

The

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

Views and Opinions.

*On Lies and Lying.*  
A CONSISTENT liar is scarce; an artistic one is rare. It is not at all difficult to tell a lie, everyone does it sooner or later and more or less. The difficulty is to keep it up, above all to tell lies that have just that degree of acquaintance with probable truth as to fail to awaken doubt. These things mean more than a mere exercise in inventiveness, they involve a terrible strain on one's memory and imagination. When one gets a liar whose lies are well told, carefully rounded, supplied with what Pook-Bah called corroborative details calculated to give an air of verisimilitude to the whole, we have one whom we can regard with a certain admiration—much as we admire the lying of nature when animals mimic the coloration of others for attack or defence, or a lizard feigns to be a dead branch of a tree in order to devour an unsuspecting insect. From this company of liars worthy of admiration I exclude children. They are not usually liars, but merely romancers with an unchecked, untrained imagination, living in a fairyland of their own creation. I also exclude the average parson, the average politician and ninety-nine per cent of newspaper writers. All these have their lies prepared for them; they are merely echoes. They all tell the same tales year after year, generation after generation, with a mere variation in time and place and person. Go back, say, a hundred and fifty years, and you will find parsons telling the same lies about their opponents, and about their own position that they are telling to-day. Unbelievers were always more or less bad men, the glorious gospel was commanding the admiration of all good men and women, the revival of religion was just at hand. With politicians the attacks of one party on another were precisely what they are to-day, and the claims of each just what they are to-day. Select a series of newspaper articles on the Royal Family of a hundred years

ago and we learn that the qualities and grace of our rulers were then just what they are now. If there was a war on, our own soldiers were all gallant gentlemen, and the soldiers of those against us brutes, savages inspired by nothing but lust and greed. Reformers met with the same kind of treatment then as now, and the knights of the pen were almost as much in the market as to-day when a paper advertises that it has bought a writer from a rival concern as a football team buys a player. Each of these classes have their lies already prepared for them. All they need exercise care in is to see that the dates, the names, and, perhaps, the terminology is brought up to date. These are the mere followers of the small, but select body of imaginative geniuses who really deserve to be called liars, and how small this body is those only who have devoted time and labour to the subject are aware.

So it happens that, thanks to the inartistic quality of the would-be liar, the old saying that "Truth will out" is being constantly exemplified. Perhaps this may be because even while we hide facts, the facts remain. They are there demanding attention, and when the liars are off their guard, they receive recognition. Sooner or later the man who has been loudly declaring that two and two make five is off his guard enough to admit that they may equal four. A goat butting a brick wall wearies and presently admits the immovability of the wall. Truth may not be all-powerful, but it is very insistent.

\* \* \*

The Lie of Religion.

There are indications that one of the oldest and most honoured of lies in connexion with religion is wearing very thin. For generations parsons by the thousand have been protesting that religion is an indispensable and indestructible element in human nature. Hundreds of writers with an over-developed sense of the value of catering for the credulous, have repeated it. Well, indestructible, religion certainly is not, since there are millions in all parts of the world who actually get along without it. And now we have no less a person than the Archbishop of Canterbury pointing out that in Russia the fact of a whole generation being brought up without religion places Christianity with its back to the wall, fighting for its life. Within measure that is really the position all over the civilized world. And it is the more remarkable because of the powerful inducements offered people to at least pretend to be religious. The avenues of promotion are still easier to tread for those who profess religion, even when they are not closed to those who disown it. There are few inducements to break with religion, there are many to retain friendly relations. So that to have reached a position when it is admitted that religion really is losing its hold on the people, may be taken as a remarkable illustration of the truth

that the logic of facts will here and there conquer, in spite of its many circumstances that make for its defeat.

What Max Nordau called the lie of religion is wearing thin. So far as Christianity is concerned, that in its genuine form has become too greatly exposed for men and women of intelligence to entertain. Its doctrinal scheme, its "plan of salvation," its whole theory of man and the world has become simply ridiculous in the light of modern knowledge and modern needs. Its doctrines do not belong to our world at all. Nor is it the layman only who knows the historic Christian doctrines to be false, a large number of the clergy know it also. It is true they introduce in place of the historic lie what one may call a subsidiary one. The doctrines are not to be taken for what they said, but for the symbols they indicate. And, of course, by that plan you may convert anything into "spiritual truth," from the Virgin Birth to Old Mother Hubbard. Given an established Church, with wealth and a large body of preachers, and the latter might as easily have become the core of a religion and would have given the same scope for symbolical interpretations as does Christianity.

\* \* \*

#### The Danger of Discovery.

With religion as with an ordinary lie there is only one thing that is fatal to it—being found out. Lord Palmerstone is said to have advised his Cabinet that it did not matter what kind of a lie they told so long as they all told the same lie. Unfortunately—for religion—Godites have not always told the same lie. One has contradicted the other, and while it was quite certain they could not all be right, there was always the possibility that they might all be wrong. No reasonable person can believe a virgin birth to be true in Judea and false in India or ancient Egypt. It becomes a case of take the lot or reject the lot, and what can a reasonable person do but reject the lot? Of course, if those who believed in one tale never came across the other all might go well, but when they came across the other, and still another "other," what conclusion can the average man or woman draw? So it came about that Christianity was found out, and people began to treat its theory of things with complete contempt. It became a theory not even worth seriously discussing. How could it be otherwise? The Copernican theory shattered the Christian claims in the world of astronomy. The physics of Galileo and Newton killed its pretensions in another direction. Lyell and Darwin dealt it staggering blows in another. The heavens no longer declare the glory of God, the earth no longer illustrates his manipulative skill. "God" has become a discarded hypothesis, an atrophied organ of the body social. Gods are useless in a world where human intelligence has reached maturity.

\* \* \*

#### A Hopeless Fight.

The world is outgrowing religion. I emphasize the fact because it is that which makes the future of religion so hopeless. In the great majority of cases people do not reject religion as a consequence of an elaborate process of reasoning. In the main, they outgrow it. That is why the religious lie, tough as it is, persistent as it is, general as it is, yet tends to wear thin to the point of disappearance. It ceases to bear even a semblance to the truth. The wicked Atheist, rejecting religion because he wished to lead a life of wickedness has gone owing to the multiplication of Atheists who turned out to be quite ordinary people. Statistics on the one side and the growth of science on the other has killed the lie of the God who

interfered with the order of nature in order to benefit his friends or to punish his enemies. So one might run through the list of the various forms assumed by the religious lie during the ages. The religious lie is not yet so poor that none will do it reverence, but it is losing its force, and its upholders seem incapable of thinking of any new form that will serve to give it a fresh lease of life.

Mind I am not complaining at the religious liar, as such. My chief complaint is that he has not moved with the times. He is telling the same lies to-day as his forerunners were telling generations ago. In a sense, as I have said, lying is part of the natural order, and for those who believe in deity part of the "garment of God." The earth presents the lie of flatness, the stars of nearness, an epileptic seizure of an indwelling demon, most things are presented to us as what they are not, and only after long searching and much suffering do we discover the truth. So that in the end even nature gets found out and is forced to tell the truth. Parsons cannot hope to evade a similar fate. They cannot hope for ever to "get away" with the old lies, and it is pretty evident they have not ingenuity enough to invent new ones. Why not take the bull by the horns and tell the truth? I present the suggestion to them for what it is worth.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Gentle Art of Making Enemies.

"The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies."  
Lucretius.

"People swallow falsehood as a cat laps milk."  
G. W. Foot.

"Broad ideas are hated by partial ideas, that is, in fact, the struggle of progress."—Victor Hugo.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in one of those delightful essays in which he endeavoured to infuse "sweetness and light" into his hard-headed and commercially-minded countrymen, criticized the aggressive manner in literature and journalism. He called it the manner which "aims rather at an effect upon the blood and senses than upon the spirit and intellect, and loves hard hitting rather than persuading." Arnold himself, he it remembered, could hit very hard, but he always wore the velvet glove over the steel gauntlet, although it was difficult to persuade his many adversaries that he was a Bayard rather than a boxer.

This playful apostle of "sweetness and light" never seemed to tire of the pleasant pastime of bishop-baiting, and he kept the bench of Fathers-in-God in a flutter of indignation for years. His crowning flourish at Orthodoxy, however, was his comparison of the Christian Trinity to "three Lord Shaftesburys." This caused such a sensation that Arnold smilingly apologised by saying that he had no wish "to give pain to a distinguished philanthropist." As the apology was worse than the original offence, Arnold must be accorded the honours of the encounter.

Observe there was no malice. Like the church directed against the famous jackdaw of Rheims, no body was a penny the worse for it. Religious animosity, on the other hand, has always been responsible for much that was really brutal in speech and action. Roman Catholics burned Protestants, and Protestants killed Catholics. Both Catholics and Protestants murdered Freethinkers and heretics. The austere Milton left the peak of Parnassus and used the language of Billingsgate when he attacked priestcraft. The light-hearted Sydney Smith could no more speak civilly of the early Methodists than Mr. Hilaire Belloc or the editor of the *Morning Post*, of Jews.

Cobbet was more than usually brutal in his treatment of the inoffensive Quakers. That a Freethinker must be weak-minded or wicked is a postulate of Christian Evidence lecturers and other defenders of the Faith said to be delivered to the saints. The late Arthur Conan Doyle denounced Materialists with unsavoury rhetoric, a form of speech he never used before he embraced the Spook Evangel.

Old Doctor Sam Johnson was not a bad-hearted man, but Goldsmith was right when he said: "There is no arguing with Johnson, for when his pistol misses fire he knocks you down with the butt-end." Johnson was at his worst concerning Freethinkers. He calls Bolingbroke "a scoundrel and a coward." Yet the doctor had never read the author he so savagely pillories. "I have never read Bolingbroke's impiety," he remarks with an unexpected lack of humour. To Johnson, Freethinkers are vermin, which his windy rhetoric would fain exterminate. Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire are all scoundrels to him. Men like Priestley and Price were an abomination. Boswell tells us that when Dr. Price came into a company where Johnson was, the latter instantly walked out of the room. Small wonder that old Sam said that Rousseau was "one of the worst of men, a rascal who ought to be hunted out of society."

Shelley's known Atheism incurred the hatred of Christians, and no enmity is more relentless or more venomous. The abuse which was supposed to have killed John Keats was the quintessence of politeness compared with the assault and battery made upon Shelley. Here, for example, was what the *Gentleman's Magazine* had to say of the poet when the news of his untimely death reached England:—

Percy Bysshe Shelley is a fitter subject for a penitentiary dying speech than a landing elegy; for the muse of the rope rather than of the cypress.

That was what a periodical edited by a Christian gentleman for Christian gentlemen had to say of the young Freethinker who had devoted his short life of twenty-nine years to the service of Humanity. Not long before another representative of the "Religion of Love," we recall, met Shelley in the post office at Pisa, called him "a damned Atheist," and knocked him down.

This malevolence still survives. Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton, one of the most prominent of present-day critics, has used his strength tyrannously in the service of the most reactionary of the Christian Churches. He has nothing but jibes and insults for the great "intellectuals." Chesterton dubs Thomas Hardy a "village Atheist." In writing of Swinburne's *Songs Before Sunrise*, he tries to belittle those superb lyrics by saying that they were songs before a sunrise that never arrived. Emily Bronte, one of the most remarkable women of the nineteenth century, is described as "unsociable as a storm at midnight." According to Chesterton, the great Victorians were all "lame giants." And this is the critic who professes to convict science of irrationality, and who challenges the dogmatism of the Agnostics, and finds "liberty" inside the barred cells of Romish monasteries and nunneries.

As editor of the *Freethinker*, G. W. Foote was the target of abuse. His waste-paper basket was seldom without an insulting letter or postcard sent to him by orthodox people. "I have been accused of all the crimes in the calendar, except murder," he once remarked. "That solitary exception is due to the difficulty of finding a corpse." Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh were subjected to similar treatment, and even her sex never prevented lime being thrown at her, or other manifestations of physical violence at the hands of Christian fanatics.

In the Great Republic of the West, Christian prejudice barred Robert Ingersoll from important positions in the political world. A man of his consummate ability might easily have attained the proud position of President of the United States. Fortunately for us, Ingersoll esteemed duty more highly than dollars.

All this abuse is not solely owing to bad manners. These broad-minded men and women were abused and described as bad and vicious persons with a definite purpose. Christians deliberately cast dust in the eyes of the unthinking public, and hoped to incapacitate them from seeing the strength of the Freethought position. They sought to discredit the cause, and encourage the idea that intellectual liberty is inseparably associated with the wildest licence and lawlessness.

MIMNERMUS.

## Verbal Humbugs.

To those who make a study of the functions of language there is something rather comic about the halo of sanctity which certain words in our language have managed to acquire. "Altruism" is one of them; "patriotism" is another; "charity" is a third. It seems as though no one were able to utter them without metaphorically taking his hat off or doing obeisance. Any paragraph in which they appear is almost certain to have some sort of moral lesson or solemn appeal tacked on to it somewhere. While anyone who might presume to treat of them lightly is sure to be suspected, sooner or later, of Bolshevism, Nihilism or even some worse Ism—if there happened to be one handy.

But though I am a great respecter of words, as cogs in a machine which needs careful handling, I cannot bring myself to regard them as having "souls" or "personalities" or "characters" worthy of worship. So, despite the fearful odium which I may incur from the faithful—the faithful congregation of verbalaters—I purpose to show that, regarded in any other light than a symbol of reference, at least one of the holy trinity mentioned above is nothing more nor less than a sanctimonious humbug. And the greatest of these is "charity."

"Charity," according to the Bible, "suffereth long and is kind"; and in view of subsequent developments there is little to be surprised at in this remark. But since there appears to be some doubt as to whether "charity" in the Bible is the same as what we mean by the word nowadays, I must perforce ignore that medley of "inspired" ambiguity and seek for a definition of the term in some other less vague source of information. Also since I wish to confine myself to the meanings in which it is most commonly used and understood, I shall ignore all metaphorical uses of the word. (For example, where "charity" means "kindliness" or "broad-mindedness.") In the literal modern sense, then, and according to most dictionaries "charity" means either "gifts bestowed gratuitously on the poor or the needy," or "institutions mainly dependent upon such gifts."

On the face of it there does not appear to be anything very obnoxious about the word. And, as a linguistic symbol, this is, of course, true. But the question which needs to be explained is, why has it attained to that peculiar sanctity of application which renders it so sweet to the ears of a large section of the public? How is it, too, that donors to charity are always admired by their fellow-men, and that so many of them are rewarded in return by having honours gratuitously bestowed upon them? And lastly, how is it that the poor and needy are not similarly honoured for providing suitable opportunities which,

but for their poverty and need, would never present themselves to their richer brethren?

If charity were, of itself, the beautiful thing which we are led to believe, then the halo it has acquired should shine with equal lustre upon all who are necessary to its existence as a word or deed. But it doesn't. It distributes its light with a brilliance which increases in proportion to the increase of wealth, and leaves the very causes of its existence in a murky gloom.

Let us get down to facts. Who can afford to be charitable—literally, not metaphorically—except those who can afford to be? And what is there in that situation to make "charity" beautiful? One might with equal logic admire "extravagance," because only those can be extravagant who can afford to be so. Again, who can give gratuitously to anyone, poor or otherwise, but those who have more than they need, or those who know that they will receive an equivalent in return? And what is there in that to make "charity" beautiful? The person who gives to charity and imagines that he is doing something worthy of merit either hoaxes himself or is a fool—or both. For it is only the thriftless fool who gives away what he really needs; and it is only the self-deceiver who gives away what he does not really need, while enjoying the pleasure of having given what he hoaxes himself he cannot do without.

I have used the term "self-deceiver"; but that is not strictly applicable to all non-thriftless donors to charity. We may grant that some, who flatter themselves that they have given of their superfluity "till it hurts," do actually rest content with both eyes glued in admiration upon their own beneficence, and with both ears stuffed with the cotton-wool platitude of "Virtue is its own reward." Yet there remain others who let one eye rove hopefully upon the prospects of outside favours in return for their deed, and who keep one ear open to catch the sweet sound of some wholly undeserved "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." And what is there in either of these attitudes that does not stamp "Charity" as a humbug?

It may be argued that no one knows exactly what he really stands in need of and what is mere superfluity. And on this account it may be held that it is better to preach "charity" than "selfishness." But this is mere playing with words and avoidance of facts. For, in the first place, the correct antithesis to charity is not selfishness, but thrift. (The popular antithesis to thrift, namely, extravagance, is entirely false. For since extravagance means the lavish expenditure of money upon unnecessary things, its precise opposite must be parsimony—not thrift.) Secondly, in the realm of fact it is absurd to maintain that no one can know what he really needs or does not need. For if this were true, then no Government would be able to specify a minimum taxable income; and it would also be impossible for any man to estimate what he could safely spend or give away without becoming bankrupt.

Even if one admits that, owing to fluctuations in prices or to the incidence of unforeseen expenses, no man can say exactly to a farthing how much he needs for the present and the near future, this does not in any way make a virtue of such charity as he may choose to indulge in. For whether he be accurate or inaccurate in his budget estimates, the fact remains that whoever parts with what he thinks he cannot afford to give away is thriftless and therefore to be condemned; while he who gives of what he considers to be his superfluity is, as far as he knows, depriving himself of nothing. The man who donates to charity not knowing whether he can or cannot afford to do so is no better than a gambler.

I am well aware that to remove the halo from

charity's head must prove a sore blow to the many of moderate means who have been accustomed to "effect economies" in their expenditure for the sake of some pet charity. But it is high time that we all—and especially Freethinkers—should rid ourselves of that false self-esteem which comes so easily to most of us by inheritance from our religious forbears, or by blind acceptance of their illogical verbalotry. We are not here to encourage self-esteem or mutual admiration, but to promote logical thought and action such that the conditions of each and all may become better and happier in the present. And false values will never assist us in the attainment of that end.

If we give of our superfluity, let us do so with a live sense of the fact that we have more than we need. Or else let us be wise in our living and in our thrift, such that we do not add to the fearful burden of poverty which already exists in the world. But in any case let us not pat ourselves on the back, nor expect return or praise from others, when circumstances favour us with the opportunity to indulge in what is commonly known as "charity." For the halo of sanctity which surrounds this word is, as I hope I have shown, nothing more than a relic of the false values which arise from that pernicious and religious habit of verbalotry, or the worship of verbal humbugs.

C. S. FRASER.

## "The Bible and the Public Schools."

Address delivered before the Rotary Club of New York  
August 6, 1931, Hotel Commodore, 42nd Street and  
Lexington Avenue, New York City.

(Concluded from page 588.)

A child must be taught the morality we wish him to follow. In facing the facts of life there is no magic wand by which we can accomplish what we desire. We must work and labour for what we want. We must be trained to perform our labours. And it is a slow and painful process. Anyone who has taught children knows how difficult it is. And if any of you gentlemen present do not know how difficult it is to teach, just remember the task you had the first time you tried to teach your friend how to play golf, or your wife how to drive a car.

No, my friends, the teaching of morality is a far more difficult task than most people realize.

Give us knowledge, and a sense of understanding, and a high order of morality cannot help but follow.

Not very long ago this city was stirred by the exploits of a young desperado. I am referring to "two-gun Crowley." The memory of his capture is still too vivid in our imagination to need repeating here. He boldly confessed the murder of an officer of the law. I want to cite his case to show you the difference between religion and morality.

If you tell me that what he was taught is not the religion that you would teach, then I must ask who is to determine the religion that is to be taught, and what I raise that question there comes to my mind the whole history of religious antagonism and wars; with their massacres and butcheries that have stained this earth with innocent blood for the past 2,000 years.

After Crowley's capture and his incarceration he was approached by the District Attorney. He said: "Of course I killed that cop. I don't like cops. No, I don't want any lawyer. Get it over with. Repent? Hell, no! My conscience was never so clear in my life. What I want is a square meal."

The kind-hearted District Attorney suggested a

thick beefsteak. "No, sir: no meat for me," said the young killer. "Don't you know this is *Friday*?"

What did his religion teach him? That it was a greater sin to eat meat on Friday than to murder a man.

When Earle Peacox was apprehended after the frightful murder of his wife he was found to be the proud possessor of a medal for six years of perfect attendance at Sunday school.

And recently a man of the Jewish faith was arrested for some infraction of the law. He refused to eat, while in jail, any but kosher food! *He was not going to take any chances to arouse the wrath of Jehovah.*

These are but three of the hundreds of instances that are happening daily to prove that religion and morality are not the same.

And I have in my hand a letter received some time ago, from Mr. Lewis E. Lawes, Warden of Sing Sing Prison. It is in answer to a letter of mine asking for the religious beliefs of the inmates electrocuted during the past ten years.

To me this is a very significant letter.

And unless we are ready and willing to face the facts we would not be fair to ourselves nor to the important subject under discussion.

Mr. Lawes' figures for those executed in Sing Sing for ten years are as follows: Catholics, 6.1%; Protestants, 26.6%; Hebrews, 6.1%; Pagans, 2%; Irreligious, 0.3%.

If what Mr. Tuttle tells you about religion and crime were true, the reverse of these figures would prevail. Not only are these figures true of Sing Sing Prison, but they are substantially the same in every country, almost without exception.

*This condition proves that the more intense the religious instruction, the less is the sense of moral responsibility!*

Professor Westermarck, in his monumental work, *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, says that it has been "noticed that a high degree of religious devotion is frequently accompanied by a great laxity of morals." Of the Bedouins, he found that with one or two exceptions, "the practice of religion may be taken as a sure index of low morality in a tribe."

And in quoting an authority of the Mohammedan people, he records that "those Moslems who attended to their prayers most regularly were the greatest scoundrels."

Among two hundred Italian murderers, Ferri did not find one that was irreligious; and Naples, which has the worst record of any European city for crimes against the person, is also the most religious city in Europe.

On the other hand, according to Havelock Ellis, "it seems extremely rare to find intelligent irreligious men in prison."

And Laing, the historian, who was anything but a skeptic, observed that there was no country in Europe where there was so much morality and so little religion as in Switzerland.

So, when Mr. Tuttle tells you that religion is the cure-all of crime, he makes that statement either designedly, deliberately and maliciously, knowing it to be false, or he makes it through ignorance.

If the former, it disqualifies him as an honest representative, and if the latter, it precludes him from speaking with authority upon this important subject.

Does Mr. Tuttle think for a moment that if religion, as he wants it taught, could cure crime, that we would be opposed to it?

On the contrary, we would welcome it with open arms.

What Mr. Tuttle and the Interfaith Committee propose has been tried and failed. That is why we are so much opposed to it. His method has been discredited. We want a better and more efficacious method.

But I do not think that Mr. Tuttle or the Interfaith Committee are seriously interested in the question of crime. It is religion that they are so much concerned about.

Another question that is sometimes raised while discussing the Bible in the schools, is that we do not object to the reading of Shakespeare.

Why should we?

Is Shakespeare imposed upon the children by law as of divine revelation? Is Shakespeare read in the schools without note or comment?

On the contrary, Shakespeare is read and discussed and studied for the good that can be gotten from him, for the knowledge that can be gained from the study of the greatest literary mind that ever lived upon this earth. And when the Bible is put into our educational institution to be studied as Shakespeare is now studied, no one will be better pleased than we are. Because we advocate the study of the Bible. We advocate that it be studied with the same searching inquiry as any other book.

We do not for one moment want to convey the impression that our efforts to take the Bible out of the public schools is an attempt to interfere with the rights that parents possess to instruct their children in religion if they so desire.

If parents wish to instruct their children in a religious doctrine there is plenty of time *outside* of the school hours and on Saturdays and Sundays for this purpose. To ask the public schools to do the work that properly belongs upon the shoulders of the parents and the churches is not only an unjust imposition, but reveals a shameful shirking of their duty.

And it is a peculiar situation that those who are trying to uphold the law and the Constitution are put on the defensive by being called "intolerant" and "fanatical," while the churches and their paid representatives who are deliberately making every effort to violate the law to attain their ends, are put in the light of the injured party.

The attitude of the churches in trying to break into the public schools and break down the safeguards which were so wisely provided in the Constitution reminds me of a man who, after robbing a store, runs down the street shouting "stop, thief," for the purpose of distracting the attention of the people for his crime.

*How can the churches plead respect for law, when they are doing their utmost to violate it for their own selfish purposes.* They are merely trying to bootleg religion into the public schools, and bootlegging is obnoxious even if done by a churchman.

There is an old principle of justice, that if you come into a court of equity you must come with clean hands.

The injection of religion in the public schools breeds prejudice and hatred among the pupils. It intensifies their religious convictions, and discord and dissention must inevitably follow.

The fight to take the Bible out of the public school and stop the singing of hymns is a movement that has been going on for decades. It is an endeavour to keep both our public institutions free of religious influences, as well as to keep up with the march of intellectual progress.

The Bible cannot legally be read or taught in the State of Ohio. It cannot legally be read or taught in the State of Wisconsin, California, Illinois, Kentucky, Kansas or Washington.

And the last State to my knowledge where a

decision has been secured on this question comes from the far Western State of South Dakota. It was rendered by the highest court of that State in June, 1929.

After reviewing fully the question, the court said :—

A review of the history and a comparison of our institutions with those of other nations where religion is under State control, reveals the wisdom of our policy. It will not do, by an ill-advised decision, to impair the liberty of conscience so carefully safeguarded in this country.

The charge is made that without the reading of the Bible our public schools are Godless.

The same court had this to say in answer to that :—

Another promise to be firmly fixed is that the reading of the Bible, or the offering of prayer, or both, in opening the exercises, is devotional, and not a part of the secular work of the school. One serious complaint made by religious people is that by excluding such exercises we thereby make our schools Godless. Such complaints argue that the converse would be true if such exercises were allowed, indicating that such exercises are considered devotional.

I do not think that the members of the highest court of the State of South Dakota are Communists or Bolsheviks, but I want to take the opportunity of congratulating them on their sound Americanism.

Secularism, gentlemen—the separation of Church and State—is the magic principle that has made this country the most outstanding success among the Governments of the world.

When the time comes when such a system of government no longer exists in this country, the time will come when religious freedom will cease.

The reading of the Bible and the injection of religion into the public schools is the entering wedge that will eventually destroy this principle.

And the old adage is still true that "a little leak will sink a big ship" . . .

Would Mr. Tuttle and the misguided members of the Interfaith Committee have us surrender this principle? Can an intelligent person, looking back upon the history of these Governments which sanctioned religion in their public institutions, and reviewing the fearful destruction wrought by a connexion of Church and State, want to see such a blight fall upon this Republic?

The public schools of this State provide for the secular education of our children; the teaching of these fundamentals which we all agree upon as the basis of truth and knowledge. They must be kept free from sectarian influences, influences which are diametrically opposite to all the principles of education and learning.

I have the utmost confidence in the efficacy of our public school system. Its work has been most commendable; its future of great potentiality. I hold that the public schools are the most fundamental and most important institution in America. It is indeed the "melting-pot," and we do not intend to sit idly by while over-zealous forces seek to "season" it to their liking.

We send our children to the public schools, not to be made Protestants, Catholics or Jews, but to make American citizens, and to be instructed in the fundamentals of education. They are sent to the public schools to be taught that each and every one is equal before the law, and that each possess the inalienable right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

And that man is an enemy to this country, an enemy to its ideals and institutions, who seeks to corrupt that system with religion.

The record of the public schools needs no defence. They are a shining light to America and her principles of equality. Nowhere in the world has educa-

tion better shown itself than in the splendid men and women who are the products of the public school system of this country.

For that reason we are opposed to the reading and the teaching of the Bible in the public schools.

We are opposed to the Bible in the public schools because we want to eradicate religious prejudice, bigotry and hatred. We are opposed to the Bible in the public schools because we want our children to receive the finest secular education that the world has to offer.

We are opposed to the Bible in the public schools because we want our boys and girls to grow up to be intellectually free and morally courageous men and women.

We are opposed to the Bible in the public schools because we want the future citizens of this country to be Americans in the best sense of that word.

JOSEPH LEWIS.

### A Talk About Sin.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Thus Matins or Evensong may begin. Although cleansed "from all righteousness," the same service contains a daily petition for worshippers for "the forgiveness" of their sins. What about the cleansing? It does not last twenty-four hours! In the Roman Church sin is divided into two classes, mortal and venial sin. Non-attendance at Mass on Sundays, Saint's Days that are "days of obligation," and the "greater festivals" is, if without "reasonable excuse," a mortal sin. But lying, and indeed a large proportion of it, may be only a venial sin. Again, if you are a "strict and particular Baptist," or even a "free-churchman" of the orthodox evangelical variety, sin need not greatly trouble you. Why? The "saved" are predestinate so to be. "Free grace" is sufficient for them. They may fall away (i.e. "sin") but, once among the elect, they will be saved at the last, and, if lucky, be among those who are expecting to "be caught up to meet the Lord in the air" on his still eagerly anticipated but long delayed return. If you are not so strict as this, say a Salvationist, you sing (with unsuspected humour and candour) :—

"I was to God a stranger  
Till Jesus took me in;  
He saved my life from danger  
And saved my soul from sin."

"Sin" is an essential part of all religion of the Christian variety. The Protestant "Pentecostals" and "Holiness Conventions"—one is held every year at Keswick—and the Divine "Perfection" of Rome's multitude of canonized and beatified "saints," show how in practice Christian teaching admits that what it calls sin (which is, in fact, a purely theological and therefore non-existent bogey), is not "cleansed," is not unknown to the "saved," and is, if the truth is to be told, the *raison d'être* for the whole machinery for the "salvation" of "souls." If all the pious were "saints" in the Catholic sense, or "redeemed" in the Protestant sense, priests and parsons would be out of business. But they are, as they admit every time they say the General Confession, all "miserable sinners," and hence priests and pastors.

Give me the liberty to know, to think, to believe, and to utter freely according to conscience, above all other liberties.—Milton.

The illusion that times that were better than those that are, has probably pervaded all ages.—H. Greeley.

Look up and not down; look forward and not back; look out and not in; and lend a hand.—E. E. Hale.

## Acid Drops.

In connexion with a proposed new Censorship of films a great effort is being made to have it believed that that elusive and evasive entity, called "the churches" has a right to be represented at any Advisory Committee that may be set up to act with the Censor, and nearly all the religious journals, at least of the Nonconformist hue, are bleating about the dangers to the younger generation of what they call, not always with good reason, "sex" films. Alongside this campaign is the cry for so-called "temperance reform," and, indeed, for a revival of all sorts of prohibitions. We hope the powers that be will not overestimate the weight of these elements. What they count for at the polls can be judged by the verdict of one who is accounted the supreme strategist of our politics, Mr. Lloyd George.

Writing on Prohibition in his *Where are We Going* (p. 136), he says: "You cannot secure unanimity of action on temperance reform even amongst the religious forces. If they were united in their demand, and prepared to enforce it at elections, nothing would resist their power. Between elections they seem agreed in their policy; but no sooner does the party bugle sound than they all fall into rank in opposite armies, and the temperance banner is hurriedly packed into the cupboard for use after the polls have been declared. It is then brought out once more to wave over the tabernacle, and its wrinkles are straightened out in the breeze." Mr. Lloyd George goes on to say he has "seen the fiercest champions of local option supporting brewers at elections," and that "the exigencies of party conflict" are fatal to this propaganda. This is only another way of saying, what is the truth, that the "religious forces," when it comes to vote getting, do not count. Why, then, should they be assumed to possess an "irresistible force" when it is a question of action in the much less democratic and doubtful manner of appointing committees of inquisitors to dictate to the public as to what it shall eat and drink, and by whom it shall be entertained? There is no more "breeze" of public opinion to take the wrinkles" out of the flag of repression, than their was reality in that supposed German machine that was denounced by a well known M.P. as being imported into this country to "take the wrinkles out of tripc."

There are, in London, declares the Bishop of Southwark, 30,000 basement dwellings unfit for occupation; they house 100,000 people. Obviously, this state of affairs calls for a truly Christian remedy on the lines of "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor." The Church of England is a very wealthy institution with immense possessions. Why not realize some of these and erect new dwellings for the 100,000 people who need them? That would be a truly Christ-like gesture—and a magnificent advertisement for the only true Church as by law established. We fear, however, that this will be regarded as a very fantastic suggestion. For the wealth of the Church is primarily intended for erecting pretty edifices for God to hang about in and for maintaining grand palaces for bishops, not to mention roomy country rectories. Let us not forget that Christ died on the Cross so that bishops and lesser ecclesiastics might not have to dwell in cellars.

The late Queen Victoria seems to have set a fashion in jubilee celebrations, and this year is to see one of the Revised Version of the Bible, which, according to the Bishop of Norwich, who has some curious things to say about it in an article in the *Sunday Times* (August 30) "occupied 792 days of six hours." The Revised Version has never been popular, not having the "literary flavour" of the Authorised Version, or, what the Bishop called "the beautiful English of 1611." Accuracy, it is to be noted, is less important to piety, than charm of expression. Dr. Hort, of Greek Testament fame, is quoted as saying that "all inspiration is verbal," but if that is right, revision seems to be out of the question. Dean

Burgon, one of those who attacked the revised version, said, apropos of verbal inspiration, that the Bible, "every word of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the most high, supreme, unflinching, unerring." Yet, according to the Bishop of Norwich, the translators differed as their own translations, and, on their difference, vital doctrines depend.

"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," for example, was changed, in the revised version to "in Christ Jesus our Lord," and Bishop Westcott "vigorously pointed out the importance of the new rendering, because it safeguarded the truth that eternal life does not come to men merely through the channel of our Lord, but from their union with him." The Bishop of Norwich says, "Who shall judge"? God knows; but how, in these circumstances, any believer in the inspiration of the word of God can be sure of the exact meaning and significance of a single word of it is difficult to understand. It is a "misconception," says the Bishop of Norwich, "that the Bible stands apart from other books." Yet it does stand apart from all other books if his Lordship is right in adding that "whatever version of it is employed, it will teach its readers, according to their spiritual insight, something of the needs of man, and still more of the grace of God." If, however, this "Divine Library" depends on (a) what the original really does mean, and (b) the degree of "spiritual insight" in the reader—whatever that may be—surely the more it is translated the worse the confusion will become.

It is, of course, the notion of revelation that creates for the Christian this thorny problem of inspiration, whether of Book or Church or both. A learned, courageous, and somewhat heterodox defender of Christianity, the late Rev. George Tyrrell, has stated this position with characteristic clarity, and his statement has only to be read to understand why the case of revelation and inspiration stand or fall together, and why they have, in fact, both fallen. Tyrrell wrote: "Revelation comes in largely to aid the insufficiency of reason and to secure that, what otherwise would be known only with difficulty and hesitation by a few, may be known easily, certainly and universally; and though we may never say that revelation is a strict exigency of human nature, yet in this matter it is almost evident that if revelation were denied to us, some substitute would need to have been provided if our race was to rise from barbarism to any sort of higher development." *Hard Sayings*, p. 70. That substitute is reason, and apart from it, we have to agree with Father Tyrrell when he says a few lines later than those just quoted, "the babe just born knows as much of the world and its ways as the wisest of us can know of the ways of God." It does indeed.

As the readers of this paper may have suspected, we regularly read the *Church Times*, among other organs of periodical piety. A recent issue is unusually full of good things, good that is to say from the standpoint of controversial quotability. First in order comes the leader which may or may not be by the editor whose most appropriate name is Dark. It is entitled "Ghandi and Christ," and the former is described as a "mystery," and, adds the writer, "a mystery in flesh and blood is uncanny." Yet, unless we are misinformed, "a mystery in flesh and blood" is the foundation of the religion of the *Church Times*. We never thought to see that very mystery described as uncanny in these most religious columns. And that is not all. "It is on its acceptance of coercion as a social principle that Ghandi's main criticism of Christianity rests."

Christians know, says the writer, "what apparently Mr. Ghandi does not, that children cannot be left to play with fire." Truly has it been said that "open confession is good for the soul." Again it is asserted that "Mr. Ghandi's religion" is predominantly a religion of crisis. He wants to usher in the kingdom by one cataclysmic act and seal it with his life blood. In this he is not unchristian. "There were many in the primitive Church who cherished a similar expectation." "But"—and this "but" is well worth noting—"but a fuller comprehen-

sion of the Christian faith and the method of its working cured them." Then we get this remarkable conclusion, "what cured the early church will cure modern India also." After all this we are asked to believe that by reason of the Christian religion "practical confidence is encouraged that all things are in fact being made new." We will leave the leader at that.

Another feature of this issue of the same journal is a sermon preached by the Rev. A. E. Baker of York, on the forty-first anniversary of the death of John Henry Cardinal Newman. This gentleman, a beneficed clergyman of "the Protestant reformed religion established by law" says, "when a man has been brought up to believe that the Church of England is a Protestant body," and then feels the need of "supernatural help," he discovers that "Catholicism offers just that help . . . Newman left the Church of England because he learned to be a Catholic, and the rulers of that Church, in his day, would not suffer men to practise the Catholic religion." The moral of which seems to be one less creditable to the present Anglo-Catholics than their reason for Newman's "conversion," namely, that as the rules of the Protestant reformed Church of England do, notwithstanding that its Protestantism is the *raison d'être* of its establishment, allow men who are paid to teach that masses are "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits" to teach that it is a mortal sin not to attend mass on Sunday, these gentlemen are justified in trying to "satisfy the inspirations" of Catholics, and incidentally to receive anything from £300 a year and a house for so doing. Mr. Baker also boasts that "there are more monks and nuns in the Church of England to-day than there were before the Reformation." Also "there is no surer test of the development of Catholicism in the Church of England than the growth of the practice of (auricular) "confession." It was a liberal Catholic, the late Dr. Mivart, who said, "There is nothing at once so pathetic and so absurdly grotesque as for members of the Anglican Church to pretend to be Catholics—yet they are very effective workers for Rome." That being the case, as it undoubtedly is, the sooner these Anglo-Catholic gentlemen have to rely for their support on those who desire their services and cease to derive all or part of their incomes from an impoverished State hard up for money to balance its next Budget—the better.

There has been meeting at Geneva a three-days Conference of the International Peace Through Religion Movement. This, like many other high-sounding things, is "much sound and fury signifying nothing." How could it signify more? "All the great religions of the world"—said to be eleven—will "co-operate." How much their co-operation will bring forth is indicated by the fact that, following the orthodox precedent for "much ado about nothing," they have appointed "a Commission" to "study the causes of war." We do not need much study to hit upon one of the most terrible and consistent causes of war, namely religion. Wars were never more frequent than in the "ages of faith." Jehovah was a god of battles, who not only fought for his followers, but encouraged them to commit atrocities, and blessed treachery and had his special benediction for those who exterminated the enemy, even men, women and little children. Jesus is said to have come, not to bring peace on earth, but a sword. The first real effort to secure the substitution of reason for force in modern times is the Covenant of the League of Nations. It contains no reference to the Deity, and its signatories do not propose, so far as its provisions are concerned, any reference whatever to supernatural sanctions in international affairs. If only Ultramontanism was not the enemy of true internationalism, and if only Christianity, Protestant and Catholic, was not the friend of war, the task of those who, from human motives and for humanity's sake seek to purge the world of this scourge would be less difficult and more likely to succeed than is the case at present.

A member of the staff of a religious weekly who is tramping the country in search of "copy," regrets to notice the numbers of chapels closed during weekdays. To point out the bad policy in this he says: "When, in rare instances, a shop-keeper keeps short, inconvenient

and unusual hours, it is soon a case for the bankruptcy court. *Verb sap.*" On the other hand, we suggest, there is not much advantage to a shop-keeper with failing trade if he does keep open at all hours, when the goods he has for sale are not what the people want. As regards the praying-shops, we think the parsons can be credited with enough business instinct to open shop more often if there was any demand for such opening.

The Lord's Day Observance Society protested against the "fly over" for the Schneider Trophy taking place on Sunday. "Can we wonder" (says the amusing Secretary of this organization) "at the prevailing national distress when God's Commandments are wantonly flouted in this way?" But at least one of God's prophets "went up in a chariot of fire"; and it used to be taught that, upon the Second Coming of Christ, "those who are alive and remain will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air"; and Enoch "was not, but God took him," though not, of course, by aeroplane. As the race concerned was postponed from Saturday because heavy clouds and a rough sea made it impossible, and as nobody believes, except for hymn-singing purposes, that praying is any good for "those in peril on (or over) the sea; and as the Lord is responsible for the weather—to the great puzzlement of the clergy this harvest time—it is really hard to see why a little consideration for the safety of these air-men should be "a breach of God's commandments," and "an indelible stain on Portsmouth." We may add the Lord's servants, in the person of the officers of the Lord's Day Observance Society have an eye on the value of publicity in the Sunday newspapers which suggests that when it comes to business they are like the old lady who said she preferred *terra cotta*.

Writing about young Methodists who migrate to London, a pious scribe says that far too many of them are cutting themselves adrift from the churches, "to their own loss as well as that of the churches." Yes, it is indeed disheartening to see these young people failing to profit by the careful training inculcated from the cradle. Their "religious instinct" has been delicately matured, and they have been constantly drilled in the habit of regular church-attendance. Then they suddenly discover that they can live quite happily without the parson, and the prayers, and the hymns, and the gossip, and the bun struggles, and bright brotherhood items of amusement. How infinitely sad it is that they don't appreciate what they have lost, nor spare a thought for the future of parsons!

### Fifty Years Ago.

RELIGIONS, as Heine said, die but of one disease, that of being found out. In the accelerated march of humanity a larger and larger quantity of superstitious impediments gets left behind. The place that Christian doctrines will hold in the mind of coming generations is best measured by their estimation by the thinkers of this. With one notable exception the Christian Church cannot boast an intellect even of the second order, and John Henry Newman is to-day a cardinal only because his penetrating mind saw no logical halting place between Catholicism and the rejection of all theological dogmas. The late Earl Beaconsfield, whose Freethinking opinions have been so interestingly exposed by the Marquis of Queensberry, makes one of the characters in his last novel, Eudymion, say "Sensible men are all of the same religion. "And pray what is that?" enquired the Prince. "Sensible men never tell." This like so many others of the author's brilliant sayings, is a plagiarism. The epigram here recorded was uttered by Lord Chesterfield. It expresses a deal of truth. Educated men are agreed in the main as to the worth and weight of Christian dogmas; only some, a very few of them, tell out plainly what they think. But the Christian Creed is of that nature that if really believed it must evidence itself in life. By their fruits shall ye know them. And what class in Europe, save a few ignorant peasants, really show in their lives that they believe in Christianity?

The "Freethinker," September 18, 1881.



TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DR. R. K. NOYES.—Thanks for congratulations. The article might form part of a volume on *Essays in Freethinking*. We hope to issue a fourth volume so soon as some other things are out of the way.

CINE CERE.—It always seems possible to find money for foolish purposes. Perhaps that is because the fools are in the majority, or because so many fools make money, or because the "cute" ones find it pays to provide fools with institutions that will confirm them in their folly. Thanks. We are feeling much better for our brief rest. It was only when we slacked off that we realized how much the rest was needed.

F. ROGERS.—We had not thought of reprinting Mr. Blake's article as a leaflet, but might consider it when issuing new ones.

J. CLAYTON.—A little late in acknowledging your letter, but we are quite pleased to know that your lectures gave rise to so much discussion. That is as it should be.

P. HODDAY.—Received and shall appear shortly.

J. KEY.—As you say, the parsons will exploit anything. We are obliged for pamphlet which will prove useful.

W. I. ROWE (Rhodesia).—We quite appreciate your feelings when contemplating the slow development of humanity. Still, there is a move in the right direction, and that is encouraging. We have to work for the improvement of institutions and education, which means a better environment to which the rising generation will adapt itself. At present the weight of both are in the wrong direction.

H. JAMISON.—We will deal with the matter you raise presently. But the few days holiday has left us with a frightful pile of arrears to work off. It makes us realize how much we get through normally.

D. MATTHEWS (Johannesburg).—Why not form an overseas Branch of the N.S.S. in Johannesburg? There are plenty of Freethinkers there and a number of readers of the *Freethinker*. Pleased you consider *God and the Universe* a "useful and notable book." Cuttings useful. Your letter is quite a good one.

R. COLES.—We do not expect all readers of the *Freethinker* to agree with what is written, nor each writer to agree on all points with the rest. It takes all sorts to make a world.

T. H. GUNNING.—We had very good reasons for acting as we did. We imagine you have been misinformed as to the facts.

B. L. BOWERS.—Excellent, but just a little off our line—particularly at the present juncture.

S. W. JAGGON.—We are afraid there is small chance of the *Freethinker* being reduced in price while other things remain as they are. Mr. Fysh is indeed a "staunch Freethinker." He is an old friend of ours. We knew him some thirty-five years ago before he left this country. Anecdote useful.

A.C.W.—We think the matter might well rest where it is. As you say, your main point is not really disputed.

W. M. HEWITSON (Rhodesia).—Pleased to have your letter. You are not the only one who regrets not having made acquaintance with the *Freethinker* earlier. We are also pleased to have your opinion that the *Freethinker* enables one to get a real grasp of the Freethought Movement, both historically and philosophically. Hope to hear from you again.

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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Letters for the Editor of the "*Freethinker*" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

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One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

Sugar Plums.

We must again ask the indulgence of our readers. Mr. Cohen took advantage of being in Berlin to attend the International Conference to take a few days holiday, which is the only holiday he has had, and will have this year. There now remains a pile of arrears to clear up, before he commences his autumn lectures on October 4 at Liverpool.

An account of the Berlin Conference appears in another column, from the pen of Mr. McLaren. From the point of view of numbers and enthusiasm the gatherings were quite successful. But on the Continent the Freethought Movement differs somewhat from our own from two causes. First, public men who are Freethinkers call themselves such, without adopting one of any number of aliases, and therefore the whole movement gains a certain public standing it lacks here; secondly, the Socialist Movement is unmistakably and avowedly Freethinking, which gives Freethought a better political status. There are, of course, large numbers of Freethinkers outside the Socialist Parties, but Socialism and Freethought are inseparable. These things combine to place Freethought in quite a different aspect before the general public.

But the strong association of Socialism with Freethought places the latter movement in a numerical inferiority at such gatherings as those lately held, and, unfortunately, we think, the adoption of the new plan places those Freethought organizations which aim at keeping Freethought and politics apart emphasizes this. This may prevent the National Secular Society from adopting more than a sympathetic attitude towards the International Federation, but that remains to be seen. In any case, we can join with them in their fight against the common enemy.

The Failsworth Secular Sunday School will hold an American Tea in the school at Pole Lane, Failsworth, nr. Manchester, on Saturday, September 26. Tickets are now on sale, and may be had, together with Syllabus of Concerts, Lectures, etc. for the session 1931-2 from the Secretary, Mr. S. Jones, 8 Andrew Street, Failsworth, nr. Manchester.

Those responsible for the formation of the Wembley and District Branch of the N.S.S. have lost no time in getting to work. Officials have been appointed, and a fortnightly course of lectures and discussions arranged. Mr. R. H. Rosetti will open the course to-day (Sunday) with a lecture on "Do we need Religion?" Further details will be found in the Lecture Notice column. Mr. P. V. Morris, of 43 Paxford Road, North Wembley, Middlesex, is the local Secretary, and asks all unattached Freethinkers in the district to get into touch with him.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be in Plymouth for a week commencing to-day (Sunday), when he will speak in Plymouth Market Ground at 7 p.m. Further announcements will be made at that meeting, and it is hoped that all interested will make a point of being present. The local Branch of the N.S.S. will co-operate at all the meetings held during the week.

Things are getting so bad that it has struck the Archbishop of Canterbury that it is time the "Almighty was reminded that he might do something in the matter." So he has asked for a day of "united prayer." Our very able contributor, Mr. C. S. Fraser, wrote the following letter to the *Observer*. We print it here because such outspoken letters are carefully excluded from our delightful newspaper press:—

Sir,—In view of the otherwise remarkably sane and practical nature of the news and views which you publish, I was astonished to notice the prominence given on your centre pages to the Archbishop of Canterbury's "Call for united prayer." This suggested mass-attack upon an utterly powerless relic of superstition (despite its flattering title of "almighty") is in all circumstances nothing less than a pitiful farce. But apart from its comic aspect, at times like these it is a shameful inducement to fatalistic inaction on the part of the credulous masses, who believe in the efficacy of such primitive magic; as it is also a slur upon your own intelligence.

## The World Congress of Freethinkers.

THE International Congress of Freethinkers held in Berlin, from September 5 to 7, must, considered as a whole, be pronounced a signal success. Delegates were present from every important country in Europe, except Russia and Italy. Italian representatives had been appointed, but were unable to attend because their Government refused to grant the necessary passports—a display of malice and petty tyranny which evoked expressions of contempt and indignation from all present at the Congress.

On September 4 and the morning of the 5th, the delegates met at the rooms of the Deutscher Freidenker-Verband (Union of German Freethinkers) and dealt at considerable length with preliminaries bearing on the subjects to be discussed at the Conference itself, which was held in the building in Leipzigerstrasse, formerly used by the Prussian Upper House. It is unnecessary to relate in detail the proceedings at these meetings. The gist of them was the advisableness of combining all the forces in Europe making for the overthrow of clericalism or any other form of absolutism, ecclesiastical or political, and in particular to promote closer relations between the intellectual forces of the Freethought Movement and the political influence exerted by Socialism. Mr. Cohen and Mr. McLaren, representing the N.S.S., both emphasized fairly strongly that the Society was loyally supported by members of various political parties, and that they had no power to commit it to any proposition which would direct it into the wake of a specifically political or socialist movement. This was also the attitude taken up by Mr. C. B. Bonner and Mr. Pike as representatives of the Rationalist Press Association.

A public demonstration was held in the "Neue Welt," Hasenheide, on the evening of September 4, and I can best convey some idea of the meeting by simply stating that, from beginning to end, it was organized with German thoroughness. As the large hall could not accommodate the enormous crowd, a further meeting was held in the adjacent hall, which was also completely filled. A member of the Verband assured me that the total attendance was over six thousand. The tableau, "Youth greets the World-Congress," with its recurring chorus of young voices, and the vast assembly in the body of the hall and the galleries, presented an impressive scene and reflected great credit on Mr. Bruno Schoenlank, who arranged it. The recitation, "The Call to Freedom," was magnificently rendered by Mr. Alfred Beierle.

Mr. Fritz Schmidt (President of the Verband) in a short speech heartily welcomed all the delegates present.

Dr. M. Terwagne (Belgium), President of the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Libre Pensée, said that the Freethought Movement is essentially international—a fact which supporters of our cause everywhere must realize if they expect their efforts to produce the best results.

Professor Hartwig (Czecho-Slovakia) spoke of the laws in force in Germany specially directed against Freethought propaganda. He earnestly appealed to those who had already discarded their religion as an effete superstition to render active support to our cause.

Mr. Ronzaal (German Austria) threw considerable light on the general cultural conditions obtaining in his own home-land, where Roman Catholic clericalism exerts a powerful influence.

Mr. Chapman Cohen (England) was cordially received, for the *Freethinker* is well known in Germany.

He conveyed to German Freethinkers, and to the delegates of all countries represented, fraternal greetings from Great Britain. We may be separated by an expanse of water, by difference of language, we may each have special problems of our own, but our common aim stands out clear from all geographical and linguistic differences. The course of our movement in England cannot be described as all plain sailing. On the contrary, in no country is there a more dangerous priestly influence than in Great Britain. Our clericalism is more underground, it works more subtly than in countries which are predominantly Roman Catholic; but it is there all the time, influencing the Press, the various channels of publicity, political life, and primary education. Public men in England, whatever their individual opinions, are not outspoken on the question of religion. We are one in aim, Freethinkers everywhere desire an all-round higher standard of human life, but find the way to it blocked by the ideas of God, soul, heaven, hell, and the fear born of such superstitions which must be superseded by ideas that urge men to concentrate effort on the present world. It is significant that in the New Testament mention is made of two animals, the sheep and the ass, and where Christianity prevails the masses are reared like sheep, taught to think like sheep, and finally sheared like sheep. Every inch of ground gained for freedom has been drenched with the blood of martyrs to our cause. We Freethinkers have a great past, and if we make up our minds never to forget this we also have a great future. (Mr. Cohen's speech was ably interpreted by Mr. Peter Petroff).

Mr. Hoving (Holland) in an able speech urged Freethinkers to combine their forces. "Christian love," with its insistence on the salvation of the soul and its dogmatic formularies was a degradation of personality in marked contrast with the humanism for which we Freethinkers stood. There are many religions, sometimes many sects within the same religion, but there is only one truth.

Miss P. Pardon (Belgium), the Secretary of the International, greeted those present especially in the name of Freethinking women, and made a strong appeal for the co-operation of the latter in everything that concerned our movement, as women's influence would strengthen the spirit of international peace.

The proceedings at the Conference itself began on Saturday, September 5, and the large hall was full of delegates and supporters of our movement. Mr. Max Sievers, President of the International Proletarian Freethinkers, and Dr. Terwagne formally announced, amid a storm of applause, that from January 1, 1932, there would be only one combined Freethought International. The principal speech of the afternoon was by Dr. August Siemsen (Jena) on "The Education of Youth and its Problems." A system of education based upon authority and dogma was essential to the Church for the maintenance of its power, but it was important to bear in mind that such a system received unstinted support from the forces of reaction generally.

On Sunday the discussion turned mainly on the subject of the missionaries and their methods of consolidating the power of the Church abroad. Mr. Boulangier dealt at some length with missions and their sinister influence in the Belgian-Congo. The schools established by Roman Catholic missions there were supported by the Belgian Government, but in reality were completely controlled from Rome. Mr. C. B. Bonner (England) gave some statistics on religious missions in different parts of the world, and showed how they combined business with soul-saving. The State often supported these missions by grants of land and free passes on the railways.

The final meeting of the Congress was held on Mon-

day afternoon, when Mr. Hoving spoke on "Natural and Technical Science and Metaphysics." Science had shown that religious belief, which is really superstition, was full of contradictions. The technical applications of science had also helped materially to weaken metaphysics, the speculations of which the speaker characterized as an almost inexcusable waste of energy. The moral consciousness based upon reason, science and experience was really the content of modern Freethought, and would lead ultimately to international unity. Mr. Ronzaal having briefly addressed the meeting on "Fascism and Clerical Reaction," a resolution was passed that:—

The Freethought Movement must associate itself directly with the realities of political life, and take its part in the cultural struggles of the moment. The Freethought Movement is not bound to any political or other party, but its guiding idea is Socialism, and its goal is an order of society based on political, economic and cultural freedom, for only such a society guarantees the unimpeded developments of free thought. In this sense the task before the Freethought Movement is to support the Socialist parties in their struggle against Fascism. To accomplish this task it is essential, in all countries, to stimulate the masses to an active interest in the Freethought Movement.

The resolution is sufficiently comprehensive, and makes quite clear the general spirit of the Conference. The old International Federation is at an end. The N.S.S. delegates, as was stated definitely at the preliminary meetings, while welcoming support for our cause from any and every quarter, could not vote for a resolution which would make our movement dependent upon European Socialism or the organizations supporting it. It should also be noted that, under the revised statutes, the voting power of these organizations, especially in Germany, would completely determine all resolutions at future International Congresses.

The Conference was fully reported in *Vorwaerts*, the Berlin Socialist journal, and also received a little notice from some of the other daily papers. This will be noted with interest by those who know how our own Press consistently boycotts everything connected with the popular Freethought Movement in England.

A. D. McLAREN.

### On the Sad Case of Dr. Horton

THERE appeared here some time since a kindly and critical study of Dr. R. F. Horton, undoubtedly one of the most cultured of living dissenting divines. There was one phase of Dr. Horton's work that was little noticed in the former paper, and, as it is worth adding to complete a true picture of the subject, it shall be added here. Dr. Horton's *Autobiography*, a work of unusual charm and candour, itself devotes the greater part of a chapter to this matter, namely Roman Catholicism. In 1898 Dr. Horton went to Ireland, and found its people "so loyal to the Church which to the outsider seems rather to exploit than to bless them." About the same time Dr. Horton's Lectures at his Hampstead Church on "England's Danger," *i.e.*, Romanism, attracted wide attention and much controversy. "The hostility of the Catholic Press opened my eyes to a new set of facts. The Catholic papers had a totally different standard from that established elsewhere in England . . . A Catholic monthly even insinuated charges of immorality against me." Dr. Horton's theory that Catholicism, as distinct from Protestantism, "makes the reform of abuses" impossible, and that one type of Christianity rather than another has anything to do with

the material wealth of nations will not bear examination. It is not only the Roman Church that "silences the thought of its members" and "imposes the faith of the church on the individual." Spain was most prosperous when it was most Catholic, and that the Bible is the "secret of England's greatness," is as true as the well known picture of the late Queen Victoria presenting a copy of that book to a dusky subject with that fatuous remark.

Dr. Horton proceeds to say that he looks back with "great distaste on this controversy." He adds: "I see more clearly than I did then that the evils in the Roman system work out their sure result in the modern world, and make it virtually impossible for the Papacy to regain its old authority or draw into its obedience more than a certain section of our population." This is followed by a declaration which shows that Dr. Horton, like all the most learned apologists for Christianity, is now more concerned with the defence of Christianity as a whole, and sees that if the church is to survive, even among Protestants, it must not be above borrowing some of the worst features of what used to be called "the old religion." He puts this with a subtle touch. Thus: "I have even learned to think that some minds are better for the strict supervision of directors and confessors, and many are held in the practice and faith of Christianity by the powerful hand of Rome, that would yield no allegiance to the authority of Truth or the decisions of Reason." That it is better they should be held "in the faith" so, is, apparently, what Dr. Horton means, for he goes on to say: "In later years I have come to cherish a hope that a fairer synthesis is awaiting the Church of Christ, in which the virtues of Catholicism will be blended with those of Protestantism, and a church will appear . . . capable of embracing the varieties of temperament, the habit of obedience to authority, the strivings of progressive thought, and the longing to discover a genuine unity for the human family."

How, we may ask, is the latter aspiration to be achieved by the religion which has aroused the angriest passions in men, and provoked some of the most sanguinary wars in history? Dr. Horton says: "The conviction has grown on me that Love is the condition of seeing Truth. What I dreaded in the Inquisitor I have come to dread in myself. And even with Papists I have no controversy except to see how to love them, and to love all men."

We think Dr. Horton's autobiography makes plain the road by which he has come to this position of benevolent neutrality. In 1888, when his *Inspiration and the Bible* was published, a great storm of protest arose. The Baptist Union cancelled Dr. Horton's engagement to preach at its Annual Meeting. Dr. Parker wrote a reply: Mr. Spurgeon added Dr. Horton to his list of "Down Grade Theologians," and "the orthodox" of that time were "raised to a kind of frenzy," while the author was denounced as "a Unitarian, an Atheist, the worst enemy of Christ." This opposition, says Dr. Horton (whose book was really a very mild affair compared to the recent pronouncements of Dr. Barnes), "was simple obscurantism." He was, "notwithstanding the opposition of the religious world, standing up for the doctrine of Christ, and liberating it from some hindrances to its progress." And it is true, as he says, that "the way of regarding the Bible in 1888, which seemed to ignorance revolutionary and heretical was, in 1897, recognized" as "a cautious and reverent admission of facts which could not be disputed." And how many more such facts have had to be admitted, "cautiously and reverently or otherwise," since then? In a further book, *Revelation and the Bible*, Dr. Horton carried his criticisms further, and attempted to show "what

is actually revealed in the Bible, when we are compelled to admit that the writing of the books as such is not guaranteed against mistakes."

The readers of this journal will, we believe, share the regret of the present writer that one who did undoubtedly do good service to the cause of knowledge (as distinct from the cause of Christianity)—his *History of the Romans*, published over forty years ago, has been a favourite with the schools—should now seek shelter from the inevitable results of the advance of knowledge, and from the, to him, awful prospect of a world increasingly indifferent to religion, in the hope that Light and Darkness, "submission to authority" and "the strivings of progressive thought," may be reconciled in a quite incredible amalgamation of the contending sects of Christendom.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

## "From Schoolmaster to Parson."

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL PROFESSIONAL  
ECCLESIASTICS.

REVEREND SIRS,

Now that this country has arrived at an economic crisis, when it is supposed that everyone will, by making sacrifices, assist the community, it might prove a suitable time to address to you a few thoughts concerning present-day religion and its teachers.

Christ said "It is harder for a rich man . . ." He Himself had nowhere to lay His head, was poverty-stricken and humble, the world was His care. Now you have palaces and spacious residences; your churches are of costly design, fitted with expensive plate, furniture and memorials to the dead. The first seven incomes from livings in a large city I read as follows: £1,870, £1,700, £529, £823, £400, £425, £630. My own modest needs are supplied by £210 per annum! You indulge in atmospheric ceremonies and music, and argue about Reservation and Transubstantiation, while thousands of simple and ignorant folk endure physical emaciation and mental torture. If your parish is a poor one, you live outside it in a "high-class" residential area. In their homes the people are desperately in need of money to procure the bare necessities of life, if they attend your church, collection boxes and appeals of all kinds surround and exasperate them. Do you wonder that your churches are empty when your own hypocrisy is so obvious? Give up your fat livings and palatial residences, cease the only too evident strife for social and professional betterment, and turn your energies to the proper and righteous issues of life. These will not be concerned so much with the preparation of the life to come as with the improvement for others of the life that is.

You who are bishops or archbishops, have your habitation with the wealthy; you attend royal functions and other first-class social events; your amusement is the puppetry of the rich, your mental powers are exercised with the university products. All this is fellowship. But there is also fellowship in the public-house, where mental stagnation will breed the foul and ignorant conversation of those steeped in poverty. In these places you are either mercifully forgotten or cursed as the representatives of a peculiarly unjust God and mock religion. "He who is greatest amongst you shall be least," said Christ. Do you still believe in a judgment day? If so, what will be your position then?

It has been my duty to instruct and attempt to educate the children of the poor. Some of them possess brains and ability of first-rate quality. They secure good positions. "But," laments Dean Inge,

"these people are taking the bread out of the professional man's mouth." I have also heard the same learned Doctor say, in an address on gambling, "There is only justification in receiving money when it is properly earned or inherited." Such is the prejudiced lying of those complacently basking in social smugness.

Christ taught forbearance, and shunned publicity. He showed us the beautiful lesson of "turning the other cheek." But nearly every day our newspapers contain accounts of some petty clerical difference; Bishop quarrels with Archbishop; a vicar annoys his whole parish and his church is turned into a bear-garden; two priests drag a childish libel action through the courts. It does not need great intelligence to perceive the results of these and similar things upon the religious outlook of the people.

In fact, it is really difficult to find any really useful purpose you serve in these modern times. Church of England ministers still cling to an antiquated Prayer-Book containing such fallacies as "being content to do my duty in that state of life into which God hath called me," and such obvious inaccuracies as "the Resurrection of the Body." Instead of having meetings to discuss, twenty years too late, such things as birth control, why don't you scrap the whole of your abominably out-of-date systems and ideas, and set your energies to fit your work for modern requirements? There are hundreds of questions every thinking person asks, for example, about the Gospels, and never receives an answer; instead of sitting tight and raving about faith and such platitudes as "all things are possible with God," it would surely be better to attempt to give the people some reasonable and positive teaching on those vital questions which trouble them.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer suggests that my stipend (sic) should be reduced fifteen per cent. He doesn't mention yours. Perhaps he is optimistic to believe that there is a little "Christian" spirit left somewhere.

The best precept is example.

Yours, in enlightenment,

VINCENT KNIGHT.

## The Inquisition in New Spain.

(Concluded from page 583.)

ELSE, how account for their recalcitrance? Certain learned gentlemen of the clergy set forth in erudite volumes how to ferret out infidels. It was known thus that a Jew hated Christ so much that he made a practice of mutilating crucifixes and holy images. In a book called *Sentinel Against Jews*, placed on the tower of the Holy Church of Our Lord, it is related that at one time: "There was a great earthquake and strong hurricanes, and this was because the Jews were torturing a holy image. But when one of them confessed and was burnt, immediately the tempest ceased." At another occasion an infidel saw in a Church the image of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and carried away by rage, came in the night and stabbed it with a dagger. And wonderful happening, which no man can deny, occurred by Divine Will, the blood oozed excessively from the wound which this wicked man had made in the image. The book, published in Mexico, in 1648, called *Third Exaltation of the Divine Mercy*, for having cleaned and purified this city from heresy and of the cursed sect of Judaisers re-

lated that "In a village called Izqimqilpan, a certain image known by the name Christ of the Poor Lead Mines, had become blackened and destroyed. Its eyes were falling out, rat nests were in its body, and although it performed many miracles its appearance deteriorated greatly, due to the fact that so many heretics were performing abominations throughout the land. One day suddenly the image detached itself from the cross, as if to go to the capital and punish the evil-doers. The winds blew and the earth shook, which lasted until the Jews were discovered and punished, after which music and singing was heard in the church. Three stars appeared above the Copula, and the bells rang of themselves, and a great light shone, after which it was seen that of itself the image had become miraculously renewed." Inquisition walls arouse about its guilty suspects at night and silently. No one but the immediate family of the arrested might guess his fate. And for months and years even they might wonder where the walls were which held them, and expect at any moment to find out. Eventually a smuggled message reached them in time to dispose of goods otherwise soon to be confiscated . . . and other important instructions. It was a grave crime, likely to augment materially the punishment to receive or carry messages. Negro slaves were sentenced for life for carrying messages, and wives and sisters who received them automatically became themselves the subjects of voluminous justiciary folios. The Inquisition was at a loss to find out the means of communication between prisoners and relatives and ascribed it to magic; but sometimes discovered more concrete means. As for instance, one prisoner bought a pie through a guard, and sent it as a present to his family; the slave who carried it sold it to a confectioner, who sent it with an order of dainties to an Inquisitorial table, where it was opened and within was found, to the horror of the guests, a paper containing instructions for the disposal of property and some disparaging remarks about the Holy Tribunal and its officials. Within the prisons, inventing codes was a favourite intellectual sport. Some spoke in plain language, but in Aztec incomprehensible they knew, to nobles and their men. At one occasion, a sixteen year old girl, under torture, testified that Jews advised each other when there was a meeting, by sending a little negro-boy dressed in red beating a drum along the streets.

"The dungeon of the Torment," says a post-Tribunal description of Inquisitorial processes, was the name of a subterranean chamber in the house of the Tribunal to which led innumerable flights of dark, narrow and slippery stairs. Two High Inquisitors sat at a table, upon which rested a crucifix, two yellow candles, and an hour-glass to mark the time of each kind of torture. Two executioners, garbed in black robes, with their faces covered by black hoods, in which were cut red holes for the eyes, grasped the prisoner, at the moment he entered the chamber, and removed his clothing, and he stood, naked before his judges. There was also a doctor to examine the prisoner and measure his endurance before, after, and during the torture. The inquisition did all in its power to keep the prisoners alive. The decree was solemnly read to each, before the torment, that "If during the torment he dies, is hurt in any manner, if his bones break, if an eye burst from the socket or his entrails are dragged out, he shall bear the sole blame, and not the Holy Tribunal which desires only to investigate and discover the truth." If he died without repenting he was burned in effigy at the *auto-da-fé*. The worst crime was to remain negative and unrepentent. Thus, Manuel Nunez Caravallo, age thirty-four, circumcised, of profession vagabond, dead in the dungeons of the Holy Tribunal was punished in effigy as a Judaizer.

Again, Rafael Granada, with evident sign of circumcision, age nineteen, took communion without fasting, since he did not believe the Host to be the sacred Body of Christ. A fourteen year old girl, whose beauty was remarked upon even in the Church chronicles, sentenced because she was suspiciously lax about going to Mass, communion, and confessing, greatly augmented her penalty because she revealed nothing. She "was the most notable case in the records of the Inquisition, both here and in Spain."

Before executing the sentence she was first given two years in an Inquisitor's house, there "to be instructed in the faith." What precisely besides negative evidence such as hers defined a crime for the Inquisition it is difficult to determine accurately. There are recorded some statements of the penitents; "One woman, when she dreamed, would go immediately to confession and put the bad omen on the priest, this being a custom of the Jews; she sang hymns without a *Glori Patri*. Another woman Dona Isabel de Rivera, was heard to say that it was a sin for a Jew to hear Mass, to confess, to tell the Rosary and take communion. Those who perform these abominations would be carried off by devils."

The wife of Francisco Botello, who with her was punished in 1659, remarked when her husband was arrested, that "They had imprisoned him because they wanted his money, that the Holy Tribunal was not holy at all, it rather was dishonest and unjust. For such speech she was arrested. One could cite these nauseating records *ad infinitum*. We will quote two more only: Francisco de Acosta, native of Lisboa, age thirty-five, merchant was burned at the *auto-da-fé* of the year 1647. It had been noted by some Catholics that when the Host was raised he would look upon the Crucifix, placing his hand upon his beard, with one finger on his nose. Dona Beatriz Enriquez was accused of going to Church, and in Mass nudge the other women . . . and at meetings where it was discussed how to cope with the Tribunal, she would say, lifting her arms, to look at them and see how good she had them for the torture.

X.X.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### WHAT DOES RELIGION MEAN?

SIR,—Mr. Fraser takes me to task over the phrase "what religion *ought* to mean." He criticizes it trenchantly, and at times with caustic severity. On the whole I am in sympathy with him, but really the phrase is not mine at all; I merely took it from his own article. He said, "We are not out to show what religion ought to mean according to the opinion of this or that person or community, but what the most correct interpretation of the word is when stripped of all idiosyncrasies and reduced to its one invariable common denominator." I took this to be the equivalent of saying, "We are not out to show what religion *ought* to mean but what it actually *does* mean." If Mr. Fraser did not intend to convey this, I stand corrected. Had I expressed the matter in my own way, without attempting to blend my words with an actual quotation from his text, I should have used not the phrase "what religion ought to mean," but the more precise phrase, "what we ought to mean by religion." If, with this modification, Mr. Fraser would still hold that his criticism is substantially unaffected, and that what we *ought* to mean by religion is necessarily what we *do* mean, then I should be prepared to contest that. But before jumping to the conclusion that he would in fact take up this position, I must await a statement from him to that effect. Even taking up the argu-

ment on a question of what religion *does* mean, there are grave criticisms of the self-consistency of Mr. Fraser's technique and conclusions on that head, but this line of discussion I deliberately set aside because it seemed to me that the most important side to the matter would best be reached and discussed on the issue of the capital letter to the word "Unknown." My contention is that when Mr. Fraser comes to amplify his definition so as to make clear the precise elements of meaning which that capital infuses into the word, he will find a very delicate and difficult situation arising. He will find, in short, that the capital "U" imparts a positive complexion which separates the word sharply from the entirely negative term "unknown" as used in science. And I assure him that, far from attempting to make excursions into verbal niceties, I have discussed his article with the genuine motive of following what is paramount to the real substance of the position, because I believe that upon this "issue of the capital" turns the merit of his definition, together with its logical consequences to the Free-thought case.

MEDICUS.

## BROTHERHOOD.

SIR,—I shall be grateful if you will allow me to thank C. H. Ross Carmichael for the great pleasure derived from a reading of his paper with the above title in a recent issue of the *Freethinker*. It gains immensely by its moderation, and at the same time there is instruction to be had for all those who care to look below the surface of things. The road of the Freethinker is hard. Perhaps he would not have it otherwise, but there are tremendous forces against him; mob-thinking at top and bottom are not the least of his obstacles. For the time being Matthew Arnold's poems are my companions, and each reading brings out some new thought or interpretation. In "A Summer Night" I caught the echo of a great poet's struggle with himself:—

"And I, I know not if to pray  
Still to be what I am, or yield, and be  
Like all the other men I see."

Viewed from the present there is nothing very iconoclastic in any of the works of Arnold, but in his comparatively mild criticism there is a symptom of wanting to turn back to bovine thinking which is the pasture land of orthodoxy. Dr. Carmichael's article should encourage all Freethinkers to go forward with renewed hope in the belief that the world will have to bed down and be led safely in the only world we know by the Secular shepherds whose task is to see that brotherhood shall breathe the air of reality and thereby be strengthened.

ADAM BREDE.

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LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

FINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—A Lecture.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road): Saturday, at 7.30, Mr. F. Day and Mr. E. Bryant. *Freethinker* and other literature on sale.

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. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, Sunday, at 7.30, Mr. C. Tuson; Wednesday, September 23, at 8.0, at Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, September 25, at Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, at 8.0, Mr. C. Tuson.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.30, Messrs. Bryant and C. Tuson.

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

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, J. Hutton Hynd—"Responsibility and the Artistic Temperament."

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Zealley's Cafe, 100 High Road, Wembley, near L.M.S. and Bakerloo Station): 7.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Do We Need Religion?"

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

ACCRINGTON MARKET.—Sunday, September 20, at 7.0—Mr. J. Clayton.

BURNLEY MARKET.—Sunday, September 20, at 3.0—Mr. J. Clayton.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Branch meetings at 164 Elm Grove (corner of Linton Street) on the third Thursday of each month at 8.0. Will members please take note.

DURHAM (Market Place).—Tuesday, September 22, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—Ramble to Waterside, meet at Bishopbrigg Car Terminus, 11.0. Members and friends invited.

LUMB-IN-ROSSENDALE.—Thursday, September 24, at 7.30—Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, at Queen's Drive (opposite Baths), Messrs. Jackson, Shortt and Tissyman; Monday, at Beaumont Street, Messrs. Jackson and Wollen; Tuesday, at Edge Hill Lamp, Messrs. Little and Sherwin; Wednesday, at Waste Ground adjoining 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.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market).—Wednesday, September 23, at 8.0—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, September 20, in Bigg Market, at 7.15, Mr. R. Atkinson.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Market Green): Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture at 7 p.m. Announcements for remainder of the week will be made at the meeting.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street).—Saturday, September 19, at 6.30—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND (Boilermaker's Hall)—Sunday, September 20, at 7.0—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

INDOOR.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole Lane, Failsworth, near Manchester): An American Tea will be held at the School on Saturday, September 26. Local Saints and friends heartily invited.

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