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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,  
 Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions.

Byron the Rebel.

On July 16 I was one of the guests of the Lord Mayor at the luncheon given to commemorate the handing over of Newstead Abbey to the City of Nottingham. The Abbey and grounds were given by Sir Julian Cahn, the Byron furniture and relics by Mr. Ian Fraser. The whole formed a magnificent and generous gift, one of which the citizens of Nottingham should feel proud, and if it leads to renewed interest in Byron the gift will be doubly beneficial. It was also fitting that the principal guest of the occasion was that grand old man of Greece, M. Venizelos, the present Prime Minister. M. Venizelos delivered two or three short speeches during the luncheon in the Council Chamber, but reserved his chief speech till the afternoon at Newstead Abbey, where the deeds were formally handed over to the Lord Mayor. No one better than M. Venizelos could have been secured for the occasion. He has spent his life in fighting for the freedom of the Greek people, and he made the journey from Greece for the purpose of being present. His address on Byron was well phrased, well delivered, in spite of the handicap of being delivered in English, and adequate tribute was paid Byron for devoting his energies and his wealth to the fight for Greek independence, and who in the end gave his life to that cause. There were many Greeks present, and the speaker well said that they had come "to join hands in bowing to the memory of a poet and hero. Britain in admiration and pride, Greece in admiration and gratitude."

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The Real Byron.

It did not come within the scope of the address delivered by M. Venizelos to more than hint at the character of Byron as being much more than a lover of Greece, intoxicated with the glory of its past, its

imperishable contributions to art, philosophy and science, and burning to restore some of its ancient splendour. But there were plenty of indications that he was well alive to the real Byron. For Byron did not belong to the company of mere idealistic philhellenes; he was at once a realist and an idealist, ever ready to champion struggling peoples, never deaf, as M. Venizelos put it, to the pleadings of "high ideals and lost causes." His services to the cause of Greek independence were great, but they were all part of his services to Italy, Ireland, and England. His letters show that he was quite alive to the faults of the Greeks, faults that were largely a compound of their religion, and of the fact that, as the speaker said, for hundreds of years their political history had been one of a change of masters. He was as much alive to the faults of the English, the Irish, and the Italians, but in no case did this hinder him taking up the cause of the oppressed, rather it stirred him to action. He might well be called a universal rebel, but his was a rebellion based on clear intellectual perception.

This is a phase of Byron too much neglected by English writers. Here, in this country, we have stereotyped ways of dealing with a genuinely radical reformer. When possible his memory is buried altogether. His ideas may become the common property of an after generation, but that generation knows little of the man to whom they owe so much. If the reformer cannot be so expeditiously buried, then his significance is minimised by a passing reference to him as an "agitator"—still a dreadful word in this country, or a reference is made to his lack of scholarship, or his defective education. When neither of these plans are possible, when his position and ability demand some kind of posthumous fame, then he is served as a man such as Leigh Hunt has been treated, prominence is given him as a writer of interesting literary essays or as a writer of pretty poetry, or as an ineffective idealist, and he is left there. Thus, Owen, Paine, Carlile, Byron, Hunt or Bradlaugh, becomes when mentioned in general literature almost a caricature, at best a pale and ineffective figure, while their ideas in a watered form are taken up by men sufficiently "respectable" to handle them with safety. Byron was one of the class who could not be silenced, neither could he be buried. So chief stress was laid upon him as a poet, upon scandals attaching to his name—scandals which shocked a society that could take unmoved so disreputable a blackguard as the Prince Regent, and upon his great work for Greece. Greece was a long way off, what he did happened a long while ago, and the most conservative upholder of abuses in England could expand his bosom and strut his way when speaking of the work Byron did on behalf of freedom—for Greece. In praising Byron for his zeal for liberty in Greece, we may divert attention from the fact of how bitterly he denounced tyranny and shams in England. Emphasis

on this last fact might act as a very troublesome inspiration.

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#### Byron the Rebel.

I am not now attempting to measure Byron's standing as a poet. He has often been denied first rank, although a critic such as Henley has said that no matter who are the men whom we count as the first poets of the nineteenth century Byron is certain to be one of them. I am more concerned with Byron as the man of revolutionary ideas, not so much Byron the poet as Byron the Reformer. And here I may take a passage from a great critic of English literature, Henri Taine. He says of Byron that "he is so great and so English that from him we shall learn more truths of his country and his age than from all the rest put together." Unfortunately much of what we learn from him of the England of his day reflects more credit upon Byron than upon the country which gave him birth.

Consider the environment in which he was born and reared. Coming from an aristocratic stock Byron was born in January, 1788, and died in April, 1824. That thirty-six years covered a period pregnant with great things. There were more dreams dreamed of the refashioning of human society during that time than during any previous generation. Just a year after Byron's birth the French Revolution with its watchwords, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," began to force its flaming way over Europe. Byron saw the meteoric career of Napoleon, and witnessed the fierce reaction which set in here to stifle revolutionary reform. He saw the miseries of the new industrial system, and drew a damning indictment against it in his maiden speech in the House of Lords. He saw and recognized the protecting cloak which the established religion threw over it all. He saw a landed interest which was rapidly divesting itself of all responsibility, but clinging to and consolidating all its privileges, with an aristocracy that was as blind to its past as it was to the demands of the present. It was the period of which Beaconsfield said that under the pretence of liberty the English people had been robbed of all the real freedom they possessed. Of the mass of the people he said, in the speech to which I have just referred, that in all his experience of despotic countries he had never seen such utter wretchedness among the people as he had witnessed in this country. It was with all this in mind that he wrote. He might have written pretty essays or equally pretty poetry. He preferred to attack religious, political and social hypocrisies with some of the deadliest and bitterest satire that had been penned since the day of Swift. It was an unforgivable crime.

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#### A Lover of Liberty.

There is an unintentional belittlement of Byron in restricting one's praise of him to the part he played with regard to Greece, fine as that was. It was only part of his general attitude towards injustice and wrong wherever he saw it. He had a genuine passion for liberty, and when he wrote, "I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments," he framed a charge against all the then governments of Europe. His scorn of those who

... plod in sluggish misery  
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age  
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die,  
Bequeathing their hereditary rags  
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage  
War for their chains rather than be free

had a much wider range than its application to Greece. It applied to man's submission to tyranny and injustice wherever it existed.

That it was so taken by his contemporaries there can be no doubt. "Society" hated him the more because he belonged to it by birth and education. The better spirits hailed him as, to use Morley's fine phrase, "the literary organ of the revolution." Any one who will spend his time delving into the records of such organizations as the numerous "Corresponding Societies," "The Friends of Humanity," and the various Freethinking bodies of the day will be under no illusion as to his influence. In this direction the law unwittingly helped by refusing copyright to several of his works, with the result that men such as Hone and Carlile reprinted them over and over again at a popular price. Great as Byron the poet may be, Byron the Rebel is a still greater figure. His influence as a force in the European reform movements has been inadequately recognized, and it is probable that not five per cent of the couple of thousand of men and women present at Newstead had any knowledge of or gave any thought to his work as purveyor of heretical and revolutionary sentiments.

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#### A Herald of the Dawn.

Byron was representative of the new tendencies in European thought, and it was this that gave him an instant and sustained influence on the Continent. What was done in after years by the novel, Byron did in his day with his poems. At a time when the reaction that followed the fall of Napoleon was in full swing, and when advanced thinkers were beginning to get discouraged at the failure of many of their ideals, he raised his voice on behalf of these outraged ideals and lashed hypocrisy and a slavish devotion to conventional morality in a way that few other men of his age did. No reply to him was possible; he was met, as such things usually are met, by hatred and misrepresentation.

There are many cases in which the poet outlives the man, and while a subsequent generation may treasure the music of the verse, one need think little of the man who wrote it. In the case of Byron, intelligent appreciation depends upon a remembrance of both. I do not undervalue his services to Greece, but those services should be thought of as an illustration of a phase of his character, a specimen of his activities. Mere courage, the love of adventure have led men to such places as the battlefield for the sake of worthy and unworthy causes, and one may admire the high intellectual courage that carried Byron there, but whether in Greece, or in Italy, or in Britain, he was ever the champion of ideals to which he was never false. Ruskin, never the man to pay tribute to unworthy characters, spoke strongly of the good he had gained from Byron on account of his "measured and living truth." Jane Welsh Carlyle said that when the news of Byron's death came it was as if the sun or moon had gone out of the heavens. And Carlyle himself said "God, that so many men should fill up their base existence to its utmost bounds, and this, the noblest spirit in Europe should sink before half the course was run. Had he been spared to the age of three score and ten, what might he not have done! What indeed! But, as the old Greeks said, above the Gods stands Fate, and to its decrees we must submit with what grace we may. We may be sure that if Byron had lived longer he would have wrought more, and that is all. Yet the value of a man's life is not to be measured in length of days but in deeds. It takes as little effort to be born as it does to die, and the end may be as unimportant as the beginning. Had the world had at its service for a longer period the fiercest spirit of Byron with its dauntless courage, more might have been done to end the shams and hypocrisies and injustices that stain our civilization. All this is in the region of the might-have-been. The certainty is

that the work of men such as Byron does not die with them. It lives on in the lives of those who follow. They give to the future as they have taken from the past, and the future is the better for the more rational thought and the larger freedom they have helped to create.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Cockney Christianity.

"Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling."—*Ambrose Bierce.*

"Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon."—*Shakespeare.*

EDITORS of newspapers are very hard pressed for copy during the height of Summer. Stories of giant gooseberries and sea-serpents are not so popular as they were. So, the editors try to whip up a little enthusiasm by promoting discussions. This year religion has been selected for discreet debate by salaried defenders, and the columns of the newspaper press have been sprinkled with the professional patter of prelates and preachers, tempered by the jargon of the journalists, who turn pious for half an hour to write their articles.

One morning paper has started a series: "Religion's Fight To-day," and, not to be outdone, an evening contemporary speedily followed with "The Religions of London." These articles make very interesting reading, for they reveal a change of tone which is truly remarkable. A year or so ago preachers were wont to explain that people stayed away from places of worship because of the counter attractions of the golf-links, the motor-car, greyhound tracks, and even the cinema, and not at all because of the hardness of their hearts, which were as pure and as innocent as those of little children or police constables.

Now, it appears that there is actually a war in our time to save religion, and the opposition is not composed of musicians of jazz bands and female film-stars with eleven ex-husbands. According to the Protestant Archbishop of York, "the enemy in our time is Secularism." But the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, equally inspired, thinks that the arch-enemies of religion are the "out-and-out Socialists," and want of certitude. Another defender of religion, however, the Rev. Israel Mattock, who is not a Christian, considers that the real opposition comes from militant Atheists.

The Christian Religion, according to the Archbishop of York, has always been fighting. Come to think of it, two thousand years of incessant warfare is a good record for an evangel of love. But the present conflict is more serious than preceding battles, for the enemy now has machine-guns instead of being armed with primitive bows and arrows. The Archbishop of Liverpool is almost lyrical in his despair, and says bitterly: "What is needed is for the religious bodies in this country to close up their ranks," but as he has already told us all Christians outside the ranks of Popery are "quacks," the close comradeship of the new allies does not appear to be so pronounced as might be desired.

It is unnecessary to survey the world from China to Peru, so we will restrict our view of religion to London, the capital of the British Empire. According to the latest census, it contains 2,150 places of worship, which, at a hasty glance, seems a large number for a tottering cause. But, as Shakespeare says, "soft, awhile." No less than nineteen of these churches, situated in the heart of London, were, not long since, declared to be redundant and derelict by the Ecclesiastical authorities. And the remainder

are "a mixed lot," as the auctioneers put it. They include Unitarian churches where one god is worshipped; and also a vast number where three gods in one receive the same mark of respect. As the Virgin Mary, however, receives divine honours with the Holy Trinity, the Roman Catholic believer may almost be said to worship four deities; whilst his Spiritualist neighbour, who attends a rival tabernacle, worships none at all. Several of these churches are reserved for the Mormon Community, where the followers of Joe Smith carry on the evangel of the Latter-Day Saints. There are seventy-nine synagogues for Jewish people, and also meeting-places of the Mohammedans. Indeed, there are churches of every nation and every creed, some of them only known to their own people. As wide asunder as the Poles, they have one thing in common, their congregations are dwindling.

There is no real friendship between these religious bodies. The teachings of the Protestant Reformed Church of England are considered by the many Nonconformist Churches to be wrong and harmful, whilst the instruction given by dissenters is pronounced by Churchmen to be heretical and dangerous. Roman Catholics in their turn, consider that Anglicans and Free Churchmen are alike perfectly monstrous. Churchmen and Nonconformists, however, agree that all other religious bodies are outcast. Although this cock-eyed attitude satisfies most of the clergy, who use it to consolidate their own positions, it still impedes education and fetters progress.

Although the sky-line of the Metropolis shows an undue array of spires and domes the buildings themselves are half empty. The Theological Superstition is crumbling. Everything eventually crumbles which is not true. Never was there so little religion, never so much Secularism, as at the present time. Never have men attended places of worship so little; never have they attended hospital and humanitarian meetings so assiduously. Religion is in the melting-pot, and Secularism is slowly permeating everywhere.

The theological theories no longer satisfy, for no faith can satisfy which is found out. Men, nowadays, no longer accept upon mere trust the religious misbeliefs of their remote and ignorant ancestors. Over the pulpits of the fast-emptying places-of-worship is inscribed, "To the Glory of God." That is the voice of the past. Secularism sounds the vibrant and triumphant note of the future: "To the Service of Man." Based on fables, supported by dead men's money-bags, trading on ignorance, Religion at length finds educated opinion rising above and beyond it. The voice of reason has been a still, small voice, sometimes almost inaudible, though never quite stilled, but now it is swelling into a sound like the sea, which will overwhelm the chanting of the priests. If the priests of all denominations are failing it is because the conscience of the race is rising against ancient ignorance, and because the cultural side of our civilization is becoming more adequate.

MIMNERMUS.

### HEDGEHOGS IN HEAVEN.

The only indication of a belief in a future state which I ever detected in an old Gipsy woman, was that she once dreamed she was in heaven. It appeared to her as a large garden, full of fine fat hedgehogs.

*Richard Liebich in "The Wind on the Heath."*

Too much sensibility creates unhappiness; too much insensibility creates crime.—*Talleyrand.*

Human nature craves novelty.—*Pliny.*

## The Testimony of Organic Distribution to Evolution.

THE geographical distribution of living forms presents various interesting features. The unscientific theory of special creation assumed that plants and animals were divinely designed to dwell in a particular environment. But a detailed study of the problem has induced modern naturalists to adopt an entirely different explanation of organic distribution both in the present and the past.

Animals inhabiting the same continent display pronounced contrasts. Different climatal conditions were once regarded as furnishing a complete explanation of these unlikenesses. Yet, although climate constitutes an important factor in determining the nature of species, other influences must be sought for the wide differences which prevail. The tropical areas of Australia, Africa, and South America possess almost identical climates, but their fauna and flora are markedly dissimilar.

Upon such apparent anomalies the creation legend throws no light. But when the problem is approached from the evolutionary standpoint, the present distribution of organisms is seen to be the result of the countless changes which have occurred on our planet's surface throughout a vast period of departed time. Geographical, climatic, and biological transformations have all made their contributions. Palæontological and geological science partly disclose the earth's history from ages immeasurably remote. Knowledge of the fossil remains of plants and animals which flourished many thousands and millions of centuries ago is still fragmentary, but many gaps have been filled in during recent decades. Science is now acquainted with many new facts discovered since Darwin's death, and these add materially to the previously powerful array of fossil testimonies to the truth of evolution. Not one, however, furnishes any support whatever to the theory of special creation, or to the dogma of the fixity of species.

Researches into the present and past distribution of the camel group supply a striking illustration of scientific method. There are now two divisions of this curious mammalian family. The only undomesticated camels of the Old World inhabit Central Asia. The other section is confined to South America and includes the llamas, guanacos and kindred creatures. These two groups differ considerably in outward appearance, but all anatomists are agreed regarding their close relationship. The prehistoric habitat of the camels, as revealed by their fossil remains preserved in the rocks, was restricted to Northern America throughout a prolonged period during Tertiary times. In any case, their fossils are absent elsewhere. The eminent American geologist and palæontologist, Prof. W. B. Scott assures us that: "Each successive group of rocky strata in our western plains has yielded remains of its own characteristic type of camels, whose development towards the modern type may be followed through many almost imperceptible gradations. . . . Later in the Tertiary period the fossils record the arrival of camels in Asia, on the one hand, and in South America, on the other; and finally, at a very late geological date, they completely disappeared from North America. Their passage from North America to Asia was made possible by the existence of a land connexion where we now find the shallow Bering Sea. This connexion was often made and broken in past ages."

At the period when man first appeared in Europe many species of the giant mammals that had long exercised undisputed sway over vast territories both in the Old World and the New were eliminated from

the realm of life. The causes that led to this wholesale extermination of mammalian organisms remain undiscovered. Some fatal epidemic may have swept the globe. Although the hunting activities of primitive man may explain the extinction of the mastadon and mammoth, early human agency can scarcely account for the widespread extermination of so many animal types in all parts of the world. In America alone, elephants, horses, camels, wolves, leonine cats, tigers, with a multitude of other animals were incontinently swept away. This tragedy of the mammals ended the career of the North American camels although they have survived in Central Asia and South America.

It is utterly incredible that highly developed mammals arose independently in separate continents. Asia and America were united at the point where the Bering Sea and Strait now exist. Here also, as the fossil remains testify, mammals wandered from one continent to another. Many American mammals are obviously the modified descendants of Old World ancestors. Some settled in America in ages very remote. Others are of such recent arrival that they vary little from their Asiatic forerunners. In every instance the continental distribution of animals finds its explanation in terms of modified descent, and in these alone.

Island life also presents its cogent evidences of organic evolution. Islands known as oceanic may arise suddenly from the sea. Continental outliers or islands, on the contrary, date from a far distant past. These detached areas of a neighbouring land-mass are composed of the same rocks, and are usually separated from their parent by shallow water. The British Isles, from a geological standpoint, are of recent origin, and their flora and fauna closely resemble those of the adjacent European continent. Islands such as Borneo and Java, which were severed at an earlier time have become the dwelling place of species more peculiar in character than those of their parent continent, Asia.

Volcanic islands are situated at great distances from continental lands, and usually emerge abruptly from the ocean depths. Now, the plants and animals of these islands bear little resemblance to those of continental origin. Apart from animals such as rats and mice introduced adventitiously by man when visiting these islands on his voyages, oceanic isles possess no mammalian resident save the bat. This winged mammal may accompany vessels, but probably it is more frequently driven to remote islands during gales. Animals that perish in sea water are absent, as are true lake and river fish, molluscs and crustaceans. Land birds find a haven in sea-girt isles when driven by storm or ocean current. Also, the flora are confined to those plants whose seeds are transported by wind or wave. Many of these barren islands are perfectly congenial to higher animal existence. This has been demonstrated by the completely successful colonization of domesticated animals such as swine, goats, cattle and horses. Again, wild creatures such as rabbits will flourish like the green bay tree. Indeed, all the facts confirm evolution and negative special creation.

Confirmation much stronger than that of Holy Writ of the theory that oceanic islands derive their fauna and flora in the manner described above is furnished by the happenings on an island during recent decades. Krakatua, an island of volcanic origin lying in the Sunda Straits between Sumatra and Java was the theatre of a succession of titanic volcanic disturbances without parallel within historical times. In 1883 volcanic eruptions devastated the greater part of the island, and the little that remained was so overwhelmed by volcanic dust and ashes that every

vestige of living matter suffered death. Yet within twenty years, this apparently forsaken island was re-furnished with living things by the air and ocean currents.

Dr. Scott cites the testimony of the famous Prof. Selenka, so well known for his researches into the embryology of apes, who paid a visit to Krakatau a few years after the calamity. This scientist tells us that: "Under the shade of a Casuarina, among coconut palms and thickets as high as a man's head, I found to my astonishment, an active animal life of spiders, flies, bugs, beetles and butterflies; even lizards half a yard in length animated the peaceful picture. All these plants and animals were brought hither by wind and water from Java and Sumatra, replacing the vanished world in the course of a few years."

When Darwin made his memorable voyage on the *Beagle* he visited the Galapagos Islands in the far Pacific. These remote refuges were then in a state of unspoiled nature. He was thus enabled to study their flora and fauna before the intervention of man had wrought its inevitable changes. Rising from the depths of the ocean many hundreds of miles from the American coast, these isolated areas were the residence of various plants and animals unlike any others in the world. If divinely created, each of the fifteen islands which comprise the group was populated with species specially fashioned for this purpose. The land birds are distinctly strange, but a close scrutiny discloses their relationship to species common to South America. Huge terrestrial tortoises were abundant when the islands were first explored, each island possessing its own peculiar species. But like the birds, the reptiles, despite their strange features, presumably due to their prolonged isolation from continental contact, were all really related to South American forms. Plainly, these immigrant animals, completely cut off from communication with their earlier environment were able to evolve the peculiar characters which distinguished them from their ancestral stock.

The organisms that inhabit the Cape Verde Islands in the far flung Atlantic, despite the many transformations they have undergone, still betray their affinity with the flora and fauna of Africa. On the other hand, the Hawaiian Islands, situated at a remote distance from any large land surface, and whose history dates from a dim geological past have been the scene of the development of avian and other animals of species so peculiar that their pedigree cannot be determined with certainty. The relationship which invariably exists between the singularity of plants and animals, and the isolation and antiquity of their dwelling-place is clearly explained by the doctrine of descent, while remaining utterly enigmatical when approached from the standpoint of special creation.

T. F. PALMER.

### Stoicism.

FAIR, fond illusions! and prolonged despair,  
Knock at thought's gates—you can not enter there;  
For one, I found, like snowflakes melt away,  
And 'other beauty dreads the break of day.  
To-day has sped with music all the way—  
To-morrow I shall hear wild asses bray;  
You shall not claim to jig upon my brain  
Those airs seductive-fleeting joy and pain.  
But things there are that none shall take away,  
Until, through me, life shall his passion stay—  
The star-lit eye, the good deed freely done,  
The point to life, the race that's nobly run.

C-DR-B.

## Philosophic Bankruptcy.

IN the correspondence columns of the *Freethinker* for July 12, there appeared a letter whose pathetic appeal must have touched the hearts of many of its readers. In it the author described in perfectly clear language the somewhat hopeless state of mind which he and, apparently, many of the younger generation like him have reached as a result of the indeterminate philosophies current at the present time. He begins by expressing surprise at the tone of "unbounded enthusiasm" evinced by the articles which he has read in the *Freethinker*—"a spirit entirely new" to him. He proceeds to explain his case, and ends as follows: "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."

Such an appeal is bound to call forth a large number of replies, both helpful and critical. And one can have no doubt that from this fund of common-sense the writer of the letter will be able to extract enough mental cash to wipe out the philosophic bankruptcy from which he seems to be suffering. One can be equally sure that there will also be more than enough left over to enable him to build a stable edifice of cheerfulness and enthusiasm in which to exercise his capacities as long as he lives. But the subject is one which cannot be easily dealt with in the space of an ordinary letter, and it seems worth while to attempt a wider treatment.

To begin with, the author and his friends will probably agree that no argument, no religion, no philosophy, is going to be of avail to the abnormal or unhealthy mind. A person suffering from melancholia or paranoia is not to be cured by reading the Bible, Plato or the *Freethinker*. But since the letter in question shows every sign of being the product of a rational and healthy mind, I am freed from anxiety in that direction and my arguments will, therefore, be addressed as to one capable of facing facts with balanced judgment.

What are these facts? I take them from the letter itself. First of all a concern for the distant future and the influence which our actions may or may not have upon it.

Does it really matter to us very much if, millions of years hence, man loses his relative position in the animal world and some descendants of the earthworm or the cholera germ evolve into the "lords of creation"? Does it really matter if the earth becomes lifeless like the moon and the universe becomes a tepid slush? Neither you nor I will know anything about it. And if we are honest with ourselves, neither you, nor I, nor the Christian (with his "everlasting life") care two hoots about it. Why pretend that we do? You and I will be dead, and the Christian imagines that he will be twanging a harp in some entirely different and fantastic surroundings. As long as we are bodily and mentally satisfied now, the ultimate or penultimate state of the Universe can go hang. Do you seriously maintain that you enjoy a good film or a sunshiny day the less now, because in 1936 you may (or may not) perhaps be suffering from a raging toothache or be the victim of an accident? Of course you don't. It's the here and now that matters first and foremost.

"There are few painters or musicians," writes the author, "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." Quite so. If they knew. But they don't know. And if they did possess the power of foreknowledge to that extent, would they be such idiots as to spend these months in toil? Of course not. They would set up shop as prophets.

Neither Jeans, nor Milliken, nor Cohen, nor anyone knows what is going to happen millions, nor yet thousands or even hundreds, of years hence—though most of them adore the guessing game. None of them, in fact, knows for certain what is going to happen next minute. So why be depressed by statements which are at best pure theory, and at worst pure guesswork?

But I suspect that there is something more at the bottom of this deep concern for the distant future than appears on the surface. May it not be due to a false estimate of our own values? Is it not really the importance of our own little selves that bothers us? We smile at the chagrin of our forefathers when they learnt that the earth was not the centre of the Universe. Even to-day the suggestion that we may be descended from the same stock as the apes arouses heated repudiation from certain folk. Is it not possible that a trace of this, or a very similar, conceit is still prevalent among us? Frankly, does it not amount to this: "What is the use of living if my precious little self and all my precious little activities are not to be of some permanent use?"

But why this concern for permanence? You cannot deny that you and your actions are of some use in the present and, as far as one can judge, in that indeterminate period known as "the immediate future." If you do deny this, then why eat or drink—why bother to move? If, on the other hand, you confess that it is better to eat, drink and live, than to commit suicide, you at once grant that you and your actions are of some use. And if they are of some use now and in the immediate future—a use, the value of which you can appreciate without any deep philosophy—why hanker for a "permanent" use which you will never be able to appreciate, and whose value is bound to be utterly problematical? If you were shipwrecked on a desert island, would you spend your time in contemplating the ultimate evolution of the Cosmos? If not, why not?

No one who is sane ever regulates his actions with no concern for their present uses. And, limited as the effect of these actions may appear to be in some cases, the value of them (to the persons concerned) is invariably greater in proportion to the nearness in time and space of their effects. As I said before, it is the here and now that matters, not the somewhere and sometime.

I strive to propagate ideas about eugenics (amongst other things) not for the sake of remote generations, in whose welfare I am not at all interested, but because I believe that the inculcation of such ideas in the present generations will result in a saner outlook on life for everybody. And this sanity will be of immediate benefit to myself and others with whom I am in contact. So much is this the case with me, personally, that I am apt to suspect the motives of those who profess to regulate their actions solely with a view to the attainment of some end which they will never know, or which they think they will only know when they are dead. I have no use for Utopias, and I do not trust the out-and-out Utopian.

To this the objection is raised that such views are "too ego-centric," and that one requires "something bigger and wider" than one's own happiness to hang on to. But do not let us hoax ourselves. If there is anything bigger and wider than our own happiness in the first place; a happiness which, in the second place, depends almost entirely upon the conditions which surround us; which, in the third place, depends upon others with whom we come in contact; whose happiness, in the fourth place, depends partly upon us and partly upon a wider circle beyond them; and so on *ad infinitum*—if there is anything bigger and wider than that, I would be glad to hear of it.

Like a stone thrown into a pond, causing a series of ever-widening ripples which, when they strike another object, are reflected back in greater or lesser degree to the point from whence they came, so is the effect of every one of our actions. How then can personal happiness, regarded as a centre from which happiness may spread to others, be condemned as a small or narrow aim? One cannot begin from an ever-widening and ever-changing circumference. There are too many people, even in our immediate surroundings, for any single person to be able to judge how best to please them all. But we can begin from the centre, ourselves. And by the best use of reason and judgment we can attain to a measure of happiness which will be a source of power for the betterment of life; and this will, in its turn, be reflected back to us.

Do not let us be misled by the emotional effect of words. "Ego-centric" may sound unpleasant and "altruistic" may sound good. But in fact there is no difference between the motives which prompt the actions of both egotists and altruists. The difference does not lie in the motive, but in the effects which these actions are seen to have on others. There is nothing shameful or small in seeking personal happiness—it is what everyone does, though some of us are not frank enough to admit it. Altruism is no more meritorious than egotism; but like honesty it is often the best policy, and for this reason alone it has acquired a sanctity out of all proportion to its true value.

Lastly, the author appears to fear the "spectre" of old age. I don't know how old he is; but when I was ten years of age I thought thirty was mighty old. Yet strange to say when I reached that age I did not shed bitter tears at the thought of my vanished youth. At thirty I regarded fifty as old. Yet at my present age the "spectre" has come no nearer, and, indeed, I have quite lost interest in the fellow. If I ever reach the age of seventy, I don't suppose I shall even give him a passing thought. Like most bogeys, this "spectre" retreats further into the shadows as I advance upon it. And I have little doubt that when it is my turn to die, the "spectre" of old age will have vanished as completely as the "spectre" of death. It is not the inevitability of old age or death that troubles me, or that should trouble anyone; it is, rather, the possibility of want and suffering. And against those I enjoy doing battle, by living healthily and prudently in the present.

In any case I do not make a bogey of something I know nothing about personally. Time enough to do so if and when the "spectre" becomes a reality. Surely the same applies to everyone. Or do some of us still labour under that religion-bred habit of believing in the reality of and fearing creations of our imaginations? There was a time when I shuddered with horror at the "spectre" of Atheism. Now that I am an Atheist I can't find the beggar anywhere! Do I think with regret of the glorious (?) past when I walked hand in hand (metaphorically speaking) with that spectre "God"? Ask me and see what my answer will be!

C. S. FRASER.

Being persuaded of nothing more than this, that whether it be a matter of speculation or of practice, no untruth can possibly avail the patron and defender long, and that things most truly are likewise most behaviorally spoken.—Hooker.

The nobler sort of man is dignified but not proud; the inferior man is proud but not dignified.—Confucius.

## The Unspeakable Richness of Christian Impudence.

PERIODICALLY—and more often than more seldom—we have exhibitions of Christian impudence and arrogance which testify to the hold that the Churches still have upon those placed in positions of secular authority. No matter what kind of secular function of a public kind takes place Church leaders must have front free seats. Let a new tax be proposed and the Churches are at once out lobbying and touting for exemption. Let a report arrive about the persecution of Christians in some foreign land; and at once a howl goes up from the Churches for Governmental interference and primitive reprisals. The persecution of persons who are not Christians leaves our home Christians indifferent and cold. But for brazen effrontery, cool audacity and false claims, the appearance of prominent Churchmen on Peace Platforms is about the absolute limit. Lord Cecil's meeting in London was almost broken up because of the resentment felt by so many towards the prominence of dog-collared officers of the black army as "supports" to his Lordship. After the evidence we have had furnished to us of the fact that, in the Great War, the clergy were the most efficient feeders of the blood-lust, it is not surprising that their impudent self-assertiveness at Peace gatherings is bitterly resented.

Impudence and audacity will carry some people very far. Does the best man always win? Take any branch of business; and you will find that the keen hustler with average brains will beat the man with better brains who is not an assertive hustler. Take sport. In golf it is not necessarily the finest players that meet in the final of the championship. The insensitive player who has nerves of steel will in the majority of instances get in front of the player who knows more about the game, but who is handicapped by his sensitiveness. In the game of life, in almost every department, the rule holds good that victory goes to the man with the hard face and the brass neck.

And this is a truth, the significance of which the leaders of the Christian Churches have not been slow to appreciate. Take up any Christian journal and note the assumptions that are made therein based on the fundamental notion that theology is the king of all other sciences. These assumptions include the claim of "ordained" clergymen to a position of superiority over the rest of their fellow beings—the theory being that they have been set apart by God to be guides and teachers of the rest of mankind. To the Freethinker the claim is absurd and ludicrous; because it involves favouritism and partiality on the part of the supreme ruler of the universe by constituting a small section of men repositories of a special supernatural revelation. The Protestant Churches affect to make light of the apostolical order of succession; but they find an equally efficient substitute in their own systems of ordination, induction, laying on of hands and so forth. Every Protestant clergyman equally with the Catholic maintains that he holds his commission to dictate how his fellow beings shall live and comport themselves from an all powerful unerring supernatural source. The very basis of Freethought is a complete and strenuous denial of the validity of such claims.

Innumerable examples can be cited of the eagerness with which clergymen slobber over prominent members of other professions, who show friendliness to Christianity, or who though sceptics have not the moral courage to disclose their real opinions about Christianity; but who (having been nurtured and

trained in an atmosphere of religiosity, for the sake of personal peace, ease and comfort, and security and success in business let it be taken for granted that they are Christians. To do otherwise—to resist—to prove rebellious intellectually—would mean the breaking of congenial ties and probably material loss. Laymen of that kind who have "succeeded" in their professions and businesses and enjoy all the material comforts the world can supply are disposed to prefer the calm of inertia to the storm of conflict. They do not however realize that this calm is often merely intellectual and moral, and probably also physical stagnation. Who wants to start a heated argument about miracles for instance after the miracle of a perfect dinner? It would spoil the coffee, liqueurs and cigars!

These round-bellied bourgeois believers are amused at us hot-headed fellows to whom cassocks are red rags! After all, these parson fellows represent you know an old established institution, which stands—you know—in a sense as a bulwark of national security—teaching people to restrain themselves and be contented with their respective lots to which the Almighty—you know—has been pleased to call them. By gad, sir, the Church has more than once helped to protect us against revolution!

If the plutocratic magnates of Britain, her meek scientists, and her proletarian geese all give such testimonials to the Christian Church is it so very surprising that the leaders of Christianity carry their heads high?

IGNOTUS.

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## Acid Drops.

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As was to be expected the attempt to bring theatres within the limits of permitted Sunday performances was rejected by those considering of the new Sunday Performances Bill. The Attorney General suggested that the proposals might be made the subject of a Bill which confined theatrical entertainments to London, and hinted that such a Bill would be passed. There were the usual humbugging speeches delivered in which everything but the real reason for opposition to a free Sunday was put forward. Indeed, the only honest speech in opposition was given by Lord Eustace Percy, who said quite plainly that he saw no reason for interfering with the way in which people saw fit to spend Sunday, save the command given in revealed religion. That was honest even though stupid. So we shall continue to go on for some time permitting one section of the community dictating to another section what it shall not do on Sunday for no other reason than they do not like to see them spending their Sunday in a non-religious manner. But we still sing "Britons never shall be slaves."

This is how it is done. And it is done by Mr. J. W. N. Sullivan in the course of an introduction to a book just issued. First of all, with regard to the "new science" you are properly warned that it is not built for reaching conclusions on it until it is thoroughly understood. Then it is pointed out that the principle of Indeterminacy would make it appear that the behaviour of the electron cannot "by our methods of measurement be strictly determined." That leads up to the grand conclusion that "it may be concluded that something like free-will lies at the basis of natural phenomena." And that is how the rabbit is brought out of the hat in full view of a delighted (clerical and Christian) audience.

Now let us see how this particular rabbit got into the hat from which it is so triumphantly withdrawn. First we must not be too certain about scientific speculations. That helps to prevent our getting too dependent upon science. Then as we cannot foretell the movements of

the electron, by our present "methods of measurement," we must—not create other methods of measurement, which would seem to be the logical conclusion—but must conclude that no measurement is possible. And as we cannot measure the movements of the electron, and so bring it within the circle of *known* determined things, we must—not wait for more knowledge, but *conclude* that "freewill is at the bottom of it all." So on a basis of pure ignorance we somehow reach a positive conclusion that takes the rank of knowledge. And that is how the rabbit gets into the hat. As clear a piece of mental thimble-rigging as one could desire. And Mr. Sullivan stands high with the British press. What a thing it is to stand well with the British press. It gives a guarantee for the safe exercise of absurdity, and converts any writer of popular nonsense into a philosopher.

It is somewhat difficult to know the reason contained in the following extract from the *Times* leading article July 11:—

It will be a profound misfortune if this quarrel is allowed to colour Catholicism with anti-Fascism, or to galvanize into fresh activity the anti-clericalism that is always latent in Fascism.

Does the *Times* suggest that Roman Catholic policy and teaching should exist unchallenged? There is not the least doubt about Catholic intentions with regard to the education of youth, and any Freethinker would be as much in disagreement with the inoculation of the young with the germ of Fascism as that of Catholicism. The struggle for youth between factions is sufficient proof of the disreputable position of all religions that choose this period in the life of an individual for the inculcation of dogma. It is a condemnation of methods that dare not risk a test at maturity.

The following letter from the Rev. Silas K. Hocking, the novelist, appeared in a daily paper and a religious weekly:—

Since writing my previous letter on the opening of cinemas on Sunday, I have received much criticism, and no small measure of abuse from good and well-meaning people. The main points of their contention are that people should not work seven days a week, and that no man who had conscientious scruples should be asked to work on Sunday.

These points I understand have now been conceded by the cinema and theatre employers and the London Trades Council, who have agreed to support an amendment to the Sunday Performances (Regulation) Bill, which ensures a six-day week for all employees, and protection for those who have conscientious objections to Sunday labour. This being so, it seems to me that all reasonable objections to the opening of cinemas on Sunday have been met.

The objections that remain are based on a religious taboo, on bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and on cant and humbug. As these objections are voiced by only a minority of the citizens of the country whose own way of spending Sunday is in no manner interfered with, such objections and objectors should be ignored.

In connexion with Divorce Reform, the following remarks are made by a reader of a daily paper:—

Many women are compelled to live a solitary life, owing to an absconding husband, and have no chance of divorce. Is it not time the present laws were altered so that women who made a mistake in their young days might have a chance of re-marriage?

This letter is signed by "A Victim." Her pathetic cry will make no impression on the spiritually deafened ears of our clergy and the pious, who are responsible for the main opposition to Divorce Reform.

Speaking about the new housing areas around Birmingham, the Rev. A. J. Perry, a Methodist, says that the difficulty of catering for the religious needs of these new communities is tremendous, but "it has been tackled in a thoroughly enterprising and business-like manner." We don't doubt it. Dealing in an "other world" commodity in no wise unfits Methodist parsons for looking after the interests of their profession in a thoroughly enterprising and business-like manner. One can almost

admire the astute way in which they get Methodist mugs to part up with their hard-earned cash—for the "benefit of clergy."

In many countries, says a pious weekly, clergymen of many churches and denominations are taking a firm stand against war of any kind. This move is rather too belated to give religion a lift up. The joke is, however, that the same God who, for centuries, has been giving victories to nations at war is now being asked to ensure a victory for Peace. As he has been so very helpful in the past, these pacifist clergymen should have no reason for doubting whether he will attend to this rather novel request of theirs.

According to the Archbishop of York: "The snag of our generation is to be found in the possibility of being endlessly amused by things that tickle the surface of the mind but contribute nothing to the wealth of life." This knock at the people's amusements savours rather of the pot reproaching the kettle for being black. The Archbishop's own churches specialize in pantomimic amusement stuff which merely tickles people's primitive emotions and contributes nothing to the intelligent side of life.

Following the moan of religious bodies that the masses are indifferent to the advantages of salvation, the Registrar-General, Mr. S. P. Vivian, has told a reporter of the *News-Chronicle* that people, in their census returns have a greater respect for the truth. Students of sociology will take note of this and turn a deaf ear to the prospect of the awful consequences of unbelief.

Some newspapers are printing under big captions a rather depressing view by the Primate. Incidentally one notes that when such men as he make a pronouncement they affect to speak for the whole population. The impudence of it! And the authoritarian air of it! Good Elpus! Mr. Cosmos Lang is dissatisfied with the "stuff" of this old country. We are "going soft." Well, this complacent prelate should be a good judge of softness. The vast numbers who acquiesce in the existing episcopalian system must be pretty soft. Lang heads the list of Bishops with a salary of £15,000 and a couple of palaces. A soft job! His criticism should stir up any manhood left in his adherents. By jove, it is a poor tribute to the great organization of which Lang is the head and to the Christian teaching of 2,000 years!

In a silly review of two theological works in the *Spectator*, the sanctimonious reviewer ("Evelyn Underhill") has sure "spilled a bib-ful." She professes to be relieved to know that we have escaped from the "naturalistic and humanitarian morass" of the end of the nineteenth century. This reviewer is like other people with the mentality of the ostrich. If she and her fellow-religionists are satisfied with that sort of reflection, and cannot see that the numbers of those who prefer naturalistic and humanitarian agencies to supernaturalism are growing daily they are surely blind leaders of the blind. Morass forsooth!

The *Spectator* itself assumes a pose of motherly and sloppy concern about social and political matters. It inserts a short essay by a child of twelve on the "Idea of God"—on which subject it has been running a series of articles by religionists of various types—mental and accidental. It is not a badly written little essay; but a dozen as good could be supplied by the children of Atheists of the same age. The little writer is well inculcated with the essentials of the "old, old story." By the way, will the *Spectator* have the courage to throw its net wider and engage the pens of some capable writers who do not believe in supernaturalism to present their ideas of God. I suppose we may have to wait a considerable time before its pages are enriched by an article from an avowed Freethinker.

In Glasgow fifteen arrests were made as the result of a fight between Orangemen and Catholics. Let brotherly love continue.



TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. C. MUSGRAVE.—We should be very pleased to do as you request, but we lack the opportunity. Perhaps one of our readers could inform us by what means you could get into touch with the Grand Orient of France.

F. SMEDLEY.—It was easy to miss one in a crowd. You will see we have written on the subject.

C. C. CRAINE.—Next week.

A.C.W.—Thanks, but will have to wait for next issue. Always welcome, and a real help.

J. CLAYTON.—So far as the restriction is concerned it would only apply to meetings held indoors. Glad to hear of the continued success of your meetings. Thanks for good wishes, which we reciprocate to you both.

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

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

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

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

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

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

Sugar Plums.

On Wednesday and Thursday, July 29 and 30, the President of the N.S.S., Mr. C. Cohen will lecture in the Durham Town Hall, and Market Place. The President's visit, being the outcome of the recent interference with our meetings in the Durham Market Place, is having the anticipated effect, and from reports received we understand saints from the surrounding districts may be expected. The meetings begin at 7.30 p.m. Mr. Cohen is hoping to meet those friends in the district who are interested in organization. A business meeting might be arranged before he leaves the district.

Some enemy of the Christian religion induced the Daily Mail to publish five articles by four leaders of different forms of Christian belief and one Jewish Rabbi. They form the most complete indictment of modern religious mentality I have seen for some time. They are simply not worth dealing with save on the principle which made the Spartans exhibit a drunken slave to their children. One would have thought they would have been too stupid for the readers of the Mail or even of the Morning Post. Mr. Cohen will deal with them next week. He would have dealt with them in this issue, but preferred to take the subject of this week's "Views and Opinions" first.

Will South African Freethinkers please note. A reader of the Freethinker, and member of the N.S.S., on a visit to this country, is keen on the formation of a Free-

thought Society in South Africa. He is willing to undertake the preliminary work, and asks Freethinkers in the Cape area interested in the project to communicate with Mr. J. Forrer, P.O. Kirgrove, Cape Province, South Africa.

Mr. G. Whitehead reports very enthusiastic meetings at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The spectacle of a crowd waiting for the meeting to begin each evening is not only inspiring to the speaker and Branch officials concerned, but also creates the very atmosphere for success.

Under the arrangements made with the Executive of the N.S.S. Mr. G. Whitehead will visit the following places on the dates named. July 26 until August 21, Scotland, Commencing at Perth. August 23 until 28, Bolton. August 30 until September 11, Manchester and District. September 13 until 18, Birmingham. September 19 until 25, Plymouth. September 27 until October 2, Fulham and District.

We are asked to announce that a meeting of the new Birkenhead Branch of the N.S.S. will be held on July 26, at the Baker's Hall, 36 Cloughton Road, Birkenhead. The meeting place is just opposite the Queen's Cinema and the meeting will commence at 8 o'clock. We hear excellent accounts of the enthusiasm the Branch is showing, and as it is working in conjunction with the Liverpool Branch, it should go ahead. We hope that Freethinkers in the district will give every help they can.

A glance at the Lecture Notices column each week will show work contemplated by Messrs. J. Clayton and J. T. Brighton, and with few exceptions good meetings result, and what is equally important, quantities of our literature are distributed off the beaten track. The Executive of the N.S.S. is responsible for the work undertaken by those speakers.

The question as to whether Madame Blavatsky is or is not a charlatan cannot be answered by appealing either to her friends or to her enemies. It can only be settled by deciding whether Theosophy itself be true or not. Is the Secret Doctrine true? If it is, then obviously "H.P.B." was not a charlatan. But may heaven save us from going through that monumental work to prove anything one way or other.

The centenary edition (which has just reached us) of H.P.B., *In Memory of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky by some of her Pupils*, is a reprint (with some additions) of the 1891 edition published just after her death, and naturally it is all entirely in her praise. Everything she did was genuine including all the marvellous "phenomena" associated with her and her Mahatmas or Masters. She just couldn't help doing them, and people like "young" Hodgson of the Psychical Research Society were simply idiots to believe anything whatever that she did, could possibly be fraudulent.

The only antidote to this kind of thing is a dispassionate survey of the evidence given for the phenomena, and that is exactly on a par with the evidence for most of the phenomena of Spiritualism. For the rest there can be no doubt that H.P.B. was widely read in the occult and had great powers of inspiring devotion and love—and indeed, whether charlatan or not, was a remarkable woman. The volume of Essays published by the Blavatsky Association at 6s. 6d. will no doubt prove welcome to all Theosophists and followers of a striking personality.

Somehow or the other the article "A Friendly Dialogue," published in last week's issue of the Freethinker was ascribed to "Tom Blake." This was a mistake. The author was Mr. J. E. Addy. Our apologies are offered to Mr. Addy.

## Ancient Mysteries.

(Concluded from page 453.)

THE last links of Egyptian mysteries were found in the worship of Serapis and in the writings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus. Serapis, in the Leyden papyrus Osarapis, *i. e.*, Osiris Apis, the sacrificial bull Apis, the living emblem of Osiris, was introduced by Ptolemy to assimilate the old Egyptian worship with that of the Greek Hades. In his head-dress of the corn measure, Serapis preserves the old meaning, but he takes more Christ-like characters. The Emperor Hadrian, an enlightened man, yet one anxiously alert for information on religion, who got initiated into all extant mysteries, when in Egypt, about 134, wrote that he found the worship of Christ and of Serapis one and the same.<sup>7</sup> Antonius Pius introduced the worship of Serapis into Rome. His mysteries were celebrated on the 6th of May.

H. Weingarten, the writer of the articles "Monastery" and "Monasticism" in Dr. Schaff's *Religious Encyclopædia*, says:—

In the Serapian temples there lived, completely secluded from the world, whole congregations of monks. After giving away their property to the poor, they retired to the temple, where they lived upon the bread which their relatives brought to them. The purpose of this renunciation was wholly ethical—the purification of the soul; and as the whole form of the asceticism of the Serapis monks corresponded peculiarly well with the sombre character of the Egyptian worship of the dead and the graves, they were much revered by the Egyptian people: indeed, like the bulls of Apis, they were considered as incarnations of the deity. No wonder, then, that when Christianity became the popular religion of Egypt, that peculiar form of Egyptian religious life, but one in which a deep popular instinct had found its adequate expression, silently guided into the Christian Church. Just as the Christian Stylite saints of the fifth century were a mere imitation of the Stylite saints of the Syrian Astarte, so the Christian monks of the fourth century were a simple imitation of the Egyptian monks of Serapis.

The books of Hermes Trismegistus, as transcribed for us by some of the Neo-Platonist school at Alexandria, continue the old Egyptian pantheistic doctrine in which Pythagoras, Plato, and other Greek philosophers were instructed, who in turn reacted on Egypt in the time of the Ptolemies. These writings are among the last and most valuable monuments of Paganism. They are the link between Egyptian theology and Christianity. Hermes, the Egyptian Thoth (Thought), the measurer, was a generic name. The invention of letters being ascribed to Hermes, he became the god of wisdom, the Logos, interpreter, and initiator into mysteries. In these writings he unfolds the doctrine of a divine creator and of his son, begotten before all worlds, a doctrine, says De Rougé, in his *Etude sur le Rituel Funéraire des Egyptiens*, which is to be found on the earliest monuments. Similarities to the Gospel of St. John are numerous, and have made some think the writings were produced or touched up by Christian hands. In Hermes we read, for instance (*Poemander*, i. 12): "But the Father of all things, The Mind, being Life and Light, begat a Man like to Himself, whom He loved as His own child, for He was very beautiful, having the image of His Father. For, in fact, moreover The God loved His own form [see Col. i. 13, R.V.], and to this delivered over all his own creations."<sup>8</sup> But, as Mariette mentions, on a stele at Berlin, the sun is

called the firstborn, the son of God, the Word, and on one of the walls of the temple of Philæ, and on the gate of the temple of Medinet Abou, are inscribed these words, "He hath made all that is, and without him nothing that is hath been made," words applied to the Logos by John fourteen centuries later.<sup>9</sup> The proof that Hermes Trismegistus is anterior to the gospel is clear.<sup>10</sup> Justin Martyr, the first of the authentic Christian Fathers, who himself mentions no evangelists by name, though acquainted with their story, says at the end of his exhortations to the Greeks:—

And if anyone supposes that he had learned the doctrine concerning God from the most ancient of those whom you name philosophers, let him listen to Ammon and Hermes, to Ammon, who in his discourse concerning God calls Him wholly hidden; and to Hermes, who says plainly and distinctly "that it is difficult to comprehend God, and impossible even for the man who can comprehend him to declare him to others."<sup>11</sup>

This is taken from the *Poemander*, which is also cited in the first part of chapter six of Justin's second Apology. In his first Apology, chapter twenty-one, Justin says: "When we say that the Logos, who is the first birth of God was produced without sexual union, and that Jesus Christ, our teacher, was crucified, and died and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Zeus," etc. And he begun his list by mentioning "Hermes, the interpreting Word and teacher of all." Lactantius too, in his *Divine Institutes* (bk. i., chap. 6, Of Divine Testimonies), cites, "Hermes, whom the Egyptians called Thoth." He says (bk. iv. 9), "Trismegistus, who by some means searched into almost all truth, describes the excellency and majesty of the Logos." But the most notable testimony is that of Irenæus, the first to mention the four gospels, for he cites Hermes as Scripture, saying, "Well then spake the Scripture, saying, first of all things believe that the God is One, he having created the Universe, and the rest." The *Poemander* or *Shepherd of Hermes*, was continued in the title of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the most popular book in the Christian Church in the second, third and fourth centuries, before the Christ story was completely carnalised. It too was termed revelation, and inspired scripture by Clement, Origen and others. The author claimed to record the words of angels, from whom he received much valueless information on divine mysteries. The *Pastor of Hermas* is indeed a poor Christian copy on the lines of Hermes' *Poemander*, which furnishes additional proof how much of Christianity is of Egyptian origin.

(Late) J. M. WHEELER.

In reading authors, when you find  
Bright passages that strike your mind,  
And which perhaps you may have reason  
To think on, at another season.  
Be not contented with the sight,  
But take them down in black and white;  
Such a respect is wisely shown,  
As makes another's sense one's own.—Byron.

Science is the most important event in European history since the fall of the Roman Empire.

Dr. Charles Singer.

<sup>7</sup> See *Freethinker*, May 5, 1889.

<sup>8</sup> P. 6, J. D. Chambers' translation.

<sup>9</sup> See Dr. L. Menard, *Etude sur l'origine des livres hermétiques*, p. xliii.

<sup>10</sup> He is called great, great, great, on the Rosetta Stone B.C. 195.

<sup>11</sup> In Quæstius, *Ec. Hist.* bk. v, c. 8.

## Was Jesus Like This?

EVEN if it displeases both the Archbishop of Canterbury and that devout Labour M.P., Mr. C. G. Ammon, I am fain to say that I do not believe in any of the supernatural stories (Virgin Birth, Resurrection and the rest) told about Jesus. On the other hand, I find nothing unbelievable in the sort of tale lately made out by the learned Jewish writer, Dr. Robert Eisler, in a very expensive book, entitled *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist* (Methuen & Co.). I propose to put it down in short. And let me be clear. I do not swear a solemn oath in the name of the Crescent Moon, and say I am certain Dr. Eisler's history of Jesus is the true one. All I say is, I find nothing silly in it. So here begins the record, according to Eisler.

Jesus belonged to a wandering clan of Slebs, a sort of gipsy people who roamed between the desert and civilization. They were quick-witted and free-spirited craftsmen, owning no lord, and paying no taxes, and detesting money-lenders and usurers. They did odd jobs of carpentry and smith-work, and had repute as healers by magic powers or medicines. Their women were often unconventional, and Jesus, who prided himself on descent from the desert-wanderer, David, had no objection (nor had the "Matthew" Gospel) to including Rahab the harlot in his ancestry. Short, bent, scant-haired, and with meeting eyebrows, he had no personal attraction except through his pioneer and enthusiastic spirit. He felt moved to appear as Messiah, who would draw the devouter type of Jews away from Roman rule, and into a religious commune in the wilderness.

In the year 19, Pontius Pilate, a fresh Roman administrator in Judæa, irritated the Jews by placing Roman "standards" (ornamental stakes, to which medallions of the emperors' heads were attached) in the Temple at Jerusalem. To the Jews, the hateful standards seemed an insult to their God, Yahweh. Tumults followed. A rebellious passion seethed even when tumults were suppressed. For years past, the Sleb Johanan—hairy-robed, hairy girdled, vegetarian, water-drinker—had baptized agitated crowds, glared threateningly at smug priests, bourgeois scribes, and soldiers, and foretold a burning-up of things rotten. Jesus was bedless, homeless, moneyless; and he eloquently blessed the hungry, the tearful, and the slaves; he extended sympathy to beggars and prostitutes; this enthusiasm touched sufferers as if with a magic of healing. He sent out Twelve Apostles into villages and cities; he sent out Seventy Disciples with news of food, health, laughter, heaven. As the months passed, the earlier pacifist sentiment, which whispered: "The Kingdom of God is within you," gave place to impatience, to the rattle of swords. He appeared, with excited mobs, in Jerusalem, raised an uproar against bankers and traders in the Temple, and broadly hinted that, even if the Temple were destroyed, Yahweh could raise up a finer and more enduring structure of the converted heart and fiery spirit. A confused camp was set up on Mount Olivet, just outside the city, and 150 artisans and proletarians heaved and buzzed with a sense of revolution. Some of the zealots seized the Tower of Siloam on the city-wall. At this point, Pilate put the heavy Roman machinery in motion. Roman engineers dug under the Siloam Tower, and it fell, burying eighteen rebels. Jesus, the supposed Wonder-worker, had ridden an ass, and been saluted with the shout: "Osanna"!—"Give us freedom!" and then the power of the poor Slebs collapsed.

Arrested and swiftly tried, he was crucified with two of his followers. The Olivet camp was speedily

broken-up in massacre and captures; and a gang of the rebels were sent down to Antioch city, to suffer such penalties of exile, etc., as the Roman legate in that Syrian city judged fit. A record of the riots and crucifixions was drawn up (as would be done in all such cases) in a document, or "Acta," by Pontius Pilate (year 21). A good while afterwards, the Baptistizer was imprisoned and beheaded (year 35); and, in 62, the brother of Jesus—James the Just—was stoned to death because he put on a sacred breastplate, and claimed the right, as High Priest, to officiate in the Temple. The death of this Sleb, and a series of mob-risings and riots brought history down to the fall of Jerusalem in 70.

Such is Eisler's reconstructed story of Jesus the Carpenter, given in my words, not his.

Suppose Jesus was like this, more or less. Is there anything unbelievable in such a tale? In that sense, I can believe in a historical Jesus. And then—that age (I mean the first 200 years of the present era) being what it was, with its millions of uneducated slaves, peasants, artisans, seamen, and gipsies, and its long-customary habits of legend-making—I think two things could very naturally happen:—

1. People who were trained in the "Mysteries" and festivals of Mithra, Isis, the Dea Syrea of Hieropolis, etc., would readily exalt the memory of such a "Lost Leader" by dramatic pageantries of the Last Supper, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension, mingling his idealized memory with myths of many Gods and Heroes.

2. Rumour, and folk-lore, and the oriental story-telling habit, and the wit of poets would easily invent a thousand legends of Jesus born of a Virgin, Jesus the Healer, Jesus transfigured, Jesus walking on water, Jesus feeding 5,000 people from a small basket of food, and so on. Some of the stories would be idiotic, some trivial, some comic, some tragic, some long-winded, some curt, some dull, some interesting, some very interesting, and some (such, in my opinion, as the "Luke" gospel) of first-class merit as poetry and dramatic narration. Look at the New Testament, and the so-called Apocryphal Gospels and Acts (in Dr. Montague R. James's edition, for choice), and you will see all these types of legend spread out before you. It was this theme that I tried to present to a Conway Hall meeting of the N.S.S. in November, 1930, my lecture being entitled: "How the Second Century Created Jesus."

When these two processes have played their part, what shall we say? Shall we say we accept the Historicity of Jesus? Or shall we say Jesus was a Myth? It seems to me that the answer must be so complicated, and so beset with explanatory foot-notes as to make the questions hardly worth asking.

How does Eisler arrive at the tale about given? He examines various old books and manuscripts, mainly those of Josephus; he says passages relating to the Sleb rebel have been altered or added to; he affirms that deliberate forgeries have been inserted; he industriously sorts out the items that appear believable; and he pieces them all together into the record I have summarized.

Eisler is not infallible; but neither is the New Testament.

F. J. GOULD.

It is curious to observe how anyone who leaves the traditional highway in order to travel in his own proper path always has more or less the sense of being an exile, a condemned criminal, a fugitive from mankind.

Nietzsche.

Of all the perils that beset my pathway, the dread of becoming respectable has for me the greatest horror. That is the paralysis of all effort. It is the eclipse of the liberal mind.—Dr. Alexander Irvine.

## The Wrecking of William Cowper.

THE B.B.C. cannot suppress all their writers and speakers; or it may be these cannot suppress themselves; or, peradventure, the former must "save their souls" in the secular sense; or is it innocence on the part of Sir John Reith that allows G.B.S. to hurl his *St. Joan* talk against the religious camp—after which the whirlwind! a puny protest from one poor little priest, and indignation of that larger one, quite as ineffectual? Still the common sense of most is far from complete. I have heard an Atheist defend the Sunday evening Epilogue, not as true, but as rounding off a perfect day—we would say, from the sublime to ridiculous—from inspiring song and music to tom-toms and savagery—to people of really cultured taste that is the effect—or let us say, two cultures, modern and primitive, which the exquisite parson and his following continue to mix so well.

In the *Listener* for June 17, 1931 there appears perhaps unconsciously, a serious breach of parsonic Good Form: Lord David Cecil writes a superb article on that gentle, unhappy, much misunderstood genius William Cowper:—

The life he liked to live was a quiet, country, family life, full of small pleasures, pets, and walks, and picnics, and cosy tea drinkings and reading aloud, and fireside talks . . . friendship and the beauty of nature—his greatest friends were women . . . as more delicate and gentle than men . . . He lived among Squires and Clergymen . . . Gentle, constant, modest, timid sort of man . . . loving home and family, clinging to people and places he was used to, shrinking alike from revolutionary views or the whirl and rush of town life . . . But his life was not all peace . . . Through the green smiling garden of his everyday existence ran a black rift . . .

That rift was Religion, early and inherited. Such a man could only discard religion and be sane; retain it and go mad—there was a long and intermittent struggle—in the end "the power of darkness won!" If any one doubts the beauty of Cowper's nature, or the felicity of his language, let him read again the lines written under his mother's portrait, ending:—

Could those few pleasant hours again appear . . .  
But no—what here we call our life is such,  
So little to be lov'd, and thou so much,  
That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

ANDREW MILLAR.

## A Witch Hunt.

PROBING into the remote past of the civilized nations, or into the affairs of those races who have made but short strides towards the attainment of knowledge, we find that man in his pristine stage believed that evil spirits surrounded him wherever he journeyed, and caused all his misfortunes, tribulations, and woes. He fancied they controlled and regulated the elements; also were they culpable for earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other catastrophes which occasionally visited his portion of the globe and left behind a trail of devastation, suffering, and extreme terror.

Now, when upon the scene came a man a little more intelligent, of a deeper imaginative nature, and probably more cunning than his fellows, he became—perhaps even by accident—highly interested in the evil spirits, and eventually, having assured himself, he convinced the tribe that he had been chosen as an intercessory. This, of course, would entitle him to a position of prominence which would include certain privileges together with an amount of influence. We can quite imagine that provided he gave satisfactory evidence of his ability to propitiate the spirits he would have a fairly easy and comfortable time. We can appreciate too his desire to cling to the vocation, and if at all possible, further entrench himself by strengthening his hold.

One method he conceived and adopted to achieve this purpose became known as witch-hunting. The early procedure was roughly as follows: He by degrees insinuated that a member or some members of the tribe (it may be taken for granted that they were usually indi-

viduals he personally disliked), were agents through whom the evil spirits worked their destruction, and finally prevailed upon the chief to summon all the people. When this was done he reviewed the assembly, and after some preliminary antics warranted to inspire awe and fear he indicated the culprit or culprits and they were immediately put to death, in the fashion approved by the people.

As the years elapsed the process became more elaborate, and below is given a description of a witch hunt that took place in the equatorial region of Africa about forty years ago. For the details I have borrowed mainly from Dr. F. Puleston's *African Drums* (pp. 169-179).

The drums were sounded in the manner peculiar to such dread occasions and the whole tribe responded to the call, for not one dared to remain absent. Having commanded silence the chief addressed the crowd and explained the reason, which in the book previously mentioned was that a chief in a neighbouring village who had not been sick and had attended his duties without suffering in any way during the morning had, while partaking of his evening meal, suddenly rolled over and died. The cause of his death must have been witchcraft or wizardry; there could be no other solution—according to the purview of these people—and, in order to expose he or she who under the influence of evil spirits had used sorcery to kill the chief, the witch doctor had been consulted.

As he watched the poor, miserable, panic-stricken natives going through the agony of suspense while awaiting the arrival of the witch doctor Dr Puleston thought: "Everything in nature was beautiful but man; he was the only horrible creation. A boa-constrictor kills; a lion kills; but they do not torture. Only man is a brute. He is the one creature in nature which deliberately tortures and ill-treats. He uses his brains to devise and perfect diabolical instruments of punishment and most cruel methods of execution."

Finally, from his hut leaped the witch doctor, who we find, has so improved his status that he is unknown to the tribe and even to the chief himself. His body is striped with grey clay; his face is covered by a mask grotesquely painted to represent the African's conception of the devil; from his wrists almost up to his elbows dangle brass bracelets which jingle as he moves. Altogether he makes quite a hideous picture.

As he circles round the natives are driven almost insane with fear. At length, he drops on his knees and places his ear to the ground which, by the way, is his manner of conversing with the tribal god, who in this case has largely superseded the evil spirits, and indeed is held responsible for storms, floods, etc. When he rose he glanced around then stepped in front of one of the natives. "Thou art the man and must surely die," he declared. The crowd made an instantaneous rush, but the witch doctor held up his hand and again consulted the god. Three in all were picked for sacrifice, and the rest now laughing and overjoyed at having escaped seized them and rushed them unceremoniously to the nearest baobab trees.

The mode of execution in this particular tribe (the Manyemma) was crucifixion. The victim was hauled up until his feet rested on a step cut in the tree, then, pieces of iron were driven through his feet and hands. Next his head was tied in position and his eyelids were pinned to his eyebrows "by means of a spine tough and sharp, procured from the palm tree." Soon along comes an army of black ants, which are large, ferocious insects. In a very short space of time they have crawled into the mouth, eyes, and ears of the helpless man, and have eaten their way into the holes made by the nails. Thus does a poor innocent native meet his or her death because of this abhorrent practice instituted and furthered by the witch doctors so that they may at least maintain their power if not increase it.

Let us by all means draw a veil over the revolting scene; let us hope and trust that in the years that have intervened such happenings if not entirely stamped out are very rare. But, let us not forget that it is not many years since witches were tortured and burned to death in countries such as England, America, Germany, and France, which in the cultural sense are far ahead of Africa; and let us remember that had it not been for

long, arduous, but determined struggles by valiant bands of Freethinkers in these countries the Biblical injunction: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," would still have been enforced by the Christian Churches.

TOM BLAKE.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### TITHES.

SIR,—I was glad to see the excellent article on tithes in the issue for July 5. Naturally Minnermus could not deal with all the points of tithe pretensions and history, nor can I, but here are two or three more.

Tithe was originally imposed by law for other purposes than the support of the clergy. These included relief of the poor and maintenance of roads and bridges. Whilst the tithe has been enforced the burdens have been cast on other shoulders.

Common land enclosed by Act of Parliament is as subject to tithe as all other land not specially exempted, thus refuting the common lie that tithe was given to the church by landowners centuries ago.

Tithe is being compulsorily redeemed at thirty years purchase, while its market value would not exceed fifteen years. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is the obsequious servant of the parsons to carry it out. No doubt it was selected to do so because parsons are always so keen on the loaves and fishes.

W. W. KENSETT.

### PHILOSOPHY AND COMMON SENSE.

SIR,—Though outside the immediate influence of any particular "School of Thought," and also as a regular reader of your thoughtful paper, I find amidst my appreciation, one or two points here and there that grieve me.

Week by week, in articles which show research and a desire for enlightenment, we find a dallying with meaningless "philosophies" of completely ineffective professional writers. Mr. Taylor who is evidently struggling to free himself from such influences speaks always with an absurd respect for these writings, which remind one of the old Schoolmen, who could mask lack of reasoning faculty by undue obscurity reinforced by a technical jargon, and always the final appeal to specious authority.

Mr. Taylor could render a real service if he disengaged his article from the jargon mentioned, and reviewed the academic product in the light of clear reason.

What disconcerts me most is that in his recital of this pompos but tawdry stuff, he makes no reference to the work of Arthur Lynch in this field. When I read his *Principles of Psychology* and its sequel *Ethics*, I find myself in a world quite removed from the scope of the tentative teachings of the Universities. His main idea, that of establishing definitely by rigorous reasoning the "Fundamental Processes of the Mind," as he calls them, gives at once the true note and brings to view the veritable scientific conception thinkers have been seeking. Possibly Mr. Taylor has not yet become acquainted with this book, although its value is accepted by continental philosophers, but hitherto it has met with scant recognition here.

J. CRECH. BAYLEY.

S. Africa.  
[Mr. Bayley is entitled to his complimentary grumble, but we think that Mr. Taylor is serving a useful purpose in keeping readers of the *Freethinker* acquainted with the course of modern speculative thought.—ED.]

### FREETHOUGHT AND LIFE.

SIR,—I found the letter under the above heading in your issue of July 12 of great interest: to people like myself, taking an active part in Freethought propaganda, and finding therein a never-ceasing source of pleasure and zest in life, the "aimless Atheist" and "languid Freethinker" (if I may be allowed the expressions) are almost a source of wonder. We are constantly meeting the type, and naturally do our utmost to get them to participate in the work of freeing men's minds from the shackles of superstition and illogical thinking, but invariably we come up against the arguments submitted by Mr. Sezel. They willingly give up the idea of personal immortality, but much less willingly the idea of racial immortality: in effect, they say, what is the

use of working for a race that is doomed to extinction?

Our reply, that, as the race is likely to carry on for millions of years yet, there is plenty of time to spend on the job of improving human conditions, does not give them any consolation, and they seem to be annoyed with the universe. It is not fair, they say, to have all the trouble of making man mentally free and creating a society as near perfection as possible, if at the end the race is to be blotted out.

Unless the race is granted eternal life, as a compensation for the loss of personal immortality, the universe is a fraud, and it is not worth while being interested in either the present or the future of humanity.

Coming from one who claims to be a Freethinker the argument is interesting, it is reminiscent of the Christian claim that personal immortality must be a fact because so many people say they want it.

It seems to be of no avail to tell these people that Freethought is not a mere set of comforting platitudes, and that its very acceptance, as an outlook on life, involves something more than dilettantish Atheism.

Freethinking surely demands high ideals of duty and service. It claims the right to submit all problems to the test of human reason, in the belief that only by that procedure can there be any hope of getting at the truth, but once convinced of the truth of their ideas Freethinkers are faced with the necessity of putting them within the reach of everyone. It is a duty to truth, because no man is truly free in a society most of whose individual units are fettered. But that course of conduct means propaganda, and that means conflict with the powers of authority and tradition, and very soon the Freethinker discovers that he is not fighting merely to make a more or less perfect race in the distant and problematic future, but is engaged in a very real struggle against injustice in the present generation, and that he himself is one of the victims. That gives all the spur necessary to make any man really a Freethinker an active participator in the fight.

That our efforts will benefit the race in the future is fairly certain, but we try to make them bear fruit now, knowing full well that we as individuals will share the improved conditions. The hope of reward is a tremendous urge on all of us, the reward the Freethinker wants is freedom for all humanity, his "self" is as wide as humanity, and he realizes that before he can get his reward of greater freedom the whole race must share in the improved conditions. But the desire to enjoy that greater liberty now is surely spur enough to send all like Mr. Sezel into our ranks at once.

S. R. A. READY.

### WHAT IS FREE?

SIR,—Mr. Rees should not confuse issues by confusing the various meanings of the words "free" and "freedom" (or "liberty"). Freedom of action only exists in relative form in any civilized State, and in that sense it is justifiable to assert that "there is no such thing as a Free State." In a totally different sense, however, many Irishmen would be justified in rebutting the assertion. Freedom of thought also exists only in relative form if one takes inherited proclivities into consideration. But in its ordinary meaning a person exercises freedom of thought only when he refuses to accept as final any authority but his own judgment. This, as Mr. Rees rightly points out, is "not the same as logical thinking"; though without it logical thinking is impossible. Also because one may be forced by physical compulsion to act contrary to one's own judgment, one does not thereby forfeit the claim to be regarded as a Freethinker.

But no Roman Catholic can claim to think freely. For in certain matters he says: "Whatever my own views may be, I leave that to the Pope to decide for me, and I accept his ruling unconditionally even though it be contrary to my own judgment."

No one denies that Mr. Rees is free to disagree with the Pope on any matter he chooses. What they do deny, however, is that Mr. Rees can do this and still call himself a Roman Catholic. A Freethinker, on the other hand, is not bound by his faith or any other self-imposed tie to accept the ruling (in matters of thought) of anyone but himself. So Mr. Rees is not yet quite such a free thinker as he imagines himself to be—or else he is not a true Roman Catholic.

C. S. FRASER.

## Society News.

## ENTHUSIASM AT BIRKENHEAD.

THE newly-formed Birkenhead (Wirral) Branch of the N.S.S. kicked off with a flourish on Sunday evening (July 12). Between forty and fifty persons were present at the inaugural meeting at Beechcroft Settlement, Birkenhead, and considerable enthusiasm was shown throughout the proceedings. The marked success of the meeting was in no small way due to the capable way in which Mr. E. Egerton Stafford, the President of the Liverpool (Merseyside) Branch, occupied the chair, and to the ready and useful suggestions of the energetic secretary of that Branch, Mr. S. R. A. Ready, and our thanks are due to our Liverpool friends for their kind and practical help.

The officers elected were: President, Ronald H. S. Standfast; Vice-President, Wm. J. Hughes; Secretary, J. W. Porter, 63 New Chester Road, New Ferry, Cheshire; Committee, W. Davies, F. Ensor, J. H. Pinguet, D. E. Pude, and C. Sharp. Eleven new members were afterwards enrolled, and many more promises were made to come along to the next meeting of the Branch, which will be held on Sunday, July 26, at 8.0 p.m., probably at the Baker's Hall, 36 Claughton Road. The subscription has been fixed at 6d. a month, and a collection for initial expenses realized 9s. 4½d.

If Birkenhead fulfils the promise it has shown and maintains the enthusiasm already displayed, it will not be long before we shall see the realization of Mr. Ready's hope of Merseyside leading the rest of the country in the cause of Freethought.

The new Branch will shortly be busy planning its winter programme, and the Secretary will be pleased to hear from any speaker who will be willing to come along and give us the pleasure of hearing his lecture.—R.H.S.S.

## ENLIGHTENING THE CITY OF BRADFORD.

THE most successful fortnight's propaganda that has been held in Bradford for many years came to an end on Saturday, when Mr. George Whitehead's summer visit to that city concluded. Out of the whole fortnight, only one meeting was washed out, and special visits were paid to Dewsbury (where the cause is officially represented by a handful of enthusiasts) and to Leeds, where the cause has, as yet, no official representation.

There is no doubt about the impression that Mr. Whitehead's meetings have made. Last year, when he paid two visits, there was considerable opposition, but it would seem that the lectures given then, and the literature sold, have had their effect, as the past fortnight's meetings have been very well attended, and responsive and sympathetic.

The interest created may be gauged from the fact that groups from the crowds have stood on Bank Street until midnight, engaging in follow-up arguments, after every meeting. The heroism of the local clergy was adequately illustrated during the meetings by the fact that not once during the fortnight did they come forward in response to Mr. Whitehead's invitation, to reply, from the speaker's platform, to what the speaker had said.

To our appreciation of the able and courageous expositions of the Secular cause put by George Whitehead, we must add a word of thanks to the local members who, led by Mr. Thos. W. Green, the local Secretary, have given such splendid moral and practical support to the speaker. George Whitehead must have made many friends in Bradford—and he can have lost none worth keeping.—F.J.C.

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

## LONDON.

## OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting in Victoria Park. Branch Outing.

FINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—II.15, Mrs. E. Grout—"Lies Told to Children."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolde Road, North End Road): Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. Haskell and Aley; Saturday, at 7.30, Messrs. Barnes and Day. *Freethinker* on sale at both meetings.

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

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. Stonhouse Street, Clapham Road, Sunday, at 7.30, Mr. C. Tuson; Wednesday, July 29, at Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, July 31, at Liverpool Street, Canterbury Gate, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

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, B. A. Le Maine and E. C. Saphin. 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.

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

## INDOOR.

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): Wednesday, July 29, at 7.45, Mrs. E. Grout—"The Services of the Church."

## COUNTRY.

## OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Saturday, at 8.0, opposite Opera Market, inside the Level, speakers—Mr. Jackson and Mr. Byrne. Sunday, at 3.30, the Level, speakers, Mr. G. & Lacey and Mr. Byrne.

BOLTON.—Mr. J. Clayton will lecture on the Town Hall steps on Sunday, July 26, at 3.0 and 7.0 p.m.

HORDEN (near Miners Hall): Sunday, July 26, at 10.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, July 26, Outing to New Brighton. Meet for 2.30 boat for Seacombe. Food to be brought.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, at Queen's Drive (opposite Baths), Messrs. Jackson, Shortt and Tissyman; Monday, at Beaumont Street, Messrs. Little 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 Tissyman. All at 7.30. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at all meetings.

NELSON (Chapel Street)—Wednesday, July 29, at 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

SUNDERLAND (near Boilermakers Hall): Sunday, July 26, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

TRAWDEN.—Friday, July 30, at 7.45, Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

WORSTHORNE.—Monday, July 27, at 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton—A Lecture.

## INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, July 26, at 8.0 p.m., Baker's Hall, 36 Claughton Road (almost opposite Queen's Cinema), not Beechcroft Settlement as arranged. Business meeting to be followed by members' discussion on "Do We Need Atheism?" Please note unavoidable change of hall.

DURHAM.—Durham Town Hall, Wednesday, July 29, at 8.0, Mr. C. Cohen—"Things Christians Ought to Know." Commencement at 7.30, admission free. On Thursday evening, July 30, Mr. Cohen will address an open-air meeting in the Market Place, Durham, at 7.30.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pittgrim Street): 3.0, Members meeting. Mr. R. Atkinson will lecture at Bigg Market at 7.0 p.m.

**LECTURE NOTICES - cont.**

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : Sunday, August 9, A Ramble to Roughlee. Meet outside Palace Theatre, Burnley Center, at 1.0 p.m. Nelson friends meet top of Carr Road, at 1.30 p.m. Tea and Games at Roughlee. Bring the children. All East Lancashire Freethinkers and friends are invited. Members of the Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. specially invited. At 7.45 p.m. a meeting will be held on Carr Road Recreation Ground, Nelson.

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