

The
FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN ■ ■ EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G·W·FOOTE

VOL. XLVIII.—No. 37

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1928

PRICE THREEPENCE

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This World and the Next.

THERE are one or two considerations that should have weight with anyone who is attracted to Spiritualism on account of what has been rashly called the "scientific evidence" of its truth. In this connexion "science" is a gross abuse of language. A leading feature of scientific evidence is its impersonal character. It is evidence that is quite independent of personal feeling or prepossession, and when produced, it appeals alike to all normally constituted minds. In the case of Spiritualism, not only is there very wide divergence of opinion among a group of people who are called together to witness certain things, but there is even doubt as to their occurrence. One need only refer inquirers to the records of these signs and wonders for evidence in proof of these statements.

Moreover, death is no new thing in the history of the race. It has been almost coincident with birth. Every human being born has died, every human being has passed into the "Summerland," and every human being has had the capacity for communicating with the living. If Spiritualism is true we are dealing with a natural fact. And, if true, the fact of communication should by this time have been as well established as our knowledge of every other palpable, everyday natural fact. What we find to be the case is that belief in it ebbs and flows more in the character of a mental epidemic than anything else. And during the past century we have witnessed, side by side with exposures of trickery, and explanations based upon a knowledge of dissociation and various kinds of automatism, a development of the means of communication, from simple table-rapping to flying trumpets and "direct" voices, which is far more suggestive of and most clearly allied to improvements in the conjuror's art.

When We Arrive. * * *

Now let us come back again to the "most logical religious philosophy" of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Sir Oliver Lodge tells us that in the next world

people "remain very much themselves, they are not really deprived of a bodily instrument though it is not made of matter." Sir Arthur tells us that in the next world "Our form at its best, our character and our knowledge are exactly the same as before." I really do not see why our form at its best should be preserved, except for the reason that the next world must be made as sugary as possible. Why should not our form at its worst, or at its "middling" be preserved? The only reason I can see is that people would not like it, and while one is creating another world one may as well build it as one would like it to be. And why does the "mind" which survives bodily destruction here, require a bodily "instrument there"? Probably the reason is that even Sir Oliver cannot really think of a "mind" floating around minus a body, and prefers to keep his unthinkabilities to this world. And, once more, when one is reshaping the universe it is only common sense to "remould it nearer to the heart's desire." Only—and this is the great drawback—when we are remoulding it in the name of logic it is as well that some attention to the rules of logic should be paid.

For example. The cardinal and all-important facts of individual existence here are birth, growth, decay, and death. The first and last terms of the series are not isolated facts, they are two aspects of the same thing. Birth has no meaning apart from death, death has no significance apart from birth. Birth, except in the case of the forms of life that perpetuate by budding or simple division, involves the fact of, and the attraction of, sex. It means male and female. There are, it seems, males and females in the spirit world, although what the deuce they have to do as males and as females it is hard to see. Sex means mating, mating means children, children means a more or less settled life, and a settled life, based on the relations between men and women, and the existence of a family, lies—as all students of sociology are aware—at the foundation of what we have in mind when we speak of moral and social development.

* * *

Self and Environment.

Just one or two other considerations. It is quite a commonplace to say that physical structures are developed in accordance with a particular environment. That is true throughout the whole of the animal world. It is so uniform that we can examine an organism and give a general outline of the environment in which it lives, or we can take a given environment and forecast the kind of organism that can live therein. There is no room for dispute on this head.

It ought to be quite as clear that precisely the same generalization holds as truly of qualities as it does of structures. Family affection implies family

life. The love of man for woman or woman for man implies the existence of sexual differences, sex attractions and sex gratifications. Feelings of loyalty, of honesty, of duty, of truth, imply a society in which these feelings have meaning and application. Even the desire for knowledge, although apparently one of the most disinterested qualities that human nature possesses, can be derived from the advantage it gives to the group in the struggle for survival. Ultimately, knowledge has to be good for something, or for someone.

Now, in the next world, we shall—so says Sir Arthur—have full scope for all the powers we possess. There are changes, but (more sugar) “all changes are for the best.” On the other hand—here comes a devastating flash of something approaching common sense—“We find ourselves in an exceedingly busy and complex life, in which we have full scope for all the mental powers which we possess, which means that the environment must be much the same.” But if the environment is the same as this one, why is there not the same room for going down as for going up? Why must it be all for the best? Where we have ninety-nine parts nonsense the introduction of one part of common sense is rather risky. Mr. Blatchford is quite certain that he will meet and live again with his wife, and Sir Oliver Lodge tells us that the departed ones are “happy in the consciousness of progress, continued affection, and ultimate reunion”—with the people on earth. It is all quite interesting, as pretty as a child’s fairy tale, and one only begins to feel dissatisfied when one attempts to put together the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle that has been given us. It is then we discover that the pieces simply will not fit.

* * *

Our Life Over There.

In the “Summerland”—this much we may take for granted—there is neither birth nor death. There will be no lamentations over the one, neither will there be any rejoicings over the other. There will be no babies toddling about the streets of the next world, there will be none of the anxiety of parents about the health or safety of their children; so far as newcomers are concerned the relations of parent and child will not exist. It is true there is to be a reunion of those who were parents here with those who were children here, although if Sir Arthur is right, and we are grouped according to our sympathies, I do not quite see how parents will get into contact with children who are out of sympathy with them. Sex, in the vital sense of the word, will be non-existent. The difference in dress, or in appearance, will have about as much sex significance as in the pictures in tailors’ and dressmakers’ circulars. Family life will also be non-existent, for one cannot call any congregation of adults a family, any more than a gathering of people in a seaside hotel can be called a family, save by the grace of poetic licence. I daresay that the inventors of this badly fitting jig-saw puzzle will explain that the love of parent for child and child for parent is immortal. I am not quite sure of that, but at any rate I cannot conceive a parent who lived on earth, say, three thousand years ago, having quite the same affection for his child, now aged 2,980, that he had when the child was a boy of ten. In the “Summerland” there is nothing for parental love, family love, or sex attraction to live on, and the pictures one gets of beautiful women floating about the celestial streets—whether these pictures are circulated by Christians or Spiritualists—have about as much veracity as the charming bungalows depicted by the

speculative builder who is opening up a new seaside district.

It is almost as difficult to see what place in the “Summerland” there is for most of the other virtues and vices. There does not seem much room or demand for honesty, or for courage, or for loyalty, etc. We never read of spirits fighting, or stealing, or playing the traitor. Presumably there is nothing to steal, no one to kill, and no room for disloyalty. We do read of lying spirits—and are duly thankful for having that little bit of human nature left, although that may be put in to make the professional evangelist and religious journalist feel more at home in the next world.

* * *

Getting Ready for What?

Both the orthodox religionist and the Spiritualist are agreed that this world is in some way a school of discipline for the next. But how can a life in one environment fit us for an existence of a quite different kind? What is the use to us of qualities which will in the next world have no scope for expression? Who would spend time learning to swim in order to qualify for piloting an aeroplane? What is the use of all this sugary nonsense about love and duty, if we are to live in a world where the conditions of love and duty do not obtain? If men and women are reduced to the state of sexless souls, only to be distinguished one from the other by the kind of robe they wear, what justification is there for talking as though human nature can go on “developing”? The very conditions of development are wiped away. It may be said that I am, in writing in this way, concerning myself with the beginnings of love, and am ignoring its later developments. Not in the least. I am writing this in a garden, and within reach of my hand is the delicate pink petals of a beautiful rose. It is a far remove from the dirty malodorous earth in which it is rooted to the delicately tinted rose leaf; but take away the former and the latter will live but a limited number of hours. Atrophy rules with feelings as with structures; evolution is all of a piece, nor can all the vagaries of religious extravagance rule out the logic of life.

It does not need careful examination of “hundreds of records” to perceive the absurd falsity of Spiritualism. If men would but supply the least amount of critical faculty to the farrago of absurd contradictions that are presented to them, they would know that Spiritualism is not true. Consider the facts:—

(1) A large part of what goes on in the seance room is admittedly fraudulent. Medium after medium runs his or her allotted course, to be detected in the end in trickery.

(2) The residuum that remains when the likelihood or possibility of fraud has been eliminated, may be explained as the product of dissociation, hysteria, or well understood automatism.

(3) Nearly every witness as to the truth of communications being received from the dead receives them under conditions, personal or otherwise, that puts them out of court.

(4) The spirits do not agree as to the kind of world in which they are living, or where that world is.

(5) They do not know what kind of body they have, or whether they have any body at all.

(6) They do not know whether they require food; or, if they do, the kind of food they eat.

(7) They are not agreed as to whether they com-

municate with each other vocally or by thought-transference.

(8) Wherever Spiritualism flourishes the kind of future life described is suspiciously like that current in religious circles.

(9) The communications received are of a strikingly puerile and commonplace character. Tawdry exhortations to love one another, etc. Instead of there being evidence of continuous progress, the evidence produced is in favour of rapid deterioration.

The list might easily be prolonged, but it is this collection of gross contradictions and radical irreconcilabilities which is given to us by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as the "most logical religious philosophy" he has ever met. One is tempted to say that Sir Arthur is rapidly qualifying to take a high place with the philosophic spirits who dominate the seance room.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Have Shrimps Got Souls?

"The mind is what it is, not less petty when it is dubbed spiritual, not less noble when it is called material. No wisdom of philosophy or theology can prove that atoms are base stuff."—*Henshaw Ward.*

"All we now call super-normal is merely normal imperfectly understood; but destined to be understood as knowledge widens."—*H. G. Wells.*

Quite a number of the clergy are quite unsuited to their jobs. They talk too much and too fluently, like the dear Bishop of London, who is never tired of explaining that the more money he earns the poorer he becomes. Then there are the perfervid revivalists who paint word-pictures of the alleged wickedness of the world in such lurid colours that they suggest naughty ideas to their congregations. If people were better educated they could not regard such men as reverend, and right-reverend, as pastors and masters. Such mules should never be regarded as oracles; they ought to be harnessed to bath-chairs and fed on carrots.

The education of the clergy as a class is an illusion. In the overwhelming majority of cases they are only educated in the patter of their own sorry profession. Most priests do not understand the alphabet of science, and it is the consciousness of their own shortcoming that makes them so shy of debate. The reason why the average Christian is muddle-headed with regard to the religion he professes is largely due to the fact that he sits under a empty-headed pastor, and the imbecility exhibited in the pulpit is too often reflected by the inanity of the man in the pew.

Take, for example, the subject of immortality. Millions of sermons have been preached, and thousands of books written, upon this matter. Yet the subject is a veritable *pons asinorum* to the majority of Christians. Under cross-examination they behave like a nervous schoolboy before a stern headmaster. Catholics hope to survive death on the authority of a Church controlled by Italian priests. Protestants rely on the testimony of a two thousand years' old book. One Christian will talk of the resurrection of the body; and another will wax eloquent on the immortality of the soul. Yet another Christian is certain that the majority of the human race will go to Hell; and another is cocksure that almost all will reach Heaven. And another is equally certain that there is "no sich place" as Hades. No wonder that an ancient philosopher caustically remarked that truth was to be found at the bottom of a well. So far as theology is concerned, it is likely to remain there, with the lid padlocked, too.

Belief in life beyond the grave reached its culminating point in ancient Egypt, thousands of years ago. Wealthy people spent as much money providing for a future life as for their present existence. These superstitious people have their successors to-day, for in all the slums of England it is the custom to spend the insurance money on an impressive funeral of the deceased, and to trust in the local Relieving Officer for the future needs of the survivors. These ancient Egyptians, who had such ambitious ideas concerning a future existence, also worshipped crocodiles. Deities have always been greedy, if one may believe their priests, but crocodiles "take the bun" in more senses than one. As the Irishman said: "I deny the allegation, and defy the alligator."

All the priests of Christendom have never succeeded in proving that man has a "soul." They have talked as much and as loudly as bookmakers on Epsom Downs, but it has all ended in mere words. Their guessing game is still going on, and their boldness is remarkable. For instance, the Venerable H. J. C. Jones, Archdeacon of Brecon, believes that dogs have "souls," and hopes to meet his canine friends in the next world. The same belief was held by the late Canon Molineux, Vicar of St. James's Church, Derby. Another clergyman, the Rev. C. L. Tweedale, of Weston, near Otley, Yorkshire, supports his clerical brothers, and declares that he is certain of the matter. There is no arguing, it is as true as the Gospels.

This is really more exciting than a cross-word puzzle, or a football competition. We are all familiar with the beautiful idea that the late Doctor Crippen, having "found grace" at the last, is now playing a golden harp in heaven. It is stale news that Colonel Ingersoll is having a rollicking time in the red-hot poker department of another place. But this matter of the bow-wows in the next world suggests that, as sceptics suspect religion is "going to the dogs."

Are we to suppose that all life is indestructible? In that case, why stop at dogs? Perky Pekinese, and bandy Bonzos do not exhaust natural history. We have still to ask where life begins, and wherever the line may be drawn, it is manifest that cobras, sharks, shrimps, lodging-house fleas and winkles, are on the hither side of it, and have "souls." All these, and a thousand other difficulties encounter us when we try to consider this matter of the survival of animals.

It all sounds very odd, but perhaps Spiritualists can help in this theological cul-de-sac. Priests always say, or rather shout, that the surgeon's knife cannot find the "soul." It sounds very like trade jealousy. In a sense, however, Spiritualism does try to find the "soul" with the knife; that is, with material means. It wants to get as good evidence for the existence of John Smith after death, as it had for the existence of John Smith before death. The supposed "spirit" of Mr. Smith is required to prove his existence and presence by making himself audible, by showing that he remembers his aunt, or the red-headed girl next door, or by having his photograph taken.

Now, "spirit photographs" differ widely. Some depict the deceased as if he were an incandescent gas-mantle surmounted by a head. Here, however, the critic is cornered by the question of face-fungus. Sideboards à la Rudolph Valentino, twirly moustaches, trimmed beards, even clean shaves, suggest the work of hairdressers. And hairdressers imply razors, scissors, shops, tips, and, before you can say "Hello," our present existence is reproducing itself, and the New Jerusalem is very like Oxford Street.

There are worse snags than this. Other spirit

photographs show the dear departed arrayed in stove-pipe hats, frock coats, spats, starched shirts and collars, and wearing jewellery. As for the ladies, I have seen, fresh from the alleged other world, the leg-of-mutton sleeves and long dress-trains of thirty years ago reproduced with the faithfulness of a Bond Street modiste. Frankly, it will not do! It is getting too close to Colney Hatch.

If you think this far-fetched, listen, for a space, to Sir Oliver Lodge, who is the champion of the Spiritualists. Here is his description of the alleged next world, taken from his book *Raymond*:—

A chap came over the other day, who would have a cigar. "That's finished them," he thought. He means he thought they would never be able to provide that. But there are laboratories over here, and they manufacture all sorts of things in them. Not like you do, out of solid matter, but out of essences, and ethers, and gases. It's not the same as on the earth plane, but they were able to manufacture what looked like a cigar.

That last sentence touched me deeply. I have been the victim of "what looked like a cigar," more than once, and paid for the discovery. I remember the last time the box was ornamented with the portrait of a highly-coloured, flamboyant person, resembling Marie Lloyd. And I am no more satisfied with this so-called "scientific" testimony concerning human survival than I was with the alleged cigar made of cork lino, brown paper, and a portion of cabbage-leaf.

All the so-called evidence is "flat, stale, and unprofitable." We long for something satisfying. Like the story of the dying farm-labourer, we like something concrete. His friends tried to solace him with the golden joys of heaven. Raising himself for a last word, he said: "'Tis all very well for thee; but give I the bar at the 'Pig and Whistle.'" His credulity, like that of some of us, was near a breaking point.

In spite of the clergy and the mediums, the riddle remains unanswered, the sphinx is still silent. Couched in plausible and semi-scientific language, presented with all the resources of men who have devoted their lives to propaganda, this plea for survival is, in the last resort, but a reflection of the zest of life itself. Heine hit the nail on the head when he suggested, smilingly, that the idea of personal immortality may have suggested itself to a lover in the arms of his mistress, or to some citizen sipping his beer on a summer evening. It is, in the last analysis, but a desire for personal continuance, to be for ever as we are. The clergy and the mediums both exploit this feeling, and make comfortable incomes in the process.

MIMNERMUS.

Sonnet.

Reading maketh the fool man.
Francis Bacon (slightly altered).

His mind is tangled in an undergrowth
Of words and phrases got from divers books;
His broth is spoiled by too many cooks;
His mental poverty comes not from sloth.
Resounding word; the flashing phrase; they both
Can captivate him by their very looks:
They hold him fast; they grapple him with hooks,
To think things for himself the man is loath.
He reads the *Times* and from it every day
Cuts out the speeches of our public men;
He learns by heart the empty things they say;
But should you ask of him politely when
These childish things will all be put away,
He cackles like a stupid frightened hen.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

A Grave Question.

SOON after I saw the list of names of persons that the Editor of the *Daily News* had invited to contribute articles to that journal on "Where are the Dead?" it was not long before it occurred to me that the Editor had asked the wrong people altogether; that most of the writers knew nothing about the dead, and that he would have been well advised if he had asked a certain number of undertakers, gravediggers and superintendents of cemeteries to give their views on the subject. For after all, Sir Arthur Keith as a doctor, and Professor Julian Huxley as a scientist, deal with living human beings, and it was only when man was coming to his last gasp as it were, that Sir Arthur declared that the life went out of the human body in the same manner as the light went out of a candle when it was burnt down to the end of the wick; it just flickered and went out. And as far as he could see, that was the end of man as a personality. When, therefore, the Editor of the *Daily News* invited a number of clergymen of the Church of England, a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, several Nonconformist parsons, a number of journalists, and two or three well known Spiritualists, he was asking persons who know no more about the dead than the ordinary man in the street—but for the most part, persons who profess to know something about "souls" or "spirits" which they are unable to describe in intelligible language, and of which, therefore, no intelligent person can form any rational conception.

Accordingly, as I am on very friendly terms with two undertakers, both of whom are in a large way of business, several gravediggers, whom I have met on various occasions, and a superintendent of two very large cemeteries, I thought I would just interview these gentlemen and ask them a few questions on "Where are the Dead?" and send the result of my inquiries to the *Freethinker*, as I know perfectly well that the Editor of the *Daily News* would not be likely to insert such a communication. When I had told the first undertaker what Sir Arthur Keith had said about man's life going out like a candle, and that that appeared to be the end of him as a personality, the undertaker replied frankly that he quite endorsed that view. He and his assistants, he said, had seen and handled hundreds of dead bodies during their professional career, and he saw no reason to believe that once a man was dead, and his body decayed, or reduced to ashes as in cremation, that there was any prospect of him coming up again as the same individual with a "celestial body," whatever that may mean, in the distant future. He had heard many priests and parsons, in their "Burial Service," declare that we should all rise again at the last day, but from his practical experience among the dead, he very much doubted it—though, of course, he did not tell them so; otherwise his occupation, like Othello's, would soon be gone. The second undertaker was less candid and more diplomatic in his replies. He did not know whether man had an immortal soul or not; but he thought it was much more pleasant to believe that in the distant future we should meet our loved ones in a heavenly abode, and be forever happy in their company.

I pointed out to him that it might be comforting to some to believe they would meet their loved ones in Heaven, but according to many Christians there is another place where a vast number would go to—a burning Hell—and it would not be very comforting to learn that any of your loved ones had gone there to suffer an eternity of torment. Moreover,

a good devoted wife would certainly not desire to join her brutal or drunken husband, who had cruelly treated her on earth, in the heavenly abode, or the good kind husband meet his dissolute and faithless wife—wherever he might find her. But my second undertaker, while admitting the difficulty of dealing with such cases, said that it was no part of his duty to enter upon any theological controversy on the occasion of a funeral. In fact, strictly in confidence, he told me that he thought there was something in Spiritualism, and that man really never did die; that when his body was deposited in the grave, his soul went straightway to the spirit world, where it existed in unalloyed happiness for evermore. I asked him whether he thought there was any truth in the statement of Sir Oliver Lodge, that in the spirit world his son Raymond drank whisky and soda? And, further, whether there was a distillery and soda manufactory in the spiritual region—but he only gave a hearty laugh, and shook his head in reply.

And then I went in search of a gravedigger, to see what fresh light he could throw on the subject of "Where are the Dead?" Now gravediggers are not highly educated persons as a rule, but they are gifted with good common sense; and on a question of how long a dead body will lie in a grave before it is reduced to bones and dust, they can, from their experience of deceased bodies, give a very good estimate. Shakespeare knew that over three hundred years ago. For listen to what the gravedigger said to Hamlet in "The Grave Scene" of that sublime tragedy:—

HAMLET: How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

GRAVEDIGGER: Faith, if he be not rotten before he die (as we have many pocky corsers nowadays that will scarce hold the laying in) he will last you some eight year, or nine year; a tanner will last you nine year.

HAMLET: Why he more than another?

GRAVEDIGGER: Why Sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body.

Shakespeare also understood the doctrine of the indestructibility of matter and force.

Listen: Hamlet is still talking:—

"Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;
O that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw."

But I asked my gravedigger, in all seriousness, where he thought the dead were; and he said, "They're in the earth, governor. And they'll be there for a devil of a time, believe me, sir. Why there's some in this cemetery that's been here close on a hundred years already." "But," I went on, "don't you really expect there will be a resurrection one of these days?" "I don't know sir; but I should think some of those in common internments, eighteen feet down in the earth, with several coffins on the top of them, would have a poor chance of escape on the morning of the resurrection. What do you think, sir?" That was a poser that I did not attempt to answer.

I next sought my friend the superintendent of two cemeteries. One of them had only recently been closed as being full up for ordinary graves—but family graves were still open for future interments. The Borough Council had purchased the ground—freehold—for the new cemetery, I learned, so that they had no immediate expectation of any resurrections. The residents in the immediate neighbourhood, I also learned, rested quietly in their beds at

night, having no expectation of seeing any lively corpse walking about the cemetery—unless some person with a very vivid imagination, who had been imbibing too freely of spirituous liquors at the local pub, happened to be wandering about near the cemetery at night—but such ghosts vanished into thin air in the early morning. Briefly then, the above statement contained the substance of my inquiries into the question of "Where are the dead?" from men whose daily lives bring them into constant contact with the matter under consideration; and consequently I send this unbiassed report to the only paper whose Editor I believe will have the courage to let his readers know the truth from men whose opinions, and experiences, have not been asked for in this controversy.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

A Fable and an Essay.

THE GAMEKEEPER.

Once upon a time there lived a man who kept several hens. He kept them because he felt sure the world needed hens, and moreover, it paid him. One of the fowls, a buff orpington, symbolized the Christian account of the origin of the world. A Rhode Island red symbolized the Christian explanation of how man came into being. The Christian interpretation concerning the forces which govern the world was symbolized by a Plymouth rock. The idea of the survival of the soul was represented by a white wyandotte; and so on.

Now a fox resided in the vicinity, and the presence of these fowls piqued his curiosity. Periodically he would venture into the hen-roost, leaving behind him the uninspiring remains of a dead chicken. One very early catch of his was a white leghorn, which symbolized the fact of the earth being the centre of the universe. This fowl was lean and scraggy, and did not give the fox undue trouble.

The owner of these fowls was not very intelligent, and, in spite of more insistent worship, the slaughter still went on. One day the seductive waddle of the Plymouth rock caught the fox's eye. The waddle ceased with the approval. Very soon after, the Rhode Island and the orpington—both very fat and juicy birds—discontinued the functioning for which they were originally intended.

But the annoyed gamekeeper did not disclose to the world the loss of his poultry. He did, however, warn other gamekeepers to keep a sharp look-out for a fox that he was sure lurked in the neighbourhood.

The process still went on until, one day, he found his roost with nothing in it to indicate recent life except a few feathers strewn amongst the straw. The disappearance of the majority of the last batch did not disturb him too much—they were not prolific birds anyhow—but he was mightily annoyed over the loss of his prize bird, the wyandotte. So wrathful was he that he determined to track the fox to its lair and kill it.

On the road he met a goose. The goose was wild, but as the expression on the gamekeeper's face was wilder, it ambled away, watching him out of the corner of its eye. The gamekeeper raised his gun and pointed it in the direction of the goose, which promptly hurried away. The man followed, and they both frolicked for some time over hill and dale, across streams and through forests.

"Well," said the gamekeeper's wife, when he returned, "did you kill the fox?"

"Yes," he replied. "Here it is."

And he laid the goose on the table.

THE CHILD.

"And he called unto Him a little child and set him in the midst of them and said, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

This is the text of Mr. Fosdick's articles in the issues of the *Christian World*, dated July 5 and 12. Apparently a friend of his had written him to say that al-

though science and philosophy satisfied the mind, how he wished he could pray again! Now this makes me very curious concerning the identity of this friend, for no one who has been *convinced* of the sterility of religion ever dreams of going back. He has too great a contempt for the mental processes involved.

Mr. Fosdick's article, by the way, is entitled: "Beyond Reason." I do not mention this because I disagree with the choice. I only do so because the exquisite humour of it impresses me.

"Can you imagine a sharper contrast than that presented to your thought between the typical modern mind on one hand, glorying in its scientific process, and thinking of that as the major method of dealing with reality and getting at true knowledge, and on the other, Jesus' little child getting into heaven by his contrary method?"

No, Mr. Fosdick, we cannot imagine a more cutting contrast. And we thank you very much for pointing out how simple it really is to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. At the same time it makes things difficult for those who have given way to the natural and normal procedure of growing up. I, for one, regret bitterly the wasted opportunities that will never occur again. For in my manly access of self-consciousness I cannot bring myself to play hop-scotch again, or collect cigarette cards. Much as I would like to regard scissor-grinders and tram drivers as national heroes, I fear I cannot, for my ideals are no longer what they were. I now enjoy my baths. I no longer register the normal and healthy child's expression of boredom and indifference when someone mentions Bach or Shakespeare. *Tiger Tim's Weekly* and pea-shooters seem to have lost their attraction for me. It is all very exasperating. It can hardly be called fair on God's part to reserve his spiritually-wafted kisses for children, half-wits, and parsons. It is too bad, when it is time for people to take responsibilities in life, that they should simultaneously be deprived of the hankering to grovel in the sand and build sand castles. What fool was it that conceived the idea that education means the development of the faculties of the child? Did he not recognize that when education comes in at the door, then the Kingdom of Heaven goes out of the window? But perhaps we are given a second opportunity when our second childhood comes round. How far-seeing Nature really is!

Now, if Mr. Fosdick had been content with this simple message, all would have been well. But he goes on to give a philosophical explanation of the divergence between the religious and scientific methods, and there his touch is not so sure.

He claims the authority of a famous professor that an uneducated man of his acquaintance was able fully to appreciate poetry—much more so than many educated persons. This peasant simply approached a poem in a child-like manner! But it seems absurd to have to point out to Mr. Fosdick that such a peasant is not a child but a genius. How many peasants are there like this? If an uneducated person appreciates art more than an educated one it is simply, in most cases, a reflection on the system of education.

Mr. Fosdick then goes on to say that there are many more ways of getting at true knowledge other than the rational and logical way. We may derive knowledge by the exercise of instinct, intuition, faith, sense of beauty, etc. Quite. But such a statement merely shows how complete is his ignorance of the scientific method. He never once mentions the word "interpretation," and in a comparison of religious and scientific methods it is impossible to omit it. Should it be necessary to have to point out to an educated man that the difference between the religious and scientific methods lies entirely in the method of interpretation? We all have the same truths and facts to go at, and we have five senses with which to discover them.

Mr. Fosdick argues that the sense of beauty gives a way of getting at reality, and instances the fifth symphony of Beethoven. With the typical conceit of the religious, he assumes that only those spiritually inoculated are able to enjoy the music, and that scientists pass the time away by counting the air waves.

Well, let us consider. The scientist and the religious one both sit back to enjoy the music. The reception in

each case depends upon past experience and circumstances. Any knowledge acquired may do two things. It may provide the listener with more insight into Beethoven's music and character; it may also develop the listener's musical taste. Up to this point both the religious one and the scientist are on equal terms.

But suppose someone came up afterwards and asked: "How, or why does the symphony affect us?" The religious one, by virtue of his undeveloped reasoning faculties will be unable to answer—he will say *something*, of course, and one can be pretty sure that "spiritual" and "uplift" will frequently occur. But the scientist will reply that the impact of airwaves upon the membranes of the ear produces an effect on the brain, and that this effect is dependent upon the brain's past experience. If Mr. Fosdick says that there is more in the symphony than the mere impact of air waves, perhaps he will explain why it is that deaf persons do not enjoy "listening" to the music. If there are telepathic communications abroad, why don't they percolate through the mind instead of taking upon themselves to cease when hearing ceases? Is it not apparent that knowledge derived from a sense of beauty is merely a kind of glorified sense data?—in other words, the starting point of the scientist?

As for faiths and worship, where is the certainty of the knowledge derived, if the object worshipped never existed? There are many people even to-day who say that because the Bible says so, there is immortality! What is going to happen to this "certain" knowledge if, as is bound to happen when education progresses, the Bible is recognized as a fraud perpetrated by unscrupulous historians? Besides, it is delightful logic to postulate a god, derive knowledge by worshipping this god, and then claim that this faith insists that there is a god.

For the benefit of children and those adults who are psychologically juvenile, we here append a thumb-nail outline of the scientific method. Impressions from the external world are received in the brain through the medium of the senses. This includes every possible fact that can be thought of. Science then proceeds, by means of classification and co-ordination, to evolve interpretations of the phenomena observed. These interpretations are verified by repeated reference to the external.

The receiving of the original impressions may be done in any way one pleases. One may read the Bible, consult one's grandmother, or go to Chicago. It makes no difference how one gets the facts. But what is important is that the verification and interpretation simply *must* be rational, and it is in this department that science is so superior to religion. One by one, religious interpretations have been shattered—the story of creation, of the origin of man, of the forces which govern the world, the survival of the soul, etc. They only exist now among the uneducated, and among those whose interest it is to keep them alive.

A fitting conclusion is the reproduction of two of Mr. Fosdick's conundrums. They were intended to demonstrate the shortcomings of the scientific method! They are: How does a couple know beforehand that their marriage is going to be a happy one? and how does a man know he is going to make a successful physician?

We reserve the answers in case the B.B.C. needs them for the Children's Corner. But I will put in a good word for the London University Correspondence Courses. Beginners are given special attention and age is no object.

PANSY.

The Miracle.

AN EPIGRAM.

When true lovers mate, the groom a Prince shines forth;
The bride a Princess, life's superbest daughter—
A world transfigured: East, West, South and
North . . .
"What need for Christ to change to Wine our
water?"
Nigeria.

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Freethought Flashes.

Religion is the one thing in which the fool regularly apes the air of a philosopher, and the philosopher most usually plays the part of a fool.

I do not know why men should talk about seeing God and never about smelling him. Seeing and smelling are both activities of particular organs exercised on special objects. If the object exists to see, it might also exist to smell. Indeed, in an earlier age, Christian saints have written of a "divine perfume" that accompanied visions of Jesus and the Virgin. Also, why is it reverent to talk of the mind of God, but irreverent to speak of him as having whiskers? Again, the earlier generations of Christians never fumbled at picturing God with a full-blown beard. I fancy the real answer to these questions is that in such matters men dare not be honest with themselves. They perpetrate myths by a series of delusions. If they talked of the body of God, or of smelling God, the nature of the belief in God would be quite plain and unmistakable. But by thinning it down, by attributing to God the least tangible of human qualities, they disguise from themselves that they are, after all, human qualities, and that the only gods man knows are such as he makes in his own image.

Has there ever been a freedom loving people? The reply in the affirmative is open to grave doubts. There have been peoples who were free, but that is not quite the same thing, for enquiry will show that their freedom was won by a few lofty spirits setting the ideal of freedom before them and then spurring them on to attain it. And so long as the few were watchful and energetic the freedom may have been maintained. But these same people were always ready to break down and cast away the freedom they possessed, always ready to express the intolerance which has been checked for a time. That is one reason why vigilance is the price of liberty—vigilance on the part of the few so that the many may not cast away something they never greatly value, and are only too ready to cast aside.

It is well to have in use the phrase "the English of the Bible," for the English of the Bible is the English of the Bible. That is, it is English that was never in use as either a written or a spoken language. It grew up in connexion with the Bible, and not in connexion with the main stream of English prose. The great currents of English prose developed quite independently of it.

God, being everywhere, has nowhere to go. Knowing everything, he has nothing to learn. Immovable and unteachable! If he exists, even an idiot ought to have enough sympathy to pity him.

Animals have no souls. The proof is, they are not human. Man has a soul. The proof is, he is not an animal. You see, it is entirely a question of difference. And in a world dominated by cattle, the ruling philosophy would not be greatly different in kind.

The teacher has nothing to do with compromise in any form. He should leave that to the politician.

A belief that is credible needs no force to ensure its acceptance. It is only the incredible that needs impose pains and penalties for its rejection.

Acid Drops.

A new blasphemy trial is promised in the United States. Dr. Horace Meyer Kallen, of Harvard University, is reported to have said in a recent lecture that if Saccho and Vanzetti were anarchists, then so were Jesus Christ, Socrates and others. It is not the first time that Jesus Christ has been called an anarchist, and almost everything else. That is the best of a character such as the New Testament Jesus—anyone can make him just what they like. And it will be interesting to see a jury of American citizens determining whether Jesus was a follower of Anarchy or not.

A Christian wireless listener is responsible for the following:—

I believe the B.B.C. endeavour to satisfy the majority; and I am sure the majority, if not definitely religious, is not antagonistic towards religion. There is not enough practical religion at the present time, and attendances at places of worship are falling off more and more each year. On the contrary, the country and seaside are invaded by thousands each Sunday. If the people *will not* or *cannot* go to hear religion, then take religion to the people. They are not compelled to listen. They can switch off.

So, the majority are not "definitely religious"; they avoid places where religion can be had on tap; and they take their week-end holiday where they can enjoy life without religion. Therefore, the B.B.C. is advised to satisfy the majority by giving them religion! This letter must have cheered the hearts of the B.B.C.; its logic is so sweetly in tune with their own. What seems rather a pity, from the B.B.C.'s evangelizing point of view, is that the majority can switch off. How can the B.B.C. satisfy the majority if they can and do switch off?

Dr. F. B. Meyer and other religious leaders are very anxious about the present condition of the Churches and the need for revival. They have therefore convened a meeting of ministers to consider the matter, and have set aside October 4 for all-day ministerial conference and prayer. After this, no doubt sporting clerics will perhaps be ready to back that noble hoss, "Revival of Religion," for a place. At present his chances seem none too rosy. For, as the Wesleyan Pastoral Address reminds us, "the sense of the necessity for worship stirs the people but little," and the Gospel is ignored.

The rector of Kelvedon Hatch says: "The ministry is becoming a rich man's job, and soon it will be no man's." We humbly submit that the ministry will soon become no man's job, not because the salary is poor, but because there will be difficulty in getting people to listen to the parson's twaddle.

A reader of the *Daily News* is not enamoured of the Victorian idea of parental control of the young. He recommends Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*, because it strongly condemns the Victorian system. Says he:—

After all, why should the Victorians be regarded as models in matters relating to the upbringing of youth? Why, indeed! The Victorians were certainly model *Christian* parents. They took the Holy Bible as their guide, philosopher and friend in family matters. But their system of prohibition and repression undoubtedly caused a frightful amount of psychical damage to their unfortunate offspring. One doesn't need a very deep acquaintance with modern psychology to realize that. A fact worth mentioning is that only quite recently have educationalists begun to discard stupid Victorian notions about training the young. But already there can be noted benefits from the new methods now obtaining.

A sermonizer points out that this is an age of independence, of breaking off the chains of custom and tradition. Young people, we are told, claim to think for themselves and to act accordingly. The sermonizer reminds them that 1 Cor. xii. 1-28 teaches that they are not their own masters. We deeply regret to say that the young people don't care a tinker's cuss about what St. Paul said, and that they much prefer to do their own thinking rather than let an ancient or a modern man of God do it for them. These young people don't realize the danger they are in, running around without the chains of custom and tradition.

The right atmosphere for appreciating the Pastoral Address of the Wesleyan Conference is to be obtained in a derelict graveyard. The times, we learn, have greatly changed. Intellectual progress has been inconceivably rapid. But we gather that the changes have not bettered the conditions of things for the Churches—on the contrary. The question that disturbs the pastors is, whether the "Kingdom of Our Lord" is becoming more surely an undisputed and obvious fact in the world. The answer is obvious. For the pastors say they are "not a little anxious" about the widespread indifference to religion, the insensibility to spiritual values and realities, and the sheer godlessness in the lives of the multitude. This hardly suggests that the much-heralded "revival of religion" is ready to erupt. Maybe the inspired newspaper prophets got the date wrong.

Still, although everything in the garden is not lovely, yet the pastors have sought and found a crumb or two of comfort to console the down-hearted. They ask the brethren not to forget—they mean "believe"—how Jesus has influenced the preceding centuries. He, it appears, has made a tremendous difference to thought, literature, music, art, and social customs. He has "changed our values, ennobled our standards, and purified our ideals." And so "with thankfulness and praise we see in our days" world movements towards freedom, brotherhood and peace. What the pastors might explain is, why these movements were not in evidence when the influence of Christ and the Churches was at its greatest, and also why they should manifest themselves only when that influence is admittedly at its lowest ebb.

We were glad to see the *Daily Chronicle* giving special prominence to an address by Sir Charles Eliot, in which he described the worship of Ganesa, the Indian elephant-headed god. He is the god of wisdom and good fortune, and the poor misguided followers imagine that by praying to him they will secure what they require. People write their prayers on slips of paper, which are then pasted on sticks and stuck in the ground. How absurd! Now if the things for which prayers were asked were written on a slip of paper in a prepared box, with a contribution, in a Catholic Church, and the priest was asked to pray, the matter would be quite reasonable. Or if a praying chain were devised, so that for twenty-four hours there went up to heaven a continuous bombardment of prayers, no one could see anything wrong in it. Or if instead of praying to a god with an elephant's head, the prayers were offered to a god without any head at all, there again we should have reasonable and a Christian practice. No wonder Christians look down with tolerant pity on those poor benighted Hindoos.

But merely in a sporting spirit we venture to offer the followers of the Christian no-headed god a challenge. We will offer prayers to the god with an elephant head, and a sincere Christian may offer a prayer to the god without a head, and note the result. We will undertake to get as many answers in the one way as in the other. We daresay we should lose, but in the sporting mood we should be putting the question to the test. Only Christian ministers are invited to compete, and letters

should be marked "Prayer" in the top left-hand corner. If the parson wins we will supply him with a copy of the *Freethinker* for one year, free.

A *Radio Times* reader refers to "those unutterably low-brow comedians who talk nothing but sheer piffle—though what inspired piffle!" It is up to "Woodbine Willie" to attempt some kind of defence of his fellow-pifflers who occupy the Broadcast Pulpit.

Capt. A. Larking, Secretary of the Early Closing Association, is deeply concerned about the lighting of shops on Sunday evenings. He fears that the practice will create a demand for shops to open, and hence, a demand for Sunday labour. What the gallant captain and those pious organizers at the back of his Association are really concerned about is really this. They fear that the lighted shops will encourage people to stay away from the churches. Still, it wouldn't do to say so. This real objection has to be camouflaged under pious concern for the shop-assistants' day of rest.

A bit of good news is to hand from China. Marshal Feng, the Christian general, has sent for three missionaries to attend his army headquarters, and minister to the soldiers in the name of Christ. There should now be no doubt about which army should win. The Christian god of battles is on the side of Feng. The other armies don't stand a dog's chance.

The living of Doddinghurst, Essex, from which the Rev. F. J. Hutchinson disappeared recently, and was discovered on a farm in Canada, is valued at £650 per annum. Perhaps the explanation of the reverend gent.'s disappearance is that he got fed up with the kind of poverty engendered by £650 per annum.

Two thousand people attended the annual service at Cocklet Church, Eyam, Derbyshire, the other Sunday, in commemoration of the villagers' deliverance from the plague in 1665-6. We daresay the two thousand would rather depend on modern medical skill than on prayer if another plague broke out among them.

Universal brotherhood of man through Christ Jesus has just had another bit of assistance. The Protestant Alliance has issued an *Anglo-Catholic Conspiracy* pamphlet, which contains brotherly references to the "Romanizers," and helpful information about how to defeat them. There has just been held at Prague, a pious Congress for "promoting international friendship through the Churches." What would seem necessary first of all, is that friendship should be achieved among the sects, and sub-sections thereof. But perhaps spiritual fervour will have to diminish 90 per cent. before the followers of Christ can achieve that.

Mr. Lloyd George is reputed to have said recently, that petrol is the foe of the pulpit. And the *English Churchman* laments the fact that the bicycle and motor-car have caused a steady decline in church attendance. This is a very sad state of affairs indeed. Perhaps the best remedy would be a mass petition to God to destroy all these sinful vehicles. Obviously, while they run about, there's no getting the people into the churches.

OUR WEEKLY HINT.

Every new reader is a fresh step towards breaking down the boycott against this journal. It is the only kind of protest to which Christians will pay serious attention.

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.

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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.

J. WRIGHT.—Sorry to hear of your ill-health. Hope to soon hear that you are better.

T. MAY.—We gave an account of the proposed discussion between Mr. Hannon Swaffer and Mr. Cohen some weeks ago. Mr. Cohen had nothing to do with the abandonment of the debate. Mr. Swaffer decided that discretion was the better part of valour. The Spiritualist Society suggested a quite unknown person to meet Mr. Cohen in place of Mr. Swaffer, but Mr. Cohen declined unless some proper person was put forward. There the matter rests for the present. Mr. Cohen will not debate with anyone who cares to jump forward; he does not go about "challenging" anyone, but he is always ready to discuss with any suitable person who is forthcoming.

W.P.B.—Thanks for cuttings. Very useful.

J. NEATE.—We are glad to hear of the successful meeting held by Mr. Le Maine in Victoria Park, and the interest with which his lecture was received.

E.G.—There is no need whatever for anyone taking the oath in any circumstances. The Affirmation Act applies in every case where an oath is usually required.

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

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

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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.

The very fine weather on Sunday last had its effect on the attendance at Mr. Cohen's lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall. The audience was a good one, but it was not up to the usual number, and the large Town Hall takes some filling. Still, there was no mistaking

the interest in the lecture, although, with one exception, the questions were of a very poor quality. That, however, is what one might expect. The decline in the intellectual quality of current Christianity is certain to be reflected in those who are foolish enough to attempt to defend it in public discussion. Those who have ability enough to make out a good case, if it were possible, have also the wisdom to see that they have no case to put forward where talking back is allowed.

Mr. Cohen desires to take this opportunity of thanking all those who have written offering their congratulations on his having achieved the sixtieth anniversary of his birthday. The letters have been too numerous to reply to singly.

There is at present a brisk demand for tickets for the debate between Mr. Joad and Mr. Cohen, at the Caxton Hall, on September 26, and those who wish to be present should secure their tickets as quickly as possible. Otherwise they may find themselves faced with a "House Full" notice.

The *Daily News* has republished, at the price of 3s. 6d., the articles on "Where are the Dead?" which appeared in its columns. In a cover advertisement someone—perhaps the publisher—says that the articles have been contributed by "many of the foremost thinkers of the day," and that "every attitude of the modern mind is here represented." The best comment on the first statement is to run over the list of the names of the writers—the Rev. H. R. I. Sheppard, R. J. Campbell, Lady Southwark, Robert Blatchford, Rev. Rhondda Williams, etc. And if they represent the foremost thinkers of the day, one can only say "God help the worst—and the day." Perhaps all that is meant is that they represent the foremost religious thinkers. Readers of the *Freethinker* will be in a position to gauge the quality of the thought put forward.

As to the second statement, that "every attitude of the modern mind is represented," one can only say quite plainly that this is a deliberate and calculated falsehood. The direct Freethought view is not represented at all. And on this matter the *Daily News* has surely touched the lowest level of religious bigotry and cowardice. It will be remembered that, under pressure from this paper, the *Daily News* asked the Right Hon. J. M. Robertson to write an article. The article appeared, but it will hardly be believed that it is omitted from the series. After announcing that in order to get all points of view the paper had solicited an article from an avowed Freethinker, it now leaves that article out of the series, but adds one on "Swedenborg's Teaching." We do not think that anything so deliberately dishonest as this has occurred in the annals of even recent religious journalism.

Personally, we have to thank the *Daily News* for having so splendidly demonstrated the truth of our statement that, in spite of its parade of liberalism, it dare not permit an article in its columns that would tell the plain straightforward truth about religion and about Christianity. It must do what it can to keep the people in ignorance. It caters largely for a chapel audience, and it must follow the usual religious lines.

We hope that all our friends will note this behaviour, and that they will do what they can to make the *Freethinker* better known. It is the only weekly paper in this country that dares to say what it thinks, without bothering about anyone's pleasure or displeasure. The exclusion of Mr. Robertson's article is only one form of the universal boycott which is brought against us. And the only way to break that down is for every Freethinker to make up his, or her, mind that our side of the case shall be heard. We do what we can week after week at our end. We want the rest to do what they can at theirs.

Spiritualism and its Evidence.

(Continued from page 572.)

In the year of grace 1923, the denizens of the spirit world apparently singled out for the spreading of the gospel, one, H. Dennis Bradley, author of a gaudy, cacophonous collection of platitudes and puerilities, to wit, *The Eternal Masquerade*. That they chose with vast and unerring wisdom is evident. There was joy in spirit-land in the June of 1923. Here was no sceptic requiring, as did the famous Lodge, years of pupilage. One sitting sufficed. "I was given, in a few minutes, the convincing knowledge and proof of the spheres of existence beyond this earth." Thus Mr. Bradley, who at the same time admits that previous to this sitting he knew nothing about Spiritualism. But with the coming of this momentous knowledge, Bradley, in response to the continued urgings of the spirits,¹¹ decided to

¹¹Time after time, in mingled terms of entreaty, cajolery and flattery was Bradley implored to write. These extracts from *Towards the Stars* will show clearly the trend of the promptings: "I want you to go on with your work and enlighten other people."—(p. 54.) "You have a great deal of power and will be able to help a great number of people."—(p. 54.) "Go on with your studies, Herbert, and never lose patience."—(p. 57.) "Your sister is bending over you, as if urging your arm to write."—(p. 81.) "You have forestalled the critics. There can be no criticizing for they have no reason left to stand on."—(p. 160.) "Nobody can pick holes in your arguments."—(p. 160.) "... your book will make your name famous throughout the earth plane."—p. 176.)

share his glorious revelation with the whole world. The result was *Towards the Stars*. Listen to this from the first chapter:—

This is a book of Truth.

My words are to the new and virile generation.

I despise the decadence of worn-out minds.

To them I concede only the spittle of my scorn.

To the unmanacled intelligences I offer a new light.

A new revelation.

A great Truth.

I offer the weapon of the Gods.

No, it is not an extract from an evangelical sermon or a theological tract. It is the considered utterance of "a natural psychologist."

Through 300 pages of the most amazingly jejune drivel that has assuredly ever gone to the making of a book does Bradley take the reader. Scance after scance is reported, and as a result of evidence which would scarcely suffice to convince an Andaman Islander, absolute conviction is expressed. Valiantine, the medium who figures all through the book, was never once subjected to test conditions. The seances were held in a private house, with selected sitters, in almost pitch darkness. The gramophone appears to play most of the time and the voices come through a trumpet.

Much of the book is a record of a long series of revelations from the spirit world by automatic writing. It is by Bradley's own hand, and its genuineness is unquestioned. Like every other specimen of spirit writing, it bears the imprint of the medium or hallucinant. The mystery of automatic writing is a mere bugaboo. It is as explainable and as understandable as the washing of one's face or the kissing of a pretty girl. In an emotional condition verging on ecstasy, the writer articulates the words unconsciously, and imagines he hears some spirit dictating them to him,¹² as did Swedenborg, and later Andrew

Jackson Davis; or where articulation and auditory hallucination are absent, his pen or the ouija board is manipulated in accordance with his thoughts. After all, this Johannes, the communicating spirit, tells us remarkably little. His knowledge is decidedly limited. But to Bradley it is wonderful: it is all-convincing. From the final chapter of *Towards the Stars*, I lift bodily one or two specimens of Mr. Bradley's bombinating prose:—

I demand your acceptance of after-life on the proofs which I have given you.

Life on earth is a phase.

We live and develop after death.

Our spirit is eternal.

Again:—

This new knowledge is the true philosophy.

And again:—

The quest I undertook has reached a conclusion.

I no longer rely upon beliefs.

I know.

The following extract is not the account of some befuddled old woman or neurotic girl. It is not even from the pen of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It is the report of one, Hannen Swaffer, man of the world, cynic, iconoclast, sceptic, one time Editor of the *People*. It is taken from *Northcliffe's Return*, Swaffer's cataclysmic contribution to the lore of occultism. From a reading of the book it is perfectly evident that this Swaffer's knowledge of the genesis of Spiritualism is of the slightest; it is sure and certain that of the workings of the human mind, he knows not one jot more than does his compatriot Bradley. What to the two of them appears to be evidence of the most incontrovertible brand is mere tawdry twaddle.

When the lights went out, Bradley turned on the gramophone. After placing on the ground an aluminium trumpet, similar to Valiantine's, the broad end marked with a luminous band, we sat in the darkness while the gramophone reproduced the voices of Galli-Curci and Battistini. Then the trumpet was seen to be lifted in the air, and, after a few seconds, it was waving, as though conducting the music, in broad vigorous movements.

After a time, we could see the trumpet, which had fallen to the ground, again move straight, but rather nervously, this time across to Madeline Cohen, who was seated opposite me. A light whisper came from the trumpet, which we couldn't hear, although it seemed to say the word, "Mother."

"Speak louder," said Bradley.

It repeated the word "Mother" more clearly; then it said "Madeline" and "Darling," adding something about "Kisses."

Then I knew that Spiritualism was true.

Much is made of the spirits, in their own voices, speaking in languages unknown to the medium. These points seem to have monumentally impressed the actresses, editors and politicians whose names decorate the records. Thus Caradoc Evans was convinced with lightning speed of spiritualistic truth apparently by the fact that a spirit spoke to him in the Welsh language; Marconi got a message in Italian; Viscountess Grey heard real Spanish; and others have had conversations in Russian, in Chinese, in Japanese. In truth, the bald statements, unexamined, seem weighty in their evidential value. Let us, however, look at the whole thing a little closer. I turn to the published reports. Here, as

"was subject not indeed to delusions of mind, but to hallucinations of the sense of hearing, so that the rational suggestions of his own brain, exceptionally valuable in consequence of the accuracy and delicacy of his highly cultivated tact, seemed to him to be projected without him, and to be returned to him through the outward ear."

¹² There are clear indications that automatic writing is closely allied with, and probably a nascent form of audible thinking, of which a striking case is instanced in Socrates, who, says his biographer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,

an instance, is the incident of the Chinese pow-wow:—

The countess could understand the language, apparently, but could not hear . . . It (the trumpet) came up again trying to make itself heard, and fell a second time. Twice more it came up, before anything was audible to the countess. Then, the fifth time, she got a message. She was the only one in the room who could understand a word of it. "I got a message from my father," she said. "A sentence of four words, I was sure of."

And here is another vastly illuminating message in Russian:—

The countess heard probably a score of Russian words. It was proof conclusive.

And here, again, is something in Japanese, just as conclusive, just as convincing:—

He found it hard to hear; but he got the word "hari-kari," which was probably how his friend died, and when, not getting the spirit's name, he asked, "Did I know you in Japan or in England?" He heard clearly in Japanese, "No, not in England." There were probably a dozen other Japanese words he recognized, but he could not connect them.

This exhausts the evidence I can find of the linguistic capabilities of the communicating spirits. Dragged out into the open for everyone to clearly see, it amounts to four words in Chinese; a score in Russian, and probably a dozen disconnected Japanese ones. Such is what Swaffer deems to be "proof conclusive" on the ground that the medium knew no foreign languages. Dear me! Dear me! What again is the tally? Four Chinese, a score Russian, a dozen Japanese: not sentences, words, disconnected mostly and barely audible. And there are dictionaries of every one of these languages for the searching.

Then there is the identity of the spirit in each case indisputably proved, as we are assured again and again, by the fact that the sitter recognized beyond any suspicion of doubt the voice heard. From such constantly reiterated statements one gets an idea that the spirit voices must be clear, precise, brimming with characteristic intonations and betraying peculiarities of accent. This indeed with the foreign language communications represent all that is capable of carrying conviction, for as regards the actual content of the messages from spirit land, there is nothing given that was unknown to the reader of the penny picture papers. It is this recognition of the actual individual voice of the dead communicator that is so evidential. But there is no need for me to ask, as no sane man would ask, how in the world a voice can retain its character, when in susurrant accents it comes drippingly from a megaphone?—the estimable Swaffer, in his best Sunday-newspaper style provides the answer himself, and at the same time, all-unconsciously, destroys at one slashing blow the foundation on which the evidentiality of the Valiantine seances was by himself in the *Sunday Express* week after week, built up. It stares at the reader from page 164 of *Northcliffe's Return*: "The trumpet makes all voices sound more or less alike."

One more sample of what masquerades as evidence I reproduce from the *Sunday Express*, dated March 29, 1925:—

To Spiritualists, medical advice from the other world is an almost everyday occurrence. Indeed, last Thursday, when Mrs. Bradley sprained her wrist very seriously, falling on a polished floor, three or four doctors, in turn, were telephoned to immediately to attend her. But, as they were all out, Valiantine took his aluminium trumpet into the silver cupboard, placed it on the floor near a

vacuum cleaner—there was only just room enough for him to stand there—and consulted Dr. Barnett as to what should be done! The doctor's voice immediately answered through the trumpet, ordering the application of hot vinegar, and other treatment. In the absence of an earthly doctor, Valiantine applied the remedies; in consequence, Mrs. Bradley was immediately relieved of her pain! This will astound you. But I assure you that, in Spiritualist homes, such things are thought nothing of.

One more example, culled from the pages of *Northcliffe's Return*, showing to what heights of pellucid reasoning a giant of Sunday newspaperdom can rise, is here given in all its delectability:—

If Lord Northcliffe does not still exist, I don't. I have more proof of his survival than I have of his death; and I went to his funeral service in Westminster Abbey. After all, I never saw him lying dead in his coffin; and I have never seen his death certificate. It is certainly true I read of his death in the *Daily Mail* and the *Times*, but I don't believe everything I read in the *Daily Mail* and the *Times*. So why should I believe that?

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

(To be concluded.)

Satan.

CARDUCCI, the great Italian poet and Freethinker, who was buried some eight years ago* at Bologna amidst the grief of a whole nation, first made himself famous by his *Hymn to Satan*. The very title of this poem is enough to upset the godly. To treat Satan with respect and even admiration is shocking; to address him as if he were intellectually and morally superior to Jehovah is blasphemy. This is how it strikes the orthodox Christian. But in this, as in so many other matters, the orthodox Christian is wrong.

Satan is the great, vague, impressive figure of the Bible. When the "sons of God present themselves before the Lord" in the first chapter of Job, Satan comes also amongst them, and the Lord addresses him in terms of the highest courtesy. They bow to each other like a couple of old Castilian nobles. And when the compliments are over the Lord boasts of his servant Job as a fine and noble fellow; but Satan throws cold water on the heat of the Lord's exultation by asking the dramatic and searching question, "Doth Job fear God for naught?" This was a fresh view of the case; the Lord had not seen it in that light before, so he resolved to put Job to the test.

Satan is here the challenger. He asks the Deity himself if he is perfectly sure of what he is talking about. And is it not curious that while one account represents the Lord as tempting David to number Israel, another account represents Satan as tempting him to take the census—which was certainly a step in civilization? Over against the Lord, with his omnipotence and his cocksure omniscience, stands Satan with the probe of his perpetual interrogation. Ancient custom is confronted with the spirit of novelty—solid conservatism with the quick spirit of revolt. Is it so? Should it be so? Shall it be so? Such is the eternal gradation of questioning which is the vital essence of all progress.

It was this spirit of revolt that Carducci addressed in the *Hymn to Satan*. In our own smaller way we touched the same point, many years ago, in an Imaginary Conversation we wrote between Satan and Michael. After reminding Michael of his unsuccessful effort to send a breath of freedom through the courts of heaven, Satan continues (in that old piece of ours) in the following manner:—

"I animate all who fight against servitude and somnolence. The heroes and martyrs of liberty and progress in every age have drunk of the strength of my spirit. I inspire the revolter, the scorner, the sceptic,

* Written January, 1911.

the satirist. I still distribute the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. I am the soul of the world. The fire of my inspiration may consume, but it gives unspeakable rapture. I am the Promethens of the universe, and keep it from stagnating under the icy hand of power. Milton, Goethe, and Byron made me the hero of their greatest poems, and felt my power in despite of themselves. Burns spoke of me with a tenderness he never displayed towards God. Wits and humorists own my sway. I moved the minds of Aristophanes and Lucian, of Erasmus and Rabelais, and through the pen of Voltaire I shattered the mental slavery of Europe. I am the lightning of the human mind. I level thrones and altars, and annihilate binding customs. With the goad of a restless aspiration I urge men on, until they outgrow faith and fear, until the Slave stands erect before the Tyrant and defies his curse."

The statement that Satan is the hero of Milton's, Goethe's, and Byron's greatest poems is perfectly true. Let us look at the facts of the case for a moment.

Milton's genius dilates to its greatest capacity whenever Satan appears upon the scene. God the Father, in *Paradise Lost*, is a pompous old fogey, and God the Son is a prosy prig—but Satan is always magnificent. What a grand picture Milton draws of the fallen archangel, with his splendid presence, his sleepless intellect, his indomitable pride and invincible courage. Some of Cromwell's characteristics creep into the portrait. The great Regicide sat as one of the models for the great Rebel—and the result gives the poem its finest majesty. And when Satan is humiliated, as in the hissing snakes episode, we feel shocked and pained as at the spectacle of fallen greatness trampled into the dust. This also is very noteworthy. God the Father never shivers at the thought of his creatures' damnation; he is only concerned to vindicate his own character; but Satan, as he watches the innocent couple in happiness in the garden, feels compunction at making them pawns in the game between himself and the lord of heaven, and deplors the necessity of having to do what else, though damned, he would abhor.

Goethe puts nearly all the intellect, and all the best of the morality, of *Faust* into the mouth of Mephistopheles. Satan thus became, for the great German poet, the spokesman of all sorts of daring ideas and profound reflections. Mephistopheles is the real soul of *Faust*. Faust himself, and Marguerite, are but the foils for that subtle and audacious spirit. Sentimentalism has made too much of them. For, after all, there is great force in Lamb's question as to Margaret's value, and his remark that Marlow gave *his* Faust no less a star of beauty and romance than Helen of Greece.

And does not Satan dominate in Byron's superb *Vision of Judgment*? Southey, George III., Michael himself—these are all nothing to the tremendous figure of the lord of hell. All the rebellious force of Byron's own nature went to the the composition of that grand design. "And where he gazed a gloom pervaded space." Magnificent—yes, and true! For the rebel's spirit must, first of all, cast a gloom over the sparkling inanities of false and foolish life.

"Sabbathless Satan," as Charles Lamb quaintly called him, is the ideal of energy and activity. He is also the ideal of intelligence. His worst enemy never called him a fool. Even the clergy admit that he represents what they call the pride of intellect. And thus it is that they call every sceptic who looks as if he meant business "a child of the Devil." To believe what they preach, and to do what they say, and pay what they demand, is to be a child of God.

Jehovah, on the other hand, only represents irresponsible power. All the bloody wars, all the deliberate wickedness, all the abominable cruelty in the Bible are the work of his hands, or the execution of his orders, or the perpetration of his friends. The Bible calls the Devil the father of lies; but even this is a wretched slander—for when the Lord wanted a lying spirit to go forth and fill the mouths of the prophets so that Ahab might be lured on to his doom at Ramoth-Gilead, there was no need to send to hell for a clever practitioner; the Lord found an excellent volunteer at his very elbow in heaven.

Why should not men, if they must worship somebody,

worship Satan for a change? We never heard of anything really to the discredit of this personage. He never taught men to love their enemies—and hate all who differed from them; he never incited men to cut each other's throats for a difference of opinion; he never instigated religious wars; he never aided in the oppression and spoliation of the people; he never countenanced slavery and the degradation of women; he never promised to damn people through all eternity for exercising their wits and trusting to their common sense. "The name of God has fenced about all crime with holiness," as Shelley said; but no such charge was ever brought against Satan. He is cleaner, sweeter, more moral, and in every way more eligible as an object of worship than his great rival. But the principal advantage, it appears to us, is that he allows people to think—nay, urges them to think. In this respect, he is an improvement on all the gods we ever heard of. So three cheers for Satan!

G. W. FOOTE.

Modern Missionary Methods.

No Freethinker ever had any objection to propaganda, as such. The presence of Muslim Mosques and Buddhist temples in European cities may be as inept and futile as the erection of Christian Churches in Peking and Tunis. But toleration is a symbol of civilization. The propaganda of opinions we disagree with should be met by our own propaganda in answer to it.

If Christian Missions meant what, let us say, the Vegetarians mean by propaganda, the peace of the world would have been less rarely interrupted. It is the merest truism to recognize that the majority of Christian Missions from earliest days down to the most recent Chinese invasions, have meant that a religion has taken advantage of the guns of the Christian powers, to force upon a relatively weak country an irritating interference.

Christians have certainly spent much money on these missions. In all probability these missions have usually implied much self-sacrifice of the sort that all propagandists willingly make in order to propagate their ideas. This fact is consistent with the occasional well-meaning martyr-missionary. But it has not excluded systematic robbery of native wealth and land, trading in its worst form; selling worthless goods for valuable consideration; supplying guns and gin directly as well as offering facilities to compatriot traders to obtain wealth more easily than would have been possible without the Missions. This is only one aspect of the evil side of modern missions, and it is perhaps the less ghastly aspect.

The worst of missionary "enterprize" has been the active work they have perpetrated in the exploitation and appropriation of the native. They have made things easy for the suppression of native rights. They have helped natives to forfeit their land to invaders whose pioneers were the missionaries. Failing as regards almost all genuine conversions, they have appealed successfully to their country's army to complete the conquests they began.

At their best, Christian Missions have stood for alien interference with native customs, morals, and wishes. Mission churches, being invariably more orthodox than the home variety, have not even stood for those stages of development which advancing civilization has forced even on the churches. The mission church stands for the crudest and worst kind of Christianity.

And now all that is to be changed. The missionary activities of the Protestant Churches of the world are about to be revised from top to bottom. A world-conference representing all the Protestant Missionary Societies has recently been held at Jerusalem. Although millions of money can still be relied on for the societies, there is too much competition. The cash would go much farther, there would be fatter incomes if energies were not so often wasted in fighting other Christians. Native contributions would amount to more if the rich native princes knew of a central fund to subscribe to. It must be very annoying to find an Indian Nabob sub-

scribing to the one and only Catholic Mission, simply because he found it difficult to choose between the rival claims of a dozen or more Protestant Missions. The organizers have also a shrewd calculation that at home there must be many potential donors who do not give to Baptist, Congregational or Episcopal Missionary Societies, but who might be induced to give to a "Christian" Mission, for, bear in mind, Catholics are not "Christians" to these Protestant Missionary Societies. The "heathen" might just as well remain a heathen idolator as become a Romanist one.

The Conference decided that in future all missions are to be directed from the country where they are situated, instead of from the "home" centre. In other words, the "man on the spot" is to be the boss. As he is generally selected and sent out by the home organization, there is not much in this particular "reform."

"Differences between the various Protestant sects at home shall not be represented by similar differences amongst the foreign mission enterprises." This is pure eye-wash. Obviously you either have bishops or you don't have them; you either believe in baptism or you do not; if the Congregationalists' view that the congregation is the church is right, how can one ignore it in the mission field without dropping it out in England?

The third decision of the Conference is of much greater importance. If it were meant with all sincerity, it would be an admission of such failure that there would be no longer any excuse for further extensions of Protestant and other Christian Missions abroad. It reads:—

That in future, missionary efforts shall not be regarded as carrying a message from lands where Christianity is an assured success, to lands which are altogether in darkness, but that Christianization and the eradication of evils shall be regarded as a world-wide problem, to the solution of which the whole world can contribute.

The Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council has, in all probability, no other motive or idea than the stimulation of subscriptions. To obtain a further lease of power the Missions will throw over a good many of what their ancestors called principles. It is incredible, however, that they want to accept the logical deductions from this fine bit of wordy nonsense. One sees in it an echo of a "best seller" called *Christ on the Indian Road*. In that book the author shows how he has succeeded in getting a good hearing from native princes and others in India, by not asking them to throw over their native religions, but to add Christ as a sort of post-script to their present superstitions. Can the funniest American humorist suggest a prettier picture than that of our bishops telling the kaffirs and worshippers of Mumbo-Jumbo that they too can aid in solving the problems of civilization? The greatest of all our Scientists are useless, if they are Freethinkers, but the "native races," even without surrendering their native religions, can assist in the "solution of world-wide problems." Perhaps these bishops are humorists after all, and perhaps the secret of it all is in the use of the word "contribute." The native "contribution" toward the solution will be the usual collection-box contribution.

At Jerusalem there were 240 representatives of the missions of fifty-one countries. And these Christians solemnly declared that "the failure of Western Churches to consider the un-Christian aspects of their own economic order is the gravest hindrance to the power and extension of missions." Their report on race relationships begins with a "confession" of the failure of the churches "even to approximate, within their own organizations, a genuine Christian position." We need not worry ourselves as to what is "genuine" Christianity. It is enough to register this admission, and to ask how in the name of common-sense can any of these Christians justify the continuance of propaganda on the part of a church which they admit is un-Christian? Obviously the honest way is to convert their own church first, not ask for public, private, and State support for something admittedly NOT GENUINE.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Correspondence.

WHO ARE THE DEAD?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the recent discussion in the *Daily News*, on "Where are the Dead?" no one seems to have paid much attention to who are the dead, which is also a question of some importance. According to geologists, mankind has inhabited this earth for about 500,000 years, and millions were born and died before the dawn of civilization.

The first palæolithic men were little better than anthropoid apes, they had not discovered the use of fire, they sowed no crops, domesticated no animals, and their speech must have been confined to a few calls, but gradually they progressed in intelligence, until after tens of thousands of years we find somewhere about 20,000 years ago the first beginning of civilization in Asia and North Africa. Samuria, Chaldea, Egypt then represented civilized man, the rest were nomadic savages, wandering in tribes over the face of the earth.

For only four per cent of the time man has been in existence can he be said to have been civilized, and of the great majority that have "passed over," about ninety per cent of humanity were pure savages. These are the dead, who according to some theologians, although dead, are still living, and who will continue to live for ever and ever.

S. SODDY.

PAINE AND THE GIRONDINS.

SIR,—Mr. Davis says that Atheism had not nearly so much to do with the Revolution as is generally supposed, and quotes Mr. Robertson to the effect that "only a minority were Atheists. Deism prevailed." This is true enough as regards the Revolution as a whole, but I was not writing of the Revolution as a whole, but of the Girondists.

For Isnard's Atheism, I relied upon his atheistic speech, as given by Lamartine; it is some years since I read Aulard's history, and I had forgotten the mention of Isnard's recantation related there. So Mr. Davis scores a point off me there, unless some one else comes forward with proof that Isnard recanted his recantation, for his deism does not seem to have been of a very robust order.

I said that I had only been able to trace two of the prominent members of the Gironde as Deists, to which we must now add Isnard. Mr. Davis objects that Herault de Sechelles, Chenier, and Cloutz, were not Girondists. It is true they were not executed along with the famous twenty-two, but they were moderate men, they voted with the Gironde, they opposed Robespierre, and fell victims to his vindictiveness later on. But even eliminating these three, there still remain, Condorcet, Garat, and Salaville, as pronounced Atheists, and Madame Roland, an Agnostic. To say nothing of Gensonne, Buzot and Ducos, who figure in Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*, and were probably Atheists too.

I repeat again, that my description of the Girondists as "nearly all Atheists," comes nearer the truth than Aulard's definite statement that they were all Deists. They were not all Deists.

W. MANN.

The National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 31, 1928.

THE President, Mr. Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Miss Kough, Messrs. Clifton, Coles, Corrigan, Easterbrook, Neate, Rosetti, Hornibrook, and the Secretary. An apology for unavoidable absence was received from Mr. Moss.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

New members were received for the Parent Society, and for the Glasgow and Fulham and Chelsea Branches.

The monthly financial statement was presented and adopted.

Correspondence was received from the following Branches: Birmingham, Chester-le-Street, Liverpool, and South London; from the Paddington Branch of the I.L.P., the London District Council of the Spiritualists' National Union, Limited, and the National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty.

It was decided that arrangements should be made for a meeting in the Stratford Town Hall, to be addressed by the President. It was also decided that a Social and Dance should be held towards the end of October.

The meeting then closed.

F. MANN,
General Secretary.

Society News.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD AT LIVERPOOL.

THE Sunday evening meeting at Liverpool was rained off, but the other six meetings were held according to programme. Mr. Whitehead was at four different pitches, including two where the local speakers have had trouble, but all the meetings passed off without the slightest hitch. Scarcely an interruption marred one meeting, and the audiences were sympathetic and interested to a degree. Some of this interest is undoubtedly due to the keenness of the local Branch, which holds four meetings each week, and even during Mr. Whitehead's visit some of these extra meetings were still continued. The Liverpool Branch deserves commendation for being very much alive in a city teeming with religious bigotry, some of whose effects have been in evidence during the present season. Thanks are due, for assistance rendered at Mr. Whitehead's meetings, to Messrs. Morris, Brady, Jackson, Sherwin and Shortt, while Miss Wilson very kindly provided hospitality for the lecturer.

From September 8, Mr. Whitehead is in Salford district for one week.

NELSON BRANCH MEETINGS.

MR. J. CLAYTON'S audiences have lately been a little smaller than usual, but on the other hand the meetings have been quieter, and the lecturer listened to with greater attention. The absence of noisy religionists gives the speaker an opportunity to appeal to reasonable people. Successful meetings have been held at Padiham and Rawtenstall. One of Mr. Clayton's regular supporters at Rawtenstall has promised to get out an advertisement sheet before the next meeting. This should help considerably. The meeting at Accrington, on Sunday, September 2, was exceptionally good, and, what is most unusual at Accrington, there was no opposition. A number of invitations to address meetings, both indoors and outdoors, have been received and accepted by Mr. Clayton, who is eager to use every opportunity to spread knowledge of "the best of causes."

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The Last Call for England."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S.—(Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. L. Ebury—A Lecture.

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. W. Campbell-Everden—A Lecture.

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

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart—A Lecture; 3.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—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.

OUTDOOR.

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

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Houghton): Tuesday, September 11—7 p.m. (Hetton): Thursday, September 13—7.30. 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.

NELSON BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. J. Clayton's Meetings: Rawtenstall (Bacup Road): September 7, at 7.30; Todmorden (Market): September 9, at 7.0; Padiham (Burnley Road): September 11, at 7.30; Accrington (Market): September 16, at 7.0.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's Meetings: Saturday, September 8, Corner of Langworthy Road and Liverpool Street, Salford. September 9 to 14: Sunday, Two Meetings, 3 and 7 p.m., Stevenson Square, Manchester; Monday to Friday, Corner of Langworthy Road and Liverpool Street, Salford. All week-night meetings are at 7.30 p.m.

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