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Views and Opinions.

*Man and His Soul.*

WE referred last week to the “sensation” created by Sir Arthur Keith, by a statement during the course of a lecture on Darwinism, that there existed no scientific warranty for the belief in a “soul” as a thing separable from the material organism. It was, of course, very indiscreet to say this at a time when it has become a fashion with so many of the clergy to say that Materialism is a discarded philosophy, and when, thanks to their influence on the press, it is being repeated by a number of scribblers, whose understanding of Materialism equals a cow’s conception of astronomy. The popular, perhaps the profitable, method in this country, is for men of science to keep their heresies to themselves, rather than to run counter to the bigots in the pulpit and the buffoons in the press. Here, however, is the passage that is responsible for the “sensation”:

We can drug the brain, so as to exalt the powers of certain parts, and deprive those of others, and thus alter the mental behaviour of any man or woman. We can, at will, obliterate consciousness or exalt it. In short, the brain is a piece of living machinery. It consumes fuel and transmutes energy into feeling, thought, and memory. If we withhold the supply of oxygen or fuel, the sources of its energy, the brain ceases to act just as certainly as fire ceases to burn when its supply of fuel or air ceases. Medical men can find no grounds for believing that the brain is a dual organ—a compound of substance and of spirit. Every fact known to them compels the inference that mind, spirit, soul are the manifestations of the living brain, just as flame is the manifest spirit of a burning candle. At the moment of extinction both flame and spirit cease to have separate existence.

However much this mode of explaining man’s mentality may run counter to long and deeply cherished beliefs, medical men cannot think otherwise if they are to believe the evidence of their senses. It is only when they accept the physiological interpretation of man’s mentality that they can diagnose and understand the nature of man’s mental ailments and take effective steps for the prevention and for the relief of disasters which so often overtake modern humanity.

Structure and Function.

A few days ago the papers were full of the greatness of William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood. That discovery laid the foundations of modern physiology, and it put to flight a host of “spirits” that were assumed to prowl through the human arteries much as one might imagine Sir Arthur Conan Doyle “sensing” the ghosts of Jack Shepherd and his associates prowling round the site of Seven Dials. Harvey’s advance reduced the circulation of the blood to a question of mechanics, and so made it understandable. And from Harvey’s time every advance has been in the one direction, that of linking mind and body together in terms of structure and function. How could it be otherwise? This question of structure and function is of the very essence of science, and, what is not so often seen, even by many of our “scientific” teachers, is of universal applicability. The function of anything is what it does. Whether we are dealing with an aggregation of physical objects, a collection of chemical elements, biological organs, or psychological qualities, their function in each case is what they do. And we can only know anything about them by seeing what they do. The relation of structure to function is not peculiar to mind and body, it is a universal condition of understanding, the very life blood of science. If this had been clearly and universally appreciated, even among scientific men, there would have been no need for Sir Arthur to say what he did say, nor would many of the letters and articles that have appeared in the press have been written. If I may repeat what I have so often said, a knowledge of scientific facts is easily acquired, and generally worth little when one has got it. An appreciation of scientific method and thinking is sadly needed, even among many men who stand forward as teachers of science. If one wants evidence of this, I must refer him to the fact of Sir Arthur Keith’s statement having created a “sensation.” So would the rising of a balloon among savages.

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Brain and Soul.

I see that a few medical men have written to the papers saying they do not agree with Sir Arthur Keith. That may be so, but it is not given to every medical man to understand philosophical questions, or even to appreciate the nature of the tools he uses daily. Still, if a medical man were asked whether he ever treated mental ailments save as resting on some derangement of the nervous system, he would certainly regard the suggestion that he ever did so as a reflection on his professional sanity. As a Christian he may profess to believe that there is something in man that is separable from his physical structure; as a medical man he acts as though such a thing could not possibly be true. Sir Oliver Lodge, on being



asked his opinion of Sir Arthur Keith's statement, said that "It is a recognized view of physiologists that the spirit does not survive after the brain has ceased to function," which is only another way of saying what has just been said, namely, that there is no other conceivable manner of understanding brain and mind, save in terms of structure and function. And for a function to exist apart from structure is sheer scientific lunacy.

An "eminent" Harley Street doctor, cited by one of the daily papers, says that while there is no evidence that would justify the belief in the survival of the "soul," "we have no evidence to show that the soul does not survive after death." I collected quite a number of similar expressions, and it was these I had in mind when I said last week that they were so hopelessly confused, that it would take a volume to disentangle a sentence. What have these men in mind when they speak of the "soul"? The primitive savage, when he spoke of the equivalent of the "soul," meant a double—a copy of the body, although of a more tenuous kind. And that persists right down from the stage of culture represented by that individual to the astral, or ectoplasmic ghost of the modern Spiritualist. But when a modern—a scientific modern—uses such a term as soul, or mind or spirit, he has nothing more in view than a general term to cover a special set of phenomena associated with the activities of an animal organism. It no more stands for a separate entity than such a term as heat stands for something apart from the vibrations of particles of matter. Let anyone try and separate the two things in thought, and he will see into what a hopeless state of confusion he will get. When we have arrived at the conclusion that mind is a function of the organism, we have settled the question of survival, and have shown it to be an unwarrantable supposition. If we fall back upon the primitive theory of a double, and deny that the mind stands to the body as function to structure, then we may talk of this supposititious entity flitting to some other place when its present roosting place is destroyed. But if we do not make that assumption, why talk of having no evidence that the "soul" does not survive? What evidence could we have that an entity that does not exist before the organism decays, does not continue to live when the organism is destroyed?

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#### A Question of Fact.

Let me put a question or two to this anonymous but "eminent" medical man. Man, it is admitted, is primarily known to us as a body. That body's contact with the world is through the medium of the senses. It is a fact that every one of the functions of the body may be deranged or stimulated by variations in food or temperature, by drugs, by disease, and in other ways. The study of glands in recent years has shown what an important part these play in the determination of character. It is admitted that one may destroy the sense of sight by destroying the eye, of hearing by damaging certain nerves, and so with each of the senses. We do not ask, in such cases, what has become of hearing, or seeing, or the sense of smell. We are content to note a deficiency. But we are asked to take it as the intelligible proposition that if instead of each of the senses being destroyed by an accident, by disease, or by the knife of the surgeon, they are all simultaneously blotted out, they may survive in some other state as though nothing whatever has happened? Is that a reasonable, is it even a thinkable proposition? What, then, can possibly be meant by saying that "we have no evidence to show that the soul does not survive

after death"? We can show that there is not a particle of evidence that there is anything in man separable from and independent of the material structure, and when we have done that we have done all that is possible.

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#### The Pity of It!

In this connexion we may note a statement of Sir Arthur Keith's that is calculated to make one rub one's eyes. "I do not think," he told a newspaper reporter, "what I said can be construed as destroying the theory of immortality." Unless Sir Arthur was engaged in the popular pastime of "pulling the leg" of the reporter, this is surely a superb example of giving a pail of milk and then kicking it over. Consider the definitely expressed belief that "mind, soul, spirit, are the manifestations of a living brain," and that these disappear with the destruction of the organism as a flame goes with the extinction of a candle. Are we to assume that, after all, the brain may be a roost in which some little man nestles, and who survives the disintegration of the body? If there is not a single fact known to science to support the thesis that soul or spirit is independent of the organism, if every fact points to mind being as much a function of structure as light is a function of a burning candle, the only conceivable basis for the belief in immortality is gone. Sir Arthur would surely not argue that there is just the possibility that the flame of the candle may exist somewhere else, despite the destruction of the candle itself. If his remarks do not indicate his belief in the scientific impossibility of survival, then I am quite in the dark as to what they do mean.

Sir Arthur may take it for granted that the clergy will have no serious quarrel with him if he stands to his statement of the brain and its functions, but leaves it an open question whether there may not be other grounds—unnamed and unthinkable—on which we may base a belief in personal survival. The facts are too well known nowadays for the clergy to openly deny them, and their power is too weak to prohibit their publication. All they ask from the scientist nowadays is a statement of belief, or a statement that there is room for belief; and whether the belief has facts in its support, or whether it is expressed in intelligible language is quite a minor consideration. On the whole, they would rather have it expressed in indefinite language, for a religious belief that may be clearly conceived, and which adduces known facts in its support is of the most dangerous description. If Sir Arthur Keith means exactly what he says, and no one can accuse him of lacking either clarity of thought or capacity to express his thoughts in plain language, then his meaning is that science absolutely condemns the belief in personal survival. Why then this sop to the parsons? What a pity it is that so many of our public men appear to lack just that little extra courage which would enable them to tell the clergy plainly that it is for science and not for the medicine-man to give the ruling on such a question as personal survival, and so give their message to the world without so many stultifying qualifications.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued.)

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He was an Agnostic, a term commonly employed by the modish to avoid the odious one of Freethinker.  
Anatole France ("The Revolt of the Angels").

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Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.—Bacon.



## Baldwin Boosts a Bible.

"The best way to measure a man is not from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head, but from his chin upward."—J. K. Sykes.

"The carpenter said nothing but 'the butter's spread too thick.'"—*Alice in Wonderland.*

THE Premier, Mr. Stanley Baldwin, likes to make Cook's excursions into the realm of theology. In this foible he resembles his predecessor, William Gladstone, who sometimes imagined himself the one and only Champion of Christendom. Mr. Baldwin has been eulogizing the Christian Bible, and, by the irony of events, the Queen's Hall, London, the scene of so many Freethought addresses, was chosen as the scene of this eulogium of a lost cause.

The meeting was not a political one, but was the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and Mr. Baldwin said some very sweet things concerning the Christian fetish-book. His address was, like the curate's egg, "good in places," but his outlook was more than usually provincial. Throughout his discourse Mr. Baldwin referred to the Christian Scriptures as "the Bible," just as if it were the only book of its kind in the world, and he was a young Sunday school teacher in his "teens," who had never heard of "The Sacred Books of the East," and to whom the name "Zend Avesta" would in all probability, suggest the title of a patent-medicine, or a hair-restorer.

Yet, almost in the same breath, Mr. Baldwin was bragging that the Christian Bible was the greatest of all literature, although he was particularly careful not to make odious comparison with other and older Scriptures. The Bibles of the many different religions greatly vary in literary value, and range from the impressive language of the Hindoo "Vedas" to the ungrammatical verbiage of the "Bible" of the Christian Scientists, and the downright twaddle of Joe Smith's *Book of Mormon*. All these various scriptures make their appeal to believers, who are, in the main, ordinary folks, innocent of the fine arts. Even in England the man in the street does not greatly care for literature, and when he does, he, more often than not, prefers the purple pages of Mr. Edgar Wallace to the archaic language of the Christian Bible. And you cannot blame Mr. Everyman, for he leaves school when he is fourteen years of age,\* and imbibes journalistic culture in the intervals of "spotting winners" in his favourite newspaper. To such a one the language of the Authorized Version of this Bible is a stumbling block, and when he reads such words as, "divers diseases," they inevitably suggest the pathology of those hardy seafarers, instead of the real meaning. It is because the Christian Scripture is so liable to misinterpretation on the part of innocent believers that the Roman Catholic priests insist on the authority of the Church itself, and not on private interpretation.

Mr. Baldwin regards the Christian Bible as "the greatest literature in the world," which is a most ironic comment on the culture and mentality of politicians. He is on safer ground when he describes the Christian fetish-book as "a high explosive." The fact is that in this country, so important a thing as education has been hampered by the desire of the clergy, of whom there are 50,000, to ally this Bible explosive with the ordinary curriculum. In this attempt the quarrels of the priests have extended to their congregations, and from the congregations to the electorate. The teachings of the Established Church are considered by the Nonconformists to be wrong and harmful, whilst the instruction given by the Dissenters is pronounced by Churchmen to be

heretical and dangerous. Roman Catholics, in their turn, consider that Anglicans and Free Churchmen are alike so monstrous that they provide their own schools. Churchmen and Nonconformists, however, agree that this Bible be read in the schools, but that no theological doctrines be taught. This is what is called "the compromise," and although it satisfies most of the clergy, who use it as the thin edge of the wedge, it still impedes education and fetters progress. For the clergy realize that so long as their fetish-book is forced upon the children of this country their own position as a clerical caste is quite safe, and their salaries guaranteed.

There are grave reasons, however, why the Christian Bible should have no official place in the school programme. Its educational value is out of date, and large parts of it are unfit for children. What do our kindergarten teachers, for instance, make of such Biblical advice as "a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding." "Thou shall beat him with a rod"; "Chasten thy son, and let not thy soul spare for his crying"? Such Bible instruction may receive the blessings and approbation of 50,000 priests, but it remains the essence of barbarism, and their application merits the attention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Even "a translation of incomparable beauty," to quote Mr. Baldwin, cannot whitewash these blemishes. But the leader of the Conservative Party is, for once, a whole-hogger instead of an opportunist. The Christian Bible is not only a thing of beauty, it must also be a joy for ever. It is a light shining over a saucy world; indeed, our Western civilization is owing to this precious Oriental book. Mr. Baldwin might as well have said that our modern civilization is owing to the bowler hat. It would have been just as true, for, wherever there is civilization there is the bowler hat. But facts are stubborn things. Mr. Baldwin contends that British lives have been shaped by the Christian Bible for three hundred years. Abyssinia has enjoyed the privileges of the Christian Religion for many more centuries, but civilization and the Abyssinians are still awaiting introduction to each other.

Despite "a translation of incomparable simplicity, incomparable beauty, and incomparable majesty," the Authorized Version is no longer read as it once was, in this country. And, remember, this version of the Christian Bible is not an ordinary book by any means. It is stamped as the work of a god, or three gods, by Act of Parliament. It is forced, including all its unseemly passages, into the hands of children at schools. It is used as a fetish for swearing upon in Courts of Law. Men and women have been punished for criticizing it. And at the very time that Mr. Baldwin thinks fit to eulogize this fetish-book, the clergy themselves are beginning to admit the force of Freethought criticism. At present, it is true, the clergy are tearing unseemly pages from the Old Testament, but, before long, the New Testament will suffer. When the process is complete the Christian Bible will be a thing of shreds and patches. This Bible will at length take its proper place among the so-called Sacred Books of the East. A large number of the clergy will then have to look for honest employment, and politicians, Labour and Conservative alike, will no longer find it expedient to tickle the ears of the pious groundlings in the fond hope of gaining votes at an election.

"Nothing but the light which comes from this Bible can lighten the twilight," says Mr. Baldwin. And here I will tell a story. A bishop was travelling on the railway and was asked for his ticket. He felt



in all his pockets but could not find it. "Never mind, sir, I know you. It will do later," said the collector. "But it isn't all right," retorted the bishop, "for if I can't find my ticket I don't know where I am going." Mr. Baldwin imagines that the ordinary citizen is like that absent-minded and muddle-headed bishop. Unless he had this precious Bible as a guide-book, he wouldn't know that he was alive.

MIMNERMUS.

## Evolution and God.

AFTER fighting desperately against the theory of evolution for half a century—the opposition is still going on, especially in America—the more intelligent and better informed members of the Churches can see that further opposition can only lead to disaster. Evolution is now so firmly established, and widely accepted, that its opponents to-day only excite laughter and ridicule.

So now we are told that evolution is God's way of working. That the old idea of God making the world in six days, as recorded in the Bible, is merely a poetical romance, suitable for the primitive people for whom it was written, and who would not have understood a scientific description of the matter, but not intended for a more enlightened and scientific age.

And further, we are told, the idea of evolution gives us a grander and nobler idea of God than the old anthropomorphic view of a man-like God fashioning Adam and Eve out of clay, in the Garden of Eden. Of course there is no more evidence that a God has anything to do with evolution than there was for creation. But supposing there was; it is not enough, for the purposes of religion and worship, to prove that there is a God. A malignant, or tyrannical, or unintelligent God, would be of no use at all. What they require is an intelligent and benevolent being, worthy of veneration and adoration. Do the processes of evolution reveal the operations of an all-wise, benevolent and intelligent God?

Prof. J. B. S. Haldane, who occupies the chair of Biochemistry at Cambridge University, deals with this question in his interesting volume of scientific and philosophic essays, entitled *Possible Worlds*. (Chatto & Windus. 1927.) He observes: "Blake asked somewhat doubtfully of the tiger: 'Did he who made the lamb make thee?' The same question applies with equal force to the tapeworm, and an affirmative answer would clearly postulate a creator whose sense of values would not commend him to the admiration of humanity." (p. 29.) But, as he further points out, in spite of this he might be an intelligent being. Now it is a characteristic of an intelligent being that he learns from his mistakes, and therefore we should expect that when a certain type of animal had proved itself a failure by becoming extinct, the experiment would not be tried repeatedly. Yet this is the case:—

Both reptiles and mammals have, on numerous occasions, given rise to giant clumsy types, with from one to six short horns on the head. One remembers triceratops, dinoceras, titanotherium, and others. Not only did they all become extinct, but they did not even, like some other extinct animal types, flourish over very long periods. And the rhinoceros, which represents the same scheme among living animals, was rapidly becoming extinct even before the invention of the rifle. But all these animals were evolved independently. Among the titanotheres alone, eleven distinct lines increased in size, developed horns, and perished.

Two or three attempts would have convinced an intelligent demiurge of the futility of the process. That particular type of mistake is almost the rule

in vertebrate evolution. Again and again, during Mesozoic times, great groups of reptiles blossomed out into an inordinate increase of bulk, a wild exuberance of scale and spine, which invariably ended in their extinction. They doubtless enjoyed the satisfaction of squashing a number of our own ancestors and those of the existing reptilian groups, who seem to have been relatively small and meek creatures. It would appear then, there is no need to postulate a directive agency at all resembling our own minds, behind evolution. (J. B. S. Haldane. *Possible Worlds*. pp. 29-30.)

The question then remains whether it can be explained by the known laws of nature, and after a discussion of the question, which runs to twelve pages, he comes to the conclusion that: "The history of an animal group shows no more evidence of planning than does that of a national literature. But both show orderly sequences which are already pretty capable of explanation. To sum up, no satisfactory cause of evolution other than the action of natural selection on fortuitous variations has ever been put forward. It is by no means clear that natural selection will explain all the facts. But the other suggested causes are unverified hypotheses, while selection can be observed by those who take sufficient trouble." (p. 43.) And finally: "no facts definitely irreconcilable with Darwinism have been discovered in the sixty years and more that have elapsed since the formulation of Darwin's views." (p. 44.)

Of the new revelation of the immensely increased age of the earth which, he says, places the origin of life "at least a thousand million years ago," Prof. Haldane observes that when these dates meet with general acceptance and penetrate the imagination, as they will in course of time, they will have a devastating effect upon religious beliefs. He says:—

Religion will inevitably alter its standpoint, even if some of its fundamental beliefs survive. On a planet more than a thousand million years old, it is hard to believe—as do Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Buddhists—that the most important event has occurred within the last few thousand years, when it is clear that there were great civilizations before that event. It is equally difficult to doubt that many events as significant for humanity will occur in the future. In that immeasurable future the destiny of humanity dwarfs that of the individual. If our planet was created a few thousand years ago to end a few years or a few thousand years hence, it is conceivable that the main purpose to be worked out on it is the salvation and perfection of individual human beings. No religion which accepts geology can regard such a purpose as anything but subsidiary. (p. 17.)

As for the statement that men have always believed in immortality, and that religion and morality are impossible without it, Prof. Haldane observes: "The truth of this ludicrous statement may be tested by referring to the first seven books of the Bible. They are full of religion and ethics, but contain no reference to human survival of death." And he goes on to tell us that: "Most of the men under my command whom I got to know during the war, believed in God. But I think the majority thought that death would probably be the end of them, and I am absolutely certain that that is the view of most highly educated people." (p. 206.) And concludes that: "We do ourselves no good in the long run by telling ourselves pleasant fairy tales about this world or the next. If we devoted the energy that we waste in preparing for a future life to preventing war, poverty, and disease, we could at least make our present lives very satisfactory for most people, and if we were happy in this world we should not feel the need of happiness hereafter." Which is a very concise statement of the gospel of Secularism.

W. MANN.



## "Christ" in India.

A FRIEND recently asked me to look through a "best seller"—a book written by a missionary, entitled *The Christ of the Indian Road*. I sorrowfully confess that I have wasted a good deal of valuable time reading religious tracts, but this work has really been the biggest waste of all. I do not, these days, come across quite so many of the four or eight-page leaflets which used to be put through the letter-box of my paternal home. They had the most astonishing titles, and often some lurid illustration on the cover depicting the "infidel" either drinking himself to death or just managing to be sober enough to pick up a Bible lying conveniently near his feet. The "infidel," who generally was a part-time burglar or wife-beater, and often a child torturer to boot, would open the Bible with a sneer of derision, but his bleary eye would then alight on some extraordinary saying of Jesus or Paul (but most often of Jesus.) Terror would strike his "soul," his bleary eye would see the light, and once again a lost sheep would follow the Gentle Shepherd. Millions of this kind of thing, with slight variations of the matter, must have been distributed among unlucky Victorian homes, most of the occupants of which, in any case, had been washed in the Blood of the Lamb. But I always believed the war had put an end to these dreadful tracts, yet here in this year of grace, 1928, we have an epitome of the same kind of rubbish selling in thousands—twenty editions are marked on the fly-leaf of the book. Mr. E. Stanley Jones must be congratulated. He is not living in an Age of Faith, you know. Ask any of our Freethinking friends who object to militant propaganda, and you will be told people have long since given up Christianity. The fight is all but over. We have undermined the citadel. Well, I suggest the people who talk like that should read this book.

Not, mark you, that Mr. Jones stands for Christianity. He doesn't care for the word at all. He is out for *Christ*, and the "Christ" of the old tracts is just a wee pigmy in comparison with the giant "Christ" of the Indian Road.

You will not be surprised to learn that Mr. Jones wipes up Hindus and Mohammedans and agnostics as easily as I write this sentence.

"I have hated Christianity," said a Hindu lawyer to the Christ-like missionary, "but if Christianity is Christ, I do not see how we Indians can hate it." A prominent lecturer, says Mr. Jones, claims that the "discovery on the part of India of the difference between Christianity and Jesus can be called nothing less than a discovery of the first magnitude"!! "We too must acknowledge," adds Mr. Jones, "our part in the mistake (a Christ completely covered by Christianity) and see to it that in future India has a chance to respond to an untrammelled Christ"!!!

"I don't like the Christ of your creeds and churches," says a Brahman. "How would you like a Christ of the Indian Road?" asks the missionary's friend. "I could love and follow the Christ of the Indian Road," replies the Brahman earnestly. And Mr. Jones then points out that Christ has now become naturalized in India. *Naturalized!* This is nearly as funny as Mr. Bruce Barton's contention that Jesus is the most supreme example of a Big Business Boss the world has ever seen. (And, incidentally, Mr. Bruce Barton's famous work has actually impressed some Freethinkers.) Mr. Jones tells us also he knows nothing higher than God, and "if God in character is like Jesus, he is a good God and trustworthy." Now, this is where I get a little muddled. I always believed, on the strength of the aforemen-

tioned tracts, that Jesus *was* God. Surely the tracts weren't wrong? Anyhow I hope, for Mr. Jones's sake, that God's character equals Jesus's. It would be awful to think, if God were really jealous of Jesus, that God and the God of the Old Testament were one and the same. A jealous God—but words fail me.

"One of the most brilliant Hindus" said to Mr. Jones, "I have thrown over everything in my belief as to the future life, except the continuity of human existence and the consistency of the character of God," and "Jesus is the highest expression of God we have ever seen." It's a wonder that this "brilliant Hindu" did not add "and even higher."

A Jewish lady told Mr. Jones that what the people of India wanted was not talk on religion, but *bread*. (The only sensible thing in the whole book.) This is the Christ-like missionary's comment. "Therefore, while I thank God for every endeavour to help India to get more bread, I believe the best way to give India bread is to give her Christ. For Christ makes life *free*."

An agnostic "European professor of comparative religions in a Hindu college" had a conversation with "Sadhu Sunder Singh, the great Christian mystic." This conversation is detailed in the book, but Sadhu completely squashed the unfortunate agnostic by continually insisting "he had Christ." The professor "went away discomfited—and thoughtful." Possibly, by the end of the book, the professor has also found Jesus, but I haven't got as far yet. These professors rouse my ire. They're always "discomfited"—or what is worse "thoughtful." Alas, how many eminent "professors" have been beaten in debate by the simple but beautiful Salvation Army lassie! How many of these hardened sinners, obstinately sticking to Science, have come to believe at last in the lovely old story repeated so pleadingly by beauteous lips!

Mr. Jones was once told by a Hindu (not a "brilliant" one this time) that he was such a broad-minded Christian. "My brother," said the missionary, "I am the narrowest man you have come across. I am broad on almost anything else but on the one supreme necessity for human nature. I am absolutely narrowed by the fact to one—Jesus." Ah, what words of gold!

But there, I really cannot quote many more extracts. My pen falters, my heart fails me. This book is full of such unmitigated nonsense that I am obliged to rub my eyes and ask whether I'm not dreaming. Everybody the missionary talks to seems to have come to the conclusion that the world is gasping for Christ. Every Hindu unbeliever is yearning for Christ. Remember, not Christianity but Christ. They don't want bread but Christ. They judge us by the "white light of the spirit of Jesus." Ghandhi himself said to Mr. Jones, "I would suggest, first, that all of you Christians, missionaries and all, must begin to live more like Jesus Christ."

Now, if Ghandhi said anything so supremely silly, then either he must be given up as utterly hopeless, or he simply did not understand his own words. Jesus never married—is that Ghandhi's ideal? Jesus never worked—is that Ghandhi's ideal? Jesus went about "preaching," and was fed and clothed by other people. Is that Ghandhi's ideal? Jesus never said a kind word to his mother or his relatives—is that Ghandhi's ideal? Jesus said, "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." I can hardly believe that this dreadful teaching is anybody's ideal—except that of Christ-like missionaries



living on the fat of the land at the expense of Christian dupes.

Mr. Jones gives a list of the many questions asked him—and some are teasers and no mistake—and adds, "I have been cross-examined by as many as thirty lawyers at one time, trying for hours to beat down the evidence. But my verse has been true. I cannot remember a single situation in nine years where it has failed me." After that, one can believe anything—but what a Godsend Mr. Jones would be to the Christian Evidence Society! Yet, on second thoughts, why shouldn't a follower of Christ easily defeat thirty lawyers, all asking questions at the same time? Surely the age of miracles isn't past? Ask Mr. Chesterton.

Mr. E. Stanley Jones is to be congratulated. He has convincingly shown that silly as the old tract-writers believed the English people were in the old Victorian days, the Hindus can beat them in stupidity. Otherwise, how can he induce brilliant Hindu professors, agnostics and unbelievers to come to Christ? Is it possible to believe they don't know what Biblical criticism is? Have they studied comparative religions and yet believe Christ is "unique"? Have they never heard of the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, written by Christian scholars to such purpose that what is left of Christianity and Jesus can at the most be found in nine paltry verses from the four Gospels—and even these are disputed? Mr. Jones writes like the mid-Victorian tract-writer, but his book is a best seller. Mr. Bruce Barton gets eulogies even from Freethinkers. As for Herr Emil Ludwig—but I shall deal with him another time. Is Christianity—the Christ-like variety—played out? I do not think so. And my heart is heavy.

H. CUTNER.

### Acid Drops.

We often find ourselves wondering what game it is that some of our journalists are playing. Thus, "Carados" of the *Referee* complains in the issue of that Paper for May 13, that the stage censor is not active or vigilant enough. He selects some instances which he says should have been suppressed because they "verged on the blasphemous." "Exclamations" such as 'My God!' and 'Good God!' broke out in comic situations, whereas such expressions are only permissible in outbursts of despair or anguish." From one point of view the complaint is really funny. If the situation is humorous "Good God" is out of place. But if it is a case of someone being struck dead, or an accident, or an earthquake, then "Good God" is quite in order—with, we suppose, an emphasis on the "Good." But it is almost impossible to believe that the ordinary journalist feels shocked when he hears such expressions. Which leads us to ask "What is the game?" Such ignorant bigotry simply cannot be genuine in these cases. At a venture we should say that the writers of such rubbish are not religious themselves, and count religious people, for whom they think they are writing, as being more ignorant than they really are. And in the *Referee*, too!

The British Boy Scouts' Association is quite distinct from Sir Robert Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts' Association. It is, according to its own addicts, a Christian patriotic movement, whose distinctive feature is that it believes in something deeper than even good citizenship, namely, to win boys for Jesus Christ. From this we infer that some of the Churches have failed to exploit the Scout Movement to the extent they hoped; and so they intend to run a client-catching movement of their own. We are not surprised at this being done. After all, there is little about the gentle and soulful Jesus that is likely to appeal to the average healthy-minded boy; and no doubt the exploiters have found a difficulty in

getting the average Boy Scout to fit in Jesus among his gallery of soldiers and sailors and adventurers. In these circumstances then, the obvious thing to do was to organize a movement in which there would be a free hand to dose boys with Jesus. More kidnapping!

A pious reporter says it is often a puzzle to him why a Methodist's prayer-meeting should be so painfully solemn, almost melancholy. Would it be, he asks, a very dreadful thing to hear even a ripple of laughter on such occasions? It would be not so much dreadful as dangerous. When laughter walks in at the door, reverence flies out at the window. One cannot tune in with the Infinite with a grin on one's face.

Apropos of lucky "chain-letters," "the Padre" (in *Methodist Times*) says: "A chain of good luck is some degrees worse than a prayer chain; for that is sheer, stark unrelieved superstition, whereas the other does leave a loop-hole for the exercise of faith." The difference is the same as that between Tweedledum and Tweedledec. Only an expert purveyor of superstition can perceive it.

You have heard the plea against Sunday opening of the Zoo to the public, on the grounds that the animals need a day of rest as well as human beings. Perhaps the animals get a rest, and perhaps they do not. The average Sunday attendance, by private permit, is 4,200—more cant opposition to Sunday opening!

In Australia, says the Rev. F. W. Boreham, young men and women attend church services in very great numbers. Now, that makes us wonder what motive many Australian parsons can have in deploring the indifference of young Australians to religion. Can it be that they, like the ancients, are afraid of the spite of the Fates, if they rejoice too loudly that their business is prospering? Or is the Rev. Mr. Boreham drawing on his imagination? If he is not, we are puzzled to know why Gipsy Smith visited Australia "to revive religion."

A well-known cleric who does a good deal of journalistic work, says that if he were beginning life again, he would not choose a different kind of work. He would do more with the pen and less with the tongue, but he would still be a preacher. It's a wise man who knows his limitations. After all, preaching by tongue or pen doesn't make very large demands upon one's mental powers, and there is always a living to be had by the exercise of even quite indifferent preaching skill.

F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock, D.D., in the *Morning Post*, writes, pointing out that William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood was known after a fashion in Greece 210 A.D. To show, in connexion with this, what heathens we are, the doctrine of hell-fire was only dropped yesterday by professional Christians, and the Roman Catholic Church graciously permitted the earth to revolve round the sun in 1820. They're terrible lads for knowledge, these ecclesiastical chaps.

We are indebted to an advertisement in the *Daily Mail* for enlightenment about the virtues of Blue Circle Portland Cement; here it is:—

When the pious hands of our own generation set about building the second largest church in Christendom, the materials to be used in its construction were chosen with the religious care appropriate to an edifice that must endure for centuries. For the making of the concrete "Blue Circle" Portland Cement was selected.

We are duly impressed with the wording, and Liverpool, the lovely Venice of the North, has no doubt solved the housing problem, and now has money, pious hands, leisure, peace, contentment and a slice of Paradise, or it would not be engaged in building the second largest Church in Christendom. We trust we are not mistaken.



A doleful dirge comes from the Bishop of Guildford. To make our flesh creep he states:—

British Columbia, where a British population is growing up, is in danger of growing up absolutely pagan. No religion is taught in the schools there, and no means of teaching religion are supplied by the Church at home.

This is very serious news—for the Bishop's profession, and he assumes that people will accept his valuation of the word "pagan." Shades of Sophocles, Aristotle, Plato!—do you hear this gentleman calling you names?

A daily newspaper describes the so-called plot of Prince Carol to overthrow the Roumanian Government as being a disgrace to British journalism. We do not agree, as British journalism passed the disgraceful stage years ago, and something is to be said for the thesis that the majority of newspapers exist to undo all the good that a decent education may confer on a citizen.

"Candidus," of the *Daily Sketch*, says that if democracy would only believe it, the unpopular man is the most valuable of all its possessions. No one who has ever done any good in the world has escaped being unpopular at some time or other. No man can ever fight hard for an idea that he believes in sincerely without becoming unpopular. His unpopularity is a sign that he is doing something worth while and that he has courage. This should cheer the hearts and steel the courage of Freethinkers, and especially Freethought advocates.

The same writer, "Candidus," says there are men who love opposition for opposition's sake, and change their minds the moment their views are shared by the majority. There is much truth in this. Instances can be provided by certain notable men of letters living to-day who once fought for Freethought. "Candidus's" observation helps one to understand why they gibe at Freethought to-day. Since their fighting was not motivated by perception of principles, the Movement has not lost much by their desertion.

Apropos of the recent police interference with public whist drives, the *Daily Sketch* says:—

The consistent disregarding of foolish laws breeds a dangerous contempt for wise ones . . . Laws are intended to prevent crime, not to manufacture criminals. When a law is offensive to common sense, it should be abolished—not be winked at.

For our part, we should like to see a drastic revision of the laws of this country, and a wholesale expurgation of laws inflicted upon us moderns by our narrow-minded pious ancestors—the Blasphemy Laws, for instance, could disappear without the nation going into mourning for them.

After being in abeyance for over 200 years the superstitious custom of "blessing the fields" has been revived by the vicar of Kirk Langley, Derbyshire. Soon after the procession had started from the church, rain fell heavily, so that the rest of the ceremony had to be finished inside the church. The Lord was commendably prompt in supplying the needful blessing. He thought the fields could do with some water, and straightaway sent it. Such promptness may have been inconvenient to the procession (plus crucifix), but it demonstrates the efficacy of the "blessing" and how willing to oblige God is, if only he is asked in the proper manner.

During the hearing of a divorce petition recently, a husband, whose wife had committed adultery, sought to take the onus of blame on himself. The Hon. Mr. Justice Hill declared that the man's attempt to manufacture evidence was not only wrong, but absolutely idiotic. *John Bull's* comment is that the term "idiotic" is best applied to a law which insists on adultery as an adjunct to annulment of marriage. We agree. Perhaps when stupid Christian notions about marriage no longer bewilder the minds of our law-makers, divorce law will be less idiotic.

For years Bath has been the only spa where no Sunday concerts were permitted. Pious opposition has ensured that. At last, however, more intelligent views have gained a footing in the godly town. The City Council, by twenty-nine votes to eighteen, has decided to permit Sunday concerts, under municipal control. Deputations from the Churches opposed the proposal, but the taboo merchants were unable to secure its rejection. One thing they did achieve was the extracting from the Council a promise that the concerts would be confined to the evenings and after church hours. That's something; it will prevent the Bath Sabbath from becoming an awful Continental Sunday—the Lord be thanked!

Do we really want an after-life"? asks Mr. Adrian Maxwell. Well, thousands of Freethinkers, and many thousands of non-Christians, manage to live quite decent lives without cherishing the Christian hope of rewards in an hereafter. Christians are different. They cannot be trusted to do the right thing unless they are bribed by a hope of future rewards or are cowed by the threat of future punishment. They are a superior people.

The practice of any art, says a writer, refines character and tends to improved conduct. Not any art, surely. The Christian art—it really is an art—of lying to the glory of God does not have that effect.

Two out of every five children examined for admission to Cumberland Schools are declared to have some mental departure from the normal. Before accepting this as fact and as a matter to be deplored, one would like to know exactly what were the tests applied. In these days, certain educational experts and officials have a mania for applying weird and wonderful tests, which they fancy measure average intelligence. The quaint inferences the experts make from the "tests," and the tests themselves, seem to us to measure the degree of intelligence possessed by the measurers. We hazard a guess that the majority of the most intelligent men known to history would not, in childhood, have passed the tests of our present-day experts.

Miss Kay Harrison, secretary of a Methodist Study Centre, declares that the task for Christians is to make the world into a home. Are we to presume that this is what Christians have been attempting for nineteen hundred years? If so, to judge by the appalling amount of bloodshed, squabbling and suffering Christians introduced in the world during the period, we are justified in hoping that Christians will discover a more peaceful task to perform. A world-home attained by Christian methods does not seem to be a particularly inviting kind of thing.

A reader of a daily paper, with vivid memories of his adolescent years, says that a belief in a future life with possible rewards and punishment is good for the world. This gentleman, you will notice, hasn't observed that the world has grown up, and grown out of the nursery notion of—a pennyworth of sweets for being good, and a slapping for being bad.

The Rev. K. A. Saunders, a Congregationalist of Richmond, believes that Sunday school methods, and especially the teaching of the Old Testament, were wrong. The child, he thinks, gets an early impression, through mistaken teaching, that religion is unreal and fantastic. We think that indicates how acute the child's intelligence is before pious dope from adults has had a chance to deaden it properly! The children's impression of religious teachers, says the reverend gentleman, is that they meant well, but didn't know much, that they (the teachers) cared a good deal for the Bible and goodness, but did not care much for truth. That sort of impression, says Mr. Saunders, is fatal in a scientific age. "We are in grave danger of losing the respect of the educated public." We can assure Mr. Saunders that there is no "grave danger" floating around. He and his tribe have already lost the respect of the educated



public. The reverend gentleman's remedy appears to be that of so re-interpreting the Old Testament that it will no longer repel (shall we say?) the better educated minds of to-day. From this the reader will know that Mr. Saunders is a worthy member of the M.O.M.T., which means Modern Order of Mental Thimblerriggers.

As all good men and true know (alas!), Christianity would have transformed the world, if only it had been tried, and if only Christians were able to practise their creed. There is another thing, it appears, with the "if only" drawback, and this is Rotary. A weekly journal reminds Rotarians that so long as ideals are merely words and aspirations, they "cut no ice." Rotary, we learn, holding 144,000 meetings each year, "could change the face of the world, if it made active efforts to transform its professions into actions." Well, the Rotary Movement has a good few parsons in it, and it is declared to have a Christian basis. Perhaps this explains why it suffers from the "if only" disease. For our part, we cherish no illusion about Rotary transforming the world. Movements with windy aspirations and ideals, have been, and are, common enough. But we have yet to notice that the world has derived any benefit from them. One characteristic of Rotary is, we note, that members wax benevolent and "aspirationary" after they have lunched well. But spasmodic benevolence and lunch-inspired aspirations are not the kind of things by which a world is transformed.

Mr. J. C. King, president of the Newspaper Society, said at the annual dinner of the society:—

The day is far distant, I hope, when the Press will be a series of loud-speakers to carry the voice of one man or a group of men, no matter how high the ideals which animate the man or the group. The best safeguard for British democracy is the continued existence of unfettered and independent organs of public opinion.

In commenting on this, Mr. A. G. Gardiner reminds one that Sir William Berry has acquired the Aberdeen group of newspapers, and already owns the Derby *Daily Express*, the Newcastle *Chronicle* Press, and much of the Hulton publications. Lord Rothermere, too, owns, a considerable number of provincial publications. "A.G.G." adds that the Press is not a mere manufacturing industry. It makes public opinion. It controls what we shall read, and, more important still, what we shall not read. It can "doctor" our news from home and abroad, can fill us with prejudices on this subject and passions on that. A power like this, he says, is a power over the State. It is a power over men's lives. If the power is distributed, as it used to be, if it is exercised by men we know in our own communities, if, in a word, it is "unfettered and independent," an instructed public opinion emerges from the clash of many points of view.

But the holding of this enormous power, says Mr. Gardiner, in a few hands, even in one or two hands, as is fast coming to be the case, threatens the whole democratic institution. None of the financial magnates buying up the Press has any moral or intellectual claim to wield the enormous power over the nation that these operations give them. They are unknown to the public, unelected by the public; they have never done anything in the public service that gives any assurance of capacity to serve or of a desire to serve disinterestedly. Yet they are our masters. Their control of public opinion makes them masters of the politician, who will pay their price for power.

The Churches and allied associations are doing their utmost in support of the Sunday Trading Restrictions Bill. The Sabbatarians pretend to be primarily interested in getting for shop-keepers and their assistants a free Sunday. What nauseating cant that is! The parsons' chief concern with prohibiting Sunday trading is that Sunday is a "sacred" day, and that trading on that day interferes with the Churches' business. We should like to see a clause added to the Bill, permitting

every shop to open on Sunday, provided it closed one whole day a week as well as the weekly half-holiday. The insertion of such option clause would force the Sabbath fanatics to drop their particular piece of cant, and to centre on their real objection.

No doubt the parsons would object to the optional closing day, on the grounds that Sunday should be the closing day for all, to allow religious traders and their assistants opportunity for attending church services. But there would be nothing to prevent the Churches supplying a full service on a certain day in the week to meet any demand that might arise. After all, there could be no Christian objection to using any day of the week as a Sabbath. The Bible only ordains "rest and worship" on one day in seven, and this need not necessarily be man's calendar Sunday. We should like to see the option clause inserted in the Bill.

Since writing the foregoing, we see that Sir Gerald du Maurier has been objecting to the English Sunday. Theatres, he thinks, should be permitted to open on Sunday, if that is their wish. Why, he adds, "should not people be allowed to open their shops on a Sunday, and, if they want to do so, to close on a Monday?" The answer to this is that there is no reason, save that of primitive religious taboo, why they should not open on Sunday. The objection comes from a noisy and well organized minority, who delight in placing restrictions on everyone's freedom except their own. And the politicians are mortally afraid of offending the religious voter.

An enquiry, says Dr. T. R. Glover, was made during the war as to what the Army thought of religion. A "Commission," made up of representatives of the Churches, asked everyone available, including padres, voluntary Y.M.C.A. workers, women, and private soldiers. From the data collected the Commission estimated that 25 per cent. of the army "might care for, and be interested in," or "might have some use for" religion; and 75 per cent probably did not. Dr. Glover goes on to say that 75 per cent. of boys and girls of England who have attended day-schools have been in the Sunday schools. Hence, 75 per cent. of the Army had been at some time in Sunday schools. And if only 25 per cent. still were concerned with religion, it followed that half the Army—half the men of England—after a training in the Sunday schools, had in the main done with religion. "Not a cheering figure," says the Doctor.

Dr. Glover puts the blame for this awful state of affairs on the Sunday schools. The teaching had failed to occupy the mind—too often it "did not recognize the mind." The schools have failed to recognize the progress in education, and the modern movements of mind; they have "sinned against youth by ignorance and irrelevance." We, however, would put the "blame" on the spread of education, the dissemination of scientific conceptions and knowledge, the improvement in average intelligence, and, to some extent, the permeation of Freethought criticism and ideas. If our diagnosis is correct, we fear that Dr. Glover's suggested improvements of the Sunday school will be of little avail for preventing or arresting the irreligious stampede. Primitive superstitions have a long life, but not life everlasting.

### A Thought for Whitsuntide.

THE success of our Movement depends upon each of us doing something. If you are already doing something, can you persuade a Freethinking friend to do something also? You weaken the Churches by what you do, but you help the Churches by not doing anything.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—H. Holt, £5 5s.; Libra, £1.

J. L. CACHET (Pretoria).—Mr. Cohen is pleased to have your appreciation of his articles.

J. BROWN.—Thanks. The paragraph may have been written in either ignorance or malice. Perhaps there was in it a little of both.

LIBRA.—Shall look forward to meeting you at Liverpool.

F. HAUGHTON.—Thanks for report. Pleased to hear of the success of the meetings.

R. CHAPMAN.—Glad to know that things have gone satisfactorily.

J. PRIOR.—Thanks. It is quite possible that the *Freethinker* inspired the paragraph. Many journalists know that the *Freethinker* is "damned good to steal from." But, of course, the borrowing must not be acknowledged or the paper mentioned by name. The pretence that Materialism is dead, Atheism non-existent, and that no such paper as the *Freethinker* exists must be kept up. Where Christians are genuinely interested in their religion, it is hard for them to abstain from lying either directly or by implication.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

Visitors to Liverpool for the Conference, and who arrive on Saturday evening, will please make their way to the Washington Hotel, Lime Street. The President and others will be there to receive them from 7 o'clock.

The Conference business meetings will be held at 10.30 and 2.30. This is for members only, who will be admitted on presentation of their membership card. Between the morning and afternoon sessions there will be a luncheon provided at a charge of 3s. 6d. In the evening there will be a public demonstration, in the Pictou Hall, at which the President will take the chair, supported by various speakers. Admission to this is free, but there are a number of reserved seats at 1s. We should like every Freethinker who comes to make an effort to bring a Christian friend with him. The chair will be taken at 7 p.m.

On Monday there will be an excursion to Chester. The charge for this will be 9s. 3d., which will include train fare, trip up the river, dinner and tea. Chester is one of the most interesting old cities in Britain, and will well repay a visit. Mr. Cohen hopes to be able to accompany the party.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle writes:—

I notice that you state in your columns that I accept pyramidal prophecies, and that I prophesied that some dire event would happen on May 29. There is not a word of truth in this. How can you justify it?

The complaint is based on a paragraph which appeared in "Acid Drops," and on reading it again we regret it was so phrased as to lend itself to the inference that Sir Arthur identified himself with the Rev. Walter Wynne's pyramidal prophecies. We intended what we said to cover only the portion of the prophecies which were concerned with the terrible happenings at hand, and prophecies which had been confirmed "by a number of spirits of the very highest grades." The authority for this is found in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's own pamphlet, *A Word of Warning*, in which we are told, on the authority of communications from the spirit world, that unless there is some sweeping change of heart terrible disasters will arise. "The date of this crisis would be soon, it would take the form of political and natural convulsions, and its effect would be absolutely shattering." This seemed to us to quite fall into line with Mr. Wynne's prophecies. The difference between the two is that Sir Arthur's forecast is based on spirit communications, that of Mr. Wynne's on fantastical readings of pyramid measurements. But we regret that the distinction was not more clearly stated in the paragraph in question. Sir Arthur is not a follower of the pyramid cult.

The *Daily Sketch* is not quite up to date in its law. In its issue for May 18, in the course of a leading article, it informed its readers that:—

If a man left a fortune to an organization, whose avowed object was the undermining of Christianity, his will would probably be upset on the ground that it was contrary to public policy.

This is absolutely wrong. The highest legal tribunal in the land, the House of Lords, decided, no later than 1917, that such a bequest was absolutely legal, and the Courts would enforce it. The law of England to-day is that a bequest left to the National Secular Society or to the Secular Society, Limited, is as secure and as valid as a bequest left to any of the Churches. In the House of Lords case, Bowman versus Secular Society, Limited, the foolish dictum that Christianity was part of the law of England, and must not be attacked, was simply ridiculed out of existence. There is no judge in England to-day who would attempt to revive that theory. It is true the Blasphemy Laws are still in existence, but the present law of Blasphemy does not say it is illegal to attack Christianity or to undermine it, it merely says that the object of the criticism must not be that of mere ridicule or mere vilification. Finally, we may remind the *Daily Sketch* that during the past dozen years many thousands of pounds have been received by Freethought organizations from bequests, and some of them have been paid over by the Public Trustee.

Mr. Mann, as Secretary of the Secular Society, Limited, at once wrote the *Daily Sketch*, correcting the above version of the law regarding bequests. The letter will probably appear after this issue of the *Freethinker* has gone to press.

We congratulate the Bingley (Yorks) Parks and Allotments Committee on having the rare courage to stand up to the clergy. The "clergy and ministers" asked for permission to give an address between the band performances; this has been refused. Previously the same request was turned down by the Council. We should like to see other Councils have the same courage and sense of public duty. It is a piece of confounded impudence for these men, finding that a number of men and women have gathered together to listen to a musical entertainment, to thrust themselves in to deliver a religious address, which as often as not is a direct insult to a civilized intelligence. Please note that the request was made by the "clergy and ministers" of the district. Trust the clergy and ministers to be united where it is a question of plundering or imposing on the public.



We are glad to note the following in *The Wireless Constructor* :—

Marvellous to relate, the B.B.C at long last has been impressed by the growing public demand for brighter programmes on Sunday. The previous assumption that to cater for the "nonconformist conscience" alone was good business, is now being modified under a mass of new evidence that the bulk of listeners are not practising members of any religious communion, and are heartily tired of being forced to take religion or nothing for their Sunday Radio fare.

There is hope also during the time church services are going out, some stations will radiate alternative programmes of music or literature. The humanizing of the British wireless Sunday is long overdue. These are small but significant beginnings.

We are glad to see that the campaign which we initiated over two years ago is having its effects. The B.B.C. was partly jockeyed into the false position in which it finds itself by the fact that the Churches and Chapels got busy, while others remained quiet. The result was that the B.B.C. was influenced by manufactured demands for religious services into putting back the humanistic clock for nearly a generation. The result was we had the curious spectacle that while the world was rapidly throwing off the demoralizing influence of the British Puritan Sunday, the newest of scientific inventions was doing its best to drag us back to the atmosphere of the seventeenth century.

For this Freethinkers had themselves largely to blame. As we have often pointed out, Freethinkers have got too much in the habit of taking Christian arrogance for granted, and regarding the unfair treatment of themselves as quite in the proper order of events. For that reason we urged Freethinkers all over the country to let the B.B.C. know that they were alive, and did not want the incredibly stupid things sent out on Sunday in the name of religion. And we advise them, again, to keep it up. The Churches and Chapels will bring every ounce of influence they can to bear. We must do the same, and if we do all we might do, it is likely the result will astonish the "Praise-God-Barebones" crew who care for nothing so long as their professional interests are conserved.

### The Death Penalty for Heresy.

A CARDINAL was speculating some few days ago on the chance of a King of England having doubts about his Protestant faith and being wishful for the Church of Rome. To coerce a king in circumstances like these perturbed the prelate very much, and he gave a display of sweet reasonableness and charity altogether desirable. What I admire about the Cardinal is his cocksure notion that the British newspaper reading public has little knowledge of his Church, and his willingness to base his case on sheer ignorance. There never was a cardinal who did not bank on the people's ignorance, but it requires a certain amount of "face" to carry it through nowadays. And it suggests also that the Church of Rome thinks there is a slackening of the vigilance that has hitherto kept it somewhat civil, in England, at least, and that there is an opportunity to push on with the establishment of the spiritual and temporal supremacy of the Popes of Rome. For in spite of the Cardinal's tolerant attitude, when it suits his purpose, the Church of Rome has not surrendered a particle of its claim to decide the destiny of both nations and individuals, here as well as in the Catholic hereafter. Dr. G. G. Coulton, the Cambridge Professor of History, two or three years ago, gathered together the evidence for the Church's claim to enforce the penalty of death for heresy, and he proved conclusively that Rome has still the medieval outlook on Freethinking which lit the fires of the stake and inspired St. Bartholomew massacres and wars of extermination. She is ready to apply, logically, the doctrine of salvation by faith, which involves the

slaying of every heretic who might, by his example, lure the faithful and subject them to the chance of hell-fire. The concern for a king's conscience is cover for an advance, however slight, against the conscience of everyone outside the Roman Church, an advance against the mental and physical freedom of mankind.

Dr. Coulton is a writer with an abounding knowledge of medieval life and a meticulous concern for accuracy. Those who are acquainted with his encounters with prominent priests of the Roman faith, and with laymen of the Belloc type, know that the truth of any matter under discussion is his first and only consideration. A Belloc, slippery and brilliant, may well inspire murderous impulses in an opponent of his, but Dr. Coulton disposes of the Roman acrobatic champion by possessing a much wider knowledge of Church and social history, and by having a truer and more nicely balanced reasoning faculty than the child of the Church. In *The Death Penalty for Heresy*, he covers the ground from 1184 to the year 1921. Hardly anyone outside the Roman Catholic Church needs convincing that Rome burnt heretics; she did it, although she has always dodged admitting it. A contemporary of Saint Thomas put it that "the Pope does not execute anyone or order him to be put to death; heretics are executed by the law which the Pope tolerates; they particularly cause their own death by committing crimes which merit death." Her apologists now plead that it was the secular arm that put the victims of the Spanish Inquisition to death, forgetting to state that the dread threat of excommunication was held over the secular judge to enforce obedience to the Church's desire for death. But in places where instant and forcible protest is not likely to be forthcoming, Rome shows her hand. The example nearest to us in time, quoted by Professor Coulton, is that of Cardinal L. Billot, S.J., formerly Professor at the Gregorian University at Rome. The fourth edition of a book of his was published in 1921 with the usual official imprimatur, and in it the text "Compel them to come in" is justified. There is no remedy for heresy, he says, but "the laws which reigned in the Middle Ages against heretics and their abettors. . . Therefore we must say that material force is rightly employed to protect religion, to coerce those who disturb it, and generally speaking, to remove those things which impede our spiritual aim. Nay, that force can have no more noble use than this." Another professor in the same university, Father de Luca, published a couple of volumes in 1901, *Institutiones Juris Ecclesiastici Publici*, which were issued with the Pope's blessing, or benediction, or whatever the technical term is. In them he harks back to one doughty defender of the faith, the Blessed Robert Bellarmine, and quotes him with gusto. "Experience teaches that there is no other remedy; for the Church has gone forward and has tried every remedy; first she did but excommunicate; then exile; at last she was compelled to come to death; for heretics scorn excommunication and call it a cold thunderbolt; if you threaten a fine, they neither fear God nor regard man, knowing that there will be no lack of fools to believe in them and to support; if you shut them in prison or send them into exile, they corrupt their neighbours by speech or distant folk by books; therefore the only remedy is to send them without delay to their own place." When it is considered that Rome claims as its subjects everyone who has undergone baptism, whether it has been done in the Church or outside it, the potential inhabitants of "their own place" will be a fairly large assembly. Baptism is an inalienable Church possession. Protestants may practise it, but every operation ushers



another soul into the fold of Rome. And although the unconscious member of the papal family had never heard of Rome, he is adjudged in error, and subject to the penalty reserved for heresy. The Spanish Inquisition burnt English sailors who fell into its clutches, on that very account.

It has been pointed out that in 1917 a new Codex of Roman Catholic Church law abrogated the penalty attached to heresy. "It is, for practical purposes," says Professor Coulton, "like the promise of an octogenarian that he will not attempt to birch his son of forty" . . . "a not very straightforward change of policy, resting on purely opportunist and temporary grounds." For the principle has not been given up; the value of a statement tucked away in an obscure document, and which is not alluded to in subsequent additions to the Catholic Encyclopedia, carries little weight. For just as the Pope formulated the change, so he could decree a return to the age-old practice of the Church at any time. It is true that in England and Ireland, where the power of the Church is more under the surface of things than in other countries, she is indignant that a charge of being favourable to the use of force, even to the point of death, should be brought against her. The Irish prelates issued a manifesto on the subject a hundred years ago, wherein they professed their peaceful nature, and declared their loyalty to the throne. In England, priests of the propaganda department deny that Rome looks with longing to the burning days. In both cases the denial is purely diplomatic. Rome has not openly given up the right of punishing heretics with death. Neither has she relinquished her claims to temporal power and independence. Spurgeon, the Victorian preacher of damnation, said that no religion which had had the power, refrained from persecution; they only needed the means and opportunity to begin. And Rome, past mistress in iniquity, will not be behind her numerous offspring if that day of supremacy arrives.

H. B. DODDS.

### The Popery Bluff.

THE question of the Popery menace, raised by Mr. H. Cutner, is certainly one that cannot be disregarded by Freethinkers, in view of the energetic propaganda on the part of the Romish Church. So long as this Church maintains anything like the strength that it has, it will remain a nuisance. For, among all the sects of Christendom, it is the most determined opponent of progress and civilization, the most deadly enemy to knowledge and enlightenment. But it is really such a menace as we are sometimes inclined to suppose? How far is its present aggressiveness bluff?

Although Protestants and Catholics hate each other with the virulence peculiar to Christians, they are at one in influencing the Press so that it is almost impossible for a sceptic to express himself in any newspaper. To expect fair play from Christians is, of course, hopeless. Their brutal ferocity when they have the upper hand is only matched by their mean cowardice when they have not.

The fact that the Freethinker could make "mince-meat" of the best protagonist that the Roman Catholics can put forward hardly needs stating; and this is why Messrs. G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc dare not express themselves where there is any chance of their being replied to on equal terms. They are typical Christian cowards. They dare only write on religion when they can sneak behind a partial editor who will see to it that the other side is muzzled. For example, neither of them would come

forward in the columns of the *Freethinker*, although they would be given a free field and no favour. But they would not stand the ghost of a chance, and they know it.

My own opinion of these two gentlemen is that they know better, but they have discovered that the Catholic pose is a highly profitable, journalistic stunt. These men are not fools, neither are they ignorant. They are under no illusions as to the real nature of the "bunk" that they write on these lines. Mr. Chesterton no more believes that a priest can conjure a bit of bread into God than I do. Mr. Belloc is as well aware of the actual cause of the Massacre of St. Bartholemew, and of the real nature of the Inquisition, as I am. But they know that the majority of the people who read them are ill-informed on these matters. Thus they do not hesitate to distort facts and misrepresent history whenever it suits their purpose. In this they follow the recognized practice of the Great Lying Church to which they belong, a Church whose pretensions are based upon forgery and perpetuated by falsehood, fraud and imposture.

But are their efforts really productive to any large extent of the effects intended? I doubt it. They appeal only to the faithful, and these are in a decreasing minority. The statistics of religion in this country are interesting and instructive, and are worth considering in this connexion. The following figures are provided by the churches themselves. They do not err, therefore, on the pessimistic side. In respect of the Church of Rome, the whole populations of its dioceses are given. It is the Catholic practice to include every new-born babe of Catholic parentage, and never to strike off any seceders. Thus these figures are not a true indication of the Catholic strength. In the case of other sects, the numbers of adults are given first, the Sunday school children second, and the totals in brackets. They refer to Great Britain only.

Church of England, and in Wales, 2,457,377; 2,087,285; (4,544,662): Roman Catholics, 2,030,855; Wesleyan Methodists, 490,118; 840,205; (1,330,323): Congregationalists, 451,229; 605,796; (1,057,025): Church of Scotland, 760,173; 196,445; (956,618): United Free Church of Scotland, 534,950; 192,623; (727,573): Baptists, 413,841; 530,782; (944,623): Primitive Methodists, 216,597; 407,528; (624,125): Calvinistic Methodist Church of Wales, 188,970; 160,721; (349,691): Presbyterian Church of England, 85,054; 63,423; (148,477): United Methodist Church, 148,543; 253,245; (401,788): Christian Scientists, 16,349; 18,555; (34,904): Independent Methodists, 10,067; 24,758; (34,825): Quakers, 18,691; 15,495; (34,186): Wesleyan Reform Union, 8,399; 22,219; (30,678): Moravians, 3,083; 3,786; (6,869): Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, 1,698; 2,600; (4,298). There remain the Salvation Army and a small number of insignificant, freak sects. The "Army" undoubtedly includes among its "soldiers" a large number who belong to other sects, and thus likely to be counted twice. Its published figures are no more reliable than the Catholic, and we shall therefore be generous if we allot to them, and the petty sects, a round 100,000. The Protestants number 5,805,139 adults and 5,425,466 children = 11,230,605; the Roman Catholics, 2,030,855; and the Salvation Army, etc., 100,000. Total, 13,361,460.

Compare these figures with those of twenty-five years ago, which I have not the space to give here, and it will be found that, in relation to the population, there is a steady and enormous falling off from the churches. There is good reason to believe that this will continue until the professional mystery-



mongers are compelled to turn to a more honest mode of livelihood from sheer lack of supporters.

It is the experience of every Freethinker that there is a considerable number, mostly men, who attend church or chapel, not because they have any religious belief, but for various other reasons, business or domestic. How many must we deduct from the total on this account? It will also be noted that the number of children is nearly equal to that of the adults. If we could thus separate the Catholics, the children would probably outnumber the adults. Can the churches, in view of their anxiety to show the largest possible numbers of adherents, claim twelve millions, half of them children? How many of these children, who are now compelled to go to church and Sunday school, will continue to do so when they are old enough to please themselves? Further, the majority of adult church-goers are middle-aged or advanced in years. Will they be replaced by the coming generation in anything like equal numbers? It is safe to assume that they will not.

The population of Great Britain is upwards of forty-three millions. We may conclude that of these about one-fourth (consisting half of elderly folk and half of children) only, may properly be called Christian. The fact then remains that the great majority of the people of this country can in no sense be regarded as Christian, though most of them might, if pressed, describe themselves as such for lack of a better designation.

It is true that this decline is not due to intelligent scepticism, but rather to an ignorant indifference. Everyone can read nowadays, but it is quite easy to ascertain that the average man seldom reads anything worth reading. He knows little more concerning the true facts of the world he lives in than did his grandparents. His knowledge of science, of history, of foreign countries, of literature, might be set forth in a space no larger than is occupied by this article; and then it would be found to amount to next to nothing so far as his ability to sum it up into a coherent conclusion is concerned. In a word, despite our much vaunted popular education, he is ignorant.

Ignorance is the soil in which religion grows and luxuriates. None knows this better than the Romish priests. If they can take advantage of it and find a way of attracting increasing numbers of those who are indifferent, then the Church may become a menace once again. But can they, and will it? I am inclined to think that the average man of this generation finds that he can do very well without religion, apart from any informed, or intelligent, views on the subject one way or the other. The young people, children of indifferent parents, will not go to church to be bored with a lot of tedious and meaningless rigmarole. Thus they will stay outside the churches in increasing numbers, and example spreads. My view is that this indifference, ignorant though it is, is a more deadly menace to the churches than all the Freethought propaganda, though I do not wish to be understood as deprecating this in the slightest degree. The public at large will not come to our lectures, but also it will not go to church.

E. J. LAMEL.

"In that fair and pleasant land  
Lo He sits on God's right hand."  
So Parson said: it worried me,  
Remembering the Trinity,  
How God the Father, God the Son,  
And God the Spirit are but one!

The explanation must be that  
His God is quite an acrobat.

JOHN H. HEWITT.

## The Shadow Show.

"For in and out, above, about, below,  
'Tis nothing but a magic shadow show,  
Played in a box—whose candle is the sun,  
Round which we phantom figures come—and go."

OMAR KHAYYAM.

### THIS WEEK'S NEWS REEL.

Sing a song of Debuntantes in their limousine, a hundred haughty hoydens, kow-towing to the Queen; When the Show was opened and they played "God Save the King," why, the Labour Mayor of Deptford was "thrilled like anything!"

Prince Carol's very hurt because Jix put him through the hoop. He's had to fly from England and *Lupescu the Loop!* He must behave in Belgium or else he'll find he's barred. There's a serious Indictment of the Police at Scotland Yard, and a lot of ugly rumours about the C.I.D., whose methods now resemble the Yankee "Third Degree." Jix promised an Enquiry—at present all is dark, *but don't talk Economics with a Lady in the Park!* It's a risky proposition, and though you speak the truth, you may get hauled to Bow Street by an extra zealous sleuth!

Sir Arthur Keith's new bombshell has upset Cantaur (Randall) because he said the Life of Man went out just like a candle! And Bishop Barnes of Birmingham is most perturbed as well, for if the Scientist is right, there'll be no Heaven or Hell! It's a blasphemous assertion for Sir Arthur Keith to make, he's lucky to escape the rack and torture at the stake. If he'd veiled it all in verbiage, they wouldn't care for Keith, but his uncompromising statement has made 'em gnash their teeth!

Dean Inge, that Fearless Thinker, who occupies St. Paul's, at Oxford spoke what Workhouses so rudely class as—Rot! (and if you think the metre's changed, I emphasize it's not). He jeered at all the Workers, did the Reverend Dean on Monday, thought he praised a Lowly Carpenter (to earn his screw) on Sunday! While Bishop Hensley Henson says this Country's going to Ruin, and he wants a New Revival—I'm afraid there's "nothin' doin'!"

The Season's started with a swing, and Margot's written a novel, while Ju-Ju men still fool their dupes who on their kneecaps grovel. The Miners tighten up their belts, cat burglars keep on robbing, the Chinese Puzzle worsens and the drums of war are throbbing. Freethinkers meet this Sunday for their Yearly Jamboree. Alas! in post-war England, it's only Thought that's Free! If Medicine-Men would do so, they'd ban our Conference, the *only* Sunday Meeting where men talk common sense. But the Freethought Flag flies proudly—despite the Church's ban. We need no gods to worship. Our Homage goes to Man!

### THE PAST PANORAMA.

May 27, Whit-Sunday. The Feast day of Julius Martyr, St. Bede—Father of the Church, and St. Mary Magdalene of Pozzi. Quite a full programme of Mumbo Jumboism to-day, my hearties, on our panorama.

Once upon a time, on this date or thereabouts, the Sacred Spook did his stuff and reversed the unfortunate incident which occurred at the building of Babel. You will doubtless recall that the impious builders of the Tower were frustrated by God Almighty in their project of storming heaven. Justly resenting their attempt to menace his privacy, he cursed the presumptuous creatures with a confusion of tongues—known as Babbble to this day. About a thousand years afterwards, however, according to the veracious chroniclers, God reversed the process on the day of Pentecost, and the disciples, who were unlettered Galileans, were presented free, gratis and for nothing, with a lightning language course that knocks spots off the Linguaphone, Hugo, and Pelman systems.

"There appeared unto them," says the local reporter of *The Nazareth News* (with which is incorporated the *Capernaum Chronicle* and *Bethlehem Advertiser*) "there appeared unto them, cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." It sounds deucedly



unpleasant, but it doesn't seem to have fazed the disciples much, for they promptly indulged in a little airy bandinage and light chit-chat in the languages of the "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, not forgetting the dwellers in Mesopotamia!" And just to show what a thoroughly comprehensive language course Jehovah's was, they exchanged a few well-chosen words with "the dwellers of Cappadocia in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphilia in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene."

Just to prove that their newly acquired linguistic achievements were of sound commercial value, they also chatted in Latin to the strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, to say nothing of brisk back-chat with the Cretes and Arabians. To paraphrase the Scotsman on Burns' Nicht: "Whaur's your Monsieur Hugo noo?" On this date also, in 328, the Empress Helena claimed to have found the True Cross at Jerusalem. I've seen a piece of it. When I lived at Jerusalem some years ago I was a frequent visitor to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—one of the best arguments for Atheism I have yet encountered, incidentally. I was shown, as a great favour, by the bewhiskered Witch Doctor in charge of St. Helena's Chapel, a piece of the "true cross," which that saintly lady discovered in dramatic circumstances. It was a faded chip of wood about three inches long, set in a massive golden cross literally encrusted with jewels. At a modest computation the number of pieces of the "true cross" in existence support the theory that Christ was crucified on a cross three times higher than the Nelson Column!

On this date, in 1199, John Lockland was crowned King of England. He was one of the few thoroughly had monarchs that have not been whitewashed with the passing of the centuries. He seems to have suffered even in those days from the haphazard methods of Laundrys, for it is on record that he lost his crown in the Wash!

On May 27, 1588, the Spanish Armada, consisting of 130 vessels and more than 50,000 men, sailed proudly forth from Lisbon to sweep the seas. They reckoned without Drake however, and a few days later he not only finished the game, but the arrogant hopes of Spain for world dominion. On this date, in 1738, was born Joseph Ignace Guillotin, whose name is inseparably connected with the hungry machine which he invented, and whose gaunt arms were raised starkly against the red sky of the Terror.

On this day too, in 1829, died Sir Humphrey Davy, the gentle natured physicist and scientist, inventor of the miner's safety lamp. A few years later, on the same date, in 1843, Noah Webster died. His name gains immortality through his massive dictionary, which carried on the tradition of our own Sam Johnson. It was only on this date, in 1871, that the Jews in Great Britain were relieved from the forced observance of the Christian Sunday. There is grim humour in the thought—but I doubt if it would appeal to our Lord's Day Observance bigots!

Curiously enough—such is the fascination of contrast on our Panorama—it was on this day, in 1893, that the Chicago World's Fair opened all day on Sunday, despite the torrential protests from the churches.

When we consider that Wembley was a failure, and that the bigots had their way, one wonders if our boasted modern freedom from the blighting hand of the Ju-Ju Man is as great as we think it is.

#### SAY IT WITH CLOCKWORK.

"We are even beginning to say our prayers by machinery," declared Mrs. Champion de Crespigny, at the Lyceum Club last week. The Angelus, which used to be called by a devout man, is now, at Westminster Cathedral, pronounced by clockwork, which has to be wound up periodically."—*Daily Paper*. Splendid! Now we shan't be long before the following incident will be commonplace:—

Mary had a gramophone,  
With which she used to play  
A lively Fox trot melody,  
To dance the hours away.

The Vicar called on Mary,  
Her frivolity to chide,  
But Mary turned the record  
And showed the other side.

Said she, "I say my prayers sir,  
This new invention's fine,  
The Lord's Prayer as a One Step  
Is perfectly divine!"

#### OUR DUSTBIN—RUBBISH MAY BE SHOT HERE.

"The Church of England ministers to the spiritual needs of the whole English People."

*George Bernard Shaw.*

"Attending Services on Sunday provides an intimate fellowship with God."—*Bishop of Blackburn.*

"It is blasphemy to the Almighty to turn out lads and lasses to work at 6 a.m."—*Ben Turner.*

"We want our good old English Sunday back again. Going to Church is one of the things our fathers did, that can, and should be good enough for us."

*Mr. H. H. Martin in the "Daily Express."*

"Cripples who have been cured, cancer cases who have been healed, and those who have suffered from deafness, defective sight, growths, and skin diseases will testify to our "Four Square" Gospel.

*Rev. Pastor Jeffreys.*

"The Cross cannot be defeated—for it is defeat."

*G. K. Chesterton.*

"The skirt to foil evil eyes has already been approved by the Roman Catholics in England and English Girl Scouts. The inventor, Mr. C. J. Mackenzie Kennedy, has the courage to upset the present feminine fashion of exposing too much leg, and is now going to Rome to submit it to Mussolini."—*Daily Express.*

"We hope and believe our prayers in the House of Commons are answered by Infinite Wisdom."

*Sir Thomas Inskip.*

THE SHOWMAN.

## Correspondence.

### A CORRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Kindly grant me space to say that your statement that I am "able to find money for the most lavish advertisements" of my biblical and Pyramid beliefs is absolutely false. I have not spent a penny piece in advertising my conclusions. They have cost me a lot of money. To write my latest book *The Sphinx Unveiled* cost me about £300. Do you think it aids your cause to make false statements? I don't ask you for comments on this letter. I must request you to publish it as written.

WALTER WYNN.

[Certainly nothing good is gained by any cause from false statements. Considerable gain is made from false statements, as witness the history of the Christian Church. But so far as Mr. Wynne is concerned we neither intended nor stated anything derogatory to him. But we did take it that he was concerned in the advertisements of the Pyramid theory we have seen, and we have no hesitation in expressing regret that we should have said that he was. But our comment on the amount of money spent in this direction casts no reflexion on any person's honour. It was intended as comment on the general level of intelligence when money could be found for what we regard as one of the wildest of delusions. It is no more against Mr. Wynne's personal character to have money spent on advertising his theories, than it is against ours to have money spent on advertising the *Freethinker*.—EDITOR.]



## MEXICO AND THE CHURCH.

SIR,—I have much appreciated your masterly treatment—in the last two issues of our paper—of the fight between the Mexican Government and the Roman Catholic Section of the Christian Sect established in that country. A rational criticism of the situation was much needed; and you have done it, with comparatively few words. Another proof of what commonsense can do—when freed from superstition and religious bias. One of the many factors which tend to prevent an occasional contributor from contributing, is to find—so often—that a question in which one takes an interest is dealt with in the *Freethinker* so much better than one could do it oneself!

The fight which is proceeding against the lawlessness of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico has also taken place—in varying degree—in the other countries of South America. In 1926, the more "advanced" countries—such as Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, were said to be "finally shaking off the domination of the Church." In the more "backward" countries, among them Bolivia, Peru, Columbia, Brazil, the worst of all Christian Churches still retains much of its stranglehold upon the people. There "the priests are drawn in large measure from the native populations. The priesthood offers an avenue of escape, the only such avenue, from crushing peonage." Incidentally, that is—in an increasing degree—the inducement to recruits to the clergy of the Anglican section in this country.

"The laws which Mexico is trying to enforce have been in effect in Ecuador for decades. No foreigner may conduct any religious ceremony. The Church property has been confiscated by the State. Divorce is easy. These things are so much a matter of course that there is no longer any discussion about them. The Church has been forced to practise some of the resignation it has hitherto preached to others."

In Brazil, "the priesthood is strong through its economic possessions."

These interesting items I have culled from an informing article by Arnold Roller, in *New Masses* for November, 1926.

I am glad, also, that you emphasized the point that—in "our" country—"the property of the Established Church is already State property, and that therefore, the State has the legal right to put that property to other than its present use if it so decides." That is the logical, the rational, the best, method of disestablishing the Church. I have often advocated that principle in political circles—generally with dialectically riotous results among those who are not mentally free.

ATHOS ZENO.

## Society News.

## MR. WHITEHEAD AT REGENT'S PARK AND BRIXTON.

MR. WHITEHEAD addressed a very successful meeting in Regent's Park, on Sunday, May 13, and for the rest of the week was in Brixton. The Brixton meetings were somewhat handicapped by wet weather, but all of them attracted most attentive audiences, which seemed well satisfied with the intellectual fare provided. The South London Branch, by its activities in the district, has killed all the noisy type of opposition, and excellent order accordingly prevailed. Mr. Corrigan chaired at every meeting, with tact and ability. Mr. Whitehead will be lecturing at Liverpool until Sunday, May 27, inclusive, and from Tuesday May 29 until June 1, in Victoria Square, Leeds.

## CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH.

THE Chester-le-Street Branch opened its summer campaign at Houghton-le-Spring, on May 15, and an audience of about 400 was addressed by Messrs. Brighton and Brown. There was plenty of opposition offered, but this was satisfactorily dealt with, and the members felt that a very good beginning had been made. A meeting has also been held at Darlington, and at both places it is felt that the prospects of forming Branches of the Society are good. It is the intention of the Branch to carry the gospel of Freethought all over this district

during the summer months, and the help of friends is earnestly requested.

A Faith Healing Mission was being conducted at Darlington, and the Branch challenged the conductor to debate. The challenge appeared in the *Northern Echo*, but was refused on the ground that as the Secular Society would not acknowledge the Bible as an authority there was no common ground for discussion. That means that unless you believe in faith healing, the "Healer," Mr. Horler, will not debate whether it is possible or not.—J.T.B.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

## LONDON.

## INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—No Service.

## OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park): No Meeting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, A Lecture; (Brockwell Park): 6.0—A Lecture. Wednesday, May 30 (Clapham Old Town): 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Thursday (Cooks Road, Kennington): 8.0, Mr. F. Mann—"Materialism and Life."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 3.0 and 7.0, Messrs. Hanson, Botting and Baker. Thursday, May 31, at 7.30, Various speakers.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart—A Lecture. 3.30 p.m., Messrs. Hyatt and Le Maine. 6.30 p.m., Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Maurice Maubrey. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30 p.m. Lecturers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Hart, Darby, Le Maine and others.

## COUNTRY.

## OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Meetings held in the Bull Ring on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 7 p.m.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road Entrance): 7.0, Mr. R. Atkinson.

FOR SALE—The late Mr. J. T. Lloyd's books: Lists on application. Apply: Miss PERKINS, 82a, Portsdown Road, Maida Vale, W.9.

GREAT YARMOUTH—Comfortable Apartments with full or part board; bed and breakfast; or rooms and attendance; 3 minutes sea. Terms moderate.—13 Beaconsfield Road.

YOUNG MAN, 20, clerical, urgently requires position; anything—WILLIAMS, 9 St. Annes Terrace, Aigburth, Liverpool.

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