

BORROWING OUR THUNDER.

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Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Borrowing our Thunder.

I GREATLY enjoy reading a Christian minister who sets to work to criticize a religious belief with which he is quite out of sympathy. For one thing it helps to revive one's faith in the irrepressible power of human reason. For another it helps one to realize how much or how far Freethinking criticism has affected those who still claim to be religious. For when a believer wishes to criticize the religious beliefs of other people he is almost compelled to use arguments which have been directed against his own belief by Freethinkers. A modern missionary writing of the religious, and uncivilized, people among whom he has worked does not hesitate to put down the performances of the native medicine-man to self deception, positive fraud, or ignorance of natural causation. But the early generations of Christians adopted no such attitude. They did not deny the supernatural origin of the pagan miracles, or the real existence of the beings whom the pagans worshipped. They simply said that the Gods were demons and the miracles were the work of devils. They matched God with God, miracle with miracle, and claimed simply that theirs were the better or the more authentic brand. But within the last two centuries and a quarter a change has taken place in the quality of Christian defences. When faced with a rival religion, or a religious doctrine in which he does not believe the Christian controversialist will, often enough, be found using with tolerable shrewdness against the religious beliefs of others the exact arguments which Freethinkers have so triumphantly urged against his own. And in so doing he is helping us to realize how much he is influenced by the very arguments he has rejected when defending his own religious beliefs. Common sense is, after all, infectious. That is why the Churches have always, officially, set their faces against it.

The Absurdity of Immortality.

An example of the truth of what has been said may be found in an article which appeared in the *Morning Post* for July 4, and written by the Rev. J. C. Hardwick, late Chaplain and Tutor of Ripon Hall, Oxford. Another writer in the *Post* had contributed a series of articles on what he considered the scientific evidence for immortality, mainly concerned with Spiritualism. Of course, there is no such thing as "scientific" evidence for immortality, nor for Spiritualism. The evidence offered has no justification whatever for being called scientific. Mr. Hardwicke recognizes this, and also, I think sees the danger of calling in science to pass an opinion on the matter. So he proceeds to marshal the Freethinking arguments against immortality almost as though he were summarising the many articles on the subject that have appeared in these columns. For example, he points out that it is useless to advance the widespread belief in immortality as evidence of its truth. Anthropologists, he rightly says would laugh at it. The same argument might be advanced in behalf of witches, demons, and numerous other superstitions. The biologists would be just as hostile. Even granting the existence of an independent "force" which manifests itself through the organism, its individuality is a product of the organism, and with the disintegration of the organism the individualized product disappears also. The psychologist is equally hostile. Certainly he has no use for Spiritualism, "even when he regards the phenomena as authentic." And "it is a not uninteresting fact that though distinguished physicists have become converts to Spiritualism, I know of no psychologist who has done so."

Mr. Hardwick has also said that if the next life is similar to this one it will not be worth the living. He also thinks it would be better to attain "the bliss of extinction" than to continue living for ever on these terms. I quite agree with this, but Mr. Hardwick leaves untouched the important truth that as the only life for which human nature is fitted is a life similar to this, another life where the conditions are not similar to those which obtain here is a scientific and logical impossibility. As I have so often said, it is only an untrained and an unscientific imagination that can make the belief in immortality either logical or desirable.

Those who wish to see a developed form of these arguments may find them all in my *Other Side of Death*, and in numerous other Freethought writings. There is, of course, no scientific evidence for immortality, and Mr. Hardwick might have pointed out that inasmuch as the known origin of the belief in a soul reduces the whole idea to a delusion, there is very little about which to argue save the history of a delusion. But even Mr. Hardwick fights shy of bringing forward the argument from anthropology, which shatters not merely the belief in a soul, but

the whole circle of religious beliefs. Mr. Hardwick uses Freethought far enough to destroy the case of his opponent, but drops its application to his own beliefs so soon as it threatens their existence.

* * *

God and Immortality.

But as a parson Mr. Hardwick must find some place for immortality. Where does he find it? Well, the only argument for immortality that is of any value to Mr. Hardwick is the religious argument. And what is the religious argument? "It depends upon belief in God . . . Those whom God loves, and who love Him, He will make partners of His eternity. And it is only the thought that eternity is God's . . . that divests it of horror." Here, then, is the position. It is impossible to justify the belief in immortality by science—that is, no proof of such a belief can be offered. The only basis on which it can stand is a religious basis. It must be built on the belief in God. Believe in God and you can then believe in immortality. I agree. Believe in God and you can believe in anything. It is the Voltairean retort over again. Believe in the first of the hundred paces walked by St. Denis with his head under his arm, and belief in the remaining ninety-nine is easy. It is the first step that counts. A man who can persuade himself that he believes in the existence of what religion means by God ought to be able to believe in anything that is suggested to him. Mr. Hardwick is saying in rhetorical language that the only sure way to believe in an absurdity is to base it on inconceivability. Perhaps that is what the New Testament means when it says that everything is possible to those who believe. Perhaps, also, that is what lies behind the fact that religious Confessions nearly always begin with an "I believe." The one who is taught to say that does not trouble to master what is to follow until "I believe" has thoroughly mastered him. It is the real secret of all the creeds, the key to all the mythologies from a child's fairy tale to a cathedral incantation. When Mr. Hardwick tells the writer he is criticizing that he is talking scientific nonsense when he says that there is a scientific basis for immortality, he is absolutely correct. But if his opponent cares to remind him that his own belief is equally nonsensical there will be nothing for it but that they join hands and try to establish a new religion to which each will contribute an equal part.

* * *

Immortality a Misfit.

The plain fact is, says Mr. Hardwick, citing Cardinal Newman, the thought of survival is a nightmare, save on the one condition that it is spent in the presence of God and in communion with him. I am not quite sure what that means, and I do not believe that either Newman or Hardwick understood either. If eternity with anyone is likely to prove boresome, why should it be otherwise with "God"—whatever he, or it, is? How do I know that I want to be in communion with this meaningless thing? If I am built to be in harmonious converse with anyone it is with human beings, not with Gods. I may have the same interest in looking at Gods that I now have strolling round a zoological gardens looking at a collection of, to me, hitherto unknown animals, but I am afraid I should not care to spend eternity in communion with them. I do not know that I want to spend eternity with God, because I do not know what God is like, and how he and I would get on together.

The fact is that Mr. Hardwick is up against the same difficulty that he brings against the writer he is criticizing. This is that man is both physiologically and psychologically related to a certain set of con-

ditions, and can fit those general conditions only. If the next world is different from this we shall not fit it; we shall be as much out of place as a fish on dry land. If we do fit it, it is this life over again, and an eternity is unthinkable. We are built for communion with men and women, not with Gods, and all our better qualities, love, truthfulness, justice, honesty, etc., would be meaningless in a world different from this one. "God" would not make it good, it would only emphasize the lack of adaptation. If I may close by quoting myself:—

Birth and death offer the living paradox that while apparently the negation of each other they are, strictly speaking, complementary facts. Birth is the other side of death, death is the other side of birth; the significance of the cradle is to be found in the grave; the grave finds its justification in the cradle. On these two complementary facts all human affection centre. In a world where death did not occur affection would wither and love be without meaning. For an absence of death would be an absence of birth and all that birth implies. What meaning would such terms as husband and wife, parent and child or family have in a world where immortality was a fact and death an unknown thing? If anyone tries, in thought, to take away all that is owing to these relationships, what would there be left worth bothering about? There is a limit to the attractiveness of the mere duration of days. The most attractive of things becomes stale in time. There is a saturation point in human affection as there is with the chemical elements. And one might well stand appalled at the idea of living age after age with no prospect of termination. If there is anything that would make existence an unendurable horror it is this. (*The Other Side of Death*, p. 87.)

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Tyranny of the Tithe.

"The State is founded on follies, the Church on sins."
Lauder.

"To what damned deeds religion urges men."
Lucretius.

A FEW weeks ago the furniture of an old-age pensioner's home on Canvey Island, Essex, was seized to satisfy a judgment obtained by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for non-payment of tithes. Nor is this a solitary instance. Hundreds of distress warrants have been issued in different parts of England for the same purpose, and in each area much resentment has been displayed against the Church of England. Resolutions calling upon the Minister of Agriculture to abolish the existing tithe laws have been passed at many meetings, and an association has been formed to defend the interests of the farmers with branches in many counties.

What are tithes? This question which has been raised in this acute form in the present time of industrial depression, is worth answering. Tithes are a tenth part of the yearly produce of the land, of the stock on the land, and of the personal industry of the occupier. It is one of the oldest devices of the priestcraft for the raising of revenue. It was used by the Semitic priests thousands of years ago; and to-day it is an established method of taxation in this country, where Church of England priests still claim a divine right to this tenth part of the produce of land. The system is in use as far away as Salt Lake City, U.S.A., where the Mormon hierarchy, representing the youngest of religions, use the flattery of imitation by copying the methods of the priestly caste of the Old World in ages of ignorance and faith.

This ecclesiastical tax is of great antiquity, and the priestly claim in this country was acknowledged as far back as Anglo-Saxon times. Eventually it became recognized as part of the ordinary law of the land. In the earlier times the tithe was paid to a priest or to the bishop for distribution. The tax was originally paid in kind, every tenth cock of hay, a tenth part of the cattle, fowls, and so on. Church property was exempt from this tax. So extensive were the ecclesiastical properties and monastic lands that inequalities became apparent and complaints were numerous.

An Act of Parliament was passed, therefore, in 1836 converting the tithe rents into a rent charge payable in money, and, more recently, the Tithe Act of 1925 standardized the annual payments. Farmers contend, however, that they have grave reasons for complaint. Corn, which was the basis of the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 has decreased in quantity and price by more than fifty per cent, while labour costs have increased by over 400 per cent, yet ecclesiastical tithe is now stabilized by the Tithe Act of 1925 for eighty-five years at a figure nearly twenty per cent higher than its average value from 1836 to 1914.

The tithe is a terrible form of tyranny. Tithe is not a penalty for owning land, but for cultivating it. Mere ownership does not produce tithe; tithe is produced by the capital, muscle and brain of the farmer and his men. In the last analysis tithe is a penalty on the food producer. Land reformers have pointed these things out for generations, but vested interests, supported by the law, have been hitherto invulnerable to all attacks. Until such burdens are removed, however, our civilization can never be other than a caricature of democracy.

When England had a Roman Catholic majority the Pope of Rome could grant an exemption from tithe. Naturally, Catholic Church property itself was exempt. In Henry VIII's reign, when the monasteries were dissolved, it was enacted that the new possessors of these ecclesiastical estates should be entitled to the tithes formerly enjoyed by the priests. On the other hand, Church property not having been chargeable, it was enacted that the lay owner should have the same immunity as his priestly predecessors. A part of the very extensive monastic lands were granted to laymen, hence it followed that there are a number of lay impropiators who are by law entitled to the tithe. Speaking broadly, however, tithe forms an important part in the administrative machinery of the Church of England, the financial side of which is looked after by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who get £1,200 yearly, and a pension on retirement. One of these gentlemen is a Labour Member of Parliament, who supports the Bishop of London in his demands for help for the starving clergy, but, apparently, has never noticed that agriculturists are as human as archdeacons.

At a time when these matters have been forced into the light of day, the Bishop of London shouts about the bare pittance of the Church of England clergy. His own bare pittance is £10,000 yearly, with the use of a palace and a town house, an income which would support quite a number of farm labourers and their families. What right has this Anglican Church to make its thousands of servants rely for their income solely upon the success of one particular industry in the country. Only one person in twenty ever attends an Anglican place-of-worship, and many of these at rare intervals. It is no longer the one, predominant, all-powerful, national church, but merely one of a hundred competing sects. Yet, in its name, the farmers of England are penalized. Land which is titheable pays two rents, one to the landlord for the use of the land, and another to the priest, or his repre-

sentative, out of the produce of that land. Is it not high time that this state of affairs was altered?

Tithe is simply an ecclesiastical tax, a relic of the bad, old days when Priestcraft had unlimited sway. Priestcraft is a business, and priests are gold-diggers. Priests differ from ordinary business men in so far as they pose as being the friend of the poor and the protector of the downtrodden. It is shameful humbug; put a priest into power and there is no more heartless despot, no one with a greater contempt for the masses.

Priests are simply exploiters of humanity, parasites upon the body politic. Their mentality is curious. They think that the most important industry in this country should be taxed one tenth, over and above the landlord's claim, in order that one particular form of religion, out of many, should be permanently enriched. The Protestant Reformed Church is the Church of England by Act of Parliament. What Parliament has made, it can also unmake. Any system of Land Reform worthy of its name must remove such a Feudal survival as a crushing tax on agriculture in support of one particular form of superstition, a purely sectarian body of religious opinion.

MIMNERMUS.

"The Christian's Sunday."

(A REPLY TO SOME CRITICISMS.)

SINCE my pamphlet on this subject appeared in 1927 I have received a large number of criticisms of it, and the present interest in the Sunday question provides an opportunity for dealing with those points raised that seem to be of most importance.

Several critics, including a liberal Anglican clergyman, who have certainly not read the pamphlet superficially, protest that the Sabbatarian atmosphere which prevailed in England for generations was solely the creation of the Puritan element in the Church, and has been continued to our own time by the religious sects that still represent that element. I am not told at what precise date I must distinguish between Episcopalians and Puritans, nor do I think the point raised of sufficient general interest to deserve a very long reply. The English Sunday, like the Establishment itself, is only one of the survivals of an age in which the State, in the interests of organized religion, exercised strict control over the whole "spiritual" life of the nation and the individual. It belongs to the same category as blasphemy laws, tithes, exemption of church property from taxation, clerical control of education, and a defender of the faith by divine right. This fact is obscured because the Sunday we have with us at least once a week; but the other survivals only come prominently before the public now and then. Of the fact, however, that they do appear occasionally we have a reminder in the recent seizure and sale of implements at a village in Sussex for recovery of tithe. The *Church Times* (June 19) says that the anti-tithe movement is exceedingly grave for the Church.

I am aware, of course, that in pre-Reformation times, after religious exercises, sports in the field were the order of the day, as they still are in many parts of Europe, Catholic or Protestant, and that the sects now known as the Free Churches have been the traditional supporters of English Sabbatarianism. This difference in attitude is not confined to Sunday observance. The average member of the Church of England is less actuated generally by the spirit of religious intolerance than the average Wesleyan or Baptist or Plymouth Brother. The latter have risen to

heroic heights in denouncing incense and banners, they have fought vigorously against "sacerdotal tendencies," and some of them avow hostility to any control of spiritual affairs by the civil power; but they have always been ready to invoke the strong arm of the law in the interest of their own particular orthodoxy. They know exactly what God wants and have no doubt that he wants the Sabbath kept "holy." On what doctrine or observance has there been a perfect consensus of opinion among Anglicans?

The practical influence of the Establishment and its clergy in securing a relaxation of the Puritan Sabbath has, in my opinion, been considerably exaggerated. It may be true that the formalities of the Church do not commit her members to any particular view of the day based on the fourth commandment; but among her great divines at the time of the Reformation, or shortly after, I find that a fair proportion stood for a somewhat austere observance of Sunday. Later, when the *Book of Sports* authorized Sunday games for those who had already been "present in the Church at the service of God," many of the clergy refused to read it to their congregations, while some of those who complied with the ordinance denounced it. It would not be difficult to show that, from about the middle of the sixteenth century to quite modern times, the record of the Anglican clergy on this subject shows a progressive deterioration. I have before me a long list of names of prominent Anglicans who, within the memory of people still living, have opposed all "encroachments" on the sanctity of Sunday. On this list are the names of Archbishops Tait and Benson, the Earl of Selbourne and Lord Shaftesbury, President of the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association. Ever since its foundation the Lord's Day Observance Society has counted numerous members of the Establishment among its active supporters. I know there are protests against this attitude; but nearly all those who favour some measure of Sunday recreation emphasize that the day must be set aside primarily for the worship of God.

Another criticism of my pamphlet has reference to Section V, *The Continental Sunday*. From time to time, I am told, many wage-earners and shop-assistants, in different parts of Europe, have shown hostility to Sunday work. My critics have entered the lists to find no antagonist. Apparently, some of them are not aware that in nearly every country in Europe there have for a long time been legal restrictions on days and hours of work; but there has been no general demand for the serious curtailment of Sunday amusements. There never was on the Continent a "Sabbath question" involving a conflict between a powerful Puritanical party and the advocates of a free Sunday. Here it is not possible to survey more than a fraction of so vast a subject as the "Continental Sunday"; but a few facts from the modern history of this question are worth recording. In Germany, August Lammers, who in the decade 1875-1885 was one of the leading advocates of the cessation of Sunday work in factories and workshops, criticized trenchantly the dull monotony of the English and Scotch Sunday "which could never be the free choice of any people." Those who associated it with his efforts, he said, were rendering a great disservice to the cause (*Sonntagsfeier in Deutschland*, 1882, pp. 21, 24-5). At about the same time there was some agitation for a "genuinely Christian Sunday" in Brunswick, led by Pastor von Grone, who admitted, however, that the movement had received very little support from the German clergy. In France, from the middle of the nineteenth century down to quite recent times there were constantly loud protests against Sunday work; but English Sabbatarians never mention the fact that very few of the opponents of Sunday

labour desired to suppress sport and amusement. Proudhon's *De la Célébration du Dimanche* was published in 1850, and at one time was widely quoted both in England and in Germany. Probably, however, either a religious sanction or the authority of the State was the last thing that appealed to Proudhon in his mature years, and since 1850 there has been a mass of legislation in France on the subject, but no diminution of Sunday games. Much more recently Rautlin de la Roy spent considerable time and energy in rousing public opinion to the need of a Sunday holiday for the industrial worker, and especially urged the cessation of all labour, not absolutely necessary, in Government Departments; but he insisted on every individual's right to spend the day in any form of recreation not otherwise unlawful. Even the Abbé Mullois, one of the strictest of the French Sabbatarians, found little to censure in Sunday amusements, with the exception of theatrical performances. In parts of Italy during the later decades of the nineteenth century there was a vigorous demand for *il riposo settimanale* (weekly rest), and the priest who called himself Padre Agostino supported it heartily on religious grounds. He anathematized Sunday amusements, but I do not know of any influential laymen in Italy who took the same attitude. In 1875, in Rome, a society was formed for the observance of Sunday and all the festival days of the Catholic Church. It was a favourite theme of caricature with the comic journals. In Switzerland, Pastor Oswald, of Zurich, wanted "a complete religious observance of Sunday," and, much later, Alexandre Lombard, of Geneva, where a Sunday Observance Society existed at one time, advocated legislation closely restricting Sunday labour. Neither of them succeeded in convincing the Swiss people of the necessity of suppressing Sunday sport.

The Lord's Day Observance Society is circulating throughout England a declaration, signed by 7678 English doctors, which highly commends a weekly rest-day on account of its physical value. The Church has not always welcomed science as an ally, nor has science for a long time yearned for any welcome from that quarter. It is worth noting that "rest" is rather elaborately defined in the famous treatise on the Sabbath written by Nicholas Bound and published in 1595. He was a doctor of divinity and a master of arts—marks of real distinction in those days when there were no American degree factories from which they could be procured at a guinea a time. The Sabbath rest, according to Bound, must be "complete, precise and exact," without any of the "recreations and pleasures lawful on other days." Those were the good old times of compulsory church attendance. I do not know how many of those 7,678 signatories agree with Bound's definition, or hold that enforced idleness on any day is rest and that one individual can decide for another what kind of rest is necessary. One fact, however, is beyond dispute. Science to-day is multiplying, for all classes, the means of using leisure, and any restriction on Sunday "desecration" by the masses which cannot affect the sports and amusements of wealthy individuals, is class legislation of the worst type. At one time in England churchwardens could enter any dwelling-house where Sabbath profanation was suspected, and in Scotland the names of delinquents were "entered in the presbyteries." At that time English and Scotch Christianity did not pretend to be tolerant, but it could well afford to be impartial.

The Rev. Thomas Toplady stated recently that at his church a picture service is held from 8.10 p.m. on Sunday, and is crowded with young people. Why, then, should it be made an offence to display a film at the public cinema? The fact that a fee is charged for entrance to one entertainment and not to the other

can hardly be said to affect, directly or indirectly, the principle involved. For in the public parks every Sunday in summer a charge is made for admission to the enclosure round the band-stand, and sometimes, on Sunday, payment is demanded for lectures at the British Museum. It is interesting to note that these charges are, ostensibly, only for the sitting accommodation, but more interesting is the distinction between the legal and the illegal cinema. No doubt it accords well with the ethic of traditional English Christianity and with the reputation which the latter has acquired abroad.

A. D. McLAREN.

The Parent of Economic Science

THE religious rationalism of Adam Smith, the celebrated author of *The Wealth of Nations*, is rarely, if ever mentioned. Dwelling in a land of sour piety in an aggressively orthodox age, Adam Smith prudently refrained from the open expression of his religious opinions. But that this great and good man was a freethinker in the deeper philosophical sense there can be no serious doubt.

It is very regrettable that so little has been preserved of his private life. Like many other eminent men his fame rests almost exclusively on his published writings. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* remains a work of decided value. This appeared in 1759, and its tracing of mental emotions to feelings of sympathy appears to have influenced the later psychology of both Herbert Spencer and Alexander Bain. Another dissertation from Smith's pen dealt with the origin of languages. These essays were widely esteemed at the time, and established the reputation of their author. But their contemporary brilliance has been dimmed by the enduring fame of the later *Wealth of Nations*. Still, they played an important part in securing a public for the celebrated volumes on economics, which propounded principles which were revolutionary in tendency, and therefore antagonistic to the conservative instincts of the race.

The Wealth of Nations must ever remain a monumental masterpiece. Despite all the multifarious changes of modern social and economic life, its leading teachings remain unshaken. Smith's devoted friend and adviser, David Hume, largely inspired its composition. As John Hill Burton states: "If there was one man to whom Smith was indebted for the leading principles of this book it was David Hume, and it was from him, as best understanding the fullness and completeness of the exposition that it had its first emphatic welcome." Indeed, all succeeding students and teachers of economics have felt its influence. Ricardo, Mill, Marx, Jevons, Marshall, Pigou, among a multitude of other economists are all beholden to *The Wealth of Nations* for guidance and inspiration. Buckle, the brilliant author of *The History of Civilization* acclaimed this work as the most important exposition ever penned by mortal man.

Adam Smith was born at Kirkcaldy, in 1723. His father was a member of the legal profession, who died three months before his gifted son was ushered into the world. The mother was a Douglas, and her fatherless boy became the supreme care of her life. Her affection and solicitude were strongly reciprocated by her son, and she lived to witness his successes in letters and science.

When a child, Adam Smith was distinguished by his intense love for reading, as well as by his very remarkable memory. His inborn absence of mind, and an early habit of talking to himself persisted through life. In later years this curious habit was wont to arrest the attention, and arouse the wonder of all

within hearing. On one occasion Smith accepted an invitation to meet a celebrated statesman who was staying at Dalkeith House, "During, or after dinner," the late Lord Haldane tells us in his *Life of Adam Smith*, "he fell into a reverie, and began to discourse aloud upon the merits, or rather demerits, of this very politician, in language which was neither guarded nor indirect. On being recalled to consciousness of his surroundings, he was so covered by confusion that he again relapsed into reverie, muttering to himself and to the company, as the reflection of his inner mind—'Deil care, deil care, it's all true.'"

From school in Scotland, the youthful Smith proceeded to Glasgow University, where he secured an exhibition which entitled him to prosecute his studies at that famous seat of learning Balliol College, Oxford. The celebrated City of the Spires, the Christminster of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, and "the home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and impossible loyalties" of the satirical Matthew Arnold was in Smith's time sunk in somnolence and sloth. Yet its drowsy influence failed to deter the mind of the man who was destined to produce a veritable revolution in economic thought.

Like Darwin, Adam Smith was intended for the ministry of the Church of England. But his experiences of sacerdotal sluggishness and obscurantism at Oxford, and his careful perusal of Hume's sceptical *Treatise of Human Nature* seem to have completely estranged him from what little liking for religious orders he ever possessed. He decided to adopt the calling of secular literature, and returning to the north he cemented his memorable friendship with David Hume, which remained unbroken until that great philosopher's death. The attachment which persisted between these two remarkable men was profound, and no sense of rivalry ever dimmed their devoted comradeship. Probably, Haldane was right when he wrote that, "Whether Hume could ever have been but for Smith, we cannot now say; but we know that, but for Hume, Smith could never have been."

When Hume died the customary stories of the Freethinker's terror of death were circulated. Smith, however, who was in a position to speak, has recorded that his friend "died in such a happy composure of mind, that nothing could exceed it." As a matter of fact, when Hume knew the end to be near he read Lucian's "Dialogues of the Dead," and jested concerning the excuses made to Charon to delay the operations of that ferryman to the land of the shades. Hume pictures himself as proffering a final appeal for respite with the words: "'Have a little patience, good Charon, I have been endeavouring to open the eyes of the public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition.' But Charon would then lose all temper and decency. 'You loitering rogue; that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue.'"

Adam Smith's testimony concerning the serene deathbed of Hume was coldly received by the religious world. If the story said to have been told by Sir Walter Scott be true, Dr. Johnson was very resentful. From a pious believer so morbidly fearsome of death this might have been expected. For Samuel Johnson, in company with the melancholy poet Cowper, regarded the after-life with grave misgiving. Again, Dr. Horne, the Bishop of Norwich circulated an epistle emanating from "One of the People called Christians," in which he assumed that there existed a strong resemblance to Hume's sceptical opinions in the mind of Adam Smith himself.

The Bishop was by no means urbane, as the succeeding passage proves: "You have been lately employed in embalming a philosopher; his *body*, I believe I must say, for concerning the other part of his nature neither you nor he seem to have entertained an idea, sleeping or waking. Else it surely might have claimed a little of your care and attention; and we would think that the belief in the soul's existence and immortality could do no harm, if it did no good, in a Theory of Moral Sentiments . . . Are you sure, and can you make us sure, that there really exist no such things as God, a future state of rewards and punishments? If so, all is well. Let us *then*, in our last hours, read Lucian, and play at whist, and droll upon Charon and his boat; let us die as foolish and insensible, as much like our brother philosophers, the calves of the field and the asses of the desert, as we can . . . Upon the whole, doctor, your meaning is good, but I think you will not succeed this time. You would persuade us by the example of David Hume, Esq., that Atheism is the only cordial for low spirits, and the proper antidote against the fear of death."

Unfortunately Adam Smith made no answer to this courteous epistle, which is a distinct loss to the amenities of letters. As his own religion was the religion of all sensible men, Smith may have thought that to sensible men it is necessarily confined. The moral and economic protagonist shrank from all open conflict with current superstition. A sincere, if somewhat timid Rationalist, Adam Smith showed, both in his repugnance to any publication of his own religious views, and his unwillingness to publish the posthumous writings of Hume, that he dreaded popular resentment while inwardly despising the superstitions so sedulously treasured by the unthinking multitude.

T. F. PALMER.

Dingaan—A Zulu Sceptic.

EVERY reader of the *Freethinker* has probably heard of Dingaan, the Zulu King, who flourished in South Africa during the early part of last century. For most Europeans his name is linked with episodes of savagery, and his memory persists as the murderer of the Boer Voortrekker Retief with sixty of his followers under circumstances of callous treachery, after a gathering in the royal huts, where a discussion concerning land for the emigrant Boers had taken place. In the Union of South Africa the 16th December is a public holiday of rejoicing over the defeat of Dingaan and the triumph of white civilization. The impartial historian is obliged to record, however, that Dingaan was not wholly bad. For a barbarian he was remarkably shrewd, and his cruelty towards his subjects and enemies was (to say the least) no more disastrous in its consequences, except, perhaps, to himself, than the behaviour of some kings in our history, who professed a more refined rule of conduct.

In 1926 the Van Riebeck Society of Capetown published the Diary kept by Mr. Owen, English Missionary with Dingaan during those fateful years when Briton and Boer competed for territory in Natal. Mr. Owen, with his womenfolk and servants, lived unhurt through this anxious period, and his book can be strongly recommended for the insight it gives the reader into a stirring phrase of South African history. Dingaan's supremacy was unquestionably doomed from the moment that the first missionary and trader entered Zululand. However, it is not with the secular side of this period that this article is concerned.

Mr. Owen describes the long journey to Zululand by ox-waggon from the then frontier township of

Grahamstown through lovely wooded country full of wild life, and with rare candour tells how the "Old Old Story" was received by the "heathen" encountered by the way. These happy and healthy kaffirs were scandalously lacking in a true sense of sin. Again and again does this feature crop up in the Diary, and one cannot but help feeling, as one reads on, that the missionary himself was impressed by this natural and beautiful attitude. Let us dip into the diary itself:—

"The first day that I have spent in a heathen land, delivered a short discourse . . . a company of kaffirs assembled at the waggons when I took the opportunity of entering into conversation with them. In answer to my enquiry whether they ever thought what would become of them after death, one of them with great unconcern replied: 'How can we think of what we know nothing about.'"

"About twenty natives, in addition to those of my party attended service . . . referred to a particular portion of my discourse concerning the resurrection and asked if they believed it . . . they said they believed because they did not think a gentleman like me would come and tell them a lie."

"I asked him (a very sick native) if he knew himself to be a sinner, but he was not conscious that he was one. He said, moreover, that he did not know what other sin there was than to steal cattle, but if he had been able to go with the white people he would have learned." (Not bad wisdom from the mouth of a babe and suckling!) When Mr. Owen arrived at the Zulu capital he carried "the Word" into the presence of him who was "greater than an elephant" (according to his subjects) Dingaan himself. The Diary proceeds:—

"At the mention of the resurrection of Christ, Dingaan, who had been very attentive throughout, smiled—it was a smile I have no doubt of incredulity . . ." (A few civilized disputants I have met have shown less restraint than Dingaan.)

"He asked me why I was in such a hurry to teach his people." (Mr. Owen, it may be noted, never succeeded in getting the unqualified royal sanction for the preaching of the gospel to the Zulus). "I said that life was short. He asked how that could be as, according to me, we were all to wake again."

The Zulu warriors had returned from a successful campaign against a rebel chief, and Mr. Owen seized the occasion to preach to Dingaan about the blessings of peace: "I then said that my country had not been to war for more than twenty years, and that we never went to war except for self-defence. Jesus Christ having told all men to love one another." (Dingaan's reply, if any, is not recorded!)

" . . . repeated to him the history of Nebuchadnezzar . . . at this Dingaan laughed and asked me how he could live on grass. . . . He asked me how old I was and wanted me to tell him his age. When I said I do not know he asked me if it was not written in God's book." (Dingaan vainly expected the Bible to be of some earthly use.)

Then one Sunday " . . . the most memorable at the same time most painful day since the commencement . . . (These Zulus were obviously not 'thirsting after righteousness') The king and his indunas (advisers) were seated in a ring about the royal enclosure under the open sky. Mr. Owen told them that "God is displeased at us: each of us has a soul that must live for ever when the body is dead, but that our souls, by reason of sin, are filthy and that they must be washed . . . It is impossible to give an adequate idea of the dispute which lasted for nearly two hours: one cavil succeeded another or was repeated ten times, whilst no reply was made to my answers. The indunas and the king were the chief objectors . . ."

one asked if we were to be washed in the river. I said not with water, but with blood. Whose blood, was the natural reply. The blood, I answered of the Son of God, who was Jesus Christ. Where is he? they asked. In heaven, I said, but once he came down to earth and . . . Whom did he leave behind to wash us? He washes us himself with his blood. It is not our bodies he washes but our souls . . . He washes all who come to him in faith . . . AWAY, IT'S A LIE." (This meeting appears to have been definitely "stormy") When the excitement had died down "Dingaan asked me how many days Jesus Christ had been dead. If only three days (said he) it is very likely he was not dead in reality but only supposed to be so . . . (Not bad for an illiterate savage?)" . . . they had no objection to God's Word . . . but . . . told me I need not speak anything more about the resurrection for they would not believe it . . ." Mr. Owen was also requested "to say no more about the dead—leave them where they are, go to the sick and keep them from dying, for this is easier than to raise the dead . . ."

I must resist the temptation of quoting further this most interesting and frank Diary. Sufficient has been given, I trust, to demonstrate the wholesome reaction of the unspoiled human intellect to the presentment of the fables of Christian belief.

Mr. Owen appears to have been a tolerant and kindly man. He left Zululand before the wars ending in the overthrow of Dingaan, retaining the despot's goodwill to the last.

"A SOUTH AFRICAN."

A New Hymn for Olney.

(The Cowper Bi-Centenary has just been celebrated.)

God moved in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform—
That was before the light of day
Succeeded his dark storm.

From his unfathomable mines
Of unexhausted skill,
Mankind has wrought for new designs
And worked its sovereign will.

God's fearful saints with terror shake
And cry aloud in dread,
How can they sleep, lest they awake
To find that God is dead.

Judge ye the Lord by common sense
And he will hide his face,
And drop his pose of providence
In impotent disgrace.

Blind, fond belief is sure to see
And scan man's work in vain:
Truth is its one interpreter
And will make all things plain.

Seek truth ye "saints" and ye will then
Have nothing else to fear,
For unlike all the holy saints
You have "hereafter" here.

A.H.

Necessity is cruel but it is the only test of inward strength. Every fool may live according to his own likings.—Goethe.

Gentleness and cheerfulness, these come before all morality; they are the perfect duties.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Acid Drops.

The stupidity and out-of-date mentality of our leaders and teachers is almost miraculous. We have in this country almost—if not quite—the densest population to the square mile in the world. And yet we already have lamentations and warnings because the new census returns show—not a decline in population—but merely a decline in the rate of increase of population. Now can anyone tell us what reason there is for an increase in population save that of providing more and more men for wars? We know of none. It seems almost sensible and simple enough for a cabinet of politicians or a congress of parsons to understand that twenty millions mentally and physically strong people are better than fifty millions of mentally and physically weak ones, but instead of that it is taken for granted that we must increase in numbers or we are what is called "a declining race." When thinking is on this level with regard to so vital a question as population, one need not wonder at the state of the world generally.

The "continuity" theory about Anglican "orders" is, like the older theory of episcopal "apostolic succession," rubbish. The former seems to have been faked up about 1833, which Newman thought was the birth year of the Oxford, or, as it may more properly be called, the Romeward movement in the Establishment. Mr. Birrell, no bigot, referring to Parker's consecration—Matthew Parker, first after-reformation Archbishop of Canterbury—notes that the registers that contain it have been tampered with. Also Barlow, who presided at the consecration, may not have been a bishop at all. Father *Rope*—surely not a pleasant name to combine with the profession of a Roman Priest—has now devoted 90 pages to proving that whether Parker was validly ordained or not, the "intention" in those who did the job was not enough to make him O.K. from the Roman Catholic point of view. All we have to say is that the whole business of apostolic succession on which the Roman claim depends is bunkum, and that the books of the New Testament, on which it is supposed to be founded, have, like the Parker Register, and certain infamous Decretals, the fatal quality of fake.

Who would think that it mattered a tinker's cuss whether the Psalms were sung sitting or standing or, for the matter of that, whether they were sung at all. But the S.P.C.K.—and we don't like to suspect that venerable and virtuous organizations either of frivolity or ribaldry—has just published "An Historical Study" of this very matter. From what we can make of it it ought to have been sent to *Punch*. At any rate we are glad to think that the S.P.C.K., and the Rev. Clement F. Rogers (the author concerned) are responsible for the following for, if it had appeared in these columns, we should have heard something about the wickedness of making fun of religion. But what need is there to make fun for it when the clergy, or some of them (like this Mr. Rogers) provide it? Thus:—

St. Peter Damiani argues that "The Seraphin stood (Is. vi. 2), while it was the man without the wedding garment who sat. Eli was sitting when he broke his neck, as was Belshazzar when the finger wrote on the wall. Why, he knew an old man of sixty who said the whole psalter standing and genuflecting for each alternate verse!" Standing too were the irreverent vicars and other ministers of the cathedral church of Exeter censured by the great Bishop, John de Grandisson, in 1330, because "those who stand at the upper stalls in the choir, and have lights within their reach at Matins, knowingly and purposely throw drippings and snuffings from the candles upon the heads or the hair of such as stand at the lower stalls with the purpose of exciting laughter and perhaps of generating discord."

A sufferer from hay-fever, Captain Glasson, made the following statement to a writer in the *News-Chronicle*:—

"If," he grumbled, "Mr. Henry Ford or Sir William Morris, or a few other men of energy as well as wealth were to suffer from hay-fever, perhaps the medical

world would take the beastly thing seriously, instead of treating it as a joke."

We might add also that a small part of the huge sum expended in teaching people that they are miserable sinners would be put to better advantage in the discovery of a cure for one of the Lord's blessings.

Dean Inge declares that popular government is now on its trial. Quite likely. But whatever may be the ultimate verdict, we fancy the nation has too much sense to want government by a theocracy. Government by priests has been tried and proved pernicious.

The complaint of the Rev. W. Kemp is that there is a spirit of defeatism abroad in the Primitive Methodist Churches. They have become used to half-filled churches, and they ought not to be used to them. This complaint is, we think, rather uncalled for. Surely, the congregations ought not to be reproached for exercising their painfully acquired virtue of Christian resignation in the face of adversity.

The Rev. Phil T. Fisher exclaims: "How can young people who play tennis on Sunday mornings expect to find God?" Now, as the young people are not expecting to find God, nor trying to find him, nor worrying about him at all, we don't see why Mr. Fisher need go dropping his tears so copiously. If God wants the young people he knows where to find them; in any case, they are not loafing around getting into mischief.

The Bishop of London declares he could find nine, if not ninety-nine, happy people at any given moment you could show him a miserable one. We are pleased to hear it. As four-fifths of the people in the country are estimated to be outside the churches and indifferent to religion, it is nice to know, on the testimony of a bishop, that so large a percentage of them are happy.

A Nonconformist weekly which has solemnly vowed to recommend only "clean" films to its readers, praises one particular film in this wise: "There is a story of villainy and intrigue in which at the last moment virtue is triumphant and villainy vanquished." So now we know what is a religion criterion of a good and clean film. It is one with a sloppy Early Victorian moral, obviously appended for "improving" or uplifting cinema patrons! The cinema will be very exhilarating when our Puritans have "improved" it.

Mr. George Lansbury proposes to permit alcoholic liquor to be available in London Parks. Whereupon, "Candidus," of the *Daily Sketch* remarks:—

Mr. Lansbury himself is a teetotaller . . . The more honour to him, therefore, for not wanting to force his habits and tastes on other people, and respecting personal liberty and freedom from compulsion as the foundation of all virtue.

All this, we fear, will be beyond the comprehension of our Prohibition fanatics and Puritans. They are obsessed by the stupid notion that other people can and must be made virtuous by Acts of Parliament and by-laws and petty restrictions. One can never make them understand that while they claim for themselves freedom of choice and personal liberty they have no right to deny them to others. Of course, there is no value in virtue that is virtue by compulsion.

A Nottingham woman tells a London newspaper that "Cruelty in any form is diabolical, and . . . is a reproach to our Christianity and civilization." A reproach to civilization it may be, but not necessarily to Christianity. For, as history reveals, cruelty has been the inseparable companion of the Christian sects for very many centuries. The cruelty prevalent when nations were most under the domination of Christian teaching would suggest that Christianity and cruelty are far from being incompatible. Even to-day, our oldest Christian Churches, for instance, fail to realize the cruelty entailed by their opposition to Divorce or Divorce Reform.

Mr. A. Moore Hogarth, chairman of the College of

Pestology, points out that there is a war going on in our midst more terrible and more devastating than the Great War. It is the war waged by man against his insect enemies. "Hostile insects are responsible for more misery and deaths than all the wars of the last century—and the insects are not losing the war." It is all very well to say that the insects are responsible. But the responsibility requires to be shifted to where it belongs—to Our Heavenly Father who created the insect pests. That done, the next move is to square the misery and suffering with the Christian hypothesis that the love of God for man surpasseth all understanding. This problem, of course, can be resolved by bringing in the fable of "Original Sin," but such a solution is satisfactory only to the unintelligent.

"Democritus" of the *Methodist Times* is responsible for the following useful information:—

The curious may sometimes have wondered why so many Methodist churches, particularly in the North of England, bear the name "Brunswick" or "Hanover." Most of these churches were founded in the 1830's, when a grave spirit of unrest was prevalent among the working classes of the country. The founders were so anxious not to be thought revolutionary that they named them after the reigning House.

Such an expression of loyalty to the Crown may seem laudable, but one is not quite so certain about it after reading stories like that of the *Tolpuddle Martyrs*, told in Mr. Owen Rattenbury's recent book. By implication, our Methodist forefathers were standing by governments which repressed trade unionism and all kinds of reform, and were condemning fellow-Methodist democrats like those of Tolpuddle. I am not sure, after all, whether we ought to feel proud or ashamed of "Brunswick" or "Hanover." The desire to be considered respectable is not the chief of Christian virtues.

The *Daily Express* has made a discovery of which all right thinking Britons should be ashamed. While we have been talking about the American offer over war debts, and disarmament, and such comparative trifles, it appears that there are ten millions of our fellow creatures in this country, in the new towns that have sprung up, that are without either Church or minister! That is something that should be taken in hand at once, and it is hinted that when County Councils lay out model towns they should provide sites for churches and chapels, and there would be no serious outcry if they paid for the buildings. It is true that the people who live in these areas are not crying out for either Churches or parsons, nor are they less well-behaved than their fellows where parsons litter the pavements and chapels and churches fill up the sky-line. But that only makes the situation worse; for they may grow so far spiritually degenerate as to feel they do not need the Churches, and what is then to become of the parsons. So many of our industries are decaying that we really cannot afford to have another one go by the board. We all owe the *Express* thanks for having called attention to so grave a situation.

The Rev. Thomas Jackson, of Whitechapel, says that his theology has not altered but the times have, and he has had to adapt himself to the new conditions. Mr. Jackson is wise. We ought perhaps to say "worldly-wise." He realizes that the price of survival is adaptation to environment. We are not sure just what theology Mr. Jackson preaches, but we dare wager it is not that of, say, a hundred years ago. It is not only those who call themselves Freethinkers who have benefited from Free thought criticism.

A writer in a newspaper in a fine fury, gives vent to his feelings about the public apathy towards stage plays such as "The Apple Cart" and "The Adding Machine." He says "The truth is that the English public distrusts ideas, hates reality, and cannot understand satire." The good grounding and grinding of the public in Christianity makes the reason for the truth of his criticism, and, for the following advice to playwrights, it is obviously incomplete without dedication to that public busybody, the Bishop of London:—

Write, if your line is "straight" stuff, for an average mental age of fifteen; if you deal in girl-and-music shows, then the average age is twelve.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. AITKEN.—Thanks, but sorry we cannot use.
 A. B. MOSS.—We trust you will have a good holiday. Pleased to hear from you at any time.
 R. CHAPMAN.—Will try and arrange for an article on the subject.
 R. H. STEADFAST.—We do not know anything about the book you name. There is no likelihood of Foote's *Flowers of Freethought* being reprinted. We might be able to procure a copy of the two volumes for about 6s. or 7s.
 W. T. H. REES.—Sorry we have had to hold over your letter on Roman Catholicism until next week. It is too lengthy for this week's issue.

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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.

A series of tributes to the character of the late ex-Baillie Wallace Allan was at a recent meeting of the Carnegie Library, Ayr. Tribute was paid to him for his activities in various directions, but, curiously, none of them ever appear to have heard that he was an avowed Freethinker, and a staunch supporter of this journal. This silence was not, of course, due to the fact that the truth was not known, but simply that when well-known men die and they happen to be Freethinkers, mention of the fact must not be made. It might advertise the fact that all Freethinkers are not scoundrels. If they were their Freethought would be announced to the world.

It is interesting to know that Mr. Joseph Lewis's *The Bible Unmasked*, copies of which may be secured through the Pioneer Press is being translated into Spanish. This is good news, if only as a promise that Freethought propagandists in Spain intend being active.

We noted, several weeks ago, the fact that there had been some disturbance at a meeting held by Mr. J. T. Brighton, at Durham. Mr. Brighton has been lecturing for the N.S.S. in different parts of Durham and Northumberland, and appears to have got on very well with his audiences. But at Durham a number of University students, who evidently regarded bad behaviour at meetings as one of their privileges created a disturbance. The police interfered, but not, apparently, to stop the disturbance. In view of all the circumstances Mr. Cohen was arranged to visit Durham on Wednesday, July 20, and will lecture in the Town Hall. He will, if at all

possible, speak at an open-air meeting on the following evening. We hope there will be a good attendance of Freethinkers at both meetings. Fuller particulars will be given later, but it is not tolerable that the right of meeting shall be at the mercy of a handful of ill-behaved bigots.

Towards a Better World (Bale, Sons and Danielson, 5s.) provides Mr. George Whitehead with an opportunity of discussing a number of ethical and sociological issues, leading up to an idea which he labels "Socisophy," and which may be described as Humanism with a larger social consciousness. The term is presumably taken as opposed to Theosophy, the rule of society by belief in God. Mr. Whitehead makes his points quite plainly and simply, while providing a great deal of controvertible matter. That is as it should be. A book to be of real use should set a reader questioning, enquiring, examining, and thus acquire the capacity for forming his own opinions on whatever subject comes before him.

You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs, and you cannot conduct an open-air campaign without experiencing occasional unpleasantness. And providing this does not go too far, there is no need to bother very much. But the Liverpool Branch has been experiencing some actual physical violence in the course of its outdoor work, and that should be stopped at once. The Branch runs several out-door meetings during the week, and the one at which trouble has been experienced is at Knotty Ash. We hope this note will serve as a reminder to all Liverpool Freethinkers to make a point of being at this meeting for a week or two. There is nothing like a good show of decent people round a platform to stop the other sort from misbehaviour. Place and time of meeting will be found in the Lecture Notice column.

We have to thank the Cardiff Branch of the N.S.S. for getting out a very tasteful slip advertising the *Freethinker*, with a telling quotation from Gerald Massey on the reverse side. We also take this opportunity of reminding all willing to help that we are ready to send parcels of specimen copies of the paper to anyone who is willing to take the trouble to distribute them. They need only send their name and address, and say how many they can handle.

The Religious Pest in Belgium.

AFTER the Belgian Revolution of 1830, clericalism was banished from the State, and up till fifty years ago its influence was still weak. But expanding Capitalism well understood the tremendous value of religious ideology in holding the working-class in passive exploitation. The innumerable churches did not suffice. By every conceivable means they strove for possession of the child mind, and now more than 96 per cent of Belgian children receive religious instruction. The State countenance this intolerable state of affairs. For example, in 200 villages there are no State schools, while in 2,000 parishes girls' schools are totally lacking. In these cases, naturally the churchmen take in hand the instruction, so that revolutionary or anti-religious parents must leave their children in the hands of these mind perverters.

But not only children are thus criminally educated according to a mediæval system, so also are the youth who attend higher grade schools and courses. Out of sixty-eight schools for teachers, fifty-two have religious instruction; for these institutes the State spends eleven million francs, whilst to the Catholics it give twenty millions. The Catholic University of Louvain receives a yearly subsidy of ten millions.

In 1930, the State paid to the religious schools a subsidy of 410 million fr., although the educational budget was decreased by forty-five millions, whilst that for military purposes was increased by 135 millions.

From the Workers' Esperanto Service.

Christ's Sermon.

WHEN someone who has disagreed with my opinions eventually admits that I am right and he is wrong, I cannot help feeling grateful for the admission. If that someone is a Christian, I am astonished as well as grateful. But when, having made the admission, the Christian ends up by saying "But . . .," then I feel like—well, to put it mildly—I feel like taking to drink.

Not so long ago Mr. Chapman Cohen, the author of that scathing indictment of Christianity entitled *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, was favoured with a most appreciative review of his book in the *Manchester City News*. Internal evidence clearly showed that the critic was a Christian. He admitted to the full the whole of the damning story of the relation between religion and slavery. Yet, with that eminently Christian capacity for putting the blind eye to the telescope, this critic ended with the following reserve: "Here we have, at all events, a very useful record of the danger of departing from the principles which were laid down in the Sermon on the Mount." I do not suppose that Mr. Cohen is in the habit of drowning his disappointments in drink. Yet after a "but" of this sort I, for one, would not blame him if he did.

I need not repeat passages from this review, which appeared in the *Freethinker* for June 12, in order to prove that the critic was convinced of the truth of Mr. Cohen's contentions. All I wish to show is the peculiar blindness even of such Christians as are forced, by weight of incontrovertible fact, to admit that in the past their religion has utterly failed either to improve the lot of humanity or to humanize the behaviour of those most imbued with its dogma. Such purblindness is baffling to those that seek to cure it. One can only hope that constantly repeated doses of fact and still more fact will, in the end, dissolve the thick film of religious "eyewash" which causes it.

Despite the admissions generously made, our critic clearly aims at leaving his readers with the conviction that the "Sermon on the Mount" contains "principles" which, if properly adhered to as a whole, would prove of inestimable benefit to the human race. Is this true? Let us endeavour to find out.

In the first place what is this so-called "sermon"? The earliest gospel, that of Mark, makes no mention of it. Neither does John, Matthew declares that it was delivered from a mountain; Luke declares that it was uttered when Christ "stood in the plain." Yet both these gospels are said to have been based on the same original. In addition to this contradiction the whole "sermon" is no more than a repetition of sayings which appear in the Old Testament and other pre-Christian writings. It is, therefore, neither original nor Christian. Indeed, it is highly doubtful that Christ (assuming such a person to have existed) ever uttered it at all. For what reason, then, does our Christian critic regard its "principles" as a fit example for men to follow?

Let us examine them. We are told that the peacemakers and the merciful are blessed, and we heartily agree. Blessed, too, are the pure in heart. Certainly; but surely the "pure in deed" would have been a better way to put it. For we all know the Jesuit motto, and how easy it is to excuse evil deeds on the grounds of purity of motive.

What else? Blessed are the poor in spirit and the mournful. Why? The mere statement is surely no valid reason for these depressing "principles"; while the promise of a hypothetical heaven and future comfort does nothing more than provide an excuse for the lazy and callous at the same time as it drugs the miser-

able into making no effort to improve their lot. Blessed are the poor and hungry; and woe to the rich and full. But who, in actual practice, ever admits that he possesses too many of the world's good things? I have never met such a person. And how often have these principles, combined with other sayings in the New Testament, served to condone with equanimity, nay even to encourage, the wretched conditions of the more unfortunate levels of society? Pernicious doctrine!

Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness. Yes, indeed—provided that it is righteousness. For right and wrong are merely relative terms, determined by circumstances of the moment, not by hard and fast statements handed down from less enlightened times. And what mention is there of the blessedness of those who hunger and thirst after knowledge? None. From the days of "Adam" knowledge has suffered under the ban of divine disapproval, and priests of all denominations have not been slow to take advantage of it.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and they whom men revile and say all manner of evil against falsely. Woe to those of whom all men speak well. What rubbish and nonsense! Why not say straight out: "Ask for trouble and ye shall find it; seek disapproval and it shall be given you." Anyone who thinks at all thinks that he is on the side of righteousness. Yet why should the evil opinions or slanders of one's neighbours be proof of it? And why, if one has the courage of one's convictions, should one tolerate persecution and slander rather than fight tooth and nail against them? These "principles" are no more than the disgruntled whinings of a weak-kneed introvert.

Whosoever is angry without a cause shall be in danger of judgment. Good! Yet who is ever angry without a cause? Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery. In other words, the thought is as good (or as bad) as the deed. Go to, then! Why stop at thinking. One might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb. Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And when he has slapped that one, politely ask him to give you the knock-out. Give to him that asketh thee and from him that would borrow turn not away. Give your coat to him who takes your cloak and ask for nothing back. Take no thought for the morrow, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink. And so on. In simpler language, go about stark naked and die as quickly as you can of starvation or thirst or the rigours of the climate!

But why continue with such drivel? Even the "principle" which most people seem inclined to regard as impeccable is, on examination, proved to be foolish. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." For tastes differ; and what I would like others to do to me is not by any means necessarily what they would like me to do to them. Much the most sensible admonition would have been: "Do not compel others to do what you would not like them to compel you to do."

Enough, then, of this "Sermon on the Mount or the Plain." In fairness one must concede that one or two points are worthy of commendation. But apart from these, and as a whole it makes the healthy mind sick. Blessed are they who do not allow themselves to be hoodwinked by religious humbug, and are able to free their minds from the shackles of outworn tradition.

C. S. FRASER.

It is the surmounting of difficulties that makes heroes.
Kossuth.

A Friendly Dialogue.

THEIST: "I see from my morning newspaper that five thousand people recently visited the Manchester Art Gallery, in order to see that most repulsive piece of handiwork GENESIS."

ATHEIST: "Why, have you yourself seen this statue?"

T.: "Most certainly I have not, nor have I any wish to. In my opinion it is a scandalous outrage on public decency."

A.: "You say in your opinion—but since you have not even seen GENESIS how can you form an unbiassed opinion?"

T.: "I have heard what others have told me and read the far from complementary accounts in the papers."

A.: "But this is acquiring opinion at second hand. If every one were content to rely solely upon what someone else thought there would be an immediate halt to progress."

T.: "Ah yes, I admit that much. That is, I realize the advantage of independent thinking in other directions, but in this case the very subject itself is wrong."

A.: "Can the representation of divine motherhood be wrong?"

T.: "Well no—that is perhaps the subject itself is not outrageous so much as the impure thoughts that it may give rise to."

A.: "But since the subject is so far removed from that level as to be divine, to what impure thoughts can it give rise?"

T.: "But the young, consider how harmful it will be to allow young people to see it. Would you not shield the young?"

A.: "Those who are very young will fail to see anything amiss with GENESIS, and those who will gaze upon her with dim, but as yet half-conscious understanding have arrived at an estate when such knowledge should not be withheld from them."

T.: "I am afraid that will not alter the fact that it cannot fail to have an injurious effect."

A.: "Even after they are told and realize that it is but the fruition of God's divine plan?"

T.: "I can only re-affirm my position."

A.: "And in spite of the fact that they are being reared in a Christian country and are surrounded by Christian ideals—are these powerless to check impurity in the face of what is a perfectly natural and normal function of womanhood?"

T.: "Enough. Despite all the reasons that you can give me I would still prevent the open exhibition of this work. Faith alone can guide one in such matters."

A.: "Was faith a guide to man in his early efforts to learn the secrets of nature that he might live more comfortably? Did faith prevent disaster from overtaking man in those years of struggle? History shows us that it did not. And now to-day it cannot even maintain a decent moral standard among its own devotees."

T.: "No, no . . . the truly faithful will be able to see with a proper control, the suggestions of the flesh and with a chastened demeanour."

A.: "Well if this can be done why prohibit the public?"

T.: "Because very few are truly faithful."

A.: "What, you say this in the face of the fact that this land has been Christianized for hundreds of years, and supports a huge army of priests at the public expense?"

T.: "We do what we can."

A.: "Such as supporting a frail virtue by screening from open representation of sex."

T.: "We shall never agree on this subject."

A.: "One moment more please. Another thought has just occurred to me. Agreeing with you for the moment about that we are asked to admire a statue of a mother holding her infant in her arms? It is only another phase of that which revolts you. Or put it another way

if you like. Virtuously, or should I say religiously-minded people will refrain from looking on a cow or a horse which is about to have young, yet, on passing on to the next field will rhapsodise over the pretty spectacle of a calf gamboling round its mother. Whence this hypocrisy?"

T. (Shaking his head): "I confess I cannot tell you."

A.: "Well I can and will. To begin with this attitude adopted by Christians towards sex is by no means universal. It is to-day almost exclusively confined to Christianity, and whilst it is true that other cults notably early Grecian, indulged in phallic representation, it was only because they worshipped and were grateful to the great life-giving forces of nature. It was left for Christianity to replace the spirit of frank admiration with a sense of shame because it taught that human procreation began against the express fiat of God Almighty and was therefore sinful. The Church urges that we are every one of us born in sin, and that our mothers in order to regain their former pure condition must submit to the degrading ceremony known as being churching. In former times this odious sanctification took place at the entrance of the Church, and only when the ceremony was completed was the subject allowed to enter the holy place.

"The fact that present-day believers gloss over the actual meaning by substituting a symbolical one does not deny what I have said. But it does show how ashamed they are of assenting to these beastly doctrines when stripped bare of all their camouflage. And it shows also that Christianity like everything social is subject to the endless moralizing process. A doctrine will be found probably to be very offensive when read in terms of a later culture, but, providing that we are very very careful only to compare Christian morals to a morality that existed somewhere about ten thousand years ago, no fault will be found with Christianity. It is only when the more revolting of these doctrines are considered in the light of modern culture that we are able to appreciate them at their true worth, and Christianity for what it is. Hence the frantic scrambles, suppressions and glossing over of texts by the parsons. They but barely allude to some of the fathers who wrote their insane twaddle at a time when the Church was in the hey-day of its power. It's prurient outlook on sex has however been a constant factor. It taught the uncleanness of sex at a time when its own ministers practised their privilege of the "right to the first night." And it speaks well for the conservative nature of Christianity that it persisted in its evil channel long after the glorious promise of the reformation. Now it does secretly what it formerly did openly and without compunction. It had as its cradle the old world of pagan culture which it forcibly suppressed in order to survive. To-day in order to survive when the conditions no longer permit the use of such friendly institutions as the Inquisition, it has had to suppress the cruder of its doctrines. That Christianity has a morality is without doubt, but it is a morality which is peculiarly its own. It relates and should have sole reference to pre-savage times. It is a religion which has given its ethical sanction to the slave-owner, butcher of human life, and child sweeter in turn. In short, to quote a great modern Atheist, "a religion designed by savages for savages."

TOM BLAKE.

That right to be a cussed fool
Is safe from all devices human,
It's common (ez a gin'l rule)
To every critter born of woman,—Lowell.

Time's glory is . . .
To unmask falsehood, and bring truth to light . . .
To wrong the wronger till he render right.
Shakespeare.

Nature is man's religious book with lessons for every day.—Theodore Parker.

"Swear Words."

WORDS are like coins—a medium of exchange. As it is improvident to debase the coinage, so with one's vocabulary. The use of strong words for common purposes leaves one at a loss to express deeper sentiments. It is like making officers of all your soldiers, or like having a special banquet at each meal, the adjective "special," ceases to apply—the repast becomes a common one, in the army there can be no "promotion from the ranks."

In Aldous Huxley's story *Those Barren Leaves*, Chelifer tells of his father, a grave and silent man, an Oxford don, who, beholding the glory of the sea and sky, dale and mountain, from the top of Snowden, ejaculated; with an emphatic gesture: "Bloody Fine." He said no more until half way down the mountain, when he commenced to recite Wordsworth.

What a relief it must have been to him to have found that word to hand. And yet, if it had been a word in ordinary every-day use, how futile for the desired purpose.

Swearing—the use of words which are, for some reason, taboo at ordinary times, is a luxury. Words frequently employed cease to have any value, hence the folly of using up one's whole vocabulary. Moreover lack of oral expression to very deep feeling, may result in physical action which will be subsequently deplored. I was in Saint Peter's at Rome the other day and saw about a dozen young men, apparently in training for the priesthood. After kneeling for some minutes before a shrine and mumbling their prayers they went to the statue of Peter, and kissed the toe of the saint.

I got exasperated at this manifestation of the slave religious mentality. Here were young fellows who should have ambition in life, zest for adventure and enterprise. It was so sad, so depressing. I had already exhausted my usual vocabulary of swear words at some of the other ridiculous things that I had seen. Involuntarily I said to my friend, "Thank God for Chapman Cohen and the 'Freethinker.'"

My friend smiled and remarked that such a thanksgiving must be rare in St. Peter's.

I have wondered about it since, and think that the explanation is that as in the most susceptible period of my life, adolescence, I thoroughly believed in God, the word remains, a sort of taboo word. It was a relief to spit it out. Perhaps had I not done so I might have spat in the church, or committed some other act of sacrilege which could have brought my visit to Rome to an untimely finish.

But it was an amusing episode, as I can imagine no God who would bless Mr. Cohen.

Perhaps in that far off time which is yet becoming nearer, when the work of the *Freethinker* will be accomplished, we shall retain "God," for the purpose of "letting off steam" in this way.

The point I wish to emphasize is that it pays to "keep a shot in the locker," and not to underline each word.

A.H.M.

Youth on the Way.

FIVE years ago I was confirmed in the Christian belief. A year ago I was still steadfast in my faith; or rather, had I been challenged, I would have unthinkingly have dubbed myself a Christian. I knew, at any rate roughly, the outline of my religion, and—about once in a year—I went to church. I had a horror of Atheism as something unclean; a perversion linked with Bolshevism and all that, according to my upbringing, Bolshevism stood for.

Now I am an Atheist myself. Within a brief twelve months I have crammed spiritual experiences which some men do not gain in a lifetime. I have come to the point where I feel that I cannot be content with being an Atheist myself; that I must do whatever lies within my power to rescue my friends from the spiritual slavery in which many of them are bound.

How was I brought to this condition of mind? The influences have been many; Winwoode Reade; a minor tragedy of wild life which at once confounded my belief in the humanity of God; but greatest of all, the Church itself. I have the good fortune—I realize now that it is good fortune—to live in a parish where poverty is rare; where the congregation can afford to spend a poor man's fortune upon an embroidered cloth for the pulpit; and where, accidentally it may be, the foremost parishioners are also the richest. I have seen a place of worship turned into an exclusive club, where things are made exceedingly uncomfortable for those members who cannot afford the subscription. I have seen instances of snobbery incredible for their very effrontery.

I have left, not without such commotion as a boy of nineteen can contrive, the church which took my money and gave me insult.

Surely I was in a fruitful condition of mind for the fortuitous reading of *The Martyrdom of Man*, which came my way about that time. A year previously I would have rejected the food which this book offered me; as it was I at once set out to devour everything else of a like character which I could discover. It took me, as I have said, merely twelve months to pass through the inevitable stages of wavering disbelief, agnosticism, Atheism, and militant Atheism. Until a few weeks ago I was alone. Then a chance conversation—in a Billiard Hall of all places—revealed that four out of five of the participants, all fellows of about my own age—were Atheists too. One of them actually had a copy of the *Freethinker* with him. These were not bearded savants; they were just ordinary flannel-trousered cinema-going youths with apparently no other interests than billiards and the latest talkie slang. Yet they could all share my delight in Bradlaugh and Gibbon.

Not everything has yet been said about *Moderate Youth!* F.N.B.

The Moorland in March.

A LITTLE inland from the coastal town abides the little mountain. The same yesterday, to-day and for ever—so far at least as many generations are concerned. In walking thither one discovers new manifestations; in writing of the same ever new felicities inspired by the haunting charm of scenes reviewed, of older native and familiar association. There are detachment, isolation, freedom, no final goal, anticipation vague, yet promising. Cold and dry the March wind, bleached or brown the grass or heather, the whin is green in parts with litter of broken stems like whitened bones. Little cliffs arise amid whin and heath and rivulets amongst the rushes are silvered with ice, while patchworks of snow are scattered all around, grim signs of winter lingering in the lap of Spring. More closely cropped amidst the "rough" are little vases here and there and aimless sheeptracks—aimless and pleasant as the quiet rapture one feels in treading them again. The rocky fronts with hermitic fringes are almost warm in the kisses of an intermittent sun, as we touch them as we pass, lingering on those little lawns! The scene is different beyond the little hill in the valley of the winds in the lichened wild wood with scarce a full tree upstanding, levelled or leaning after the visitations of blasts long blown. New forest is springing up in thickets of sapling birch in the rich dank soil. The single cock robin of the weird *Splen* remembered. On the homeward way the Vision of the gleaming sea unfolds; behind, in hazy grandeur, arise some nobler hills. From this majesty one descends to the roadway, the fields and the commonplace of home to the common virtues, to be performed, perpetuated, if the race is to be noble still. COLLA.

We must not stint
Our necessary actions, in the fear
To cope malicious censurers.—*Shakespeare*.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."
FREETHOUGHT AND LIFE.

SIR,—For a considerable number of years, I have been both a Freethinker and an Atheist, but it is only recently that I have begun to study the writings of other Freethinkers and to read the Journal which bears their name. I have as yet only read about five or six numbers, but already I have been struck by the whole tone of the paper, which impresses me as being one of unbounded enthusiasm for a cause which is felt to be of supreme value, and worthy of the dedication of one's whole life to its service. Now such a spirit is entirely new to me in Freethinkers. I belong to what I believe is a growing body of Freethinkers who possess no such enthusiastic purpose or aim, who, in fact, have no purpose or aim of any sort. Most of us are young men and women, who having thrown over the gods and religious ideas of our forefathers, have as yet found nothing to put in their place. We have been portrayed almost to perfection by Aldous Huxley in his play the *World of Light*. We are Hugo Wenhams. "Only a live man can find a live god. And when one's dead as I am . . . I'm dead, I'm empty. A dead vacuum." That is roughly how we feel, and it is because such feelings are extremely dangerous not only to the person holding them, but also to the cause of Freethought, that this letter has been written. If it induces a reply which will shed some light on how we are to become alive again, it will have achieved its purpose.

The difference between the Hugo Wenhams of this world and other people is simply that the former can find no aim or object in life for which to strive while the latter possess one either in this world or in a supposed world to come. The ordinary Christian finds the thought of a life of infinite bliss to be attained after death, sufficient stimulus to carry him through this vale of tears, while those Freethinkers who are not Hugo Wenhams appear to have found a sufficient aim in this world.

The idea of personal mortality as opposed to personal immortality does not worry us, for the latter is really almost unthinkable. But the question of racial mortality of immortality is another matter. The English physicists are strong upholders of the principle of entropy. They tell us that in so many millions of trillions of years, all the kinetic energy available will have been dissipated, and there will be a warm but completely dead and static universe. Sir James Jeans has aptly summed up the conditions of that remote epoch as those of a heat death. It is this vision of the end of the universe that produces in us the feeling of the gigantic pointlessness of everything. I have detected in more than one of Mr. Cohen's books a reluctance to accept these views of the English physicists, and I feel that most of those who write for the *Freethinker* would also be loath to give up a belief in the immortality of an active universe. Since, however, the American physicists conceive that matter may be in the process of being built up in the remote depths of space, the case for a dead universe eventually being realized may be considered unproven. But there can be no question about the mortality of this world in the relatively near future. The inhabitants of this earth and their civilizations will pass away, and the case for the colonization of other planets is, practically speaking, no case at all. These facts have undermined what used to be for many of us a sufficient aim and object in life, namely the future of the race. If this race is in the future to come to an abrupt end, it is extremely difficult to get up any enthusiasm for its betterment. And this is a fairly reasonable position to take up, for there are few painters or musicians who would be willing to spend months of toil on a work, if they knew that a few days after its completion, it would be destroyed.

It could be pointed out however that the fact of racial mortality is in reality of no great matter, for there is a vast period of time before extinction will occur, and within that period there is no reason why a utopian race should not evolve. To work towards the realization of such a transitory utopian race might be a sufficient aim

for which to strive. The conception of the human race developing slowly to a pinnacle and then vanishing, is almost as acceptable as that of the race rising to a pinnacle and staying there to infinity.

There is little doubt that many of us have fallen back on this second line of defence, but it turns out to be as weak as the first. In a recent number of the *Freethinker* appeared the statement that the sores of humanity would one day be healed, and that there must come the time when "mankind will emerge, proud, and free, with unbounded hope for a future which will be the veritable golden age." But if there is one thing that is certain it is that if any one of us at present living were to be placed in the world in ten thousand years time, let alone a hundred thousand, we should be utterly miserable, for the simple reason that the civilization would be completely foreign and unintelligible to us. J. B. S. Haldane has pointed this out and has written an amusing story to press it home. In the same way, if a man of ten thousand years ago, let alone a Neolithic man, was dumped down in our civilization, he would be rendered acutely miserable so foreign would it be to him. The belief that our own little utopia will one day be realized, is, like many other beliefs, understandable, but I fear nothing more.

The third line of defence is as follows. Could not life be worth living just for itself, without any other object or aim? To the majority of mankind, such a suggestion does not apply, for the conditions under which they live, preclude it. However, it does apply to some of us. Hard work, hard recreation and a hundred and one possible interests might render life an end in itself. It might not be possible to take up this standpoint in youth, but one is hardly likely to feel the same in old age, with no capacity for work or physical recreation, and with perhaps the greater number of one's friends and acquaintances only present as memories. Moreover much of one's youth is distinctly unpleasant and the sceptre of old age is always in the background. Bill Hamblin in *The World of Light*, found life worth living for itself, but even he could not escape from visualizing the "whole horror of growing old." Even if such views were possible, most of us would find them too ego-centric, for we require something bigger and wider than our own happiness to hang on to.

I hope I have said enough to render our position intelligible. More and more of the younger generation, I am convinced, who think at all, are coming to hold opinions such as these. Such views tend to make the holder cynical towards life and induce in him the feeling that his actions and deeds are valueless and futile. They tend to make steady and reliable work increasingly difficult. In the *World of Light* it is suggested that love might conceivably turn Hugo from a dead into a living man. But many of us may not ever fall in love, and in any case it has rather the appearance of a drowning man clutching at a straw. If Freethinkers who do not feel as we feel, can nevertheless offer us no help, then indeed our future will in no sense be an enviable one.

EDWARD L. SEZEL.

"THE POPE AND SOCIALISM."

SIR,—In your issue of July 5, Ignotus, under "The Pope and Socialism," depicts a picture of Collectivism therein, and like countless others confounds the true meaning of Individualism as contrasted with Socialism (Collectivism); it would appear that it is only Socialism which is or can be concerned in social welfare and communal co-operation, and that Individualism is a "competitive, self-seeking, greedy and anarchic" system which has a regard only for the individual entirely disregarding that of the community in general.

But this is quite wrong; the true Individualistic Society is not made up of an aggregate of men solely concerned with their own egoistic activities and oblivious to the humanistic duties incumbent upon them; interwoven with its fundamental principle of personal liberty enjoyed to its fullest possible extent in so far as it does not infringe on the like liberty of every member of the society, is the promotion of a harmonious state and common weal—which is the ultimate aim of the Individualistic as of the Collectivistic scheme, the difference between them being in the course pursued towards that ideal.

H. TEITELBAUM,

Society Notes.

THE arrangement made by the Executive of the N.S.S. with Messrs. J. Clayton and J. T. Brighton is working very well indeed. By their efforts the message of Free-thought is taken to wayside villages in Lancashire and the County of Durham. Lectures are given, literature distributed, and questions answered. Both possess qualifications for that sort of work, being keen, energetic, capable and trustworthy.

Mr. G. Whitehead reports ripples on the surface at Nelson, where two Christians, under the influence of drink, upheld their religion and their Bible. Mixing the three was not wise. In this case it resulted in arrest, and subsequent committal to prison for a month for being drunk and disorderly. Like the Chairman of the Court, we are sorry to see the man in that position, but to defend the Bible to a point of creating disorder, we suppose a man must be either drunk or stupid.

At Bradford an over officious policeman interfered with the sale of literature at one of Mr. G. Whitehead's meetings. We are pleased to know that by a combination of firmness and tact by Mr. Whitehead, and a sense of fair play and commonsense by the constable, harmony was restored, and the usual procedure of our meetings was not again interrupted.

To-day (Sunday) Mr. G. Whitehead opens a week's lecturing in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne district, the local Secretary, Mr. J. G. Bartram, will be busy and happy if a full quota of meetings can be held.

Several reports have reached us lately of clergymen starting opposition meetings near the Freethought speaker. Naturally we are glad to know the clergy are helping us. Freethought speakers may spend some time on the intellectual bankruptcy of Christianity, but it is not nearly so convincing as a clergyman demonstrating it from an adjacent platform.

Perth Branch N.S.S. are in high spirits as the result of a debate held last Sunday between Mr. J. Wingate and a local Christian on "Has Religion Assisted Social Progress?" The Perth saints are having a good time, thanks to the efforts of their chief advertising agents, the Town Council.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

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LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

FULHAM AND CHLSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorroids Road, North End Road): Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. F. Day and F. G. Haskell; Saturday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. J. Mathie and E. Bryant. *Freethinker* on sale at all meetings.

PINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. L. Ebury—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.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. Stonhouse Street, Clapham Road, 7.30, Mr. C. Tuson; Wednesday, July 15, Station Road, near Brixton Station, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, July 17, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, 8.0, Mr. E. C. Saphin.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Outing to Canvey Island. Train 9.58 a.m. from Plaistow, calling at Upton Park, East Ham and Barking. Book to Benfleet, cheap day ticket. Lunch to be carried, tea arranged for 4 p.m., at the Pavilion Restaurant, Shell Beach. The Branch Secretary, Mrs. J. Rosetti will act as guide. All *Freethinkers* and their friends invited.

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 15, at 7.45, Mr. Lombardi—"Unemployment, its Alleviation."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"Is World Government Possible?"

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

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

BURNLEY MARKET.—Sunday, July 12, at 8.0 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

COLNE (Bottom of Spring Lane).—Monday, July 13, at 7.30 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

CRAWSHAWBOOTH (Adult School).—Sunday, July 12, at 3.0 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

CRAWSHAWBOOTH.—Tuesday, July 14, at 7.30 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

ENFIELD (Barnes Square)—Friday, July 10, at 8.0 p.m.—Mr. J. Clayton.

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.

NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA.—Sunday, July 12, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Wednesday, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. George Whitehead, of London, will lecture at the North Road entrance to the Town Moor on Sunday, July 11, at 7.30. Each night thereafter in the Bigg Market. All meetings commence at 7.30. Questions and discussion invited.

SUNDRRLAND.—Near Boilermakers Hall, Sunday, July 12, at 10.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

WINGATE.—Saturday, July 11 at 7.15, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

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