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Views and Opinions.

Christian Pessimism.

It was not without reason that Edgar Saltus placed Jesus and Christianity in the category of pessimism. It was not the intellectual pessimism of a Schopenhauer or a Leopardi, but it was pessimism nevertheless. For Christianity has always built upon a profound distrust of human nature, as such, and has dwelt with unintelligent insistence upon the weakness of man. It has resisted every endeavour to establish the truth that man's salvation depends upon his own efforts, or that a helpful scheme of ethics could be framed which looked upon this life as an end in itself. Every Christian advocate adopts the same plea, in some form or other. The burden of their cry is that this life alone is not enough, better never to have lived at all than to end it at the grave; the universe is a colossal mockery if there be other life. The criticism of opponents moves on the same line. The complaint is not usually that anti-Christian teaching is bad in itself, so much that we must not expect ordinary human nature to live up to it. If men are convinced that this life is all, that there is no heaven and no hell, no reward or punishment in another world for good or evil done in this, then farewell to all moral "restraints," there is nothing left for us but—in the words of St. Paul—to eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. If this attitude of mind does betoken pessimism of the most unreflective and demoralizing kind, then one needs to revise one's philosophic vocabulary.

* * *

The Poor Clergy.

The essential pessimism of the Christian outlook came out very strongly in an address given before the Church Congress by the Bishop of Durham. The Bishop was faced with two undeniable facts. One is the clear drift of men and women away from Christianity. The other—it is really only the reverse side of the first—is the determination in both theory and practice to guide life by considerations with which

Christianity has nothing to do. Naturally, the Bishop does not like this state of things. For one thing, it means the elimination of the parson. Consider the following passage:—

The structure of civilization has become more complex; the activities of the State have developed amazingly, and the functions of the clergy have become greatly narrowed. Whereas in 1868 the clergyman seemed the inevitable leader in social and philanthropic work, there is now little need, and sometimes little desire for his assistance.

Now I am not sure that in 1868 the clergy seemed the inevitable leaders in social, or even in philanthropic work. It is true that so far as the latter is concerned the clergy strove then, as they strive now, to keep, so far as was possible, the direction of philanthropy in their hands, but that was not because they were so much interested in the end of philanthropy, as because it gave them a certain control over masses of the people. It requires little insight to see that so long as charities filter through clergymen and their churches, they have those dependent upon that charity under control. Attendance at church or chapel could be made, and was made, the condition of help. The poor were bribed to profess religion. It, to use a phrase much beloved by the Christian, kept them in order. But a charity that did not come *through* the clergy, carried with it no compulsory profession of religion. It robbed them of the deference of the poor. And, even more important, it took from them the support of the rich. If the poor were not being "kept in order" by the clergy, there seemed no reason why the wealthy should pay them for a work they were plainly unable to do.

* * *

Playing Bogey.

Here is another passage, which we may take before considering the other implications in the one just cited:—

Civilization seemed . . . in 1868 to be stricken with two maladies for which Christianity alone could provide the remedy—a materialism which in denying the spirituality of man destroyed his individuality, and left unchecked the empire of sensual passion . . . Civilization in parting company with Christianity is restoring the features of pre-civilization—its essential cruelty, its prevalence of suicide, its squalid superstition, and its unbridled sensuality.

The Bishop was addressing an audience of clergymen and so was quite safe in making the wildest statements provided they were made in defence of Christianity. But when we bear in mind that the period which is singled out by the Bishop as his starting point for the destruction of individuality marked almost the crest of Victorian culture in art, science, literature, and philosophy, one feels that, to put it vulgarly, he is simply talking through his hat. All that emerges is, again, the fact that the Bishop is

noting the beginning of a period during which the clergy have lost very heavily in power and in intellectual status; and as is quite common with his order, anything that detracts from the status of the medicine-man is, *ipso facto*, a retrograde step. What the Bishop has in mind when he talks of the influence of "Materialism" in destroying the individuality of man, is not quite clear. If he means scientific materialism the statement is simply rubbish. That leaves ample room for all the higher qualities of man, and one may compare the tone and level of, say, Tyndall's *Belfast Address*, frankly materialistic in tone and aim, with any religious address delivered. And if an ethical materialism is meant, then, surely, none could be lower than that of the Christian creed, which sees no reason for good conduct save that supplied by either a whip or a bribe.

* * *

A Dangerous Plan.

A Christian who attempts an historical retrospect in order to support his religion is always on dangerous ground. And even though the period during which Christianity has undergone such a rapid decline had increased its volume of vice and selfishness, it is hardly wise for the Christian to stress the assumed fact. For there is always open the retort that the society in which these evils have developed at such a remarkable rate had been Christian for many centuries, and during almost the whole of that time had been completely under the dominance of one branch or another of the Christian church. And it certainly does not say much for the moral fibre developed by this course of Christian breeding if it can disintegrate and retrogress at such a rate in so short a time. After all, Society has its habits as well as the individual, and the habits that are developed by successive generations of social life are not so easily disposed of. And, therefore, one of two things seems quite plain. Either the influence of Christianity in moulding the nature of a people for good is not of a very strong and permanent kind, or the state of the world has not become so much worse without the guiding hands of the Christian clergy. Altogether, if I were a Christian clergyman, I think I would handle these sort of subjects with just a little more care than is usually displayed.

* * *

The Good Old Days.

I would invite Bishop Henson to go back beyond 1868, say, to a time when there was no great fear of "Materialism," to a time when the Bible was still accepted as the word of God, when the Christian church stood supreme, before the wicked evolutionists had come upon the scene and ousted God from the universe, and then compare the state of the world with what it is to-day. Let us take the early part of the nineteenth century and see how the state of affairs then compare with conditions to-day. The date should be the more favourable to the Bishop, as there is no question of the wave of religion that was then sweeping over the country. It was the time when a great many of the existing propagandist and evangelist societies now in existence came into being. There was no dominant materialism denying the spiritual nature of man, but there was a dominant spiritualism asserting it. With what result? Capital assumed its most arrogant and most intolerant form. Children were sold by Guardians into practical slavery all over the country. They were poisoned in their work as chimney sweepers, stunted, starved, and murdered in factories for the sake of mere gain. Workmen were imprisoned or transported for the

"crime" of meeting together to consider a concerted demand for a slight improvement in pay, or for bettering the conditions of labour. Women were working in mines in a nearly nude state, with chains round their waists, harnessed to trucks of coal like so many animals. Education, so far as the mass of the people were concerned, was practically non-existent. The people were without political power, and with little enough education to use it had it been theirs. The great victory abroad of Waterloo, was followed by the great victory at home of shooting down unarmed men at a labour demonstration at Peterloo. Men and women were imprisoned, one after another, for discussing and disseminating such books as Paine's *Age of Reason*, and *Rights of Man*. Men were hanged for the offence of stealing a pocket-handkerchief, and English prisons were sinks of vice, corruption, and disease. As to the general state of the country, such books as those of Mayhew, dealing with London life, and the famous *Black Book*, written a little later, are enlightening as to the alleged demoralization that followed the decline of Christian belief. Housing conditions were almost unbelievably vile, food was poor and inadequate among the mass of the people. And above all stood the clergy of the Established Church, rapacious to the last degree, fighting for the retention of the control over whatever education existed, with a Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords steadily resisting by their votes and influence, any and every attempt to affect improvements. I have no space here for details, but Dr. Henson may have them in plenty on application.

* * *

Our Christian Heritage.

Can anyone look at the state of things now, and honestly say that there is not a vast improvement all round, when compared with what they were then? Admittedly there are many things of which we may complain. Many things exist concerning which we may feel disappointment. Education has not done all that its early advocates hoped it might do. Better conditions of life have not turned men and women into paragons of goodness. State help has brought with it many evils along with the good it has unquestionably achieved. The extension of the franchise has not converted the electors into miracles of political wisdom. There is an increased demand for mere pleasure, and the pleasures sought are not always those of the highest order. All these things may be admitted, and I fancy I could draw up a far more damning and more precise indictment of existing conditions than the Bishop has done. But is there anyone with knowledge and sense of responsibility, who would deny that the general level of life has been raised during the past century to a greater degree than any preceding period during the whole of the history of Christian history? The "dole" is responsible for grave abuses, and nothing could be worse than keeping young men for months on end with just enough to live on, but without anything to profitably occupy either hands or mind. But there is in the fact of the dole a recognition of social responsibility for the general state of affairs, that is of greater value than aught else. And all the pleasures of the "lower classes" are not of the lower kind. Education has made many, many thousands of them appreciate the higher possibilities of life, and that is something certainly to the good. And it must be remembered that these improvements, the decrease of crime, the creating of a sense of social duty and responsibility, greater now than at any time during our history, has been coincident with a marked decline of Christian belief. As a Bishop, Dr. Henson

must do his best to hide this significant fact. As a Freethinker it is my duty to point this out to him. And if, as I have said, the people, when they find placed before them the opportunities for leading a much higher life than they do, fail to rise to the level of their opportunities, one should be neither disappointed nor discouraged. After all, the material with which the reformer has to deal has come to us from Christian sources. It has come to us infected with the Christian outlook on life and the Christian conception of human nature. It is the Christian Church which has impressed upon people the notion that without Christianity man is a beast and should behave as such. We are doing the best we can; we have done a good deal; and the condition of the accomplishment has been the weakening of the influence of the Christian religion. To cite Bishop Henson, there is to-day little need and sometimes little desire for the presence of the parson. And as a parson Dr. Henson is not happy.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Lure of the Creeds."

MANY years ago the Rev. C. A. Briggs, D.D., D.Litt., published a remarkable book entitled *The Fundamental Christian Faith*, which was a historical exposition of the two greatest Creeds, the Apostles' and the Nicene. For about forty years Dr. Briggs was Professor of Theological Encyclopædia and Symbolics in Union Theological Seminary, New York, under whom the present writer had the privilege of studying the Hebrew Language and Literature; and well does he remember how tremendously orthodox and cocksure the Professor used to be in the years 1874-1877. His book of 330 pages was issued in 1913, through the well-known publishers, Messrs. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, and after carefully reading it more than once we must confess that the Creeds are anything but alluring to us. Nevertheless, there are people to whom they are immensely attractive. Less than a month ago the Ven. E. E. Holmes, B.D., Archdeacon of London, preached a sermon in St. Paul's Cathedral on what he called "The Lure of the Creeds." Naturally the discourse appeared in the *Church Times* of September 16. The venerable gentleman says:—

We are glad to remember that the Creeds appeal to the whole man—to the imagination, for instance, as well as to the intellect—the faculty which plays so large a part in making them more easy to be understood and illuminating their "knotty points." The intellect, as William Blake has wisely reminded us, "must collaborate with the imagination, and we must cultivate the imagination without stifling the intellect." . . . Think of the Apostles' Creed, which St. Augustine brought us from Rome in the sixth century. Sunshine plays on every article. It is full of romance from beginning to end; not, of course, of romance in the sense of fable or fiction, but as the word is used in such book-titles as *The Romance of Excavation*, *The Romance of War*, *The Romance of the British Empire*, and more especially *The Romance of the Last Crusade*.

We envy the Archdeacon his amazing gift for discovering romance in most unlikely connexions. Fancy anyone finding romance in the following words: "I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord, who was conceived by Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Even fiction at its wildest soaring is expected to keep within the limit of possibility; but the Apostles' Creed does not even recognize such limits. There is no such entity as a ghost, holy or unholy, and a virgin cannot give birth to a child. Surely no sunshine plays on this article, and

more surely there is no romance in it. And yet this venerable gentleman has the audacity to speak of it thus:—

This second clause is the story of a great adventure, a Divine Crusade—when God sent forth his only Son as the Divine Crusader—not, indeed, as in the first medieval crusade, when Godfrey and Baldwin rescued the Holy Land from the infidel, or as in the last 1917 crusade, when Allenby received the keys of the city from the Mayor of Jerusalem—but to rescue souls in that very same Palestine and in all the world from the Prince of Evil. Listen rapidly to this great romance.

That is exceedingly well put, and, in fact, the whole sermon is undeniably eloquent; but all the same it is sheer superstition that the preacher offers us. Is it not absolutely inconceivable that "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," sent forth his Son, co-eternal and co-equal with himself, as a tiny, invisible seed and planted the same in the Virgin Mary's womb, in due time to be born as a Divine-human baby? The preacher exclaims: "Never mind for the moment the difficulties of the Virgin Birth, when by an act of Divine creative power the Holy Ghost made Mary a mother." If that statement is true God did not send forth his only begotten Son at all, but authorized the Holy Ghost to perform the mighty miracle of creating him in the womb of the Virgin. A more utterly absurd teaching never descended from any pulpit in Christendom. Neither difficulties nor contradictions matter in the least. And this is Anglo-Catholicism! No wonder the souls of men in all the world are still in the grip of the Prince of Evil! No wonder Christianity has been, as the Bishop of Durham sadly admitted at the Church Congress, so colossal a failure!

In the eyes of the Archdeacon everything recorded of Jesus Christ in the Gospels, or taught about him in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, is unspeakably beautiful. He cries out ecstatically:—

Ah! what a book could be written on the Romance of suffering, as translated into music by Liszt in his setting to the thirteenth Psalm, with its wail of pain in the grief-laden words; think of the sufferings from the five most Sacred Wounds, in Hands and Feet and Side, to the cry-telling pain of the last-born babe.

He admits, however, that God is not the creator of suffering. It began in opposition to his will, and it is his intention to put an end to it. In that case, how on earth can suffering be romantic; is it not rather a curse to get rid of as quickly as possible? How can any sensible man affirm that "the Romance of the Cross makes crucifixion itself beautiful?" The Cross, if historical, is not a Romance, but a shocking Tragedy. How salvation can be effected by accepting the Church's doctrine of the Cross passes all understanding. And yet such is the Gospel preached in all Christian pulpits and the congregations join heartily in singing it. Have we not often heard the following silly doggerel sung in many places of worship? :—

There is life for a look at the Crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee;
Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved,
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.

There is no need to follow the Apostles' Creed any further. The alleged resurrection, ascension, and the coming judgment are definitely taught in it, but where the lure comes in is a mystery. Freethinkers have certainly never felt it, and they cannot possibly understand how a preacher can become truly eloquent in the attempt to prove its reality. If God exists and is supreme, how came the Prince of Evil into being? If God exists and is absolutely omnipotent and perfectly noble and good, how are we to account for man's need of salvation! If the Christian

God exists, he is, on his ministers' own showing, either deplorably weak or morally responsible for all the wickedness and misery in the world. To us there is no such being, and for us such a book as *The Justification of God*, by the late Principal Forsyth, possesses no value whatever. We are wholehearted evolutionists, and with Daytonites, whether in this country or America, we have not a spark of patience, though we frankly acknowledge that they are the only logical and consistent Christians. Nothing can be clearer than the fact that the theory of evolution and the Christian religion cannot both be true. Believing in the truth of science we have discarded supernaturalism as false and harmful in its influence, and our present aim is to employ all legitimate means to bring others to the same position. It is encouraging to know that the number of those who sit at the feet of science is rapidly increasing, while for many years the Churches have been steadily losing influence and power as well as members and adherents.

J. T. LLOYD.

"The Laureate of Secularism."

"Alas poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy."

Shakespeare, "Hamlet."

"Quick, my tablets, memory."—Matthew Arnold.

NOR long ago I purchased on a bookstall a soiled and well-worn copy of Mackenzie's *Brimstone Ballads*, and it set me thinking of the man whose lively and facetious verses were, years ago, one of the regular weekly delights of readers of the *Freethinker*. The book was to me a veritable link with the past. For the name on the title-page was of one who was my friend, and I loved him well. If I were writing one of those chilly obituary notices, I could not make a great story of what he had done with his life. He was a minor writer and not a famous author. Yet to those who called him friend he had the qualities which are quite as precious as those which make for fame and reputation. He had a merry heart and a kindly one. There was never a company not the merrier that he was in. Many are duller because he is dead. For he possessed that vagrant, potent thing which men call charm. No wonder he took hold of one's mind as he took hold of one's hand, with a warm affectionate grip that lasted.

George Leslie Mackenzie had "ink in his blood," and he hunted books as zealously as some men hunt wild animals. He used to frequent Booksellers' Row in the Strand, and haunted the barrows in Farringdon Road, a fondness he shared with Joe Wheeler, the assistant editor of the *Freethinker*. Wheeler was a great patron of the open-air booksellers, and provoked George Foote's good-natured jest: "Poor Joe! He's so kind-hearted he can't bear to leave a book in the rain."

Mackenzie only published one book, but it was, to use John Morley's expressive phrase, "a thunderous engine of revolt." Within a couple of hundred pages, *Brimstone Ballads* contained an astonishing amount of wit, satire, and argument. It was a happy idea on Mackenzie's part to commence his very profane book of verses with lines on "Genesis," and to finish with some verses on "Cremation." In this volume he proved himself the most uncompromising rhymester that ever attacked superstition in general and the Christian Religion in particular. He showed the orthodox faith no sort of mercy, and his statement of his point of view is well worth reading. So comprehensive an indictment of a vulnerable institution could hardly fail to contain a great deal of truth.

Although a good speaker, Mackenzie was never at

his happiest in the garish light of publicity. He always sat in the audience at the Camberwell Secular Hall, a gloomy building which was a mixture between a Turkish bath and a mausoleum, made gloomier by being situated in a cheap street. He loved better a few friends with whom he could talk metaphysics and literature, especially of the great French authors, for whom he had a real liking. He had the spirit of the idealist without the sharp edges that sometimes makes the missionaries of ideas less attractive to a saucy world than one might wish. Above all, he was sociable in his idealism. A truly modest man, he preferred the position of a common soldier in the Army of Freethought. That is the kind of work which does a man honour but brings him none. Mackenzie would have sympathized with the modest Frenchman who, when Napoleon took him familiarly by the ear, and offered him the cross of the Legion of Honour, answered, "Thank you, sire, but could not you give it to my father?"

Mackenzie was employed in the architectural department of the Admiralty. In the course of his duties he had sometimes to design churches for Coast-guard stations. This amused him, for he told me: "I am the only Atheist who has to design churches for a living. If I am not careful I shall be stuffed after my death and placed in the Natural History Museum." His professional position would have made most men cautious, but timidity was unknown to him. All his contributions to the *Freethinker* were signed with his own name, and in those stringy days it was almost as risky as tying one's visiting card to a bomb.

It was in the scant leisure of a busy career that he composed his verses, and he chose the metrical form of writing because it demanded a certain amount of skill in using words. He was under no illusion as to the merits of his verses. "I know too well what a poet ought to be," he once told me, "to imagine I am one." For, in my impetuous way, I had dubbed him "The Laureate of Secularism."

The publication of Mackenzie's book entailed a tour round the literary world. Against my earnest advice, he called on the West-End publishers, and had a lively time. There was too much brimstone in his ballads, and it offended their delicate, commercial noses. At the end of his journey he bearded the redoubtable "Saladin" in his den, and the business matter got mislaid in an excitable argument concerning the respective merits of the two Freethought rhymers. Robert Forder was the sponsor of the book, and I well remember Mackenzie's amusing account of the interview. Forder's "office" was a cupboard at the back of his shop, and when a visitor was ushered in, poor old Forder had to come out to make room. After the palatial premises of the big publishers it must have been a striking contrast, but Forder "delivered the goods," which the superfine book-brokers declined.

I first met Mackenzie on a South London tramcar. We fell into conversation, and I offered him a copy of the *Freethinker*, for I was ever a missionary. He replied, "I not only read it, but I write for it." "Who are you?" I queried, and I recall his whimsical smile as he answered, jocularly, "Mackenzie, if it doesn't mak enzie difference." My first impression was something of a shock. You could hardly imagine that this quiet, smiling, respectable, professional man could write a lyric, or turn a profane phrase against the orthodoxies of the world.

A thorough Freethinker, there was no shadow of turning, no trace of compromise about Mackenzie. It was his thoroughness, perhaps, even more than his ability which earned for him the admiration and confidence of his friends for many years. I saw him for

the last time at Southend, and he then talked with difficulty, and I could not but admit that my dear old friend had then only a short time to live. Since then Fate has had his way with him. His name is with so many other remembered names, and the sight of his little book has set me thinking of him. I can, in my mind's eye, see him now as he stood quietly watching the sunset shining on the sea that stretched far away. Now he is himself gathered to the quiet West, the sundown of death.

MIMNERMUS.

The Fall of Man.

(Concluded from page 651.)

As to the objection made against God's injustice in condemning people to eternal torment for a sin committed by an ancestor several thousand years before they were born, St. Augustine answers:—

"By how much divine justice is loftier than human justice, by so much is it more inscrutable, and by so much differs from human justice . . . Think on these things, and forbear to set God the Judge in comparison with human judges, that God whom we must not doubt to be just even when He does what seems to men unjust, or what, if it were done by a man would actually be unjust."—(Op. imperf. c. Julian iii. 24.)²

To which, says Mr. Williams, the same unanswerable retort of John Stuart Mill, to a similar appeal to mystery, advanced from the same Oxford pulpit occupied by Mr. Williams, by a Bampton lecturer sixty-six years ago, will apply. Mill declared: "I will call no being good [or just] who is not what I mean, when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go."³

We have advanced some way since the time when this retort of Mill was regarded as a terribly defiant piece of blasphemy. Now it is calmly cited, by a Christian divine, as the fitting reply to an argument advanced by one of the greatest pillars of the Church!

According to St. Augustine, the sex-feeling now experienced by fallen man, is in itself sinful. This has always been the typical Christian view of sex. St. Paul taught that the celibate, virgin state was the best, and the highest; marriage being only a concession to human weakness. He himself followed the example set by Christ and remained single. All through the Middle Ages and down to the present time, this view has prevailed. Even to-day, in the Catholic Church, the priests are not allowed to defile themselves—for so they regard it—by marriage. When the Nonconformist puritan holds forth against the sinfulness of sin, it is sexual sin that is always uppermost in his mind. St. Augustine declared that: "The very act of begetting a child inevitably stains it with 'original sin,' so that we are in a quite literal sense 'born in sin'; that is, in the 'sin' of our parents. It is for this reason, he thinks, that it was necessary for the Saviour to be born miraculously, in order that His human nature might be free from the entail of sin."⁴

Without following Mr. Williams, step by step, we now come down to the Reformation. The Fall theory

² Cited by N. P. Williams. *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin.* p. 381.

³ J. S. Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865). p. 103; replying to H. L. Mansel's Bampton Lectures. *The Limits of Religious Thought* (1858).

⁴ N. P. Williams. *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin.* p. 366.

of St. Augustine was adopted by both Luther and Calvin: "The Reformers," says Mr. Williams, "were determined to paint the present condition of fallen human nature in colours as gloomy as possible." (p. 427.)

Luther declared: "It is the essence of man to sin"; "Original sin is that very thing which is born of a father and a mother"; "Man, as he is born of a father and mother, is with his whole nature and essence not merely a sinner but sin itself." (J. H. Mohler, *Symbolism* [1847] pp. 29-80). Calvin held that even the good deeds of Jews and pagans are really sins, as, owing to "total depravity" all that issues from human nature is necessarily sinful. According to Calvin, says Mr. Williams:—

The whole of human nature is saturated with "concupiscence," which is in itself mortally sinful, even before and apart from the consent of the will. Man is covered from head to foot with sin as with a flood. Infants bring their own damnation with them from their mother's wombs; the moment they are born their natures are odious and abominable to God.—(Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ii. 1.9—1.8—1.6.)

And probably to Calvin too. Calvin and his God are about the limit in religious atrocity. The blackest of the pagan gods never taught anything half so hideous. Both Lutherans and Calvinists held that original sin is the only real sin that exists; the actual sins we commit being regarded as merely: "A loathsome efflorescence of which the foul root is the inherent sinfulness of humanity. The sin of Adam, which is the sin of mankind, is regarded as a perennial fountain of filth and uncleanness which is perpetually bubbling up in black streams of perverted and degraded impulse."⁵

Another doctrine, closely connected with that of the total depravity of man, was that concerned with the freedom of the will. The Reformers carried the speculations of St. Augustine to their logical conclusion in the shape of a relentless determinism. That is, they declared that man has no free-will at all. That his every action has been foreseen and determined by God, long before the man began to exist. The idea that he has a free choice between doing good or evil is a pure delusion; it has all been settled for him, long before he was born! Luther, in his treatise *On the Bondage of the Will*, declared: "God foresees nothing contingently, but that He both foresees, determines, and actually does all things, by His unchangeable, eternal and infallible will. By this thunderbolt the whole idea of free-infallible will is smitten and ground to powder."

Some of the Reformers did not hesitate to declare that God himself was the author of evil. Melancthon, who drew up the Augsburg Confession, and was the life friend and coadjutor with Luther, declared, in the edition of his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, published in 1525:—

Not merely does God permit His creatures to act, but He Himself is the proper agent in all things that happen; so that as men confess that the conversion of Paul was God's proper work, so they ought to confess both that morally indifferent actions, such as when men eat men are God's works, and also actions which are bad, like David's adultery.

He goes on, says Mr. Williams, "to assert that the treachery of Judas was just as much an act of God as the conversion of St. Paul." These conclusions, however, were so revolting that they found no support among the general mass of Lutherans, and the responsibility for the origin of evil was transferred to Satan. The passage, indeed, has disappeared from all later

⁵ N. P. Williams. *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin.* p. 433.

editions of the work, and is only known through its preservation by Melancthon's pupil Martin Chemnitz.

The Calvinists, however, were more logical, and possessed the courage of their convictions. To the question: "What was the Cause of the Fall?" Calvin replied: "The will of God." Mr. Williams observes:—

Calvin's pre-destinarianism is, therefore, of what is called the "supralapsarian" kind; that is, it assumes that the decree which arbitrarily destined certain elect souls to salvation and condemned the mass of mankind to perdition, was made by God in eternity, before the Fall, and that the Fall itself was preordained as the means of procuring the infection with sin of those destined to be damned. Calvin leaves us in no doubt as to his tremendous meaning. Such a dictum as the following speaks for itself: "Man falls, the providence of God so ordaining"; and, alluding to the sovereign pre-temporal decree of God, which he regards as the direct cause of the Fall of man, with all its consequent misery and horror, ending in the eternal ruin of the greater portion of the human race, he observes: "It was in truth a horrible decree, I confess, but none can deny that God foreknew the final fate of man before He created him, and that He foreknew it precisely because it was appointed by His own ordinance." How this terrible doctrine can be reconciled with the love of God, Calvin nowhere explains; it is harmonized with His justice by the familiar Augustinian expedient of postulating a peculiar, mysterious and "occult" kind of Divine "justice," which has little or nothing in common with what we know as human justice. (p. 436.)

In conclusion, returning to the problem of evil, Mr. Williams observes that "tooth and claw" were "red with ravin," millions of years before our race was born: "If we face the facts candidly, we must admit that no one of us, if he had been in the position of Demiurge, would have created a universe which was compelled by the inner necessity of its being to evolve the cobra, the tarantula, and the bacillus of diphtheria. . . . The answer can only be that He did not do so." (p. 522.) And quoting the passage in Genesis: "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." He concludes, "To explain evil in Nature no less than in man, we are compelled to assume a Fall—a revolt against the will of the Creator." (p. 523.) But this is part of the story of the Garden of Eden, of which Mr. Williams gave such a humorous account and dismissed as a fairy tale! However, we recommend the book to all Freethinkers as a learned and candid compendium upon the subject.

W. MANN.

Explaining the Incomprehensible.

WHEN one surveys the long course of man's history it is difficult to understand why the existence of such a paper as the *Freethinker*, in the twentieth century, is not an anachronism. The ideas which it has to convey are so elemental that a young, earnest thinker, unbiased by dogmatic upbringing, might well ask what there is to argue about. The doctrines of freethought are as axiomatic as the doctrines of Euclid. One need not spend time in arguing that the whole is greater than the part—the proposition is self-evident, the definition of the subject necessitates the predicate.

The basic proposition of freethought in reference to theology is just as self-evident, namely, the finite cannot grasp the infinite. If the deity has no body, parts, or passions, then it is beyond man's cognizance, which is built up from the relations between bodies, parts and passions. All man's knowledge is derived from the comparison of relations between things, but in the infinite there are no such relations, for relation is a concept dependent upon finitude. That which is infinite is beyond all compare and therefore beyond man's compre-

hension. If an infinite deity exists, man knows nothing whatever of it and can postulate nothing concerning it. yond man's comprehension. If an infinite deity exists, man knows nothing whatever of it and can postulate nothing concerning it.

By attributing infinity to the deity the theologians have indeed made it inscrutable, and produced the same mental effect as if the existence of a deity were totally denied, for a deity which is altogether beyond man is just as much outside man's comprehension as if it did not exist. In actual knowledge of an infinite deity the theologian is at one with the atheist: they are both, by definition, beyond the pale.

The earnest, young thinker, anxious to know and do the right in scorn of consequence, eager to set this world a-rolling at a more rapid rate of advance, may reasonably feel some impatience at the necessity in this era of setting down truths that are so elementary and self-evident. He may justifiably feel amazed that people should be found explaining to others the desires of a deity who has no desires—and receiving good coin of the realm for the barefaced charlatanism. He may well feel astonished that people should be found in any age willing to hear a man in woman's clothing explain the unexplainable—and to pay for the imposture.

A more mature thinker, however, does not share this amazement. He knows that the capacity for keeping an open mind is very sparsely spread through the community. With the majority of people the rule of life is an *explanation at any price*—the farther-fetched the better; distance lends enchantment to the view. They would rather have a wrong explanation than none at all. And to combat this attitude in some form or another, this paper will always be needed. The cult may suffer a change, but the credulity of the masses will remain.

HAROLD SCUDDER.

Acid Drops.

This is a dreadful time for shortages. We are, for example, several hundred pounds short of completing our Endowment Scheme. But we are not alone. The Church of England is some 4,000 short in the number of clergy it requires to see that the people do not lose the habit of looking to the parson for guidance. And that is a serious outlook, for if once a man does away with a parson, he not alone does not feel a heavy loss, but he wonders how on earth he ever managed to get on with them. The one condition of the parson keeping where he is, is to see to it that men and women never have the opportunity of getting on without them. Hence the lament about the shortage of parsons.

But the Bishop of Chichester, however, does not agree with those who suggest that farmers, lawyers, doctors, or others might qualify for the job of a parson while still retaining their ordinary work, and practising as a parson on Sunday only. He welcomes any kind of man who will take up the job, but he says it must be a whole-time job or nothing. He cannot do with a man who preaches on a Sunday and practises the rest of the week. He must preach all the time. And it must be a life-long job. For, he explains, a man could not, after being ordained, decide that he had made a mistake without causing considerable scandal. Here we see a flash of common sense. For the man is there because God called, and what kind of an opinion should we have of the judgment of God if he called a man to the pulpit, only to find that he either would not come, or that he had made a mistake, and after a short trial, firmly declined to have nothing more to do with it. We confess we see no way out of the difficulty short of the honest confession that the day of the medicine-man is over.

Canon M. R. Newbolt, besides talking to the farmer about agriculture, would also talk to him about God. Canon Newbolt ought to choose a better summer than 1927 for a remark of this kind, and we wish him luck—this Don Quixote of the Congress—in answering a few simple questions from farmers with fields of rotten hay,

and cows with bad feet, all due to a celestial strike or something of the kind in the waterworks of the cosmos.

A book entitled *Fifty Years of Spoof*, by the veteran actor, Arthur Roberts, has been published. It is a title that perhaps might cover more appropriately records in the adjacent profession, but if Mr. Roberts is as amusing in his book as he was on the stage, we wish him every success in his venture as an author.

At the Church Congress, Lord Hugh Cecil deprecated bishops and clergy talking about everything, whether they understood it or not. We do not agree with the noble Lord; let 'em talk to show that they are just as human as ordinary people—and just as silly. Lord Hugh Cecil is a kill-joy, or is it jay walker? It's something or other we have picked up on reading the infernal papers instead of getting on with our knitting.

For our Communist disturbers who cannot help us in our job of letting in a little fresh air in the minds of superstitious people, there is, in a newspaper report before us, something of interest. At the Isle of Wight County Council, it was reported by a butcher, that a woman living in a country cottage could not afford meat. The reason she gave was that her two daughters that week had spent £2 on having their hair waved. Our sole reason for pointing this out, is to indicate that there are other problems besides economic ones, and that mental poverty is perhaps the most deplorable. While our friends will in their way, without hindrance to us, be busy in furnishing the base, we will continue with our task of furnishing the upper storeys.

There was not a little of a fine womanly gesture in the request of the late Mrs. Wells, that the marriage of her son should proceed, although it followed the day of her death. Here is a very definite example where the grip of the historic forces is being forced to slacken round an event in which customs peculiar to the church have hitherto been predominant.

The Bishop of Carlisle, speaking at the Church Congress, suggested that men studying for the Church should be encouraged to take degrees or diplomas in agriculture. If it became a question with farmers between souls and taters, we think that taters would have it. Is it thus, that the mansion-in-the-skies experts are going back to the land?

We are reminded of a battle conducted by men armed with bladders tied on the ends of sticks, in the encounter between the Bishop of Winchester and the Bishop of Birmingham. There is the true medieval atmosphere in the following announcement by the former Bishop:—

In the breaking of the bread there is a Presence which is discerned by faith. It is mystical, but real and wonderful.

The only fault to be found with this statement is that it would not be taken as evidence in such a mundane place as a Police Court, but it is evidence of the lofty polemical heights on which angels fear to tread.

Mr. Oliver Baldwin, son of the Premier, gave an address on social reforms at Bethesda Chapel, Dowlais. "People in this country suffer from lack of thinking," he said, and we are left wondering whether the statement was made in an appropriate place. The intellectual level of thought carrying a sacred book as "taboo" would not exactly set the Thames on fire, although in history it has made fires of a kind that would never have been lighted by apes.

In the nature of a few notes on a tin whistle it is put on record that on October 7, 1927, a German Invasion took place. Before, however, our Bishops, etc., can get busy we must hasten to add that the force consisted of a lawn tennis and a hockey team. We have always thought that the grin on the face of the hunter's moon was more extensive than any other, and, in this manner she registers this event in the light of comedy. There

is no record of a reception by Bishops or Generals, but not much commonsense will have to be exercised by the Germans' sporting opponents to make up the deficiency.

From a Sunday-school journal we gather that it is not "sinful" to enjoy the pastime of cycling on Sunday, if one is willing to tag on to it a bit of service for the Lord and the parsons. The new generation, says our contemporary, craves for life, movement, pleasure, and adventure; and it fails to understand many adult prohibitions. It asks why it is wrong to cycle on Sunday. And the answers to the query, we are told, are not very satisfactory. Youth is determined to enjoy innocent and wholesome recreation on the Sabbath, no matter what parsons may say. And so, as youth cannot be brought to heel, our contemporary suggests that the "eager young men and women" should be mobilized for active service on Sunday. Town Sunday-schools should organize cyclist corps of young preachers and teachers to ride out to outlying village centres, and thus offer to youth "opportunities for both mental and spiritual as well as physical recreation." The pious suggester must be a reader of the *Freethinker*. A short time ago this journal commended to readers the suggestion that N.S.S. branches should form cycling clubs, which could ride to various towns and conduct or support Freethought meetings. The idea is a good one, in view of the fact that the work thus accomplished would counteract pious activity organized on similar lines. The "eager young men and women" of the Freethought movement will no doubt give it a trial, and not let the churches and chapels have things all their own way.

A newspaper announces that science is to come to the farmers' aid. What, are all those Harvest Festivals and Thanksgiving Services useless? Farmers are an ungrateful and disbelieving race of men.

The Attorney-General, in addressing a meeting of the Post-war Brotherhood, quoted this passage from the last letter written by his father, Mr. Quintin Hogg:—

Do not confuse biology and religion—one is a science to be proved, and the other is a life to be lived.

The vicar of St. Michael's, Bournemouth, does not, apparently, subscribe to the late Mr. Hogg's view. He has organized a "children's church," in which children fill all the usual offices and conduct services, save the preaching part. He evidently believes that religion is a habit to be contracted while you are young. We daresay he agrees that religion is a life to be lived, but he thinks a considerable portion of the living ought to be done inside a church; otherwise, what will become of the parson?

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society seems a little depressed at the Begum of Bhopal's having devoted £10,000,000 to Mohammedan missionary work. In an advertisement it asks Methodists, rather plaintively:—

Can you contemplate Mohammedanism becoming the predominant world religion? It is making a bid for it. Having made Methodist flesh creep like this, the Society ought easily to get the £15,000 it is begging for.

"Commander" Evangeline Booth says the work of the Salvation Army in America is going strong. It is now well received in all parts and among all grades of society—from White House to Hell's Kitchen; and the Army has forty million dollars' worth of property. From this last statement one may suppose that judicious propaganda of the fear of Hell-fire is a profitable advertising investment. It is wonderful what a lot of money and salaries and jobs can be produced out of a quite simple idea, plus human ignorance and credulity.

The Annual Conference of Conservative Associations has been discussing votes for women at twenty-one. A speaker urged as grounds for granting the vote, that the Socialists would make a bid for women's political favour if the Conservatives did not snatch it. On the high

ethical plane in which politics move, the outwitting of an opposing party is evidently considered sufficient reason for granting a piece of tardy justice to women.

There would be many fewer divorces if husbands and wives were all good Churchpeople, says the Rev. Albert B. Belden. No doubt, and especially if the husbands and wives believed in the indissolubility of the marriage tie. On the other hand, there might be more unhappy marriage. Again, there might be many more divorces if incompatibility of religious doctrine were made a ground for divorce. For there is nothing like difference in sectarian opinion for causing squabbling in wedlock.

That daring gentleman, Bishop Barnes, has been at it again. He says that the English Church will break to pieces unless some agreement is reached concerning the Sacrament. He does not believe that "a priest using the right words and acts, can change a piece of bread so that within it there is the real presence of Christ." He also suggests that the matter could be tested by experiment. If there were a physical change in the bread chemical analysis could detect it, and he is prepared to believe in transubstantiation "when I can find a person who will come to the chapel of my house and tell me correctly whether a piece of bread which I present to him has undergone the change for which believers in transubstantiation believe."

These be very gallant words, but it is noted that the Bishop seems a bit timid about using quite plain language. What believers claim is that a bit of bread is turned into the actual flesh and blood of a real man by the magic of a priest, and believing this he at once proceeds to devour his god, a piece of material which was bread, but which is now flesh and blood—human flesh and blood. If Bishop Barnes were to use such plain language he would at once make plain the primitive and disgusting nature of this central article of the faith of the Church. And it would help other people to realize the culture stage of Christians who can solemnly discuss so ridiculous and so disgusting a doctrine. Some of our readers have thought that we were too hard on Christians when we have so often insisted that, so far as their religious ideas are concerned they were upon the exact level of savages. Well, here is the proof that we have not spoken too strongly. For here are men holding high positions in the Church and the State, who can calmly assert that when the priest has pronounced his magic, and they eat the sacrament, they are actually devouring human flesh—the cannibals!

After all Bishop Barnes says that he "would be the last to doubt that the real presence of Christ could be with men in the service of Holy Communion." And that strikes as a mere reflection of the savage doctrine of God eating. The magic of the priest cannot turn bread into flesh and blood, but it can bring Christ down among his worshippers! And Bishop Barnes stands forth and rebukes his followers in the name of science! It is an outrage on the name of science. Bishop Barnes retains as much of the doctrine of the savage as he feels it safe to hold. But he lacks either the courage or the common sense to turn his back upon the Church and leave the savage in the environment to which he belongs.

The world, according to the Rev. Walter Wynn, is swarming with "mad hatters" in every form and variety. A considerable portion of them get their inspiration from that "mad hatters'" *vade mecum*—the Holy Bible. The number of weird and wonderful Christian sects in the world is legion. From this you might fancy that the various Christian peoples use *Alice in Wonderland* as a text-book, but you would be wrong—they use the companion volume written by God Almighty.

The Bishop of Ipswich has been looking at girls' legs. He thinks light stockings are a symptom of youth's greater independence. In his search for symptoms the

Bishop is looking in the wrong place. Youth carries its independence in its head, and a symptom of its being there is that youth no longer listens to what bishops and parsons have to say.

Dr. T. Tingfang Lew, Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Yenching University, said at the City Temple, London, that he thought any conscientious man would admit that the Christian Gospel was the most potential factor in helping the Chinese people to solve its problems. This Chinese gentleman, as is befitting to a professional servant of the Lord, seems to have learnt the Christian "patter" off by heart quite nicely. The Christian religion is admittedly a wonderful thing for solving problems—of its own making. But as the Chinese already have a good few of "this world" problems for solution, we think they can very well dispense with the intelligence-befogging "other world" problems of the Christian religion.

The *Radio Times* has a letter from a listener, who likes to hear over the wires, "Tales from the Old Testament." Listening to stories is one of the oldest occupations—and the easiest; probably the next easiest is looking with the eyes, but this particular correspondent gives reasons for his choice that are not very flattering to the professional expounders of a "sacred" book. He writes: "Heard as we now hear them, on Sunday afternoons, at home and away from the often dehumanizing atmosphere of church or Bible class, they seem to gain in reality and human interest." For those who care to contrast or compare civilizations, it will be remembered that the Greek contribution to knowledge was given at a period previous to the disturbance called Christianity, and there was no "sacred" book in the whole range of Greek literature. The deadening and demoralizing influence of this book bearing a "taboo" might fill volumes, with a special section weighing a ton, on the "Consolation of Hell."

The Rev. Donald Standfast, a Wesleyan Methodist, thinks the "routine methods of Church life" are not reaching the young men up to twenty-five. He went to a well-attended church and found only one young man under twenty-five in the congregation. And in a large church with gallery accommodation for a thousand people he counted twenty-five men under that age. He thinks it is the conventional methods, the routine, of the Church that is keeping the young men away. These men of God are all alike. They simply refuse to face up to the fact that the young men of to-day don't believe in the Christian religion, are not interested in it, and have no use for it. Mr. Standfast is pathetically anxious to give the young men a chance of self-expression through a wonderful scheme he calls the Reginal League, which he hopes to tack on to the "Toe H" movement. It seems a pity to disturb pious hopes, but the blunt truth is that the young men of to-day have ample scope for self-expression outside the Churches, and so they have given these the go-by. That being the case, the client-catching Reginal League is not likely to increase very largely the percentage of young men in Wesleyan Church congregations.

We have not the slightest doubt that Lord Birkenhead would object if it were suggested that he was not a Christian. In his latest book *Law, Life and Letters*, he shows us the bent of his mind, with an echo of Samuel Smiles, in the following extract:—

In my first year I made £120; in the second year £1,200; in my third year £3,100; in my fourth year £4,200; in my fifth year £5,150; and in my sixth year just over £6,000.

We trust, if it gives him any pleasure, that he will go on making money in this ratio all his life, so that he will have to rent The Canadian Docks at Liverpool to store it. But, with culture in England symbolized by a Rolls-Royce and a big cigar, it may be wondered whether we really have any message for the heathen abroad. The above confidence very neatly fits with sharp swords and glittering prizes.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

THERE has been a lull in the flow of subscriptions to the Fund, and we cannot, this week, congratulate anyone on the advance made. We console ourselves with the reflection that this is merely a pause to take breath, and that there will be a good spurt in the near future. All we want to say now is that on the collection of £800 depends our securing another £1,615. Every pound given is thus worth two. Saying this should be quite enough to bring half a dozen substantial cheques before we go to press next week.

FIFTH LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

	£	s.	d.
PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED	5,568	13	3
R. Apsden	0	5	0
R. Speirs	1	0	0
G. Lawrence	0	5	0
W. Collins	0	5	0
Mr. & Mrs. W. H. Finney	1	0	0
A. McInnes	0	10	0
H. Silvester	1	0	0
A. B. Moss (2nd Sub.)	0	10	0
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H. R. White (Galway)	1	0	0
H. Wilson	1	0	0
T. Slater	0	5	0
J. H. Barnes	0	2	0
J. McCartney	1	0	0
J. R. Brooking (Per J. W. Wood)	1	0	0
D. G. Sharp	0	5	0
A. H. Deacon	1	0	0
Total	£5,580	0	3

Promised on condition that a further £804 19s. 9d. is contributed by December 31, 1927 1,615 0 0

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and crossed Clerkenwell Branch, Midland Bank, and directed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

- A. ASPDEN.—We believe there is room in all the Lancashire towns for an active Freethought propaganda. Where nothing else could be done, literature might be distributed, and we are prepared to send on some to anyone who will undertake to put it into circulation.
- J. BREEZE.—One is bound to suspect either the intelligence or the honesty of a man like Bishop Barnes, who says what he does about Christian beliefs and still remains inside the Christian Church. It ought not to be a question of seeing what we could make Christian beliefs mean, but what has always been meant by them. And when a man does not accept that meaning he ought to give up service in a Church that is intended to perpetuate it.
- H. PATERSON.—The title of the book is *Aloysius Horn*. It is published by Jonathan Cape, London, at 7s. 6d.
- J. G. BURDEN.—We pass on your reminder to Mr. Mann that he promised to write on psycho-analysis.

H. SILVESTER.—Thanks for good wishes, which we reciprocate.

H. WHITE.—We mean to keep on pegging away until we have placed the old paper on a sound basis. And we feel certain that we shall succeed.

MR. J. MCCARTNEY.—We hope that some of the kind things you say about the *Freethinker* and its editor are deserved.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The Manchester Branch opens its winter season to-day, at the Chorlton Town Hall, afternoon and evening. In the afternoon at 3 o'clock, his subject will be "The Priest and the Child"; in the evening, at 6.30, "The New Warfare between Religion and Science." Chorlton Town Hall is at All Saints, just opposite the Church, and tramcars stop at the door. This is a new venture for the Branch, and we should like to be able to report that the hall was crowded.

Next Sunday, in the same hall, Mr. John M. Robertson. It is some time since Mr. Robertson lectured in Manchester in a Freethought Hall, his visit should bring many old friends together.

So much has been written round the Presidential Address of Sir Arthur Keith on the Origin of Man, that most of our readers will be glad to have the address in a permanent form. This has now been issued by Messrs. Watts & Co., under the title of *Concerning Man's Origin*, at the popular price of one shilling. To that address Sir Arthur has added appendixes on the Further Evidence and Some Unsolved Problems, Darwin's Home, Why I am a Darwinist, and Capital as a Factor in Evolution. The book can be supplied from this office, post free one shilling and three halfpence.

Mr. H. R. Rosetti will lecture at Leicester to-day, in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, at 6.30. His subject is "God, Evolution, and Sir Arthur Keith."

Apropos of our "Views and Opinions" of October 2, Mr. W. Collins writes:—

I consider that the Freethought movement owes a debt of gratitude to the Christian Evidence Lecturer, and if he is still living we might have a collection so that he may end his days in peace. The tactical blundering has resulted in Christianity receiving some of the hardest blows it has ever experienced.

We hope to live long enough to give some more hard knocks to the Master superstition before the end comes.

Religion's New Conquests.

THERE is nothing new about the religious attempts to monopolize all the kudos obtainable from the various activities of citizenship. The manner in which the war memorials in England have been made to pay unwilling tribute to ecclesiasticism is only the latest form of the scandal. Education, army, navy, civic prison and all other public services have for centuries borne witness to the greed of the churches.

The clergy long ago began to realize that the Labour movement offers a fair field for spiritual exploitation. In England this has been assisted enormously by the readiness of many "Labour leaders" to second and support the priests. Keir Hardie, the father of the English Labour Party, was one of the first and worst offenders. This is rather curious, because Hardie certainly had often shown clear proofs of his own enlightened views on religion before party exigencies seemed to point to advantages derivable from clerical support. The Labour members, prior to I.L.P. days, were much more orthodox personally, but there were men like Burt and Arch, who gladly welcomed Charles Bradlaugh's support, and realized that secularists were the friends and all the churches the enemies of Labour.

In America, the will to exploit Labour in the interests of religion is even more apparent than in England. It is true that there is also a far more decided sectional antipathy to all religious "patronage," and all friends of freedom will wish this section to succeed. Henry George has still a strong following, and he was fond of Bible texts and of using religious emotionalism for his propaganda. But he was certainly not an orthodox Christian like W. J. Bryan. It would not be just to regard Bryan as a type of the Labour man in politics to-day, for all his fervent rubbish about mankind being crucified on a cross of silver. Bryan was already then opposed by Eugene Debs and all true Labourists, while his more recent "monkeyings" at Dayton would have extinguished him even as a Democratic leader, had he lived. By the way, irreverent Americans call the anti-Darwinians "funny-dementalist"—not an inapt corruption of "fundamentalists."

It is worth noting that at the last annual Convention of the American Federation of Labour, there was actually a danger of the whole business being sidetracked by a banal religious squabble. The Employers' Association of Detroit (where the Conference was held) were jealous of the danger that God and his holy church might weigh down the balance by backing Labour with Omnipotence and all the other divine gifts. Accordingly the Employers' Associations of Detroit induced the Y.M.C.A. of that city to cancel an invitation to the President of the Labour Federation, to address it. The Employers also brought pressure to bear to prevent Labour delegates from preaching in the Detroit pulpits during Convention week.

The Labour Federation won, but did Labour win? That is a question to which Freethinkers can have only one answer. What, however, is most significant is the symptom it discloses of an attempt on the part of employers to exploit religion in the same way that religion has hitherto tried to exploit Labour movements.

The fact is we are witnessing a new conquest by religion. Religion is being wooed by big business in a very direct way. It is not for nothing that one sees "big-seller" books like *The Man Nobody Knows*. Such books obviously do not sell for their literary charm, or their interest as narratives, nor their

originality of thought or brilliancy of expression. They succeed because they expound the doctrines demanded by big business. Christ was a smart booster according to them. Their favourite text is Christ's confession that he had to be about "My Father's Business."

Naturally the churches will not shut out the possibility that Labour is after all more likely to be the victor in the near future.

Accordingly religion will never again denounce Labour uncompromisingly as in the past. [Needless to say there are and have been individual clergy and Christian laymen as sincere in their Labour advocacy as any other individuals could be]. But this consideration does not stand in the way of the Churches rushing to avail themselves of the warm invitation of the business men to come and spread religious propaganda where it is likely to benefit mutually the church and the shop.

Here is a cutting from the *New York World*—an item of news on the front page, not an "ad." in some obscure back page of a provincial journal:—

To the rhythm of *Onward Christian Soldiers* one hundred Boy Scouts marched through the streets yesterday to deliver one thousand Bibles to the guest rooms of the new — Hotel. The boys each carrying ten Bibles, the gift of the New York Bible Society, started their parade from the N.Y.B.S. headquarters, No. 5 East 48th Street, marched down to the hotel and personally distributed one of the new books in every room.

Another item of news. A religious organization consisting of clergymen and laymen (class leaders and half-and-halfers) called the Committee of One Thousand, has been formed chiefly for the purpose of preaching the necessity of strictly enforcing the Volstead Act (Prohibition). The Committee has delivered addresses to no fewer than six thousand Conventions of Business Men during the past year. These "trade conventions" are little known in England. In America every industry and profession has its "booster day," and its "convention"—the latter lasts from three to six days as a rule. All the salesmen, etc., of all the toothbrush manufacturers, including travellers, managers, buyers and others interested in the business, meet together in some attractive town. It is said that no convention ever meets in a town where prohibition is strictly enforced. Mr. H. L. Mencken seriously believes that Mr. Coolidge would never have been adopted if the convention at which he was chosen had been held in a lax instead of a strict city. Mr. John Drake, in the October number of *Julius Haldeman Monthly*, gives one the impression that drinking, gambling and whoring are common in such convention weeks.

The "National Association of Credit Men" held its convention recently in New York City, with over 3,000 delegates present. The programme included a special devotional service at St. John's Cathedral, five sessions of prayer, conducted respectively by three Protestant clergymen, one R.C. priest and one Rabbi. There was an oration by the Y.M.C.A. Secretary, and a sermon on "Religion in Business," by Rev. S. P. Cadman, D.D.

At the latest convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs, held at Philadelphia, the same Dr. Cadman preached to the delegates on "Imagination and Advertising." Dr. Christian Reisner lectured this convention on "Spiritual Principles in Advertising"; and H. Jamison, Advt. Manager of the American Tin Plate Co., lectured on "Advertising our Bible Classes," and another pious crank addressed the delegates on "Advertising the Kingdom of God through the Radio Service. There were no doubt other fixtures including for certain, cabaret dances, at which the Atlantic

City Beauties were advertised to take part from 11 p.m. till 2 a.m.

Thousands of similar instances can be given. The American churches are determined to "get in" wherever there are big crowds. Money-making bosses, or exploited workers—it is all grist to the "mills of God."

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Random Notes.

AN anonymous correspondent of mine, some time ago, airily assured me that the propagation of Freethought was but skirmishing with the enemy of mankind; the real battle would take place, so he said, in the region of economics. On a little reflection, I am sure he would see that his contention misses the point. Freethought seeks to establish the supremacy of reason in human affairs, and organized Freethought attacks Christianity because, of all forces opposed to reason, it is the most influential and reactionary. The structure of society is permeated with Christian feeling, harmful to individual and State. Major Douglas, the engineer, whose constructive thinking on economics is the most hopeful thing in either theoretical or practical politics, has no doubt about the part played by Christianity in bringing about and keeping in being, the financial conditions under which the civilized world is staggering to-day. He has stressed the obstructive power of the ideas set up by the distinctive Christian doctrines; the perfectly petrifying action of the dictum, from an economic point of view, that a man shall not eat if he does not work, or the numbing effect in so far as tackling ever present problems is concerned, of a system of future rewards and punishments. My correspondent dates his letter from "Scotland," which country, for centuries, was prevented by the predominance of Biblical ideas from making any economic headway whatsoever. The latter chapters of H. G. Graham's *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, will freshen his memory about the details of that grey and hungry time, and may help to make clear the fact that the destructive criticism of Christianity is a preliminary and necessary factor in the solving of all social problems.

* * *

I have been reading the *Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini*, the sixteenth century Florentine artist, and, it must be admitted, scamp and assassin. Over and above his faults, however, he possessed that excellence of nature which puts men away above and beyond their fellows, and endows them with the mastery of things and of life. Cellini came into contact with popes and cardinals and kings, and although he gave them the impression that he was honoured by their notice, he never concealed from himself that the exact opposite was the truth. Some of them divined that he was one of the elect, and sometimes acted accordingly. His was no shrinking genius. He and his peers decided the conception of beauty in art for kings and people. He created things of enduring beauty, and he was truly what the modern novelist delights in calling himself: a creative artist. And he was religious to an exceptional degree, but never servile. He frequently called upon God for assistance as if he had a first call upon that august personage, but he never lost faith in himself. There was no slave morality about him. He was one of those favoured sons of Earth, who are dowered with the innate quality of good taste and know it.

* * *

Just outside the city of Newcastle, on its western side, is the site of an old Roman station. The

antiquaries are digging down through the earth there in the hope of finding something to widen their knowledge of Imperial Rome, of its vigour and decay. C. M. Grieve, the poet and critic who is making a gallant effort to resurrect the dormant genius of the Scottish people, has a scathing sentence in his book of *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, on the barren nature of this burrowing among the things of the past. It is true that much of antiquarian work is done from no better motive than that which animates the collector of stamps or rare books, and Scotland has more than her share of learned societies, who consider the deciphering of an old charter of more importance than the encouragement of a young poet, but they are invariably composed of old men, and it is the nature of old men to retrace their steps and fight their battles o'er again. In the face of a movement of youngsters, inspired by a truly national spirit, the conservative tendency of the greybeards will count for little, and the Scottish Renaissance of art and letters, when it comes, will take the charter chests in its stride and be none the worse. Nevertheless, the study of antiquity provides something more than the edification of old men. Rightly conducted, it adds hugely to our experience. When the lesson of the past has been read aright, mankind will be able to steer clear of the pseudo-democracies and bastard autocracies that have torn humanity asunder through the ages.

In the meantime, while the lesson is being missed, an eye should be kept open for the flowering of the Scottish national movement.

* * *

Turning over the pages of a recent *Freethinker* volume, I came across a passage wherein the Editor was suggesting to a voluminous author of "popular science" books, that there was a rather important difference between "writing evolution and "thinking" it. Writing evolution is comparative easy, and, as far as it goes, valuable enough, but thinking it involves a deeper knowledge of first principles than most of us can boast of. One need not be an expert, however, to detect the more obvious strays from the path of strictly scientific procedure, even when it is done by a professor of the higher branches of learning. Some time ago I attended a lecture on "What is Electricity," by a professor of the Durham College of Science. He had for audience the élite of the local technical world, and during the utterance of what I considered grossly unscientific statements, I never noticed the slightest ripple of dissent. The lecturer was confident about his definition of matter, although some of his demonstrations of the spiral element in the subject failed lamentably. That was due to faulty apparatus, which was duly explained by the professor, but he apparently never glimpsed the faulty thinking that lay behind his declaration that one of the rarer elements had only half the density it should have. That was showing an extremely unscientific desire to fix a label where it wouldn't rightly stick, but the teacher had a tendency throughout to take short cuts to his conclusions. After minutely tracing the pedigree of the atom back to positively and negatively charged specks of ether, he reverently announced that he assumed an act of creation to account for the latter. An air of certitude was thrown over the statement by a slight pause after it was uttered. Then he hied back to the atom, while his audience was in the right frame of mind, and asserted that it bore the marks of a manufactured article.

That, I suggest, is simply talking science, rather than thinking it. The "manufactured article" argument is older than I am, and what it is designed to support: an irresponsible, interfering deity outside and apart from matter, is the very antithesis of all orderly knowledge. Once let God loose in the domain

of science and we head straight back to medieval times, when the fantasies of theologians passed muster as ascertained truth. The co-ordinating principle that underlies modern science, and which ensures a forward movement, is what distinguishes the science of to-day from that of the Middle Ages. When Professor Thornton, the lecturer in question, assumes an act of creation to account for the ether, he is not talking the language of science, much less thinking it; he is putting himself in line with the necromancers and astrologers of the Dark Ages.

H. B. DODDS.

Rationalism and Education.

(By a retired school inspector, Author of the "World-Story")

THE frustration, largely by the churches, of the efforts made to found a national system of education in England during the earlier part of the nineteenth century forms a well known chapter of our educational history. Whitbread's Poor Law Bill of 1807, which included the provision of State primary schools, passed the House of Commons; but the opposition of the Lords, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, destroyed the Bill. Lord Brougham's Bill of 1820 naturally "foundered on the rock of the religious difficulty," as it proposed that the masters of the State schools should be members of the Church of England, and that the curriculum should be determined by the clergy! So we had no Education Act until 1870.

The formation of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, and its proposal to begin the training of teachers by providing a State training college, were met by a storm of opposition from the Established Church, and also from the Wesleyans. The Council was formed (by a bare majority), but the college project met the same fate as the early Bills mentioned; and we owe the first training college (established in 1840) to the generosity and public spirit of Dr. Kay (afterwards Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth), the first Secretary of the Council, and a few of his friends. A set of denominational colleges then grew up.

The churches also captured the inspectorate, which was inaugurated in 1839. In the following year the officers were divided into three sections, one for the Anglican, one for the Roman Catholic, and one for the Nonconformist schools. By a Concordat of 1840, the appointment, and continuance in the service, of those who were to visit Anglican schools—which were, or soon became, by far the largest group—was made subject to the concurrence of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; and many "unbeneficed clergymen" were appointed.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that Matthew Arnold belonged to the last of the three inspectorial groups, and thus escaped the "quaint scrutiny of an archbishop"; but it is said that the famous school inspector lost his chance of promotion, and of obtaining more congenial employment, by publishing his "affable pleasantries about the Deity of the middle-classes," and the like.

Following the great increase of sectarian schools, these have waned during recent years, and now only about one-third of our primary school children attend them. Undeterred, however, or perhaps incited, by this state of things, the champions of sectarianism have put forward a demand for "adequate religious instruction" in all our schools: that is, to make theological instruction a compulsory part of the curriculum of the public, provided schools; to make such teaching a fuller charge on the community than it is

at present, by providing out of public funds for the upkeep of sectarian schools, and for the building of new ones if the local authorities can be induced to take that course; and, in general, to increase clerical control and influence over the schools and teachers. Proposals of this order are by no means peculiar to this country, and in at least two cases the clericalist attack has been successful. In Belgium, in 1870, the Liberal Party completely secularized the schools, banning from them all religious instruction. But the Roman Catholic Party subsequently became strong enough to secure the reversal of this policy; religious instruction was made compulsory in all the schools in 1895, and was put directly under the control of the clergy.

In Holland, in 1920, a measure was passed which made it possible for any locality to establish a separate denominational school if forty scholars of a particular sect could be guaranteed; and we learn that in some cases a group of schools belonging to rival churches has already been formed at the expense of the existing State school. Here is waste to a pronounced extent and degree. On the one hand, there is the relative inferiority of the education received, where children of widely different ages and attainments are taught in the same class or group—as is the case (unavoidably at present) in most of our own rural schools, and also in the not inconsiderable number of sectarian (chiefly Roman Catholic) schools in our smaller towns (which is not unavoidable, but is sheer educational waste). On the other hand, there is the serious financial loss involved in the duplication of building, repair and care-taking of premises, the supply of furniture and apparatus, and the payment of two or more headteachers instead of one. This may form one reason why the teachers of Holland, who are paid directly by the State, have been shorn of about 30 per cent. of their salaries since 1920, and may also account for the fact that the inspection of schools has ceased in the more rural districts—that is, where such oversight and help is more especially needed.

A like reactionary attack is now being made in Germany, and a "School Reform Bill," in which the proposals are embodied, is soon to come before the Reichstag. It is by no means improbable that we shall have to fight a similar reactionary measure in this country during the lifetime of the present Government.

J. REEVES.

(Retired School Inspector.)

In Quest of the Beautiful.

VI.—POETRY.

IN the reign of Queen Elizabeth a star of great magnitude shone over lesser lights, and something happened in the history of the consciousness of man. It seemed that one genius was capable of comprehending every thing there was to be known about man. In Shakespeare I found the beauty of understanding; in his sonnets there was for me the cold purity of thought, untouched by the clamour of the market place, yet near to the heart of men who desire to know and to speak truth—one of the hardest tasks. The foundations of ethics may be no stronger than a spider's thread; the tiger and the ape in man may have to go for good. The beginning of its disappearance might start with a poet's truth:—

Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?

We may deplore the brutal frankness of Elizabethan speech, the coarseness of pastimes, the cheapness of life, but the present day has evils far worse. That this thought was born in that age is our good fortune; we have only to live up to it. Through the spring colours of his comedies, the heavy purples of his tragedies, into

the mellow sunshine of "A Winter's Tale" and the "Tempest," I was carried by the spirit of search for the Beautiful; that I found it, was a compensation for the years of wandering. To Marlowe, with his fire, and mighty line I was also indebted. In the opening to the "Jew of Malta," there was for me a great truth:—

I count religion but a childish toy,
And hold there is no sin but ignorance.

Marlowe was a grown-up man. True courage with knowledge was there, to be admired when we look with provisional sympathy on his age, but in all his plays and poems he shows a command of description of natural beauty as one who knew his subject and embroidered his tales with almost an excess of the beautiful.

In Milton I was drawn by his play of "Samson Agonistes." There was a haunting sweetness in "Lycidas"—perhaps because of its Greek fatalism, and apart from its beauty of language. His "Il Penseroso" is a mixture of Christianity and Platonism, but his "L'Allegro" does not contain one Christian simile, and the old puritan well and truly pays homage to knowledge—and the stage. His noble words on liberty brought me further in my quest and, in a Dedication to his essays on various aspects of Christian belief, there was a peculiar joy in finding, what I might term, "growth": "I earnestly beseech all lovers of truth, not to cry out that the Church is thrown into confusion by that freedom of discussion and inquiry which is granted to the schools, and ought certainly to be refused to no believer, since we are ordered to 'to prove all things,' and since the daily progress of the light of truth is productive far less of disturbance to the Church, than of illumination and edification." It was therefore, after this, a natural step to the few forcible words of gold in the *Areopagitica*: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." Here, then, was the object of my quest in another form. It was not the freedom of license, but the cry of a man on behalf of men, and a precious picture from an age that has gone lingers in my mind—of Milton in the autumn of his life, "sitting in a gray coarse cloth coat, at the door of his house near Bunhill Fields, in warm sunny weather, enjoying the fresh air."

Someone has stated that logic is the closed fist. In the couplets of Pope there was abundant matter to bid me persevere. I found a gem of beauty, where rhyme was wedded to wisdom. Here was the science of logic with the music of the poet; here was an amulet that I might touch every day to advantage, keep my feet on the earth, and be free from the tangled growth of fruitless dispute. From "An Essay on Man," then, there was the beauty of an idea circumscribed almost to the size of a pin-point, but sufficient to give motive power for a lifetime:—

Say first, of God above, or man below,
What can we reason, but from what we know?

Not in profusion, or extravagance or waste, but in the fine art of compression I was to salute again, the object of my search. In aphorism, as in the point of the eye it was possible by a genius to see the world with its mountains, valleys, clouds and boundless seas. This little gem of one line with its light has been helpful, and in another form I found it in Emerson: "A man should not tell me that he has walked among angels; his proof is, that his eloquence makes me one."

Every poet, popular, little known, obscure, encouraged me to continue in the hope of reaching some Ultima Thule. But that was not to be, and though the argosy of youth bids one to hope at one day to hail the land where there is nothing more to be known, the quieter reflection of age whispers that everything is within. It must obviously be a catalogue of names to cite the various poets of all ages wherein this magic of beauty resides. The vigorous beauty of Blake, the torrential sweep and rhythm of Swinburne, the measured sweetness of Tennyson, the arresting yet tantalising challenge of Browning, the domestic pictures of Cowper, the close-set jewels of Meredith—still the spirit of search does not cry out—hold enough!—and beauty moves among these realms like a will o' the wisp.

To weave into the texture of the philosophy of my own

life this poetical quality of beauty created by dreamers, idealists and star-gazers was a necessity. There could be no resting, no landing even at the Utopia of poetry, but its music was soothing, invigorating, bracing—I should need it all. The closed fist of logic intruded, and although the ease-loving part of me said stay, there was another that commanded me to go forward. I had not met Beauty face to face, but in looking backward to her first faint appearance in a meadow, in the simple natural picture that unfolded itself to a youthful consciousness, I was grateful. What was true then, I can affirm is true now, and by my life in some kind of unfinished way I had really lived and tested the words of Keats:—

Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

TRISTRAM.

Correspondence.

THE JUDAIC SOURCE OF THE CHRISTIAN CREED.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have reason to believe that the first portion (up to the words—"These national enthusiasts," etc.) of the last paragraph of my article in the issue of October 2, was not sufficiently explicit to stress the point I wished to emphasize. I had hurriedly amalgamated three paragraphs of a rough sketch, and did not notice that the blending was so imperfect, till I saw it in print. As it is, however, one of considerable import, I crave permission of you, Sir, to spare me space to restate it:—

"In pursuance of the determined policy of the Christian Fathers and of the Church ever since, to repudiate at all cost the idea that the new cult was a natural evolution, the practice of keeping its natural source out of sight, was supplemented by another, which was curiously complementary in character—*viz.*, the finding of sentences in the Old Testament, which, when detached from their context, appeared to have some allusion to the proclaimed Founder of Christianity. These alleged prophesies, on the assumption that the Old Testament contained only divinely revealed truths, were held as proof positive of its divine origin, as it showed that the new cult was a part of God's eternal plan.

The suppression of historical antecedents was only negative as means of propaganda. The preaching of fulfilled predictions was, on the other hand, a *positive* weapon that enabled the Christian Fathers to fulfil what they considered to be their primary and paramount duty of creating the belief that the new religion was *not* the outcome of the apocalyptic ravings of Messianic enthusiasts, but that it was launched by God himself."

The substance and sequence of the above are the same as those in the article, but beaded, I trust, on a less knotty string.

KERIDON.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

SIR,—May I please notify the members and others, through the columns of your publication, that the office of the West London Branch of the N.S.S. is now at 26 Edgware Road, two doors from the old premises, on the right, the agreement of the above having terminated on the last quarter day.

B. A. LE MAINE.

Mr. G. Whitehead at Wigan.

WIGAN shares with curates and mothers-in-law the distinction of being one of the chief butts of the music-hall comedian. Mr. Whitehead's experience suggests that its reputation is deserved. Here the dead horse was particularly frisky as it was being flogged; indeed, it yelled and howled, and one evening even threw an orange (which like all the arguments of the opposition was rotten), smashing the lens of the speaker's spectacles.

Order was kept during the lectures, but at question time, speakers of all kinds, including three sorts of clergymen, one of whom behaved like a gentleman, occupied the platform in opposition, largely concerned in accusing the lecturer of most of the crimes in the calendar. When Mr. Whitehead came to reply, a chorus

of Catholics, chiefly women, made Christian noises, some of them unprintable, while one of the clergymen, after justifying the interruptions, continually added to the bad behaviour with a running fire of interjections which finally drew upon him protests from the fair-minded section of the crowd. These tactics defeated their object, and the result was that at the last five meetings of the seven addressed, before the time for starting, several hundred people were awaiting the speaker, and on each occasion the audience swelled to gigantic proportions. The sympathy was largely on the side of Mr. Whitehead, as a rash Catholic found, who challenged a show of hands—to be confronted by an overwhelming defeat. A humorous aspect of the situation was to find the Protestant clergymen exhibiting bad manners cheered by Catholic women, who at any other time would have consigned them to hell, and when one of the clergy did happen to protest against Catholic unfairness to the speaker, he then came in for a share of the jeers. As mentioned, in spite of the noise of unfair opponents, secularism is popular in Wigan, and each lecture was rewarded with a hearty ovation, while at the end of the meeting scores flocked round to shake the hand of the speaker, and to encourage him to continue. The sales of literature were also good. We have to thank Messrs. Foster and Hunter for their help, and also Mr. Partington, who travelled from Bolton to act as chairman. Three more meetings at Wigan and five at Bolton will conclude Mr. Whitehead's summer campaign.

Society News.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.

THERE was a good attendance to hear Mr. MacEwan on Sunday last. His subject was "Custom," and the wealth of illustrations, the wide-spread sources of supply and the manner of dealing with the lessons to be learned showed the speaker at his best. Quite a number of questions were put, and there was some discussion.

It has been suggested from time to time, to open a Discussion Class or a Study Circle. We have an option on a room for Thursday evenings, and will be glad if those who wish to join will hand their names to the Secretary or to Mr. MacEwan. The class will not be confined to members of the Society.

Next Sunday (October 16) Mr. J. W. MacLean is to speak on "Secularism and Current Events," and we hope to see many new faces among his hearers.—T. R.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

MR. R. B. KERR's finely reasoned and thought-provoking address, on the question of the over-population of Britain, evoked many questions and a lively discussion, in which Mr. Palmer, Mr. Eagar, Mr. Bowley, Mr. Saville and others took part.

To-night, Mr. Hornibrook is addressing us on "Native Exercise." Those who have heard Mr. Hornibrook already know what a splendid address on Health he always gives; the pity being that we cannot find a better hall in North London for his lectures.—K.

Obituary.

MR. JOSHUA VANDERHOUT.

THE ashes of the late Joshua Vanderhout were interred in the City of London Cemetery on Saturday. Relatives and friends were present, and a Secular Service was read by R. H. Rosetti.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICE, 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.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. F. A. Hornibrook—"Native Exercise."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman—"The Sex War."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Litt.—"Modern International Ideals."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34 George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Lantern Lecture by Mr. E. C. Saphin. Thursday at 7.30—A Lecture.

OUTDOOR.

FREETHOUGHT MEETING.—(Corner of North End Road—near Walham Green Church): Saturday at 7.30. Speakers—F. Bryant, F. Moister, A. J. Mathie.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. Leonard Ebury. Wednesday, October 19, at 8 p.m. (Peckham, Rye Lane): Mr. Corrigan; (Clapham Old Town): Mr. L. Ebury. Thursday, October 20, at 8 p.m. (Clapham Old Town): Mr. Sandford.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30 and 3.0, Speakers—Messrs. Hart, Botting, Baker, Hanson and Parton.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.0, Messrs. A. Hyatt, B. A. Le Maine; 6.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Carter and Jackson. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith, W.): 3.0, Mr. Campbell-Everden, A Lecture. Freethought lectures every Wednesday and Friday in Hyde Park at 7.30. Various Lecturers.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Assembly Rooms, Front Street): 7.0, Mr. Jas. Davidson—"Evolution of Mind." Chairman: Mr. N. Riddell. Open daily for reading, etc, from 10 a.m. All Freethinkers and enquirers welcome.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Dr. Carmichael—"Materialism Re-Stated." Admission free.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints): Lectures by Chapman Cohen: 3.30, "The Priest and the Child"; 6.30, "The New Warfare between Science and Religion."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Co-operative Buildings, Drake's Circus): General Meeting, October 18, at 8 p.m. Business: Treasurer's Report; Proposed Meeting; General Business. All members are requested to attend.

OUTDOOR.

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

THE MORE WE STAND TOGETHER the wealthier we will be; money as well as knowledge is power. Organization and co-operation are irresistible forces. A Company owned and controlled by Freethinkers, catering for Freethinkers, and advertising in the *Freethinker* needs very little thinking about to demonstrate its immense possibilities, and how desirable and necessary it is. Definitely and certainly, such a Company will be in existence within the next few weeks. This is likely to be the last public announcement and your last chance of securing the honour of being one of the original shareholders. You should communicate at once with DAVID MACCONNELL, Mossiel, Brookside, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

A SENTENCE of banishment is far too severe altogether; it is rarely heard of to-day. Don't exile us from your home—write immediately for any of the following:—Gents' A to D Patterns, suits from 55s.; Gents' E Patterns, suits all at 67s. 6d.; Gents' F to H Patterns, suits from 75s.; Gents' I to M Patterns, suits from 98s.; Gents' Overcoat Patterns, prices from 48s. 6d.; or Ladies' Pattern Sets, costumes from 58s.; coats from 44s.—MACCONNELL & MARE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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