

VARIOUS KINDS OF DOPE.

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

Views and Opinions.

Various Kinds of Dope.

I WAS writing last week on the way in which the most widely read newspapers in this country—consciously or unconsciously—serve as so many agencies for "doping" the public. I need not go over again the ground of that statement, the explanation was, I think, sufficiently clear. But I have been reminded that there are other kinds of dope beside that of the stunt press. There is, for instance, the dope of religion, which comes an easy first on the list. Its character is so patent that it is proclaimed by its very defenders and teachers. For example, we find a man like Sir A. J. Thomson setting it forth as a defence of religion that men become religious when they have reached the limits of their emotional and intellectual tether. The resort to religion in such circumstances is not universal, for I know of many who when they have reached the limits of their emotional and intellectual tether seek comfort in beer or whisky. But up to the present I have not heard this last consideration put forward as a conclusive argument against abstinence or in favour of cheap beer. Then there is the statement that when people tend to become impatient under misfortune, and are likely to cause social disturbances or national upheavals, religion keeps them "in order." The belief in a future life is also commended because it comforts people in seasons of loss. There are other forms of the same argument, and they all have the common feature of commending religion on the ground that it is a handy and excellent "dope." It is true that when the Russian Government broadcasted to its people the message "Religion is the Opium of the People," there was universal indignation among believers, but that was because the language in this case was plain and unmistakable. The offence lay, not in

what they said, but in the nasty way in which they said it.

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How the B.B.C. Works.

But there is yet another and popular form of dope in active operation, and that is the B.B.C. I have dwelt many times upon the way in which the B.B.C. stages "faked" discussions. The procedure is simple, and it appears to have met with a fair measure of success. It arranges that a particular subject shall be discussed by two or more people, and there is every appearance of an exchange of independent opinions. Probably few listeners are aware that where the question is of consequence, and the outcome likely to disturb the minds of listeners, care is taken that the speakers shall be quite "safe," and that the views expressed shall be supplementary to each other rather than contradictory; neither are listeners aware that what the speakers will say is known to the B.B.C. before ever the discussion takes place. The discussion is as formal as a stage quarrel, and rather less convincing.

At any rate there is no longer excuse for anyone pleading ignorance of the nature of the faked discussions which Sir John Reith puts before the public. The other day it was announced that a discussion was to take place before the microphone between Lord Eustace Percy and Sir Oswald Mosley. The subject was "Tradition and Progress," and for that subject the speakers were well selected. Sir Oswald is a reformer of a rather scarlet hue, and Lord Eustace is a fine and not very advanced representative of the Stone Age. But at the last moment it was announced that the discussion would not take place, and many wondered why? After all both these gentlemen are members of Parliament, they both help to make laws, and in the last Government Lord Eustace was the Minister for Education. But the discussion was suddenly declared "off." Why? Thanks to the *Evening Standard* of February 11, we are able to answer the question.

* * *

An Apologetic Indictment.

It appears that the chief dope peddler, Sir John Reith, enquired what was it Sir Oliver and Lord Eustace intended saying? He discovered that "the two protagonists were not going to waste time on generalizations, but intended to discuss the actual procedure of the House of Commons." To agree to this being done would have exposed Sir John "to criticism from all parts of the House," and that might have meant trouble when the B.B.C. charter comes up for renewal. So the *Standard* sets out, in all seriousness, what looks like an inspired defence of Sir John Reith's action. Thus:—

Sir John Reith has to maintain his neutrality inviolate with as rigid a watchfulness as that exercised by Belgium before the war. His impartiality

must be absolutely immaculate. He is bound by his position and his charter to play for safety first. It was virile on the part of Lord Eustace and Sir Oswald to refuse to talk sweet nothings, but it was, I suppose, prudent of Sir John Reith when faced with this refusal to "postpone" the discussion.

I have never read an apology that was more of an indictment than is this one, although it is stated with no apparent unconsciousness that it is an indictment. There is the frank confession that the discussions are "faked," that is, that not merely must the subject of discussion be stated, but what the disputants intend saying must also be known beforehand. There appears to be less latitude with the B.B.C. than there is with a Church. If Sir Oswald and Lord Eustace had agreed to stage the debate, to talk "sweet nothings," and leave the subject where they found it, while persuading their hearers that they had been listening to a frank exchange of opinions, Sir John with his "immaculate impartiality" would have been content, and he would have said that he had given all sides a hearing. But the two disputants properly declined to lend themselves to so gross an imposture, and we congratulate them on their decision. It is to be hoped that other public men will be induced to follow their example. It is degrading enough for a speaker to have to submit a MSS. of his speech to the censorship of the B.B.C. before he is permitted to read it, but it is infinitely worse to do this in the case of what is alleged to be a public discussion. The striking thing is that Sir John's apologist cites this as an example of his method of keeping his "neutrality inviolate!" So does the Vatican maintain its neutrality; so does every parson maintain neutrality in the pulpit. They all maintain neutrality by seeing that only one side is heard. Some time ago the *Christian World* referred to Sir John Reith as a true son of the Manse. No one who has noted the policy of the B.B.C. will dispute the accuracy of the description.

* * *

Doping the Public.

Last week I said that the "stunt press" was a gigantic doping machine because, having a huge public largely dependent upon it for its news of the world, and for its opinions—or prejudices—it was fobbed off with a mass of stuff of no consequence to anybody save to the newspaper proprietors. So far as the B.B.C. sets itself up as an educational agency it comes within precisely the same category. It stages what it calls discussions. I have listened to many of them, and have seldom heard anything that would ruffle the serenity of a mid-Victorian maiden aunt. The two disputants spend from thirty to forty-five minutes in front of the microphone in harmless chatter that leaves the subject where they found it. The listeners are not aware that all has been arranged, and that all "objectionable" matter has been cut out. If the B.B.C. barred all discussions it would not be dope. The exclusion would be avowed and obvious, and little harm would be done. But to pretend to give both sides of a question while actually censoring both parties, is sheer dope.

Look at the position with regard to religion! The B.B.C., a nationally established monopoly, avows it to be its aim to prevent the decay of Christianity. When objection is raised by a Roman Catholic Bishop that it permits un-Christian views to be broadcast, it defends itself by saying that care has been taken to prevent any anti-Christian using its machinery. It takes up a very liberal part of the time of its licence-holders with religious services, prayers, and Bible readings, for which only a small minority express approval, and on Sunday compels the majority of its subscribers to seek Continental stations because it has

made itself the champion of sheer Sabbatarianism. Its Sunday programmes are, as a matter of fact, the subject of derisive comment by most of the leading papers in the country. Speech after speech, sermon after sermon, is delivered through the B.B.C. Yet it obstinately declines to permit any genuine criticism of the Christian religion. That is the "immaculate impartiality," the "inviolable neutrality" of this son of the Manse.

* * *

Protests Needed.

I think that the more intelligent section of the public owe both Sir Oswald Mosley and Lord Eustace Percy their thanks for having so clearly exhibited the policy of Sir John Reith and the B.B.C. It was a direct insult to two prominent politicians to ask them to take part in a faked discussion, and it is to be hoped that all others who are invited to go through similar performances will adopt the same attitude. And, again, I would suggest that sheer self-respect ought to lead public men to refuse to submit even their speeches for censorship and revision. If a man is sufficiently representative to be asked to speak, it should be left to him as to what he is to say and how he is to say it. In any case the public will not be the worse for having some of their pet superstitions trampled on now and again. It is an insult to ask men voluntarily to submit to the censorship of a committee set up by such a body as the B.B.C.

If the B.B.C. restricted itself to entertaining, one would have little to say. But it sets itself up as an educator, as a purveyor of world news in such a way that it will leave behind it a better informed public. But education can only be achieved by inducing people to think on a basis of reliable information. The B.B.C. does not give this. It selects only what it thinks is good for its listeners to know. It carefully excludes anything that is in conflict with certain views, while giving the impression that it is supplying a reliable statement of the facts. That is why I say that in this aspect of its work the B.B.C. is a gigantic monopoly for the administration of dope. The *Standard* suggests that Sir John Reith must act as he does in order to secure the renewal of his charter. Well, it should be for those who do not believe in this kind of monopoly and sectarian doping, to see that the protest against the policy of the B.B.C. is persistent enough and loud enough to make this son of the Manse realize that there is in existence a genuinely advanced opinion with which he must reckon.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Strongest.

He who can quiet bide
When storms around him rage,
In him shall kings confide,
For they shall hold him sage.

Who can refrain to act
When passion sways the crowd,
Of prudence is compact;
Of him shall kings be proud.

A leader, men shall hail,
Who in himself shall find
The strength that cannot fail—
An ever tranquil mind.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The Dignity of Death.

"To bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm;
That is the top of sovereignty."—*Keats*.

"Death and his brother, Sleep."—*Shelley*.

SHAKESPEARE, the supreme genius of the world's literature, has told us that "our little life is rounded with a sleep." This materialistic similitude of death to sleep is a thought which has possessed a peculiar fascination for great writers, ancient and modern, but more particularly for Shakespeare, whom it always prompts to utterances of unusual sublimity. With this lofty thought is often mingled a touch of simple pathos that strikes home to every heart, as, for example, in the saying, "Tired we sleep, and life's poor play is o'er."

Sleep! All that the human fancy can conceive of delightful and refreshing things are compressed in that gentle word. Poets in all ages and in all countries have sung its praises, but of all tributes uttered on this subject, the most striking, probably, is that which Cervantes puts in the mouth of stout and witty Saúcho Panza:—

Sleep! It covers a man all over, thoughts and all like a cloak. It is meat for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, heat for the cold, and cold for the hot."

Priests, unlike the poets, have ever sought to take advantage from the fact that man is mortal. They have taught their followers that death is the most dreadful evil. All the terrors that theology could gather from savage nations were added to increase the horrors, and they invariably tried to paralyse reason with the clutch of fear.

The advent of the Christian religion deepened this terror. Never has death been the cause of such craven timidity as in the Christian world. To visionaries like Catharine of Siena, or Emanuel Swedenborg, it may have been different, but to the uncultured masses death has been, and is, the King of Terrors, from whose approach they cower in an agony which Epictetus and Socrates would have scorned with lifted eyebrows. Notice how the grand old Pagans look death in the face without flinching. Epictetus says proudly:—

Why should we fear death? For where death is, there are we not; and where we are, there death is not.

No less emphatic is Marcus Aurelius, who bids us regard death as a friend:—

What is it to die? If we view it by itself, and stripped of those imaginary terrors in which our fears have dressed it, we shall find it to be nothing more than the mere work of Nature, but it is childish folly to be afraid of what is natural. Nay, it is not only the work of Nature, but is conducive to the good of the universe, which subsists by change.

These great Pagans of the Classical Period invested death with dignity, but Christians fear death as children fear the dark. In Francis Bacon's famous essay on death it is remarkable that all the instances he gives of its being borne with equanimity are taken from Pagans. For the Christian Religion added fresh terrors to death in the thought of being cut off in sin. Even in the present day the Church of England, the Government form of faith, has a prayer against sudden death, which the old-world Pagans regarded as best.

The clergy have found it exceedingly profitable to invest death with horrors. "Prepare for death, flee from the wrath to come," have been their cries. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," shout the evangelists, with throats of leather and lungs of brass. By such appeals to fear and im-

agination the clergy have made a terror of what should be accepted with serenity. The clergy knew their sorry trade. Old Doctor Samuel Johnson was not a fool, but he was tormented by the fear of death. The gentle William Cowper was driven mad by the horrors of religion. Spurgeon, the most popular preacher of the nineteenth century, preached and wrote for forty years that the vast majority of the human race was destined to everlasting torture in full view of their three-headed deity. To-day, the Romish Church, the most powerful of all the Churches of Christendom, has not abated one solitary spark of this fiery damnation, and the Salvation Army actually works the same threat into its trade-mark—"Blood and Fire"—and the tambourines of its devotees are full of money.

Yet to the Freethinker, dissolution has no terrors beyond the sundering of friendship, or of love. This feeling has been finely expressed by William Cory, the singer of "Ionica":—

"They told me Heraclitus, they told me you were dead;
They brought me bitter news to hear, and bitter tears to shed;
I wept as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky."

That old-world Freethinker, Lucretius, insists that death is dreamless rest. Indeed, Freethought everywhere destroys the terrors of death. Shelley, in the lovely opening lines of his *Atheistic Queen Mab* hails death and sleep as brethren. Walt Whitman, "the tan-faced poet of the West, chants many a hymn of welcome to death. Our own Swinburne sings beautifully:—

"Content thee, howsoever whose days are done:
There lies not any troublous thing before
Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore."

"That unsubdurable old Roman," Walter Savage Landor, in extreme age wrote:—

"Death stands above me whispering low,
I know not what into my ear;
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear."

George Meredith asks with a fine touch of stoicism:—

"Into the breast that gives the rose
Shall I with shuddering fall?"

Death to Sully Prudhomme was the liberator as well as the great consoler. He wished to "drift on through slumber to a dream, and through a dream to death."

Truly, the poets have left the priests and their many superstitions far behind. Beyond the fabled hills, the tiresome purgatories, and the tawdry paradises, the resplendent words of the great singers sound over the world. For thousands of years priests have chanted the old, sad, disheartening refrain of death as the enemy, but the Freethinker listens to far other and better strains. Paying no heed to "the lie at the lips of the priest," he dies without fear:—

"Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

MIMNERMUS.

Virtue is bold and goodness never fearful.

Shakespeare.

Consider, man, weigh well thy frame; the King, the beggar are the same; dust formed us all.—*John Gay*.

It is untrue that equality is a law of nature. Nature has no equality; its sovereign law is subordination and dependence.—*Vauvenargues*.

A Brilliant Light of Science.

THE illustrious Florentine astronomer and experimental philosopher Galileo Galilei ranks with the foremost men of science. A scion of an aristocratic but impoverished family, his father was an excellent mathematician and musician. Indeed, the elder Galilei played an important part in the genesis of operatic music. His *Ugolino*, designed as a dramatic scena, superseded the chorus, and provided scope for a single voice with musical accompaniment. This creation established monody and made possible the subsequent evolution of opera.

Vincenzo Galilei's distinguished son was born at Pisa in 1564. A born thinker, he early manifested mathematical tastes, and while still youthful was appointed to a professorship first at Pisa, and later at Padua. For nearly twenty years he laboured with shining success at Padua, until at last, so appreciated were his addresses that the most spacious hall in the university failed to seat his audiences.

No cramped specialist, Galileo was a man of striking versatility. A capable musician, and no mean painter, with a remarkable aptitude for mechanical invention he appeared destined to adorn several departments of cultured life. But the fates decided to make him a star of the first magnitude in the realms of physical science. According to tradition, while still at Pisa, in 1583, when seated in meditative mood in the cathedral, he was deeply impressed by the circumstance that the oscillation of a bronze lamp suspended from the ceiling, however unequal their range, appeared to be executed in equal times. The accuracy of this inference he promptly proceeded to verify. He compared the beating of his pulse with the swing of the pendulum, and with prophetic insight divined that this equality of oscillation in the swing of the pendulum could be utilized as an efficient instrument for the measurement of time. And some years later, Galileo constructed a useful astronomical clock.

Still more successful were his astronomical achievements. He had heard that magnifying glasses were in use in Northern Europe, and he now constructed a telescope. With this simple instrument he swept the starry skies, and his astronomical discoveries startled and astonished the world. Whatever the moon's phases, as seen by the naked eye, the lunar orb was now revealed as a constantly globular body, and not subject to the changes commonly supposed. The planet Jupiter was shown attended by its moons, and the phases of the inner planets Venus and Mercury were plainly disclosed.

Those so long misled by the cosmic scheme of Ptolemy who were unwilling and afraid to abandon time-consecrated dogmas, quite naturally resented these new discoveries. Some, it is recorded looked at the heavens through Galileo's telescope, then shook their heads, and consulted Aristotle, so that they might reassure themselves. Others refused even to glance through this Devil's instrument. And when one of these prejudiced philosophers died shortly afterwards, Galileo is reported to have said that possibly he saw the newly-revealed celestial objects on his way to heaven.

In the words of Fahie, in his fine study of Galileo's life and work: "The educated world of Italy was then divided into two hostile camps—that of Aristotle and Ptolemy on the one side; and that of Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler on the other. In the first were to be found blind worship of authority, and unquestioning adherence to ancient doctrine; in the second freedom of thought, research, recognition of demonstrated truths—in a word—progress. As was

to be expected, the first-named party was the most numerous and noisy, and it was reinforced by all those who opposed the innovators from interested motives. Foremost among these were the Jesuits. They claimed for themselves the monopoly of instruction, and the first rank in the learned world, and were jealous of all intruders."

Nevertheless, Galileo's immense fame secured him the brilliant post of Astronomer Royal to the Medicean ruler of Florence. Previously, Galileo had served as a scientist under the powerful Venetian Republic, but now, in entering Florence, he brought himself within the jurisdiction of the bigoted and obscurantist Roman Church. A fiery and uncompromising controversialist, inspired with a steady devotion to truth, Galileo was soon beset by angry, envious, and malicious foes. The priests who burnt Bruno and the scandalized adherents of the orthodox philosophy united to humiliate and suppress this upstart iconoclast.

As all the world is aware, Galileo's antagonists enjoyed a transient triumph. Charged with the authorship of a Dialogue in which the Copernican astronomy was vindicated and its assailants scorned, he was arraigned before the Holy Inquisition. With Bruno's martyrdom within his remembrance, Galileo suffered mental, and probably physical torture. He was driven to publicly recant his damnable doctrines, and constrained to dwell in strict seclusion till death released him from his miseries in 1642. Many painstaking investigations have been undertaken by scholars to determine the extent of the persecuting activities of the eternal enemies of enlightenment in this crime against science and culture. But it seems probable that the truth will never be made known, for it is justly suspected that the documents relating to the trial have been deliberately tampered with. Still, as a dark stain on the character and conduct of the Roman Church, it will ever remain. Epoch-making were the astronomical discoveries of Galileo. Yet, they yield pride of place to the principles he established in the realms of natural philosophy as a whole. In terms of the then ascendant Aristotelian cosmology, the shapes assumed by natural bodies denoted their several stages of development. The most perfect forms represented Nature's masterpieces. The rough and irregular earth is eclipsed in regular outline by the heavenly bodies, while the Divine itself dwells in a sphere of pure form extending beyond the spaces of the starry spheres.

But the revelations of Galileo's telescope dispelled these fancies as an idle dream. Irregularities were plainly evident in the dark spots of the sun, the motions of Jupiter's satellites, and other phenomena. Moreover, the ordered swing of the pendulum, and the fall of bodies towards the earth's centre implied an immutable law of causality previously foreign to the human mind. Galileo's multifarious experiments proclaimed the reign of law in every department of physics investigated. His combination of physical inquiry with mathematical calculation evolved a new system of science based on observation and experiment conducted on strictly Baconian lines. As Nordenskiöld states in his *History of Biology*: "Galileo brings the phenomena of motion on the earth under one common law, which operates out of mathematical necessity, and whose manifestations can under given conditions be calculated in advance . . . Galileo was, it is true, unable to find one common law governing the motions of terrestrial objects and the heavenly bodies—that was for Newton to find in the law of gravitation—but Galileo laid down the principle governing the natural scientific treatment of terrestrial phenomena, a principle which he expressed in the words: 'To measure what can be measured,

and to make measurable what cannot be measured.' He seeks a mechanical cause for everything that happens—a force which sets things in motion. To refer to God as the cause of natural phenomena serves no purpose . . . for one can attribute anything whatever to the will of God, since no necessity underlies it." Galileo rightly claims that material entities must be compared with one another, and not with mystical suppositions. Even if Nature herself be a miracle, her manifestations possess a mechanical meaning. The ultimate reality ever eludes us. Science teaches us *how* the energies of Nature operate.

These revolutionary concepts proved in advance of the age. But germinal ideas once enunciated seem certain of ultimate success. For the moment, the authority of the Church, coupled with the almost superstitious veneration with which most of the scholars of the Renaissance regarded the lore of olden times served to postpone the triumph of truth. Aristotle's system remained orthodox for another century. But a little later, the penetrating thoughts of Descartes, Spinoza and others undermined scholastic error, and a clearer path was prepared for the mental emancipation of mankind.

T. F. PALMER.

"Why I Am An Atheist."

Address delivered November 30, 1930, by invitation of the Reverend Christian F. Reisner, minister of the Broadway Temple 175th Street and Broadway, New York City. This was the first of a series of weekly addresses to be delivered at this Church. The others were:—

Mr. Samuel Untermyer—"Why I Am a Jew."

Mr. Martin Conboy—"Why I Am a Catholic."

New Suffragan Bishop of New York—"Why I Am a Protestant."

I WANT to thank Dr. Reisner this evening for the kind privilege he has accorded me to speak to you to-night. I am fully cognizant of the fact that he is a Methodist Minister, and that I represent a point of view diametrically opposed to his. It is to his credit, and he is to be congratulated for his liberality in permitting me to speak from his pulpit, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to leave here to-night with the acknowledgment that I had made an Atheist out of your pastor.

But in order to be fair to you and honest to myself it is necessary that I speak the truth as I see it.

Certainly, you do not expect me to speak to-night as if I was an orthodox Jew, a Protestant Fundamentalist or as a Roman Catholic. And unless I speak my honest thoughts and express my honest convictions, I would be as hypocritical as if I were to say that I was a Holly Roller or a Holy Jumper.

I do not think that you expect anything but the truth from me. I feel sure that you have come to listen to me expound the reasons "Why I am an Atheist," and all I ask of you is that you give me a respectful hearing. If you do that, I cannot ask more, and I will be grateful to you.

Even though I am a militant Atheist I respect the opinions of others, regardless of how much opposed to them I may be. I subscribe to the axiom of Voltaire. "I do not agree with a word you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it."

And if I say anything from this platform to-night that might shock the sensibilities, or opinions or convictions of those in this audience, I ask that you do not take it as a personal affront. I would not deliberately hurt the feelings of a single human being, but I believe that the cause of truth deserves that it be outspoken and unafraid.

Do not expect me to say that I believe in a God, a devil or hell; or that the Bible is a divine revelation; or that Christ was born of a virgin; or in the immaculate conception, the crucifixion and the resurrection. For these are the very things that I do not believe.

And if there are some in this audience, who, for the first time, are looking upon an Atheist, let me say to them that I have no horns in the back of my head; that I have never been arrested for beating my child, or for deserting my wife, and I even pay my income tax.

I was never trained to espouse the cause of Atheism. I came to accept Atheism as the result of independent thought and self study. And although as a child I was instructed in the religion of my parents, I never came under the spell of religious training long enough to so warp my mentality as not to be able to see any other viewpoint. I came to my conclusions after a full analysis and an impartial consideration of the various religious creeds, and the different systems of philosophy.

In my study of the different fields of thought, I found no philosophy that contained so many truths, that inspired one with so much courage, as Atheism. Atheism equips us to face life, with its multitude of trials and tribulations better than any other code of living that I have yet been able to find. It is grounded in the very roots of life itself. Its foundation is based upon nature, without superfluities and false garments. It stands unadorned, requiring nothing but its own nudity to give it strength and charm and beauty.

No sham or shambles are attached to it. Atheism rises above creeds and puts humanity upon one plane. There can be no "chosen people" in the Atheist philosophy. There are no bended knees in Atheism; no supplication, no prayers; no sacrificial redemptions and no divine revelations; no washing in the blood of the lamb; no crusades, no massacres, no holy wars; no silly rewards, and no vindictive punishments; no heaven, no hell, no purgatory; no Christs and no Saviours; no devils, no ghosts, no Gods. Atheism breaks down the barriers of nationalities, and like "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

Systems of religion makes people clannish and bigoted. Christian loves Christian. Jew loves Jew. The religious man loves his God. He loves his God so vehemently that he has no love left for his fellow-man. He is concerned with saving his soul. Religion is responsible for crusades, inquisitions and massacres. It murdered Hypatias, imprisoned Galileos and burnt Brunos. In the name of God and for the love of God, hell in all its fury has been let loose upon the earth.

The motto of the Atheist is to forgive and forget, and to strive to prevent the crime of intolerance from ever again staining the earth with the innocent blood of the martyrs of truth. Let me control the public school children of New York for one generation and I will perform an educational miracle. I will not subtract one single item from the education that they receive, but I will eradicate racial and religious prejudice and hatred from their hearts. I am an Atheist because Atheism is a vigorous and a courageous philosophy. It is not afraid to face the problems of life. It does not claim that it has solved all the questions of the universe, but it does claim that it has discovered the approach and learned the method of solving them. It has dedicated itself to a passionate quest for the truth. *It believes that truth for truth's sake is the highest ideal. And that virtue is its own reward.* It believes with Ingersoll when he said: "Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith. Banish me from Eden when you will, but first let me eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge." If Atheism writes upon the

blackboard of the Universe a question mark, it writes it for the purpose of stating that there is a question yet to be answered.

Is it not better to place a question mark upon a problem while seeking an answer than to put the label "God" there and consider the matter solved? Does not the word "God" only confuse and make more difficult the solution by assuming a conclusion that is utterly groundless and palpably absurd?

"God," said Spinoza, "is the Asylum of Ignorance." No better description has ever been uttered. Shelley said that God was a hypothesis, and, as such, required proof. Can any minister of any denomination of any religion supply that proof? Facts and not opinions are what we want. Emotionalism is not a substitute for the truth. I am an Atheist because Atheism is a self-reliant philosophy. It makes a man intellectually free. He is thrilled to enthusiasm by his mental emancipation, and he faces the universe without fear of Ghosts or Gods. It teaches man that unless he devotes his energies and applies himself wholeheartedly to the task he wishes to achieve, the accomplishment will not be made. It warns him that any reliance upon prayers or "divine" help will prove a bitter disappointment. His prayers will only prove "echoes of his wailing cry."

I believe that praying to God is humiliating, and worshipping God degrading. I believe that love of humanity is a higher ideal than a love of God. We cannot help God, but we can help mankind. I am an Atheist because I believe that "hands that help are holier than lips that pray." I haven't the slightest compunction to standing on this pulpit and deny the existence of God. Neither do I feel the slightest fear in asking God if he exists, as proof and as a demonstration of his power, to strike me dead. It will not happen because a God does not exist. The existence of a God is a scientific impossibility.

To the philosophy of Atheism belongs the credit of robbing Death of its horror and its terror. Death is no longer the enigma of life: Living is its problem. The sting of death has been removed. We know death's destiny, and no longer fear its consequences. The only suffering attached to death now is the injustice of its time of coming, the reluctance of parting with loved ones and the loss of the opportunity to attain.

I am an Atheist because I hate the idea of hell. I look upon the doctrine of eternal punishment as the most pernicious and the most outrageous that was ever concocted in the perverted brain of man. Imagine a God punishing for ever defenceless human beings for the innocent mistakes of life. A God who would punish innocent children unto the third and fourth generation is detestable beyond words.

I do not know whether there are any in this audience who believe in hell or not, but I do know that there are a number of ministers in this city who do. Only last Sunday morning, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Reverend J. M. J. Quinn said that "One cannot hold the doctrines of Christianity without believing in hell and everlasting punishment for wrong doing." So there might be no mistake about what he meant, I quote further from his sermon as published in the *New York Times* of November 24, 1930.

"At the close of the ecclesiastical year, the Church desires to impress upon us, the fact that there is a hell. Those who say that this business of the fear of the Lord is not the Lord's way of requesting service and love because God would never coerce love, have not apparently read God's own words. If God were asked by a soul up for judgment if there is a hell, he might answer, 'What do you think I died on the cross for? Wasn't it because I loved you and wanted to save you from hell's fires and eternal punishment?'

You wouldn't fear a just judge, if you were innocent." "Christ said that it would be better to go to heaven with but one eye than to go to hell with both eyes. God said, 'Depart from me ye sinners into everlasting hell.'" "Do not question God's goodness, but be good yourself. We cannot understand His mysterious ways. We have finite minds and His is infinite. It is a salutary thing to believe in hell and fear Almighty God; it is the beginning of Wisdom."

I believe that a church that preaches such a doctrine is an institution of evil. And as long as I have strength in my body I shall fight that damnable doctrine.

Since we must die let us die in perfect calmness and in perfect peace. Let us become firmly convinced that, once we are dead, no thought, no act, can possibly harm us. We are beyond the pale of nature's pangs. We are at rest, and forever.

I am an Atheist because I am opposed to the institution of the church. The church may be successful in convincing a person that the more he suffers here the less he will suffer hereafter, but we are concerned with putting food into his stomach, clothes on his back, and shelter over his head now.

JOSEPH LEWIS.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

The newly-born twin children of Mrs. Wise—the woman charged with the murder of her child—are to be brought up outside the prison, and free from the prison taint. That is as it should be, but we would remind our Christian Home Secretary that this is going dead against the example set by God Almighty. For he said, in the book on which the greatness of the British Empire is built, I will visit "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." It is not for Mr. Clynes to set himself upon a higher or different level than that of his heavenly father. And it is obvious that "father" in this commandment includes the mother. Mr. Clynes is acting just as though he were an Atheist. Some one in Parliament ought to put a question on the subject.

We have several times called attention to the confusion of mind of Mr. Clynes whenever a question of law is involved. The confusion ought to be avoided, as he has particularly well paid law officers at his service. In reply to a question in the House on February 12, as to whether he had come to any decision concerning Sunday entertainments, he replied that "It took a very long time to lead up to the decision which has created the present position, and some time will be required to enable the Government to come to a decision." The first part of the reply is quite wrong. It took no time whatever to make Sunday entertainments to which admission was by money, to be declared illegal. The case was a short one, and it was decided the moment the case was brought into court. It was as simple and as clear as a legal declaration that slander or forgery is illegal. The issue was decided by the passing of the 1781 Act. Of course, the Government may take up some time in making up its mind, but that will be because it wants to make quite certain of the strength of the Sabbatarian vote.

But when it is settled, it is to be hoped that it will not be settled on the basis that Sunday entertainments are legal, provided the profits are to go to some charity, leaving the charity selected to the judgment of a local council. It is an altogether vicious principle to introduce into law the idea that a thing may be legal provided that the profits are given away. There is no greater reason for compelling a Cinema proprietor to give away his profits than there is for compelling a milkman to give away his. And to leave the selection to some little local council makes the matter worse. Sunday entertainments

should be either legal or illegal, and when that is decided, they should fall under the same regulations as entertainments on other days of the week.

While we are on this subject, we may note another instance of gross mis-statement of law—this time in the case of the Attorney General, Sir William Jowitt. Speaking in the House of Commons on February 12, and dealing with the question of when a strike became illegal, he said that it all depended on the purpose of the strike. He said:—

Supposing there was a strike to abolish the House of Lords, that might be illegal *because the end was illegal*. The italics are ours, and the words underlined are absolute nonsense. It is on all fours with the celebrated declaration of Chief Justice Hall, that as Christianity was part of the law of England, therefore it was illegal to criticize Christianity. No one ever understood in what sense Christianity was part of the law of England, and even if it were it was manifestly absurd to say that one may not criticize any part or the whole of English law. Yet this strangely absurd reading of the law was gravely cited by lawyers and judges until the resistance of fighting Freethinkers swept it away.

Sir William Jowitt's dictum is one of the same kind. A strike to abolish the House of Lords might be illegal because the end was illegal! Nonsense! There is nothing whatever illegal in a movement to abolish the House of Lords, or to abolish the monarchy, or even an agitation to abolish Parliament itself, and to carry on the government of the country by some other method. That is, indeed, one of the reasons why a revolution by force may be ruled out as unnecessary in this country. There is existing in this country the machinery for the peaceful and legal carrying out of the most dramatic revolution. Sir William Jowitt is as wrong here as he was when he misdirected the Committee of the House of Commons on the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. On some things our Attorney General needs watching.

Many men, declares a writer, say "I think" this or that, when they have never thought about the thing at all, if they had, their expressed opinion would often be very different. That is true. "I think there is a God," or "I think the Christian religion is true"—many a man will say that, without having taken the trouble to examine the case against his propositions, to weigh up "pros and cons," and thus to earn real opinions. But, of course, where religion is concerned, every effort is made to keep the case against religion out of sight. Only the efforts of a comparatively few earnest men enable it to secure some publicity. What the professional religionists profit by is the large number of people who say "I think" when they haven't been doing any real thinking.

When a youth was charged at Wakefield with having loitered with intent to commit a felony, it was said of him by a prison medical officer, that he would spend all his time sitting in a corner reading the Bible. The medical officer said the youth told him he suffered from head noises, which became voices ordering him to kneel and pray. He described the youth as "a danger to himself and others," and said he would be prepared to certify him insane. The charge was withdrawn, and we have no doubt that the youth is undergoing suitable mental treatment for his condition. But we venture to predict that if such practical treatment were given to all the cases of dangerous religious mania there would be a terrible shortage of asylums. The Wakefield youth was said to be "certifiable" because of his religious kinks, but we know eminent people who do more idiotic things than read the Bible and kneel to pray—and they get away with it!

The modern dress of women is too seductive, thinks the Rev. Hugh Chapman, Chaplain of the Savoy. He wants them to cover up their bare arms and necks because, in his opinion, such things incite impure thought in men. Judging by the way the parsons keep harping on this one thing, we are inclined to suggest that they are rather more susceptible than ordinary men. What

is curious is that they are always warning men against being upset by womanly charms. They never say anything about the possibility of women being incited to impure thought by the sight of men's bare necks, arms and knees. Women nowadays can see men in abbreviated costumes wherever athletic games are played. Why doesn't some bold parson lift up his voice in protest, and demand that the men should be "decently" clothed, lest women's morals be undermined? At present, the sex philosophy of our "moral uplifters" seems a trifle one-sided.

Mr. Desmond MacCarthy says in the *Listener*, that: "the chief, if not the only, use of criticism is to make us see things to which we might otherwise be blind." Perhaps this explains why the B.B.C. objects to broadcasting criticism of the Christian religion. It does seem curious that criticism is valuable in relation to every other subject except religion.

If the Kaiser could have played plenty of bowls and golf, says the Rev. Frank Jennings, he would probably not have thought himself the ally of the Almighty. Well, we are all wise after things have happened. And if the Almighty had really resented the Kaiser claiming to be his ally, he would have presented the Kaiser with a bag of marbles and kept him out of mischief.

Speaking of the English, Sir Norman Angell says that: "Too often we have a feeling that if our hearts are stout, it does not matter how thick are our heads." Perhaps in this connexion the Churches might be helpful. They often provide a "national day of prayer" to cope with various difficulties. How about setting aside a "day of prayer" for asking God to remove the defect in the national temperament? Telling God about it wouldn't make any difference, of course. But some good might result from advertising the fact that it existed.

Miss Cicely Craven, Hon. Sec. of the Howard League of Penal Reform, tells a religious weekly that 60 per cent of the probation officers attached to police courts are also employees of voluntary societies. And we gather that as the societies have usually a connexion with some religious denomination, they impose a religious test when engaging such employees. Miss Craven points out that: "It is manifestly unjust that citizens of other denominations, or of no denomination, who desire to serve the State as probation officers should be forced to enter the public service through sectarian gates, or abandon their career." She also adds—

All we ask is that the State should recognize Probation as a national service, and meet the full cost out of public funds, thus giving equality of opportunity to all candidates regardless of creed. This is done already in the case of the probation officers of the London Juvenile Courts. They have passed no religious test, and they are living proof that no such test is necessary to secure probation officers of the very highest type.

The latest concern of the primitive-minded in our midst is the question of special prayers for aviators and all who travel by air. Seemingly, it is the nature of an "All-loving" God not to attend to anything unless he is specially asked to do so. God, one may suspect, must get heartily sick of his Christian believers always petitioning him about something. They profess to believe that what God does or omits to do is always "for the best." Yet they are incessantly asking him to do what they think is best. An "All-loving" God might surely be trusted to attend to his all-loving job without needing to be given hints as to what he ought to do.

Now that Sir Oswald Mosley has felt what the censorship of the B.B.C. means with its faked discussions, and careful elimination of unorthodox teaching, he may view with some sympathy the large number of protests that have been raised against the religious propaganda of the monopoly. It is remarkable that at a time when we are all talking about the need of raising the standard of education, and large numbers are denouncing the intolerance of the Established Churches, that the Government should father an organization which reaches the

vast audience that is reached by the B.B.C., and which simply ladles out certain opinions, while refusing to permit listeners to hear anything that may contradict them. The policy of the B.B.C. in certain directions is little better than a public scandal.

The Archbishop of York is conducting a mission at Oxford to young men, and we feel that we ought to award him full marks for the Great Thought of the Week, for the following:—

As soon as the reality of God is an intellectual certainty, there is no longer any spiritual merit in faith.

This is not new, for long ago some little girl was credited with saying that faith meant believing things to be true which you knew to be false. We only give the award to the Archbishop because he is an Archbishop, and it is quite noteworthy to find in so highly-placed a person the frank confession that the merit of faith lies in believing to be the greatest of truths something that may after turn out to be a lie. We have some notion of having some medals struck and sending one weekly to those who earn the decoration.

The Archbishop also said that the God Christians believe in is one of absolute goodness and absolute power. That means, we suppose that God can do everything, and that he must always do that which is absolutely good. On that, all we want to know is how the devil anything but good happens to be in the universe? Perhaps the answer is "the Devil," for God wants to do good but the Devil gets in the way. But in that case what becomes of God's absolute power? We note that the quality of absolute wisdom is not given to God. So, perhaps, the complete picture is absolute goodness with absolute power, but modified by a very so-so sort of an intelligence. We should not be surprised, for if we bear in mind the millions of years during which the earth has been in existence, the immense time during which life has existed, and then reflect that the outcome of all this toil and struggle, and suffering is—the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London, and Billy Sunday—well, it does look as though the least said about the wisdom of God the better.

The Mauretania, which was due to leave New York on Friday, the thirteenth, delayed its sailing till the 14th, had begun in order to allay the fears of its passengers, who were alarmed at sailing on the 13th. Who says we are not a civilized people?

That well-known Spiritualist, the Rev. Vale Owen, is seriously ill, and is being attended by ordinary mortal doctors, and also by a number of doctors from the next world. That looks very much like playing for safety. If he recovers, his recovery will be quite forgotten. If he does not recover, the fault will be due to the interference of the earthly medico. Heads I win, tails you lose.

By the way, it is a safe speculation to say that most men, if they understood sufficiently well the mechanism of their bodies, might live for many more years than they do. This being so one would have expected that as Spiritualists may command the services of doctors whose experience goes back for many hundreds of years, and who can, moreover draw upon all the accumulated wisdom of the spirit world, Spiritualists should, as a rule, live longer than ordinary people. This is not the case. As usual very little that is either sensible or useful comes from the spirit world. In that world witty men become downright bores—there has, we believe never been a witty spirit—and wise ones degenerate into downright fools.

Philosophers and religious teachers, says Mr. Bruce Barton (in *Everybody's Weekly*), have attempted, in various ways to account for the gross inequalities of life, and to hold out future hope to those who seem to have received only a niggardly portion of happiness. He also adds:—

Christian theology presents the promise of another world, where rewards will be distributed in proportion to sacrifice, courage, and fidelity to truth. Until we have

passed across the River we shall not know whether this is true.

If Christian philosophers and teachers had not falsely buoyed-up the spirits of the masses with a "Great Perhaps," and a doctrine of heavenly compensation, maybe the masses would have demanded and got a socially fairer share of the things that make life happier.

Speaking for the younger generation, Lady Dorothy Mills declares that "modern youth resents fiercely too much governing." By which she appears to mean that youth objects to being expected to conform to customs, codes, conventions, and traditions imposed by an elder generation. In so far as it indicates that youth is determined to do its own thinking, this objection of youth is certainly a healthy sign; whatever the parsons may say in lamentation about the "revolt of youth." As the Christian religion, as taught by the Churches, is a conglomeration of customs, codes, conventions, and traditions drawn up hundreds of years ago, and as the more intelligent portion of the younger generation seems to be aware of that fact and therefore suspicious of religion, we surmise that the campaigns "to capture youth for Christ," will merely rope in the least intelligent. In these hard times, however the Churches are thankful for the smallest of mercies.

Most of us are familiar with the parsons' distress over the difficulty of retaining the younger members of the churches. Seemingly, the trouble is extending to the older clients. The Rev. James Lewis, a Wesleyan of Darlington, says: "One of the most distressing facts of the day is the apparent wearing out of the religion of the middle-aged." He complains that to the middle-aged the Church of God is secondary; its sacraments are not regarded as compulsory; its arrangements are set aside; its ministry is merely endured; and secular matters receive first consideration. So one gathers that neither the young nor the middle-aged will be very useful when the Churches set out to capture the "outsiders" for Christ.

Protesting against Puritan tyranny, a reader of a daily paper exclaims that Puritans can surely enjoy their own gloom on Sundays without tyrannizing over other people. But that is exactly what the Puritan cannot do. He experiences an internal glow of righteousness when he realizes that he has prevented other people from enjoying Sunday as they like. This is one of the spiritual blessings the Puritan enjoys by being a Puritan.

Opening a newly erected Sunday school at Wood Green, a parson declared that it would be "a palace of the Great King, dedicated to winning the young for Christ and His Church." This is a rather grandiloquent description for a building in which is to be practised the art and craft of doping immature intelligence for the benefit of parsons.

To get more Sunday school scholars, the Rev. Stanley Southall urges that a thorough system of canvass be adopted: "Get the scholar, and get him at all cost," is his motto. And a very good motto, too, for a parson. In these sceptical times, the capturing of adults is far from easy. But the immature mind of the child is the parson's last hope.

Life is precarious, says the Rev. A. T. Capsay. His advice to young Methodists is:—

Let us recognize that and then let us not mind about it. We can never tell what may happen, but whatever happens does so within a world in which God our Heavenly Father rules.

Since God rules the world, he is responsible for the fact that human existence is a precarious affair. He exposes man to sudden death or mutilation, to disease, and to multifarious kinds of happiness. No one would admire or extol a human parent who exposed his child thus. Yet the mentality of the Christian is such that he delights in worshipping, praising and loving a Heavenly Father who does so. Verily, the Christian intelligence passeth all understanding.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We are asked, on behalf of the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S. to ask if any of our readers could inform the Secretary of the Branch, Mr. S. A. R. Ready, of 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool, of the whereabouts, or the decease of Mr. W. C. Schweizer.

S. GREENBERG.—Thanks for offer of book, but we reviewed *The Mind of the Savage*, when first issued. It is a good work.

W. KENT.—We are afraid you take a satirical paragraph literally. We see no reason when Christians write foolishly about Atheists and death, and too often forget that Atheists are human beings, for not treating them as they deserve. We have not seen much good result from trying to smother Christians with sympathy. They deserve justice, and so far as we are concerned we try to see that they get it. But we are careless of either their good will or their affection.

C. V. LEWIS.—Sorry to have to hold your letter over till next week, but it is impossible to print lengthy communications that reach us on Tuesday—the day on which we go to press.

A. B. MOSS.—Sorry to hear that you are suffering from an attack of rheumatism. We are bothered with a slight dose of that ourselves at the time of writing, so we can mingle our groans.

F. HILL.—We do not think that in any Bill altering or repealing the Lord's Day Observance Act there will be any special treatment of Wales. But there may be an attempt to make it a matter of local option, and that should be resisted. The opening of museums, or parks on Sunday is entirely a matter for the local governing bodies, and all you can do in that matter is to get up a local agitation. As we have so often said, go on making Freethinkers. That is the surest way.

S. COLLINGS.—We hope to publish a volume of articles by the late J. M. Wheeler very soon. It ought to have been done before.

J. CLAYTON.—Pleased to hear of your successful meeting at Accrington. Mr. Cohen will hope to make the acquaintance of many friends there on March 29.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen concludes his course of lectures in the Secular Hall, Leicester, to-day (February 22) with an address on "The Coming of Man." The Hall was again filled on Sunday last, and a large meeting is looked for on the last occasion. The subject should lead to a good discussion. Next Sunday Mr. Cohen will visit Glasgow.

On Sunday, March 1, the Leicester Secular Society will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of its hall. This is an event worthy of commemorating, and there will be two meetings on that day—afternoon and evening. There will be a number of speakers, including Mr. John M. Robertson, Mr. Harry Snell, M.P., and Professor Graham Wallas, and Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who will represent the N.S.S. Mr. Cohen would have been present but he is in Glasgow on that day. He will, however, attend the public dinner, which is to be held on Monday evening. He will break his journey home from the North in order to be present.

To-day (February 22) Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture at Birmingham in the Bristol Street Schools, at 7.0. His subject will be "The God Men of Science Believe in." The subject is topical, and should attract a good audience. We hope so. Newcomers we are sure will not find their time wasted.

After a lengthy delay we received a reply from the Chairman of the Finance Committee of the West Ham Council, with regard to his statement that complaints had been received of "distasteful and objectionable language" used by Mr. Cohen at his lectures. The charge was, of course, ridiculous, and we dealt fully with it in the *Freethinker* for December 21, 1930. We then asked for a precise statement as to the exact language that was so described. No answer was received for more than a month, and the letter now to hand simply repeats the original statement. We replied asking, not for the name of the informant, but for the language, as we assumed that no official would be foolish enough to issue such a statement on the bare word of someone that "distasteful and objectionable" language had been used. We have again waited patiently, but without getting the required information. From other sources we learn that the principal, if not the only complaint received was from a man who had actually been confined in an asylum with religious mania, and who has been turned out of several churches for his behaviour during meetings. All we can do now is to say that the statement which the Chairman made is false, it is made in a cowardly manner inasmuch as a request for a copy of the indictment is not given, and we are left marvelling that a man with so scant a sense of justice is permitted to figure in any position of public responsibility.

We publish on February 25, Mr. Cohen's new book *God and the Universe*. This is a careful examination of the positions taken up by Professors Eddington, Jeans, Huxley and Einstein. Mr. Cohen is, as usual, very thorough in his criticism, and seeing the use that is being made of the "new science" by writers all over the country, there is need for a work such as this one. The great sale of such a work as the *Mysterious Universe* of Sir James Jeans, and of the *Nature of the Physical World*, by Professor Eddington, to say nothing of the attempt of Professor Huxley to present the world with a new religion, makes such a book as this one highly desirable. As usual Mr. Cohen does not mince matters in dealing with these writers. The reply of Professor Eddington to Mr. Cohen, with Mr. Cohen's rejoinder adds additional interest to the volume. At the present juncture *God and the Universe* is a much needed work. The book is issued by the Secular Society, Limited in two forms. In paper covers at 2s., and in cloth at 3s. Postage extra in both cases.

An American professor of philosophy of education, writing about "This New Education," says:—

The world war shook our faith in many things, but the faith of the nations in education was not disturbed. And we now look to education to accomplish the result which political agencies failed to bring about.

Meanwhile, one hopes this faith in education will not be disturbed. It may well be, since the suggestion has been made that "this new education" is merely producing the type of intelligence which demands the "tosh" supplied by the daily newspapers.

We have had some responses to our suggestion that those interested in the Jubilee of the *Freethinker* should signify the same by taking an extra copy of the paper for two or three months, and place it where it would do most good. The number of replies we have had are not what we ought to have received, and we repeat the suggestion once again. There are many new readers to be secured, if we will only look for them.

Witchcraft and the Erotic Life.

(Concluded from page 107.)

It will be informing to reproduce a more detailed statement of the evidence of one of these nuns as reported by a defender of the whole proceedings against Fr. Grandier. M. de Morans, who had heard nothing, ordered Sister Clara, who was likewise ignorant of what had been said, to obey the intentions of M. Chiron. This young girl then fell into strange convulsions, blaspheming, rolling on the ground, exposing her person in the most open manner, without a blush, and with foul and lascivious expressions and actions, till she caused all who looked on to hide their eyes in shame. *Though she had never seen the Prior*, she called him by his name, and said he should be her lover. It was only after some repeated commands, and an hour's struggling, that she took up the missal, saying 'I will pray.' Then turning her eyes in another direction, she placed her finger on the capital S at the beginning of the introit aforesaid of which facts reports were drawn up." There was considerable other evidence of mental disease on the part of some of these nuns.

And such was the evidence that she was influenced by satanic magic, emanating from Fr. Grandier! The great mass of people still believe in similar supernatural magic. It is now the habit to emphasize the more soothing aspects of it. That is to say, we think more in terms of the alleged benign influence of God than the malignant animal magnetism need and its subjective processes are all just the same now, as in the persecution of Fr. Grandier.

It remains to be seen if psychoanalytic theory can be read into the foregoing facts, so as to enlighten us about them. We may fairly suppose that all of the actors in this drama experienced a childhood, wherein the inevitable subjective conflicts of the pre-adolescent and pre-pubescent sexuality were more intense than usual. It is by this uncommon intensity of the earliest subjective conflicts over sex problems, that we explain the withdrawal of nuns and priests from the ordinary social contacts, sexual temptations and marital responsibility. The degree of emotional intensity, which is necessary for such a result, implies a rather unusual obsession over sex. By this we mean an obsessing conflict between irreconcilable tendencies toward a sexual mania and phobia. Of course, the unconscious function of the church is to accentuate just that conflict. After that the chief glory of the church is that it supplies delusional remedies for such ills of its own creation. If the delusional remedies do not cure the psychologic pathology of priestly creation, then the church supplies sadistic, pious, penalties, for the alleged unavoidable "magic" of its enemies. The church also claims to supply restraints upon the extravagance of passions which it unconsciously fosters.

These alleged restraints must be also regarded as delusional because they appear to work only where the church has failed to create a sufficiently morbid impulse to induce overt criminal acts. When its unconscious destructive work has failed, then the church delusionally claims to have restrained anti-social impulses. The church receives credit, chiefly from those whom it has first deluded with a theory of inborn sinfulness.

Frustrated erotic impulses naturally find some kind of expression, at least in the phantasy life. In the condition of these nuns of Loudun, erotic dreams in which they phantasied sexual relations with an attractive priest was quite inevitable. However natural such dreams may be, where the physical expression of the sexual drive is piously inhibited or prevented, such dreams tend to be unusually vivid. This vividness in turn supplies a convincing certainty of their being exact transcripts of an objective reality. The church's artificial, associated fear and shame prevents the acknowledgment, or even a recognition of the fact, that these erotic dreams are a wishfulfilment, founded in an organic sexual need and the resultant psychologic imperative. The witch's sabbath was little more than an imaginative sexual orgie, again a wishfulfilling phantasy. Upon such a foundation it is variously estimated that from 4,000,000 to 9,000,000 humans perished under condemnation made under the "infallible moral theology" of a pathologically "infallible" priesthood. If one dare not admit sexual desire or phantasies, because the church has taught us that all such are terribly sinful, then the only righteous explanation for such lewdness of the imagination consists in ascribing the dreams to superhuman (satanic) agency outside the self, and imposed through one's enemy. [Projection mechanism.]

Since Fr. Grandier appeared in the erotic dreams of frustrated nuns, nothing seemed more reasonable to these sexual phobias than to accuse him, the object of their envy and hatred, of being an instrument of Satan, who seduced consecrated nuns by means of supernatural power. It was all the devil's magic power exercised through Fr. Grandier. Nothing could be more logical for such pious sexual psychopaths. The record shows that some laymen held the common sense estimate of the morbid condition of these nuns. This was probably the real determinant behind both acquittals. However, such a conclusion about the morbid sexuality of these nuns was necessarily offensive to many, if not to most clericals. It seemed to ignore or even to discredit the supernatural virtue of sexual phobia. By arguing for a married clergy, Fr. Grandier was repudiating the glorified mask, provided by Holy Church "moral theology" for all the sexual morbidity of its devotees. Accordingly the priests and nuns must hate Fr. Grandier with a degree of intensity that was exactly equal to the intensity of the sexual phobia which he had discredited. So far as his local enemies were concerned, Fr. Grandier was conclusively prejudged as guilty of spiritual seduction, by means of satanic magic. Cardinal Richelieu had much motive for seeing to it that no third acquittal should occur. He also had enough influence with Louis XIII, to prevent any appeal that might again upset the foreordained verdict of "guilty." Fr. Grandier's personal enemies now had the backing of all the superstitious and fearful ones, of all the infallible moral theology of the one and only infallible, unchangeable and irreformable Holy Church, Institutionalized Christianity has adopted and glorified the "infallible" moral theology of its sexual psychopaths. These latter visited upon Fr. Grandier, and innumerable others, the divine wrath for the magical seduction of His consecrated women. A delightful, glorified and sanctified sadistic orgie was

⁴ This narrative is mainly taken from: *The History of the Devils of Loudun*, the alleged possession of the Ursuline Nuns, and the Trial and Execution of Urbain Grandier, told by an eye-witness. Translated from the original French, and edited by Edmund Goldsmith. Privately printed, Edinburgh, 1887. Also, under Grandier in: *Dictionary, Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*, Second edition. J. J. and P. Knapton [et al] 1736, v. 3 pp. 210, et seq.

enjoyed by the piously qualified ones, when Mr. Grandier was burnt to ashes, in the year of our Lord 1634.

THEODORE SCHROEDER.

Rome or Reason?

SINCE the Great War there have been various happenings significantly indicative of very strenuous efforts behind the scenes by ecclesiastical wire-pullers to bring about incorporating unions between the larger Churches as preliminary to the General Reunion of Christendom. They realize that much is to be gained by combination. They see the younger people deserting the Churches and exhibiting an independence of opinion which was by no means common before the War. Recently the world has seen a remarkable rapprochement between the Italian Government and the Vatican, which has on one or two occasions (perhaps unwisely because prematurely) exhibited an attitude of dictatorial insolence—as in Malta. The world has also recently seen the union of the two greatest Scottish Churches; and the Archbishop of Canterbury is to be heard voicing the hope that the union of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches is now within the region of "practical politics." What do all these things portend?

In the first place, they show that the advancing power of Freethought is acknowledged throughout the world. That is the chief reason for the increased friendliness among religious communions, which in former days spent a good deal of time in black-balling one another, and picking holes in one another! Those days are fled. Presbyterians are to be seen occupying Episcopalian pulpits and Episcopalians occupying Presbyterian pulpits. Particularly notable is the co-operation between different denominations in the "foreign mission fields." The most astute ecclesiastical big-wigs are working for an all-round combination, whereby the great body of believers may present a united front to the forces of infidelity.

In the second place, they point to the disintegration of Protestantism.

Catholic and Protestant padres co-operated in the War; and they are co-operating now. The Anglo-Catholic influence in the Episcopal Churches in Britain is very extensive; and it is only a step from Anglo-Catholicism to Rome. And not only are the Episcopal Churches showing proofs of the permeation of Catholic doctrines and practices. In various Protestant bodies there is growing up a love of mysticism which cannot find satisfaction or adequate expression through the ordinances and ritual of Protestantism. Time and again we read of some talented and distinguished Protestant being admitted to the Church of Rome. Time and again we read of the introduction of liturgies and Catholic practices into Protestant services, many of which have become much more ornate. And the knowing old man of Rome smiles and winks the other eye! The Protestants are only his aberrant sons, who after, as prodigals, having been in the far country for some time, are returning again to the original fold! It is only a matter of time. Rome can wait. Rome can be patient. The flowing tide is with her and cannot be dammed. Rome is daily adding to her numbers while Protestantism is losing adherents. And rulers shall bow down to her in the day of her power!

In the third place, they reveal the fact that human progress and human development can proceed far more satisfactorily—thank you—without reference to, or dependence upon, any supernatural being or beings. Neither the Christian God nor his earthly representatives have done anything to prevent such convulsions as the Great War. Equally they do nothing to pro-

mote reforms or social regeneration. Christianity is based upon a sordid individualism, which can with equanimity contemplate the miseries of the unemployed and the poor without a blush. Yes, if you want to encounter the real "hard faces" and "brass necks" go to the fashionable Church! They have the same experience in America. Read, for example, Stephen Leacock's *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*, and his description of the two fashionable Churches—one Presbyterian and the other Episcopalian—a "merger," of which was effected by their leading members, in the real financial style! But let any great experiment (as in Russia) be tried for the emancipation and elevation of the down-trodden masses; and the big men of the great Churches are up in arms at once shouting to their press-hacks; and the manufacturers of lies are soon at work at full pressure. "Nothing, by God, shall be done with our consent except by God!" A very convenient proclamation—seeing God never did and never does anything! Which many of these big-bugs (for their comfort) know very well. But though it may be honest to be frank about such a thing, it is not convenient—or expedient. We have to consider these working fellows. If we acknowledged such a belief to them—God bless you, they would get out of hand altogether!

That is the type that pays priest and parson, and pays them well. That is the type that tops subscription lists, and is found in the most ornate, most up-to-date and best equipped ecclesiastical edifices. And their spiritual guides will lead them—wherever they are directed to lead them!

And when the final "merger" takes place of all the great Churches and there is one universal Church in the Earth, the President or Archbishop of it will be the familiar old Papa of Rome, without any doubt! For every denomination even the most unclerical will furnish its quota (after its other members have embraced Freethought), who will kiss the Papal toe; and then the challenge will be shouted to the neutrals: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve—Rome or Reason!"

IGNOTUS.

The Church and the Schools.

IT has been frequently assumed that the smouldering embers of religious intolerance and animosity are dying out, and if they are revived by that Church which knows no toleration it must not whine if it draws itself into open warfare with those who see through its falsity and deception.

It babbles about the morality of children: it christens them when they are a few days from birth to secure their unconscious souls (whatever soul may mean) into heaven (which has no geographical existence) whilst its unholy hands are ready to plunder the State to uphold its schools with false doctrines: doctrines which, to credit the priesthood with sincerely believing, would be to offer the greatest insult to their intelligence.

The priesthood having received what Archbishop Downey calls a full meal of education dispenses concoctions of poisonous confectionery to its adherents—for a fee; and for this purpose asks for State money to carry on its bakeries. No greater duplicity nor immoral behaviour could be conceived.

The Church throughout its existence has hobnobbed with kings, aristocracies and democracies alike whenever they have acceded to its own wicked designs.

Adverse to socialism it is now hobnobbing with Socialist Members of Parliament and others of that ilk who are more concerned to secure votes than to serve the community.

The Right Honourable Arthur Henderson pandered to the Catholic demands before his election, and has since been threatened with dismissal unless the Government, of which he is a member, redeems its promises.

He has preached in the very pulpit that the Rev. T. Kilby Champness now occupies, and is on the Wesleyan preaching plan, from which, I understand, he cannot be displaced; and now the reverend gentleman referred to feels called upon, and rightly so, to condemn the policy of this Government that professes to govern for the emancipation of the common people.

To accede to the clamours of the Roman Church would be to endow superstition and falsity at the expense of the State, and this is what a Socialist Government has come to: a Government of men of widely different beliefs and men of no religious beliefs. To the credit of the local Socialist candidate be it said that he declined to accede to the iniquitous terms of this Church.

The Church will die when it can no longer command the services of honest and intelligent men, and when the people are sufficiently informed on facts which make up human life. In the meantime it will struggle for its existence by an interested priesthood who are more concerned to uphold their false doctrines than they are to educate the child.

Education is a national matter that concerns the future welfare of the State, and those who want to contaminate it with religion may be allowed to do so in their own time and at their own expense. Morality, philosophy and behaviourism belong to another category, and these will follow if priestcraft and sacerdotalism can be kept away from innocent children; from children who, if and when they are old enough and have sufficient strength of mind will throw off the shackles of superstition.

The discussion of political and religious topics is banned from certain associations because of its society splitting influences. Religion has always split up human society, and been the cause of many wars.

The Vatican sat on the fence watching the Christians of Europe murdering each other in the Great War, and waited to see which side the power was on, whilst their God did nothing.

The insolent attempt now made by the Roman Church to intermeddle in the affairs of State must be resisted as are other evils associated with political elections.

This Church cajoles when it cannot crush. It was instrumental in having Francisco Ferrer shot in Spain within living memory for educating children in doctrines for their enlightenment. It has tortured and mercilessly imprisoned those who brought newly discovered truth, and will do so again if ever it regains its lost power; and the time may come again when it will drive the people to Church at the point of the soldier's bayonets.

CINE CERE.

WHY CARLYLE IS OUT OF FASHION.

It would be impossible to find a writer whose philosophy and style were more unsympathetic to modern moods; . . . Carlyle was a great writer. But he was a rhetorical writer—and rhetoric is in disgrace. He was a moral prophet, a hero-worshipper—and moralists are no longer dogmatic and hero-worship is out of fashion. Above all, he preaches the *momentous* view of life, the endless significance of choice; that every crisis is a spiritual crisis, and history is made up of spiritual crises decided by individual character—to-day the prevalent view is that all individual effort is lost in vast movements which no man can guide, that economies are more important than the soul, and irony more intelligent than enthusiasm.—Desmond MacCarthy.

A "Free" Church.

THE London Dinner is already a memory—and an anticipation! After one more Great Adventure, and before going home to our mountains there was a minor sequel in Manchester which seems worth recording. A confederate and I had arranged to meet and together visit Cross Street Chapel to hear a sermon on the lesser Professor Huxley's Conway Lecture, which resolves itself into a religion without God—recalling that famous sneer at Positivism—"religion without Christianity." Owing to a late train and some indirections in this Second City, I missed my first rendezvous and had to seek Cross Street F.C. Chapel alone. Feeling a little like Satan in Paradise, I secluded myself in the rather desolate organ loft, but the pews below were well filled with the most devout-seeming worshippers I had ever seen. I was appalled. Surely, I thought, such prostration cannot permit of question. Impossible! But, no. The first act over the cherubic young parson descended from his pulpit and stood on a level with the pews. I also had descended and was shown into the arena of debate by a smart City man, but one sourly contemptuous, brusquely intolerant, his whole manner eloquent of that far-famed Christian charity. It left a bad taste in the mouth, but was illuminative of the psychology of the true Christian (if the metaphors may pass). Just a few of the worshippers had gone away; curiosity, etc., had kept the rest. Written questions were first and "answered" with much circumlocution, much confident assertion, and little argument. Again it was bows and arrows against machine guns. It was not magnificent, and it was not war. Some would see through the smoke screen of the sham fight. It was indeed merely juggling with God—as the showman would say:—

Now you see it, now you don't;
Maybe you hit it, maybe you won't!

And yet the preacher was fain to accept nearly all of the Huxleyan position, yet was as sure of his God as the simplest soldier of the Cross. Again:—

What thin partitions do divide
The bounds where false and true reside!

Nor was this valiant young man dismayed by the conclusions of anthropology, folk lore and primitive culture as set forth in the *Golden Bough*, he could accept all that, even God inspiring to be good and wise those who denied his name! So the partition wears away: God is good, and good is God: God is love, is here and there, everywhere and nowhere . . .

A god whose ghost in arch and aisle
Still haunts his temple and his tomb.

Most of the congregation would go away still believing in some quite sufficing and substantial, even sustaining kind-of-a-sort-of-a-something; even, in spite of modernist teaching, in that shadow of the fear of hell, that deepest scar on the mind of man left by two thousand years of Christian teaching—or rather scaring—that only centuries of Freethought teaching can finally efface.

Hell's out and the Devil is dead, is a premature boast. Those crudities of the Church are only obscured a little by more immediate mundane crises—such as our present industrial damnation, the only one we shall ever know. What is Holy Church doing to solve this problem, avert this calamity? Does Browning's, God's in his heaven all's right with the world bring us any comfort in this rugged and awful concern? Science stimulates, religion can only confuse and stupify. Let it lag no longer, not even a thin apparition, in this living, moving, actual stage of life.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Every age has its problem by solving which humanity is helped forward.—Heine.

Learning passes for wisdom among those who want both.—Sir W. Temple.

An acre of performance is worth the whole world of promise.—Howell.

The Decalogue.

Writing in the *Daily Herald* the other week, the Reverend D. Morse-Boycott made a comment to the effect that there was nothing wrong with the Ten Commandments, and that interpreted as they had been by Christ they stood four-square with life.

I am not directly concerned here with whether Christ interpreted them or not, though I shall endeavour to show indirectly that if he did then he made a rotten job of it.

According to the narrative in Exodus, the Decalogue—I am speaking of the one generally accepted in this country (see Exod. xx, 3-17, or Deut. v. 7-21)—was promulgated from the top of Mount Sinai by Jehovah, amid the blare of trumpets and the crash of thunder; while in Deuteronomy it is apparent that the great event occurred at Horeb.

However, when consulting the Bible you have to blind yourself to contradictions which appearing in any other book excepting a humorous one, would earn for it scorn, sarcasm and ridicule from all quarters, and cause it to become the butt of many jokes and a great deal of laughter. So, metaphorically closing our eyes we pass on, then open them again in order to examine what some Christians describe as a code of ethics without parallel.

The first two commandments can be dismissed as of no value outside religion. The Jewish deity is really prohibiting the patronizing of any other firm but his, just like an ordinary business man would do, if he got the chance.

The third precept is on the same lines, although it is not a model of perspicuity by any means. It seems to suggest that the Lord's name shall not be invoked upon a falsehood. Well, a visit to a police court during the hearing of almost any case will show you just how much notice is taken of this nowadays.

With regard to the fourth mandate one can only say that it is the most nonsensical of the ten; and that is saying a careful, to use an Americanism.

The fifth injunction is most interesting. It commands children to honour their parents, and as a sort of compensation offers them long life. This is Christian morality all over. Always the keynote is: Don't do anything decent unless there is a huge reward to be reaped as a consequence. Is it any wonder that quite a number of Christians are hypocrites?

The next three mandates denounce murder, adultery, and theft as you know. But, the joke is, that as soon as war breaks out the Churches openly pray for, and eagerly sanction the first and last, and blissfully ignore any conduct that comes under the other heading. Again take the case of a murderer about to hang. To him comes a priest or a parson and asks him to repent; making the promise that if he does he will ensure for himself a place among the saints, and a rousing welcome from the Lord and his angels into the bargain. The same offer holds good for a thief or a man or woman guilty of adultery. Thus the very people who inform us that these commandments are four-square with life, quite solemnly blow them to fragments when they think nobody is watching.

Your neighbour, so the ninth precept orders, is the only person against whom you must not bear false testimony. Any other persons—well, "God help them!" that's all.

The last commandment concerns itself with all the things you must not covet. Here you are limited to your neighbour's possessions. However, as only a Christian would dream of calling coveting a sin I think we can safely treat it and the other nine mandates with the contempt they deserve.

The Decalogue fails utterly. Nothing whatever is said about that primary virtue, truth. No mention is made of honesty, kindness, unselfishness, or justice. The precepts are largely concerned with the individual, and put his welfare before that of the race or nation.

In the past the Decalogue obscured ideas of morality, and even to the present day some people regard it as a fine system of ethics, as I remarked above. I can only reply that if any man's sole claim to virtue lay in his observance of it, then unquestionably that man would

not only be valueless, but also an undesirable member of society. Morality essentially implies the sacrifice of the individual interests to those of the community.

TOM BLAKE.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

A TWENTIETH CENTURY TORQUEMADA.

SIR,—I came across an edition of the New Testament the other day, issued by the British and Foreign Bible Society, London, 1915, printed at the University Press, Oxford.

Pasted within, I found a pamphlet of some eight pages, entitled *Why Jesus Died and Rose Again*, by W. A. Sunday.

In a foreword the reader is informed that Mr. Jno. R. Mott, the world's greatest student leader, who was offered, by President Woodrow Wilson, the American Ambassadorship in China, but refused this high position to continue Christian work among students, says of Mr. Sunday's work: "You cannot fool a great body of students. They get a man's measure. If he is genuine they know it, and if he is not, they quickly find out. Their devotion to Mr. Sunday is significant."

A visit made by Mr. Sunday to the University of Pennsylvania is summarized as follows by the *University Weekly* :—

The result of Mr. Sunday's visit within the University has been nothing short of marvellous. The Provost has been receiving congratulation from trustees, business men, lawyers, members of the faculty, and prominent under-graduates.

Several whole fraternities have taken action leading to higher living in every line. Drink has been completely excluded from class banquets. Students are joining the churches and religion had been the paramount topic of conversation throughout the entire University.

I shall now quote verbatim some of the writings of this gentleman, whose views or personality are reputed to have elicited the praises of eminent citizens, and wrought such pleasing effect on American youth. The italic print is the author's.

Thus :—

Some man says read good books, do good deeds, lead a good life, and you'll be saved, you'll be damned. That's what you will, all the books won't keep you out of hell without the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Its Jesus Christ or Nothing for every sinner on God's earth.

Again :—

Whenever I see blood I'll pass by, says God. And God says everyone who is not under the blood is a sinner; and if you're not under the blood, God pity you. There is no other way. *God can't save you if you reject the blood of Jesus Christ.*

Once more :—

The time will come when he'll come with his angels; some day he will withdraw his offer of salvation. Then—God pity you.

Come and accept my Christ! Who'll come and get under the blood with me?

These are but a few examples, the whole exhortation or whatever the drivel may be termed, breathes a similar atmosphere of hell fire, blood and brimstone.

What a vast field for enlightenment still awaits the Freethinker.

A. D. C. FORBES.

THE BEGGAR'S GOSPEL.

SIR,—No one who reads the New Testament with reasonable attention and impartiality can doubt that it holds poverty a merit—a state always, everywhere and unconditionally meritorious. The opposite extreme is equally wide of the truth. E.J.P. makes poverty always and without qualification the result of demerit, and wealth always and unconditionally an evidence of high qualities in its possessor. While agreeing with much that E.J.P. says, I feel bound to ask, "is it necessary for a Freethinker to try to make himself as ridiculous as the Christian Bible?"

ROBERT HARDING.

Among the Branches.

THE Bradford Branch, N.S.S. shows a record of very good and useful work for 1930. A number of pointed letters have been accepted by the press, and by means of general propaganda, the Branch is winning recognition as an active element in local life. Mr. H. L. Searle is the President, and Mr. T. W. Green remains the Secretary. With two such enthusiastic and energetic Freethinkers at the helm, we can expect some more good work in Bradford.

A report of good work done during the past year comes from the Newcastle Branch. Mr. J. G. Bartram is the moving spirit there, a veteran in the movement, but youthful in enthusiasm. His Secretaryship is marked by judgment and tact, to the advantage of local Freethought. Messrs. Brighton and Keast have given valuable help on the platform.

At the Annual Meeting of the South London Branch, Mr. A. Heath was elected President; Mr. S. Seabert, Secretary; and Mr. H. Preece, Treasurer. Several motions for the agenda of the Annual Conference were passed, and submitted to the Executive.

West Ham Branch with its modest but enthusiastic band of workers has also completed another year of successful work. With Mr. F. C. Warner re-elected as President, Mrs. H. Rosetti as Secretary, and Mr. F. G. Warner as Librarian, the movement can look forward with confidence for good work in that district.

A Social at Caxton Hall, on Saturday, April 18, and the Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday, May 24, are the next items in which the co-operation of the Branches will be asked for.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

Society News.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

ON Sunday last Col. Arthur Lynch delivered an interesting and instructive address on "Ethics, Authoritative or Scientific?" The address was marked by both wit and wisdom, and the wide range from which the illustrations of the subject were drawn impressed and delighted every hearer. Authority in Ethics was shown to be as absurd and as injurious as mere authority in other directions. There were a large number of questions and some discussion. Mr. C. Pilley occupied the chair.—B.A.I.E.M.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S.

MRS EMILY GROUT was very interesting in her lecture last Sunday—"Lies Told to Children." The questions and discussion which followed fully proved this. This Sunday will offer the treat of a debate between Mr. E. Bryant and Mr. R. T. Dowley—"Is Death the End." Our President (Mr. Bryant) will take the affirmative.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S.

MR. F. P. CORRIGAN gave two very interesting lectures here in the Co-operative Hall, on Sunday last. In the afternoon the meeting was not so large as we would have wished, but the evening meeting was one of the best of the season. The lecturer was in excellent form, and the audience both interested and delighted. Some questions and discussions followed the lecture.—J.McK.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; every Friday at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrod Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Saturday, 7.30, Messrs. A. Frank, F. Day and G. Barnes.

INDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (London Co-operative Society's Hall, 249 Dawes Road, Fulham): 7.30, Debate—"Is Death the End?" Affir.: Mr. E. Bryant; Neg.: Mr. R. T. Dowley.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 50 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. John Murphy—"The Meaning of History."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Winter Garden, 37 High Street, Clapham, near Clapham North Underground Station): 7.15, Mr. A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A.—"How I Came to be a Freethinker."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Alison Neilans—"The Influence of Finance on Unemployment."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"New Uses of Leisure."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Town, N.W.1, facing The Brecknock): 7.30, Mr. S. D. H. Smith, B.A.—"The Historicity of Jesus."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 7.30, Mr. F. W. Read—"Egypt and Some of its Religions."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Council Schools): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"The God Men of Science Believe in."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Mr. Francis J. Corina will open discussion on "Should Freethinkers withdraw their children from religious instruction in schools?" This is a question of vital importance to all Freethinkers, and a good attendance is requested.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Fred Casey, of Bury—"The Theory of Scientific Thinking." Questions and discussion, all welcome. March 1, "Illustrations of Scientific Thinking," by Mr. Fred Casey, author of *Thinking: Its History and Its Science*.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY—City (Albion Street) Hall, at 6.30, Mr. Robt. Fyfe—"150 Million Heretics."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, 47 Islington, Liverpool—entrance Christian Street): 7.0, Mr. S. Cohen (Manchester)—"Christianity and Atheism—What's in a Name?" Current *Freethinkers* on sale.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (London)—"God and Man."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester): 3.0, Dr. C. H. Ross Carmichael (Liverpool)—"Determinism and Morals." 6.30, "This Brotherhood."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.0, Members meeting.

NELSON.—I.L.P., Vernon Street: 11.0, Mr. J. Clayton N.S.S. will lecture on "Determinism."

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Bakers Hall, 5 Forbes Place): 7.0, Mr. C. M. Wilson—"The Gateway to Health." A Branch Meeting will also be held on Wednesday, February 25, at 7.30, in the same hall.

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FEBRUARY, 23rd at 7.30 p.m.

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ON

"Rational Evidence of Divine Revelation."

BY

REV. W. H. CLAXTON

SUBJECT—

"The Evidence of the Old Testament."

CHAIRMAN: Mr. B. A. LEMAINÉ, West London Branch
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