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Views and Opinions.

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Science and a Future Life.

I AM dealing with the three selected by the Editor of the *Daily News* to represent the opposition, before coming to a criticism of the defenders of the belief in immortality, in order that my readers may see the motive underlying the selection. For just as twenty-one out of the twenty-four writers were selected because it was known they would defend the belief in immortality, so apparently, two of the three were chosen because it was known they were not likely to completely expose this particular superstition. The last one of the three, Professor Julian Huxley, is of a far more robust type than Mr. Arnold Bennett. As a practical scientist, he is secure from some of the absurdities of Mr. Bennett, and has a better appreciation of the point at issue. He asserts that "the mind is seen to be dependent not only on the brain, but on the whole chemical array of the ductless glands, and on the construction and working of the entire body . . . Mental and spiritual activity is not something separate from the outside, but a necessary activity of that kind of living matter." He also points out that, if we grant immortality to a man, there is no reason for withholding it from an orang-outang or dog, and if given to these, from a newt or a jelly-fish. That is quite clear, but one is just a little surprised to find this conclusion drawn:—

In other words, the body, which is the material frame of a human being, and the mind with which he thinks and feels, are only two aspects of the single reality, the living human individual himself.

But, in other words, nothing of the kind. The conclusion bears no relation to the premises. If "mental and spiritual activity" are dependent upon the activity of the brain, and the "chemical array of the ductless glands," then there is room for the conclusion that the two are causally connected, but how do we reach the conclusion that because of these things there is a third reality which is the human

individual himself? Does Professor Huxley mean that he believes in a kind of manikin which lives inside the organism and pulls the strings? If so, he is getting back to a disguised form of the animism of the primitive savage. But if the character, the activity, the disposition, the personality, we know is dependent upon the brain and the nervous system, what is the human individual apart from these things? The logic of it is quite hopeless. I wonder what Professor Huxley's grandfather would have had to say to this resurrection of the "quiddities" of the schoolmen?

"The hypothesis towards which I would lean," says Professor Huxley, "is,

that just as every scrap of material energy, whether lib rated by an engine, or the fall of a stone, a volcanic explosion or a steam-hammer, is never lost, but returns to the ever constant store of energy which is the source of all physical activity in the universe—so spiritual or mental activity is not lost, but all of it returns, in some way not yet understood, to a store or pool of spiritual reality which is the non-material counterpart of energy."

So, first we have body and mind, which are two aspects of a third thing, "reality," which is the genuine human individual, then, directly after, we have a pool or store of physical energy, with another pool or store of mental energy, each of which is apparently independent of the other, but which manage to work together in a kind of pre-established harmony, controlled by, I assume, another "pool or store" of some other kind of energy, about which we know nothing whatever. Off-hand, I should not wonder if a believer in the Athanasian Creed would ask what he is to gain by giving up the conundrum of orthodoxy in order to adopt that of heterodoxy. A more amusing mixture I have not come across for some time. These things do something to relieve philosophy from the charge of being dull. If Edward Lear were alive, he would be the one to put it into the nonsense-rhyme with which his name is so closely associated.

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Clouding the Issue.

But the "spiritual pool" will not do for anyone but a hard pressed, easily gulled Christian, ready to grasp at anything as an excuse for believing. In the first place, there is not the slightest analogy between the return of a specific form of energy to undifferentiated energy (I must not be made responsible for such an expression as this last one, I am merely following Professor Huxley) and the survival of a distinct personality. As I have so often pointed out, the question of immortality does not turn upon whether energy, or matter, or anything else is, in essence, indestructible, but whether the particular collocation of forces—whether drawn from one or a

dozen "pools"—which we know as John Smith, will continue to exist after he is dead. If Chapman Cohen continues to exist merely as an indistinguishable drop in a "pool," then Chapman Cohen ceases to be. If I am going to be transformed into something different from what I am now, then, too, I am extinct. I am quite sure that no one who knows me now would recognize me in some future state if I were transformed into another being with the physique of Dempsey or the mentality of the Bishop of London. Later in his essay Professor Huxley says:—

The idea of personal, individual survival, especially in any definite place, does seem to me to be ruled out. Our personalities are so based on body that it is really impossible to think of survival which would be in any true sense personal without a body of some sorts.

Now that is clear and precise. It quite rules out the survival of personality, which is the real question at issue. But in that case what is the meaning of the talk about mind and body being two aspects of a third reality which is the real man? If that is so, then the disappearance of body, or of mind, does not affect the existence of the "living human individual." If, however, personality is the expression of a particular aggregation of forces, no matter what their nature, how can that expression exist in the absence of the aggregation? It may sound very impolite, but it really is time that our scientists made up their minds either to write only about such things as they understand, or to write without bothering their heads whether they are giving offence to religious susceptibilities. Above all, one expects from scientists the same warranty for assumptions made that is demanded by science, and the same relation between premises and conclusions that ordinary logic requires.

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#### The Laudation of Mediocrity.

Before coming to a criticism of the articles championing the belief in immortality, it may not be waste of time to note the article written by the Editor of the *Daily News*, summing up the "debate." This essay appeared on June 30, and the writer expressed himself astonished at the brilliance of the articles and the high quality of the hundreds of letters received. On this latter point, one is reminded of the fellow diner with F. Burnand, the Editor of *Punch*, "I suppose, Mr. Burnand," he said "you receive a great many really humorous stories?" "Certainly," replied Burnand. "Well," asked his questioner, "why don't you publish some of them?" And it is a pity that the *Daily News* did not publish some of these brilliant letters. As it is, it appears to have been most unfortunate in the selection, and when the Editor confesses that hundreds of correspondents expressed themselves in the "simple phrases," "If you want the answer to this question, look in the Bible," or "The Bible is enough proof of immortality for me," one is left wondering what standard the Editor set himself in judging the quality of the correspondence. After that, however, one is not surprised to find him confessing that, in reading the correspondence, "one has been conscious of being in close contact with humanity itself. So much so that it seemed at times almost as if one were listening to the beating of the human heart." He would! Perhaps the game is given away by the statement that "The nature of the subject guaranteed that," and it might be cruel to suggest that any daily paper that opened its columns to any kind of religious correspondence might count on being bombarded by religious cranks from all parts of the

country. For there is no subject under the sun on which every fool and every fanatic feels himself so competent to give an authoritative opinion, as on this one. In any other subject, want of knowledge, the consciousness that some kind of preparation is required before a man ought to give an opinion, exists. In religion, the less a man knows the more certain he is.

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#### This Life and the Next.

This is, of course, all part of the scheme to present the subject of a future life as dominating men's minds, and to give ground for the triumphant assertion, "The majority, the overwhelming majority, believed in immortality." But is this really the case? Does the subject of a future life dominate men's thoughts? I know there is a literary, a pulpit tradition to that effect, just as the pulpit still keeps up the tradition that men die thinking about their eternal destination, in spite of the fact that the experience of nearly everyone proves that very few, when on their death-bed, trouble about the next world. But one does not find men in bus or train, or in general intercourse, talking about the matter, and it is a standing complaint of the clergy that men simply will not live as though they were immortal beings, likely at any moment to face their maker. So, too, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, in spite of the fact that most people have a liking for a mystery, and nearly everyone likes a clever conjuring trick, complains that the vast mass of people refuse to pay attention to the "proofs" that Spiritualists have of intercourse between the two worlds. Tell a man that a new oil field, or a new gold field has been discovered, and he is at once interested; and if it is near, a stampede sets in. Tell him that you have discovered a new proof of a future life, and he remains unmoved; while if you tell him you have discovered a short and easy way of getting there, he will look upon you as a lunatic. Men in the mass really care little about a future life, and hardly anyone is in a hurry to realize it. It is safe to say that men have a keen desire for wealth, for power, for fame, for position, because on all hands one sees them struggling for these things, and greeting their realization with every sign of satisfaction. But no one, be he ever so certain of his place in the next world, takes the announcement of an early transit there as "glad tidings of great joy." And the revolt of modern man against his time being taken up with concern about a future life is so marked that the Christian clergy on all sides are to-day driven to protest against the teaching that Christianity is chiefly concerned with a life beyond the grave. The theory that things are otherwise is a mere religious tradition. It is curious that at a time when the clergy are trying to keep this teaching in the background, the *Daily News* should strive to bring it to the front. Still, it is perhaps fitting that the paper should add this particular piece of "flapdoodle" to its elaborate imposture of a "Great Debate" in which twenty-one writers on the one side are selected and only three on the other, and which then proclaims triumphantly that the ayes have it.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Man is certainly stark mad; he cannot make a flea, yet he will be making gods by dozens.—*Montaigne*.

Heroism can save a nation in difficult circumstances, but it is the accumulation of little daily virtues that makes its grandeur.—*Gustave Le Bon*.

### William Watson.

"His eyes be like the starry lights—  
His voice like sounds of summer nights—  
In all his lovely mien let pierce  
The magic of the universe."—*Matthew Arnold.*

"I claim no place in the world of letters; I am, and will be, alone, as long as I live and after."—*Landor.*

COLLECTED works make or mar men's reputations, for so often they are dusty warehouses rather than golden treasuries. Beside the masterpiece comes the half-success; beside the permanent, the temporary, and sometimes the frankly fugitive. But nothing is more gratifying in these days of bubble reputations than to note the steady path along which the fame of William Watson has advanced. He owes his good fortune solely to the sterling merit of his work, for no one has done less to advertise it. Indeed, those who look back during the past half-century will be surprised to perceive how noiselessly this poet has crept into the hearts of lovers of literature.

No one can read his poems, from "The Prince's Quest," published nearly fifty years ago, to the very latest, *Selected Poems*, issued this week, without being struck with the amount of work of the classical quality of which there can be no question. To begin with, William Watson always sings with dignity on matters of high moment. It is not too much to say that "Wordsworth's Grave," "The Tomb of Burns," "In Laleham Churchyard," and "Shelley's Centenary," will be linked indissolubly with the memory of those great writers they celebrate, so penetrating is the insight into the genius of each poet. Maybe Watson's finest effort in this direction was his "Lachrymic Musarum," which made so notable a stir when Tennyson died. It ranks as one of the noblest poems we have had for many years, so worthily was that great theme of august death handled.

In nothing is William Watson's genius so bright as in his gift of language. His poems are a golden treasury of jewelled aphorisms. Take, for instance, the following felicities of expression:—

- "The mystery we make darker with a name."
- "Not in vague dreams of man forgetting men,  
Nor in vast morrows losing the to-day."
- "Now touching goal, now backward hurled,  
Toils the indomitable world."
- "Song is not Truth, not Wisdom, but the rose  
Upon Truth's lips, the light in Wisdom's eyes."
- "And set his heart upon the goal,  
Not on the prize."

When we remember what Catullus, what Lucretius, what Wordsworth, what Tennyson, what innumerable poets have sung in praise of Nature, we might well despair of hearing a new note. But Watson has a charm and power of his own, as his "Ode in May" shows:—

"What is so sweet and dear  
As a prosperous morn in May,  
The valiant prime of the day,  
And the dauntless youth of the year,  
When nothing asks for bliss,  
Asking aright, is denied  
And half of the world a bridegroom is,  
And half the world a bride."

Here is a couplet in "The First Skylark of Spring":—

"O high above this home of tears  
Eternal joy sing on!"

How unforgettable in its way is the following:—

"I beheld the waters in their might  
Writhe as a dragon by some great spell curbed  
And foiled; and one lone sail; and over me  
The everlasting taciturnity;  
The august, inhospitable, inhuman night  
Glittering magnificently unperturbed."

William Watson does not belong to the "Mooney School of Poetry." His humanity is beyond ques-

tion. In "The Purple East" and "A Year of Shame," he impeached Abdul, Sultan of Turkey. Was ever monarch attacked in such sonorous lines, with such rhetoric, sounding declamation, pictorial richness? These poems were written with a pen of flame, and they echoed in the brain and memory of the men who read them. For Watson never lacked courage, witness his own Freethought, "four square to all the winds that blow." It is playful in "The Eloping Angels," a satire worthy of Byron, and it is serious in "The Unknown God":—

"A god whose ghost in arch and aisle  
Yet haunts his temple—and his tomb;  
But follows in a little while  
Odin and Zeus to equal doom;  
A god of kindred seed and line;  
Man's giant shadow, hailed divine."

In a fine sonnet, addressed to Aubrey de Vere, the poet, he expressly voices negation:—

"Not mine your mystic creed; not mine in prayer  
And worship, at the ensanguined cross to kneel."

This well-balanced sanity is a distinguishing mark of Watson's verse. His eyes may rove round the heavens, but his feet are firmly planted on the earth. Listen! :—

"A life too great for folly,  
In a world too wise for wine,  
Is a life the saint or sage may love,  
But I cannot boast it mine  
If all by law were sober,  
And all by statute good,  
I could not breathe the impeccable air—  
And I would not if I could."

All through his literary career William Watson has, from a poet's watch-tower, watched passing events. It is a real tribute to say that his poetical contributions have been neither rhetorical nor dull. Compared to the official Laureate's later crudities, Kipling's hysterics, and the tin-trumpets of minor poetasters, the dignified lines of Watson are, at least, readable. Few real poets could write about contemporary politicians, and remain poets. Even Swinburne and Tennyson, living in an era of greater men, did not do this thing with impunity, and their political poems represent but the dregs of their genius.

The real trouble is that it is well-nigh impossible at present for a man to write exactly what he thinks, as a man, about men in authority, and yet point what he writes. This makes political poetry possible, but improbable, and gives point to the gibe that there is less freedom in Britain under the Guelphs than in ancient Rome under the Cæsars. William Watson's political poems are often white-hot with scornful fury, and the agony of the poet is reflected in his verse. But we also remember that this poet has given us of his best, and that is the highest kind of poetry. He is one of the singers of the English race who has held his ear close to the movements of the modern world, and brought away with him some sounding echoes of its music. Pulsome adulation of politicians may safely be left to other writers. Young University students, and the Editor of *Punch*, can do these little things admirably. We should prefer that a real poet was silent than that he should stammer in such a chorus. For, at its freest and best, Watson's verse has within it the deepest message known to the sons of men. "Though all else perish, the golden thought survives."  
MIMNERMUS.

### Not for Joe.

SAID Potiphar's wife, "Do not go,  
If you kiss me there's no one can know."  
"Although that may be truth,"  
Said the innocent youth,  
"I must beg to decline. Not for Joe."

S. SODDY.

## Things I'd Like to Know.

DOUBTLESS many students of the gospel narratives have, like myself, often been struck with the paucity of the details recorded in connexion with the important events they relate. There are so many things the curious mind would like to know, but upon which these narratives are strangely silent. What a meagre account, for instance, we are given of the person and character of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus Christ: who, considering his relationship to the chief actor upon the New Testament stage, was surely entitled to a little biographical notice. We are favoured with the long pedigree of Jesus Christ on the Paternal side, dating back hundreds of years, but of poor Joseph's life we are kept almost entirely in the dark. About the only thing we are told of him, is, that he was a carpenter; which isn't much of a guide as to his personality and character. A person's occupation has little to do with his mentality, which, after all, is about the only thing of interest in a human being. With such an illustrious apprentice as his adopted son, there must have been many little incidents in the workshop that were worthy of record.

Recently, I was spending a holiday in a little border town, and found myself in the repairing shop of a boot and shoe dealer. The rain outside was coming down in torrents, and my friend and I were glad of the shelter, as well as of the opportunity to pass the time in company. The old man and his assistant were hard at work, and leather, and old boots, and the tools of the trade were strewn all around. There are few pleasanter sensations than to sit and watch other people at work, and I would have been quite content to pass the morning in luxurious idleness. But, presently, with a gleam in his eye, remarking that he understood I sometimes used the pen, the old shoe-dealer put into my hands a large book of his own poems in manuscript. I was as surprised as I was delighted, and read them with a good deal of pleasure as the hours sped swiftly by. My reading was shortly interrupted by one of the ladies of the household putting her head in at the workshop door and wishing us a cheery "Good Morning." And I have since been wondering if any such pleasant little incident ever enlivened the monotony of Joseph's carpenter's shop at Nazareth. Did any of his old pals ever drop in to have a chat, and did he sometimes entertain casual visitors by a sight of his poems on the cedars of Lebanon, or the banks of the Jordan, similar to those of my old friend's on the sparkling waters of the Glen and the Till? Or did Mary ever put her head in at the workshop door to ask if he wanted anything brought from the town, or to tell him that dinner was ready? Was Joseph a student of the Messianic prophecies, and did he ever dream that these would find their culmination in the life and career of Mary's son? Was he a teetotaller, or did he nightly wend his way, after his day's work was done, to the select room of the "Pig and Whistle," to discuss the politics of the hour? To ask these questions is but to show how little we know of the real Joseph, and the inadequacy of the gospel records in the matter of biographical details.

There are many things, too, in connexion with the disciples that would have been of live, human interest. It is usual in religious circles to refer to them as the "fishermen of Galilee," but the "atmosphere" of their calling, anything suggestive of their trade, is entirely wanting. The inspired writers do not even attempt a description of their modest sea-craft, or inform us whether any of their boats were named the "Grace Darling," the "Saucy Sally," "Capernaum's Pride," or the "Maid of Galilee."

Did they wear oilskins and sou'westers, and did any sudden squalls ever necessitate the calling out of the lifeboat on a stormy, boisterous night? Did they ever put forth any of those heroic efforts in saving the lives of a shipwrecked crew, such as is common on our own treacherous coasts? Was life on the rolling wave, in those days, the patriotic theme of popular music-hall songs? Were they the kind of sailors that are reputed to have a wife in every port, and who excite the romantic fancy of every girl they see? Somehow the mean figure of Peter does not appeal to the imagination, nor inspire the poetic faculty to creative effort. Ecclesiastics tell us that bible-reading has gone out of fashion, and is it any wonder? The authors have omitted to record the very things that would have made their narratives readable and interesting. With such a splendid collection of sea stories in modern literature, one turns to the fanciful exploits of the Galilean fishermen with a feeling akin to weariness. If only the task had been undertaken, say, by a writer like W. W. Jacobs, the New Testament would have been in as great demand at the free libraries as a "best seller." But, perhaps, even the ingenuity of a W. W. Jacobs could not make an interesting "character" out of the sordid material of a Simon Peter.

And then, how little we know of the Virgin Mary. She occupies a place in Christian thought and literature out of all proportion to the mention accorded to her in the gospel narratives. Did she prove a good wife to Joseph, and remain faithful to him after her first lapse? What were her ideas of the claims and pretensions of her first-born? How did she regard his statement that "before Abraham was I am"? Did she neglect her wifely duties to follow him in his wanderings, and approve of the vagabond life he led? It is surely passing strange that the New Testament should be silent on such vital questions. According to the Catholic doctrine of the Assumption, Mary is now body and soul in heaven. And yet we are told nothing of her death, her resurrection, or her ascension. We know that Elijah ascended into heaven in a fiery chariot, and on the road up threw his mantle overboard in case it might get singed. But how did Mary get up to heaven? Did she go up in a balloon, or in a light aeroplane? Or was she provided with the wings of an angel that was proof against the unfavourable climatic conditions? If communication with the "other side" has been as definitely established, as Sir Conan Doyle alleges, surely an interview with Mary would be of greater interest than the usual twaddle with which we are favoured. She might be able to throw a good deal of light on the difficulties that are perplexing the Churches, and help the poor bishops in their dilemma with regard to the Prayer Book—unless, of course, she is a Roman Catholic, and regards all the Protestant sects as heretics.

Perhaps the most regrettable omissions are in respect to Jesus Christ himself. There have been thousands of "Lives of Christ" written—one writer recently put the number as 195,389—if he has copies of them all he will have a fairly extensive library—but it is impossible to construct anything like a consecutive history from the very fragmentary material that has come down to us. His entry upon the stage of life was, indeed, heralded by some little show of pageantry. We have recorded the visit of some wise men from the far East, who had been guided to his humble birthplace by a little twinkling, wandering star, which had probably been dismissed from a travelling group for failing to keep time to the music of the spheres. And then, we have the pastoral picture of the shepherd of the hills, alternately watching his flocks by night and dreaming of

someone "coming home"; and waking to find a group of angels in the air, in the midst of a flood of light, singing of his mysterious birth, and announcing that he had come to earth for the special purpose of making this mad, bad, sad world a fit place for heroes to live in. But, although so much is made in story and in song of Christ's birth, it is strange that we know nothing of his babyhood or childhood. One wonders whether Mary suckled this infant prodigy at the breast, or whether he was brought up upon the bottle. The feeding of infants occupies a large share of public attention at the present time, and it would have been interesting to learn whether Christ's first diet was afterwards changed to a course of "Robinson's Patent Barley," varied occasionally with a dish of "Force" or "Shredded Wheat." At what age did he first learn to talk, and what were the first words his infant lips learned to utter? Was it "Goo-Goo," or "Mamma," or "Dada," or did he start right off with a harangue about the Kingdom of God? I feel sure the junior readers of the *Freethinker* would have been pleased to read such details, and that they would have helped to keep alive the interest in the sacred book. Sometimes I think that if Jesus Christ had only had a little sister, his life would have been altogether different. Supposing, for instance, she had come across him, at the age of twelve, discussing with those learned doctors in the temple, one can imagine the way she would have cut their parleys short, with a—"Come on! standing talking to those old fogies! Mother won't half give it to you when we catch up to the company!" Even the nature of the questions which he discussed with those learned doctors has not been left on record. What school or college did he attend, or had he at that early age found some royal road to learning, the quest of which has baffled the teachers of mankind in all ages? Did he ever cheat at marbles, or have a stand-up fight with some bully in the school-yard? Did he ever play truant from Sunday school, and go a bird-nesting on the Sabbath afternoon? Did he ever steal any apples out of old Cohen's orchard, and tear his first pair of trousers in trying to escape over the fence? Was he ever chased by a bull in a meadow, or did he ever have an encounter with an enraged farmer, who caught him coming out of a turnip field? These things, I suppose, we will never know. And even the conflicting records of his three years wanderings will never now be "harmonized." If only some inquisitive Boswell with an eye for interesting details, had accompanied him on his travels, what a different record we would have had! I am sure that this Boswell would have told us a good deal about Christ's relations with Martha and Mary, for instance, which the inspired writers have discreetly left unsaid; and also of the other women who followed him from place to place. One can only hope that some day there may be discovered manuscripts, at present unknown, which will tell us of these things, and enable someone to write the life of Christ afresh, and put some human interest into the story.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

#### IN DESPONDENT MOOD.

"A crowned caprice is god of this world,  
On his stony breast his white wings furled;  
No ear to listen, no eye to see;  
No heart to feel for man hath he.  
But his pitiless arm is swift to smite;  
And his mute lips mutter one word of might,  
"Mid the clash of gentler souls and rougher,  
Wrong must thou do, or wrong must suffer.  
Then grant, oh dumb, blind god, at least that we  
Rather the sufferers than the doers be."

Grant Allen.

## The Truth about the Middle Ages.

CATHOLIC apologists are never tired of claiming that the Middle Ages—the Ages of Faith—when the Church was all-powerful, and the monks ruled in her name, were the ideal times, and we shall never achieve real happiness or prosperity until we return to the belief and practice which gave rise to them.

Then, according to the Catholic account, the Church was the protector of the peasant and the guardian of the poor. England was "Merry England," and everything was lovely. An ideal state of society had been reached, which was rudely disturbed and overthrown by the Protestant Reformation.

The average man is at a disadvantage here, for he has little, if any, knowledge of medieval times. His knowledge upon the subject probably extends no further than an acquaintance with Draper, an author who achieved the distinction of writing a history extending from 400 years before Christ to nearly 1900 after, without giving a single reference for his statements—a fact that Catholic critics are not slow to seize upon to discredit his work.

The Catholics had a further advantage in the fact that their priests are taught medieval history at their colleges—Catholic medieval history—and as the medieval writings are practically all in Latin, they could pick and choose whatever suited their purpose and proved their point, and ignore the rest. At least, so far as the average man is concerned.

But this happy state of affairs—for the Catholic apologist—has now passed away. The last few years have seen an immense advance in our knowledge of the Middle Ages. The veils which have for so long shrouded the medieval writers and teachers have been drawn aside and the actual truth revealed. Anyone who is interested enough in the subject, can now judge for himself upon all the matters for which Catholics make claim.

We have pointed out, in previous articles, the great work which Dr. Coulton has accomplished in this direction, in his *Medieval Studies*, and *The Medieval Village*, followed by the first volume of *Five Centuries of Religion*. We have now a further immense contribution in the second volume of this great work published by the Cambridge University Press (3rs. 6d.)

The first volume dealt with the period of 200 years between 1000—1200 A.D. This second volume comprises the following 200 years between 1200—1400 A.D., its sub-title being "The Friars and the Dead weight of tradition." The first volume was a portly affair of nearly 600 pages, but the present volume runs to over 700 pages! What the work will amount to by the time it is finished we can only conjecture. Dr. Coulton does not ask you to take anything upon trust, or upon his authority as a great scholar; he gives the actual words, and chapter and verse for them. The book is packed with quotations from medieval writers, preachers, letters and other documents.

As for the impudent claim that the Church abolished serfdom, Dr. Coulton observes:—

It has been asserted, again, with a boldness which has no excuse since the studies of Fournier and Brecht, that the gradual mitigation and the final extinction of servitude were mainly due to the Church, and especially to the monks. One of St. Gregory's letters is quoted in favour of this, while another is ignored which tells far more definitely in the other direction. No evidence has ever been produced (apart from one or two hints from the very earliest days of doubtful legend) for monks doing what lay lords and ladies fairly often did; that is, freeing considerable numbers of serfs, without pay-

ment, for the good of the owner's soul. For nearly all the monastic enfranchisements recorded, we have either explicit documentary evidence that the serf bought his liberty with hard cash, or have strong reasons to suspect it.—(G. G. Coulton: *Five Centuries of Religion*, Vol. 2, p. 77.)

As he further points out: Canon law—that is Church law—"explicitly forbade alienation of serfs as of any other kind of property . . . Serfdom, therefore, lasted longest of all on ecclesiastical, and especially monastic, estates; there were about 300,000 in France when the Revolution broke out. Consequently the monk shared, and justly shared, nearly all of such unpopularity as attached to landlordism in the Middle Ages." (p. 77.)

Another popular delusion, for which Catholic writers are responsible, but which Dr. Coulton explodes, is the idea that the monks were hard-working, self-supporting communities, who farmed their own lands and did their own house work. Nothing could be more false. He observes:—

The brethren kept many servants, quite apart from those who may be counted rather as workmen than as domestics. At Bury, about 1280, there were 111 servants to 80 monks; this is no extraordinary proportion. At the smaller house of Ramsey, about 1270, the total of abbey attendants was 95, of whom 57 were servants in the strict sense. At Glastonbury, in 1322, 60 monks had 60 servants, of whom we should count two or three as artisans nowadays, yet there was not one whose work could not easily have been done by the actual monks, if they had not lost the tradition of labouring for themselves. At Bitleden Abbey (Cistercian) the monks, 11 in number, were employing, in 1535, "servants 51, whereof hinds 24, waiting-servants 13, boys and children 9, women for dairy 4." At Evesham, about 1090, there were 55 resident monks, with 67 servants. At Meaux, in Yorkshire, about 1390, excluding the workmen, there remained "as many as 40 domestic servants; an inordinately numerous household, it would seem, for a family of 26 monks." Professor Savine reckons that, at the Dissolution, workmen and servants together outnumbered the monks three to one. Chapters General and visitors frequently condemn the superfluity of servants in the monasteries. (pp. 52-53.)

Another point upon which Catholic writers are very eloquent is the relief given to, and the care of, the poor and destitute. Here again the facts are the very opposite to the claims put forward. The monks extorted a great deal more from the peasants than they ever gave to the poor and destitute. Says Dr. Coulton:—

The peasant, then, knew the monk mainly as a lord not very different from other lords. Alms were given at the abbey gate, but far less than is commonly supposed; and, if these had been multiplied fourfold, they would not have equalled what the monks drew from their rights, hallowed by custom and law, of taking to their own use the greater part of the endowments of a large number of parishes. The monk was often a banker and a trader; he was no longer a workman, but very often a sportsman; Chaucer's picture can be corroborated from many different sources. It was notorious, and popes and councils complained in vain, that the monasteries neglected the villages from which they generally sucked about two-thirds, and sometimes a great deal more, of the parochial endowments. (p. 81.)

The fact is that the monk sat on the backs of the peasants and the serfs like an old man of the sea whom it was impossible to shake off, and who rendered no equivalent service for the labour he demanded. Dr. Coulton, in a footnote, adds that this point will be far more fully treated in his next volume.

The peasant indeed was regarded as little better than the beasts of the field, and although by the middle of the fifteenth century he had fought his way, unaided by the Church, to a far better position, says Dr. Coulton, yet, "his political and social disabilities, his want of education and the scorn of other classes, went far to counterbalance this. 'Villein,' 'serf,' 'rusticus,' were stock terms of reproach; he was, as Lamprecht puts it, 'The pariah of society.'" (p. 76.)

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

## Acid Drops.

There is prophecy that, as George Eliot said, is the most gratuitous form of error. There is also prophecy that is no more than an intelligent anticipation of events. To the latter class belongs a forecast of what the articles in the *Daily News* on "If Christ Came to London?" will be like. As no one will be invited to write who will say anything about Jesus Christ that is to the point, what will be said will be as follows. We shall be told that if Christ comes to London, he will be shocked at the poverty of some people and the great wealth of others. He will be filled with compassion for the poor and lowly, they will flock to him gladly, and he will lay his healing hand upon all who suffer. He will denounce the sacerdotalism of the Churches, and he will preach universal love to all. He will say that all men are brothers, and call those whitened sepulchres who fatten upon their fellows; and he will encourage charity in all directions. And there will be much talk of the comfort and consolation the "divine figure" has brought to people through the ages, and the many men who have looked to him for guidance. Given the name of the writers almost anyone on the staff of the *Daily News* could write the whole of the articles. For all the arguments used are already standardized, and nothing new will be permitted.

Having written the articles, the same person might proceed to write the letters that will be published. They will also be on the usual line of people who have looked up to the figure of Jesus, and who feel that if they are robbed of that, life is empty and worthless. A deeper degree of silliness will be encouraged in the letters than in the articles, for they will not be written by responsible Christians. Then there will be the sermons reported, and notes of the deep interest taken throughout the country in the articles. All of this could just as well be written now as day by day. When it staged the "Debate" the *Daily News* perpetrated an imposture. Quite fittingly it now follows with an elaborate humbug.

We managed to incite the *Daily News* to admit at least one Freethinker on the subject of "Where are the Dead?" We wonder whether it would be too risky for them to accept another suggestion which would give the articles at least a semblance of reality. Instead of the topic "If Christ Came to London?" let the Editor invite his contributors to tackle the specific questions: "How would Jesus deal with (a) the coal question, (b) the relations of capital and labour, (c) Marriage, divorce, and the family?" We could suggest other questions, but these will be enough to test whether it is of the slightest possible use mooning about love one another, and all men are brothers, doing good to the poor, etc. All these things were preached before the name of Jesus Christ was heard of, and have been preached continuously for the past nineteen centuries. We fancy the Editor will not dare to accept this suggestion. It would expose the humbug of looking to Jesus as nothing else could.

The following letter from *Radio Times* is very much to the point. It comes from "R. B." (Belfast):—

I wish to point out that all licence holders do not receive equal treatment at your hands—the religious

one having not only rights, but privileges, whilst his opponent has neither. This is patent from the position of religion on the programmes: it is not subject to the law governing controversy—the opinion against it not being allowed—whilst being broadcast daily and monopolizing Sunday.

Bearing in mind the proverb that constant dripping of water wears away the stone, our readers should keep on hammering away at the B.B.C. There should be no privileges for any section of listeners. Equal rights for all listeners is the demand of Freethinkers. Such a demand ought to be unnecessary in a country that boasts of always "playing the game," and of its high standard of sportsmanship. Apparently, where religion is concerned, ordinary notions of fair-play are not to be expected.

Another wireless listener asks: "Cannot I choose whether it is fitting to switch off after the 'Dream of Gerontius' or the Prayer Book Debate?" In regard to the latter item, the answer is: "Of course not." The B.B.C.'s committee of parsons have said so. The fact that Britain is not a priest-ridden country is entirely irrelevant to the issue.

A third wireless listener remarks that, since the advent of the alternative programmes there is always something to interest or amuse, no matter what mood one may be in. That is true of the week-day programmes, but not of Sunday's. What is required, and listeners have a right to demand it, is an alternative programme for non-pious licence-holders which will not impose on them a compulsory silence during church hours. There is a big and growing demand for such an alternative, and it is the duty of the B.B.C. to satisfy it.

In a sermon at Bangor Cathedral, the Vice-Principal of the North Wales Training College recently stated that to-day the Churches are hardly touching the youth of this country. They see something in the Churches rather alien to their vision. If the youth of the land will not go to the Church then the Church must go to them; the Church must not hold itself aloof from the games of the young. It is wonderful how acute are the intellects of our men of learning. The brilliant idea suggested by the Vice-Principal would never have occurred to ordinary persons. It sounds quite practicable. The only drawback is that the youth of the land may not appreciate the kind thoughtfulness of Mother Church, and will ignore it. After all, you can take the pail of water to the horse, but the horse may refuse to drink. As is well known, the youth of to-day is frightfully ungrateful towards the kindly offices of the Churches. 'Tis true, pity 'tis . . .

The Rev. W. H. Heap, a Wesleyan, declares there has for years been dissatisfaction with the Church's method of choosing candidates for the ministry:—

In Methodism, every man offering himself as a candidate believes himself to be called of God. With us that is essential. Added to this personal conviction there must be the call of the Church. Even in these days more offer themselves than are needed, though the quality of those offering leaves something to be desired.

We suggest the Wesleyan Church should ask God what the deuce he means by it. He must know exactly the number and quality of candidates needed by the Church. Yet he broadcasts his "call" to a scratch lot of believers (men only), many of whom are—as he must know—unsuitable on the score of inferiority, and some of whom are superfluous. It seems a very unbusiness-like way of doing the job. It wastes the time of many of the candidates and also of the examiners. Yet to omniscience, the "calling" of the exact number and the right quality of candidates should be as easy as falling off a log. The conclusions we come to are: (1) that God doesn't know how to work the "call" business; or (2) that God is fond of a joke; or (3) that the candidates' belief in a "call" is a self-delusion not unconnected with the "struggle for existence" instinct and a desire of assured social position.

For several months the spiritual lethargy of the Bitterne district, near Southampton, had been the "concern" of a few devout souls, and an appeal was made to the three Churches—Church of England, Congregational, and Wesleyan—to meet together in prayer. Soon a desire for action of some kind manifested itself, but various ways suggested seemed to be closed when enquiries were made as to ways and means. Then God gave a lead along a somewhat new line. We have copied all this from a religious weekly. The upshot was that it was resolved "to make a daring venture of faith and hold a week's Singing Mission," an idea suggested by the public interest in community-singing. Scouts, Guides, schools, Christian Endeavours, Wesley Guilds, temperance societies, local preachers, choirs, and the Salvation Army were all invited to help. We are glad to learn that this barrage of noise was "a great success." A number of people accepted decision-cards to sign. Interest in the meetings on the part of the "outsider" varied considerably, and according to the particular place of meeting. But "the influence of the week to the 'outsider' is incalculable." Quite so; but what is the exact increase in the numerical strength of the local churches? We suppose it is so small as to be incalculable.

The ex-President of the Wesleyan Conference, the Rev. W. Hodson Smith, thinks that Methodism is full of vitality and possibilities, and its opportunities are vast, particularly among the young people. As for the future, Mr. Smith thinks Methodists need to cultivate an intelligent sympathy with modern thought and modern attitudes, and must adjust the Methodist position to the "increasing spiritual demands of many classes of the community." Above all, Methodists must adopt an attitude of intelligent sympathy towards the discoveries and experiments of science, and not be disturbed by them, but claim and use the results of such investigations "for the promotion of the Kingdom of God."

These remarks of Mr. Smith are very revealing. They imply that the Christians called Methodist have in the past been scared by scientific discovery, and have been antagonistic to it. And that, of course, is the traditional Christian attitude towards everything that has appeared likely to undermine "revealed truth." Now, as Christians can no longer oppose scientific truth, the parson suggests they should frankly admit that it has seriously disturbed traditional religious beliefs; and therefore the next thing to do is to twist "revealed truth" into a semblance of conformity with scientific truth. That is what Mr. Smith really means, when he talks of claiming and using the results of science for promoting the "Kingdom of God." The proper name for the parsonic manoeuvre is mental thimble-rigging. This may be fairly effective with the semi-educated Methodist clients; but it has the one disadvantage of risk of being found out. And disillusion means lost clients.

The Rev. A. E. Whitham relies on the accuracy of the following story he relates in the *Methodist Recorder*. A friend told him that he entered a Roman Catholic church in the North of England and heard a sermon during a mission to a poor district. The priest put the following case: A woman, too ill to take her child for baptism, gives a half-crown to a neighbour, and asks her to take the child to a priest to be baptized. The woman spends the money on drink and brings the child back to the mother, assuring the mother that the child is a baptized infant. The mother takes the little one to her breast and believes him now to be God's child. "But," said the priest, "the child was not God's child. As the boy grows up the mother will think him baptized, and the boy will be told he is baptized, and neither will know the fact; and when he dies he will go to the limbo that is the place for unbaptized people, and never, never see Heaven."

Mr. Whitham is very indignant with this "blasphemous travesty of Christianity." We fail to see why.

Adherents of his own Church and of most Protestant Churches believe that the unbaptized, and also Free-thinkers, never go to heaven when they die. This belief is an integral dogma of the Christian faith. To discard it means making the admission that non-Christians can get to heaven. In which case, what advantage is there in being a Christian and becoming a member of a Christian Church?

According to a reviewer, two of Bishop Gore's main contentions in *Christ and Society* are: that the present alarming condition of society calls aloud for a thoroughgoing reformation; and that its evils are the results of human blindness and selfishness. The only hope, of course, lies with the Bishop's patent panacea. The prelatial vocation, we presume, doesn't encourage originality. Hence the Bishop's dear old chestnut. It really is a stale joke. First he has to paint society as black as possible, and then the causes of the blackness have to be found to be certain things which are the antithesis of certain ingredients claimed to be in the panacea. Absolutely convincing the arguments, of course. Vendors of patent medicines have made fortunes by adopting similar tactics. The next question is: did the vendors learn from the Bishop, or the Bishop from the vendors?

Samuel H. Gee, a Wesleyan writer, says of his Church:—

We, in our day, have organized on an elaborate and expensive scale. Our Church machinery is about as perfect as the wit of man can make it. And yet, with an organization so skilfully fashioned, with all the material resources of which the Churches in our day have command, can it be said that their influence upon the great mass of public opinion is proportionately great? With such so much more effective weapons, can it be said that we are waging a better warfare than our fathers?

The answer, we think, is in the negative. In a purely helpful mood, we suggest scrapping the whole expensive and elaborate machinery, and returning to the methods of Jesus and his apostles. That is, make all Wesleyan parsons wander about and cadge for raiment, food, and shelter. Let them go back to the pure and simple and Christlike. What was good enough for Jesus ought to be good enough for his modern disciples.

In Manchester, we are informed by a newspaper, there is dissatisfaction among ex-service men. At a cathedral service in commemoration of the Battle of the Somme, the National Anthem, the Reveille, and the Last Post were omitted, because there was not time for them before the Communion Service. This is in keeping with the impression gathered from the activities of the clergy over War Memorials; there is almost the idea given that the clergy won the war, although the inquisitive may well ask what really is it that has been won besides.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton recently informed a Beaconsfield audience that "most people outside Catholicism did not know what they believed or disbelieved. We are not usually concerned with defending Protestants against Catholic attacks, but we fancy that an apt reply would be that anyone could be quite certain of what they believed if all they had to do was to consult the nearest priest and ask him what it was. Protestantism does at least ask a man to make a pretence of thinking. Roman Catholicism does away with even this obligation. If a Catholic is in doubt as to what he believes, all he has to do is to consult a priest and ask him what it is. Then the whole matter is settled.

With the passing of the years, says a Wesleyan writer, there have been changes for which everyone thanks God. There has been less bitterness in controversy. The relations between Methodism and the Established Church were never so happy. The Free Churches generally "fraternize in the true Christian spirit." We think our pious friend is wrong in thanking God for the improved changes. They can be accounted for in other ways. Freethought ridicule and criticism of the petty

squabbles, bitterness and lack of fraternity among Christians have played their part in the improvement noted. So, too, has the growth of indifference to religion among the generality, which has caused Christians to modify the "true Christian spirit" in the hope that disgust, one reason for indifference, might be removed. Again, the improvement in general education has brought Christians in contact with thinkers outside Christian influence, and with the tolerant spirit of the age. Furthermore, the growth and diffusion of scientific knowledge has lessened pious certainty about Christian dogmas. And as for greater fraternity among the Churches, this has its basis in the need for closer understanding and unity to enable Puritan and Sabbatarian restrictions to be forced upon the general public.

Croydon Sunday Evening Rendezvous is a scheme pioneered by a Mr. Zuppinger and the Croydon Christian Council. It is designed to solve the "Sunday Night Problem," manufactured—be it noted—by Sabbatarian bigots. Starting with 120 patrons, the Rendezvous, after two years, now caters for between two and three thousand persons every Sunday evening during winter months. Mr. Zuppinger recently pointed out, at a Conference of Girls' Clubs, in Birmingham, that it does not compete with either the Churches or the cinema, because many of the patrons of the Rendezvous would not attend any religious service, nor be able to afford a cinema, even if such was open. Indeed, the Churches appreciate it so much that they contribute towards its finances. It provides games, other than cards or gambling games, magazines, and light refreshments at moderate prices, as well as music. No religious service is held.

But we gather that the real aim of the scheme is to enable the various religious organizations to get in touch with the "outsider" in order to entice him or her into the Churches. The alleged object of the organizers, to provide decent amusement for people with only the pub or street to go to, is just so much camouflage. What an unlovely game it all is! The Sabbatarian fanatics close down as far as possible all wholesome amusement on Sunday, so that the poor man, who is minus the advantages of the better-off classes, is reduced to boredom. Next, the disinterested Churches organize a little amusement for the bored, and then boast of what they have done for people outside the Churches! A parson recently declared it was unfair to judge the Churches by the worst people in them. Well, the above-mentioned contemptible manoeuvre is organized by the best people in the Churches. Is it unfair to judge them and the Churches by it? We think not.

According to a writer in one of the evening papers, there used to be at the London Zoo an elephant that could not stand the presence of a clergyman. We have always understood that the elephant was the most intelligent of the animals. It looks as though the description was accurate. What we should like to have is that elephant's opinion of the humans around him who pay so much attention to parsons.

## ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL?

*There is a world of difference between "Actual" and "Potential." The one stands for energy at rest. The other for energy in action. There are hundreds of thousands of potential Freethinkers in this country, and if this mass of potential energy could be converted into actual energy, the Freethought movement would be one of the most powerful and the most influential in the country.*



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FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—G. Christian, 5s.

G. F. WALL.—We are in agreement with the bulk of your letter, but the faults of the Church are faults that are derived from the belief in religion. It is by clearing away belief in all forms of religion that one is making for the better social health of the people.

J. ROBSON.—Glad to learn of the success of Mr. Whitehead's meetings at Darlington.

H. IRVING.—Generally the most abstruse subject can be put with a fair measure of simplicity, provided it is clearly understood by the teacher. But there are limits to the simplification of everything. There is always room for the more popular presentation of Freethought, because there are always a number of people to whom such aspects come with all the force of a new revelation. We are trying to be as simple as possible with the articles now running through these columns. And we hope the simplification will not be found to be lacking in thoroughness.

S. MERRILL (Boston).—We are very pleased to learn of the high appreciation you and your wife have of the *Freethinker*. Our compliments to you both.

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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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.

There has been a little trouble in Newcastle-on-Tyne in connexion with Mr. Whitehead's meetings in the Bigg Market. An officious police constable, who evidently imagined that something had to be done to stop this wicked propaganda, took it into his head to apply for a summons against Mr. Whitehead for obstruction. There were other meetings going on at the same time, but as these were of a religious character no notice was taken of them. The matter was at once reported to headquarters by Mr. Bartram, the local N.S.S. Secretary, and, acting on advice sent, a solicitor was engaged and the evidence of witnesses taken. In the end the magistrate, after hearing the evidence of the police constable, and the solicitor's cross-examination, promptly dismissed the case. We hope the matter will end there, and that the police constable will learn to keep his religious feelings within bounds in the future.

The Secular Society will issue very shortly a booklet which should have a ready sale amongst Freethinkers and others. The nature of the work is indicated by its title, *Buddha, the Atheist*, and it lives up to it. We shall have more to say about it on publication.

We must allow, this hot weather, Mr. B. Paynter, a correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, to write this "Sugar Plum" for us:—

Among the totally unnecessary noises of to-day are those church clocks which strike the quarter and half hour, and church bells rung both for practice and before services.

No theatre rings an outside bell to advertise its performances, and almost everybody possesses a clock or a watch, and knows the hour of the services in his or her parish church. There are many invalids in nursing or private homes, to say nothing of hospitals, who suffer greatly from these two noises; but it seems useless to complain. Apparently the bell-ringers and the clergy put their satisfaction far above the sufferings of humanity.

### Wood Magic.

GREEN knowes beneath a wavy wood  
Of sombre pine; sweet solitude!  
What bliss within that shade to lay  
Life's fret and failure all away.

Reposed on that green mossy bed  
What healing for the aching head;  
For limbs and frame reclined at ease;  
To rest, forget, and be at peace—

Forget! forgive ev'n self's reproof  
Beneath that fretted gracious roof;  
Soothed and sustained, refreshed, renew'd  
By magic of a vernal wood.

Soft magic! Spell of Nature's breast  
For ev'ry heart and brain oppress'd—  
But naught corrupt must here intrude,  
Or flees the magic of the wood.

The shades of night, or cool or chill,  
Descend and all is lone and still;  
But souls on this elixir fed  
Find courage all where all was dread.

Nor is this madness; ye who smile and say:  
Poor man, again his reason is astray;  
Nor feeble folly; sapient cynics; nay;  
But wisdom, goodness, courage, comfort, calm  
Are garnered here; the zephyr's whisper'd psalm;  
Commingle sweets; for bruised spirits, balm.

ANDREW MILLAR.

## Marcus Aurelius Antoninus in the Talmud.

(Concluded from page 478.)

ACCORDING to the Talmud, "Rabbi" conversed not only with the emperor, but also with one of the emperor's daughters. This lady figures in the work under the designation of "the third Faustina." She asked "Rabbi" the interesting question, "At what age may a girl get married?" and then, womanlike, without awaiting his reply, she went on to tell him that she herself had already entered wedlock in her sixth year, and that she regretted not to have entered it sooner. Dr. Bodek confesses that this sounds very improbable, as the Roman Law forbids the marriage of girls under twelve years; but he adds that evidence presented by Friedländer, especially the portion derived from grave-stones, shows that particularly among the upper classes, the above prohibition was not strictly obeyed, and that Roman girls really did get married from the end of their sixth year.<sup>31</sup> The genuineness of this pearl might have been further supported by recalling that Marcus caused his daughter Lucilla to remarry within the legal period of twelve months; and that he left one of his daughters in Egypt, whither he had come from Palestine.<sup>32</sup>

The reader is justified in demanding my opinion respectively to the facts and arguments reported in this chapter. Dr. Bodek insists strongly upon the primitive, universal and persistent nature of the tradition connecting "Rabbi" with "Antoninus," whom he takes, and in my opinion rightly takes for Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Still, in the case of two persons flourishing at the same period, and eminent alike for their responsible positions and for their wisdom and goodness, it might happen that some people connected with the one in humble circumstances thought good to represent him as the friend of his more exalted contemporary, even though the two were but slightly acquainted, or perhaps had never made each other's acquaintance. The spurious correspondence of Paul and Seneca is a case in point. Hence a desire to increase their credit with the Romans, or a simple impulse of vanity, may have caused the Jews to invent the intercourse between the patriarch and the emperor, or at any rate to magnify its intimacy. Therefore, whilst ready to agree with Dr. Bodek that the conscientiousness of Marcus would be likely to make him correspond officially with the moral and judicial head of a famous race occupying a definite locality in his empire, and scattered over many other parts of it, I am inclined to believe with Dr. Grätz that the difference between the political, philosophical, and religious views of Marcus and those of the Jewish patriarch would, in the case of such earnest and sincere men as they were, exclude the possibility of an intimate friendship, though a mutual esteem could not but exist. Dr. Bodek strives to overcome this difficulty by insisting upon the liberal education and enlightened sentiments of "Rabbi," in conjunction with the tolerant disposition of Marcus and his accessibility to reason. In particular, he notes the favourable attitude which Marcus displays towards monotheism. But Protestants often feel an indulgence for Catholics, which these do not and cannot reciprocate. Thus, even supposing that Marcus felt a sympathy with the monotheistic creed of Judaism, the Jewish patriarch would never be able to view

with anything but abhorrence the polytheistic faith which Marcus so devoutly practised. Moreover, although the intercourse between the two men were historical, yet the details of the intercourse might be wholly or mostly fictitious; and I do not think any unprejudiced person would deny that some of the stories which the Talmud relates about the communications that passed between "Antoninus" and "Rabbi," belong to the category of what Huckleberry Finn calls "the very rottenest sort of tales." Thus, there is no corroborative evidence that Marcus ever thought of putting "his son," or anybody else, "on his place"; and he was the last person in the world to escape responsibility by abdicating in favour of a boy. There is also no other record that he ever possessed a son named Severus; but he had one named Verus, who died at the age of seven years, and whose name may have got into the present fib under a wrong form. Again, what probability can we assign to the statement that a Roman at the mature age of Marcus, and with his disposition and education, took part in a correspondence conducted by means of symbolical herbs and flowers; and that he used this childish method in discussing a matter of the gravest importance to the honour of his family? As regards the story about the bride of six years who regretted the tardiness of her marriage, it is almost as hard to digest as Jonah's whale.

It should always be remembered that one of the chief designs of the Talmud was to furnish popular teachers of religion and morals with material adapted for popular instruction. Thus a lesson is often illustrated by, or conveyed in an anecdote about this or that eminent person; or it is set forth through a conversation between two, or more, famous people. Many of these things are wholly imaginary, and some are partly symbolical. The tendency was to attribute wise words to men celebrated for wisdom, no matter whether the particular sages did or did not utter the particular sayings. It was the same with respect to conduct, exemplary either in the good or in the bad sense. Kings, even though anonymous, were found to impress the vulgar when introduced into dialogues or parables. The voice of a rabbin went further than that of a private person. These facts are indisputable, and they afford a measure for the historical value of the Talmud.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the above tales about "Antoninus" seem very like fragments of contemporary gossip suggested by the popular imagination at work upon vague or distorted reports of actual things.

The presence of such names as "Gera," "the third Faustina" and "Severus" points to a corrupt acquaintance with real facts. The same applies to what is said about the desire of "Antoninus" to abdicate in favour of his son, and about the power of the nobles. For these are blundering references to the elevation of Commodus, and to the restoration of the senatorial authority. The facts which thus gave rise to fictions bear unmistakable signs of having reached the story-tellers by oral communications, and not from literary sources. This is interesting because it reveals the possibility that here among the fictions there may be truths elsewhere unobtainable.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

A fair controversialist will refrain from personalities. I have done this, and I will do no more. I believe in free thought and honest speech. In the war of ideas there is neither treaty nor truce. To ask for quarter is to admit defeat; and to give it is treachery to Truth.

G. W. Foote.

<sup>31</sup> b. Nidda, 45a. Digest xxiii. 2-4. Fried Darstellungen aus der römischen Sittengeschichte i. 268 and 324. B. P. 148.

<sup>32</sup> Cap. M. Ant. 22-27.

## Freethought.

(Paper read at the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society.)

As all institutions, including religion, can be ultimately explained by the operation of the mental, moral and social make-up of humanity, it follows that Freethought is also determined by and dependent on the same factors.

The superabundance of movement is substantially indicative of the remarkable complexity of human mentality and temperament which can easily accommodate good causes, doubtful causes, lost causes and noble ones, and among the last we may reasonably include Freethought.

With nothing to gain financially or socially; hated or abused in greater or lesser degree by practically every other party, Freethinkers fight for the time when the greatest enemy of mankind will be in our museums as a trophy of war and a relic of the past. As campaigners in that fight we are bound to take cognizance of new phases as they appear and adjust our tactics to meet the new front.

In a tranquil atmosphere progress moves with slow measured steps, but a violent clash or challenge to deep-rooted ideas is the impetus to rapid progress. One has but to think of the great revolution in scientific thought and progress since Darwin hurled his *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* into the camps of scientists and theologians less than a century ago.

In the economic and political field, Russia—in ten years—has set the capitalist countries of the world pulsating with violent attacks of nerves because of her drastic challenge and overthrow of the old system. And in religion, the founders and leaders of the N.S.S., the firing line of militant Freethought in this country, made for the enormous and rapid progress of Freethought by the fearless manner in which they launched their attack upon the Christian stronghold.

To the defenders of the Faith, it was sheer audacity for anyone to challenge their beliefs, whilst, when it came to deliberate attacks upon the very foundation and vitals of their religion, their age was bitter and spiteful in the extreme. No weapon was too mean or cowardly for their use, all were used without stint. Instead of those weapons crushing Freethought, they were destined to play an important part in the defeat of the wielders.

To-day Freethought could never have been so strong, nor Christianity so weak, had it not been for the publicity given by the tactics of Christians, to the mental and moral bankruptcy of their position, and the vigorous mental and moral health of Freethought.

Some Freethinkers, as an excuse for their lack of energy and enthusiasm, declare the battle of Freethought has been won, that the fighting is over.

It isn't true, the glutton for fighting on behalf of Freethought can still be amply accommodated.

What has happened is, that the nature of the fighting has undergone a change.

Freethought principles have gone deeply into every department of social life, and the Christian realizes that bricks, personal violence and the lifeless remains of domestic pets are no longer profitable arguments, except in rare cases. Consequently the theologian has been forced to become diplomatic in his attack upon Freethought, but, although diplomatic, yet still cowardly in his choice of weapons.

Every opportunity open for a slanderous attack upon Freethought and closed for any reply is used to the utmost, and constitutes the chief Christian method in the field to-day.

That is a distinct change from the earlier Christian method of open violence and plenty of it, to a more astute, though equally cowardly plan of campaign, and it behoves us to adapt our efforts to new situations as they arise.

Actually, the policy of boycott need trouble us little, it is doomed to failure, already signs are well in evidence that it is giving way.

As boycott fails them other methods will be adopted, which will become increasingly cunning and Jesuitical in their operation. Evidence in that direction is already available in the manner in which the Church is trying to get a greater measure of control in the nation's schools, namely, by sly—almost secret—methods. Not only must we be on the alert, but the time is also ripe to bring into play some of the factors in humanity's mental, moral and social make-up, and enlist them to still further the health and strength of our Movement.

An increase and even an overhaul of our platform is already overdue, the same may be said of our literature department, but they must not be considered the alpha and omega of our cause.

The average citizen exhibits more or less indifference towards museums, art galleries, public libraries and other educational opportunities.

It is to our advantage, more than, perhaps, to any other organization to correct that attitude, and make the average citizen realize that those institutions are of national importance only so far as they are popularly used for purposes for which they were founded.

The disgrace of ignorance in the midst of free facilities for acquiring knowledge cannot too often be tactfully put to public audiences.

A very hopeful sign, full of potentialities for our Movement, is the occasional invitation from outside organizations for a Freethought speaker to put the Freethought case before their members. Every such opportunity must be accepted and encouraged.

Again, what are we doing to attract young people to our Movement?

Lectures and literature are not quite sufficient, they may suffice for the older people, but they fail to nourish that desire for mutual support and sympathetic comradeship inherent in every healthy young person. Youthful spirits must have an outlet, and if there are no facilities in our Movement, they are sought and found elsewhere, and our Movement is the poorer.

Hence it follows a social side must be built up, membership of an N.S.S. Branch must be made to mean the stepping into a circle of happy warriors in a great cause, ready to work, keen for a fight and with opportunities of reasonable forms of amusement when off duty.

In that way we shall cater for the mental, moral and social health of Freethinkers, and open the gates of our organization to the younger generation.

The right material will remain with us and add to the strength of our Movement, the unsuitable material will glide out and also leave Freethought healthier and stronger by their absence.

R. H. ROSETTI.

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Many scientific men have speculated about the first beginning of life and their speculations are often of great interest, but there is absolutely no definite knowledge and no convincing guess yet of the way in which life began. But nearly all authorities are agreed that it probably began upon mud or sand in warm sunlit shallow brackish water, and that it spread up the beaches to the intertidal lines and out to the open waters.

H. G. Wells.

### Drama and Dramatists.

"How many times are you going to see 'Love in a Village' before you tell readers all about it? Six is not enough, so after the seventh you had better stir yourself." In this way we disputed with ourself, and as we have "done" this comedy thoroughly, we can, with confidence, recommend everyone to see it. It gains in distinction by being thoroughly English, and different from any play on the stage at the present, and a visit is in the nature of a holiday in the country. Sir Nigel Playfair is a perfect master in production and his knighthood, in our opinion, has the same deserving merit as that bestowed on one of our best musical conductors, Sir Henry J. Wood. There is love, love-making, and the usual deception in the fine art, but it is all done so cleverly that one recognizes the truth of a very fine saying of Mr. Bonamy Dobree's in his introduction to the Comedies of William Congreve. He writes: "Being leisured, they were much preoccupied with love; being sceptical, their emotions were of the first importance to them, for when man's communings with God cease to matter intensely to him, his personal relations are bound to gain significance." "Love in a Village" is without the verbal flashes of wit found in Congreve, Wycherley and Farquhar; it is of more substantial build and the French influence of the period is almost absent.

Mistress and maid are found in a garden and the conversation plunges into the subject: the maid is twitted with being in love with the gardener, Thomas. This is resented very prettily, and throughout the play it is taken as a matter of course for any member of the caste to burst into song. The mistress departs, and in the wings Thomas is heard making his approach—singing. With a water-can complete he makes his entrance, and from the manner in which Rosetta shuns him, we know that her matrimonial fate is sealed, and the curtain comes down with hero number one, in a fine frenzy of despair, squirting with a syringe at trees off that must have been the height of the Pyramids.

Lovemaking, scene two, is of a different order; Hodge, the carrotty-headed hero, is pursued by a forsaken flame, Madge. Her rural swain has set his mind on Rosetta, the perky chambermaid. The fooling between the two rustics is exquisite, and calculated to make a mummy laugh. Her flinging of Hodge through an open window, leaving the mind to imagine his introduction to a cucumber frame underneath is a climax, so that the sense for the grotesque by the producer is only equalled by the thoroughness of the actors. The dance of Madge also, in this act, must be seen by those who can appreciate a polite mockery of seriousness—that dignified seriousness mentioned by Sterne as a mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind.

In Act 2, Lucinda, the daughter of Justice Woodcock has almost made up her mind to elope with her sweetheart, who is impersonating a music-master, and they both play a pretty game with the old gentleman. The old magistrate has been a bit of a blade in his time, and, in spite of gout and rheumatism, he, in accordance with rules, bursts into song and supplements it with a circumscribed dance. We know that he is only another edition of Prospero with a watchful eye on Miranda. At a later time he also makes advances to Rosetta, with warnings about the idle, flashy young dogs of the present day. In the third act, everything sorts itself out beautifully—even Hodge is reconciled to Madge, and you leave the theatre having made a contact with the past that Sir Nigel Playfair has re-created.

It is very difficult to define the tremendous grip that this comedy has on one who is not prepared to be pleased with anything. Is it the music? Yes. Is it the clean, wholesome frankness of the various stories? Yes. Is it the presentation of country life as we would like to think it? The answer is again, Yes. The sweet airs will be humming in your mind; a comical situation will come up before the eye; a generous sentiment in the play will be recalled, and the answer will be to go and see it again. Frederick Ranalow, as Will Hawthorn, has found another character to suit to perfection his undeniable gifts in charming us with his songs. Miss Rose Hignell, as Rosetta, is perfect in her intonation: the shades and nuances of her diction carry equal merit with

her singing, and her patronage of Madge is laughable. Miss Viola Lyell, from Mr. Eden Phillpott's play "Yellow Sands," is really the last word in fun and bucolic simplicity; we will not be responsible for any accidents through laughing at her song and dance with Hodge (Leslie Holland) especially if the barometer elevates its nose any higher than it is at present. We have warned you, and wash our hands of any claim.

Hodge is a Shakespearean character, and we thank him for the homely pronunciation of "wherretting"; it is a good old-fashioned word that knocks about the Midlands still. As a staid, old, good natured gentleman, Sir Nigel Playfair has a small part, but his performance is like his ability as a producer. Scott Russell, in the character of a carter, is breezy and English; shades of our youth when he is on the stage, we can see Boxer and Smiler hitched to the plough that we helped across fields what time the late Editor of this paper would be in gaol for knowing his Bible. Lucinda (Sybil Crawley), thou too must have a word of praise for thy full-throated song, and thy encounter with the wicked Aunt Deborah; and there is still left some for every member of the company.

Sings Browning: "Oh, men spin clouds of fuzzy where matters end." And again, in writing of books with obscure meanings, he says, after wrestling with the tough stuff that is scarce worth the time:—

"And in there breaks the sudden rose herself,  
Over us, under, round us every side,  
Nay, in and out the tables and the chairs  
And musty volumes, Boehme's book and all—  
Buries us with a glory, young once more,  
Pouring heaven into this shut house of life."

"Love in a Village" is the answer to a lot of ephemeral stuff on our stage; it is as near to the human heart as "The Midsummer Night's Dream," and no further distant than the smell of freshly baked bread and smouldering faggots in a wood. For that, we counsel you reader, to go and see it, and for many weeks be haunted with nothing else but Frederick Ranalow's song "My Dolly," and this will help you to forgive Handel for his "Largo."

WILLIAM REPTON.

### George Bernard Shaw.

BORN 26 JULY, 1856.

HE stands on Mount Olympus and surveys  
A pigmy world, a race of purblind men;  
The thunderbolts hurled by his Jovian pen  
The groundlings dazzle and the gods amaze.  
No spot eludes his all-embracing gaze;  
The nearby forest and the far-off fen,  
The teeming city and the silent glen,  
To him yield up their hidden, secret ways.

Yet has this god a kindly human smile—  
The tolerance that understanding breeds;  
He knows that folly is not fraud nor guile;  
That in mankind deep-hidden lie the seeds  
Of future good; that in a little while  
Earth's garden will bear more than noxious weeds.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

### THE GULF OF WAR.

I know of no nation that has enriched itself by its victories since the Romans. Italy, in the sixteenth century, owed her riches to her trade. Holland would never have existed long as a Power had she confined herself to capturing the Spanish silver fleet without drawing the means of her subsistence from the East Indies. England has always impoverished herself by war, even when defeating the French fleets, and trade alone has enriched her.

Among the European nations a few years of war places the victor in almost as desperate a situation as the vanquished. War is a gulf in which all channels of prosperity are swallowed up.

Voltaire (writing in 1750.)

## Freethought Flashes.

Parsons gain reputations by voicing heresies for which better men have suffered.

Chance is the name we give to an event, the occurrence of which could have been foretold if we had known all the circumstances that preceded its appearance.

A politician is one who appeals for votes. A philosopher is one who appeals to convictions. That explains the eternal antipathy of the one for the other.

I agree that very many Christians have reason to be thankful that Jesus died for them long before they were born. Had he and they been contemporaries, Jesus might well have decided to let them go to hell in their own fashion.

A week of universal prayer! A whole week in which all Christians shall engage in telling the Lord just what he ought to be doing, and giving him scarcely veiled hints as to how to run the universe. We are far from denying that the Lord needs these hints. The unequal distribution of rain and sunshine and the scarcity of common sense proves as much. But why not call this praying crowd "An Association for Helping Distressed and Perplexed Deities"? That would be doing the thing in a sensible manner.

The believer who says that miracles are as likely to occur now as in the early ages is on quite solid ground. They are just as probable now as ever they were.

There is no greater waste of time than the struggle to find some idea that is quite original. And usually there is nothing more stupid than to say it when found.

Believers find evidence of a "divine mind" in perfection, when, as a matter of fact, it is imperfection that is an indication of the only mind we know. The great distinction between the operation of natural forces and mental action is that the one acts with certainty and uniformity while the other operates with uncertainty and irregularity (of course, I am speaking of the immediate and perceived consequences only). A machine-made article is always more uniform in its lines than one that is turned out by man.

A reformer who believes in God is one who worships perfection while constantly trying to improve upon it.

Of all the trees in the garden of Eden, God gave man full permission to eat, save one. The tree of knowledge was barred. There is no evidence that the eating of that tree disagreed with man, but it did disagree with God. Man has always been the better for that meal. It is the gods who have grown sick after man has eaten of the tree. It is an example of vicarious indigestion. Man eats, and the gods grow very ill.

It is quite a mistake to take the Ritualist and the anti-ritualist as opposites. Both are violent believers in the importance of ritual. The Roman Catholic believes that a nation will be damned if it does not encourage it. The rabid evangelical Protestant believes that a nation will be damned if it does. They are both believers in the power of ritual. Both attach the same fetishistic power to it that a savage does to his ju-ju. They are both expressions of what is fundamentally the same type; and the nation bids fair to be damned that encourages either.

## Correspondence.

### PAINE AND THE GIRONDINS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have been trying to find some reference to the statement about Paine and the Girondins mentioned by Mr. Mann in his interesting theological autobiography, but without success. I am afraid, however, that he is mistaken in thinking that the Girondins were "nearly all Atheist." Professor Aulard says (*French Revolution: Political History*, Vol. 3, p. 43): "In religion, the Girondists were deists; some after the fashion of Voltaire, some after the fashion of Jean Jacques Rousseau." And the account given by Lamartine of the last supper leaves one with that impression. Robespierre had a playful habit of dubbing everyone "atheist" who did not accept his version of Rousseauan Deism, and that may perhaps account for the prevalent belief that the Girondins were athiests.

A. W. DAVIS.

### THE BUDDHA.

SIR,—May I correct one or two errors into which Mr. Sim has fallen in his article "The Resurrection—According to Mark."

Mr. Sim treats the word "Buddha" as though it were a personal name like "Jesus," whereas it is a class name like "the Christ." But "the Christ" stands for a class containing but one person, whereas "the Buddha" (translated by the Bhikku Silacara, "the perfect one," and by several others, "the truly enlightened," and "the supremely enlightened") means "one who has attained." It means one who has done what any may do, either in one life or in a succession of lives devoted to rectitude and the strenuous cultivation of certain virtues, graces and attitudes of mind. For, the thorough-going Buddhist believes in re-births.

Mr. Sim speaks of the Buddha as a God. Now, although many absurd claims are made for the Buddha, godship is not one of them. Primitive Buddhism is atheistic. "God" in Buddhism means a being superior to the human but mortal, fallible, limited.

Mr. Sim speaks of the Buddha being born on December 25, and of a virgin. No Buddhist would accept either the date or the circumstance, although they are both, probably, as likely to be true as many of the things that they would accept. The statement that the Buddha died for humanity and rose again is definitely at variance with every record of his alleged career. "Of his eighty years of life," says the Bhikku Silacara, "fifty were spent in unwearied teaching activity."

Mr. Sim says that he disputed and taught in the temple when twelve years old. At twelve years old he was living in his father's palace. No thought of public life had come to him. It was not until the age of thirty that he commenced any kind of public teaching. And what "temple" can Mr. Sim be referring to? That he is coming back is a statement in singular and violent contradiction to his whole life's teaching. Quoting from the *Dhammapada* (verses 90, 94-96) Rlys Davids says, *inter alia*, "To him who has finished the Path . . . there is no more fever of grief . . . For such there are no more births."

It is a pity Mr. Sim has fallen into error in this way, for the Buddha was, in many respects, a great Freethinker as well as a beautiful character. Though much of what is believed concerning him is, doubtless, utterly foolish, his historicity is tolerably well established, and a very large proportion of his teaching is scientific, practical and ethically ennobling.

ROBERT HARDING.

### THE BUDDHA: A CORRECTION.

SIR,—Mr. J. Sim, in his article on "The Resurrection," in your issue of July 22, says: "Long before the time of Jesus Christ, Buddha, Krishna, Adonis, and a host of other gods, had died for humanity, and had risen again . . . Buddha selected December 25 for his birthday. His mother was the virgin Maya. He dis-

puted and taught in the temple when twelve years old. He rose from the dead and some day he is coming back . . ."

As a Buddhist, I would like to protest against the Buddha (a title, please, not a proper name) being classed along with gods. He was not a god, and never pretended to be. He did not "select" December 25, or any other day, for his birthday. He was born on the full moon day of the month of Wesak (May). His mother was not a virgin. The Buddha was the son of Suddhodana, Raja of the Sakyas, and of Maya his wife; and he was begotten and born in a natural way just like anyone else. It is said that he showed early ability, but I never heard of him disputing and teaching in the temple at twelve years of age. Which temple? The Buddha did not rise from the dead. His body was cremated and the ashes were interred under various mounds, whence some of them have been recovered in recent years. The Buddha is not expected to return.

I make these corrections because it is essential that Freethinkers should be accurate in their statements. Moreover, the *Freethinker* is, to my knowledge, welcomed and read with eager interest in Buddhist countries.

It would be interesting to know whence Mr. Sim derived his information. The majority of the books written in English, and especially those by Christians, upon Buddhism, are not worth the paper they are printed on.

E. UPASAKA.

### Society News.

#### MR. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S visit to Darlington was most successful. The audiences were large from the outset, and increased in size as time went on. The local press reported the mission, and only one report was not complimentary. A large number of *Freethinkers* were distributed, and many applications were received for further information regarding the National Secular Society. There is every prospect of a Branch being formed in the District. Thanks are due to the members of the Chester-le-Street Branch, who travelled to Darlington to assist at these meetings. The Chester-le-Street Branch Secretary received several invitations from local preachers to arrange debates; these were accepted, and if it is possible the Branch will carry on the propaganda in the district.—A.B.

#### MR. J. CLAYTON'S MEETINGS.

MR. CLAYTON paid a return visit to Higham, on Monday, July 16. The questions were crude, and the opposition put the point of view of the Middle Ages; but the audience was most attentive. A local paper, the *Nelson Leader*, published a report of the meeting. The report is full of inaccuracies, but it should serve to make the meetings known to a larger number of people. Mr. Clayton lectured on Spiritualism at Padiham on Tuesday. During the lecture someone went to the Hall of the local Spiritualists, and a number of ladies rallied to confound the sceptic, arriving just as Mr. Clayton finished. The leader of these amazons hurled abuse at the speaker, who gave them a cordial invitation to attend his next meeting. Mr. Clayton was at Rawtenstall on Friday, at Todmorden on Saturday, and at Accrington on Sunday, successful meetings being held at each place. A list of Mr. Clayton's engagements will be found in "Lecture Notices."—H.S.

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### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

#### LONDON.

##### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. F. Mann—"The Peace of God."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Every Saturday at 8 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Bryant, Mathie and others.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. J. Hart—A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. W. Sandford. (Brockwell Park): 6.0, Mr. W. Sandford. Wednesday—(Clapham Old Town): 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. Thursday—(Cooks Road, Kennington): 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. F. C. Warner—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart.—A Lecture. 3.30 p.m., Messrs. Hyatt and B. A. 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.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. Campbell-Everden.

#### COUNTRY.

##### OUTDOOR.

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

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Bolton Town Hall steps): Mr. Whitehead will lecture each evening until August 3, at 7.30 p.m.

BURNLEY DISTRICT (Nelson): July 29, at 11.0 a.m., Debate at Nelson I.L.P.; (Burnley Market): Sunday, July 29, at 3.0 p.m.; (Higham): Monday, July 30, at 8.0 p.m.; (Padiham Recreation Ground): Tuesday, July 31, at 8.0 p.m.; (Accrington Market): Sunday, August 5, at 7.0 p.m.; Speaker—Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Houghton): Tuesday, July 31, at 7.15; (Hetton): Wednesday, August 1, at 7.15; (Herrington): Thursday, August 2, at 7.15. Speakers—Messrs. T. Brown and J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Every Monday, at Islington Square—Mr. P. Sherwin; every Tuesday at Beaumont Street—Messrs. Shortt and Sherwin; every Thursday, at High Park Street—Mr. J. V. Shortt; and at Edge Hill Lamp—Mr. P. Sherwin. All meetings at 8 p.m.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road Entrance): 7.30, Mr. R. Atkinson—A Lecture.

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