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Views and Opinions.

Spiritualism.

(Continued from page 547.)

In the series of articles dealing with "Where are the Dead?" the *Daily News* invited the co-operation of three Spiritualists. This was, of course, quite safe. They would not be likely to say anything against Christianity, and, in any case, they believed in a future life. The three articles were by Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Mr. Robert Blatchford. I purpose dealing directly with Sir Arthur's article, and with the other two only so far as the course of the argument demands. Sir Arthur opens his article by saying:—

It has always been a matter of surprise to me to find that the mass of evidence as to the conditions of life beyond the grave collected by psychic means has not penetrated more generally to the public.

That is a very good comment upon the statement by other writers in the series—a statement in which Sir Arthur concurs—as to man's yearning for another life and for news of the dead. A "yearning" that does not and will not take the trouble to get itself satisfied at the small amount of trouble demanded by Spiritualism cannot be of a very potent quality. Sir Arthur is surprised, because Spiritualism

is reasonable in itself—so much so that it presents the most logical religious philosophy which I have ever heard, and it comes in a more direct way than any previously inspired message.

As religious philosophies go, "the most logical" is an equivocal recommendation. It is certainly more direct than any other religious message concerning a future life because, if the evidence is good, it is the dead themselves who give us the information. The message is "straight from the horse's mouth." As the newspaper sporting prophets say, it is "inspired information." It remains to be seen what is the value of the logic, and whether the "inspired" information is not of the same quality as that dispensed by benevolent gentlemen to credulous visitors to the Derby.

Forcing the Cards.

I do not wish to insinuate, and am far from believing that all or either of the selected three are deliberately deceiving their readers, but I do say that the way in which they present the case for Spiritualism cannot but deceive the unprepared person. I have dealt with Spiritualism at greater length in my book *The Other Side of Death*, and can only summarize some of the things there set down on this and on other heads. But here are the counts in support of what has just been said. (1) The way in which the names of great men are paraded as those who have testified to the reality of "psychic" (the word has a quite hypnotic influence on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) phenomena, hides the fact that some of those who have testified to the reality of certain occurrences, have specifically repudiated the Spiritualistic explanation of them. Neither is there any hint of the important truth, that many of the scientific men who have examined the same things at the same time, have rejected their genuineness. The case is presented as though conviction followed examination. (2) No mention is made of the fact that a great deal of what is called proof of communication with the dead can be quite satisfactorily explained as the action of well known and well understood abnormal and pathologic frames of mind. Well known forms of automatism—crystal gazing, automatic writing—far from being evidence of communication with the dead, are normal experiments in all up-to-date psychological laboratories. Intensification or deadening of certain senses are normal features of the hypnotic state, as are the recovery of experiences which are totally lost to the subject under normal conditions. Dual and multiple personality is an abnormal state with which case-books of psychological medicine are well filled, and these will explain a whole host of cases that bring conviction to thousands of Spiritualists, and which, apparently, form part of the indubitable evidence that has convinced Messrs. Blatchford, Doyle and Lodge. The evidence here is so extensive that a writer so sympathetic towards Spiritualism as Dr. Hyslop points out that there are few "Mediums" whose performances cannot be explained on these lines. Of these things, not one Spiritualistic believer out of a thousand has any knowledge whatever. To most, the wonderful is the Spiritual, and, very much in the frame of mind that dominates the lower culture, anything that does not fall into line with ordinary experience may be taken as evidence of the activity of our friends from "Summerland." Nor, so far as my reading of their works is concerned, have either of the three writers before us shown any desire to deal with the subject from the points of view indicated, or evince any indication of the importance of its bearing upon their belief.

### The Question of Fraud.

It will be observed that I set the question of fraud entirely on one side. There is any amount of fraud connected with Spiritualism, and the frauds become more elaborate as experience invents new methods, or advises new precautions. And ninety-nine out of every hundred who investigate Spiritualism are splendid material for the "flat-catcher." They go to a seance hoping to receive some message from the dead; they help the medium by replying to leading questions, they know nothing of automatism, or the play of abnormal and pathologic mental states. Under a state of emotional tension over the death of a son, or a wife, or a dear friend, they submit to the hypnotic influence of a seance room, and are on the lookout only for such obvious trickery as would scarce deceive a blind man. They go ready to believe and they come away believing. I do not, I repeat, rest my case against Spiritualism on the existence, the palpable existence, of fraud. And I have no hesitation in saying that during the past fifty years, the Spiritualists have had no better friends and no more effective propagandists than those who have gone about the country writing and speaking as though the choice before us was either Spiritualism or fraud. Such people are as ill-prepared to deal with the average case of Spiritualism as is the believing Spiritualist. Very often—most often—the things that have brought conviction to him have occurred in his own home, with his own wife or daughter, or son, or even in his own person. He knows, as certainly as he knows anything, that this is not fraud. And to tell such a man, ignorant of the real nature of what is going on before him, that it is either spirits or fraud, drives him to the position he takes up. It is in this way that these ill-informed enemies of Spiritualists have played into their opponents' hands. I do not wonder that Spiritualist propagandists have always been ready to meet them, but have fought shy of those who prefer another line of attack.

So when Mr. Blatchford says that if the "Man in the Street" will investigate Spiritualism he will become convinced, as he has himself been convinced, I am inclined to agree with him. That is exactly the way in which people believed for so long in spirits as the cause of insanity and epilepsy. But if the "Man in the Street" can get it into his head that before examining anything, he ought to fit himself for the task, then he is most likely not to come to the same conclusion as Mr. Blatchford, who is obviously unacquainted with the nature of what is going on before his eyes. One ought to know the factors if one wishes to understand the result. And watching the light in a dying child's eyes, or mooning about the power of love can hardly be regarded as a necessary preparation for understanding the nature of psychological processes, normal and abnormal. If it were a case of mechanics, or physics, or chemistry, or discovering the nature of a special disease, the first query would be as to the qualifications of the person who expressed an opinion. Where a religious subject is concerned, knowledge is never required. It is enough to believe.

\* \* \*

### What am I?

Let us come back to "the most logical religious philosophy." Some weeks ago I dealt with the argument of Sir Oliver Lodge that the nervous system of man is an "instrument" on which a spiritual entity plays, and that the entity continues to exist when the instrument is destroyed. The fallacy here is so patent that one can safely

say that, connected with anything but religion, Sir Oliver would have laughed it out of court. It is enough now to point out that, at the outset, Spiritualism is encumbered with the difficulty that meets every believer in survival. What is it that survives? The life of a man is evidently not a unit, but a multiple. If the facts warrant any conclusion at all, it is that the life manifested by an organism is the total, the organized total, of the forces of that organism. And there is no more an individual life existing apart from, say, the different cell lives, than there is a national life apart from the individuals comprising the nation. National life is the total of individual strivings and resistances, achievements and neutralizations, ambitions, ideas and beliefs; and one might as reasonably talk of a nation living on after the individuals comprising it are dead, as speak of the co-operative product we call individual life as living after the different parts of the organism have disintegrated.

It is the same with the personality. This is clearly not something that is given, but something that is achieved. The building of a personality, as well as its disintegration, is something that takes place before our eyes. There is no question of theory here, it is entirely one of fact. There is the personality of the child, of the youth, of the man. There is hardly a single time in the life of any individual when one could not detect a somewhat different personality if our observation or our instruments were keen enough. There is, again, the personality of the sober and upright man, followed, through stress of circumstances, by that of the drunken and untrustworthy one. And the disintegration of personality under the influence of disease is one of the tragedies of the physician's life. Which of these personalities is it that survives? One is just as real as the other. Why should one survive rather than the other? If one, why not all? If not all, why any?

To none of these questions does "the most logical religious philosophy" give an answer. What we get is the information that we are just the same after death as we were before, but that we live in some uncharted country where we are graded according to our sympathies (Sir Arthur evidently labours under the delusion that a desirable existence is where there are no differences of taste or opinion), and other information which, instead of solving the puzzle, only serves to create new ones. Sir Arthur concludes from all this that, "The message which Spiritualism has been able to bring to the human race as to their future fate is not only the most reasonable, but also the most cheering which we have ever received." And this is done by the simple process of Sir Arthur and his band of spirits making the next world exactly what they would like it to be. This looks well, until one brings the different parts of the picture together and demonstrates the absurdity of it all.

\* \* \*

### Woe unto Ye Rich.

The striking thing about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's picture of the next world is its sugary inconsequence. And it follows so closely on the Christian theory of the next world. The spheres into which the departed go are "circular and round the world," there is no physical pain there, but mental pain, such as remorse, may exist. There are immense numbers of undeveloped spirits, "many of them from among the rich and famous of the earth" (did not Jesus say that the rich had had their good things here?), though it is difficult to see why a man, being rich, must of necessity be more undeveloped than a poor

man. These unfortunate rich and famous persons are passing through a condition that "corresponds with the old idea of Purgatory," and "there may be darker places for those who have been positively wicked, and whose reformation can only be effected by punishment." This must be so because "any narrowness of religious vision, or any limiting of God's mercy to this or that sect is a dangerous mental condition which calls for correction." Finally, "there is no mixture of jarring natures as on earth, but those who are in sympathy are attracted together."

That is quite a nice picture, exactly such as would commend itself to a liberal Christian, or to a preacher planning a campaign to capture Christians who were getting dissatisfied with the doctrinal part of the religion in which they had been reared. Still, for a very logical creed, it has its faults. Sir Arthur, or the spirits, appear to have overlooked the important fact that sympathy runs in cross sections. Two or three people who are sympathetically attracted, say, on art, will be at daggers drawn on ethics, or politics, or science, or religion. What then? Are we to understand that A is drawn to all other A's when art is on the carpet, and then is attracted to some other sphere when politics, or science, or religion, comes on for discussion? For if human nature is much the same there as it is here, it must present the same jangle of "sympathies" there as here. "Our character and our knowledge are exactly the same as before," says Sir Arthur. But there are some characters whose delight is in fine music, and there are others who delight in seeking a companion whose tastes run in the direction of good beer. What then? Is there a musical sphere and a beery sphere? It looks as though there must be. Or is it the explanation that we are dealing with pictures painted in accordance with the "earthly" environment in which the narrator has been trained?

The latter seems the most feasible explanation, for those who are acquainted with spirit revelations know that there is the widest possible divergence in the accounts given of the next world—the world in which these spirits are actually living. On the Continent it is common to find the spirits endorsing the doctrine of reincarnation. In England that never occurs. Some of the spirits say they have material bodies, but of finer texture than those we have. Others do without bodies altogether. Some say the environment is much like ours, others that it is entirely different. Some say they take food, others that food is unnecessary. Some say they converse by a vocal language, others by a kind of telepathy. It has even been declared that spiritual cigars and whisky are forthcoming for those who require them. A preacher such as the Rev. Vale Owen, has been given the assurance that there is a Church prepared for his preaching in the next world. So the story runs on. Now if these spirits are in any other world, and if they really do come back to tell us all about it, there should be just a little more agreement about the kind of world in which they are living. But if they are mistaken as to the way they live, where they live, what they eat and drink, how they converse—if they are mistaken in all these commonplace things about which they ought to be most certain, may they not also be mistaken when they tell us they are still alive? Seriously, it would be as easy to get from some spirits the information that they are not there at all, as it is to get the stories which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle so trustingly hands on to us.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

## A London Voluntary.

"Thus do I make my fool my purse."—*Shakespeare.*

"I don't believe in principle,

But oh I do in interest."

*Lowell, "Biglow Papers."*

THIS is the big gooseberry season, a period when pressmen find a difficulty in filling the endless columns. The newspaper proprietors are shooting grouse, and the junior reporters are hunting sea-serpent yarns in last year's files. Sea-serpent, however, as a diet is apt to pall. Hence editors have to look further afield for subject matter. One pious pressman started a discussion on "If Christ Came to London," and, judging by the correspondence, the office-boy appears to have had a hand in the journalistic game, and enjoyed himself in the process.

Nor does the topic seem a very suitable one for the hot weather, or the holiday mood. It has neither the merit of topicality nor novelty. The Christ legend has as many whiskers on it as the sea-serpent. Even as a journalistic stunt, it has been done before. A generation ago, the late William T. Stead wrote some forceful articles, entitled: "If Christ Came to Chicago," and he said some very nasty things concerning that beautiful city which some Americans affectionately call "Porkopolis." Stead described it as a cross between Port Said and Pentonville, which was not a compliment, and was not intended to be one. But time, as the proverb reminds us, brings in its revenges. Chaste Chicago is now the home of Christian gunmen, and is as sober as a Band of Hope. Even an austere Pilgrim Father might have glowed with pride at seeing a gunman's funeral five miles long, with bare-headed spectators five deep outside the cathedral.

There is no good in arguing with editors, however. They are as lordly as a blue Persian cat on a cushion. Otherwise, a little variation could have been introduced, such as "If Buddha came to Belgravia," or "If Mahomet Came to Mile End," or "If Brigham Young Came to Battersea." But this particular editor chose the Christian legend as the background of his comedy, just as Gounod chose the Faust legend for his opera. He also chose the little village by the Thames, when he might have selected the more popular Southend, or even Margate. So we close the door quietly, and leave him alone with his glory, and the wastepaper-basket.

Wise old Disraeli said that it is not so much what people say, as what they leave out, that matters. So with this discussion, which might as well have been entitled: "Do cockles make good mothers?" as far as practicality is concerned. Most of it was terminological thimble-rigging, and even holiday folks might crave something more exciting than splitting hairs, or chopping straws in a temperature of eighty degrees.

Accepting the gospel story for what it is worth, the youngest reporter might write that Christ's views differed from those held by the respectable members of the Primrose League. The remarks, "But woe unto you that are rich!" and "Blessed be ye poor," prove this. At one fell swoop, modern society is indicted, and, curiously, the Christian religion is included in the condemnation.

Consider the matter a little further. England is a Christian country. Foreign critics even say that it is the most sanctimonious country in the world. But it is also one of the wealthiest, and "there's the rub." The Church of England is one of the richest Churches in all Christendom. So, if Christ came to London, he would see stranger sights than many other "old-timers." True, he would notice that

motors had superseded donkeys, and aeroplanes outstripped camels. He would marvel at such things as eyeglasses and spats. But he could scarcely fail to notice that, whilst the poor are still in the vast majority, the rich are even richer to-day, and the priests of his own Churches were amongst the worst offenders.

He would note that Lambeth Palace and Fulham Palace were the residences of two Christian priests, and he would see that the magnificence of the abode was more than matched by the splendour of the priests' apparel. Whereas the dress of an ordinary citizen, bowler-hat, umbrella and all, costs £10, the attire of a Christian Bishop costs £200. Mr. and Mrs. Everyman sport a penny bus, but the Right-Reverend-Fathers-in-God roll by in their silver-plated limousines.

He would scarcely fail to see that the higher ecclesiastics were all aristocrats, and that they behaved accordingly. He would note further that Christian priests were a caste apart from their fellows, and were styled "reverend," and wore "dog-collars." And he might notice that the present tenant of Buckingham Palace was styled "head" of a Church of Christ, and that this sign of approval was backed up by Parliamentary sanction. By inquiry he could ascertain that forty bishops of this Christian Church share £182,700 yearly, and that the bachelor Bishop of London enjoys a salary of £300 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep fifty ordinary working-class families in comparative comfort.

Nor is this all, for the bitterest irony is everywhere interwoven in modern Christianity. "Peace and goodwill amongst men," proclaim tens of thousands of pulpits, and the same clergy also bless the standards of murder, christen battleships, and are appointed as army chaplains, at officers' pay. To such a pass, after so many centuries of the Christian Religion, has England come; and, not only this country, but the whole of the Western world, with the sole exception of Russia, which is at present the Cinderella of Europe.

There are other points that might occur to the youngest of all the reporters. For example, it might be advisable for the Oriental visitor to keep out of the way of such men as Mr. Tex Rickard, or Mr. Cochran. For the "gate-money" that might be obtained by an organized tour would make any promoter "wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice." And the opposition of the common clergy to such a proceeding might even lead to civil war, for there are fifty thousand priests in this country, and however uncivilized, they are sufficiently intelligent to know which side their bread is buttered.

The young reporter will not get his chance of expressing himself so fully. You remember that amusing burlesque of a Lyceum melodrama: "Waiter, take away Lord Whatsisname; he's been dead two days." The famous Oriental exploited by the editor has been dead two thousand years (if he ever lived at all); and, from a journalistic point of view, it is too late for a reconquest of antiquity.

The editor could not print these things in a popular newspaper, because he would fear that it might cease to be popular. Nor could he say that beneath every millionaire's shirt-front beat a greedy man's heart, for that would be unpalatable to his employer. Journalists can neither do justice to themselves, nor serve the public honestly in a press dominated by patent-medicine and other advertisers and liquor and other vested interests. In spite of their rivalry, the English newspapers are of one mind in suppressing advanced thought, which is understood to be fatal to

fat dividends. Room is always found for rubbish and filth. Every murderer is a handsome hero, and every murderess wears a halo. Sea-serpent yarns, ghost-stories, and similar "muck," are always welcome "copy" when things are quiet. Let there be no mistake on this point. The writers of this trash do not all believe it. It is, in the last analysis, simply a matter of smart business, and is done to promote those huge circulations which entice the advertisers.

MIMNERMUS.

### The Christian Sexual Complex.

AMONG the most vivid recollections of my youth is the great purity campaign organized by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and the journalist, W. T. Stead. They sent spies to all the theatres and music-halls to watch for moral depravity. They made a great outcry against the Empire Music Hall in Leicester Square, and tried hard to get the licence taken away. They actually put up candidates for election, on the various Boroughs and Councils, for the sole purpose of stopping the licences of places of amusement that did not meet with their approval. They made a great outcry over the bare back of a lady athlete, who, under the name of Zaco, was shot, nightly, from a cannon into a net, at the Westminster Aquarium.

It was Stead, at the instigation of General Booth, who wrote the series of articles in his paper, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, entitled "The Maiden Tribute," for which he received three months in Holloway Gaol; the wily General escaping scot free, and leaving Stead to hold the baby.

It was the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and Stead who ruined the political career of Sir Charles Dilke, because of his divorce. Dilke was the best man the Liberal Party ever produced. He would have succeeded Gladstone in the Premiership, very much to the advantage of the Liberal Party and the country, as he was a man of advanced ideas, and great intellectual ability.

Another man, greater than Dilke, whom they ruined and brought to a premature death, was Charles Stuart Parnell, also on account of being brought into the Divorce Court. This broke up the Home Rule Party, just as it was on the verge of success, and delayed Irish Home Rule for a quarter of a century, with nearly fatal results to us during the Great War, and terrible results to Ireland.

Our country is, unhappily, the happy hunting ground of the pious prude. It is the legacy left behind by the Puritans and transmitted through the Evangelical movement. We have made some advance, of late years, towards the discussion of sexual problems, but we are still far behind the Continent in this respect. Even now, birth-control, and the limiting of population, is violently denounced in the name of religion and morality, and the government implored to suppress its propaganda—in spite of the fact that we have to support a continual burden of considerably over a million unemployed, and for the major part of whom there is not the smallest chance of ever being employed again.

The bachelor Bishop of London—who is always urging upon others the duty of having large families—is a thorough Puritan; the mantle of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes seems to have fallen upon his shoulders. He is delighted to head deputations to urge the Government to suppress something or other which they regard as immoral. It is through knuckling down to these miserable Pecksniffs and Stigginses that the Government has got landed in such a mess over the London parks. To satisfy these

mentally diseased people, who are always obsessed with the intolerable idea that people were practising illicit connexions unblest by the sacraments of Church or Chapel. The Government employed plain-clothed spies to watch people about the parks. Now spies have to be paid, therefore they have to make a show for their money, or they would soon be shown off. Well, they did; every week a batch of culprits was hauled before the magistrates, fined, and nothing said, everybody was pleased—with the exception of those who were fined, but as they were only common undistinguished people, it did not matter—but unfortunately for them, they had a great misfortune. They picked on the wrong couple. Instead of a pair of unknown, undistinguished persons whose protests could be safely disregarded, they discovered (when too late, alas!) that they had caught a bigger fish than they could land—or rather, than they could land in the cells—to wit, Sir Leo Chiozza Money, the celebrated political economist, whose works on poverty, wealth, and insurance, are known all over the world.

Notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of Scotland Yard to rake up something reflecting upon the character of the young lady arrested with Sir Leo—including several hours at Scotland Yard, under very much like the American “third degree” questioning—nothing could be found, and, in fact, she was found to be *virgo intacta*. The case was dismissed. For a long time after this no further arrest for indecency in the Park was made. But when this was mentioned in the House of Commons, one was soon provided.

All lovers of good English literature know the works of Havelock Ellis, the author of *The New Spirit*, *Affirmations*, *The Dance of Life*, and many other delightful and inspiring works. Havelock Ellis is also a great scientist, he has written a great work dealing with the physiology and psychology of sex. But you cannot obtain a copy in this country, not in a legitimate way. For directly it was published it was pounced upon by these mentally diseased carrion crows, prosecuted for indecency and ordered to be destroyed. The work circulates freely in America and on the Continent, where the author is regarded as one of our greatest men of science. It is enough to make any decent-minded Englishman ashamed of his country.

Walking out on Sunday (August 19) I was confronted with a placard of the *Sunday Express*, which announced, in words of the largest type, “A Book that Must be Suppressed.” Thinking that Mr. James Douglas, the Editor, must have been reading the Bible and come across some of its indecencies, I hastened to obtain a copy. But it was not the Bible, it was a new novel by Miss Radclyffe Hall, entitled *The Well of Loneliness*, that Mr. Douglas wished to suppress. I have not read the book. To tell the truth, I am not much attracted by sexual subjects, as men of the mentality of Mr. Douglas appear to be. All I knew of the book was a review I had just read, by Miss I. A. R. Wylie, the popular novelist, who speaks of the author as “an artist and a fine poet,” and the book as devoid “of any shadow of offence.” The book, it appears, deals with the problem of the “masculine woman”—the woman endowed with the mentality of a man—and this is how Mr. Douglas lets fly at it: “I would rather give a healthy boy or a healthy girl a phial of prussic acid than this novel. Poison kills the body, but moral poison kills the soul.” Certainly, to give an extremely powerful poison, like prussic acid—which has a pleasant smell like that of almonds—to anyone without warning would be tantamount to murder, therefore Mr. Douglas would rather murder a youth than allow him

to read this book! We say deliberately, that a man holding such insane ideas is a danger to society, and is not fit to be at large. It is he, and not the book that ought to be suppressed.

Mr. Douglas says of decadent vices: “I have seen the plague stalking shamelessly through great social assemblies. I have heard it whispered about by young men and young women who do not and cannot grasp its unutterable putrefaction.” There seems to be a patent contradiction here, for if they do not realize its significance, why should they need to speak of it in whispers? It seems to us a palpable falsehood. For our part we have heard nothing of this plague degradation, or these putrid whisperings. Where, and in what company, does Mr. Douglas spend his time? Mr. Douglas sent round to the principal libraries, Smith’s, Mudie’s, and Boots’, who all replied that they were circulating the book. Now all the books circulated by these libraries have to pass a censorship. How comes it that they cannot see the vileness that is so apparent to Mr. Douglas? He ends up his tirade with a genuinely Christian appeal for suppression. He says: “I appeal to the Home Secretary to set the law in motion. He should instruct the Director of Public Prosecutions to consider whether *The Well of Loneliness* is fit for circulation, and, if not, to take action to prevent its being further circulated.”

Mr. Jonathan Cape, the publisher of the book, replied to Mr. Douglas’ rant in a letter which appeared in the *Daily Express* (August 20), in which he asks, pertinently, “why should any one give the book to any boy or girl? It is not intended for boys and girls.” And he adds that it was not published “for the general and promiscuous reader. To this end we published it in a special and sober format, and at the high price of fifteen shillings, with a view to keeping it out of the hands of the general novel-reading public.” But the result of Mr. Douglas’s article will nullify this expedient, and give the book a wide circulation. In conclusion he says that he is sending copies of the work to the Home Office and the Public Prosecutor, and he will abide by their decision. He is not, “however, prepared to withdraw it at the behest of the Editor of the *Sunday Express*.” We shall watch the outcome with interest.

W. MANN.

[Since Mr. Mann’s article was written, the Home Secretary has stated to Messrs. Jonathan Cape that in his opinion *The Well of Loneliness* should not be circulated. The publisher has therefore withdrawn the book.—EDITOR.]

### Life.

The Spring—Youth’s thrill—  
Joy and song!  
Oh! Take your fill,  
Day—long!

The Summer’s glee—  
Too quickly goes!  
For you, for me  
A rose!

Autumn—billy!  
Youth now fled;  
Love, a Lily;  
Rose—dead!

Winter—Fires—  
Growing old;  
Dream—desires;  
Hearts cold!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

## The Resurrection.

THE word resurrection is derived from two roots *re*, back, and *recto*, I rise, meaning to rise again or return to the original state. The Shorter Catechism teaches as follows:—

The souls of believers are at their death being made perfect in holiness do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies being safe in the Lord do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

People repeating the Apostles Creed also make the following confession:—

I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

That the dead will rise again out of their graves has been the firm conviction of all Christians since the beginning of the Christian Era. This belief is simply an absurd delusion, for the science of chemistry proves it to be an utter impossibility.

Every student of chemistry knows that the bodies of all animals, human or otherwise, are a composition of the elements oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon, with a percentage of mineral matter, principally lime, which is an oxide of the metal calcium, lime being Ca O, in the bones. The body of a person of average weight is estimated to contain about 110 lbs. of water H<sub>2</sub>O in combination with the other elements. These elements cannot be destroyed, but pass from one combination into another according to circumstances. At the death of an animal the combinations, constituting the body, begin to disintegrate, and new combinations are formed giving rise to the offensive smell attending the decomposition of a dead body. It is quite immaterial if a dead body is burnt or placed in a grave, the result will be the same in the end, the only difference being that the crematorium will accomplish in about an hour, what the course of nature will take perhaps years to perform. The new combinations will eventually find their way to the surface of the earth, either mixing with and being brought down again by rain, or percolating upward through the earth, and constitute the food of plants, grasses, etc., and eventually the bodies of other animals later on. The writer remembers, when he was a boy, that his father shot the jackals that came prowling round our house in Ceylon at night, and they were buried in a grass field at the back of the house. Their graves could be plainly seen as the grass above them grew more luxuriantly, and of a darker green colour. Our cows that supplied us with milk ate this grass in preference to the other, so in all probability the elements that once formed part of the jackal's bodies passed into ours eventually. We cannot follow the elements of their peregrinations, or there might be some startling revelations; for instance, a haughty aristocrat dining on a nice steak or chop in a West-end restaurant would be horrified to think that some of the elements in that steak or chop once formed part of the body of some dirty wretch that died down Whitechapel way, which is neither improbable nor impossible. With the exception of some meteoric stones that have fallen upon it, nothing has come into, or gone out of our world since it became capable of supporting life. What then has become of the bodies of all the individuals that have lived and died on it since, as it is no larger now than it was at first? That proves that nature must be using the same elements indefinitely, and is in accordance with two texts in the Bible. In Genesis, Chapter iii. verse 19, it says: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," and again in Ecclesiastes Chapter i. verse 9, we read: "The thing that hath been, it is that shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." These two texts are plain enough, and prove an old belief that we have only the loan of the elements during our lifetime, which is conclusively proved by the science of chemistry. If there was such an absurd thing as a resurrection of the body, to which individual would the various elements belong on that occasion, which formed part or whole of their bodies during their lifetime? The idea of a resurrection of the body, as believed in by all Christians, is ridicu-

lous nonsense and goes to prove that the founder, or founders, of the Christian religion must have belonged to the ignorant lower class, who had no more idea of the processes of nature than a cow has of astronomy. Of the three great religions, Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Buddhism, the first two are of Semitic origin, and an offspring of Judaism. Christianity is the worst of the two, and only fit to delude children, savages, or very ignorant people, while it is quite incomprehensible that many clergymen of all sects and denominations, who are supposed to be men of education and know something of chemistry, continually delude their hearers with the idea of the resurrection of their bodies at some indefinite future period. It is the result of self-interest or mental deficiency. The third-named of the three religions, Buddhism, is on the contrary of Aryan origin, and being founded by a prince, who undoubtedly had the best education it was possible to get in his time, Buddhism is free from all the preposterous nonsense contained in the Christian religion, and does not come in conflict with science.

ALEX S. GUTHRIE.

## Acid Drops.

Some weeks ago a paragraph in this portion of the paper referred to the growth of more liberal thinking among Christians as being due to the propaganda carried on by Freethinkers. "Padre," of the *Methodist Times*, affects surprise at this, and thinks it is all due to Charles Dickens, education, and the spirit of Christ. That is a rather curious jumble, and we should be the last to belittle the influence of education or of Charles Dickens. As to the spirit of Christ, that is so nebulous a quantity that one never knows what the devil it means, save that it will mean whatever anyone cares to make it. But the "Padre" shows a curious unacquaintance with the growth of liberal thinking in the nineteenth century—to be, apparently, unaware of the keen and persistent attacks made upon Christian doctrines and Christian hypocrisy for many years before ever Dickens wrote a line. Paine, Owen, Godwin, Shelley, Hunt, Hetherington, Carlile, with hundreds of others, right through Bradlaugh and Holyoake up to the present issue of the *Freethinker* have all the time been compelling Christians to drop one piece of humbug after another. "The spirit of Christ" had about as much to do with the whittling down of Christian superstitions as the lowing of a cow has to do with the precession of the equinoxes.

But there is still plenty to do. The "Padre" offers evidence of this in his concluding paragraph. For he repeats the story of a Freethinker's funeral, at which no sort of religious rites were observed. And one of the mourners said, "We cannot leave him like this," so a prayer was offered at the graveside. It is all very ridiculous, although it is quite conceivable that with the impudence and shocking bad taste of Christians on such occasions, someone filled with "the spirit of Christ" might have so misbehaved himself. But told as it is, and for the purpose for which it is told, it looks as though the "Padre" still subscribes to the good old Christian doctrine that lies told for the greater glory of God are excusable and even laudable.

A Sunday school teacher has asked the Rev. H. C. Carter to explain the doctrine of the Trinity in terms to be understood by ordinary persons. Mr. Carter says, first of all, that thought he can say he believes in the doctrine, he does not mean that it is clear to him, or that he can explain it. The doctrine of the Trinity, he says, was formulated, not to offer an explanation of a mystery, but to admit the fact of a mystery. It was an attempt to express a truth that was avowedly beyond logic. Who wouldn't be a Christian! Thank heaven Freethinkers are not called upon to believe in something they don't understand and can't explain. One of the

great benefits conferred by Freethought is that it lifts from the mind of man the incubus dumped there by Christian mystery-mongers.

The so-called "naughty theatres" of Paris are declared to have reformed. The reason given is that they have become unprofitable through changes in French taste, as well as by world-wide criticism of the type of performance given during the first decade of this century. If they have reformed, the likely reason is that the taste of foreign visitors to Paris has changed of recent years. It is a well-known fact that travellers from puritan-bred countries visited Paris to enjoy what at home they thought was naughty. These were the clients whom such theatres chiefly catered for. It is curious that the change in taste should coincide with indifference to religion, which is so marked a feature of this decade.

In the *Sunday School Chronicle*, a writer says that contempt is always one of the hardest things to endure. And contempt directed against one's religious faith is the form of assault that makes it supremely difficult to hold religious faith unshaken. We are glad to have this opinion from a Christian writer. We have never concealed our dissent of the Christian religion, and we have invariably shown why it excites our contempt. It is gratifying to learn that this type of attack on the Christian superstition is pretty deadly. Other writers and speakers in the Freethought cause should make a note of the fact. Contempt gives the Christian's complacence a rude jolt, and sets him wondering whether his creed deserves it.

The Rev. C. W. Andrews, a Wesleyan, says that in 1914, when war was declared, the great majority of Christian ministers supported it. What he might now explain is, how they managed to square the pacifist teaching of Jesus with their support of war. Again, if the parsons, Bible in hand, could find justification for the last war, and invoke God's blessing on it, why won't the same justification serve for the next war? If not, why not? Mr. Andrews appears to think that through the last war, people have now begun to realize the futility and stupidity of all wars. Well, since the majority of parsons have always blessed and justified wars, this implies that it is from human experience, and not from priests and a God-inspired Book, that people must learn what is folly.

The Rev. Dr. Luther Lovejoy, of Chicago, is Secretary of the Stewardship Department of the American Methodist Episcopal Church. The reverend gentleman thinks that the "Stewardship Movement" is a good thing. We gather that is an American invention for encouraging Christian mugs to part with their hard-earned money. The Doctor says that when people under the bright light of the Christian faith understand the principles involved, they will "gladly and hilariously" offer at least a tenth of their income for religious purposes. No doubt they will, provided they clearly understand the "principles." These, we fancy, are that if a Christian desires to make sure of everlasting bliss and to escape hell, he must be prepared to pay the price. After all, if the Christian tale be true, one-tenth of one's income for assurance and insurance is really "hilariously" cheap.

We learn that the inventor of the Stewardship stunt was a Rev. Dr. H. R. Calkins. And we are told that most American Churches have now a Stewardship Department. Quite so; one can safely trust the parsons to push a good thing with money in it.

Another life of Jesus! An American parson, the Rev. Walter Goldberg, writing in the *Carolina News*, gives the following original, novel and interesting précis of a new "life" he is writing:—

Jesus Christ was a master-builder (Luke xx. 17), an expert stone-mason and memorial stone designer (Matt. xxvi. 13), a loud-speaker (John xix. 37), a numismatist (Luke xx. 24), a non-talker (John xiv. 30), a hater of lawyers (Luke xi. 52), a democrat (Lukè vi. 46), a republican (Mark xiii. 9), a Roman Catholic (Rom. i. 7), a Protestant (1 Cor. xv. 31), a Jew (Luke ii. 4), a Gentile (Acts vii. 45).

Walter is a smart fellow, but surely somewhere there ought to be evidence that Jesus was also a painter in water colours, a member of the Royal Commission on Mites in Cheese, a lavatory attendant, Head of Scotland Yard, a slow-combustion-engine-builder, a steward on a Thames Steamboat to Richmond, editor of the *Bottomley Bull*, chauffeur to Lady Godiva Fish, the hindlegs of the Blondin-donkey, and composer of "Show me the way to go home." Cannot somebody even now let us know *everything* about what Jesus Was? Biography on the instalment plan is most irritating. Is he to remain eternally The Man Whom Nobody Except Goldberg Knows?

But everything is *not* lovely about the life of Jesus. Thus the Charleston Ministerial Association of West Virginia reproaching their Lord and Master for being a bit of a boozier. Here is their Resolution:—

*Be it resolved:*

1. That Christ, otherwise the one perfect man, made a mistake in furnishing wine for beverage purposes at a marriage feast.
2. That as a user of wine for beverage purposes Christ had Himself to blame for the reproach of being called a wine-bibber.
3. That in setting His approval on the use of wine for beverage purposes Christ, in the language of Dr. Cherrington, belonged to a lower civilization.
4. That we recommend to all Christian bodies the substitution of unfermented grape juice for wine at the communion service.

The next word is with Christ. Will he blast the Charleston Ministerial Association of West Virginia, like he cursed the barren fig-tree? And will they "wither away" like the fig-tree did? I should say not. But if Jesus Christ takes this rebuke lying down, there will be some more complaints about defects in this "otherwise perfect man." Using naughty words to his mother may be the next. Misbehaviour in the Temple, even cursing the fig-tree may be brought up against him presently. Section 4 may be merely the interested advice of ministers anxious to retain the licenced quota of "fermented wine for communion use" for their own dinner tables, by creating a demand in the congregation for a cheaper and commoner commodity.

According to a reverend writer, the Prince of Wales is a voracious reader, with a special liking for the best short stories, biography and memoirs. It is a pity the reverend gent. was not able to state authoritatively that the Prince has a great affection for the Bible. That would be a real asset to the Churches. For, there are so many of the half-baked who are eager to read what some royal person declares his fondness for.

Mr. W. R. Morris, the motor-car manufacturer, has promised a gift of £38,000 for building a new maternity home in connexion with Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford. One thing is certain, the money will benefit a large number of persons. That is more than could be said if the money were used to build a praying-shed.

A learned professor says: "Science and Religion have too seldom been in conflict because they have too seldom met." Why? Because religion has so often been retreating?

Denbighshire Education Committee has unanimously decided to introduce "Bible teaching" into all Council schools. Since the majority of rate-payers comprise persons indifferent to religion, Roman Catholics, Jews, and

Freethinkers, the Committee should be asked why it is thought right that these ratepayers' money should be used to help propagate the Protestant Christian faith.

Prompted by God, of course, the League of Loyal Churchmen and the Protestant Alliance have protested against the appointment of Dr. Lang as Archbishop of Canterbury, the objection being that Dr. Lang is leader of the Anglo-Catholics. The protest is no doubt one of God's means of convincing doubters how true is the claim that the Christian religion promotes unity, brotherhood, and fellowship, and lots of other nice things to be attained only through belief in Christ Jesus.

In America, the Rev. Dr. Cadman recently described the Liverpool Conference of the Wesleyan Church. It stationed the preachers, he said, legislated for the Church at large, heard appeals, sanctioned new enterprises, and determined the work and worship of Wesley's followers. This suggests that the Wesleyan Conference was an excellent commercial enterprise, efficiently conducted on the lines of "big business"—which, of course, it is. Everything is done to secure continued patronage for the Wesleyan commodity. If Christ had come to Liverpool, no doubt he would have congratulated the parsons on their efficient business methods and insight.

Four Methodist ministers, each living in a University city, are anxious that their Church shall not lose clients. The four are appealing to ministers and parents to send the names of all Methodists going for their first term to the various Universities. The response to this appeal has in previous years, we learn, been very disappointing; only a few names were sent. And the appealing four hint that many Methodist students escaped, so to speak, from the fold. We are inclined to fancy that the students who dodged the parson's officious solicitude were not at all sorry to get free of the blighting influence of the creed they were cradled in.

The Salvation Army has published *Stories of Army Triumphs*. Each of the tales, says a pious reviewer, "exalts the wonders of redeeming grace"; and, you may be sure, the wonders of the Salvation Army receive honourable mention. For the coppers of the pious have to be conjured into the coffers of the "Army"—else, how are the many thousands of the "Army's" paid officials to get their wages? The Army records its own victories, and these are not subject to revision.

Lowestoft recently had to put up with a week's open-air services by Wesleyan ministers on the sands. There was, we are told, no difficulty in getting a crowd, and each preacher's heart rejoiced to see "the eager, wistful expression" on the faces of the listeners. Perhaps the ease in getting a crowd is accounted for by the fact that many of the pious are on holiday. But one may be sure that the "outsiders" didn't trouble the mission. Being more wholesome minded, they were not anxious to hear the doleful story of the Man of Sorrows. It doesn't blend happily with the holiday spirit.

The B.B.C. appears to be determined to pursue its course of evangelizing the British people, and its latest is to announce six talks by the Rev. Professor Waterhouse, on "Some Ideas and Ideals in the World's Religions." Of course a Christian preacher is selected for the job, and everyone knows that the outcome of the talk will be to prove that any religion is only good so far as it approximates to Christianity, and is bad so far as it departs from it. And, equally, of course, the B.B.C. dare not permit any kind of criticism of this particular parson's presentation of the case. We hope that all our readers will make their protests heard against this blatant utilization of the B.B.C. machinery as an evangelistic agency. In its way it is even more contemptible than any of the Churches. These are frankly

sectarian, and openly one-sided. But the B.B.C. professes to do what it does in the name of education. It is dominated by the fear of giving offence to the Churches.

One result appears to have been achieved. So long as it could, the B.B.C. kept up the pretence that its religious work was undertaken as a response to the bombardment it received from listeners in asking for religious services. We were able to expose the glaring absurdity of assuming that the people who will not attend church at any price are rapidly anxious to have a church service and silly sermons given them over the wireless. Now the "Director of Education" (what a grandiloquent title for a man who is plainly a mere instrument in an entertainment business! It is worthy of the United States at its worst) Mr. J. C. Stobbart, admits that the demand for these talks is a minority demand. It will be remembered that the demand that all sides of religion should be presented if any were admitted, was rejected on the ground that it was only a minority who made this demand. But when a minority ask for religion, the question is quite different. Professor Waterhouse belongs to the Wesleyan College at Richmond. He was one of the contributors to the *Daily News* series on "Where are the Dead?" and if his "talks" are on the same level as his article, those who take any pleasure in them have our sincere sympathy.

The Reverend Billy, the world-famous clown, has made a will instructing his executors to "send for a tanner when I am dead and have me skinned. I want drums made out of my old hide, and I want my wife to tell the world that I still live to give the devil the best run he can for his money, for I want men to go out and beat those drums to get an audience for the Gospel of Jesus Christ." There should be no serious difficulty in utilizing the great evangelist's skin. How admirably the preacher knows his own best point. How awkward for his executors if he had thought of anything to be done with his brains! For this is one of Billy's many proofs that man can live fifty years without brains: "The Volstead Law of Prohibition," he recently said, "is the greatest social reform, moral decision, and religious act, since Good Friday The First."

The Ven. Archdeacon Jones, Vicar of Builth Wells, is quite convinced that his dog has a soul, although he is not so sure about "vicious types of animals." He believes his dog will have immortality because he thinks it has the religious instinct "strongly developed." It would attend the week-day services and sit quietly through the whole of the proceedings. On Sunday it was not allowed to go, and so the poor dog had to sit at home engaged, one may hope, in private religious meditations. In the house it was often present during prayers, and sat quietly till the prayers were finished. So the good Vicar hopes to have his dog with him in heaven. Well, we have read many worse reasons for a future life, and this is as good a one as any we have come across. Only we venture to remind the Vicar that the only animal we read of as being in heaven is a jackass, and we have only the word of the Koran for that.

### Thought for the Week.

*Freethinkers may be grouped in two classes. Those who THINK what they can do to propagate Freethought, and those who DO what they can. It is the latter that counts.*



## National Secular Society.

THE FUNDS of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THOSE SUBSCRIBERS WHO RECEIVE THEIR COPY OF THE "FREETHINKER" IN A GREEN WRAPPER WILL PLEASE TAKE IT THAT A RENEWAL OF THEIR SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE. THEY WILL ALSO OBLIGE, IF THEY DO NOT WANT US TO CONTINUE SENDING THE PAPER, BY NOTIFYING US TO THAT EFFECT.

T. FISHER.—Sorry to hear you have been unwell. The obituary notice appeared in due course. Thanks for notes, which we regret we are unable to use.

W.P.B.—There seems always to be plenty of money about for any kind of superstitious folly.

THE CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH asks us to acknowledge the receipt of a parcel of *Freethinkers* for distribution from an unknown friend.

A. MCKINN.—The story about Darwin's death-bed is pure invention. The members of his family have exposed the lie several times, but that does not, of course, prevent good Christians repeating it.

J. WADSWORTH.—We should have no objection to printing such cards as you suggest, if we thought that enough would be displayed. What are the stamps enclosed for? You do not say.

"CINE CERE."—Pleased to hear from you again. We really should like to get the considered opinion of an intelligent ape on the proceedings of some humans. Other points noted.

W. COLLINS.—We should be glad to take things easier, but the work must be done, and that decides the matter. Your case looks like "Blessed is he of whom the Lord takes no heed." Shall hope to see you soon.

J. S. ARNOLD.—Messrs Constable & Co., publish a series of little books at about 2s. each, which will contain the information you desire. Your suggestion of a series of articles on "Great Freethinkers" is a good one and is noted.

WYMAN AND S. SODDY.—Letters are held over till next issue.

H. ROBERTS.—Pleased to know that you found the *Materialism Re-stated* so helpful and so enlightening. A new edition should be required in the near future, but it will not be enlarged. We prefer its present compact form.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (September 2) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on "Some Things Christians Ought to Know." The chair will be taken at 7 o'clock. Admission is free, but there will be the usual collection. We hope that Birmingham friends will do what they can to make the meeting as widely known as is possible.

As will be seen from our advertisement pages, the public debate on "Materialism: Has it been exploded?" between Mr. Cohen and Mr. C. E. M. Joad, will take place at the Caxton Hall, on Wednesday, September 26. The price of admission will be: reserved seats, 2s. 6d. and 1s. 6d., and unreserved seats 1s. There will also be a small number of platform tickets at 5s. We would strongly advise all those who wish to be present to secure their tickets at once or they will in all probability be disappointed. The tickets may be obtained from the *Freethinker* office, the office of the National Secular Society, or from the Rationalist Press Association. The chair will be taken by the Right Hon. J. M. Robertson. Mr. Joad is the author of a number of books on philosophical subjects, and it is to be hoped that listeners will hear the most that may be said against the Materialistic position. We fancy that this is the first time the subject has been debated to the exclusion of other issues.

Mr. George Whitehead will be in Manchester for a fortnight's propaganda from September 1. A detailed list of the times and places of meetings will be found in "Lecture Notices." We hope that as many of the "Saints" as possible will be present to support the speaker, and that Freethinkers in Manchester will do what they can to make the meetings widely known.

Last week we printed a paragraph commenting on the new move among the Christian Scientists which permitted members of that body "co-operating" with medical men. We have received, as a result of that paragraph, two letters. One hails from the Christian Science Committee on publication, which states that there has been no split, and that those who think they can combine medical practice with Christian Science are not members of the Church as established by Mary Baker Eddy. The other comes from the Christian Science Parent Church, which explains that since the death of Mrs. Eddy Christian Science practice has "largely become a commercialized faith cure," and that "the records of disease, death, and invalidism among Christian Scientists have, of recent years, presented an appalling picture." This Church is under the leadership of Mrs. Annie C. Bill, and claims to be in the line of true descent. So we must leave these two bodies to settle which is and which is not the real Simon Pure. It is just as well that the folly of the world should be as variegated as possible. It would be deadly dull were it otherwise.

Mr. C. R. Boyd Freeman has just issued, through the Pioneer Press, *Priestcraft: A Study of the Exploitation of the Religious Sentiment*. Mr. Freeman writes with the gloves off, and does not mince matters when handling what is really one of the greatest curses from which modern civilization suffers. Mr. Freeman is mainly concerned with the Roman priesthood, but his impeachment really strikes at the priesthood under whatever form it exists. The price of the work is 6s. post free, 6s. 3d.

## The Will to Deceive.

MR. CHAPMAN COHEN, writing on the will to believe, in a recent number of the *Freethinker*, hits the nail on the head, and drives it home in his usual vigorous and effective fashion. To believe some of the nonsense that passes current as profound thought would seem to indicate either the most determined will, or congenital imbecility.

One cannot class among the imbeciles, such men as Sir Oliver Lodge or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; nor, from what I have seen of them, the professional Spiritualists or Christian Science practitioners. These last are by no means imbeciles. They are cunning knaves who have formed a pretty accurate estimate of the average standards of education and intelligence. The will to believe is more often the will to deceive, and if one can succeed in first deceiving himself, the deception of others is greatly facilitated. We have also to bear in mind the love of the marvellous, the mysterious and the uncanny present in most people, and the pathetic and childlike credulity that goes with it.

This credulity is not confined to the uneducated. It is often found amazingly developed in the learned and the intellectual whose pursuits, one would have thought, might lead to a more critical frame of mind. Neither Sir Oliver Lodge nor Sir Arthur Conan Doyle are, I think, "psychic." They have to accept what they are told by those who pretend to be, and they observe the phenomena produced by these people and then form their own conclusions, or rather, they accept such conclusions as are suggested to them. But, if these two gentlemen were not thoroughly honourable they might easily become psychic, and then we would witness some very remarkable developments. It is very easy to lie. But neither of them will lie if they know it, and they are themselves so far removed from anything which savours of dishonour, that they are reluctant to attribute deliberate lying and dishonourable practices to others, unless absolutely forced to do so. This last is most regrettable, since, in the case of Sir Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, we might have had some drastic exposures, whereas he is now only numbered among the dupes.

Sir Arthur's bias came out clearly during a recent police court case in which he appeared as a witness. Among other things, it was stated that one of the defendants had acted as a "control" for a Sioux Indian, who died 400 years ago. This claim was sufficiently ridiculous in itself; it did not seem to occur to anyone to ask how an Indian chief of 400 years ago come to express himself in English—unless indeed the English language is the current speech of the spirit world!

Counsel asked Sir Arthur: "What is the purpose of sitting with a medium, and what is it hoped to gain thereby?" To which the witness replied: "Several purposes. One purpose is to refute the idea that death ends all. We wish to strengthen what we regard as the central core of religion, which is that man carries on after death."

Here we have the whole matter put in a nutshell. This is in line with religious practice in all ages, namely, that any kind of fraud and imposture may be resorted to for the purpose of bolstering up statements which cannot be supported in any other way. I do not suggest that this was actually in the mind of the witness, but such is the subconscious influence of religious thought in all its forms, Christian or otherwise. Religion—using the word in its conventional sense—is never in harmony with the facts of life, it is

always untrue, and it expresses itself ultimately, and inevitably, in falsehood and deception.

It is as easy for a man of a religious habit of mind to lie as it is for a duckling to take to the water. It follows as a stream flows along its course. There is no alternative. Beginning with a lie, as most religions—certainly all god-religions—do, other lies follow as the bubbles on the surface of the stream.

In the course of somewhat extended travels in various parts of the world, especially in the Far East, it has interested me to study the various religions and superstitions which I have encountered. In India I have associated with, or closely observed, sundry kinds of swami, yogi, sadhu, fakir, and others who deal in the occult and the supernatural. And I have come to the considered conclusion that they are all frauds. A good many of them succeed in deceiving themselves, but many more have not even this virtue, if virtue it be. It is the same thing in the end, however, with all of them; they proceed to deceive others as a matter of course, usually to their own advantage. The marvellous stories told about them are nearly all fiction. Some of them can, certainly, perform wonderful feats. But that we cannot explain how these things are done, does not justify the assumption that the performers are possessed of supernatural, or even 'supernormal', powers. I do not know how the lady on the stage, whom I once saw escape from the cabinet in which she was enclosed, presently emerged from the wings. Messrs. Maskelyne and Devant know, and they also know that the supernatural had nothing to do with it. So it was with the mango-tree, which a half-naked Indian caused to grow under a piece of old sacking without any stage apparatus whatever. But there are other things said to be accomplished by these jugglers which they never have done, and which no one has ever seen. It is easy to lie.

If, to what I know of Eastern "magic," occultism, and the rest, I were to add the ingredient of a somewhat lively Irish imagination, I could easily come out as a first-class mystery man, and might succeed in putting the theosophical Mahatmas into the shade. I can, however, quite successfully inhibit any spiritualist medium, or crystal-gazing seer, so that no "phenomena" will result. I have, indeed, been accused of being two quite contradictory things, a hardened sceptic whose disposition is so inimical to the spiritual intelligences that they will not come anywhere near, or a kind of black magician deliberately guilty of using counter-influences against them! The real truth is that I know the whole of this "occult" business to be fraud and humbug from start to finish. At the ordinary spiritualist meeting, a medium pretends that he, or she, can see the spirits of defunct relatives or friends standing by one's chair, and proceeds to describe them. As a matter of fact, the medium is lying, sees nothing of the sort. Listen attentively, and it will become apparent that all such descriptions are of so commonplace and general a kind that anyone may make them fit in with someone once known. Especially is this the case if one desires to find a resemblance and connexion. The medium is, all the time, directing the mind of the person addressed with that end in view. Finally, that person will make admissions giving the medium a clue, and so one thing leads to another until an identity is established. The rest is easy.

The way to inhibit this is to render one's mind a blank when addressed by the medium, and then deliberately to think of some other person quite different, as the description of the "spirit" proceeds. The medium will be at a loss and finally the test will break down. On the other hand, one may,

by following the description closely, and thinking intensely of someone who is not dead, make it that of a person very much alive, and not a "spirit" at all! It is just exactly thus that the devotees of Spiritualism are imposed upon and made to believe that they are in touch with deceased relatives or friends. It is sheer, imaginative deception.

The vast, uncritical credulity of the majority of people is the basis upon which all this fraud is built up. They need little encouragement to tell tales of the marvellous. On more than one occasion I have listened to such stories, and have capped them by others, based upon which I have seen in the East. There was no question about my being believed. I was believed most implicitly. And then, when at the end I said, "It is not true. I made it all up. You see, it is so easy to lie," I ceased at once to be popular! Human nature is a strange thing, and human credulity still stranger.

A man of my acquaintance says that at one time he was a sceptic, a rationalist of sorts. But he underwent an operation under ether. The effect of the drug was to produce hallucination of an extraordinarily vivid kind. He firmly believes that his soul left his body and found its way into "the other world." I need not describe what he thought he saw, but I have heard the story on several occasions, and every time it grows. This man is quite convinced that he was permitted a glimpse of the spirit world. He is now neither a sceptic nor a rationalist. As I have said, the story grows. In a little while we shall have a complete "revelation," and I should not wonder—provided the man is clever enough—if we get a new prophet and a new freak cult. This is the way these things come. If the will to believe allies itself with the will to deceive, then we see religion in the making. And—it is easy to lie, as all priests, prophets, fakirs and mystery merchants are well aware.

E. J. LAMEL.

### Spiritualism and its Evidence.

(Continued from page 555.)

IN addition to all this, there is the self-deception of the sitter. I am inordinately suspicious of the reliability of the statements of those who remember, with a meticulous regard for details, the exact words of a conversation of months ago, the precise points of appearance, the tone of voice, and a hundred and one other details. Not for one moment do I doubt the genuineness of their convictions. Convinced that their memories are impeccable, they are assurity itself. And not unnaturally they impress others with their apparent accuracy. But what is the truth? Simply that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they are woefully wrong. If anyone doubts this let him make, at the moment of utterance, and unknown to anyone else, a verbatim report of some story or statement of sufficient interest to remain in the memory of those present. Let a month elapse and then ask each separately to write down the details with especial stress on exact time, place and wording. The result, unless I am utterly in error, will be a revelation. And further, the accounts will be found to be conditioned in each case, by the writer's own personality and by present conditions. In no small degree does this peculiarity of human mentality help the medium. The mannerisms are recognized; the descriptions of dead friends are found to be strictly accurate; the statements are remembered word for word as they were uttered years before to the sitter and to no one else. In some cases it is only after much mental massaging and diligent inquiry that the statement, or allusion, or description is found to

be true. But given sufficient time, true it undoubtedly does prove itself. Particularly does all this apply to the many accounts of apparitions, and previsions, given by Sir Oliver Lodge and others in their voluminous writings. On examination, the accounts are invariably found to have been written long after the event which proved the truth of the vision. All such cases are worthless.

That Mrs. Piper knew a good deal more than she admitted is, I think, certain. With the utmost respect for the opinion of Sir Oliver Lodge, I am extremely suspicious of these so readily assumable trances. As often as not the reading of the reported seances provides evidence in abundance that Mrs. Piper simulated with facile artfulness the trance state. That this involves no insuperable difficulty is undeniable. I could do it myself with supreme ease. Sir Oliver Lodge is not even a medical man, and the deception of the medical faculty is easy enough. As much was secretly recognized during the recent war, when doctors, in dread fear of being deceived, passed as fit every men who could walk, and on occasion some who couldn't. Before Mrs. Piper developed the art of automatic writing, her spirit controls fished for information regularly, they flashed about their meagre bits of information amidst much mental obscurity, and I have a shrewd idea that beneath the shelter of that carefully assumed trance a pair of remarkably sharp and cunning eyes were doing a good bit of mental reading.

For these as well as other reasons, the only sitting that can be considered in the remotest degree evidential is the first one. Even then it must be anonymous. I have taken the trouble to examine a good many of these sittings, and I cannot find one shred or particle of evidence that in any way is worthy of consideration as proof of the existence of a communicating spirit. The most famous of the whole lot, in the consentient opinion of the leading Spiritualists of the day, is the one given in *Raymond* and known as "The Group Photograph." I reproduce the case here in full:—

*Extract from the Record of O. J. L.'s Sitting with Mrs. Leonard, 3 December, 1915. (Mrs. Leonard's child control, Fedra, supposed to be speaking, and often speaking of herself in the third person).*

Fedra.—Now ask him some more.

O. J. L.—Well, he said something about having a photograph taken with some other men. We haven't see that photograph yet. Does he want to say anything more about it? He spoke about a photograph.

Yes, but he thinks it wasn't here. He looks at Fedra, and he says, it wasn't to you, Fedra.

O. J. L.—No, he's quite right. It wasn't. Can he say where he spoke of it?

He says it wasn't through the table.

O. J. L.—No, it wasn't.

It wasn't here at all. He didn't know the person that he said it through. The conditions were strange there—a strange house. (Quite true, it was said through Peters in Mrs. Kennedy's house during an anonymous sitting on 27 September).

O. J. L.—Do you recollect the photograph at all?

He thinks there were several others taken with him, not one or two, but several.

O. J. L.—Were they friends of yours?

Some of them, he says. He didn't know them all, not very well. But he knew some; he heard of some; they were not all friends.

O. J. L.—Does he remember how he looked in the photograph?

No, he doesn't remember how he looked.

O. J. L.—No, no, I mean was he standing up?

No, he doesn't seem to think so. Some were raised up round; he was sitting down, and some were raised up at the back of him. Some were standing, and some were sitting, he thinks.

O. J. L.—Were they soldiers?

He says yes—a mixed lot. Somebody called C was on it with him; and somebody called R—not his own name, but another R. K, K, K—he says something about K. He also mentions a man beginning with B—(indistinct muttering something like Berry, Burney—then clearly) but put down B.

O. J. L.—I am asking about the photograph because we haven't seen it yet. Somebody is going to send it to us. We have heard that it exists and that's all. (While this is being written out, the above remains true. The photograph has not yet come.)

He has the impression of about a dozen on it. A dozen, he says, if not more. Fedra thinks it must be a big photograph.

No, he doesn't think so, he says they were grouped close together.

O. J. L.—Did he have a stick?

He doesn't remember that. He remembers that somebody wanted to lean on him, but he is not sure if he was taken with some one leaning on him. But somebody wanted to lean on him, he remembers. The last what he gave you, what were a B, will be rather prominent in that photograph. It wasn't taken in a photographer's place.

O. J. L.—Was it out of doors?

Yes, practically.

Fedra (*sotto voce*).—What you mean, "yes, practically"; must have been out of doors or not out of doors. You mean "yes," don't you?

Fedra thinks he means "yes," because he says "practically."

O. J. L.—It may have been a shelter.

It might have been. Try to show Fedra. At the back he shows me lines going down. It looks like a black background, with lines at the back of them. (Fedra here kept drawing vertical lines in the air.)

For the sake of brevity, it may be stated forthwith that this description turned out to be correct in all essential details. There were twenty-five in the group, including officers whose names began with B, with C and with R, but not one beginning with K. Sir Oliver Lodge devotes a whole lengthy chapter of his book to this one sitting, which he considers of vast importance, and which undoubtedly did much to change his wobbling ideas of the eighties into his adamant faith of to-day. Apart from the very obvious fact that the ignorance of the members of the Lodge family as to the existence of the photograph is no indication of a similar lack of knowledge on the part of the medium, seeing that no less than twenty-five boys and presumably a no small number of relatives, best girls and friends possessed this knowledge, and in many cases without doubt carried about in their hand-bags and wallets copies of the photograph. I do not stress this point. I have no intention whatever of suggesting that the medium possessed this information, but it is silly to overlook the staring fact that we are provided with no absolute evidence of its non-possession. With the knowledge of Sir Oliver Lodge's unbounded interest in Spiritualism, I do not suppose there was then or is now a solitary professional medium in all England lacking at his or her finger ends, or docketed for instant consultation, every available tit-bit of information respecting the scientist and his family. On the grounds stated, the evidence is useless. And apart from this it is weak to the point of futility. No supernormal mentality is required to guess at the existence of a photograph. The very first thing a soldier did after donning his uniform was to have his photograph taken: an officer posed before the camera-man twice a week, and in an immense variety of attitudes. Indeed, they were so common, these photographs, both of individuals and groups, in those sentimental and patriotic years, that one could have paved the streets of London town with them. Well, and what else?

"Some were sitting, some were standing." "Somebody called C, and somebody called R—not his own name, but another R. K.K.K.—he says something about K."<sup>10</sup> It all reminds one of the predictions in *Old Moore's Almanack*. The sitting is typical. Amidst a mass of trivialities, a few details of a general and suggestive nature are made. Meticulous care is taken not to make any definite and committal statement; to provide a loophole in the case of any grievous error: hence the perennial query mark, the suggestions of doubts and difficulties in the transmission of any cast-iron facts, or matters of precision such as names and dates. It is the old game of heads I win, tails you lose.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

(To be continued.)

### Face to Face with It.

At a little village almost buried in the vast sand dunes that front the North Sea from Ostende to Re-tranchment, Madame Siska was born in 1840. In the good old days before the Franco-German War, painters used to come from Germany, from France, and from England to transfer to canvas that magnificent feeling of space between the sky and the sandy hillocks now wearing the beautiful yellow of tansy in full bloom, and echoing the sun colour back again. In these dunes I have found some thirty-six specimens of flowers nearly all native to England. Also I have touched the fringe of what is almost a myth. When painters were hungry, and you must remember that painters and writers do not live on air, they would visit Madame Siska, who would make coffee to oblige them. Later on she also made cakes, and these were the mundane ambrosia for those who followed art. Madame Siska was a magnificent woman. She was built on generous lines and had had five husbands. In time her name and fame grew so that in many countries she acquired a reputation that increased in size on the snowball principle. To quote an old writer: "to know her was a liberal education," and she continued to make coffee and cakes until September 29, 1918, when she died.

In the neighbourhood where she was born there are many pretty little tea-houses, with gardens nicely laid out with clumps of philox, dahlias and glarcias. Also there is a generous space set aside for the amusement of children. Fierce-looking wooden horses, painted red and white, with snorting nostrils and arched necks, swing round and round. Sec-saws are in abundance—swing boats are there to give the sensation of sailing on dry land, and on Sundays, these "Siska" places are visited by families who take coffee, beer, cakes and sweets. These families also include relatives—cousins, and second cousins, and as many as twenty will sit down together round three or four tables arranged to make one big table. When refreshment time is over, there is general conversation, and the children make liberal use of the contrivances placed at their disposal. Altogether, men, women and children enjoy a few hours in this very

<sup>10</sup> The circumlocution of mediums, which is a noteworthy peculiarity of all, is somewhat naively admitted by Sir Oliver Lodge [The italics are mine]: "When operating indirectly in the ordinary way through a control and a medium, it usually appears to be remarkably difficult to get names transmitted. Most mediums are able to convey a name only with difficulty."—(Raymond, p. 360.) And again, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle [The italics are mine.]: "This idea, that there is some law which makes an indirect speech more easy than a direct one, is greatly borne out by the cross-correspondences, where circumlocution continually takes the place of assertion."—(The New Revelation, p. 120.) "... whatever the explanation, it is a noteworthy fact."—(Ibid, p. 121.) Some Law, forsooth! The law that recognizes a definite statement is a hundred times more likely to be pilloried as erroneous or even as trickery than an indefinite one which the sitter in his ecstasy can shape into pretty nearly anything he wishes.

reasonable and modest form of recreation. Towards the evening, motor-cars and tiny trams take them homewards. For those who stay late a piano or gramophone will make dance or song music. Sometimes in the afternoon a wandering musician with long hair will draw and squeeze melody out of his violincello, and he has been seen to distribute tin-whistles to the children, but he does not follow in the steps of the Pied-Piper. Also, in order that the measure of music shall be full to the brim, a mechanical piano is brought along by a man in antique cloak and hat, set off by contrast with the clean and picturesque dress of his wife, who calls on you with a tambourine. She has a pleasant face, good complexion, and strong limbs—and a nice smile. She would make a good study for Murillo or Augustus John. And when the piano departs, you hear more clearly the calling of grasshoppers provoked by the gramophone. To your right, on the land of a peasant farm, the corn, truly golden, has been cut and put in "shocks" of ten sheaves. Between these stacks, the proprietor has already ploughed up the land, harrowed it, and sown it. The tall blades of maize rustle and droop, and his few acres look like a bed quilt in their colours and variety. The road in front of you is flanked on one side by trees, and these, with other transient beauties of the countryside, form the setting of the scene.

On every road-side there are trees. The willow, poplar and ash are in abundance, and they have all been lopped about eight feet from the ground. From the place where they have been cut strong branches grow, and at the base of these new branches, the frolic wind has blown all kinds of seeds that have taken root in the trunks. Hedge clematis, wild rose, tansy, sorrel, grass—the green life on life sprawls and twines in abundance; it is gratifying to know that influential people in England are interested in beautifying our own roads by planting trees. No one will be more pleased than nature lovers at this imitation by us of old Flemish and Dutch masters.

There is good-natured laughter and chatter; the children do not give any trouble, and pleasure and relaxation combine to pass the time away agreeably. People come with pleasure and leave with reluctance.

Madame Siska (may she rest in peace wherever she is) by ministering to the wants of those useless people who spend their lives mooning about trying to make beautiful things, is now a myth. People come to see her, but she is no more. There is an old mill, weather-beaten and almost derelict, near to the place where she was born; but, she was the beginning of what is now an extensive custom in the summer, which is the catering for and entertaining of thousands of young and old on Sundays. Some may account this a crime. The numerous *cramiques* sold have not been blessed by the priest, but, as they are made of sultanas and custard-coloured flour, they are bread and wine. And the giant arms of wind-mills invented by men, have very practically put the golden fields on a tea table. Madame Siska then, was a great woman. She builded greater than she knew, and when people arrive in the district they are told that she is dead, but her work is alive in the flying feet of little boys and girls on wooden horses. There is the *Maison Marie-Siska*, *Chez les Enfants-Siska*, *Maison Gustave-Siska*, *Maison Mère-Siska*, *Enfants de Fonseca-Siska*, and many more, I believe, if they could be found. In the form of entertainment mentioned above, the native people spend their weekly day of rest, and in case you may have overlooked the moral, I must tell you plainly that it is a picture of a Continental Sunday, set down without malice or exaggeration; isn't it awful, and don't you think something ought to be done about it? Here, before the eyes, is the secular canonization of Madame Siska; there was no brawling and no police to be seen, and none were needed. Night comes on—the late twilight turns to purple the miles of mauve sea-beather, the plough wheels in the evening sky, the restless surge of the sea reaches the ear, together with the almost human cry of a curlew seeking its mates, and the shade of the old lady, if such a thing there be, must be pleased to remember, that, in earthly form, she was the Gany-mede of Art.

WILLIAM REPTON.

## Early and Medieval Christianity.

AMONG the many good stories written by Sir A. Conan Doyle there is at least one of special interest to Free-thinkers. It is called, *The Coming of the Huns*, and is concerned largely with two religious hermits of the fourth century. One of these, named Paul, had been in seclusion for a long time; the other, a younger man named Simon, had recently retired from the world of men, shocked at the excesses of the persecution of the Arians (which, as the author remarks, could only be equalled by the outrages by which these same Arians in the day of their power avenged the treatment on their brother Christians).

Brother Simon found brother Paul in his cell, and the older man questioned the younger as to his view on the "vital matter" of the nature of the Logos. Simon replied: "The Logos is assuredly but a name used by St. John to signify the Deity." The old hermit hereupon gave a hoarse cry of fury, and seizing his huge cudgel, shook it murderously at his companion and cried: "Out with you! Out of my cell! Have I lived here so long to have it polluted by a vile Trinitarian—a follower of the rascal Athanasius? Wretched idolator, learn once for all, that the Logos is in truth an emanation from Deity, and in no sense equal or co-eternal with Him. Out with you, I say, or I will dash out your brains with my staff!"

However, it is pleasant to learn, as the story goes on, that brother Simon had not yet lost all interest in earthly things; for, when he saw a great barbarian army approaching, he rushed away to warn the Romans.

After long obsession by the kind of thought indicated in the conversation of the two hermits, associated with constant fear of hell, of the end of the world, and the like, accompanied by contempt for real knowledge, it is not altogether surprising that, in the thirteenth century, Abbot Richalm wrote a book called *Revelations*, in which he related the daily and hourly torture from devils to which he was subject; and he gave much information about the habits of these strange creatures. They were the cause of all his maladies, both physical and mental. If fleas kept him awake, it was the work of devils; for fleas, he said, only seemed to bite, and devils were responsible for the damage done. If a monk snored, the noise was made by a devil within the man. Intoxication was produced by similar agency; and the devils in this case, though usually staying at inns, were apt to slip into the monastery on feast days and glide about among, and enter into the monks as they sat at table. The principal remedies prescribed by the Abbot for these ills were holy water and the sign of the cross, the latter being specially recommended for flea-bite.

But though a few eminent persons, and a considerable number of others, are still obsessed by the supernatural, or preternatural, a large proportion of the members of the more forward communities of the present day have escaped from the deeper sloughs of superstition; and we can share in Sir J. G. Frazer's evident appreciation of this improvement:—

For ages the great army of spirits, once so near, has been receding further and further from us, banished by the magic wand of science, from ruined cell and ivied tower, from haunted glade and lonely mere, from the riven murky cloud that belches forth the lightning, and those fairer clouds that pillow the silver moon or fret with flakes of burning red the golden even. The spirits are gone even from their last stronghold in the sky, whose blue arch no longer passes, except with children, for the screen that hides from mortal eyes the glories of the celestial world. Only in poets' dreams or impassioned flights of oratory is it given to catch a glimpse of the last flutter of the standards of the retreating host, to hear the beat of their invisible wings, the sound of their mocking laughter, or the swell of angel music dying away in the distance.

One would like to commend the above passage from *The Golden Bough* to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his fellow spiritists, and another passage, which points out some of the serious effects of occult belief, and particularly of the supersession of rational thought and effort by "otherworldliness":—

This excessive preoccupation with the problems of the future has been a fruitful source of the most fatal aberrations both of nations and individuals. In the pursuit of these visionary aims the few short years of life have been frittered away; blood has been poured out in torrents; the natural affections have been stifled; and the cheerful serenity of reason has been exchanged for the melancholy gloom of madness.

J. REEVES.

## Correspondence.

"WHERE ARE THE DEAD?"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I, as one who not only read, but pondered, on your Editorial of July 29, counsel Mr. Panton to do likewise?

Of course Prof. Huxley never mentioned a third reality. That would have given his case away entirely! But he cannot escape the implication.

Possibly Mr. Panton has confused "aspect" with "reality." Mind as we know it is a function of the body through one of its parts; so is the beating of the heart and scores of other things. In that sense, there are many "aspects" of the one entity, the body or individual.

Hydrogen is one thing; Oxygen is another.  $H_2O$  is neither.

His analogy of the poles is meaningless: the two "poles" do not comprise the world.

GEO. H. TAYLOR.

## Society News.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD AT NELSON AND BLACKBURN.

THE rain interfered with outdoor propaganda very considerably while Mr. Whitehead was at Nelson. The two meetings finishing the series held in Blackburn were as successful as the rest, and the one addressed on the Sunday afternoon was exceptionally well attended and responsive. But the four meetings at Nelson represented the triumph of mind over matter, the latter being as Mr. Mantaline would have expressed it, "demnition moist." Each evening a devoted number of enthusiasts gathered under conditions more reminiscent of a polo match than a lecturing theatre, to hear the gospel of Freethought, but the majority of people of Nelson preferred dry feet to full heads, and this week accordingly cannot be regarded as one of the best.

On Saturday, September 1, Mr. Whitehead commences a fortnight's propaganda in Manchester and Salford, details of which are given in the Lecture Notices.

### BURNLEY BRANCH LECTURES.

THE exceedingly bad weather during the past week prevented some of the meetings, which had been arranged, being held. It was, however, fine on Thursday, and Mr. Clayton had an attentive, if only partly sympathetic, audience at Worsthorne. Many questions were asked after the lecture, and there was some opposition. On Sunday afternoon it was possible to hold a meeting at Brierfield, where the speaker always has something of an uphill fight. But Mr. Clayton got an audience, and kept it, afterwards distributing copies of the *Freethinker*. Since Sunday afternoon the rain has fallen continuously, making out-door meetings impossible.

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Radcliffe—"Ethical Theism in India: The Brahma Somaj Centenary."

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S.—(Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"Does the World Show Design?"

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrols 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. R. H. Rosetti—A Lecture.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. (Brockwell Park): 6.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Wednesday—(Clapham Old Town): 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Thursday—(Cooks Road, Kennington): 8.0, Mr. F. Mann—"More Nonsense from the Universe."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart—A Lecture; 3.30, Mr. Hyatt—A Lecture; 6.30, Lecturers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Le Maine. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday, at 7.30. Speakers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Hart, Hyatt, Maurice Maubrey and others. The *Freethinker* can be obtained at the corner of Bryanston Street during our meetings.

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

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM (Town Hall): Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN—"Some Things Christians Ought to Know." Doors open at 6.30. Chair taken at 7 p.m. Admission free. Collection.

#### OUTDOOR.

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

BURNLEY BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. J. Clayton's Meetings: Friday, August 31, Rawtenstall (Bacup Road), 7.30; Sunday, September 2, Accrington (Market), 7.0; Monday, September 3, Higham, 7.30; Tuesday, September 4, Worsthorne (The Square), 7.30; Sunday, September 8, Todmorden (Market), 7.0.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—Tuesday, August 28, 7.15—Houghton-le-Spring; Wednesday, August 29, 7.0—Gladstone Institute, Darlington; Thursday, August 30, 7.15—Hetton. Speakers—Messrs. Brighton and Brown.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Each week as follows. Sunday: 6.45, Beaumont Street—Messrs. Shortt and Sherwin. Monday: 7.45, Beaumont Street—Mr. P. Sherwin. Tuesday: 7.45, Beaumont Street—Mr. J. V. Shortt, Islington Square—Mr. P. Sherwin. Thursday: 8.0, Edge Hill Lamp—Mr. P. Sherwin; High Park Street—Mr. J. V. Shortt.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's Meetings: September 1 to 7. Saturday, Alexandra Park Gates, Manchester; Sunday, 3 and 7 p.m., Stevenson Square; Monday, Alexandra Park Gates; Tuesday, Devonshire Street, All Saints; Wednesday, Devonshire Street, All Saints; Thursday, Alexandra Park Gates; Friday, Alexandra Park Gates. All week-night meetings are at 7.30 p.m.

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