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Views and Opinions.

Christ at The Academy.

BEARING in mind the row created by the *Freethinker* cartoons of fifty years ago, the prosecution that followed, and that this week we are commemorating the Jubilee of the paper, it is a curious coincidence that there should be going on a controversy respecting an alleged caricature of the figurehead of the Christian religion. The *News-Chronicle* says of the Royal Academy exhibition: "Many people were obviously rather shocked by Sir William Orpen's picture 'Palm Sunday—A.D. 33,' which they interpreted rightly or wrongly as something like a caricature of Christ." The art critic of the paper says, "Many will feel it ought not to be there . . . (it) will be regarded as an affront. . . . The crowds at Burlington House . . . will look at the comic donkey, bearing a comic figure representing the Christ, the kneeling figure being blessed, and the ridiculous trio beyond." Viscountess Ellibank, who was one of the fashionable crowd at the Academy, said tearfully, "I just can't bear it." That should be quite enough to justify a prosecution against Sir William for blasphemy, since it is blasphemy to depict anything which a good Christian is unable to bear.

Mr. Hammen Swaffer, who, where religion is concerned, can reel off stupidities with an ease that should make Mr. James Douglas and the Bishop of London jealous, says "it is irreverent . . . It will cause sniggers. It will offend," and adds:—

He paints an Assyrian-looking Christ straddling, with straight legs, a wooden-looking donkey with straight up rabbit ears, and near Him, three or four children holding unsympathetic palms. . . . It represents our Lord, as a low type of Levantine sitting astride what looks like a white wooden donkey from Hamley's. The coarse fingers are upraised in blessing, and the four figures so far from suggesting an exultant crowd, might be funeral mutes.

It will be noted that Mr. Swaffer twice complains

about the donkey. I have always suspected that Christianity owes a great deal to jackasses, and I appreciate Mr. Swaffer's stand on behalf of a reverent, one might almost say a thankful treatment of a type to which the Christian Church owes so much. I am a bit puzzled about what is meant by "unsympathetic palms." Perhaps Mr. Swaffer knows of palms that look sympathetic. But I am no botanist. On a film, of course, the palms might have been depicted waving about wildly whenever Jesus came near, but that cannot be done in a painting. As to the Assyrian-looking Jesus, or the Levantine-looking Christ, well, I suppose if Jesus ever lived, and if he really was a Jew, the odds are in favour of his looking that way. For Jews often do look like Jews. Presumably Mr. Swaffer would have preferred his looking like a British Prime Minister delivering a patriotic oration. The stupid appearance of his worshippers cannot be helped. That is the way religious folk, when they are wrapped in adoration, often look.

* * *

That Sacred Atmosphere!

I say this is a curious coincidence to have occurred just at this time because it was the daring of the *Freethinker* in depicting the life of Christ in a way that put in pictorial form the New Testament story of Christ—which is the only life of Christ we have—that cost editor, printer, and publisher of the *Freethinker* twelve, nine, and three months imprisonment. Christians began by demanding that everyone should accept their beliefs, or if they did not believe them should remain silent. That kind of thing is not quite dead now, although there is no method of legal enforcement of either belief or silence. But there are still large numbers of believers who say that they do not think that anyone ought to attack their beliefs, and others who because they lack courage or dread the inconvenience of attacking religion, put forward the lame and quite indefensible plea that they believe in letting the beliefs of other people alone. But what are both these pleas but the surviving remnant of the older and more bigoted form? No one is justified in leaving alone what he believes to be a lie. The destruction of wrong beliefs and false ideas are indispensable to human progress. Timidity may account for one of these pleas, bigotry may account for the other, but neither of them can be either morally or intellectually justified.

But there still remains the legal and social law against laughing at religion, or against treating it without "reverence." That is the complaint brought by the critics cited against Sir William Orpen's picture. I am not discussing whether the picture is well-painted or ill-painted. I do not care one way or the other. The complaint made is that it does not treat the Christian lay-figures in the standardized manner, and so may disturb people's belief in them. A true

picture of Jesus—assuming his existence—would present him as a typical wandering Eastern religious preacher, and what kind of an impression would that make on a British audience? I do not agree that the figures are "comic," the really comical thing is that men and women should treat the story as a series of historic incidents. But the real offence, as in the case of the *Freethinker* cartoons is that it helps, as they helped, to depolarise—to use a very expressive word of Wendell Holmes—the figure of Jesus Christ. It lifts it out of a mass of unreasoning sentiment and helps the unreflecting to see it in something like its proper proportions. And until this is done we need never expect to see people looking at religion as they look at other things.

* * *

Those Religious Feelings!

As I have pointed out in another part of this issue, it was the unforgivable offence of the *Freethinker*, that it altogether rejected the demand that religious subjects should be treated with either reverence or respect greater than that which other subjects receive. We have simply nothing to do with the "feelings" that some people have connected with religion. That is, indeed, one of the things against which Freethinkers who know their business have to fight. A special treatment for religious "feelings" is in a modern society one of the foundation stones of religious privilege and religious tyranny. We have at the moment a Government that is afraid to repeal laws which prevent the people of this country spending one-seventh of their lives in an orderly, decent, and healthy manner, because an organized mob of religious bigots say that their "feelings" will be outraged by seeing other people doing so. Every man or woman sent to prison for blasphemy during the past hundred years has been formally condemned because he or she hurt the feelings of Christians. "Don't hurt my feelings," is the last cry of a religious intolerance that is to-day too ashamed to offer any intellectual justification for its existence.

Now I say quite plainly that not only ought people to be taught to laugh at the New Testament legends, but they are never safe until they are able to do so. It is the acid test of their mental liberation. They must be able to discuss Jesus Christ with the same freedom with which they discuss Lloyd George, and in the same language. The only things that matter in either case is sincerity of conviction, and correctness of conception. I have no concern whatever with the "feelings" of a man concerning the divinity of Jesus or the infallibility of Lloyd George. It is my conception that matters, not his. The non-believer who retains a special language, a special frame of mind, or a special mental attitude when dealing with Christianity is either a humbug or has not yet outgrown the Christian frame of mind. I repeat, the ability to laugh at Christian stories is the acid test as to whether a man is really liberated or not. He must learn to laugh at the Christian legends; and when he is able to do that, freely and spontaneously, he will not need to even trouble to laugh at them. He will then be in a condition for dealing with the Christian legends as he deals with the religious legends of the ancient Egyptians.

* * *

Laughter and Liberation.

Fundamentally, the claim that Christian beliefs must be treated in a standardized manner is an admission that Christianity withers when exposed to completely free criticism, and can only exist when the mind is so far as possible, surrounded with at best an atmosphere of medievalism, and at its worst with an atmosphere that belongs to the most primitive stages

of culture. It is a phrase of the claim made by Roman Catholics with regard to the education of children, namely, that if the Church is to retain its hold on the rising generation, it must be educated amid a "Roman Catholic atmosphere." No such claim is made with regard to any other subject. Everything else may be taught or discussed with the free winds of modern thought and modern culture playing around it. Religion broadly, and Christianity in particular is the one thing on behalf of which such a claim is made. That must be treated with the utmost solemnity. The pretence that there is something "sacred" about a man's religion which does not attach to his opinions about any other subject, must be kept alive because it is in this way, and the only way in which the Churches can hope to offer any opposition at all to modern thought. It is essential to the Christian case that the claim shall be made; it is stultification, even a betrayal of the best interests of Freethought to admit it in either theory or practice.

Time has justified the principle acted upon by the *Freethinker* of fifty years ago. Time is justifying it on all hands to-day. The tearful vacuity of the Countess Ellibank, "I just can't bear it," or the silly protest of Mr. Hannen Swaffer against the picture because the donkey is irreverent and the palm branches unsympathetic, are belated instances of a once general idea that religious beliefs must not be treated as are other beliefs. That religious people think they should be is beside the point. It is a conviction that every straightforward Freethinker will at once challenge, and will back up his challenge with action. I do not trust a man who cannot laugh at the absurd New Testament story when it is presented to him as veritable history. He is only partly liberated. He is still under the glamour of the Christian superstition. And the destruction of specific doctrines is only part of our work. That work will only be complete when the frame of mind on which religion lives is recognized by all as a reversion to a lower type.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Early Freethought Editors

"So far as a man thinks, he is free."—Emerson.

"Instead of being made, make yourself."
Herbert Spencer.

"My heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love."—Whitman.

DURING the stormy period prior to the birth of an organized Freethought Movement in England, Charles Southwell stood in the forefront. His undoubted eloquence, ability, and courage attracted the small but determined body of intellectuals, and drew on him the resentment of the orthodox, who were then strong in the land. Living when he did, he performed a high and useful task, and his keen, bright sword played havoc in the serried ranks of imposture and superstition.

Charles Southwell's life is one of the romances of Freethought. Born in 1814, the year before the battle of Waterloo, he was the youngest of a large family of thirty-three children. His father was a militant Freethinker at a time when heresy was dangerous, and a remarkable man. When upwards of seventy years of age he married a handsome lass of twenty. Charles was the offspring of this marriage of May and December. In his schooldays young Southwell was notorious for playing truant, and for possessing a wonderful memory. When he left school, at the age of twelve, he had, to use his own words, "knowledge enough to puzzle pedants, and ignorance enough to

disgrace a Hottentot." His subsequent career was a series of great adventures. During his short life he was actor, soldier, orator, Socialist, Freethought advocate, writer, editor, and prisoner for liberty of speech. At one time he joined the Spanish Legion formed for the purpose of assisting Queen Isabella to maintain her throne against Don Carlos. For two years he consorted with this ragged regiment, and, in spite of loathsome surroundings, chronic starvation, and attacks of fever, he came through without serious damage.

On his return to England, Southwell soon achieved a big reputation by his brilliant oratory, and he made history with the publication in 1841 of *The Oracle of Reason*, the first periodical entirely devoted to Freethought propaganda. It was an ambitious publication, and its literary tone may be estimated by the contents, which included articles on "Symbol Worship," "The Theory of Regular Gradation," and "Is there a God?" The clergy were at once alarmed at this bold challenge, and threatened Southwell with all the rigours of the law, which then retained many of the ferocities of the Ages of Faith. Southwell did not wait for the attack, but struck as hard as he knew how. Faced with heavy fines and imprisonment for publishing literary and philosophical articles, he met force with force, and the pages of the *Oracle* were laden henceforth with very outspoken Biblical criticism. On the publication of the fourth number of the *Oracle*, Southwell was arrested, tried before Sir Charles Wetherell, and, in spite of an eloquent defence, sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and a fine of £100. During Southwell's imprisonment George Jacob Holyoake, "the father of Secularism," edited the paper, and when he, in turn, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, Thomas Patterson stepped bravely into the breach. Bull-dog Patterson, as he was called, affectionately, was also sent to gaol, and George Adams and his wife, Harriet, took charge of the paper, each to be sent to prison. William Chilton succeeded them, and kept the flag flying to the bitter end, which was hastened by the heavy debts incurred in the continuous legal proceedings, and the large fines imposed.

The *Oracle of Reason* lasted just over two years, but during its short and stormy career it created a profound impression, which, in due time, led to the formation of a properly organized Freethought Movement, and under the able generalship of Charles Bradlaugh, did so much to consolidate the position of the "intellectuals" who dared to challenge the pretensions of the clergy.

After his release from prison Southwell carried on a Freethought mission in many places, and ultimately settled in New Zealand, where he ably edited the *Auckland Examiner*. He died in 1860 at the early age of forty-six years. Southwell wrote much, but most of his work was simply journalism. He wrote many pamphlets, but cold controversy is often indigestible. Perhaps the most interesting of all his publications is *The Confessions of a Freethinker*, published in 1845, a candid and fascinating piece of autobiography, which ought to be reprinted.

There is an elusive element in Southwell's life-story. So much is vague that whole chapters of his adventurous and romantic life are blank. The few photographs of him have been described as unsatisfactory, and a biographer is reduced to inference. Although an orator of outstanding merit, no adequate reports of his speeches and lectures remain. A brilliant and many-sided man, Charles Southwell's enduring claim to fame is that he was the first editor of the first definitely Freethought paper. Southwell may truly be credited with a passion for liberty, he was a humanitarian in a genuine sense, and he was pre-

occupied with a love for his fellow men. He was the harbinger of a great brood of Freethought journalists, who, regardless of personal reward, worked untiringly towards the realization of a New World.

"Wonderful" is the only adjective which will serve for this surprise of surprises, this record of the men and women who have cared, not for wealth and notoriety, but, who, for the sake of intellectual honesty, have suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. For each of them were, in their way, the apostles of Freedom. They were knight-errants of the evangel of Liberty. From the dark days when Charles Southwell, and his brave comrades, with their backs to the wall, fought against the hosts of Superstition, until the present time when a compact army fights under the banner of Secularism, Liberty has never failed of her volunteer soldiers. The bare records of the doings of these pioneers thrill and fascinate by very reason of their simplicity. They are potent because of their very sincerity. Who could fail to recognize the splendid courage which held so steadfastly to the last moment, or fail to appreciate the iron nerve which bent only before the impossible? We do well to honour them, because they dedicated their lives to the service of intellectual liberty, and laid deep the foundations of the future greatness of the human race.

MIMNERMUS.

Sense-Data and The "Thing."

THE nature of the universe has fascinated the mind of man from the earliest times, and has been the subject of many fantastic speculations. We hear, for instance, of the ancient orientals who conceived it as being supported on the back of a gigantic elephant, which in its turn was dependent upon a monstrous tortoise. As to what the tortoise rested on the old sages were silent, and if they had used up all the animals in existence they would have got no nearer to the real problem, because all they were doing was merely stating in a crude, though picturesque, way the argument of the first cause.

It used to be argued that as you receded along a chain of causes you finally came up with a bump against a great First Cause. It was usually called God, though why he should be given preference over the Devil is hard to understand, except on the hypothesis that it was necessary in the priestly interests to replenish a shattered Jehovah conception. The argument is of course no longer in vogue. No responsible Theist philosopher to-day takes his stand on any of the old classical arguments, and many explicitly reject them. If God created the universe, who created God? If everything must be created, God must be created. But if anything can exist without being created, why should it not be the Universe?

And in fact nothing substantial ever is created. The Universe is a panorama of changing forms and the metaphysician, instead of going to one end of a supposed line to look for a first cause, instead of going to the other end for a last effort, looks underneath the whole business in an attempt to understand what is the *ground* of it all, the substance of which all things are made, the noumenon giving phenomena, the datum of existence. That is metaphysics as it was conceived in ancient Greece and as it is understood to-day. The name began with Aristotle, who gave it several meanings, of which one is preserved. *Ency. Brit.*, *Harmsworth's Univ. Ency.*, *Chambers*—all concur, "the science of being," as distinct from that of the various forms of being, which is the work of the sciences. Writers whom it is unnecessary to

mention phrase the same idea. This frees us from concern with any conception such as might be found in the Middle Ages, or in any one individual, or even in etymology.

The Greeks of Ionia set the ball rolling. It was water, it was air, it was fire, it was falling atoms. Plurality and mystification crept in; Empedocles introduced the former, Pythagoras the latter. It was number, it was the infinite, it was idea waiting to be moved, and so on.

Why should this self-existence, the thing-in-itself, be so elusive to human understanding? It does not admit of the same detached, objective treatment that can be applied to its various forms. Mind itself is embedded in it, just as is all that the mind perceives, and this may account for inclination of many, probably the majority, of modern philosophers to treat the problem introspectively, from a subjective standpoint, and so build their systems of Idealism.

Only mediately—through sense-data, is it given to us. The forms taken by substance, in being rendered significant to mind, are conditioned in their appearance by that relationship. In a simple statement, "I see a star," of the three terms the first fact given is neither "I" nor "a star," but "see." Consider what happens; really a very complicated network of physical and physiological events has been instrumental in bringing about this mental state of mine. Modes of energy, say in waves, have emanated from the star, and through them my visual organ has undergone impression. Delicate changes, probably chemical in nature, have occurred in the cones of the retina; the fibres of the optic nerve are thereby affected and through them an influence is conveyed to those cerebral centres in the cortex with which the fibres are connected. From molecular motion there emerges a new train or series of events called a sensation, and we have got the fundamental fact of mental life. I am not forgetting that a pure sensation seldom or never occurs after infancy, owing to the accumulation of a retained background of mental facts, which help to condition subsequent experience. But the fact remains that our first experience of an object is nothing but a cluster of sense-data (*e.g.*, colour, heat, texture, shape), and their inter-relations. There is no need to follow Mr. Joad, who contends that we see, not objects, but sense-data. We do see the object, and the sense are what we see of it in the act of seeing. To say we see sense is to carry the process back indefinitely.

In our knowledge of the external world, then, we are at the mercy of sense. Sense-data are the handle, so to speak, by which we take hold of the outer world. If anyone regards that world as existing exactly as he sees it let him consider for a moment the conditions of sensation. If a number of us sit round a table and draw an object in the middle there will be so many different drawings. We cannot suppose any one of these representations to correspond with a "real" object. Or consider the effect of intervening media. A stick which appears straight when seen through air will appear in various shapes when placed in moving water. Again, it is possible to see a star which was gone out of existence before we were born, and the light rays of which are just coming through. Or the physiological conditions may have their say in the matter, colour-blindness, intoxication, etc. We may imagine a race of beings to visit this planet with sense organs differently constructed from ours. Then from the same flux of events different features might appeal to them, and so they would be led to construct a picture world different from ours, both ours and theirs being taken from the same noumenal background.

All this is not mere unfounded speculation. The

Scottish thinker who contended that things were as he saw them is now only of historical interest. He called his the system of Common Sense, which, says Russell, suffers from three defects, being vague, cocksure and contradictory, and thus requiring a little collection in philosophy. "The universe is to us what it is because our sense organs are what they are," and "our sense organs condition our awareness of externality." (*Materialism Re-stated.*) G. H. Lewes says, "Our world arises in consciousness. We are the centres to which it converges and from which it radiates." That there is an external existence which gives these appearances is the inference made from sensation by Realist philosophers—Locke, Hume, Bain, Hobbes, v. Holbach, and to-day, Russell, Broad, Moore, Alexander, to name only a few representatives, and their individual differences are not relevant here. The lucid statement given in *Materialism Re-stated* may be enlisted:—

Obviously the senses can only register the sensational effect of existence; they cannot tell us what it is like apart from sensation . . . the conclusion is reached that while an external world may be inferred, it is no more like the cluster of sensations we have relating to it, than the sensation of heat resembles the blazing coal of which it is the consequent. Thus arises the problem of the nature of ultimate existence, and the conclusion that while an external world may be inferred as the cause of our mental life, what that something is we do not and cannot know, so long as knowing is conditioned by the structure of the sense organs.

Here is a region in which a profession of Agnosticism is quite legitimate, *i.e.*, we assert the existence of something, but deny the possibility of knowledge concerning its nature. Ignorance concerning the nature of a thing must clearly rest upon the assumption that the thing exists.

"The thing exists," but what is it? The above quotation, I should explain, was used to expose Agnosticism, and not to develop any special theory of the thing which exists. So far I have mentioned writers who believe it to lie on the *other* side of the appearance, *i.e.*, on the side of the star. In a rough and ready way we call them Realists. But there are others who posit self-existence *this* side of appearance, on the side of the "I." This makes the cluster of sense-data manifestations, not of something "out there"—call it matter—but of something "in here"—call it mind. In a rough and ready way we term them Idealists. It need not be the individual mind which is responsible. (Subjective Idealism, giving Solipsism, the belief that the world is all my dream). The more popular form is Objective Idealism, wherein appearances are the ejects of a mind wider than our own and sometimes embracing ours, *e.g.*, God or the Absolute (Hegel, Bradley, Bosanquet, etc.). To-day we have, among others, Viscount Haldane, Webb, Croce, Gentile, and (the late) McTaggart.

The Realist does not deny mind any more than the Idealist denies matter. It is merely a matter of allotting the status of each. For the Realist there is, at least, a self-existence behind appearance, independent of being known. For the Idealist mind is, at least, more fundamental, and "matter" a derivative, a concept covering certain of mind's ejects.

What has science to say? That is the question it is purposed to discuss later.

G. H. TAYLOR.

Profound ignorance makes a man dogmatic. He who knows nothing thinks he can teach others what he has just now learned himself; while he who knows a great deal, can scarce imagine anyone cannot be acquainted with what he says, and speaks for this reason with more indifference.—*La Bruyère.*

Origins.

The long-period Freethought Editors of England's past are five in number; in influence incalculable. It is doing no violence to history to claim that they have changed the very form of thought, the ultimate currents of mental—and even of physical—life. Thousands of humans have been consciously influenced by perhaps "the biggest five" ever known; millions have been influenced unconsciously. There is probably not a man or woman in England or the States whose life has not been to some extent fired and quickened and improved by the unselfish and impassable efforts of these pioneers. To the student of social history there is all the magic of association in their names, all clues to freedom and to happiness. Here they are: Richard Carlile, George Jacob Holyoake, Charles Bradlaugh, William Stewart Ross ("Saladin"), George William Foote. We like names sometimes without dates or details; there is an impressiveness in bare nomenclature. Let them stand. There are scores of subsidiary names; those we have given are the chief.

There is an innate inertia, a stolid Conservatism, in human nature that resists change; it was the life-work of these heroic pioneers—are not all pioneers heroic?—to force new ideas, new mental flowers, into the stubborn soil of men's minds. The work broke most of them to pieces; but they all succeeded.

Physically delicate, Holyoake managed to survive to a hale old-time, by economy of vital means; the other four—strong men and indomitable warriors—were all broken on the world's wheel; all in the cause of humanity; all for the love of man.

To those who know the social history of the past hundred and twenty years, each of the names we have given will be a focus wherefrom radiate strands of thought and action that reach to the very ends of the world, the furthest confines of thought. It is simple truth to say that these invincible "sports" have changed the history of our race. There is no single convention of the past that to-day is unchallenged; nothing remains unquestioned; all ideas are being cast into the melting-pot of utility; and the civilization of the future will consist only of those elements that have survived the fire unscathed.

A forgotten Victorian writer, Robert Bell, puts the matter tersely and finally; writing of Napoleon, he affirms, "One little brain, that you could put into a saucer, is restless, and the whole of Europe is deluged in blood." Of our own heroes we can say, with absolute truth, "One little brain, that you could put into a saucer, is restless, and the whole world is bathed in light." That would serve as an epitaph for any one of our Freethought heroes. Is any nobler epitaph conceivable?

Consider, O fortunate and enlightened Modern, what these men did. In the face of tradition, authority, and ingrained stupidity and malevolence, they tore down from the skies the brutal and obscene phantoms adored by our priest-primed ancestors; and they enthroned on earth a figure of liberty that stretches kindly hands towards all mankind, "irrespective of race, caste, creed, sex and colour."

Of the five names in our list, that of the most versatile and gifted owner—take him for all in all—is George William Foote; as thinker, pioneer, orator, editor, writer and wit. As wit and writer he surpassed them all.

What do we Freethinkers not owe to him and his colleagues? Is there a single department of life that they have not influenced? Clib and comfortable scientists, sleek and pompous clerics, cunning and popular politicians, flourish and fatten on the mental

atmosphere that Foote helped so tremendously in creating. The bravest heretic of his day, the founder of the *Freethinker* made it possible for the publicists of the future to hereticise with impunity. The little, timid, time-serving, amateur leaders of our day mouth as novelties in thought the commonplaces of the forgotten thinker and master. For the sake of the popular leaders of to-day Foote went to prison nearly half-a-century ago; and it is no tragedy that most of those who profit by his martyrdom fail to remember him; for race-gratitude is the rarest of all human graces; the noblest possession of a chosen few. We do not expect "popular" figures to remember the forces that made their popularity possible. They know no more of the origins of freedom than a Brixton fruiterer may be expected to know of the beauties of an orange-grove. That is usually the secret of their success. It is well that only the minority should remember all that is owed to the pioneers; and of those pioneers one of the noblest was the unvanquishable and unvanquished hero who founded this paper half-a-century ago, and edited it for nearly thirty-five years—George William Foote.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

More About the Roman Catholic Holy Shop.

APART from the large scale issues of indulgences and dispensations in connexion with the crusades and the jubilees, dealt with in a previous article, Holy Shop did a brisk day-to-day trade in them. One scandal in connexion with them (to be noticed presently) brought on the Reformation, and many people think that after that the trade stopped. This was not so. In Latin countries it was hardly checked, and it is going on briskly to this day. In fact wherever Holy Shop has an establishment the trade in some form or other continues. In predominantly non-Catholic countries like England there is not such an open parade of the swindle by the confidence tricksters—though this statement requires modifying to some extent. In one sense there is no concealment but the enclave system keeps the chattels so much apart from the rest of the community that the latter takes very little notice of what goes on in the enclave or chattel-preserve. Consequently the trade though "open" in the enclave is practically concealed from the non-Catholics because these latter contemptuously do not trouble to look. Also, in such a country as England Holy Shop purveys a large amount of holiness-humbug to cover, or at least to camouflage its nefarious activities. One main lesson which the Shop learned from Luther and the Reformation was that there is a point beyond which it is risky to neglect the camouflage of "holiness." For at least two centuries before Luther the Shop had been over-weening and careless, and as a result got its knuckles well rapped. It had almost ceased to purvey any holiness or morality, and concentrated on its hell and purgatory stunt with the sole object of making the dupes pay for priests' "magic" to be exerted to the warding off of the awful doom they were afraid of, or to releasing their dead friends from the fires of purgatory. The trade had been so successful that the Shop had achieved a monopolist position, such as can scarcely be realized now. In every country in Europe it owned from one third to two thirds of the land, so that a very large portion of the population was absolutely dependent on it in the economic sense. Its political power was even greater, and all was used to satisfy a greed that was morbid and diseased. Its aim was to keep the people so abjectly ignorant and superstitious that they would fairly sweat to earn

the Shop's goodwill in regard to purgatory. The Shop still has this aim, this desire—made no mistake on this point—but for centuries previous to Luther it had achieved its aim.

We can hardly imagine now what *independent* political power the Vatican gang had in every country in Europe. The priests were an independent caste, not amenable to the laws of the land. They could (and did) commit murder or anything else and not be taken for trial before the ordinary courts. More than this, they had their own laws and their own courts, to which they could summon "offenders." These "Bishops Courts" were supposed to be founded for the discipline of morality—they were made (we condense from Froude) the instruments of the most detestable extortion. If an impatient layman spoke a disrespectful word of the clergy he was cited before the Bishop's commissary and fined. If he refused to pay he was excommunicated—no tradesman might sell him clothes or food—no friend might relieve him—no human voice might address him, under pain of the same sentence, and if he died he died like a dog and was buried like a dog. The records of some of these courts survive and show the principles on which they were worked. When a layman offended, the single object was to make him pay for it. The magistrates could not protect him. If he resisted and his friends supported him, so much the better for they were all now in the same scrape. They would be indicted in a body for heresy, and then there was nothing for it but to give way (unless they wanted burning) and compound for absolution with money. It was money, ever money.

Some idea of their power can be got from the fact that they could and would, on a flimsy pretext, order a criminal to be transferred from a civil court to their own court. The criminal might be a murderer. No matter, if he could pay to be let off they would scheme to get hold of him and—for money—let him off. Their usual pretext in such cases vividly shows up the general ignorance of the people. If a man could write his name or read a sentence from a book he qualified for "benefit of clergy" and of course the priests could decide whether he qualified or not. It would depend on how much he had.

All this power was based on the belief of the chattels that the keys of the other world were held by the priests. If a man confessed regularly to the priest, received the sacrament and was absolved, he was told, and believed, that all was well with him. If he committed sins he was prescribed penances, which could be commuted ("indulgences") for money. He might be sent to a shrine or holy well or wonder-working image, where, for due consideration, his case would be attended to. It was no use to go to a saint empty-handed. The rule of the Shop was nothing for nothing. At a chapel in Saxony was an image of the Virgin and Child. If a chattel went to it with a good handsome offering the child bowed and was gracious: if the offering was unsatisfactory it turned away its head and withheld its favours till the purse strings were untied again. There was a crucifix of the same kind at Bexley in Kent. It used to bow—when its good will was secured with a good sum of money. When the Reformation came and the police looked into the matter the images were found to be worked with wires and pulleys. The German lady was kept as a curiosity in the cabinet of the Elector of Saxony. The Bexley rod was brought up and exhibited in Cheapside, and was afterwards torn in pieces by the people. Many who read this will be familiar with the Cheapside of today. It will add interest to your perhaps daily passage along the street to think that the place where you are walking and where the twentieth century

motor buses, lorries and cars are rushing to and fro is the very place where, 400 years ago, one of the many impudent swindles of the Vatican gang had finis put to it.

Of course, in one sense, the same swindle is still going on. The superstition about purgatory and the power of the priests in regard to it is still the basic belief on which the Vatican gang works. No amount of camouflage can hide this fact. But in the centuries preceding Luther there was no attempt at camouflage. It was the other way about. The stark fact was impressed and stressed at every turn. It was the entire "religion." Its very universality, its presence everywhere, mesmerized the ignorant people. They could not get away from it. Nay, they sought it. In those days, what corresponded to our holidays at the seaside were the pilgrimages to some shrine, holy well, or other establishment of the Shop where the amusement (with very onerous tax) was purgatory-dodging. Canterbury Cathedral (Becket's shrine) was perhaps the chief place in England—and it bled the people of unbelievable sums of money. But Rome, as the head office of the Shop, was the greatest pilgrimage place of all. A volume would be required to describe all the counters and side shows of the gang's central establishment. For the period we are now at we will take some items from a book published in London in 1517. "By St. Peter's Church is a stair of twenty-nine steps, and as often as a man goes up and down it he is released from a seventh part of penance. Above the door is an image of Christ, and between the feet is one of the thirty pence for which he was sold—every look on the penny carries 1,400 years of pardon. The Churchyard was brought with the thirty pence—every time a man goes through it he has 1,500 years of pardon. In the choir, from Lady Day in Lent to Assumption a cloth made by the Virgin herself is exhibited—every look on it carries 400 years pardon.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

The *Daily Herald* reports that there is a probability of a movement amongst Roman Catholics against the broadcasting of "Agnostical talks" by the B.B.C. This will probably take the form of a boycott. The B.B.C. may probably take this as a justification of its policy of itself boycotting anything like a letting out of the truth concerning the present standing of religion and science. It will argue that if the mild comments on religion that have been permitted cause a row, what would have happened if we had been quite honest and allowed the whole truth to come out? To that it may well be replied that if the B.B.C. had had at its head a man of courage instead of a prize bigot such as Sir John Reith, and had commenced with a policy of absolute fairness of all sorts of opinion, the country might have taken it as a matter of course. The *Freethinker* gave the object lesson years ago, that to meet bigotry with timidity or apologetic concessions is to place a premium on intolerance.

But the *Daily Herald*! We are quite sure that this organ of an enlightened democracy will never run any great risk by giving any sort of news that tells against Christianity. The miraculously careful way in which it keeps news of Freethought out of its columns, and the scope it gives to all kinds of sloppy religious sentiment, is quite good evidence of this. Of course, if all its Freethinking readers were to threaten it with a boycott, as Roman Catholics are threatening the B.B.C., it might soon alter its attitude. The *Daily Herald* is run on quite safe lines—that is it is certain never seriously to offend Christian orthodoxy.

We are indebted to that great democratic paper for the important news—important because it is given pride of place on the front page, that the great Douglas Fairbanks has returned to this country and has with him 480 suits of clothes. That is an item of great interest to everybody concerned with the welfare of the human race, besides saving the same D.F. the trouble of bending his mighty intellect to the task of doing something else that will compel the attention of one of our organs of enlightened public opinion.

According to an official report there have been no murders or other crimes resulting in death in Norway since 1928. This state of affairs is ascribed to a better standard of living, less drinking of alcohol, and better education among the working people. We hope the pious will note here that good social conduct can be secured by agencies other than fear of a Big Bogey in the sky and suchlike "spiritual" expedients.

Surely, suggests a reader of a pious paper, the churches haven't fallen so low that the only way to get people to go there is to cut off every form of counter-attraction? This is a decidedly unpleasant suggestion to make. As it happened to be so close to the truth, we feel sure the cause of "true religion" is not helped a little but by making it.

A religious journal jubilantly exclaims that "the influence of Christ in China is deepening and widening week by week." This is thrilling news. But more wonderful still is the fact that someone appears to implicitly believe a fairy-tale invented by missionaries for the purpose of extracting donations from pious old ladies.

A woman reader of a religious weekly says:—
I wonder when we of the Churches shall give up our attempts to force other people to church by giving them no other resources on Sunday. When we do we shall have time for our real mission, namely, to make those churches so attractive by echoes of our Master's loving faith in and respect for ordinary men and women that the cinemas will have no chance as rivals.
This dear lady should allow the parsons to know best about their professional interests and how they must be safeguarded.

Mr. Arthur Greenwood thinks that the people of this country deserve better newspapers. We doubt if they will get them yet awhile. The production of the other kind of newspapers is too profitable. Catering for the "lowest common denomination of intelligence" is also far easier. The first step in the direction of an improvement must be a better type of newspaper proprietors and editors—the kind of men who will scorn to take their inspiration from the gutter. The breed appears to be nearly extinct in Britain at the moment.

In Italy a new law has been passed for the protection of animals. Anyone who is cruel to animals by not feeding them properly, or by working them too hard, or by giving them work for which they are unfit, will be liable to a fine of from 100 to 3,000 lire. The penalties will be doubled if animals used in games or public shows are wounded or cruelly treated. Members of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of the Sacred Heart have, however, complained that the law is too severe. These philosophers contend that animals have not an intelligent will, or a soul, and therefore cannot experience pain as man does; that animals have neither rights nor duties, and were created simply for the service of man. This is a pretty specimen of Roman Catholic reasoning. Apparently, the spiritual influence of a "Sacred Heart" is not conducive to intelligent thinking, nor is it in the direction of kindness to animals. We sincerely hope that all the philosophers of Italy are not under the influence of a "Sacred Heart."

Our humorous contemporary, the *Christian Herald*, has been remarking on the fall of nine absolute monarchies during recent years. These events, it appears, have a prophetic significance. "The overthrow of so many thrones since the Great War is a most arresting

sign of the times, and, considered in conjunction with the general unrest of the world, and the fickleness of present-day politics in almost every land, is a clear fulfilment of Scripture prophecy." King Alfonso of Spain will be glad to know this. It would seem that a thousand or two years ago, God ordained that the Spanish people would, in the twentieth century, get disgusted with Alfonso and eject him from the throne, in order to prepare the world for the second coming of Christ! Alfonso ought to be able to extract any amount of consolation from that.

In a Nonconformist weekly a writer says it has amazed him to discover recently how many uncompromising Calvinists remain even in our own time. They say it is God's purpose to save only an elect and pre-ordained company of souls, amongst whom they naturally hope to be numbered themselves, and all the rest are simply "not wanted," and fore-doomed to destruction. This, says the writer, is a comfortable view—from the point of view of the "elect." Quite so. For our part, we would regard total destruction as a far better fate than that of living for all eternity in the company of a revolting mob of self-righteous Calvinists.

Apropos of our recent remarks on Roman Catholic hatred of tolerance, we note that the Rev. William Jackson, of St. Helens, has had some experience of it. He says that during the last two years his own public platform has been assaulted eleven times, and its speakers assailed with sticks, stones, eggs, and bottles. For preaching Protestantism in Oldecastle, county Meath, he was kicked about like a football. It is worth noting that these assaults were committed in the name of a God of Love and a Prince of Peace and Goodwill to all men! One also gains some insight into the kind of ferocity that accompanied the religious wars of the past.

A Sunday-school teacher says that Sunday schools must keep pace with the modern day-schools, "where children are trained to think and act for themselves." For our part, we fancy the pace set will be rather too warm for the Sunday schools to get in step. For one thing, the Sabbath schools are engaged, not in teaching children to think for themselves, but in training them to think the same ideas as were held by some Hebrew tribes 2,000 years ago. The two kinds of training are not in the same century, one might say.

We are indebted to the *Methodist Recorder* for the following piece of information:—

Puritanism is a term variously defined and understood. To some it is a synagogue for a bigoted kill-joy spirit. This seems to us to involve an entire perversion of the facts. The essential characteristic of Puritanism is that it recognizes a clean line of demarcation between right and wrong, good and evil; black and white are two distinct colours. Secularism, on the other hand, conceives of good and evil as shading off into one another, and can see only shades of grey.

This is very illuminating. No one need be puzzled now to understand why bigotry, intolerance, persecution, and prohibitions invariably accompany Puritanism. Under the inspiration of a particularly stupid, narrow and uncultured mind, the Puritan separates things into what is good or evil, and right or wrong. And since that inspiration is believed to come from God, the Puritan conceives it his duty—a moral and righteous duty?—to compel other people to conform to his narrow notions and petty standards. The Puritan mind breeds intolerance as naturally as a swamp breeds malaria germs.

It seems strange, says a reader of a daily paper, that thousands of acres of fertile land in England should be idle while thousands of men are unemployed, and food-stuffs are imported which could be grown on the idle land. He adds:—

The principal trouble seems to be that agriculture has to find the greater part of £2,000,000 per year in the form of tithe to pay the Church of England. We would point out, also, that this tax levied by the Church of England on agriculturists is in the nature of an indirect tax on the people's food and other necessities, merely for the upkeep of one of the Christian sectarian

Churches. There is nothing whatever to justify its imposition. And its removal is a reform long overdue.

Apropos of the Sabbatarian opposition to Sunday labour in regard to amusement, a Nonconformist parson has something to say which will not endear him to the bigots. He points out that every minister and chapel-keeper works on Sunday, but they do not get a day off during the week. Westminster Abbey, Westminster Chapel, Westminster Central Hall, the City Temple, Kingsway Hall, and St. Martin-in-the-Fields are largely filled by Christians who have employed railway men, tramway men, and bus men to take them there on Sundays; and probably every church in London contains some people who have made others work carrying them to worship. Also, all who stay in hotels or lodgings make others work on Sundays. Everyone who buys a Monday newspaper makes men work on Sundays. Everyone who listens to the wireless on Sundays makes others work on that day. The aforesaid parson complains that, although these facts are known, they are ignored by those who oppose Sunday entertainments because of the Sunday labour it requires. What will people who are outside the churches think, he asks, when they read letters written by Sabbatarians who ignore such facts? Well, their conclusion will probably be much the same as ours—that unscrupulousness, dishonesty, hypocrisy, and stupidity seem to be inevitable accompaniments of rabid Sabbatarianism.

Methodism is notoriously one of the camps of kill-joys and Sabbatarianism. Occasionally, however, a little enlightenment penetrates this stronghold of narrow minds and primitive prejudices. For instance, some young Methodist ministers have publicly affirmed their belief that the general public will never be given a "right idea of Sunday," by restrictive legislation, but only by being persuaded to spontaneously partake of its rest and worship. We fancy the bigots will not enjoy being attacked in the rear by their own brothers-in-Christ. Of course, the young ministers must be very young. They obviously haven't had time to assimilate the glorious Methodist tradition concerning the moral duty of legally enforcing Puritan prohibitions and restrictions on other people. On the other hand, the young ministers may be slightly more intelligent than the rest of the Methodist clan, and are therefore a trifle more sensitive to outside pressure.

Religion before everything! The Rev. F. J. Walkley, Baptist, said at the City Temple, on April 28, that in villages Baptists were deliberately deciding to remain childless because the Anglican Church were capturing their children and bringing them up in another Church. Mr. Walkley also said that when these children grew up they could be seen "careless of discipline and authority, crowding the streets on Sundays and growing up indifferent to all the important things of life." That is quite a nice picture of the brotherly feelings developed between Christians, and also the very wholesome consequences of a genuine Christian training.

For long wicked sceptics have sneered at the power of Jesus' name, and have winked the other eye when told of the wonders worked by the power of prayer. They have also pointed to empty and half-empty churches as evidence of the waning power of faith. But these people know not of what they speak. Religion still draws the multitude as nothing else would. Here is a case. The other Sunday All Saints' Church was packed to the door. Indeed the rector said that had it not been a wet day the Church would have been overcrowded, and many turned away. One suspects that the Lord may have sent the rain in order to regulate the attendance. Thus, let the sceptic note that the people came and listened to prayers, a short sermon, and to hymns. The congregation also listened to a band "from one of the most popular dance halls in the city." But the audience put up with the intrusion of this most popular dance band, and even listened to the reading of the lesson by the manager of the Ritz Dance Hall. And the collection amounted to twenty pounds, while the rector explained that it was the largest congregation he had had for many years—ever since they

played "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" in the same church. Thus does the Lord confound the ungodly and prove their reasoning as naught.

Writing in *Discovery*, Mr. A. M. Hocart, in a description of his experiences among the natives of Solomon Island, notes that since the war the people have been much puzzled to know why a native should be hanged for killing an enemy, while a white man is rewarded for killing twenty or thirty in war. Now isn't that indicative of an uncivilized, unchristian type of mind? If he would only attend the League of Nations or a Church Congress he would soon find out that for a Solomon Islander to kill an enemy is a sign of savagery. But for a white man to kill an enemy is a sign of the highest civilization. If that explanation doesn't clear the matter up, we can only wait for him to become a Christian, then the distinction will be quite clear.

On Sunday last there was unveiled in the Cathedral of Turin the Holy Shroud—that is the veritable winding sheet in which the body of Jesus Christ was wrapped. There are dark red marks on the linen, and an impression of the body and the face. There can be no doubt of the genuineness of the article after this. It also sets at rest all question as to whether Jesus Christ ever lived or not. The exhibition of the sheet is to be followed by a "careful and reverent scientific examination." We do not quite know what a reverent scientific examination means, probably it means looking at it with one's eyes shut. But it must be awfully poor fooling Christians of this type—like stealing coppers from infants.

A writer in the *Daily Telegraph* says that "no one is civilized till he can take a joke against himself." We agree, and would point out that religion is the only thing that cannot stand a joke against itself. Moreover it is the only thing in the whole country that requires a law to prevent people joking about religion. God was once used to back up the police force. Now it is the policemen who is used to back up God. Times have changed.

The spirit of true-blue Puritanism still lives among the Nonconformists. One of these quaint creatures declares that pubs are less morally and spiritually dangerous than the cinemas. He exclaims: "The cinema is an unholy chamber of imagery, degrading and devastating." How deliriously exhilarating our cinemas, theatres, paintings, scriptures, and books would be, if only the Puritans were permitted to control such things! As there are so many things on earth that he objects to, we hope he will discern nothing objectionable in heaven. He will be lucky not to do so; for heaven, we presume, caters for all kinds of Christian taste and culture.

Under a heading of "Humbug About Charity"—"Why Cinema proprietors want Sunday opening," the *Melbourn Times* prints the following excerpt from a speech by Mr. C. P. Metcalfe:—

The charity condition in the Bill is all wrong. If there is a demand for Sunday cinemas then the people who cater for it are entitled to receive the profit arising from their work, just as the people who open shops or cafes on the Sabbath take the profits they earn. Why should the cinema trade be singled out in this way, and told that they could only open on a Sunday if they gave a contribution to charity?

The Rev. A. C. Lamb, a missionary of West Africa, laments that there are many difficulties as regards presenting the Gospel in Mandiland. The religious difficulty is that the people are under the influence of native priests and are dominated by fear; and pagan religion and Mohammedanism are both fighting for the souls of the people. This is indeed disheartening. What the missionaries should do is to try to persuade God to revive his old Yahweh instincts and smite the priests of the rival creeds out of existence. There would be no lack of Christian converts after that.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

[We regret that owing to pressure we are obliged to hold over until next week a letter from Dr. Lynch in reply to his critics, and also letters from several other correspondents. These will appear in our next issue.—ED.]

C. J. WILSON.—The discussion over the character of Sir William Orpen's picture is like most other outcries of that character, just ridiculous. The fear is, of course, that people may take Christianity for what it is.

S. ARMSTRONG.—We think our plan is the best with regard to the Jubilee Double Number. As you say, if we had doubled the price we should have made a profit. That is, we imagine one of the main reasons for the issuing of double numbers. But in the long run we fancy our plan may result in more readers, and that is the more important thing of the two.

We beg to acknowledge £1 from C. B. Little and 10s. from J. Lane, and £5 from G. Hollanby towards cost of publishing Jubilee issue of *Freethinker*.

D. CLARKE.—Mr. Heaford will, we believe, contribute a fuller account of Ferrer and his work in an early issue of the *Freethinker*. Have not yet recovered, but there is nothing to worry about.

E. GRAVES.—Thanks. Next week.

W. HEAFORD.—We had made up our mind to do as you suggest. But we cannot start till September. The *Freethinker* was not a weekly until September, 1881.

H. A. SPEED. Obligated for news. Will be used next week.

R. D. VOSS.—Pleased to have your appreciation of our work, even though you may over-estimate its value.

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

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

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

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

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.

Sugar Plums.

The Jubilee Supplement, given with this issue, is so printed, that by cutting it in two readers will have two complete papers. One of eight pages giving a history of the paper, and another of equal size consisting of a reprint of No. 1. We fancy all old readers will value this.

The preparation of this Jubilee issue of the *Freethinker* has involved considerable labour, and we hope that our friends will see that it has as wide a publicity as possible. The general press is far too fearful of the influence of the *Freethinker* to help in this direction, so we are thrown back upon the good-will of our friends. But the present seems to be an admirable occasion for making a bid for new readers. That is the very best kind of help we can receive, and if only twenty-five per cent of existing subscribers secured a new reader before May had ended we should be able to do many things we are at present unable to do.

The labour of preparation on which we have just remarked does not refer to the mere writing, although that is considerable, but to its preparation. It involved going through the whole of the fifty volumes of the *Freethinker*, besides consulting many other publications, and when that had been done there came the much greater task of deciding what was to be left out. We had limited our sketch to sixteen columns, when we really

needed about forty. In the end we had to decide on a bird's-eye view, and have left many things unchronicled. Perhaps, an occasion may arise when we may refer to these later.

We should much like to have dwelt upon the names of many who did good service to the *Freethinker* during its career. Particularly we should like to have given a sketch of Robert Forder, who for many years acted as unofficial publisher of the paper, and who also did service as writer and lecturer. Forder was an East Anglian, who walked to London from Yarmouth in 1858, and for some years worked in Woolwich Dockyard. Later he became interested in Radical and Freethinking reforms, and was for many years Secretary of the National Secular Society during the years of its hardest struggles. His shop in Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, has been pulled down for many years, but while it was there, and while he was there, it was a gathering point for all sorts of advanced thinkers, and an emporium for all kinds of heretical and unpopular literature. He was also a strong advocate of Malthusianism in days when its advocacy meant something different from what it means to-day. But he helped to make Freethought popular, and "respectable" enough for a great many to advocate it to-day with absolute safety. We have the pleasantest recollections of our own intercourse with Robert Forder.

By the time this issue is in the hands of its readers, the new edition of Mr. Cohen's *Christianity, Slavery, and Labour*, will be ready for sale. We have no hesitation in saying that it is the most complete treatise on the subject yet issued, and should be in the hands of every Freethinker, and as many Christians as possible. There is also a very striking illustration by Mr. H. Cutner of the slave-ship *Jesus*.

We are asked to announce that Mrs. M. J. Wadham, of 13 Bishops Road, Stamford Hill, Durban, South Africa, would be pleased to receive communications from readers of the *Freethinker*, or members of the N.S.S. in the district.

The new Brighton Branch of the N.S.S. is getting into action and circulating a deal of literature. The local Secretary appears to be very keen and enthusiastic, and is ready to supply all district Freethinkers not already members of the N.S.S. with forms of membership. Will those with sufficient interest in the movement write to Mr. J. T. Byrne, 188 Elm Grove, Brighton, Sussex.

The Perth Branch of the N.S.S. is taking prompt and energetic action against what looks suspiciously like Christian bigotry in the Town Council, in granting permission to hold propagandist meetings on the Inches to other organizations, and refusing it to the local N.S.S. Branch. We may return to this next week.

Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture in the West Ham district for a week, commencing to-day, Sunday, outside the Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E., at 7 p.m.

We would again remind delegates and others attending the Annual Conference at Liverpool, on May 24, and requiring hotel accommodation, or Conference luncheon, to make their requirements known to the General Secretary, at headquarters, or the local Secretary, Mr. S. R. A. Ready, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool. In another part of this issue will be found a communication from the Liverpool Branch offering a hearty invitation to Freethinkers to attend the Conference. All who accept may be assured of a warm welcome. There is also to be an excursion on the Monday to West Kirby. Will all who wish to take part in this be good enough to notify the General Secretary as early as possible. Mr. Cohen will accompany the party.

We are pleased to announce that the first edition of *God and the Universe* is nearly sold out. The work was published at the end of February. We have the second edition well in hand. All readers who have not yet secured their copy, and are desirous of a first edition, are requested to write at once to save disappointment.

The Glory of Freethought.

EVERY Freethinker in this country, old or young, should join with us to-day in celebrating the Jubilee of the only weekly Freethought journal in this country—the *Freethinker*, Edited by that fine champion of Freethought, Mr. Chapman Cohen. Its life has been one of great stress and turmoil, but it has come through all its trials and troubles triumphantly, and has long established itself as the most fearless and outspoken weekly journal in Great Britain. Its one great aim has been to assail and destroy so far as possible, all forms of religious superstition; and in its fifty years of life it has done much towards the modification and change of the religious belief of the majority of the intelligent people of this country. Soon after Mr. Foote became the Editor of the *Freethinker* he invited me to write for its columns, and I then found myself in company with my old friend Mr. William Heaford as one of its frequent contributors. Previous to this I had become very intimate with Mr. Foote, and he frequently invited me to his house. I found him a very charming personality with wide reading and great culture, and we passed some very delightful evenings together. Later I went to see him at his office at Clerkenwell Green, and there I had the good fortune to meet Mr. Joseph Mazzini Wheeler and Mr. W. P. Ball, who were on the permanent staff of the *Freethinker*. They were both very learned gentlemen, of vast and varied reading on all sorts of subjects, especially science, philosophy and religion, and I felt highly honoured in making their acquaintance. Mr. Foote, in addition to being a fine writer, was one of the most eloquent and distinguished lecturers that ever graced a Freethought platform.

Every week these gentlemen wrote some scathing criticisms of the Bible and of the chief tenets of the Christian Faith, that were calculated to disturb the equanimity of the priests and parsons of this country as well as many of their parishioners. And in these days—fifty years ago—religious bigotry and intolerance prevailed in every direction.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the Great Baptist Orator of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, addressed a vast multitude of credulous Christians every Sunday, and proclaimed in lurid language the horrors of hell that awaited unbelievers of the Christian Faith.

Not only Nonconformist Fundamentalists, but clergy of the Church of England were equally strong on hell open to unbelievers, and I myself heard two clergymen deliver sermons in which they declared that there was only one way to escape the horrors of eternal torment, and that was to "believe in the Lord Jesus and him crucified." In 1880 Charles Bradlaugh was returned as one of the Members of Parliament for Northampton. As an Atheist, when he went to claim his seat, he asked to be allowed to affirm, but was not allowed to do so; he then said he was prepared to obey the law and take the oath, but he was still not allowed, although he assured the House that if he took the oath it would be binding upon him in as full a degree as any affirmation; but still he was kept out of his seat. At last he took the oath in defiance of the House, and took his seat, only to be sent to the clock tower for his pains. Later he gave notice that he would take his seat and was prevented on the afternoon of August 3, 1881, from entering the precincts of the House by twelve stalwart police officers, and in a brutal struggle, in which they cruelly ill-treated him, tearing his coat and bashing his hat and otherwise injuring him, in his attempt to claim his rights.

Mr. Foote and other Freethinkers were grievously annoyed and hurt over this treatment of their trusted leader, and from that date they began to write some very strong satirical articles in the *Freethinker* ridiculing the main teachings of the Christian Faith. They followed this some time after, by issuing every week comic pictures illustrating the absurd miracles of the Bible—of the New Testament as well as the Old. This enraged the Christian bigots very much, and on July 11, 1882, Mr. G. W. Foote, the Editor, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, the publisher, and Mr. Kemp, the salesman, were brought up before the Lord Mayor and charged with Blasphemy. I wrote some sketches in the *Freethinker* about that time, and so did my friend, Mr. Heaford, but I am not quite sure whether either of us were mentioned in the indictment. The three defendants were brought before the Criminal Court at Old Bailey, but as Mr. H. Cutner has recently given a very accurate and vivid descriptive account of their trials in this journal, there is no need for me to refer to them further here.

While Mr. Foote was in Holloway Prison serving his twelve months imprisonment the *Freethinker* continued to be published under the Editorship of Dr. Aveling, and I continued to write for it. I wrote a series of articles with the strong title of "Christianity a Degrading Religion," in which I endeavoured to show that no self-respecting person could allow an innocent person to die in his place for sins he had committed, and even if he did, the sins having been once committed, could not be undone, or blotted out. Afterwards I had the articles reprinted as a pamphlet.

A few years after Mr. Foote came out of prison Mr. Chapman Cohen joined the staff of the *Freethinker*, and for many years before Mr. Foote's death wrote every week articles of such great merit as to establish a reputation for himself as a very accomplished critic and a profound thinker on philosophy and religion. Among the other contributors at this time were our friend "Mimmermus," and Mr. Francis Neale. Mr. Charles Watts, Senr., who used to call me his "pupil," and from whom I received great encouragement in my work joined later, and Mr. J. T. Lloyd joined a little later still. During these years the influence of the *Freethinker* increased, the pictures were discontinued, and the circulation greatly enhanced. In 1915 Mr. Foote became seriously ill and died; and afterwards Mr. Cohen became Editor, and from that time forward, with the assistance of his accomplished little army of contributors, he has carried on the work as Editor and writer with great distinction and success. As no doubt Mr. Cohen will tell the story of his long association with this journal in this Jubilee Number, I will only add that since Mr. Cohen has been Editor he has written many articles that have won the admiration of Freethinkers from all parts of the country and abroad; and as President of the National Secular Society has proved himself a distinguished and worthy successor of the two brilliant men who preceded him in that office. And, further, the great lead he gave us all by his splendid articles on "The Education Question" and "The Blasphemy Laws," won for him our ardent admiration and thanks. During the fifty years of life of the *Freethinker*, it has gone into thousands of homes, and the glory of Freethought has been exemplified in the fact that its readers have learnt by its articles the art of reasoning and the art of judging from a variety of facts on all kinds of subjects, from religion, science, philosophy and art down to the common affairs of daily life, which they could not have acquired by the perusal of any other weekly journal before the public.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Now for the Centenary.

AFTER fifty years of strenuous battling with the bigots and superstitionists, and much mud-slinging from a motley assortment of religious cranks and pious freaks, like the Christian Evidence gangsters, whose sole record was and is one long venomous trail of insults vomited by them against all those who had turned their backs upon the creed "once [too often] delivered to the saints," the *Freethinker*, which sprang from the fertile brain of George William Foote, stands forth, to-day, as a perpetual monument to his genius. For half a century the Freethought crusade against the Cross and its implications—abject stupid faith, fear of an angry God, and a lively dread of a brutal or boresome immortality either in hell, or in its anti-type—heaven, has been incessantly waged in the lively and enlightening pages of the *Freethinker*, with the result that, in the interval of time between the first issue of the *Freethinker* and the fiftieth commemoration of its first appearance, the broadening tone of public opinion concerning religion, as evidenced by the growth of practical indifference to religion in all its various kaleidoscopic forms and phases, has justified the initial launching of the paper whose "apotheosis" to-day we are celebrating. It may, I venture to predict, be safely asserted, that when the centenary of the birth of the *Freethinker* comes round, the amount of real and earnest virile belief in the Christian religion will have finally become so attenuated—fine by degrees and beautifully less—amongst the bulk of the intelligent people in England and throughout the world, that it will inevitably present itself to the saddened eyes of the "unco guid" as but a pale and insignificant simulacrum of its antient virile, piety, and sanctimonious beauty. For there has been, in the last half century, a very remarkable slump in hell-fire stock; the allurements even of heaven have visibly and deplorably declined in attractiveness; and even an Archbishop quite recently has been warning and assuring us that we can have "too much God," and can even afford to drop his divine society when more serious business—money-making, or even, it may be, love-making—put in their claim for our exclusive attention.

The advent and influence of the *Freethinker* has, in fact, been "a boon and a blessing to men" in a very real and practical sense. Hitherto man has surrendered too much of his time, and lavished too much of his attention, upon the things of heaven—whatever they may be—and has been far too sparing of his energies and intellect upon pushing the practical business of making this world a world fit for man to live in.

This iniquitous practical monopolization of human life and its energies in all the past history of mankind by the craft and compulsion of kings and priests, with the guilty and cowardly compliance of politicians and their underlings, aided by the imposed ignorance and superstition of our handcuffed and tongue-tied ancestors and immediate forbears, has got to stop its fearful depredations upon the peace, the happiness, and the intellectual independence of mankind. I have no hesitation in declaring that the only policy that is safe for us to press and pursue in the next fifty years of our national and international life is precisely that ethic and method of anti-Christian attack which the good old and ever to be loved *Freethinker* made its own from the very first. It has never pretended to condone and uphold the stupidities of the so-called sacred creed; it never turned the other cheek to the bullying snifter; it never grovelled before the altar, and crouched before it for the purpose of eating and digesting an artificially created duplicate of the

omni-present God of Christianity, presented in the shape of a wafer or a piece of consecrated bread, miraculously transposed by the incantations of a priest into the veritable body and blood of Christ; and last but not least, never has it smoothed and composed its features so as to denote its acceptance of absurdities as solemn and sacred realities; and never has it refrained from laughing at stupid solemnities when presented to us as holy and venerable verities. For these sins of commission and omission the *Freethinker* has been hated by the mealy-mouthed utterers of insane inanities; its founder George William Foote, for the sole crime of refusing to believe and revere a lie, or a whole congeries of lies, as embodied in the Christian creed, was herded with thieves and criminals of hideous character in a Christian prison, where he stood out as the only honest man in the awful crowd of malefactors—one hundred per cent Christians.

Foote and the *Freethinker* will, I hope, never cease, to live in the love and affection of those who knew him, as I did, as a man of matchless eloquence—a man who lavished his genius lovingly and ungrudgingly upon the pages of his paper. I venture to hope that the Freethought spirit in the coming generations will not let the *Freethinker* die when Foote's successor ends his present editorial labours. Before we of the early *Freethinker* days pass on we ought so to stimulate the enthusiasm of our younger brethren that they will take good care to ensure that the foundations will be laid, decade by decade, for the celebration, fifty years hence, of the Centenary of the *Freethinker*, so that the world shall be better, and safer, and sweeter for the successors of Foote and Cohen.

To do this we must make more Freethinkers every year, and inspire ourselves, both young ones and old ones, with the fervour and courage and splendid idealism of the heroes and worthies who have gone before. Let us, then, march on to victory. The cause for which Bradlaugh laboured, for which Foote suffered his twelve months' martyrdom, will, surely, not fail to find its devotees and emulators.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

COHEN'S EPIGRAMS.

Opinions, by Chapman Cohen. Pioneer Press, 1931. Price 3s. 6d. net.

Mr Cohen, editor of the *Freethinker*, has published a book of a kind rare in the English language. It consists entirely of epigrams and apophthegms, many of which are limited to one sentence, while hardly any exceed half a page. In France this has long been a favourite form of literature, and some of the best authors, like Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, and Chamfort, have found it their natural mode of expression. We congratulate Mr. Cohen on having enriched English literature with this excellent little book, which packs a world of wisdom into 143 well printed pages. There is an excellent portrait of the author.—From "The New Generation."

MAN, NATURE AND GOD.

Given faith that conscious Will is at the helm of human affairs, then a definite attitude must result before the spectacle of humanity; but if the mind be built to accept only unconscious Law as controller, the outlook differs and a resolute trust may develop in man, an ultimate arbiter of his own destiny. Neither assumption can be proved, or disproved; but the relation of a controlling, guiding Spirit to the Universe lies open to doubt; its subjection to law does not; and building on this latter certainty, I discovered, in the evolution of the moral principle, full cause for trust and for hope.—Foreword to "Children of Men," Eden Phillpotts.

The National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

WASHINGTON HOTEL, LIME STREET, LIVERPOOL.

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 1931.

AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.
Motion by Bethnal Green, Chester-le-Street, Liverpool, Nelson, West Ham, and South London Branches :
"That Mr. Chapman Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
5. Election of Secretary.
Motion by the Executive :—
"That Mr. R. H. Rosetti be appointed Secretary."
6. Election of Treasurer.
Motion by the Bethnal Green, North London and West Ham Branches :—
"That Mr. C. C. Quinton be re-elected Treasurer."
7. Election of Auditor.
Messrs. H. Theobald and Co., the retiring auditors, are eligible and offer themselves for re-election.
8. Nominations for Executive.
SCOTLAND.—Mr. James Neate and Mr. F. A. Hornbrook, nominated by Glasgow Branch.
WALES.—Mr. T. Gorniot and Mr. A. C. Rosetti, nominated by Swansea Branch.
N.E. GROUP.—Miss K. B. Kough, nominated by Newcastle and Chester-le-Street Branches.
Mr. A. B. Moss, nominated by South Shields Branch.
N.W. GROUP.—Mr. H. R. Clifton and Mrs. E. Venton, nominated by Liverpool and Manchester Branches.
S.W. GROUP.—Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook, nominated by Plymouth Branch.
MIDLAND GROUP.—Mrs. C. G. Quinton (Junr.) and Mr. J. G. Dobson, nominated by Birmingham Branch.
SOUTH LONDON.—Mr. H. Preece, nominated by South London Branch.
NORTH LONDON.—Mr. L. Ebury, nominated by North London Branch.
EAST LONDON.—Mr. H. Silvester, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.
WEST LONDON.—Mr. B. A. Le Maine, nominated by West London and Fulham Branches.
9. Motion by the Executive :—
"That this Conference desires to offer its heartiest congratulations to the *Freethinker* on the completion of its fiftieth year of publication; it desires to put on record its appreciation of the manner in which it has placed its columns at the service of the National Secular Society, and its consciousness of the debt which Freethought in this country owes to its bold and unwavering championship of freedom of thought, speech and publication."
10. Motion by Liverpool and West Ham Branches :—
"That this Conference protests against the attitude of the Government as expressed in the Sunday Performance (Regulation) Bill, which rather than extending the existing freedom with regard to the rational enjoyment of a day of rest, tends to strengthen the hands of Sabbatarians, and urges upon all who seek the mental, moral, and physical welfare of the people to agitate for the repeal of all restrictions upon the free use of Sunday."
11. Motion by South London Branch :—
"That the Immediate Practical Objects be amended in such ways as to make them acceptable to all Freethinkers."
12. Motion by West Ham Branch :—
"That in view of the general dissatisfaction with the wireless service on Sundays, this Conference suggests to all holders of a wireless licence that persistent pressure should be brought to bear on the B.B.C. by letter or otherwise, to provide an alternative programme during such times as the religious service is being transmitted, and failing this provision it suggests that a plebiscite of licence holders in order to test feeling on this subject."
13. Motion by G. H. Taylor :—
"That this Conference by recognizing the importance of a press campaign and the work done by this means when there is concerted and persistent effort, recommends that a publicity committee be established in connexion with every branch of the N.S.S. with a view to correcting all misrepresentations which occur in the public press."
14. Motion by Miss Wilson :—
"That each representative on the Executive shall furnish when there is represented with a written report of the business transacted."
15. Motion by West London Branch :—
"That rule 7, clauses 1 and 2 in the general constitution be revised so as to permit each Branch having twenty-five or more members to appoint one member on the Executive."
16. Motion by West London Branch :—
"That where necessary the Executive be empowered to defray the travelling expenses of one delegate from each Branch to the Annual Conference."
17. Motion by Mr. L. M. W. Easterbrook :—
"That this Conference deplors the lack of vitality amongst large numbers of Freethinkers in the country, and calls upon the Executive to arrange for an intensive and extensive propaganda that will serve to awaken a determined effort to eliminate the power of superstition, organized and unorganized, from the lives of the people."
18. Motion by Executive :—
"That in view of the approaching centenary of the birth of Charles Bradlaugh (September 26, 1833) this Conference is of opinion that steps should be taken to celebrate that event in a striking and suitable manner, and authorises the Executive to consider the best way in which this could be done, and report progress at the 1932 Conference."
19. Motion by Birmingham Branch :—
"That the place of the Annual Conference be voted upon and decided six months before the date thereof."
20. Motion by Fulham Branch :—
"That in the opinion of this Conference it is advisable that a standing committee be formed, composed of representatives of various bodies who are willing to co-operate in the promotion of any of the objects of the National Secular Society, so that political emphasis may be given to the securing of those objects."
21. Motion by Fulham Branch :—
"That the attention of Branches should be directed to the importance of securing that all libraries and other public institution be supplied with copies of the *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature."
22. Motion by Liverpool, West Ham, West London and Chester-le-Street Branches :—
"That this Conference deplors the policy of successive governments in their continuously attempted bargaining with the rival Christian sects on the question of religious teaching in the schools; it strongly condemns the present Government in connexion with the suspension of one of its own educational measures, through fear of the religious vote, and again reiterates its conviction that no solution to the educational problem will be found until all schools receiving State-support are restricted to subjects defined as "secular" by the Education Code, and further urges that the Executive press the Secular Solution upon this public by every means within its power."
23. Motion by Fulham Branch :—
"That this Conference regrets that no step has yet been taken towards the formation of a class for the training of speakers."

The Conference will sit in the Washington Hotel, Lime Street: Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; Afternoon Session, 2.30 to 4.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the door; Members, the current card of membership. Only Members of the Society are entitled to be present. A Luncheon for delegates and visitors at 1 p.m., price 3s., will be provided in the Washington Hotel. During the Afternoon Sessions, papers will be read on items of Freethought interest, followed by discussion.

By order of the Executive,
CHAPMAN COHEN, *President*.
R. H. ROSETTI, *Secretary*.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SUNDAY.

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Maurice Whitlow of the Lord's Day Society, I would say that "the purely religious argument" is that Sunday is a "holy" day, alleged to have been commanded by God for man's observance as a day on which all work should cease and religious exercises be observed. That is the primary reason for the existence of the Lord's Day Observance Society, whose business is to prevent Sunday from being spent in any other than a religious manner.

Nobody accuses all religious people of cant and insincerity for advocating such a point of view, or for believing that a religious Sunday is "best." But when an attempt is made to gain support for the observance—compulsory observance—of Sunday as a "holy" day, by professing great concern for the worker's rest and health, they are justly accused of cant and insincerity.

As regards the "practical help" declared to have been given by the L.D.O.S. to the hardressers, musicians, actors, and retail traders towards getting one free day in seven, would it have been forthcoming if such persons had declared in favour of any day in the week as a rest day? I suggest that the "practical help" was offered primarily because it would assist the Society to perpetuate the Sabbath superstition.

In conclusion, Sabbath laws were inflicted on the community for the benefit of religion, the churches, and the parsons, and not out of any concern for the people's leisure and health. To seek, as the Lord's Dayers seek, to gain support for the enforcement of such laws on the latter grounds, is canting and hypocritical.

D.P.S.

SUNDAY AND BIGOTRY.

SIR,—I am afraid that Mr. Whitlow's definition of bigotry as "dogmatic assertion made by someone with whom we disagree," is hardly adequate. If bigotry meant no more than this, then few Freethinkers would have any serious objections to it. Let me illustrate.

Brown asserts dogmatically that it is wicked to go to a cinema on Sundays; that he thinks everyone else should regard it as wicked too. I assert the contrary. As far as dogmatic assertion goes there is nothing to choose between us, and according to Mr. Whitlow's definition, we are both guilty of bigotry. But are we? Let us see.

When Brown gets into power his convictions lead him to frame a law, which he enforces, prohibiting anyone from going to the cinema on Sundays, whether they want to or not.

Later on, however, I get into power. There are two alternatives open to me. Either I could retaliate upon Brown and make it compulsory for him to go to a cinema on Sundays; or I could frame a law leaving it free to anyone to go or stay away as he might choose.

Mr. Whitlow knows perfectly well which of these two alternatives I would choose to legalize—since I am a Freethinker. But what I would like him to answer is: Is Brown, or am I, the bigot?

C. S. FRASER.

MARX OR KINGSLEY.

SIR,—A correspondent, K.E.N., in the *Freethinker*, March 22, states that Karl Marx did not coin the phrase: "Religion is the opium of the people." And quotes from Kingsley's *Politics for the People*, 1848: "We have used the Bible as if it were an opium does, etc." The statement from Marx can be found in the *French and German Year Book*, 1844.

It was in an article called "Introduction to a Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of the Right."

It will be noted that Marx preceded Kingsley by four years.
W. C. ELLIOTT.

N.S.S. ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 1931.

SIR,—On behalf of the members of the Liverpool (Merseyside) Branch, we extend to all Branches and members of the National Secular Society a cordial invitation to Liverpool for the 1931 Annual Conference.

This yearly gathering of Freethinkers from all parts of the country, besides being an important item in the Society's programme, has two especially attractive features—the re-union of friends, and social intercourse for the many workers in the cause who, owing to their widely separated localities, are debarred from meeting.

In addition, this year marks a very outstanding event in the history of Freethought in this country; the *Freethinker* attains its Jubilee, and we feel that such an occurrence should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. Hence we hope that this Conference will be one of the largest and most successful ever held, and that it will help to stimulate Freethought activity, not only in Liverpool, but throughout the British Isles. Help us to make a *Freethinker* Jubilee Conference by being one of those present.

We in Liverpool will do all we can to give everybody a very pleasant time: the fraternal side is not being overlooked, and will include the reception at the Washington Hotel on the Saturday evening, and an outing to West Kirby on Whit Monday. Let us remind everybody that Liverpool is fairly centrally situated. With greetings on behalf of the Branch.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD, *President*.

S. R. A. READY, *Secretary*.

Liverpool (Merseyside) Branch N.S.S.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): Mr. E. C. Saphin will lecture at 3.15 p.m.

FINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—Mr. L. Ebury will lecture at 11.15 a.m.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolde Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Saturday, 7.30, Messrs. A. Frank, F. Day, E. Bryant.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Stonhouse Street, Clapham Road): 7.30, Mrs. E. Grout—"Miracles." Wednesday, May 13, Rushcroft Road, Brixton, 8 p.m., Mr. L. Ebury. Friday, May 15, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, 8 p.m., Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): Mr. George Whitehead will lecture at 7 p.m. Lectures in West Ham from Monday till Friday will be announced at Sunday's meeting.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Every Wednesday at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; every Thursday at 7.30, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and J. J. Darby; 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.

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LECTURE NOTICES - cont.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith) : 3.30, Messrs. Bryant and C. Tuson.

INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station) : 11.15, Mrs. Ursula Roberts, B.A.—“The Place of Pity in the Good Life.”

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road) : 7.0, R. Dimsdale Stocker—“Can Faith in Man Suffice Us?”

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.) : 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—“Fresh News from Chicago.”

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Outing to Wrens Nest. Meet at top of Livery Street, 2.15, or at Dudley Castle, Town Gate, at 3.15.

COLNE.—Monday, bottom of Spring Lane, 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Outdoor meetings will be held as follows: Sundays, Queen's Drive (opposite Baths); Mondays, Beaumont Street; Wednesdays, Waste Ground adjoining Library, Knotty Ash; Thursdays, Corner of High Park Street and Park Road. All at 7.30 p.m. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale. Mr. Whitehead will commence in Liverpool on Saturday, May 16.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market) : 7.30, Mr. R. Atkinson—A Lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Wednesday, May 13, at 8.0 p.m., in Bigg Market, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

NELSON.—Tuesday, Bradley Road, 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton.

SUNDERLAND.—Sunday, May 10, at 7.0 p.m., Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

TRAWDEN.—Friday, near Post Office, 7.45, Mr. J. Clayton.

WINGATE.—Saturday, May 9, at 7.0 p.m., Mr. J. T. Brighton A Lecture.

INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street) 7.30, A Lecture.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : The Annual Dinner will be held on Sunday, May 17. At 2.30 Lecture in the above rooms. 5.30 dinner will be served at the Empress Hotel. Social in the evening. Will all intending to be present kindly notify the Secretary at once. Tickets 2s. 6d.

FAIRSWORTH.—Secular Sunday School, 3.0 and 6.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

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