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Views and Opinions.

Socialism and the Churches.
 It is to be hoped that a great many members of the Labour Party in this country will have learned from the recent manifesto of the Pope on Christianity and Socialism, combined with other happenings, the uselessness of sacrificing principle to vote-catching where social needs conflict with religious demands. Certainly, these events should rouse in the large body of Freethinkers inside the Labour Party the need for some revision of their present policy in remaining quiet so far as their own convictions about religion are concerned, while tacitly abetting any and every Christian to preach Jesus Christ in their name. The record of the present Government whenever it has sacrificed principle to vote-catching—and it has done this on every occasion when it has been faced with religious claims—is peculiarly illuminating. In the case of the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws it gave way to the claims of Christians in general by declining to permit the repeal of these laws unless the friends of the Bill agreed to an amendment which made matters worse than they are at present. When the Education Bill came it gave way to the Catholic threat of opposition in the constituencies by conniving at its own measure being hung up indefinitely. When the Sunday Observance question had to be dealt with it gave way to the threats of rabid Sabbatarians and produced a thoroughly bad measure, which made no real improvement in the situation, and for the first time in modern English history took away the right of public meeting on Sunday—unless a licence from some miserable little local Council had been obtained, and made even this licence dependent upon whether there was an overwhelming demand for the meeting in that locality. And now the crowning act of contempt for the party that has done so much to prove that it will yield to any threat from an organized religious crowd has been furnished by the recent decla-

ration of the Pope that no Christian can be a Socialist. We doubt whether even the lesson of this will be taken to heart; for we imagine that in reply we shall be having scores of speeches and hundreds of articles from Labour writers and speakers all trying to prove that Socialism is true Christianity.

* * *

Is Socialism Religious.

One of this expected spate of articles appeared in the *Evening Standard* for May 26, from the pen of Father Francis Woodlock. I do not think, by the way, that Roman Catholic leaders in this country will be altogether pleased with the papal declaration that Socialism, real Socialism, and Roman Catholicism are incompatible. Events have shown that the Roman Catholic vote, ignorant and organized as it is, can be used very effectively to bring a Labour Government or a Labour Party to heel in this country. On the other hand, on the Continent, where Socialism runs along more logical lines, and where the movement is, on the whole, aggressively anti-clerical, which means in practice anti-Catholic or anti-Christian, some stand had to be made. It is too much for even the impudence of the Roman Church to give its sanction to a movement, which if it aims at anything at all, aims at organizing Society on a basis that ranks religious beliefs as no better than a useless form of mental dissipation.

It was left for Mr. Ramsey Macdonald to discover—when trying to placate the religious parties in this country—that Socialism had no more to do with a man's religion than it had with the colour of his hair. It would be an insult to Mr. Macdonald's intelligence to assume that he really believed this, in any case no one who knew what Socialism was and is could accept such a statement at its face value. A theory which aimed at a complete reorganization of Society could hardly get seriously to work and leave religion alone. When we bear in mind how much religion interferences with education, with marriage, with divorce, with freedom of discussion and publication, etc., it is rather too much to expect anyone seriously to believe that you can change the attitude of men and women towards these things without interfering with religion. And even though the non-religious Socialist was content to leave religion alone, it can hardly be expected that religious people who were in earnest about their beliefs, could possibly join in a reorganization of Society so long as religion was treated as of no account.

* * *

The Reward of Complaisance.

Father Woodlock explains, for the obvious benefit of the British Labour Party, that the Pope's pronouncement does not of necessity exclude Socialists, so long as they are not true Socialists, but "No man can be a good Catholic and a true Socialist," and so

that it may be made more palatable he further explains, "I feel sure that Pope Pius XI. would not regard Mr. Macdonald and Mr. Snowden as 'true' Socialists in their Party programme." But on the Continent:—

Socialism is not merely an economic theory, it is a cult with a definite philosophy of life, based exclusively on material considerations. It is a substitute for religion; it refuses to be guided by other worldly considerations. In Belgium or France the words "Liberal" or Socialist have such a clear anti-Christian connotation, that if you ask if certain prominent men are Catholics the reply as often as not will be "No, they are Socialists—or Liberals."

And he points out that the German Socialists have definitely demanded increased facilities for divorce, the secularization of education, and the refusal of any public funds for religious expenditure, while in Stockholm the programme of Socialism shows its materialism by repudiating schools where the Christian faith is taught (presumably at the public expense) and proposes the abolition of a State Church.

This is really very bad—for the trimmers. After Socialists, in the hope of making converts, have mouthed about our "brother Christ," and backed up religious claims that are an outrage upon one's sense of social justice, after Freethinkers within the Labour Party have kept their opinions on religion to themselves for fear of losing the support of religionists, after all this, to be told by the largest Church in Christendom, that no true Christian can be a Socialist, is enough to drive these people into quite open speech for the rest of their lives.

* * *

The Logic of Bigotry.

As an outsider my sympathy lies with Father Woodlock and the Pope. The logic, the common sense of the situation lies with them. No one with a proper sense of the situation can subscribe to the ridiculous, vote-catching proclamation of Mr. Macdonald's that Socialism has no more to do with a man's religion than it has to do with the colour of his hair. It does not matter whether one adopts the extreme Marxian or any other form, Socialism is a theory of social reconstruction that cuts at the very roots of religion. All the great leaders of Socialism from Robert Owen to Marx have seen this. It deals with social structures and social life as matters of experimentation, to be scrapped or established in terms of human well-being here, and without reference to any life hereafter or to any belief in a God. If these religious beliefs exist they do so as mere speculations, interesting maybe, but never of fundamental importance, and on no account to be permitted to act as decisive influences in determining social action. Of this there is simply no question. Religion in any Socialistic theory of society exists as a survival from a more primitive state. It may express itself in semi-sociologic terms, but to the scientific student this is an exhibition of mere rationalization.

Father Woodlock makes this position quite clear. It is not merely Socialism that the Pope condemns, but any 'ism that leaves out religion. Father Woodlock says:—

The Holy Father does not hesitate to declare solemnly that this Socialism (that is non-Communist Socialism) provided, of course, that it really remains Socialism, even in a mitigated form, and even though many points of its teachings are in themselves conformable to justice and admitted by the Church, has nevertheless a fundamental concept of human society so different from the true concept given us by the Gospel that any argument in doctrine remains absolutely impossible. It is not possible for a good Catholic to be a true Socialist.

It will be seen that the Pope's pronouncement is something much wider than the mere assertion that Socialism is incompatible with the doctrines of the Roman Church. It is an assertion that no social theory that is not based upon the concept of supernaturalism is harmonious with Christianity. And with this, as I have shown in my pamphlet *Socialism and the Churches*, I am in complete agreement. If a scientific sociology means anything at all it means that all that is possible, even all that is desirable, in human society may be achieved without any reference whatever to God, the Soul, or a future life. It robs religion of all utility, and makes God of no greater consequence to political economy than Old Mother Hubbard is to the question of the food supply.

* * *

Which Road?

Incidentally it may be—although on this point I am not very sanguine—that the Pope will have done an unintended service to the political parties in this country. His Encyclical may drive some of them to a consideration of first principles. It may help to stop some of the foolish talk that goes on with politicians about combining "true Christianity" with political and social theories. And it may also nerve those who are not Christians, and who are members of all parties, to let their own beliefs become widely known, and so help prevent the interference with social legislation by religious organizations. The Roman Church cannot afford to let its members form their own opinions on politics, because it sees that it may lead to their forming independent opinions on other subjects as well. The exercise of private judgment in religion is only a prelude to the expression of independent opinion in politics, and that is something the Roman Church has never admitted in theory, and has always tried to prevent in practice. On the other hand Freethinkers—real Freethinkers—have never failed to recognize that the road to independence in sociology lies through release from authoritative teaching in religion. We have to recover in its completeness the old Greek point of view, namely, that laws and institutions are subjects of social experimentation, that the test of their utility is their effect on human health and happiness; and when we have reached this platform we shall have reduced, not merely the Christian religion, but all religion, to a series of idle speculations about which no man need seriously concern himself.

CHAPMAN COPIES.

Elbow-room.

(Thanks "C-de-B." for the Thought!)

We are a crowd, we two,
In the Vineyard of Truth;
But there is room for you,
And we specially welcome Youth:
If you will join us we shall then be three—
You; and my friend; and me.

For there is much to do
In the Vineyard of Truth,
And the labourers are few,
So we gladly welcome Youth.
If your pal comes, that's four—
We can't expect much more.

You need not harbour fears
We shall lack elbow-room;
And, strange as it appears,
Truth will receive a boom
If four of us should do
The work now done by two.

BAYARD SIMMONS

Famous Freethinkers.

"Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
For you a stately gallery maintain
Of gay and tragic pictures."—Wordsworth.

"The moving finger writes, and having writ,
Moves on."—Omar Khayyam.

To the cultured mind there is no better reading than a list of names of note. We can well understand the sober joy of the old Puritans, who, taking the Christian Bible seriously, loved to grapple with the lengthy genealogies of Israel and Judah. Even a gazeteer is a mine of suggestion, and in a London directory you can lose yourself among the strange lanes from Pie Corner to Hanging Sword Alley. But a biographical dictionary or an encyclopædia is certain to make large inroads on our time. Take, for example, Joseph Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. In it there are thousands of entries, taken from all ages and all countries. That means thousands of names of interest, thousands of men and women who have played their part on life's stage, and who played it in a sufficiently remarkable manner to give their names a distinct interest to their descendants. We know of few more fascinating occupations than the reading of such a book, and regret that Freethought publishers were not sufficiently wealthy to include the portraits of many of the persons mentioned.

Such a book is informative, and turns the handles of many doors. We turn a page and encounter the name of Charles Bradlaugh, as brave as any soldier who ever handled a rifle in the Great War. He fought a great battle for thirteen years against overwhelming odds, and his was the cool head and calm judgment of the great captains of men. He gave his life for liberty, and our children will remember something of this Freethought leader when the names of his opponents are forgotten. A few pages further and there is the name of Richard Carlile. What an indomitable spirit does it not conjure up! There flits into our memory the ten years' martyrdom of this lion-hearted soldier of liberty. Further, we see the name of George Roote, the silver-tongued orator, and the finest writer in the Freethought Movement since Paine laid down his pen of fire. Then, we notice the splendid name of Edward Gibbon, the greatest of English historians, who, in his *Decline and Fall*, "sapped a solemn creed with solemn sneer." He walks for ever as to the clash of martial music under an imperial banner. Without exploration we have found the magnetic and powerful name of Voltaire. What a man! His witty epigrams stung like wasps, rankled for years. At sixty-four years' of age, when most men are thinking of slipped ease, he was writing *Candide*, the wittiest book in the world. Writing *Edipus* at seventeen, *Irene* at eighty-three, he crowded between these two masterpieces the accomplishments of a giant. And Edward Fitzgerald, the East-Coast recluse, who turned the quatrains of the old Freethinking Persian, Omar Khayyam, into a masterpiece of English poetry. "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," said his friend Tennyson. The name of Thomas Paine is homely, but what a personality does it recall? A character of outstanding ability, a pioneer among pioneers. His was the hand that first wrote the arresting words: "The United States of America," and he had a great share in the making of the Great Republic of the West.

There is a significant entry in the name of Catherine of Russia. How many innocent young curates realize that the evangel of Reason appeals equally to the monarch on a throne as to the toiler in the garret.

Catherine was a great woman, and a Freethinker in word and deed. When Denis Diderot was compelled by dire poverty to sell his library, she bought it back for him and installed him as librarian. Another "intellectual" was Frederick the Great. What must it have been to have been present at these festal nights at Frederick's palace when the nimble wit of Voltaire challenged the choicest brains of Europe? It must have been a rich memory and an abiding delight, like the ever-memorable nights at the "Mermaid," when the smiling Will Shakespeare exchanged quips and cranks with rare Ben Jonson. A more shadowy figure is that of Kit Marlowe, the Elizabethan dramatist, whose early death prevented his trial for blasphemy. Richard Burton, the master of many languages, and the intrepid traveller who penetrated to the "Holy of Holies," at Mecca, at the peril of his life, is another of the glorious company of Freethinkers.

The "intellectuals" of France are represented by a magnificent procession, reaching from Abelard through the centuries to Anatole France. Who can see the name of Robert Ingersoll without a quickening of the pulses? He comes riding down the wind like a white-plumed knight in shining armour to attack the embattled hosts of Superstition. And here is Charles Darwin, the solitary student who shook the world. He it was who proved beyond all dispute that man was not a fallen angel. He turned "Adam" and "Eve" out of the fabled "Garden of Eden," not with a flaming sword, but with a steel pen. Then, there is Heinrich Heine dying upon his mattress-grave in Paris with a jest upon his tired lips; and Shelley, the sweetest-souled of a thousand years of English poets, whom Christians sought to deprive of his children, and imprisoned men for selling his works. A sense of fellowship with the fled centuries invades us as we see the name of Giordano Bruno, one of the most fearless martyrs for truth. And Time seems poised for a moment upon his spread wings as we encounter the puissant personality of Lucretius, one of the sublimest poets who ever attuned his lyre under the eagles of the Cæsars.

Famous names such as these are but signposts to meet the reader and direct him towards the wonderful universality of Freethought. And, mind you, there are many hundreds of such signposts. Here under one roof, we may say, is the temple of Liberty, compared with which the churches, chapels, and mosques of the superstitious are but charnel-houses full of bones. For each of these men and women were, in their own way, the Apostles of Freedom. They were knight-errants of the evangel of Liberty. From the dim twilight when Lucretius rolled his richest thunders against the infamies of religion in his day, until twenty centuries later Swinburne rallied the soldiers of Freethought with the golden trumpet of his genius, Liberty never failed of her votaries.

The bare records of the doings of some of these pioneers thrill and fascinate by very reason of their simplicity. The feats of Freethinkers have needed little of the embellishment which high-sounding language could give them. From Hypatia, murdered by a Christian rabble, to Francesco Ferrer, "butchered to make a Roman holiday," they strike our imagination and hold our wonder in thrall. They are potent because of their very sincerity.

We come to this in the end, that Freethinking "Saints" are the best. It is significant that even in Christian Scotland the popularity of St. Andrew's Day is far less than that of Burns's Night. Is it not also true that in the fight for the possession of England's day, Shakespeare has beaten St. George, as our American friends say, to a "frazzle"?

This is but a little cloud of biographical dust, and

no apology is needed for it, for the interest of such a volume is inexhaustible. It reaches from the greatest names in history to hundreds of men and women whose achievements were less important, but, who, because they did some service to the cause of intellectual liberty, laid us all under obligation. The real pioneers all meet on one common ground of courage, unrecognized courage, without thought of tribute or hope of reward. They get no stripes for their wounds, no medals for their courage, and no more than bare soldiers' pay. They are the salt of the earth, the very flower of their generation. And the old world still has her pioneers, who blaze the trail for future generations, and whose glory is that they do not know how courageous they are.

MIMNERMUS.

Ferrer and his Work.

(Concluded from page 325.)

VI.

WHEN the disastrous bomb of May 31, 1906, exploded at Madrid and furnished to the murderous hands of the children of the Inquisition, the pretext for revenge against Ferrer and the schools founded by him, the bigots sent forth a cry of joy, for the Lord—as they imagined—had delivered Ferrer into their hands. Divine Providence who, or which, as the religious reactionaries declare, is always on the side of the priests now enrolled itself under the blood-stained standard of the Jesuits. They had raised up a fiery fanatic, Morral, and his devastating bomb played the unscrupulous game of the sons of Ignatius Loyola. These pious soldiers of the Cross had watched and prayed for the opportunity of crushing the beneficent movement of popular education set on foot by Ferrer, so that they were beside themselves with glee that they could now profit by the occasion, given by Morral, for the suppression of the Escuela Moderna and its founder. The bigots at the Cortes with Senor Silio (what a name!) at their head, cried aloud for the closing of the schools, and the clergy, in the press and in the pulpit, preached—*more suo*—blood and fire against the cause of education. For example, at Gijon, a Jesuit Father, in the course of a sermon against Ferrer, declared that “it is a sin, a thousand times greater than fornication or adultery, to read the publications prohibited by our holy mother Church.” A religious paper, published at Bilboa, *El corazon de Jesus* (“The heart of Jesus”) poured out in an article the following torrent of pious indignation:—

Morral is a disciple of the Escuela Moderna, one of the haunts of Atheism in Barcelona. What is the Escuela Moderna? It is a system of education without God; of teaching and instruction based on the principles of Freethought, including secular schools, indecent reviews, disgusting books, blasphemous meetings, irreligious spectacles, and impious discussions.

These crimes [alluding to the bomb explosion] will continue to take place as long as Spaniards support the liberty to read, to teach, and to think—from whence proceed all these anti-social monsters.

When the history of the culture of modern Spain is written, the recital of the intellectual renaissance which was the result of the labours and sacrifices of the heroic man who, during the thirteen months of his unjust incarceration at the Carcel Modelo at Madrid, was menaced with death as the penalty of endeavouring to save his people from the satanic hands of a corrupt and bloodthirsty priesthood, will constitute one of the most moving chapters in the long annals of the martyrdoms of Freethought.

VII.

It may be useful, at this stage, to cite from the *España Nueva*, of November 14, 1906, a few paragraphs from Ferrer's article in the above journal entitled, “My Profession of Faith.” In this revealing self-portraiture, he declares his attitude as follows:—

Experience has taught me that even as religion divides mankind into sects which hate each other, which fight between themselves, provoking war, and making impossible the reign of peace amongst mankind, so the names with which political parties brand each other are the cause of division, of hatred, and bloodthirsty wars! Being convinced of the foregoing principles, I ceased to fight in any political party after the death of Zorilla Ruiz (in June, 1895) in order to dedicate all my activity to education, the only solid basis of human regeneration, according to my humble opinion.

I have always denied before the magistrate that I was an anarchist. I made this denial because the idea formed here of an anarchist is that of a being hungry for blood, the enemy of humanity, and a partisan of evil by means of evil—and I am none of these things. On the contrary, I detest the shedding of blood; I labour for the regeneration of humanity, and I love the good for the good's own sake.

But if people choose to classify me as an anarchist because they have read a phrase of mine in which I have spoken of ideas of demolition in men's brains, I will reply that there—there!—in the collection of books and “Boletines,” published by the Escuela Moderna—will, indeed, be found ideas of demolition. In other words, the introduction into men's brains of the rational and scientific spirit leads to the demolition of all prejudice.

VIII.

During the short period in which Ferrer was engaged in building the foundations of the Escuela Moderna, over fifty volumes were poured forth from his publishing house. These works include the magnificent Spanish edition of Reclus' *Man and the Earth*, in six beautifully illustrated volumes, on the production of which Ferrer was specially engaged when the priestly ghouls claimed him as their victim. The four volumes of Letourneau's *Ethnic Psychology* are included in Ferrer's classic library of text books, as also the four volumes by Dr. Odon de Buen, entitled *The Natural Sciences*, specially introduced for the use of the Escuela Moderna. Ferrer's anxiety was that his pupils should have access to the best books for their instruction and enlightenment. For that reason Professor Ingerrand's one-volume book, entitled *Notions of the First Ages of Humanity*, was highly recommended by Reclus for use in the teaching of the Escuela Moderna. In connexion with the foregoing volumes, our readers will scarcely be surprised to learn that one of the earliest of the Ferrer publications was a three-volume work (which might interest H. G. Wells himself) entitled *Compendium of Universal History*, by Clemencia Jacquinet, a learned woman, who co-operated with Ferrer as the co-Director of the Escuela Moderna. The first volume comprises a brief scamp through time and space from the prehistoric ages to the days of the early Caesars. Volume 2 deals with the period from the Middle Ages to the dawn of the French Revolution. The third volume deals with the French Revolution and its consequences. The survey of events in these three volumes is extremely interesting, and the work simply cries aloud for a translator. I am sure that even those who have taken an excursion with Wells through time and space, would find this *Compendium* fresh and delightful.

In my last article I referred to *The Universal Substance*, by Parof Javal, and have no space here to do ought than reiterate the view that Ferrer took of this

On Slavery.

I SUSPECT that, for many people nowadays, the word "slavery" is but a word—an unpleasant one, of course, but still only a word. There is no such thing as slavery, don't you know. It was killed, once and for always by Christianity, and naturally, if it ever broke out again, Christianity would wipe it off the slate again.

When I was a boy at school, the legend that slavery was abolished by Christianity was assiduously taught as an irrefutable fact. Our Lord and Saviour taught that all men were equal in His eyes. He ranged Himself definitely against all injustice. Slavery was an awful Pagan injustice, and therefore He was against it. He did not actually say so in so many words, but He *must* have been against it. How can anyone imagine Jesus acquiescing to slavery? When one gets this kind of drivel repeated every time the subject of slavery—or for that matter serfdom—crops up, is it any wonder that we finally believe it? I never for a moment questioned the matter till I became a Freethinker, and then only did I find how necessary it was to be on guard whenever a Christian—as a Christian—said anything whatever.

The history of slavery is one of the foulest blots on the history of man. In very ancient times, when there was hardly anything like humanitarianism, and lives were cheap, the lot of the slave was one of unparalleled brutality. Under Paganism, particularly under the Romans, while his life was at his master's mercy, he did often have a chance to become a doctor, a poet or a philosopher. He did often get the chance to become educated. But under Christianity this was denied him. Under Christianity, slavery and the slave trade became synonymous with the worst and most degrading cruelties known in history.

Mr. Chapman Cohen's latest work* will give the enquiring reader a mass of information on slavery and its unpleasantness, compressed in 124 papers, of surprising range and research. The first edition, published many years ago, was followed by a second both of which are now out of print. This edition has been carefully revised and expanded, and should prove a veritable armoury of facts against the lies and nonsense of Christian claims with regard to slavery. Its author has put aside for the moment science as such, and has gone to history and his deductions therefrom show Christianity in about as sorry a light as it is possible to imagine. Slowly and relentlessly he traces the terrible story down to our own day. The chapter on slavery in Pagan times is illuminating for Mr. Cohen clearly shows how and why it differed from slavery in Christian times. That difference should always be born in mind when discussing the question with Christians for it is fundamental. He says:—

It will not do, therefore to identify Pagan with Christian slavery. Slavery as an institution existed in both cases, but, as Professor Cairnes says, "we look in vain in the records of antiquity for a traffic which in extent, in systematic character . . . can be regarded as an analogue of the modern slave trade." The Christian slave trade represents one of the most frightful and systematic brutalities the world has ever known.

When we come to Christian times, "nowhere," says Mr. Cohen, "does the early Church condemn slavery as an institution." Of course there have been Christians who condemned slavery or worked for the mitigation of the lot of the slave, but this was not because they were Christians. Rather is it because they

* *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*. By Chapman Cohen. 1s. 6d. paper. 2s. 6d. cloth net. The Pioneer Press, 1931.

volume, viz., that it is a veritable vade-mecum of arguments in favour of materialism and, is specially needed in these days when woolly-minded mystics abound who have turned their eyes away from scientific facts in order to wallow in the clouds of fancy and vague speculation.

Another remarkable volume *Super-Organic Evolution*, by Enrique Lluria, should be read in conjunction with the last-mentioned volume. In the *Prologo*, by Dr. Ramon Cajol, he points out that our actual humanity, which Dr. Lluria calls "the super-human organism," has turned way "disdainfully" from Nature, and thereby has brought about a systematic and perpetual violation of the laws of evolution; hence our irritating disequalities and torturing sorrows and miseries. It is a learned book by a very learned man, but Dr. Lluria would have written a less confusing book if he had put his Socialism into one book and his Science into another. But it is a very delightful and suggestive book, and gives us 95 per cent of good and useful scientific material, and only a mere 5 per cent of irrelevant Socialism. The amalgamation of heterogeneous elements in the make up of a scientific work is, not perhaps a sin, but a mistake. Dr. Lluria supports fully the materialistic view of the universe.

Already, in my last article, I mentioned that very valuable book, the *Origin of Christianity*. It is a perfect little gem, scintillating light and learning upon the mysteries which envelope the nature and origin of the now much battered Palestinian creed. A crowd of small but suggestive illustrations exhibiting Christianity as a disguised Paganism, adorn the work, and take the mind back to the superstitions that were rampant before the advent of Christ. The 175 pages of the *Origin* tell the tale, and kill the venerable lie, in a few hours of sweet delight.

I have only to add that no less than thirty-two schools, formed independently of the Escuela Moderna, adopted into their teaching and programme the books issued and used by the Escuela Moderna. These auxiliary schools were scattered over a wide area in Spain, from Barcelona in the north to Malaga in the south.

IX.

Ferrer to-day, though dead, still lives in the hearts and minds of those who knew and loved him, not only as a hero, but as a generous-hearted man. Alfonso, who consigned Ferrer to martyrdom, counts to-day less in the scales of influence and power than the victim whom he sacrificed. The Church and the Monks and the Bishops have, only a few years after Ferrer's doom, seen the Churches around them blazing with the fires of a people's indignation. The King of Spain is now in exile; his indignant people, and the now victorious Spanish Republic, are about to arraign him on charges that never sullied the name and fame of Ferrer, and the last of Spanish Kings may never see Spain again, except as a prisoner fettered, and as a criminal loaded with charges of malfeasance. The schools that he smashed, and the educators, like Ferrer, who sought to lighten the darkness of his people's superstition, might have brought contentment and peace to Spain and honour to its ruler; but Alfonso chose the evil part and left undone those things that he ought to have done. For this omission he will go down to posterity loaded with pity—and contempt.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The wisdom of one generation will be the folly of the next . . . yet we persist in making preceding generations dictate to the succeeding ones.—*Priestly*.

were *men* and shared with other men, Pagans, Jews or Christians, the humanitarian feelings of men. And in any case, says the author, "It would be indeed nearer the truth to say that the Christians who wrote in favour of the mitigation of the lot of the slave were far more indebted to Pagan than to Christian influence."

The chapter on the English slave trade gives a revolting picture of the way in which the unfortunate negro was treated by his Christian white brother, backed up by all the forces of Royalty, the Church, and the Bible, and the two reproductions of the slave ship *Brookes* only add to the horror. From the day when "gallant" Sir John Hawkins with his slave ship, *Jesus*, kidnapped the "gentle and loving" natives of Cape Verd to the days in which Wilberforce vainly tried to pass a Bill against the African slave trade, Mr. Cohen gives us the pitiless details, and a terrible picture it is, and even more horrible is the description of American slavery, particularly as they all were, in almost every instance, backed up by real Christianity. Indeed it was the "infidels," Thomas Paine and Frances Wright, and Abner Kneeland, with Abraham Lincoln and many other unbelievers who fought slavery with tenacity and courage, rare and enviable, and finally helped to vanquish it. Mr. Cohen's facts and figures are damning as to the part Christianity played in the victory—though he gives credit to the individual Christians who helped the movement.

Finally, there is a chapter on the relationship between Christianity and labour, in which, concisely and accurately, the reader will get a clear view of the conditions under which men, women and children worked in a Christian country like England. Those who really believe there used to be a "Golden Age" for workers, should study this long chapter. The worker in medieval England or under the factory system in the nineteenth century was a genuine slave under appalling conditions—whatever he called himself. Some of the conditions under which they worked are almost unbelievable, if anything can be unbelievable under Christianity. And it is simply farcical for anyone to pretend that Christianity had any hand in ameliorating the lot of the worker in any shape whatever.

The last chapter in the book deals with the relation of the Black and White peoples and shows how "stripped of all pretence and subterfuge, it is a record of subjugation and exploitation, and of subjugation for the purpose of exploitation." It is not pleasant reading for no white man likes to be reminded of his dealings with the black man. It is a fitting summary to the book, however, and Mr. Cohen is to be congratulated on his fine sociological study, grim and unbearable as some pages of it are. He has shown "how systematic and continuous has been the perpetuation of various forms of wrong under Christian auspices," but he has shown more. For under all his attack will be found his passionate faith and belief in humanity and humanism. He will tear away the covers and expose the hideous sores, but only because he knows there must come the day when they will be healed and mankind will emerge, proud and free, with unbounded hope for a future which will be the veritable golden age.

H. CUTNER.

Except among Politicians, the irrelevance of Parliament is not even discussed, it is assumed with a shrug of the shoulders . . . —*John Galsworthy*.

It is only by making the ruling few uneasy, that the oppressed can obtain a particle of relief.—*Bentham*.

Discussion.

(Concluded from page 349.)

(3)—DUPLICATE MEANINGS.

APART from abstractions there are many words in every language which have two (or more) specific meanings. It is a pet dodge of the controversialist to avoid the issue by shifting, if possible imperceptibly, the discussion from one subject to another by using the same word in two different senses.

The specimen discussion given previously shows, at the point marked (e), how Brown, seeing that he was getting the worst of the argument, tried to alter the issue by using the word "invest" in its meaning of "to purchase" in place of the meaning it had previously been given of "to lend money with a view to getting interest."

Even where this ruse is not adopted deliberately, duplicate meanings frequently lead to misunderstandings. The word "law," for instance, is a common stumbling-block even to the logical mind, for it has two distinct meanings—the social and the scientific. To use the word "law" in reference to nature and to God in the same discussion is simply to invite confusion. In the first case the sense is: "a descriptive formula," and in the second: "a command." Again the necessity for accurate definition of terms becomes apparent, and the earlier in a discussion that this occurs, the less likely is it that misunderstanding will arise.

(4)—METAPHOR.

It is not true, as one learned writer has said*, that all statements are metaphorical, and that the sentence "sugar is sweet" is no more literal than "that man is an ass." For if such were the case, the words "literal," and "metaphorical" would be meaningless. That the writer himself is fully aware of some actual distinction between the two terms is tacitly admitted by his choice of examples, as well as by his use of the words "no more literal" in reference to the first example.

In some cases it may not be so easy to distinguish between a literal and a metaphorical statement as in others, and misunderstanding may arise on this account. But the distinction is not an impossible one to make, as the following comments will show.

With the exception of words like those indicated in the foregoing section, most words have only one primary or "literal" meaning—the meaning which is understood when a word is presented without context. And unless the factual or verbal context implies the contrary, it is this "literal" meaning which is always *first* applied in the interpretation of any statement. If a statement, thus interpreted, makes sense, we call it a literal statement.

In certain cases, however, a word is sometimes used with a limited meaning—a meaning based upon some partial aspect of its primary meaning. And if a statement makes nonsense when the primary meaning is applied, but makes sense with a secondary meaning, then the statement is called metaphorical.

Thus, in the statement "sugar is sweet," we begin by giving the words their primary meanings, and we find that this makes sense. So we regard the statement as "literal." But in the statement "that man is an ass," the primary meaning of the word "ass" is "a quadruped of the genus *equus*, with long ears, etc." And since man is not a quadruped, this interpretation makes nonsense. But in the limited meaning of the word "ass," namely "a stupid

* *Dialectic*, by Mortimer J. Adler. (Kegan Paul)

creature," the statement makes sense. So we call the statement "metaphorical."

It will be noted in this connexion that if we regard all statements as being of the nature of equations, the first part is always intended to be taken literally, while the second part may be either literally or metaphorically interpreted, in accordance with the criterion of sense.

So indeterminate, however, are the uses to which the symbols of language are put, that we should beware of the apparent sense of many seemingly literal statements. This warning is most necessary in cases where popular catch-phrases or slogans or proverbs are used.

Thus, that favourite slogan of the altruist: "Virtue is its own reward," far from being a self-evident truth, is, if taken literally, mere nonsense. For the primary meaning of the word "reward" is "something given by one person to another for services rendered." It follows, therefore, that nothing can be its own reward. But if the limited meaning "something which gives pleasure to the receiver" is applied, then the phrase makes some sort of sense. Interpreted in this way the slogan might read: "Virtue is something which gives pleasure to the virtuous person." Apart from the fact that this interpretation is not true to experience, it strips the slogan of its fashionably altruistic appearance.

(5)—SIMILE.

Similes are in the nature of definitions. They purport to explain what is being discussed in one sphere by illustration from or comparison with another sphere. The danger of their use lies in the fact that it is seldom possible to produce an illustration which is completely parallel to the circumstances it is intended to illustrate. In the process of elaborating the comparison there is generally a tendency on the part of the speaker to lay as much stress upon the non-parallel elements as upon the rest. And the listener, unless he is wary, is apt to be misled by the general similarity into accepting the non-parallel elements as valid to the discussion.

"Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow" is a poetic simile, applicable perhaps in certain very limited instances. But to argue from this that all errors always behave like straws upon water is to argue that errors are, in fact, straws—which they are not. Many other examples could be given of similes by the use of which false arguments have been subtly introduced. But since similes are less easily disguised than metaphors, their use in an argument is less likely to lead to misunderstandings of a serious kind. It is, nevertheless, a good policy to avoid their use altogether, or to deny their validity if there is any suspicion of their having been introduced for any other purpose than illustration.

(6)—DEFINITIONS.

In any discussion, therefore, when it becomes apparent that the meanings of terms used are ambiguous, both parties must call a halt in order to isolate these terms and to provide them with definitions to which they can agree. And this is always possible as long as there is a desire on both sides to arrive at some definite conclusion, and not merely to convince the other party or to have the final word.

It is not necessary, nor even advisable, to appeal to dictionaries for definitions of the terms we use. For dictionaries seldom give the meanings which we have in our own minds; and it is these meanings which we intend and which we should be able to explain in our own words. If we are unable to do this, it is a sure sign that we do not know what we ourselves are talking about. It is, of course, not to be expected that

every definition so provided will be complete and all-inclusive; that would be an impossibility under any circumstances. But it is not impossible to provide definitions which shall be adequate to the discussion in hand.

In conclusion I come to an issue which is not strictly concerned with the misunderstandings arising out of the use of language. The primary condition essential to any discussion whose ostensible purpose is to reach truth, is *the genuine desire of all parties to arrive at an agreed conclusion in regard to a clearly worded proposition*. The absence of such desire is easily detected in the unwillingness of one or other of the parties (a) to adhere to the original proposition, or (b) to define or explain in simpler terms any term which has given rise to misunderstanding, or (c) to adhere to an agreed definition when such definition has been provided. Where any of these conditions supervene, the wise person will make it his business to refrain from further discussion.

C. S. FRASER.

Acid Drops.

When the agreement between Mussolini and the Pope was established we pointed out that it contained all the elements of a disagreement. Mussolini stood for the supremacy of the State, and that is something with which the Roman Church will never agree, for it stands for the supremacy of the Church in the State. Mussolini was, again, committed to the control of the education of the young if his system was to remain permanent. Here, again, the Church could not agree, because it must, like all Christian bodies, capture the child if it is to control the man. People who are educated without religion do not become religious as they reach maturity. Religious belief is always the dregs of early superstition however watered down the superstition may be, and however elaborate the process of rationalization may be. In these two directions there was always the possibility of a row, and reports from Rome seem to indicate that the row has eventuated.

There have been riots in Rome with cries of "Down with the Pope," and even "Down with the Church." The Fascists and the Roman Catholics each accuse the other of fomenting the disturbance, and this time the bugbear of Russia, which with a handful of men and a comparatively small sum of money seems able to fool the rest of the world at its ease, is not applicable. It might truthfully be said that Mussolini declared war on the Church when he said "Education must be ours," and no one who knew the Roman Church ever believed that it saw in fascism anything but a tool it might use to its own ends. But with Spain repudiating the Church, and the Church losing its hold on Italy, "God's own Church" looks as though it is in for a bad time.

The Presbyterian Churches of Scotland are gravely concerned at the growing indifference to religion, especially in the large towns, and have decided to make a special missionary effort in Glasgow. Whereupon a Methodist journal mentions that the Methodist Church has, in the past, been responsible for the principle evangelical activity in the city, and that its Bridgeton Hall is situated in a centre of a dense population "largely indifferent and even hostile to the Churches." This latter item of news will no doubt encourage our Freethinking friends in Glasgow to even greater efforts. There cannot be too much Freethought antidote to the pious poison now being distributed.

There is nothing more absurd than that sort of apologetics in which the Catholic Truth Society delights. It holds up to ridicule the fable of *Maria Monk*; but an illiterate invention, or a thousand such, wittily exposed, does not wipe out a line of Lea's appalling and unchallenged indictment of clerical celebacy, or of the records

and reports of Henry VIII's Examiners. Why bother to advertise some incredible Jesuit of fiction, such as one of Joseph Hocking's, when the history of yesterday, and the Spain of to-day, is black with the record of the Jesuit of fact? This week's *Observer* quotes among the "Sayings of the Week," Father F. Woodlock's assertion that "the habit of birth-control is the greatest threat to the survival of civilization which it has hitherto encountered." That this patent lie, like many others from the same mouth and the same Maysfair pulpit, can get notice from the press, even of the high-brow, not to mention the popular variety, while such a genuine item of news as the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society is not mentioned in a single newspaper where the news-editor is boss, is the best proof, if there were not tons of it already, that there are others as well as Jesuits who act on their precept—"make yourself clear that you are justified in deception, and then lie like a trooper."

The *Methodist Times* is trying to start a "crusade for clean films." It wants to "purify" the cinema in accordance with Puritan notions. If our purifying Methodist friends are allowed to have all their own way in this matter, the cinema will in future provide little that is attractive to its present patrons. For most of us know what Puritan censorship means. The narrow intelligence that sees evil in mixed bathing, and that goes on the prowl in search of "wickedness" among the boating parties up the Thames on Sunday, is the last to be entrusted with improving the cinema. If reform be needed, it had better be left to persons with wider culture, broader minds, and more human sympathies. One can imagine what our museums and art galleries would be like if the Puritan "purified" them—many of the finest pictures and noblest statues would be removed or covered up "in the interest of public morality." The Puritan can no more be trusted to improve the cinema than he can be trusted to improve art or literature. His standards are too unenlightened, too narrow, warped, and rancid.

We have often and recently referred to the imperviousness of dissenters to truths affecting themselves and their superior "spiritual" claims. We therefore are glad that John Swain, in a new book *The Pleasures of Torture*, tells us how the late lamented C. H. Spurgeon once drew loud applause from an audience by asserting that the Baptists had never persecuted those who differed from them. When the cheers ended, he drily added that they never had the chance.

Spurgeon was, indeed, better at raucous back-chat than at theology, and loved a joke as well as his cigar. Most of his successors are, if we are to believe their own account of themselves, unlike him in being men "without a single vice." Of course one slips out occasionally—in a court that deals with divorce or affiliation.

Palmer's Green Congregational Church recently discussed the question of the Sunday opening of Cinemas. At the close of the discussion thirty-six voted for the opening and twenty-four against. We are getting on; but what a change from the time when the campaign of Secularism against Christianity began!

The British Israelites are against the League of Nations. This should please Lord Beaverbrook. To know that one of the most intellectual of the Christian sects—plus their God, of course—is with him must be very encouraging. When a one-eyed man essays to lead the blind, any encouragement floating around will naturally be appreciated.

A reader of a Wesleyan journal says: "I believe that if the Christian pulpit was strengthened by the right type of man there would be no need for further controversy about Sunday Observance." Now, as all the parsons say they have been "called" by God for their peculiar vocation, are we to infer that God has been "calling" a lot of undesirables?

A terrible attack on secondary schools has just been made by the Bishop of Durham, Dr. Hensley Henson. He says there is a very great shortage of curates, but "the secondary schools were beginning to send admir-

able candidates, and he looked to them with waxing hope as a great recruiting ground for the ministry." Now what will the teachers in secondary schools say to that! To be publicly told that the material turned out by them is fit for nothing better than to serve as raw material for the Christian ministry is the last word in slander. If that were true the sooner the schools are closed the better.

Dean Inge has been protesting against the belief in the reality of Hell. He says he is sure that "Our Lord" never meant what he said to be taken literally. What a pity it is that "Our Lord" never mastered the art of making himself understood. But that fault seems to have run in the family. Everybody misunderstood the Father when he wrote, and everyone misunderstood the Son when he spoke. It looks as though it would have been better if they had both kept quiet.

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Chadwick says: "Modern thinkers, even in Christian thought, are at their wit's end to know what to make of the Holy Ghost." The reverend doctor is not quite right. Modern thinkers do not spare a moment's thought for bogies—holy or otherwise. Some Christian experts may do so, but juggling with imbecilities is their speciality.

In connexion with Methodist Union, the united committee of the three churches concerned affirms that the main object of Union is "the more effective evangelization of the world and service of the age." This noble sentiment, of course, needs translating. What the united churches are hoping for is more money and influence to inflict more Puritan legislation and petty restrictions upon people outside the churches, and to prevent old restrictions being swept away. For the genuine lover of freedom, religious amalgamations have always a sinister significance.

From the *Methodist Recorder* :—

The decree of religious liberty throughout Spain, issued on Saturday, is obviously a matter of satisfaction to Protestants, though one must guard against mistaking the motive behind it. The decree, which makes everyone free to worship how he will or not at all, was probably little more than an expedient to win the Socialists over to political co-operation with the Republicans; and this purpose it seems to have achieved.

In a book somewhat pompously entitled *Princes of the Modern Pulpit*, the author (Mr. E. H. Jeffs) quotes a sermon of the late Dr. Joseph Parker's on Sabbath Observance as that gentleman knew it in his early days. Thus :—

Rise at seven, family prayers. Breakfast at eight o'clock. Sunday school at nine, church at ten-thirty, then home to cold dinner. One hour of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, then Sunday school at two. Home to tea, then another hour of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, then hymns round the pianoforte. Then evening church, followed by cold supper, more hymns round the pianoforte, family prayers. Then to bed. Bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it . . . WONT HE!!!

Religious journals please copy.

The following item is from a Kent paper :—

The age-old quarrel between Churchmen and Nonconformists has opened again. This time it is at Sutton-at-Hone, where the Parish Council has elected Mr. A. H. Chandler as a school manager, and his election has been endorsed by the Kent Education Committee. But the Vicar of St. Paul's, Swanley, objects, and refuses to recognize a Nonconformist as a manager of the local "Church" school. But the "Church" school is maintained partly by the contributions of rate-payers, Churchmen and Nonconformist alike. When shall we all realize that we are living in 1931—not in the Middle Ages.

The curious may care to note that squabbles such as these are due to a religion which specializes in Brotherhood and Love. Someone has said that the Christian religion was the only thing that would bring peace among the nations. Why, it cannot cure itself yet of producing discord around a parish pump!

National Secular Society.

THE Funds of the National Secular Society are legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. S. FRASER.—Yes, the Pope appears to have his hands full at present, but the tremendous mass of organized ignorance and credulity that lies behind the Roman Catholic Church will not easily be overcome. Thanks for cuttings.

O. UNDERWOOD.—Pleased to have your appreciation of our Jubilee number. Very many of our readers are following your example and preserving a copy of that issue among their "treasures."

S. CHARLES.—We feel flattered. We have had many letters thanking us for the articles on Spain, but we do not think that as they stand, they are suitable for separate publication. The situation is not stable enough for that. As we said, the intention of the articles was to stop the game being played with Freethought in Spain that was played with Freethought in Russia. If we have placed our own people on their guard, it is enough for the time being.

C. C. CRANE.—Thanks, but not quite up to standard.

M. LONGTON.—Do you seriously think that an uneducated Jewish peasant who may have lived about two thousand years ago could really act as the world's teacher on social and economic problems to-day? It is almost too absurd for discussion.

J. NEIL.—The Rev. Barr's pamphlet is on the usual lines of those who by hook or crook are determined to make the Bible the great saviour of all humanity.

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

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. 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.

Sugar Plums.

We are glad to say that the issue of our Jubilee number has resulted in a distinct rise in the circulation of the paper. May we now point out that this is a good time for our friends to push the paper among their acquaintances. It is the best kind of praise they can give us for our work, and the only kind of praise we value. Some time ago we suggested that if each one resolved to provide a new reader, and fine himself or herself to the extent of an extra copy weekly until it was done, this would be a very real help. We are doing what we can to make the paper better known by different methods of advertising, but what we can do is, naturally very restricted. Until the paper becomes wealthy, our chief help must be that of personal recommendation. It is a paper worth recommending—even though "we says it as shouldn't."

We are pleased to hear that the Glasgow venture in opening a bookstall at the juncture of West Regent Street and Renfield Street was very successful. The sales exceeded expectations, and the Branch hopes to chronicle a steady improvement. We trust they will not be disappointed, and we again advise all Freethinkers in Glasgow and district to give the movement their cordial support.

Our energetic friend, Mr. Joseph Lewis, of New York, never misses an opportunity of joining legal issue with the Churches in their endeavours to use the State to sectarian ends. It seems there is a move to use the machinery of the schools to collect funds for the Salvation Army. Mr. Lewis has written to the authorities concerned stating that if this is attempted he will ask the Courts to prevent it being done. Technically, the American Constitution, is freer from religion than is our own, and we wish Mr. Lewis success in any move he undertakes. At all events he will have the opportunity of ventilating a public scandal.

Mrs. Ettie A. Hornibrook has added to her other useful health books *Restoration Exercises for Women* (Heinemann, 5s.). The work is simply written and covers the ground of dieting as well as exercises. There is nothing in it that any woman cannot easily follow, and, so far as man resembles woman, he also will find it usefully suggestive. Modern civilization makes dependable works of this kind increasingly necessary, and Sir Arthur Keith, in a Foreword to the author, expresses our own conviction when he says that "the health of the womanhood of England would be vastly raised towards the ideal if what you teach could be brought to the lady who lolls on her chesterfield, as well as to the washerwoman who stands at her tub." Health is, or ought to be everybody's business and advice of the kind given here, with no expensive apparatus required, and given in language that even a child may follow would surely mean fewer or smaller doctor's bills, and greater contentment with life as a consequence. There are plates illustrating the exercises recommended, and some useful notes on the preparation of food.

Cardiff and Neath saints are reminded that Mr. G. Whitehead will be lecturing in those districts this week. Details will be found in the lecture guide column. There is a Branch of the N.S.S. in Cardiff which will co-operate in the meetings there. The local Secretary is very keen, and will be on the watch for unattached Freethinkers.

Following on the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. at Liverpool, Mr. G. Whitehead reports some very good meetings in the open-air resulting in many questions, a number of enquiries as to the Society's work, and good sales in literature.

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 24, 1931.

MEMBERS and delegates were punctually at their places in the Conference Hall, at the Washington Hotel, Liverpool, when the President took the chair and the General Secretary called the roll. The branches represented were: Bradford, Mrs. M. Bulmer, H. L. Searle; Brighton, L. M. W. Easterbrook; Bolton, W. H. Sisson; Birmingham, J. Clayton; Bethnal Green, C. J. Harrison; Chester-le-Street, J. T. Brighton, J. Walton; Cardiff, J. Marsh; Darlington, J. Anderson; Glasgow, A. Jackson; Liverpool, W. McKelvie; Manchester, W. Blaney, J. E. Addy; Newcastle, T. Dixon; Nelson, R. Hartley; North London, A. D. McLaren; Plymouth, W. J. W. Easterbrook; Paisley, J. McMillan; Perth, J. Wingate; Swansea, W. T. A. Skinner; South London, G. Whitehead, Shotts, R. Parker; Shields, R. Chapman, Mrs. A. Shortt; West London, H. J. Savory, E. C. Saphin; West Ham, Mrs. H. Rosetti, Mrs. E. Venton, R. L. Venton. There was a good attendance of members from various parts, in addition to delegates.

The Agenda was a long one, and the President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, lost no time in getting well on the way to business. The Minutes of the last Conference were taken as read, and the Executive's Annual Report, read by the President (and published in full last week) adopted. Motion No. 3 was the adoption of the Financial Report, proposed by Mr. Stafford (Liverpool) and seconded by Mr. J. T. Brighton (Chester-le-Street). Questions were asked and satisfactorily answered.

Motion No. 4 was the election of the President, Mr. Stafford, the President of the Liverpool Branch, taking the chair, during the retirement of Mr. Cohen. He gave a short but splendid tribute to the work Mr. Cohen had done in the past, after which Mr. Harrison proposed and Mr. Brighton seconded that Mr. Cohen should be re-elected President of the National Secular Society for the coming year, the members present responding with great acclamation. Mr. Cohen again took the chair, and in a few well chosen words thanked them all for the honour they had given him, and again could only say that he would continue to do his best.

Motion No. 5 was the election of the Secretary by the Executive, and the President proposed and Mr. Jackson (Glasgow) seconded that Mr. R. H. Rosetti should be elected. Mr. Cohen said that during the past year Mr. Rosetti had fulfilled his duties most admirably, and had been a great help to him personally. The motion was unanimously carried.

Mrs. Venton (West Ham) moved and Mr. Stafford seconded that Mr. C. G. Quinton should be re-elected Treasurer. Carried.

Mr. Savory (West London) moved and Mr. Williams seconded that Messrs Theobald be re-elected Auditor. Carried.

The nominations for the new Executive were elected as printed. Mr. Jackson, who seconded the motion that the nominations be voted *en bloc*, regretted that so few of the retiring members were present. The President joined in the regret, but said that so far as could be seen there was no way workable in which this difficulty could be overcome.

Mr. L. M. W. Easterbrook raised the question of the creation of a new electoral area, which would properly take in such a Branch as the one recently formed in Brighton. He moved that the Executive be instructed to revise rule 7, in order to permit the crea-

tion of new electoral area. This was seconded and carried.

Motion 9, moved by the Executive and seconded by Mr. Clayton was:—

"That this Conference desires to offer its heartiest congratulations to the *Freethinker* on the completion of its fiftieth year of publication; and desires to put on record its appreciation of the manner in which the *Freethinker* has placed its columns at the service of the National Secular Society; Conference also expresses its consciousness of the debt which Freethought in this country owes the *Freethinker's* bold and unwavering championship of freedom of thought, speech and publication."

Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook supported the motion as a reader of the *National Reformer* and of the *Freethinker* from the first number, and put forward the suggestion given by Mr. W. Heaford, that we should now prepare for the centenary of our paper. It was most desirable to make the effect on public life and thought of the *Freethinker* permanent, and we should do our best to raise the Endowment Trust by another £3,000 at least. He thought the sketch of the *Freethinker* in the Jubilee number magnificent. He wished, however, to move an addendum to motion 9. After the word "publication":—

"and it pledges itself to make and support every endeavour to raise the Endowment Fund to the required £10,000 of invested capital; and it further authorizes the Executive to make whatever arrangements may appear necessary or desirable in the future to secure that the *Freethinker* shall be invariably the official organ of this Society."

Mr. A. D. McLaren seconded, and pointed out how necessary it was to make the paper self-supporting to increase the circulation. He recalled how proud he was when his first article appeared in its pages.

Mr. Savory (West London) was proud to support the addendum, and said he had read the *Freethinker* since 1883. He thought the revenue might be increased by securing more advertising.

Mr. Sam Cohen wondered what would happen if the title of the paper were changed.

The President, in his reply, said that there was nothing to fear at present about the *Freethinker*, and in any case a change in the title would not alter the continuity of the paper.

Motion No. 10 for Liverpool and West Ham Branches was proposed by Mr. Shortt:—

"That this Conference protests against the attitude of the Government as expressed in the Sunday Performance (Regulation) Bill, which, rather than extending the existing freedom with regard to rational enjoyment of a day of rest, tends to strengthen the hands of Sabbatarians, and urges upon all who seek the mental, moral, and physical welfare of the people the need to agitate for the repeal of all restrictions upon the free use of Sunday."

He thought that the Bill opened a new danger inasmuch as the Councils could hand over their powers to the licensing magistrates, thus giving no one any chance to appeal.

Mrs. Rosetti, seconding, the motion was carried.

Mr. G. Whitehead moved Motion No. 11 for the South London Branch:—

"That the Immediate Practical Objects be amended in such ways as to make them acceptable to all Freethinkers."

Mr. McMillan (Paisley) seconded, and said that the fifth paragraph from end of the leaflet of *Immediate Practical Objects*, seemed too political.

Mr. Easterbrook thought we should alter the word "labour" to "bodies of persons." The President said such an alteration would first have to be put on the Agenda, but he could see no objection to the paragraph. It reflected perhaps some of the objects we were fighting for at the time, and which had

now been won or accepted, and such things were always a constant reminder of what early Freethought battled for. After further discussion the motion was lost by two votes.

Mrs. Venton proposed and Mr. Shortt seconded Motion No. 12 by the West Ham Branch:—

"That in view of the general dissatisfaction with the wireless service on Sundays, this Conference suggests to all holders of a wireless licence that persistent pressure should be brought to bear on the B.B.C. by letter or otherwise, to provide an alternative programme during such times as the religious service is being transmitted, and failing this provision it suggests that a plebiscite of licence holders be taken in order to test feeling on this subject."

Mr. Clayton, in support, thought Freethinkers were lax in not writing, whenever possible, to Sir John Reith. He had had a reply from this gentleman personally, to the effect that the majority want the religious service. Mr. H. Black thought we were butting our heads against a brick wall. He got plenty of amusement out of the religious services. Mr. Brighton insisted that he also had replies from Sir John Reith, but in a different tone. Mr. W. Sissons also spoke, and Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook wished to know who was to conduct the plebiscite? He moved the following addendum as part 2 of the motion:—

"That this Annual Conference of the National Secular Society protests against the general and intensive religious propaganda of the B.B.C., and considers that in common fairness the Controlling Committee should at least provide alternative secular programmes during such times as the religious services and talks are being transmitted."

Mr. Jackson seconded and the motion as a whole was carried.

Motion No. 13 by Mr. G. H. Taylor:—

"That this Conference by recognizing the importance of a press campaign and the work done by this means when there is concerted and persistent effort, recommends that a publicity committee be established in connexion with every branch of the N.S.S. with a view to correcting all misrepresentations which occur in the public press."

Mr. Taylor supported his motion with some excellent advice and Mr. Ready, in seconding, gave an account of his Branch's success in Liverpool, and in getting dozens of letters published in the local press. Mr. Searle, of Bradford, was equally successful, and Mr. Shortt thought we should always use the words N.S.S. after the writer's name. Mr. Black was in full sympathy, and instanced (as a Manchester man) that the *Manchester Guardian* was one of the few papers in the country which mentioned Ferrer in connexion with the recent revolution in Spain.

The President, with some final advice, put the motion, and it was carried.

Mr. Savory, for the West London Branch, moved Motion No. 15:—

"That rule 7, clauses 1 and 2 in the general constitution be revised so as to permit each Branch having twenty-five or more members to appoint one member on the Executive."

and Mr. L. M. W. Easterbrook seconded. Mr. Saphin thought the proposal would encourage Branches to obtain more than twenty-five members, but the President pointed out this might prevent Branches having fewer than twenty-five members from appointing a member to the Executive. After further discussion, it was proposed that the motion should be amended to read that Branches of more than twenty-five members should appoint a member to the Executive irrespective of area representation. This was carried.

Mr. Saphin, for the West London Branch, moved Motion No. 16:—

"That where necessary the Executive be empowered to defray the travelling expenses of one delegate from each Branch to the Annual Conference."

and Mr. Wingate seconded. Mr. Saphin had every sympathy for the poorer Branches which wished to be represented at the Conference, but were unable to do so for lack of funds.

The President pointed out this would mean £150 to £200 extra expense for the N.S.S., and would really be an expensive item. Mrs. Rosetti and Mr. Savory were both against the motion, and they thought Branches should do their best to provide expenses themselves. Mr. Wingate thought a Conference with its opportunities of making members acquainted with each other and broadening their views was an excellent thing, and every help should be given. Mr. Monks and Dr. Carmichael spoke against the motion, and the President wound up the debate with a resumé of the position and some well needed advice on making Branches pay their way. He thought more effort should be made to secure local help—though Headquarters was always willing to help in every possible way.

The motion was not carried.

Motion No. 17 was moved by Mr. L. M. W. Easterbrook:—

"That this Conference deplors the lack of militancy amongst large numbers of Freethinkers in the country, and calls upon the Executive to arrange for an intensive and extensive propaganda that will serve to awaken a determined effort to eliminate the power of superstition, organized and unorganized, from the lives of the people."

Mr. Sissons seconded, and after discussion, the motion was carried.

On behalf of the Executive, the President moved Motion No. 18:—

"That in view of the approaching centenary of the birth of Charles Bradlaugh (September 26, 1833) this Conference is of opinion that steps should be taken to celebrate that event in a striking and suitable manner, and authorizes the Executive to consider the best way in which this could be done, and report progress at the 1932 Conference."

The President said that this was not the time to enter into details of what might be done, but it was clearly fitting that the National Secular Society was the proper body to undertake such a Centenary meeting. Bradlaugh was a man who cut his name very deeply into the life of his day, and not enough had been done by Freethinkers outside this Society to keep his name before the general public. If the resolution was carried it would be the duty of the Executive to prepare plans to place before the Conference at its next meeting. After some further discussion the resolution was carried.

For the Birmingham Branch Mr. J. Clayton moved Motion No. 19:—

"That the place of the Annual Conference be voted upon and decided six months before the date thereof."

Mr. Easterbrook seconded, and after some discussion it was suggested that the "six" months should be amended to "four." This was then proposed by Mr. Stafford and seconded by Mr. Jackson and carried.

For the Fulham Branch Mr. Savory proposed Motion No. 20:—

"That in the opinion of this Conference it is advisable that a standing committee be formed, composed of representatives of various bodies who are willing to co-operate in the promotion of any of the objects of the National Secular Society, so that political emphasis may be given to the securing of those objects."

After some discussion the President said he could not see how we could order anybody to co-operate. It was always the practice of the N.S.S. to form or join Committees for the promotion of common work for such purposes concerning which there existed agreement. There could be no harm in passing the resolution, which would be only a reaffirmation of a policy already in operation.

Mr. McKelvie moved Motion No. 22 for Liverpool, West Ham, West London, and Chester-le-Street Branches:—

"That this Conference deplores the policy of successive governments in their continuously attempted bargaining with the rival Christian sects on the question of religious teaching in the schools; it strongly condemns the present Government in conniving at the suspension of one of its own educational measures, through fear of the religious vote, and again reiterates its conviction that no solution to the educational problem will be found until all schools receiving State-support are restricted to subjects defined as "secular" by the Education Code, and further urges that the Executive presses the Secular Solution upon the public by every means within its power."

Mr. Brighton seconded, and after discussion, it was carried.

For the Fulham Branch, Mr. Savory moved Motion No. 23:—

"That this Conference regrets that no steps have yet been taken towards the formation of a class for the training of speakers."

He dwelt upon the difficulties of untrained speakers and every effort should be made to assist them. Much sympathy was expressed with the resolution, and it was left for the Executive to see what could be done to help.

The remainder of the Conference time was taken up with three very excellent papers, one by Mrs. Rosetti, on "From a Woman's Standpoint"; one by Dr. Carmichael, on "Brotherhood"; and one by Mr. Egerton Stafford, on "Magic and Christianity." These will appear later in the *Freethinker*.

The President having briefly thanked the Liverpool Branch for the splendid manner in which it had entertained the Conference, a most successful and inspiring Conference came to a close. We all left pleased with what had been done, and with high hopes of what lay before us in the near future. H.C.

More About the Roman Catholic Holy Shop.

(Concluded from page 327.)

LUTHER first heard of Tetzel indirectly. We must premise that Luther though technically a monk, was professor of philosophy at the University of Wittenburg, and as far as learning went in those days, was in the front rank. He was also preacher in the town church. He found that some of his parishioners were taking to loose ways, and they explained to him that it was alright, they had got indulgences from Tetzel. This brought Luther into action. He not only told these "licensed" reprobates what he thought about them and Tetzel's wares, but he preached in the church on the subject. In effect, as Froude remarks, Luther looked at those wares of Tetzel's and said, "Your pardons are no pardons at all, no letters of credit on heaven, but flash notes of the Bank of Humbug, and you know it. They did know it, and the Conscience of every man in Europe answered back that what Luther said was true . . ." "Tetzel bayed defiance and the Dominican friars took up the quarrel. If souls could not be sung out of purgatory,

their occupation would be gone." There was the danger. For this purgatory business had thousands of practitioners all over Europe. Tetzel was only one very conspicuous example. The "regular" way of the business was, not by letter of indulgence, but by saying masses. "To be a mass priest was a regular profession, in which, with little trouble a man could earn a comfortable living. He had only to be ordained and learn by heart a certain form of words, and that was all the equipment necessary. The masses were paid for at so much a dozen, and for every mass said so many years were struck off from the penal period. Two priests were sometimes to be seen muttering away at the opposite sides of the same altar like a couple of musical boxes playing different parts of the same tune at the same time. It made no difference. The upper powers had what they wanted. If they got the masses and the priests got the money all parties were satisfied. (One considers, though, that the "upper powers" at least were easily satisfied. Still this is one of the assumptions of the Roman Catholic so-called religion).

With their vested interests so criticized and endangered, the priests would have killed Luther if they could have managed it in due form. But Luther's action brought out, and so revealed, a tremendous amount of public opinion in agreement with him. Assassination would have been bad policy, but all the same it was a dangerous time for Luther. But he showed himself fearless. On December 31, 1517, he nailed up his famous 95 theses on the church door of Wittenburg. He had not consulted any of his friends. He took all the risk himself. It was a brave act, for it was a slap in the face for the Pope, and has always been considered as the dramatic beginning of the Reformation.

We are here only concerned with the money swindles of Holy Shop and not with the history of the Reformation so can only be brief with Luther. His importance to the Shop can be gauged by the fact that the "save you from hell and purgatory" stunt (of which Tetzel's indulgences were but a part) accounted for a third of the Shop's revenue. Another third would be rent and other interest on capital, and another third from political taxes, e.g., in the Papal States and other political subsidies of which a modern counterpart to-day in England is the grant to Roman Catholic schools from rates and taxes. Once started with his criticisms however Luther went forward and attacked much more than the indulgences, and the situation became so serious for the Shop that the Chairman of Directors had to sit up and take notice. A Papal Legate (a very important person from the Shop's point of view) was sent to Germany to put the stopper on Luther. A few years before, the "stopper" would have been a fire and the priests did call for one. The Legate sent for Luther to Augsburg, and though there was danger of assassination he went. The Legate ordered him to recant. Luther refused and told the Legate to prove his case! The Legate found public opinion so strong that he dare not burn Luther—at least dare not do it at Augsburg. So Rome told him to send Luther to Rome, where he could be burned without trouble. The Legate reported he would want an army. As showing what the Shop considered as of most importance the Legate having found himself forced to temporize, let it be told to Luther on the quiet that if he would retract just on the question of indulgences he (the Legate) would be satisfied. It was the money aspect that was worrying the Shop. Luther told the Legate it couldn't be done—and he went home. It happened that political events kept the Pope too busy to look after Luther till 1521, by which time his importance was such that nothing less than the Diet (the supreme council of the

Empire) could deal with him. He was summoned to appear before it. They had to give him a safe conduct; what was more *they had to honour it*, though the Pope (who wrote a personal letter) and the priests vehemently urged them not to. The military caste, however, was firm in its decision that its word was its bond. (It is still Roman Catholic doctrine that faith need not be kept if it is, or seems, expedient to break it. They are an absolutely untrustworthy lot).

That session of the Diet of Worms was one of the greatest if not the greatest event in European history since that battle of Tours which decided that Europe was to be Christian and not Mahomedan. For nearly a thousand years the tyranny and bugbear of the Papacy had fettered Europe. What the Pope said was to be accepted as true just because he said it. What the priests said, *went*. Unbelievers, if they spoke out, were tortured and burned to death. Luther inaugurated a new era. What he believed he believed because he had reasoned it out. It might be true or false, but he claimed the right to form his own opinion and to criticize Pope or priests if necessary. If they wanted to change his opinions they must attempt it by reasoned argument. The right of private judgment—that is what Luther, more than any other single man, restored to Europe. He went to Worms. Friends met him outside the city to impress on him the risk he ran. They knew the safe conduct was, to the priests, a scrap of paper. They reminded him of Huss, who very similarly had been inveigled to the Council of Constance with all imaginable promises and safe conducts—and had been put instantly into a stone dungeon, three feet wide, six feet high and seven feet six inches long, and later had been burned. Luther was firm. The next day he was before the Diet ((April, 1521).

That it should have come to this at all, in days of such high-handed authority was sufficiently remarkable.

There, on the raised dais, sat the sovereign of half the world (Charles V., Emperor of Germany, King of Spain, etc.) On either side of him stood the archbishops, the Ministers of State, the Princes of the Empire, gathered together to hear and judge the son of a poor miner.

The body of the hall was thronged with knights and nobles—stern, hard men in dull gleaming armour. Luther, in his brown frock was led forward between the ranks. The looks which greeted him were not all unfriendly. The first article of a German credo was belief in *courage*. They were not without pride that a poor countryman of theirs should have taken by the beard the great Italian priest. They had settled among themselves that come what would, there should be fair play. As Luther passed up the hall a steel baron touched him on the shoulder with his gauntlet. "Pluck up thy spirit, little monk," he said; "some of us here have seen warm work in our time, but by my troth nor I nor any knight in this company ever needed a stout heart more than thou needest it now. If thou hast faith in these doctrines of thine, little monk go on." Luther threw up his head. "Vorwärts," he said.

He spoke two hours. Finally "Confute me by plain arguments or I neither can nor will recant. Here stand I. I can do no other."

Some of the people, on his way to the hall had called out to Luther not to recant "as in a kind of solemn petition." Was it not in reality *our* petition too, the petition of the world lying in dark bondage paralysed under a black spectral nightmare and triple hatted Chimera calling itself Father in God, and what not. "Free us; it rests with thee; desert us not." Luther did not desert us . . . it is, as we say, the greatest moment in modern history; the germ of it

all lay there. Had Luther in that moment done other it had all been otherwise." (Carlyle: *Heroes and Hero Worship*).

Luther though a brave, a good, a great man was still a product of his age. Though he got out of Catholicism he did not get out of Christianity. But he carried the Nordics a good step on the road of progress. He caused the Shop to have to put up its shutters in the North, but did not drive it out of business. Among the Latin races it carried on much as usual, and does so to this day. Owing to a mistaken idea of toleration it has been allowed to re-enter once forbidden territory with its bucket shops. We hope to give some more account of its long-firm frauds in future articles. The story of Luther, however, may be said to emphasize this fact for those who are attacking the Italian confidence tricksters. Their Financial swindles form a very vulnerable point of attack. The *Freethinker* has recently shown up a few of these money-under-false-pretences dodges, thanks to various readers, some as far away as Canada and Australia. Such exposures are excellent for propaganda work, and we suggest that as many as possible should be reported and published.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

The Charlatan who Founded Theosophy.

THEOSOPHISTS will not be pleased to find Helena P. Blavatski, their founder summed up as "one of the most accomplished, ingenious and interesting charlatans of history," but after reading Ephesian's *The Mysterious Madame* (Bodley Head, 7s. 6d.), one can come to no other conclusion.

Helena Blavatsky was a prophet, a medium and a magician, born in Russia a hundred years ago, and even in her childhood she told most incredible stories with cool assurance. It is difficult to separate the fact from the fiction, even in Ephesian's book for the author first of all tells her life story as she herself narrated it, and then tells her life story as it really was.

Her life was a life of wonders, spent in mystical studies, in journeys to Tibet and so on, according to herself. In actual fact she eloped from her husband with an Englishman, joined a circus, became mistress of a singer, left him and married an Englishman, with whom she went to America where she entered public notoriety.

For many months she tried to earn a living as a spiritualist, as a writer, and as a public character, and then she met Olcott, who became her publicity manager. Olcott she described as a "windbag full of vanity," and "a perfect bag of conceit and silliness," but he was useful to her, and what was better still he believed in her powers.

It would be wearisome to repeat the long list of frauds and deceptions which Madame practised; they can all be read in the book where they are described in detail.

From America Madame went to other places, and ultimately to India, where the new religion she preached won much support, and where she tricked eminent people into believing her. A scandal which showed up some of her tricks almost ruined her, but the time came when there were sufficient people in the so-called civilized world to support her.

The last chapter in the book is well worth the attention of the *Freethinker*, for in it the author discusses the character of Madame Blavatsky. He first of all says that no one who studies her life can accept her at her disciples' nor at her enemies' valuation. For instance, her admirers have said, "About the middle of the nineteenth century, the Trans Himalayan Masters of Wisdom began to prepare an agent through whom they could give to the world so much of the Light of Truth as cyclic law permitted. That agent was H.P.B."

Another one has even gone so far as to allege that the Reformation in Europe was part of the Theosophical system, and the formation of the American Republic and the Declaration of Independence great steps forward in that system.

Her enemies on the other hand have alleged that she was a Russian spy.

Ephesian considers she loved notoriety, and craved excitement and power. She wished to keep secret the squalid casual life led with her lovers, and so advanced as an excuse for her long absences that she was secretly pursuing occult knowledge in uncharted lands.

"So long as Spiritualism was fashionable in America she remained a Spiritualist, and claimed to be able to evoke spirits more potent and exotic than any other medium. When Spiritualism suffered a decline she gladly assisted Olcott in founding a Theosophical Society to import Egyptian wizards and materialize elementals. Another medium invented the Chevalier Louis; H.P.B. countered with a whole Brotherhood of Luxor. When the Arya Samaj offered her society its only hope of survival she shifted her interest to Oriental philosophy and sailed for India.

Ceylon welcomed her and she became a Buddhist, and an exponent of Karma. Discovering that Hindus believed in the physical existence of miracle working Mahatmas, she declared herself their constant and intimate associate."

She triumphed, says the author, because a belief in Magic is ingrained in human nature.

It would be interesting to learn the opinion of orthodox Theosophy on this interesting and revealing life story.

NECHILLS.

Obituary.

REV. WALTER WALSH.

WITH genuine regret we have to record the death of the Rev. Walter Walsh. Dr. Walsh has for long been a well-known figure in all sorts of advanced movements in London, and by his steadfast adherence to principle was regarded with respect and even affection by many who did not share his religious views, nebulous as they were from a doctrinal point of view. He was one of the smaller number of people who never speculated as to the popularity of an opinion before expressing it. He had a genuine conviction of the value of freedom of thought and speech, not merely for himself, but for other people, and had all the educated Scot's contempt for those who waited for what they called "a favourable opportunity" before saying what they thought. For many years he was a popular and powerful preacher in his church at Dundee, until his growing heresy forced him to break with all the Churches. In that trying time it was good to hear him say that the one paper in Britain from which he received most appreciation and sympathy was the *Freethinker*—a man of his warm humanity could appreciate sympathy, and readily extend it. He founded the Free Religious Movement, and most of his addresses at Lindsey Hall, Notting Gate, might well have been delivered in a Freethought hall. He was a staunch upholder of the Secular Education policy, and a strong advocate of the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. I am sure he will leave with all that knew him the memory of a strong, upright and tender personality.—C.C.

MARY JANE WHITE.

It is my painful duty to record the death of Mary Jane White, aged fifty-nine, the dearly beloved wife of Alex. White of Poplar Street, South Moor, County of Durham. Interment took place at Stanley Cemetery on May 31. Deceased was an ardent and life-long Secularist, who with other members of the family were staunch supporters of the National Secular Society. After an operation at the Newcastle Royal Infirmary, realizing the uncertainty of survival, she expressed a desire for a Secular funeral service to be read at her grave. This wish was duly carried out by Mr. C. J. Keast, President of Newcastle Branch of N.S.S.

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LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mrs. E. Grout—"The God of Genesis."
FINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—Mr. A. D. McLaren will lecture at 11.15.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road): Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. F. Day. Saturday, 7.30, Mr. F. Haskell and Mr. E. Bryant.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. McLaren—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. C. Tuson will lecture at Arlington Road.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Stonhouse Street, Clapham Road, 7.30, Mrs. E. Grout—"What do Christians Believe?")
Wednesday, Station Road (near Brixton Station), 8.0, Mr. Ebury. Friday, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, 8.0, Mr. J. Hart.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

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 10, at 7.45, Mr. Rose—"The Founder of Christianity."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"Talking about Religion."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

CARDIFF BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture as follows: June 9, 10 and 12, at Pentyrech Street, Cathays; June 11, at Cowbridge Road, outside Wyndham Hotel, 7.30 each evening.

DURHAM.—Tuesday, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.
LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, at Queen's Drive (opposite Baths), Messrs. Jackson and Tisson; Monday at Beaumont Street, Messrs. Jackson and Wallen; Wednesday, at Waste Ground, adjoining Old Swan Library, Messrs. Little and Short; Thursday at Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, Messrs. Jackson and Tisson. All at 7.30. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at all meetings.

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

NEATH—Mr. George Whitehead will lecture on Sunday and Monday evenings.

NEWCASTLE.—Wednesday at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.
SUNDERLAND.—Saturday and Sunday, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street) Bradford): 7.30, Members Meeting.

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PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

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