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Views and Opinions.

Do Miracles Happen? Most Freethinker readers will be well acquainted with Hume's famous essay on Miracles, and those who are not familiar with it will be well used to the argument there set forth.

laws of nature by miracles, in order to judge which of them is most likely and probable . . . As the violations of truth are more common in the testimony concerning religious miracles, than in that concerning any other matter of fact; this must diminish very much the authority of the former testimony and make us form a general resolution, never to lend any attention to it, with whatever specious pretence it may be covered.

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Hume the Anti-Christian.

To most people, nowadays, Hume's argument will appear to the most obvious common sense. It is the ground upon which nearly every rational man works when dealing with any story that is brought before them.

We may conclude that the Christian religion not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one.

was not likely to excite grateful feelings in the mind of any believer in the Christian religion.



### Miracles Incredible.

Much of Professor Taylor's criticism reads rather more like a smart exercise in dialectics, than a genuine attack upon Hume. There are, however, two instances in which he makes a hit. The one is in which he points out that inasmuch as Hume held that events did not, so to speak, flow into each other, but merely followed each other—they were conjoined but never connected—he had no right to come to any definite conclusion concerning the course of events, which might be to-morrow quite different from what it is to-day, and so make easy the acceptance of the miraculous. The believer in the miraculous, and the believer in science thus have the same consciousness of a miracle within their own breast. This is a keen thrust, although it does not seriously affect the main doctrine of Hume concerning the value of human testimony to the miraculous. And it is made possible in consequence of Hume's theory of causation. I have dealt with this fully in my *Materialism Re-stated*, and all that needs be said here is that while there may be some strength in the argument against a theory of causation which denies any organic connexion between events, it can have none so soon as effects are recognized as consequents due to the integration of definite factors. That places the question of the credibility of miracles upon a quite different basis, and enables one to rule out certain happenings as not merely incredible, but impossible.

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### God and Miracles.

The other issue raised by Professor Taylor is much more to the point. He argues that, ultimately, whether we are ready to believe in a miracle, or reject it as unworthy of examination, depends upon our "pattern universe," our belief is determined by our metaphysic. If we believe in a God, then we may reasonably expect that we shall see signs of his activities here and there in the course of history. If we do not, then we shall not expect them, unusual events will manifest themselves as "freaks," that is as unusual combinations of known forces, and not as happenings that have some unmistakable reference to an assumed world pattern. The problem of the miraculous, he says, "cannot even be discussed with any profit between two parties of whom one is a Theist and the other an Atheist or pure Agnostic," and he agrees with Bacon that "miracles have been wrought to convince idolators, but none to convince atheists." With that we are inclined to agree. If you believe in a God, there can be no reasonable objection to believing in miracles, since you have already accepted the greatest miracle of all. And if you have managed the miracle of believing in an inconceivable existence, which somehow or the other called everything, including itself, into existence, and gave everything the properties it possesses, then it is possible to possess a belief that when it so suits this inconceivable existence, it can re-endow things with quite contradictory qualities and so produce quite unusual results. If I could believe in a God, I should never boggle at so small a thing as the feeding of the five thousand, or the virgin birth. The curious thing, however, even with this position, is that while we can only believe in miracles if we believe in a God beforehand, miracles are brought forward to prove a God exists. So the dog chases his tail, and if the two moving ends never meet, considerable amusement may be given to the onlooker.

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### A Question of Psychology.

Hume, in writing his essay on miracles, did at least present us with a common sense reply to such

as asked that miracles should be accepted as true because men of old had testified to their occurrence. Professor Taylor challenges the local relevancy of Hume's method, and succeeds in clouding the whole issue. For the real question at issue is not whether we have evidence for miracles, but only that of an understanding of the conditions under which the reality of the miraculous is accepted. What evidence has there ever been of the virgin birth, or the raising of a man from the dead, or the feeding of the five thousand, or the casting of devils out of a man and their reincarceration in a drove of pigs? People did not get any evidence about these things; they were simply told about them, and they believed because they were told. And the question, therefore, is not whether they ever occurred, but why did a certain number of men and women believe they occurred? The question, as I have so often pointed out, is not historical, but psychological. The problem before us is the determination of the conditions which causes people to accept as true things which we know were false, because we know they never could have happened. Professor Taylor's talk merely disguises the point that is to be decided. The modern mind rejects the miraculous simply because it recognizes that belief in miracles is as much a stage in the mental development of the race as is the belief in fairies, and ghosts, and goblins, and devils. It says definitely that certain miracles never could have happened because they run directly counter to what we know of natural processes, and because we believe that natural forces operate the same to-day as they did a couple of thousand years ago. If that is not the case, then all science is impossible, and all reasoning from the present to the past, or from the past to the future is sheer absurdity. To those who argue from the point of view of mere evidence, Hume's reply stands unaffected by anything that Professor Taylor says. And to those who examine miracles from the point of view of historical psychology, there is no need to enquire what evidence there is for their truth. We know that no evidence exists, or ever has existed. Nor do I doubt but that if Professor Taylor was faced with the position of those stated in the Christian Bible was true or not, he would quickly decide against it on exactly the grounds just named. For, after all, miracles in general are made up of miracles in particular. Miracles, to repeat Bacon, may happen to those who believe in a God, they never happen to those who do not. That is almost the final word. Elaborated, it means that miracles happen to those who expect them. They occur where they will do the least good, as evidence, because they cannot occur where they would be of use. Or, to cite Hume, miracles "are observed chiefly to abound among ignorant and barbarous nations; or if a civilized people has ever given admission to any of them, that people will be found to have received them from ignorant and barbarous ancestors, who transmitted them with that inviolable sanction and authority, which always attend received opinions." Then we have settled the state of mind which gives birth to the belief in miracles, we have settled all that is really in question.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The wise and good wish well to liberty  
Throughout all lands; aim to win her cause  
By some bold movement from the heart of all  
United Nations.

Philip James Bailey.



**"A Reply to a Sceptic Critic."**

SUCH is the title given in the *Western Mail* of August 20 to a report of a discourse which the Rev. Evan H. R. Hughes, vicar of Mardy, South Wales, delivered on Sunday, August 14, in answer to an article in this journal for August 7, entitled "A Characteristic Sermon in Wales." The subject of the Sermon criticized was Immortality, and for the fine spirit and tone which pervade his "Reply," Mr. Hughes deserves the highest praise. He says: "The writer exercises his right as a Sceptic to criticize the arguments advanced in my sermon." Quite true; but "the writer" desires to inform the preacher that from a strictly etymological point of view the term "Sceptic" is hardly applicable. He is not a mere doubter, but a positive denier, of the objective truth of supernaturalism. He once believed in and advocated it, as his parents had done before him; but no sooner did he seriously begin to examine critically and scientifically the alleged evidences for it than doubt seized him, and as the investigation proceeded the doubt ripened into a firm conviction of their utter inadequacy. Consequently, for nearly thirty years he has been a deeply convinced disbeliever in and zealous repudiator of Christianity. Mr. Hughes indulges in several frank admissions, but puts his own interpretation upon them. Here is one:—

I readily admit that only a small proportion of our population are adherents to any form of organized religion. But this is due to impatience with ecclesiasticism; disgust at the contradictions and rivalries and obscurantism of the sects; the inconsistencies of many professing Christians; and a general indisposition of the masses of the people to trouble overmuch about anything which demands real seriousness of mind, and not to any great extent to an abandonment of belief in the supernatural and after-life. The attraction of Spiritism for such large numbers of people confirms me in this opinion.

There is a stupendous amount of truth in what the reverend gentleman tells us about the horrible corruption and rancour to which the reign of Christian sectarianism in the land inevitably gives rise; and during the last twenty-five years we have met thousands of people whom this fact alone has driven, not only out of church and chapel-going, but also out of belief in the divinity of the Christian religion, and ultimately into disbelief in the Supernatural itself. Has Mr. Hughes never heard of the crowded Freethought meetings that have often been held at Mountain Ash, Merthyr Tydfil, Ferndale, Porth, Tonypany, Pentre, and other places not far from Mardy, which were addressed by, among others, the present writer? Why, the Rhondda Valley simply teems with Secularists, almost everyone of whom is an avowed Atheist.

Mr. Hughes makes another interesting admission. In the article on "A Characteristic Sermon in Wales," it was claimed that "non-Christians, as a class, are not one whit behind ardent believers in character and conduct," and the preacher agrees. He says:—

I personally and intimately know many good Freethinkers. I have for them a profound respect and affection. I have also met not a few bad so-called Christians.

On that point we are in full agreement with Mr. Hughes; but he proceeds thus:—

All this proves, however, is that some people are not nearly so good as what they believe, or think they believe, and that other people are much better than what they believe, or think they believe. Anyhow, these are only exceptions to the general rule, that creed and conduct have a vital bearing on each other, and that, as John Morley said, "opinions shape ideals, and it is ideals that inspire conduct."

Again, in *principle* we are in complete agreement, while in his *application* of the principle we are at total variance, with the preacher. So far as his application of the principle is concerned he is peculiarly unfortunate in his choice of the author from whom to make his quotation. He cannot be ignorant of the fact that Lord Morley was a firmly convinced and uncompromising Freethinker. Once he nearly lost his seat in Parliament, through his inability to assure his Scottish constituents that he believed in God. When he joined the Rationalist Press Association, a few years before his death, he publicly confessed that the longer he lived the more Rationalistic his views became. Does it not, therefore irresistibly follow that Morley's *ideals* were not Christian, but emphatically Humanistic, essentially unconnected with any theory of Supernaturalism or of immortality? As J. A. Symonds well puts it in his scholarly article on "Renaissance" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Humanism "indicates the endeavour of man to reconstruct himself as a free being, not as the thrall of the theological despotism, and the peculiar assistance he derived in this effort from the Greek and Roman literature, the *litteræ humaniores*, the letters leaning rather to the side of man than of divinity." Later on Mr. Symonds says:—

Petrarch first opened a new method in scholarship, and revealed what we denote as humanism. In his teaching lay the twofold discovery of man and of the world. For humanism, which was the vital element in the Revival of Learning, consists mainly of the just perception of the dignity of man as a rational, volitional, and sentient being, born upon this earth with a right to use it and enjoy it. Humanism implied the rejection of those visions of a future and imagined state of souls as the only absolute reality, which had fascinated the imagination of the Middle Ages.

To-day Secularism is a Humanistic philosophy of man's life, in which supernaturalism is not recognized as an existing reality at all, and the hope of immortality is only an empty dream. Mr. Hughes, however, persists in vainly asserting that the belief in a future life is an indispensable condition of the attainment of the noblest and purest morality. He says: "I do not think that Renan exaggerated when he wrote: 'The day when belief in an after-life shall vanish from the earth, will witness a terrific moral and spiritual decadence, there is no lever which is capable of lifting an entire people, if once they have lost their faith in the immortality of the soul.'" Renan possessed many admirable qualities, and was one of the sweetest stylists of his day, but he was neither an accurate thinker nor a reliable prophet, while by the Church he was cursed as a dangerous heresiarch.

Mr. Hughes deliberately ignores two wholly undeniable facts. The first is the fact that early Buddhism was an Atheistic philosophy of human life, in which there was no room for either the soul or a future life (See Rhys David's *Buddhism* and *Early Buddhism*). Nirvana did not signify a future state, but a state of conquest and exaltation in this world. In this state Gotama learned this lesson: "Rebirth is at an end. The higher life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After this present life there will be no beyond." And yet under the sway of this godless, soulless, futureless philosophy for several hundred years India became the most highly moral and happy country under the Sun. The second fact ignored by the reverend gentleman is the most dreadfully damaging in its effect upon his case for immortality that can possibly be conceived; namely, the, to him, dismal fact that nigh two thousand years of the dominance of the be-



belief in an after-life has not succeeded in lifting Christendom into a life of a preeminently perfect and spotless morality. What about Italy, Spain, and France; can it be honestly said of a single one of them that Christian ideals have inspired excellent conduct in it? And can we report of dear old Wales, after all its exciting revivals, that class war has come to an end, and that industrial and economic problems have been justly and sanely solved, in it? If, then, the faith in immortality has not achieved the moral and social transformation of Christian countries, what right has Mr. Hughes to say in Renan's words, that the loss of it would result immediately in "a terrific moral and spiritual decadence."?

No, Mr. Hughes's reply has not been a success. By attempting it he has merely worsened his own case and improved that of the *Freethinker*. In reality, his plea for belief in a life after death is quite as inane and silly as that of the great poet Tennyson, in the following lines:—

A Voice spake out of the skies  
To a just man and a wise—  
"The world and all within it  
Will only last a minute!"  
And a beggar began to cry,  
"Food, food, or I die!"  
Is it worth his while to eat,  
Or mine to give him meat,  
If the world and all within it  
Were nothing the next minute?

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Higher, the Fewer.

"Genius hovers with his sunshine and music close by the darkest and deafest eras."—Emerson.

"Spirits are not finely touched  
But to fine issues."—Shakespeare.

DURING the holiday season newspaper editors are hard driven in search of news. Stories of big gooseberries and tales of fearsome sea serpents pall by repetition, and the editors start discussions in their columns on subjects likely to attract attention. A recent debate was of more than average interest, and concerned the alleged dearth of great men in the present era.

In a newspaper interview, Professor Butler, President of Columbia University, U.S.A., said: "For two thousand years there has never been a period when somewhere in the world, there was not a really great poet or philosopher or genius of some other sort who dwarfed his fellow-men. To-day there is no great man in any country in the world! Not one!"

This tall statement from the land of tall buildings passed unchallenged in this country. Even Hall Caine did not draw attention to his own facial resemblance to Shakespeare, and not a squeak of protest came from the Bishop of London or "Woodbine Willie." No theatrical publicity agent pressed for the recognition of his fair employer's many accomplishments. And that Christian martyr, Horatio Bottomley, was, for the moment, tongue-tied, a further proof of the humility of saints.

In the United States, on the other hand, the subject became a nine days' wonder, and anxious editors gave the matter wide publicity and provoked wider discussion. For a brief spell American culture and commercialism were both interested in the same matter, although with vastly different objects. From New York to Nebraska, editors smiled as they paraded their encyclopædic knowledge in leaded type. Near the Pacific slope busy pressmen had to race to the public libraries to find out whether Paderewski was listed with the noble dead, or whether Sobieski was still with the living. These, however, were the

little drawbacks attendant upon powerful intellects moving in unfamiliar regions.

According to the numerous organs of American opinion it would seem that the world's greatest men are Mussolini, Edison, Marconi, Orville Wright, Henry Ford, and Bernard Shaw. These are supposed to be the "big six," but other names suggested as having claims to recognition are those of H. G. Wells, Professor Masaryk (of Czechoslovakia), Edward Robinson (a Transatlantic poet, whose fame has not yet reached Europe), Tesla, and de Forest.

Glancing at the names selected, we feel bound to say that there is little or nothing in the list to rebut the statement of Professor Butler's which provoked the original discussion. Looking ahead we feel bound to doubt whether our own choice would have included any of them except Bernard Shaw, who is the leading dramatist of the day as well as one of its foremost intellectuals. As a force in English literature, however, he does not bulk so greatly as Thomas Hardy, whose shelf full of masterpieces proclaims a rare genius when his own modesty would deny the imputation. As to Signor Mussolini, he is not so much entitled to recognition as the makers of modern Russia, who, if successful, will be truly entitled to the name of nation-builders. So far as Edison, Marconi, and Orville Wright are concerned, all these men have supplied valuable links in the chain of scientific research that has led up to some great and commercially exploitable discovery or invention; but it is impossible to apportion the credit between them and the scientific pioneers who preceded them. As for Henry Ford, he is a smart tradesman and a clever organizer. He is not thereby better entitled to be considered great than Messrs. Swan and Edgar, the famous West-end storekeepers, if they indeed exist, and are not legendary figures.

Posterity, and not newspaper readers, must be the final court of appeal as to real greatness. History shows us, however, what sort of men come to be reckoned great finally. Looking over the outstanding names, Shakespeare, Napoleon, Aristotle, Michelangelo, Abraham Lincoln, Darwin, and scores of others, we find that they became great not only because they possessed genius, but because their age gave scope for greatness. There is still scope for it in the world.

Genius is a word incapable of exact definition, and is used with too much latitude. It is therefore very difficult to assert that the world is barren of genius. Contemporaries lack perspective, just as a man walking up the side of a mountain fails to see it in all its grandeur. When Shakespeare strolled through the streets of Stratford-on-Avon the natives thought of him only as a player from London. When Edward Gibbon published his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, old King George said: "What, another big book, Mr. Gibbon!" Shoals of politicians in America considered they were the equal of Abe Lincoln. Darwin's thirty years' work was dismissed as a hasty generalization by men unacquainted with the alphabet of science. After Napoleon's death, his own brother said: "He was not so much a great man as a good one."

Few people recognize a genius when they see one. A man may be a genius in some highly specialized form of philosophy or science, and yet remain obscure outside a very small circle. The results of his work may take years before they penetrate the public consciousness and are recognized as epoch-making. A genius is often ignored or mocked by his own generation, simply because he is original. Theodore Hook said that Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* was likely to remain unbound, and he voiced contemporary criticism. Wagner was grudgingly conceded to



possess method in his musical madness. Whistler was thought to be quite mad by people incapable of painting a street door.

The genius is just as often without honour in his own era as is the prophet in his own country. It is, usually, future generations that applaud him and give him his due when he is dead. For it is much easier to judge of greatness in perspective and to value a man when his work is completed. Charles Bradlaugh was misunderstood during his life, and only appreciated at his true worth when he was beyond praise or blame. Turner's canvases were "caviare to the general," when first painted; now they are the wonder and despair of a later generation of artists. Emerson, the sweetest and rarest of America's thinkers, was a riddle to his countrymen. It was said that when Emerson visited Egypt and saw the Sphinx, that the latter winked and said, "You're another."

It is difficult for ordinary, normal people to appreciate genius simply because genius is abnormal. Many men are sceptical because their swans have turned out to be geese. Too often the boy who gains the medals and prizes at school finishes his public career at Dartmoor, and the apparently stupid scholar lives to become a somebody. But when a reputation has stood the test of time, it is easy to see why it is great. To make dogmatic statements as to the absence of geniuses in the world to-day appears to be a most gratuitous form of error. Our descendants will have little difficulty in recognizing them.

MIMNERMUS.

## History and Growth of Spiritualism.

(Continued from page 556.)

A MATTER of eighty years ago, fame was not so easy a thing to woo and win as it is to-day. Opportunities, before the days of cinemas, radios and Sunday newspapers, were not numerous. And yet I very much question whether enduring fame was ever gained quite so easily as that secured by the two young Fox girls and their remarkably astute sister, the Mrs. Fish of imperishable memory. At any rate, to innumerable spiritualists these Fox girls are very nearly deities; Hydesville, the hamlet in Wayne County, New York State, is a sort of pocket Mecca. For, at this precise spot, spiritualism, to hear the mystics of to-day talk, was born. Certainly, modern spiritualism in its popular conception owes much to Hydesville and the precious Fox family. And the story is well worth the telling. Vastly interesting indeed is it, as the investigator is enabled to trace how a movement of world-wide extension and enormous importance may be set in motion. History, and here the events are so recent that history for once is authentic, tells us that the day of days, or rather the night of nights, was March 31, 1848. In the frame house of one, J. D. Fox, prosperous farmer of Hydesville, were heard mysterious sounds which made the farmer and his wife cock up their heads and listen. Presumably these Fox's, man and wife, were of wooden courage, for the repetition of the sounds, which were in the shape of raps, distinct and definite, does not seem to have caused anything which could be described as savouring of panic or even excessive alarm. Mrs. Fox, though plainly inclined to think of ghosts, was frankly puzzled. She decided to test the matter by asking if the rapper were a spirit, and if so to rap three times for "yes." Promptly enough came the three raps, distinct, definite, unquestionable. By an amplification of this crude method of communication, an alphabetic code was formulated, and Mrs.

Fox continued her converse with the spirit, which rapped out its answers promptly and thoroughly. The consternation in the Fox household, comprising, in addition to the heads, the thirteen years old Margaret, the eleven years old Catherine and their nurse, spread through the district, and night after night, the local yokelry came to gape and to question, to wonder and to worship. Someone recalled the legend of a murdered pedlar, and with him was immediately identified the ghost.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, to settle all doubts and disputes, this ghost, on the question being put, confirmed the suspicion with promptness.

Not every one could draw from the spirit the answering raps. Mrs. Fox met with a good deal of success; others fetched answers intermittently. Surprisingly enough, the two young girls developed a measure of success which were well nigh phenomenal, and in other circumstances and with a more critical audience, might well have aroused suspicion. They were credulous to a degree in Hydesville in those days. It was left to an elder sister, one Leah, married, and living at the neighbouring town of Rochester, to guess at the truth. A woman of some astuteness, this Mrs. Fish, she took her baby sisters upstairs, and after an extended interview behind closed and locked doors, she haled the two of them to Rochester. In the meantime, the tale of the Hydesville ghost had been flashed through the length and breadth of the States, and to Rochester, where, under the skilful chaperonage of the clever Leah, the Fox girls held nightly seances, the curious of a whole continent flocked by the hundred.

Not unnaturally, others found they could communicate with dead friends and relatives, and spirit rappers or mediums sprang into existence all over the country. Undimmed, however, was the fame of the Fox sisters, whose seances were the resorts of the highest and mightiest, including many well known public men. Fenimore Cooper was a regular sitter, so too, were Horace Greeley and Harriet Beecher Stowe. There was, of course, plenty of hostile criticism, and three years after the first manifestations the fate of the Fox family trembled very shakily in the balance. The University of Buffalo appointed a Committee of Investigation composed of three medical men, to attend the seances. Promptly was issued the report that the raps were produced by muscular contraction of the joints. But the public had in its wisdom decreed that the raps were genuine spirit communications, and would have none of this prosaic explanation. Merrily proceeded the game, the spirits continually discovered fresh ways of startling the sitters, such as touching their legs and hair, culminating in 1869 with Leah's master stroke, the production of an actual ghost which walked about the room answering questions of the sitters. In the meantime, Greeley's interest had deepened. His attendances were regular to a degree, and there seems little doubt that the charms of the seductive Catherine had something to do with it. One momentous night Horace took with him a well-known Arctic explorer, by name, Captain Elisha Kent Kane. The rapping and other hocus pocus impressed the captain not at all, but Margaret did unquestionably impress him tremendously. Indeed, he fell in love with her there and then. Eventually the two went through a form of marriage, the captain imploring the girl to give up the rapping. And then fate stepped in with a big and mighty foot. In a matter of months Kane died, and Margaret, indubitably in love, after continuing for some time in the medium-

<sup>1</sup> Despite much thorough exploration at the time, the skeleton of the murdered pedlar was not discovered until forty-six years later, to wit, in 1904. The inference is obvious.



istic business, in a moment of contrition turned Catholic. The result was inevitable. Impressed by sacerdotalism with the duty of exposing a false religion, she gave an interview to the *New York Herald* and confessed the whole sordid affair, putting the blame barefacedly on Leah. The raps were made by manipulations of the toe and finger joints against a hard surface. As children, Margaret and Catherine discovered their ability in this direction when lying in bed, and constant practice brought considerable efficiency. But it was the artful Leah who realized the possibilities of this rapping, and it was on this scheming Leah, then in the full pomp of her majesty and power, that, in a spirit of poetic justice, the reformed Margaret wreaked vengeance. A fine taste of the dramatic had this same Margaret. The full story of an evangelical brand plucked from the burning was told from the stage floor of the New York Academy of Music on the evening of October 21, 1888. Punctuated with sobs, preceded by a tale of misery, repentance and God-to-be-thanked power to tell the truth, the reformed medium blubbered her story:—

I am here to-night as the founder of spiritualism to denounce it as an absolute falsehood from beginning to end, as the flimsiest of superstitions, the most wicked blasphemy known to the world. The rappings are simply the result of perfect control of the muscles below the knee, which govern the tendons of the foot and allow an action of toe and ankle bones that is not generally known . . .<sup>2</sup>

The marvel is that the movement did not wither and die under such a sledge-hammer blow. Wither it certainly did for a time. Die it just as certainly did not. For the blow was to some extent modified. A woman of the undoubted agility of mind of the redoubtable Leah (now Mrs. Underhill) was not one to be done out of an easy livelihood without a struggle, and the growth of the movement had created a small army of mediums and societies, to whom spiritualism was a matter which concerned directly or indirectly their bread and butter, and in not a few cases their fame and social position. Moreover, religious fanaticism once it is awakened takes some killing. Spiritualism is and was a religion, its more immediate and earnest followers, apart from professional frauds, are believers and fanatics just as much as are the women who finger their beads in the Catholic confessional box, or sip their wine at the sacrament of the Eucharist. And it was in this very matter of religion that Margaret gave to the spiritualists a weapon on which they were quick to put capable hands. The Catholics, said Leah and her army, had in their insane jealousy and fear of the new revelation, forced Margaret to concoct the whole story; while H. J. Newton, the then President of the First Spiritualist Society of New York, in a positive burst of inspiration amounting almost to genius, hammered the critical element with force and effect.

If she says these things about her own feats, she lies! I and other men of truth have seen her many times under conditions where there was no possibility of fraud. She says she produces the rappings with her feet. It's a lie! Why, I have seen her produce raps many times when she was too drunk to move her feet!

In sweet truth, a master stroke. To the memory of this Newton, in sheer reverence, I doff my hat.

It is then on such a flimsy foundation that modern spiritualism stands. I have more than a suspicion that not a few of the psychists of to-day, those

<sup>2</sup> A fuller account of Margaret Fox's confession, from which this excerpt is taken, appeared in an article, "The Fountain of Spiritualism," by Patrick Kearney, in the *American Mercury*, March, 1925.

"mystics," whose names decorate the volumes published by the Society for Psychical research, would throw up their hats in sheer delight if the Hydesville affair and the career of the Fox sisters could be capably and durably buried; much in the way that the pillars of modern theology would give an extra sixpence on the collection plate, if the story of Noah and his ridiculous ark could be exorcized for good and all. The public, however, that gulper of emotional fairy tales and mythological stories, thinks otherwise. It accepted these things in good faith and it means to stick to them. The rank and file of spiritualism intend to reverence the Hydesville tradition for all time.<sup>3</sup> Its relegation to the annals of folk-lore would be looked upon as a crime comparable with vandalism. You might as well ask them to give up their Christmas festivities; you might as reasonably ask them to stop believing that the ostrich, in moments of terror, hides its head in the sand.

Even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle worships at the Hydesville shrine, witness this in *The Vital Message*, page 45:—

It was only when the young Fox girl struck her hands together and cried, "Do as I do," that there was instant compliance, and consequent proof of the presence of an *intelligent* invisible force, thus differing from all other forces of which we know. The circumstances were humble and even rather sordid, upon both sides of the veil, human and spirit, yet it was, as time will more and more clearly show, one of the turning points of the world's history, greater far than the fall of thrones or the rout of armies.

But not every spiritualist has reached such a stage of fanaticism, that he can write in sober faith such jejune mush in connexion with a vulgar, cheap and sordid piece of commonplace cheater. Conan Doyle, in his zeal, will believe pretty nearly anything and, in consequence, is continually making himself ridiculous.<sup>4</sup> He takes into the atmosphere of the seance-room a credulity rivalling that of a stage-struck servant girl worshipping at the feet of the Dolly Sisters, or of a clodhopper in a cinema cheering the antics of Charlie Chaplin or Rudolph Valentino.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

(To be continued.)

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. Dr. Lamond contributes to the issue of *Light*, dated May 9, 1925, a detailed account of the Hydesville affair, which he terms "the beginning of the movement of modern spiritualism." Further, this reverend writer states, "it was in 1848 that the clear conception first dawned upon the minds of men that intelligent and reliable communication could be maintained between the visible and the invisible worlds." But in this lengthy article there is no mention of the report of the Investigation Committee appointed by the University of Buffalo; there is no mention of Margaret Fox's public confession; there is no mention of Katie Fox's denunciation of spiritualism as "all humbuggery"

<sup>4</sup> As recently as June 19, 1925, we find Sir Arthur Conan Doyle quoting, as a proof of spiritualistic truth this pitiful quackery of the Fox family. In the *Morning Post* of that date, he writes: "There are certain classical examples, each of which is, in my opinion, quite final . . . Among such cases I would quote the whole opening incident at Hydesville in 1848, which was impressive before, but has become overpoweringly so since the actual discovery of the murdered man's remains fifty years after the original outbreak. This was the one link missing, and the chain is now complete. Then there is the long record of Crookes' experiments with the materialized form of Katie King as chronicled in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, from 1871 to 1873, supported by the numerous photographs which he took of the ectoplasmic body. This case has never been honestly faced by any opponent." Thus Sir Arthur with shut eyes gaping open-mouthed at the fount of fraud and fable. The Hydesville case I have examined, and I shall show later how for brazen impudence the case of Katie King runs it a good second.



## Acid Drops.

To-day we are always hearing complaints about the dwindling attendances at churches and chapels, and some of our clergy are at their wit's end. They don't know what on earth to do to bring back their straying sheep, and to save them from eternal damnation, and, incidentally, to fill up their own churches again. It must be so annoying to spend a whole week preparing a touching and eloquent sermon on the necessity of Christ and the vitalness of the Christian religion, and so on, and then on Sunday to find that only half-a-dozen people are prepared to be bored to death listening to it, three of whom are already sound asleep, while the other three are engaged in whispering to one another the latest tit-bits about "that scandalous man, Mr. Smith," or "that terrible woman, Mrs. Brown," or "that brazen huzzy, Miss Robinson." However, why not take the suggestion of Lord Chief Justice Beest a hundred years ago? In the *Evening Standard*, for August 22, was reprinted the following from the same newspaper for August 22, 1827:—

In his charge to the Grand Jury, at Bridgewater Assizes, Lord Chief Justice Beest said: "The poorer classes should be coercively compelled to attend divine service, if they could not be persuaded of its necessity. The old ecclesiastical censure and a fine of rs. for causeless absence from a place of parish worship ought to be brought into active operation. It might be said that coercion would be a bad mode of making people religious. It was most desirable, at all events, to get people to frequent their respective places of worship that some chance should be afforded to illustrate the lines of the poet... Those who came to scoff, remained to pray."

This is really a great scheme, and, if put into operation by some of our toy politicians at Westminster, should prove a very successful church-filler. You see how it works? If you go to church you put a threepenny bit or a trouser-button in the plate; if you stay away without any just cause you pay up a shilling fine. The odds are that you go to church and save ninepence. Unfortunately for the deceased learned gentleman's pious hopes; though nowadays, thank heavens, "those who go to scoff, remain to . . . scoff."

A recent newspaper report states that the inhabitants of the Bulgarian village of Lopnitzna, in despair, owing to the continual stormy weather, resolved to have recourse to human sacrifice in order to propitiate the "weather god." They therefore decided to offer up four of their number, who were renowned for their evil deeds. The four victims were selected and immediately executed. And yet people still continue to rant and rant about the absolute necessity of religion, and what a terrible state the world would get into were it not for the saving effect of religion. The poor blind fools don't seem to realize that their own religion is but a development of these nauseating barbarities which are still perpetrated to-day by savage adherents of some primitive religions.

In a characteristic address at Bedford, Bishop Mumford, ex-President of the English Province of the Moravian Church, said that people did not always realize that a sermon took an average brain at least one day to prepare thoroughly and might take longer. People probably didn't realize this, as they could only judge from the results, which hardly suggest a vast amount of thinking and preparation. Of course, when the Bishop said "average brain," he meant the brain of an average clergyman, a very different thing, and, judging from the typical Sunday night productions, all this time spent on the preparation of sermons seems to us to be "love's labour lost."

The chairman of a great insurance society said recently that not only was the average age at death in this country much higher than it used to be, but the general health was greatly improved, partly from better knowledge of the laws of health, and through the adoption of preventative methods in the treatment of disease rather

than curative. Though the chairman forgot to mention it, this improvement may be attributed to the Christian religion. Every piece of progress in whatever sphere you like is due to the Christian religion. We know that for a fact, because the parsons keep on saying so, and everyone knows that men of God never tell untruths.

More than 50,000 people were killed during recent earthquakes in Kansu Province, China. This is, of course, as a Second Adventist weekly points out, one of the signs indicating the Second Coming of our Lord. It is a pity Gentle Jesus cannot be a little quieter in heralding his approach. And if that is what happens while he is on his way, what are we to expect when he arrives?

Bishop J. W. Hamilton of U.S.A., preaching at Westminster feelingly spoke of the difficulties with which the Christian was confronted because of the progress of scientific thought from time to time. He, however, reminded his hearers that in the end science and the word of God must confirm each other if both were true. We like the bishop's "if." Science has, so far, not confirmed a single particular of the Word of God. And, by the trend of things, it appears never likely to do so, the movement being in the other direction. Still, the Bishop's congregation was no doubt cheered by his deliciously non-committal statement.

Miss Shushama Tagore, a sister of the poet, states that it is an error to suppose that Hindu women are oppressed. As the Hindu religion teaches, she says, they are treated with great regard. If Christian missionaries, in the interests of the cash-box and their creed, were not in the habit of manipulating the truth about the Hindus, Miss Tagore's statement wouldn't have been necessary. We fancy, however, it will fall on deaf ears in this well-Christianised country.

Dr. D. L. Ritchie, Principal of Montreal Theological College, who is now in England after a five years' absence, was asked to give his impressions of this country. One of his comments was: "It is clear that ecclesiastical Christianity is driving a somewhat hard furrow. One can only admire the splendid way the ministers and churches are holding on despite all difficulties that many changes are placing in their way." Dr. Ritchie's remark is hardly likely to cheer our reapers in the Lord's vineyards. Couldn't he have trotted out that merry little joke about there being a revival of religion just about to show itself?

Truth will out. A Protestant weekly claiming allegiance to the Church of England says that when the Enabling Bill was passed, its aim was said to be to democratize the Church. The effect has been, says this paper, "to enable Bishops and other officials and managers to call the tune, leaving the clergy and laity to pay the piper!"

Apropos of the possibility of Parliament rejecting the new Prayer-Book of the Government religion, the Bishop of Gloucester says that there is no doubt that there is a great majority of thoughtful Christians in its favour. If it is rejected by the secular authority, the result may be serious. A Protestant journal, the *English Churchman*, thinks the Bishop's "majority" is questionable. It adds that the book will not bring peace, but will introduce a possible cause of contention into every parish. "Already it has produced strife and controversy on a large scale, and the controversy will be intensified by its legislation." We can hardly credit this. Does not every Anglican congregation on Sunday beseech the Almighty to, "Give Peace in our time, O Lord"? Surely the Lord God will not turn a deaf ear to the prayers of his faithful servants? Besides, if Christians do quarrel among themselves, there is no need to worry about that. They so soon "kiss and be friends"—their religion enables them to do this more easily than ordinary mortals.



The enemy is at the gates! The Scottish Sunday is being de-Sabbathized. Railway Companies are now running Sunday excursion trains and despoiling the priceless possession of the Scottish people. A pious contemporary lugubriously records the fact that the other Sunday a train from Aberdeen carried 2,000 people to Inverness. It resents this desecration of the Sabbath, which offers to presbyter-ridden Scotsmen an opportunity to be ordinary human beings on Sunday. And it hopes "the Scottish Churches will rise in defence of the national heritage of which they are guardians, and will prevent the total loss of what is admitted to have been the greatest single factor in shaping the character of the Scottish people." The Churches, which in practice means the parsons, will no doubt rise to the occasion. One can safely trust the parsons to do their utmost towards safeguarding their industry.

Sunday cabarets, organized by one or two parsons at Wolverhampton last winter, to take off the streets young people bored by a Christian Sabbath, seem doomed. The authorities of the town have decided to enforce strictly the regulations affecting the use of church, chapel, and Sunday-school buildings for concerts, entertainments and social functions. Taking the view that concerts with no religious element in them come under the licensing laws, the authorities are demanding the reconstruction of entrances and exits to the buildings used for Sunday cabaret entertainments, and are declaring that the buildings become liable for rates. A pious contemporary, which has all along condemned the Sunday cabaret because the religious element was missing, seems to be guardedly glad that the cabarets have thus been stopped. It says:—

If there had been any definite religious element combined with the cabaret, one might have taken another view, but there are undesirable elements in this making terms with the world.

Our contemporary, edited by a professional man of God, sees clearly. Christians ought not to try to keep young people off the streets for altruistic motives only. Altruism should be blended with professionalism. Sunday cabarets must strive to make clients for the Churches. If they do not, professional interests most pertinently ask: What good are they? The young street walkers can go to the devil if they refuse to be interested in religion. The Wolverhampton authorities are no doubt acting within their rights. But why should they differentiate between a building when used for a secular entertainment, and the same building when used for a religious entertainment? For, after all, a religious service is nothing other than an entertainment; it has a lecture from the pulpit, singing and other music. And consistency demands that a building used for a religious entertainment should be licensed, should have emergency exits, and should pay rates exactly the same as the other halls for entertainment. Wolverhampton Freethinkers might point out this fact in their local Press.

Mussolini's great engine for the suppression of opinions differing from his own is being steadily perfected, says a weekly contemporary. Journalists have been brigaded into disciplined corporations. But only journalists of "undoubted faith" may become members. Men whose political opinions were in doubt were invited to declare themselves loyal Fascists, and those who refused to sign have been excluded from the profession. The Fascist Syndicate of Journalists makes this official announcement:—

More than a hundred journalists, some of whom have had very great influence on Italian political life, have been definitely excluded from the ranks of journalism. The Fascist syndicate will not permit any of them to resume in any possible way the exercise of the journalistic profession.

Knowing of his early training in the Holy Roman faith, one can understand Mussolini's dislike to freedom of opinion, and his unhesitating choice of well-tried Roman Catholic methods for suppressing it. Perhaps, however, these methods are, in another form, not altogether alien to our English gentlemen of the Press. Ecclesiastical influence being what it is, there is a quite clear under-

standing among journalists that nothing contrary to the Christian religion may be written. And if an English editor attempted to print such matter, the newspaper proprietor—like the rest of his tribe, a whale for free opinion (in theory)—would soon bring him to heel. Fascist disciplinary methods in a disguised form appear to flourish quite nicely on English soil.

Force is no remedy, says a *Daily Chronicle* writer. What cannot be done by coercion can be effected by common sense. The method is applicable to all human affairs and scarcely ever fails. For example, the writer says that in countries where an attempt has been made to keep people sober by Act of Parliament, the evils of drinking have been seen to increase. In Britain, as returns published show, these evils grow smaller year by year. Common sense gains gradual triumphs, where coercion stiffens the resolve of many to "do as they please." We wonder how the pious temperance fanatics, who haven't the faintest notion of what temperance really means, liked that bit of common sense. We don't suppose it was very palatable. Force is no remedy. We hope Sabbatarian readers of the *Chronicle* let the statement sink into the vacuum each calls his mind. If it is allowed to take root, the Sabbath fanatic may be less ready to make frantic appeals to Secular authorities to suppress Sunday games or other wholesome amusement that non-church-goers wish to enjoy. And there is a possibility—remote, we admit—that he may even realize the futility of attempting to suppress by force Free-thought propaganda. Force is no remedy. We thank the *Chronicle* for putting the statement before a type of reader most in need of the reminder.

Too good for comment, and hubbly over with logic that passeth understanding is the following pronouncement by the Rev. J. D. S. Parry-Ewans, Chaplain-General to the Aldershot Command:—

Do not tell your children of the horrors you saw. Tell them of the tradition which you maintained and of the goodly heritage of which they are the heirs. The journalist reporting this, shall answer it in the same column:—

Men hobbled along on one leg, painfully attempting to keep time; others were trying to conceal the fact that they had only one arm; and onlookers had many heart stabs in counting the number of men with one eye.

The names of pioneers are almost as ephemeral as those of actors. The mud-stained days of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Annie Besant in their battle for a little elementary commonsense in connexion with birth control, have, in many ways, made it safe for our present day publicists to be greatly daring. In terms of social ostracism, what would the following statement by Professor J. Arthur Thomson have cost him in those lovely and luscious hell-fire days of fifty years ago?

In almost all civilized peoples the birth-rate is now steadily declining, and that way safety lies, and much more than safety—the possibility of a reasonably happy life. The agitation of an intelligent few in the past is now considered as advanced thinking.

In *John O'London's Weekly*, a writer, Mr. J. Mansfield, asks the superfluous question, "Can Newspapers Tell the Truth?" We do not see any occasion why they should, as the last thing they appeal to is reason. And furthermore, if they told the truth, they have so effectively fouled their nest that they would not be believed. Every interest that exploits prejudice and ignorance, is welcome to the benefits, and it may be a mark of culture one day for an individual to state that he does not read newspapers.

In the nature of a little relief from Mussolini having all the limelight, the Bishop of Piacenza, at Milan Cathedral, ordered out some candidates who were immodestly dressed. This, we think, is rather inconsistent with the few clothes appearing on the millions of figures of the central character of a creed that has its roots in fear, and its foundation on ignorance.



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.

J. R. LICKFOLD.—The publisher of *Aloysius Horn* is Mr. Jonathan Cape. The price is 7s. 6d.

A. HYSLOP.—We wish your friend had written earlier. The copy must have gone astray in the post. Another one has been sent. We should be obliged if anyone who has any complaint to make of any kind would write us direct, and as soon as possible.

W. H. W.—Thanks, but it is hardly "meaty" enough for publication.

C. HARVEY.—We are really not concerned with knowing what God can do, what he ought to do, or what he might do. What we should like to know is what he does do. If someone would supply that information, we should be greatly obliged.

L. GOLDSTEIN.—Books of one kind or another are constantly being recommended in the *Freethinker*, and readers must exercise their own judgment as to which is the kind of book they want. But if your enquirer will read Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God*, and, say, *Bible Romances*, he will find much of what he wants. There is, of course, the whole range of Freethought publications from which he can make choice, and their contents may be plainly seen from their titles.

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, Mr. F. Mann, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

The third of the out-door demonstrations will be held in Regent's Park to-day (September 4) at 3.30. Mr. Rosetti, Mr. Campbell-Everden, Mr. Mann, and Mr. Cohen will be the speakers. It is to be hoped that the weather will be in a more gracious mood than on the occasion of the last demonstration at Brockwell Park.

Next Sunday (September 11) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Bristol Street Board Schools, Birmingham, at 7, on "Would the world gain from Unbelief?" This is the first lecture in the Schools since the Council removed the ban against Secular meetings being held there. The place should be crowded.

Mr. F. Mann, the new General Secretary of the N.S.S., has now taken up his duties, and we hope will have a long and useful career in that position. He is young and energetic, and there are many ways in which a young and energetic man can find scope for his abilities in a Society such as the N.S.S.

Mr. Cohen's new book on Materialism is now on sale. The price is 2s. 6d., bound in cloth, postage 2½d. extra. It is a book we should like to see in the hands of every reader of the *Freethinker*, and of as many others as possible. There are few subjects which have suffered so much from misunderstanding and misrepresentation as has Materialism, and sometimes the misrepresentation has been deliberate. This book should do something to clear the air, and we venture to say that it is one no *Freethinker* can afford to miss.

In the *Schoolmaster*, Mr. G. Warwick Thompson, and Mr. Edward Lunt, B.Sc., point out the need of training school-children in the principles of citizenship. History and civics, they declare, develop the reasoning power; and though they cannot fail to kindle patriotism, they should cure the narrow provincialism that sneers at foreigners and believes that one's own country can never be in the wrong. The ability to examine both sides of an argument with the object of picking out the truth while seeing the other man's point of view, can be exercised by children, if they are discreetly trained in the use of their intelligence. All that is best in the world's literature, art, and philosophy can become the common possession of all by means of the schools. What the nation requires is citizens who are alert, able to think and act, and too intelligently critical to be hoodwinked by mere slogans or by newspapers. It wants citizens who know how to choose the things that matter, how to weigh the relative value and importance of things, how to organize ideas and facts, and how to be balanced and self-reliant. All this undoubtedly embodies a lofty ideal for educationalists to strive towards. But we fail to see why the day-schools should need to trouble about it. Are not our churches and chapels and Sunday-schools already nobly producing such citizens?

*Freethinker* readers will regret to hear that Mr. V. J. Hands, whose contributions to these columns are always welcome, has been again obliged to enter a sanatorium. He retains his brave and cheerful spirit, in spite of these blows of adverse circumstances, and we feel we may associate all *Freethinker* readers with us in wishing him all possible good fortune.

Another item of news that reaches us is of a more cheerful character. Mr. Walter Mann recently had a narrow escape from death through a leaky gas-tap. His sense of smell is defective, one of the consequences of an attack of influenza some years ago, and he was unable to detect the fact that his room was filling with gas fumes. He lost consciousness and fell to the floor. Fortunately the fall roused some of the other occupants of the house, and his son and his wife came to the rescue. He is none the worse for his experience, but it might easily have been a reported suicide of a wicked infidel writer, etc., etc.

We are glad to hear that the new Chester-le-Street Branch is continuing its propagandist activities, and with considerable success. Meetings have recently been held at Washington, and Herrington Burn. Good meetings have assembled, and much literature distributed. Messrs. Brown and Brighton have done the speaking, and a friend has loaned his car for the purpose of carrying the speakers round. We are pleased to have so favourable an account of what is going on.

In *Self-Realization, the End, the Aim, and the Way of Life* (Constable & Co. 4s.6d.) Mr. Edmond Holmes gives us a very readable book, and it would have been a very wise one if he had not taken a certain form of mystical religion as the basis for his writing. And as is usual in such cases, Mr. Holmes would have found the answer to most of the questions which seem to drive him to religion, had he considered man as a member of a social group, with a nature that had developed in response to the demands of his biological individuality on the one hand, and to the psychological demands of the socio-historical whole of which he is a part. But apart from this fault, the book has much wise counsel



for all who can separate the number of perfectly sane maxims from the theological jargon in which they are often expressed.

There is one curious passage in Mr. Holmes' book which we cannot let pass without comment. He says:—

There is one proof, and one only, of the existence of God—namely the prevalence among all peoples and the persistence through all ages of the idea of God. An idea which belongs to all the peoples and all the ages must have *some* content. "All the people" cannot fool themselves for all time.

Up to a few centuries since, what is said of the prevalence of the idea of God might have been said with equal truth of the belief in a flat earth. And, as usual, no notice whatever is taken of the fact that there exists positive knowledge as to the way in which particular belief came into existence. And one would like to put to Mr. Holmes the question: If a belief can be shown to have originated in a mistaken interpretation of a number of known facts, in what way must we look for some "content" apart from the psychological blunder that is manifested? It is a pity that men of the calibre of Mr. Holmes will not make a serious attempt to apply modern knowledge to primitive beliefs, instead of attempting to find in the conclusions of the primitive savage the foreshadowing of some profound philosophy.

### Cristian Precept and Christian Practice.

It is well known that Christian clergymen are not infrequently very bad advertisements of the efficacy of the faith they profess, and it was not therefore surprising to see in the papers recently the report of an action brought at Cambridge County Court, in which the Rev. Charles Henry Scott, of the College, Ely, minor canon of Ely Cathedral, sued a brother divine, the Rev. Montague Robert Bethune, of the Vicarage, Lymington, Hants., for £20, the price of an oak altar and predella. Mr. Scott said he had the altar made to his own design, intending to use it for a private oratory, but being unable to do so, advertised it for sale. The altar cost him £13 7s., and the price he sold it for was £20. The defence was that Mr. Scott had misrepresented the goods, that the whole construction was most shoddy, and that a statement in the advertisement "£20 Bargain" was misleading and not true. Judge Farrant held there was no evidence of fraud or misrepresentation to justify him setting aside the contract, and gave judgment for the amount claimed.

The following day the Rev. Ernest Edwin Lilley, Vicar of Cubert, Cornwall, met his creditors in Truro Bankruptcy Court, with no assets and a deficiency of £420. He attributed his failure to living in excess of income (£328 a year) and paying excessive interest on borrowed money.

Now, all this is delightfully amusing. Born and brought up in a Christian country, we have always been given to understand that it is only by and through Christianity that we live in peace and goodwill with our fellow-creatures. A good dose of the Christian medicine is popularly supposed to be a short cut to perfection. It is only necessary to accept Christ, we are told, to live in peace and harmony, loving and trusting one's neighbours as oneself, calling every man brother and every woman sister, and all the other damnably dull attributes of a Utopian existence. The average labourer slaves all the week for a wage miserable in comparison with some of the figures earned by clergy, smokes his pipe, drinks his beer, backs his fancy, swears at everything in general and nothing in particular, and lets the rest of the world—this world and that world to come—go by.

But this doesn't suit our religious friends, whose only conversational ability seems to consist of a repetition of the parrot phrase, "Come to Jesus." If only the labourer came to Jesus all his sins would drop from him as fetters severed by a keen blade, and he would become a model of drawing-room virtue. Straight from his state of sin he would instantly ascend to a paradise of purity and righteousness, saved by the redeeming blood of that poor old scape-goat of humanity—Jesus Christ.

If such a transformation is possible in a labourer by the mere acceptance of a string of creeds and doctrines (and who are we to doubt the mighty powers of priesthood?), then how much more loving and trusting and virtuous must be those divinely-inspired teachers whom God in his wisdom has thought fit to appoint over his people to lead them in the way of the true Christian life? If anyone be bold enough to make pretence at any approach to equality to the figure held out to our admiring gaze as the average product of Christianity, surely it must be these earthly N.C.O.'s of the great Officer Commanding who resides in his wonderful land aloft. Yet in the cases under review we find two of these very same specimens of "the only true way of life," who do not hesitate to try to "do" one another over a deal involving a paltry sum of £20, and that one of them does not hesitate to accuse the other of fraudulent purposes. Also, we find another of these earthly showmen of the man who told us not to lay up treasures for ourselves on earth who is unable to live within an income of £6 a week, a figure which would represent a fortune to millions of our working masses.

Yet doubtless most of our good Christians will defend these wealth-coveting devotees of the man of poverty, on the grounds that "after all, they are only human." Possibly the vast majority will not bestow a passing thought to the cases, seeing no incongruity between their spiritual leaders' preachings and their practices. Probably the churches of these divinely-guided gentlemen will be packed (?) just as tightly on succeeding Sundays, when it rains, and the poor people have got few avenues of escape from sheer boredom except wireless or the churches, and probably those people will listen just as enthusiastically and appreciatively to their priests' mouldy mouthings and plausible platitudes about the love of God, the laying not of treasures upon earth, Christian trust and fellowship, and so on *ad lib*. Such is the folly and the blindness of human nature. It is even possible that these three Christian gentlemen will choose their texts from the numerous works ascribed to St. Paul, but it is hardly to be thought that for those texts they will go to the sixth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, where the writer asks: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? . . . But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because you go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" So now we know what a Christian should do and say when he finds himself being defrauded by another. With a true nobility of character he should turn round and say: "Carry on, old chap. I'll be the mug in this game. I know you are robbing me right and left, but that doesn't matter a hang. Get on with your nefarious work, and the best of luck!" How long are civilized people going to stand for all this tommy-rot?

This incongruity between Christian precept and practice is far from being an isolated case. It is seen on every hand. Among my circle of acquaintances are two very pious and devout Christians, a man and his wife, in whose presence it is a crime to mention



the "Devil," in spite of my frequent assurances that His Satanical Majesty is really a very nice and polite gentleman. In conversation, the other day, my pious friend, waxing very eloquent on the evils of Socialism and Communism, brought out with an air of triumph, "The Socialist says, 'Trust your fellow men,' but I say, 'Yes, that's all right, but I'm a grocer.'" Before I had a chance to ask him how he could reconcile these sentiments with his Christian faith, he had darted off at a tangent and was expounding a philosophy of Parliamentarism in the mazes of which I got hopelessly lost. "Good afternoon, Mr. Smith."

And so it has been through the ages. The hideous head of Christianity and of the priesthood has hidden itself in the folds of a cloak of many attractive colours. Is it not time people came to their senses? Is it not time they began to have some glimmering of the light and to see the ridiculous and awful reality behind the enticing exterior of shams, hypocrisies and illusions? Will they never advance boldly to the barrier of ignorance and superstition perpetuated by an ignorant and superstitious priesthood, and smash their way through to the golden land that lies beyond, a land of promise, a vast country of knowledge and power, the only "paradise" that is not a phantasmagorical vision begotten of a diseased mind?

I must conclude by apologising to my readers for these rambling and long-winded remarks. My only excuse is that in dealing with the ridiculous one finds it devilishly hard to remain buoyant in the heights of the sublime. Man begets man, and assuredly the ridiculous begets no other than its likeness.

R. H. S. STANDFAST.

### The Problem of Paul

THERE are a good many people who are inclined to put the blame for the failure of Christianity on to Paul. The real genuine true religion is, of course, that of Jesus—Paul's being too dogmatic and theological. Put Paul out of the way and the world would see how beautiful is the true religion of Jesus—how necessary for the salvation of mankind. It is difficult to make these followers of Jesus see that there is really very little to choose between Jesus and Paul. Both were utterly mistaken, and the world could have dispensed with either and been the better for it.

Still, the problem of Paul remains, and those who are interested will find in Mr. C. Clayton Dove's finely reasoned book\* a very complete elucidation of many of the difficulties surrounding the great Apostle.

Mr. Dove takes for granted the genuineness of the greater part of the epistles as well as the record of Paul's life contained therein. He does not like *Acts*, and over and over again shows his contempt for the statements in that work about Paul. Part of the problem of Paul seems to be to reconcile *Acts* and the Epistles, or to explain why they vary in so many particulars. This last problem has never been solved, and probably never will be.

The Epistles have been studied with very great care by many critics, and their conclusions differ to such a degree, that it is difficult to get any settled opinion about them. Romans, First and Second Corinthians and Galatians are considered really "genuine," but Mr. Dove insists that all except Timothy and Titus "seem to bear unmistakably the impress of a single mind." Mr. Dove finds in them "a remarkable similarity of ideas and sentiments,"

\* *Paul of Tarsus: His Life and Teaching*, by C. Clayton Dove. 7s. 6d. net. Watts & Co.

and "the moral characteristics are identical, ubiquitous and very pronounced." One of the very greatest of German biblical scholars, Ferdinand Baur, however, considered Colossians and Philippians as "spurious"—written near the end of the second century; and he rejected Thessalonians, which contained teachings quite at variance with those recognized as Paul's. One could quote many other critics, as well as the famous Dutchman, Prof. van Manen, whose celebrated article on Paul in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* seems to be indispensable to a study of the problem. Prof. van Manen considered all Paul to be spurious, and even an orthodox critic like Sir W. Ramsay quotes two learned Jews of his time, who said they were perfectly certain that none of the Pauline letters could be genuine, because there was much in them which no Jew could write.

The reader, if he is interested, will find quite a literature on the subject, but Mr. Dove's book proceeds on the assumption of the actual historicity of Paul, and, as shown above, on the authenticity of the greater part of the Epistles, and it would be difficult to better his clear exposition of the knotty points both in the life and teaching of Paul. Indeed, Mr. Dove's knowledge of his subject is extraordinary; on every page one gets proof of his deep research and lucid explanation of many obscure passages which have baffled previous investigators. No better book could be imagined than this very able treatise for those who wish to study the doctrine of Paul and all its bearings on Christianity.

The present writer, however, feels in a bit of a quandary. Does Mr. Dove really believe in Paul's teachings? Does he believe that the first three Gospels are "our only reliable authorities respecting the doctrines of Jesus"? Does he believe that "Jesus was eminently a reformer in the political sense"?

If the teachings of Paul are such as he so ably expounds, what a relief it must be to come out into the fresh air of Freethought, away from these ghastly doctrines, these dreadful imaginings of a more or less diseased brain! Surely the Christology of Paul should be relegated to the rubbish heap of the rest of the theistic nonsense which has so long dominated and tyrannized the world.

But for those who wish to possess a well written and carefully compiled account of the life and teaching of Paul, based on the New Testament narrative, we can safely recommend Mr. Dove's book.

H. CUTNER.

### The Ocean of Love.

This passion of Love seems an ocean,  
Asleep in the twilight cool—  
As calm, and as free from emotion,  
As Gideon's Pool:  
Forgone all the fret and commotion  
Of Storm's dying rule!

And yet—though with faith naught may sever—  
In deepest of water immersed  
We bathe, with a constant endeavour  
To satisfy thirst:  
Love's Passion, for ever and ever,  
Is strong as at first!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Certainly it is easier to perceive error than to find truth, for the former lies on the surface and is easily seen, while the latter lies in the depths where few are willing to search.—Goethe.



### An Opportunity Lost.

HOLIDAY-TIME is drawing to its close. True, one may still behold the busy taxi nudging its way through the traffic piled high with the family luggage; but these are mostly homeward bound.

I always feel a wistful regret when I see the leaves start to come tumbling down. But this year I cannot say that I am as sorry as usual, for the summer which has been foisted on to us has scarcely been worthy of the name. Rain! Rain! Rain! It has ruined the holidays, interfered with sport and set everyone grumbling like bears with sore heads. I am not of the always-grumble-on-principle school. I try to be reasonable and to realize that the weather cannot always adapt itself to my needs. But this really has been the limit.

Now when one has a grouse to ventilate, it is much more satisfactory to find someone on whom to lay the blame. In this particular instance I have been not a little perplexed as to where I can find a scape-goat—by the way, what a pity it is that that most useful and obliging animal, the scape-goat, has gone out of fashion. Just imagine how delightful it must have been for the Israelites to lay all their sins on the back of the unsuspecting goat, and then see it bear them away for ever into the wilderness. I wonder how many sins the average goat was computed to carry. Ah well! We have the Confessional instead, so I suppose we must not grumble. However, I digress. To return to the main theme.

Now some people vent their vexation at the weather on the unfortunate Clerk of the Weather. This is not fair; and I could never do that however angry I was. Poor Man! He does his best under most trying circumstances. Others pour anathema on the head of "David," a gentleman whose identity I have never been able to discover. No, neither of these seem at all goaty to me. I like to have something tangible, something with real horns and a beard. And I think I have found one at last. Furthermore, unlike most others of its kind, I believe this one really does deserve censure.

It has only recently occurred to me that we have a perfect system for dealing with disobliging atmospherics all ready to our hands. Need I say that I refer to that most useful and helpful of all volumes, the Book of Common-Prayer? Here is a machine carefully thought out in every detail by the cream of the intellects of all ages. Everything is, so to speak, in apple-pie order; all the parts are carefully tended and are the admiration of all who are mechanically inclined. Those who know, tell us that it is the finest piece of engineering the world has ever seen or ever will see. Everything is ready and in order, and yet no one will say the word "go," and allow the machine to turn out a really fine line in weather. It is as if a man wished to cross a river and saw a splendid boat moored at the bank, which no one would unfasten and row across.

I cannot understand this apathy. We have an excellent opportunity of improving our conditions, and at the same time demonstrating the power of God and his willingness to help us. Furthermore, we have several precedents for this kind of thing, not the least noteworthy of which is the case of Elijah calling down fire from Heaven to burn his sacrifice. Can it be that our priests of to-day have not as much simple faith as Elijah of old? Are they perchance afraid of being treated as the said Elijah treated the prophets of Baal when their God refused to answer their entreaties? At least they cannot fear that anyone would take them down to the brook Kishon and slay three hundred of them. Would it not be an inspiring sight if the heads of the various Churches assembled on some convenient hill, attended by their priests and followers, and made a formal petition to the Throne of Grace for fine Harvest weather? But then again they would probably all start quarrelling amongst themselves as to the correct method of address, and blame the ensuing failure to receive a reply on each other.

In all seriousness I would ask any intelligent Christian whether he really imagines that the weather can be altered on account of his prayers. Does he think that his all-wise and all-merciful God needs to be told what to do with regard to the elements? Personally, I should

shrink from having any dealings whatsoever with a Power which could direct such frightful catastrophics as the Japanese earthquake and the Mississippi floods. Let sleeping dogs lie, is my motto with regard to such a deity. I cannot imagine anyone, no matter what his religious beliefs might happen to be, stopping to pray in the middle of an earthquake. Put to such a test, I am sure no one would follow any law but that of self-preservation. And yet, according to the Christians, that would be the correct procedure.

When one considers a subject of this kind, there is obviously only one conclusion to be drawn: that a man's religious beliefs and his actions have no real relation at all. On Sunday, a business man will tell you that he has a simple, child-like faith in the Almighty. But ask him on Monday morning to trust in the Lord as regards his business deals, and he will stare at you as though you were mad.

Religion, common-sense and experience never did nor ever will walk hand in hand. And the sooner everyone realizes this and goes to work on rational lines, the better for the world at large.

B. S. WHICOX.

### Correspondence.

#### THE MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Much as I should like a discussion on Malthus with Mr. Clarke, he will pardon me if I point out that it cannot be carried on in this journal. My notice of the Jubilee Dinner of the League was allowed, because so many Freethinkers had been in the past, and were at present, members and intimately associated with its propaganda.

Mr. Clarke, however, would find the pages of *The New Generation*, under the editorship of Mr. R. B. Kerr, ever open to opponents, and I advise him to conduct his campaign therein.

But I hope I shall be allowed a passing remark or two. I am tired of people who tell me that they "have never been convinced that Malthusianism is of any value to the community" after "demolishing" some argument in a brief notice of the movement. Malthus's famous work has been before the public for over one hundred years, and while there have been many "replies"—like those to the *Age of Reason*—there has never been, as far as I know, a single answer. If Mr. Clarke can answer Malthus, he will receive, I am sure, the thanks and gratitude of, at least, many Socialists and Catholics. Why does he not attempt one?

Then there are Professor East's *Mankind at the Cross Roads* and Mr. R. B. Kerr's *Is Britain Overpopulated?* Both these books put the case for Malthusianism pretty fully, and Mr. Clarke's opposition will receive far more respect from me when he has successfully refuted them.

H. CUTNER.

#### HAPPINESS.

SIR,—I should like to make a few observations regarding Mr. Vincent J. Hands' recent article which commented on a very short essay written by me in a contemporary, and, by implication, criticized the theory put forward in my book *Elysia*, a book which Mr. Hands has not read.

My essay touched only on one small aspect of the subject of happiness, and when your contributor, by raising objections, which are already answered in the book, imagines that he has destroyed my case, he has merely damaged a dummy of his own erection.

Even then, his article is contradictory. After agreeing that happiness cannot be increased or diminished over an extended period by any mode of conduct—after saying "it is all so obviously true," without understanding the implications of the statement, he commends Utilitarianism, which aims at the "greatest happiness of the greatest number."

If, as I have stated, no system of government or morality, no new invention, nothing on earth can alter the ration of happiness and misery for any individual, that our happy and miserable experiences balance, whatever those experiences might be, then it is obvious that to talk of striving for "greatest happiness" is illogical.



We each have a "greatest happiness" and "a greatest misery" without striving for it, from the blind pauper to the blatant millionaire, and the pauper's "greatest happiness" is psychologically equal to the millionaire's—no better or worse. Further, the pauper has as many happy experiences as the millionaire, and as many miserable ones. If we are all just about as happy as each other, and as happy now as we ever were or ever shall be, how can one base a system of morality on the increase or decrease of felicity?

I say that the question of happiness is quite apart from that of morality. Morality is conduct that tends towards survival and growth, but the quest of happiness frequently tends towards decay and death. Cocaine, whisky and motor-cars are fruits of the demand for happiness, equally with brown bread, lettuces and cold baths. Utilitarians weakly state that some kinds of happiness are better than others—that Beethoven and coffee is much superior to the Savoy Orpheans and whisky, for instance, but this is merely a matter of taste, and the large majority would prefer the latter.

Nature appears to have only two sanctions for living beings: (1) That they should live. (2) That they should increase (or grow).

The feeling of satisfaction that follows an accomplished desire is something additional, acquired in order to ensure the repetition of the act. In the lower animals desire goes hand in hand with life and growth, because their habits are established and no habit that is detrimental to life could survive over a lengthy period; but man is a creature of comparatively rapid change, and he has many desires that have not yet been proved. He frequently desires a surfeit of food and drink, idleness, soft living, drugs and unnatural excitement. On no argument can indulgence in these be excluded from the pursuit of happiness, but, in my opinion, such indulgence is immoral—if that word has any meaning at all—because it tends towards the cessation of growth, decay and death.

I may point out that I am referring to mental growth chiefly, and in this connexion, although, as Mr. Hands says, the reading of my book *Elysia* may not add to his pleasure, it is possible that it may increase his height.

It will be understood that this letter does not attempt to summarize the book; it is written to clear up any little misunderstandings that may have arisen from Mr. Hands' article.

ALBERT LUC.

FALLACIES.

SIR,—I think dilemmas which do not dilemmas must be your favourite form of fallacy. I remember exposing a fine specimen: "either one believes in God or one does not." The one I have now under my eye is on page 546: "Must we not either reject all forms of religion as pure delusion, or reject all that anthropology has to tell us of the nature of primitive ideas?"

You beg representative Christians to face this "plain question." Well, I'm not representative, nor a Christian; but I find it so easy to face as to be quite amusing. I accept all the anthropologists say about the way primitive man reasoned; and I reason exactly the same way myself.

Sinel, in *The Sixth Sense*, lately published, gives the case away neatly. "What could be more natural than that he [the savage] should conclude that these things were done by beings like himself?" Exactly so! What could be more natural? or more logical? It is exactly how I reason, now that I have seen through the interwoven fallacies of Christianity and Atheism. And neither Sinel nor you try to refute your imaginary savage. You can't.

C. HAYM.

ALCOHOL AND CRIME.

SIR,—May I recommend to Mr. Stuart-Young a book entitled *The Criminal*, by that very able author, Havelock Ellis. The title itself should be suggestive to Mr. Stuart-Young, and the book will not only interest him, I feel sure, but will also remove a certain amount of optimism which we must all wish we shared with him. Even if we could grant that all alcohol leads to crime, I fear it in no way follows that all crime is the outcome of alcohol. To say that alcohol "dulls the finer sensi-

bilities" is very nearly true, but somewhat misleading. What it actually does is to decontrol the individual, by paralysing the higher centres of the nervous system, first psychic, then muscular. On the psychic side the result of this is that the inner nature is let loose, unhampered by considerations of caution, expediency, or the superficial restraints of convention. The important fact to be realized is that the drug does not *change* the nature, it merely permits its unbridled expression. Men in general seem to recognize this, and when his friends said of a certain great naval officer, now dead, that he "was a gentleman in his cups," what they meant to convey was that when his inner self was released it was found to be that of a gentleman. It would be difficult to pay a greater compliment.

Crime, in the proper sense of the word, is the expression of self. The criminal nature is there, alcohol or no alcohol. Agreed that the drug, by removing caution, will lead to the more ready expression of that nature, but we must not run away with the idea that criminality is merely the effect of alcohol on a *normal* mentality. If it were so the problem of crime would indeed be easy of solution, and the science of Criminal Anthropology but a subsidiary branch of Toxicology. It is unfortunately far from the truth that "the man whose blood is totally free from alcoholic blood-poisoning cannot be worked up to the mood of robbery." Part of the future problem of medical science (with apologies to Mr. Hands and Mr. Riglin) will be to discover a method of working a man out of a perpetual mood of robbery.

These facts are of the kind which has made Criminology the study not of crimes but of criminals, and form part of a general doctrine of criminal reform in which the world of Freethought has played, and will go on playing, a steadily progressive role.

MEDICUS.

A FORGOTTEN DEFEAT.

SIR,—In an article recently in the *Freethinker*, headed "On Being Serious," which I enjoyed, as is usually the case with Mr. Vincent Hands I noticed, with some surprise that the "Lord had delivered me" into his hands a year or so ago, and that he had apparently knocked me out. Now, whether on account of the wicked Irish blood in my veins I cannot say, but I did not know that I was beaten—did he hit me hard?—and, if so, then like Jack Dempsey—the Irish blood again, you see—I will ask for a come-back.

Certainly I have not written in your columns for some time, although I believe that the *Freethinker* is second to none in the world as a fair and intelligent paper, but I have been under the whip to an extraordinary degree preparing a couple of books. One of these *Science: Leading and Misleading*, I would recommend to the kind care of Mr. Hands. He will see that I am alive and kicking—not at himself, of course, but at the humbugs whom we are both after. Also for a long time I have owed you an article on "Mind and Body," but, alas, there are only twenty-four hours in the day. Meanwhile, Vive the *Freethinker*.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

MEDICAL FREEDOM.

SIR,—For intolerance the medical priest can at the present day excel the priest of religion. If any medical man expresses a disbelief in vaccination or other similar treatments, he is treated with a shocking intolerance—I think with less excuse than the intolerant priest of religion acts. For there are questions in which logic and reason are supposed to settle, whereas in religion faith is supposed to be the essential. How can the truth about vaccination be got at, when any doctor however conclusively he shows it to be an absurd delusion or imposture, is, if he has any office (such as M.O.H.), turned out of it as in the case of Dr. Tebb and several others? The case of Dr. Hadwen, to anyone who is thoroughly acquainted with it, is a frightful example of the length to which attempts to ruin a man may go for unorthodox opinions. And Dr. Hadwen's opinions on the vaccination question are fully substantiated by the history of smallpox in Gloucester itself. That history makes it discreditable for any Gloucester M.D. to profess a belief in vaccination.

A. J. MARRIOTT.



### Mr. G. Whitehead at Birmingham.

THE Birmingham week aroused more interest than usual, and several new members were made as a result. In spite of rival meetings in the Bull Ring, and Christian attempts to disturb our meetings by ranters pitching on the edge of our crowds, the attention was well sustained, and volleys of questions and some platform opposition kept the interest alive all the week. The members who attended were all convinced of the benefits of outdoor propaganda as a means of placing our views before those who will not attend indoor lectures. Mr. Dobson, through illness, was prevented from repeating his performances of other years, when he has attended every meeting, but Miss Dobson, and Messrs. Melton and Terry were assiduous in their help. The Birmingham crowds expressed their delight at the prospect of Mr. Whitehead's return visit in September.

Mr. Whitehead commences a week's mission at Chapel Street, Nelson, on Saturday, September 3.

### Society News.

#### WEST LONDON BRANCH.

No one who takes interest in the valuable work of the Cause's outdoor propaganda in Hyde Park (and surely every reader of the *Freethinker* would include himself in this category) need suffer from the slightest degree of pessimism in relation to the results achieved by the labourers in this vineyard; and although, as of old, those who commence their work late command the same rate of pay as those who begin earlier in the day, and those who merely "stand and wait" are remunerated on the same scale as the rest, it must be confessed that each does his utmost according to his individual capacity, and most speakers seem to be satisfied with the magnitude of the crowds and the courteous attention of the audiences.

Grateful acknowledgements must be made to such veterans as Messrs. Hyatt and Williams, whose addresses always excite an appetite which is difficult to satisfy, and which stirs memories of *Oliver Twist*.

Of course the work of making Atheists is greatly aided by the Christians themselves, whose varying exponents, ranging from the raucous roarer to the sly slanderer, demonstrate the worthlessness of their stock-in-trade and the poverty of their salesmanship. An advocate with a bad case invariably abuses "the other side"; but he loses it all the same. Unfortunately the pew-rents do not yield as much as pastors would like to collect; and if this should reach the eye of anyone whose contribution has not yet been acknowledged by the Treasurer, let him realize there is only one possible explanation. This is not a hint; it is a sledgehammer.

Ravenscourt Park attendance is improving encouragingly, and the seed sown this year should produce a good crop in due course. Hammersmith folk are apparently addicted to the habit of forty winks after the Sunday mid-day refection. The County Council has consented that an appropriate Committee shall consider an application for a better site, but this consideration will not be attempted until too late to be of any use for this year.—A. B. I.

**PRODIGALS** who buy clothes once in four years and the thrifty who have a new turnout twice in every twelvemonth alike eagerly seek our aid. Tailors to everyman we are—but specialists for Freethinkers. Ask at once for any of the following:—*Gents' A to D Patterns, suits from 55s.; Gents' E Patterns, suits all at 67s. 6d.; Gents' F to H Patterns, suits from 75s.; Gents' I to M Patterns, suits from 98s.; or Ladies' Fashion and Pattern Sets, costumes from 60s.; frocks from 47s.*—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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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.

##### INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe, "Can We Believe in Progress?"

##### OUTDOOR.

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 3.30, Freethought Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. Chapman Cohen, Campbell-Everden, R. H. Rosetti and F. Mann. 6 p.m., Lecture by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common, 11.30; Brockwell Park, 6.0): Lectures by Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.0, Mr. Jackson. At 6.0, Messrs. Hyatt and LeMaine. (Ravenscourt Park): 3.0, Mr. F. Carter, A Lecture. Freethought Lectures in Hyde Park, every Wednesday and Friday, at 7.30. Various Lecturers. A debate between Mr. C. Herbert and the Rev. Mr. Reed on September 2, in Hyde Park, at 7.30, will take place. Subject: "Is Materialism Rational."

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—A Meeting of the Branch will be held at The Empire Cafe, 30, Smallbrook Street, at 3.30 p.m., on Sunday, September 4, to elect officers for the ensuing year and the initiation of new members. All members and friends are requested to attend. A plain tea will be provided, 1s. each.

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

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Royal Buildings, 18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, A Lecture. Will friends and members please note.

##### OUTDOOR.

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

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

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Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

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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 Free-thought 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 Free-thinkers 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.

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