

MORE ABOUT THE CHURCH IN SPAIN.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. LI.—No. 22

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 1931

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

More About the Church in Spain.

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The first open move in the implied war between the new Spanish Republic and the Church took the form of a 4,000 word Pastoral Letter from the Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain. Publicly the King had promised to abide by the result of the June elections, and had advised his followers to continue meanwhile to support the new Government. Certain members of the Government now claim to have in their possession proofs that the King has been plotting with Monarchists and Churchmen all the time, and recently certain possessions of the King have been taken over by the Government on the ground that the King had been using his position for purposes of profit. It may be remembered by some that this charge of speculation was brought against him by the novelist Ibanez some time ago. The *Universe* states that direct orders have been received from the Vatican, and an indication of the nature of these orders is given in the Pastoral alluded to. In this Letter the Archbishop, after expressing gratitude for the devotion shown by the King to the Church, makes a direct appeal to Monarchists and all Roman Catholics by saying that the Church cannot surrender any of its rights, to the followers of the Church. He says:—

You may dissent concerning the form of Government, or on matters of purely human interest. But when the rights of religion are in peril, it is absolutely essential that Catholics should unite in order to secure the election of those candidates for the Constituent Assembly who offer a full guarantee that they will defend the rights of the Church and the social order.

No one who remembers what are the claims of the Church, even in this country, will be in any doubt as to what this means in such a country as Spain. The Roman Church everywhere says quite plainly that an

education that is not permeated with its teaching is not education at all. In Italy it has protested against Protestants being permitted to carry on their propaganda, and has charged Mussolini with a breach of the Concordat. In Spain it is protesting against anything of the kind being allowed there. In Spain it has hitherto enjoyed special privileges and rights, and it is quite certain that any attempt to put the religious orders on the same level as other organizations will be resisted as an attack on the rights of the Church, just as an attempt to secularize the State will be resisted as an attack on the social order. By education the Archbishop means Roman Catholic education, by morality he means Roman Catholic morality, by the rights of the Church he means that in the midst of a changed constitution the only thing that shall remain unchanged is his Church. That is to continue as it is, and for this to be so other things must continue as they are. It is not surprising that the leaders of the Revolution treated this manifesto of the Archbishop as an attack on the Republic. The people left no doubt as to their understanding of it. Both would have been arrant fools had they understood it otherwise. There is before every one the example of Malta, where the Church threatened with excommunication any Catholic who disobeyed orders as to voting; there is also the example in this country of the sheep-like way in which Roman Catholic voters are driven to the polls by the priests; we saw in the House of Commons, over the Education Bill, that Roman Catholic members will obey their priests first of all, and finally, we have the explicit assurance of Mr. Hillaire Belloc that when the Church pronounces a decision, individual opinions as to right and wrong count for nothing at all. The manifesto was a veiled declaration of war on the Republic.

* * *

Royalists and Revolutionists.

On May 11 the hitherto peaceful, even polite course of the revolution was broken by reports of riots in Madrid. Some ten or twelve religious institutions were broken into and set on fire by the crowd, and some of the *Morning Post* writers, the chief mouthpiece of the wildest stories of religious massacres in Russia, and which certainly caters for the most hopeless mass of educated ignorance in the country, began to speak of Atheistic and Communistic outrages. As to the Communists, Mr. J. H. Greenwell, the special correspondent of the *Daily Express* says he does not believe there are a hundred Communists in the whole of Spain. And while there is a strong anti-clerical feeling in the party, and, I hope, a fair number of Atheists, there is no Atheistic movement there. One day I hope there will be, but it is not there yet. The education of the Spanish people has not yet reached a suffi-

ciently high point for that. In any case it is not very flattering to the population of a country—the same picture has been drawn of this one—that a mere handful of Communists are so supremely intelligent that they are able to twist the rest of the people, who are by contrast hopelessly idiotic, this way or that way at their pleasure. The *Daily Telegraph* is probably nearer the mark when it says:—

It is at least clear that Monarchists in Madrid had been encouraged by the Government's tolerant temper to go about organizing their forces with an openness which could easily be interpreted as defiance.

Mr. Greenwell also says:—

The Monarchists in Paris held a meeting and decided to start trouble. An offensive was launched against Spanish securities, but the peseta was not touched. Provocative agents at the same time were instructed to arrange demonstrations—not demonstrations in favour of the Monarchy, but against the Republic as being too lax.

The plan here is quite plain. If outside sympathy for the Monarchy and the Church is to be excited, there must be riots and trouble in Spain. The Revolution was too peaceful. This was to be corrected by Monarchists and Jesuits joining in fanning resentment against the Republic on the ground that it was too lenient towards both the Church and the Monarchy. If that could be done and sustained the way might be made clear for the recall of Alfonso in order to rescue his unhappy country from the lawlessness and terror in which the revolution had plunged it. This it may be pointed out is an old trick in Spain. It was fairly well proved that many of the outrages that occurred just before the time of Ferrer, outrages that were ostensibly the work of the Reformers, were actually fomented and carried out by some of the religious orders. And in the present instance, even though not quite successful, the riots might be successful enough to frighten people to vote at the forthcoming elections for the return of the King.

When Alfonso was driven out he was treated with the utmost courtesy, and his family were even permitted to take a considerable quantity of "loot" with them, at least so ran the reports. The behaviour of the people amid all the excitement was admirable. Those shops that had closed in fear of disturbances were ordered to open, and no harm was experienced, and no cases of robbery occurred. Mr. Greenwell, who was on the spot, says that in the burning of the Convents there was not a single case of robbery, and not a single instance of a nun being ill-treated or insulted. I would like those who are inclined to talk of "outrage" to see if they can find a single instance in the history of Europe when the anger of a religious mob has been excited against others, and where there has not been wholesale robbery and an insult and outraging of women. In addition there is a general agreement with eye-witnesses that the disturbances began with the Monarchists deliberately inciting the Republicans by their public demonstrations against the Republic. If Mr. Greenwell is right, that was the main purpose for which these demonstrations were held. At the time of writing things appear to be quiet again. If they remain quiet the plot will have failed, and the Church will have to see what it can do by working on the superstition of the illiterates of Spain to vote the King back and so retain its privileges. Hitherto Spain has been dominated by the Church, the King, and the Army—a ghastly amalgam of brute force and stupid cunning. A change of *regime* may very easily be better. It cannot well be worse.

* * *

The Church the Enemy.

Of course, a mere handful of agitators could not

have worked up the riots had circumstances been against them. But there were circumstances which were with them. First, the people were within sight of constitutional government. Second, the youth of Spain saw threatened the opportunity of Spain taking rank as an educated self-governing country, and the faked demonstrators of the allies of Church and Crown had good material for their ends. And a crowd whether in Spain or elsewhere is very inflammable material. Those who noted the behaviour of English crowds during the war period, know that a cry set up by one or two is enough to create a riot in given circumstances.

One final word, but an important one. It is significant that in the history of Europe, from the fourteenth century onward, in the case of every popular rising, there has been a general attack made on the Church. Defenders of the Church are prone to represent this as due to the fact that the Church stood as the guardian of decency, of good government, of righteousness, which the revolutionists hated because it stood in the way of their lusts. Quite an affecting picture, but quite untrue to facts. Men do not rise up in this way against that which has befriended them. A nation has never yet risen against institutions that stood for human decency and kindly actions. The cause of the attack on the Church lies deep, but it is sufficiently solid for it to reach the surface. The people rise against oppression, and the people never do rise except there is oppression. And their perception of the basic fact is that always it is the governing religion that stands as the very incarnation of the tyranny and oppression they are trying to overcome. People realize that before reforms can be achieved the power of the governing Church must be broken. That was the lesson of the risings in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was the lesson of France, of Mexico, of Russia. It is the lesson of Spain, and it is the lesson that the people of this country must master—even though it may be done in a more peaceful way—if we are to secure the reforms we need.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Courage of Carlile.

"The greatest gift the hero leaves his race
Is to have been a hero. Say, we fail?
We feed the high tradition of the world,
And leave our spirits in our children's breasts."

THE stories of the heroic age of Freethought are full of a greatness that deserved to be remembered. Without a thought for their own safety these pioneers, true to their principles, sacrificed their own liberty in the hope of saving the freedom of others. The memory of their unselfish bravery should be an inspiration to all of us and should teach us once again the lesson that apparent defeat may be the greatest of victories.

Freethought was fighting for its very existence in the days when Richard Carlile and his comrades fought the good fight. Superstition, effectively disguised in the ermine of the judge, was strong in the land, and contemptuous enough of the little band of heroes and heroines, whose evangel has revolutionised every branch of knowledge, and rewritten the intellectual history of the world. In the darkest days of the Freethought Movement, Carlile and his comrades never lost courage, for they knew the longer they lay in prison the greater triumphs would be won for the cause they had at heart.

Carlile himself possessed the true soldier's temperament, supported by the unshakable principles without which no great purpose can be achieved. No misfortune disconcerted him, no defeat cowed his indomitable spirit. He could not be bullied or frightened. Carlile himself suffered nearly ten years' imprisonment for championing freedom of speech. His wife and other members of his family, and business associates, divided among them fifty years' confinement in gaols. And what a man was their leader, that vivid, vital, radiant personality, all aglow with enthusiasm, who diffused energy all about him, and whose very presence caused stimulation!

Richard Carlile, like George Foote, was a son of the West Country. He was entirely self-educated. As a boy, he collected faggots to burn in effigy "Tom Paine," the Guy Fawkes of that period, whose virile writings were in after life to influence him so greatly. For he was twenty-five years old before he began to read Paine's *Age of Reason*, and *Rights of Man*. These books roused Carlile like a trumpet-blast. Henceforth he was the dauntless champion of Freethought and free speech. Taxes were then placed on knowledge, and fines and imprisonment faced all who dared to speak or write of religious or political liberty. England was then ruled by a crazy king, a profligate regent, and a corrupt Government; but Carlile, a poor man, with few resources but his own courage, defied the Cerberus of Authority, and broke the fetters of press despotism. For, remember, the press to him was not a mere purveyor of sensational news, crossword-puzzles, dirt and scandal. It was, to him, a vehicle of ideas, a pulpit from which the evangel of liberty could be proclaimed with tongue of fire; a trumpet whose clarion note would summon men and women to the unending battle against tyranny and wrong. How ironical it all sounds, when glancing at the commercialized press of our own day, when editors meekly obey the nod of the advertising managers.

Alive in every fibre, Carlile was the very man to carry a forlorn cause to victory. Handcuffed and imprisoned, he roused the public conscience, and compelled the all-powerful authorities to cry "halt." It was impossible to suppress him; it was but punching a pillow. When a score of his assistants had been sent to prison for selling Freethought literature, the prosecuted books were sold through an aperture, so that the buyer was unable to identify the seller. Afterwards, the volumes were sold by a slot-machine, probably the first of its kind. Among the books for sale were Paine's *Age of Reason*, Annet's *Life of David*, Voltaire's Works, Palmer's *Principles of Nature*, and many other thunderous engines of revolt. When his stocks were seized by the authorities, Carlile read nearly the whole of Paine's *Age of Reason* in his speech for the defence, so that additional publicity should be given to the matter which was sought to be suppressed. Nor was imprisonment the only punishment inflicted, for fines, amounting to thousands of pounds, were imposed. To annoy his persecutors, Carlile dated his letters from gaol "the era of the carpenter's wife's son." In like fashion, many years later, George Foote had just emerged from prison, where he published his *Letters to Jesus Christ*, which was even more profane than the offence for which he was sent to gaol. Superior folks may lift their eyebrows at such audacity, but the fiery, restless courage which accounted for it is a rare quality which the world can very ill spare. What it can achieve needs no record, it is recorded on history's page in actions as courageous as any recorded in the immortal pages of Plutarch.

Fighting the embattled hosts of Superstition, the victory remained to Carlile. Writing from prison in

the sixth year of his imprisonment, he was able to say, "All the publications that have been prosecuted have been, and are, continued in open sale." Similarly, in George Foote's case, the *Freethinker* was published regularly during the whole term of his imprisonment, Edward Aveling acting as interim-editor. On Foote's release, he at once resumed the editorship of the paper, and actually posted the first issue to the judge who had sentenced him. What superb courage! "The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of barbarians." Small wonder that the two greatest poets of Carlile's time, Keats and Shelley, recognized him as a hero battling for liberty; and that George Foote was heartened in his desperate fight by the support of George Meredith, Richard Burton, and Gerald Massey.

Carlile's victory over his opponents was so complete that his later years were spent in comparative peace at Enfield, where he died in 1843. True to the end in his devotion to science and humanity, he bequeathed his body to Dr. Lawrence for the purpose of dissection and the advancement of knowledge. His funeral at Kensal Green Cemetery was the occasion of an exhibition of clerical spite. At the graveside the Rev. Josiah Twigger appeared and insisted on reading the Church of England burial service. "Sir," said the eldest son, Richard, "we want no service over the body of our father; he lived in opposition to priestcraft, and we protest against the service being read." The priest persisted, and the last insult of the Church was hurled at the dead hero. Carlile's brave wife survived him only a few months, and she was buried in the same grave. Thus ended the career of one, who, as Browning has it, was "ever a fighter"; strenuous, eager, and unsparing, often bitter and hard; but he had the imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength.

Such heroism was not without result. Twenty-three years after Richard Carlile's death organized Freethought was an accomplished fact, for, in 1866, the National Secular Society was founded, the first President being the able and courageous Charles Bradlaugh.

"The wheel has come full circle!" Now, in the twentieth century, when every man and woman can choose, if they so wish, to walk the road to freedom, and step boldly along it, heedless of the great hardships which beset the pioneers, there should rise in our hearts a sense of gratitude to the brave ones of the bad, old days. We, who have taken the torch of idealism from their dead hands, may not rest till we have shown our fellows that we, too, in our turn, are animated by the same stirring ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

MIMNERMUS.

You will do me the justice to remember that I have always strenuously supported the right of every man to his opinion, however that opinion may be different to mine. He who denies to another this right, makes a slave of himself to his present opinion because he precludes himself the right of changing it. The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is reason. I have never used any other and I trust I never shall.

Thomas Paine.

He who being moral, styles himself religious, assists in the bewilderment of mankind, who ought to be enabled always to see the wide distinction between religion and morality.—G. J. Holyoake, "The Oracle of Reason," Vol II, p. 212.

It is doubtful whether any tyranny can be worse than that exercised in the name of the sovereignty of the people.—Scherger.

John Toland and His Times.

THE opening years of the eighteenth century were animated by the Deistical discussion. In this momentous controversy many distinguished scholars participated, and a literary conflict raged between the sceptical and sacerdotal schools of thought.

The leading Deistical writers were Matthew Tindal, Anthony Collins, Thomas Woolston, Thomas Morgan and Thomas Chubb—the three doubting Thomases—Charles Blount, Peter Annet, John Toland, and Henry Dodwell, junior. Shaftesbury, and Pope's admirer, Bolingbroke, are also to be reckoned with the Deists, but these aristocratic sceptics paid small attention to religious dogma, and exercised far less influence than their more fearless contemporaries. Collins, Toland, Annet, and others, aroused the eager interest of Voltaire, whose inimitable pen made their bold speculations popular in cultured circles throughout Western Europe.

Charles Blount was a disciple of Herbert of Cheshire, and his writings were published towards the close of the seventeenth century. He was stigmatized as a Deist who never disclaimed the term. In his *Anima Mundi* he championed natural as opposed to revealed religion, and he noted the relative merits of other creeds than ours. Blount's *Great is Diana of the Ephesians* appeared in 1680. In this the evils of ecclesiasticism are exposed. To his translation of Philostratus, illustrations are added in which the divinity of Jesus, and the miracles he is alleged to have performed are discredited. Blount's other writings were published after his death. These, his *Miscellaneous Works* include the *Oracles of Reason*. And so provocative were Blount's pleadings, that Charles Leslie composed his *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*, which was acclaimed as a crushing rejoinder to the infidel. But on the eve of the publication of Leslie's answer, Toland's *Christianity not Mysteriorious* appeared.

The vaunted Protestant doctrine of the exercise of private judgment in matters theological was now put to the test. Both parties, orthodox and heterodox alike, asserted the supremacy of reason. The chief question was: What are the rational foundations on which Christians rear their beliefs? It is noteworthy that John Locke in his *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) appealed to reason and to reason alone in justification of his religious creed. The example thus set was copied in the succeeding century by the more celebrated controversialists on the Christian side. And it was popularly asserted, that in terms of that reason to which each party appealed, the pious protagonists Tillotson, Butler, and Clarke had vanquished their adversaries.

In the early stages of the struggle the evil spirit of persecution constrained the Deists to dissemble their doubts concerning the authenticity of the reigning cult. Much discussion raged as to what constituted true Christianity, and how its teachings and traditions were to be interpreted. Toland was born near Londonderry in 1670; was given the names of Janus Julius by his Catholic parents, although "a sensible schoolmaster" later changed them to John; and at the early age of sixteen, lost all patience with the Popery in which he had been trained, and adopted the Protestant religion. Subsequently, he became an associate of dissenting sectaries, but at the time his most famous work was published, he considered himself a member of the broad-minded branch of the English Establishment in Ireland.

Toland studied theology at Leyden under Spanheim, and lived some time in Oxford. In the Bodleian Library he gathered the materials of some of his

later volumes. His *Christianity not Mysteriorious* created a profound sensation, and Toland's antagonists invoked the aid of the State. The writer was prosecuted by the Grand Jury of Middlesex. In Ireland, Toland's book was publicly burned by the common hangman when, to escape arrest and imprisonment, the luckless reformer escaped to England, and even there his liberty was in danger, at least for a time.

Leslie Stephen admits that Toland was "a man of remarkable versatility and acuteness," and acclaim him as a brave pioneer of Freethought. He was, without question, a man of wide and varied culture. His knowledge of theology enabled him to meet his critics on terms of equality. Toland's theological bent coloured his strenuous career. His political essays were designed to promote the interests of the Reformed faith and the Protestant Succession, and his erudition is best displayed in his speculations concerning the problems of Christian origins. His political abilities were appreciated in influential quarters, and his unofficial missions abroad made him acquainted with the Electress Sophia and her daughter, the Queen of Prussia, to whom the *Letters to Serena* were addressed. Among other correspondents, the famous thinker Leibnitz is to be numbered.

Toland knew Locke and was a student of his writings. The *Essay on the Human Understanding* obviously influenced his arguments. Although in *Christianity not Mysteriorious* Locke's name is omitted, that philosopher's theory of knowledge is utilized as the basis of Toland's doctrine. So clear was the resemblance that Toland's work provoked the celebrated discussion between Stillingfleet and Locke, in which the latter strove to make clear the difference between his contention and Toland's. Yet, all Toland does is to press Locke's arguments to their logical conclusion. Locke labours to prove that Christianity successfully appeals to man's reason. On the other hand, Toland contends that anything that outrages reason, or even transcends reason, is ruled out from the teachings of Jesus.

True religion exists for the plain wayfaring man. It contains no paradoxical conundrums. What once may have seemed mysterious is now made manifest by revelation. A genuine revelation is set forth in unmistakable terms. Moreover, the matter revealed must not run counter to human experience. Verities really disclosed or revealed, remain mysteries no longer. It is immaterial whether truth emerges from man or from God. There is, however, one profound distinction between human and divine enlightenment. Men may falsify, but God is ever true. In the absence of ideas faith and knowledge are equally impossible. If, when we speak of knowledge we mean an understanding of what is believed, then "I stand by it that faith is knowledge." Men's ideas may prove inadequate for complete comprehension, but in the spiritual realm, as in the material kingdom, knowledge is limited. The real essence of natural things constantly escapes us. We know nothing of objective things save their attributes or properties, and God and the soul are made manifest in the same way.

In his *Letters to Serena*, Toland discusses the speculations of Spinoza, whose philosophy influenced his own thoughts. In a letter Leibnitz reminds Toland that several references to Spinoza's identification of Nature and the Deity occur in his writings, and yet he makes no answer to this pernicious blunder. But Toland was rapidly moving towards Pantheism himself, if we may judge from the *Pantheisticon* which was published semi-anonymously in 1720. The authorship, however, was an open secret. In this

quaint volume, written in Latin, Toland satirizes his none too-considerate Christian opponents.

From the day of his liberation from the chains of Catholicism Toland's mental outlook enlarged. When his pilgrimage began he sincerely endeavoured to retain everything in the current theology capable of adjustment to the verdict of dispassionate reason. He ultimately surrendered all strictly Christian dogma, and Pantheism, rather than Deism, denotes his final faith. Although Toland is usually classed among Deists, he never advanced the view that Providence is to be regarded as an energy external to Nature which created the universe, established immutable laws, and then left it to its own more or less evil courses. As a matter of fact, the term Freethinker was urged against him, and he employs it himself in his works.

Toland's later life was clouded by poverty. The income derived from his various publications was ever slender. Shaftesbury and other Freethinking sympathisers helped him for a time. Still, his monetary woes and other troubles make one of the most touching chapters in D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors*. In his *Letters to Serena*, Toland foreshadowed some of the later theories of scientific materialism. His humanism is shown in his early advocacy of Jewish emancipation. In our day he would doubtless have proved an advanced social and religious reformer. At the time of his death he was in dire distress, surrounded by his ever faithful books. The last summons he received with dignified calm. He said that he was "going to sleep," and so saying, died.

T. F. PALMER.

National Secular Society.

Executive's Annual Report.

By THE PRESIDENT.

IMPORTANT events that affect the welfare of this Society and the Freethought Movement as a whole are so regularly dealt with in the columns of the *Freethinker*, that it is unnecessary for the Executive to give more than a general survey of the work done during the past year. It is gratifying to be able to record that in spite of the unprecedented trade depression, the great number of unemployed, and the necessary absorption of the general mind with the problem of mere existence, the work of this Society has more than maintained its previous level. Reports of work done have been of a most encouraging character.

To commence with London. Here the open-air propaganda has always bulked larger than in the Provinces, and here there has been no falling off in the activities of recent years. The South London and West London Branches take first place with regard to the extent of their activities, the former carrying on three stations, the latter two stations, but with more frequent meetings. Bethnal Green, West Ham, and other Branches are also continuously active during the Summer months, and very many thousands of men and women are thus brought into touch with our movement. South London, West London, Fulham and Chelsea, and the Bethnal Green Branch also undertake indoor lectures during the winter, the two first regularly, the latter at intervals. There is plenty of room for development in both these directions.

This year there also appears to have been more provincial open-air work than usual, and in addition to the work carried on directly by Branches, Mr. Whitehead has been engaged in his usual summer peregrinations up and down the country, while Mr. J. Clayton and Mr. J. T. Brighton have also been busy, in more restricted areas, with a great measure of success.

These arrangements are being continued during the present season, and more will be done as opportunity offers.

Those Branches that are so mindful of their duty as to send reports of their work also speak of good meetings indoors. A special word must here be given to the Liverpool Branch. The old meeting place proving too small, the Branch migrated to a hall both larger and better situated than the previous one. The President opened the new premises with a course of lectures, each meeting seeing the hall filled to the doors. The Branch reports good attendances right through to the end of March. The success of this Branch is due to the work of its very able Secretary, and its hard-working Committee. This Branch has also organised an energetic press campaign, and the local papers bear testimony to the success achieved, by the quality and number of letters published. We commend this example to every Branch in the country.

On the financial side it must again be pointed out that the balance sheet placed before the Conference is a record of the income and expenditure of the Executive only. Each Branch has its own income and renders an account to its own members. Nevertheless the Executive again ventures to point out the desirability of the income of the Executive approximating nearer to its expenditure. To-day, owing to the increased cost of everything the Executive spends a very considerable sum in assisting Branches in their propaganda, in addition to lecturers who are directly engaged by the Executive. Fortunately, the Society, which is in a stronger financial position than it has ever been in its history, is able to see that assistance is given where needed, but it is well to bear in mind that its resources are not limitless. Moreover, better giving locally means not merely a larger total income to the Society, it also means a more sustained interest.

Apart from the financial assistance given by the Executive, a very considerable quantity of literature has been given away in answer to applications, some of these coming from places abroad. The Executive has also supplied a number of outside organizations with lecturers when application has been made for them.

During the year new Branches have been opened at Cardiff and Perth. The Perth Branch appears to be very active, and has already come into conflict with the local Council over preferential treatment being shown to other organizations with regard to the holding of meetings on ground under the control of the Council. The Branch appealed to the Executive on the matter and was advised how to act, and given a promise of legal help if necessary.

The Executive has to report with the deepest regret the death of its late Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance. Miss Vance had been Secretary of the Society for very many years, but was forced to retire in September, 1927, owing to ill-health, after carrying on for some years under great physical disabilities. Her health grew gradually worse, and the end came in July, 1930. To the last she remained a member of the Executive, attending its meetings whenever circumstances permitted. Her interest in the movement ceased only with her death.

During the past year many applications for help or advice, or both, have been received, largely from non-members, and from different parts of the country and from abroad. In one case the Executive felt justified in taking steps which involved some expenditure.

A few years ago a bailiff of Montreal, Canada, J. S. Gaudry, caught his wife in an act of misconduct with the parish priest. He detained the priest until his

superior arrived. Afterwards the priest was transferred to some other district. Soon after Gaudry commenced publishing leaflets, mainly reflecting upon the Catholic priesthood. Montreal is a very Catholic place, the district being very much under Church control, and eventually Gaudry was arrested on a charge of Blasphemy. When brought to trial, the Judge, probably despairing of a verdict of guilty, in even that bigoted atmosphere, suspended the hearing and remanded Gaudry to the prison asylum for medical examination. Gaudry's own doctors saw no evidence of insanity, but the prison doctor reported otherwise, and a certificate was signed by himself and another doctor, who, we are informed, never even saw the accused man, with the result that Gaudry was sent to a criminal lunatic asylum.

Friends of Gaudry got to work, and on a writ of *Habeas Corpus* brought him before another judge, who on the medical evidence before him at once ordered Gaudry's discharge. On that the Judge who first condemned him issued another warrant ordering his arrest, and Gaudry has been in prison since February, 1930.

In the circumstances Mr. G. A. Field, an Englishman, wrote to the *Freethinker* and to the Executive appealing for the Society's help. About £100 was needed to secure another trial, and there were few in Montreal who had the courage to come forward. On behalf of the Executive your President replied that if copies of the indictment and other necessary papers were forwarded there need be no delay in going forward for a new trial. The necessary funds would be found. The papers were forwarded, and after legal advice had been taken here, there certainly seemed a strong prima-facia case for investigation. A sum of £50 was accordingly sent, and the balance promised as soon as the case was down for hearing. Considerable delay, owing to the action of the authorities in withholding the necessary papers, ensued, but Counsel was engaged, and the matter is going forward. Meanwhile there is the ugly fact that a probably innocent man, who has suffered the break up of his home owing to priestly infamy, has been confined in a criminal lunatic asylum. At any rate, even so far away as Canada, the Executive felt it would be acting only as the body of members would wish it to act in taking up the case. Our fight is waged over a wide-flung front, and Freethought is a principle that overlaps the boundaries of nationality or colour.

Two years from hence—1933—will witness the centenary of the birth of one of the greatest Freethinkers of the nineteenth century, Charles Bradlaugh. The Executive received from the Rationalist Press Association an invitation to join with it in commemorating the centenary by inviting the International Freethought Federation to hold its Annual Congress in London. The invitation from the Rationalist Press Association was accepted, and a joint committee appointed. A meeting was held, and a general agreement reached as to procedure, but eventually the Rationalist Press Association gave notice that it did not purpose proceeding with the matter, and the proposal, as between the two societies, dropped.

But your Executive is of opinion that something should be done to celebrate so significant an occasion, and as the Society founded by Bradlaugh, and of which he continued as President until ill-health compelled his resignation, and the only Society in this country which continues his work, the task of commemorating the event is properly ours. A motion on the Agenda allows for discussion of the matter.

1933 is also the centenary of another great Freethinker, but on the other side of the Atlantic, Colonel Ingersoll. Although an American by birth, his in-

fluence in this country was very great. His wit and broad humanity appealed to and influenced many who imagined themselves untouched by his anti-religious opinions. American Freethinkers are making preparations to commemorate the event in a fitting style. A committee has been formed, and the intention is to erect a monument at Washington. Your President has been asked to become a member of the Committee, as representing British Freethought, and he has, of course, consented. A hope has also been expressed that he will visit the United States to take part in the proceedings, but that will depend upon the state of affairs in this country.

Another event of great significance to our movement occurred during the present month. This is the attainment by the *Freethinker* of the fiftieth anniversary of its birthday. No other Freethought paper in this country has had so long a life, and none has surpassed it in its uncompromising attacks on superstition of every kind. For more than forty years of its existence the *Freethinker* has placed its energies and its space at the service of the National Secular Society, without asking or receiving payment. It has further, whenever required, raised funds for the Society to carry on its work, and it is, indeed, largely to its efforts that the Society to-day occupies its present favourable financial position. It is in recognition of the services of the paper to the Freethought Movement as a whole that a motion expressing this has been placed on the Agenda.

To turn to more general matters. More than once the Annual Report has called attention to the evil of the intrusion into the political field of religious interests. Within the past few months we have had two instances of this. Nothing is more deplorable than the way in which Education Minister after Education Minister has attempted to conclude a bargain with Church and Chapel on the subject of religious teaching in the schools. The usual policy followed by the present Government, with the usual result. A Bill containing provisions which the Government thought essential to the development of our educational system was deliberately held up by a vote of the House of Commons until such time as the good will of the Churches had been bought by the promise of a further financial subsidy to sectarian schools. There was no disguise whatever about the "hold-up" of the Government. It was the most shameless piece of religious "racketeering" that had yet transpired, and the Government humbly submitted to the "hold-up."

Nothing more humiliating had been seen for some time; and it is certain that such things will continue until a policy which in State-supported schools completely eliminates religious teaching is adopted. At present, out of every sovereign spent in these sectarian schools, nineteen shillings comes from public funds, and for the sake of this five per cent we continue to sacrifice the welfare of the rising generation and to perpetuate a principle that is alien to the modern State.

It may be noted in passing that the Roman Catholic objection to the Bill as it stood was that it would involve an extra expenditure on their schools of nearly a million pounds. The figure is probably an exaggeration, but it may be pointed out that the new Roman Cathedral in Liverpool is estimated to cost three millions. That is faced cheerfully; but a third of the sum to be spent on education is quite another question.

A second illustration of the influence of the intrusion of religion in social life has arisen in connexion with the question of Sunday Observance. Sunday performances and Sunday meetings are at present regulated by the Act of 1781, which makes them

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of London told the Rotary Club at Hammersmith the other day of his great labours in attempting to cope with the immorality of the film, the sex novel, and scenes in Hyde Park. He says he has told Mr. Lansbury what he has seen in Hyde Park, that he and the Public Morality Council watch every cinema, every play, and all the books. He says:—

I sent twenty-two printed books to the Home Secretary, the other day, and one of the staff said, "Why do you send them to the Home Secretary? He takes them to heart so."

The picture of the Home Secretary reading all these naughty books, with tears of anguish rolling down his face is very affecting. But what a high old time these celibate old gentlemen must have reading all these immoral books, prowling round Hyde Park on the look out for things they ought not to see, and watching all the suggestive situations on screen and stage! If the Bishop could only be induced to give public reading all these wicked books, he might take the Albert Hall, charge for admission, pack it with old ladies—of both sexes, and finance the whole of the missionary movement.

We venture on a prophecy. Unless Spain can work up some outrages, murders, riots, shootings, and the like it will soon disappear from all English newspapers. The British press has no time or space for a country that engages in building itself up by attention to education, industry, and such like commonplaces things. If Spain seeks publicity in the British press it must at least burn a Church once a week, or have a riot every other day. We have often wondered that some of the papers have not started a competition offering a goodly sum for the nearest forecast of the number of Gangster shootings in the United States during 1931.

The *Morning Post*, by the way, is rather upset that some kind of press censorship has been established by the new Government in Spain. The *Morning Post* managed to bear with admirable equanimity the rigorous censorship set up by the late regime, but for Freethinking Republicans to follow that example is quite another thing.

We see that the Pope has refused to accept the Spanish Ambassador, Senor Luis de Zulueta. He considers him an undesirable person. Senor Zulueta is a man who stands high in the estimation of his countrymen, but he is a Freethinker, and that may make a difference to the Pope. We hope that the Spanish Government will insist on its selection. A staunch Roman Catholic is not one who could be trusted with safety. It would be a case of the Pope first and the country nowhere. "No faith with heretics" is a very old principle with the Roman Catholic Church.

In the *Daily Express*, a reader says:—

Your correspondent who advocates that we should pray to the Almighty to reveal to us a cure for the terrible scourge of cancer is surely in the right. The prayer of the faithful avail much.

The pious are either very daring or very innocent. Asking "our heavenly Father" to supply a cure for the scourge which, presumably, he inflicted on mankind is equivalent to questioning God's wisdom in sending the scourge. To tell him that one of his special creations in the disease line is regarded as a scourge is hardly calculated to put him in a good humour. The pious seem deplorably lacking in tact when asking favours of their God.

A lament of the Rev. A. W. Mason, of Chatham, is that these are days of revolt against authority, in the home, the Church, and religion. He wants people "to get back to a realization of the sovereignty of Christ." Now, that is a very natural desire for a parson to have. People who "realize the sovereignty of Christ" are people who don't realize they are in mental bondage to the parson. Once he is accepted as the divinely appointed transmitter

illegal if admission is by money—by tickets sold for money. For some time the Act with regard to Cinemas has been overridden by licencing authorities taking to themselves to authorize such gatherings. But when this was challenged in the courts, the issuing of such permits was declared to be illegal. Compelled to face the situation, the Government, with its usual lack of courage and principle, and acting in fear of its Sabbatarian supporters, proposed repealing that portion of the Act which relates to debates, cinemas and musical entertainments, but accompanied this with regulations that are absurd and unjust. There is to be no profit made from Sunday entertainments, and all gatherings must be licenced, thus taking away from the public a right of meeting, for either debate or entertainment that has never before been questioned, and forbidding a profit to be made from an occupation which it declares to be quite legal and proper. It is one of the most stupid, one of the most cowardly, and one of the most unjust measures that has been brought before the House of Commons for a long while.

An endeavour was made by your Executive to get the Cinema proprietors to join with the N.S.S. in a public protest against such a measure, but they, and certain political parties, were apparently afraid of stirring up religious prejudice. An article, written in the *Freethinker* by your President, was circulated in the House of Commons, but it is not likely to greatly affect the ultimate voting on the Bill. The independence of members of the House is almost a non-existent quality.

The lesson from both these instances is that the only way by which we can be sure of securing the complete secularization of the State is by continuing to make Freethinkers. So long as political parties are left to face the activities of massed religious bodies they will continue to look to votes and to ignore principles. They will go whichever way they are pushed, and if we Freethinkers will put more energy into our work, and more courage into our speech and action, we may be able to "push" in the direction of justice to all and against sectarian privileges.

The Executive feels that this report ought not to close without a word of acknowledgement to those of our members who in various parts of the country give their time, their labour, and oftimes their money to carrying on the work of the Branches. Thousands of lectures are delivered year after year, in London and the Provinces, which would never be delivered but for the steady labour of men and women who of necessity pass unknown to the body of members. In such an army of voluntary helpers the mention of names would be invidious, but it is well to recognize that the work of those who figure on our platforms and in the press, is made possible only by the work of others whose only compensation is to be found in the progress of the ideas for which we all stand.

It has been said that Freethought is something that overleaps barriers erected by either nationality or colour, and like science is interested and influenced by the growth of the freedom of the human spirit all over the world. It is therefore encouraging to note that the development which has been so often noted of Freethought in this country, is going on all over the world. On the Continent of Europe the set back experienced during and following the war is being recovered, and in Germany and France Freethought organizations are beginning again to gather strength. In Spain the recent revolution cannot but make for the weakening of the Church, and the establishment of a genuinely modern system of education will protect the rising generation, from the demoralizing in-

(Continued on page 347.)

of God's commands and interpreter of Christ's wishes, he can manipulate the people as he pleases. The modern revolt has broken his power. No wonder he objects to it! Whenever man makes a move forward mentally, the parson is always the first to cry "go back!"

A Wesleyan journal appears to have come to the conclusion that many of its readers are rather uncertain about God. It says:—

How often men echo in their hearts the complaint of Carlyle, that God does nothing. If God is to act in our midst, we must be certain of him . . . the one thing which, in our human language, hinders or restrains him, is our own uncertainty of him. But how if we cannot be certain?? What will remove this subtle and paralysing doubt? . . . How can we even pray, if the "little devil Doubt" whispers that the heavens are as brass?

Our contemporary devotes a couple of columns to trying to assure its readers that there is no need for uncertainty. The times have indeed changed. How unspeakably sad it is that so much energy must needs be expended on dispersing the doubts of Church adherents! Who was the humorist that suggested a revival of religion was just coming round the corner?

There has been quite a flutter in the Nonconformist dovecote over the proposal of Dr. Norwood's, that Congregationalists should cease appointing chaplains to the Army. It has been urged that in this Congregationalists would deprive their members in the Army of "spiritual ministrations," while the majority have fallen back upon the question of whether Christ forbade war or not. There have been a number of other points raised, all equally footling. The *Christian World* says that when the Disarmament Conference opens it will strengthen the hands of those who are on the side of peace if delegates can go there feeling they have the Church behind them. The unfortunate thing about this advice is that delegates to Peace Conferences have always had the Church behind them, and have also had the politicians behind them, and all military men behind them. It is all so much eye-wash.

Peace Conferences take place either between wars, or just after a war when people have had enough. No one in this country, or in any other, will get up and say at any time "I believe in War." They will all profess to hate war, particularly in times such as the present. And yet the moment war is declared—if it is on a scale sufficiently large to arouse the blood lust, all these people will find elaborate reasons for keeping war going, and will all proceed to shower abuse on anyone who dares to say that wars settle nothing, and only leave affairs worse than they found them. It is at the present moment quite easy to stand up for peace, but when we observe that those who do so are each willing to disarm on the condition that everyone else disarms first, pure admiration is weakened a little.

The truth is that the Disarmament Conference will not discuss disarmament. What they will talk about is the reduction of armaments, which is quite another and a comparatively unimportant matter. Equality in armaments means equality in fighting power, and with the will to fight as it was, war becomes as likely as ever. And smaller armaments mean so little. The numskulls who were responsible for the Versailles Peace Treaty understood so little the situation, and had studied history to so little purpose that they actually went on the lines that conquerors had gone on when dealing with the conquered for the past two hundred years. They forbade the Germans to have battleships above a certain size and more than a certain number. Any but a politician would have seen the result. Germany kept to the treaty, but evolved a pocket battleship capable of blowing the big ones out of the water. France aims at establishing the greatest air-force, the greatest navy, and the greatest army in history. Italy says it must arm against France, and so the tale goes on. Disarmament should mean disarmament, and the only way to secure that is to disarm, with an international force to be used as we use a police force. But who will raise that point at the Conference.

And the Churches? No one with any sense in their heads can have any doubt that if another war breaks out the clergy will be in the forefront to cast an air of moral grandeur and patriotic duty over the carnage. That has always been their function, and it is always likely to be. For the crowning indictment of the Christian Church is not that its accredited mouthpieces, with rare exceptions here and there have always fanned the war flame, but that they have *moralized* the whole beastly business. Any man may be compelled to go to war hating it all the while and fully seeing it for what it is. There is hope for that man. He yields to circumstances, fully knowing what these circumstances are, and knowing the price he will have to pay for what he is doing under the compulsion of circumstances. But it is largely owing to the Christian practice of making warfare a moral and religious duty that war stands where it does with Christian nations. They have moralized war as they moralized intolerance, and provided a moral outlet for the sadistic impulses of man in both instances. General Crozier spoke nothing but the literal truth when he said that the Christian Churches were the best creators of blood-lust we have. And every statesman knows their worth when it is a question of drugging the people.

Canon Storr says he is quite sure there is a growing demand in the country for instruction in the Bible. We fancy we have heard something about the wish being father to the thought. But what have the clergy of the country been doing all the time? And if instruction in the Bible is really desired why not recommend the reading of the *Freethinker*. Our own acquaintance with the Canon gave us the impression that, for a Canon, he is remarkably liberal-minded, and we are sure he would like his people to hear both sides of the case. What about an exchange of pulpits? We will take his church for a week and he shall be provided with a secular meeting place for a month. Now here is a chance to indulge in some real propaganda.

A parson says: "it must be a cause of wonder that, with all our Church organizations and the irrefutable intellectual basis of Christianity, that the world, in its problems, does not follow the way we advocate." Our friend must have a lively imagination if he can find an irrefutable intellectual basis to Christianity. Bribing men and women to be good with a promise of everlasting bliss is about as un-intellectual basis as could be invented.

A writer in a religious weekly says: "The age in which we live in is, from the religious point of view, noteworthy in two ways—the emphasis on service and the emphasis on intellectual quest; and we may be proud of both." The two ways, we may add, owe nothing to the Churches for their inception. The Churches for hundreds of years discouraged intellectual quest. And as for "service," the Churches merely encouraged service to the Church. It is in this irreligious age that the social instinct of service has been able to find its proper channel.

According to a minister of Bexley Heath, one of the most prominent features of modern times is "the rising tide of youth"; and the supreme task of the Church is to infuse the movement with the Christian spirit. For our part, we hope the attempt at "infusion" will prove a failure. "The Christian spirit" is something that the world would have been happier without than with. The Christian spirit, we remember, was responsible for the St. Bartholomew massacres, for the Inquisition, for Jewish pogroms, and for the imprisonment of Freethinkers for the fictitious crime of blasphemy. It is also responsible for opposition to reform of the divorce laws. These are but a few of its inglorious achievements. Quite recently, too, it urged the Rev. Father Woodlock to voice a poisonous suspicion concerning immorality among young persons connected with the wholesome pastime of hiking. It is the same Christian spirit which seeks to prohibit all rational amusement and recreation for the people on Sunday. The supreme need of the world is to be purged of the Christian spirit.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—J. A. Davies, £5.

E. H. HASSELL.—Glad you were so pleased with the Jubilee issue. It is quite impossible for us to undertake such a work as a history of militant Freethought during the past century. The most we could do would be to supervise it, if some wealthy man will come along and provide the cost, which would be fairly heavy. We have "Ol' Man Adam." If some of the illustrations had appeared in the famous Christmas number of the *Freethinker*, they would certainly have formed part of the indictment. That they can be now issued by a "respectable" publisher may be taken as an illustration of the influence of this journal. It has helped to make the world a little safer for heresy.

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.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The Liverpool Conference must be set down as one of the most successful of recent years. There was a good attendance of delegates from all parts of the country, and a plentiful number of individual members. The proceedings were characterized by that mixture of good humour, enthusiasm, and criticism which make a Conference of this kind helpful and inspiring. One very hopeful sign was the number of young members—of both sexes—present, and their enthusiasm for the work. That bodes well for the future of the movement. It is sad to note the absence of old friends who pay toll to nature with the passing of the moons, but their efforts reap their reward in the accession of the younger ones who have been inspired by them. That is as it should be.

The Liverpool Branch played its part as host in an excellent manner. Everything was done to make visitors comfortable, and everyone was comfortable. From the moment of the reception on the Saturday evening until the last good-byes on Sunday and Monday evening, visitors felt that was indeed a case of "home from home," with friendliness all the way. The reception on the Saturday evening was enlivened by some excellent singing by Miss Whitelaw and Mr. Wingate, and several stirring recitations by Mr. Booth. On Monday there was an excursion to West Kirby, with luncheon and tea, and although the weather might have been a little more friendly than it was, no one seemed to bother very much about that. All were out to enjoy themselves, and seemed determined not to allow such a small thing as the weather to balk them. It was a capital time.

The evening demonstration at the Picton Hall was also a complete success. Whit-Sunday is about the worst day in the year on which to hold a public meeting in Lancashire, but the large hall was filled nevertheless, and it presented a striking picture from the platform with the tier upon tier of expectant and interested hearers, and it was no small compliment to the speakers that the interest was sustained for two hours on such an evening. The officials of the Branch were in high feather over the meeting, and the well laden bookstall with which the meeting started present a comforting scantiness by the time the last of the audience had gone.

We print this week the Executive's Annual Report. The report of the proceedings of the Conference will appear in our next issue.

Mr. Rosetti informs us that he has had a number of applications for membership to the N.S.S. after reading the Jubilee number. The curious thing is that these applications come most from those who have been Freethinkers for years. We wish that a couple of thousand of readers would be similarly inspired by the Jubilee issue. We suggest they all think seriously about it.

The new Branch of the N.S.S. at Brighton has soon got to work, and meetings will be held on Sunday afternoons on the Level at 3.30. We hope all Freethinkers within range of the meeting-place will consider it a duty and a pleasure to attend and support the Branch.

Most of our readers will remember the case of J. S. Gaudry, of Montreal, who was charged with Blasphemy, and on a judges warrant was committed to a criminal lunatic asylum, in spite of medical evidence to the contrary. Gaudry was not connected with the National Secular Society, but an appeal on his behalf was sent to the Society by Mr. A. G. Field, asking for help to raise the case again on a second writ of *Habeas Corpus*. Most people, both here and abroad, know where to apply when the interests of Freethought are attacked, and so far as we are aware a genuine case has never yet been turned down. The N.S.S. accordingly promised £100 towards the costs, £50 of which was at once sent. Every difficulty has been placed in the way of the defence by the authorities—Montreal is almost as priest-ridden as Spain used to be—but on May 21 we received a cablegram to the effect that two doctors had now certified Gaudry to be quite sane. Now the trial will go forward. Meanwhile we have the ugly fact that as a result of Christian intrigue a man has been kept in a criminal lunatic asylum for more than twelve months for the heinous offence of attacking the Roman Catholic Church. We are expecting full particulars by the next mail.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be in the Birmingham district from Sunday, May 31 until Friday, June 5 inclusive. Full particulars will be found in the Lecture Notice column. In arranging Mr. Whitehead's tour, the Executive of the N.S.S. take it for granted that local saints will rally round and give any assistance possible when Mr. Whitehead is lecturing in their area.

We must ask the indulgence of correspondents this week. It was late on Monday night when we arrived home, and Tuesday was press-day. So of necessity many things will stand over until next week.

We have to acknowledge the sums of £25 from Mr. E. Adams; 10s. 6d. from H. T. Barrand; and 5s. from D. Underwood, towards advertising and promoting the circulation of the *Freethinker*.

The Glasgow Branch purposes establishing a bookstall for the sale of Freethought literature at the juncture of West Regent Street and Renfield Street. This is a good move, and we wish it every success. Glasgow friends, and visitors to Glasgow should bear this announcement in mind.

The New Science and Religion.

(Concluded from page 316.)

It was Copernicus and Galileo who, unintentionally, gave the death blow to the Christian system. Messieurs the Pope and Cardinals at Rome were under no delusion as to what the effect of their discoveries would be, if they were generally accepted. They silenced Galileo and condemned Copernicus, but they could not suppress the facts they had revealed. Facts which dethroned man for ever from his position at the centre of the universe, and inaugurated the conflict between science and religion which has continued down to the present day. As Dean Inge has well observed:—

Those Churchmen who airily declare that there is no longer any conflict between Christianity and science are either very thoughtless or are wilfully shutting their eyes. There is a very serious conflict, and the challenge was presented not in the age of Darwin, but in the age of Copernicus and Galileo.

The discovery that the earth, instead of being the centre of a finite universe, like a dish with a dish-cover above it, is a planet revolving round the sun, which itself is only one of millions of stars, tore into shreds the Christian map of the universe. Until that time the ordinary man, whether educated or uneducated, had pictured the sun of things as a three-storeyed building, consisting of heaven, the abode of God, the angels, and beautified spirits; our earth; and the infernal regions, where the devil, his angels, and lost souls are imprisoned and tormented.⁶

Since the time of Galileo our views of the universe have continually expanded, and man's significance in the scheme has continually contracted. Tennyson, in his poem *Vastness* voiced the sentiments of the Victorians in the matter when he said of human activities:—

What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million
million of suns?
Swallow'd in vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd in the deeps
of a meaningless past?

Even Herbert Spencer, the least emotional of philosophers, said that he could not look through the coal-sacks into what he thought was the outer blackness of infinite space, without shuddering. Since then our knowledge of the universe has grown enormously. Each increase in the power of the telescope has revealed more stars and nebulae, until to-day it has penetrated into space: "140 million light-years," and this, says Sir James Jeans, "is only a very small fraction of the whole way round the universe. Within this distance of 140 million light-years, about two million nebulae are visible. Each contains about as much matter as 2,000 million suns."⁷ When we recollect that light travelling at the rate of over 186,000 miles a second, or 11 million miles a minute, would traverse in a year, constitutes a "light-year," we are utterly baffled in attempting to realize such vastness. It is claimed that the 200 inch telescope which is being proceeded with in America will multiply the known nebulae by eight! And how much is there beyond?

The scale of these immense distances is equalled by the magnitude of the time scale. To quote Sir James again: "Before man appeared on earth, the stars were much as they are now, and in all probability they will still be much the same when the last man has left the earth. The whole history of the human race is but the twinkling of an eye in comparison with the ages of the stars. We individuals see the universe only as a traveller sees a landscape

lighted up by a flash of lightning. It was there long before the flash revealed it to us, and will be there long after darkness has closed in again." (pp. 151-152.)

These are the things that will strike the imagination of the ordinary man who first makes acquaintance with them, and not the argument about determinism. When the discovery was made that the stars were really suns, and not mere points of light stuck in the firmament for the benefit of the earth, it was naturally concluded that each sun had its attendant planets circling it; but this is far from being the case, in fact it is extremely rare. Our system of sun and planets resulted from the near approach of two suns causing a disruption, the material of which, circling round the parent sun, evolved into the planets of which our earth is one. But in spite of the number of stars being comparable with "the total number of grains of sand on all the sea-shores of the world. They are such enormous distances apart," says Sir James: "that is an event of almost unimaginable rarity for a star to come anywhere near to another star. . . . We believe, nevertheless, that some two thousand million years ago this rare event took place."⁸ In course of time, continues Sir James, one of these cooling fragments thrown off from the sun, our earth to wit, we know not how, when, or why, gave birth to life. And further, "life must be of very rare occurrence, for it is so unusual an accident for suns to throw off planets as our own sun has done, that probably only about one star in 100,000 has a planet revolving round it in the small zone in which life is possible. Just for this reason it seems incredible that the universe can have been designed primarily to produce life like our own." p. 5.) Sir James even goes so far as to say of the Universe:—

Perhaps indeed we ought to say it appears to be actively hostile to life like our own. For the most part, empty space is so cold that all life in it would be frozen; most of the matter in space is so hot as to make life on it impossible. . . . Into such a universe we have stumbled, if not exactly by mistake, at least as the result of what may properly be described as an accident.⁹

As a result of these revelations, says Sir James: "We find the universe terrifying because of its vast meaningless distances, terrifying because of its inconceivably long vistas of time which dwarf human history to the twinkling of an eye, terrifying because of our extreme loneliness, and because of the material insignificance of our home in space—a millionth part of a grain of sand of all the sea-sand in the world. . . . emotion, ambition and achievement, art and religion all seem equally foreign to its plan." (p. 3.)

The Press did not devote much attention to this side of the book, with one exception. *The Christian World*, for April 23, devoted its front page to an article dealing with this point of view, entitled "God and the Universe," by W. A. Painter, M.A., Ph.D. The article commences by stressing the importance of intellectual honesty in spiritual matters, and then puts the question: "Can Christianity be of very much importance in view of the astounding impressiveness of the non-human universe as science now perceives it?" This is a point with which Sir James Jeans does not deal, no mention of Christianity or Jesus Christ is made. So far as any indication in the book is concerned, it might have been written by a heathen or a pagan; unless indeed the Great Mathematician may be regarded as an object for religious enthusiasm. Mr. Painter goes on to observe that Christian theology was drawn up in an age when the earth was regarded as the centre of all creation. "It

⁶ *Science, Religion and Reality*. (Essays, edited by J. Needham) 1925. p. 357.

⁷ Sir James Jeans: *The Stars in their Courses* (1931) p. 149.

⁸ Sir James Jeans: *The Mysterious Universe*. p. 1.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

was the 'hub of the universe' in a literal sense . . . The final end and purpose of the whole universe centred in man, the summit of creation." Copernicus and his contemporaries destroyed this idea. "But," continues Mr. Painter, "it is not certain whether theology has been fully aware even of this historic change of view. Dean Inge tells us that religious thought has not yet adjusted itself even to Copernicus and Newton. If this is so, we are overtaken now by the next epoch-making change of conception before the religious world has learned to express itself adequately in terms of the last!"

Mr. Painter goes on to say that he recently spent a day reading *The Universe Around Us*, by Sir James Jeans, with the result that his mind became "saturated with the idea of the immensity of space, and the resultant smallness of the human race on this little fragment of a globe." In the evening he went to hear a preacher who "spoke quite simply of how Almighty God uses obscure and ordinary people to further the work of His Spirit in the world." Now all this, says Mr. Painter: "assumed that the earth and the life of men was not only of supreme interest to the Deity, but necessary to His highest purpose." But, under the impression created by reading Sir James' book, says Mr. Painter, where the earth is reduced to a pin's point. "The thought of God inspiring obscure human lives mingled with nebulae whirling in unfathomed space. In my humble frame of mind—it needed the universe to produce it!—I was quite ready to feel that this fussy interest in human life must be beside the point, a minute disturbance without significance." And that is how it would strike any ordinary man open to conviction.

Then comes the reaction. After reflection, the thought of the preacher did not appear "so outrageous as one might expect. For this impersonal power was being interpreted in a sense that gave even to it a fuller meaning and an enhanced majesty. It was neither alien nor unreasonable after all." It seems to us that Mr. Painter is here merely hypnotizing himself with words. What has an "impersonal power" got to do with Christianity? Christ was a person, and when a Christian prays, he prays to his Father in heaven, another person. How many Christians would consider an "impersonal power" worth praying to? Not one in a thousand, one might just as well worship electricity.

As we have noticed before, Sir James Jeans declares that modern science "compels us to think of the creator as working outside time and space, which are part of his creation, just as the artist is outside his canvas." He will have nothing to do with Pantheism, the idea that the Universe as a whole, is God; or the immanence of God in the Universe. So that he has now removed God, or the Great Mathematician, several million light-years away. Does he really think that this being, if he exists, spends his time in listening to and answering the prayers of Dick, Tom and Harry residing on this minute speck, the whole duration of the human race upon which represents but a tick of the astronomical clock, or the duration of a flash of lightning? It seems to us that this defender of religion has struck it a mortal blow.

After reading this book, the Christian who has been tempted into buying this book through the trumpeting it has received as a prop to religion, will ask, "But where does Christianity come in? And what is more, where do I come in?" But upon this subject Sir James preserves an ominous silence. There is no reference to the plan of Salvation, or to God the Father, God the Son, or to God the Holy Ghost. No reference to the tragedy on Calvary or of a future life. One would like to ask Sir James if he believes

that about two thousand years ago, God sent his only son down to die a miserable death, on this microscopic speck of dust revolving round a grain of sand.

W. MANN.

N.S.S.--Executive's Annual Report.

(Continued from page 343.)

fluences of one of the most demoralizing of the Christian Churches. In Turkey there is also a Free-thought movement developing, although little attention is paid to it by the press of this country. If Mohammedans and Freethinkers were to commence butchering each other both would figure prominently in these organs of public misinformation. America is also developing its Freethinking organizations, and these manage to secure greater publicity than is possible in this country. In South Africa also there is a growing demand for Freethinking literature, and the newspapers bear testimony to the growth of Freethought. Advices from Australia inform us of the attempts being made to establish effective Free-thought societies, and the nascent Freethinking of China and Japan is beginning to make itself manifest. Even from Persia there has come quite recently a request for permission to translate some of your President's writings, so that the wind of Freethought is beginning to blow there. We have many callers in the course of the year from India, and from their reports and from other sources it is plain that Free-thought has its place in educated Indian circles. Russia, of course, presents the unique spectacle given over to the official promulgation of Atheism, and whatever the future holds in store for that vast area of the world's surface nothing can ever re-establish religion there in anything like the position it once occupied.

In most of the places mentioned, as with ourselves the great need is for closer and more effective organization. The churches and chapels are strongly organized, their members act almost automatically where sectarian interests are concerned, with the result that they exercise an influence which is quite out of proportion to their actual numbers. On the other hand, certainly in the large centres of population our influence on such questions as the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, Secular Education, Sunday Observance, the introduction of Freethought works into public institutions, etc., our influence is not at all that which we should exercise in virtue of our numbers. The Churches are too vocal, and we are not vocal enough. In the large centres it is often a noisy well-organized religious minority that manage to impress the world with their being a large and important majority.

Let us, then, go on making Freethinkers, but let them be Freethinkers that are proud of what they are, proud of the traditions that are theirs, and determined to make their strength felt and respected. All experience shows that nothing is to be gained from the Christian world by submission or deference. A Free-thought that is to be effective must be bold and plain-spoken. The way to gain the real respect of the world is to show that one respects one's self, and we Freethinkers are doing this only when we prove ourselves worthy of those who faced prison, and worse than prison for the liberty we now enjoy. Let us take for our marching orders the splendid words of William Kingdon Clifford, if a thing be true let it be shouted from the housetops; if it be false, let that be shouted from the housetops also.

The N.S.S. Conference at Liverpool.

NOTHING ever seems to damp the enthusiasm of Freethinkers at Conference meetings, and this year was no exception. Although the weather did not exactly live up to its reputation at Liverpool during Whitsun—for, of course, King Sol invariably reigns supreme in Lancashire at holiday time—delegates and members, not in the least depressed by darkening skies or threatening rain, met again with genuine pleasure and souvenirs of past Conferences. The arrangements made by the Liverpool Branch were excellent, and the reception held at the Washington Hotel on Saturday, headed by the President, was distinctly animated, and particularly cheerful. Miss Whitelaw gave some delightful rendering of famous songs, helped by her efficient accompanist, Mr. Wingate, the Perth delegate, showed us nothing in the world would prevent a Scot from leaving out his beloved Burns from a convivial meeting, and Mr. Booth gave some admirable recitations. Everything passed happily, and ended with a few well chosen words from Mr. Chapman Cohen.

The proceedings next day were purely business and formal, and a full report will be published next week. A long programme had to be gone through, and members and delegates were promptly to time at their seats in the Conference Hall. After the minutes of the last Conference had been taken as read, the President read out the Executive's Annual Report—given in full in another part of the paper—and it was exceptionally well received. Indeed many members thought it should be reprinted in pamphlet form as a fine piece of propaganda for enquirers.

Mr. Cohen, with his wide experience of Conference procedure, kept the meeting well in hand, and with tact here and informative points there, was able to smooth out difficulties as they arose. The luncheon hour provided a welcome break from business, and as the lunch itself was excellent everybody was in a good humour. The remainder of the business passed off satisfactorily, and the Conference settled down to hear the three interesting papers read out by Mrs. Rosetti, Dr. Carmichael and Mr. Stafford, all of which will duly appear in these pages. In the evening, the Picton Hall was almost packed to hear Freethought expounded by several speakers. Limited to time as they all were, it proved exceptionally interesting to hear the best of all causes dealt with from such strongly individual points of view. Mr. E. C. Saphin's powerful voice and humorous outlook were fully exploited in his own specially characteristic way. Dr. Carmichael's masterly grasp of his subject was evidenced by his keen analysis and irresistible logic. Mr. George Whitehead was, as usual, powerfully eloquent. Mr. Jack Clayton's resonant voice easily filled the large hall as he pointed out the difficulties inherent in Theism. Mr. A. D. Maclaren's scholarly address was listened to with the greatest attention, and Mr. J. T. Brighton showed how no Christian upbringing could successfully challenge the Freethought position. Finally, Mr. Chapman Cohen in his eloquent address rose to heights rarely climbed even by him; and whether he was pouring contempt on the Cinema Bill, which the Government is trying to pass, or whether he was dealing, in striking images, with the slow sapping of the Christian creed by Freethought, alike as an incisive speaker, logician, or exponent of our principles, he held his audience as few Freethought speakers have ever done. He was loudly cheered at the close of an exceptionally fine address.

On Whit Monday most of the delegates with mem-

bers and friends spent a delightful day at West Kirby, and the time was all too short in which to discuss various aspects of Freethought and Sociology. But the thanks of everyone are due to the splendid way in which the Liverpool Branch worked for the success of the Conference. The work required to make everything run smoothly is far more difficult than one is apt to think, and the Branch rose nobly to the occasion. It was a great and enjoyable Conference.

H. CUTNER.

Discussion.

"The greatest sophism of all sophisms being equivocation or ambiguity of words and phrase."

Francis Bacon.

DISCUSSION is one of the best means of widening one's outlook on life, as well as of testing the validity of one's convictions. No discussion can take place without the use of language. No language is a perfect instrument of communication. Nor is there any certainty that the most intellectual persons are, by reason either of education or intelligence, the most efficient in their use of language.

In every discussion, therefore, misunderstandings are liable to occur. So to all who may be interested in the benefits which can be derived from discussion, it will be profitable to examine some of the causes which give rise to the most common misunderstandings. If we are forewarned, there is less chance of our being misled by the ambiguities which so often crop up in dialectics.

Language is a system of visual or auditory symbols which serve two purposes. One is that they provide man with convenient labels for the many and varied experiences which come to him through the medium of his senses; and these labels, combined with memory, enable him to manipulate mentally a mass of impressions which would otherwise be more or less chaotic. The second purpose is that they act as a means of reference and communication between man and his fellow beings.

Inasmuch as any symbol, or combination of symbols, is associated with the same complex of ideas in the minds of two persons, so do we say that those two persons "understand" the same language. We also say that the symbols "mean" the same for them. An "idea" (in the sense here intended) is that which occurs in the mind when something is experienced. Thus a child who has experiences of chairs has a number of ideas in connexion with them which form a "complex" in his mind. Every time he has experience of a chair some new idea is added to the complex, or some old one is revived, or both things happen together. At first the complex may be formed without any sound-symbol being attached to it. Later, through the frequent repetition by others of a particular sound in connexion with the object, the sound-symbol "chair" becomes associated with the complex of ideas already formed. And this association between symbol and idea-complex is what we call the "meaning" of the symbol. It should also be noted here that meanings have both positive and negative aspects. The child learns, for example, not only that a chair is "something to sit on," but that it is *not* a "sofa," even though people do sit on the latter.

The meanings of words, therefore, are established by the personal experience of each individual. And since the experience of no single individual can be precisely the same as that of another, so do we find that many words have different "shades of meaning" for different people. For all practical purposes, however, most words in a given language have the same

meaning for a large number of people, because circumstances compel us to live together in communities whose individuals have many experiences of a very similar nature in common.

(1)—SHADES OF MEANING.

Misunderstandings which arise from differences in shades of meaning are almost every-day affairs. Here is an example. "I don't call that a basin; I call it a bowl," one person is heard to declare. "Well, I don't," replies the other. "I say it is a basin." And so on. Had these two persons shared the same experiences from childhood up, the difference of opinion would probably not have arisen. And had they been aware of the limitations and proper functions of language, the misunderstanding could have been remedied in a very short time.

From a dilemma of this sort the only possible escape lies in a precise definition of the terms in dispute. "I call all things of this sort 'basins' if they are used with jugs," one could have said. "I call all things of this sort 'basins' if they are more than a foot wide, whether used with a jug or not," the other could have said. Ultimately some compromise might be agreed to, or one person might adopt the more practical definition given by the other. Without definition, the chances are that the discussion would have ended with some such statement as: "Well, I have always called that sort of thing a basin (or bowl) and I shall continue to do so," regardless of the misunderstandings which would be certain to arise from the same source in the future.

(2)—ABSTRACTIONS.

We come next to those misunderstandings caused by the use of terms which do not refer directly to real objects or conditions. Words which refer to realities are fairly simple to define. For even if the realities themselves have not come within the experience of the persons concerned in the discussion, it is generally possible to bring them within their experience and so to demonstrate the meaning of the words which refer to them. But when we use abstract terms, definition of this direct nature is not possible. A specimen discussion will make the point clearer. (Letters in brackets refer to subsequent remarks.)

Brown: "I maintain that all investments are speculations."

Jones: "Oh, I don't agree. British Government stocks (a) aren't speculations."

Brown: "You only say that because you are British. You wouldn't regard Bolivian Government stocks (b) as safe investments, I'm sure."

Jones: "No, I wouldn't. But then, when is an investment safe? (c) Let's have your definition of a safe investment?"

Brown: "Well; I regard as a safe investment one which pays the interest promised for as long as promised and which repays the whole capital invested." (d)

Jones: "In that case you assume the possibility of knowing what is going to happen to your money when you invest it—and that is impossible."

Brown: "Which is precisely why I say that all investments are speculations."

Jones: "But you must admit that some investments are much safer than others. It is hardly fair to condemn all investments as unsafe."

Brown: "I never said that all investments were unsafe. I said that they were speculations."

Jones: "But according to your own definition no investment can be safe; for one cannot know in advance what is going to happen to any investment."

Brown: "Oh, yes, you can. If I invest (e) in a pound of steak at the butcher's, I can see that I get full value for my money." Etc., etc.

This discussion, which turns mainly round the abstract word "speculation," shows the necessity for prompt definition of words whose meaning appears to be ambiguous. If at the beginning Jones, realizing that his meaning did not agree with Brown's, had said: "What is your exact definition of the term 'speculation'?" then the chances are that the discussion would have been cut short by half.

It also shows the ease with which the argument can be shifted by the introduction of irrelevant qualifications or secondary meanings, as at (c) and (e). For if Jones had not been led away at (c) by Brown's introduction of the word "safe," he could have conserved the issue by stating: "But if you admit that there can be safe investments, then by your original statement you also admit that there can be safe speculations—a contradiction in terms."

Lastly, it shows that no discussion of abstractions can be conducted without reference to concrete cases; as was done at the points (a), (b) and (d).

As I pointed out in a previous article, entitled "Language and the Abstract" (*Freethinker*, December 21 and 28, 1930), abstract terms are merely abbreviations or condensations for linguistic convenience. Thus the verb to "borrow" is a condensation of the longer phrase "to ask for the use of something on the condition that it will be returned after use." In no case do abstract symbols refer directly to real objects or conditions—such, for example, as the words "my coat," or "the trees in Hyde Park" or, "you cannot drink and speak at the same time" might do. Just as the letters *x* and *y*, etc., in algebra are conveniences for abbreviating mathematical calculation, so are abstract words conveniences for abbreviating linguistic reference.

When in any discussion abstract terms are used which appear to be ambiguous, it is essential that, before going any further, all parties to the discussion should insist upon some unambiguous definition which they are prepared to accept. It is quite useless, however, to attempt a definition in terms of other abstractions whose ambiguity is as great as the word they purport to explain. The only method is to define them by reference to real or concrete cases. Every abstraction has its origin in the facts of experience, and it is only by reference to such facts that intelligible explanations can be provided.

C. S. FRASER.

(To be concluded.)

RELIGION IN CZECHOSLOVAK.

The returns of the Czechoslovak census of December last are now available in further detail, and the statistics touching religion have just been published for Bohemia. Out of a total population of 7,018,045 in Bohemia, the distribution of the various confessions (omitting the minor ones) is as follows: Roman Catholics, 5,316,340; *Freethinkers* 727,084; Czechoslovak National Church, 617, 927; Bohemian Brethren (Protestant), 199,677; German Protestants, 99,453; Jews, 76,348. Since the previous census in 1921, the most progress has been made by the Czechoslovak Church, which has increased its membership by 180,550, or over 41 per cent; the Roman Catholics have increased by 100,144, representing a growth of less than 2 per cent. On the other hand, the Bohemian Brethren have augmented their numbers by 51,866, the equivalent of over 35 per cent; the German Protestants have increased by 17, 469, or practically 20 per cent, and the person who profess no religion have increased by 69,000, or over 10 per cent. The Jews have declined by 3,429. The confessions work out as follows per 1,000 head of population: Roman Catholics, 782.9; *Freethinkers*, 98.6; Czechoslovak Church, 65.6; Bohemian Brethren, 22.2; German Protestants, 13.1; and Jews, 11.9.

Obituary.

It is with the deepest regret that we have to record the death of J. Greevz Fysher, a very old and a devoted member of the National Secular Society. He was born in Youghal, County Cork, in 1845, of Quaker stock, and was himself for some years a member of the Society of Friends, and became an avowed Freethinker about sixty years ago. For a number of years he took an active part in militant Freethought work, and was associated with some of Mr. Bradlaugh's lecture campaign as well as himself conducting lectures, debates, etc.

He became President of the Yorkshire Naturalist's Union in 1930, and took as the subject for his Presidential Address a rare form of snail *Limnia Peregra*, the shell of which twists to the right, but of which rare specimens occur with a sinistral twist. A pond close to Mr. Fysher's residence is the only known place where this form occurs, and he was responsible for the effort, as a result of which the owner, Lord Moynihan, generously provided for the preservation in perpetuity of this only remaining habitat.

Mr. Fysher's health began to fail last year although he was able to continue riding his bicycle up to last October. Early this year he became practically confined to the house and passed away peacefully on May 18. He leaves a widow, three sons and two daughters as well as two sons by a former wife.

He was a man of great firmness combined with gentleness of character, and ready always to take up the cudgels on behalf of any one threatened with tyranny or invasion of the freedom of the individual. His loss is felt very keenly by all who knew him.

There is no reason in the world why the Negro is not entitled to all the rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man.—*Abraham Lincoln.*

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LONDON.

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

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrols Road, North End Road): Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. A. Frank and F. Day. Saturday, 7.30, Messrs. A. J. Mathie and E. Bryant.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—Mrs. E. Grout will lecture at 11.15—"Liberty."

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Every Tuesday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture outside Hampstead Heath Station, L.M.S., South End Road. Every Thursday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture at Arlington Road.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. H. C. White—A Lecture.

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 7.0, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and 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.

INDOOR.

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, June 3, at 7.45, Mr. W. Dakin—"Some Socialistic Fallacies."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Intimacy and Individuality."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—Ramble to Ben Lomond. Meet Cathedral Street and Dundas Street, Saturday, May 30, at 6.0, for Drimen Bus.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture as follows:—Sunday and Monday evenings in the Bull Ring, at 7.30; Tuesday, top of Belgrave Road, at 7.0; Wednesday, Bull Ring, at 7.0; Thursday, Small Heath Park, Golden Hillock Road, at 7.0; Friday, Bull Ring, 7.0.

DURHAM.—Market Place, Tuesday, June 2, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead (London) will lecture as follows: Thursday, May 28, corner of High Park Street and Park Road; Friday, May 29, Islington Square. Local meetings will be held as follows: Sundays, Queen's Drive (opposite Baths); Mondays, Beaumont Street; Wednesdays, Waste Ground adjoining Old Swan Library; Thursdays, corner of High Park Street and Park Road.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Bigg Market, Wednesday, June 3, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S.—Bigg Market, at 7.30, Mr. R. Atkinson—A Lecture.

PERTH BRANCH N.S.S.—City Hall Square, 2.30, Mr. R. T. White (Paisley N.S.S.). Subject—"Does Morality Depend on Christianity." Questions invited.

SUNDERLAND.—Near Boilermakers Hall, Sunday, May 31, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

WINGATE.—Saturday, May 30, at 7.15, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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