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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions.

Cannibalism and Religion.

It is amusingly interesting, or interestingly amusing to observe the quarrel over the Sacrament that is now "convulsing" the Christian Church, and which has been brought before the general public by a recent sermon of Bishop Barnes. In the Catholic doctrine of the Mass, which is the classical form of the whole thing, it is held that when the priest blesses the bread and the wine, these are positively transformed into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that when the worshipper eats them he is eating the body and blood of his Saviour. The later Christian view is that it is not the veritable body and blood of Jesus that is eaten and drunk, they are eaten only in symbolic form, or the real presence of Christ is somehow brought into touch with men in the act of feasting. Now Bishop Barnes creates a sensation by denouncing the former conception, while accepting the latter. He advances an argument—with more than the air of an Einstein, a Darwin, or a Newton announcing a discovery in physics or biology—that is very, very old, to the effect that if the bread and wine is really changed into the body of Christ there must be some physical or chemical change that should be perceptible to scientific tests. He accepts the "spiritual" change because no tests can be applied, and like a true theologian he believes in making statements where no means of testing their truth exists. "Safety first" is his motto. Then he goes a step farther and declares that the belief in the actual transformation of the bread and wine lands us in the region of primitive magic, and that those who accept it are on a level with a "cultured Hindu Idolator." I do not know why the "Hindu Idolator" is dragged in except on the assumption that this belief, which the majority of Christian believers adopt in its most literal form, really brings us back to the level of the most primitive of savage religious beliefs, and that it would never do to directly relate Christian belief to savagery.

Magic and Religion.

I feel almost inclined to apologise to readers of the *Freethinker* for seriously discussing this absurd, disgusting, and savage religious practice, but it is, after all, one of the oldest of Christian beliefs; it is, as I have said, accepted by the majority of Christians, and it does really throw a light on the mentality of religious believers, as well as upon the true character of religious doctrines. A further illustration of this comes in the shape of a lengthy summary of a lecture by Dr. E. O. James, Vicar of St. Thomas's, Oxford, on "Religion and Magic," delivered to London University Students of the English Church Union and published in the *Church Times*. The summary is printed as a reply to Bishop Barnes. So that in this case we see, so far as their religious beliefs are concerned, two modern savages at loggerheads, but neither of them in the least appreciating how much of the savage the other has in his religious make-up. Dr. James opens the bombardment by distinguishing between religion and magic. By magic he means the control of supernatural impersonal forces by power inherent in the person who is working the magic. Religion consists in the propitiation of supernatural powers that were superior to man. I have no special quarrel with these definitions, but Dr. James follows with an explanation that is in its way, enlightening. Magic, he says, is the exploitation of the supernatural from within; Religion "is the special attitude to the supernatural from without." But why is the word "exploitation" not used in both cases? Clearly because Dr. James does not like to present the Christian as exploiting God. But does it matter whether one is trying to get the supernatural to do something by coercion (magic) or by supplication (religion)? When a man commences by defining two things substantially identical in such different ways, one has not much to hope for in the direction of impartiality or enlightenment.

* * *

God-Eating.

What is the central fact of the Christian Eucharist? It is the eating of the body of a divine victim, so that the eater may become at one with him, or absorb his qualities. The moment one states the problem thus plainly, no one, whose mind is not bemused by a whole mass of mystical verbiage, and who is acquainted with what we know of primitive religious beliefs and practices, will have the slightest doubt as to the kind of thing with which we are in contact. Mr. J. T. Lloyd has written a threepenny booklet, to which he has given the suggestive and perfectly accurate title of "God-Eating," in which he shows the cannibalistic nature of the Christian rite, and which I venture to commend to the attention of all my readers who have not yet secured the work. The

Christian who reads that will know more about the subject of the Sacraments in half an hour than he will by following for ever the half-hearted revelations of Bishop Barnes, and the childish speculations of the *Church Times*. And those who are acquainted with the mass of evidence brought forward by Sir James Frazer and other anthropologists will be under no doubt as to the origin and nature of God eating. Dr. James points out that the practice of killing and eating a "divine" victim (as a matter of fact, it was the killing that made the victim divine) whether animal or human, was very wide-spread and existed in all the countries round about Judea. I am not going to discuss the exact way in which this became part and parcel of Christianity; the question of the "how" is always an interesting one, but it is well not to let the difficulty of determining this obscure the fact. The belief existed, the practice existed, and it begins in a very simple act of reasoning. Primitive man eats his enemies, as he eats certain animals, for reasons other than merely gastronomic ones. He believes that in so eating them he will acquire their qualities. He kills a selected victim, a kind of embryonic god, and scatters pieces of his victim on land that is to bear crops, so that the life of the victim may give life to the crops. If his elected gods show signs of weakness he, as Dr. James points out, may offer the blood of another victim in order to prolong the life of his God. At other times they ate the God to become like him. But there was no imagery in all this, there was no mysticism, it was a literal fact. In Africa, in various parts of Asia and elsewhere, this practice of eating—literally eating—a sacrificial victim is found. And it is not without significance that right through the ages, particularly in early and medieval times, we have cropping up stories of the sacrifice and ceremonial eating of children or adults by certain sects, just as we find in Christian annals the continuous cropping up of strange and objectionable sexual practices. And every anthropologist knows that whenever he comes on the track of this kind of thing he may safely look for its origin in the remote past.

* * *

Religious Cannibalism.

Dr. James admits the prevalence of the idea and the practice of killing a victim—human or animal—then eating the flesh, or bathing in or drinking the blood, but he refuses to credit the statement that the Christian Eucharist, the transformation of the bread and the wine into the body and blood of Christ originated in this manner. His main reason for this is that the earlier practice was magical, but the Christian one was religious—as though the one could not quite naturally grow out of the other! As a matter of fact we know that it did. One can see the stage at which the actual victim is sacrificed. Then we have the sacrifice of the victim in effigy, as in Mexico, where an effigy of the God was made and then eaten, and even in Catholic countries to-day the practice of affixing a sacred picture, made of some soluble material, to a cake and eating it is not unknown. The very name of the festival in Mexico was "God is eaten." And when we find a Christian writer such as Chrysostom talking of "burying his teeth in Christ's flesh," or Ambrose speaking of the bread as being so transformed that the eater is offered the transfigured body of Christ, it is evident that we are not far removed from the literal thing. To argue against this on the ground that the thing is too absurd when taken literally, is quite by the way. One of the chief attractions to certain minds of the many mystical cults of to-day is just that want of clear comprehension of what is meant, or what actually is

effected by the words used. With the truly religious mind the incomprehensible equals the admirable.

* * *

Our Medicine Men.

Bishop Barnes referred to the priest who transformed the bread and wine into flesh and blood as a "medicine-man." Dr. James says that the Christian priest is not a medicine-man, and asked his audience, "Do I look like a medicine-man?" One might reply that it all depends. True, the modern priest does not dress exactly like the primitive medicine-man, his language is more precise, and his manner is more sedate. But I have been asking all my life for someone to point to any substantial difference between the two. And up to the present no one has given me any enlightenment on that point. It is one of the tasks of science in all directions to detect fundamental identities beneath superficial differences. And the fundamental likenesses here are overwhelmingly plain. Is there any difference in the mental attitude of Dr. James or Bishop Barnes offering prayers to their God for this or that, and the savage praying to his god for victory in battle, good fortune in reaping the harvest, or recovery in sickness? The language matters not a jot; it is the mental attitude that is all important. What is the difference between the savage legends of the creation of man and woman, of animals and of the earth, and those told in the Christian's Bible of the Christian's God? What is the difference between the Christian story of a sacrificed saviour, whether he is eaten or not, and those similar stories that meet us in earlier religions? Can anyone doubt that we are dealing with substantially the same things whether they are in a Christian Church, a pagan temple, or in a forest clearing? Bishop Barnes arouses a storm because he says what has been quite well known for the better part of a century to all authorities on the subject, namely, that the Christian practice of god-eating is a piece of primitive savage magic. He disowns this, but retains other ceremonies and practices that are equally well known to have an identical origin. Dr. James speaks deprecatingly of those large numbers of people who carry about mascots, or believe in lucky stones, or in the healing power of images. But what real difference is there between these poorly developed specimens and those who still believe in "sacred" places, who sprinkle buildings with holy water, or dedicate them with prayer so that they become "sacred," and these others? The mentality in each case is identical. There is really no difference between believers in a Joss, whether the Joss be of the Christian variety, or of the kind that flourish among the head-hunters of the Solomon Islands. That is a point I have been trying for nearly forty years to make people realize. The true father of Christianity is the primitive savage. We perpetuate his belief in religious cannibalism in the Christian Eucharist. We pay homage to his ignorant speculations as to the origin of things in our belief in a God and in special creation. We admit the correctness of his fear of the supernatural in all our prayers and religious petitions. We assert he was right when he instituted the principle of taboo when a food is proscribed for religious reasons, or a day is set apart for the worship of the Lord. Common sense will no longer permit us to state these beliefs exactly as the savage stated them. Common decency will not permit us to practise as he practised. But, in the churches at least, there has not yet been developed sufficient of mental honesty to lead us to acknowledge the savage as our real religious teacher. It is he who is enthroned in every church in Christendom. Without him Christianity could never have existed.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Boasting Axe."

THE REV. DINSDALE T. YOUNG, D.D., is one of the best known Wesleyan Methodist ministers in this country. Unlike the generality of his brethren he is permitted throughout the years to exercise his ministry at the Central Hall, Westminster, where great crowds enjoy his presentation of the Christian Gospel. The present writer remembers him as a young man in the town of Gateshead, where an uncle of his was an Anglican Church clergyman, and how immensely popular he was after he began to preach. He now occupies the first rank among London preachers. Preaching at the Central Hall recently, his text was Isaiah x. 15: "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?" The sermon appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* of October 13. Dr. Young begins by calling attention to the fact that the Bible contains a considerable amount of humour. He ventures to exclaim, "What humour God often indulges in!" The peculiarity of God's humour, however, is that it "always has an evangelistic purpose." Curiously enough, in the text, as it stands, there is no trace whatever of any evangelism. Indeed, the fifteenth chapter of Isaiah treats of a great and terrible disaster which was about to fall upon Moab, but preaches no Gospel. Dr. Young sees in his text a humiliating satire:—

I don't wonder that somebody said God is the great Ironist of the universe . . . It is a dangerous thing to be sarcastic. Dr. Denney, so says one of his students, once said in his class in New College, Glasgow, "Thomas Carlyle once said sarcasm is a thing of the Devil," but after a pause he added, "I am afraid we must say it was Thomas Carlyle's mother tongue" . . . God wields the weapon in this question. It concerns every one of us. Shall the axe boast itself? Then who is it that hews with it? God.

So human beings are axes wielded by the Supreme Being. The preacher declares that "man is moulded by a superior force, individuals are wielded by a Divine power." To "mould" and to "wield" are verbs to which two fundamentally different meanings are attached. To mould signifies to fashion, model, or form into a particular shape, while to wield is to use, employ, direct, regulate. If man is moulded by a higher force he is not responsible for what he is and does. He is a machine, with neither head nor heart he can call his own, a mere puppet, controlled by another. Consequently he is wielded, utilized by some superior power. Whether we use the one verb or the other the result is practically the same. Human responsibility is non-existent.

Is it conceivable that a man dowered with commonsense can give expression to such a hideous doctrine? Listen:—

Does God hew with human axes? Yes, every young man here is an instrument capable of appalling destruction or capable of achieving splendid results. It is a homely figure. Is this the normal relation of man to God? Yes, it is. It is not the speculation of a scientist, or the guess of a philosopher, but the word of God. If we could all wake up to the fact that we are wielded by a superior power I tell you it would be a soul-saving fact. It would stimulate us to do all we can.

Here is a glaring inconsistency. Surely if we are both moulded and wielded by a higher power there can be no need whatever of soul-saving grace. The moulding and the wielding go on just the same whether we are conscious of the processes or not. It is true that there is abundant Biblical warrant for such teaching, and for the inconsistency as well. Dr. Young has the courage to express his convictions in no vague language. Here is an instance:—

The old divines were always talking about the sovereignty of God. It was a great fact to them that man was an instrument in God's hands, and none the less because a man does not know God and does not realize it. Such a sovereignty on God's part that man can do nothing but be moved by the ethereal Hand? It is true.

If it is true Christianity is utterly false. God simply wasted his time and energy when he sent his only begotten Son into the world to live and die and rise again to make possible the salvation of lost sinners. There are no sinners. Churches are absolutely useless. Preachers of the Gospel are deceivers of the people and sappers of their moral strength. Dr. Young assures us that every man is an instrument in God's hands, "capable of appalling destruction or capable of achieving splendid results," and God alone is responsible for both types. He rejects the evolutionary theory of man's origin, and yet he has no patience with those who are perpetually prating about the dignity and majesty of human nature. At this point he slips into another inconsistency, saying, "Some of us here can say we have surrendered forever all notions of dignity, and have nothing else to say seven times a day than 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" Then he denounces the braggart thus:—

Shall the axe boast itself? How many there are who are ignorant of the fact that they are wielded by a superior force. There are some here who will say, "Pah, we don't accept it." But, my fine gentleman or my fine lady, it is no less true because you reject it. Every one of us is an axe wielded by the mighty hand of God. Very often an unconscious instrument, yes; but the axe is wielded, unconscious or not. I beg you younger people not to remain ignorant of the fact.

Closely examined in the light of reason Dr. Young's view of life amounts to Fatalism. There is no such thing as liberty. Even the most wicked man alive to-day is not in the least degree blameworthy, for he is but an axe wielded by fate, nor does the best man on earth deserve praise, for he also is only an instrument. Dr. Young is radically disloyal to his theological theory, for before closing his discourse on the sovereignty of God he exclaims passionately:—

I wish God would use me to wound you to repentance, that you may accept the atoning Saviour and put your undivided trust in Him.

What does the atoning Saviour do for the man who accepts him? Does he deliver him from being an axe wielded by God the Father? The truth is that Dr. Young is labouring under a theological delusion, imagining that all who differ from him are entirely mistaken and following a false path; but he is candid enough to admit that his doctrine is saturated with insoluble mystery. He refers to a certain man who once wrote to the late Dr. Alexander Whyte of Edinburgh: "I would like to call on you and get you to make clear the question of the relation between the sovereignty of God and the free will of men." Dr. Whyte answered: "I should be delighted to see you, but please don't come on that errand." Dr. Young cries out: "My dear sir, you cannot explain it. If you try to solve it you will only be bruising your fists against a granite wall." Perfectly true, the mystery is insoluble because it does not exist. Both the sovereignty of God and the free will of man are theological illusions. Dr. Young is a magnificent dreamer. When intellectually asleep most people enjoy delightful dreams about Gods and angels, and immortal souls, but when they awake dream-life comes to an end and real-life begins, and God and angels and souls vanish as unsubstantial shadows.

J. T. LLOYD,

Two Busy B's.

"The man who feels that he has truth on his side must step firmly. Truth is not to be dallied with."
Goethe.

"In this world, if you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you may just as well not say it at all, since nobody will trouble themselves about anything which does not trouble them."—Bernard Shaw.

FEW men, even among the stalwart personalities of the heroic age of British Freethought, fought a more arduous battle against the buffetings of bigotry than Charles Bradlaugh. For eleven years he contested for a seat for Northampton in the House of Commons, followed by five years of struggle before he was allowed to occupy it. Only his courage, legal knowledge, and unquestionable honesty prevented his imprisonment for blasphemy. His colleague, G. W. Foote, spent a full year in prison. Bradlaugh died early because of the ill treatment he received, and the rescinding of the resolution of expulsion by the House of Commons was a tardy recognition by his opponents of the rare merits of a very remarkable personality.

The memory of his personal career must live while anyone has an eye for the dramatic and romantic in English history. The story of his meteoric rise from a common soldier to that of a statesman is like a leaf torn from the pages of Plutarch; the story of his untimely death as moving and as poignant as a tragedy of Sophocles. He will live with Cobbett and Gambetta, as one whom a vivid and forceful personality must always make interesting. And, remember, his struggle was greater than theirs, for he chose deliberately to swim against the stream of public opinion instead of with it. The fight he made in Parliament and outside, against an overwhelming majority of opponents was one of the bravest ever fought, and his triumph in the hour of death was as complete as that of Nelson on the deck of the shot-riven "Victory." And our lives are easier for his struggle. Thanks to the courage and devotion of Bradlaugh and his brave colleagues, heterodoxy is no longer a serious bar to the citizen, and priestly authority has been shorn of its dangers.

It is strange that people are only now beginning to see that Bradlaugh's attitude to religion was actually forced upon him. He had no wish to fight fifty thousand clergy and their myriads of supporters; he did not want to waste his time arraigning the ignorance of the Pentateuch and the barbarities associated with religion. But he realized clearly that priestcraft and kingcraft, altar and throne, supported one another. As a Republican he was opposed not only by the timid political placemen, but he incurred the hatred of the priests, who felt that their sacred authority was being challenged. As a Malthusian he found once more the thousands of priests ranged against him. If he seemed to those outside of his influence a mere iconoclast, he has in these matters only shared the hard fate of the world's greatest reformers.

In Bradlaugh's earlier days the Freethinkers were feebly led and fitfully inspired. Charles Southwell was more of an orator than a leader, and George Jacob Holyoake never really fulfilled the promise of his splendid early audacity. Bradlaugh was made of sterner stuff, and had something of Napoleon in him. First and last he was a man of action. His leadership made a rabble into an army. It was he, most ably seconded by men of real talent, doubtless, but, again, first and foremost, he who made the Freethought Party as we know it to-day.

In the making of a national party of reform he was most ably assisted by Annie Besant, who, for fifteen stormy years was in the very forefront of the battle for free speech and liberty. In those stormy days

women speakers were scarce on Freethought platforms, and Mrs. Besant was a charming lady and a rare and accomplished orator. Indeed, she was easily the foremost woman speaker in the country. Moreover, she was cultured to the finger-tips, though she carried her weight of learning gracefully. As a debater she had few rivals, and some of the foremost women speakers on the Temperance and other platforms seemed commonplace in comparison. Her golden voice has won a hearing for so many causes, but the fact emerges that her best and most lasting work was done for militant Freethought.

Those fifteen years were years of sacrifice. Coming from a sheltered home, Annie Besant had to endure almost a martyrdom. Her name became a hiss and a by-word. Lime was thrown at her; sticks broken over her. She was abused and threatened from one end of the country to the other, from Land's End to John 'o Groats. Jealousies and unkindness and bitterness of spirit are in most human labours; but religion, with its insincerities and intellectual meannesses, seems to hold a poison of its own which narrows the vision and blunts the very edge of principle.

It was nearly sixty years ago that Annie Besant discovered her gift of golden speech. She was then the young wife of a Church of England minister, the Rev. Frank Besant, brother to the famous novelist, who was instrumental in founding "The People's Palace" in East London. One day, being alone in the church, where she had gone to play the organ, the idea seized her of mounting the pulpit and delivering an address to the empty benches, "I knew of a verity," she wrote afterwards, "that the gift of speech was mine, and that, if ever—and then it seemed so impossible—if ever the chance came to me of public work, this power of melodious utterance should at least win hearing of any message I had to bring."

These two gifted persons did pioneer work in that great battle-field of Humanity, whose soldiers fight not to shed blood, but to dry up tears; not to murder their fellow men, but to raise them up to a nobler life. They worked, not for themselves, but for succeeding generations, and in doing so they made for themselves imperishable names in their country's history.

MIMNERMUS.

THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW.

"THE European talks of progress," said Disraeli, "because by the aid of a few scientific discoveries he has established a society which has mistaken comfort for civilization."

That is the sneer of a cynical philosopher, but there is some truth in it. None of these things which the scientists foreshadow as the promise of the future will assure the happiness of man. Many of them may lead to frightful dangers—freaks, and monstrosities from surgical laboratories, a machine-like system of life enslaving the workers, powers put into the hands of the human race for its own destruction. Unless the mentality and morality of men and women reach higher standards so that they can control this modern science and use it for good instead of evil, then the Day after To-morrow may come with new miseries rather than with wonder-working gifts.

Is the human mind itself capable of an evolution quick enough to adapt itself to all this new knowledge? Is the mind of man advancing to attain mastery of its own instruments? Everything depends on that, for otherwise we ourselves may be mastered by the monstrous forces that have been unleashed in the secret places of science and our progress will be towards evil, and very swiftly. The world is waiting for a spiritual understanding of these material powers, and cannot afford to wait very long.—Sir Phillip Gibbs (in Nash's Magazine).

Conan Doyle on Houdini.

THE articles in the Strand Magazine upon Houdini, written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, throw a flood of light upon the methods adopted to keep the Religion of Spiritualism before the public. When a religion has to find its support in the mysteries of a Music Hall illusionist, it must be a very entertaining creed, to say the least. As is well known, the name of Houdini came before the public in connexion with what was called a Handcuff King show, in which he permitted himself to be fastened in handcuffs or manacles, then he retired behind some curtains, and within a few moments he appeared before the audience freed from his fetters. He was in the habit of concluding his act by using a box, into which he was placed, the box was fastened with locks, and roped, his wife drew the curtains, covering the box from view, and within a few seconds the curtains were drawn back by Houdini, and when the box was opened his wife was found inside. In order to obtain publicity he sometimes performed stunts outside the theatre, such as diving into a river heavily fettered, or, fastened in a strait jacket and suspended upside down, he would succeed in releasing himself in full view of the assembled crowd.

In the later years of his life Houdini utilized the stage for the usual type of conjuring performance, and then in a second part gave an exposure of fake or fraudulent mediumship, bringing down upon his head the most virulent abuse from people associated with the Spiritualistic fraternity.

Sir Conan Doyle knew Houdini, and on the basis of that knowledge, seeks now to prove that Houdini was really a medium himself, and that his stage performances were in reality exhibitions of genuine mediumship, and not, as Houdini stated, tricks and illusions obtained by perfectly simple and natural subterfuges. Conan Doyle opens his effort by saying: "Who was the greatest medium-baiter of modern times? Undoubtedly Houdini. Who was the greatest physical medium of modern times? There are some of us who are inclined to give the same answer." Then follows an amazing string of stories in an endeavour to prove this ridiculous opinion, and at times Sir Arthur drops to a very low level of discussion in order to make his case against the dead magician. If the relatives of Houdini have among them anyone capable of using the pen, no doubt more will be heard about these attacks of Conan Doyle. It would be interesting to hear what Houdini's widow has to say, because she more than any one else knew the way in which the escapes were made, having assisted Houdini in his most critical moments. She could tell the story, for example, of that great scene at the London Hippodrome, knowing full well that no spirit hand helped in that desperate instance.

We are often told about the honesty of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in his pen service to the cause of Spiritualism, but the word honesty has a very elastic meaning in those circles, seemingly.

One instance of this is shown in Sir Arthur's account of the "Margery" case, he says:—

He (Houdini) had brought with him an absurd box, which was secured in front by no fewer than eight padlocks . . . The forces behind Margery showed what they thought of his contraption by bursting the whole front open the moment Margery was fastened into it.

The readers of the *Strand Magazine* have been imposed upon, as they can easily see by turning to Malcolm Bird's book on this case, page 429: "the entire top of Margery's cage was found open, the diagonal doors having been thrown back. Houdini

at once stated that anybody sitting in it could thus throw it open with the shoulders." Then on page 431, Mr. Bird says: "Following this seance, the committee for once insisted on a course of action, demanding that the top of the medium's cage be properly secured. Next morning Houdini and Collins added padlocks and staples to the cage doors . . ." There is no report of the cage doors bursting open after this! Why has Sir Conan Doyle given such an obviously incorrect report? It is doubtful whether the box ever did have more than six padlocks on at the finish. Why should Sir Arthur start it off with eight? This kind of writing does not make Houdini look absurd in his beliefs as to the fraud of Spiritualism.

In a previous issue of the *Freethinker*, Conan Doyle made a reply to the present writer on the case of Julius Zanzig. In that reply the point was avoided and false issues raised. The point that mattered was that Sir Arthur claimed Zanzig as a genuine Psychic, but that Zanzig himself denied such a claim, and that so far from his show being possible only to his wife and himself, he was selling his method of Mind Reading, his "Original System" which has baffled Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, the Society of Psychical Research, and others all over the world." Sir Arthur's reply to this was to say, that conjurers do not print books to teach the public the true secrets of their own mysteries, and that he possessed the codes himself. But that Mrs. Zanzig once told him that, above the codes, they used telepathy. Julius Zanzig has always denied that they accomplished their effects of so-called mind reading by any other than perfectly simple and natural methods. Whether conjurers tell the public about their illusions in books has nothing to do with the point at issue. He says that since the Davenports were driven from the stage on account of their admission that their results were truly mediumistic, no member of the conjuring fraternity will make such a claim, whether he be psychic or not.

So we are to believe that Spirits are prepared to work wonders obligingly for the music hall performer twice nightly, and perhaps on matinees! Could anything be more absurd?

And we are to believe that they are afraid to let the public into their secret, otherwise the audiences would break up the show!

Houdini, who has gone to his grave, need never have gone behind curtains when he had his wrists fastened, he need never have had his box hidden from view, but he could have let the audience see the Spirits at work releasing him according to Sir Arthur. And this is 1927!

HENRY SARA.

CONVENTIONS.

A WOMEN'S weekly recently asked several well-known people the following questions:—

What are the uses of convention? Which, if any, established convention do you most dislike? Which has done most harm? Which has done most good? Are women more conventional than men? Has convention hindered the progress of women?

To these the Hon. Bertrand Russell replied:—

I consider that the uses of convention are that they enable people to endure each other. The convention which has done most harm is that of so-called Godliness, while most good has been achieved by the convention of cleanliness. I should say that women have been, and are, more conventional than men, except the young women who are less so. Some of the established conventions will be abolished as the result of further co-education. In the training of children the conventions of most value are cleanliness and some manners. The most irksome convention to me personally is dressing for dinner. In reply to the last question, "Has convention hindered the progress of women?" I say decidedly: "Yes."

Drama and Dramatists.

"You have a poor bag on this journey," said the superior critic who sits at your elbow as you write. "Be cheerful," we replied, "even the weather has tried to make up for its bad conduct by giving us sunsets to dream about." And we paid our five francs and went into the travelling booth that had fixed its quarters next to the village church—another theatrical concern. Gounod's opera "Mireille" was billed, and like nearly everything French, it was late in starting. This gave us an opportunity to look round. Our feet were on the earth, and we sat on planks. Fishermen with their wives and children, visitors, the village band, young lads and girls were there, and at last, after repeated cries of *La Musique! La Musique!* the feeble piano gave the overture, the stationmaster's bell rang, and the curtain went up. There was, with the audience, a simple and cheerful enjoyment of the performance, hearty laughter, and generous applause for the singers. The booth was packed, and at times the wind threatened to carry away the canvas roof. Like children with greedy ears, they were interested in the telling of a story, and as the village exchequer is suffering from financial cramp in respect of providing drains, a place like Covent Garden is a thing of the remote future. The next day, we made a careful survey of what we had romantically encountered in the novel *Captain Fracasse*. The young man who was the manager was painting on the announcement board, "La Fille de Madame Angot," the hero of last night was holding a skewbald horse by the tail, and washing its legs. Under one of the caravans, the space between the bottom and the ground was wired in, and poultry, together with a solitary turkey (perhaps for Christmas) were busy eating lettuce leaves. The heroine was washing a pair of stockings in a bucket. "They order things better in France," wrote Sterne; perhaps he was right. Here at least was one company that toured the country and did not have to part up with its earnings to landlords, sub-landlords, lessees, owners of the bar, advertising rights, royalties, and all the thousand and one impediments that seem determined to choke enterprise and kill the muse. You will thank us for recommending *Captain Fracasse* in the Lotus Library; it is one of the few novels that will stand re-reading. There you will find the account of the capture of a gander by one of the actors for the company on the verge of starvation; you will also find that the story beats near to the human heart, and it was written by that modern incomparable pagan Théophile Gautier.

As you, my readers, are now familiar with the play of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, it will not be necessary for me to tell how, before the play started, the audience beguiled the time with fencing, drinking, dice-throwing, cards and flirting. It will be superfluous for me to tell you also, of the man who said, "By coming early, one can eat in comfort." Fortified with all the rules of the drama from Aristotle down to Tom Mix, we surged from west to south-east to the Elephant and Castle. There is a sledge-hammer and anvil ring, an assonance, a dissonance, a concatenation and symmetrical rhythm, moving, stirring and enthralling in the words "Maria Martin or the Murder in the Red Barn." And the inquisitive spirit, working for your delight, said, "go and see what it's all about." The house was full of good natured people; when we arrived, three of the audience very considerably moved to the end seats so that their journeys for refreshment would not interfere with our enjoyment. As the story in the first act unfolded, a man behind repeated *sotto voce* the words of the speakers, so that we had twice our value for money. The old dramatist who strung this story together knew the value of action; when knives and pistols were flourished we had not long to wait before Ishmael was killed, dying with a slogan on his lips; "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, blood for blood." As William Corder made his entrance, one of the audience, in order that there should be no mistake, warned his friend by saying, "That's the ——— villain"—presumably so that the doubtful one should get his hate spot on the right character. When the curtain descended there were

many comings and goings, much laughter, much discussion, and much frankness in interchange of views. In the second act, the broad humour, broader than the Old and New Kent Roads together, sent the spirit of laughter reeling and tipping among the dark recesses of the theatre, and, at one sally about the wisdom of getting married on December 21st., one member near to us said excitedly, "Blimey, did you hear what he said?" There was also much interest displayed in getting Maria Martin properly focussed; she looked very pretty when dressed as a boy, about to make her journey to the Red Barn. "Swankpot" ejaculated one woman near to us, as the infamous Corder told her false tales of love, and when he declaimed, "A woman will always believe anything a man tells her," the laughter was seismic. Act three, in the famous interview between the Bow Street Runner and Corder, again moved the woman who could see through the villain. The forerunner of detectives in a very searching examination at last forces the murderer to give himself away. "Got yer!" said the voice in the dark behind me. Another member—perhaps the dress was responsible, made the slight mistake of thinking that the chaplain in the prison scene was Thomas Martin's wife. When the plum of the play arrived (the hanging) excitement was intense, and as William Corder took his journey downwards, after being told that he was going the other way, all the ladies said, "Oh," as explosively as the boy who sold ices. Everybody was happy and satisfied, and this story, by its reception, showed that the audience was thoroughly acquainted with the rudiments of right and wrong. Amidst applause, the villain declared, "There is no hell other than a guilty conscience." The spirit of Spurgeon, whose tabernacle is near by, must have realised the failure of his life's work in preaching about a place where there were no ices. That wonderful old song, "Do not trust him, gentle maiden," was improvised as music, and the popular tunes by the orchestra between the acts, set many well-shod feet keeping time. To vary the old saying, that if you don't see what you want, ask for it, we might say, if you can't find anything in the West End, go to the Elephant and Castle. Our search was well rewarded. Whilst *Œdipus complex*, neatly disguised pornography, and problem plays may have a certain appeal among a certain class, Maria Martin (you know the other part) has a very clear standard of right and wrong that gets there even if all the audience cannot wear blazers with medieval engravings. There was only one thing needed to make a perfect evening; at critical moments there were sounds of disturbed receptacles on the floor, and these should be fitted with domes of silence, until the day is ushered in when beer can be supplied in indiarubber bottles.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Acid Drops.

There was a "scene" in St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday last. The preacher for that day was Bishop Barnes, and before he commenced his sermon Canon Bullock-Webster arose, marched solemnly to the front of the altar and denounced Bishop Barnes in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost for his false and heretical teaching. Canon Bullock-Webster was photographed by the daily papers, surrounded by a crowd of his supporters, and if the portraits are true copies of the originals, one is not surprised at their believing as they do. The Canon called upon the Bishop of London to inhibit Bishop Barnes from preaching, and upon the Archbishop of Canterbury to cast him out of the Church. We have not the slightest doubt but that the Bishop of London would like to inhibit Bishop Barnes speaking, if he could; he belongs to that same type of Stone Age man as does Canon Bullock-Webster, but he has not the power to prevent anyone preaching in the Cathedral. And in any heresy case the Church would stand to lose far more than it gained. It might succeed in driving Bishop Barnes and scores of other parsons into complete outspokenness. And where would the churches be if the unwise persecution of one or two drove a number into complete honesty of speech?

This quarrel between the men of the Stone Age and their immediate successors is very amusing to outsiders, but they must really not expect the stranger without the gate to take them seriously. The only serious aspect of the matter is that of men who take the money of the Church, who assume the position and power of a Christian medicine-man, and then strive to see by what method they can twist and turn the "sacred" writings into meaning something they never have meant and by no honest method can mean. Canon Bullock-Webster is a much less cultured man than either Dean Inge or Bishop Barnes, but we are of opinion that he is intellectually the more honest. Very many men, who, when they discovered they no longer believed, left the Church altogether. Bishop Barnes and Dean Inge remain inside. We do not wonder that the more stupid canons and bishops think it a scandal and insist on their removal. We agree with them that these men have no proper place in the Church. The Church is not the place for men with intelligence. We may deal with Bishop Barnes' sermon next week.

We are indebted to the *Manchester Guardian* for a summary of an article in an American magazine on the religion of George Bernard Shaw. The article claims to be the result of an interview, and for the sake of Mr. Shaw's reputation for intelligence, we hope that the clotted nonsense cited as coming from him belongs to his interviewer. Thus:—

Evolution is a mystical process. Darwinism a mechanical process that destroyed religion, but gave us nothing in its place . . . It engulfed Europe yesterday in the world-war and its tide of woes . . . Natural Selection must have played an immense part in adapting life to our planet, but it is creative evolution that adapts the planet to our continual aspiration to greater knowledge and greater power.

They really do this kind of thing much better in the pulpit, and Mr. Shaw would be advised to leave it there. Only one would dearly like to have put into definite language precisely what is meant by creative evolution shaping the planet to human capacity? It sounds something like the divine providence that causes death to come at the end of life instead of in the middle of it. As to Darwinism being responsible for the last war, if Mr. Shaw really said that, one can only gently suggest that a few lessons on the implications of Darwinism, with a reminder that "fitness" to survive has its form determined by the form and the conditions of animal existence would not be out of place.

There has been an outbreak of head-hunting in the Solomon Islands, and we expect that our delightful missionaries will discover in this a fresh reason for raising funds to carry the gospel there. What they will not inform the public is that this form of sport is entirely religious in origin and in aim. Mr. Jack McLaren, the novelist, who knows the islands well, explained to an *Evening News* representative that the outbreak was due to the belief that the souls of the dead were crying out for vengeance. He also calls attention to the well-known fact that in eating their enemies the natives believe that the strength and whatever desirable qualities the dead man had passes into the eater. We commend this to Bishop Barnes and the Christian primitives who are quarrelling over the sacrament, that there is here the origin and the real meaning of the Christian sacrament. The primitive God is made by ceremoniously killing a man, and when the god is eaten his divine qualities pass into the man who eats him. He becomes literally at one with the eaten deity. The Christian eating the bread and drinking the wine as the body and blood of Jesus Christ is only carrying on this form of primitive religious cannibalism. The Christian ought to look with kindly eyes on these Solomon Island head-hunters. They are his real spiritual brethren. But for them and their kind he would not now be attending a Christian Church and quarrelling over whether the bread is transformed into the flesh of Jesus or not. Let us give honour where honour is due.

A weekly paper asks:—

Does Croydon's vicar who headed the successful opposition against Sunday Kinemas think he has done any good to the numerous couples who will still be forced to walk the streets? There are many worse pastimes than looking at pictures.

Our contemporary is in error if it fancies the vicar is out to do good to the Sunday street walkers. What concerns him is that no harm shall be done to church collections. Most parsons are anxious to prevent an evil of that sort.

The New Prayer-Book is monstrous and abnormal, says the Rev. Arthur Gould, late vicar of Huttercroft. Nothing so complicated has ever been seen. He adds: "I have already discovered over 100 different ways of celebrating the Lord's Supper—all authorized by the new Book." As the worthy revisers of the Prayer-Book have been working hard for years to achieve just such result, in order to prevent a split in the Church, one would have thought Mr. Gould might have given them a word of commendation. We are afraid the reverend gentleman doesn't understand ecclesiastical politics and manoeuvres.

Sunday schools have been the nursery of character, declares Mr. D. R. Grenfell, J.P., M.P. It would be more accurate to say that the Sunday schools have produced the nursery type of character.

New Zealand, says a writer, is still a country where religious books are in considerable demand, as compared with Australia, where such books have no sale at all. This is no doubt due, we learn, to the Presbyterian element in New Zealand. Australians are to be congratulated on their possessing an intelligent notion of what is and is not worth reading, though we suspect Gipsy Smith did not appreciate it during his recent tour in Australia.

What can God do with his fools? was the question the Rev. Dr. Archibald Black attempted to answer in a recent sermon. God alone knows what he can do with them. We know what he does with them. He allows his priests to exploit them from the cradle to the grave.

In the *American Congregationalist* a layman journalist discusses "The Church and Newspaper Publicity." The writer has a bright touch, as per sample:—

The gladdest tidings that ever were proclaimed to the world came by Angelic news heralds . . . The Church believes in ringing bells, but not in blowing its own horns.

If he cannot hear the Churches blowing their own horns he should consult an ear specialist. They get more free publicity than does any other industry in the world.

The Rev. E. E. J. Martin, of St. James', Hatcham, objects to greyhound racing because it is a gold-mine for the bookmakers. Live and let live, Mr. Martin! In a way, the Churches too run a sort of bookie business. Habitual church-goers each week back that clever dog, Salvation (by Jesus, out of Hell-fire) for a place. And the parsonic bookies always win. Anyway, the backers never see their money back, and there is never any winnings forthcoming. So, obviously, the pastime is a gold-mine for the parsons. Live and let live, Mr. Martin!

Canon H. Bickersteth Ottley would like to see all Sunday labour abolished, except labour of love and necessity. He considers it an insult to any man or woman, whether scientist or barmaid, to be asked to work seven days a week. The Canon has, of course, a lofty altruistic motive in opposing Sunday labour. To suggest that he is interested in safeguarding ecclesiastical industry would be doing him a grave injustice, because everyone knows that canons and bishops have done more than anyone else to reduce hours of labour and to ensure for each worker one free day in seven.

A pious scribe says a leading Belfast journalist told him that in no place in the world does the Press pay so much attention to religion as in Belfast. From which one may infer that in no place in the world is it harder to get a fair hearing for the other side's case.

Why is it a fact, asks the Bishop of Winchester, that God "cuts no ice" nowadays? Hasn't his lordship noticed that, generally speaking, his fellow-countrymen are better educated and more intelligent, and that consequently belief in bogeys (big and little) has gone out of fashion?

At the unveiling of a war memorial in the Great Northern London Cemetery, New Southgate, the Assistant-Bishop of St. Albans, in cope and mitre, attended. The *English Churchman* objects to the cope and mitre, saying: "We are confident that the great majority of the men who laid down their lives for their country would have no sympathy with the ecclesiastical system associated with the mitre." It seems not to have occurred to an outraged contemporary that the "great majority" would have no sympathy with the Christian creed and its mumbo-jumbo experts, mitre or no mitre. This being the fact, a Christian ceremony of any kind is a disgusting piece of impudence. But we don't expect our contemporary would admit that. Its sensibility has been dulled by a Christian training.

Mr. J. C. Meggitt, J.P., Chairman of the Congregational Union, must be one of those resolute souls who refuse to read newspapers. Otherwise he might know that various journalistic seers have foretold the imminent outbreak of a religious revival. Or maybe he does not believe the prophets. For he had a lugubrious tale to unfold recently at Newcastle. He sees the nation drifting away from the things that matter. He sees the people as a whole losing interest in "vital things" which have made our country great (N.B.—Sabbath observance). He notes the Bible neglected, the Sabbath Day dishonoured, the young people missing the great advantage of religious education, and he asks: Whither are we bound? What will be the condition of our country if the people lose their sense of the presence of God? Mr. Meggitt may console himself with the thought that things are never so bad as they seem, and that so long as they don't become as bad as they were in the Ages of Faith, all will be well.

There is no accounting for the stubbornness of the sceptical mind. A Church has just been erected at Jerusalem which, says the daily press, is brushed by the leaves of an ancient olive tree, under whose branches Jesus prayed. There are or have been actually in existence pieces of the swaddling cloth in which he was wrapped as a baby, a bottleful of the tears he shed when he was crying over Jerusalem, the cup from which he drank at the last supper, a bottle of the darkness which spread over the earth when he was crucified, the seamless robe which he wore in his daily walks, plenty of pieces of the cross on which he was executed, etc., etc. And how could any of these things have existed if, as some assert, he never existed? If people will not believe, no evidence that could be produced would convince them. And how could anyone doubt if he stood by the very tree under which Jesus prayed? It is possible to even stand on the very spot on which Jesus stood when he drove the devils out of a man and permitted them to take refuge in some pigs. What could one ask for more?

Mr. Austin Hopkinson, M.P., has written a book with the dead language title of *Religio Militis*. A notice of it in a newspaper reads as follows:—

Mr. Hopkinson maintains that the youth of to-day are not scoffers at religion, but are earnest seekers after truth.

Now the writer of this ought to be presented with a copy of *Materialism Re-Stated*, to enable him to make the simple discovery that things that are different are not the same. God save the mules who lead public opinion, which means that they cannot be.

It is very easy to tell a lie, says Mr. Arthur Mee, and a lie with a good start will go round the world, running on sometimes for hundreds of years, while the less interesting correction of its falseness toils after it in vain. It always does harm on its journey. In the end it is run down and the lie may struggle, squeal, and protest, but when caught it is done with. It is up against something stronger than itself. It is up against history. And the facts of history will not budge. There they stand, and the more closely they are examined the harder they are found to be. What Mr. Mee says explains why Christian lies about well-known Freethinkers and Atheism have so long a life. Eventually, of course, truth catches up with them, and they die. But there are still plenty of Christians about in the world to start fresh lies a-journeing. Lying for the Glory of God is as old as religion.

The widow of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has been asked by a reporter whether she thought the people of London harder to win for Christ in these days than forty years ago. Mrs. Hughes said it was difficult to say; conditions have absolutely changed. She thinks, however, that:—

There is a great willingness to hear about Christ. But it is no use preaching to the people in the language of a bygone day. The dialect of theology, which you and I were brought up in and understood, is meaningless to the present generation. I think the religious appeals my husband made would not have the same effect to-day. There is little sense of sin, or of the need of repentance among the young people. Belief in Hell is absolutely gone. But I believe they are willing and ready and even anxious to be told how to make their lives better, if preachers will appeal to them in a direct, frank fashion and in a broad human spirit.

This may be interpreted thus: As the old fears are gone and the soil is not suitable to their cultivation, keep dogmas out of sight and dish up the pallid Christian platitudes. No doubt the game will pay with people brought up in a Christian atmosphere. But it won't "win for Christ" the multitudes outside Church influence who have rejected the parson's claim to be their tutor.

The Rev. "Dick" Sheppard, formerly of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, says: "All men should think out their Christianity for themselves, and not accept it on authority." This inciting people to ignore ecclesiastical authority seems a rather dangerous line for a paid servant of the Church to take. The "thinker-out" may be encouraged to reject the authoritative statement that the Bible is "God's Word" or "divinely inspired," and that priests are divinely appointed to guide mankind. And if that should happen, the thinker-out instead of thinking out his Christianity may think himself out of Christianity.

Mr. Sheppard believes that the great days of the Christian religion have arrived, and that mankind is now recognizing as never before its need for the saving power of a great religion. There's no possible doubt whatever about that. And all this parsonic moaning about diminishing church-attendance and the alleged widespread indifference to religion puzzles us greatly, since Mr. Sheppard's statement is so obviously based on fact. The reverend gentleman also believes that the religion of Jesus is capable of "turning the world upside down." Having read some Christian history, we feel bound to agree. But unfortunately we happen to be obsessed by an absurd notion that the world would get along better rightside up. Upside-down principles are sound enough for bats, but human beings can dispense with such guidance.

Signor Mussolini declares he is now "living on his nerves." This may account for his swashbuckling pronouncements. He should be seeking a cure, and not governing (or misgoverning) an excitable nation.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

WE are making headway with this Fund although but slowly. But we would remind all concerned that there is but a few weeks to run if we are to secure the £1,615 promised. Our getting that depends upon another £730 being subscribed, and we have but ten weeks in which that is to be done. A number of those who have already contributed have promised to send again, and we deeply appreciate their resolve to do what they can to bring the biggest thing ever attempted in the history of Freethought journalism to a successful issue. But there are the very large number of *Freethinker* readers who have not yet done anything at all, and I am addressing myself specially to them. We are doing our share of the work at this end, and perhaps more than our share, but we are content if others will do what they can and what they ought to do. There is a chance for everyone, big and little, to do something towards giving the Freethought Movement an endowed newspaper.

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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.

E. A. WHITE.—Dr. Bernard Hart's *Psychology of Insanity* is quite a good introduction to the study of Psycho-analysis. But the use made of the illustration is not one that would be endorsed by the author of it. Applied generally, it is an obvious and a glaring absurdity. But to a good Christian absurdity is a recommendation rather than a drawback.

P. FREER.—Name of sender omitted from letter, but we hope this will meet his eye. First letter was not received, but are now sending papers to address given.

J. RICHARDS.—Very pleased to hear from you, it recalls the old days on Tyneside. Trust things are going well with you. We are keeping well, and mean to remain so, for fear our Christian friends would grieve.

Mr. W. MANN writes to say that he made no promise to write on Psycho-analysis. The correspondent is probably confusing this with a promise to write on Relativity.

R. BELL.—Very pleased to hear of the work of the Chester-le-Street Branch and of the capability of its officials.

H. B. FOSTER AND OTHERS.—Thanks for promise to send again. We appreciate the small contributions as much as the large ones. It is the spirit of giving that one appreciates.

F. EVANS.—We really cannot see anything "painful" in the paragraph to which you refer. After all, this is the *Freethinker*, and it has always been its policy for contributors to write as they feel and as they think, and its readers have always been used to their doing so. That some readers disagree with what is written, goes without saying. They would not be intelligent readers of the paper if they did not. But we have no intention of ever writing, or encouraging others to write, with an eye on some possible reader who may not agree with what is published. There is far too much of that kind of thing going on.

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

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

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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.

Chorlton Town Hall was full both afternoon and evening on Sunday last, to listen to two lectures from Mr. Cohen. The Branch had worked hard to make the meetings successful, and for their sake we were glad to see so pleasing a result. The afternoon meeting was the largest ever held in Manchester for many years, and in the evening there were many standing. Mr. Rosetti, the President of the Branch, occupied the chair in the afternoon; and Mr. F. B. Monks, the Secretary, in the evening. Both made strong appeals for members, and for support generally, and, we hope, with good results. The collections were, we believe, quite satisfactory.

We were wrong last week in stating that Mr. J. M. Robertson would lecture in the same hall to-day (October 23). His visit is fixed for October 30—Sunday next. Manchester friends will please note.

Next Sunday Mr. Cohen will visit Glasgow, and will lecture in the City Hall, morning and evening. The usual good meetings are expected.

To-day (October 23) Mr. F. Mann will pay his first visit to Birmingham. He will lecture in the Bristol Street Council Schools, at 7 p.m., on "The Dishonesty of Bishop Barnes."

In the *Rationalist*, the official organ of the Rationalist Association of Australia Limited, there is a full page

review of Mr. Walter Mann's little book on *Christianity in China*. The reviewer says: "In compact style, the book surveys a wide field. It is an excellent little volume. We trust that many thousands of copies will circulate throughout Australia."

The *Manchester City News* has a very appreciative notice of Mr. Cohen's new work *Materialism Re-Stated*. It says, "Here we have the avowed Secularist stating his case clearly, concisely, and uncompromisingly; and whether we agree or disagree with him we are impressed by his sincerity, his logical consistency, and his fearlessness. He is the scientist who has scant patience with theology, and none with superstition." We confess to being unable to draw any sharp distinction between the two, but we let the statement go with a recognition of its good will. And we can add that Mr. Cohen is more than pleased that his efforts to state the case for Materialism in a clear and scientific manner should have met with so general approval.

How I Became a Freethinker.

AN EVOLUTION.

HAVING been invited by our worthy Editor to give an epitome of my journey from the narrow path of religious superstition (which has been said to lead to the celestial mansions) to the broad and open road of intellectual freedom, I propose beginning with a few reminiscences showing the kind of atmosphere with which I was surrounded, and from which I drew my spiritual nourishment from the age of five years onwards.

My earliest impressions were connected with a type of religion of the sternest brand, to wit—The Particular Baptists; and I have a lively recollection of being taken to the "little Bethel" on Sunday mornings by my maternal grandfather.

The saints (who had all got booked seats for the Kingdom of Heaven) only numbered about thirty, and they were a dour assembly.

Praise to the Lord on musical instruments was not allowed; it was one of the Devil's little decoys to deceive the unwary. There were long prayers, longer sermons, and terribly long hymns of ten or a dozen verses, which were each read by the parson before being sung. The tune was started by a little man with a voice out of all proportion to his stature.

Now, how could a little boy stand all this torture and not be guilty of a bit of devilment?

It occurred during those awful prayers. At this part of the ceremony the congregation were accustomed to turn round and kneel upon the seats of the pews, and while the parson was talking to the Almighty, with as much confidence as to his next door neighbour, the writer was engaged in scraping little portions of paint from the back of the pew, rolling it into minute pellets and flicking them at the broadcloth on the backs of the prayerful. I am afraid I was already one of those lost souls which the parson told his flock were predestined before the foundation of the world to everlasting fire and brimstone. During these performances I must have forgotten the terrible one-eyed monster with a huge beard, whose gaze (so I was told by a loving relative) was fixed on naughty boys. If this fall from grace had been witnessed by the dear old lady who used to pat me on the head and slip a threepenny piece into my depraved hand, saying what a good boy I had been in chapel, I am afraid there would have been a different story to relate.

After a year or so the source of my spiritual nourishment was transferred to a Primitive Methodist Chapel. An accident to a limb, the results of which extended over all the years of boyhood and

youth, prevented the usual long journey to the "one and only gate of heaven."

I have a vivid recollection while attending the ministrations of this section of the Lord's army of hearing a sermon by a real "ranter," as the term went in those days for Primitive Methodists, and I can honestly say that this gentleman fully maintained the reputation which these gospel bangers had earned for shouting, raving, and wild gesticulations.

The subject of his discourse was calculated to bring him to white heat—and it did. Darwin's *Origin of Species* had just been published, and I may say that only those who can look back for fifty odd years can appreciate the amount of venom and hatred belched forth from the pulpits of this land against one of the greatest men who ever lived.

This dimpled darling of the Lord's vineyard consigned Darwin and all his works to hell-fire, and ended by giving the Bible a mighty thump with closed fist, exclaiming: "If Darwin wants a monkey for his grandfather, let him have it so; all liars shall have their portion in the lake of fire which burneth for ever and ever." When he sat down I can distinctly remember seeing the white handkerchief being used again and again to mop the godly perspiration from the angelic face. And to-day, we have a leading bishop of the Church placing Darwin before Genesis, and so scrapping the whole Pauline scheme of Redemption. Yes; as Galileo so steadfastly asserted, "It still moves."

And the Sundays in those days! No young person of the present time could possibly imagine the horror of them. One of the greatest crimes I ever committed (according to parental judgment) was taking a walk in the park one gorgeous summer's morning instead of going to the house of God.

Shall I ever forget the "scene" that followed? Never! A dinner just prepared was totally neglected while maternal hysterics were in full swing, and while the criminal received a paternal lecture on the heinous desecration of the Lord's Day. For some weeks afterwards I experienced to the full what "our Lord" meant when he said: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." Inwardly, I cursed such a creed.

About this time I narrowly escaped becoming a parson. It is strange irony that to-day I am a full-blown Freethinker, notwithstanding the urgent paternal appeals to the Almighty, that I may become a "minister of the Gospel." A book written by the great John Angell James of those days, and entitled the *Young Christian*, was placed into my hands with implicit instructions to read some portions *on my knees*, a difficult business, seeing that only one was in action. It was pointed out to me that this performance was absolutely necessary, until I felt "a conviction of Sin," which must take place before I could become "a child of God." It was no use. I got fed up waiting for this manifestation of the Holy Ghost, and began to take a deep interest in the natural and far more important things appertaining to this world.

This parson business fell through, but I was "kept to my cake and milk." To go to a theatre was heading straight to the devil: Cards were an invention of the same person: and train riding or any other means of locomotion on Sunday was taboo. Reading on the same day was restricted to Spurgeon's Sermons, *Pilgrim's Progress*, the Bible, or something equally jolly.

However, the beginning of my deliverance from the intolerable yoke imposed upon me by this accursed creed was not far away. A carpenter came to do some repairs in my house, and in the course of

conversation, it turned out that he was a Christadelphian. The controversial powers of this gentleman were such that Hell was soon "dismissed with costs"; and the harps and golden streets of the other place were treated as figments of the imagination. Like *Oliver Twist*, I asked for more and got it in the form of a book, entitled *Christendom Astray*. The perusal of this orthodox destroying volume proved the beginning of the end to a creed which had hitherto cursed my life. It proved to me historically the various channels through which Christianity had passed before receiving the seal of authority from which there was no appeal. But to-day I marvel that these people can go so far in their rejection of superstitions mentioned above, and then put the blinkers on when it comes to such mythological nonsense as a Virgin Birth, Resurrection and Ascension. However, I thank that Christadelphian to-day, in that he caused me to think; and, as Mr. Cohen has so frequently said, there is hope for one who does.

The paternal mind was greatly perturbed over my study of the book mentioned, and at once banned it as an infidel production, which indeed it was to the orthodox creed.

Later on I joined the Wesleyan body, and one Sunday morning heard a memorable sermon by a superintendent minister on the "Golden Rule." And now came my second step towards liberty of thought. This good man told the congregation that Jesus did not coin those words: "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you," but that Confucius and other great men had said the same thing hundreds of years before Christ. More mind food for me. And now, that predestination theory seemed to be at work with a vengeance, but not for the salvation of my immortal soul, for about this time there was a lively discussion proceeding in the correspondence columns of the *Birmingham Mail* on religion, and like most arguments on the topic God had to play his part in it. The Rationalist advised his opponent to read Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God*. Whether he did so or not I am unable to say, but the writer lost no time in getting a copy, the perusal of which proved a veritable searchlight in eliminating the hoary old fables known as Gospel Truth.

This book was quickly followed by others—*Modern Science and Modern Thought*, and *Supernatural Religion*, by Walter Cassels, a veritable bombshell, which shatters all claims for inspiration of the Gospel records. Even at this stage on the road to Freethought I was still attending the Wesleyan Chapel, but with a growing feeling of hypocrisy. How could I continue to participate in a service which I knew to be a lie from its foundation? I then severed my connexion with the Christian Religion finally. It only remains to say, that from that time until the present (a period of fifteen years) I have lost no opportunity in doing all I can to preach the gospel of "The Best of Causes"; for I am more convinced every day I live that there is "no darkness but ignorance," so let us have the truth though the heavens fall.

My complete emancipation from the superstitions of the Christian Religion was attained when I brought to each dogma the acid test: Is this true? *Man made his gods, and he will destroy them.*

"Glory to man in the highest,
For man is the master of things."

JOHN BREESE.

NOTE.—These notes are not complete without including my introduction to the good old *Freethinker*; but this would have necessitated a further trespass on the space allotted to me on this occasion. Perhaps the Editor will consider an extension of these reminiscences later on.

The Contemporary Outlook.

PHILOSOPHY is a dual pursuit which records the progress in closing in upon the processes treated by discursive thought and concurrently projects the most appropriate design of the universe which follows from their valid application. Its fundamental activity is the apprehension, development and criticism of the means and processes of thinking. Epistemology is the cumulative research which treats of the way of coming into consciousness and the import of its data. Method treats of that highly evolved technology applied in pursuing thought. Together those studies of the basis and of the devices and procedures of thinking cover the occasions, instruments and manners of dealing with phenomena. Their essential concern is the most effectual way of gaining and using facts.

The beginning of modern philosophy is the realization of the basic significance of the entire fact of consciousness. All experience is primarily conceived as arising as a part of this total immediate fact. The whole endeavour then becomes to adequately grasp the import and best effect the fit elaboration of these data. The only start is the given continuity of consciousness, part of which has some external reference. But the original process is pre-eminently authentic and essential. The task of thought is the conversion of this experimental flux into the manageable form of the statement. In doing this the thought processes occur not only in an organism, but as much in a specifically outfitted thought shop. The invention, perfection and utilization of the data-machining appliances is of prime importance. The validity of the treatment of the materials of thought extensively depends upon the accuracy and adequacy of the apparatus used. It is by means of special noumenal devices for treating the psychic given that sensation and sentience are made meaningful and generally applicable. Certain of these are the necessary instruments for dealing with phenomena, and are of continuing usefulness. Others turn out to be transient shifts of inquiry and speculation, which are to fall into disuse and discard.

There is always an intrinsic opposition between the process and the statement. From the statement one must repeatedly revert to the process in order to be immediately assured of the sufficiency and justness of the instruments, activity and product of the logical mechanism through which it was derived. Yet men are apt to be forgetful of the process, and not at all insistent upon living in significant relation to its stream. Instead they recede to, accept and proclaim the static statement, and even apply a quite mistaken reality to its instruments and form.

Still, the isolated statement is but the process frozen into some imperfect solidity. Such set and inertia makes much current thought of greater historical and methodological interest than of intrinsic importance. Active criticism of the receding constructs and methods of thought is then forever needful. It accordingly becomes the business of discursive thought to examine and evaluate the traits still current in the evolution of thought, for, when the epistemological situation is understood and the logical mechanism accurately set down, the resolution of many questions consists in determining their standing in the thought faculty so outlined. The proper delegation of a method or construct or judgment to its place in relation to the most advanced thought procedure is the most essential way of treating it. Such restrictive criticism is the underlying requisite to the maintenance of a sound body of thought.

Species are not derived from single mutations duplicated into eventual predominance according to

a genetic ratio. But in certain strains inherent tendencies towards specific mutation spring up and bear fruit. Predominant or universal mutations come of a general mutation tendency. This also takes place in the natural history of thought. In the course of the evolution of the mind certain views acquire such a status that they can be stated readily and completely, and accepted wholly on their inherent patency. The movement of thought recurrently brings us into a position where some outlook and its conceptional pattern can be decisively presented and left to be its own support. From this newer place all that has gone before takes on a definite perspective.

Just as its complete history is indicative of the full significance of a word, the developmental career of a conception contributes to its present status and import. The aboriginal method of hypostasis at least began in a sentience of some austerity and grandeur. In the earliest primitive dynamism there was an awful primal sense of some vast enveloping force, a terrible impending potency. In the further derived psychological animism everything was regarded as having a comparable conscious impulsion. All phenomena were alike treated under the form of the animate as amenable to motivation. Such informing and inspiring psychic entities were projected into all things in the first comprehensive method. With its complete establishment the extended series of its derivatives begins.

The first simplification of the cumbersome method was the designation of generic or departmental groupings. But the numina so formed were only intermediate in a more complete modification. Through whatever diverse origins derived, it was certainly upon an animistic plane of thought that the hierarchy of gods was appointed. Logically and methodologically they were essentially derivative of animism. Theology, with its gods to call upon, invoke and implore, treats of nothing else than a generalized, restricted and segregated animism. Its gods are clearly enough only abstracted, personalized, traditional animi with conveniently arranged functions. In henotheism there was a definite distribution of rank and prerogative in the resulting pantheon. In this way the tendency to a more single theism came into being. But even the much claimed one god is but this useless heritage merged into singleness. This was the extent of the development of popular theism. But these more native gods were still to be filtered, denatured and sublimated in the course of speculation. All the later gods were at some time badly philosophized. In addition, purely philosophical gods were derived from them. The historical deus was a god outrightly put into the discard though with some formal incompleteness. But the acquired god was reduced to a distinct, separate and aloof personage, put quite outside of everything, made totally inconsequential, and in fact all but actually put by. Other such procedures were more dubious in the outcome. The pantheos was the same source conception diffused generally, and thus actually diminished to the point of negativity, though by a curious shift still retained. A consistent frank thorough-going pantheism would take to itself a god of which the entire world is the exact projection, the entire evidence, the complete equivalent. Such an open god, the substance consisting in infinite attributes, would still have at its basis the fallacy and inanity of all hypostatization, but might otherwise be retained unobjectionably though to little purpose. Since the conception of a god is wholly merged with the experience of everything, the result is equal to Atheism, though it retains an older guise. Pantheism is not Atheism, only when incomplete and

partial. A true pantheos, resolved directly from the world without any evasive selective repression, could only remain a god in that it kept the hypostatic manner of statement, which might be reduced until it was only a rhetorical remnant. But in practice the attributes are always acceptably selected. Something is always held back from the conception. The pantheos is a mean shift, a last little evasion, a slight deception. At its most genuine it may accompany some big cosmic pathetic fallacy. Usually it is but a substitute for a less liberal designation of the intellectual reach of the pantheist. It is the last halt on the way of departure from animism. It is absurd, empty and useless. It is the old god disclaimed, impersonalized, metaphicalized, identified with some loose conceptual inanity, preserved as the final repository of some diffuse emotionalisms, the feeling for the informing stuff of life, the infusing spirit of the universe, the immanent transcendent, or such like vague nonsense. But the atheos is close to the outcome of this evolutionary succession. It is the penultimate negation. It represents the transient stage of opposition. With it the whole sequence closes. Each incident has been surpassed. All has been set aside. Thought has come to and attained the free state of metatheism. By this analysis the way to metatheism was indicated.

Throughout this lengthy progress the animistic conception has assumed no truer function of phenomena or of thought. But as is being demonstrated by the practitioners of the dynamic psychology it has at all stages been a distorting psychic transference. A thought construct must have adequate external reference, significantly apply to a psychological event proper, or constitute an advantageous organ of thought. The animistic construct meets no one of these requirements. God is not a datum, nor can it be deduced as the apodictic derivative of any possible data. All the existential arguments are sophisticated frauds which have been fully discredited. God only remains as a wholly adventitious figment, the usefulness of which is to be decided. Methodologically it is an entirely arbitrary instrument of thought, the very problematic applicability of which has long passed. Brought to any intellective situation it effects absolutely nothing. It is the basis only of a wholly fallacious and deceptive antiquated methodology. The retention of the animistic method in any degree is an actual impediment in dealing with experience. If there is no conflict between the introduction of an adventitious internal element into phenomena to permit their treatment in parallelism, with introspective events and scientific method which pursues the fullest statement made with recognized minimal necessary constructs, it is only because the factual method has completely displaced the animistic.

CURTIS BRUEN.

(To be continued.)

TRUE TO TYPE.

The strange thing about the modern man, says Dr. F. W. Norwood, is that he sees no portents, nothing has any moral or spiritual significance for him. He looks for an interpretation of the things of Nature (such as a volcano eruption and an earthquake) in terms of physical science. Mr. Norwood thinks that what the world is waiting for, perhaps more than anything else, is a re-birth of the prophetic spirit. What Dr. Norwood really means is, a re-birth of the credulous and superstitious spirit. One can imagine a priest of ancient Greece talking much like Dr. Norwood, when clients, having glimpsed the rational interpretation of nature, stopped attending the temples. This modern medicine-man is true to type. Any priest, anywhere, and at any age, would have welcomed him as a brother craftsman in the art of mystification.

American Notes.

A RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION.

HONOUR to whom honour is due. It must not be overlooked that the infamous K.K.K.—the Klu Klux Klan—is primarily a religious organization. One of its chief aims is to promote Protestant Christianity, and to extirpate Catholics and Freethinkers. Thanks to one brave newspaper (the *Birmingham News* of Alabama State), something like an effective protest is being made against the Sadistic outrages of this anti-social society. It is a hard fight because Alabama is dominated by the K.K.K., which boasts that it controls the Alabama Senators, the governor and other State officers, and the whole of the State legislature. Here is a cutting of some interest to Freethinkers:—

Recently, for the first time in Alabama, convictions for klan whippings were obtained in the case of Jeff Calloway, a nineteen year old orphan. Calloway was seized near Oneonta by masked men, who threw him into an automobile, kicked him in the mouth to gag his outcries and flogged him until he was almost lifeless.

The perpetrators of this brutality had conducted services at a church in Antioch in full regalia—sheets and hoods—and Calloway on the outside had taken a drink. The klansmen grabbed him, found a pint bottle in his pocket, which they drank among themselves, and then proceeded with their brutal act. This was the case that started the crusade and it led to seven convictions.

The Mayor of Indianapolis, John L. Duvall, has been prosecuted for illegally undertaking to follow the instructions of the K.K.K., in his duties as Mayor. The evidence proved that he and other candidates for office in the city, "took a solemn oath," in the presence of the K.K.K., that of the jobs going their way if elected, at least 60 per cent. should be given to K.K. Klansmen. This "solemn oath" to commit a civic crime was administered by a clergyman, the Rev. George S. Henninger. Duvall became mayor, and promptly appointed only "Klansmen" to the payroll of the city. Duvall was found "guilty," and sentenced to thirty days in jail, a fine of £200, and to be ineligible for any public employment for four years.

THE "IRRESISTIBLE" RELIGION.

The Rev. Roy L. Smith, D.D., Litt.D., writes a sermon in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune*. He wants the churches to give up preaching about miracles, the infallibility of the Bible, etc., and to confine themselves to the essence of Christ's teaching, genuine religion, the real thing!

I wonder if he understands religion any better than he understands materialism, or if he just lies about both? Here are some choice excerpts from his sermon:—

Materialism says, "Eat, drink, and be merry, if you can, for to-morrow you will certainly die. Get all the thrills and pleasures out of life you can, for it is all a brutal jest and the only way to win is to snatch some scrap of pleasure or sensation that comes your way."

Atheism can offer arguments to meet every logical defense we can invent, but for one argument there is no answer, the argument of a life that is like the one Jesus lived.

The church has never failed to preach in the name of Jesus, but the *irresistible* religion is that which is preached in the spirit of Jesus.

THE METHODISTS' CHAMPION.

Mr. E. S. Shumaker has been convicted on what is perhaps the worst offence against citizenship and good government. As Superintendent of the Indiana Anti-Saloon League, Mr. Shumaker was proved guilty of tampering with justice by using threats and otherwise attempting to blackmail judges into acting as Shumaker and his League wished. The case against him was that he dictated to the judges the alternative of making illegal decisions, or of suffering the loss of their jobs. He is under sentence already of sixty days' imprisonment, but the Federal authorities are appealing to increase the sentence.

After his sentence Shumaker appeared at the Methodist Conference at Indianapolis. He was introduced as a hero by Bishop Henderson, and the whole assembly rose to its feet and broke into prolonged applause.

HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR IS DUE.

To condemn unfairness, misrepresentation, and bigotry on the part of the clergy, necessitates a whole-hearted appreciation of sensible, timely and courageous sentiments from other individuals in the same churches. Professor Daniel Evans, holder of the chair of Christian Theology at Andover Theological Seminary, condemns the recent censorship of books like Sinclair Lewis's *Oil*, etc. He speaks quite generally about the censorship of books that:—

It is a menace to cultural, social and scientific advancement.

He added that "to-day's proscribed literature may be discovered as the great literature of the future."

He trod on many toes in Boston and elsewhere, by declaring that he preferred his children to read *The Scarlet Letter* than all the *Polyanna* books in the world.

Professor Evans' remarks, coming so soon after the Boston prosecution of *Elmer Gantry*, are exceedingly significant, and, of course, the most significant thing about it all is that sane, sober, sensible sentiments of his kind should be so strikingly rare in twentieth century university chairs in America.

A CATHOLIC PRESIDENT (?)

If Governor Al. Smith runs for the presidency of the United States, we shall see an interesting spectacle. Smith would be the only candidate honestly and frankly opposing prohibition. Some public men hate prohibition, but dare not call their soul their own sufficiently to stand on a "wet" platform. Governor Smith happens to be a Roman Catholic, and I am told there is not the faintest likelihood that a majority of Americans would ever so far forget their religion as to vote for a Catholic. Naturally, a Freethinker would as soon vote for the one as for any other religionist, and obviously Smith is not running as a Catholic. Even if he were, or if he does what all religionists do as a rule—give jobs to those of his own creed—it might at least give us a change from the common-place Protestant pump-puritanism of average officialdom. As a stranger and a Freethinker, I take no sides in American politics, and I have no opinion on the merits of prohibition.

BRITISH HYPOCRISY.

I hinted in the last paragraph at the hypocritical views of American politicians on prohibition. Hypocrisy has so long been a British quality that I feel quite jealous at seeing another nation taking the lead. A sarcastic correspondent writes to a Chicago newspaper, asking where he can get "a licence" to open a saloon and gambling hell: they seem so common in Chicago. The *American Mercury*, the *American Monthly*, the *New Republic* and the Haldeman Julius publications are constantly exposing American religious, political and social hypocrisy. Is it possible that British hypocrisy is a Quota Immigrant, and will be seen no more in Merrie England?
GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Mr. G. Whitehead at Bolton and Wigan.

The last week of Mr. Whitehead's summer campaign was occupied by addressing five meetings at Bolton and three at Wigan. The Bolton meetings, as is usual there, were orderly and appreciative, and the audience listened with respect and interest to the various lectures. Many people expressed their recognition of benefits received by the visits of Mr. Whitehead to the town, and some of the remarks were very flattering, especially as coming from natives of a district not given to eulogy. But the meetings at Wigan were in another category. They immediately followed those reported last week. The Saturday meeting, although exciting, was quite orderly, and the clergyman who took the platform in opposition was a vast improvement in logic and manners upon some of his predecessors. Another clergyman, contending that filth published by G. W. Foote was responsible for the retention of the Blasphemy Laws, was challenged to produce any Secularist publication containing anything comparable to many of the passages in the Bible. He refused the challenge.

The meeting held on the Sunday afternoon was quite

orderly until question time, when various interruptions took place, in spite of the vigorous protest of the major portion of the crowd. This meeting concluded by a young man attempting to strike the lecturer. The police then warned Mr. Whitehead that further attempts at meetings would be unsafe, as threats had been made that he would be thrown in the canal if he persisted. Mr. Whitehead replied that whatever were the threats he intended to carry out his advertised programme. When he arrived on the pitch in the evening, a crowd of several thousand people, completely filling the street, was awaiting him.

During the lecture two Catholic women shouted abuse, and Mr. Whitehead warned the police present that they would be held responsible if disorder developed, a circumstance quite possible owing to the size and temperament of the crowd. This warning had its effect and the nuisance stopped. The address was received with an ovation, and the attempts of some of the opponents later to work up hostility towards the speaker failed and the meeting was a huge success. This meeting ended the mission at Wigan, and as Mr. Whitehead left the pitch scores of people assured him of their sympathy and requested a return visit as soon as possible. Wigan, in spite of the noise of a minority, is one of the most hopeful centres for Secularism in England, providing some propaganda is put in. Messrs. Foster, Hunter, Sisson and Partington receive our thanks for their valuable assistance in trying circumstances.

Altogether Mr. Whitehead has addressed 170 meetings during the season now concluded, and notwithstanding the trying weather, which has involved considerable strain upon the vocal organs, the meetings have been better attended, the sales larger, more sympathy has been in evidence, and the tour as a whole has been more uniformly successful than any he has previously conducted. Our lecturer takes this opportunity of sincerely thanking all those helpers who have contributed to this success.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

It is greatly to be regretted that Mr. Hornibrook's splendid lecture given last Sunday evening was not better attended. If Freethinkers would only realize the necessity for healthy bodies to ensure healthy minds, open to reason, they would advertise these Health lectures far and wide. We owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Hornibrook in North London, and he may rest assured that the few who do attend his lectures are his devoted and appreciative followers. To-night, Mr. Cutner addresses us on "The Failure of Socialism."

K. B. K.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.

Last Sunday saw a good audience to hear Mr. Jas. W. MacLean, on "Secularism and Current Events." Mr. MacLean included in his survey, Sunday Observance, Birth Control, *Elmer Gantry* in the Libraries, the alleged Revival in Scotland, the Social services in the Churches, and the usual cry of the clergy, "Give Christ a Chance." There was a fair number of questions, but the opposition was confined to matters of detail.

One new member was enrolled and there were several inquiries. Several more names were put down for the Discussion Class, but we want a few more to give it a good send off. No sex bar, no colour line.

Next Sunday (October 23) Mr. F. Lonsdale, on "The Philosophy of Secularism."—T. R.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. H. Cutner—"The Failure of Socialism."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"Religion and Morality in the United States."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"Cromwell and Mussolini: Our Dictator and Theirs."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34 George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Lecture by Mr. Robert Harding—"The Errors of Secularism." Thursday, 7.30 p.m., A Lecture and Discussion.

OUTDOOR.

FREETHOUGHT MEETING.—(Corner of North End Road, Fulham—near Waltham Green Church): Saturday at 7.30. Speakers—F. Bryant and F. Moister.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. J. Hart. Wednesday, October 26, at 8 p.m. (Clapham Old Town): Mr. W. Sandford; (Peckham, Rye Lane): Mr. L. Ebury.

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

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.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Council Schools, Bristol Street, Birmingham): 7.0, Mr. Fred Mann, "The Dishonesty of Bishop Barnes." Admission Free. Questions and Discussion.

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

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Lecture by Mr. F. Lonsdale. Subject: "The Philosophy of Secularism."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Dr. Carmichael—"Materialism Re-Stated" (2nd lecture). Admission Free. Questions invited.

SHotts BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall): 7.30, Lecture by Mr. W. A. MacEwan. Questions and discussion.

OUTDOOR.

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

A CURE may not be so good as prevention, but as we cannot prevent your scepticism pray let us cure it by sending you by return of post 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 & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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