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Letters to the Editor, etc.

## Views and Opinions.

### God and the State.

LAST week I dealt with the amazing document from Rome to the Spanish Government demanding a restoration of the privileges and powers of the Spanish Church as they existed previous to the deposition of Alfonso. Nothing more amazing has been issued since the publication of a manifesto by the Allied Powers calling upon the revolutionists of 1789 to return to their allegiance to Louis the Sixteenth. The French replied to that infamous document with the head of the King, and if the Papal document does not make the Spanish people more determined than ever to be done with the King and the Church, they will deserve all that happens to them. But I would like my readers to bear that document in mind because it serves to illustrate the speech delivered by Cardinal Bourne at Edinburgh on June 17, and reported in the *Universe* for June 19. It was hard on the Labour Party, after it had so abjectly bowed to the mass vote of Roman Catholics in this country to be told by the Pope that no "true" Socialist could be a member of the Roman Church. That is a declaration which may injure the Church in Britain, and the Cardinal had a rather difficult job before him, particularly if his hearers become acquainted with the aims of the Church as set forth in the message to Spain.

The question dealt with by the Cardinal may be expressed thus: Granting that to be a politician in this country one must belong to one of three political parties, what must be the attitude of Catholics entering the field of politics? The Cardinal prefaces his answer by congratulating himself that no political party in this country bases itself on "non-Christian principles." I do not want to be hyper-critical, but it is quite certain that no political party in this country bases itself on Christian principles. At the least every political party ignores them, and at most opposes them. Christian principles should at least in-

volve faith in prayer, belief in the divinity of Jesus, belief in the policy of non-resistance, of taking no thought for the morrow, and a childlike trust that God will look after man as he does the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. We should like to see what would happen to any political party that publicly based itself on these things!

\* \* \*

### "Ye are My Sheep."

The Cardinal's reply to the question is that no Roman Catholic "may deliver himself, or his conscience, wholly into the keeping of any political party. When his religious faith and his conscience come into conflict with the claims of the party, he must obey his conscience and withstand the demands which his party make upon him." On the face of it this *might* mean no more than that a man must do what he thinks right and not subordinate his sense of truth and justice to mere party claims. But the "value lies in the interpretation thereof," and by a sense of right and justice Cardinal Bourne means no more and no less than the duty of every Roman Catholic to obey the orders of the Church on all topics. Education, marriage, divorce, the rights of private property, the right of the Church to dominate the State, the right of the Church to dictate to its members in a thousand and one ways, and the duty of Roman Catholics to accept that dictation without question, is really what the Cardinal means by the demands of his religious faith and conscience. The Church stands for the conscience of the individual believer, the Church decides what his faith must be on pain of eternal damnation.

The Roman Catholic does not function as a free man in a free State; he is a soldier acting under orders that he is forbidden to question. In all circumstances where the interests of the Church are concerned it is his business to do as he is told. Other Churches may *advise* their followers how to act, the Roman Church *orders*, and enforces its orders with all the spiritual pains and penalties at its command. It makes such questions as divorce, education, and obedience to the Secular Government a matter of faith whenever it finds it to its interests to do so. And in virtue of the unreasoning mass vote it is able to command, it holds political parties up to ransom under the very thin guise of the demands of conscience. It is this that has made the Roman Church a threat to a genuinely enlightened government wherever that Church has established itself.

\* \* \*

### Politicians and the Churches.

The Manifesto issued from Rome to the Spanish Government does at all events make it quite clear—to those who were not already acquainted with the claims of the Church—what it would regard as placing a political party in direct conflict with the religion and conscience of Roman Catholics. It re-

jects altogether the principle of religious toleration, it demands that the Church shall exist as a State within a State, that its priests shall be above the ordinary law, and that the Government shall by its official sanction and presence recognize the Church as something to which public deference is to be paid. Of course, the Church does not openly make these claims in every country. The conditions would make such claims in this country, for example, little short of an act of suicide. But where it can it makes them, and in all cases it makes them in proportion as it feels it safe to do so. At present it will permit its members to vote for Labour candidates, but only in such cases as these candidates promise to support the claims of the Church with regard to the schools, and in the case of the recent Ardwick election it was officially announced that the candidate had given the required promise. Of course, it may be said by Catholics in defence of their position that the Roman Church is in this respect acting only as do other Churches. Indeed, the Cardinal says that when he pointed out to the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman that some contemplated measures would injure the interests of the Roman Church, he replied:—

We have been put into power by the Nonconformists, and we must produce measures that will satisfy the Nonconformists. If you, by your efforts, can bring about a change in public opinion, then we shall be quite prepared to alter our attitude.

We are not surprised at the fact, but only at a Prime Minister so publicly confessing that his party was ready to sell to the highest bidder. We should like confirmation of the story, although it must be confessed that it faithfully represents what does occur, and the action of the present Government with regard to religion in the schools, the blasphemy laws, and the Sunday question, shows that it is the principle upon which it works. But the distinction even here is that the Roman Church can make its decrees on political issues a question of faith, and can count on its followers acting with a docility that no other organization in the country can produce. The Roman Church represents the menace of religion to civilization in its most complete form.

\* \* \*

#### A Plain Issue.

Proof of the truth of the last sentence is found in that passage of the Cardinal's speech, in which he unconsciously points out the incompatibility of Christianity with civilization. He says:—

Whether Socialism be considered as a doctrine, or as a historical fact, or as a movement, if it really remains Socialism it cannot be brought into harmony with the dogmas of the Catholic Church, even after it has yielded to truth and justice in the points we have mentioned; the reason being that it conceives human society in a way utterly alien to Christian truth.

For according to Christian truth man . . . is placed here on earth in order that he may spend his life in society and under an authority ordained by God, that he may develop to the full all his faculties to the praise and glory of his creator, and that by fulfilling faithfully the duties of his station he may obtain temporal and eternal happiness. Socialism, on the contrary, entirely unconcerned about this sublime end both of individuals and society, affirms that living in community was instituted for the sake of the advantages which it brings to mankind.

That states the issues with commendable clarity. It is not merely the issue between the Roman Church and civilization, but the issue between Civilization and Christianity. It is the issue of whether social life is to be considered as an end in itself, and social effort

to be tested by considerations limited to the welfare of man in society, or whether it is to be considered as part of what is called a "divine order," and social action determined by something called the "will of God," with a view to man's existence in some other life? It is the issue between Naturalism and Supernaturalism, between Theism and Atheism, plainly and unmistakably stated. In this respect nothing else really matters.

\* \* \*

#### A Threat to Civilization.

I regard the Roman Church as an illustration in unmistakable form of a danger to civilization which is implied in all forms of genuine religion. Other Churches do not offer so clear an illustration because they are more susceptible to certain inhibitions than is the Roman Church. But the danger is there with all, held in check by counter forces against which the older Church is able to offer a more effective resistance. How can we expect men who hold the belief in God and a future life to be essential to social well-being to subordinate them to considerations drawn from secular and non-religious theories of sociology? It cannot be done, and when we have in addition to the general belief in religion, the added acceptance of an alleged revelation from God, the opposition between religion and a scientific view of life is so plain as to be unmistakable.

It has often been pointed out that a distinguishing feature between past and present is that between unconscious and conscious evolution. Social evolution is at first achieved with little more conscious direction than one meets with in the animal world. The process is, therefore, in its earliest stages, slow, clumsy, wasteful, and often ineffective. But with knowledge comes power, the power of understanding and the power of direction. A knowledge of natural forces enables man to direct them; he takes short cuts, and produces greater and better results. What is true with regard to social evolution in general should be more strikingly apparent with religion. The religious beliefs of the world have been bad, wholly and irretrievably bad. But because they are operative in society, they have been mixed up with natural, social, qualities without which they would long since have disappeared. It is high time that the divorce between the two was decreed and made absolute. In other directions science has developed as it has left behind the religious idea and limited itself to genuine research. Sociology has not yet taken on a scientific cast because it is still entangled with the fetishistic formulæ of the medicine-man. Like the man who swallows a medicine and offers a prayer for recovery, afterwards attributing the recovery to the prayer, we mix our sociology with religion, and then permit a huge parasitic class of priests to profit by the confusion. It looks as though events in this country and elsewhere are working towards clearing the priest out of politics, but that should only be a preliminary step towards clearing the religious idea out of life. You cannot combine the Stone Age and the twentieth century without running the risk of disaster.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,  
Have oftimes no connexion . . .  
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;  
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.—Cooper.

O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,  
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give.  
Shakespeare.

## The Cry of the Clergy.

"We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions."—George Foote.

"Speedy end to superstition, a gentle one if you can contrive it, but an end."—Carlyle.

"Religion is the opium of the people."—Karl Marx.

ONE of Charles Dickens's characters had a playful habit of introducing King Charles's head into any conversation in which he was engaged. The irrepressible Bishop of London, in like fashion, revels in highly-coloured accounts of the alleged poverty of the Anglican clergy. Year after year he has harrowed the feelings of audiences with the awful details of their frightful sufferings. Once he described these unhappy workers in the Lord's vineyard as belonging to a "rotten profession." This so upset some ardent Church people that his lordship was constrained to explain later that he was thinking only of the financial point of view, and was not concerned with ethical or intellectual considerations. The Bishop actually quoted the harrowing instance of a parson who fed a large wife and larger family on sixpence a meal, and a distressing case of another man-of-God who lost what brains he possessed in direct ratio to a vanishing bank-balance.

His latest piece of frightfulness is that in the East End of London he found a clergyman's beloved wife was housemaid, cook, and nurse to the whole establishment. No wonder the well-dressed audience at the Church Assembly, Westminster, was impressed. Worse was to come, however. The Rev. H. G. Crabtree, instancing the extreme poverty of the clergy, said that he stayed at a vicarage, and the daughter danced joyfully into the room and announced steak-pie for dinner. This was the only meat they had for a whole month. More shudders from the well-dressed audience.

This is the merest mouthing and cockscomby. Mr. Bernard Shaw has not eaten meat for half a century, and he is one of the most active and intelligent men in Europe, and of far more consequence than the whole Bench of Bishops put together. Vegetarians never eat meat, and they are numbered by thousands. So, this "steak-pie" argument is no real proof of poverty.

The excellent Bishop of London should be an authority on poverty. He is obsessed by the woes of the wealthy, and is always painfully anxious to rebut the awful charge of riches. Some time ago he explained to a perplexed congregation that, after drawing his episcopal salary of £10,000 for fifteen years, he was £2,000 on the wrong side of the ledger, and actually in a worse position than when he started following in the footsteps of the twelve disciples. On such bookkeeping it is clear that had his lordship's salary been that of his brother of Canterbury, he must have ended his unhappy career in a Church Army shelter, or on the Thames Embankment.

The clergy are not really starving. It costs £1,000 to train a young priest, and if his parents can spend so much money on their son's profession they must be far above the poverty-line themselves. The endowments of the Church of England are more solid than the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, and they are not invested in Russian securities. Lord Addington's return of 1891 showed that the annual value of these ecclesiastical endowments was £5,469,171, exclusive of modern private benefactions, which then amounted to £284,000 a year. Since then these endowments have doubled in value.

The plain truth is that the Anglican Church is the richest religious organization in Christendom. At the

top are prelates with seats in the House of Lords, where they never do any good service for the democracy; at the bottom are a multitude of holders of benefices far better off than the ordinary man. Forty bishops share £182,000 yearly, ranging from the Archbishop of Canterbury's £15,000 to the modest £2,000 of an ordinary Father-in-God. Crockford's Clerical Directory shows that the average "reverend" enjoys a comfortable existence. His stipend is good, and he lives in a decent house, often nicer than most of his neighbours. He has just as much, or as little, work as he likes to do, and if he chooses to spend three-fourths of each day reading or visiting, there is no one to say him nay. He can count on invitations to dinner and other hospitality all the year round, which is no small saving on the household expenses.

It is interesting to know that the episcopal costume costs £200. It is, indeed, a far cry from the legendary figure of the Carpenter of Nazareth to Lambeth Palace, with its pleasure ground, Farnham Palace, with its deer-park and Wells, with its moated garden.

The Bishop of London's arithmetic will not entitle him to an honorary membership of the Society of Incorporated Accountants. His Lordship's protests are a trifle too loud. As he has already collected tens of thousands of pounds from devoted Church people to protect the sacred persons of the clergy from the blessings of poverty, perhaps there is some method in his protestation after all.

It is idle to talk of the poverty of the Church of England. In all his appeals for money the Bishop of London appears to have completely forgotten the vast resources of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Queen Anne's Bounty, and other sources of clerical income. The Church of England owns property in London alone worth millions of money; it possesses vast coal royalties in the County of Durham; and, last but not least, under the Tithe Act of 1925 it has its greedy hands on the farming industry of this country. The clergy are not nearer the poverty line than millions of their countrymen in these hard days of industrial depression. It is absurd to pretend otherwise. In so many parishes the parson with his big and expensive vicarage too often is a miniature reproduction of the bishop in a palatial residence too large for him and for the times. The cry of clerical poverty is simply a ruse to excite the sympathy and to open the purses of people.

The solution of this matter does not lie in the appointment of Socialist (or Labour) Members of Parliament as Ecclesiastical Commissioners at £1,200 a year, with a pension afterwards. It lies in the disestablishment and the disendowment of a Church which, so far from being of national interest, can only claim a membership of one in twenty of the population. The present so-called Socialist Administration has not even pecked at the fringe of the thing. Parsons claim to be sacred persons, and a caste apart. Unless a man accepts them and their extraordinary dogmas, without doubt he is outcast, and shall perish everlastingly. That is the Church of England's plain teaching for the masses, whilst it accepts so-called Socialists as Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Is it not time that some serious attention was given to this nursing-ground of Feudalism and Sacerdotalism? For, as it stands, the whole sorry thing is an affront to Democracy, and an anachronism in a country supposed to be in the vanguard of civilization. And the antediluvian character of the Church of England is entirely unaffected whether its parsons have steak-pie for dinner or not.

MIMNERMUS.

Freedom is the will to be responsible for oneself.

Nietzsche.

## On Our "Established" Religion.

THE late Dr. Mivart once observed that "there is nothing at once so pathetic and so absurdly grotesque as for members of the Anglican Church to pretend to be Catholics." We are reminded of these words, which we read and made a note of a good many years ago, by a tiresome but informative round of visits recently paid to Anglican Churches of the "Catholic" variety.

Not having been to church for a good many years, except, if we may quote the late Arnold Bennett, "to take part in some quasi-legal ceremony," we were astonished at the thorough going fashion in which all that appertained at one time to the worship of "the Protestant reform religion established by law" has been eradicated from its still established—and endowed—temples to-day. The old three-decker, the Royal Arms over the chancel or on the front of the gallery, and the two pointed tables of the ten commandments on the chancel wall, are hard to find, and, where they exist, are shown as among the curiosities of the neighbourhood. The "decent table" provided for in the Book of Common Prayer—a supper table, to be exact—is as rare as the parish clerk, even in "evangelical" churches.

As readers of this generation may never have seen these things, it may be interesting to mention how they came into being. For this purpose material is ample, but we will content ourselves with a few facts about the best known church in this country since the "wireless" came in, namely St. Martin-in-the-Fields at Charing Cross. In its Parish Registers we may read how, at the Reformation, the altar candle-sticks and brasses were sold as "olde metal," how some wax images were sold to "one Wylliam Mathewe at Tijd ye pound," how a workman was paid "for iij dayes worke in takyne downe ye aulters ijs vid," and so on. Here also "paid for Communion table vjs," and "paide for paynting of the commandments vs." and just before this entry (in the reign of Queen Mary) payde for wypping ye scriptures owte of the church vjs ijd." So it cost one and twopence less to paint them in than to "wype" them out. These facts, which, of course, are only samples of what may be found in the registers of many pre-reformation churches, knock the much vaunted "continuity" theory on the head even better than the disputed "ordination" of Barlow, who consecrated Parker, the first after-reformation Archbishop. Not far from where these lines are written, at Thame (Oxon.) there is a record that shows what the "decent table" was meant for, and that it was not meant for an altar. For on a Sunday in 1655, at what would now be called a "high celebration" or "mass," three gallons of wine and twenty-six loaves of bread were consumed by the "communicants."

Though it might not be suspected we have a practical object in this note. It is to point out that if there is any ground on which the continued establishment of religion in this country is commonly, defended it is that the State Church embodies the nation's Protestantism. But at a time when it is hard to find a church where the service can be followed from a Prayer Book (which is the schedule of an Act of Parliament) and when it has been vainly sought to get Parliamentary sanction to make the "Catholicization" of the English Church and its office books a legal operation, the last vantage of justification for the establishment has gone. Britain to-day is in no danger from Popery; but it is in danger from the entrenchment of a privileged religion in its Parliament and in its educational system. That this is the case is proved by recent political developments which are well known and too significant to need mention here.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

## The Riddle of the New Testament.

WHEN I was in my teens I heard G. W. Foote—in a lecture at the old Hall of Science—compare Christianity to a "sack of salt in a stream." It might look all right for the time being, but it was gradually losing its contents. Since then the process has continued until, in so far as the Established Church and some of the Nonconformist sects are concerned, there does not seem to be anything left but the sack.

At the time above referred to I heard J. M. Robertson have a set debate with a clergyman who defended the truth of Genesis, and the authorship of the Pentateuch by Moses! At the same time Charles Bradlaugh was debating with clergymen who upheld the authorship of the four Gospels by the Apostles whose names they bare, and that they were the veritable eye-witnesses of the things recorded in them! These were the conscientious beliefs of the vast majority of the Clergy, and, of course, the people, at that time. We do not suppose that there is a single educated clergyman, under sixty, who would attempt to defend such positions to-day.

These reflections were aroused by reading a recently published work by the Rev. Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, and Noel Davey, entitled *The Riddle of the New Testament* (Faber & Faber, 10s. 6d.) Sir Edwyn acted as a curate at Sunderland from 1908 to 1912, and was select preacher at Oxford University, 1924-5. In the "Introduction," the authors state: "The purpose of the book is to display the critical method at work upon the New Testament documents in the hope that some who are engaged elsewhere may be enabled to appreciate what has been and still is being achieved behind the scenes in the sphere of Christian historical theology." (p. 11.) But to present, we are told, the reader with a number of assured results, would be misleading, for: "It is a strange paradox that precisely as the critic grows in confidence in the adequacy of his method, so he becomes increasingly diffident of his ability to catalogue 'assured results.'"

For example, the critic is unable with any confidence to date the New Testament documents precisely; nor can he, except in the case of the majority of the Pauline Epistles, discover who wrote the various books. More serious is his inability to pronounce a final judgment as to whether isolated events happened or did not happen as they are recorded in the Gospels. He is dealing almost wholly with anonymous books in which occur no reference to events familiar to the historian of the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup>

Except in the case of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, and, it may be added, over the historical details furnished by these writings, scholars have carried on ceaseless arguments and disputes. As our authors observe: "No where in the New Testament are events recorded or referred to simply as events. The events are set in a theological context and their record serves a theological purpose. Consequently, if the general reader requires from the critic assured results concerning date, authorship, and historicity, set forth in tabulated form, he must be disappointed." (p. 12.)

We do not at all agree with this view of the matter. The assured results of modern criticism prove that the New Testament writings are of unknown authorship and written a long time after the period in which the events are placed. What the authors really mean is not that there are no assured result to give the reader, but that there are no assured results to establish the truth of Christianity. And with this we agree.

<sup>1</sup> *The Riddle of the New Testament*. p. 12.

Our authors devote a large part of their book to showing that the New Testament depends at every step upon the Old Testament, and that it is impossible to understand the New, apart from the Old. All the New Testament is written in Greek, it has not been translated from a Hebrew original, but was composed in Greek. When the writers cite the Old Testament they do not use the Hebrew version but the Septuagint, or Greek version translated at Alexandria.

The Greek of the New Testament, as our authors truly point out, is a special kind of Greek. The writers are endeavouring to express Hebrew ideas in the Greek language; a very difficult thing to do, they were worlds apart. Paul himself complains (1 Cor. i., xxiii.) that his teaching was "unto the Jews" that is the orthodox synagogue Jews, "a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." As our authors remark: "The highly-significant twisting of the language has taken place behind all this Christian moral and spiritual experience: It has taken place in a purely Hebraic—Aramaic environment." Consequently, declare our authors:—

So long as the modern New Testament reader is consciously or unconsciously interpreting it in terms of a humanitarian ethic or a humanitarian spiritual experience, he is sinning against the meaning of words. If we are to understand the Greek of the New Testament we can be satisfied neither with a lexicon of Classical Greek, nor with a lexicon of the spoken Greek of the first century A.D., nor even with a lexicon of the Greek of the Septuagint, even if one could be procured which noted carefully the Hebrew words which underlie the Greek of the translation: We can be satisfied only with a lexicon devoted wholly to the New Testament itself, in which the specifically Christian associations which became attached to each word are carefully detected and set forth. (pp. 46-47.)

During the past fifty years a great deal of the Greek in use, during the first and second century of our era, has been recovered from inscriptions, records, and letters, much of it recovered from Papyrus manuscripts retrieved from the ancient rubbish heaps of Egypt, which has all helped to a better understanding of the language; but even so, observe our authors: "The New Testament documents were, no doubt, written in a language intelligible to the generality of Greek-speaking people; yet to suppose that they emerged from the back-ground of Greek thought and experience would be to misunderstand them completely. There is a strange awkward element in the language which not only affects the meanings of words, but also disturbs the grammar and syntax, but lurks everywhere in a maze of literary illusions which no ordinary Greek man or woman could conceivably have understood or even detected." (pp. 24-25.) Each writer is "struggling to interpret into Greek a non-Greek method of thought and a non-Greek terminology." He who depended, for his salvation, upon an understanding of the Gospels, was in a parlous state.

Nor do our difficulties end here, as our authors point out, for: "Of the hundreds of manuscripts of the New Testament in Greek at present in existence, it would be hard to find two in all respects alike. Variations in spelling, variations in order, variations in actual words and even in whole verses, make each more or less distinct." This is due to the fact that before the invention of printing every copy had to be made separately by hand, with the inevitable result of many errors creeping in due to the copyists. Then the next copyist, seeing the mistake makes nonsense, attempts to correct it by guess works, and makes it still wider from the original; and as: "None of the manuscripts known to scholars to-day is earlier than the fourth century. None therefore, preserves a text which has escaped the corrupting influences of several

transcriptions." (p. 53.) And in fact: "variant readings were in fact already current during the second and third centuries." (p. 61.)

As for the claim so confidently made for the uniqueness and superiority of the ethics and moral teaching of Jesus, there is no truth in it. Our author's assert:—

The attempt on the part of Christian scholars to discover in the teaching of Jesus some new teaching about ethics or morals has completely broken down. Those modern Jewish scholars who have busied themselves with a comparison between the ethical teaching of Jesus and the ethical teaching of the Rabbis have given this judgment, that there is no single moral aphorism recorded as spoken by Jesus which cannot be paralleled, and often verbally paralleled, in Rabbinic literature. With this conclusion Christian scholars working in the field of Rabbinics are showing more and more agreement. (p. 191.)

In conclusion our authors declare: "It must be quite definitely affirmed that neither the Jesus of History nor the Primitive Church fits into the characteristic nexus of modern popular humanitarian or humanistic ideas. This is not merely because they belong to another age, of which the thought moved in an entirely unmodern idiom, but because their idiom was entirely foreign to that of any age, including their own. The Gospel was as much a scandal to the first century as it is to the twentieth." Not, our writers assert, because the Gospel was anti-humanitarian; but because "there emerged within the early Church a faith in men and women so deeply rooted as to make modern humanitarianism seem doctrinaire and trivial." (p. 261.) On the contrary we believe that what really emerged, destroyed the ancient pagan culture, and threw civilization back a thousand years.

But it is encouraging to know that the critical views advanced by Freethinkers, and so violently contested fifty years ago, are now accepted and taught, as mere commonplaces, by the best scholarship in the church itself to-day.

W. MANN.

### The Great Power of Polish Christianity

POLISH Christianity forms in our country a kingdom within a kingdom. During ten centuries it has succeeded in building a powerful apparatus by which it rules the mind of the Polish people, whilst with its rapacious talons it penetrates their body, sucking the very life's blood. The Catholic clergy, linked by a Concordat with the "Holy Father," have great privileges and the army of eternal salvation is extremely numerous. Government statistics show that Poland has 14,055 priests, and this number increases yearly; for instance, in 1928, 490 new priests swelled the ranks.

And the misery-laden Polish worker must carry on his shoulders the whole burden of the colossal expense necessary to maintain this army of parasites. For the year 1929-30 the national treasury paid out to the Polish Jesuits 26,500,000 (Zl.) (more than £6½ million). For the current year, that sum is to be increased by 300,000 Zl. but the Government asserted that even these enormous sums were insufficient, and decided to increase the monthly pension of the priests by 22¼%. The Jesuits have also control of extensive farms, the property of the Church, which yield huge profits.

Besides this the priests have many remunerative sidelines, such as marriages, deaths, baptisms, etc., which draw large sums to the coffers of these godly men. In the midst of servants and "holy sisters," they live in luxurious palaces, which under the cloak of celibacy, are nests of demoralization and vice.

Thus, in the light of facts and figures, appears the "humble Christ" of the Polish Jesuits. How much could be done with the sums swallowed up by this contemptible priesthood to build schools, theatres, homes for the homeless, libraries and hospitals for tuberculous workers, whose number increases at an unprecedented rate.

From the Workers Esperanto Service.

## The Waning of Faith.

FAITH, or firm, wavering belief based on unreliable evidence, ambiguous facts, and threadbare proof has not quite the same army of adherents as was the case when religion ruled and fear and terror stalked through many lands. Nor is it half so strongly entrenched as in the days of yore. Its foundations are crumbling and are becoming so pitifully weak, that it is really amazing how it manages to remain erect.

For instance, the Bible is now discussed and questioned on every hand, in fact, it seems as though only in pious circles is it regarded in a serious light, for even those with but a modicum of intelligence cannot accept it as a divinely inspired work; indeed many of them ridicule and pass humorous comments on the stories it contains. The New Testament, which for a while was believed by those who had not the time and opportunity to study it for themselves, to make amends for the shortcomings of the Old Testament, is now known to be equally as nonsensical, contradictory, indecent, and inaccurate as its precedent.

Jesus has practically lost his status as a God, and the clergy, conveniently overlooking this aspect, generally refer to him as a noble, upright, pious man whose gentle disposition all should endeavour to copy. Among others he is thought to be a person who preached against the practice of the priests of his time, and was ultimately crucified for his outspoken views, or, again, it is fancied that he was a lazy carpenter, who not liking work overmuch became an itinerant preacher. Some declare he was brave, and fearless, while many hold that he was a fool, a maniac, or a sun-god myth. His ethical teachings which were once highly respected in many quarters have in the main been found to be nugatory. Thus hath the mighty fallen!

Hell, too, has tottered from its pedestal. This place in its prime was of utmost value to the Church both from a financial and moral point of view. The blackmailing campaign it enabled the Church to carry out was a complete and indisputable success; the wealth it helped the Church to accumulate is beyond reckoning. In a like manner the dread, misery, apprehension, and horror it disseminated is incalculable; and the lives it ruined; the homes it wrecked, the seeds of knowledge it destroyed; and the amount of selfishness and hypocrisy it introduced into the world cannot possibly be computed. Yet now its glamour has nearly all worn off. Many jokes are made about it, and are allowed to appear even in newspapers and periodicals which on other matters are pious first and sensible on rare occasions. It is declared that if it does really exist it cannot be much worse than our earth.

The domain of the Holy Trinity, Heaven, has also suffered as a result of the steady waning of faith, and now it is not so surely situated, nor so inviting as was once the case. The reason is that it has been subjected to heavy bombardments of criticism from unbelievers and also believers, with a result that it is reduced to a wispy, intangible something which is hoped for largely by those who have behaved decently only because of an expected reward at the end of life's journey, and is supported by egotistical people who cannot conceive of a world from which they will be entirely divorced. After all, the latter argue, individually, how possibly can the world go on unless I am somewhere about? without them they feel certain it would soon be in a "terrible state of chaos." The belief in future life is still rather strong, but, from being considered as an actual fact it has declined to a mere conjecture. Most people uphold the view that a world in hand is infinitely better than two somewhere beyond the sky.

Now let us proceed a little further and take a glance at God, the supreme all-powerful being belief in whose existence is at the root of all religions. If ever we are confronted with clear and unmistakable evidence of the diminution of faith it is here. Once he saw everything, did everything, knew everything. In his name men and women were tortured; were executed for an alleged infringement against his commands; were offered up as sacrifices to appease his divine wrath. Not so very many years ago any bold individual who absented himself from

church and politely informed the parson that he had arrived at the decision that to worship and sing the praises of a God whom nobody had ever seen, who never seemed to make attempts to improve the conditions of life, and who failed absolutely to justify his existence appeared to him very much like lunacy, was immediately seized, placed in the stocks, and in anything but a gentle manner shown that no matter how he disliked church he would have to go or else take the very severe consequences, which, were certainly worse than listening to the parson's droning voice every Sunday. But, can the wilful delinquent be taught a similar lesson in our times? Alas!—for the Almighty's account of the origin of the world, and his statement in relation to the evolution of living forms as revealed in the Bible are false. So far, indeed, from the ascertained facts are they that it looked as though he has been deliberately trying to hoax mankind. However, as fresh discoveries were made by scientists and explorers the matter was reviewed in a new, surprising light. The braver spirits actually asserted that the universe did not require a superhuman being to keep it in orderly condition, and the arguments they brought forward to substantiate this could not be confuted. For a considerable time the churches succeeded in silencing the heretics, this being the most effective method of combating them, but, it so happens that although he is often inconsistent, perverse, credulous, and even erratic man is a born searcher for and lover of truth. So that with all the power behind it religion lost ground steadily, and at present it is the minority who bow the knee in humble reverence to the dying Creator: the rest ignore his injunctions despite the risks they run, and never dream of entering his houses of worship. He lingers on as yet and will no doubt continue to do so for some years, but, his fate is definitely sealed.

Another aspect is the faith in religion as a moralizing factor. Repetition and affirmation have been employed in establishing this, yet it has had an enthusiastic army of advocates. Still the upheaval in Russia and now Spain has induced many to pry into the history of these countries. The consequences are that those who might not otherwise have become aware of it, now know that religion is a curse, a sworn enemy of knowledge, a perverter of morals, and it has made them determined to assist in the struggle to bring about its utter destruction.

The waning of faith can only mean that the dawn of the age of reason is rapidly approaching. Let it be borne in mind, however, that it depends largely on those of us who have achieved emancipation from the chokehold of religion as to how long it will be ere the sun of knowledge rises clear above the horizon of fear and beams down upon an enlightened world awakened to new and unlimited possibilities.

TOM BLAKE.

## Acid Drops.

The Rev. F. C. Spurr is not satisfied with the state of the religious world. Few parsons are; few parsons have ever been. They have always told us of the hunger of the man for religion, and the all conquering power of the Christian Gospel—and then complained that whole masses of people will not feed on religion, and the Gospel simply does not touch them. It must be a very keen hunger that is so easily satisfied and a very powerful religion that fails altogether to touch multitudes, and even those whom it does touch seem to shake it off very easily.

Mr. Spurr makes the discovery that "there is no definite hostility to religion, as in Mr. Bradlaugh's time." We have heard of this before, and it belongs to the same order of things as the "Great revival of religion" that is always at hand, but never arrives. Of course, if there is to be a great revival of religion there must be a weakening of hostility to religion. The latter is a kind of preparation for the former, and the discovery that there are multitudes of young men and women who are hungering for religion is a kind of "Preparation in history for Christ," about which theologians of the middle

of the last century used to write so feelingly. It all hangs together so beautifully, until one begins to look at the facts, and then we realize its true nature. Yet, presumably, the tale pays. It may be true that you can't fool all the people all the time, but it is certainly a fact that you can fool a large number of them all the time. That is a circumstance for which every parson in the country must unceasingly thank God.

The truth is that, generally, the position remains about the same as in Bradlaugh's time, with the exception that there is far more disbelief in religion to-day than has ever before existed. Under Bradlaugh the militant Freethought movement in this country became definitely Atheistic, and so it has continued. But definite Atheism in this country has always been unfashionable, and the compromising character of English public life led a great many in Bradlaugh's time, as it has done since to seek safety in adopting a number of compromising terms, and even to make play with that blessed word "religion," while dropping everything for which religion properly stands. One French writer properly remarked that on the Continent men who in this country call themselves Agnostics would be called Atheists and would call themselves such, and no one would think any the worse of them for doing so. But here we do things differently, and it is the readiness of so many to play with half terms that lead parsons of the type of Mr. Spurr to talk of the decline of Freethinking since Bradlaugh's time. The decline is pure myth. If statistics could be obtained it would probably be found that Freethinkers in this country have doubled their numbers within the past twenty years.

One other point. When Bradlaugh commenced his campaign, and for some years after, Christian champions were found by the score ready to meet the Freethought advocate on the public platform or in the press. There were many debates, but there could be no hiding from religionists the strength of the Freethought position. Naturally Christian preachers found that this policy did not pay. They found they were quite unable to silence the Freethinker, but they were opening the eyes of large numbers of Christians. Never a debate took place that did not bring fresh converts to Freethought. So a new policy was adopted—that of silence. Christian defenders no longer—save at rare intervals—appeared on Freethought platforms. And as an addendum to the policy of silence, the next thing was to declare that Freethought was dead, or dying. Mr. Spurr's discovery is a belated echo of this old "yarn." Like many others he much prefers to fight disbelief in religion—at a distance. He likes doing it in a chapel, where there is no talking back permitted, and as he knows that his hearers do not attend Freethought meetings and know nothing about Freethought, he feels himself quite safe. So he is, but if he ever screws up enough courage to come into the open, he may be able to tell a different tale.

The Primitive Methodist Conference, meeting at Derby, views "with grave concern the proposals now before Parliament to legalize Sunday openings of any place of entertainment." Very graciously the Conference says it has no objection to "hikers" going out on Sunday, but if Sunday Cinemas are permitted they should only be permitted "at certain hours," and the character of the films should be "worthy of Sunday." That helps us to realize what chance there is of getting Sunday films where these people have any influence, and the grand-motherly character of the supervision that will be exercised. Still, we do not anticipate that the British public will kick. To-day it will stand almost anything in the shape of interference with individual liberty.

The Methodist Church has decided to permit women candidates for the ministry, with the proviso that they must resign as soon as they get married. Now we shall be told very soon that Methodists are the pioneers of the equality of the sexes, and poor old Paul with his "I will not allow a woman to teach," and Jesus who failed to select a woman for one of his disciples, and even declined to permit a woman to touch him, after his resurrection,

for fear of defilement, will be put in the background. The world does move!

On the other hand the Annual Meeting of the Church Union and Anglo-Catholic Union is very much disturbed at the thought of women being permitted in the pulpit, and the Rev. E. Seyzinger said that if ever this took place in the Church he would leave it at once. He said the objection "was not based on the superiority of man, but on the priority of his creation, and the order of our Lord, and the unbroken obedience of Christianity to him from the beginning." He says the appointment of women preachers would be "a calamity and a dishonour." Hear, hear! That is good sound doctrine, and one that the Christian Church has always preached. Of course, women will still be permitted to make collections, outside the Church, and to do the donkey work of the Church, but we agree that if "Our Lord" meant women to take a part in the preaching he would have said so. And if we are to ignore the authority of "Our Lord" in this respect, where are we to stop?

We are reminded by these things that at the recent General Assembly of the Scottish Church, held in May, it was permitted to women to present a petition in favour of women entering the pulpit, but was promptly "chucked out," Dr. John White declaring that if such a request were granted it would "jeopardise the unity of the Church." The women may consider themselves lucky that they were not treated to a dose of the Ducking Stool. The hussies!

Chapels and Churches in Wales are asking for the exemption of Wales from the operations of the Bill for legalizing Sunday Cinemas. There is the usual silly cry that the people do not want them. But if the people do not want them they will stay away, and the Cinemas will not keep open longer than there is an audience for them. The plea is not merely silly, it states an obvious lie. There is not a Cinema in the country open on Sunday that is not full to the doors. The truth—which one seldom gets in Christian pleas—is that the parsons and Sabbatarians do not want Sunday performances. The first do not because it is opposition to their own Sunday shows, and tends to divert custom. The latter do not want them because they object to see anyone enjoying themselves on Sunday. They say that if you are not really miserable on Sunday you might at least look as though you are.

Mr. Herbert Casson, editor of the *Efficiency Magazine* makes the assertion that thinking can be taught. Mr. Casson is a brave man, and we hope he will carry battle into the ranks of journalists and clergymen, whose written and spoken word respectively may be described as tosh and tripe.

On the authority of a writer in the *Morning Post*, commenting on the Hendon Air Display, spectators will be able to judge for themselves the efficiency and skill of the Finest Air Force in the world. None doubts the courage and gallantry of the individuals who take an active part in the display. A French writer, who might be describing Hendon, does the thing better. He says, "For all armies are the finest in the world. The second finest army, if one could exist, would be in a notoriously inferior position; it would be certain to be beaten. It ought to be disbanded at once. Therefore, all armies are the finest in the world." At another point in his description, he writes, "War without fire is like tripe without mustard: it is an insipid thing." The writer is Anatole France, and the two extracts are from *Penguin Island*. And the history of the Great War teaches us that mankind learns nothing from history.

"If it was necessary for the Christ-God to die in order to save mankind," writes James Douglas, in the *Daily Express*, "it may have been necessary for ten million men of our day to die." This piece of wisdom, in the hands of a journalist, is well and truly added. The writer will soon be making the Bishop of London jealous.

Sir Arnold Wilson, speaking at Oxford on June 18, made a confession, which appears in the *Times* report under the heading of "The Power of Religion." He said:—

Much as they might regret it, it was unlikely that any ideas that were unsupported by armed force would long prevail.

This is quite a good advertisement for the religion which is to save the world.

Where, asks a writer, can one be assured of continued fine weather? Seemingly, he has never heard of a place called Heaven. This sort of ignorance is really astounding, in view of the fact that the State provides religious knowledge in all its schools.

Colonel John Buchan, M.P., says that the nation today is faced by new problems, but they will never be solved by foolish people who possess wit and nothing else. Perhaps so. Meanwhile, we note that our professional solvers of national problems are much too occupied with Party tricks to have achieved any solving of national problems.

Education which excludes the "spiritual" side of life, avers the Bishop of Ripon, is inevitably leading to disaster. Well, of course, everyone can realize that education which ignores religion and the parson must be disastrous—for the Church and the priests. The bishop is to be congratulated on having a keen eye for fundamentals. But lesser mortals have often a similar insight—the shoemaker instinctively cries "there's nothing like leather!"

A Nonconformist weekly speaks of the liberty and joy of "sanctified stewardship." What this wonderful thing is can be gathered from the following: "There is no matter of more moment to our churches than that of giving. Recent years have seen much attention directed to this essential aspect of Christian service." We can quite believe it. Parsons can be safely trusted to see that money comes flowing in to keep their pots a-boiling. But isn't "sanctified stewardship" a rather grandiloquent term for summing-up the old adage, "Fools and their money are soon parted"?

Having read a book called *The Brontë Sisters*, a writer in a religious weekly supplies the following:—

The tragedy of the Brontë children was that they grew up without tenderness or any outward expressions of love being lavished on them. Their aunt, Miss Bramwell, who brought them up, was a good woman of strict Methodist principles, but her moral scruples forbade her to show any feeling. If ever she felt any inclination to gather the motherless lambs to her heart and caress them she sternly put such feelings from her. The children knew no affection, no tenderness; they were orphaned of their mother—hence of happiness.

One gathers that the Brontës would have been much happier if only their aunt had been more human and less religious.

A reader of a daily paper thinks that vestments, banners, processions, etc., in church satisfy man's desire for pageantry and preference for symbolism rather than that which is symbolized. And he is quite sure that God does not mind whether he is worshipped with elaborate or simple ritual. What our friend should have said is that the pantomime stuff in certain churches satisfies some men's primitive instincts. And as to whether God is indifferent to the kind of antics worshippers perform when seeking special favours—well, each man creates a God to suit his fancy, and a God of that kind is wonderfully accommodating.

A pious writer suggests that this country would be worse off, if there were no churches. In confirmation of this, he suggests that the voluntary hospitals would soon be bankrupt if the churches did not organize their usual Hospital Sunday collections among the religious. He

suggests also that the churches keep alive the sympathy for suffering, and thus induce the church adherents to give towards hospitals. From all this, one might imagine that the pious, with their special encouragement from the churches, comprise the section of the nation which gives most money to hospitals. As a matter of fact, people outside the Churches contribute quite as generously, and they sympathize just as warmly with suffering, because they suffer themselves and they see their friends suffering. Suffering is a human feeling, not merely a religiously induced feeling. Another writer insinuates that the voluntary hospitals are lacking in funds because this is an irreligious age, and therefore lacking in sympathy. The fact of the matter is that the hospitals to-day require treble their former funds, and one reason why they are not getting what they want is that a very large number of people who would give cannot do so. Millions of citizens are affected financially by unemployment, or high taxation, or the industrial depression.

Apropos of Methodist Union, Dr. Russell Maibby said that complaints had been made that that Union had been manufactured from the top, when really it ought to have sprung from the rank and file. Well, we think the complaints are, in one particular, well grounded. There's no doubt that certain clever ecclesiastics in the Methodist Churches realize that there are some sound advantages—material, not spiritual—in amalgamation. But, of course, these are not advertised to the sheep.

Another speaker on the same topic remarked: "It has been stated sarcastically that the Methodist Churches are coming together for warmth, and that remark, without any sarcasm is quite true." Well, that's something to be thankful for. It is very seldom that a thing said is true both sarcastically and literally!

In giving some advice to young engaged couples, Dr. Frances Upton in a woman's journal quotes an eminent surgeon as saying:—

Some sort of initiation for marriage is as old as mankind. We are now reaping the harvest Mrs. Grundy was so busy sowing in Eighteenth-century days. We have so long kept any sex knowledge, any knowledge of the essential things of life, from our children, and have had it kept from us and our fathers, and even our grand-parents, that now we are reaping a magnificent harvest of ignorance. As a medical man, I see many men who have spoilt their married lives in a way which they would not have done had they possessed even a modicum of knowledge of sex. I am perfectly sure that many a marriage has been wrecked from the start by this lack of knowledge.

Mrs. Grundy was a misbegotten child of the Christian religion. Knowing that, one need not dwell long on the problem of to what agency can be ascribed the widespread ignorance on sex matters, and the wrecked marriages.

A parson of Ely says: "If you say that a man is outside the Church because he drinks a pint of beer you will never get him inside." Well, why not "go the whole hog," and invite the beer drinker to bring his pint with him to church? This would make him feel at ease, and he could enjoy two inspirations at one time, the spiritual and the spirituous. As a solution to the empty churches and the spiritual problem this seems worthy of consideration. And it would even be better if free beer were provided. After all, there is nothing in the Holy Book which prohibits a man from quenching his thirst in a church.

In a daily paper a reader says that scientists are continually warning us that insects, unless kept under control will rob man of his heritage, and drive him off the face of the earth. Why, asks this reader, does not man mobilize all his forces against his common enemy—the pestilential insect? Why? Well, man, as we all know on good authority, is instinctively religious, and he therefore shrinks from destroying the creatures God in his wisdom has created. Man has no right to interfere with the divine plan—that would be sacrilege. The only permissible procedure is to prayerfully ask God to move his pestilential insects.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—E. Wright (N.Z.), 18, 9d. H. S. F. BROWN.—The standing and announced policy of the *National Reformer* was "Republican, Atheistic, and Mal-tusian."

F. PRICE.—The Executive has the matter in hand. The police all over the country appear to be taking to themselves powers they do not really possess.

M. TRAYNOR.—Mr. Cohen will not be lecturing, unless special circumstances call for it, until the autumn.

J. KEAST.—We quite appreciate what you say, and also what is done. What we said was by way of general advice, to be acted on wherever possible and so far as is possible.

L. HAMMOND.—We will consider the republication of some of the things you mention, so soon as other publications we have in view are out of the way.

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

## Sugar Plums.

In *Garnered Sheaves* (Macmillan, 21s.) Sir James Frazer has brought together a number of reviews, lectures and essays, which although diverse in character are united by the central theme of a study of primitive mentality as existing in either actually primitive peoples or as persistent forms among the more civilized ones. This last is a phase of the general studies of Sir James that is almost always present, and it is important enough to warrant its recurrence. It will, for instance, come as a surprise to many to learn that as late as 1916 M. Venizelos was solemnly and publicly "cursed" for his attempts to save his country from King Constantine. The Metroplitan of Athens, with full ecclesiastical pomp, solemnly excommunicated a bull's head—intended to represent Venizelos, and cast the first stone. Then, says Sir James, "each member of the crowd assembled by King Constantine's hooligans cast a stone against the pile and solemnly cursed the man who had plotted against the King." But for all the cursing of the Church King Constantine had to leave the country and Venizelos returned to power. Very many similar illustrations of persistence are given in the present volume, and this does unquestionably provide an ever-present danger to current civilization.

Again, taking an example from Greece—ancient Greece, this time—Sir James provides his readers with an interesting essay on the superstitions of the ancient Greeks. He reminds us of what we in our admiration of the greatness of Greece are apt to forget, namely, that Greek science and philosophy served as the cultural

cover for a mass of very primitive beliefs which had great power over the minds of the people. It is interesting to be reminded that a man such as Pythagoras believing that the tinkling of a brass pot was due to a demon imprisoned in the brass. And a link with present-day apologetics is established by the comment on the efforts of certain philosophers of antiquity "to wring some drops of moral wisdom" or "philosophical profundity" from these survivals from primitive savagery. We have the same thing with us to-day—prominent scientists and writers who instead of treating primitive Christian superstitions for what they are, spend their times in trying to read moral and sage teaching into doctrines which can be seen to-day in living activity, among existing savages.

If we may offer a word of complaint against one from whom we have learned so much, it would be that Sir James Frazer is not so ready as we would wish to apply his researches to present-day religion. He does advise that our civilization is seamed and fissured with superstitions which offer a constant threat to its security, but the affiliation of the savage customs he so charmingly and interestingly writes to the teachings of the current religion are left unemphasized. And yet their chief importance lies in that fact. In the belief in a crucified and resurrected saviour, in the belief in sacred books and buildings and days, in the belief in a soul and immortality and God we are perpetuating ideas which owe their origin to the savages whose mentality Sir James Frazer depicts. Probably, as he hints in one of his works, he feels he has done enough when he has dragged the guns into position and provided the shot for them. So that we must be content with the riches he has given us and long for more.

Those of us who have known Mr. C. T. Gorham only as a vigorous and hard-hitting Rationalist will, we think, take up with surprise his latest volume *A Supper with the Borgias and Other Poems* (3s. 6d. net. Watts & Co.). Mr. Gorham can certainly rank as a genuine and excellent poet not only in craftsmanship but in his subject matter. His narrative poems are full of drama and action told with mastery and certainty in splendid blank verse; and the command of his material, his fine phrasing and powerful lines are all the more astonishing because Mr. Gorham has led an exceptionally busy life in other fields than a poetic one.

Mr. Gorham closes his volume with some beautiful sonnets and lyrics, all showing a fine feeling for beauty and form, and a love of nature and the sea; and a drama in one act written in blank verse. This is an unusual work—for few Freethinkers have evoked the muse with success. There are Shelley and Byron, of course, and James Thomson. Mr. Gorham worthily upholds the great tradition, and we cordially recommend everybody who loves poetry to buy his book.

Mr. G. Whitehead reports good meetings at Bolton, Blackburn and Burnley. At Nelson the local conditions were against us. There the inhabitants were in the grip of holidays and a trade dispute. It was just the fortune of war, and we must hope to be more favoured next time Mr. Whitehead visits Nelson. We hope the Bradford saints will remember Mr. Whitehead's lectures each evening this week in their district.

The West Ham Branch has arranged an outing to Canvey Island for Sunday, July 12. Train from Plaistow 9.58 a.m., calling at Upton Park, East Ham and Barking. Book to Benfleet, cheap day ticket. Lunch to be carried, tea arranged for 4 o'clock at the Pavilion Restaurant, Shell Beach. Canvey Island is quaint and interesting, and should provide a very enjoyable day's outing. All Freethinkers and their friends will be welcomed.

The Brighton Branch N.S.S. are doing very well at their Saturday evening meetings opposite the Open Market. Mr. J. T. Bryne is not only the Branch Secretary, but also the moving spirit at the meetings. With more local help the work of the Branch can be extended. We hope the local saints will take the hint.

## The Interactionist View of Existence.

As against the idea of purpose ordained by an outside agent or *deus ex machina*, and running according to fiat, we have here the conception of purpose as *struggled for* within the process, by a finite, restricted principle (e.g., a Life Force). This issues in Pluralism, with at least one other fundamental besides the dead, obstructive material (Matter), which by interaction may be turned to use by the independent existent (Life). Purpose is achieved, not by transcendent decree, but by interference or inoculation, a theory ever prone to wed the "principle of indeterminacy."

Of recent years the chief representatives of this interactionist philosophy have been Bergson, Hans Driesch, the Haldanes, Gen. Smuts and the Holists, G. B. Shaw, Joad, Prof. O. Lodge, the late Prof. Hobhouse, Lloyd Morgan, the psychologist McDougal, and some of the neo-Lamarckian school of biologists. The theory has taken various forms [Vitalism, Holism, Animism, Dualism] and it is possible here only to generalize.

There is a mainstream of Life, which by contact with matter is broken up into units. These units carry on the struggle, according to Joad, with the object of reaching a realm of Value (a third existential principle); according to Bergson, with no definite aim in view. By means of emergence the Life Force (Vital Principle, Élan Vital, Entelechy) jumps from one level to another, and each jump represents a conquest over matter.

Holism, which has a brighter future than Vitalism, sees significance in the effect of wholes on parts. Driesch used to cut up embryos into two or three parts, and show how they came together again; the Holistic Factor had been at work. In Lloyd Morgan a Directive Activity has been responsible for the gradual emergence of mind, which, having come, detaches itself sufficiently from that which gave it birth, to introduce a novel type of causal action.

McDougal champions Animism, and with him it is "psychoplasm," which acts on matter. Hobhouse constructed a neo-Kantian dualism with accretions from biology. Mind, he contended, had a separate line of development in biology, while its special psychological function was the correlation of experience. Only mind, he said, progresses; matter always remains the same, which is only saying in other words, the progress from lower to higher, in terms of mind, reaches its highest in mind.

By far the most ingenious form of interaction is the latest development of Sir Oliver Lodge (*Hibbert Journal*). Mind, he has held, acts on matter from its vantage ground in the ether, and so becomes incarnate, first as Life, which is rudimentary mind. Life, or mind, then uses matter as its instrument and vehicle of expression.

He now advocates "form-waves" as "the physical mechanism whereby Life and Mind operate on and direct material particles." This entirely dispenses with inoculation. The laws of science remain unbroken, and "the element which life adds is not energy but guidance." By means of the waves Life controls the course of matter without imparting any new energy, *just as railway lines determine the path of a train*. Life's interaction, then, is that of a guiding agency to which the natural process automatically answers. In connexion with "form-waves" (which are not substantially existent) Lodge advises biologists to adopt the notion of a "bio-field."

According to the general view of existence here considered, *unintelligent substance is acted on by another principle of existence, which is intelligent*.

This, for reasons well known, is not acceptable to the Materialist, who seems to be the heir to Occam's razor. He regards the Vitalist as a "quitter," who, rather than trust to the method of analysis commended in history and established in practice, invents a totally new unknown and unknowable. Vitalist and Materialist alike are confronted with a gap in our knowledge, and to fill this a hypothesis is needed. Both have one; the important difference is that the Materialist's unknown is of the kind known, and of which our knowledge is daily increasing, whereas the Vitalist is guilty of introducing a new unknowable, about which he tells us himself we can never hope to learn anything. Under the guise of explaining a mystery he is giving a name to our ignorance.

What is the Materialist doing? He is simply postulating more structure than the microscope at present reveals. Meanwhile his Vitalist friend is arguing that because one deterministic analysis has been found inadequate, *no* such analysis will ever satisfy; and so he straightway introduces "entelechy" or even "God" to function in place of the unfound factor. Is there a more undignified procedure for any philosopher-scientist to take, when confronted with a gap, than to run off to Theology, borrow a word, God, and stick it in? Then when the gap begins to close, "God" finds himself in a tight place, and his attributes have to be chopped off accordingly.

Of course, the Vitalist will tell you his Life Force cannot be isolated in a test-tube. But then neither can some material elements, yet we can determine them all the same. Elements have been recognized, and the characteristic behaviour of chemical compounds has been ascribed to their presence long before they were isolated. Indeed there are some groups, like  $\text{CH}_3$  and  $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$  in biochemistry, which cannot exist in isolation, yet they play an essential part in determining the characteristic behaviour of compounds. But they are no mystery. They can be passed from one compound to another, and there is no analogy to that in Vitalism. No Vital Force can awaken a corpse. A unit of this alleged force cannot be isolated, and cannot be determined anywhere. The Vitalist may even go so far as to admit that it can neither be isolated nor determined, but in that case the misfortune is his and not ours.

Much the same might be said about a Holistic Factor (which it is doubtful whether Smuts intended to be taken as an independent principle); or about a Directive Activity (which Lloyd Morgan openly says cannot be demonstrated). There is one feature of the Interactionist theory, however, which has been on the carpet of late, namely, the "jump" of the electron, which is frequently regarded as a sign of "free-will," in spite of the ridicule Lodge himself has poured on the idea.

There is nothing permanently baffling in the experience of an electron going from one orbit to another without traversing the intervening space, when we have some comprehension of what an electron is. An electron is said to be the registration of what is happening elsewhere—in the surrounding "field," to be more precise. Let us consider a beam of light falling on a particular spot on the wall. What looks like a steady beam is, on the principle of quanta, a cinematographic affair, one unit or quantum of light being a "photon." Now let us imagine that, between the emission of two consecutive photons, the light has been diverted very slightly from its original direction. The beam will commence to fall on another spot without having gone through the intervening space. The second beam would be regarded as a continuation of

the first, just as we say it is the same electron which was travelling in another orbit.

Protagonists of the Vitalist philosophy may, and do, sometime realize their theory to be about as sound as that of the German peasants, who, on being shown the workings of a locomotive, said, "Yes, yes, but there's a horse inside, isn't there?"

G. H. TAYLOR.

### The Pope and Socialism.

To an extent it may be concluded that the Pope in issuing his pronouncement on Socialism has been affected and influenced by his environment. We are told that in the mass Continental Socialists are Atheists—notably in Russia. Many Socialists in Britain are still possessed with the delusion of Maurice and Kingsley; and proclaim that they are Christian Socialists. Men with penetrating vision like Papa of Rome and Stalin of the Soviet concur in maintaining that "Christian Socialism" is a contradiction in terms. An out-and-out Socialist cannot be a Christian. An out-and-out Christian cannot be a Socialist.

And for why? For the fundamental reason that the God of the Christians is a capitalistic God—that he is the upholder and protector of the system of private ownership of land, and all the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the system of commerce and industry by which the private owners of these things trade for profit and gain to their individual pockets. The Continental Socialists (unlike so many of our British kind) have apparently been too honest—in avowing their hostility to the Ecclesiastical Corporations. Here, the Socialist Party if it were to avow itself against supernaturalism would lose many votes. And votes are a million times more important than honesty, truth or intellectual conviction.

The Pope has a regard for honesty, truth and intellectual conviction far transcending that of many of his adherents. And Freethinkers ought to be grateful to him for exposing chicanery, casuistry and sophistry. The "Christian Socialist" is always qualifying, explaining and adapting, trimming and dovetailing with the object of proving that it is possible to reconcile things and views that are at the heart and core hopelessly and eternally *irreconcilable*.

Some British Socialists who also claim to be Christians try to take refuge from the Pope's scorn in the declaration that religion is an individual and personal thing—not social, national or communal. (What a flimsy refuge!) What is the purpose of congregations of "the faithful" regularly meeting in public worship, and of the various activities of ecclesiastical organizations, societies, clubs, guilds, fellowships and so on? Are they not designed to pervade and permeate society, the nation, the community? And do not our British "Christian Socialists" loudly proclaim that in essence the application of Socialism would be the carrying into practice of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount? A great deal of our British Socialism is just so much sentimentalized guff. One has only to read the speeches delivered at Church Assemblies, Convocations and Synods to appreciate this.

Those Socialists (without a qualifying adjective) who really believe in Socialism as a solution of the World's economic ills have arrived at their belief by intellectual processes—by the force of Reason as distinguished from *traditionalism*. They take and look at and examine the world as they find it; and, disgusted with an anarchic individualism which in their view is a "system" of muddle and grab,

they seek to show their fellow beings that salvation is to be found in substituting for the present self-seeking greedy competition a regulated system of communal co-operation—so much the better if it can be made all-embracing and be designed on international lines.

The achievement of this object would involve the death-blow to private commerce in human necessities and in the materials required for the public service. It means the dethronement of Capitalism and the God of Capitalism. It means the extinction of the tyrannical power wielded by men of immense wealth over their unfortunate fellow beings who have no wealth beyond their persons, hands and brains. It means the end of exploitation of the poor by the rich. It means the beginning of personal dignity for every individual human being irrespective of birth or class. It means a new and cleansed world—and material security for all from the cradle to the grave. It means the disappearance of money, and with it the elimination of many murders, burglaries, thefts, embezzlements, frauds and swindles, confidence trickery (cleric and lay); loveless marriages of convenience—such as between elderly rich roués and pretty poor young girls; of ignorance and poverty.

Such is the belief and view of the rational Socialist; and such is the belief and view which Papa of Rome cannot and will not evidently abide. Why?

Firstly, because if true all the legends, miracles, relics and fundamental teaching of Mother Church are foolish, futile and meaningless; and secondly, because like other great ecclesiastical corporations, the wealth and revenues of Rome must in large measure come within the control of the new economic regime.

Do we wonder at the non-Socialist and anti-Socialist movements for a reunion of Christendom? Money meanwhile still talks. And the Pope is logical. He, anyhow, knows that oil and water will not mix.

IGNOTUS.

### The Old Bible Minstrels.

We must explain at once for the present generation, and indeed for some of our own, that the metrical version of the Psalms of David were not mere rhymes for which only the authors were responsible. This will be clear when it is said that the edition from which we quote is entitled *A New Version*; stated to be "fitted to the tunes used in Churches"; printed by the Oxford University Press, and published, bound up with the Book of Common Prayer, for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1842. The authors, Brady and Tate (Rev. N. Brady, D.D., and N. Tate, Esq.) commonly known to our great grandparents and grandparents as "Tate and Brady," were strictly orthodox Christians, and their work had the sanction of, and was used by, the clergy and ministers of Protestant churches and chapels, established and otherwise. It is necessary to insist on this point because, as will appear when we begin to quote them, it is highly incredible that any of these religious persons, denominations, or societies, would acknowledge or approve these lines to-day.

It is the fashion now to contend that religion, and the Christian variety in particular, has always and still does inspire all the best works of art and literature. Nor, as a rule, do those who thus argue fail to mention the literary beauty, and the matchless style of the Authorized Version of the English Bible. It may be judged how little relevant this fact is when, as it is so shown here, the Authorized Version of the Psalms of David, by no means the least rich in literary form and expression, was permitted to be turned into the appalling doggerel of Messrs. Tate and Brady. Those who made this version, like those who used it, were not, however, concerned about literature, but about making their religion and its sacred book "understood of the people," and easily

assimilated by the least literate of them. And so we find the doctrines now generally apologised for in the pulpit, are here set forth in all their crude enormity, and in rhymes and language as abominable as those doctrines themselves. We may add that this was also the peculiar virtue of that once well known, and still often used, hymnologist, Dr. Isaac Watts.

There is no part of the Psalms so embarrassing to the theologians of to-day than the picture they give of God, and of his treatment of his enemies, which is the reverse of that now more commonly supposed to be the Christian's duty. When he is told to love his enemies he can, if Messrs. Tate and Brady are right, quote the highest authority for not so doing:—

"Thick clouds of wrath shall brake  
On his rebellious foes;  
And thus will he in thunder speak  
To all that dare oppose.

Though madly you dispute my will  
The King that I ordain  
Whose throne is fix't on Sion's Hill  
Shall there securely reign.

Attend, O earth, whilst I declare  
God's uncontrolled decree;  
Thou art my Son, this day my heir  
Have I begotten thee.

Ask and receive thy full demands;  
Thine shall the heathen be  
The outmost limits of the lands  
Shall be possess'd by thee.

... he whets his sword,  
His bow stands ready bent:  
E'en now with swift destruction wing'd  
His pointed shafts are sent."

(Psalm ii.)

When we are told, as we frequently are, especially at the annual assemblies of religious bodies, that we are living in very irreligious times, and warned of the consequences, it may not be amiss to reflect that, according to Messrs. Tate and Brady (and, it is only fair to add, David) these are no novel conditions. As witness:—

"The Lord look'd down from heaven's high tower  
And all the sons of man did view,  
To see if any own'd his power,  
If any truth or justice knew.  
But all, he saw, were gone aside  
All were degenerate grown and base,  
None took religion for their guide  
Not one of all the sinful race."

(Psalm xiv.)

Although these lines were written a very long time ago, it would seem that many people are still waiting for an answer to the prayer with which they conclude, or, it may be, have discovered a better way of doing what was then prayed for, thus:—

"Thy threatening sceptre thou shalt shake  
And crush them every where;  
As massy bars of iron break  
The potters brittle ware.

Learn then ye princes; and give ear  
Ye judges of the earth;  
Worship the Lord with holy fear  
Rejoice with awful mirth.

Appease the Son with due respect  
Your timely homage pay;  
Lest he revenge the bold neglect  
Incens'd by your delay.

If but in part his anger rise  
Who can subdue the flame?  
Then blest are those whose hope relies  
On his most holy Name."

(Psalm ii.)

Here we have, put so that there can be no mistaking about it, the real meaning of the famous picture of the late Queen Victoria presenting the Bible to a native, and informing him that it is "the secret of England's greatness." As we are not here to discuss politics, local or imperial, we will make no other comment than that in the days when the public were less suspicious than they now are of "little wars" in various quarters, and of the exportation to native races by the same boat of Bibles, missionaries and gin, many a pious and gallant defender of this Empire must have claimed more than a royal

warrant for his orders, often orders to shoot. And he was quite as justified in doing so as Messrs. Tate and Brady were in making a popular version of proceedings of a not very different character a long time before the British Empire existed.

Another ancient and now less popular notion that the deity has favourite persons and nations finds ample foundations:—

"Consider that the righteous man  
In God's peculiar choice  
And when to him I make my prayer  
He always hears my voice."  
(Psalm iv.)

Only two psalms further on we get this:—

"Thy dreadful anger, Lord restrain,  
And spare a wretch forlorn,  
Correct me not in thy fierce wrath  
Too heavy to be borne."  
(Psalm vi.)

In one breath we are told that:—

"Then down in peace I'll lay my head,  
And take my needful rest  
No other guard O Lord I crave  
Of thy defence possess."  
(Psalm iv.)

But this was a precarious security, for very little later we hear that:—

"Would he his saving power employ  
To break his people's servile band;  
Then shouts of universal joy  
Should loudly echo thro' the land."

It is relevant to remark on this that the most effective instruments for the above purpose, namely breaking servile bands, are now called, according as they are national or international, democracy and the League of Nations, whose covenant, perhaps for the first time in the history of human peace-making, contains no reference to or supplication of the deity, but relies only on mankind, and could only have been created if the majority of the representatives of those who made it had not differed from Jehovah's (the Psalms of David's) conception of war.

As there is a limit to human endurance, so there should be a limit to quotation from such unpleasant sources as these. We will therefore finish off with one more sample, one of the so-called "damnatory" psalms, as if that epithet does not apply to most of them:—

"Proud Babel's daughter, doomed to be  
Of grief and woe the wretched prey;  
Bless'd is the man who shall to thee  
The wrongs thou lay'st on us repay.  
Thrice blest, who by just rage possess,  
And deaf to all the parent's moans  
Shall snatch thy infants from thy breast  
And dash their heads against the stones."  
(Psalm cxxxvii.)

This is the bloodthirsty and inhuman doctrine which not so long since (and in the century that Dean Inge says was the golden age of religious poetry), and was expressly "fitted to the tunes used in Churches," and commended both by the authorities of the established religion in this country, and by that ancient and well endowed friend of superstition the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. When we are asked to consent to the white-washing of Christianity on the ground that it does not now deal in these abominations, we may reply with both logic and justice that, if the Psalms of David had not been in the Bible (or in some other authoritative religious book) this version of them would never have been made or called for; and that, whatever may be their merits as poetry—for which no language can be used which it is lawful to print—their theology is still part of the canon of so-called holy writ, and also part of those scriptures which, according to Article vi. of the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law in this country, "contain all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required by any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

A.C.W.

### The Fishmonger's Deity.

TRADESMEN, as a rule, fight shy of religious disputation. Trading with people of differing beliefs it is not considered good form to be emphatic in opinions, religious or political. A man must live they say, and our fishmonger will vend plance to a sceptic as readily as to the most orthodox churchwarden.

Yet, one sometimes finds, amongst those useful people who supply the necessaries of life, some who hold very convinced views on interesting subjects. They have definite, or maybe indefinite, views of the cosmos. They know—or think they know—all that is to be said about the latest findings of philosophers. They believe themselves to be acquainted with the results of modern science. They hug themselves with the notion, that in spite of the advance of materialism, "God's in his heaven and all's right with the world."

Such a man is our fishmonger. In a little talk we had with him the other day, he was quite certain there was a definite purpose in the universe, and I gather that one of the chief purposes of omnipotence was the production of a downright orthodox fishmonger. It reminds one of Rupert Brooke's *Fish's Heaven*, where the immortal fishy hope is expressed:—

"One may not doubt that, somehow, good  
Shall come of water and of mud,  
And there the reverent eye must see  
A purpose in liquidity."

The hopeful turbot goes on to speculate on the finny paradise where:—

"Paradisal grubs are found;  
Unfading moths, immortal flies,  
And the worm that never dies."

My friends' faith has been greatly strengthened by a pamphlet called *Roger's Reasons*. The indomitable Roger instigated by John Urquhart has been called in to defend Holy Writ, and, of course, makes minciment of all those who doubt the inspiration of the "Impregnable Rock"; or of those who hint that perhaps, after all Moses may have made a few mistakes.

No doubt Roger is a whole-hogger in the defence of his fetish. No Modernism or new-fangled evolutionary theories for him. The Bible makes no mistakes, and, I expect, even the commas are inspired. The only mistakes are made by those deluded scientists who cannot agree among themselves.

Roger quotes his authorities glibly enough. Herschell, Proctor, Kelvin, and the Duke of Argyll are brought into play. He has small trust in men like Samuel Laing or Edward Clodd. Huxley and Darwin are given the cold shoulder. The period elapsed since the Great Ice Age is gradually reduced from Lyell's 850,000 years to Prestwick's 20,000. According to Lyell it took Niagara 35,000 years to cut through its rocky gorge, while a Mr. Gilbert has very kindly estimated the period to be 7,000 years and probably less, thus bringing the story into harmony with Genesis.

Roger has "a way wid him" in dealing with difficulties. He is supposed to be discussing with four or five hard-headed sceptical gentlemen, among whom is a lawyer. Roger convinces the lot. It is fine fun to see this "limb of the law" going down before the redoubtable Roger. It is a convenient method, setting up a number of skittles, and watch them toppling over one by one. Roger has vanquished the field.

It "gives one to think," when we realize that after the *Freethinker* has been established for fifty years, after all the discoveries of modern science, there are men to be found—including our fishmonger—who believe the Genesis story of Creation. They believe in a universal Flood. They believe the sun once stood still, but it was a rare occurrence. They believe that the poetical passages in Job, Isaiah, or the Psalms really anticipated the findings of the latest astronomers or geologists. When the book says: "He meted out heaven with the span," the Almighty must have had an exact measuring rod. The belief in the rotundity of the earth is proved by that interesting tale in the New Testament, when two women were found grinding at the mill, and one was taken and the other left.

Of course Roger has the usual conviction that only

those who understand the real meaning of Hebrew words are entitled to credence. If we only knew what the original Hebrew meant! Ah there's the rub! God left it for thousands of years so that Roger and his kin might give us the correct interpretation.

We thought some progress had been made in fifty years. In 1881 Hell was very generally believed to be a definite locality. The temperature was abnormally high. The great majority of mortals were destined to spend an unwarrantably long period in that climate. Plenary inspiration of the Bible was regarded as a fact. The vindictive nature of the chief person in the Trinity was taken for granted. The end of the world, foretold so assiduously by the Rev. Baxter, was a practical certainty. In the 70s, his horned beasts and his dragons, his scarlet woman and his fearful menagerie were accepted without question. With the lapse of time he moved his dates forward. He was always ready to accommodate his victims in that direction. Like the proselytising Bishop appointed by Chas. II., "his nonsense must have suited their nonsense." We were a happy family in 1881.

One might strain a point, like Roger does in his evidence, and claim, for the Rev. Baxter one true prophecy at least. Perhaps 1881 was about his last date chosen as the end of the world. We, as Freethinkers, might argue that here, at least, he was correct. The end of the world of superstition and unreasoning belief, had come. In that year the *Freethinker* was born. Long may its flag wave proudly in the fight against every form of tyranny and error.

ALAN TYNDAL.

### Dr. Barnes Says His Piece.

QUITE recently a great missionary festival was held in the Birmingham Town Hall.

At the opening the Bishop of Birmingham made a long speech, evidently based on things told him by missionaries.

Now obviously missionaries will not tell anyone of their failures and of the drawbacks to persuade non-Christian races to give up their native superstitions and to adopt the Christian superstition so that Dr. Barnes' remarks must be taken *cum grano salis*.

Dr. Barnes said the time had gone when the missionary was regarded as a narrow, dull creature, who was a nuisance to governments because he was always liable to get into trouble, and that the missionary was now looked upon as necessary to the shrinking world.

With an unscrupulous disregard for the history of all Christian countries Dr. Barnes added that "the surest way to prevent friction and enmity between peoples is to create a common background of religious idealism."

But what is the use of quoting further? Anyone who ever wastes time in glancing at missionary and religious periodicals knows the old old story, but anyone who has had actual contact with countries where there are missionaries knows well that there is another side, far different from that told to the dupes at home who are asked to give freely to the Lord.

Immediately I had finished reading Dr. Barnes' eulogy of the missionary, I turned up page 235 of Michael Terry's *Hidden Wealth and Hiding People*, published by Putnam's at 15s.

This book deals with an expedition into the centre of Australia, and is an eminently readable account of the desert, the wild life and the people. A discussion on the looting of the aboriginal blacks leads Michael Terry to state definitely on the page mentioned:—

By all means create aboriginal reserves, issue rations to the deserving, shield the innocent from the aggression of inconsiderate stockmen, but do not attempt to clothe or Christianize the black. One ruins his body, the other his primitive but suitable moral code.

So much for the ennobling influence of Christianity, written by one who knows the aboriginal as few white men can. Mr. Terry supports his argument by quoting from the findings of the Royal Commission which investigated the question. The findings declared that the aboriginals' depredations were caused by "Unattached missionaries wandering from place to place, having no

previous knowledge of blacks and their customs, and preaching a doctrine of equality," and by "a missionary woman living amongst native blacks thus lowering their respect for the whites."

Needless to say these findings have not been printed in any English missionary periodicals.

Michael Terry returns to the attack again on page 315, where, after sketching the ruin which drought brings to hard working settlers, he bursts out with:—

Oh you who idolize the blacks, you who give your shillings and pounds to the missionary, why not spare a penny for your own kind, whose need is greater? No one holds jumble sales and socials for the more urgent needs of the impoverished whites whose pride forbids charity. But my Lord! five pounds worth of rations to one hundred settlers in the centre would do more for Australia than dresses and clothes and toys for the well provided blacks. Why is this? Perhaps there can be no romance in helping your own tribe.

The Freethinker will probably add that the Christian gives money for helping natives, because the missionary says it is for the Lord's sake and there will be a reward for the generous in Heaven. To give to white men is merely helping humanity, and does not bring a reward in whatever after life there may be. NECHELLS.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JUNE 26, 1931.

THE President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Moss, Clifton, Dobson, Wood, Silvester, Hornibrook, Easterbrook, Le Maine, Rosetti (A. C.), Preece, Mrs. Quinton, Jun., Mrs. Venton, Miss Kough and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted, monthly financial statement presented.

New members were admitted to Liverpool, Brighton, Perth, Bradford, Chester-le-Street, Fulham and Chelsea, N. London, and W. London Branches, and the Parent Society. A proposal from Australia, to rename an existing Freethought organization as the National Secular Society (Australia) received approval.

Attacks from the authorities upon the rights of N.S.S. meetings in several places were notified, and plans for the full vindication of those rights were outlined and endorsed.

Correspondence was dealt with from Liverpool, Glasgow, Chester-le-Street, Perth, Cardiff, Burnley, Montreal, and Louvain.

The Executive increased its number by co-opting Messrs. A. D. McLaren and E. A. Sandys.

It was agreed that if possible two delegates be sent to represent the N.S.S. at the forthcoming International Congress of Freethinkers to be held in Berlin in September.

The President, drawing attention to the time, suggested the items remaining on the agenda be held over until the next meeting, it was agreed to and the proceedings closed. The next meeting of the Executive will be held on Friday, July 24.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

FINSBURY PARK—11.15, Mr. A. D. McLaren—A Lecture.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrols Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Shaller and Haskett. Saturday, 7.30, Messrs. Day and Bryant. *Freethinker* on sale at both meetings.

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

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. Stonhouse Street, Clapham Road, 7.30, Mr. E. Bryant; Wednesday, July 8, Station Road, near Brixton Station, at 8.0, Mr. E. C. Saphin; Friday, July 10, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mrs. E. Grout—"Liberty."

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, July 8, at 7.45, Miss Wood—"Sex Education."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"The New North and South."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Every Saturday evening at 8 p.m., opposite the Open Market.

BRADFORD.—Bank Street, Thursday and Friday evening, at 7.30—Mr. G. Whitehead.

BURNLEY MARKET.—Sunday, July 5, at 3.30 p.m., Mr. J. Clayton.

DEWSBURY.—Sunday evening at 7.30, Mr. G. Whitehead.

DARLINGTON.—Sunday, July 5, at the Market Steps, 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—Ramble to Blackwood Hill. Meet Clarkston Terminus at 11.0 a.m. prompt.

HAPTON (Front of Co-op. Stores).—Tuesday, July 7, at 7.30 p.m.—Mr. J. C. Clayton.

HIGHAM.—Monday, July 6, at 7.15 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

HOEDEN.—Saturday, July 4, near Miner's Institute, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

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.

LEEDS.—Saturday evening at 7.30, Mr. G. Whitehead.

NEWCASTLE.—Wednesday, July 8, Bigg Market, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S.—Town Moor (weather permitting) at 7.30, Mr. Keast—A Lecture.

PADIHAM (Recreation Ground).—Sunday, July 5, at 7.30 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Board Schools): Thursday, July 9, at 7.30, Annual General Meeting. All Freethinkers heartily invited.

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S.—An Inaugural Meeting of the new Birkenhead Branch of the N.S.S. will be held on Sunday, July 12, at 8.0, at Beechcroft Settlement, Whetsome Lane, Birkenhead. All local Freethinkers (attached or unattached) invited, and are also requested to make the meeting well known among their friends. Any information from Ronald H. S. Standfast, 24 Circular Road, Birkenhead.

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