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 Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

God and Civilization.

The recent earthquake shock experienced in England has called attention to a serious omission in the Book of Common Prayer. There is no prayer for protection against earthquakes. There are prayers for protection against sickness, famine, disasters at sea, and any other unpleasant happening to which British Christians are accustomed, but none against earthquakes. Of course, these classic exhibitions of God's anger were known to occur out of England, but Christians here could not be expected to bother about Christians there, apart from the fact that if British Christians began to advise the Lord of the danger of causing an earthquake in Japan, or Italy, or in some other country, they might be unpleasantly reminded to attend to their own business. But now that our solid British earth has begun to shake, the attention of the Bishops is being directed to this omission, and pending a formal addition to the prayer book, we understand that forms of prayer are to be issued asking for protection against earthquakes.

This is hardly a wise step for the Bishops to take. It publicly fixes either the responsibility for the earthquake on God, or asserts his power to protect people from their consequences, and in either case the inferences may be unpleasant—for the clergy. It cannot be assumed that people pray to God to protect them from disaster unless they believe that if he would he could. And if he does not the inference is that he will not, but prefers to stand idly by and permit the unrestrained forces of nature to work their will. God, like man, ought at least to live up to his opportunities; if he neglects them he must, again like man, be prepared to pay the price of his negligence.

Theory and Practice.

Of course, it may be argued that reasonable people nowadays do not expect that God will actually divert

the course of an earthquake for the sake of human beings. But why not? If the theologian is right the whole universe was made for the sake of man, constructed for the sake of man, and continues to exist so that man may work out his salvation. And all the prayers that man offers proceed on the assumption that God, having had his attention called to the requirements of John Smith, or a multitude of John Smiths, will forthwith, on their behalf, do something that he would not otherwise have done, and which but for their reminding him of their needs would never have been done. Really reasonable people, that is people who hold their religious beliefs on a basis of logical reasoning, will, having once accepted certain theological propositions, proceed to apply them in practice. The so-called reasonable people in religion are to-day not reasonable people at all. They are very unreasonable. Their conclusions do not square with their premisses, their practice does not align with their theory. They believe in a God who *can* do everything but will not trust him to do anything. To-day the worst kind of Christian reasons like a fool and acts like a bigot; and the better kind believes like a Christian and behaves like a reasonable being. The first illustrates the persistence of a primitive mentality in a modern environment. The second evidences the force of a modern environment acting on primitive beliefs.

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God and Disease.

An illustration of both types is to be found in a case which came before a Southport Coroner the other day. An inquest was being held on the body of a woman who was a member of a Christian sect known as "The True Church Washed in the Blood of the Lamb." The woman had died without the help of a medical man, and a travelling evangelist of the type that might have ranked as a great Christian Saint in earlier ages, said that she had anointed the deceased with oils and had said prayers over her. She said also that she had nothing to do with diagnosing diseases, she simply obeyed the Word of God and claimed to have the gift of healing through the Holy Ghost. Asked the Coroner:—

Do you suggest that hospitals and infirmaries, with medical and surgical skill attached to them, are of no service?

Witness: I say they are not God's way. They are the work of civilization through the research of human beings. God's way is revealed by Him.

Coroner: Supposing I am suffering from appendicitis and the appendix is taken out by a surgeon—you do not approve of that? I have to be anointed and then there will be prayers and God will cure it?

Witness: Yes. We are dealing with the Creator, and if He can create the universe He can do anything.

Finally the Coroner summed up:—

It is a sad and melancholy thing that these poor

deluded creatures are taught by women like this woman from Cheltenham that no matter what their physical sufferings or physical injuries, whether they have fractured their skull or legs, there are persons who say to them: "Do not take any notice of medical skill or science. Have your forehead anointed and let me pray and leave yourself in the hands of God?"

Now that Coroner was not acting fairly to the woman before him. He should have reflected that this woman was a Christian, living in a Christian society, brought up to believe in a book which that society had called "sacred," and which treats with honour thousands of priests and ministers who affirm through their official creeds, their preachings, and their teachings all that this travelling evangelist declared to be her guide in life. If they are right, that woman was right. If she was wrong the fault lay with those who had taught her, and with the society which holds up that book as the Word of God. The woman, had she been cute enough, might have cited the prayer book which plainly states that whatever illness we suffer from is God's visitation, and which provides express prayers for those who are afflicted. And if the prayers to God are effective in curing the sick, why trouble about doctors? If they are not effective why waste time in praying? Unconsciously the woman was giving the Coroner a lesson in logic and common sense. It was also a lesson in the economy of effort, and that is certainly something that both civilization and common sense teaches.

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#### Faith Healing.

There is not a Christian preacher in the country who dare say openly and plainly that his God *cannot* cure disease. The New Testament teaching on this point is too plain. Faith is the only medicine that Jesus carried in his medicine chest, it was the only cure commended by his disciples. Christians dare not say that God cannot cure disease, they can only admit that he does not, and look round for reasons why he does not. Perhaps it is too much to say that all Christians admit he does not, for we have scores of healing missions up and down the country, and thousands of cures reported. More, every year there are thousands of people who with all kinds of diseases travel under the auspices of the Catholic Church to Lourdes, and some few cases of cure are reported. Only a few years ago a special report of the English Church was issued on the subject of "Spiritual healing," which came to the lame conclusion that "Spiritual healing—that is healing by God was a fact, but that the sick ought to have a qualified medical man in attendance—presumably, in case God was unable or unwilling to tackle the case. There is also a regular traffic carried on by the Roman Catholic Church all over the world in which prayers are sold for the cure of disease. In their case it is not merely God who cures the disease but a whole gallery of saints operate—provided the proper fees are paid to the priest. What does this Coroner make of all these and similar cases? If he had been both courageously intelligent and intellectually courageous he might have said to the Jury:—

It is a sad and melancholy thing that these poor deluded creatures are led astray by a collection of writings which tells them that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall make them whole," that there are thousands of men in this country who from thousands of pulpits teach that the Lord can and will cure the sick in the absence of skilled attention, and who can take directly or indirectly from the public large sums of money on account of these alleged cures. It is, above all, sad that the book which teaches this method of cure should be held up for the admiration of the young in every public school in the country.

But what an outcry there would have been if the Coroner had thus summed up the situation!

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#### Religion and Civilization.

The honours of the day rested with the travelling evangelist. If God could create the universe he can do anything. That is what the Americans call "horse-sense." If you can believe in God nothing else ought to be difficult. It is the master miracle, the unbeatable absurdity. The Coroner swallows the camel with ease, and almost chokes in getting down a gnat. And if that were not enough the woman met him with another clincher. Hospitals, doctors, etc., are the products of civilization, and she met them with religion. There is the stark alternative in a sentence. Civilization versus religion, or, to put it more accurately, it is a question of the clash of a lower culture stage with a higher one. The lady evangelist with her God who can do everything, Jesus with his miraculous power of casting out demons, who cause all disease, the Roman Church with its magical cures, the Established Church with its half-ashamed patronage of faith-healing, are all so many examples of a belief characteristic of savages, as opposed to the developed scientific theory of disease as the product of knowable and ultimately conquerable conditions. Of this lower stage the Churches with their sacred books and miraculous cures, its prayers for protection against disease and earthquakes are living survivals of savagery. And we have ample evidence that education does not always eliminate the savage. Often enough it serves but to provide our primitive impulses and beliefs with a mere cloak of culture.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### A Don Quixote of Dissent.

"The animal terror of death is the driving force of all religion."—C. R. W. Nevins.

"In religion,  
What damned error, but some sober brow  
Will bless it and approve it with a text."

Shakespeare.

EVERY bishop, it seems, must have his biography; and there have been episcopal biographies which made their readers groan. Leading lights of Nonconformity, however, when they "relate themselves to paper," make tough reading. Spurgeon's life, for example, is as dreary and rectangular as the tabernacle in which he officiated. Dr. Robert F. Horton's *Autobiography*, however, is on another plane; just as Horton's invertebrate Christianity differed so much from Spurgeon's hard-shell Puritanism. Zeal was the outstanding quality of both of these famous Free Churchmen, but, curiously enough, Horton was the Don Quixote who tilted at more windmills than his more popular predecessor.

As one of the last of the hot-gospellers, Horton had stronger affinities to Newman Hall than to Spurgeon and Billy Sunday. Indeed, Spurgeon regarded him, charitably, as one of the "Down-Grade" heretics. The life-like portrait Dr. Horton has painted of himself emphasises most clearly the real differences between himself and the Boanerges of the Newington Tabernacle and the Playboy of the Western World. Horton had a real passion for "crying for the moon," and always set himself seriously to the consideration of some of the social problems of the age. In this respect he resembled Dr. John Clifford, who was always more of a politician than a theologian. The most interesting quality of Horton's *Autobiography* is, however, not the prejudices of the author, but the

light thrown on the religious and social life of time not too remote.

Reared in a Nonconformist home, Robert Horton was eyed with some suspicion in his schooldays. At Shrewsbury School he was appointed crier, which compelled the holder to end announcements with the pious adjuration, "God save the Queen, and down with the Radicals." He was happier at New College, Oxford, and, fortunate with his acquaintances. The celebrities he watched with critical eyes, and jotted down his impressions with determination. He tells an amusing tale of Professor Bywater, who was always talking of Plato: "When I was a child I was vaccinated and christened; neither of them took." The talented and unfortunate Oscar Wilde was also a student, and sat for his examination with Horton, who says:—

I see him with his flabby face and ruffled hair, striding up to the desk for fresh paper after the first hour; then handing in his book half an hour before time was up. He was a genius, and for him to pose was second nature. Of course he was in the first class; he reached by sheer ability a position which I had gained only by the concentrated and interested labour of two years.

These recollections of his University days have more than a passing interest. "Milner," he says, referring to the Oxford Union debates, was the speaker of that time who made the greatest mark afterwards. "He had a foreign accent, and never struck his fellow students as being quite English, but his intellectual mastery was the prophecy of his famous career." Dr. Horton adds a caustic and necessary comment on the intelligence of the governing classes:—

My Union experiences were not without their value in opening my eyes to the nature of English public life. When I was President (of the Union) my predecessor and successor were Lynton (now Earl of Portsmouth) and Brodrick (now Lord Middleton). Thrown a good deal into their company, I found out the slender equipment with which the governing classes, by the weight of their tradition, could be carried to the highest places.

Robert Horton decided to adopt the Nonconformist Ministry, as his father and grandfather had done. "I knew that in Dissent," he writes, frankly, "it is absolutely impossible to obtain a distinction which gives you any acknowledged place in the national life." This is a hard saying in a country boasting of its civilization, for Horton belonged to the Congregationalists, one of the oldest, wealthiest, and most reputable of the Free Churches. Always a "whole hogger," he announced his intention of declining the title of Reverend and refusing to adopt clerical dress. "I shall wear no clothes," he declared with a plentiful lack of humour, "to distinguish me from my fellow-Christians." The young Oxford "barbarians" made rare fun of this remark, and even caricatured Horton soaring to the sky in a state of nature, with his discarded clothes beneath him.

There are more serious things in this book than these trifles. Dr. Horton's first speech at the Oxford Union was in defence of the rights of Nonconformists to bury their own dead with their own funeral rites. A Free Church minister had lost his wife, and when he brought her to the churchyard he found that the place allotted to her was a rubbish-heap. It was happenings such as this which determined young Horton to enter the Congregational ministry, he might have entered the Church of England, and, to quote his own sarcastic words, "even have risen to be a canon." And, as canons go, he would have reverberated more than most.

Robert Horton's indignation at the Anglican

Church's conduct towards Nonconformists was only natural; but it must always be remembered that this arrogant Church's attitude towards the working class was equally objectionable. What sixteen centuries of the rule of Christian bishops had done for the common people has been told by Joseph Arch, the first agricultural labourer who became a Member of Parliament. In most moving language he has described the conduct of Churchmen towards their own poorer brethren:—

First, up walked the squire to the communion rails; the farmers went up next; then up went the tradesmen, the shopkeepers, the wheelwright and the blacksmith; and then, the very last of all, went the poor agricultural labourer. They walked up by themselves; nobody else went with them; it was as if they were unclean. At the sight the iron entered into my heart and remained fast embedded there. I said to myself, "If that's what goes on, never for me!"

The ecclesiastical strain in Dr. Horton showed itself in his abortive efforts to impose Puritanism on his fellow-citizens. Once he determined to preach in support of a crusade against music-halls, which, curiously, were then more respectable than they had ever been. "Then it occurred to me," he says, naively, "that I have never been to such a place." So he went, and found the performance decorous and common-place. "It was deplorable," in Horton's view, "that human beings should find pleasure in things so banal, stupid, and insipid." He preached his sermon, but the notes were recast. Does it not recall the biting sarcasm of Macaulay that the old Puritans disliked bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the beholders?

Robert Horton's personality could neither have grown nor thriven outside the British Isles. In the United States Billy Sunday is outflanked by Al Capone. In the bad old days of absolute monarchy it was a law with all good citizens that "the King could do no wrong." This adage Dr. Horton applied to himself. He magnanimously denounced all those who dare to utter a word that might not profit the young people of that Hampstead conventicle he adorned himself. Dr. Horton's theology, however attenuated it may be, is still theology, and for any purpose connected with the real welfare of the people of this country it might as well be forgotten. In spite of its associations, it explains nothing and adds nothing to human knowledge, but leaves the modern world in the meshes of the Middle Ages, a period of devilry, darkness, and despair.

MIMNERMUS.

### Blasphemy Prosecution in Germany.

THE recent prosecution, on a charge of blasphemy, of Walter Victor, editor of the *Saechsische Volksblatt*, Zwickau, has attracted considerable public attention in Germany. The blasphemy seems to have been of a very mild type. It consisted of the publication of a sketch depicting the death of a convict, after twenty-one years' imprisonment, who, having called the governor and chaplain of the gaol to his bedside, said: "Now I can depart in peace: our Lord died between two thieves." In March the local court acquitted Victor, but on appeal this decision was reversed and he was sentenced to four months' imprisonment. Against this sentence he has now appealed. According to the *Berliner Tageblatt* (22 May), which characterizes the proceedings as regrettable and reactionary, this is the first case of the kind since 1922, when Karl Einstein was prosecuted and fined for blasphemy contained in his novel, *Die Schlimme Bolchast* (the disastrous mission).

A.D.M.

## Christian Unity.

THERE is no doubt that if all the Christian denominations of to-day were to unite under one common creed and to form one united organization, it would prove a severe blow to the forces of scepticism and agnosticism, whose influence becomes daily more pronounced in every phase of life.

The effects of such a union would be immediate and wide-spread. Non-Christians would no longer be in a position to point at Christianity's weakest spot, its varying and contradictory dogmas. There would be an immense economy of expenditure and manpower. Where now we find a district, either at home or in the mission field, served by ministers of several sects, in future but half the number or less would be required for the same duties. The money saved hereby could, and would undoubtedly, be used to gain political and temporal power—a most useful weapon for those who advocate compulsory adherence to creeds which in the ordinary way fail to attract allegiance.

But an ideal union of Christian Churches, such as is often mooted amongst bodies outside the Roman Church, is no longer within the realm of practical politics. For it implies one or both of two things. It implies organization under the control of one person, or at least under a small committee. It also implies a definitely formulated (written) creed applicable to the whole organization. The last-named condition is the minimum required for anything that could properly be called a united Christian Church. There are, however, six good reasons why neither of these conditions is likely to be fulfilled in the near future, or at any time.

(1) The Roman Church will certainly not abandon its claim to be the one church with the only proper organization, and professing the only true religion. Thus whatever sort of union may be proposed, the Roman Church would remain outside unless all the other Churches agreed to submit unconditionally to orders from the Vatican. For obvious reasons ninety per cent of the denominations calling themselves Christian would never consent to this.

(2) If it were granted that all denominations, which are supposedly "orthodox" on fundamental points, had been able to agree to some formula of union, there would still be plenty of others left outside who regard themselves as Christian, but whose doctrines could never by any effort of verbal jugglery be harmonized with the rest; e.g., Christian Scientists, Christadelphians, Unitarians, etc. A union which did not include every sect and denomination calling itself Christian would be as futile as the present state of affairs.

(3) Again, even supposing the impossible were achieved, and that every sect and denomination calling itself Christian were united under one common creed acceptable to all, that creed would never be anything more than an empty form of words which would lend itself to many more variant and contradictory interpretations than any of the creeds in current use. It is questionable whether it would be possible to include the word "Christ" or "Christian" in it, without the inclusion of some other words to which objection might be taken by one or other sect.

(4) With the increasing spread of education and knowledge of the facts of life, people are becoming (and many have become) less and less inclined to submit unquestioningly in matters of belief or opinion to any authority whatever. The proportion of those who are content to leave their thinking to others, even on theological questions, is now very small. So until education and the facilities for it are definitely eradicated, even Christians will

not blindly accept the decisions of their religious leaders. Any union would, therefore, be a union of the different hierarchies, but not necessarily of the congregations. And without their congregations the churches would be non-existent.

(5) Most congregations are composed of persons who, while content to worship in the way they have been accustomed to since childhood, would resent any material change in verbal or ceremonial service. If the union resulted in no apparent change of service, the situation would be no different to what it is now. Religious differences would continue as before. If, however, it resulted in noticeable change, it would wake the congregations up to debating the reasons for such change. The inevitable disruption consequent upon this awakening would be productive of as many "Nonconformist" bodies as there were before. People do not like having their religious habits disturbed.

(6) Finally, there is one consideration which makes a union of Christian Churches utterly impracticable, and that is the purely abstract bases of the Christian religion. This argument applies to the divisions in every other religion under the sun. Theories divorced from reality cannot find a common point of contact. In the absence, therefore, of any real and material foundations upon which to begin discussion, every effort at union will be dissipated in verbal wrangling and will be doomed to failure from the start.

C. S. FRASER.

## Magic and Christianity.

(A Paper read at the Annual Conference of the N.S.S.)  
WITH the history of magic in Christian countries whether during the Middle Ages, when magic flourished so well, or at any other period, I am not at present concerned. That history is doubtless very interesting and very informative, but I want now to show that certain Christian doctrines and rites, believed to be so distinctive, are in reality essentially of the magical order of thinking and acting, and that Christianity roots deeply in the soil of savagery.

The various side-shows or branches of magic such as those of the sorcerer, the diviner, the necromancer, the astrologer, the augur, etc., need not be taken into individual consideration, for our immediate purpose. A study of these various developments of magical ways of thinking would in many respects be fascinating and enlightening, but I want you to keep in mind the early forms of magic so that you will be better able to realize how much Christianity is derived from and depends upon the mentality that thinks in terms of magic. That you may do this, I must ask you to go back to the early days of mankind when everything was animized and the whole of man's environment was thought of as being capable of doing something to him just as he was able to do something to the objects around him. Then you will be able to realize that there was nothing out of the way in the savage's belief that he could bring about certain things if he could only get into touch with the invisible entities, natural beings who could act at a distance for him as it were. In fact, when we look back upon the evolution of human mentality the habit of thought involved in the belief and practice of magic, before the professional took it up, is just what could be expected. Our regret should not be on the score of magic having appeared, but on account of its persistence throughout the ages.

As a useful definition of "magic," I think we may take the following from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Vol. 3 Col. 2895).

"Magic may be briefly described as the attempt on man's part to influence, persuade, or compel spiritual beings to comply with certain requests or demands. It rests upon the belief that the powers in the world are controlled by spirits, and that therefore to be able to overrule these spirits is to have the mastery of nature."

I must ask you, however, to remember not to give too metaphysical an interpretation to the word spirit as the savage was given to thinking in the concrete and no doubt to him these spirits would be gentlemen very much like himself; or at any rate powers like the wind, and not theological concepts like the "soul." As E. B. Tylor has said: "Magic is to be reckoned among the earliest growths of human thought," (*Art, Magic* 9th Ency. Brit.), and this being so there was no need at first to call in the professional in order to set the magic influence at work. Every man could be his own magician, and later on I hope you will realize that every Christian can be, and often is, his own magician too.

The existence of the magician as a specific functionary is not essential to the carrying on of magic, any more than is that of the priest or the parson to the carrying on of that other variation of superstition, religion. In fact the existence of such exploiters of human credulity frequently prevents many of us searching for the essential.

The performer of magic becomes so associated with his magic; and the performer of religion becomes so closely related with his religion, that most people fail to see that the whole question of magic and religion, with all their trappings, is a study of mental development in relation to sociological conditions; and not something of which the secret is to be found in the powers of men who are set apart from other men.

That the mentality of the believer in general is a most important field of investigation to those who would seek out the persistence of magic in the thought of man in later ages, will be realized, I think, from the following examples of magic.

North American Indians believed they could injure an enemy by drawing his figure in sand, ashes, or clay, and then sticking a sharp stick into it. The enemy would receive an injury in the part of his person which corresponded to the injured part of the figure. It is a widespread belief that an enemy may even be killed by magic if his image is killed in the proper way.

Camphor hunters of Borneo never washed the plate from which they ate food while on an expedition, or the camphor might dissolve and disappear from the crevices of the trees.

A warrior must not partake of a cock that has died fighting or he too will meet death on the field of battle.

Women of the Yuni tribe in California did not sleep while their husbands were away fighting. They danced and chanted continually in order that their husbands might not grow tired. According to a world-wide belief, injury can be done to a person, even at a distance, by anyone who has some part that has been severed from his body—such as his hairs, or finger nails; in fact if harm can be done to his clothes that have been left behind he will feel the harm.

If an enemy has been wounded by an arrow, the arrow head should be recovered if possible and put into a fire. Then as the arrow-head becomes hot the wound of the man will burn like fury.

I have made this summary of a few examples from the pages of the abridged edition of Frazer's *Golden Bough*, because to my mind they fairly illustrate the magical action at a distance which is carried over into the beliefs and rites of Christianity.

The examples quoted appear to have been taken from magic of a non-supernatural kind but, to my

mind, they reveal the mentality that makes possible and thrives upon the supernatural interpretation of the universe. They present that mentality at the beginning, and I want you to see how it persists even unto the present time.

It will be noticed that a superstructure is built up on ideas of association, contiguity, and similarity, with an absence of testing results and examining methods. This being so it is regrettable that many writers, including so great a scholar as Sir J. G. Frazer, should treat magic as if it involved "mistaken notions of cause and effect," and justified the deduction that the savage had a conception of the uniformity of nature. Had early man soon learned to think of his universe in terms of causation his magic would soon have died out, and there would have been little chance for the development of the systems of religion that later on had their being. It was the inability to formulate a law of causation that made the magical, or religious, or supernatural, whichever you will, interpretation of things possible; and relative to the persistence of this inability magic has persisted even when religionists, especially, thought they had got rid of it. Magic is with us in Christianity to-day.

In a non-causal universe there is theoretically no reason why you should not do anything you like, provided you go the magic way about it. That, doubtless involves associated idea; objects in contact with each other, similarity of thought and actions, and things, but I see no reason why a conception of causation should ever enter the believers mind, any more than it does in the case of the believer in prayer.

There is one other mis-statement concerning magic which we must guard against. In *Bygone Beliefs* (p. 88), H. Stanley Redgrove, B.Sc., says of magic: "It is the (pretended) art of producing marvellous results by the aid of spiritual beings." Not for the world would I say there have never been magicians who have pretended, but it is wrong to use that term when defining magic. The believer in magic did not pretend, he actually believed, just as people believe in the modern Christian form of magic, prayer.

It is not fully realized, even by students of the evolution of religion, that in prayer the Christian has a very close point of contact with primitive magic. Yet, if there is anything outstanding in prayer it is its essentially magical nature. Prayer is not the child asking his father for something which the child knows the father can give. It is the child asking his father for the moon. It is an ignoring of the regularity of the processes of nature, in a request that those processes which experience has taught us to be conditioned, should be set at one side for the time being, irrespective of all conditions. In prayer we have the believer in magic revealing himself as being ignorant of or forgetting the law of causation which has been derived from social experience.

When the theologian attempts to bring prayer into line with modern science, by trying to reconcile prayer and causality, he is not justifying the belief that magic, in this case prayer, may involve some groping after an idea of causation. He is simply importing the idea of cause and effect, which he has gained from outside of religion, into a region to which it does not belong.

Obviously, natural processes cannot persist, and at the same time be abrogated in order that prayer might be answered. Yet, in spite of rain coming as the result of certain conditions, the Christian prays for rain to come just when he wants it; while his fellow Christian prays at the same time for it not to come. How other can it be done than by magic?

In the sacrificial offering of Jesus as the atonement for the sins of the world we have Christian magic at its greatest. This time God, the supreme spirit tries

by magic to influence himself in the interest of mankind; and the magic rite is repeated in a symbolic manner everytime the priest administers the sacrament wherein the body and blood of the Saviour-God are partaken of by the Christian.

It is by magic that the Christian communicant acquires the strength and other qualities of the god whose blood he has been given to drink, and of whose body he has eaten in symbolic fashion, and becomes one with his saviour. Just as the savage became one with his god at the meal of sacrifice.

If there is any virtue in conversion it is the virtue that belongs to magic by which the suppliant Christian finds peace in forgiveness of sins, the greatness of which has often no foundation in reality, but is of a religious nature. While in the washing away of sin by means of the blood of the lamb, reputed to have been shed hundreds of years ago, we have a magical rite of which any savage might be proud.

It is only by the magic of belief that the efficacy of the washing can be repeated in each individual Christian.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

## The End of the Ancient World.

THE greatest calamity that ever befell humanity was the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, the consequent triumph of barbarism, and the descent into the night of the Dark Ages, the Ages of Faith; by which the march of civilization was held up for a thousand years. Look at the immense advance we have made during the last three hundred years and then think of how much more advanced we might have been but for the advent of Christianity and the ensuing Middle Ages of barbarism!

Many works have been devoted to explaining why Rome fell. Gibbon, summing up the result of his immortal work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; declared "I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion."<sup>1</sup> Renan was of the same opinion, he declares: "The triumph of Christianity was the extinction of civil life for a thousand years," and "Christianity sucked ancient society like a vampire."<sup>2</sup> Lange, in his *History of Materialism* says that Christianity "unhinged the ancient world." Many other historians have recognized, in more or less degree, the destructive effect of the new faith on civilization. No one can dispute that the rise of Christianity coincided with the decay and ruin of the Roman civilization.

Another voluminous and learned work—dealing with the fall of the Roman Empire—by Prof. Ferdinand Lot, entitled *The End of the Ancient World and the Beginning of the Middle Ages*, translated from the French, has just been published. (Kegan Paul, 15s.) There is no doubt as to Prof. Lot's learning, for there is a bibliography at the end of the book, consisting of fifteen pages; containing the titles of 742 volumes, a library in itself, in all the principal European languages! To save printing the full titles of these works, when the author quotes from them, and thus increasing the size of the volume; each work has a number attached and is used to indicate the volume. This is ingenious, but it is rather hard on the reader, who has to be continually referring to the end of the book for the title of the work cited.

Although Professor Lot does not actually, in so many words, attribute the downfall of the Roman Empire to Christianity, yet he shows that it was one of the main causes, if not the main cause of the catas-

rophe. He says: "The assertion is repeatedly made that the triumph of Christianity was inevitable; sooner or later it was bound to come. It is easy to say this. We forget that Christianity was not the only religious power to appeal to the masses. It had competitors, four or five of them formidable ones."<sup>3</sup> It was the act of the Emperor Constantine, in throwing his sword into the scales that threw the balance over and gave the victory to Christianity over its rivals. As he truly observes:—

Constantine's conversion is the most important fact in the history of the Mediterranean world between the establishment of the hegemony of Rome and the setting up of Islam. To it is due the triumph of Christianity, which by transforming human psychology, has dug an abyss between us and antiquity. Since the adoption of Christianity we have been living on a different plane. (p. 39.)

We have Christianity taught that: "the world being evil. There was only one way of escape: to live artificially outside the world by seeking the desert or solitude, shutting oneself up alone as a recluse or collectively in a monastery. . . . Henceforth 'to take up a religious life' will mean renouncing the life of this world. A dualism and even an opposition is established between the religious and the social life." (p. 51.)

The consequence was, continues Prof. Lot:—

In spite of the efforts of the Emperors, we can see that ancient society became rigid and lifeless. That there was no longer any political life goes without saying, but there was scarcely any municipal life left either. Art was utterly retrograde, science stereotyped and literature insignificant. . . . The religious sphere alone was the field of a violent turmoil, because it attracted with a passionate force every faculty of heart and mind. (p. 100.)

Men turned away with indifference from the things which interested their ancestors, they no longer understood the ancient literature. The arts no longer charmed them: "The gods are dead, killed by the one God whose commandments impose a rule of life so new that henceforth this world will assume a secondary rôle: 'the new philosophy' will place the object of his desires in the sphere of the world beyond. Between the men of the new and those of the ancient times there will no longer be a thought in common." (p. 2.) To be independent of philosophical and theological speculations, science needs "a passionate attachment on the part of men to truth and reason," a disinterested attachment, and "calls for efforts and self-sacrifice which from all time have been repugnant to the immense majority of mankind." And "Lastly," says our author:—

science as well as philosophy suffered from the formidable competition of the spirit of mythology, which offers at a smaller cost more attractive solutions of the problems of life and death. Scientific abstractions cannot stir men's hearts or rouse their longings, as does religion which promises happiness here below or in another world to the sentimental egotism of mankind. Science and philosophy, unable to strive against mysticism, which secures for the initiated union with the absolute Being, were submerged in the torrent of religiosity coming from the East, which, especially since the first century A.D., tolerates nothing outside itself." (p. 170.)

The Oriental superstitions overflowed and submerged the West, "the Orontes flowed into the Tiber," Christianity was the most deadly of them all. Wherever it obtained a footing it killed the old Pagan life without substituting anything better. It taught renunciation and hatred of the world and this life. It fixed men's interest on another life and future re-

<sup>1</sup> Clodd: *Gibbon and Christianity*. pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> Renan: *Marcus Aurelius*. pp. 336-337.

<sup>3</sup> Ferdinand Lot: *The End of the Ancient World*. p. 47.

wards and punishments, with special stress on the punishments.

To the Pagan Emperors, Prof. Lot pays a well deserved tribute when he says. "The Roman world saw on the throne a succession of sovereigns, to which subsequent history has shown no parallel." He continues:—

Amongst these men, more than one gave proof of a pitiless cruelty, as did Valentinian, but all showed an incomparable energy. Statesmen, legislators and warriors they flew from Britain to the Rhine, from the Rhine to the Danube, and from the Danube to the Euphrates to defend the Roman world and civilization against the German or Sarmatian barbarians or against the Parthians, and later the Persians. All of them knew their life to be constantly in danger; the friends of yesterday were the rivals of to-morrow; they knew that the soldiers who had forced upon them the purple, would cut their throats from a mere whim. Yet they gave themselves up fearlessly to their tragic destiny of super-men. For if ever there have been super-men, they must be sought amongst the Roman Emperors of the second and fourth centuries. Compare them to our medieval kings and you will be astounded by the greatness of these Emperors. How pale and ludicrous, in comparison, do the physiognomies of the Merovingian or of the majority of the Capetans appear to us! (pp. 173-174.)

Prof. Lot might have brought the comparison down to much later times.

W. MANN.

## Acid Drops.

The legislature of the State of Vera Cruz has passed a Bill providing that the number of Roman Catholic priests shall be limited to one for every 100,000 inhabitants. The Legislature declared that the Roman Catholic Church has kept the masses of the people in a state of ignorance, and the Bill was intended to prevent this in the future. It is curious, but there is hardly a State in the world that has not been at one time or another compelled to take action in order to minimise the influence of one section or another of the Roman Church.

It seems to be almost settled that the Spanish Government will disestablish the Church, and will probably exclude the Jesuits. In that case we must be prepared with much talk of the persecution of religion, particularly as the persecution of religion in Russia has now fallen flat. What the Christian means nowadays by the persecution of his faith is permitting criticism of religion to be as free as the advocacy of religion, and the prevention of religion persecuting other people.

The Bishop of Croydon is reported as saying:—  
I hope the Church will put the Thirty-nine Articles where they ought to be—in an ecclesiastical museum. What he really meant is that they ought to be removed from one. We sincerely hope they will not. The Church as a museum of primitive superstitions, antiquated habits of thinking, antedeluvian theories, and senile notions, must have a brief catalogue of its exhibits. And what could be better than the Thirty-nine Articles? Compiled under the direct inspiration of God Almighty, it would be sacrilege to remove them.

In *Radio Times* a reader says: "I read with great interest the article on the ridiculous, mournful intonation adopted by many preachers. Do they think it gives an atmosphere of holiness? Whenever I hear it, it gives me the feeling that religion must be a terrible thing if it gives rise to such feelings of utter, abject misery." We don't see why listeners should object to the parson's age-old trick of conveying the notion of holiness and solemnity. God has had to listen to tens of thousands of sermons, and he has never yet raised any objection. What is good enough for God ought surely to be good enough for man.

A bishop says that it is a mistake to think that youth has revolted against morality and religion. Of course. Youth has merely come to the conclusion that an alleged Sacred Book full of folk-lore, primitive superstitions, and ancient customs and ideas is useless as a guide for modern minds. Youth has revolted against divinely ordained leaders for the rest of mankind. These things are not signs of a revolt, but indications of the awakening of intelligence.

From the *Methodist Times* we learn that:—

God must find man, man cannot find the way to God. The Gospel is "no tidings and instructions about the divinity and deification of man, but a message about a God who is quite other." Man can only come to know God through revelation. What we have in the Bible is not how we have found a way to Him, but how He has sought and found a way to us.

Now, if the Bible is the means adopted by God to make himself known to mankind, he can hardly be congratulated on the intelligibility or the efficacy of the instrument he invented. Each of the Christian sects has a different notion about God, and his message and his desires for mankind; the interpretations are as multifarious as the sects. The obvious conclusion is that God made a sorry bungle of the Bible as a revelation of himself. What else can be said of a revelation so indefinite and confusing that it set men wrangling and fighting about the one true meaning of it for nineteen hundred years? A more stupid "way" of enabling God to "find" man could hardly have been invented. A revelation that necessitates hordes of priests and theologians to interpret it is hardly a testimony to the wisdom of God.

Another reader of the same Wesleyan paper declares that he believes "that intelligent people are waking up to the fact that the Sacred Book [the Bible] has the right solution of all the social, economic, religious, and political problems that confront us to-day." He means, of course, people as intelligent as himself—which is not quite the same thing.

Canon Guy Rogers, of Birmingham, declares: "Mentally we are half asleep, and spiritually we are half drugged." As the Church has been encouraging this type of citizen, and discouraging the opposite kind, for nineteen centuries, we think a dignitary of the Church should be the last to complain at the result. And we are not in the least inclined to hope that a parson could make any alteration for the better. All he is capable of is teaching people to follow his guidance, like silly sheep. Alert intelligence was never yet acquired by following a parson. For the parson's job is to train people—where intelligence is not needed.

In a daily paper a reader wants to know why Girl Guides wear such unhealthy uniforms. Whereas the Scouts wear shorts and open-necked shirts, the girls are attired in a heavy costume with long sleeves, high-buttoned neck, and thick scarf-tie. The answer is not very difficult. The Guides are under the control of pious ideas from the Victorian age, when girls were regarded as indecently dressed if they were not completely covered from toe to chin. The Victorians preferred to be "moral" and "decent" rather than healthy. So we may say of the Girl Guides that the ignorance of the Victorians is being inflicted upon their Georgian descendants.

Lady Astor, M.P., told a meeting of local preachers: "I didn't believe in politics in religion, but I do believe in religion in politics. I feel very strongly about it. I believe in the sort of religion that takes bitterness and hate out of people's hearts." We hope Lady Astor will be lucky enough to find such a religion. She won't find it in the Christian religion. Do Protestants love Roman Catholics? Do Christians have anything but dislike for Freethinkers? Did Christian parsons teach the combatants in the last war to love or to hate the enemy? Have religious issues introduced into the sphere of politics been noticeable for anything else than bitterness?

It is a refreshing change to find the Church indicted in the Sunday newspaper. Last Sunday's (June 14) *Sunday News*, however, "features" an article by its Editor (Mr. Edgar Wallace), provoked by the recent decision of

the Bishops about the re-marriage of divorced persons, but containing strong meat which most of his contemporaries of the Sunday and daily papers will, we fear, find indigestible. For example: "Priesthood is power, and the foundation of priesthood is mysticism. Even as a private soldier cannot approach an officer unless accompanied by a non-commissioned officer, so it was ordained that no man should approach God except through an authorized agent." Again, on the foundation of the religion established by law in this country Mr. Wallace says: "There came an English king whose private life was foul, and who quarrelled with the Church, not to destroy Roman Catholicism, but to enrich himself and his friends. And out of this festering sore of a man came the Protestant Church, which differed from its Roman sister in that its priests were allowed to live with women and beget their kind, and the new Bishops became a power in the land, had and have their palaces, occupy churches built by and stolen from Rome, and are makers and interpreters of laws." As to the Bishops and divorce, Mr. Wallace says, "They will give the blessing of the Church to the cretin and degenerate, but not to a healthy woman who has left an impossible husband or to a healthy man who has deserted a drunken wife." What ever will Mr. Wallace's pious contemporary the *News-Chronicle* say to this?

The Churches, having always retarded progress as long as possible, nowadays try to exploit all moderately advanced movements and, indeed, to suggest that they originated them. Their intimate and constantly advertised association with the League of Nations idea, and even more with the very orthodox and conservative propaganda organization which works in this country, does no good to the League or to its apologetics. It is good, therefore to find in an authoritative work just published, *The League Committees and the World Order*, by H. R. G. Greaves (Oxford Univ. Press) such sound doctrine as this instead of the sentimental claptrap which is so common in this connexion.

Mr. Greaves says, "Until the organs of international disinterestedness are created, empowered, and trusted, war, or the threat of war remains the necessary instrument of policy. To prate of peace in such circumstances is merely irrelevant." He says (and we agree with him), "The primeval forces of ignorance and superstition, indolence and fear, have wrought continuous havoc upon man in the past. To-day they are the reinforcements of commercial greed and national ambition."

If it is a bad thing to borrow it is a worse not to acknowledge the debt. We therefore say plain and pat that we owe two paragraphs to two reviewers of the *Sunday Times*, who have given us the quotations we mention, and by this reminder prompted mention of them. The first is a ten year old statement of Professor J. G. Frazer's of *Golden Bough* given thus:—

More and more each inquirer has to limit his investigations to a small patch of the field, to concentrate the glow-worm lamp of his intelligence on a tiny circle, almost a speck, in the vast expanse which we perceive stretching out to infinity on every side of us. Only by multiplying these glow-worm lamps, glimmering side by side, can we hope, step by step, to diffuse the light of knowledge through the boundless region of the unknown.

We comment this to the notice of people who, faced by some phenomena which does not admit of any explanation that occurs to them at the moment, proceed at once to assume supernatural intervention. It is only great men, like Frazer, who recognize, not only how little we know, but how much there is to learn if only we will seek knowledge by scientific means, and not mistake our own contemporary ignorance for a justification of the deity and of all his dubious and alleged works.

The Church, says a Nonconformist paper, must lead in the great questions now occupying the modern mind; there was never such a chance as to-day for the Church to lead the world. Well most of us know what kind of lead the Church specializes in. It stands behind watching to see which way public opinion is going, and then gives a

gallant lead—from the rear. What seems odd is that the Church should have to be incessantly exhorted to lead. These frantic exhortations remind one of the beating of an unwilling ass to make it go.

The Rev. Dr. Donald Soper says that Christianity is not attempting to push something alien into people, but evoking from people. If such is the case, we cannot help wondering why the churches have to make so great and prolonged efforts to get religion into the child—who, as most of us know, is more receptive than the adult.

The Bishop of Johannesburg laments that there are more "heathens" among the natives than there were thirty years ago. We suggest that the reason may be that either the natives have found out what Christianity is, or the material temptations to profess Christianity is not so tempting as they were.

Dean Inge is seventy-one, and a representative of the *Daily Herald* asked him whether he would like to live to be a hundred. To that the Dean replied:—

Good gracious no; I should be as tired of the world as the world would be of me.

That is quite good sense, even if we raise the age from one hundred to two hundred. Individual life is a thing that wears itself out, and in time become burdensome to everybody. But if Dean Inge can see himself becoming tired of living say, after a hundred or two hundred years, what is he going to do about the Christian doctrine of living for ever? Eternal life is one of the most horrible things that one can conceive, and only a cowardly fear of death, developed to so great an extent by Christianity, co-operating with an untrained imagination could ever make so ridiculous a belief acceptable. But we should like to hear Dean Inge on the subject.

Preaching the sermon on Civic Sunday in Shipley Market Place the Rev. T. A. Fairweather said:—

The present age was tending towards Agnosticism. The penalties of Agnosticism are many. It destroys the finest sentiments and aspirations of life. An Agnostic loses his powers of veneration, gratitude and respect. Terrible! But it looks as though the "Agnostic" has not saved much by not calling himself an Atheist. We have always said that Christians are not so foolish as not to see through so flimsy a disguise. All Christians believe many silly things, but it is a fatal mistake to assume that, therefore, all Christians are silly people. They are not.

A suggestion made by a reader of a newspaper is that a good way to ensure everlasting peace would be for the nations to decide not to have another war until the last one is paid for. As a gentle reminder of the folly of the last war, this may serve a useful purpose. But it seems to have overlooked the fact that Christians are too spiritually minded to allow so sordid a thing as money to affect their decision to wage a righteous war when they believe it is necessary. The question of finance is, too, of small account when they know they can rely on God—"our help in ages past"—to assist them in killing their fellow Christians. To ensure peace, we would prefer to rely on educating the peoples of the nations, and especially their politicians and diplomats. Let them be taught to appreciate that questions of justice when in dispute can never be decided equitably by resort to armed force and mass murder. As a means of settling disputes, war is simply a reversion to savagery, a large scale imitation of the method of the street hooligan and apache.

Mr. F. F. Corballis, Chief Scout Commissioner, thinks that "Christian homes seem almost to have disappeared." Let him dry his tears. There may be fewer pious and ultra-pious homes. But there is a much larger number of homes where decent and worthy citizens are reared, and where the child's individuality can express itself, instead, as was formerly the case, of being repressed. And that is a gain, not a loss, to the nation.

## National Secular Society.

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**E. HALE.**—Thanks. We are overloaded with "copy," but your interesting article will appear in the issue dated June 28.

**S. LAWSON.**—There is no need to aim at saying something new. That is almost an impossibility. But there is nothing to prevent your saying even old things with a flavour of freshness, or restating them in terms of current knowledge.

**IONA DAVEY.**—Sorry we have not space for your letter in this issue. It will appear next week. The exordium was quite unnecessary. Anyone who is criticized in this journal has the right of reply.

**J. MARSH.**—Glad to hear of Mr. Whitehead's successful meetings at Cardiff, but regret that your report is far too lengthy for insertion.

**W. R. S. JACQUES.**—Excellent. Sorry we are too overcrowded to permit reprinting now, and it may be too late next week.

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

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

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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.

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

It is interesting to note that for the first time Jews in Spain have now the legal right to be married by a minister of their own religion. Hitherto the only religious marriage in Spain was that of the Roman Catholic Church. There existed also the civil marriage. We have no doubt but that the Pope will consider this an outrage and the feelings of Roman Catholics.

Dr. G. G. Coulton has added to his useful and authoritative series of works on the claims of the Roman Catholic Church two further volumes. One is the second part of *Romanism and Truth* (The Faith Press, 7s. 6d.) consisting of a series of essays dealing with the falsities and frauds of the Church. This volume is particularly interesting to Freethinkers if only on account of a chapter dealing with the strange career of that daring French Freethinker, Leo Taxil. This tells the story of Taxil's pretended conversion to Catholicism, with his final public demonstration of the hoax, but leaves untold Taxil's work in other directions. The other volume is made up of three lectures *In Defence of the Reformation*, Simpkin Marshall, 3s. 6d., with an account of discussions attaching thereto, and a further demonstration of the practical impossibility of getting Roman Catholics to face an issue honestly. We do not expect Dr. Coulton would agree with us, but, as we have remarked, these books form about as terrible an indictment of the whole of Christianity as one could imagine. That some branches of the Christian Church have shown a slightly better record is only evidence that these were more responsive to the better spirit outside the Church.

Quite a wide-spread revolt against the payment of tithes is going on in various parts of the country, and the parsonry is very much upset as a consequence. Many summonses have been issued, and in one case where the goods were sold in default of payment, friends of the farmer refrained from making more than a nominal bid, and their owner received them back at the cost of a few shillings. At the moment of writing (June 16) our old friend, W. Kensett is due to appear at the Horsham Town Hall to answer a charge of non-payment. Mr. Kensett has been carrying on this fight for some years, and we expect he will have the cordial sympathy of all tithe payers in the district. It is time that this subsidising of the Church by a tax on land were abolished altogether. We do not say that a parson should not have a salary, but it should clearly be paid by those who want his services.

Cardiff and Neath report successful meetings addressed by Mr. G. Whitehead. The hostility of Christians experienced at previous visits was not repeated, instead, there were critical questions and discussion. That is indeed progress, and shows there is still hope for some Christians.

Nelson Freethinkers are reminded that Mr. G. Whitehead will be in that district from Sunday, June 21, until Friday, 26, inclusive. The local Branch of the N.S.S. which has been re-organized, and possesses an energetic Secretary, will co-operate at all meetings. Unattached Freethinkers are asked to introduce themselves, and become members of the Nelson Branch of the N.S.S.

We have to announce that *Atheism—What it Is—What it Means*, by Joseph Lewis, is temporarily out of stock, consequently many orders for the work cannot be executed until the arrival of another consignment from America. We apologise for the delay and inconvenience to those whose orders are held over.

Mr. Jack Clayton, we are pleased to hear, has been holding some good meetings in Lancashire. A little tact and good humour will nowadays secure a good audience in most places, and with the right kind of speaker evoke considerable sympathy.

We are asked to announce that the Birmingham Branch has arranged for an excursion to Ludlow on Sunday June 21. The cost will be 5s. 6d., which will include tea. Members and friends will meet at Old Square at 10.30.

We regret that the time of the Excursion arranged by the Manchester Branch for to-day (June 21) was omitted from last week's issue. Those joining the excursion will meet at the Lower Mosley Street Bus Station at 12.30.

## The Prince of Scottish Sceptics.

### I.

CALEDONIA proudly claims the parentage of many men of powerful intellect. Some highly patriotic Scots assert that the cream of mentality is indigenous to their rugged land. Still, among innumerable others, Southern Britain complacently regards Shakespeare, Chaucer, Newton, Darwin, Spencer, Swinburne, Gibbon and Milton as men of supreme ability. Nevertheless, a splendid array of pre-eminent intellectuals who have contributed to the grandeur and glory of English science, art, and letters are distinctly related to Scotland. Although usually classed as English, Carlyle, Bain, Macaulay, James and John Stuart Mill, Lyell, Frazer, Ronald Ross, Maitland, and Kelvin are all of Scottish descent.

No marvel then, that doubting David Hume, the brilliant philosopher, economist, and historian who was hailed by Huxley as the subtlest thinker of the eighteenth century was a countryman of Burns and Scott, who maintained a life-long friendship with Adam Smith the famous author of *The Wealth of Nations*.

Hume was born in Edinburgh in 1711. The younger son of a small landed proprietor, his mother appears to have been a remarkable woman, and from her David probably inherited much of his high ability. A born lover of learning, he owed little to scholastic training, and this passion for letters remained dominant throughout his career. He was intended for a legal life, but law studies soon proved distasteful. While he was supposed to be poring over the classics of jurisprudence he was secretly devouring the masterpieces of polite letters, and so severely studious were his labours that he suffered acutely from nervous depression. No doubt the common inconveniences associated with puberty and adolescence were in part responsible. As a remedy for melancholia, and as a monetary resource, he turned to commerce. But the monotony of a mercantile office in Bristol, at that time one of our greatest ports, was uncongenial to his temper, and he resolved to settle in France, where he could comfortably subsist on his slender income.

After three years' absence he returned to his native land to provide for the publication of the first product of his pen. The work, entitled *A Treatise of Human Nature*, two volumes of which appeared in 1739, did not attract sufficient attention to please its author. So at least he tells us in his *My Own Life*, composed in later years. "Never literary attempt was more unfortunate," he complains, "than my *Treatise of Human Nature*. It fell deadborn from the press without reaching such a distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots." This statement is usually taken at its face value by the commentators and critics, but as a matter of fact a reference to Burton's indispensable biography of Hume shows that the work was accorded at least one discriminating, and in some respects laudatory review, and that the publisher paid him fifty pounds for the copyright, a sum at least four times the value of our present money. Moreover, Hume was then an unknown author in his twenties.

Despite his disappointment at the poor reception of his maiden effort, Hume prosecuted his labours, and the third volume *Of Morals* appeared in 1740. In 1741 he published his *Essays Moral and Political*. This work was more successful and ran into two editions, and a supplementary volume was issued in 1742.

This gratifying success induced the author to elaborate and popularize the principles of his first relatively unsuccessful venture. And the earlier *Treatise of Human Nature* constitutes the groundwork of all

his later philosophical speculations. And, although Hume, when he had attained fame and fortune, affected to disdain this product of his youth, it remains in the minds of most competent judges his supreme philosophical achievement. Indeed, Lytton Strachey goes so far as to state that, with this masterpiece, his real contributions to philosophy begin and end.

Be this as it may, it is certain that Hume himself regarded human nature as the indispensable foundation of any inquiry into mental and moral science. This view is clearly expressed in his autobiography written in 1734, but remaining in manuscript in his own life-time. In this work he tells us that as a boy he was discontented with the methods employed both by philosophers and critics. He recalled the unceasing disputes that everywhere persisted where fundamentals were concerned. At the age of eighteen Hume imagined he had discovered a royal road to truth. He was transported "beyond measure," and vowed to dedicate his life to the erection of a permanently valid philosophy. He set himself to soberly consider his plan of campaign. After cooling his "inflamed imagination" he decided that "everyone consulted his fancy in erecting schemes of virtue and happiness without regarding human nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend. This, therefore, I resolved to make my principal study, and the source from which I would derive every truth in criticism as well as morality."

Although Hume lived to enjoy wide influence and comparative affluence, he met with several rebuffs while striving to secure an independent income. Two attempts to gain a professor's chair ended in failure. His sceptical opinions were urged against him. He acted as tutor to an insane aristocrat, and served successfully as secretary with expeditions and missions in France, Austria, and Italy. Various treatises appeared from 1748 onwards. His *Political Discourses* (1752) were immediately successful, and this work was rendered into French, thus introducing Hume to Continental letters. The philosopher officiated from 1753 to 1755 as Secretary to Lord Hertford, the British Ambassador in Paris. In the cultured capital he became a first magnitude star in court and literary circles. In addition to the famous beauties and blue-stockings, Hume became intellectually intimate with Turgot, Holbach, D'Alembert, and Diderot. He made the acquaintance, and was the benefactor of that strange visionary Rousseau who accompanied him on his return to England. The strained relations of the two writers that ensued were characterized by what Huxley terms "lunatic malignity on Rousseau's side, and thorough generosity and patience on Hume's." After serving in London as Under Secretary of State he returned to the land of his fathers and became the leading ornament of an Edinburgh circle which included Robertson the historian, Blair and others, whose outlook was similar to that of the current Modernist school.

In his own *Life*, Hume informs us that he settled in Edinburgh in 1769, possessed of a revenue of £1,000 a year. In 1770 Hume made himself a mansion in the suburbs of the Modern Athens. This was the first dwelling place erected in a new thoroughfare, and someone chalked "St. David's Street" upon the wall. The sage's servant told her master, who answered, "Never mind, lassie, many a better man has been made a saint of before." And the visitor to Edinburgh will find St. David's Street to this day.

Hume never liked, or even understood the English, and many are the gibes and jeers in his correspondence at the hated southron. For example, we are referred to as "the barbarians who inhabit the banks of the Thames." Voltaire tirelessly extolled the English,

Hume constantly depreciates us, while exalting the alleged universal "regard paid to genius and learning" by the French. He assures Gibbon that he never expected a work so great as the *Decline and Fall* from an English historian's pen.

The Scottish philosopher exaggerated the unpopularity of his countrymen in the south. Much of this antagonism was directed against the Scot, Lord Bute, who exercised a baleful influence over the Crown. In his brilliant monograph on Hume, Huxley humorously sums up the situation: "To care nothing about literature, to dislike Scotchmen, and to be insensible to the merits of David Hume, was a combination of iniquities on the part of the English nation, which would have been amply sufficient to ruffle the temper of the philosophic historian, who, without being foolishly vain, had certainly no need of what has been said to be the one form of prayer in which his countrymen, torn as they are by theological differences agree; 'Lord! gie us a gude conceit o' ousersels.'"

When the disease from which he suffered began to assume alarming proportions the philosopher executed his will, and sat down to calmly compose his autobiography. His interest in intellectual avocations was sustained to the last, nor was there any abatement in the liveliness of his spirits. Death he regarded as a happy release from the infirmities of old age, and he was content to die at the age of sixty-five. The end came in Edinburgh in 1776, and he was buried on the slope of the Calton Hill. A vast multitude assembled, mainly attracted by the possibility of the Devil appearing in person to claim his own. His tombstone simply records the dates of his birth and death, leaving posterity to supply the rest.

T. F. PALMER.

## Studies in the New Testament.

### THE SEARCH FOR THE TEXT.

WHEN the Roman Catholic says—and he does say it every time he gets the opportunity—that the Protestant idea of the Authorized Version of the Bible coming straight from God and Heaven is absurd, he is, of course, quite right. To listen to the itinerant evangelist describing the Precious Word makes one wonder whether human stupidity and credulity could ever go further. The Bible according to him is not only God's Own Gift to wicked man, but the translation known as King James' was, if not actually written by God Himself, at least verbally inspired. If any of the contradictions produced by the wicked infidel look like contradictions, this is only because we are Blind. God's own Precious Word can never be blind or wrong or contradictory. Besides the blatant Materialism of the Victorian scientist is quite given up now, and science is gradually coming to recognize its Maker—and so on *ad infinitum*. Even the fervid and equally credulous Roman Catholic can't stomach this kind of drivel, so every now and then he comes out with some marvellous truths about the Bible which, for anyone with a grain of common sense not to say logic, must destroy its credibility and authenticity for ever. First of all it is necessary to point out that the Roman Catholic loves to parade St. Thomas Aquinas, because Aquinas really did depend a great deal on "reason" for his arguments. Reason, the Roman Catholic will tell you is the rock bottom of his faith, and granting one premiss, I'm inclined to agree with him. If you grant God, then such a thing as God's Church can logically follow—of course, so can Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp, but that is by the way. Once the fact of God admitted, the Roman Catholic can ram home the infallibility of the Church, and once you admit the

Church, you're bound to admit the Bible. As far as the New Testament is concerned, it can be historically proved that it came into being later than the Church. Indeed, as the Right Rev. Henry G. Graham will tell you with triumph, "the books of the New Testament were produced and called forth by special circumstances that arose, were written to meet particular demands and emergencies." Now Mr. Graham's book *Where we get the Bible* is thoroughly orthodox, and it has the "imprimatur" of "Joannes Ritchie, Vic. Gen." So it can't be explained away. And he adds that the New Testament "was written by the Church, by members (Apostles and Evangelists) of the Church; it belongs to the Church, and it is her office, therefore to declare what it means . . . The Bible in the Church; the Church before the Bible—the Church, the *Maker* and *Interpreter* of the Bible that is right. The Bible above the Church; the Bible independent of the Church; the Bible, and the Bible only, the Religion of Christians—that is wrong." So there you are. It must be admitted that the Church made the New Testament, and the only thing left to prove—and, needless to say, the Right Rev. Henry G. Graham does not prove it—is to prove the authority of the Church. At least, when you ask a Roman Catholic the authority for his Church, he says Our Lord said, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock, I will build my Church." You then ask him, who says Our Lord said that, and he says Matthew. And you continue, what is the authority for Matthew? Whereupon, you are told the Church!

Now is not that clever? The authority for the Church is Matthew, and the authority for Matthew is the Church! In fact as the Right Rev. Henry G. Graham will tell you, the Church produced Matthew when the occasion arose to produce it. All the talk about the Apostles and the Disciples and the early Church and the actual words of Our Blessed Lord comes from the Church, and unless you believe in God, the Church can't produce a scrap of authority for *its* authority: not a pennyworth. When the occasion arose, the Church produced the Blessed Words of Our Blessed Lord, and as the Church has never produced any evidence whatever for the actual existence of Jesus—except for those who already believe in God and the Bible—the evidence for the words of Our Holy Saviour requires a great deal more faith to believe than this scribe possesses anyhow.

Now all this has something to do with the question I am discussing. Just as the Church produced Matthew so she produced the other books of the New Testament, but the difficulty is to disentangle the true text from the thousands of copies in existence. Was the true text really written in Greek, for example? How are we to know this? We can believe in God and the Church, and therefore swallow anything told us by God's Own Precious Ministers—or rather Priests. That is the simplest way. Just believe what you're told and don't ask questions. Who are you to question a Priest—a man of God specially trained for his job? A man who knows Philosophy, History, Science, Sex, and many other things, and in addition is specially inspired by God Almighty—he knows, and you don't and can't. If, however, you will ask questions, then you'll find out very soon that the Roman Catholic can produce a text, a wonderful text, called the Old Latin. This is a very early translation of the New Testament, that is, if it is a translation. If it can be definitely proved that the Inspired Writers actually wrote in Greek, then the Old Latin text is certainly a translation. Now the funny thing is that there are dozens of copies of the Old Latin text and they are all, in hundreds of places, quite different from each other. As Sir Frederick Kenyon says, "the extant MSS. differ so greatly from one

another that is questionable whether they could have originated from a simple archetype. Nor is it easy to determine the locality in which it (or the earliest form of it) had its birth."

This is very sad because when the Church wanted a translation instead of producing one wholly free from error, she produced some scores in her own special tongue, and nobody knows which is the correct one or even where any of them was written. This may be due to different translators using different Greek copies, which also differed from each other so that nobody (except the Pope—and we've only his word) knows which is the one we ought to rely upon. Another little difficulty was that nobody until 397 A.D. knew which books of the then New Testament were really holy. Quite a number were supposed to be, but it was not till the Council of Carthage settled the Canon and got the Pope to confirm its findings that anybody really knew which was a holy book and which was not. A large number upon which many devout Catholics staked their souls and future habitation were found then to be altogether spurious; though how anyone—except through God's Precious Working—can tell which was a spurious Gospel and which was not, surpasses my precious comprehension.

Well, the list made then is what is found in the Douai Version to-day. And you must not forget the emphatic words of our friend, the Right Rev. Henry G. Graham: "The Church existed before the Bible; she made the Bible; she selected its books; and she preserved it." And it would have been all right but for the multitude of copies and versions all differing from one another: that's where lies the snag. The only thing the great textual critics could do (and are doing) is to classify them into groups or families. The MSS. get different letters to distinguish them, and the letters get figures added to show you that the "original" copy has been "corrected." The correctors themselves all belong to different schools and sometimes a corrector would add to the text (the *text*, mind you) somebody else's comment on a text—which is somehow or other pounced upon by the hateful infidel, and very difficult to explain away by the learned Priest. What a pity infidels can't be painlessly exterminated!

The final result of the Old Latin text is given by Sir F. Kenyon in his entrancing *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*: "It belongs to and is a principal member of that class of authorities which is distinguished by the boldest and most striking departures from the received text (*Textus Receptus*)."

This, mark you, is the earliest version presented to us by the Roman Catholic Church, and you see how it differs from *our* text. So are we not in a jolly old muddle!

But what about the Vulgate—the Latin text in use in the Church to this day? Well, what about it? Is it God's own Precious Word that cleanseth man from sin? It will be worth examining in our next study.

H. CUTNER.

I love all thou lovest,  
Spirit of Delight,  
The fresh earth in new leaves drest  
And the starry night;  
Autumn evening, and the morn  
When the golden mists are born.—*Shelley*.

You promise heavens free from strife,  
Pure truth, and perfect change of will;  
But sweet, sweet is this human life,  
So sweet I fain would breathe it still.

*William Cory.*

## Christian Apologetics in Extremis.

It is one of those obvious things that are often overlooked that Freethought has made such progress in our time, that its enemies are increasingly inclined to leave it alone, that is so far as responsible controversy is concerned. The babble of parsons matters nought. The piety of an old scientist here and there is of little, if any, account. The pronouncements of bishops are, like the laughter of fools, the crackling of thorns under a pot. Apologetics has retired behind the smoke screen of popular journalism from which it might be concluded that Freethinkers, instead of being as common, or more common, than Christians, were as extinct as the dodo. These are allegations that admit of proof.

If you take the main line of the assault on Christianity, which, in our opinion, consists of (1) the assault by science and discovery, and (2) the assault by organized Freethought and Rationalism, and (3) the inevitable result of the admitted tendency of credulity to decline in proportion as popular education advances, it is plain that no real answer has ever been made at all by the apologists of religion. If so we may assume that it was not for the want of the desire to answer, but from the lack of rebutting evidence. And if it is not so, where are the answers? And where is the evidence?

The *Freethinker*, which has just celebrated its Jubilee, and the National Secular Society, albeit still bearing more than their share of the lot of unpopular and fearless organizations, have poured forth a steady output of devastating criticism that is feared by none more than by those in high places in Fleet Street and elsewhere, who pretend it is too small or too vulgar to notice. Did G. W. Foote ever meet his match? The answer is in the negative. (This is a digression, but not quite an irrelevant one) we heard Foote's last debate at Caxton Hall with one Wauchauar—then a doctor of divinity and since unheard of in that department, but busy elsewhere under a pseudonym. We remember Foote's superb retort to a silly argument that God was no more responsible for evil than a rose gardener for the weeds in his garden. Foote said, in unanswerable reply, "And so it come to this: Man plants the roses. God sends the weeds." After this debate we saw Foote, ill as he was, tramping of down Victoria Street carrying his heavy bag of books, and, just as he got to a corner, he was nearly run over by a huge and luxurious motor-car, in which his reverend opponent reposed among the cushions with an appearance of being used to it! And now back to our argument. Take the R.P.A. publications and popular reprints. From *The Churches and Modern Thought* (first published in 1906), to the last of them—where, when, and by whom have they been answered? Where is the "reply" that is still selling?

Even the journalistic apologists for Christianity have given up the ghost. Mr. James Douglas, not the least stalwart of them, admitted in his recent obituary of Arnold Bennett, that Christianity is "a dying belief." And what has happened to Mr. G. K. Chesterton? Since he took the logical step, for one of his ideas, of joining the Church of Rome (and, perhaps, involved himself in the awkward dilemma of having to keep "mum" on certain subjects unless he could get canonical "lawful authority" and an "imprimatur" for his lucubrations), he has been strangely passive about religion. Ten years ago his *Orthodoxy* was submitted to a most searching examination, and this present writer, having written that book (*Author's doxy*: The Bodley Head) will say no more about it.

except that in all those ten years Mr. Chesterton has not, to his knowledge, said one word in reply to a serious attempt to provoke him.

Only the other day there appeared a new effort to rehabilitate even a minimum of belief in Christian Theism. (*The Revelation of Deity*, by Dr. J. E. Turner). Even the Conservative critic in the *Times Literary Supplement*, reviewing this book, cannot help (being an honest writer) pointing out that "there are presuppositions in his treatment of his theme"; which, in plain language, means that if you presuppose red to be no colour at all, you can believe it to be any colour you have a fancy for at the moment. Dr. Turner admits how shaky are the foundations of belief by the very fact of having to protest against the idea "that they are nothing more than mere assumptions." So anxious is he to preserve, if he can, something like a reason for belief in Christ, that he suggests that "the concept of the divine potency of subdual has to be interpreted in relation to the psychical history of the earthly Jesus." We do not agree with the *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer that "it is true that *omnia exeunt in mysterium*, and that the relations between control and contingency in the immediate and ultimate issues of redeeming activity can only baffle the presumption of reason." On the contrary, we believe that the *mysterium* bogey has been worked, if not to death, at least into a condition in which the verbosity of Dr. Turner, and the less complicated efforts of less learned, and we can well believe less pious, corpse revivers will all be in vain. It may still have a long way to go, but that the Christian superstition is on the run, and very short of wind, is as plain as the nose on our face and, we hope, plainer.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

**The Curse of Slavery.**

*Christianity, Slavery and Labour.* By CHAPMAN COHEN. (London: The Pioneer Press.) 2s. 6d.

MR. CHAPMAN COHEN, who is a born fighter, has unfortunately only too easy a task in framing a strong indictment against the religious world which under an entire misconception tolerated slavery through many centuries. His study of the whole case presents a curious as well as a very painful problem in mental aberration. A large section of the community, otherwise not lacking in humane feelings, allowed itself by sheer perversion in reasoning to conclude that the enslaving of the lower races was not only justifiable but was almost a commendable duty, that it was a divinely sanctioned institution, and that it was warranted by the highest sanctions of Scripture. It was assumed that because the Bible recorded wholesale slavery, history was to be accepted as a warrant, and the foremost leaders in the churches believed that they could be doing no wrong if they followed the example of the great ones in early days. Hence it came about that those who professed the deepest religion and who uttered the most pious sentiments were the worst offenders, and even to the last the heads of the churches offered the most powerful opposition to the abolition of the evil. When once slavery as an institution was acknowledge as right all the horrors for which it was responsible followed, and it is impossible to acquit the religious bodies of their share in the results.

It seems strange to us in these days that this question of enslavement should have been so utterly divorced from all other moral considerations. Men who preached and practised humanitarianism in other respects entirely ignored their own most cherished principles when the traffic in "black ivory" was concerned. The negro might be a man and a brother according to theory, but in reality he was to be merely a beast of burden without rights and subjected to any ill-usage and barbarity that his masters chose to inflict upon him.

So we get one of the most appalling of all the stories

of man's inhumanity to man, and in the end it was not the churches—not even the bishops and clergy, we regret to know—who brought about the reform, but the common people whose feelings were outraged by what was done. There was, of course, another reason why slavery so long prevailed—the sordid reason that it was profitable. Liverpool and Bristol, to mention only two English cities built up their prosperity mainly on the slave-trade. We know also what kept it so active in America. But the pity of the whole awful business was that it was so strongly bound up with religion itself, or, rather, with what religion was supposed to be.

Mr. Cohen's volume is mainly historical, and there is no getting over the facts. He has put them together in his own forcible fashion, and he constructs from them a cogent argument. We have to bow our heads in shame as he recites the unrelieved and unredemmed horrors, and we can but hope that his narrative of a misguided policy and a false conception of man's relationship to man will strengthen the resolve that such evils must never occur again. We cannot blame Mr. Cohen for his own conclusions as to the nature of a Christianity which could ever have associated itself with the iniquitous traffic; from his point of view he is justified in making them; but the modern Christian ethic of the past which repudiated the false christian ethic of the past which brought about the terrible delusion. Here we have, at all events, a very useful record of the danger of departing from the principles which were laid down in the Sermon on the Mount. Men have learnt, though only too late, that they must not only preach the blessedness of mercy and brotherhood, but must practise what they preach, otherwise their religion is brought into contempt.

*From the "Manchester City News."*

**Ethics.**

WE'RE born in ignorance, but not in sin!  
You still insist the Bible says we are,  
The Bible, your belief and faith therein,  
Are gems of ignorance piacular!

Our quondam friend we essayed to convince,  
But failed to brush the cobwebs from his brain,  
His adamantine mind has crumbled since,  
Poor Jonah is at Menston now, insane.

If one could only get the information  
Why and wherefore the insane are insane,  
The cause of his or her incarceration,  
We should find religious teaching is the bane!

But what about the children, would you not  
Allow attendance at the Sunday School?  
Well now, you touch a very tender spot:  
But wherefore should the child be made a fool!

By all means let the child some school attend;  
But then it is your duty not to shirk  
Your own responsibility, my friend!  
Don't let the mind be crippled by the kirk.

Keep clear of creeds, adhere to things mundane,  
Let children be acquainted with this planet!  
Nature, our task and tutor, both! explain  
Just how the world evolves, not who began it.

A "past" the universe has never known!  
It always is, there's no such thing as "Time"!  
Its changes, or creations, are its own!  
Natural, though unconscious and sublime.

The principle intelligence is man's;  
Derived from functions sequent to his birth!  
Experience alone, the mind expands,  
There's nothing supernatural on earth!

Indeed! how wise! but what about the soul?  
Man is a spiritual being! Just so;  
Self conscious, capable of self-control!  
Read thou Sir Arthur Keith an thou wouldst know!

B. I. BOWERS.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE LATE ALBERT HEATH.

SIR,—As a member of the South London Branch, I should like to supplement your obituary notice concerning the late Mr. Albert Heath, for many years the Hon. Secretary and afterwards President of our Branch. He had, I think, a very great share in making our Branch one of the most active in London, cutting for ever new ground by holding meetings at varied places in Clapham, Brixton, Kennington and Camberwell. He organized every year a Bradlaugh demonstration addressed by leading Freethinkers, and it is due to his efforts, that we had the privilege of hearing Bertrand Russell lecture for us. His ready recognition of the services of others, his own unassuming ways and his altogether sterling qualities won him many friends and his home was always a rallying place for local Freethinkers. We honour ourselves and our movement in honouring the memory of Albert Heath as an advocate of Freethought, as a fine man and a loyal friend.

H.G.

## Obituary.

MR. WALLACE ALLAN, J.P.

Ayr and district is the poorer for the death of ex-Bailie Allan in his eighty-fourth year; a man of high character, intelligence, and principles; an austere yet magnanimous man. Resembling in features G. B. Shaw, Mr. Allan had much of the Irishman's wit, but the grain of the former always seeming the more abiding substance—and ever the severer exterior concealed the jewels of wit, wisdom, and philosophy within. He filled many public posts in his town and county, and ought to have been Provost—and, dear and simple soul he was, would like to have been—but his true "large honours" lay in his labours for human welfare and enlightenment. For these things he strove to the end. In his last two years he failed rapidly, death was not unexpected, and while resigned, was still fighting to the end. In the beginning, it should be remarked, the future watchmaker and jeweller, when he found himself at leisure to choose, felt an early call to public service, and was for sometime a Sunday school teacher; but presently found he had made a "bad start" in teaching as true what he later found to be the very opposite. In a succeeding life of reading, writing and speaking he made ample amends! In the last days he was able to absorb only the Editorial part of the *Freethinker*. From his home in Prestwick he rests now beside the river in Ayr's fine Cemetery—Pantheon enough for him. I may pass that way again, often, but Epicurus will not be in his Garden, but sadly and lovingly remember lying There!—A.M.

## Miscellaneous Advertisements.

ACADEMY, Oxford Street (Opposite Warings). Unique Film Season. The Russian Epic "Turksib," and a Rene Clair Comedy, "The Crazy Ray." Next week, "The Passion of Joan of Arc."

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

FINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—A Lecture.

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

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain) : 6.0, Mrs. E. Grout—A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. Stonhouse Street, Clapham Road, 7.30—A Lecture. Wednesday, Station Road (near Brixton Station), 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. Friday, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, 8.0—A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.) : 7.0, Mrs. E. Venton—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; every Thursday, at 7.0, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and J. Darby; every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

INDOOR.

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.) : Wednesday, June 24, at 7.45, Mrs. E. Grout—"Lies Told to Children."

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level) : 3.30, A Lecture. BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Annual Outing. Arrangements to visit Ludlow are being made, full particulars from local Secretary, T. G. Millington, 1 Mayfield Avenue, Per shore Road, Selly Park, Birmingham.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : The Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. intend to pay a visit to Townley Hall. Will friends who intend to join the party meet outside the Hall at 3.0. Restaurant in the grounds.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, at Queen's Drive (opposite Baths), Messrs. Jackson and Tisson; Monday, at Beaumont Street, Messrs. Jackson and Wollen; Tuesday, at Edge Hill Lamp, Messrs. Little and Sherwin; Wednesday, at Waste Ground adjoining Old Swan Library, Messrs. Little and Shortt; 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.—A Lecture will be given on Town Moor (weather permitting), at 7.30. If doubtful at Bigg Market. Speaker J. T. Brighton. This being Race Sunday a good attendance is requested.

HORDEN—Near Miner's Hall, Saturday, June 20, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE—Bigg Market, Wednesday, June 24, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street, Bradford) : A meeting will be held on Sunday evening at 7.30.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Board School) : 7.30, Mr. Whitehouse—"Sir Arthur Keith's Rectorial Address."

Select Bargains in New Books.

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- THE ETHIC OF FREETHOUGHT. By KARL PEARSON. Published at 12s. 6d. Price 4s. 6d. Postage 6d.
- KAFIR SOCIALISM. By D. KIDD. Published at 10s. 6d. Price 2s. 6d. Postage 6d.
- A CANDID EXAMINATION OF THEISM. By G. J. ROMANES. Published at 10s. 6d. Price 3s. 6d. Postage 4d.
- A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY. By SALOMON REINACH, 1922. An important Work by a Leading French Freethinker. Translated by Florence Simmonds. Published at 10s. 6d. Price 4s. 6d. Postage 6d.
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