

The FREETHINKER

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

Views and Opinions.

Bringing the Bigots to Book.

The incident of the symposium on "Do the Dead Live?" which appeared in the columns of the *Daily News* will be fresh in the minds of most of my readers. The quality of the articles published was dealt with "faithfully," as the old-fashioned Methodists would say, and I have no intention of dealing with that aspect of the subject again. It will also be remembered that as a consequence of the pressure brought to bear on the *Daily News* by the *Freethinker*, backed up by letters of protest from Free-thinkers in all parts of the country, the *Daily News* very reluctantly asked the Right Hon. J. M. Robertson to write an article putting the Freethought point of view. These essays were afterwards reprinted in book form, and announced on the covers of the volume as "A collection of lucid, simply written articles contributed by many of the foremost thinkers of the day," with the further explanation, "every attitude of the modern mind is here represented." We may pass the "foremost thinkers of the day," as being in line with the modern newspaper method of announcing any article by one of its staff as a "brilliant" one, for fear, one may assume, that in the absence of such a statement its brilliance might escape notice. But to everyone's surprise, in the volume of reprinted essays, Mr. Robertson's article, the only one in the collection which put the Freethought point of view, was omitted. So the publisher's deliberate misstatement, that the volume contained "every attitude of the modern mind" was deliberately untrue. It was a cowardly statement, for the publishers knew quite well that the *Daily News* would not admit any exposure of the falsehood in its columns.

* * *

Wriggling.

From all parts of the country letters were sent to the *Daily News* protesting against the omission of the article. So far as I am aware the paper ignored all these letters with the exception of one. A reader of

this paper, Mr. M'Cartney, of Hawick, did receive an answer. Here it is, signed by F. N. Hillier, Leader page Editor:—

I have your letter of the 18th September, with regard to Mr. J. M. Robertson's article on "Where are the Dead?"

As the book was published by Messrs. Cassell & Co., Ltd., of La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4, I would refer you to them for the information you seek.

Not to be put off, Mr. M'Cartney wrote Messrs. Cassell & Co., and in due course received the following reply from the Managing Director, signed, Newman Flower:—

In reply to yours, it was not possible to publish all the articles. We made a selection, which we considered to be most representative of the writers' views.

It is not often that one meets with a couple of letters dealing with a matter of some public importance—for I venture to think that the question of fair play in the press is a question of much greater importance than the one of "Where are the Dead?"—which displays so much evasion, mental cowardice, and, one may almost say, downright lying. First, the *Daily News*. The copyright of the articles, in the first instance, certainly rested with the *Daily News*. Are we to take it that the *Daily News* parted with this copyright without any understanding with the publishers as to what was to be done with the articles? That does not sound either reasonable or business-like. But if the *Daily News* did go about its business in so unsophisticated a manner, and if its child-like innocence was so grossly abused, one would have expected when the volume appeared, instead of the "puff" in the shape of a review, there would have been some expression of dissatisfaction with the conduct of Messrs. Cassell for leaving out the only article printed which put the Freethought point of view. But the *Daily News* said nothing on the subject; it took this abuse of its innocence lying down, and in saying nothing lent a hand at the game of befuddling the public into believing that in this symposium no one had anything definite to say against the belief in a future life. In such circumstances its silence made it a partner in an act of deliberate deception. And then to all the letters protesting, it replies to one by laying the blame on the shoulders of the publishers. It would have been wiser to have kept silence to the end. Really, bigotry should be made of sterner stuff.

* * *

Almost a Record.

Now for Mr. Newman Flower. This gentleman is, I take it, Managing Director for the firm of Cassell. He is also the author of some religious books, and that says a lot. He replies that a selection was made

and as it was not possible to publish all the articles, those articles were taken which were thought to be most representative of the writers' views. In that short paragraph this very Christian gentleman manages to give us two lies—I am using very plain language—and a misrepresentation. It is a noteworthy performance, and runs President Roosevelt very close who, when he called Thomas Paine a dirty little Atheist, managed to utter three lies in four words. It is not true that there was not room for all the articles to be published, because while Mr. Robertson's was omitted, one of equal length on "Swedenborg's Teaching" was added. And it is curious that the only one for which room could not be found was the one written by an avowed Freethinker. Does Mr. Flower expect any human being outside an asylum or a chapel to swallow so clumsy a falsehood? It is clumsy—even for a religious lie, where great art is not required on the part of the liar. And what is meant by the selection being representative of the writers' views? Why, every writer represented his own views. That was the boasted point of the symposium. Perhaps Mr. Flower means that such articles were selected as represented distinct points of view. That is what the advertisement on the wrapper untruthfully says. But if Mr. Flower means that, there is less excuse than ever for excluding Mr. Robertson's article. And what are we to think of the ethics of this Christian gentleman who, republishing what professes to be all the articles that appeared in the *Daily News*, leaves out one without any notice whatever, explains privately, when pressed, that they could not publish all (but at the same time finds room for a new religious article), and also explains that they selected representative articles, while keeping out the one article which gave a point of view nowhere given by the other writers? Really, I should have more respect for Mr. Flower if he said boldly and plainly, "I did not publish Mr. Robertson's article because he is known as a Freethinker, and I will not permit those who read, so far as I can help it, to know the kind of arguments that can be brought against Christian belief." Again, bigotry should be made of sterner stuff. The bigot should be proud of his intolerance. It is contemptible to be bigoted in the name of free discussion. Passing counterfeit coins is a punishable offence in a court of law. I am hoping for a time when the passing of counterfeits of truth will be a punishable act in the court of public opinion. But Christianity will have to be much weaker than it is before that day arrives.

* * *

Our Cowardly Press.

I have returned to this subject of the *Daily News* articles because I believe it to be of importance to Freethinkers primarily and to the world generally. I have said over and over again, until I am almost tired of saying it, that there can be no such thing as equal freedom for Freethinkers—real Freethinkers—till they are strong enough to demand it. It is idle talking of the growth of a more liberal spirit among Christians. That way of putting it harbours a dangerous fallacy. It implies that men can be more tolerant without being less Christian, and that is not the case. The correct way of expressing the situation is that Christians will only become tolerant in proportion as their belief in Christianity is weakened. The only way to get genuine freedom is to go on making Freethinkers. The only way for Freethinkers to get fair play from Christians is to let their opinions be known boldly and without qualification. At present, so far as the newspaper press is concerned, and so far as publishers are concerned,

there is hardly greater freedom for genuine Freethought than there was fifty years ago. Papers will admit criticism of parsons, so long as particular parsons are not picked out, because that loses them little. Some parsons are always criticizing other parsons. They will permit criticisms of Christians, because Christians are always criticizing other Christians, and each one believes the indictment intended for "the other fellow." But there is not a paper in the whole of the country that would dare to permit in its columns a straightforward criticism of Christianity or of religion. It does not matter whether we take the London or provincial press. It does not matter what type of paper we take—Conservative, Liberal or Labour. Whatever sham is denounced in their columns, the sham of religion must not be touched. It is little better than a disgrace that the only paper in the country that will tell the whole truth about religion and about the Christian religion is this one, a paper that for nearly fifty years has been steadily fighting a stern boycott, hampered by never having a paying circulation, and dependent for its existence upon the loyalty of the handful of men and women who are determined that the truth shall be heard at all costs.

I am not at all annoyed at what the *Daily News* and Messrs. Cassell have done. I thank both for making the fact of the activities of Christian bigotry so patent to those who care to open their eyes. And if it leads men and women who value genuine freedom to do something to weaken the most intolerable and the meanest tyranny that ever oppressed the human mind, I shall feel that I have something for which to thank the *Daily News*, and that very Christian gentleman, Mr. Newman Flower.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Psychic Freedom."

One cannot change English ideas without making a good many people uncomfortable.—*Matthew Arnold*.

"This mystery of vending spiritual gifts is nothing but a trade."—*Swift*.

"You do not believe, you only believe you believe."
S. T. Coleridge.

THIS is the day of fancy religion. Gone is the time when Roman Catholics and Protestants divided the bulk of Christendom between them. Now, theology wears many masks, and "isms" are "as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa." Even Spiritualism is seeking a place in the sun, and the spirit-rappers are in a hurry to get there.

A movement is on foot to demand "psychic freedom," which sounds very like the language of hyperbole. By psychic freedom, however, the spirit-rappers mean freedom from Scotland Yard's attention for mediums, and the lifting of any legal ban upon Spook activities. Spiritualists announce that they intend to plan militant intervention in the next General Election, and threaten to vote solidly for the political party that will help them to realize their ambition.

According to Sir A. Conan Doyle, there are five hundred churches devoted to the Spook Religion in this country, and the members total about half a million. I use the expression, "Spook Religion," because Conan Doyle states that one third of these churches are run on "purely Christian lines," and the great majority are run on Unitarian lines. As Unitarians, in their turn, also claim to be Christian, it will be seen that these Spiritualists are quite religious folks, and their faith is, on their own admission, but the Christian Religion "with knobs on it."

If these plans materialize the next General Election should be almost as exciting as the Day of Judgment, of which priests talk so eloquently. There will not only be the inclusion of five millions new women voters, but there will be the alarms and excursions sure to be associated with this Spiritualistic crusade. For, it is not unlikely that the spirit-rappers, who claim to be in communication with the dead, will neglect so glorious a chance of vindicating their faith. Most political candidates like to refer to what Gladstone said in 1866, or what Rosebery did at a later date. One will glow with pride in recalling the triumphs of Disraeli; another will wax eloquent in referring to Keir Hardie and the beginnings of the Labour Party. But the Spiritualist can do so much more, for he should be able to communicate with Disraeli, Gladstone, Rosebery, Keir Hardie, and any other famous person required for the purpose of clinching an argument, or converting the electorate. Just imagine the excitement at hearing once again the silken accents of Joseph Chamberlain, or the resonant syllables of Hyndman. The Spookist need not stop at politicians. Why should not Bobbie Burns be asked his views on Prohibition, and Florence Nightingale her opinions concerning the state of Hyde Park. The prospect is boundless, but, as a Humanitarian, I hope that the illustrious dead will not be expected to work overtime. For the dead are dead quite a long time.

You see what a really terrible business this Spook crusade is likely to be. Hell will be ransacked, and Heaven decimated. The more illustrious a man, the more he will be in demand. Plain Mr. John Brown, being an ordinary quiet citizen, will be left to play his harp; but poor Charles Dickens will be called upon to explain why he attended an Unitarian Chapel, and what was the finish of "Edwin Brood." Even Sweeney Todd might be called upon to explain on which side of Fleet Street his barber's shop was situated. My health has been indifferent of late, but I hope that I live to see this General Election.

Why this anxiety of the Spiritualists? They want mediums to pursue their quaint calling, until one remembers that most mediums are paid. Otherwise, millions of dead folks ought not to be afraid of a mere policeman. If Spookish be true, they can get at him, but the "copper" can't get at them. If anybody wants protection in this instance it should be the police constable, not the bogeys.

There is a point worth noting in Sir A. Conan Doyle's remarks on this matter. He insists that Spiritualistic Churches are run on purely Christian lines. But Sir Oliver Lodge is equally emphatic that life after death is a continuation of life on earth, such as Shelley's sarcastic description of hell as a place "very like London." Spiritualists can't have it both ways. The theological theory of heaven and hell is not at all the same as the secularized sequel suggested by Lodge. Baker Street is not quite the same as the Chamber of Horrors. According to "purely Christian lines," life after death is, to the large majority, horrific. Lodge's ideas may be Polynesian, but, at least, they are more humane.

Behind Lodge's semi-scientific vocabulary there is always "Sludge the Medium"; and behind the "purely Christian lines" of the Spook Church service there is also "Sludge the Medium." That explains the anxiety of these Spiritualists for "psychic freedom." But why should the Spook people need to steal the recognized Christian form of worship. It is done, doubtless, to attract unsophisticated Christians to their tin-tabernacles. Mediums know where to find their audiences; and they are sagacious enough to distinguish the credulous among the average citizens.

The ordinary Spiritualist must be a little uneasy concerning the relative merits of Conan Doyle and Oliver Lodge. He must be ready to exclaim with Captain Macheath:—

"How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away."

Doyle is a writer of imaginative literature, and he is just as earnest concerning fairies as he is of "Sherlock Holmes" and his friend Watson. In addition, Doyle has almost boxed the theological compass, for he has been a Christian, a Theist, a Rationalist, and is now a Spiritualist. Lodge is not so flighty, for he is a rector of Birmingham University. Yet his recreations are necromancy and spiritualism, grave pastimes for a University dignitary, who has publicly professed the Christian Religion. In the Ages of Faith necromancers were cursed as handsomely as any Scientist or Freethinker. The civil authority, acting for Holy Mother Church, saw that the curses were carried into effect. Now we have come to this, that necromancy is reputable under the name of Psychical Research, and Sludge the Medium, with a tambourine between his toes, is agoing wooing of the British electorate. MIMNERMUS.

Tailed Minds.

THERE are many criminals in our prisons to-day, who, if they had been born into a savage environment, would have become great chiefs, or rulers. But the qualities of ruthlessness, courage, and ferocity, which would have brought them glory and renown among savages, brought them to a prison cell in a more civilized society.

Take, for instance, the case of the two men who were recently executed for the brutally cold-blooded murder of a policeman; one of them, at any rate, was a highly skilled mechanic who could have earned a good income by honest work, either by working for himself or for a master. After being sentenced to death he expressed no contrition for the life of crime he had led. On the contrary, he wrote a boastful account of his daring exploits, glorying in his success in tricking the detectives and the police. He did not drink or gamble, and looked down with contempt upon his companion who did. He did not plead any political views, such as anarchism, for his misdeeds, and he seems to have lived on affectionate terms with his wife. He declared that he led a life of crime solely for the sake of its excitement. His primitive instincts were so strong that he could not settle down to what he regarded as a quiet, humdrum, honest existence.

Many of the inmates of our Asylums are quite animal in their behaviour. They are a reversion to a type which mankind has long passed through and discarded. Just as some few people are born with the external rudiments of a tail—every one, indeed, possesses it, concealed by the flesh, as can be seen by examining any ordinary human skeleton—and others are able to move their ears, or scalp. So there are people with tailed minds. And, in fact, most people have to fight, especially during youth, against the wild surge of primitive emotions and cravings, inherited from our prehistoric ancestors; and many there are who fall by the way.

A book dealing with this subject, entitled *The Cave Man's Legacy*, by E. Hanbury Hankin, has just been published by Messrs. Kegan Paul (5s.). The author states, in the preface, that: "The purpose of this book is an attempt to justify the popular opinion that what is commonly described as 'the cave man within us,' plays, or may play, an important part in influencing our conduct." And to draw the atten-

tion of psychologists and ethnologists to "the strong psychological reasons that exist for believing that 'the primitive brute' is 'still deep down within us chaffing at the fetters by which he is bound by social convention.'"

Even man's superstitions have their roots in the lower animals and are developed from them. Says Mr. Hankin:—

It may be mentioned that apes have a superstitious fear of the mysterious analogous to primitive man's fear of ghosts. Kohler made some dolls vaguely resembling animals, with black buttons for eyes, of which his chimpanzees were greatly afraid. When he entered their room with one of these toys under his arm, "in a moment," he says, "a black cluster, consisting of the whole group of chimpanzees, hung suspended to the furthest corner of the wire roofing; each individual tried to thrust the others aside, and bury his head deep among them." (p. 17.)

Among many savage races, strangers are regarded as enemies, even though they belong to the same race, and our author observes: "The ferocity with which a gang of monkeys will attack a strange monkey that trespasses on its preserves was paralleled, we suggest, in the habits of our ancestors. Thus arose the feeling of primitive patriotism, originally as an instinctive desire to kill strangers who trespassed on land belonging to the community, with the resulting widespread identification, as "hostis," of a stranger as being the same as an enemy. This is not a theory unsupported by facts of experience, for, to the present day, patriotism in this primitive form still exists among the lowest members of the human race, namely the Australian aborigines. According to Curr, with them, strangers invariably look on each other as deadly enemies." (p. 112.)

In this case, says Mr. Hankin: "The instinct survives with us, in vestigial form, as race prejudice and race hatred. The ill-treatment of new comers by boys at school and college is another manifestation of the same vestigial instinct." (p. 46.)

There are also grounds for believing that: "at first, religion was neither humane nor beneficent; on the contrary, under the rule of the cannibal gods, it is probable that the sole duty inculcated by religion was the torture and murder of innocent victims. Some ancient religions seem to have risen but little above this level." (p. 87.) And, as he remarks, the frequent and easy alliance between religion and the cruelty instinct, down to comparatively recent times 'is curious and remarkable.' As an example, he tells us that in the year 1547, the Lord Chancellor of England condemned a Protestant lady, Anne Askew, to torture, to extort a confession: "So far was his sense of humanity and propriety vitiated by his feelings, that he and the Solicitor-General went together to the Tower of London and, with their own hands, turned the levers of the rack on which the lady was being tortured." (p. 88.)

Another example concerns a Christian saint of the Middle Ages: "The 'angelic doctor,' St. Thomas, asserted that 'In order that nothing may be wanting to the felicity of the saints in heaven, a perfect view is granted to them of the tortures of the damned.' How strikingly does this quotation bring home to us the fact that, even in the mind of a saint, the cave man influence is still present, balanced but not eradicated by moral influence." (p. 128.)

Addressing the reader, who has no doubt, passed the day most virtuously, he asks: But why, at breakfast time, did you linger over the newspaper account of the sordid details of a sensational murder? And he quotes the explanation given by a psychologist, as follows:—

Most of us, especially the more refined, live in a world of convention, in which the wild upsurging of instinctive impulse is repressed. But the primitive brute is still deep down within us, chaffing at the fetters with which our social codes and ourselves have bound him. And he finds in a recital of such crimes the vicarious enjoyment of committing them.

The orthodox Christian explanation of the matter is that these wild impulses are due to the machinations of Satan, tempting us to sin, but this view only provokes a smile from the scientist of to-day.

W. MANN.

The Scientific Backwash at Glasgow.

PHILOSOPHERS, scientists and parsons have discoursed largely and learnedly on freewill and kindred topics at Glasgow this week. There has been a spate of assertion. The materialist principle in science has again been put in its proper place, and the outlook for the creative theory is—they say it themselves—fair, and likely to remain so. Sir Oliver Lodge and a number of lesser lights in the scientific world left their own particular niche and their own scientific manner of dealing with things they know, and had a romp in the metaphysical countryside. They seem immensely confident of their ability to find their way about that cloudy region, although an irritation foreign to the scientific spirit may be detected about their utterances if a little care be taken in scrutinizing them. And they are slightly at variance in their contentions.

There was a new conception of matter put forward, destined, so said its discoverer, to completely demolish the old deterministic doctrine of knowledge. Einstein's accomplishment a few years ago must have somewhat miscarried, for it was confidently advocated by outsiders because it had once and for all time, destroyed the materialistic conception. Yet the idea is still being slain wherever two or three of the tribe are gathered together. And surely many of them must know that the principle they condemn—in one sphere only—does not rely on any definition of matter whatsoever. Materialism is the claim that all phenomena can be, or is, explainable in terms of natural law, or, "is the consequent of a composition of natural forces." The definition of matter may change; there may be as many definitions as there are thinkers, but the determinist principle would not be affected. The professors should be inoculated with a microbe of mental courage. They carry out research in their laboratories with the materialistic principle as a basis for all they do; their whole interpretation of the side of science with which they are familiar is done in terms of determinism, yet when they come before the public, who, as a rule, knows as much about science as an Irish terrier knows about chess, they hum and haw and opine that there may be something to which the laws of science does not apply.

Sir Oliver Lodge is certain they do not apply to "life." He is uncertain what "life" is, being something, he speculates, which crystallizes in the ether of space and uses matter as a vehicle of expression, and after the organ has worn out betakes itself back into space, there to await an opportunity of again occupying a human body. In these days of birth control knowledge that must be more and more difficult to attain. An unattached "life" or "soul" will be hard put to it to find a lodging. They will have to queue up in Summerland for what there is, and I can imagine a good deal of jostling on the part of those in whose past experience a good time animating a speck of

humanity is included. Others see nought but mystery surrounding life. Professor Donnan, lecturer on physical chemistry, at University College, London, had an eloquent passage about the sonnets of Shakespeare and such things as joy and sorrow being dependent on the constant feeding of the brain with sugar and oxygen. "Stop the stream for a second and consciousness vanishes." That, however, he adds, is not to solve the mystery. One is tempted to ask, what mystery? The professor can, presumably, describe the structure and the whole process of the growth of the brain and the conditions of its functioning, and yet he wants something more—something to stand as the habitation of some particular deity or other; for that is what all the mental gymnastics amounts to: something to make the supernatural seem a reasonable proposition. There is no scientific justification for the claim that there is a mystery. When the circumstances under which a thing appears is described fully and accurately, science has done its work. And this applies all round, in psychology as well as in physiology. "Bodily processes are the condition of mental processes; and the statement of them furnishes us with the scientific explanation of the mental processes." Shorn of all its technical jargon, it was put with vigour and clearness years ago by Buchner, in *Force and Matter*. "There is no mind without matter; no matter without mind." Be it understood, that is not explaining mind matters in terms of chemistry; mental manifestations have their own laws, but the essential thing is that "force" and "matter" are as one.

The usual crop of opportune books came out during the sitting of the Association. Noticing one of them, by Sir J. H. Jeans, whom the *Daily News* describes as the world's greatest authority on stellar physics, the organ noted for its honesty in dealing with things of the intellect, shouted out in heavy type that the world did not come by Chance out of its present elements, and seemed to think that it was getting in a crushing blow at the Materialist in so doing. Chance—ignorance of particular causative factors, is not recognized by any Materialist as a contribution to the solution of any problem whatsoever. When the author says the Determinist is hopelessly unscientific, the answer might be put that an assertive avowal of ignorance does not entitle him to condemn a principle, the implication of which he is obviously a stranger to. "Chance" is a good enough foundation for a system of religious philosophy; they are all based on that or something akin to it, but science rests on knowledge and the study of natural phenomena.

The spectacle of scientific men denouncing the materialistic principle—Prof. Cathart, Regius Professor of Physiology at Glasgow: "I am opposed to the materialist view of life"—is something to wonder at and difficult to explain. The influence of Christianity has degraded and belittled the intellectual life consistently wherever it has had the power; scientific men have eaten their words, in times of stress, at her behest, and it is obvious that the Church's power and will to evil operates, or is potentially capable of operating, to-day, as in the medieval period. Its pressure against the advance of knowledge is constant. For how other could men, the value of whose work depends on adhering to certain scientific principles, deny those principles in the light of day? All science depends on Materialism. Lodge and the rest of the deniers rely upon it in their daily tasks; it is only when the work impinges on the Church's domain that they deny the fructifying principle. In science it is Materialism or chaos, progress or decay.

It is all illustrative of the obstructive force of religion. While the scientist may be concerned only with disarming or placating a dishonourable foe, the theologian has more ambitious aspirations. He seeks to impose his will on scientific thinking, or, at the least, to maintain a state of mind favourable to his creed. He is not concerned with truth, as truth; he squats in the gaps in knowledge and seeks to people them with the gods of his undisciplined imagination. And the results of that dominance is seen in the fact of an association meeting to discuss matters of moment in various branches of science, frittering away its time in bolstering up an age-long superstition.

H. B. DODDS.

Science and Freethought.

I

THERE is abundant evidence to show that irrational beliefs and practices can exist comfortably side by side with literature and art. Various living barbarous peoples have some development of the latter features. The lowly Australian aborigines, for example, make drawings, apparently to help the men, in some magical way, with their hunting; and these people possess a crude oral literature, including a primitive sort of poetry or chant, which may be fairly compared with some of the earliest known literary productions of ancient Rome. The Eskimo execute artistic work of high quality, as did the men of the later part of the Old Stone Age. Of the oral literature of the African Bushmen, more than seventy quarto volumes have been published. As is well known, art reached a high state of development in some directions in ancient Egypt, and a copious written literature developed, while irrationality in thought—except, of course, in some of the simpler and commoner affairs of daily life—was all-pervading. The advent of science, however, brought in its train express scepticism and the slow development of rationality in general thought.

In the ancient Oriental states science did not advance sufficiently to produce a marked effect in this direction. But in Greece, following the rise of what may be fairly called "organized science," mankind began to pass from a long age of visionary faith to one of free and rational inquiry, belief, and practice.

This movement, and the similar one that began, under like intellectual conditions, about the close of the European Middle Ages, indicate that science has been the chief factor in mental enfranchisement. Herbert Spencer's statement that "but for science we should be still worshipping fetiches, or, with hecatombs of victims, propitiating diabolical deities" is substantially true.

When Thales, about 600 B.C., proclaimed his conclusion that the celestial bodies move in accordance with fixed laws, and not, as had long been believed, in accordance with the wills of the gods; when Pythagoras and others discovered that the world is round, that the sun and not our world is the centre of the solar system; and when it was found that land and sea areas have changed places (as shown by the presence of shells embedded in land high above sea level): it would be difficult, if not impossible, for those who had absorbed such ideas to credit the old accounts of supernatural creation and control of world phenomena.

The discoveries and conclusions of Greek biologists, including the doctrine of Empedocles that there is an essential unity and some sort of progression among animal forms, with an advance to the present human condition; the work of the Hippocratic

school, and the founding of a natural medical system in place of the old magical-spiritist system; the discoveries of Aristotle, which resulted in a rather close approach to the principle of evolution: all this would have a powerful effect in establishing a naturalistic view of human phenomena.

When Lucretius, the Roman naturalist-poet, adopting Greek ideas, wrote his surprisingly accurate sketch of the rise of man from a wild to a civilized condition, the traditional view of the original superiority, subsequent fall, and supernatural destruction of mankind—as contained in Egyptian, Babylonian, Hebrew and other records, and in the writings of Hesiod—would receive a serious blow.

It is true that most of the prime facts and principles mentioned were not sufficiently established to overcome the more ancient traditional views, and that, following the general decline and fall of science, they were lost. The way was then once more open to the unchecked development of superstition, of the earlier superstitious dread (which, according to Roman writers, had waned as a consequence of the sense of world-order implanted in the minds of the people by Greek astronomy), and also of that reversion to primitive savagery which, under the influence of all-pervading ignorance and fear, resulted in the banishment, imprisonment, torture, burning, and drowning of hundreds of thousands of people as "schismatics," "heretics," "witches," etc.

After the darkness of the Middle Ages, however, the discoveries were again made, and were finally established. The triumphant march of modern science began; and, in its wake, we note the advance—slow at first, but with ever-increasing acceleration—of modern rationality and freedom of thought.

J. REEVES.

ATHEISM AND LIFE.

To all prophecies as to the effects of Atheism on the morality of the future, there is the apt reply that they are prophecies and nothing else. In this respect it is dangerous for the Christian to appeal to history. For while the consequences of Atheism can be no more than a forecast, which may or may not be justified, the record of Christianity is before the world. And we know that the period during which the influence of Christian theism was strongest was the period when the intellectual life of civilized man was lowest, morality at its weakest, and the general outlook most hopeless. Religious control gave us heresy hunts and Jew hunts, burnings for witchcraft, and magic in the place of medicine. It gave us the Inquisition and the *auto da fé*, the fires of Smithfield and night of St. Bartholomew. It gave us the war of sects and helped powerfully to establish the sect of war. It gave us life without happiness and death cloaked with terror. The Christian record is before us, and it is such that every Church blames the others for its existence. Quite as certainly we cannot point to a Society that has been dominated by Freethinking ideas, but we can point to their existence in all ages, and can show that all progress is due to their presence. We can show that progressive ideas have originated with the least and have been opposed by the most religious sections of Society. What religion has done for the world we know; what Freethought will do for the world we can only guess. But we are confident that as honour is possible without the falsity of religion, as duty may be done with no other incentive than the visible consequences of actions on the people around us, so life may be lived in honour and closed in peace with no other inspiration than comes from the contemplation of the human stream from which we emerge and into which we finally go.

(Chapman Cohen in "Theism or Atheism?")

I am a Briton; and must be interested in the cause of Liberty;—I am a Man; and the Rights of Human Nature cannot be indifferent to me.—Burns.

Acid Drops.

The *Universe* is quite grateful to Sir William Bragg for pointing out that there are departments of life which science does not touch, and which may be left to religion. It is very easy to gain the support of the professional Christian world. All that one has to do is to dwell upon the limitations of science, or upon the ignorance of scientists, temporary or permanent, to be hailed as a real thinker. The scientist the religious world will not have at any price is the one that insists upon the power of science and not upon its weakness, and upon the plain fact that where science fails everything else fails also. We should much like the private opinion of some of these men of science on the question of religion. We have a suspicion that it would not quite square with what their religious friends think about them.

The Rev Thomas Tiplady knows quite a lot. At one time, says he, religion covered all life. Every little thing came in as a part of religion. Religion covered every detail of life. Anyone who reads the Old Testament will see that a considerable part of it is devoted to the preservation of health in a hot country. The laws of health were given a religious sanction and insisted upon as a moral obligation. In the earlier ages it was the same with Christianity. The holidays were holy days. The drama was directly connected with the Church, and the Miracle Play was used to teach religious truth to the people. It is only in modern times that religion has been divorced from daily life, and has become a thing apart—a ceremonial of the few. In the old times religion concerned itself with everything. There was a religious ceremony at the sowing and reaping of the fields, and at the sailing of a fishing fleet. Work, play, rest, birth, marriage, death, all had their religious observances. Religion was for everybody and everything. Now we have drawn a hard and fast line between the sacred and the secular, and we have put almost everything down as secular. In the old days there was no such distinction. The result of the change is that 90 per cent of the people are outside the Churches.

As we have said, Mr. Tiplady knows quite a lot, but he has still more to learn before he rightly can understand the facts he mentions and their causes. By carrying his reading further, he will learn that people of earlier ages were religious and put religion into everything because they saw ghosts and gods everywhere about them. These ghosts and gods they feared for the mischief they might and could do. The people thought the denizens of the spirit world had to be placated; hence, the religious ceremonies for all the affairs of human life. The people's knowledge was limited. It was their ignorance that made them religious. The people of modern times have a far greater knowledge. Their greater knowledge causes them to reject the religious notions of their primitive forebears. The result of the change is that 90 per cent of the people are outside the churches. This result is, from Mr. Tiplady's point of view, highly deplorable, no doubt. Still, we can't quite see how it can be altered, except by the good Lord's reducing the people of to-day to the primitive intellectual level of their forefathers.

Spending a holiday in Wales, a daily paper reader records his annoyance at finding all the public-houses closed on Sunday. Why it should be considered sinful and immoral to drink on Sunday passes his comprehension. He wonders whether teetotalers in Wales forgo their milk on Sunday and newspapers on Monday because these involve Sunday labour. Of course not; the chief enjoyment of the Sabbatarian comes from the knowledge that he has prevented the other fellow from enjoying something. For such is of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mr. Ernest H. Hayes, of the National Sunday School Union, says that the greatest danger to the Sunday schools is not slackness of teachers, indifference to the Church, or a falling away of scholars, so much as an

absence of spiritual power among the teachers, and a temptation to rely upon training and method instead of "the presence of the Holy Spirit." The reason why, he adds, so much Sunday school work in the old days was successful, despite the crude indifference to child psychology and educational method, was the teachers' reliance on spiritual power. From all this we gather that the magnetism of Jesus has become a little mildewed and fails to put the 'fluence on the new generation of teachers. No wonder; you can't secure spiritual power when the fear of Hell-fire has passed away. How can the teacher put fervour into his description of the glory of being "saved," when he is not quite sure of what it is he has been saved from?

A contributor of the *Christian Advocate* writes:—

I called on a Hindu gentleman professionally a few days ago. After transacting our business, this man, who holds a high and important position under the Government, said to me: "Padre, what do you think will have happened to Hinduism fifty years from now?" Not having met him previously, I felt I had to be cautious in my reply and said: "I presume Hinduism will reform herself from within as she has done before, and thus adapt herself to the new conditions." He replied: "I beg to differ. Fifty years hence, Hinduism will be practically extinct. My father was a liberal Hindu, for his day; but he dared not defy Hinduism, as I can do in my day." Then he said, with a significant look, "I am stronger than Hinduism." That phrase, "I am stronger than Hinduism," expresses the attitude of the Intelligentsia of India at the present time it does not at all mean that they are abandoning Hinduism for Christianity. Rather does it mean that they will become a people without religion, unless the Christian West sees to it, at this time of crisis, that we do not relax our ability to present Jesus Christ as the only hope of satisfying their hearts and their intellects.

A Wesleyan, the Rev. W. J. Tunbridge, informs the world that "the social reformer of our time is frequently a man with a great passion to help his brother but with little or no passion to honour his God." This is an oblique way of stating that a good number of modern social reformers are unbelievers. Such candour as this will never do. The reverend gent should be warned that in the best journalistic and clerical circles the practice is to keep the dreadful fact dark. Mr. Tunbridge also declares that men of piety have frequently been indifferent to or apathetic towards education or learning. True; and the reason for this is not obscure. Pious fanatics were satisfied that Holy Writ contained all the knowledge necessary for a man to know. It was this attitude that retarded progress for so many centuries of the Christian era. Even to-day it would be safe to say that this pious attitude is not extinct.

The growing secularism of the Sabbath is a matter of the gravest concern for the *Methodist Times*. Our pious friend is convinced that this secularism is not only seriously interfering with the work of Sunday schools and churches, but is dealing a blow at "the best elements in the life of the community." We are glad to note that our contemporary does not include the work of the Sunday schools and churches with the "best elements." We are duly grateful for this innocent or unconscious revelation of truth.

The *Methodist Times* hopes that all the Methodist Churches "will be raised to sustained and united effort to frustrate any endeavour towards the further secularization of the Day of Rest and Worship." This is the bigot's call to other bigots to prevent other people from doing as they wish with their free day. When bigots unite, the man-in-the-street can get ready to have more of his liberty curtailed—for the benefit of God, Son and Holy Ghost, and not forgetting the parsons.

Says Mr. Douglas Goldring: "With all its vagaries our climate is at all events never boring." We don't think the same could be said of our parsons—particularly the broadcasting ones.

William Norman Brown has written a book entitled *The Indian and Christian Miracles of Walking on the Water*. He concludes that the miracle of walking on the water originated in India, tracing the record to 800 B.C., in the Rigveda. This is joyful news for those whose knowledge of religion goes as far back as what the *Daily News* said yesterday on "If Christ Came to London."

Mr. J. H. Squire, in a daily newspaper, is lamenting the preference of the Englishman and the Scot on holiday, for sad songs. What does the gentleman expect after centuries of forcible feeding by hymns ancient and modern?

On the subject of "Why Churchgoers are Bored," the Rev. F. G. Baring offers the explanation that it is due to inferior preaching. If this line of argument is followed, it would mean that there is a supply of inferior preachers, and also to the conclusion that the Lord's vineyard holds no attraction for intellectual men.

The *Church Times* is very, and properly, contemptuous towards the series of articles on "Where are the Dead?" now reprinted from the *Daily News* in book form. It remarks that it is difficult to see why some of the writers were invited to give their views, unless authorship of a successful romance is supposed to constitute expert knowledge either in metaphysics or theology. This is substantially what we ourselves said more than once during our criticism of the articles. Some of the articles were, to put it plainly, elaborate displays of ignorance or cheap journalism. But the truth was that because their names were popular and well known that the *Daily News* invited certain people to write. Whether they were qualified to express an opinion or not was a consideration that never troubled the *Daily News* at all. It was enough that the name was well known. It was one of the most glaring impositions of the modern newspaper world.

Judging by what Dr. Dinsdale Young said recently at the re-opening service at Westminster Central Hall, Freethinkers will need to continue flogging the "dead horse." Here is a specimen of the dead:—

"Belief" in the saving sense is not simply intellectual vision, nor the response of the emotions, nor even the assent of the will: it is simple trust in the Lord Jesus Christ . . . Do you see Christ as your Saviour? Do you see yourself as a poor, guilty, erring sinner? There is a hell to be saved from and a heaven to be saved to.

In other words, if you won't believe and won't trust, you are doomed to a rough time in the Celestial Agony Parlour. Dr. Young's statements were well calculated to make torpid and tepid Christians sit up and take notice and ponder on the merits of "Safety First." Fear of hell and a professed love of Christ (or "Safety First") are cause and effect in the Christian religion.

A reader of the *Methodist Recorder*, Mr. J. M. Boltz, wants to know why Wesleyan churches are nowadays nearly empty. He, having visited many, finds the congregations dwindling. In Wales, the lack of miners attending is obvious, and very few of the labouring class go. In agricultural areas he says that both farmers and labourers are absent. We wonder what Mr. Boltz thinks of those highly-coloured tales about wonderfully successful missions held all over the country. Week after week the *Recorder* publishes them; yet, according to this unbiassed witness, congregations are dwindling. Perhaps the prime qualification necessary for pious reporting of missions is to have a lively imagination.

Nevertheless, we daresay some measure of co-operation may be achieved among the Churches. The godly representatives who were chiefly priests are sure that the world needs religion and cannot manage without them—although the world is increasingly sure it can. The influence of each individual Church and of the priests is diminishing. Therefore, the Churches (except the Roman) are prepared to combine forces to achieve cer-

tain mutual purposes. These are mainly: to preserve certain privileges enjoyed by all the Churches; to oppose any ideas seemingly antagonistic to the inspired wisdom of Holy Writ; to keep in operation old laws and prohibitions, and to make new ones, which curb liberty of speech and action inimical to religion; and to interfere with or prevent Sunday pleasures or recreations likely to keep people away from the churches. It is only for achieving such purposes as these that the Churches will try to unite.

The Rev. Dr. T. G. Gunning, the new "Director of Education, Temperance and Social Service," in the Baptist Church, says that a great number of inquiries are being received about the place of amusement in the Church. Baptist people, he says, are puzzled about it. There is the question of how far certain forms of amusement should be encouraged, and also how far should be brought in, as part of Baptist Church life, amusements which in themselves are known to be "good." The Doctor proffers the opinion that if there are to be brighter villages in localities where the Church (he means the tin bethel) is the only institution, brightness will have to emanate from the local church. We presume it is the young people in the Church who are asking the questions. The older Baptists are hard-shell kill-joys. What appears to be worrying these is that if the young are not permitted amusement in connexion with their church, they will seek it elsewhere; and that will mean a shrinkage in church attendance. But if the Baptist Church encourages amusements, we fear these will not help much to retain clients. If villages desire "brightness" they can get it nowadays without patronizing the village bethel. Motor-buses, motor-cycles, and ordinary bicycles have opened up a wide range of amusement to young and old village folk. The Baptist Church has left its benignant patronage of amusement a little too late.

The Prime Minister is a religious man, and in dealing with the unemployment problem he has not resorted to prayer, but instead he has addressed thousands of letters to employers of labour. Lord Leverhulme says that the remedy for unemployment is more trade, but, as the situation is one for the testing of the efficacy of prayer, we suggest that the whole ecclesiastical staff of the United Kingdom be put on the job. And the lot sacked if their efforts are unsuccessful.

A correspondent in the *Daily News* reminds the B.B.C. that it has not kept its promise to broadcast controversial subjects. We suggest as the first subject that a nice friendly debate on superstition between Cardinal Bourne and the Archbishop of Canterbury would just about fit the B.B.C.'s conception of controversial subjects. There is no charge made for this.

War and Christianity seem to be the twin ogres of history, and the former, reduced to simple terms, is the knocking out of one eye of the other fellow by a one-eyed man so that they can both see better. Therefore, we record it from a Christian newspaper, no other than the *Daily News*, what is a glimmering of sense. The writer, Mr. J. A. Spender, states:—

Nobody has any defence for an unsuccessful war. But who will dare assume in the time that is coming that he is going to win any war or not be wounded beyond recovery if he does? And if tanks don't help us, what will?

Mr. Spender ought to ask our Bishops and others to come and have a look at the hole in the ladder he has found—if they are not too busy blessing the weapons of war.

The Rev. Canon John Taylor Harding, aged ninety-three, has died and left £108,445. And this is the outward and visible sign of that religion extolling the virtues of poverty.

The Rev. F. L. Wiseman recently used a stock sermon of his—"Christianity by the Daylight Route." This must be a departure from the usual. Most sermons,

especially those by Roman Catholic priests and Salvationists, depict "Christianity by the Nightmare Path." Still, Mr. Wiseman is probably a follower of the white-washing school of preachers.

A hurricane in the West Indies has done extensive damage to the property of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. This property, we learn, is insured against damage by hurricanes. This is a touching commentary on the Society's belief in God's providence. Quite likely, the Society's business foresight in the matter of insurance only angers God. Directing the course of the hurricane, God would ask: "Are these mission buildings insured?" If the reply is "Yes," he says: "Let the hurricane flatten 'em out, so that these doubters of my mercy will have to build 'em up again!" We seriously suggest the Society should stop insuring, and cultivate a larger faith. Surely faith and prayer are better than insurance?"

Nonconformists have been conducting, in Reading, an open-air "Come to Church" campaign, aided by a prize band and a Gospel cinema-van. The programme consisted of music, films, addresses and worship, and closed with an exhortation to "outsiders" to rejoin "their own Churches," and attend again regularly. The Churches have evidently been experiencing a "lean" time of late. If otherwise is the case, why should this prolonged campaign be thought necessary? What the Churches have really been doing is to advertise that their business is stagnant!

The vicar of Sunbury-on-Thames says: "Pew and Psalter seem to be supplanted by punt and gramophone." That is certainly a wholesome improvement. Only a parson concerned about his loss of trade would regret it.

Citizens and visitors at Morecambe recently witnessed the roasting of a whole ox on a spit before a huge fire. It should have reminded them that not so very many decades ago Christians roasted Christians in much the same way, in brotherly love and to the glory of God.

The pioneer of cheap watches, Mr. R. H. Ingersoll, recently died at Denver, U.S.A. There is one thing to be said about him. He benefitted the world far more than the pioneer of cheap Bibles. The one gave the masses the time of the present; the other helped to delude people into thinking that the present time was really 2,000 years ago.

The Rev. Oswald J. Smith, of Toronto, co-operating with the Rev. Paul Rader in the work of the World-Wide Christian Couriers, "promoting revival." They are promoting revival of religion—not of intelligence, we may add. It never seems to occur to these religious fanatics to try to revive intelligence. Yet that is what the world needs more than anything else. No intelligent person doubts this since the last war "to end war" reduced the whole world to a state of semi-imbecility.

On behalf of the London Public Morality Council ("God's own"!) the Rev. Henry Carter has been negotiating with the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America to establish a liason relationship between the Council and the Film Producers, with a view to eliminating from American films undesirable features likely to lower the moral standard of moving pictures. The effect of the understanding come to, will be that any complaint about the moral quality or influence of American films to be exhibited in Britain can be sent by the Morality Council to the Film Producers of America. The latter have agreed to take prompt action towards meeting, so far as is practicable, any complaint thus made. Mr. Carter says the agreement has its positive side also. The Producers will look to the Morality Council for advice on moral questions affecting films to be produced in the future and shown in Britain. The Producers are very optimistic if they think they will be able to produce films to satisfy the sanctimonious and prudish gang of busy-bodies styling themselves the London Public Morality Council.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—A. W. Coleman, £1; J. O'CONNOR, £1.

T. M. MOSLEY.—Yes, we received your letter. Pleased to hear of your success. A report of the debate may be published.

C. MCGOWAN.—We read the article by Mr. James Douglas, and it is really too empty for criticism. And it is very difficult to believe that both he and Mr. Hannen Swaffer, in their religious writings, can be quite so naturally silly as they seem to be. They write for their audience, and have, perhaps, as much contempt for the intelligence of those who mistake their productions for sound thinking as we have.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—Sorry to hear of your accident, trust to soon learn that you have quite recovered. Glad to know that your appreciation of *The Grammar of Freethought* and of *Materialism* has not diminished on a second reading. That is a good test for any book, and it is one we are fond of applying to many authors.

W. COLLINS.—We dealt with the Bootle Case in the *Freethinker* for August 9, 1925. It should be easy to get fuller details from local records of about that date. The case had been before the local Council for some time when we wrote.

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

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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.

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

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.

We have received the following from the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:—

Sir,—You would be wise not to make comments upon psychic matters which are founded upon the statements of ignorant interviewers in the general Press. Do you usually find them correct in the matter of Rationalism? I am amazed that a responsible paper should take this absurd report about the origin of the remarkable picture of Mr. Longstaff as serious.

There has never been the slightest difference of opinion between the artist and myself as to the facts and he entirely agrees with my description. It has never been claimed that he was obsessed when he painted it, which is what he very properly denies. The facts were that he came to a Seance in my flat, that an artist friend established his identity beyond all doubt, that he was naturally much excited mentally by this, and that while under this psychic influence he painted

a picture which represents the whole psychic philosophy of life. How then have I exaggerated in saying that the picture is psychic? I think that you owe me an apology.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

The *Express* has done what it could to atone for its error by publishing a full contradiction to-day—September 22.

I must confess that Sir Arthur puzzles us a little. When, for example, we read the postscript to his letter, we took it that the *Express* had admitted itself to be in error, and had published almost an apology for what it had said. But on referring to the paper, all it amounts to is that Sir Arthur sent the *Express* a letter which ran on the same lines as the one above, and it was printed. If that means the *Express* did "what it could to atone for its error by publishing a full contradiction," then I can only say that Sir Arthur and ourselves appear to be talking in different languages. It was Sir Arthur who contradicted the *Express*, not the *Express* that tried to atone for its error, etc. The paper merely gave Sir Arthur the right of reply.

It was not the paper's version of the origin of the picture that was dealt with in last week's "Views and Opinions," but the artist's own repudiation of the absurd idea that the picture was painted under ghostly influence. Mr. Longstaffe went to a seance in Sir Arthur's flat, and there a dead artist friend "established his identity beyond all doubt." But this appears to be a description of Sir Arthur's frame of mind, not of that of Mr. Longstaffe. Sir Arthur says that he was "naturally" much excited mentally, and it was under this influence that he painted the picture. But the artist does not say that he was under great mental excitement, or that he painted his picture while still in that state. He says he was in his normal state, that he painted this picture as he painted his other pictures, and that far from his being conscious of any ghostly influence, it was painted as a consequence of "several conversations" with Sir Arthur, and altered in some minor details, also at Sir Arthur's suggestion, after it was finished. And neither in the letter to the *Express*, nor in the one above printed does Sir Arthur deny what Mr. Longstaffe says.

Sir Arthur thinks we owe him an apology. We should have no hesitation in apologizing if we only knew what we had to apologize for. What we did was to put the statement of the artist against that of Sir Arthur. If Sir Arthur will be good enough to state in what particular we have misrepresented him, he will find us quite ready to make the apology he desires. At present we are under the impression that we are quite justified in assuming that testimony given under "psychic" influence is of all testimony most open to suspicion.

To-day (September 30) Mr. Cohen has promised to speak at a Bradlaugh Demonstration to be held at Clapham Common. Mr. Mann and Mr. Ebury will be two of the other speakers. The meeting will commence at 3.15.

A Bradlaugh Demonstration will also be held in Regent's Park at 6.30, at which Mr. Ebury will be one of the speakers. North London Freethinkers will please note.

Mr. Cohen commences his autumn lectures on Sunday next (October 7) at Plymouth. He will speak in the Co-operative Hall, Courtney Street, at 3 o'clock, on "A Challenge to the Pulpit," and in the evening, at 7 p.m., on, "What are we Fighting For?" The Plymouth Branch is looking forward to good meetings at this, its first meeting this season.

Mr. Cohen will return to London to get the *Freethinker* out of the way, and the debates at Liverpool with the Rev. J. Howard, in Pembroke Chapel, on Wednesday, October 10. The subject will be "Has Christ-

ianity Hindered Progress?" There will be another run back to London, and then a return to Manchester for two lectures on October 14. The Caxton Hall, London, has been taken for a special meeting to be addressed by Mr. Cohen, for Wednesday, October 17, and the week will finish with a long journey to Glasgow for two lectures on October 21. By the time that date is reached, and passed, the first three weeks of the autumn season will have been fully and, we hope, profitably occupied.

In connexion with the Caxton Hall Meeting. Admission is free, but there will be a number of reserved seats at 1s. We should like to enlist the support of London Freethinkers in making this meeting as widely known as possible. A large number of slips advertising the meeting has been printed, and we want them distributed. Perhaps those who can help in this way will call on or write the *Freethinker*, or the N.S.S. Office, and get a small parcel.

Mr. Clayton in Lancashire, and Mr. Whitehead at Birmingham, both report very successful meetings during the past week. There appears to be quite a revival of interest in Freethought, and capable speakers are fairly certain of soon winning a sympathetic hearing. It is not always easy when new ground is freshly broken, but the opposition is neither so bigoted nor so persistent as it once was. Hence Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Clayton soon find themselves making friends. The next step is to convert these friends into active helpers.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be lecturing in the open air in London, from Saturday, September 29, to Friday, October 5. The meetings will be held each evening at 7.30 p.m., at the corner of Shorrold's Road, North End Road, Wallham Green. Secularists are asked to make these meetings as widely known as possible.

The new work on *Buddha the Atheist* is now on sale, and we would like to see a copy in the hands of every reader of this journal, and also in the hands of many who are not readers. The book is authoritative, and it is well for Freethinkers to have a bird's-eye view of a system that commands the adherence of about 250,000,000 people, and which, as left by its founder, had no God and no Soul, and no individual immortality. The price of the book is 1s., by post 1s. 1d. It can be ordered through any newsagent if desired. The author is a lay Buddhist, and one who has made a first-hand study of the subject.

Memorandum.

THIS year the *Paris Journal* sent M. Pierre Benoit, a well known literary man, on a tour round the world for the purpose of recording his impressions. Near Sidney, in a place called Balmoral, which is at the north side of the bay on a site resembling that of Capernaum, he saw a temple of hideous architecture, which had been erected to receive Jesus Christ at his second advent. This is built on a headland with a noble prospect. The upper terrace, constructed of cement, and semi-circular in form, is approached by an iron staircase of the kind provided for the scene-changers at theatres. The rounded side of this terrace has rows of up graded seats for the spectators, whilst the straight side is a sort of pergola, whose columns, as it were, enclose the view. The places are numbered, and a company, duly registered, preserves the right of location. The seats vary in price, from three hundred pounds downwards, and they are obtainable from Adyar House, 29 Bligh Street, Sidney. Every seat taken bears the name of its owner, and arrangements have been made to call the seat-holders by telephone in time for them to occupy their place in comfort before the Lord arrives. (*Le Journal*, July 1, 1928.)

C. C. DOVE.

Fear.

FEAR is the greatest vice: from it spring all the others. It is omnipresent and ever present. All men in all ages have been actuated by fear. The overcoming of fear is the achieving of salvation. The task of man, individually and collectively, is the transcending of fear, and the aim of all true education is to equip man for this task.

Fear is one of the greatest, the most fundamental of emotions. Not the greatest, be it remarked. Were that so, life would be insupportable. And because fear is so painful an emotion, the greatest resistance is offered by the mind to its recognition. The most vile insult is to call a man a coward, in other words, to suggest that he knows fear and is actuated by it. Of all accusations that of cowardice is the most feared and the most resented. A man will face death itself to prove that the accusation is groundless. The emotion of resentment to this charge is probably proportionate to the validity of the indictment.

Let us examine together this emotion of fear. Not a pretty subject, to be sure! But one, nevertheless, worthy our attention. For it is a well-established psychological truth that the intensity of an emotion is lessened by its study. This is particularly true of fear, for a large element in fear is ignorance. Dispel ignorance and fear tends to subside.

Let us, further, give an example of this method of attacking fear by the study of the thing feared. Let us suppose that a man, or a woman, is afflicted by one of those small, irrational fears that trouble so many. The fear of spiders will do for example. It is a fear that cannot be reasoned away, and, since the sufferer is often a cultured, rational person, to the discomfort of fear is added a sense of shame. As, further, many persons feel that to feel shame is shameful, Pelion is piled on the Ossa of their distress.

We have all heard that the cure for one love affair is to have another, while "the hair of the dog that bit you" is the toper's cure for the "morning after" malaise. In the same way, to drive out the emotion of fear we must employ and promote another emotion—curiosity. Instead of shouting for your husband to come and kill the tiny beast, make an effort to study it. It will be a great effort at first: but *c'est le premier pas qui coûte*.

How many of us can say off-hand the number of legs a spider has? The spider-fearing person says he does not want to know, his one desire is to get away from it, or to make away with it. But if by any means his curiosity can be aroused, so that he will study the spider, then the victim of this fear is on the way to its transcendence. And surely it is not too difficult a matter to rouse an interest in the Arachnida, of the order Araneæ, which resemble the Pedipalps in many structural points. One can learn, for instance, that spiders are found all over the world. That they existed millions of years ago, in the Carboniferous Period. That they occur up mountain slopes; in tropical valleys and forests; in open, grassy plains; in sandy deserts; and even in fresh-water ponds and between tidemarks on the seashore. As study progressed one would learn of spiders other than the domestic or garden variety; of trap-door spiders, and water-spiders, and of those fearsome wildfowl, tarantulas and scorpions. Knowledge would grow of the insect's habits; how some are nocturnal, some diurnal; how some catch their prey by speed of foot, some by cunningly lying hidden, some, again, by silken nets. How, further—this is important—the spider is a benefactor of mankind, keeping down the noxious, disease-spreading fly, and weaving silk which has a commercial value, the latter being equal to, if not

superior, to the best silk spun by lepidopterous larvae. By the time all this, and much more, had been absorbed, instead of making a nasty messy spot on a wall by a slipper, the one-time spider-fearer will run to see to what species, genus, and order the visitant belongs. Fear will have been driven out by curiosity; one emotion will have triumphed over the other. All of which, of course, is no argument for not sweeping away cobwebs!

The worst of all fears are those for things which do not exist. After all, the spider is a reality, and as our *Britannica* tells us, all spiders possess, not one, but a pair of poison-glands. A tarantula's or scorpion's bite or sting is not to be despised. But on every side the reflective may see persons going in fear of that which has no objective reality. Grown men fear ghosts and gods, witches and devils, and to Freethinkers, other such figments. More curious still, they even glory in their fear. The Christian delights in the title "a God-fearing man." In extolling this fearfulness, the Christian stands athwart the path of progress and civilization. But he, too, if he be willing, can be released from his bondage of fear. Some are a little ashamed of their fear of the Lord. They doubt if it truly is "the beginning of wisdom." For such there is hope of deliverance. To help these the method to be employed can be precisely that in the case of the spider, the arousing of curiosity.

Although the gods have no objective reality, it is possible to study man's inner creations. The gods are as wide-spread as the spiders—would they were as harmless to man! In their name have been practised the most loathsome tyrannies, for fear breeds cruelty. The history of man's gods is being more and more established. Anthropology, and psychology, and archæology, and history, all these make their contribution to our knowledge of the gods.

If a man only knows of Jehovah from the Bible, he knows him badly. "What do they know of England, who only England know?" sings Kipling. A study of the Moabite Stone will throw a new light on the god of the Hebrews. It records how Chemosh, god of Moab, triumphed over Jehovah. How Jehovah "took the count," and how the priests of Chemosh bore away the holy vessels of Jehovah. Things begin will further study to take their proper perspective. The god of the Hebrews is seen to be a small tribal god, competing with Baal and Moloch and Ishtar, the gods of other Semitic tribes, for a precarious foothold. In short, a barbaric creation, but quite interesting.

Comparative theology will never be a popular study and all the priesthoods of man's numerous deities will combine to put obstacles in its way. Comparisons, they will say, are odious. They are, to priesthoods, for to compare is to think, and to think is to pause in the panic flight from the unknown.

There are other ways to be employed in the banishing of fear, including that "perfect love," which, strangely enough, the god-fearing man's Bible says "casteth out fear." Few of us, however, are capable of that, but as a workable substitute the curiosity cure is well worth trying.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

A religion that, of all the hours of man's life, thinks the last the most important, that has prophesied the end of earthly life and condemned all creatures to live in the fifth act of a tragedy, may call forth subtlest and noblest powers of man, but it is an enemy to all new planting, to all bold attempts or free aspirations. It opposes all flight into the unknown, because it has no life or hope there itself.

Neitzsche ("Thoughts out of Season").

Two Impossible Trials.

THE fierce light of modern investigation is now being shed on the various conflicting scriptural accounts of the Jewish and Pontius Pilate trials of Jesus Christ. Comparison of Jewish and Roman law, and of Jewish and Roman legal procedure, force the conclusion that one and all of these contradictory scriptural stories are frankly impossible. Only wholly uncritical persons, in an uncritical age, could have adopted these stories as sober narratives of actual occurrences. Although these tales are placed in an historical setting in conjunction with the names of real persons—Herod, Caiaphas, and Pontius Pilate—they are entirely without contemporary reference, and there is no testimony regarding the central figure of Jesus Christ from either of these three men—or from any human being. Indeed no one claims to so much as handing a cup of cold water to Jesus, or even to having seen him, or to having heard him speak!

From the very outset the action has an air of unreality. The grand opening by the triumphal march on Jerusalem amid the plaudits of the multitude is in itself a sufficient tax on our credulity, while the representation of the Lord's Supper as being the institution of this sacramental rite, which had already been a world-wide custom for generations, is a complete "give away." In wholly barbarous times the sacrificial victim was a human being; as manners softened an animal was substituted, later on to be represented by a piece of dough! The reporting of the words and action of the agony scene in the garden, where none were present to see or hear (the disciples being all asleep at a distance), stamps the story at once as unhistorical. The alleged betrayal by Judas presents extraordinary features. It was quite unnecessary to spend good Jewish money to secure what could have been done equally well without payment. And mark the sequel. In Matthew, Judas belies the Jewish characteristic commercialism by returning the cash! Then he hangs himself forthwith. Paul makes Judas live as one of the "twelve," to see Jesus on his return from the grave! Peter, in the *Acts*, assures us that Judas became a landed proprietor, by judicious investment of the capital which he had acquired as a reward for the betrayal. He purchased an allotment, in which he met with a nasty accident that presumably finished him. We are loudly told that all of these stories are "The Word of God." The simple faithful will have no trouble in believing the lot!

The gospels represent the prisoner being tried in the house of the high priest, with the court sitting at night. Jewish law provided that all trials in life and death matters should be in a Hall of the Temple and in the daytime—never at night. Further, such trial had to extend over two days, with one night intervening for reflection, and those who voted "guilty" at the close of the first day could alter to "not guilty," but those who voted acquittal could not change their verdict. It is clear that the stories as told suggest the grossest and most improbable violations of Jewish law and custom. The tale of scourging the city at night for "false witnesses" is surely too fantastic for any one to take seriously.

The astonishing irregularity of next morning's alleged further trial before Pilate is in itself sufficient to brand the whole story as fictitious, in view of the formal regularity of Roman legal procedure. Without any notice whatever, without any legal preliminaries, the prisoner is brought up to be dealt with right out of hand, as casually as if exacting the death

penalty was an ordinary forenoon's relaxation in Jerusalem. Surely such a story is utterly unworthy of credence on the anonymous statements of persons of a later generation.

Pilate held his position as Governor from Rome for ten years, therefore he must have been reasonably fair in his administration. It is incredible that any Roman representative could have been guilty of executing a prisoner whom he publicly declared to be an innocent man. Had one done such a thing, he would have been promptly recalled to answer for the atrocity, yet Pilate held office for three years after the time when he was alleged to have committed this crime. No Roman governor, particularly one of the stern uncompromising character that contemporary records show Pilate to have been, can be imagined as making a public exhibition of weakness, and fear of an unruly mob whom he had been entrusted to govern. Nor would any Roman governor farcically "wash his hands" of the guilt in the manner of the Jewish (not Roman) rite. Again, can one imagine our Colonel Allan in Samoa releasing to the mob a prisoner guilty of sedition and murder, and executing a man who he publicly declared to be innocent? And to be brought before him from envy? Further, the very emperor who had appointed Pilate had, only twelve years previously, enacted in favour of condemned prisoners that execution should not take place for ten days after being found guilty. Can Pilate be imagined as breaking this ordinance—and no questions being asked?

In Roman territory (or indeed anywhere else) were ever judicial proceedings conducted in such a manner? Why, the celebrated case of "Bardell v. Pickwick" is sober narrative in comparison with these grotesque impossibilities! Only men's minds having been drugged with these absurdities from earliest childhood keeps them from being recognized as utterly unworthy of acceptance by sensible persons. And it must never be forgotten that the only grounds the world has for these amazing assertions are anonymous statements made by a generation long after the supposed date of the alleged events.

Mr. John M. Robertson's suggestion that the whole thing is the transcription of a mystery play or drama, is an illuminating explanation and elucidation of the difficulties of the story. Looked at in this light, the incidents assume a reasonable sequence. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem is quite in keeping with the world-wide examples of sacrificial saviours proceeding to their doom. The sacrificial meal, where the body and blood is eaten and drunk, is identical all the world over in modern as well as in ancient times. Only the very uninformed can imagine that the idea or practice originated with Christianity. The Judas betrayal (unnecessary and superfluous in the story) is explained by the recognized custom of treacherously enticing the victim (man or animal) to go of his own accord to the place where he is to meet his fate. The agony scene in the garden (in the story, unseen by human witnesses to report) is explained at once, as it was seen and heard by the audience. The rapidity with which one scene treads on the heels of another, the night trial, the midnight hunting for false witnesses, all fall into place in a play. The manifest inconsistencies of the Roman Governor would present no difficulties to transcribers, who knew quite as well as the author of "Bardell v. Pickwick," that they were not dealing with records of literal fact. What the transcribers failed to observe was that what was passable drama is wholly impossible narrative.

Auckland, N.Z.

J. SIM.

On the Other Side.

(HELL AND PARADISE.)

By P. MONTCLAIR. (Translation by P. H. MEYER.)

(Continued from page 614.)

"BUT you have no horns, and your feet are not forked."

"Our horns have disappeared, thanks to the application of radium. As for the rest, famous surgeons have operated upon us. You will not find more than three or four old devils who have preserved their medieval appearance. But seeing that you have finished your coffee, and that you are rested, allow me to show you over our establishment, of which we are very proud."

"Gladly. But I first wish to pay for what I have consumed."

"There is nothing to pay. Everything is gratis here, and we do not accept tips. The joy which we find in being useful is enough pay for us."

It took a long time before I recovered from my amazement. No tips! At last my wonder ceased, and I followed my guide to visit a portion of the hell. To visit the whole of it would take weeks, perhaps months. Nevertheless I saw cafés, restaurants, halls for play, theatres, bioscopes, halls for conferences, libraries, ball-rooms, hothouses, gardens, lakes, grand lawns, where one could play all kinds of games, from tennis to golf. I passed through football grounds, courses for horse and bicycle races, and splendid roads for motoring. All was lighted up by electric lights, and everywhere I saw crowds.

But what struck me most were the immense rooms, full of paintings and sculptures. During many years the most celebrated artists have been adding their works to the collections, every day, so that the museums possess unheard-of riches in works of art.

In reply to my questions, my guide told me that the numerous theatres are full day and night, as the great number of actors and actresses allows of having an unbroken series of performances. These ladies and gentlemen are very amiable, and never refuse to be admired by a chosen public. Conferences are also very much enjoyed. They treat of a great variety of subjects. For example, on the day of my arrival, one of the posters announced, among other things, "The influence of short dresses on the female character . . . and on the thoughts of mankind." "Did Jesus Christ die of pleuresy, as confirmed by Dr. Binet-Sangle?" "How the march of events would have been if Cleopatra's nose had been flat and broad." "How Jehovah created the first woman." (This operation will be demonstrated on a screen by the cinematograph). "Of the perfections to the kindergarten for babies that died without baptism." (For all inquiries you are directed to the lady patronesses). "The means employed by the Holy Spirit to appear sometimes in the shape of a dove, sometimes in the shape of tongues of fire: the trick revealed," etc., etc.

During this long visit I was much struck by the exquisite politeness which everybody showed. "Have you then no people of violent language here?"

My guide seems a little embarrassed by this question. At last he replied: "In spite of the efforts of the scholars, we have sometimes a few, but we easily get rid of these annoying people. We make them deputies, and these gentlemen assuage their tempers by using injurious words to one another. While they squabble among each other, they leave us in peace. As to the peevish women, these we also sent to parliament."

"But do your deputies, male and female, never take a holiday?"

"We have arranged it so that the parliament sits permanently. Further, these gentlemen and ladies believe that their discourses are of the highest importance for the country, and we leave them in their illusion, so that, while they are always talking with each other, we may be left in peace. In this way everybody is pleased."

"But," said I to my companion, "with all these perfections, it seems to me, hell must be, after all, a very pleasant place, and I am curious to know in what consists the punishment which the damned have to undergo."

After having reflected for some time, my companion answered: "The punishment is double. First of all, we are deprived of the sunlight. The electric light, which we have, cannot replace this. And in the long run this privation proves very hard. You, who are only now arrived, cannot comprehend what it means to say: 'Never to see the sun again.' This suffering we cannot evade. The other punishment rests only on our vanity. All, as we know, are afraid of: 'They say'; therefore we all feel a little shame at being here, for hell is still considered as a kind of prison, where people who lived bad lives are locked up. Now, nothing is more wrong. People who live bad lives are nearly always converted before they die, and receive absolution, and as they then die in a state of grace, they have every right to go to Paradise. Here are not, with a few exceptions, any people who are voluntary separated from the church. But they could not in conscience believe its dogmas, and, having arrived at a more rationalistic means, they preferred to die in this state, rather than lie to themselves. Our population is thus, as far as intelligence, energy, freedom, integrity, and courage are concerned, infinitely superior to that of Paradise. Notwithstanding this, has hell such a bad reputation, that no one is content to be locked up there. That especially hinders the people of the world, who are very sensitive of such an opinion, as can be seen by this token that they never hand visiting cards, in order not to pass on their addresses. And when they have to mention the place among themselves, they do not call it 'hell,' but the Elysian Fields! Their vanity makes them constantly suffer. The only persons that do not suffer here, are the scholars. They are too much absorbed in their work to notice that the sun never visits us. Besides, they are too happy, when, according to time-honoured expression, they have plucked some secret from Nature, or made a discovery which is useful to their fellow men. Provided, they say, that one can work, learn something or be useful, it does not matter whether one is here or elsewhere."

To visit only one portion of hell took me a long time, for everything there is on a huge scale. Notwithstanding this, the crowds are very big. "It is in vain," said my guide, "that every day new halls and new chambers are built; that the gardens are enlarged. The population, already so numerous, increases so rapidly—thanks to a continuous immigration—that we have never room enough."

At last, feeling very tired (for I had had no rest since my death), I asked my kind guide to show me my room. "We are just now arrived there, said my guide. "Here is the building. Take the lift! Your room is on the third floor, and you will easily remember the number of your room. It is 543, followed by forty-one ciphers. If you might require my services, just phone for me."

I passed two years in hell without experiencing the least ennui, leading a very active life. Besides, I knew a great many scholars, philosophers, literary men, poets and artists. At last I had even the pleasure of finding back a few of my old friends, who had the kindness to say that they were not at all surprised to see me in this place.

Now, as I was one day walking in the company of a devil with whom I was rather intimate, our conversation turned on the different religious systems. I then expressed my preference for the gods of Olympus, and affirmed that Christianity had greatly retarded the progress of civilization, quoting the following proofs for my assertion:—

"(1) The religious wars, that arranged man against man, and had sown the seeds of hatred in their hearts.

"(2) The Inquisition, that had not alone developed even by the kindest, an unbounded cruelty, but had also, in repelling the scholars, the seekers after truth, and the intelligent, retarded, for many centuries, the triumph of science;

"(3) Celibacy, so much vaunted by the priests, and to which the souls of tender minds devoted themselves, in the hope of pleasing their god. These good and tender souls left no children behind them to whom they could transmit these excellent qualities, which was

an irreparable loss to humanity. Therefore the Inquisition, in burning the intellectuals, and religious celibacy, in declaring the having of offspring a sin, favoured greatly the increase of the cruel, the intolerable, the egotists, hypocrites and cheats, while at the same time it helped to increase people of a lower standard of morality and intellect, so that only such people could multiply. It is therefore not surprising that the human race has so much degenerated;

"(4) Even in our days is faith the enemy of science, and tries incessantly to retard its progress;

"(5) As for liberty of thought, religion holds it in abhorrence, and condemns it without hesitation as coming from some devil! (Pardon me, my dear devil, I forgot to whom I was speaking.) If Christianity had not existed, the gods of Greece and Rome would probably have been adored by some, and have been considered as symbols by others. And these gods, being friends of men, would not have invented religious wars, nor the Inquisition, nor celibacy. And far from showing themselves enemies of knowledge and liberty, they would have favoured them!"

"But then," interrupted my devil, "as you admire the gods of paganism so much you are undoubtedly a pagan yourself!"

"Certainly!"

"In this case, I shall be obliged to make a report to the authorities, though I regret this very much, for you are my friend. But our motto here is: Duty before everything!" And without any further explanation, he left me, with sadness on his face.

I had almost forgotten this conversation, when a little later I entered my room, after having been present at a charming evening party of the famous Borgia, who was Pope under the name of Alexander VI. (To make this party more agreeable, he had gathered round him a great number of very pretty women, a thing to which he is much addicted.)

On entering my room, I found on my table a letter, bearing an official seal. (This seal is on all the arms of hell, such as was adopted in the highest Christian antiquity. They represent four crossed forks above a fire of live coals. Since some time the hellish authorities are seeking for a modern and sifter emblem, in accordance with the actual state of their civilization.)

Astonished, I opened the letter, of which I here give a textual copy:—

Kingdom of the Christian Hell,
Office of the Minister for Worship,
Bureau B.

You are requested to present yourself at this office, before the 15th of this month, in connexion with an affair, which concerns you.

Head of the office,
(signature illegible).

What could this mean? What could be the affair in which I was concerned? This very laconic communication left me utterly in ignorance. I passed an unquiet night. The next day, at about 11 o'clock, still very uneasy in mind, I went to the place indicated. After having waited for more than three hours, an usher told me that the gentleman with the illegible name would gladly see me, and conducted me at the same time into a very big room, where I found the person himself.

On entering I was seized by a choking sensation, caused by a very strong smell of sulphur, coming from a monstrous heater with a big fire in it, standing in a corner of the room. Beside the fire, I perceived, through the smoke, an old devil, who evidently had refused to sacrifice to the new mode. He had preserved his two enormous horns and a goat-beard. He was dressed in a red body-coat.

For some time he regarded me with his sparkling eyes, and then said suddenly: "Are you that pagan? And, without waiting for my reply, he added: "To which gods do you pay your devotions?"

"To all the Olympic gods, but above all to Pallas-Athena."

"Why this preference?"

"Because this goddess represents intelligence and reason."

"Is the worship, which you pay Minerva, public?"

"I have in my study, in a prominent place, placed a statuette of the goddess, to which I every day offered a few flowers or some perfume. I have never tried to hide my worship of Pallas Athena, as my friends can testify."

"So, you really are a pagan! There is no doubt about it. But what are you doing here then? This is the Christian hell. Do you know that you are, here, only an intruder?"

"Sir, I am very sorry if I am guilty of such a deed, though it may not seem so to you. But to speak the truth, I am not responsible for my being here. Saint Peter told me to descend into your kingdom."

"Oh, Saint Peter is getting old, and does not always know what he is doing."

"But I have knocked everywhere in paradise, and in all the places I have been repulsed. I must find some place where I can live! Where am I then to go?"

"But, of course, you must go to the paradise of the Olympian gods, the gods which you adore. This is quite plain! There is not much intelligence necessary to understand such an elementary thing!" And whilst making this disparaging remark, the head of the office put, with a disagreeable air and without hesitation, his feet into the flames.

"You will burn yourself!" I shouted involuntarily.

"I am not afraid of the heat," he said. "On the contrary, I love it." (sadly) "But the new fashion has changed everything. We devils have become civilized, as they say, and do not like the fire neither the sulphur. But I am true to our former traditions, to the dear customs of the good, old times!" Saying this he threw a handful of sulphur into a pan, which at once spread a frightful smell. But he only stretched his long legs a little further into the flames. Then, after a moment's silence he went on: "You will oblige by quitting as soon as you can."

"May not I first say good-bye to my friends, and shake hands for the last time?"

"Go, I tell you, Go!" His voice became so cutting, and the way in which he banged the table, with his fist, so violent, that I, without further delay, opened the door and left him.

(To be concluded.)

Obituary.

MR. DONALD JAMES.

WITH deep regret, we have to report the death of Mr. Donald James, one of the oldest members of the National Secular Society.

Mr. James was associated with the Ball's Road Branch from the time it was founded until it ceased to exist. He was a loyal supporter and devoted admirer of Charles Bradlaugh and G. W. Foote, and under their leadership did valuable work for the "best of causes." Increasing age, and illness during his later years, prevented him from taking an active part in propaganda, but he never lost his interest in the Society, and to the last enjoyed his *Freethinker* and other Secular publications. Those who knew him intimately can testify to his admirable personal qualities, and the many kindnesses for which he was privately responsible.

Mr. James died on Tuesday, September 11, at the age of seventy-one, after a long illness, which he bore with fortitude. He was buried at Walthamstow Cemetery, on Tuesday, September 18, a Secular Service being performed by the General Secretary of the N.S.S. To his family and his friends we extend our most sincere sympathy in the loss they have suffered.

Some ideas there are that lie beyond the reach of any catastrophe. He will be far less exposed to disaster who cherishes ideas within him that soar high above the indifference, selfishness, vanities of every-day life. And therefore, come happiness or sorrow, the happiest man will be he within whom the greatest idea shall burn most ardently.—*Maeterlinck.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Is War Unlikely?"

OUTDOOR.

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

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S.—(Corner of Shorold's Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Saturday, September 29 and every evening to Friday, October 5, at 7.30 p.m.—Mr. George Whitehead.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. L. Ebury—(Bradlaugh Sunday).

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 3.15, "Bradlaugh" Demonstration. Speakers—Mr. Chapin Cohen, Mr. F. Mann and Mr. L. Ebury.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart—A Lecture; 3.30, 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. (Spiritualists' Hall, Hetton): Tuesday, October 2, at 7 p.m. Mr. Jno. T. Brighton—"Why are Women Regarded as Man's Inferior?" Chairman: Mr. R. Lowther. (Hetton Workmen's Club Hall): Sunday, October 7, at 3 p.m. (Chester-le-Street Co-operative Hall): 7.30, Mr. S. Browne (Chelsea)—"Birth Control and Rationalist Ethics."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Mondays: Beaumont Street; Tuesdays: Greerson Street and Islington Square; Thursdays: High Park Street and Edge Hill Lamp. All at 8 p.m. Speakers: Messrs. Shortt and Sherwin.

NELSON BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. J. Clayton's Meetings: Sunday, September 30, 7 p.m.: Accrington (Market). Tuesday, October 2, 7.30: Padiham (Tram Terminus). Sunday, October 7, 11 a.m.: Nelson I.L.P.; and at 7 p.m.: Todmorden (Market).

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