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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>A Life of Pleasure.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	625
<i>"Human Origins: Heads or Tails?"—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	626
<i>The Smile on the Face of the Tiger.—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	627
<i>The Fall of Man.—W. Mann</i> - - - - -	628
<i>Reflections on the Atlantic Flights.—B. S. Wilcox</i> - - - - -	630
<i>Freethinker Endowment Trust.—Chapman Cohen</i> - - - - -	633
<i>The Judaic Source of Christianity.—Keridon</i> - - - - -	634
<i>What is Materialism?—H. Cutner</i> - - - - -	635
<i>History and Growth of Spiritualism.—George R. Scott</i> - - - - -	636
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

A Life of Pleasure.

LAST week I mentioned that I complete with this issue thirty-seven years' work in the Freethought movement. I am not sure of the exact date, but my first appearance on a Freethought platform was at the beginning of October, 1890. Curiously, I began to speak at the invitation of a Christian Evidence lecturer. I mounted a Christian platform for the first time neither to attack Christianity nor to preach specific Freethought, but merely to ask that a Christian speaker should act with decency towards an opponent. I was a quite casual listener to a Christian who was replying to a Freethinker. The latter had an impediment in his speech, and the preacher of Christ and him crucified was amusing himself and his hearers by mimicking the defect. It will hardly be credible to many that the Christian Evidence lecturer then was of even a coarser type than the one of today, but the "old hands" know this to be the case. I made my protest and was done with it. Later the same Christian speaker invited me to offer some opposition to what he had said. Something in the speaker's tone "riled" me a little, and I said I would. And I did. Whether my opposition gratified him or not, it is not for me to say, but there are plenty of London Freethinkers who know with what love the Christians at open-air meetings came to regard me. Then the Secretary of the local Secular Society asked me to deliver some lectures for them. I did so and have been lecturing ever since. But it is curious to reflect that had that Christian speaker behaved in a gentlemanly manner, had he not invited me afterwards to oppose him, I might never have been a Freethought lecturer and writer. Whether the Freethinkers of this country have cause for pleasure or the reverse at my being amongst them, they have to thank this Christian Evidence lecturer for it.

* * *

Making a Good Start.

I can neither praise nor blame Christian speakers for making a Freethinker of me. As I have often

remarked, I chose my parents with sufficient care to see that they were not Christians. Neither were they aggressively religious. Their religion was of the kind to which the tectotalism of the gentleman belonged who, when found drunk, explained that although he was a teetotaler he was not a bigoted one. I never had enough of the Jewish religion around me for it to become troublesome, and it protected me from the much greater disaster of being infected with the religion of Christianity. Unlike good old Sir Thomas Browne, I can thank whatever was responsible for the fact that Christianity and I did *not* come into the world together. I never had any religion to get rid of—at least not any about which to bother. I do recall a time, when I was very, very young, when the possibilities of there being a kind-of-a-sort-of-a-something floated before my mind as a plausible speculation; but from my very early youth I was without any religion to shed. And that, if I may say it without conceit, gave me a tremendous advantage over those who were brought up Christians, and had years of fighting to get rid of Christianity, even if they were ever able to get the Christian virus completely out of their system. In their case the difficulty is for them to so far overcome early influences as to believe Christianity probably false. In my case it would always have required a considerable mental effort to believe it to be probably true. It would always have been as easy for me to believe this, as it would have been to believe in the occult power of a Japanese Joss to avert an earthquake.

* * *

Pure Savagery.

I had nothing to outgrow, but I had the whole world of knowledge before me to enjoy and master. I was never oppressed by the thought that it was wrong to believe this or that, that some sort of a God would punish me if I did not believe certain things, or the still more demoralizing conviction, that he would reward me if I did believe a number of unbelievable propositions. The former demands a certain amount of courage, the latter degrades and demoralizes by sapping a man's strength and intellectual integrity. It often leaves him fit for nothing better than politics or the pulpit. And when I came into controversial relationship with Christianity, I could not but classify it along with the set of primitive beliefs to which it properly belongs. I never lost sight of the paint and feathers of the medicine-man beneath the coat and collar and gown of the parson and the priest, of the pious pow-wow and tom-tom at the back of the organ and the chant, of the fear and ignorance that lay hidden in the prayer of piety, of the distorted spectres of men that formed the raw material of the gods. I never had to worry about whether religious beliefs were true or not, but only to puzzle out why otherwise civilized men and

women should believe them to be true. I found children believing in fairies, and men believing in Gods. And save for the difference, in the language used, and the physical size of the two, I found, and still find, it difficult to detect any radical difference. Some of my friends tell me I have lost something in never having believed. It may be so. It may be equally true that one loses something in never having been subject to epilepsy. But there are experiences for which one may pay too heavily. I am quite content to take religious experiences at second-hand, and to do what I can to mentally visualize the nature of the disorder.

* * *

Loss and Gain.

But, thanks to that Christian Evidence lecturer, once having had my mind directed towards the part that Christianity had played and still plays in the world, I found nothing quite so interesting or quite so important—the more important because so large a number of people were clearly afraid to face the opposition that attacking Christianity invited. I lectured and fought—literally so—on behalf of Free-thought. If I did not fight with wild beasts in Ephesus, I did fight with their modern religious equivalents all over the country. I had many solid platforms—in the open-air—broken into matchwood, but there was always a new platform in the same spot until the wild ones recognized the uselessness of their animality. I have given as many as 285 lectures in the course of a single year, between Aberdeen and Plymouth, and enjoyed every one of them. I never asked an audience in my life to behave itself as an act of kindness towards me. It would have been useless if I had done so. To-day that phase of Christian propaganda seems to have almost died out. Christians have at least learned the lesson that Free-thought lecturers are not to be stopped in their work by that kind of thing. And thanks to what Free-thinkers have done during the past two or three generations, so great a change in public opinion has taken place with regard to religion, that the Christian knuckle-duster kind of argument does not usually pay those who use it. It may be met with here and there, but it is only in remote districts where culture is weak, and scientific knowledge has but little hold on the inhabitants.

* * *

Looking Backward.

The other day a friend remarked to me that he was surprised I had not aimed at some public office or other. I looked at him and smiled. He had in mind some political post, some place in the councils of parliament, or in some municipal body. I am vain enough to think that no public place I might have held could equal in importance or in value to the race the one I have held. I have played my part, however small, in moulding opinion, and what other office could equal that in value or in dignity? I have never had to truckle to the opinions or the prejudices of masses of men, I have never had to think whether I should lose or gain in the expression of what I believed to be true, people have agreed or have disagreed with me, but whether they have done the one or the other they have recognized my right to say what I thought. What could a man ask for more than that? Is there a politician in the country who can truthfully say as much? Is there a parson in the world who dare say as much? I have had hundreds of letters, from all parts of the world, from people whom I have never seen and may never see, thanking me for what I have written, for the benefit they have derived. So far as their letters were telling me the

truth, and they obviously had no interest in telling me what was not true, I have left my mark on them, and through them on the rising generation. What more glorious reflection could a man carry with him day by day, what finer thing could a man think of when the time arrives when he takes his last farewell of the world and of the friends around him? Very often people have written talking of my self-sacrifice. The phrase is a misnomer. It has not been a life of self-sacrifice, but one of self-realization. I have lived my life as I desired to live it, I have not had the things I valued least, but I have had and enjoyed the things I valued most. If I had been compelled to hide my real opinions to gain office, if I had laboured with carefully coined phrases or with non-committal speech to persuade others that I was what I was not, that would have been, indeed, a life of self-sacrifice. It is the kind of sacrifice which the world honours and pays for. And those who have accepted payment find, when too late, that they have paid too dearly for what they have received. At fifty-nine I can look back and say that if I had to choose my life over again, I would pick no other path, nor could choose a better one. How many are there who can look back over so lengthy a period and say the same, with truth?

One may be pardoned being a trifle garrulous on the occasion of an anniversary. And reminiscences are always interesting—to the writer of them.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Human Origins: Heads or Tails?"

THE religious world seems incapable of appreciating the progress of scientific knowledge, and is at times inclined to deny its reality. We can never forget the terrible consternation caused by the late Professor Tyndall's famous *Belfast Address* (1874), delivered as President of the British Association. Tyndall was one of the most distinguished scientific teachers of his day, and the views expressed in that fine Address set the theological world, Catholic and Protestant, by the ears. For months pulpit and press vied with each other in the bitterness and violence of their attacks upon the vile heresiarch. Some there were who abused him in the most cowardly manner, and many endeavoured to reply to his arguments. One of his chief sins was his depreciation of Bishop Butler's reasoning in his popular *Analogy*. That was fifty-three years ago; but the religious world has made scarcely any advance during that long period. This year the British Association met at Leeds, and the chair was occupied by Sir Arthur Keith, M.D., LL.D., D.Sc., F.R.S. Of his inaugural Address the *Church Times* of September 9, says:—

Sir Arthur declared that man has been on the earth for at least 200,000 years; that the various races of men have descended, and not merely in one single straight line, from common ancestors with the higher primates, the apes and the monkeys; that in brain, mind, body, blood, and other characteristics, the differences between man and the anthropoids are differences of degree rather than of kind; and that the accumulated evidence of the fifty-six years since Darwin's *Descent of Man* was published makes it inconceivable that this view of man's origin should ever be shaken.

That is an accurate summary of one of the most outstanding pronouncements from the chair of the British Association, and curiously enough, this ably conducted organ of Anglo-Catholicism is in essential agreement with it, frankly admitting that Sir Arthur spoke "with the authority of a life-time study of the subject." The *Guardian* also, of the same date, expressed its admiration of the Address. The *Christian*

World of September 8, complained that "Sir Arthur Keith left spiritual forces entirely out of account. There were tremendous gaps in the argument that the *whole* of man was latent in the brain of the anthropoid primate." The editor is a theologian, and his mission is to explain and defend a more or less liberal type of theology. Is it not conceivable that Sir Arthur "left spiritual forces entirely out of account," simply because he does not believe in their existence? It is quite possible, if not probable, that he regards them as merely theological inventions, with no objective reality attached to them at all.

We now come to an article in which the teaching of the Address is uncompromisingly condemned and rejected as utterly false, which appeared in the *British Weekly* of September 15, entitled "Human Origins: Heads or Tails," and signed by the editor, Dr. John A. Hutton. Dr. Hutton is not even polite. He says:—

When Hamlet raised what seemed to him the final question in his famous soliloquy and asked, "To be or not to be?" he proceeded to deal with the very matter with which Sir Arthur Keith so ineptly, as I think, has distracted the public mind from the graver issues which are impending. And still it is true that the blank misgivings, the honourable spectres of the mind which, in the final solitude of his spirit, gathered round the Prince of Denmark compelling him to cast his vote for the spiritual view, are the considerations which will be held to be enough, by the kind of human beings on whom under God in the long run the future of the race depends.

Dr. Hutton never penned a more "inept" and silly passage in his life than that just transcribed. He betrays gross ignorance of the very nature and aim of the British Association, ignoring the fundamental fact that it is not an institution for the spread of the Christian Gospel, or for teaching people to "vote for the spiritual view," but rather and solely "for the Advancement of Science." He forgets too, that Shakespeare makes Hamlet call the world to come "the undiscover'd country from whose bourn no traveller returns." It is the Church's business to teach religion and bring the world to God, a business in the discharge of which it can never pride itself on its success. It is with science alone that the British Association is concerned; and in reality science has already rendered a greater and more valuable contribution to life than either poetry or art. Here is another absurd statement:—

I believe that philosophical grounds could be adduced for the thesis that *securus judicial orbis terrarum*, and that a final theory of human existence from which average men shudder is a final theory of human existence which is not true. It may well be partially true; but partially true is wholly false.

What on earth does that cryptic paragraph mean? It is a merely dogmatic assertion, unsupported by a single shred of evidence or argument, that the editor of the *British Weekly* offers his readers. The theory of evolution is to him a bugbear which frightens him and fills his heart with aversion; but he is absolutely wrong when he represents it as "a theory which claims to explain everything." No such claim for it has ever been made by any accredited scientific teacher. And yet it does explain innumerable facts of Nature, which apart from it would be positively insoluble mysteries.

On what grounds does Dr. Hutton reject and fling brickbats at Darwinism? Chiefly, it appears, because it contradicts and seeks to undermine the conception of the universe which Professor Caird instilled into his mind forty years ago. He has no patience with any other propositions whatsoever. He says:—

There are facts of conscience and of the will about which there is this to be said, that however difficult it may be to find a solid or objective basis for them, as it is difficult to find within our flesh a locus for what we call the soul, nevertheless, if history means anything it conveys this stern and sombre truth, that to neglect the subtle and obstinate facts of the spirit is to undermine the health of the human race and to change for the worse its quality.

That is sheer dogmatism, devoid of the slightest justification at the bar of reason and history. What are "the subtle and obstinate facts of the spirit," the neglect of which would undermine the national health and vigour? We challenge Dr. Hutton to cite one of them, and to explain what he means by "spirit," or "soul." This world under Christianity has never been a paradise. All social and moral reforms we owe, not to the Church, but to the dissemination of secular knowledge which the Church did its utmost to suppress. Yes, the facts of history stand up, a solid mass, in deadly condemnation of the cruel tyranny practised by the Church over the hearts and consciences of mankind. At last, the Body of Christ is losing ground everywhere, becoming weaker and weaker every year, while science is marching on to universal dominion. We understand the deep regret and sorrow experienced by the editor of the *British Weekly* as he contemplates this (to him) mournful but undeniable fact. We can almost pity him as he closes his melancholy article in the following pathetic words:—

The saddest thing, in my own view, about all the pother and panic over this presidential address, is that it should have occurred at all. I should have supposed that able men and women who know the riposte of God in the literature and philosophy and art of the last seventy years, the overwhelming succour He has given to the soul in man lest it should be driven into any amazement, would have given the matter one hard look, and passed on to the order of the day.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Smile on the Face of the Tiger.

"Everything is moving forward except religion, and the Church, instead of helping Humanity, is devoting itself to an attack on those who are doing their best to assist the world."—*Sir Arthur Keith*.

"Man is much more important than his inventions."
Sir Oliver Lodge.

BISHOPS are extraordinary folks. In private life they wear gaiters and silk hats, and the stove-pipe hat is now almost as rare as a hansom-cab. In their professional capacity they adorn themselves with a plausible imitation of the dress of a twelfth century ecclesiastic, so often seen in stained-glass windows. Moreover, they are popularly supposed to be the descendants of the twelve disciples, who never lived. And, apparently, present-day bishops pass their lives in contradicting each other, and talking beautiful nonsense concerning the religion they profess so loudly.

A recent example is that of Bishop Welldon, who was formerly a schoolmaster, and is certainly old enough to know better. Unburdening himself on the subject of the Anglican Church, of which he is a distinguished ornament, he lamented the dearth of candidates for the priesthood. Once, he declared, large families of position sent one son into the Army, another into the Navy, and a third to the Church of Christ. Bishop Welldon did not add that it was generally the fool of the family that was selected for the honour of the priesthood. All that is changed, and present-day young men prefer their rewards on the earth and do not care to wait till they walk the golden

streets of Heaven. This hard saying rebounds to the credit of the modern young man. The comfortable jobs in the Anglican Church are so very comfortable and the holders live to so advanced an age, that they tire their successors out with waiting for dead men's shoes.

Bishop Welldon, however, will not admit the soft impeachment. He endeavours to show that the Christian Church is really deserving of sacrifice on behalf of young men. His words are:—

The Church was once the fountain-head of the great movements in Christendom for the abolition of cruel practices, for the elevation of womanhood, for the care of the sick and suffering, the distressed and the afflicted, and for the sense of mutual duty and service.

This is the merest mouthing and cockscombr, if not worse. Burning men alive for heresy was a cruel thing, and it was practised by the Christian Church for centuries. The judicial murder of women accused of witchcraft was a cruel thing. It was done to keep the divine commandment: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." To condemn young men and women to enforced celibacy is a cruel thing, and to this day Christendom is strewn with monasteries and nunneries. As for the care of the distressed and afflicted, it is sufficient to mention that the two greatest Christian Churches, the Greek and the Roman Catholic, are the greatest enemies of Democracy in Europe. Even the Anglican Church, of which Bishop Welldon seems so proud, is an upholder of Feudalism in its worst form. So far from supporting Democracy, the Anglican Prayer Book contains prayers for individual members of the Royal Family, and, until quite recently, included an entire service to perpetuate the distinguished services to religion of "King Charles the Martyr"—one of the biggest blackguards in British history, or any other.

Bishop Welldon is not always so cocksure in his statements. He says:—

I cannot for a moment allow that the Church is bound to hold herself aloof from social reforms.

Sunday-school scholars, pupils in Church schools, and women communicants, may honestly hold the view that the Anglican Church has a long and meritorious record of social service. In religion so much is accepted upon trust. Yet the Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords show the descendants of the Apostles to great disadvantage as legislators. One conception of their duties filled their minds and animated all their actions. They were in the House of Lords to maintain the rights and privileges of the Anglican Church, the Throne, and the Aristocracy.

In the year 1800, Roman Catholics were excluded from Parliament, from the franchise, from the magistracy, the Bar, the Civil Service, from municipal corporations, from becoming officers in the Army and Navy. It took twenty-nine years' struggle to remove these restrictions, and the forty Bishops in the House of Lords used their votes against reform. The agitation for the removal of Jewish Disabilities followed, and another twenty-eight years were spent before the right to sit in Parliament was secured for the Jew, the Bishops voting against reform. The Bishops during the whole of the nineteenth century resisted concessions to Protestant Nonconformity with the same vigour they displayed against the claims of Roman Catholics and Jews.

The struggle for the amendment of the criminal laws was a battle for the recognition of the value of human life. At the beginning of the nineteenth century death was the legal punishment in England for a multitude of petty crimes. Not one solitary

vote was given by the Bench of Bishops during sixty years of the nineteenth century for the Bills for the removal of bloodthirsty laws hateful to decent men; not a word was uttered from the Episcopal Bench in the name of Christian charity to save the wretched pickpocket and miserable shoplifter from the hangman's rope. The attitude of the Bishops to popular education was one of steady and pronounced opposition to popular control. War has been waged by British arms in every quarter of the globe during the last hundred years. The Bench of Bishops has never thrown its weight in the scale of peace, when the balance trembled before war was declared. For the Labour Movement the Episcopal Bench has had nothing but the sternest rebuke. Indeed, they have never been the friends of the Labour Movement. In short, the record of the Bishops as legislators is a bad one. And Bishop Welldon talks of the Church being the fountain-head of social reform. What futility and effrontery! What do you think of it all? Do you not hold that it is high time that this policy of spoof and make-believe should be finally ended?

This perpetual association of the Anglican Church with Royalty, makes the Book of Common Prayer a Book of Snobs, and the twenty-five thousand Anglican clergy an army of flunkies. Royalty is an archaic institution in the twentieth century. How such a thing strikes a stranger is shown by a capital story of an American who was being shown the Albert Memorial. "What's that?" said the American. "That's to commemorate Prince Albert." "Who was he?"

"He was Queen Victoria's husband."

"Yes! But what did he do?"

"Why—he was the father of King Edward VII."

"Yes! But that's only recreation. What did the man do in the daytime?"

MIMNERMUS.

The Fall of Man.

THE revolution in ideas caused by the discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo and Newton, was very damaging to Christianity, but not more damaging than the later idea of Evolution. For, until Darwin had propounded the animal ancestry of man, it was still possible to believe in the Fall of Man, and the inheritance of Original Sin as a result of that fall. There was nothing in the new astronomical ideas in conflict with the central dogma of a Fall of Man from a once perfect state.

But, if man, instead of being created perfect in the Garden of Eden, was evolved from lower animal types during a vast geological period, then the facts represented a rise of man, and not a fall; and the Bible record of the magic trees, of life and knowledge, and the talking serpent who brought about the Fall of Man by causing him to disobey God's commandment, is seen to be nothing but a fairy tale.

But, if there was no Fall, what becomes of the scheme of Salvation? Where is the necessity for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, to redeem us from Adam's sin? Evolution cut at the very foundations of Christianity; there was no further need to be "Washed in the blood of the Lamb," or for the "Fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins," which we used to sing with such gusto.

The latest book dealing with the dogma of the Fall, is entitled: *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*. By the Rev. Norman Powell Williams, Chaplain of Exeter College, Oxford. (Published by Longmans Green, 21s.). The book comprises the Bampton lectures for 1924. These Bampton lectures were founded by the Rev. John

Bampton, Canon of Salisbury, who dying in 1751—one hundred and eight years before the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*—bequeathed a sum of money to be expended upon a course of eight lectures to be delivered, and afterwards published, at Oxford every year.

Poor old Bampton! If he could only have foreseen the kind of book that was to be published with the money he bequeathed for lectures in support of the religion, the main object to be, as he expressly states, "to confute all heretics and schismatics," and confirm, "The divine authority of the Holy Scriptures." So far as we can see, not one of the conditions, or stipulations, have been complied with, and all of them transgressed and broken, in this latest volume.

In his preface, Mr. Williams observes that the greatest difficulty which restrains intellectual men from giving their allegiance to Christianity, does not lie in doctrines like the Trinity, or miracles, or eschatology, but in the fundamental assertion that "God is Love." He proceeds:—

"Is it possible," they ask, "to believe that behind the cruel misfits, the senseless waste, the sordid ferocity with which organic nature, human and sub-human, is deeply marked there really exists that dazzlingly perfect, that inconceivably glorious and blissful Being of whom Christian theology speaks? Can we recognize in the infinite and eternal Energy, from which all things proceed, which seems with impersonal indifference to weave good and evil, love and hate, beauty and ugliness into the tissue of its phenomenal self-expression, the features of that loving heavenly Father whom Jesus claimed to reveal? Is it not more honest to admit that we are confronted by a morally neutral universe; and, if we keep the conception of "God" at all, to regard the God of religion as limited, as less than the Absolute, though greater than ourselves—our ally perhaps, in the work of harnessing the blind forces of nature, without us and within, to ethically valuable ends, but like men ultimately dependent for His being on the inscrutable substrate of the world process, which, for all we know, may in some unpredictable freak eventually crush Him and us?— (N. P. Williams: *The Ideas of Fall and of Original Sin*. pp. vii-viii.)

The answer given by historical Christianity is the doctrine of the Fall, but, as Mr. Williams points out, owing partly to Biblical criticism, and partly to the revolutionary ideas of modern science concerning the universe and the place of man within it, the ideas of the Fall have for some time been under a cloud; hence it seemed to Mr. Williams that a systematic study of the whole subject was called for, not only to investigate the origins of the Fall-doctrine and its development, but to determine the extent of its acceptance by orthodox Christianity, and the validity of its claims, "if any" before the bar of reason. The result of the investigation is contained in this treatise on the Fall.

We must confess that we began the reading of this portly volume of over five hundred pages, with not a little misgiving; for modern writings upon this subject, especially those of the Nonconformist variety, are so shamelessly sophistical, as, for instance, in the substitution of At-one-ment for the word Atonement, that we expected to experience again the sensation of nausea the reading of them provoked. We may say that we were agreeably disappointed. We have never read a work, by a professed theologian, of such learning combined with such candour.

The Fall, and Original Sin, are subjects that require no ordinary amount of study, as anyone who attempts it will find. Mr. Williams has studied the subject in all its bearings, from the commencement in the Garden of Eden, through the vast sea of Rab-

binical literature. In the Apocalyptic literature Jewish and Christian. In the Church Fathers, right down to Reformation and the Church of England. It will be seen that the work must have been practically a life's study. Such a subject cannot make very light reading, but we did not experience that feeling of a surfeit of chaff and sawdust usually identified with theological works; indeed, in one passage Mr. Williams shows that he possesses that very untheological quality, a sense of humour, a passage we cannot forbear from quoting. After observing, of the serpent in Eden, that there is no suggestion that the serpent was Satan, or was possessed by the spirit of evil, he proceeds with the story of the serpent's intrigue:—

With treacherous affability, he engages our unsuspecting ancestress in conversation. By adroitly exaggerating the extent of the divine prohibition ("Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"), he lures the too communicative woman into a discussion of the forbidden fruit and its properties: and points out (apparently with perfect truth, as we gather from the sequel) that the motives which have impelled her master to enact this prohibition are of anything but a disinterested nature, and that his warning as to the mortal effects of the tree is an empty threat: Yahweh is haunted by a jealous fear lest men, through the acquisition of scientific knowledge, should attain to a position of equality with himself, and he therefore endeavours to keep them in the dark by means of baseless menaces. Eve is deeply impressed by the uncanny creature's knowledge of these high mysteries, and her longing for wisdom is reinforced by the demands of natural appetite. She tastes the seductive fruit, and induces Adam to share her transgression. The immediate effects of the magic food are of a somewhat unexpected nature; the man and woman become suddenly conscious of the facts of sex, of which, it would seem, they had hitherto been ignorant. . . . Then an ominous sound falls on their ears—they hear the approaching footsteps of the Creator, who, with the most naive anthropomorphism, is represented like an earthly nobleman, as walking in his garden "in the cool of the day." . . . He (Adam) confesses it, having no other resource, but, with unchivalrous cowardice, hastens to lay the blame on his wife, who in turn accuses the serpent; the latter, unable to transfer the responsibility to any fourth party, maintains a guilty silence. Then judgment is pronounced. (pp. 45-46).

What would old John Bampton have thought of that humorous version of a sacred story? Written too by a theologian and a Chaplain of an Oxford College! And published at Bampton's expense. He would probably, like Eli of old, have fallen over backwards and broken his neck. But we have travelled far since his day, and, as Mr. Williams remarks, it is no longer necessary to discuss the question of its historicity: "it has long since been recognized by educated Christians that the sunlight of Eden, which falls upon the magic trees, the talking serpent, and the man-like figure of the Creator, walking in his garden in the cool of the day, is: 'The light that never was on sea or land.'" (p. 47.)

A careful examination of the Bible story, says Mr. Williams, raises several difficulties, to which there is no obvious answer. For instance, if the Tree of Knowledge was the only tree denied to Adam, why did he not eat of the Tree of Life, and so secure immortality, before the Fall? And again, why does the Creator's threat of instant death for eating of the Tree of Knowledge fail to be realized? "with the result that the serpents disparagement of the Creator's good faith is apparently vindicated? And, lastly, what were the motives which actuated the animal tempter in his gratuitous interference with the happy condition of Adam and Eve? As the story stands, the serpent

appears to come very badly out of the affair. He loses various gratifying privileges, and gains nothing whatever—a result which his demonic subtlety might reasonably have been expected to foresee." (p. 66.)

Mr. Williams, after an examination of the vast Rabbinical literature of the Jews, declares that the Rabbis never held the view that Original Sin was inherited from Adam. He says: "According to the Rabbis, the individual sinner neither inherits the tendency to sin from his parents nor transmits it to his children; he receives it into his soul directly from God at the first moment of his existence, as his parents individually received it before him and his children will receive it after him." In fact, they held that Adam transgressed because evil had already been planted in him by the Creator. They never seem to have faced the fact that they thus made God the author of Evil.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Reflections on the Atlantic Flights.

THE numerous attempts, successful and unsuccessful, to fly the Atlantic give rise to many and varied comments. All shades of opinion are expressed. There is the man who says: "I have no patience with such foolhardiness," and, when the worst happens, "Well, they've asked for it and they've got it." And at the other extreme one hears: "This is the Columbus Spirit; gallant pioneers all of them, and may they come safe through." The purpose of the present article is not to try and estimate the value of these flights to the human race, but rather to discuss the motives which actuate the men (and women) who attempt them. Why, as a matter of fact, do people undertake such an obviously hazardous enterprise? Is it the desire for honour and glory? Is it love of financial gain? Is it the true pioneer spirit, that spirit which is undoubtedly responsible for all the advancement of civilization? It is fairly apparent that the motives will vary according to the individual cases. There is the millionaire element which, I think quite obviously, is out purely for publicity; the type which desires, even at the risk of life and limb, to have his name flashed round the globe as the first man to do something extraordinary—he does not much mind what. But this is a somewhat rare instance, and, from the present point of view, the least interesting. If we are candid with ourselves, I think we must admit that there are very few of us who do not cherish a secret desire to have the limelight turned upon us. But, to take a special instance, I do not think this was the only impulse which launched that gallant American, who was the first to face the long agony of suspense without the consolation of human companionship. I speak with the more feeling on this matter, as I myself happen to be an air-pilot with a fair amount of experience, both during the war and since. I know the thrill and the sickening excitement of the "first solo"; I have undergone the mental strain of hobbling home with a faulty engine; and while these things are amusing afterwards, something about which to make a joke with one's friends, all who have experienced them know that there is no room for laughter at the time. Judging, therefore, by my own experience, I should say that the smiling confident faces which the photographs show us of pilots about to take off towards the grey emptiness of the Atlantic hide a wildly beating heart, and at least, in some cases, a fervent desire to abandon the attempt. It is not as though these men do not know what they are facing and are taking a blind chance with Fate. To those who know nothing of aviation, the undertaking appears hazardous and fraught with endless risks. But to him who can estimate precisely those risks, the hazards are increased tenfold.

I should imagine that if an Atlantic pilot were to ask himself on the eve of his departure, why he was about to take such a long chance, he would find his feelings somewhat difficult to analyse. The pure spirit of adventure would be a fairly large constituent. The desire, afore-

mentioned, to appear in the limelight would also be present in a varying degree. It is almost certain that the money question would not be entirely absent. But how far would the abstract idea of advancement of the human race enter into the matter? Is the average man in the least concerned with such an issue? It can, of course, be argued that it does not matter in the least whether the men of action who bring about the vast changes and improvements which constitute the march of learning and progress are actuated by the highest or the lowest motives, so long as the changes are brought about. But I contend that it does matter, that it is essential that they should know what they are doing and why. I think it has been proved that a man will only give of his very best when he is working for what he considers to be a high ideal; and the higher the ideal the better he will strive.

And here I come to the root of the problem which I am trying to discuss. For it seems to me that the ordinary man of to-day has no ideal whatever to strive for. He smiles complacently at the Bishops debating the revision of the Prayer-book, and says in effect; "Of course that's all right for them, but I've got my living to earn." In other words, religion no longer holds out an ideal which can be respected by the average thinking man. In its day, a day when the credibility of man was unlimited, no doubt it did afford a sort of moral code by which men might work. But that day is past. Its miracles are discredited, its moral record looked upon if not with disgust at least with a dawning doubt. As an ideal it is cast upon the dust-heap, and the once all-powerful theologians are wandering distractedly round that dust-heap, like men whose home has collapsed in ruins, trying to retrieve what they can of their belongings and their treasures. Let them continue to do so; we will not interfere, for their time is short in any case. In the meantime we want a new ideal to work for, a fresh driving-force, so that the brains and the energy of mankind may yield the fullest results and not be squandered in such petty squabbles and bickerings as have so largely contributed to the downfall of religion.

One cannot think of a better expression for this ideal than "the betterment of the human race on scientific lines." Let no man work for his own end unless that end is also serving the common purpose. Above all, let him not content for one line of action or one school of thought, simply because he regards these things as a sort of cherished possession which must be defended against the "vulgar" attacks of people whose opinions have just as much claim for consideration as his own.

B. S. WILCOX.

Acid Drops.

We recently called attention, for the —th time, to the absurdity of men such as Mr. James Douglas, who talk glibly about being in love with religion, but being opposed to theology. We said then that there can be no such thing as a religion without a theology, and we hinted that the declaration that one has the one without the other is an illustration of either inability to think clearly or downright humbug. We are glad, therefore, to find the *Church Times* in its last issue following up what we said, which it refers to as a product of popular writers for Sunday newspapers. It is not for the first time that we have found ourselves in agreement with the *Church Times* in its statement of a position, and this we take it, is due to the fact that the editor knows what he means and is not afraid to say it. And there is always pleasure in reading such, whether one agrees with it or not.

What is a religion without a theology? It is suspiciously like a footless stocking without a leg. Religion must consist in a belief in something—in a God, in supernatural beings, in some kind of an existence. But the mere affirmation of such would be by itself of no value to anyone or to anything. It is only when we begin to draw inferences from such a belief, to say in what it affects life, or ought to affect life, to say how this sup-

posed power acts, and how it or he would have us act, we have a theology. To say that God exists may be taken to be religion; to say that he is love—a favourite expression of slap-dash writers such as Mr. Douglas—is theology. And the very people who say they are opposed to theology, are the very ones who usually offer a theology of a very pronounced kind. "I believe in religion, but not in theology" is just a fashionable form of cant, based upon either inefficient thinking or moral cowardice. It is like professing a belief in science but discarding all generalizations.

A reviewer of Mr. F. P. Wilson's *The Plague in Shakespeare's London* says Mr. Wilson's account of how the city was organized for times of stress such as visitations of the plague, and his remarks about the insanitary condition of the city, and of the citizens' habits, makes the reader wonder how any survived epidemics, and why the plague ever departed. The streets, so narrow as to exclude sunshine and air, were filthy beyond description, and the water supplies were consistently contaminated. And—

whenever a reformer arose he was silenced by the cry that the plague was a judgment of God on the wicked, and that it was impious to try to interfere with the inscrutable ways of Providence. We have travelled far since those days, to a saner theology as well as to an improved sanitation . . .

From all this it would appear that their religion never taught the citizens to be clean. If they had been less Christian they might have been more sanitary. Secularly their pious notions dulled their intelligence and prevented them from seeking the physical causes of the plague. They prayed to a deaf God for and when they ought to have been cleansing their filthy homes and streets.

We like the reviewer's remarks about a "saner theology." The admission here is that the Christian religion in Shakespeare's time was insane. We agree, adding that the fact need surprise no one who realizes what an insane Book that religion was based on, and who also knows the Book was accepted as literal truth. If the Christian religion is less insane to-day than formerly, that is one useful result achieved by Freethought criticism and ridicule. And this debt the world owes to Freethought may perhaps be freely acknowledged by some candid historian—two hundred years hence, when the "saner theology" has been criticized and laughed out of existence.

The work of evangelization is harder to-day, laments the Bishop of Southwark, than has been the case in the past. We suggest to the Bishop that what he has noted is quite natural. Primitive ideas are always difficult to impose upon people when education and civilized notions become more widely disseminated.

A contemporary says that the sorry spectacle of police posted outside a church was seen at St. Cuthbert's, Darwen. That disorder was even feared, it adds, is a disgrace. Religion that provokes bitter quarrelling can do no good. We would remind our contemporary that religion of the kind mentioned is the only kind history has any record of. So that it must have been doing "no good" for nearly two thousand years now.

The *Daily Chronicle* sermonette writer gets into his stride with, "If an average, earnest, decent-living man, such as would justly pass for a Christian . . ." This is too modest. Why not, "If an average noble, lofty-souled, perfect-in-every part superman, etc.?" Let's have the specification true to nature.

Says a professor of pestology, we have to make people ashamed of having flies in their homes. Seeing that God Almighty created flies as disease carriers, this implied enmity to God's creatures savours too much of blasphemy for our liking.

A heading in a religious weekly runs: "The Godly Methodist Home—something to think about." On the contrary, it is one of those misfortunes the civilized portion of the nation regrets had ever happened and wishes to forget about.

The Bishop of Durham says that the Protestantism of to-day is not the Protestantism of 1558 or 1662. It is more tolerant than in those fierce and bigoted days. The *Methodist Recorder* replies that even if Protestantism has changed, as the Bishop hints for the better, there is little sign that Catholicism has. It remains stoutly and uncompromisingly antagonistic to Protestantism. We gather that our Protestant contemporary thinks that Catholic bigotry and intolerance should be opposed by Protestant bigotry and intolerance, as being the only weapons suitable to the combat. "Give Peace in our time, O Lord"!

A Countess Van Den Heaval has written a hymn to the Italian Dictator. One advantage of being a Freethought editor is that we never get visited with a misfortune like that—which is, perhaps, evidence of there being a merciful God in the universe, considerate even of unbelievers.

Most Governments are distrustful of the League of Nations, declare M. de Juvenal. For the future peace and prosperity of the world, "most Governments" would do well to acquire a few of the more civilized ideas that higher intelligences have evolved and that now await acceptance.

We are not the highest beings in Creation, says Sir Oliver Lodge; we are only the highest on this planet. There can be no possible doubt whatever about that, after reading some of the super-intelligent "messages" that have come through from other worlds via spiritualist mediums.

The China Inland Mission has, according to its own account, borne the brunt of the anti-Christian and anti-foreign movement in China during the past two years. In its annual report, "Midst Calumny and Praise," many examples are given "of the cruelty and persecution from which the missionaries have suffered." We don't see that the missionaries need regret the cruelty and persecution. For the worse the suffering "for Christ's sake," the greater the compensation credited to the good men's Heavenly account. Besides, see how useful these accounts of missionary suffering are for coaxing cheques from pious old ladies. In any case, the suffering is all part of God's plan for testing the Christian fortitude of his faithful servants. We really don't see how the missionaries can have grounds for lamentation. We hope these followers of the Lord Jesus didn't forget to turn the other cheek to the smiter. They will seldom have again so excellent an opportunity of practising their master's wise precept.

According to a writer in a religious paper, a most striking, and most welcome, change has come in the attitude of the modern theologian. He is not so obviously on the defensive (against the scientist) as on the quest. He runs abreast with the scientist, seeking the same goal—truth or reality. The writer's optics are a bit out of focus. The modern theologian is not running abreast of the scientist, but a few miles in the rear. And he is still too heavily burdened with sacred "truth" ever to be able to catch up.

The Jubilee of the Cradle Roll is now being celebrated by various chapels. The "cradle roll," we may explain, is a neat little wheeze adopted by the parsons for "catching 'em young." As soon as a baby enters the world its parents are presented with a pretty certificate enrolling it with some chapel the parents attend or may

have attended. This having been more or less thankfully received, the game proper commences. Each year a birthday-card arrives, and in the interim letters are sent, and periodical visits are paid to enquire after the baby's welfare. At four years the child's name is placed on another roll, which makes him or her a member of the Beginner's Department. And we presume the parents are worried until they consent to deliver up their offspring to the Sunday-school to be turned into the complete "bible-puncher." A wonderful wheeze, this. And the parsons are quite convinced that it delivers the goods according to plan. Though one would think even they would begin to have doubts about its efficacy, seeing that multitudes of young people nowadays are shaking off allegiance to the chapels.

The Salvation Army at a recent demonstration in Newcastle-on-Tyne, indulged in the quite Christian policy of burning a number of Sunday newspapers. The objection was that they were Sunday papers. Commissioner Booth Tucker was responsible for this outburst of "true Christianity," and on being approached by the *North Mail*, and reminded that the *War Cry* was sold on Sunday, replied:—

We make a difference between the *War Cry* and Secular literature. The *War Cry* is the Bible in dilution. It is to help people to heaven, while a Secular newspaper diverts their thoughts from heaven and turns them in another direction, and also to a large extent destroys their appetite for Bible food.

Probably the *North Mail* did not require any great amount of proof to convince it of the humbug of the Salvation Army; but if it did, it should have enough to now. All the same we venture to predict that the *Mail* will not devote its columns to an exposure of the Army and its methods. It is a Christian organization, and no matter how great the humbug or the hypocrisy, even the fraud, most newspapers are afraid to speak out in such circumstances.

It is often said that Christianity is used merely as a cloak to hide rascality. We should dearly like attention paid to the question as to why so very many frauds flourish under the cloak of Christianity? The result should prove interesting to both the psychologist and the sociologist.

St. Paul's Church, East Molesey, has been condemned as unsafe, owing to dry rot in the roof. Evidently the pulpit has affected the roof.

The Bishop of Blackburn has discovered that more and more people are finding that it is a mistake to separate religious and secular education. We fancy the "more and more people" exist in the eye of the Bishop only, and he probably hopes that by assuring the crowd that such is the case, the sheep-like mind of many will respond by saying the same thing. And ecclesiastics were never over particular about the truth where their religious interests were concerned. The one thing that is very observable is the marked growth of the general feeling that religious instruction matters very little.

What the Bishop wants is the whole of the educational system permeated with religion. He would like to see geography, history, and every other subject soaked with religion. In that way the young mind would be so doped with religion, that it would be unlikely to outgrow it when maturity was reached. We quite understand the desire, but we cannot picture its realization.

Apropos of a recent paragraph in these columns on the methods of Pastor Jeffries and his manufactured cures, Mr. E. A. Kemp writes from Southend-on-Sea, that it is the Pastor's custom to give at one place remarkable cures which he says have taken place somewhere else. Never

by any chance do they take place where he is. Mr. Kemp says it is pitiable to see the strings of sufferers who go for help and retire as they come. Meanwhile the singing and howling and arm waving of a number of persons present are taken as signs of the power of the spirit. We can only say that the game is a very old one, and there always seem to be plenty of religious fools who are anxious to have their weaknesses exploited by men of the pastor Jeffries type.

In reply to a Christian reader who objects to Darwinism, the following letter, headed "A Problem in Degeneracy," appeared in the *Daily Mirror* from another reader using the name of "Siency n":—

"Ordinary Man" argues that apes are degenerate descendants of man. Following his argument, monkeys are degenerate apes, lemurs are degenerate monkeys, etc. So that ultimately all nature is descended from mankind by degrees of degeneracy.

We hope "Ordinary Man" didn't lose too much sleep over solving the problem, nor get beset with those awful doubts that lead to infidelity.

Circulating "The Word." A leading article in the *Times*, dealing with the annual report of the British and Foreign Bible Society says that by offering the sacred texts pure and simple, in the best translations procurable and at the lowest prices consonant with purchase, the Society is in a position to prove its impartiality to all men, and to ask of all men in turn their impartial support. A very reasonable request! Yet, laments the *English Churchman*, the report shows that even in countries which are nominally Christian "the colporteurs have sometimes to exercise all their wits and all their resourcefulness to interest indifference or to appease open hostility." From this last statement one infers that the good ship "Religious Revival" is in no particular hurry to get itself launched from the celestial dockyard at present. Such a state of affairs is very odd. Man is, as everyone knows, incurably religious. He is reported by reputable authorities to be eager for spiritual truth. Our newspapers have quite recently—for the love of God, and the benefit of circulation—been arousing enormous interest in religion. And now comes the B. & F. B. Society recording the fact that the masses are reluctant to buy "The Word," even at lowest possible prices. "Oh, dear, what can the matter be!"

Apropos of the Government religion's Revised Prayer-book measure, which honourable gentlemen of various religious opinions—plain, fancy and coloured—and of no religion, will soon be asked to approve of or reject, the Rev. Edward G. Falconer, of Stowmarket, warns his brothers in Christ:—

By the help of our God we are determined to defeat the measure.

By the help of "our God" a bunch of other godly persons is also determined to push the measure through. Luckily these be less Christian times. Otherwise, by the help of God a lot of blood might be spilled in this fight for Christian unity, truth and brotherhood, and the right way to worship a figment of primitive man's imagination.

In his *Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, appearing serially in the *Daily Telegraph*, M. Maurois is quite candid concerning Disraeli's scepticism in regard to religion. Lord John Manners, he says, "was amazed and shocked by the Dizzy who would come out from a sitting in which he had defended the Church and murmur, 'It is curious, Walpole, that you and I have just been voting for a defunct mythology . . .'" M. Maurois sums up Disraeli's attitude towards the Church in a sentence: "To Dizzy, the Church of England was a great historic force which had to be respected and maintained, but the idea that the slightest importance could be attached to the letter of its doctrines did not even faintly occur to him."

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

We are making headway with this Trust, but we shall have to move to get the final £880 4s. 9d. by the end of the year. There are twelve weeks left, which means that we must have over £70 per week if we are to secure the £1,615 promised. We ought to do this with ease. Indeed it would not be difficult for me to name twelve men who could with ease send a cheque for each weekly instalment. And there are, in addition, the host of less wealthy readers, all of whom could do something if they were only so inclined. Altogether I can see no valid reason why the whole of what is needed should not be secured long before the date named. And all those who promised will be quite delighted to write out their cheques as early as possible.

I have to acknowledge a promise of £5 from "Anon," which brings the total of promises to £1,615.

We have had many quite interesting letters in connexion with the Trust, some of which I will note later. I append the state of the Fund to date.

THIRD LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

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Mr. & Mrs. J. C.	25	0	0	J. Seddon	1	0	0
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J. Robinson	0	2	6	F. Gubbins	1	0	0
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E. Pariente	1	0	0	Miss A. M. Baker	2	0	0
E. Truelove	0	15	0	Dressmaker	0	5	0
D. Wright...	0	5	0	H. A. Lupton	1	0	0
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Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and crossed Clerkenwell Branch, London & Midland Bank, and directed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.
CHAPMAN COHEN.

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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.

ANON.—We are obliged for your promise of £5 to the Endowment Trust on the same conditions as the other promises. There ought to be some 500 come along with promises for a similar or a larger amount.

A. MACHIN.—We should say from your writing that you are 78 years young, rather than 78 years old. Thanks for interest in the paper. We hope to have you on our subscribers' list for many years yet.

DR. R. K. NOYES (Boston).—Copy of *Materialism Re-Stated* has been sent. Hope it will come up to your expectation, which is very flattering to the author.

D. C. ELLIS.—The story is quite good and will be useful. Glad to know that you think *Materialism Re-Stated* "the most helpful book" you have read. The confusion on this, as well as upon many other subjects chiefly arises from writers following one another without taking the trouble to re-state the question they propose discussing.

R. HARDINGE.—We agree with you that the authorities "tolerate discussion, but they dislike it." That is the general characteristic of authorities. There is force in what you say about the authorities concentrating a number of different speakers in public places in a very small area, and thus leading to deterioration in the quality of the listeners. It develops the spirit of a dog-fight and attracts a dog-fighting kind of listener.

J. RALSTON.—We fully appreciate so complimentary a letter from so staunch a Freethinker as yourself. It gives us renewed encouragement to go on with the work. Our warmest regards to your sister, who in spite of a protracted illness loses none of her interest in the good old cause.

D. G. WILKINSON.—Thanks for cutting, which is both interesting and useful. We are gratified to learn that the *Freethinker* has been of so much help to you during the thirty-three years you have subscribed to it. We sometimes wonder whether there is any other journal in this country which could produce the same kind of tribute from its readers as can this one? We doubt it.

H. O.—The New Standard Dictionary is the kind of work you require, but that would probably be too expensive. There is also one published by the Oxford Press, but for all general purposes Chambers English Dictionary, which is moderately priced would, we think, suit.

J. SEDDON.—Shall hope to see you at Manchester on the 16th.

E. TRUELOVE.—We appreciate your letter. We are just now only anxious for one kind of recognition, and that is to see the Endowment Trust and the paper placed in a secure footing. In all seriousness we can say that we know of nothing of greater importance to the Freethought movement in this country than that.

J. ROSS.—We are very sorry to hear the news concerning one whom we have known for so many years.

W. H. HICKS.—Thanks, but we are not looking for repayment other than to see the "good old cause" served by making the good old paper secure.

H. DAWSON.—We have no authorized collectors for the Endowment Trust, but many of our friends do see to it that others contribute beside themselves—for which we thank them.

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

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

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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.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (October 2), Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, at 7 p.m., on "The New Warfare Between Religion and Science." Admission is free, but there will be a number of reserved seats.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti visits Failsworth to-day (October 2), and will speak in the Secular Hall, Pole Lane, Failsworth in the afternoon, on "What we pay for Religion and What we get"; and in the evening, on "God, Evolution, and Sir Arthur Keith." Manchester friends will please note.

The case of Major Murray, who was fined for being drunk and annoying women, and who has succeeded in getting the judgment upset on appeal, is of considerable public importance. Mr. Mead was the magistrate who inflicted the fine, and his judgment was based entirely upon unsupported police evidence. And police evidence alone should always be taken with extreme care. We do not mean that the police are any more untruthful than other men, but once a policeman makes a charge he is the last person in the world to admit an error, and in the matter of evidence policemen have a curious habit of supporting each other through thick and thin. It is Major Murray to-day, but it may be anyone else to-morrow; and if Major Murray had been a poor man without money or influence, he would have found himself saddled with conviction for a most odious offence. We are not surprised that some of the newspapers are asking that Mr. Mead should resign. Mr. Mead is eighty years of age, and we have no hesitation in saying that a magistrate who makes it a rule to accept unsupported police evidence, save in exceptional circumstances, represents a distinct danger to the public.

In addition to this, there is grave need all over the country, to make the police force realize that they are the servants of the public and not its masters. There has been too great a development of the American spirit of late years not to make many have grave misgivings. In the provinces particularly, the police take upon themselves an authority they do not possess at law, but which is generally not challenged because the police have other ways of making themselves unpleasant. Only the other day, the Chief of Police demanded to see the script of a certain play that was announced; a piece of gross and unauthorized impertinence, which was only made because the police were dealing with a place of public entertainment, and so could make themselves a nuisance if too much was said in reply. Last year, when Mr. Cohen was announced to lecture in a cinema at Plymouth, a police officer had the impudence to call upon the proprietor and inform him that it would not be to his interest to open his doors on Sunday for the meetings. This was an implied threat of interference when application was made for a renewal of the licence. The proprietor was inclined to obey the police, and it was only when Mr. Cohen assured him that if he did not open the doors as arranged an action would certainly follow, that the meetings were allowed to go forward. This interference was the worse as the police have no power what-even to interfere with a cinema owner who cares to let his place for a lecture. We should like to see a Committee formed for the special purpose of watching the police in their dealings with the public generally. It would do no harm, and prevent their Americanization. On the whole the English police do their work well, and that makes it the more imperative that abuses should be checked in their earlier stages.

The North London Branch commences its indoor meetings to-day at the St. Pancras Reform Club. Messrs. Ebury and Ratcliffe will discuss the subject, "Should we Love our Enemies?" The subject has more in it than would appear to the casual observer, and properly handled should provide a good discussion.

One lady whose contribution is acknowledged this week having decided that her *Freethinker* is worth three times what she pays for it, has sent on the fifty-two sixpences as her donation towards the Endowment Trust. She says she is sorry that her idea of contributing sixpence weekly for one year was not taken up by the mass of the readers. Well, there is still time for others to follow so good an example.

The Judaic Source of Christianity.

No phenomenon, be it physical, social, or religious can ever be understood as long as the historical chain connecting it with the past remains unknown. To understand an event or phenomenon means to be aware of its casual antecedents. When these are not known, *i.e.*, lost in the mist of antiquity, every discovery, invention, or social institution has always been considered as a gift of the gods. Corn growing and brewing, the extracting of wine from the grape, and of metals from ores are well known examples. Still more is this attitude true in the case of religions, so much so that if it could be shown to be a social evolution, it would cease therewith to be a religion; a religion is necessarily a supernatural affair. And the early Christians, including all gospel writers and apologists acted fervently and even fiercely upon that principle. Christianity was therefore systematically presented as a "bolt from the celestial blue"—a divine revelation. And so meticulously watchful were the Christian Fathers that nothing tending to weaken or to negative that assumption should be included in the New Canon of Scriptures. To understand Christianity from the New Testament alone is much like accounting for the accession of James I to the English throne, if the Norman, Phantagenet, and the Tudor periods were wholly unrecorded. For, as far as the Bible is concerned, the period between the Old and New Testaments is a historical blank, the very period that gave it birth and being. Now, Christianity had three distinct social roots: pagan, gnostic, and Judaic. The strands supplied by each of these sources are so intimately entwined as to disguise its composite nature. To its pagan source it owes its character as a religion of a dying and a re-arising god. To Gnosticism it owes its metaphysical theosophy of incompatibles and contradiction—the Trinity. And to Judaism it owes its Messiah—a mediator between God and man. Be it, however, observed that the welding of these elements into one, occasioned much distortion and rupture of the integrant parts.

It is a very strange fact that the Christian world remained in greater ignorance of its Judaic source than of the other two. The Church has at all times interested itself no little in the pre-exilic history of the Jews as recorded in Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, but not at all in the post exilic save the marginal trifles contained in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Mr. Chilperic Edwards effectively bridges this all essential gap in Jewish history, in an informative book entitled *The Messianic Idea* (Watts & Co., price 4s. 6d.); so we are now able to trace the Judaic constituent of the conglomerate cult to its social root.

The New Testament gives one the idea that the dogmas inculcating beliefs in man's immortality, in heaven and hell, in the end of the world, in a Day of Judgment, in a Kingdom of God, and in a Messiah to mediate between God and man were, one and all, special revelations made by Jesus of Nazareth; for none of these ideas are to be found in the Old Testament.

Mr. Edwards rends the veil which obscured the mental view of Christendom throughout the centuries.

He shows by copious citations from the few documents which had miraculously escaped the wholesale destruction of hostile documents, that *all* these ideas sprang into existence within the 200 years preceding our era. He also makes it very clear that it is impossible even to understand the gospels without a knowledge of this period. It is these documents alone that can serve the part of a true Commentary upon the New Testament—a fact that demands that a copy of Mr. Edward's book should be in the possession of every Sunday-school teacher.

Moreover, he reveals not only the existence of such ideas, but traces their evolution from their first enunciations to their final forms. He devotes a chapter to each of the phrases—the Kingdom of God; the Son of Man; and the son of David. These are preliminary to the main messianic idea. This is done with a wealth of detail that only a master of the subject could impart. And it is obviously done with a detachment from all considerations save fidelity to the truth.

He begins with the first famous apocalypse—the Book of Daniel, which was written about the year 160 B.C. He firstly traces the political tribulations which gave occasion to its being written at all. He then points out the new ideas assumed in the book, which had in the meantime become current in Palestine—ideas that were wholly foreign to the old Testament. These had transformed the entire character of Judaism as a religion. It was contact with Babylonia and Persia that had wrought this change. He then shows the further changes that had taken place by the time the Book of Enoch was written—about a hundred years later—changes confirmed in the psalms of Solomon; in II Esdras, in the apocalypse of Buruch, and in a Zadokite work lately discovered. He shows in the most indisputable manner that the picture in the minds of the writers of the New Testament was derived, *not from the Old Testament*, but from the Apocalyptic Book of Enoch. The parallelism is too palpable to be denied or ignored. Nevertheless, not the remotest allusion is made in the Gospels to the Book of Enoch; and as far as the New Testament is concerned, no such book ever existed, though all the Judaic ideas incorporated in the new cult are derived en masse from it. It is only by a sheer "miracle" that that book was ever discovered, after having disappeared from the knowledge of Christendom for over a thousand years.

The determined policy of the Christian Fathers and of the Church ever since was to repudiate, at all cost, the idea that the new cult was a natural evolution; but that it was, on the contrary, a special revelation vouchsafed by the Godhead through Christ to man. Though obvious precautions were thus made to keep Christianity's natural sources from sight, no efforts were spared to find sentences in the Old Testament which vaguely appeared to contain some supposed allusion to the alleged Founder of Christianity. It is needless to assert that these contentions were wholly imaginary, with no foundation in fact. These alleged prophecies were held as proofs of its divine origin. The early Church considered it, as was observed above, to be its primary and paramount duty to create the belief that the new religion was embarked by God himself and was not the outcome of apocalyptic ravings of messianic enthusiasts goaded by the galling oppressions to which the Jews were subjected by foreign powers during the two centuries preceding our era. These national enthusiasts consoled their contemporaries by prophesying that the Gentiles would be utterly destroyed for their sins. The remarkable fact in connexion with these prophecies of devastations is that the "sin" for which they were going to be exterminated was not moral, but

doctrinal, *i.e.*, a refusal to believe in the Hebrew deity. In the Book of Enoch, as in the New Testament, the cardinal sin is *unbelief*—the one heinous crime for which famine, plagues, and the horrors of war were inadequate as a retribution, so hell had to be requisitioned to supplement it. The zeal of those, who collated scripts for inclusion in the Bible Canon, to keep the "cradle" of Christianity well hidden, is particularly emphasized by the fact that out of a "literature" of apocalyptic writings, only two non-committal ones—Daniels and Revelations—were honoured by inclusion. And as was then the custom, each of these two is ascribed to a fictitious author, for the vocation of the prophet was in disrepute; so he hid his personality behind some famous name.

Personally I would hail to see a copy of this book placed in every theological seminary in the land. With the intelligent and ingenuous student, Christianity as a supernatural religion would wither as a tree whose roots are cut.

KERIDON.

What is Materialism?

Of all the problems which man has attempted to solve dealing with his relationship to the forces surrounding him, the greatest is, which is true, a purely mechanistic conception of the universe or a spiritual or supernatural one? How many thousands of books dealing with the one or the other, have been written, how many discussions in private or public, have taken place, it is impossible to guess. Certain it is that science and the scientific method which have been gaining more and more ground during the past century and which, in the ultimate, will be the real arbiter, are leaning more definitely on the one side as against the other, and scientific materialism is being openly avowed in the most unexpected quarters.

For a full discussion of the problem in all its bearings one must be prepared not merely to master the historical side of the subject such as, let us say, the monumental work of Lange, but also the various problems of philosophy as expounded by, among others, Berkeley, Hume and Kant, and the latest discoveries in psychology—about which we are only now beginning to learn something of real value. In other words, metaphysics means a life study in the ordinary way and life, in these days, is just a little too short to get in all we should like to and earn a living at the same time. This is where such a work as that of Mr. Chapman Cohen* serves a double purpose. net. The Pioneer Press, London.

Firstly, it puts the case for Materialism, briefly and forcibly. Secondly, it puts the case for Materialism by a Materialist, who is writing in this year of grace, 1927, with all the advantage that this date gives in science, philosophy and psychology. The supreme merit of Mr. Cohen lies in the fact that he never allows his opponent to put the case for him. Nothing in the realm of philosophy has been attacked with such bitterness and obloquy as the mechanistic conception of the universe. Every effort by those who believe in the supernatural has been directed to prove that Materialists are scoundrels, and their doctrine simply teaches blackguardism. A war not merely of words but of morals has clouded the issue, and many men of science have been obliged to repudiate Materialism as a term explaining their position, while their own writings proclaim they believed in nothing else.

Thus Mr. Cohen himself has been obliged to defer his definition of Materialism till after he had prepared the way with a chapter on its historical aspects. The whole subject is so clouded with misconceptions, with

* *Materialism Re-Stated*, by Chapman Cohen, price 2s. 6d.

misstatements, with deliberate lies, that it seems at first hopeless to get at the truth.

In his witty preface, Mr. Cohen apologises for the shortness of his book—though there was no need to apologise, as it would be difficult to find so much "meat" packed in so little space. But the book must be read with close attention. Point by point, the author develops his argument, and it would be interesting to learn what some readers think when they find that "it is nevertheless the fact that Materialism is not dependent upon 'matter' at all." To understand Mr. Cohen's seemingly startling paradox, the present reader must get the book if he has not already bought it, and he will find the position stated is only one of many which help to fulfil and justify the title of the work.

For many years Materialism has been crying out for a restatement, but it required a man equipped with all the resources given by modern science, and then only if, at the same time, he could defy the religious powers that be. The readers of this journal who have had the privilege of studying Mr. Cohen's articles, for I don't know how many years, will be able to judge how much clear thinking, how much wide reading in philosophy and psychology and how much of the method of science have been put to the making of his book. Take a chapter depending on the utmost clarity of thought, that "On Cause and Effect." Mr. Cohen's presentment of his case is the result of a thorough knowledge, in the first instance, of what great men have said about causation, and secondly, what his own clear thinking has made of the problem. It puts one argument against Theism better than I have ever seen it put, but every word in the chapter requires careful study and reflection. And that such study is needed amid the clash of the conflicting opinions on Materialism everyone who reads this book will admit.

Finally, the reader will find no "pompous language." Mr. Cohen eschews the terminology of the metaphysician. His business is to explain Materialism, and in none of his books has he been more successful than this, his latest, to put his case so that it can be understood by the average reader. *Materialism Re-Stated* should prove one of the most valuable additions on our shelves of Freethought works. It certainly is one of the best books which have come from the pen of our editor.

H. CUTNER.

History and Growth of Spiritualism.

(Concluded from page 620.)

It was a Mrs. Piper, hailing from the States, who in the eighties introduced this newer spiritualism as it is called. Dr. Richard Hodgson, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Hyslop, and a host of lesser lights, after much careful investigation, pronounced Mrs. Piper to be capable of communicating with the dead, while opponents of spiritualism fell back on the telepathic theory. The whole lot of them overlooked the damning facts that Mrs. Piper, in the manner of all trance mediums, fished diligently and continuously for information, that much of her so-called evidential matter was of so elastic a nature as to fit any one of a score of people; that she failed utterly and dismally in every real test of transcendental powers. That she escaped anything more serious than sceptical denouncement was due to the fact that to secure actual evidence of deliberate or conscious fraud was impossible. But that Mrs. Piper ever went into a trance at all I very much question—she exhibited a degree of alertness, mental gymnastics, equivocality,

ambiguity, which showed plainly that her very capable head was in possession of its full faculties. If at Mrs. Piper's sittings any one was in a trance, it was very emphatically the sitter.

Not always is the information given through a control. Presumably Mrs. Piper never risked the more dangerous though more convincing "direct voice," preferring to ring the changes on her collection of intermediaries.⁹ And a queer collection it was. Bach, Longfellow, an Indian girl, a Commodore, and a French doctor were mostly in evidence, and not only did they pour out a stream of information, they in addition acted as dispensers of messages and answerers of questions relating to living and dead relatives of sitters.

But when you plant yourself down in the darkened seance room and hear the spirit of your dead sister talking to you directly, and in her own voice, as Dennis Bradley so insistently states he did in America, on that memorable night in the June of 1923, it is infinitely more encouraging than if your sister's message comes in the squeaking voice of a child, as did Raymond's to Sir Oliver Lodge. True, as the sitters are somewhat reluctant to admit, there is considerable distortion owing to the necessity of using a megaphone. But even so, doubt in the minds of the entranced, there is none. Dennis Bradley and Hannen Swaffer are very emphatic. So too are many other dignitaries. Valiantine, the wonderful trumpet medium, uses the direct voice to some effect, though occasionally his controls take charge: Dr. Barnett being usually to the fore.

Finally, and in the opinion of many, as a supreme triumph, we have the phenomenon of automatic writing. The psychic writer is impelled to write by a force he can neither understand nor battle against. He may take a pencil and scrawl directly on paper; or, if the messages come too quickly for this, as they very often do, he may manipulate the ouija board, consisting of an indicator which moves at great speed over a glass plate imposed on the alphabet—a sort of glorified planchette. Swedenborg received his messages from Jesus in this crude form; Andrew Jackson Davis, revered by Conan Doyle, turned out yards of mushy pseudo-scientific stuff at the time the Fox girls were rapping out messages with their toes; Stainton Moses, too, wrote it by the yard. Nor is the power as rare as one would imagine. There have been hundreds of automatic writers in the States and Europe during the past fifty years. Apart from obvious concoctions, of the reality of this phenomenon in the outstanding main I am firmly convinced; just as I am convinced that Violet Tweedale has seen all those ghosts that flutter through the pages of her occult works; that James Moore Hickson sincerely believes he possesses thaumastic gifts; that heaps of children see angels; that any grown man can, on occasion, actually see snakes crawling on the wall-paper of his bedroom.

Although an illusion is often manifest and persistent throughout the ages, there are periods of mighty and temporary development, and these ebullitions are largely fortuitous. The late war was a fertile breeding ground for a horde of illusions as vast in number as it was idiotic in manifestation. The peddlers of emotion had full sway. To the accompaniment of brass bands, the poets, the theologians, the political job-snatchers, the actresses, the Y.M.C.A. officials, the Sunday-school teachers, hymned their mushy patriotism every minute of every waking hour, while the press, diurnally and hebdomadally, chanted the

⁹ During the later years of her mediumistic career, Mrs. Piper specialized in automatic writing. This, however, is even safer than the trance.

chorus with noise and effect. The dominant note was one of glory and vicarious sacrifice.

The plain fact is, as every truth-seeker knows, there never was and never can be any glory in death, whether the end comes suddenly in the heat of battle or slowly as a result of somatic decay. This eschatological grandeur, gleaned from popular histories, from the novels of Sir Walter Scott, is so much empty blather. Man, gregarious, cowardly, does not face death with indifference. Except under stress of emotion he will do very nearly anything to avoid death. It is to rouse this very necessary emotion, whereby sudden death is looked upon as something to be welcomed with joy, that savages beat tom-toms, sing lustily, dance madly, and go through all the other mumbo-jumbo which ultimately displaces reason and substitutes emotion; it is for precisely the same reason that the Government, at the moment of or immediately preceding the declaration of war, routs out its brass bands, encourages crazy poets, and doltish musicians, and suckles the manufacture of every kind of senseless orgy. The only person it keeps a sharp eye on is the truth-teller, whom at the very first moment of opening his mouth, it promptly claps in jail. It is easy to imagine a youngster marching proudly to war and glory singing *Rule Britannia* or *The Absent Minded Beggar* or *The Marsellaise*. It is easy to imagine an aged peasant shedding patriotism in huge drops after hearing one of Lloyd George's speeches or reading the *News of the World*. You could not imagine the evocation of any such fighting or patriotic spirit by an editorial from the pen of a leading thinker. Man fears death as he fears nothing else on earth. This platitudinous truth is responsible for man's eternal quest for an anæsthetic. The impossibility of evading the ride in the hearse has induced his thoughts to turn to after life. He grabs at the thought of existence after death as a child grabs at a toffee stick. In times of sickness, when death seems to be sticking in its ugly face, he embraces the theories of soul-savers as in other circumstances he would embrace a pretty girl. It is in moments of danger and despair that the professional theologian comes into his own. War is responsible as is no other thing for the parson's harvest. It is then he finds legions of eager listeners. It is then he gets unremitting attention, and can display his best pontifical manner. And always in the presence of the dying or at the grave-side he gets a degree of reverence unknown on any other occasion.

As a comforter religion has no equal; and of all the brands in existence spiritualism in its modern conception is plainly the peer. *Raymond*, hot from the press in 1919, appeared at a moment, which for the purpose of spiritualistic propaganda could not well have been bettered. At the time, it was unassailable. The public, screwed up to such an emotional pitch as has probably never been equalled, with such incipient critical faculties as it might exhibit in times of normalcy absolutely suppressed, seized the book with trembling fingers and devoured its contents with avaricious eyes. What is more, the Press received it sympathetically. For one thing Sir Oliver Lodge was no obscure charlatan to be ignored or scornfully dismissed; for another it suited to a nicety the mood of the public. The glittering success of *Raymond* naturally enough induced the publication of a shoal of psychic literature. The Society for Psychical Research took on a new lease of life: spiritualistic circles sprang up in quick succession all over the country. The result was a tremendous impetus to spiritualism, which still rides on a continually rising tide. At the moment the Press if not exactly sympathetic is no longer ostracistic. Where it fails to praise, it does not despise or revile. Toleration is plainly the atti-

tude of the unsympathetic. And with this the spiritualists may well be content. The tolerated of to-day may with vast confidence be looked upon as the accepted of to-morrow.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

Correspondence.

MATERIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Reading with great interest and approval your admirable *Materialism Re-Stated*, I find on page 69, line 8 from the top, the word *anti-materialist*, which appears to me should be *materialist*.

While entirely agreeing with you as against Mr. Hugh Eliot, I submit that your views are incorrectly named *materialistic*. Naturalistic, not materialistic, would be an appropriate expression, including not only matter but mind, and all abstractions as well as space and time.

More than forty years ago I found in Spencer's *Principles of Psychology—Physical Synthesis—Results*, justification for such a view.

S. J. WILKINSON.

A TALK WITH AN OPEN-AIR PREACHER.

SIR,—We have in Manchester, especially of a Sunday evening, a group of young men and women who make a practice of singing and preaching the Gospel in Tib Street. They have no qualification for the work—except an apparent sincerity, and most horrible earnestness to save souls.

I have had occasion to criticize the theology taught in the columns of the *Manchester City News*—whose cultured Editor, J. Cumming Walters, is my personal friend. I described it as the Gospel of Damnation, rather than of Salvation, for these young people to believe that most of us are heading straight for Hell, which is to them as fiercely burning as ever.

It is to me most pitiable to witness sometimes twenty or thirty nice young people singing hymns about their souls having been made white, and if we can believe their words, they have been "saved" from terrible sins—which would justify the police in keeping an eye upon them, for fear of further lapses into dangerous members of society.

The other day I met their leading preacher of the Word—a dour looking creature who has been "saved."

I introduced myself as one of their occasional listeners. He hoped I was "saved." I told him I did not feel lost, but certainly I was not "saved" from his point of view, and hoped I never should be.

I then told him of his horrible Message, and said to him: Did he not hope it was not true? For if it was true, then the great majority of mankind was doomed to eternal burning. "Now look here," I said, "if the Gospel that I hear you preach at Tib Street corner is true—then you must be the most unhappy man in Manchester, believing that I and numberless others will spend an eternity in fire—your Message is simply horrible. Don't you hope it is not true?"

The dear fellow looked at me in despair—he seemed afraid of me, he slunk away from me. "Come and have some refreshment with me," said I to him. He stammered out something about there being a way of escape for me and all others, God's Word had spoken and declared Hell for those who will not accept. Poor fellow—what a prison-house he lives in.

T. A. WILLIAMS.

ATHEISM AND BUDDHISM.

SIR,—May I make a few remarks upon Mr. Strickland's letter?

Surely it is not correct to describe slumber as a function of a part of the brain. It is rather a partial and temporary cessation of the functioning, and one is justified in assuming that destruction of the brain results in permanent cessation or oblivion.

I cannot see how this can be regarded as less scientific than the Buddhist conception of Nirvana, the disappearance of "the illusion of the personal ego, consciousness

and the perception of subject and object," as Mr. Strickland says, which seems to me to be merely three different ways of describing the same thing. I cannot detect the difference between "eternal dreamless slumber" and a permanent loss of consciousness, and I think it is better to be just a plain Atheist.

There appears to be nearly as many kinds of Buddhism as there are Buddhists, but they are all united in believing that there is in man no abiding entity whatever, but that with the final loss of the illusion of the ego a state will be attained which transcends consciousness and ultimate reality will be attained. I don't know what is meant by this, but it seems to be implied that a part shall contain the whole, and on infinite whole at that.

Atheism is not negative on the subject at all. Atheism certainly lays down that there is no survival of personality, but recognizes the persistence of force and law, which has evolved a dominant race of gregarious creatures, which flourishes by means of, and in proportion to, the development of its gregarious characteristics, which it is the duty of every Atheist to foster.

I consider this is more scientific and constructive than anything Oriental and Buddhistic, and I agree with Mr. Strickland's Brahmin: "Atheism is an excellent Religion, perhaps the best of all."

MAURICE WHITE.

Mr. G. Whitehead at Birmingham.

THE wet weather has been severe on outdoor propaganda this week, but six meetings were held in Birmingham, five in the Bull Ring and one in the Council Schools. The lecture delivered in the schools was very appreciatively received, and the outdoor meetings evoked the usual interest displayed on previous occasions. A new recruit, Mr. Kimberley, has been addressing meetings recently in the Bull Ring with a praiseworthy enthusiasm. Messrs. Terry and Dobson, and Miss Dobson and Miss Cooper assisted at the meetings.

On Saturday, October 1, Mr. Whitehead will be in Bolton, and on Wednesday, October 5, he will commence a week's mission in Wigan Market Square.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

THE North London Outdoor Meetings terminated last Sunday with "Bradlaugh Sunday," the lecturer being Mr. Leonard Ebury, who has been very active in Regent's Park this Summer.

Mr. Ebury and Mr. Ratcliffe are opening Indoor meetings to-night, when our Sunday evening meetings at the St. Pancras Reform Club begin with a debate between the two speakers, the subject for discussion being "Should we Love our Enemies?"

An excellent programme has been provided for the Autumn session, and the Hon. Secretary of the Branch will be pleased to supply anyone interested, who will apply to 8, Bartholomew Villas, N.W.5, with a copy.

WEST LONDON BRANCH.

HYDE PARK.—Successful meetings were held in the afternoon and in the evening until Jupiter Pluvius took a hand in the game with a view of showing that, whatever may have happened to the other Gods as a result of the machinations of the wicked Atheists, he, at least, was able to drown their eloquence in a flood which caused some of them to have reminiscences of Noah, and of his Ark.

RAVENS COURT PARK.—If the Brass Band cannot discourse Heavenly music it can certainly make a hellish noise, and the members of it enjoy themselves thoroughly in making the most of their opportunity. It is not to be hoped that the L.C.C. will see that the present state of affairs is unjust to people who wish to make a legitimate use of the Park for a peaceful public meeting. However, we had the patronage of the Mayor of Hammersmith; and we hope that what he heard will enable him to realize that "facts are chieftains that winna ding and downa be disputed."—B. A. I.e.M.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Harry Snell, M.P.—"The Reformation and the New Prayer Book."

OUTDOOR.

FREETHOUGHT MEETING.—Saturday at 7.30, corner of North End Road, Fulham (near Walham Green Church). Speakers—Messrs. F. Moister and F. Weight.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15, Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate—"Should we Love our Enemies?" Affir.: Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe; Neg.: Mr. L. Ebury. Admission Free. Ladies specially invited.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. Corrigan. Wednesday, October 5, at 8 p.m. (Clapham Old Town): Mr. L. Ebury; (Peckham): Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Thursday, October 6, (Clapham): Mr. W. Sandford. There will be no more meetings at Brockwell Park until next May.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Blackberry Ramble, five miles. Train, 10.5 a.m. Plaistow, calling at all stations. Book to East Horndon. Lunch to be carried.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Messrs. Carter and Jackson; 6.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Hyatt, and Le Maine. (Ravenscourt Park): 3.30, Mr. Campbell-Everden, A Lecture. Freethought lectures in Hyde Park every Wednesday and Friday, at 7.30. Various Lecturers.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

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

OUTDOOR.

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

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall, William Brown Street): 7.30, Chapman Cohen—"The New Warfare between Religion and Science." Admission free. Collection.

TO FREETHINKERS who hesitated over last week's appeal, I have the pleasure of intimating that my idea has received warm encouragement and substantial support. If even only £850 is subscribed there will be a guaranteed profit of ten per cent. There is still room for about thirty more shareholders, and you should apply at once to DAVID MACCONNELL, Mossiel, Brookside, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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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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