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Views and Opinions.

The Holy Bible.

CHRISTIANS—responsible Christians—get more and more uneasy about the Holy Bible. From containing nothing but the truth, and all the truth that matters, certainly all that is necessary to man's salvation, it has with educated and responsible Christians become a veritable Old Man of the Sea. They cannot get on with it, and they hardly know how, as Christians, they can get on without it. A number of the old-fashioned evangelical preachers still tread the old paths; revivalists like Billy Sunday and week-enders like Mrs. Macpherson, still talk about the blessed book and its marvels, and, of course, the British and Foreign Bible Society goes on circulating the Bible among people whose lack of culture makes them easy victims to those who live to exploit their ignorance. But the plain truth is that a certain section of believers is realizing that so far as the Old Testament is concerned the game is up. They admit that it contains much that is morally shocking to the civilized mind. They confess that its history is unreliable, and its religion no more than mere mythology. Mainly these confessions are made when they must be made—and to those in the know, rather late in the day. Still, they are made. And Christians have been driven to this pass after just over a century's fighting. Taking the modern period of popular biblical criticism as commencing with Paine's *Age of Reason*, we can safely say that, looking at the odds against which Freethinkers were fighting, their campaign has been brilliantly successful. Those who question the power of the Freethought attack would do well to look at the position to-day, and its position a century since when men and women were lying in Christian prisons for daring to tell the truth about the Bible.

* * *

Shades of Spurgeon!

From time to time timid opinions have been expressed by uneasy Christians that something might be done to make the Bible more acceptable to the modern mind. Recently, the Rev. Geoffrey Allen told the Conference of Modern Churchmen that large

sections of the Old Testament should be rejected as being "singularly ill-adapted in its present form for the service of Christian piety." The Rev. Dr. Major, with just a trace of artfulness, says that:—

The scholar and student desires no reduction in the Old Testament. The grotesque, hideous and immoral in it are for him the most important elements. Nevertheless, for popular educational purposes, and for reading aloud in church, a considerable reduction is desirable.

Dr. C. E. Raven, Canon of Liverpool, and Chaplain to the King, thinks that:—

Every educationalist would agree that for educational purposes the Old Testament should be drastically edited, certain parts omitted and other parts reserved for the later stages of education.

On the Nonconformist side, the Rev. Scott Lidgett says:—

I can quite sympathize with the feeling that many sections of the Old Testament are not too fitted for public use, and there is no reason why anyone thinking it desirable to publish separate versions giving extracts only should not do so.

I was almost going to say, what would Spurgeon have said to this? But one might almost ask, what does God Almighty think of this? What does he think of the suggestions that his sacred book has pronounced elements that are "grotesque, hideous, and immoral," "singularly ill-adapted" for the service of piety, that certain parts ought to be omitted, and that many parts of the "sacred volume are not too fitted for public use"? And what must his feelings be to note that these things are said, not by wicked Freethinkers—they have been saying them for so very many years that they will occasion no surprise—but that these things are being said by his selected servants? The Holy Bible, declared on the word of leading ministers of Christianity to be grotesque, immoral, unfit for public use, too disgusting for general or promiscuous reading? How have the mighty fallen! And what a clear proof of the effectiveness of Freethought propaganda!

* * *

Thimble-Rigging, Ancient and Modern.

Now it is worth while noting that this policy of attempting to bring the Bible up to date is not a new policy. Nearly every scholar knows that the English version of the Bible does not accurately represent the language or the ideas of the original. Words and phrases are glossed to give a reading that shall not too grossly affront civilized ears, and to conceal their real meaning. And when the actual language is not doctored we have the same game played with the teachings of the Bible. The Bible taught the existence of witches; and, as a consequence, thousands of women and children were tortured or burned. For centuries, no Christian thought of questioning the

truth of this teaching, and no less a person than John Wesley said that to give up the belief in witches was equal to giving up belief in the Bible. When modern knowledge, so far as educated people were concerned, killed the belief in witches, Christian commentators either said nothing about it, or they discovered that "witches" did not mean what people had thought the word meant. It was the same with the belief in demonism, in the biblical command to kill unbelievers, the biblical sanction of polygamy, and numerous other instances. These things were discreetly dropped, and not a single parson was honest enough to confess that the Bible was not merely wrong, but, in its influence, villainously wrong. There is nothing new in doctoring the Bible, and the pose of frankness, the affectation of a desire to bring the Bible into line with modern thought, is merely another instance of this time-honoured system of clerical humbug.

* * *

Fair Play for the Bible.

There is gross dishonesty in even the attempt to produce a Bowdlerized version of the Bible which will eliminate the "grotesque, hideous, and immoral" portions. First of all, I, as an unbeliever, deny that the Bible, read properly, is more hideous, immoral, and grotesque than is any other collection of ancient legends and mythological stories. They were not grotesque, immoral, or hideous to the minds of the people who were responsible for their existence. The tales of savages, the legends of savages and the practices of savages, are not grotesque and immoral to them. They become so when the attempt is made to take these relics of savagery and impose them upon a higher state of culture. The savage is a savage only when a higher culture is there for comparison. In relation to savages, the teachings of Jesus about devils and angels were not grotesque, they became grotesque when these things were taught to a people who were in touch with a better knowledge of natural facts. The medicine-man may be quite an impressive figure—certainly he is an interesting one—when considered in relation to his natural environment. But put him in the midst of a high civilization, amid people who know something of the workings of nature, and he becomes a grotesque figure, and a legitimate object of derision. The savage has no need to be ashamed of the power of the medicine-man in his native forest. But the medicine-man parading the streets of an English city, decked out in the paint and feathers of ecclesiastical trappings, is something of which every man and woman ought to feel heartily ashamed.

* * *

How it is done.

Suppose the plan is carried out and a Bible with the more intellectually and more morally offensive passages omitted is issued. What will be the result? Will the parsons who are responsible for this be honest enough to remind the reader that the book given to them is not the real Bible, but the Bible minus the very many passages that are so offensive that educated sense will not have them at any price? Will they be honest enough to tell the reader that these omitted passages were once taught as the veritable word of God, and men and women were killed or tortured, or imprisoned for doubting it? Everyone knows that nothing of the kind will be done. That would be to imagine a degree of honesty which the Christian clergy are clearly incapable of manifesting. So far as the unwary reader is concerned, the Bible given him will be *the* Bible, the book on which the Christian Church was built. When the Canon of Liverpool says for "educational pur-

poses" the Bible should be "drastically edited," education means here, and in practice, deliberately misleading and mis-educating those in whose hands the Bible is placed. They will not know more about the Bible when they have read this suggested version, but less, for they will never be brought into contact with the real Bible at all. They will become the innocent victims of clerical trickery. The older Christian Church forged documents wholesale to support its claims. The modern Christian—sometimes—denounces this as wrong. But is it less wrong, is it less dishonest, after fighting against the truth being known, to issue a revised and emasculated version of "God's book," and let those who read it imagine they are getting the Bible? One lies by writing something that was not in existence before he lied; the other lies by presenting half a thing as the whole thing and so altering its whole character.

* * *

A Bible Commentary.

The *Christian World* appears to be of opinion that such a revised Bible might well have added to it "extracts from the historical books of other religions." Does anyone believe that any body of Christian clergymen would treat these other religions with fairness if the plan were adopted? What would be done would be to so select the extracts as to prove that these other religions were on a lower plane than was Christianity, and at best were only *leading* up to Christianity. What Mohammedan would trust a Christian to give a fair representation of his religion, or what Hindoo would have any faith in such a commentator? The Christian capacity for falsification is rather too well known for any non-Christian to rely upon a Christian teacher where religion is concerned.

The only proper comment, the only honest comment upon the "Holy Bible" would be to print side by side with the biblical stories, and the New Testament stories, accounts of savage beliefs and practices to which they are unquestionably akin. The stories of the demonism of Jesus should be annotated with some selected specimens of the demonism of existing savages. The belief in witches, in angels, in miracles, in the power of prayer to raise the dead or to cure disease, the agency of "God" in sending a disease or in securing health, the birth of a child without the aid of a father, would all find the most exact parallels with the stories told in the Bible. If this were done, then we should have a Bible which people could read with interest and with profit. It is only the savage who can cast light upon the Christian religion, for his is the only type of intellect to which it can honestly be affiliated. I am hoping that one day this kind of Bible will be produced. The material for it is all at hand; all that is required is the moral courage to issue the work.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

I SHOT an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I know not where;
For so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I know not where;
For, who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

Very Hot Gospellers.

"History says that the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock. It would have been happier for America if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers."—*Ingersoll*.

"The Benighted States of America."—*Paul Bourget*.

"If there is a healthy swear-word, it is certainly 'damn.'"—*Canon Jowling*.

THIS country is threatened with an invasion, but, fortunately, it is pacifist and not a military one. The invaders will not be Russian soldiers with bird's nests in their whiskers, nor goose-stepping Teutons, nor Chinese troops armed with copper-lids and clothes props. This time the invaders will consist of a golden-haired American evangelist, Mrs. Aimee McPherson, and her suite, which is said to number forty persons, a handsomely bound Bible, and a Bonzo mascot.

The lady hails from Los Angeles, Cal., U.S.A., and she intends, modestly, to set the Thames alight, to say nothing of the Tyne, Tweed, and Severn. For she begins the divinely-appointed task of converting England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales in eight weeks. Her advertised object is to drive "the devil" out of these countries, and also to make people believe in the Christian Bible from cover to cover. Eight days are to be devoted to London, with its seven millions of inhabitants, and forty-eight days for about fifty odd millions of people in other parts of the four countries. Without exaggeration, this may fairly be described as a hustling trip by the McPherson troupe. It is a pity if it is somewhat reminiscent of Mons. Jules Verne's *Round the World in Eighty Days*, for that famous novelist did not include a perspiring evangelist in his trip, to say nothing of a toy Bonzo.

Indeed, Latin peoples are not enamoured of blood-and-thunder soul-saving missions, even if conducted by handsome blondes from sunny California. At such things Frenchmen and Italians raise their shoulders and their eyebrows, and ask to be excused. It is only in English-speaking countries that such missions prosper, and the McPherson mission is not the first of its kind that has swum into our ken from the United States.

Mrs. McPherson is no novice at this soul-saving business. At her Gospel Lighthouse Church, Los Angeles, she has been prayerfully preparing herself for the conquest of Britain and the Emerald Isle. According to her own figures, she and her assistants have made 10,000 converts in a single year. On her last night at Los Angeles she baptized 118 backsliders. These, mark you, are official figures, and give some clue to what may be expected on the trip to conquer Britain.

These figures, however, are not high enough "to drive the devil" out of England even, without reckoning the remainder of the programme. In her native country Mrs. McPherson secures 10,000 sinners in a year. This is only 200 in a week. On that average she will only manage 1,600 converts during her two months' campaign, and the tour is to include England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. And that master of figures, the Registrar-General, categorically states that the population of this country is 44,182,000. What is to be done about this sad business? The McPherson Mission only achieves its bustling American results by holding three services daily throughout the entire year. Being flesh and blood, and not umpteenth horse-power engines, these evangelists cannot work much harder here. Even if they could, there remains the distressing fact that "in the wee small hours" evangelistic services are not so popular as night clubs, or feather beds.

Mrs. McPherson told a newspaper reporter that at her Los Angeles Church, people out of work are encouraged to telephone to the church, and groceries and linen are served out to deserving cases. If this gets broadcasted there is a grave risk of a revolution in this country. At the least there are a million and a quarter unemployed, and none with souls so dead as to be insensible of the charm of groceries, to say nothing of boiled shirts, free of charge. Christian charity may be as beautiful a piece of humility as its recipients declare, but, if this gets noised abroad, there will be more work for Scotland Yard's flying squad, and, perhaps, the Territorials will be called upon. The Gospel of the Grace of God, plus groceries, ought to fill the Albert Hall for years, and dislocate the service on the District Railway.

Human nature being what it is, this association of groceries and godliness puts a premium on hypocrisy. What is to prevent a hard-boiled sinner from lining up at the Albert Hall every night for a week on the off chance of a grocery ticket? If he wore a different collar and tie he would never be recognized. If he changed clothes with a pal, he could attend three services daily, or eighteen for the week, and start a small general shop at the finish. One real earnest seeker after salvation and groceries would also figure as eighteen converts to Christ.

Even at this delirious pace the McPherson Mission cannot drive "the devil" out of England in the time specified. Maybe, a strict time-table was advisable on account of the cost of groceries, but it is a pity that it could not be done. Mind you, the idea of the provisions and other free gifts was a stroke of genius, but it is a costly jest. If you fill your church with unemployed the collection bags are apt to be filled with trouser-buttons and other trifles. And the return journey of the mission to Los Angeles has to be safeguarded in a more satisfactory way than by relying on trouser-buttons. Steamship officials are not to be bribed with buttons, or intimidated by Bonzos.

The American evangelists of yesteryear disdained the secular help of sugar, margarine, and tea. They "said it with music" and flowers of speech. Messrs. Moody and Sankey sang hymns to music-hall tunes. Messrs. Torrey and Alexander wallowed naked in the sentimental. "Tell mother I'll be there," and "The Glory Song," were as lively as the funeral march of a tinned sardine. But they took the cash and let the credit go, like the good tradesmen that they were. Their business was independent of Bonzos or biscuits.

England survived these two earlier American invasions, and without the help of Martello towers, or dynamite. This country will also outlive the "Bonzo" McPherson invasion. After all, is it our "souls" or our shekels that most missionaries are after? The chief difference between a church and a theatre, said a prominent American writer, is that you pay to go in one, and pay to get out of the other. In other words, there is money in soul-saving as in other businesses. That may partially explain why a handsome golden-haired American evangelist elects to drive "the devil" out of Britain instead of confining her activities to the gunmen, hi-jackers, and get-rich-quick folks of her native country. There are a thousand murders a year in the United States, and more fancy religions to the square mile than in any other country in the world. Besides, we have over 50,000 home-grown professional soul-savers, and we are getting a little tired of being asked: "Are you saved, brother?" Especially, by a frivolous person carrying a very woolly Bonzo. As the Chinese patriot said to another missionary, "Plenty much, no thanks"!

The Buchanite Society.

CHRISTIANITY prides itself all too smugly upon being a personal religion; time and again Christians insist upon the big-brother-like qualities of their deity; how they dwell upon their prayers as proving they are "on speaking terms" with him! And from the intimate knowledge they claim to have available about his son, you might easily suppose they wished to represent themselves as some kind of "in-laws." But, in truth, it's all too crude and absurd for discussion. Make it a bit more personal yet, however, and a human interest does begin to arise. Consider their sects, for instance. Could any one find in any other so-called system of thought or teaching so weirdly diverse an assortment of constituents! A generic title under the crude misconceptions of primitive humanity is understandable enough, but where shall we turn to find anything like the laughable array of "specialists" who account themselves the bearers of the real brand. Their nomenclature, their noisy terminology! how tawdry and feeble it all is on examination! Think of God's last word sent to be proclaimed by a Whitefield! Or are we to regard Wesley (individually one of the best) as having had the last word! A heterogeneous crew they make when marshalled under their Adventist leaders, their Plymouth Brethren pietists, their Camerons, their Southcotts, their Eddys, their methodical Wesleys!

One of the queerest of all these sects (like so many more not destined "for all time") was the Buchan Society or the Buchanites. They are now no more than a name, but recently, while travelling in the wild, beautiful province of Galloway in the south of Scotland, the name was revived rather unexpectedly. Happening to pass through the quiet little village of Crocketford, situated about midway along the main road between Dumfries and Castle-Douglas, I was surprised to learn of its connexion with so notorious a body as the Buchanites, the village in fact having been founded by these fanatics.

The leading spirits in the movement, connoting even more than the usual amount of fraud and delusion which grew into the Buchan Society, were a Mrs. Buchan and a clergyman, the Rev. Hugh White. Mrs. Buchan, the real founder of the sect, was born near Banff, in 1738, her patronymic being Simpson, and her father an inn-keeper. She became the wife of a potter named Robert Buchan, but after some years she separated from him and settled with her children in Glasgow. A perusal of the apocalyptic books of the Bible, coupled with her own grossly ignorant mind and her hysterical temperament, induced in her a belief that she had a religious mission, which in turn created "divine visions" and "revelations."

Meanwhile her partner in the oncoming duplicity, Hugh White, was creating a considerable stir as a minister of the Relief congregation at Irvine, a town in Ayrshire. This man had been a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, but having failed to secure an ecclesiastical appointment had gone to America, whence he returned to his native land with a deceptive academic halo. He posed as having acted as "Professor" in some sort of college in America, and the people of Irvine took him on this evidence as a distinguished personage. His academic pretensions could not very well be tested, and White's blatant self-assertion, his sanctimonious punctilios, and his unrestrained declamations served all too well to gull the mob. In the chicanery and humbug of this professional trickster, Mr. Sinclair Lewis might well have found a prototype for Elmer Gantry.

Of the fame of this charlatan Mrs. Buchan soon heard, and the two commenced to correspond. On a sacramental occasion he was preaching in Glasgow, and Mrs. Buchan, hearing him, was immediately convinced of their spiritual affinity. The pair readily became allies, although their doctrines were not published in their full enormity till much later. White gave her out to be an incarnation of the holy ghost, and the fame of her exalted piety and of her wonderful interpretations of prophetic and mystical passages of the Scriptures spread abroad. The extravagances of her evangel, however, proved too much for some of her hearers, and White was urged by the more restrained of his "sheep" to dissociate himself from her muddled beliefs. This he refused to do and, being tried for heresy, he was deposed from his office.

Thereafter meetings were conducted in White's house in Irvine, where they encountered a surprising amount of opposition (for the time that is) from the irreverent. The commentary of the poet Burns (who, it will be remembered, had an early connexion with Irvine) is of special interest. In a letter dated August 3, 1784, he writes: "Their tenets are a strange jumble of enthusiastic jargon. Among others she (Mrs. Buchan) pretends to give them the Holy Ghost by breathing on them, which she does with postures and practices that are scandalously indecent. They likewise dispose of all their effects, and hold a community of goods, and live nearly an idle life, carrying on a great farce of pretended devotion in barns and woods, where they lie and lodge together, and hold likewise a community of women, as it is another of their tenets that they can commit no moral sin. I am personally acquainted with most of them, and can assure you that the above-mentioned are facts." In these sentences Burns refers rather to their later life. The resentment they aroused among the populace of Irvine compelled the budding revivalists to quit the town. After wandering in the wilderness for some time, the little sect settled on a farm in Dumfriesshire, where they lived on communal lines, and where their apostolic life really commenced, as they at least imagined. Mrs. Buchan's greatest claim was to be 'The Woman Clothed with the Sun of the twelfth chapter of "Revelation," White being the Man-child of whom she had been spiritually delivered. She had further predicted that twelve hundred and sixty days after this piece of abstract obstetric the company would be translated bodily to heaven. The appointed day came, but night wore on without anything particular happening, although a company of sixty awaited developments with a blessed anticipation that must have been touching to any passing sceptic. In the end the "Friend Mother in the Lord" (as she had come to style herself) had to declare the celestial ascent off, under the pretext that her people were insufficiently prepared for the mighty change. Thereupon she appears to have requisitioned a tobacco pipe and allowed the matter quite literally to end in smoke.

Owing to new persecutions the Society, now discredited and attenuated, moved to the parish of Urr in the county of Kirkcudbright, and here in 1791 "Friend Mother" died, after uttering a final collection of prophecies, never fulfilled. White and other adherents betook themselves to America after this loss, and the Society was reduced to twelve simpletons. Then another abode became necessary and they settled at Crocketford, from which place we set out to follow their tortuous course. Not a Buchanite now survives, though they have been considered important enough to be written about despite this lack

of lasting achievement.¹ Ignominious ending, indeed, for a sect of gloriously self-assured Christianity. Commenting upon "the sad fate of Crockettford," an authority on Gallovidian lore, the Rev. C. H. Dick, writes: "It seems as if the waving cornfields whispered Buchanite absurdities, as if fatuous aspirations were borne about innocuously on the moorland winds. The stones of the village shout Chicanery! as the carts trundle through it, and its very burial-place provokes the laughter of the generations."

J.A.R.

Small Talk.

A GENTLEMAN, recently, writing from London in our local paper, was appealing for specimens of North Country "street-cries" that any of the readers might be acquainted with. He was endeavouring to collect these from different parts of the country, being desirous of "preserving these features of civilized life before they shall have disappeared." His appeal has come none too soon; and unless they can be secured in some imperishable form, they will soon be lost beyond recall. One old man used to come down our back lane for years on the Sunday morning with a musical cry of "Watercress, nice fresh watercress." But since the Council passed a bye-law, with a view to preserving the sanctity of the Sabbath, prohibiting these vendors shouting their wares above a whisper, the voice of the watercress seller is heard no more in the land. My ears had become so accustomed to the familiar cry that, somehow, in its absence, my Sundays are not the same.

This idea of preserving the features of a changing civilization seems to me a good one, and may save a vast amount of research work in the distant future. One of the things that might be preserved, as an interesting relic for the curious of future ages, is a specimen of the old *Family Bible*. One wonders what has become of all those cumbersome volumes of the Book of books that used to be the pride and joy of every household. In my boyhood's days, a neighbour of ours used to do a roaring trade in them. I remember he used to buy them in quantities of a hundred or a gross, which used to cost him, delivered into his warehouse, 15s. 6d. each, and his canvassers used to sell them for the modest sum of £2 5s. This is one of those old-time industries that has now gone west. Alas! for the changing times. I recently saw one of these handsome heir-looms in a pawnbroker's window, with a sixpenny ticket on it—the clasp itself must have been worth the money. Keeping it company in its neglect and misery were some ten volumes of *Barnes' Notes*, which could be had for the modest sum of ninepence. Poor old Barnes! I'm afraid that unless some effort is made to keep his memory green, he will pass into the land of oblivion.

A complete set of these "Notes" might be preserved with a record of the enormous sale they had in their palmy days. Nearly all the *Family Bibles* my friend disposed of were sold in the colliery villages, to be paid for on the instalment plan, like the *History of Protestantism* and the *American Organ*. The poor miner! he seems to have been always at the mercy of any man with the "gift of the gab." It is all the more necessary to preserve a specimen of the Bible in its present complete form, as by the time Canon Simpson has deleted the chronological lists of the Chronicles, and the theological

arguments of St. Paul, and the new army of ecclesiastical butchers have sliced away its extremities and the offal, it will scarcely be recognisable as the one-time Word of God.

Another of the things that ought to be preserved in some permanent form, if future generations are to understand the significance of such a phrase as the *Family Bible*, is the peculiar notion of the family that inspired the activities of the moralist and the theologian. When Mr. Bowdler published his expurgated edition of Shakespeare, he called it the "Family" Shakespeare, and in accordance with his notions of propriety, he excised some harmless and innocent expressions of the immortal bard. His Bowdlerized edition of *Gibbon* was also written expressly for "Families" and young Persons; historic truth evidently being regarded by him as inimical to family piety. And unless some guidance as to the significance of this Puritanical conception is preserved, posterity may conclude that the "Family" *Gibbon* was intended to be read in the devotional manner of the *Family Bible*, a chapter at a time, by the head of the household, before the family retired for the night. This idea might be objectively expressed by a huge oil painting depicting a South of England Labourer, sitting in the midst of his nineteen children with an open *Family Bible* in front of him. I make a present of this suggestion to anyone interested in preserving the older features of a changing civilization. Of course, if any Scotsman is of the opinion that a similar representation of the *Colter's Saturday Night* would serve the purpose I will not quarrel with him. But I think the group of nineteen children would better convey the idea of family unity and family piety which these Puritan moralists had in mind.

Everything connected with the institution of the family—as Puritanically understood—is undoubtedly in a bad way; the *Family Bible*, *Family Worship* and *Family Prayers* have all fallen from their high estate as the bulwark of Christian piety and religious fervour. Nay, even the *Family Grocer* seems to have fallen upon evil times, and not being able as in days of yore, to live upon the profits, he is compelled today to eke out a meagre existence as best he can, upon his losses.

Along with the collection of street-cries, there ought to be preserved some audible example of that affected, droning sing-song, known as the "parsonic voice." A preservation of these features of a past civilization, may help to edify, or perhaps amuse, the generations of the future.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Ode to an Earthworm.

POOR, humble worm despised by man,
Unseen, unhonoured is thy toil,
A worker since the world began
Creator of the fertile soil.
Thy sinuous labours underground
Prepare the Earth for future life.
No other miners can be found
Who bring such riches by their strife.
Without thy aid the world would be
But barren rocks and arid plains,
Encompassed by the restless sea
And battered by the falling rains.

How great the little in their might,
What wonders can their power perform.
The single raindrops small and light,
United form the raging storm.

S. SODDY.

¹ Joseph Train, *The Buchanites from First to Last* (1876); Joseph Cameron, *History of the Buchanite Delusion* (1904).

Freethought Flashes.

Whether we speak of life as an aspect of death, or death as an aspect of life, makes little difference. One is an aspect of the other. That is why everlasting life is everlasting nonsense.

Local feeling is quite a good thing. It is plain, useful, undisguised, and wholly good. It expresses the wholesome fact that a man's interests originate and centre round a certain group of things—the home, a particular group of civic concerns, etc. And all our feelings must take their rise somewhere. But national feeling is not so good. It disguises the fact that our feelings are still local, still tied up with a section or a group, and in its way forbids their expansion to a greater group—humanity—and in the absence of this, national feeling tends, in the course of time, to defeat its own ends. There is nothing in conscious local feeling to prevent its becoming a means to an end. National feeling tends to regard itself as an end, and that is its fatal quality.

A great many of the advanced clergy have the courage of other people's opinions.

It is strange that among primitive people who, as the expression goes, lived very close to nature, there does not appear to have been any great love of nature such as is displayed by moderns. Even with the ancient Roman and Greek writers, the fondness for nature was fitful and undecided. And with the Christian ages it grew weaker still. It is an enlightening fact that among the ancient writers, the one who has shown himself most observant of nature, and displayed most sympathy with animal life was the materialistic poet Lucretius. It is, indeed, from the scientific side that the impulse to nature study has come. And with the establishing of the hypothesis of evolution, it has become all conquering and all important.

I am not quite certain that wisdom is stronger than stupidity. There is more stupidity than wisdom in the world, and it is far more strongly organized.

What nonsense it is to speak of a good or a bad opinion. One might as reasonably speak of a light or a dark opinion. Opinions are either right or wrong, but as opinions they are without any ethical quality whatever.

To be born either too early or too late may be equally uncomfortable. In the latter case, we often have the criminal, the man whose passions are vented in a manner that belongs to an earlier culture stage. In the former case, we have the reformer, whose ideas are better adapted to a culture stage that has yet to be. And both are in for an unpleasant time.

I do not know anything that is more inherently incredible than the theory of mind as an independent force. To begin with, an independent, an autonomous force is something quite unknown in the whole range of science. (2) "Mind" is not an early, but a late manifestation in evolution. (3) It is not found apart from structure, but is always associated with it. (4) Its association is of a peculiarly intimate and dependent character. It can be affected by changes of temperature, by foods, by pressure upon certain well known centres, by drugs, and by a number of other causes. It is strange that the most dependent force of which we have any knowledge should be acclaimed as the most independent force of all!

Acid Drops.

No one can honestly doubt the reforming zeal of the clergy. And all must admire the fearlessness with which they speak out. The leader of the Catholics at Blackburn, Father Bede Jarrett, recently addressed an audience on "The Catholic Church and the National Crisis." The audience must have been greatly helped by the information that wages were a charge on industry, and that wages must come before dividends. No one was wicked enough to remind this good priest that wages do come before dividends, the whole of the bother being as to what proportion shall go in wages and what proportion in dividends. Still, while the Church is able to show its sympathy with labour by saying something that neither the one who gets the dividends or the one who gets the wages will dispute, and while the employer and the employed can be thus brought to believe that the Church is the friend of both, all is well. The sharps and the flats settle down together quite amicably, and everything is lovely.

Application was recently made to the licensing justices in Sunderland to hold Sunday evening concerts. The programmes were to consist of high class music, to be approved by the Chief Constable. The latter was a curious provision, and one would like to know who the devil is the Chief Constable that he should say what kind of music people should listen to? Anyway, the Bench declined to grant the request, and said that the Bench would never countenance in Sunderland any interference with the observance of the Sabbath. Hallelujah!

Take no thought for to-morrow—Trust in God—The Lord will provide—these be glorious Christianisms. Yet Wesleyans have contributed £11,000 towards a Retiring Fund for deaconesses, and are being implored to give another £4,000. "O ye of little faith!" Doth not Providence look after sparrows? Wherefore thinketh thou that the Lord looketh not after deaconesses also?

Of sob-stuff. A Rhodesian missionary writes: "We had a man in from Balonga . . . they have been asking for a teacher for some years, and we cannot supply one. 'Well,' he said, 'our tears are almost finished,' which means that they are about at the end of their crying for a teacher. This man's voice and pleading just keeps haunting me, and yet what can we do?" P.S.—If the poor native's anguished cry for a nice Christian teacher touches your heart, don't forget to send 2d. to the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

The Isle of Man Synod (Wesleyan) urges the brethren to do all in their power to secure observance of the Sabbath, and calls upon them to resist any tendency to use the day for games and amusements, and to stand out against attempts to open shops and public-houses on Sunday. We should say that for those who wish to enjoy a holiday the Isle of Man is the ideal place—to stay away from.

A retired police-inspector of Glasgow, Mr. M. McNicol, boasts that he had read through the Old Testament 369 times and the New Testament 874 times. Poor fellow! If only he had devoted the same time to reading of another kind, he might now be a well-read man instead of a one-book fanatic.

During the first six months of the present year, the circulation of the Scriptures by the British and Foreign Bible Society in China, showed an increase of 750,000 copies over that of the corresponding period in 1927. This has certainly benefited the heathen. We believe the Chinese use the covers for solcing shoes.

As an instance of the value of standing on one's head to see things the right way up, the Rev. C. J. Sharp, vicar of Ealing, must be congratulated. He was grate-

ful, he said, to the scholars who had made him cease believing in the Virgin Birth, and in miracles such as the multiplication of the loaves and the turning of water into wine. These scholars made him more sure of the reality of the Person of Christ. This is like lighting a candle in the dark and blowing it out in order to see better. There must be some special kind of reasoning with reverend gentlemen that has no existence in the ordinary world.

That the Christians are ashamed of their Bible is proved by the Rev. Geoffrey Allen, who spoke at the Modern Churchmen's Conference held at Cambridge on September 20, 1928. He said:—

Belief in eternal damnation has debased the Christian conception of God, and proved an occasion of stumbling to sincere Christians. The Church must unite to reject the legacy of the Apocalyptic school. There is no eternal damnation. Such a belief is quite incompatible with the revelation in Christ of a God of Love. There is no future Grand Assize.

When the scrapping recommended by the speaker has taken place there will be not much left. It is to be hoped that Christians will continue to help themselves to get out of their absurd beliefs, and qualify for a fuller citizenship on earth. History, in which Christianity has taken part, cannot be read without inward tears; those who refused to believe in hell in a future life were given one in their present by Christians, and in 1928, Mr. Allen now tells us that he and his fellow-children are growing up. It is almost a miracle, and there ought to be some sort of Victoria Cross as a reward for such courage.

What is "The Word of God?" is the theme discussed by the Rev. C. W. Andrews in a Wesleyan journal. Some people, he says, have demanded from him a formal statement that the Bible "does not merely contain the Word of God, but is the Word of God." He believes that the antithesis between the Bible "containing" and "being" the Word of God is based on a misunderstanding. New Testament writers, he says, always referred to the Old Testament as "The Scriptures." But the New Tidings are referred to as "The Word of the Kingdom," "the Word of God," or "the Word of His Grace," etc.

Mr. Andrews has no hesitation, he says, in asserting that the Bible contains "the Word of God." He explains that language is not a rigid and unchanging thing; words and phrases modify, or even alter, their meaning in course of time. After examining the New Testament to ascertain the exact sense in which a phrase was used by the Apostles and early Christians, he is not bound to assert that it must for ever carry that precise meaning and no other. Therefore, when someone demands of him whether he believes the Bible "contains" or "is" the Word of God, he replies: "Both my friend. It contains what is called in the New Testament, the Word of God, and it is what you and I call the Word of God." Mr. Andrews regrets there has been so much controversy about the Bible among believers, and he appears to imagine that his method of dodging will prevent that. It will not. The Fundamentalists know exactly what they mean by "the Bible is the Word of God." Equally well they know that the semi-modernist Mr. Andrews, despite his conciliatory statements, is giving the terms in dispute a radically different interpretation that makes agreement impossible.

It is not worth while asking why the assertion that "the Bible is the Word of God"—meaning, that every word of it is divinely inspired or comes direct from God—is not nowadays acceptable to men like Mr. Andrews. The answer is to be found in the fact that Freethought criticism has pointed out the brutalities, obscenities, absurdities and inconsistencies in the Bible. In light of this revelation the more intelligent Christian leaders have been compelled to reject the Fundamentalist dictum. Hence, we get re-interpretations, re-statements,

re-adjustments, and other re-shuffling expedients invented for retaining the better-educated religionists. When you come to think about it, the Modernist ought really to be grateful to Freethought for the new light it has shed upon his Bible. He doesn't seem to be. We wonder why?

Writing about the abolition of the death penalty, the *Methodist Times* says:—

We have never been able to find any justification for capital punishment in the Christian ethic. It is a survival of Old Testament standards as they represent a more or less barbaric age.

It may be true that Christ did not commend the "eye for an eye" doctrine. On the other hand, he did not condemn the Law of which it was a part. He also accepted the Old Testament, which enshrined this Law, as the Word of God. We would remind our contemporary that the teaching of the Christian Church has always been based, not alone on the New Testament, but on the Old and New. In nearly 2,000 years the Church has never condemned capital punishment; and one may infer that it was unable to discover anything in the Bible justifying the abolition of the death penalty. Still, quite likely it may now discover something, since public opinion outside the Church is declaring in favour of abolition. The Church is always playing the part of Rip Van Winkle.

The revolt of modern youth against the traditions, codes, and beliefs of former generations, especially the Victorian, appears not to commend itself to the *Methodist Recorder*. Still, this revolt, it appears, has a nobler side. The watchword of youth is sincerity; its sworn enemy is restraint. It views all authority with suspicion, for authority derives its virtue from the past. No concession can be made to the implied claim that the past has a higher title to wisdom, knowledge or understanding than the present. All progress has followed the forward look. Creative originality is better than slavish imitation. Traditional standards must submit to fearlessly honest scrutiny.

It is inevitable, says the *Recorder*, that the Christian Church should feel the strain of this new situation. Art or literature or politics may suffer by the neglect of the past, but religion, rooted in historic revelation, is bound to suffer most. The symptom alarming our contemporary is the growing indifference to ignorance of the records of the past which have sustained the faith of Christians in every generation. This, we are told, is not the panic cry of American Fundamentalism. The peril is recognized also by Modernist leaders.

The *Recorder*, however, seeks consolation in the thought that youth is revolting not so much against the past as against the traditional attitude to the past. For our part, we fail to see that this makes much difference; still, our pious friend is welcome to clutch at straws in default of anything more sustaining. As evidence of youth's willingness to think about religion is mentioned the popular interest in various books concerning the life of Christ. In these there was freedom of treatment; the Gospels were divested of authority; the past was not allowed to hamper the modern reader's judgment. And the inference asked to be drawn from this is that youth, "when most conscious of its full emancipation from tradition is still under bondage to the influence of Jesus." We doubt it. The majority of older readers of these books were members of Churches. So, too, were the younger readers. But these can hardly be said to be part of that modern generation which is revolting. The younger members of the Churches are still much in bondage to tradition. It is the vast majority of young people outside the Churches who are leading the revolt, and these have little interest in lives of Christ; nor are they in bondage to Jesus.

The *Recorder* says that when these modern lives of Christ have passed from memory, the New Testament

will still be read. The reason given appears to be, because the New Testament, while recording what God has done in the past, refuses to let people live in the past. And we are supposed to infer that it has a message for the present which has little to do with traditions. Nevertheless, we are sure its message will make little appeal to revolting youth. What the reflecting portion of this youth realizes is that the Christian story of a Redeeming Christ and his vicarious sacrifice is based on ancient beliefs and traditions about a "fallen" human race. Youth refuses to accept the beliefs and traditions. And because it does that, it has no use for the Christian story, and the Christian "message." That is a very deplorable state of affairs—for the Churches and parsons. But there is little or nothing they can do to alter it.

The *Schoolmistress*, looking at the matter with a professional eye, says the Dual System in the schools is a barrier to an equitable scheme of promotion operating throughout the whole of any one educational area. There are thousands of women teachers belonging to Nonconformist Churches, to whom denominational schools in villages and towns are closed. When they seek promotion in Council schools—the only schools in which, in practice, they can obtain employment—they have to compete against all-comers, including those who have already had opportunities of obtaining experience as headmistresses of non-provided schools. The *Schoolmistress* appears to think there is no way of removing the grievance. We think there is. If secular education became the rule, the religious opinions of any teacher would not exclude her from any school controlled by the State. Some fine day, teachers will wake up to the fact that from the professional point of view they have much to gain from Secular Education and little to lose.

Apropos of disagreement among Christians, a Methodist writer suggests as a good motto for his fellow religionists, "Think, and let think." A good motto, assuredly; but it can hardly be called a "Christ-like" one. Its call to tolerance is in essence too pagan. The Great Exemplar had no use for tolerance in matters religious. For those who were audacious enough not to agree with his views, he kept a truly Christlike stock of epithets and maledictions. It was the Christians' constant striving for an "imitation of Christ" that caused them to glorify intolerance into a virtue.

Some consternation has been caused in certain circles because, at a baptismal service at St. Martin's in the Fields, the vicar omitted the customary renunciation of the devil and his works. This is awful! Here is a little child on whose behalf his godparents did not renounce the devil and his works! It is enough to make the hair of the religious stand on end. Of course, there may not be a devil to renounce. Neither may there be a god to follow, but that does not matter to a sincere Christian. He must renounce what does not exist and follow that which is not there. What is to become of religion if such trifling considerations as these are allowed to influence people?

An Egyptian corn-bin, said to be over 12,000 years old, was recently shown at an exhibition—a very interesting exhibition, that. The corn-bin was made 6,000 years before God created the world—as authoritatively stated by Bible experts.

Sir Thomas Inskip told the girls of a Kingston school: "You would not like to be told you are lady-like; you would probably prefer to be told you are good sports." We imagine the girls would dislike still more to be told they were "Christ-like."

The Bishop of Whitby says "kids" are not such fools as many people think them to be. Sunday-school teachers discovered the fact long ago. In these unbelieving days, it takes them all their time to get the

"old, old story" accepted, and tales about miracles credited.

France has changed the name of its War Office to Army Office. It will be a big step forward when France is able to change the name (and nature) of Army Office into Peace Office.

On the rocky crest of Buckland Beacon on Dartmoor have been carved the Ten Commandments. The next step, we suggest, is to teach the birds to read. They are always breaking some of the Ten Commandments without knowing the fact. Still, God made them like that.

A reader of the *Daily News* is anxious to know, "What is the Religion of Youth?" This is a queer question. We thought most parsons—who should know—are agreed that youth hasn't any religion, and that desperate efforts are needed to get the poison inoculated.

Just to remind the godly to "watch their step," even though hell is only a sort of a state somewhere or other, a Methodist humorist ejaculates: "There's a stern side to God too often forgotten in these days of a sentimentalized theology." This is a gentle reminder to modern Christians that their sugar-slick God of Love is not sweet all through. Even though, in deference to present-day opinion, he has damped down hell-fire, he hasn't extinguished it entirely. This week's maxim for Christians: "Keep your eye on the 'stern part' of God—there's a kick in it!"

Oh, Day of Rest and Gladness.

(Revised Version.)

Tune:—The Church's one foundation.

USUAL SATURDAY SAILING CO., UNLIMITED.

[In order to save dock dues and wages, it is the custom to send ships to sea on Saturday.]

Oh, day of rest and gladness,
O sailorman's delight,
To stay in port in sadness,
Would surely not be right.
So Saturday doth see him
Each mooring line set free,
And leave to spend his Sunday,
Upon the glorious sea.

From Saturday to Monday,
The office staff must stay,
At home and spend each Sunday
In some unfruitful way.
But we upon God's ocean
No casting care shall know
Our work is our devotion
As o'er the sea we go.

The pubs are closed on Sunday.
Because they cannot trust
The weak and wayward shoremens
From going on the bust.
But we whose hearts are cleansed
From morbid thoughts of beer,
With joy that never endeth
Shall serve the Lord out here.

Please God, the gentle sailor
Will never know the pain,
The managers must suffer
When their attempts are vain
To clear the ships each week-end
And get them off to sea,
For ships tied up on Sunday
Would spoil eternity.

From the *Marine Engineer Officers' Magazine*.

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.

WILL BRANCH SECRETARIES please note that lecture notices, etc., intended for publication in the following issue of the *Freethinker*, should be sent direct to this office, and not elsewhere. We have been asking for years for this to be done, and as non-compliance causes confusion, we decline to hold ourselves responsible for any omissions should this rule be ignored. All that is needed is a postcard giving the information to be published, and nothing else. If letters are sent, envelopes should be marked "Lecture Notice." Such notices must reach us not later than first post on Tuesday morning.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—A. H. Deacon, 55.; V. H. Smith, 55.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—The General Secretary acknowledge: R. B. Harrison, 55.; F. Todd, 21s.

S. EMERY (Cheltenham).—We are pleased that you felt quite repaid for your long journey to the debate in the Caxton Hall. We were flattered at seeing so many friends from distant places present. Many towns and cities seemed to be represented.

W. MOORE.—Sorry a visit cannot be arranged to Swansea this side of Christmas. Perhaps in the New Year it may be possible.

R.L.—As you will be at Liverpool on the 10th, please wait behind and Mr. Cohen will deal with the matter then. You can bring the document with you, a brief glance will be enough.

W.P.B.—Will appear next week. Crowded out of this issue.

H. BLACK.—Good wishes are never too late, yours are welcome all the year round.

J. RION.—Thanks. We hope to meet you one day, and so remove one regret in your letter.

W. A. BULLOCK.—When the *B.B.C. Handbook* says that less than twenty letters were received protesting against the religious policy of the B.B.C., we can only assume that the Editor is trying to emulate Ananias or Munchausen. It seems useless to expect the truth where Christianity is concerned.

A. MILLAR.—Shall appear soon.

G. CHAPPLE.—We did not see the *Daily Telegraph* articles or those in the *Sphere*.

A. W. COLEMAN.—We did not listen in to Dr. Waterhouse's talk on religion. The B.B.C. is an even greater coward's castle than the pulpit. It is only in relation to Christianity that mental cowardice becomes a cardinal virtue.

J. F. HAMPSON.—Mr. Gerald Gould evidently does not even know what the "Free Will" controversy is about. His opinion on the matter is positively worthless.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day, October 7, Mr. Cohen commences his winter lecturing with two lectures at the Co-operative Hall, Courtney Street, Plymouth. In the afternoon, he will speak on, "A Challenge to the Clergy"; and in the evening, on, "What Are we Fighting For?" Good meetings are expected.

On Wednesday, October 10, Mr. Cohen will hold a public debate with the Rev. J. Howard in Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool. The subject of the discussion is, "Is Christianity a Hindrance to Progress?" and the chair will be taken at 8. Reserved seat tickets are 1s. each, and may be obtained from Mr. A. Jackson, 7 Kirk Street, Bootle. On the following Sunday, Mr. Cohen will speak twice in the Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints Road, Manchester.

More about the mystery of the great "psychic" picture. We published in our issue for September 23, an account of the alleged spirit influence in the painting of "The Eternal March," as given by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, with the artist's clear repudiation of the story. Last week Sir Arthur wrote saying that the *Daily Express*, in which paper the repudiation appeared, had done what it could to correct its error by publishing a repudiation of the story. Reference to the paper proved that the *Daily Express* had done nothing of the kind. It had merely permitted a letter from Sir Arthur to appear, in which he tamely repudiated the artist's version. The *Express* said nothing, leaving the facts to speak for themselves.

Now we receive a letter from the artist, Mr. Longstaff, in which he says:—

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has called my attention to your leader. I should wish to say there is no difference of opinion in our respective opinions as to the origin of my picture, "The Eternal March."

The matter gets "curiouser and curiouser." What exactly does Mr. Longstaff mean? Does he mean there is no difference between his opinion of the origin of the picture and mine, or between his statement of the origin of the picture and the statement made by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle? No one can tell from the letter what it means, and we should be grateful for a word of explanation. Further, Mr. Longstaff—so says the *Daily Express*—told one of the representatives of the *Express*, that his picture had no psychic inspiration other than that which any picture might have, and that there was nothing different in the way he produced this picture from the way in which he paints all his pictures. Finally, the subject of the picture was suggested to him by Sir Arthur himself, a fact, about which, if a fact, Sir Arthur said nothing at all. Now it is quite plain that, as the matter stands, it looks as though someone, the *Express*, the artist, or the "psychic expert" is fooling the public. And we think it right someone should answer a few plain questions. These are: (1) Was the picture, "The Eternal March," painted as a consequence of great spirit influence, directly after the artist had received incontrovertible evidence of the truth of Spiritualism? (2) Was the subject of the picture suggested by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to the artist, and did Sir Arthur suggest alterations after the picture was finished? (3) Was there anything in the painting of the picture which suggested to the artist that he was working under unusual influence or unusual conditions? (3) Was the interview published in the *Daily Express* a genuine interview or a mere "fake"?

It seems to us that this matter has now gone too far to be left where it is. If leading Spiritualists have a due sense of responsibility towards the public, they will see to it that this story of "the greatest picture in the world" being painted under spirit influence, and the artist's repudiation of it, needs establishing or repudiating. Common honesty should see that this done. The first statement about the psychic origin of the picture might have been dismissed with a smile at the irrespon-

sibility of ill-balanced enthusiasm. But a repetition of the story, with the artist's statement that might mean a confirmation or a repudiation, makes the matter more serious. Will Spiritualists face their responsibilities to the general public? We need hardly add that these columns are open to any statement that responsible Spiritualists may feel inclined to make.

A good supply of slips has been printed advertising Mr. Cohen's lecture in the Caxton Hall on Wednesday, October 17. We should be glad to hear from London Freethinkers who are willing to distribute these. A card to the General Secretary is all that is required, but we should like to have the hall as full as it was on the evening of the recent debate. Reserved seat tickets are 1s., and may be obtained either from the N.S.S. office, or from that of this journal.

Mr. George Whitehead will be lecturing to-day (October 7) at the Secular School, Pole Lane, Failsworth, at 2.45 and 6.30. Manchester friends will please note.

The new Mayor of Salford is to be Councillor Ernest Corbey, and, whilst we know nothing about this gentleman, we like the tone of his remarks made to a representative of the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*. Mr. Corbey said:—

People may misunderstand my refusal to go into a church. Actually I have no religious opinions at all; I respect other people's religious prejudices—I have no business in preventing them thinking what they like . . . I have no religious beliefs, so I will not enter a church, even on Mayor's Sunday, nor will I attend any religious service . . . I shall refuse to attend any dinners or other social functions unless they are, in my opinion, directly connected with the welfare of the City. My objection to religious functions will also extend to meetings of Brotherhoods and that kind of thing.

We congratulate Mr. Corbey on his manly and straightforward attitude on this matter. It is high time that mayors and civic officials began to pay some regard to their own opinions on religion instead of dancing to the piping of church and chapel on stated occasions. These men are elected to their posts to represent the *civic*, not the religious, interests of the towns in which they live. We have for many years been pressing the point that mayors, chairmen of councils and the like should do as Mr. Corbey is doing, and we hope that the excellent example set by him will be generally followed.

A Branch of the N.S.S. will be restarted in Belfast in the course of the next three or four weeks, and Freethinkers in the City are invited to join. A meeting was held in the I.L.P. Hall recently, and a resolution passed in favour of the formation of a Branch. Mr. F. Nolan was elected treasurer, Mr. R. J. M'Coubrey treasurer, and Mr. V. Kilpatrick, secretary. The Secretary's address is 3 Easton Avenue, Cliftonville Road, Belfast. We wish the new venture every success.

The North London Branch of the N.S.S. opens its winter session to-day (October 7) with an address from Mr. A. P. de Zoysa, in the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W. The meetings commence at 7.30, and admission is free. North London Freethinkers please note. Mr. de Zoysa's subject is "Is Buddhism a Suitable Religion for England?"

To-day (October 7), Mr. Mann visits Birmingham and will lecture in the Bristol Street Council Schools, at 7 p.m. His subject will be, "Religion, Life, and Death." There should be enough here to provide plenty of room for discussion. Admission is, as usual, free.

The West Ham Branch brought its open air season to a successful close on Sunday last, with an address from Mr. F. C. Warren, on "Bradlaugh the Atheist." We are glad to learn that the summer's campaign has been so satisfactory; and that the members of the Branch work so well together. One feature of the Branch is the development of speaking talent amongst its members. That is always a desirable asset. We also congratulate the Bench on having no less than three lady speakers—

Mrs. L. Venton, Mrs. Grout, and Mrs. H. R. Rosetti. They are not merely speakers, but, we understand, good speakers. Altogether a very satisfactory state of affairs.

The Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S. has had a very successful outdoor season, and to-day (October 7), it commences its winter season with a lecture by Dr. Carmichael, on "Methods of Controversy." The meeting will be held in the hall at 18 Colquhoun Street. The meeting commences at 7.45 p.m.

We are glad to learn that Mr. Corrigan has been having some very good meetings in the Darlington district. We hear that he has earned the good opinion of the Freethinkers of the district, and produced also a favourable impression upon others. This is as it should be, and we believe he will have helped the proposed new Branch in Darlington. We need hardly say that he has had the co-operation of the active Chester-le-Street Branch during the week.

"Is Materialism Exploded?"

THE Caxton Hall, Westminster, as one fully expected, was, on September 26, packed with an enthusiastic and earnest audience. It was plain to see how much the subject of Materialism interested them and how anxious they were to hear two Freethinkers like Mr. C. E. M. Joad and Mr. Chapman Cohen deal with such a subject from the standpoint of modern science and thought.

Mr. Joad represented the younger generation, eager and questioning, a man with a scientific education, with a wholesome respect for his opponent's debating powers, but obviously not quite so sure of his scientific equipment and accomplishment.

Mr. Cohen, on the other hand, came to the discussion with about forty years' experience of Freethought—an experience almost unique even in that audience of Rationalists.

Materialism, not the Materialism denounced by Christians and believers generally, but the Materialism based on science had in him a sure champion, rare because few had studied it so well or so deeply, or had so thoroughly steeped themselves in it from every standpoint, logical, historical, and scientific. From the very beginning of the debate it was obvious that Mr. Cohen knew his subject inside out, but he knew his opponent's case equally as well. He dealt with both sides with an ease of expression, a fluency of rendering that his perfect confidence in his case justified, and to which Mr. Joad could only refer—as Mr. Cohen's splendid debating powers. Well, knowing one's subject is half the battle, and it was a pity that Mr. Joad had not made it his duty to learn something of the discussion between materialists and vitalists throughout history. He suffered another disadvantage, namely, not being able to express himself so that he could be heard all over the hall. There are few things more galling to an audience than to be told a great point is coming, and then find the great point delivered almost inaudibly. No doubt the verbatim report, which is about to be published will clear up some of Mr. Joad's obscurities and familiarize us with some of his crushing replies to Mr. Cohen, but many people did not hear them.

Mr. John M. Robertson was in the chair, and it need hardly be said he made an ideal chairman from every point of view. Some of us, however, would have dearly liked his opinion on the debate; he scrupulously kept it to himself. I did, however, see him smile more than once when Mr. Joad delivered himself of arguments with an air of confidence that they were original, when, to most of us, they were theistic commonplaces in our childhood days, and could never have been uttered at all by any Freethinker familiar with Buchner or Lewes. Had Mr. Joad been familiar with this controversy he might have taken up Mr. Robertson's questions—where does any Materialist say "Nothing exists but matter?"

In his first half hour, Mr. Cohen went right to the heart of the problem. His clear enunciation carried his argument to every corner of the hall, and none of his audience failed to understand him. "Materialism is dead," was the slogan uttered almost everywhere. Well,

so far as sound science was concerned, it was Materialism or nothing. And nothing Mr. Joad said after that statement was subsequently rammed home, made the slightest impression on it. Mr. Cohen showed that any discovery science made about matter did not alter one iota the conception that the whole of the phenomena of Nature was ultimately explicable in terms of the composition of forces, or Determinism. In fact, paradoxical as it may seem, Materialism had nothing to do with matter as matter.

It was obviously a surprised Mr. Joad who got up to reply. For him, in his articles and books, Materialism had been thoroughly exploded. It was so difficult to answer back, that what he said settled the whole affair. Yet here was a Materialist not only answering back, but proving as far as proof was possible, that Materialism was very much alive, the explosion being merely a delightful assumption on Mr. Joad's part, due mostly to the fact that he was still befogged by "definitions" taken from Christians. Mr. Joad paid his compliments to Mr. Cohen's debating powers, and mentioned that he had won his reputation through knocking God off his pedestal by lecturing all over the country for thirty years. Now this illuminating description of the Editor of this paper showed us the measure of Mr. Joad's mind. It is true, of course, but not the whole truth. I think I am right in saying that knocking God off his pedestal has been a very small part of Mr. Cohen's particular mission. What he has done is to try, year in and year out, to inculcate a scientific method of reasoning, a scientific application of the facts and discoveries of modern science to problems of life and mind. This was obviously unknown to Mr. Joad, who started to explain what atoms and electrons were, and seriously put the question as to what made electrons jump? After that staggering puzzle, he asked, as if it had never been asked before—or answered—how can we say matter produces mind, when we don't know what matter is? Mr. Cohen's second speech was too witty to be reduced to a few lines of cold print. The gist of it was, that Mr. Joad had still some lingering belief in God—using a different name, of course, and he proved his contention up to the hilt.

Mr. Joad again seemed surprised, protested he had no belief in a God whatsoever and proceeded to use the familiar Theistic proofs against Materialism, such as why do we enjoy a symphony or a great painting? In his determination to get his argument well over, he forgot to include the large number of people—such as savages—who do not enjoy symphonies or paintings. But these are trifles by the way. Then he proceeded to deliver his crushing bomb shell. Something came from nothing—our æsthetic thrills before Beethoven or Titian for example—and so we get the modern doctrine of EMERGENCE. And then Mr. Cohen pointed out that he was using the modern doctrine of "emergence" thirty years ago, that Spinoza implied it, that George Henry Lewes used it. And after that, figuratively speaking, Mr. Joad collapsed. What he actually said in his final speech may be gathered from the verbatim report, but neither I nor many members of the audience to whom I spoke at the close of the meeting quite saw the relevancy of his arguments. Previously Mr. Cohen had congratulated Mr. Joad on the beautiful knots he was getting himself well into, and everything he said later only bewildered both himself and his audience. At heart that was my opinion.

The trouble with people like Mr. Joad is, that they still look upon the Editor of the Freethinker as a man whose principal occupation is going all over the country knocking God down. That this is sheer nonsense, I trust Mr. Joad has learnt from the debate. Materialism may not be quite as easy of exposition to others as to Mr. Cohen. All of us have not his remarkable gift of seeing into the heart of a scientific problem in its relation to man and the universe, and then demonstrating the result or effect in his simple and vigorous language. But this particular debate has shown how well the modern scientific Materialist can put his case, and how modern vitalists like Mr. Joad can hopelessly flounder in a maze of words inherited from their superstitious ancestors. What I should like to know is, how many con-

vinced Materialists who heard Mr. Joad have been converted? And why?

Finally, one must put in a word for Mr. Joad's pluck in meeting Mr. Cohen. What a pity it is that other "vitalists," who are not Freethinkers, cannot emulate him. They are not very likely to now.

H. CUTNER.

On the Other Side.

(HELL AND PARADISE.)

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

(Concluded from page 638.)

IMMEDIATELY two little imps approached me very politely, and told me that they were to conduct me to the frontiers. They offered many excuses for being obliged to seem wanting in their hospitality. I thanked them for their kind, fraternal words, and asked them to tell the infernal population how much I appreciated all their civilities, which every one of them had shown me. And finally I assured them that I, in all eternity, should never forget the happy days I had passed in the modern hell.

Soon we arrived at the entrance, and after having given each of my companions a hearty shake by the hand, I found myself outside in the darkness . . . alone! Timidly I approached the lift by which I had formerly come down. At the end of a very long time I arrived again on the way, which I knew already, running along the walls of paradise. I turned to the right, and started once more, going in the opposite direction to the way I formerly came, till at last I came to a gate I had not noticed on my first voyage. In response to a few knocks, many times repeated, the gate was at last opened, and I perceived the amazed look of a young faun.

"Stranger," said he to me, "What do you want?"

"To pass my eternal life in your heaven!"

"You are the first, since a very long time, who has expressed such a desire. This is a curious fact, and will certainly please us," continued the faun smilingly. "Please be seated in the shade of these trees, while I go to warn the gods."

I waited. On his return the faun requested me to follow him, and conducted me to a lawn, in the centre of which I saw a score of seats, made of marble. On each was seated on an old man of noble mien and mild aspect, draped in an antique dress. The old man who occupied the centre seat of the semi-circle asked me then: "Who are you?"

"A worshipper of the ancient gods of Greece and Rome."

"What is, in your opinion, men's duty?"

"Men ought to desire to live a physical, intellectual, moral, æsthetic and social life, always enlarging and becoming stronger, intenser, better and more harmonious. All that lives ought to strive for complete development, for harmonious cheerfulness of its being, and for the continuous enlarging of life."

"What do you understand by the words: Enlarging of life?"

"Enlarging life means to do, to work, to produce, to feel, to admire, to understand always more and better. And above all, always more and more to love our brothers, and to help them!"

"What is your opinion of egotism?"

"Egotism is a bad thing because, instead of enlarging the horizon of life, and to contribute to the cheerfulness of all that exists, it narrows the thoughts, lessens the aspirations and diminishes life by confining it to the profit of one only. Experience teaches us that a harmonious development is only possible through co-operation."

The old men consulted each other during a few moments, whereupon the one who had questioned me, said: "After having taken the opinions of these noble old men, who surround me, and in the name of the gods, who have delegated their power of judging you to us, we admit you this moment to the number of the citizens of our heaven. Be thou welcome amongst us!"

On hearing these words I was seized by an emotion

that prevented me from speaking, and before I had time to recover and pronounce a few words of thanks, the old men were going away in groups. But I was soon surrounded by nymphs and fauns, who asked me a thousand questions. One would like to know those that came from Greece and Rome. My answers were not always understood, for most of the events of which I could speak had occurred since most of the gods had quitted the earth under the reign of Constantine . . .

I say: "Most of the gods." For four among them had often visited man since then. Although these four divinities now always remain invisible, yet is their power still exercised without intermission, perhaps even stronger now than in the time that they were publicly worshipped.

First of all we have Venus, who, as formerly, subjects all that exists to her laws. Human beings, animals and plants, all submit to her power, and obey her. If this divinity should stop inspiring beings, life would disappear out of the Universe. Without her no babies! Further, it is she who brightens the flowers, ripens the fruit, wheat, and other grains that serve us as food. It is also she who causes the birth of the animals that we eat. It is thus quite correct to say that we only live by the products of love—we owe everything to the works of Venus! Without her nothing more of life!—Only nothingness!

We also have Mercury often in our midst. A thousand times more active than formerly, in Greece and Rome, he gives to many the restlessness of commerce, and aids in that way civilization.

Alas! We often perceive the presence of Mars, the terrible! Of Mars, the bloody, who again puts in the hearts of certain men the deadly fury of combats; Mars, who is the announcer of hideous discord. But he will not always be such, for of all the gods, Mars is the only one who, one day, must die!—He alone is not immortal!

Meanwhile the laughing fauns had brought me some delicious fruit, while graceful nymphs are bringing me wreaths of flowers. My new friends, judging at last that, after all these divers emotions, I should need rest, led me to a grotto, near by a lake, and covered me with poppies. Soon sweet slumber came stealing over me as a restorer, and during many hours pleasant dreams played round me.

Morning came! I opened my eyes, and found, near my couch, a tunic and a cloak. After a plunge in the waters of the near lake, I put on my new vestments of dazzling white. Everything round about me seemed divinely beautiful, because a heavenly light enveloped everything. The air I breathed filled my soul with the purest joy, and my whole being overflowed with a happiness, both calm and profound. And this happiness must be felt by all the inhabitants of that abode, for everybody wore a tranquil smile on their lips, while their faces were the mirrors of an inward peace.

I soon had the joy of being able to approach gods and goddesses, and to get acquainted with the citizens of this heavenly empire, while I was allowed to take part in long and interesting conversations. That, and many other things beside, gives me the right to affirm the superiority of that paradise.

The paradise of the Mohammedans is one of vulgar sensuality; that of the Buddhists is sottish, for they spend eternity by thinking of nothing. That of the Jews might well be called the Empire of sleep, for the elect sleep there in Abraham's bosom. That of the Christians is childish, for they have nothing to do but to play on harps and to whine songs.

The hell is not a bad place. Only, while on the whole it is nothing but an image of our earth, the activity there is too restless, its vanity incommensurable; jealousy devours the hearts, while its beauty is . . . In the paradise of the Olympian gods, however, is a regulated activity; everything is in tune: thoughts, desires, words, gestures and acts. Jealousy, anger, egotism, and all the other sensations that threaten to destroy this harmony, are all banished. Here, everything in and round us is beautiful and divine.

Yes, how grateful I am to Jesus of Nazareth for having, through the agency of his doorkeeper, refused me entrance into his heaven, and where I could have had no

other companions than ignorant and superstitious people like Peter, John, Matthew, Luke and Mark, and other saints of such intellectual stamp, so insignificant that they only deserve to figure in "The Life of the Saints for every Day of the Year." Some of them are: Abdon, Agapetus, Alphonse, Bavo, Didacius, Pancras, Vitus and Eulalie, Pulcheria and others. The more brutish of these saints I had rather pass by in silence.

Here I meet: Sallust, Socrates, Titus Livy, Pindarus, Lucretius, Seneca, Pythagoras, Sophocles, Plutarch, Cæsar, Hippocrates, Zeno, Cato, Marcus Aurelius, Apella, Aristotle, Pericles, Juvenal, Phocion, Theophrastus, Horace, Euclid, Regulus, Cicero, Homer, Ovid, Euripides, Alexander, Demosthenes, Lyeurgus, Herodotus, Thurecydides, Plato, Virgil, Archimedes, Leonidas, Augustus, Adrian, Epicure, Phidias, the two Plinys, and many others.

These are great ones that have taught me. Whilst I am telling this true story, I ought to add that since I came here, I experienced a great fear. I was afraid of finding the gods subjected to all kinds of passions, as is affirmed by certain writers. But I soon found, to my joy, that all this was done in pure ignorance by people who cannot comprehend the real nature of the gods, and who think that they resemble human beings.

O, man, listen to me! The gods are good, since they have given you life and reason, and have placed cheerfulness in the hearts of Rationalists, besides a sense of justice and love for mankind!

Unto this Last.

A FREETHINKER'S PHILOSOPHY.

I work for the pleasure of working,
I live for the loving of life;
Than "case" that is wretched and restless
There's a wholesomer, happier strife.

And tho' at the best comes the ending
Of mellow and dwindling days,
Still the spirit, heroic, transcending,
Persists while the matter decays.

Some leisure and light in November
By river, wood, moorland, and hill;
Yea, even in drearest December
Some joy will enlighten me still.

A walk by a brooklet's meander,
A rest by a sheltering thorn,
A landscape, a cloudscape, a sunset—
E'en the dawn of a wintry morn.

With memories dear, because sad ones;
With faces about me grown old;*
With all who were "good ones" and "bad ones";
All shapen in one final mould.

One earth—of grass lawn or wild bracken—
Be it silk, be it sacking, for pall
Mother Earth no caresses will slacken
For one, but impartial greet all!

And hush all to rest on her bosom,
As she wak'd all to life in her womb;
As she bred, fed and led all her children—
One cradle for all and one tomb.

For she has no heavens to offer,
Nor hates of a Christian hell:
The gifts she has given let us proffer,
And trust her and all will be well!

ANDREW MILLAR.

* Leopardi remarks that, revisiting friends after a great lapse of years, it seems as though some "serious calamity" had befallen them in their changed appearance. Yet I have just noted how much the boy character persists in the man—almost unchanged in fact in four decades. So Error persists as well as right.—A.M.

Correspondence.

"THE ETERNAL MARCH."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You ask me why you should apologise to me. You had two pages of reprobation addressed to me on the supposition that I had made an incorrect statement which had been corrected by the Artist. You now have had my assurance that there never was any difference of opinion between the artist and me. I understand that Mr. Longstaff has written to you to the same effect. The whole incident is due to the ignorance of a critic, who did not know the difference between inspiration and actual obsession. But since your lecture to me was clearly given on false information I should have thought an apology was due—though I am really indifferent as to whether it is given.

A. CONAN DOYLE.

[We have received the letter referred to by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and our comments on it will be found in the "Sugar Plum" column. We now await Mr. Longstaff's explanation of what is, to us, a very ambiguous letter. Until that information comes to hand we are not conscious of having done Sir Arthur an even unintentional injustice. We would only add here, that nothing was farther from our thoughts than to charge Sir Arthur with a deliberate act of deception. It was made quite clear in our article that we believed Sir Arthur was acting under the overpowering belief in the activity of spirit agency. The essence of the position lies in the statement that the picture was painted under psychic influence, and the artist's statement to the *Daily Express*, that Sir Arthur himself suggested the picture, and there was no greater and other psychic influence there than in any of his other paintings.—EDITOR.]

SPIRITUALISTS AND THEIR DUPES.

SIR,—There should be no reason for being surprised at the fact that Spiritualists shirk joining issue with Freethinkers like Chapman Cohen on a public platform on the subject of "Spiritualism"—a savage cult with a veneer of Western culture to make it acceptable to, and perpetuate it among the credulous and gullible of the civilized races. The reason for their reluctance to face clear-cut issues is that they prefer working in darkness, which creates a ghost-like atmosphere and renders illusion easier. If spirits can materialize in the dark, why not in day-light? It is passing strange that if spirits are seen by some with psychic powers, so-called, in the daytime, that mediums can only summon them up in a dark and gloomy environment, and under circumstances which favour illusion and trickery. Spiritualists—children of the night—give the show away, or have the spirits of the departed become "dark-horses?" Everything savours of suspicion.

Some spiritualists are candid enough to concede that ninety, and even ninety-nine per cent of psychic phenomena are based on fraud; but there remains one per cent which baffles human understanding. This seems to be their justification of the belief in discarnate intelligences. In like manner, I may argue that because a prestidigitator performs ten tricks, nine of which I grasp, but by the tenth one I am nonplussed, therefore, the latter one is of spirit or supernatural source. Moreover, if a witness makes ten statements, nine of which are perjured, it will not induce the Court to accept the tenth one as true.

Most Spiritualists and Athanatists hold that the idea of immortality is innate in man, which is a flat contradiction of what anthropology teaches. If they deem it logical to argue that the idea must be innate for the mere reason that the majority of mankind believe in spirits and some sort of existence hereafter, then they may with equal cogency argue that the idea of the sun as a flat fiery disc, is also innate in man. If for argument's sake the latter idea was innate in man and is still innate in many of the lower races, then the fact that it was or is still so does not prove its truth, for later knowledge proved the opposite. The belief of the majority does not necessarily establish the truth of a doctrine or an idea. If Spiritualists and others argue, as many of them do, that there is a desire for an after-life

because the idea of immortality is inborn in us, then I can argue with as much plausibility that with sincere desirers for an existence hereafter, the idea of total annihilation at death is innate in them, hence their cherishing a desire for immortality. Why should there be such an irresistible desire for, and hankering after a thing which we are cocksure we will get? If we know we will not obtain a desired thing, the craving and longing for it is natural and comprehensible.

The fact of the matter is that there is no desire for a life after this one, and that we really wish for a prolonged life in happiness and health on this terrestrial sphere of ours. That if there were no dreams, reflections and echoes, there would be no spirits and Spiritualists; and if there were no Spiritualists, there would not be that farrago of drivelling nonsense that pours forth from them and their organs. Science is rapidly discarding the "soul-idea" and before long the only relic of Spiritualism will be its literature which will be preserved by future generations as a memorial of one of the greatest and most devastating superstitions that have blighted the progress of humanity. D. MATTHEWS.

Haenertsburg, Transvaal.

Obituary.

MISS WINIFRED TODD.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Miss Winifred Todd, daughter of Mr. F. Todd, of Fulham. Miss Todd was only sixteen years old. She had made brilliant progress at her scholastic work, winning a scholarship at the age of eleven, while her personal character won for her love and friendship from all who came in contact with her. Her early death, after a long illness borne with cheerful fortitude, is a most severe blow to those who had hoped to see the promise of her youth fulfilled. To Mr. Todd and her relatives we extend our sincere sympathy.

Miss Todd was buried on Friday, September 29, at Fulham Cemetery, East Sheen, a Secular Service being conducted by the General Secretary of the N.S.S.

MR. FOSTER (Belfast).

BELFAST Freethinkers have lost a staunch colleague in the person of Mr. Foster, who died on September 21. He remained true to his principles to the end, and it was at his special request that a Secular Service was held at the graveside. In a place so hag-ridden with religion as Belfast, this created some attention, and his Christian friends who attended the funeral did not allow their religion to interfere with pointed comments on the ceremony. Perhaps one ought to say that the comments were the outcome of their religion. Mr. Foster was held in the very highest esteem by those who knew him. He set the world an example of loyalty to principle, and the lesson of a life of that kind is never without influence on others. The world is the poorer by his passing. V.K.

National Secular Society.

EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 30, 1928.

The President, Mr. Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough, Messrs. Clifton, Easterbrook, Gorniot, Hornibrook, Moss, Quinton, Rosetti, Silvester, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

New members were received from the Parent Society, and the Chester-le-Street, Liverpool, and South London Branches.

The Monthly Financial Statement was presented and adopted.

Correspondence was received from the Trustees of the Martland Estate; the Birmingham, Chester-le-Street, Fulham and Chelsea, Liverpool, and Manchester Branches; and from members of the Parent Society.

The Executive discussed methods of extending the Society's propaganda. Grants for this purpose were

made, and a number of further suggestions were allowed to lie on the table pending further information.

The Executive considered and approved proof copies of the Society's new membership card.

The Executive decided to arrange for a Social to be held on November 19, at Messrs. Slater's Restaurant, in Basinghall Street, adjacent to the Guildhall.

The Secretary reported the death of Mr. Donald James and Miss Winifred Todd, both of whom were buried with a Secular Service.

The Executive decided to consider the question of reprinting a number of the N.S.S. leaflets, both of those now in stock and those which had been out of print for some time. The Executive decided to meet on Friday, October 26, at 7.30 p.m. The meeting then closed.

FRED MANN,
General Secretary.

Society News.

MR. GEORGE WHITEHEAD AT PLYMOUTH.

FAVOURER with fine weather, Mr. Whitehead addressed eight successful meetings at Plymouth. The opening meeting, held at a none too favourable pitch, was somewhat ragged, and being Saturday evening, most people were too intent upon amusement and shopping, but a crowd was gathered, although not one of a high intellectual level. The Sunday morning meeting on the Quay yielded a good number of acrimonious questions, with far too many interrupted answers. The series of five held on the market ground, opened on the Sunday evening, were satisfactory in practically every way. Large and appreciative audiences collected every evening keenly interested in the subject, as one luckless religionist found when, after shouting for an hour, not a single person had gathered round to listen to his ranting. A zealous Catholic occupied the platform in opposition without conferring much glory upon his cause. A young policeman who objected to Mr. Whitehead's remarks, which he said were calculated to cause a disturbance, ordered the speaker to close the meeting. Mr. Whitehead refused on the grounds that no expression of dissent justified the policeman's objection. The meeting accordingly went on to a successful conclusion without further trouble. The one meeting held at Devonport, in spite of a little rain, attracted a good sized crowd, which at question time became slightly frisky in consequence of the combined efforts of a clergyman and several bluejackets. The Plymouth week altogether provided an interesting conclusion to Mr. Whitehead's provincial tour, and suggests a happy augury for the rather formidable winter programme organized by the local branch.

Mr. Easterbrook attended most of the meetings, and special thanks are due to Messrs. McKenzie and Lynden for their enthusiastic assistance during the whole week's campaign.

MR. CLAYTON'S LANCASHIRE MEETINGS.

IN spite of colder evenings, Mr. Clayton is still managing to gather good crowds. At Padiham, on Tuesday night, the audience was large and very attentive, with a good number of questions at the close. At Burnley, on Sunday afternoon, an old gentleman who used to follow Bradlaugh years ago presided. Discussion followed the lecture, and many questions were put to the speaker. Accrington has provided the largest audience of the week. The courtesy of Accrington audiences is very marked, and addressing meetings there is a pleasure.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8) : 11.15, Mr. Geo. F. Holland—"The Greatness of Little Things."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.) : 7.30, Mr. A. P. de Zoysa, B.A., Ph.D. (Lon.)—"Is Buddhism a Suitable Religion for England?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station) : 7.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"The Innocence of Mr. Hand."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.) : Free Sunday Lectures. 7.0, R. Dimsdale Stocker—"The Problem of the Guilty Soul."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2) : 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"Why Englishmen are not Revolutionists."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (234 Euston Road, opposite Euston Square Station) : 7.30, Miss Ettie Rout—"Birth Control."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Our indoor meetings will commence on Sunday, October 14, at 7 p.m., at the "Eclipse," Hill Street, Hanover Square, W.1.

OUTDOOR.

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

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's meetings : (The Jetty, outside Walham Green Church) : Monday, October 8 to Sunday, October 14 inclusive, at 7.30.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common) : 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture.

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

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BELFAST (I.L.P. Hall, 48 York Street) : 3.0, Mr. J. H. Hewitt—"Freethought and the Poets."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Council School) : 7.0, Mr. Fred Mann—"Religion, Life, and Death."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Hetton) : 3.0. (Co-operative Hall, Chester-le-Street) : 7.30, Miss Stella Browne, of Chelsea—"Birth Control and Rationalist Ethics."

FAIRSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole Lane) : Mr. George Whitehead, 2.45 p.m., Subject: "Pioneers of Truth"; 6.30 p.m., Subject: "The New Psychology." Musical items by School Choir and Fairsworth Orchestral Society. Collection in aid of School Funds. Teas provided for visitors.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street) : 6.30, Opening Lecture by Mr. Hale. Subject: "The Value of Science."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street) : 7.45, Dr. C. Carmichael—"Methods of Controversy." Admission free. Collection.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street) : 3.0 and 7.0 p.m., Mr. Chapman Cohen (President, N.S.S.) Subjects: "A Challenge to the Pulpit," and "What are We Fighting For?" Admission free. Reserved seats 6d. and 1s.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (4 Swilly Road, Devonport) : Tuesday, October 9, at 8.0. Committee Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

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

NELSON BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. J. Clayton's Meetings : Sunday, October 7, 11.0 a.m.—Nelson I.L.P.; 7 p.m.—Todmorden. Tuesday, October 9, 7.30 p.m.—Padiham. Sunday, October 14, 3.30 p.m.—Accrington.



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WE do not suppose, for a single moment, that you want to save doubt in the sense of keeping it by you. Doubt is a bad crutch and a worse companion, and if we drive it from you we shall make your life the merrier for it. Doubt about whom are the best tailors to patronize is natural and pardonable, but a firm which can save you time, trouble and money must have merits upon which doubt cannot cast a shadow. If you doubt that we can save you time, trouble and money, it can only be because you have not tested our methods and experienced the ease of mind scientific service gives. The obvious thing to do is to try us, and remember

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