

THE FUTURE OF RELIGION.

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Views and Opinions.

The Future of Religion.

WRITING about the religion of the future is almost as easy as writing about the life to come. It is difficult to prove that a writer is wrong; it is impossible to prove that he is right. And with prophecies in general, so long as one is wisely indefinite about details, forecasting the future is a safe game. Old Moore with his Almanack, and a parson with his pictures of the future of religion have also the aid of the short memories of most folk. A successful prophet lives on what people forget, not on what they remember. That is, if one assumes that there is any large amount of genuine belief in prophecy nowadays. When prophecy was genuinely believed in, people acted on it. Thus, when Jesus prophesied that he was returning in a very short time to liquidate the affairs of the world, those who believed made ready. For some generations large numbers of Christians lived in daily expectation of the world coming to an end, and as though nothing else mattered. Some centuries later, when the year 1000 was selected as the date for the Lord's final appearance, many handed their possessions over to the Church, probably arguing that as they would be of no use to them after December 31, 1000, they might as well secure a final dividend by getting the credit due to giving to Mother Church things they could no longer use. There are still some who believe in this maniacal theory of the Second Coming, and one individual has fixed the date for 1934. Still, I expect that he will have so arranged his affairs that even though the world does linger longer he will not be quite penniless. Prophecy, which was once a conviction, is now a dissipation.

Why Religion?

So far as prophesying about the religion of the future is concerned, the procedure is simple. Its essence is to take it for granted that the religion in which one believes will last for ever, and that every other re-

ligion is doomed. What one would really like answered is, however, the question: Why should the future have any religion at all? To the outsider it would seem that inasmuch as mankind has been gradually getting rid of its religion, there must one day be an end to this process of denudation. In the Christian story, told to illustrate the duration of hell, a bird that wiped its beak once every thousand years on a mountain of iron, did eventually wear the mountain away; and however slight be the rate of denudation mankind cannot go on giving up first this bit of religion, and then that, without finding one day that it has no more left. What these self-assumed prophets ask us to believe is that the thinner religion becomes the more important it is, the less God has to do the more reason there is to thank him for doing it, and that the definiteness of man's conviction of the value of religion will increase in proportion to his indefiniteness as to what religion is and what exactly it does. A useful and a sensible method would be to try to detect tendencies and allow for their consummation. But even here there is an element of uncertainty. It is not safe to argue that because so much knowledge has been gained, and so much progress made, the problem of forecasting the future is on all fours with forecasting the date of an eclipse or the position of a planet. Human progress is not uniform, nor do the actions of men conform to strictly logical rules. No one who has had to do with religious believers will assert that if one can prove a belief to be unreasonable, it will be given up. We may only have removed one superstition to make room for another. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is not a whit more reasonable in his Spiritualism than he was as a fully-fledged believer. Protestants are not less fundamentally absurd than Roman Catholics. If a man is naturally superstitious there are any number of opportunities for indulgence. Between Christian Science and Christian superstition the distinction is one that is quite invisible to the ordinary man or woman.

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Looking Forward.

Really our estimate as to whether religion will or will not persist in the future should be determined by our judgment as to whether the forces at work are such as tend to eliminate the religious type of mind. So long as the general environment favours the persistence of that type, religion will remain. That sounds like a truism, but it is a truism of which it is worth taking notice. In earlier generations the Christian Church perpetuated an environment favourable to the religious type by the simple method of controlling education, and eliminating, by death or otherwise, the heretic. This was done to a greater degree than was ever before either accomplished or attempted in the whole history of civilized humanity.

To-day social and political conditions, and the diffusion of knowledge concerning Man and the universe, prevent the Church exercising this kind of control. It must do its work surreptitiously, under guise of zeal for social reform, or by the aid of social ostracism. And while, as I have said, the growth of science has not prevented the flourishing of gross superstitions, it has gone a long way towards reducing religious beliefs to the status of speculations of no particular importance to anyone. One eminent professor of theology has gone so far as to prophesy that the Christian Church of the future will not count dogmas concerning the nature of God or of the next world as of any value. It will unite all men and women who are seriously and thoughtfully aiming at popularizing a gospel of social service. Something like this might occur, but if it does it will certainly mean that Christianity has ceased to exist.

* * *

Religion.

My friend, Mr. Gould, with genial sarcasm, apologized recently for using in these columns the word "religion." I have really no dislike to his meaning, or to the Comtian meaning of the word. So far as I object to it, it lies in the use to which others may put it, and so perpetuate an entirely different thing. But I quite admit the possibility that as man sheds belief in supernaturalism he may, if only as an intermediate step, ease the break by establishing some kind of a Church. The early Christian Church did something of this kind when it took over many pagan deities and pagan practices, and used both under other names. And there are instances around us of those who, having got rid of Christianity, have established "Churches" with a set ritual, which is apt to impress the outsider with a due sense of their pantomimic character. Still, man is a gregarious animal, he finds satisfaction—even more in his joys than in his sorrows—in the company of others, and it may be that in a community that has completely freed itself from real religion, there will exist institutions for the corporate appreciation of the higher aspects of life. Art, literature and music certainly profit from the corporate recognition of the part they play in the humanization of life, and there is no reason why this should not also happen in the case of broader sociological truths. Institutions, not for the worship of humanity, but for therecognition of the value of the corporate life of the race, may well play a part in the society of the future, and so may lift the individual above the more sordid and the more selfish aspects of existence.

* * *

The Decay of Religious Belief.

The practical certainty of the continuous decay of religious belief—genuine religious belief—lies in the fact that its real enemy is not to-day to be localized in either a number of men or in a specially organized movement. Either of these enemies might be crushed, as they have been crushed more than once during the past fifteen centuries. The chief warranty for the belief is that to-day it is the whole current of life that is against it. The head of the Scotch Free Church said only a few weeks ago that Scotland was being conquered by Secularism. But that is not true of Scotland alone, it is true of the whole civilized world. In every civilized State to-day the view is uppermost that whatever form of religion obtains generally, it must be subordinated to the Secular power. Even the bulk of the Christian Churches so far endorse this view that they rest their claim to consideration on their ability to promote the secular welfare of the people. And side by side with this there is to be

noted the wide-spread knowledge of science, and the manner in which this has permeated, or at the very least, affected current thought. The cultured world no longer stands in awe before the idea of God, it no longer trembles at the thunder of the Church. The knowledge that we possess of the origin and nature of religion cannot be suppressed; and it is as difficult to imagine civilization forgetting all this as it is to imagine mankind forgetting the use of metals and returning to that of stone. On the contrary, one is warranted in assuming its continued and wider diffusion, until by the spread of knowledge on the one hand, and the modification of the social structure on the other, religious beliefs take their recognized place as interesting relics of man's barbaric past.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christianity in the Melting Pot.

NOTHING can be more indisputable than the fact that the Christianity which was in vogue in this country a hundred years ago no longer exists, and is well-nigh forgotten. Then, the whole emphasis was laid on the supernatural and the world to come, but to-day this world and its affairs are being raised to a position of supreme importance. The Gospel preached with such power by the Apostle Paul is now, not only completely out of fashion, but positively disliked and rejected by the most accomplished theological scholars. This is frankly admitted by Dean Inge, in a characteristic discourse recently delivered in Westminster Abbey, and published in the *Christian World Pulpit* of July 14. Describing his text, 1 Cor. xv. 19, the Dean says: "Can you think of any other text in the New Testament that is more thoroughly unpopular to-day than the one that I have chosen?—'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' Any preacher who is at all sensitive to the feelings of his audience must have felt, especially when addressing working men, that this is emphatically what a modern congregation does not want to hear about. Not only is it no part of their religion; they resent having it put before them." That is extremely strong language to be employed by a dignitary of the Anglican Church in one of the most historic fances in the world. But the Dean is nothing if not courageous, and he continues thus:—

Many of the religious teachers, who are most in touch with current thought, seem to have no wish to speak on a subject which even to themselves is unwelcome. I put it to you that this is one of the greatest changes that Christianity has ever undergone, and that it has come about rather suddenly, rather rapidly, between the middle and the end of last century. The doctrine that we are here on our probation for another life has always until living memory been the corner-stone of Christian ethics. The whole civilization of the Middle Ages on the spiritual side was built upon the belief in two worlds, the present world and the next. Nor did the Reformation make any difference. The same splendid promises, the same awful threats, the same exhortation not to set our hearts on the fleeting shadows of time and the good things of this world resounded from Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anglican pulpits. The terrors of hell were certainly not left undescribed by Catholics, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, or Baptists.

That was the Christianity still taught in Wales seventy, even sixty years ago; but now, as the Dean puts it, "in the last seventy-five years the tradition of eighteen centuries has been broken. Christianity has to all appearance been secularized as it never had been secularized before." That is perfectly true, and its truth fully demonstrates the exclusively

human origin and nature of the Christian religion. All supernatural claims on its behalf have been utterly discredited by the facts of history. Strangely enough, this is a conclusion with which the Dean is in total disagreement, though so many of his observations inevitably lead up to it. He candidly acknowledges that the secularizing of Christianity is a process necessitated by the prevalence of crude and largely false views held and advocated by religious teachers, and his protest against such views is abundantly justified. He says:—

We are now fully alive to the amazing crudity of the old pictures of bliss and torment. The only wonder is that they were tolerated so long. Near the beginning of the Old Testament Abraham asks, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" and has no doubt of the answer. All through the Old Testament the problem of Divine justice agitates the mind of the Jewish people. God is just, and yet the world as we know it is full of injustice . . . And yet what are the worst temporal miscarriages of justice compared with the terrible picture of all men and women divided into two classes, one class to be rewarded with endless bliss, the other condemned to endless torment. Have we ever met or heard of a human being who deserved to be tortured for ever? . . . When all is said, it remains almost incomprehensible to us how sermons like those of Jonathan Edwards, which contained flowers of speech like: "You cannot stand before an infuriated tiger: what then will you do when God rushes upon you in his wrath?" were ever preached and eagerly listened to.

In his denunciation of such doctrines we are in heartiest agreement with the Dean; but he seems to forget that after all, there is ample Biblical authority for them. The Gospel Jesus expresses the view that when the wicked die they will be "cast into hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Dean Inge is naturally one of the finest and most caustic critics of the twentieth century, and many of his criticisms meet with our enthusiastic approval. Being in Holy Orders, however, his critical faculty must be kept within specific limits. He can criticize Jonathan Edwards, one of the greatest philosophers, and repudiate his conception of future punishment; but he does not dare to reject the same view as expressed by Jesus. He is an ordained minister of the Christian Gospel, and has signed the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion as adopted by the Anglican Church. After ably delineating the causes of the secularizing of Christianity during the last seventy-five years, he says:—

Many observers have considered that this secularizing of Christianity is the beginning of the end of the great religion which has inspired the civilized world for nearly two thousand years. Before long, they think, nothing will be left of the grand picture of reality which the Church has spread before the eyes of the nations. Churches as political or social institutions may go on for a time, but the tree is hollow and dead, and can put forth no more leaves. I am far from agreeing with this prediction.

It is indeed a tremendously pathetic spectacle to find the "Gloomy Dean" transported with intense joy, as he contemplates the glorious triumphs of the Christian Church in past ages; but unfortunately he culpably omits to cite a single instance of those marvellous triumphs. We rather agree with the Bishop of Durham, who has repeatedly expressed his conviction that hitherto Christianity has been a dismal failure, and that at the present time the tide of public opinion is set dead against it. By the multitudes the Church is being totally ignored. Supernaturalism has had its innings, and is now being dismissed as of no account whatever. It is easy enough for the Dean of St. Paul's to exclaim: "Secularism is a sorry sub-

stitute for the Christian religion, and its promises are delusive"; but his sense of fairplay compels him to admit that it "displaced the notion of Divine justice, which was materialistic, unethical, and incredible." Secularism is a philosophy of life in the present world, and it indulges in no delusive promises whatsoever. According to its teaching, man's whole duty consists in serving his day and generation to the utmost of his ability. We are members of society which has just claims upon us, and which we are obliged to honour in the spirit of brotherhood. Christianity, with its conception of Divine worship, is dying out, and Secularism, with its conception of altruism, is coming in to stay for good, with the sole object of guiding its disciples in the true way of life. Genuine Secularists can honestly say with Max Nordau: "All our labour is performed by men who esteem each other, have consideration for each other, mutually aid each other, and know how to curb their selfishness for the general good. There is no place among us for the lusting beast of prey; and if you dare return to us, we will pitilessly beat you to death with clubs."

J. T. LLOYD.

Keys to Happiness.

"Learn only to grasp happiness, for happiness is always there."—Goethe.

Laugh and the world laughs with you,
Weep, and you weep alone."—Ella Wilcox.

LAUGHTER, said the great humourist Rabelais, is the peculiar attribute of mankind. Although Britishers have been accused of taking their pleasures sadly, they have always appreciated their comic writers from Chaucer to Chesterton. The triumphant career of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas is largely owing to the brilliant jester, who added to the gaiety of a nation not readily given to smiling. Gilbert provided original fun for a whole generation. By degrees he educated a large proportion of the middle-class to know a real joke when it was plainly pointed out, and to own that the libretto of a comic opera may be witty and laughable. To have achieved the last feat is more miraculous than any event mentioned in the four Gospels. Only one greater task awaits, and if any writer shall make the libretto of grand opera poetic, then, indeed, the last word will be said in operatic literature.

Gilbert fooled us all to the top of his bent, and often smiled at his audience. The keynote of his delightful operas was the eternal question of Omar Khayyam, the inevitable reflection of the jester when he drops his mask. Maybe, it was the old story of the comedian longing to play "Hamlet," and that he felt the barrier in the way of success, when he would fain have found it in popularity gained in another direction. When all is said, England owes Gilbert a debt. His crisp satire came just when it was needed, and when the British theatre was given over to imitations of the moribund Third Empire. With one clever hit in "Trial by Jury," he showed that home-grown fun was again possible. He was popular, he had humour, and he awoke the British public to the salt of life.

Fun bubbled up in him like water in a fountain. He had a quick, discerning eye for the humorous things of life. His wit had a sharp flavour. How good is the story of the young lady who innocently asked him if the musician Bach was still composing. "He is decomposing," was the witty response. Gilbert was more caustic on occasion. "Funny without being vulgar," was his description of Beer-bohm Tree's performance of Hamlet. At one time an adjoining estate was owned by a wealthy jam

manufacturer, and Gilbert wrote him a letter: "Dear Sir,—My gamekeeper reports that your pheasants are constantly straying into my preserves. Will you kindly see into the matter? With apologies for the use of the word "preserves," I remain, etc." In our busy, noisy age, when the mechanism of life threatens lightness of heart, Gilbert radiated humour. He was a public benefactor from the time he wrote, "The Bab Ballads," till the pen fell from his tired, old hands.

Who reads Phil Robinson nowadays? Why his books were not as popular as those by Jerome K. Jerome, and Finlay Dunne, the creator of "Martin Dooley," is a mystery greater than the tangle of the Trinity. Years ago a delightful pocket edition of his works was started, and readers smiled at the humorous preface which said: "My publishers assured me that each successive work they brought out for me plunged them deeper and deeper into poverty," and concluded with the pleasant threat that, if successful, the series should be continued "for ever and ever."

One of the books, *Noah's Ark*, an amusing essay on un-natural history, was devoted to a disrespectful perversion of sentiment popularly ascribed to certain animals. The lion, tiger, elephant, and other beasts fared as badly as the Christian superstition at the hands of Colonel Bob Ingersoll. In *My Indian Garden*, with its studies of Hindoos, cattle, and plants, he showed that he could do much else beside don the cap and bells. As White's *Natural History of Selborne* is to England, so ought this to be to India.

The gems of humour scattered throughout his writings would make the fortune of a comic writer. His references to the "impossible giraffe," with its potential "seven feet of sore throat," has often been quoted. In a quaint letter to the secretary of the Zoological Gardens, he suggested that the old elephant was shabby, and required re-upholstering. On the subject of flies carrying contagion, he suggests that killing blue-bottles wholesale would be as arduous as "coaxing an earthquake with a penny bun." His description of the grizzly bear is worth quoting: "His temper is as short as his tail, and his sense of right and wrong that of a hooligan." The frank record of his long ride in the express train to Chicago is good. The query, "Does the fast train to Chicago ever stop?" with the reply, "Yes! It stops—at Chicago!" is the keynote. His dismay at the endless miles of split rails, and his caustic comment that, whereas he had been surprised at the number of distinguished Americans who had split rails for a living, he now wondered whether all Americans had not done it all their lives, are excellent.

Another of his books, *Saints and Sinners*, an unconventional volume on the Latter Day Saints and Salt Lake City, is crammed full of good things. One passage will show its rare quality. Writing of bugbears, he says:—"Is a bugbear most bug or bear? I never met one yet face to face, for the bugbear is an evasive insect. Nor, if I met one, can I say whether I should prefer to find it mainly bug or mainly bear. The latter is of various sorts. Thus one—the little black bear of the Indian hills—is about as formidable as a portmanteau of the same size. Another, the grizzly of the Rockies, is a very un-amiable person. But he is not quite so mean as the bug. He does not go and cuddle himself up flat in a crease of the pillow-case, and then slip out edgewise as soon as it is dark, and bite you in the nape of the neck. It is not on record that a bear got inside a boudoir-cap, and waited till the light was turned out to come forth and feed like grief on the damask

cheek of beauty. I cannot make out whether bugs or bears are the worst things to have about a house. You see, you could shoot at a bear out of the window, but it would be absurd to fire off a rifle at bugs between the blankets. Altogether, there is a good deal to be said on the side of the bear." To pick out passages at haphazard is not doing justice to a neglected jester. While Mr. Stephen Leacock is welcomed, and the creator of "Bindle," one cannot help regretting the inadequate appreciation Phil Robinson won.

MIMNERMUS.

The Religion of the Criminal.

(Concluded from page 502.)

ANOTHER form of prison religion found by Bjerre, was that prevailing among the old prisoners under a life sentence, which, he says, certainly appeared genuine in so far as it "involved abnegation to a higher power":—

These criminals, grown grey in prison, were naturally by reason of their own experience and their personal instincts, incapable of conceiving him as anything else but the god of power, vengeance and retribution. But just for this reason this all-powerful god had one weakness: he strove with his whole being for recognition by man. And owing to this weakness it was possible to bargain with him: in exchange for recognition he sold his protection on earth, and for worship he sold all the glories of heaven. He cared nothing for the actions of his followers; man can just as little win eternal bliss by good deeds as a life prisoner can gain a pardon by good behaviour. Still less did he concern himself with the mind of the faithful, he demanded nothing more than outward submission, and he spared no weapon against those who denied him.

This sort of religion, says Bjerre, may be found in the Old Testament, and among primitive tribes, but there was not in it "the least shadow of unselfish devotion." True, but who would expect to find such a characteristic among hardened criminals? To deny to this belief the name of religion, is practically to deny that a large part of the Old Testament, which teaches the same thing, is a religious book. If Bjerre had pursued his researches among the masses of the people he would have found that similar views on religion largely prevail. The fact is Bjerre is confusing religion with morality, two totally distinct things.

The main generalization made by Bjerre, towards which, he tells us, he adopted a very sceptical and hostile attitude, but which in spite of all resistance grew up out of his accumulated experience among these criminals, until he could no longer doubt it: "the generalization is that the determining factor in all crime is weakness."*

It may sound strange that the determining characteristic of a brutal murderer should be weakness, but, of course, it is not physical weakness, but weakness of character. It is a weakness, the root of which is fear. Life is beset with fears. Who has not awoke one morning and dreaded to face the events of the coming day? The clerk who has to explain to his angry employer the error, or carelessness, by which the firm have lost a large order. Or the workman who has to face the foreman with the confession that he has spoiled an expensive casting. Or it may be financial trouble, or an operation. Of course these things do not occur every day, or life would be unbearable, and usually we soon recover our equanimity.

Now, there is a class of unhappy people who live in a chronic state of fear, a constitutional inability to

* Andreas Bjerre. *The Psychology of Murder*, p. 5.

face the realities of life, a complete lack of self-confidence. It is from this class that a large part of our prison population is drawn. Bjerre tells us that, time after time, he was struck by the astonishing fact that the most brutal criminals, who were incapable of conceiving their fellow creatures as any better than dead matter, or as the means to the satisfaction of their criminal lusts, yet these degenerates: "were nevertheless frequently attached to their mothers by bonds which seemed even stronger than those which one ordinarily finds between mother and son. At first it made a bewildering, though often deeply affecting impression, to find, amidst such animal excess, so much warm, living, human feeling" (pp. 81-82).

At first he was inclined to think that this was a survival of a primitive instinct, in defiance of the complete moral decadence of these murderers. But further investigation proved that there was scarcely anything in common with what men in ordinary life feel for their mothers. This strange relationship turned on the fact of their feeling of dependence, their need of support, their sense of insecurity and consciousness of their own incapacity. From the beginning they lacked all foundation for an independent existence and personal responsibility. Bjerre observes:—

They were brought into life with an incurable terror of existence, forced with horror from their mother's womb to meet their destiny, and they therefore unconsciously shrank from the struggle for which they felt themselves unfit, clutched with the strength of despair at their mothers, and tried to conceal and forget themselves, just like children who are terrified by something inconceivable, hostile and supernatural. (pp. 85-86.)

Life presented to their terror-stricken imagination an impenetrable chaos of difficulties. They slunk to school half-crippled by the agonized fear of the unknown difficulties and dangers which awaited them, and their knowledge of their utter incompetence to cope with them. In school they found it impossible to sneak away from reality, they had to endeavour to do what was expected of them, in competition with others; and when they saw among their companions many happy and care-free, simple and self-assured, acquitting themselves easily in their games and examinations, and compared them with their own incompetence and incapacity, there arose in them a consuming hatred; a hatred destined later on, to lead them to the gallows. Bjerre has no doubt that many of the gross crimes committed by children and adolescents, such as attempts at derailing trains, arson, etc., usually regarded as inexplicable because no motive can be assigned, "are committed because these young criminals, with their sense of inferiority and consciousness of incapacity, with their hate of mankind and of the whole of existence, are driven to convince at least themselves of their superiority by causing great grief to some special object of their hate, or, if this is impossible, by doing some damage which by its magnitude will excite general amazement and terror." (p. 112.)

It must be borne in mind that this exposition of criminal psychology is not a theory, or a clever piece of guess-work, but is the result of the revelations made by the criminals themselves. In his second chapter entitled "Anguished Fear," Bjerre relates, in detail, all the salient facts in the life of a murderer of this type named Gunnarsson, as he, by patient inquiry, obtained them from the prisoner himself. This criminal was firmly convinced that the prime cause of his misfortune was that he had ever left his mother and that he would have been saved if he could only have got back to her. At school his sense of incapacity and inferiority isolated

him from the community; to obtain sympathy and protection he tried to gain favour by offering to do services, and soon came to be regarded as a toady, and despised by the whole school. If a school-fellow ordered him to do something degrading, he never attempted any resistance, and doubled his obsequiousness and zeal towards his tormentors.

Sometimes he thought he could detect a kind of scornful consideration, or sympathy: "But if ever he attempted to approach any of these sympathizers in order, in his gratitude, to open his heart to them, he was very soon made aware of the fact that he was either completely indifferent to them or even as repulsive as a creeping reptile: in other words, just the treacherous, insinuating failure which he knew himself to be. Then he would sneak away, still more deeply embittered in his secret hate." Then he would lie awake all night revelling in his hate, and picturing to himself all the evil he would do when his turn came, and: "crying out to God to give him the power to do the evil he contemplated." (p. 114.) Gunnarsson was religious, he believed in God, and naturally so, a man of his type would inevitably fly to religion for support in his helplessness.

By the process of self-deception already described, Gunnarsson lulled himself in dreams of all his troubles being ended when his school days were over; but as the day approached the dream faded away, and the thought of going out into the world, and the demands which would be made upon him, and how he would be despised for his incompetence, filled him with anguish and despair, and as his fear increased so did his hatred of all human beings in proportion. He now sought solace by drinking in the company of the lowest down-and-outs who lived by casual labour on the farms round about. To them he was superior, simply because he had money to spend, and their admiration, probably, provided him with the only moments of supreme happiness he ever knew.

In the end he murdered a girl named Anna Bengtsson, who he had been intimate with, and the result could no longer be concealed. After intercourse with her, he cut her throat and placed on her body a letter, which he had brought with him, in which Anna was made to say that she had committed suicide, and in which she accused a certain Carl Edvardsson of being the cause of her condition and her first betrayer.

Like the other murderers portrayed in this book Gunnarsson never showed the least contrition or remorse for his crime, quite the contrary, for, says Bjerre: "Like so many murderers, Gunnarsson was for the first and only time in his life completely happy after the murder, because he had at last found an expression in action for the deepest desires of his nature." (p. 119.)

Religious people are never tired of proclaiming that religion is the only antidote to crime. But there is no lack of religion among the prison population; they have religion but not morality. They are incapable of self-sacrifice; how could they be? The sense of their incompetence in the struggle of life renders impossible the growth of any such disposition. As Bjerre well remarks: "How could the least suspicion of tenderness or the will to protect a woman ever arise in a person so beset by anguished fears, and who had never approached a fellow creature except to beg for sympathy and help? How could he ever dream of giving himself up to another, when the whole of his life was spent in brooding over the reason why he could not live as an independent human being?" The religion of a man is only the expression of that man's character, and the criminal regards his God as a guardian and protector just the same as other people do theirs.

William Blake.

ON the 12th of August, 1827, a day devoted in the English calendar to the slaughter of birds, died William Blake, the great English poet, painter and mystic. There is a certain irony in Blake's selection of this date to pass, as he puts it, from "one room into another." For no English poet has more vehemently championed the cause of the brute creation. In the days of public cockfighting he wrote:—

A Robin Redbreast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage

and the little lamb, the tiger burning bright, and the chafer's sprite were all the subject of his constant thought and solicitude.

This centenary is bound to call forth a spate of writing on this most individual of English geniuses. Neglected in his life, the interest in Blake has piled up and grown to such a volume that the last three or four years have brought a torrent of commentaries on his art, and reproductions, in the most expensive *de luxe* editions, of his paintings and engravings. Writing before the event, we can imagine something of what the busy journalists will say of this disturbing portent in the artistic firmament. There will be judicious praise for his *Songs of Innocence and Poetical Sketches*, his engravings to illustrate the *Book of Job*, and Blair's *Grave*, will be justly lauded; and his treatment by Cromek and Hayley examined from this point and that. References, if made, to his Prophetic Books, will be scant, and accompanied by much head-shaking. Then, as the busy journalist must, he will turn his attention to other matters, such as greyhound racing ("Each outcry of the hunted hare a fibre from the brain doth tear," sang Blake) or the Trade Union Congress, or, the Silly Season having set in, a symposium on "What I believe," by eminent publicists.

Now, while the busy journalist will rightly avoid hazarding himself among the shoals of the Prophetic Books, it is pertinent to ask whether sterner and stouter navigators have met with any reward for their trouble. Chief among these courageous fellows who have launched out into these waters have been fellow bards, to wit, Algernon Swinburne and W. B. Yeats. It is understandable, we think, that this work of pious enthusiasm should have been undertaken by poets. Surely, they argued, if Blake's other work speaks with such authentic ring (his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, for example), there must be some message of import, some rich grains, even if hidden in a bushel of chaff, to reward the patient searcher for such treasure. And who so likely to find the key to unlock the door to his treasury of wisdom than those who had themselves felt the divine afflatus, who knew, too, that imagination which is the mother of all art. So, assuredly, they must have reasoned, and with a mole-like energy, which must evoke a tribute of admiration from plain men, they proceeded to vary the metaphor) to burrow in the tangled roots of this most exotic and esoteric of literary growths.

It is a sad fact in this wry world industry and enthusiasm are not always rewarded. Powerful as were the pneumatic drills used by these skilled cracksmen, this Arcos Safe has proved to be as empty as that of Mme. Humbert. The mole, though industrious, remains blind. These books, of which their author was so proud, remain for all the labour of conjecture, only conjecture; full of sound and fury they are, but signifying nothing. And therein lies the moral for all Freethinkers and those who seek to walk by the light of reason.

Imagination, we repeat, is the mother of all art; it is the emotive force which brings into the world of men those titanic elements that lurk in the deeps of

the unconscious. Strange and beautiful, and horrific are these elements, but, till birth, formless. One cannot term them shapes, or one might compare them to the luscious houris or the foul djinn. Divine or monstrous, they are ever striving upwards, seeking shape, seeking birth. But reason, oft despised midwife, must assist at this accouchement. She must select, must reject. The monster must be strangled ere the first breath. The dionysian upsurge of imagination must have imposed upon it apollonian form. It is strange that Blake, who in his drawings was the great upholder of definite form and firm line, should in his writings have so wildly departed from this sound teaching. He hated what we should now term Impressionism. "Slobbering" is a frequent epithet of his for all pictorial representation other than the classic and clearcut. Yet in his Prophetic Books, rhythm, meter and rime, those attributes of form, are all to seek. Rhapsodical is too kind a term to characterize what is nothing less than an insensate outpouring.

Great Blake—and poor Blake! His revolt against the apotheosis of reason, the characteristic of his, the Eighteenth Century, with its Gibbons and Godwins and Tom Paines, like ambition, o'erleapt itself and landed him in chaos. He railed against Voltaire, and Locke, and Newton, and even the great Bacon he called "little Bacon." The last three, he told a friend, "are the three great teachers of atheism or Satan's doctrine."

Yet for all Blake's fervour against atheism, he had small thanks from his Christian fellow-countrymen. After his death his pious Christian friends made a bonfire of his note-books, poems and designs, because they held them heretical and dangerous. Recently, I believe, a tablet was unveiled in the cathedral church of St. Paul to his memory, not, surely, as a great Christian, but because, like Shakespeare and Milton, he was a great Londoner and a great genius. Even in his life-time the "ranks of Tuscany" would have raised a more sincere cheer to this fearless and honest fighter than the Church that now accords him belated recognition.

For, for all his enmity to atheism, he rendered one great service to the cause of reason. In 1792, or thereabouts, he warned Thomas Paine of his impending arrest by the agents of the British Government. "You must not go home," he said, "or you are a dead man." This timely warning saved Paine, at any rate, from imprisonment. If for no other cause, this one generous deed of Blake to the great vindicator of reason, should make the Freethinker join in this centennial salute to his memory. And, in truth, no reformer could do aught but revere that great heart which vowed never to cease from mental fight till the Jerusalem of his aspirations was built in England's green and pleasant land.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The Recompense.

WE'VE sucked the honeyed wisdom of the sage,
And mourned the lesson of our mortal lot,
The holy innocence that now is not,
The "ne'er again" that seals a blotted page:
We've seen the war with Time that poets wage,
The early Paradise that Fancy blew,
But some, unblest, a childhood never knew,
And found Life's summer 'mid the snows of age:
Cold rules have bled their youth, and hollow fears
Of creeds austere, still wallowing in their slime,
Have hid its blessings with a veil of tears,
And o'erblown Virtue wears the face of Crime:
So Death has sown the harvest of the years
To reap the Truths defying Age and Time!

WM. J. LAMB.

Acid Drops.

We wonder how long it will be before this Christian country will be civilized enough to make decent men and women ashamed of the "sport" of stag hunting. Once again the papers publish an account of a poor animal driven into the sea off the Devonshire coast by a lot of fashionable hooligans, which after being rescued was butchered on a boat. After which the brave party returned home rejoicing. And these are probably the people who protest against the Spanish bull fight, or who protested against the cowboy sports in London some time ago. We do not know many things more cowardly or contemptible than this kind of "sport." It only remains to note—that one of those present at the meet was the Bishop of Taunton, mounted on a large grey hunter.

There must be a lot of wicked and lying Christians about in the world. We infer this from a Protestant Truth Society advertisement touting for funds. It announces that its Wickcliffe preachers are specially trained to refute the "subtleties" of Anglo-Catholicism, Romanism, and Modernism. The suggestion here is that Anglo-Catholics, Romanists, and Modernists are addicted to telling untruths. Hence our opening remark. We confess to feeling very depressed at the thought that all these untruthful Christians are wilfully postponing the Kingdom of God on earth, and won't let the Protestant Truthers bring it about.

The authorities of Wycliffe Hall chose a Sunday evening to start on their trip to the Holy Land. As a good Sabbatarian points out to the *English Churchman*, the journey was neither a work of necessity nor of mercy. And it seems difficult to justify their employment of transport workers on the Lord's Day. Our godly friend is right. We hope the righteous trippers will do all they can to avoid causing Sunday labour while on their journey outward or backward. An error in this respect may so easily encourage some erring soul to continue his or her Sabbath-breaking.

Sir John Adams, the eminent educationalist, says that the only hope of peace in the world is more education. Now that is a statement from which one needs must withhold assent until one knows exactly what is meant by the term "education." It means so many different things to so many different people. To the average business man it means merely a knowledge of the "three R's." The fanatic nationalist thinks of it as instruction in reading and writing, plus plentiful exercises in singing patriotic songs and waving national flags. The big newspaper proprietors appear to believe that it should consist mainly in ability to follow, without reflection, the printed word. The average schoolmaster thinks of it as capacity to memorize scholastic "facts." And the professional Christian regards it as incomplete unless it includes a knowledge of the nonsensical stories of the Old Testament, the mystical absurdities of the Gospel Jesus, and the puerile affirmations of the Christian religion. Now, these types of education have been and are being tried everywhere, but no one could say they have brought or are likely to bring peace in the world. What is more worthy of being called education is that which produces men and women who are able to perceive prejudice or bias and fallacy, who are tolerant, open-minded to new truth, fearlessly independent in thinking and in asserting their thoughts. To such men and women the adventurers, swash-bucklers, and war-mongers would rant and appeal in vain. We may add that it is not only the generality who need this kind of education, but cabinet ministers, politicians, and publicists.

The President of the Wesleyan Conference, at Bradford, appeared to be in rather doleful mood in his address to the pastors. Sometimes (only sometimes?) we feel, he said, that all is not well with us. We are not getting on as we have reason to think we ought to

get on. We appear to be toiling all the time and catching but little. We are often tremendously busy, and yet it would sometimes seem that we are doing little else than excessively toiling—busy but not impressive. We do not "get there." Brethren, said he, our difficulties are very great. The methods with which our fathers met their tasks will not necessarily succeed to-day. The reverend gentleman explains why that should be so:—

I think the changed and changing times, the altered atmosphere, the vastly different angles from which men view things, the further reaches of penetrative vision, the vast discoveries in every realm of thought and action, the wonderful and rapid advance in science, in philosophy, in art, in sociology, in commerce, and in citizenship, would colour and probably modify his (Wesley's) treatment of many things.

What he means—but he hopes his Methodist clients will not have intelligence enough to grasp the fact—is that discovery and progress are hitting the Christian religion most deucedly hard. Every new advance has been making its acceptance more difficult. No wonder "we appear to be toiling all the time, and catching but little"! No wonder the past methods, once so effective, don't "get there"! Still Mr. Hodson Smith doesn't despair. He suggests the pastors should try persuasiveness rather than dogmatism, and introduce a little more variety into the services, as well as make more use of music and of good singing. These, doubtlessly, are highly original methods for attracting and retaining clients. But we rather fancy they will not rout the enemies, doubt and indifference; for these are the offspring of that "wonderful and rapid advance" he mentioned.

So long as a man talks about religion any sort of nonsense serves, and accuracy is the last thing that is thought about. Thus, the Bishop of Blackburn calmly informed a gathering on the sands at Blackpool that "through the centuries, no State in Europe thought about education till the Church had shown the way." What nonsense! There were schools in ancient Rome before Christianity was heard of; these died out under Christian rule. The Church had schools to train priests, but none for the people. Karl the Great, who was accused of both Mohammedanism and Atheism, but whose Christianity was obviously suspect, forced the Church to take some steps towards a larger measure of education. But until the nineteenth century nothing was done for the education of the people in this country. Then the influence of Robert Owen and the French Revolution led to some improvement, and years later, while education was still under the control of the Church, a government commission reported that although the government was then giving a miserable £30,000 or £40,000 towards the education of the country, it was not, with the Church ruling, getting value for its money. Eventually it was the neglect of education by the Church that forced the government to pass an Education Act. Dr. Herbert makes quite a good Bishop.

God made the aphid (or green-fly), and made it hungry. God made the apples, pears, cherries, grapes, and beans, and the hungry aphid feeds on them. God has whispered to the aphid that strawberry-plants are also good fodder. And so the aphid has, for the first time in the knowledge of science, decided to sample the new food. All this is, of course, as our Christian arguers from Design would say, a part of the great Scheme of things. The next step lies with the scientists. They have now to discover some means of circumventing this part of the Divine Scheme, or otherwise there will be no more strawberries and cream. Very daring fellows, these scientists, to take on a battle with the Almighty.

Visitors to London may occasionally see the *Daily Liar* on sale in the streets. This is one of the few papers that voices somewhat heavy satire on our Press, and one seller was heard calling out, "The *Daily Liar*, Two-pence: The only daily paper that tells the truth." His abilities are being wasted; he should at least be made a bishop.

Man, says a writer, is the dominant creature of creation because he can think and reason, plan and foresee. This being so, then the less man has to do with the Christian priest the more he is likely to continue being the dominant creature. What he learns from the priest is to believe what he is told and to follow the guidance of an alleged deity-inspired Book. He gets no encouragement to "think and reason" from such a source.

Sheffield intends to build on one of its housing estates one public house. This will be run on model lines, with indoor and outdoor amusements, the sale of intoxicants being made a secondary matter. We suppose the pious temperance fanatics will get busy with their usual silly protests. Such protests are understandable. If public houses everywhere were so run that they became decent places for women and children to be taken to, and excessive drinking had no encouragement, two-thirds of the fanatics' propaganda would lose its force.

Coming out of church ought not to be like coming out of an anæsthetic, declares the Rev. Benjamin Gregory. When he said this, he must have had at the back of his mind the saying that "Religion is the opium of the people." Be that as it may, the reverend man's implied suggestion, that going into the church is like taking an anæsthetic, is true to fact. And the only really effective cure is that church-goers should take an intellectual emetic, such as the *Freethinker* provides for doped Christians.

The Rev. R. Moffat Gantrey says he grows more convinced that the Church of God cannot be built up on "stunts." Maybe, his own particular congregation consists of men and women who are sufficiently educated to be repelled by stunts. But this cannot be said of most Methodist congregations. The bigger part of these are only attracted and retained by "stunts." Take these away, and the wail about diminished church-attendance will resound louder than it does at present. Still, we don't see why the rev. gentleman should be averse to stunts. The Great Exemplar was a past master, according to Gospel accounts, in the gentle art of stunting. He had little to learn in the way of drawing the interest of the curious mob.

The greatest need of the day is reflection, says the Minister for Education. He might so arrange the curriculum in his schools that some training shall be given in the art of reflection. If the people who have passed through the schools are unskilled in this art or averse to it, the schools must be held responsible. We suggest he may be able to find room for such training if he cuts out some of the stuff to be learnt by rote and eliminates the Scripture lesson and prayers.

If you want to put the world right, says a Wayside Pulpit poster, start with yourself. Seeing that columns upon columns of criticism, by laymen and clergymen, alleging that the Churches themselves need putting right have appeared in recent years, we think it would have been discreet to suppress this particular poster. It tempts passers-by to retort: "physician, take a dose of your own medicine."

An interesting case of "how it is done" is at present appearing under our eyes. The Press deals in prejudice, and public opinion is where they like to put it. The term "jay-walker," an undesirable import from America, along with many others, is now being worked by the *Daily News*. Instead of looking up the common law on the rights of the pedestrian, it proceeds to parrot the term. If legislation is necessary, as it may be, with the increase of traffic on the roads, why doesn't it set about the job in the right way? The answer is that it does not know how, and prefers to make out that individuals are fools who want to cross the road where they

want to cross the road. And, in a similar manner, the word "atheist" is used as a term of abuse. There is hardly one paper that uses the word unless there is a qualifying adjective, or unless the deception is kept up that the atheist is some sort of animal that eats its young or is not fit to be in society. "We despise newspaper culture," writes Nietzsche, and prison statistics would prove that atheists at least, give prisons no trouble. Perhaps after all the height of newspaper culture was reached when a Bishop kissed a murderer.

In this Christian country of ours that can so adroitly mingle blood and salvation together, one hundred and fifty trains will carry sportsmen north for the slaughter of birds. These trains, we are told, will carry also 500 tons of baggage. In the meantime, we trust that the interests of the Lord will be carefully watched in the matter of Sunday trading, and the morals of the poor.

Sir James Frazer, although prepared to push his conclusions to a logical finish, has provoked a protest from Dr. T. R. Glover. Not much of a breeze is needed to stir the waters of faith, and Dr. Glover utters a warning where trade interests are threatened:—

The study of Folklore, as it is now called, leaves even the oil-geologist's dazzling and speculative life looking a little monotonous. Think of *The Golden Bough* and read some of its *n* volumes; but don't necessarily believe it all.

Don't believe the *explanation* of black magic, but believe our explanation of the explanation.

After all these years of preparation for the second coming of a real person, Professor Deissman, of Berlin, now goes and makes everything look silly, by stating that Christ's coming would not be in the flesh but in the heart of man. After all, we are not greedy, and would be satisfied with a little commonsense in the head of man for a change.

Mr. E. A. Baughan, the dramatic critic of the *Daily News*, states that "children are our real immortality." There appears nothing left now for Dr. Glover, except to fold up his tent and silently steal away.

A Scottish speaker at a Lord's Day Observance Society meeting said lugubriously: "Sabbath-breaking is developing rapidly in Scotland. We are likely to lose the name of being a Sabbath-loving people." This is indeed distressing. We fear it will be sad news to the whisky distillers. For the Scottish Sabbath and Scottish religion drove many a Scotsman to whisky as an antidote. And the consumption of whisky is sure to diminish if he has taken to spend his Sundays in a more rational fashion.

At the same meeting the Rev. C. F. T. Parsons said that if the Sabbath went, it would practically mean the ruin of the British Empire, and the sun of their prosperity would set. Disposal of the Sabbath would open the gate to every conceivable excess, bodily and spiritually. One's flesh ought to creep at the horrid picture conjured up by the rev. gent.'s imagination, but it refuses to do so. Being a typically modest Christian priest, he quaintly fancies that the British Empire consists only of the Christian Churches and parsons; and naturally the disappearance of the parsons' "market day" would threaten ruin to the Empire of his fancy.

After years of agitation Eastbourne Town Council decided four years ago to permit bathing on Sunday mornings. Now all-day bathing on Sunday has been requested, and the Council has graciously granted the "concession." Poor Eastbourne! She has properly gone on the path that leads to perdition. Pray for her, dear brethren of the Free Churches.

National Secular Society.

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

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

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

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

To Correspondents.

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

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—Don Walter (8th sub.), £2 2s. 6d.; Mr. Wilson (per G. Whitehead), £1; C. W. Mente, 10s.; C. F. Small, £1; "The Flea," 5s.; G. H. Lines, 9s. 6d.; A. S. Jones, 2s. 6d.

CINE CERE.—We are never "worried" by friends writing us, although we have not always the time to reply at the length we should like. Their experiences are generally interesting, and sometimes of importance. Your own experience of the persons named is an example of the different standards of judgment people bring to religion when contrasted with those used in the ordinary affairs of life.

A. JACKSON.—Lecture notice received too late for last issue.

C. YOUNG.—Mr. Cohen's new work *Materialism Re-stated* will be on sale about September 1. The price will be 2s. 6d. The new volume of *Essays in Freethinking* will follow soon after.

W. BRVAN.—You have been misinformed.

W. COLLINS.—Thanks for cuttings. The Sabbatarian thinks that only votes with reference to Sunday Games and amusements are of value when they are against them. In any case, the only "annoyance" the Sabbatarian suffers is that of seeing other people enjoy themselves in a way different from his own. Anyway we hope the Morcombe Council will act on the expressed wish of those concerned.

J. WILLIAMS.—We are inclined to believe that what you have done must have had some good effect in making the *Freethinker* better known. After all, it is only by the efforts of its friends during the whole of its existence that it has become known. It has never been in a position to pay for advertisement. We thank you for what you have done.

C. W. MENTE.—Distance and time has robbed your letter of much of its point, as most readers would have lost track of the incidents to which it refers. That is rather a pity, as some of the points are quite good at any time.

T. PROCESS.—Wherever religious influences are dominant one may safely count upon methods of suppression of unwelcome opinions. Of course, they may exist where religion is not in power, but they are sure to exist where it is.

Mr. P. SHALLER writes, apropos of our "Views and Opinions" of July 31—"It is with difficulty I pull myself together to write a letter, but I am impelled to do so on reading your splendid article on 'War and War Memorials.' I am struck with its boldness, honesty and sanity in dealing with a subject which it is difficult to write about in the present time." We have received other letters to the same effect, but without any false modesty we are inclined to say that the originality of the article consists in saying

what very many others are thinking, and that its honesty follows from the *Freethinker* having no other purpose in view save that of saying what it believes to be the truth. But we appreciate what is said by our readers nonetheless.

A. S. JONES.—We hope your Christian friends will be interested in Mr. Cohen's lectures when he visits Chester-le-Street.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Some open-air demonstrations in London are being arranged by the N.S.S. Executive. The first will take place to-day (August 14), in Hyde Park, at 3 o'clock. Mr. Cohen, Mr. Rosetti and Mr. Campbell-Everden will be among the speakers. Other meetings will follow in Regent's Park and Brockwell Park.

A friend sends us from Corsica a couple of postcards showing the blessing of the pigs. When a number of pigs are ill they are collected and blessed by the priest. The results are remarkable, for the cards show us the state of the pigs before and after. In the one card they are shown very thin and depressed-looking, in the other, after the blessing, they are quite stout and jolly-looking fellows. As the picture stands, it is the kind of proof that would delight the heart of a Conan Doyle. But the Christian religion has always had something to say about pigs, and has been very tolerant of asses.

Mr. F. Mann's lectures at Edinburgh have resulted in the resolve to start a Branch of the N.S.S. in the City. He will be holding a meeting there at The Mound to-day (August 14) and will also hold a meeting during the afternoon, for the purpose of arranging for the new Branch. There are, we know, a large number of Freethinkers in Edinburgh, and if proper methods are used there should be a strong branch of the Society there.

Many Freethinkers will remember the name of Mr. S. Soddy, who rather more than thirty years ago was a very welcome lecturer on the Freethought platform in this country. He has been for many years out of England, and we had a letter from him the other day from Mexico. He has hopes of returning to the old country again, and meanwhile sends his regards to all of his old friends who are still in the land of the living. He will also be pleased to hear from any of his old Freethinking friends. His address is Dinamita, Durango, Mexico.

Hell : Purgatory : Heaven.

(Continued from page 509.)

ULTIMATELY Holy Church found it convenient to modify the doctrine of hell. It has been said that she had made hell too hot and was forced to concede a little. The Troubadours, for instance, made fun of Holy Church's hell, and other people of commonsense have said a few words from time to time. But Holy Church caters for the ignorant multitude, and it did not bring the temperature down many degrees. Its only real concession was to arrange for a place for unbaptized infants. One of Holy Church's blackguards "doubted not there were infants not a span long crawling about the floor of hell"—in the flames and sulphur fumes of course. This was really too much. So instead of being lost in hell they are now lost in Limbo. *Lost*, mind you. They have not to see God. They have never again to see their parents nor their parents to see them.

Innocent little children, mind you. A dog (a mean yaller dog, as Mark Twain would say) would have more humanity than these celibate theologians of priests. The man whom Christians claim as their founder said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The Romish Church "inspired," "always the same," condemns little children to limbo, and until public opinion forced its hand, in its theory thousands of "span-long" children crawled the floor of hell. "Écrasez l'infame!"

The variation in Hell—which this "always the same" Church invented, was a very small reduction in temperature with a large reduction in time—*for money*. "Purgatory" has been the greatest, the most profitable cheap-money swindle ever invented. It has brought the priests, literally, millions. It is bringing them money in now at the rate of millions *per year*. People who are not superstitious are amazed at the way the priests can bleed the superstitious loonies who pay, pay, pay, at every turn for—nothing.

Hell was, of course, itself a very profitable proposition. People could be made to pay quite a lot to be kept out of it. But if, once in, they were there for ever, they were lost—to the priests. What an obvious chance for priestly aggrandisement! If priests are greater than God—and we have seen that they claim to be—then they have power in Hell. They can keep men out, or fetch them out after having got there. The most paying proposition, however, was to see that men got there and then charge for release. Of course, non-Catholics, who knew nothing about it, and wouldn't care if they did, were out of the question, as regards profit. Therefore *they* were and are consigned to Hell without hope of ever getting out. But believers could be put in—quite easily and "reasonably." Is it not "reasonable" to think that even the best of men (apart from a few saints and popes and priests) do not leave this earth *quite* good enough for heaven? Some purification is needed. Also, though forgiveness for sin may be given, and ultimately assured, yet it is only just that the sinners bear some punishment. So (for Catholics only) a Temporary Torture Department, with a purifying fire like the fire of Hell, with Pass-out Checks (purchasable on earth from the holy men called priests) was instituted. The believer can purchase these Pass-out Checks for himself, and also for those who are also *in* this department. When a man is dead, it is never *quite* certain whether his fire insurance premiums have been in order, so it is the duty of survivors to make it right. And they do!—to the tune of millions

per year. Yes, actually, these childish Catholics pay, pay, pay—for nothing. As Froude says about these priests, it is a case of money, always money. Lecky (*Morals* Vol. II. p. 235) says:—

A system which deputed its ministers to go to the unhappy widow in the first dark hour of her anguish and desolation, to tell her that he who was dearer to her than all the world beside, was now burning in a fire, and that he could only be relieved by a gift of money to the priests was assuredly *of its own kind* not without extraordinary merit.

"*Of its own kind.*" And what a kind! The priests did not wait for the death. They went to the dying man and frightened him into paying for some relief from purgatory. In the time of Henry VIII. one third of the land of England had passed to the greedy monks and priests, mostly by threats of Hell and Purgatory. It was this that made the "spoliation" of the monasteries so easy. The landed proprietors were only getting their own back. That third of the land had been robbed by the vile death-bed robbers. The condition of most, if not all, other Catholic countries was worse than that of England.

In Spain you can buy indulgences as easy as buying postal orders. For a shilling you can get one to clear your conscience if you have any *stolen* property of the value of twelve shillings, if you do not know the name and address of the owner. As pickpockets do not stay to get name and address, this means that by letting the church have a commission on the transaction they can continue their nefarious trade with an easy conscience. If the sum is over £25 they must pay a tithe, *i.e.*, 50s.

But, you ask, if a man gets a *plenary* indulgence (*i.e.*, one that *wipes out* the debt) why should he go on getting any more? Ah—you don't think the priests are *so* soft? The indulgence is only valid if the disposition of mind is morally correct—and it is impossible to be certain on this point. So the poor dupes go on trying their luck. There is another reason also. The indulgence can be transferred to someone already in purgatory, and it is a good deed to do it. Then you buy another.

What is the mental state of these folk? Not quite 100 per cent. sane, surely.

But what about heaven? The reader would notice that the heading to this article gave hell and purgatory in large type and heaven in small. The Catholic heaven is a small type heaven, a place of utter boredom. The Valhalla of our Viking forefathers, the Happy Hunting Grounds of the Red Indians, the Paradise of Mohammedans are all attractive places—to those who believe in them. But the heaven of the Catholics is a poor sort of place. A serious illness or an accident *ought* to be looked on as an introduction to happiness. But these "believers" are always extravagantly joyful when they *don't* get there. It would be bad business (on the priests' part) to hurry their dupes into the grave. A dead dupe is unprofitable. Though (as I will show presently) the potentialities of Paradise, as a cheap-money proposition have hardly been taken sufficient advantage of.

The Catholic idea of God is oriental. He is an absolute and autocratic tyrant (except—beg pardon—for the priests who are greater than their Creator). The Catholic idea of heaven is based on the gorgeous court of an Eastern king. The Lord of Lords sits high on a royal throne of state, monarch of all he surveys. Around Him are His courtiers fawning on, and flattering Him, continually crying Holy, Holy, Holy. Outside (yet not out of sight) is the torture department, the courtiers getting the joy of contrast by keeping one eye on the tortures of the damned. There is no marriage nor giving in marriage (the Catholic heaven is the product of celibate monks) and

consequently no family re-unions. The joy of the blessed is to gaze on His face and sing. Just that!

To give you a proof that this is all, we will recall a little story of the Jesuits. The Jesuits, as is well known, have proved themselves the champion blackguards of history. Once (but that once was *not* the only once) they wanted an assassin. On this particular occasion it was to murder a king of France. It was a risky job for if caught the man would have an unpleasant end. As a matter of fact the man was caught. After some horrible treatment, four horses were attached to him—one at each arm and leg, and he was pulled into four bits; after which, the treatment was still continued—though I suppose *he* had lost interest in it. However, before the event, the punishment, if caught, was quite a thing of intelligent anticipation, so, some very special inducement was necessary. The man was promised an absolute miss as regards hell and purgatory—that, of course, almost went without saying. But besides missing the unpleasant consequences of the after-death, he had to be promised the most exquisite bliss in the priests' disposal. And what was it do you think? Guess. Guess again. A front-seat in heaven between Jesus and Mary! That was the best they could do. Whether they consulted the other two before arranging for him to get between them is not told. (Well, of course, they never thought about such an unnecessary "By your leave"—were they not, as priests, superior to anything in heaven or elsewhere?)

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be concluded.)

The Jubilee Dinner of the Malthusian League.

WHEN, in 1877, the Malthusian League was first formed, few of its founders could have foreseen the wonderful gathering of nearly 200 people celebrating, on July 26th last, its fiftieth anniversary with such splendid enthusiasm. Those early followers of Malthus, Francis Place and Richard Carlile were, in the minds of the great-hearted Christians of their day, always associated with pornography and vice. Neo-Malthusianism had not quite got that air of respectability with which Birth-control is trying to surround itself. The name "Malthus" was actually given to a particular contraceptive, and contraceptives always went with such things as venereal disease, prostitution and free love. It required courage of a rare and great kind to face the obloquy, the insults and insolence poured out so generously on to the early pioneers. Needless to say, it made things harder for Freethought to be associated with Neo-Malthusianism, as Charles Bradlaugh found to his cost. Christians are not quite so ready now to utter their foul slanders as they were when that lion-hearted Freethinker faced them with his magnificent defiance and utter fearlessness. Nowadays—except in the case of Roman and Anglo-Catholics and a certain number of women doctors—the battle for Birth Control is won, though many of its warmest advocates haven't the ghost of an idea of what constitutes the Malthusian Law of Population.

The Malthusian League, it must be said, was never primarily a Birth Control league. It stood as a "Crusade against Poverty," and its main thesis was based on the economic work of Malthus. The practical side had to be considered, of course, and nearly 100,000 leaflets, showing the best contraceptive methods have been distributed. This activity, together with that of other bodies, has so thoroughly done its work that only people living in outlying dis-

tricts of the country are now unfamiliar with some form of birth control. But it was a very hard fight, as only those intimately connected with the working of the League know. For many years, a small body of members hung on to their beliefs, in spite of an almost complete boycott.

Other movements promising a golden millenium came along, and the doctrines of Malthus, like those of the materialists, were pronounced utterly "exploded" and false. Most people ridiculed the "non-sense" of parson Malthus, but time has had its revenge, and there are few well-informed economists and sociologists in these days who would dare controvert the Law of Population in its broadest sense.

Professor J. M. Keynes, who was the Chairman at the Jubilee Dinner, gave a splendid précis of the life and work of Malthus, while Mr. R. B. Kerr paid tribute to the work of Francis Place, Richard Carlile, Dr. Knowlton, and Dr. George Drysdale, among others. But it was the presence of Dr. Annie Besant that raised enthusiasm to its highest pitch. For had she not defended, with Charles Bradlaugh, the right of free speech, the right of publishing the *Fruits of Philosophy* in one of the greatest trials recorded in history?

Listening to her wonderful oratory, I could understand how greatly must her Freethought followers have loved her, and how bitter was the disappointment when she went over, body and soul, to occultism, renamed theosophy. But as she spoke and remembered those stirring days when all England followed the great trial in every detail, she forgot, perhaps unconsciously, her socialism, Madame Blavatsky and the Mahatmas, and saw once again the great figure with whom she worked so loyally for nearly fifteen years, and she gave us one of the most magnificent eulogies of Charles Bradlaugh ever uttered. In that room there were many who remembered him, many who had worked with him, and I fancy their eyes were tear-dimmed as they heard her great tribute to his passionate love of truth and his unexampled courage in the face of the severest trials. And Mrs. Besant insisted that this courage was all the greater, because unlike herself and many others, Bradlaugh had nothing to hope for, nothing to gain, for with him this life ended all.

She seemed to me to rather depreciate Dr. Knowlton, for she pointed out quite a number of times that neither she nor Bradlaugh liked his little book, which they withdrew directly it had done its work and replaced with her own *Law of Population*. She did not mention that this *she* withdrew when she went over to Theosophy, and altogether I was left wondering what exactly were her views now. Certainly she looked upon motherhood as a great duty for all women, and insisted that those who could decently bring up a family should do so. But it is ungracious to criticize the heroic figure of this marvellous old lady. Whatever else she has done, to history she means, with her great colleague, the trial, and the trial means one of the greatest events in the history of human welfare. This was the theme of all the speakers, including Mr. H. G. Wells, who also paid the most generous tribute to the work of Malthus. Mr. Wells' great complaint was that Karl Marx was very unlucky not to have read it, which considering that the author of *Das Kapital* made a violent onslaught on Malthus, claiming he was an unashamed plagiarist, is rather strange.

Mr. Wells also praised the early members of the Malthusian League—"this obscure little band of obstinate workers"—and altogether was in his happiest vein.

Mr. John Sumner—a generous donor to the cause—followed, and Dr. C. V. Drysdale wound up the

speeches with what must have been a bombshell to most of the audience. It was nothing less than the announcement that the dinner marked the end of the League! It had, in many ways, done its work. It was not really needed nowadays, and it was better to end its days and work at such a gathering than to expire unknown and unhonoured a few months hence.

I think most people were surprised, but after all why should there be surprise? One has only to glance at a chart of Birth and Death rates in England to see how, after the Trial, the birth rate in England has gradually gone down from 36 per thousand to 18 per thousand, and thus to realize how thoroughly the work has been done. There is no real need of the League as a League, but, of course, there is for the work of its individual members. Speaking as a Free-thinker in a Freethought journal, I can point out once again how the Malthusian movement has been helped by Freethought. Nearly all the pioneers were militant Freethinkers, and right through its history they were ably followed by others.

Supposing now Malthusians helped us a little. They can join our societies, they can subscribe to our journals and books, they can give freely and generously to our funds. A good many of us have been heart and soul with them in the past. We can now do with their hearts and souls in our movement. Why not? *Our* work is not finished. There are millions of people in this land steeped in the silliest of superstitions, and they stand in the way of progress, of tolerance, of happiness. We want the help of all those who so freely took the help of our great men and women to fight their battles.

One more word in conclusion. Fifty years is a long time, but among those who remembered or were present at the Trial, and who must have been very proud to be present at the Dinner, were Miss E. M. Vance and Mr. Arthur B. Moss. What memories must have crowded their thoughts as they listened to the speeches relating events in which they took part! And I fancy also that one of the proudest women in the assembly was Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner. To be the daughter of such a father and to hear that father so honoured . . .

H. CUTNER.

Sir Arthur Keith and Rationalism.

PROFESSOR SIR ARTHUR KEITH has long been a figure of outstanding importance in the scientific world, a fact which has deservedly been recognized by making him President-Elect of the British Association for the advancement of Science. Any utterance of his must therefore command our respectful attention, even if it does not win our assent. Not that Sir Arthur is an authority on matters outside his own sphere, but because his experience and training in the use of reason is likely to shed light on any matter to which he may direct his attention.

At the recent Annual Dinner of the Rationalist Press Association, Sir Arthur Keith spoke at some length on the future task of Rationalism. This he construed in a very wide sense; but the important part of his speech was that in which he attempted to draw a distinction between "constructive" and "destructive" Rationalism, and glorify the scientist who searches after knowledge at the expense of the propagandist who seeks to disseminate it. "I know of only one way of attempting to make the world more rational," he declared, "and that is by the increase of all kinds of knowledge. In spite of all that you may say, the people who are undermining all the superstitions of the world, are the people who are increasing knowledge."

Now, with all respect to Sir Arthur Keith, and whilst recognizing the general truth of his remarks, I beg to submit that there is a very dangerous fallacy lurking in the assumption that the mere accumulation of knowledge will of itself destroy superstition. I do not move

in the academic world of Sir Arthur, and I confess that I cannot conceive the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, yielding up its dogmas and abandoning its pretensions in delighted surprise at some notable discovery by the distinguished President-Elect of the British Association. What I can imagine happening is a very thorough policy of hush concerning it, and, when that is no longer possible, a wilful distortion of the facts or a malicious attempt to deprive them of significance. Copernicus added to our knowledge of the universe, but it was not until the arrival of Galileo that it began to make much headway, and then only in the face of the bitterest opposition. Sir Arthur, in the speech referred to, expressed an admirable desire to become thoroughly rational in all departments of his life: I suggest that a considerable approach to this ideal may be made by his abandoning the irrational notion that Truth will win its way unaided. A certain simplicity in great men is always a delightful characteristic, but that is carrying simplicity too far.

"The accumulation of knowledge," as Mr. Cohen has well said, "is like the accumulation of money. Its value depends upon the use made thereof." It is no use scientists collecting facts and garnering knowledge, if these facts with all their implications are never to reach the masses, or reach them only in a distorted form. The very existence of the British Association is a challenge to Sir Arthur's thesis, for it exists not merely for the co-ordination of science itself, but in order to give to the world some of the results of scientific research and familiarize the public with science and its discoveries. There is no value in the possession of knowledge unless it is related to human well-being; in a world full of difficult and urgent problems, there is no time for what Jack London called "the passionless pursuit of passionless intelligence."

As an illustration of constructive and destructive Rationalism Sir Arthur Keith drew a contrast between Darwin and Huxley:—

Huxley was much more human than Darwin, in this sense: that he was not content, as it were, to carry out such a policy as the one I have touched upon. He said: "No; these men will kill you if we do not go into their camps and slay them." Certainly he went out like Samson and slew his thousands. There is no doubt about it that it was Huxley who was our great champion and gained the great victories for us; but all the same, my heart always goes out to Darwin and his quiet way of letting the truth work its own effect.

There can be no doubt that beside the majestic figure of Charles Darwin, Thomas Henry Huxley pales into insignificance. To me Charles Darwin is incomparably the greatest figure in human history. I never hear his name without emotion. It falls upon me like a Benediction. Were I pious, I should probably cross myself. But this must not blind us to the value of Huxley's work. There were many reasons—physical and temperamental—why Darwin was content to leave the rough work to others, and he was by no means ungrateful to Huxley for the fight he waged. It was Huxley who took the sober facts of Darwin and made them a living issue for the masses.

How does Darwinism stand to-day? No one knows better than Sir Arthur Keith that efforts are being made on many sides to discredit Darwin and his work, on the strength of a few really unimportant minor modifications. No! the truth certainly cannot be left to tell its own tale, and it is to the eternal credit of Sir Arthur Keith, that he is always striving to give Darwinism its proper value, and using his great influence to keep green the memory of that great man. And if, in his Presidential Address before the British Association, he again emphasizes the essential soundness of Darwin's theories, he will be performing as great a service for science as any he has yet done, even in the realm of research.

I wish I could subscribe to the comfortable doctrine that the truth will find its way unaided, and that the acquirement of knowledge is all that matters. What we do find very often is that even the people who add to our knowledge are destroying the value of their discoveries by failing to emphasize the implications involved, or by foolish utterances in other directions. Who can doubt that the labours of Sir James Fraser have been largely nullified by his failure to drive home their impli-

cations where Christianity is concerned, and has not Sir Oliver Lodge by his adherence to Spiritualism and his attempts at squaring science and theology, rendered as big a dis-service to human progress as his discoveries in physics have promoted it?

In conclusion, there remains the question of what the policy of Rationalists, individually and collectively, should be. Sir Arthur thinks that the crusade against theology is a minor matter. He says we should "not bother about going into the cathedrals and breaking glass windows, and pulling down images, and telling people how stupid they are," which is just mere rhetoric and really unworthy of him. Mr. J. M. Robertson, in a speech which, from the printed report, must have been delightful, brought the company back to reality by quoting Holyoake's definition of Rationalism as "the development of the reasoning habit in matters of religion." Our task was already cut out for us: "We have to fight an enormous force that practically seeks to deny the authority of reason. That is why we exist, and that is why we shall have to go on fighting and existing so long as that great counter-force exists." There is really nothing more to be said.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

Something Fresh.

Up till recently I had thought that I was conversant with most of the various brands of Christianity, which are presented for the attention of the civilized world; but I find that I had overlooked the International Bible Students' Association.

A lady called at my house the other day and announced that she had some books, which she was sure I would like to purchase. She displayed one of these. The cover portrayed a modern city in lurid colours with aeroplanes circling above it; and in the sky was a brilliant light, in the centre of which were the words "Our Lord's Return." I realized that the worst had happened, and that I was about to have unfolded to me yet another patent road to Salvation. However, as I am always interested in the thoughts of other people, and as, moreover, it was a lady with whom I had to deal, I assured her that I was as yet in the outer darkness as far as her scheme was concerned, and asked her to explain the idea. Needless to say, she needed no further encouragement, and I will try and reproduce the salient points of her discourse.

She opened the ball by announcing that the Clergy were all wrong; they were mostly hypocrites, and all of them misled the people. The point was well taken; I was able to tell her that I fully agreed with her. This evidently pleased her; but she went on to say that I must be careful to set my feet on the true path, after having cast aside the false guidance of the Church. The true path was, of course, that marked out by the International Bible Students' Association.

She had now got well into her stride. Quite evidently, I was not expected to offer any further comments or criticisms; I was the pupil and she was the master-mind in possession of the Truth. I therefore allowed her to have her head without any interruption.

It appeared that the central fact which it was necessary to grasp, the hinge on which the whole system swung, was the interpretation of the Scriptures. None of the interpretations offered by the Churches were within a mile of the Truth.

With admirable judgment she sorted out any passages in the Bible which would support her theory. "Take the question of the After-life," said she, "Now I hope, of course, that you do not believe in any system of eternal punishment."

I intimated that I did not. She seemed slightly disappointed at this, I thought. She had evidently hoped that she would be able to demonstrate my ignorance to me. However, she was not going to be balked of one of her most favourite themes.

At this point the argument became very involved. I rather lost the thread of the discourse, and only picked it up again at the tomb of Lazarus. Consequently, my ideas were somewhat confused; but so far as I could gather, she contended that because Christ merely commanded Lazarus to "Come forth" and not to "Come

down from Heaven," there was no such place as Heaven. Strewing her path at every step with texts and the views of King David and "Our Lord," she went on to explain that when a person died, he simply became completely unconscious until the day of the Second Coming, which, presumably, was the end of the world. Whether everyone was expected to appear in their earthly body, or whether it was entirely a spiritual resurrection to which she referred, I could not precisely ascertain. However, I was assured quite definitely that this Second Coming was scheduled for May, 1928.

After her departure, I fell to ruminating on the curious habit of all the Christian sects of staking their all on the validity of the Bible. It is quite evident that, with a little care and patience, it is possible to prove absolutely anything if one starts with the assumption that the Bible is an exposition of "inspired truth."

We have been told that the world was created in six days; that it was created in six thousand years, and in six "indefinite periods of time." That Jehovah divided the waters of the Red Sea for the especial benefit of the Israelites; that it was the Divine Inspiration of Moses which caused him to choose the right time for the crossing. That Christ was the son of Mary by the Holy Ghost and also the Son of God; that he was the son of Mary by Joseph and also the Son of God; that he was not the Son of God at all, but merely a very good man. That the world was going to end within the lifetime of the Apostles; that it is going to end in May, 1928; that it should have ended in 1914. That the Pope is the Vicar of God on earth, and the successor of St. Peter by Divine appointment; that he has no right whatsoever to such claims. That it is incumbent on the Faithful to "adore the Elements"; that it is wrong and wicked to do so. That the Marriage Laws are in entire accordance with the Will of God; that they are simply a man-devised method of curbing the licentiousness of the human race, as Paul taught.

There is no end to the changes which can be rung on this responsive instrument. An eminent Catholic remarked, the other day, that "the Bible is like a well-tuned fiddle on which a skilful musician can play any tune he pleases." And I am prepared to admit that the Catholic Church is at least the only one which is consistent in its interpretation of the Scriptures.

But the more I study the quarrels and arguments of the various sects, the more am I convinced that the only safe and reliable method is to listen carefully to all sides of the question, and then to exercise one's own judgment in the matter. Having followed this course, I am prepared to risk the chance of finding the Golden Gates shut in my face when Death forces me to desist from contemplating this most puzzling Riddle of the Universe.

B. S. WILCOX.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. George Scott, in his article on *Illusions*, does not mention the great Doctor illusion. As a small boy I was led to believe (and I think my seniors believed it also) that the function of a doctor was to cure disease. If I had a fever, a great kindly awe-inspiring man came to my bedside, chatted affably, felt my pulse, laid a big soothing hand upon my forehead and prescribed a medicine. In a few days—the fever having passed away in the course of nature—I should be playing about restored to health, thanks to that big wonderful man. Alas! I wish I could recover the illusion—and the health.

During the past two years I have been through the hands of some dozen medical men, all of whom have displayed about the same dead-level of incompetence. Under the panel system (admirable enough in some ways) one has treated me conscientiously, and several have hardly displayed a common courtesy—something I was far from tolerating. For some months I have been under a doctor and his assistant, receiving different treatment according to whom I saw. The scientific treatment of disease is quite impossible under such conditions.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

Mr. G. Whitehead at Liverpool.

THE seven meetings addressed by Mr. Whitehead in Liverpool provided what the Irishman would call an agreeable disappointment. Friends outside Liverpool portrayed ghastly pictures of the probable effects upon the body of the propagandist of outdoor meetings held in Liverpool. The pitch being close to a Catholic stronghold added to the alleged danger. Instead of which, six of the meetings provided audiences as sympathetic and orderly as can be found in England. Questions were intelligent and keen, and sales of literature were good, and every evening a crowd awaited the opening of each meeting. Only at the seventh meeting were some of the hecklers a little impatient, but a vote of thanks, moved by a non-member, was supported by the audience, most of whom were pleased at the prospect of the return visit of the lecturer at the end of September. Being a holiday week some of the members were away, but enthusiastic support and help was rendered at each meeting by Miss Champion and Messrs. Mercer, Sharp, Short and Jackson. Our hearty thanks are also due to Mr. and Miss Wilson, for very kindly hospitality. There is abundant scope for propaganda in Liverpool, and also there are able and willing members to conduct and support it. Altogether the week spent in Liverpool was among the pleasantest in Mr. Whitehead's experience.

Mr. Whitehead will be in Swansea from August 6 to Friday, August 19.

Society News.

WEST LONDON BRANCH.

THE culmination of last week's programme was the realization, in Hyde Park, on Saturday, 6th inst, of the long-expected debate between Mr. George Easterbrook and Mr. Le Maine on the subject "Is there a God?"

The crowd was unusually large, representing sympathizers with both contestants.

It must be conceded that Mr. Easterbrook struggled manfully to support his affirmation of the proposition by quoting considerably from printed and written matter, and introducing the names of well-known scientists, whose religious beliefs seemed to be in accordance with his own.

Mr. Le Maine, however, upheld the Freethought case manfully and convincingly to a large audience, and partizans of both gladiators went home rejoicing in the combat, and in the prowess of their respective representatives; and wild horses will not drag from us any expression of opinion as to the identity of the real victor in the contest.

Magna est veritas, et prevalebit.—C. E.

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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.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Lecture by Sydney Hanson.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. S. Hanson; (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Mr. J. Darby. Wednesday, August 17, at 8 p.m. (Clapham Old Town): Mr. F. Corrigan; (Peckham, Rye Lane): Mr. L. Ebury. Thursday, August 18 (Clapham Old Town): Mr. S. Hanson.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—Ramble, Epping, Epping Upland and Nazeing. Conducted by Mr. R. Snelling-Train, Liverpool Street, 10.30 a.m. Cheap return, Epping 2s. 2d.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 6.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Hyatt and Le Maine. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 6.0, Messrs. Jackson and Carter. Freethought lectures every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30. Various lecturers.

FREETHOUGHT DEMONSTRATION (Hyde Park): 3.0, Speakers—Messrs. Chapman Cohen, Campbell-Everden and Rosetti.

DEBATE (Hyde Park): On Friday August 12, at 7.30. Between Mr. C. Herbert (N.S.S.) and the Rev. W. G. Reed. Subject—"Is Materialism Rational?"

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

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

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. Meetings held in the Bull Ring, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 7 p.m.

"Secularism and Religion." (The Mound): 6.30. Mr. Fred Mann, "Christian Slavery."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (West Regent Street): Every Thursday at 7.30, Mr. Fred Mann. August 11, "Christian Slavery." August 18, "Hell."

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THE "FREETHINKER" ENDOWMENT TRUST.

A Great Scheme for a Great Purpose.

THE *Freethinker* Endowment Trust was registered on the 25th of August, 1925, its object being to raise a sum of not less than £8,000, which, by investment, would yield sufficient to cover the estimated annual loss incurred in the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. The Trust is controlled and administered by five trustees, of which number the Editor of the *Freethinker* is one in virtue of his office. By the terms of the Trust Deed the trustees are prohibited from deriving anything from the Trust in the shape of profit, emoluments, or payment, and in the event of the position of the *Freethinker* at any time, in the opinion of the Trustees, rendering the Fund unnecessary, it may be brought to an end, and the capital sum handed over to the National Secular Society.

The Trust has been before the public since October, 1925, and up to date over £5,000 has been subscribed. A sum of £1,000 has been promised conditional on the amount being made up to £7,000 by December 31, 1927, £450 by other friends to make up the £7,000. There is thus left about £1,500 yet to be raised. That should be well within the compass of the friends of the *Freethinker* at home and abroad.

The importance of the *Freethinker* to the Freethought movement cannot well be over emphasized. For over forty years it has been the mouthpiece of militant Freethought in this country, it has never failed to champion the cause of mental liberty in and out of the Courts, and its fight on behalf of the Secular Society, Limited, in which the right of an anti-Christian Society to receive bequests was triumphantly vindicated by a House of Lords' decision, was of first-rate importance to Freethinkers all over the English-speaking world.

The Trust may be benefited by donation or bequests. Donations may be sent to either the Secretary, Mr. H. Jessop, Hollyshaw, Whitkirk, Leeds, or to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, from whom any further information concerning the Trust will be given on request.

All sums received are acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

BERNARD SHAW EXPLAINED

By GEORGE WHITEHEAD

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