such essays provide more real history of man and society than the pompous records of thrones and battles.

One of the most interesting passages in the Bible occurs at the opening, thus:—

The earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of Elohim moved upon the face of the waters. And Elohim said: "Let there be light"; and there was light. And Elohim saw the light that it was good.

Of course, it is a poem, which has been misapprehended and mis-handled, in a ghastly manner, by infidel bishops, priests and "doctors of divinity." The poet shows man, under the figure of Elohim (God), as wrestling with the tremendous difficulties of the natural world, and introducing order and harmony into both his conceptions of the universe and of his own scope of action in discovery and conquest. Greek poets dramatized the facts of social evolution by saying that light and music combined their powers, in Apollo and Hermes, for constructing the human order. Hebrew poets used a like language; and the author of the poem of *Job* tells how, when the world arose amid the beams of the new light, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The mind of humanity was becoming aware of its kingdom and its possibilities, and it invented music, magic, gods, angels and the "harmony of the spheres" as expressions of its sense of order, serviceableness and beauty. In effect, these devices were the origin of science; that is, the origin of logical explanation of things seen and felt. Modes of music varied; new strings, so to say, were added to the lyre and lute; new gods were introduced into the pantheon; new formulations of natural and moral law perpetually took the place of the older and less valid. It is a process of drama, and our entire humanity is a poet. All members of humanity, however, do not perceive this incessant and artistic shaping and reshaping. Multitudes of rectors, vicars, deans, monks, nuns, and chapel ministers are lamentably backward in the art of interpreting history and civilization; and these poor souls actually suppose that the Biblical poems were of the same nature as our Government Reports on Agriculture, Mining, Trade, Finance, etc., and are to be accepted in a purely literal significance. Unconsciously they are enemies and ill-users of the Bible. Not only so; they are obstacles (temporary only, by good hap) to the further expansion of man's creative activities. The genius that created Gods can create, and is creating, other and purer forms of utterance of order and of beauty, and of the music of achievement and quest.

F. J. GOULD.

² *The Influence of Music, from Arabic Sources* (Harold Reeves, 210, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2; 3s. 6d.). Only 225 copies were printed.

Science and Savagery.

IN the Wireless Studio, at Savoy Hill, there is a particularly pleasant, soft-voiced announcer. One can imagine a pleasing personality as owner of the voice. A cultured and heroic gentleman, also, one is sure, who successfully conceals the boredom and pessimism that must be inseparable from such an office, who yet, when something really excellent happens along, cannot conceal the happier note. He is jolly or genuinely cheerful with the exuberant jazz. He does not show it, but one feels he is not stupid enough to find enjoyment or inspiration in the impositions of the officious busybodies of the Churches—only such as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald is in his element here—even he and the permanent announcer must be truly touched and uplifted by occasional passages in the Old Testament—which Freethinkers are most aware of, and which Churchmen only stumble upon unaware—which are beautiful and true as words can be, but not within the meaning and the aims of the clergy. But, however clotted the nonsense, the announcer reads with “reverence due and unaffected grace,” or now and then, in his compulsory zeal, protests too much, approaching at times the very snuffling glorification of the pulpit voice. He reads; a hymn or psalm is sung by “thankful hearts” of men and women of unknown city choirs—pious de profundis of the men, angelic chords of alto and soprano—it would be thrilling if it were not so very heavenly, so divorced from earthly meaning. Music in the Church is music in chains. But music is strong and easily bursts the fetters of superstition even in the Church. It is indeed, at best, pagan, natural, mundane; as what else, outside the skull of the medicine man, could it be? The aged Dr. Pyne broadcast some organ improvisations from Manchester the other night, all of exceeding beauty and skill in extempore; Pagan music with a Christian name; especially the “voluntary,” sounding the joyful break up of sad congregations—music without the chain. At the microphone the aged musician apologized for having played in “cold blood”; in a diversity of themes being unable to settle down to the greater harmonies. Otherwise, no doubt, the music and the spirit of the musician would have transcended all the cold comforts of Christianity. But so long as religion can disguise itself in the borrowed garments of music and morality, so long will it impose itself upon the world. The rich and powerful and militant will use it for their own ends; and the masses, “weakened by habitual suffering and by knowledge of the natural and irreparable imbecility of mankind . . . reduce themselves to desire but little, and even this little timidly . . .” and look up to the seats of the mighty on earth, and those of the mightier in heaven as the repositories of all wisdom, goodness, and truth: at least as the ultimate disposers of their destinies. This is indeed the confusion bred by religion, the very counsel of despair, that up to the present has paralysed progress; even as in long-enslaved Russia, the people are but now learning that “God” only helps those who help themselves.

This note was intended as a paragraph, but bids fair to be an article: In conclusion; not to be outdone by Savoy Hill, Blythswood Square, Glasgow, now gives its own Sunday closing religious programme, and certainly betters the instruction; spasm after spasm of psalm and reading—how these clergy love their Bible! last scene of all the solemn epilogue—you would never think there was war in China, or a burglar’s Budget at Westminster, or any evil anywhere, that the millennium was at hand. But, after all, why deplore this savagery? It will not convert a single Freethinker, quite the contrary; hypocrisy and simplicity allied may cement the mass awhile, but even these cannot fool all the people all the time. The present writer unashamedly confesses to a liking for *Abide with me* and the like. For the rest he is like the homeless tramp, who cried in desperation, “I can stand ‘Home Sweet Home’ and ‘Annie Rooney,’ but better death than ‘After the Ball!’” and staggered out into the raging storm.

A. M.

You cannot be a pioneer without losing something.—
Lord Balfour.

Correspondence.

THE RESURRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—Your long criticism of my recent article in the *Sunday Chronicle* on “Easter,” calls, I think, for a short reply on one point only. A longer reply would appear to be out of place.

You ask me, How do I know that the grave-clothes were sunken down by the weight of the spices, as if a body had passed from them; and that, on the little shelf the head-cloth, unweighted by spices, still retained its shape. You say that there is nothing about this in the New Testament.

There I think, Sir, you are in error. I would go so far as to say that you will be the first to admit your error, because I think that you are honest in your Freethinking. The tenour of your various criticisms of me lead me to suppose that you cannot attribute a like honesty to my orthodoxy. I wish you could, because it is easier to fight in honesty than in suspicion.

Take, then, the Gospel record. In John xx. you will see that St. Peter “seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.”—A.V.

The inference is that the spices in the clothes, when unsupported by the weight of a body, caused the clothes to sink down, or lie. I believe that the cloth wound round a dead person’s head (somewhat like a turban) was not usually weighted with spices. Therefore it would retain its circular shape “wrapped together in a place by itself,” that is, upon the little head-shelf which formed a sort of rocky pillow. This is inference, but I think justifiable.

I cannot follow you in a discussion of the clothing worn by the risen master. Your words offend and nauseate. Sir, I believe that you are honest; but you are certainly not a gentleman thus to offend against good taste.

DESMOND MORSE-BOYCOTT.

[I hasten to apologize for having overlooked the passage in John (the only one who mentions it) which does refer to the grave clothes being left behind. Mr. Morse-Boycott was right and I was wrong. But I am just a little bit astonished that Mr. Morse-Boycott’s reply should confine itself to so unimportant an issue. His article was written to support the thesis that without the belief of the resurrection of Jesus, morality would disappear, and human life become worthless. My own article was written to refute this. Mr. Morse-Boycott appears to think that the one item of importance is whether the grave-clothes of Jesus were left behind or not. A discussion of the main contention of his article would, he thinks, be out of place. Does he mean by this that it is not worth discussing, or that it would be out of place for him to discuss it in a paper where the other side could not be refused a hearing? The talk of my words offending and nauseating may be taken for what they are worth. Mr. Morse-Boycott’s letter leaves me marvelling at the fearful and wonderful mentality induced by the pulpit.—Ed. *Freethinker*.]

TESTING THE SPIRITS.

SIR,—The current issue of the *Strand Magazine* contains a somewhat crude “boost” for Spiritualism in the form of a contribution describing Sir Conan Doyle’s “Psychic Museum.”

The assertions made in the course of the article reminded me of Mr. Cohen’s challenge to Spiritualists on the occasion of his debate with Mr. Horace Leaf.

In effect, he invited Spiritualists to prove the reality of their manifestations (particularly “materializations”) by operating the keys of a typewriter to be encased in a sealed glass container.

That challenge, of course, has never been met.

Now I submit, with all deference, that we have in that suggestion, an opportunity, not only of publicly proving the falsity of these so-called materializations and similar phenomena, but, treated in the right way, it would be of enormous publicity value to the *Freethinker* itself, with the result of claiming a host of new readers.

If you can find space in your columns for this letter, it would be interesting to hear the opinions of your readers as to the possibilities of a public challenge of this description and the best method of carrying it out.

In conclusion, I would suggest that it would not be impossible to obtain the co-operation of some other publication with a large circulation (if only for the publicity entailed) to broadcast the affair, and I am sure that the purchase of a typewriter and special glass case (suitably safeguarded against fraud or substitution) would be inconsiderable in comparison.

A stake of say—£500, would be in no danger of collection!

A. J. COOPER.

FRANCISCO FERRER AND THE CHURCH.

SIR,—Mr. Cutner, in his article on "The Execution of Francisco Ferrer (May 1 issue) refers to "Archer's book written for *McClure's Magazine*." I should be glad to know where it can be obtained. Although one may claim proudly to be R.C., this does not mean necessarily that one must say ditto to everything that Mr. Mara may advance. He writes in an angry mood and also, he seems to protest too much.

If Catholics have any sense of humour I don't think they are likely to be troubled by Mr. Bartlett's rather florid asseveration and generalization re the Italians.

But seriously is there anything in hereditary dispositions? When I read it, that (sinister) phrase made me sit up and take notice, but at the same time I allowed 50 per cent. for exaggeration, it was so like a facile writer with just a bit of prejudice against the Romans to write thus. But they are not all "sinister" features according to Mr. A. B. "Some have faces resembling the saints of old"—Isn't this good enough for Mr. W. P. Mara?—And by the way, what a pity it is we have no Englishmen to represent us Catholics in a really English way, not bolstering up the faults and fallacies of our misguided ancestors in their persecutions—nor propping up continental ecclesiastical fashions and prejudices, which does make our Church in this country seem like a graft from outside. It all helps to show we are not ready for power yet—even in a moderate degree, and I'm afraid it will be a long time before we get it. As to the Execution of Francisco Ferrer, that of course was a very serious and terrible business, and it seems to me Mr. Cutner might have dealt with it without being drawn off by subsidiary matters, and *without* references to the fact—if it was a fact—that the "Rev. Montague Summers defended the wholesale burnings of 'witches' and gave as one of his reasons that they actually flew to their meeting-places on broom-sticks!"

H. O. BOGER.

MR. W. J. LAMB'S SONNETS.

SIR,—Some protest should be made against the offensive attack upon Mr. Lamb by Mr. H. Barber, in your last week's issue, and it is as well that Mr. Barber should know that his lines are regarded as an insult to others than the object of his childish spleen.

Whatever may be his personal opinion, there are readers of the *Freethinker* who admire Mr. Lamb's sonnets, which are certainly more original than most of the poetry published now-a-days.

To gibe at Mr. Lamb as "conceited" and to liken him to a yapping poodle, etc., etc., is neither in good taste nor the result of intelligent reflection, and is the sort of thing we expect only from the coarsest and most intolerant natures, while to speak of his sonnets as "vapid imitations of Wordsworth," is ridiculous.

"Imitation" is a stupid charge, and has been levelled against every notable poet, although generally in a less wild manner than that adopted by Mr. Barber, who possibly is not aware that Wordsworth himself "imitated" Petrarch, Milton, etc., and has no more a proprietary right in this form of poetical structure than the many other poets, Italian and English, who have made use of it. As to being "vapid," this is the last thing that can be said of Mr. Lamb's sonnets, each of which embodies some idea and stimulates thought, although it would seem their only effect on Mr. Barber is to provoke a snarl.

R. WILKINSON.

SIR,—I notice in the *Freethinker* dated April 24, a violent diatribe against my brother, Mr. W. J. Lamb, by Mr. H. Barber, who, throwing restraint to the winds, allows his virulence to run riot. What is the matter with this man, and why, objecting to what he calls the bleating of a lamb, should he inflict upon us the braying of an ass?

Mr. Lamb is away from this country at present or I should not waste my time in acknowledging Mr. Barber's hackneyed banalities, and petulant insults. In his anxiety to be brutal he overreaches himself, as is usual with the type, and brings down upon his head the derision he hopes to procure for the object of his sour displeasure.

His sense of discrimination in literary values is sufficiently indicated by his sneering charge of "imitating" and his bookish studies should have prevented such an outrage on the intelligence of sophisticated readers, who are able to appraise Mr. Barber's inanities for what they are worth.

I trust that if ever Mr. Lamb sees Mr. Barber's masterpiece, he will treat it with the contempt it deserves—and ignore it.

D. LAMB.

A QUESTION OF BIAS.

SIR,—I am sorry for Mr. Bryce, who appears somewhat disappointed at getting a douche of cold criticism, instead of ten shillings to send to his poor friend Jenkins. But as it often falls to my lot to sell, and sometimes to distribute *Freethinkers* at outdoor meetings, where Mr. Bryce never sheds the light of his countenance, I am more concerned for the invulnerability of the *Freethinker* than Mr. Bryce appears to be for his veracity. And it seems my protest, and attempt to rescue his reputation, is looked upon as a sort of ingratitude. For whilst his pockets are bulging with protests against his indiscretions, my letter was "the most unkindly cut of all." But after knowing Mr. Bryce for many years, and having failed to discern the frailties of his confession, I felt "I must be cruel only to be kind." Such statements as those of which I complained only put a weapon into the hands of opponents to the discomfort of lecturers, and those who sell the paper. Let Mr. Bryce imagine himself, or anyone, trying to sell *Freethinkers* at some outdoor meeting, and someone shouting—"Is Amnias writing this week?" Or some writer in a Catholic paper where no explanation would ever penetrate, giving Mr. Bryce's description of himself, as the type of writers in the *Freethinker*.

It is regrettable that instead of admitting his indiscretions he tries to escape by the invention of a sophisticated smoke screen, which he hangs upon a mistake which every reader would recognize. I admit that the thirty-six shillings in my letter should have read twenty-six shillings per day, but the statement implying that miners could easily make twenty-six shillings per day still remains an obvious falsehood, and had Mr. Bryce seen some of the pay sheets that I have seen, he might feel a little more kindly disposed towards the miners. The statement, he says, was not challenged so far as he knows. And he proceeds to say he cannot understand how a statement "admitted to be true" in the public press becomes a lie when printed elsewhere. But I deny that it has been "admitted to be true." And how does Mr. Bryce know it was not challenged? The statement was taken from a firm of newspaper owners, who were bitterly opposed to the miners, and least likely to publish any challenging statement. And lies published in an interested press do not become truth by being printed elsewhere. But if "a consultation of the whole of the miners of Great Britain would not affect the matter," how in the name of reason does it happen that this one unknown witness does? No bias here. I certainly did not, "treat readers to a long tirade of my own manufactured figures." Let me, in conclusion, and in all seriousness, urge Mr. Bryce to read Mr. Bradlaugh's advice to Newcastle Secularists in one of his speeches in Newcastle in 1879.

J. G. BARTRAM.

Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission at Highbury.

THE exceptionally fine weather enabled us to make an excellent start to the summer's propaganda. Mr. Whitehead addressed eight meetings during the week, all of which were satisfactory. As previously reported, he was one of the speakers at the May-day demonstration held in Victoria Park. In the evening, Mr. Whitehead lectured in Regent's Park, before the usual attentive audience. Then meetings were held every evening, from Monday to Saturday inclusive, at Highbury Corner. Very appreciative crowds assembled on each occasion, and a number of requests for a further visit was received. Platform opposition on three of the evenings helped to make the meetings interesting, and several forms of membership were applied for, which may lead to results.

Thanks are due to Mr. Rolf, who assisted at several of the meetings, and to Miss Mostaert, who helped all the week.

To-day (Sunday), Mr. Whitehead will speak in Victoria Park at 3.15 p.m. and 6.15 p.m.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, William Platt, "Why Beethoven lives to-day." (With Musical Illustrations).

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Propagandism in the Novel."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. G. Whitehead, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Sydney Hanson, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common, 11.30, Brockwell Park, 6.0): Lectures by G. Newton and R. H. Rosetti. On Monday, May 16, Mr. G. Whitehead will commence a week's mission at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, Lectures Monday—Friday, at 8 p.m. each day.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30, 3.0 and 6.30, Speakers—Messrs. Saphin, Ratcliffe, Botting and Hart. Thursday, 7.0, Speakers—Mr. Saphin and Mr. Botting.

WEST HAM BRANCH, N.S.S. (Outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Lecture by Mr. E. C. Saphin.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Le Maine; 6.30, Messrs. Jackson and Maurice Maubrey. Every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30, by various lecturers.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH (Assembly Rooms, Front Street): Open daily for reading, etc., from 10 a.m. All Freethinkers and enquirers welcome.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Royal Buildings, 18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Mr. P. Sherwin, "Religion and Citizenship." Admission Free. Questions invited.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Annual Outing to Ludlow by Char-a-banc. Leave Old Square 10.30 a.m. Members and friends meet at Old Square (Off Corporation Street).

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY BRANCH OF THE N.S.S.—Ramble to Bardowie Loch. Meet at Lambhill at 12 noon. (Via Blue car "5 B" to Lambhill. Join car at Jamaica Street).

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