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Views and Opinions.

Socialism and Freethought.

I AM writing these notes in my dual capacity as editor of the *Freethinker* and President of the National Secular Society. It is often not easy to separate the two, and in the present instance it is not necessary. For I am very often, either as President or editor, or as President and editor, favoured with complaints or suggestions concerning the official viewpoint of both the N.S.S. and the *Freethinker*. I welcome them since they display at least interest, and it is as well to know what readers and members think of both the paper and the Society. That the complaints are few may be taken as evidence that the majority are quite content with the general conduct of affairs. Mainly the letters consist in the advice that we should make part of the Society's work the adoption and advocacy of some special teaching—Socialism, Communism, Birth Control, the Douglas Credit Scheme, Land Nationalization, etc.

The letter that has set me writing on the subject is one from a Liverpool member of the N.S.S., Mr. R. Tissyman. He writes apropos of the report of the Berlin Congress, and regrets that the delegates of the N.S.S. could not support a resolution passed at a meeting of the Conference. In order to make the position clear I reprint this resolution:—

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.

Mr. Tissyman bases his regrets on the fact that "religion is one of the strongest planks of both the Conservative and Liberal platforms, and is exploited to the extreme by both of them, while, on the other hand, Socialism is non-religious." Mr. Tissyman then asks:—

Of what use will our efforts be, if when we have cleansed humanity of all its superstitious filth and humbug, we are to leave the clean house to any exploiter of humanity without a suggestion from us as to how humanity should use that house for its own just and reasonable benefit. It seems to me that if we left it thus we would resemble a clever surgeon who has performed a very successful operation on some person without stitching up the opened body . . . Hence my belief in giving a lead towards Socialism, which is the only political movement in this country that can run in harness with Atheism.

I see nothing in the above statement that would justify either the N.S.S. or the *Freethinker* altering its present policy of holding itself free from any and every political theory or party, and indeed the resolution proposed at the Conference was sufficiently confused to justify the action of the N.S.S. delegates.

For the organization to maintain Socialism as its guiding idea while holding itself aloof from every political party—including the Socialist Party, indicates a state of mind not to be commended for its clarity. How can the Freethought Movement hold itself aloof from every political party while giving its whole-hearted support to Socialism. If it is explained that we ought to do what we can to protect freedom of thought against Fascism, the reply is, why against Fascism only? We ought to protect freedom of thought against any party, Fascist or Socialist, religious or non-religious, whether it comes from a Church or from that all-powerful substitute for God Almighty, the State. The truth is that there was on the Continent, as there has been here, an attempt to capture the Freethought organization in the interests of a political movement, and the resolution represented all that could be gained at the moment.

* * *

The Function of Religion and Freethought.

Theoretically, I do not agree that Conservatism or Liberalism is any more necessarily committed to religion than is Socialism. In any one of the three cases we are dealing with a political and social theory; any one of them may be given a religious colour, each may, and does appeal to religion for support, each may, and does, when occasion serves use arguments that are religious in form, if not in character. It is quite true that historically the alliance between Conservatism and established religion has been close, and between that and Liberalism nearly as close, but it is also true that each political theory stands quite apart from religion. Either could be stated without the least reference to religion. Mr. Tissyman must not

confuse a mere historical association with a causal connexion. The real function of religion in sociology is not that of supporting a particular form of government or society, but the utilization of any form of society that promises the perpetuation of established religious beliefs, and the use of supernatural beliefs in the interests of the established social order whatever its character.

That in turn gives us the real function of Free-thought in relation to social theory. Let me try and put the matter as simply as I can. The aim of Secularism is the restriction of human energies to this life. It does not say that these energies must be expended in this or that manner, only that they must be so restricted. But they have not been so restricted because our social heredity has loaded social activities with a mass of supernaturalism which finds expression in forms of speech, forms of thought, institutions, and, above all in the existence of vested interests that are buttressed by organized religion. Historically the destruction of those socially obstructive forces has involved an examination of the origin of religious beliefs, the origin and nature of morals, and, above all, a challenge to the principle of authority in all directions. So that, on the one hand, it has been the declared aim of Free-thought to clear the human mind of superstition, not merely of its most obvious forms, but also of what one may term its rudimentary remains which linger in our sociological and scientific thinking. And on the other hand, there has been the insistence that every belief must ultimately rest upon a basis of verifiable fact, and every institution upon a basis of social utility. But it is no more the function of Free-thought to advocate a particular theory in sociology or politics, than it is the function of scientific method to say what are the ultimate laws in physics or chemistry. It is the acceptance of these two principles which form the cement that binds together the members of Free-thought organizations, as such. If a number of Freethinkers care to bind themselves together for the advocacy of Birth Control, or Socialism, or Liberalism, and to make Freethinking a condition of membership, there is no reason why they should not do so.

* * *

The Aftermath of Religion.

But it is quite another thing to say that because a section of Freethinkers believe in Socialism, therefore it must be made an essential feature of a Society such as the N.S.S., and if that is not done, we are "thrashing a dead horse," or wasting our time in destructive efforts, or leaving men and women without adequate guidance. That is, quite plainly, just nonsense. It is surely not leaving men and women without guidance when they are invited to adopt a method of examination and a standard of value. To ask everyone to study social institutions without being subservient to authority or to religious prepossessions, is ultimately one of the greatest revolutionary propositions ever set forth. It is so revolutionary, that political parties—in this country, at least—while setting forth drastic proposals, yet are afraid to directly oppose religion. Thousands of public men, politicians, scientists, writers, etc., are still far too terrified of the power of religion to make an open and straightforward avowal of their anti-religious opinions. They must disguise them under any one of half a dozen twilight terms.

In any case the demand that Socialism must be made a part of Free-thought propaganda, for no other reason that a certain number of Freethinkers believe it to be a desirable thing, savours very strongly of the religious type of mind, and is actually a heritage from religion. It smacks too much of "For there is none other name under heaven, . . . whereby we must be

saved." Socialism is a political theory, so is Conservatism, so is Liberalism. Land nationalization, birth control, tariff reform, etc., are special schemes which their advocates believe will honestly benefit society. These may be right or wrong, or they may be partly right or partly wrong, but it indicates anything but scientific temper to say that because I, a Freethinker, believe that Socialism or Communism or some other 'ism is of first rate importance, therefore all other Freethinkers must start advocating it. That is really the religious mind in action, whether it is concerned with specific beliefs or not. I dislike religion when it is really religion; but I dislike it still more heartily when it is connected with things that are not religious at all.

* * *

The Common Sense of Organization.

Politics is a shady business at best, and in politics the art of what is called "capturing an organization," that is, taking the machinery that has been created for a specific purpose, and the funds that have been given for that purpose, and applying them to another purpose, is considered quite the proper thing to do. Outside politics cleaner methods are to be preferred. For, after all, organization is effected on a basis of agreement, not on that of disagreement. If I join a literary society I do not find fault because that society will not help me in my work for land nationalization. As I have said, a Socialistic Freethinker has every right to ask other Freethinkers similarly opinioned to join with him in promoting Socialism, but he has no right to ask that a general Free-thought body made up of Freethinkers of all shades of political opinions, and whose money is being used for a general and an agreed purpose, shall be utilized for the furtherances of the political opinions of a section. In the best sense of the word the National Secular Society is catholic. It seeks to bring together men and women who are interested in Free-thought, and who wish to see its principles established, not merely in words, but as an inseparable part of the mental outlook. Having done that, and having agreed upon the doing, I know of no rule of decency or honesty that can justify the society using its platform or its resources for the propaganda of opinions to which the Society is not pledged. We complain of parsons when they use Church funds and Church organizations for purposes outside the constitution or trust deeds of the Church. I quite fail to see in what way conduct that is wrong with a Churchman becomes right with a Freethinker. As a Free-thought organization we have our own work to do, it is work that is more urgent to-day than ever it was. And we may rest assured that if we will make our Freethinking more pronounced and better appreciated we shall have made no small contribution towards the solution of the social and other problems that beset us.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Dreamer.

You who would travel through a world set free,
 You who would banish human misery,
 You who would, men's efforts try to praise,—
 You dreamer, mend your ways!
 The world well lost, to watch the babbling brook,
 Eternity well grasped, just through a mother's look,
 The time well spent, in counting peaceful days,—
 You dreamer, mend your ways!
 You are not thrilled by buzzing aeroplanes,
 Nor whizzing folk, who dash down country lanes,
 You do not raise your hat to folly's maze,—
 You dreamer, mend your ways!
 You do not join the solemn-visaged crowd,
 By tricks and wiles to dumb submission cowed,
 You judge by deed, and not by wordy blaze,—
 You dreamer, mend your ways!

C. D. B.

Culture and Credulity.

"There is no darkness but ignorance."—*Shakespeare*.

"An educated man is one who knows when a thing is proved and when it is not. An uneducated man does not know."—*John Morley*.

It is on the records of the London County Council that a petition was presented by a number of respectable, if not respected, residents who lived in houses numbered thirteen to change that number to 12a. This record shows that the foolish superstition that the number thirteen has unlucky associations still prevails in the Metropolis of the British Empire, which is popularly supposed to be one of the most cultured and civilized spots on the earth.

Although compulsory national education has now been in existence over sixty years it has so far been ineffective in the suppression of a great mass of superstition. It has been impotent to remove from the minds of the present generation ignorant beliefs that used to prevail in bygone times. For some of these, such as the spilling of salt, and the quaint notion that Friday is a day of ill-luck and misfortune, the origin can be traced to remote ages, but for others, which still flourish over the entire country from John O' Groats to Land's End, it is difficult to suggest the explanation, except on the ground of a blind credulity and very defective education.

Why should thirteen be regarded as an unlucky number? There is, of course, no logical explanation for it. The idea is the purest fantasy, but that misfortune will befall a person if he is at a dinner which comprises thirteen guests, or if he lives in a house which bears that number, is a silly superstition so widely believed that it has to be considered. So prevalent is the idea that in a hotel or a passenger boat you will rarely find a room with the tabooed number, thirteen.

In recent times efforts have even been made to combat the silly superstition by forming "Thirteen Clubs," the members of which are pledged to do the things which credulous folks regard as being hazardous. These clubs, the members of which regard each other as being heroic, are not sufficiently numerous to affect seriously the popularity of the superstitions.

The wearing of charms is another very common form of delusion, and the most unlikely people have been known to cherish such toys. Under our boasted veneer of civilization there is a mass of sheer unadulterated ignorance which is a bad heritage from a barbarous and credulous past. This dark underworld, with all its foolish fancies and stupid superstitions, exists in London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham, and other towns and villages of to-day just as it existed everywhere in the Middle Ages, when Christianity was predominant and all-powerful.

Whilst this uncultured streak belongs chiefly to the working-classes, it is not confined to them, for charms are bought as eagerly in the West-End as in the East-End of London. In fact, these things are made in gold and silver as well as in cheaper metals. Expensive motor-cars have their mascots no less than costers' carts.

Many modern sailors, like the ancient mariners before them, believe that a child's caul is a charm against drowning, and at the height of the submarine peril of the Great War, the price for this charm actually rose from thirty shillings to three and four pounds. Some time since an exhibition was held in London consisting almost entirely of charms, "sacred" emblems, amulets, and other curious objects, worn by soldiers, sailors, and civilians to avert death, ward off disease, and bring good fortune. There were many

hundreds of exhibits, the whole forming a most ironic criticism of our culture and our boasted Christian civilization.

Nor is this all. So-called "Dream Books" are sold regularly by the ten thousand, and fortune-tellers are almost as common as public-houses. Great newspaper proprietors exploit this weakness and devote parts of their publications to this sort of nonsense. Even a cursory glance at the advertisement columns of the press reveals the pleasing fact that in this "year of Grace" 1931 manufacturers sell pills and medicines, which, individually, are said to cure all the ills that flesh is heir to, and make huge fortunes in the process.

The plain, blunt truth is that the vast majority of our population is not even half-educated, despite two thousand years of Christian teaching. We have had three generations of State education, but, in spite of this, it has been hampered by the desire of the clergy, of whom there are fifty thousand, to ally the teaching of superstition with the ordinary school curriculum. Under the "Compromise" the Christian fetish-book is used as a school book, and is forced into the hands of the rising generation. This proceeding may satisfy the clerical caste, who use it as the thin edge of the wedge, but the retention of this Oriental book still impedes education and fetters progress. The clergy are astute enough to realize that so long as their fetish-book is impressed upon the children of this country during their most impressionable years their own position as a clerical caste is quite secure, and their salaries safeguarded.

There are grave reasons, however, why the Christian Bible should have no official place in the educational programme of the national schools. Its teaching is hopelessly out of date, and it fosters credulity and perpetuates barbarism. What do our kindergarten teachers, for instance, make of such Biblical advice as "a rod is for the back of him with a rod," "Chasten thy son, and let not thy soul spare for his crying?" Such Bible injunctions may receive the blessings and approbation of four hundred bishops and fifty thousand clergymen, but they remain the essence of barbarism.

Why should British children be taught such nonsense that a snake talks, a whale has a boarding-house in its stomach, the marvels of Noah's Ark, and other ancient yarns, which, found in another book, would only excite hearty laughter? In this Bible witchcraft is still insisted upon as being true long after it has been discarded by every nation with the slightest pretence to civilization. In short, the Christian Bible, from the page describing "Adam" and "Eve" starting life at full age until the Second Person of the Undivided Trinity ascends into the ether like an airship, is a salmagundi of unrestrained Oriental imagination, and as full of discarded ignorance as an egg is full of meat.

Fed on such a non-intellectual diet, what chance have present-day children of freeing themselves easily from the absurdities and barbarities of uncivilized times perpetrated by this fetish-book? The trouble is that the clerical caste at present controls the educational machine. They know their own sorry trade only too well. If they do not stuff the minds of the rising generation with superstition, they can never do it afterwards. They must exploit the children, or join the ranks of the unemployed. And this country will not be free from superstition until it see that this is the case and acts accordingly.

MIMNERMUS.

Long life is denied to us; therefore let us do something to show that we have lived.—*Cicero*.

Revolutions are not made, they come.

Wendell Phillips.

Christianity and the Fall of the Roman Empire.

(Concluded from page 618.)

"My kingdom is not of this world."
Jesus Christ.—(*John xviii.*, 36.)

"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also. (*Acts xvii.*, 6.)

"When the centre of gravity of life is placed, not in life, but in the "other world"—in nothingness—life has in reality been deprived of its centre of gravity."

"Christianity was a victory, a nobler type of character was destroyed by it.—*Nietzsche. The Antichrist*, pp. 305-326.

THE ideas that are implanted in our minds during childhood about the early Christians and Christianity are, in Christian schools, wildly wide of the truth, and are seldom replaced by accurate knowledge.

What is taught as Christianity to-day is merely a system of ethics, simply a worship of good behaviour. All the dreadful features, the terrors of the judgment day, and eternal punishment in a fiery Hell, are discreetly veiled, like the vivisected dog in Claude Bernard's statue. To-day Christianity is posed as the gospel of altruism and love, all jam and no brimstone.

If this was all that Christianity consisted of it would never have made the slightest headway in the ancient world. It did not need a Galilean prophet to teach the sages of Greece and Rome the elements of morality. Neither Epictetus the slave, or Marcus Aurelius the Emperor had anything to learn in the matter of conduct and morals from the Christians, while the Christians might have learned a great deal from them in the matter of tolerance and charity. There is not a single moral maxim in the New Testament that was not well-known to the teachers of Greece, Rome, India and China.

What was new, and struck terror to the heart of the ancient world, were the terrifying concepts in which the future life was painted. The ideas of the Greeks and the Romans, upon the subject of a future life—when they held any—were extremely vague. It was a land of shades, a shadowy existence, unrelieved by joy or pain, but certainly not consisting of torments. The question of a future existence, says a competent Greek scholar: "is regularly mentioned and discussed as an open question." And further: "On all the points we regard as most vital, whether there was a future life at all, what its nature was, and whether in it the good were rewarded and the bad punished, the average Greek had never quite made up his mind."⁴

Christianity tore the veil aside and revealed to an unsuspecting and astounded Pagan world, the dreadful vision of an eternal Hell in which "There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." (*Matt. xxii.* 13.) And "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (*Mark ix.* 46.) It would be difficult, says the historian Lecky, to realize to-day: "the doctrine of future punishment as it was taught by the early Fathers." It was something entirely new "it flashed upon the mind with all the vividness of novelty. Judaism had nothing like it."⁵ Moreover, "It was the distinctive doctrine of the Christian theologians, that sufferings more excruciating than any the imagination could conceive were reserved for millions, and might be the lot of the most benevolent and heroic of mankind." (*Vol. I.*, pp. 314-315.) All those in fact who did not believe in, and accept the Christian faith. "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and

few there be that find it," (*Matt. xxii.* 13, 14) declared the founder of the new Gospel; adding the startling warning that "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." (*Matt. xxiv.* 34.) And that some of those standing round him would "see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." (*Matt. xvi.* 28.) They were also forewarned that the end would come suddenly and unexpectedly; "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." (*Matt. xxiv.* 44.) In fact "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." (*II Peter iii.* 10.) And woe to those who were not on the Lord's side and prepared to receive him. "Glad tidings" indeed!

It was not by any gospel of love and altruism that Christianity conquered and overthrew that magnificent civilization. It conquered, not by love, but by fear. It created a panic in the ancient world through the terrifying concepts of eternal punishment in a fiery hell. And the revelation that the end of the world, and the Judgment Day were at hand. It stampeded first the poor and ignorant; and then, by contagion, the poison spread through all classes of society.

Those who think otherwise cannot be acquainted with the early Christian apologies and writings; if they are, then they are either wilfully shutting their eyes to the truth, or wilfully suppressing it. It would take another long article to prove this point by giving actual quotations from early Christian writings, which would only weary and disgust; instead, we give the testimony of a Christian scholar, who devoted a large part of his life to the study of early Christian literature, namely, the late Dr. F. C. Conybeare of Oxford University, who observes: "It is the fashion in the present day, especially with our court divines, to pretend that the teaching of hell-fire and of eternal torture therein, is no essential or original part of Christianity. If we dip but cursorily into the *Acta Sanctorum* [Acts of the Saints] we are forced to come to a very different conclusion."⁶ And he goes on to deplore, that, "the Christians, to their eternal shame, availed themselves eagerly of an infirmity of the human mind which philosophers had deplored." And concludes: "In the dread of death and in the belief in the eternal fire of hell, which pervaded men's minds, a few philosophers excepted, Christianity had a *point d'appui* [point of support] without availing itself of which it would not have made a single step towards the conquest of men's minds."⁷ But to the philosophers of Greece and Rome this was an abomination. As Lecky points out: "To agitate the minds of men with religious terrorism, to fill the unknown world with hideous images of suffering, to govern the reason by alarming the imagination, was in the eyes of the Pagan world one of the most heinous crimes. These fears were to the ancients the very definition of superstition."⁸

As Feuerbach has observed: "To him who believes in an eternal heavenly life, the present life loses its value—or rather it has already lost its value: belief in the heavenly life is belief in the worthlessness and nothingness of this life."⁹ Gibbon caustically comments: "it was not in *this* world that the primitive Christians were desirous of making themselves either agreeable or useful."¹⁰ Not only that, says the same historian, but: "they refused to take any part in the civil administration or the military defence of the Empire . . . This indolent, or even criminal, disregard to the public welfare exposed them to the con-

⁶ F. C. Conybeare: *Monuments of Early Christianity*, p. 15.

⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 16-17.

⁸ Lecky: *History of European Morals*. Vol. I., pp. 420-421.

⁹ Feuerbach: *Essence of Christianity*. p. 161.

¹⁰ Gibbon: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. II., p. 35.

⁴ F. R. Earp: *The Way of the Greeks*. p. 106.

⁵ Lecky: *History of Rationalism*. Vol. I., pp. 311-313.

tempt and reproaches of the Pagans, who very frequently asked, what must be the fate of the empire, attacked on every side by the barbarians, if all mankind should adopt the pusillanimous sentiments of the new sect?" (Vol. II., pp. 38-39.) What they foreboded came to pass, says Lecky:—

The genius and the virtue that might have defended the Empire were engaged in fierce disputes about the Pelagian controversy, at the very time when Alaric was encircling Rome with his armies, and there was no subtlety of theological metaphysics which did not kindle a deeper interest in the Christian leaders than the throes of their expiring country. The moral enthusiasm that in other days would have fired the armies of Rome with an invincible valour, impelled thousands to abandon their country and their homes, and consumes the weary hours in a long routine of useless and horrible macerations." (Lecky: *History of European Morals*. Vol. II., pp. 142-143.)

As Professor Francis Newman has well said: "To teach the certain speedy destruction of earthly things, as the New Testament does, is to cut the sinews of all earthly progress; to declare war against Intellect and Imagination, against Industrial and Social advancement." ¹¹ As Lange said, Christianity "unhinged the ancient world."

Nietzsche can find no words strong enough to express his indignation: "The whole labour of the ancient world in vain: I have no words to express my sentiments with regard to a thing so hideous." ¹² All the scientific methods were there: "the open look in presence of reality, the cautious hand, patience and earnestness of details, all the *righteousness* in knowledge—it was already there! already, more than two thousand years ago! And added thereto, the excellent, refined tact and taste! . . . *All in vain!* Ere the morrow, merely a memory!" (p. 347.) That is what the "Glad Tidings" have done for the world.

W. MANN.

The Sword and the Lily.

THERE are three volumes before me as I write. All of them have been carefully read in the distant past, and they have, by merit, earned the right of lawful protection as long as the owner retains his faculties. A certain reason, to be disclosed later, set me browsing again in their pages, in order to touch the history of Christianity. In Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, Chap. 23, entitled "The End of All Religions the Same," a Mahometan is speaking to the Christian priest—he says: "Was it the charity of your gospel that led you to exterminate whole nations in America, and to destroy the empires of Mexico and Peru; that makes you still desolate Africa, the inhabitants of which you sell like cattle, notwithstanding the abolition of slavery that you pretend your religion has effected; that makes you ravage India, whose domains you usurp; in short, is it charity that has prompted you for three centuries past to disturb the peaceful inhabitants of three continents, the most prudent of whom, those of Japan and China, have been constrained to banish you from their country, that they might escape your chains and recover their domestic tranquility?"

This is a long extract, but it proves the effectiveness of preaching one thing and practising another. It also banishes for ever from the mind of an intelligent being, any idea of compromise with smooth words and evil deeds. Theology has a special vocabulary. It also has a special code of conduct under the seeming simplicities of its teachings. As such, it must for ever remain under suspicion by all those who do not say one thing and mean another. So much, then, for the testimony of Volney on this point.

Turning to the *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science*, by J. W. Draper, an examination can be made of Jesuitry which hangs more or less round the

neck of all religions. Like all good writing that has only truth as its goal, Draper will bear quoting, and at the same time be up to date and in fashion. On pages 275, he states: "Though against the papal theory, which denounced usurious practices, an immense papal banking system had sprung up, in connexion with the Curia, and sums at usurious interest were advanced to prelates, place-hunters and litigants." It is here seen again that the church professes one thing and practises another.

It is not difficult to take from Lecky's *History of European Morals* an extract to establish my point. Christian charity and love mouthed by wild beasts with power in the Middle Ages has the result recorded by the historian:—

"The wretched Jews, stung to madness by the persecution of the Catholics, furnish the most numerous examples of suicide during the Middle Ages. A multitude perished by their own hands, to avoid torture, in France, in 1095; five hundred it is said on a single occasion at York; five hundred in 1320, when besieged by the Shepherds." Todd's *Life of St. Patrick*, p. 462, is given as a reference to this miserable and melancholy affair.

It may be said that all these events happened long ago; this does not in any way affect the conclusion in the serious reader's mind. There is, in them all, a specious top surface of words and theory; the deeds have been done to the high sounding accompaniment of good words, precious human words—debased by their users through the actions that are recorded.

In the present time, when the blind and the deaf can see the fangs, and hear the speech of universal usury in a mass attack on the world's human family, it would be thought that now is the time for the Church to defend a produce swamped population without money.

The *Times*, August 15 (p. 9, col 5) has a suggestion from Dean Selwyn, The Deanery, Winchester. Apart from the fact that high finance can easily dispose of all church dignitaries by the substitution of gramophone records, the following is an extract of the Dean's letter.—

What I wish to urge is the establishment by Parliament of a Finance Committee charged with the task of scrutinizing not only the expenditure but also the taxation proposals, of each year's Budget . . . If he urged that this involves interference with the privilege of the House of Commons, the answer is that such interference always exists for the recent experience of Australia shows us that the banking community is at long last a very effective Second Chamber.

This contribution to the present trouble cannot be taken seriously, it shows a lamentable lack of a grasp of the position, and is a definite help to the winning minority side of financiers so long as the human race consents to play at the game with rules not made by it. One would have thought that the Churches would not soil their hands; one would have thought that the Archbishop of Canterbury would have seen through the shabby business. But events now, as always, work the same way. History up to 1931 shows that the Church, to revert to simple symbolism, has always used *in the wrong place*, the sword of defence, and the lily of innocence. With that one fact alone the Church has made itself suspect eternally to the student, a blight on the efforts of good men, and a menace to any idealist who confuses words with deeds.

Dean Selwyn, in his letter, has written the epitaph on the tombstone of all who were killed in the Great War, but their resurrection draws near, and Freethinkers, who have clear eyes, will accept the phenomenon, leaving the ecclesiastical blind unable to understand the law of causality.

ADAM BREDE.

On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,
Reason the card, but passion is the gale.—*Pope*.

Who dare
To say that he alone has found the truth?
Longfellow.

Knowledge, Love, Power—there is the complete life.
Amiel.

Human improvement is from within outwards.—*Froude*.

¹¹ Newman: *Phases of Faith*. p. 136.

¹² Nietzsche: *The Antichrist*. p. 346.

Acid Drops.

Under the spur of bad times the tithe question is once more coming to the front. A number of auction sales have taken place, in some of them there have been outbreaks of violence in the endeavour to prevent them, and in quite a number the sales have been made impossible. Farmers and landowners are combining to resist the tithe charge, and for many reasons it is to be hoped that the agitation will continue. It might lead to some rather important results.

Naturally, the parsonic world is doing what it can to disguise the fact that a tithe charge is essentially one for the maintenance of religion, whether the land owner believes in the religion the tithe supports or not. It is claimed that the tithe is no more than a charge upon land, and this is part of the possessions of the Church. The truth is, of course, that the payment of tithe is in essence and origin a tax upon the land or upon the products of the land for the upkeep of religion. There was no question about this until about the end of the sixteenth century, but afterwards the situation became confused following the changes in religion.

Following Henry the Eighth a large part of the tithes, as well as the "first fruits" became the property of the crown, and was granted by the crown in some instances to laymen for services—not always of a very honourable character. Queen Anne, who has chiefly distinguished herself by being dead, surrendered part of her income from this source for the benefit of the poor clergy, but as what she gave was made up in her allowance from the State, it was really a gift from the State. To-day many places are freed from tithes, but as this has been done by local governing bodies buying out the tithe holder, the community is still paying tithes in the form of the loss of the capital spent in purchasing. From whichever way it is looked at the tithe remains a charge upon the public for the upkeep of religion. It remains one of the many ways in which the Church is subsidized by the State. It is not a straightforward subsidization, but there are very few things about modern religion that are straightforward.

The *Times* has had a "silly season" correspondence on "Reading the Lessons" in Church. Commenting on this, our pious contemporary *The Christian* makes the surprising admission that "people attending church have but slight knowledge of Holy Scripture," and "it is beyond question that many a reading-desk and pulpit do not command attention agreeable to the solemnity of the elocutionary exercise." Also we are told that "a considerable proportion of most congregations is made of old people, and others who are hard of hearing." Lord Sandhurst butted into the *Times* correspondence to point out that often "the lesson is announced while the congregation are resuming their seats in a tone which it is impossible even for an attentive listener to hear." If we may vary an old tag with regard to the clergy it would appear that they are invisible all the week and inaudible on the Sabbath.

The Rev. J. C. Hardwick, speaking at the Modern Churchmen's Conference at Oxford, is reported to have answered the question as to why religion failed to attract, as follows. "Great emphasis was laid upon faith, which meant 'believing without evidence things suspected to be untrue.' The religious devotee was instructed to develop a sense of superiority which separated him from his fellow men, who were either heathen, heretics, or immoral." The Rev. Hardwick deserves to be commended for having spoken the truth so boldly—but we doubt whether it will make much difference.

How far one of the Lord's workers in his vineyard has followed the injunction of selling all and giving to the poor may be seen in the amount of a recent will. Prebendary Edmund Akenhead left property worth £38,679. Religion has a peculiar technique, all its own, of squar-

ing precept with practice. The right way to view it is by standing on one's head.

In all the "cuts," actual and suggested, we do not observe that any have been suggested with regard to the salaries of the clergy. They are to remain as they are. Yet a very considerable sum might be obtained in those who receive salaries, say above £400, were to agree to a substantial reduction. And when the Chancellor of the Exchequer is looking round for new sources of taxation, it is surprising that not a single member of the House of Commons has dared to hint that places of worship in this country might be subjected to the same rates and taxes as are levied on other buildings. Year after year, what is virtually a State subsidy to religion is one of the monstrous injustices against which none but a paper such as the *Freethinker* raises a word of protest. Again, why does not some member of Parliament take in hand a question at which Bradlaugh worked so hard—namely, that of Perpetual Pensions? These have always been a gross injustice, and never more obviously so than to-day. Perhaps this question is not raised to-day because the road to political promotion *does not lie that way*. Finally, as millions of money is wasted every year on naval and military manœuvres, why is it not suggested that for two or three years these are suspended? Presumably, they are continued because we wish to show the world that we really are in earnest about abolishing war.

We have every sympathy for people who are ill, no matter what is their creed, but sometimes we receive rude shocks in connexion with miraculous cures. Our pious contemporary, *The Universe*, reports the severe illness of the Bishop of Northampton. This rev. gent. was leading a party of pilgrims to Lourdes when he was stricken with such a severe heart attack that extreme unction had to be given. He immediately returned to London on a stretcher and now lies ill in a nursing home in Hampstead.

But why in the name of all that's holy, wasn't he dipped into the healing spring at Lourdes? What was the Virgin, aided by Bernadette, doing in allowing a Right Reverend Bishop of the Roman Church to get prosaically cured in an ordinary nursing home? Here was a supreme chance of confounding the ignorant unbelievers in Lourdes, with a marvellous cure, and proving ink in his own person that the Mother of God never let anybody down at Lourdes if only he had sufficient faith in the miraculous and divine grotto. Will some eminent defender of Lourdes tell us what went wrong?

A committee representative of the three Methodist Churches has been very busy selecting hymns for a new hymn-book. We gather that the revision has become necessary because, owing to the impact of secular cultural influences, Methodist ideas have become a trifle more refined, and because Jahweh is no longer the Methodist ideal of a God. Of course, the revision will not be satisfactory for many years. It will have to be done all over again when a new generation discovers the theology of the revised hymn-book is repulsive, and insists on another gallant attempt being made to catch up with the best thought of the age. How curious it is that the best thought of the age is so often found years in advance of the light vouchsafed by "progressive revelation." God appears not to be posted with up-to-date information. Seemingly, he is unwise enough to rely on the theologians for the information; hence the antique flavour of "progressive revelation."

The perambulating member of the *Methodist Times* staff has a doleful tale to tell this week. Visiting a United Methodist Chapel in Stafford (seating capacity 500, 20 persons present), he finds the theology repulsive in the preacher's sermon. "There seems to be so much of the God of rewards, on a Sunday-school prize level (to which the Rationalists take such exception), and we feel we are being asked to worship and follow Jehovah. In fact a reference is made that we need a little of the Israelitish idea than the 'too easy' God idea that is prevalent to-day." And the reporter prefers God the old grandfather!

The aforesaid reporter is also dissatisfied with the way Stafford is "keeping the letter of the Lord's Day without entering into the spirit of it." It appears that all the shops as well as places of recreation and amusement are closed. Consequently the majority of the citizens stand or walk about the streets or saunter in the parks or up the river. These rather boring ways of killing time last up to 10.30 p.m. The reporter is quite upset because "only a small part of Stafford decides to go to church." But he has a bright thought. The Churches having reduced the citizens to boredom, he thinks this provides an excellent opportunity for the Methodist Churches to do something for the citizen!

The final note of dolefulness of our reporter is that: "And we have now stayed in thirty-five towns, of varying size, in houses, hostels, Y.M.'s, cafes of varying degree, throughout England, and we have not in one of them seen a Testament or Bible." How shocking! One infers that there are quite a number of people about who have, somehow or other, lost their "natural" instinct for religion.

That Sunday cinemas may be allowed to carry on for the next twelve months is displeasing to a pious weekly. It plaintively asks: "Does not the stress of our national situation indicate that the cinema proprietors and patrons should recognize that the welfare of the nation is served to-day by an abandonment of selfish pleasure and a return to the moral and spiritual advantages of what the Prime Minister has called 'a quiet day of rest?'" We may say to that that if the many millions of Sunday pleasure seekers abandon their "selfish pleasure," there will soon be many more thousands of unemployed in scores of industries. That result is not likely to improve the aspect of the national situation, or to promote the welfare of the nation.

A bishop, says His Grace of Chelmsford, "is not a magnate luxuriating in wealth and dignity." Of course not. A bishop is one who, like his Master, luxuriates in poverty, live on stray charity, and has nowhere to lay his head. That is why there are so few aspirants to the lovely job of bishop. An ascetic life in broadcloth, an apron, and a pair of gaiters is only for the select few.

A young Nonconformist complains of the slipshod way in which many ministers conduct Holy Communion, and the growing tendency to gabble through the service, leaving out lumps of it, and cutting it down to the very minimum. Well, of course this is a critical age. So doubtless the ministers think that the less they give of the service, the less there will be to find fault with! If this is not the right explanation, another may do. The minister, the communicants, and God all know the service by heart. It is therefore quite in keeping with modern ideas to use the minimum of formula to get what is desired. Life is short, and the saving of minutes should be commended not condemned.

The Rev. Dr. H. G. Meecham, of Manchester, asks why should not Methodists unite? There is, he declares, a supreme need that all the Christian forces should mobilize that they might face the situation of to-day. Apparently, the instinct of self-preservation is just as much alive in parsons as in the rest of the human race. It won't save them from ultimate extinction, when man makes the discovery that he can get along without the officious help and instruction of self-appointed guides with alleged Heavenly authority.

An advertisement of the Wesleyan Missionary Society is headed by a quotation: "Prayer is either a force or a farce!" Then follows:—

We know it to be a force, and therefore ask the Home Church continually to offer prayer on behalf of: (1) The suffering millions at Hankow, (2) The stricken people of Belsize, (3) the members of the Round Table Conference, (4) the budgeting committees which are now considering the financial future of our work. Your prayers will enable God the more fully to accomplish his will in respect of each of these.

Now, since God did not need the help of prayer when

he caused the millions at Hankow to suffer, and when he smote the people of Belsize, why, oh why, should he need prayer to assist him in mitigating the sufferings of the stricken? As regards prayer being useful for helping the finance committees of the Missionary Society—that is quite likely. Prayer is a kind of "suggestion" which prompts pious fools to send money to the Society.

Speaking about Michael Faraday, a Nonconformist journal says he was a deeply religious man and a diligent student of the Bible. He belonged to a small Christian sect called the Sandemanians. Our contemporary concludes thus:—

If, in one point of view he seemed to keep his religion quite separate from his scientific research, yet at the basis of his thinking as a scientist was a belief in the essential unity of all the forces of Nature. The severe discipline of the sect contributed to his endurance and pertinacity in research; and in his simple faith he developed a character of extraordinary beauty and nobility.

One almost admires the sublime effrontery that assumes Faraday's qualities of mind and character to be due entirely to his Christian faith. Now, there have been, and there are to-day, scientific workers with great pertinacity in research and with noble character who entirely disbelieve in any God or any religion. Our pious friend's explanation of this would be interesting. Pious papers, of course, always ignore facts like these. They are rather disturbing to the theory they are endeavouring to get accepted, namely, that the Christian faith has a wonderfully up-lifting effect on human mind and character, such as nothing else can have—which theory is our familiar Christian friend the lie by suggestion.

Fear, declares a writer, is always bad, because it means loss of power; it means a damping down of force, a stifling of directive thought. One may perhaps, in this connexion, be allowed to add that one of the greatest and most disastrous of human fears has been the fear of God which the Christian religion engendered. There can be no question that this fear and its consequence—the endeavour to make men's thought, conduct, and institutions conform to the alleged commands of God—have resulted in loss of power to the human race, by paralysing creative thought, suppressing independent ideas and action, and thus hindering progress in almost every direction. It is only since man started to dislodge this fear that he has begun to look forward and go forward conscious of and not mistrustful of his own powers. As the fear of God dies, so man learns to be self-reliant.

In an interesting article in the *English Churchman*, Rev. Augustin Arenales, formerly a Priest at Barcelona, makes the point that "Roman Catholicism is a far more respectable religion" in countries where it has not power in the State. On present conditions this writer says:—

The Romanists are talking nonsense when they represent the reforms introduced by the Republic in Spain as depriving them of their freedom. Even in the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster we are told there are big posters appealing to the pity of the British for the persecuted Church in Spain! The Republic of Spain has never molested, and has no desire to molest the Roman Catholics in the exercise of their lawful rights. And if it has exiled Cardinal Segura and the Bishop of Vitoria, the reason is that these gentlemen, forgetting the respect due to themselves on account of their office, and that which is due to the constituted authorities, to whom they owe obedience, assumed an attitude of barefaced rebellion; naturally they brought on themselves the rigour of the law, for no distinction can be made among those who commit any offence. And if any of the religious magazines have been suspended in the North, it is also because they agitated and stirred the people to civil war. And, finally, although the Republican Government has decreed liberty of conscience, and has emancipated the people of different religious convictions, no Roman Catholic will have any cause of complaint, seeing that his Church enjoys the same freedom. The law of equality is just, and suits best the exercise of all our rights in what concerns our conscience.

Here is endorsement of our own assertion, and that from a still Christian, though no longer Roman Catholic, clergyman.

"Reason examines, rejects, accepts; it is the only tool we possess by which to build, and the modern affectation, religious or otherwise, which despises it is guilty of sin against the spirit of Truth, and carries in itself its own condemnation. The naïve realism of yesterday in religion or science is no longer sufficient to do justice to the profundities in which we now find ourselves. In Whitehead's fine words:—

Faith in reason is the trust that the ultimate natures of things lie together in a harmony, which excludes mere arbitrariness. It is the faith that at the base of things we shall not find mere arbitrary mystery. The faith in the order of nature which has made possible the growth of science is a particular example of a deeper faith."

This is from a front page article in the *Christian World* on "The Scientific Mind," by T. Wigley, M.A. The article concludes with a quotation which, it seems to us, proves that the writer is either an unconscious humorist or a Christian, whose appreciation of science has worn his faith to a very fine thread strained almost to breaking point. Quoting the comment of a tutor on the reception of the Archbishop of York's series of addresses to undergraduates at Oxford this year, Mr. Wigley says:—

It is no good appealing to the undergraduate's religion, for he has none: nor to his emotions, for he is afraid of them; nor to his moral sense, for most questions of ethics, in his opinion, are *sub judice*. You can only appeal to his intelligence and his sense of humour.

Commenting Mr. Wigley observes "nobody with any knowledge of educated youth and the churches will deny that *humour and intelligence are the very things we need.*" And what would the *Christian World* have said if this statement had appeared in these profane columns—as it might have done? Every word of it.

Dr. Wardle Stafford said at Runcorn that Methodism has been described as Christianity on fire, and he sometimes feared that the Methodist fire would go out. And he warned his hearers to keep it alive. To use the same figure, one might say that the reverend gentleman is trying to get Methodism mugs to blow on the embers of the aforesaid fire in order that the parsons shall not "go out."

In a daily paper a reader suggests that prayer should be offered up for prosperity. Whereupon another reader suggests that what is needed is practical effort—"God helps those who help themselves." This is a nice theory. But what is the value of a God who leaves people to help themselves? Again, if people can get things achieved only by helping themselves, what do they want a God for at all?

Says Monsieur Herriot, only children imagine that war can be killed by simply shouting in the street "down with war." And we suggest that it is the same type of intelligence that imagines war can be abolished by praying to God to send peace on earth, goodwill to men. This expedient has been tried for many centuries. It never made any difference, as the history books prove.

Mr. Stimson, the United States Foreign Secretary, declares that one thing which has impressed him is the growth of goodwill among European nations. Another thing which we hope will impress observers is that the growth of goodwill coincides with a widespread decline in belief in the Christian religion. In view of what Christians claim for their creed this coincidence is a rather curious one, and will want some explaining. But although it may puzzle the pious, it is not, after all, so difficult to understand to one who has properly grasped the real nature of that religion and has noted its influence during the Christian era.

A writer in a popular weekly uses as a pivot for his article, a quotation from the diary of a Freethinker, the late Dr. Nansen:—

Most people seem to think first and foremost of what impression they are making on other people, even if those others are inferior to them.

Many are afraid of being too insistent in urging their opinions. Many are afraid to own their opinions, even when they are their innermost convictions, because they think it may lower them in the estimation of other

people. Always, always, it is our impression on others. Our whole life is arranged with a view to the effect on others, arranged as other people would have it. Who lives for himself? Who lives his own life?

The honest answer is, adds the writer, very few; and that is largely what is wrong with the world and always has been wrong with it. Most people are too lazy to think, and too cowardly to act. They mismanage life by allowing themselves to be gulled and bamboozled by custom, tradition, and the fear of censure. Perhaps we may be permitted to add here that we are glad to see some Freethought notions placed before a larger public. Freethinkers may be cold-shouldered, and the *Freethinker* may be boycotted, but their ideas appear to provide useful inspiration to the journalistic profession.

In October, American Methodists are to hold a "Ecumenical Conference." The themes of some of the addresses and discussions act as a straw to show which way the stream of interest in religion is flowing: The Church in the Modern World, The Church and Human Needs, Christianizing the Nation, What is the present State of Church Life? Is Modern Worship Real? What Outward Forces Threaten the Church? Is the Church receiving adequate financial support? Is the Church sufficiently attractive? How is the Church to get hold of Youth? How may Christ be brought to the student world? Questions such as these suggest that the parsons appreciate how difficult it is becoming nowadays "to win the world for Christ"—and the parson. We hope our Methodist brethren will not omit to tell God about it. Telling God won't make any difference, but to know that God knows is spiritually comforting, and it "uplifts" one's soul at least a foot.

Whatever the shortage of gold may mean to ordinary folk like ourselves, it is a fact the Church of Christ—the Church, of course—never seems to have any difficulty in getting as much as she wants. At the least of the solemn dedication of St. Patrick's, Soho, 50,000 gold leaves were used to beautify the ceiling and panels, etc., in the church. They were of 23 carat standard gold, but no doubt the officiating priests can console themselves with the fact that as we now have gone off the gold standard, the leaves were not quite as costly as they appear on the surface. Still 50,000 leaves of 23 standard gold represent not a bad little sum in these times, and it would be interesting to know who supplied the cash? Would it not have been better value to have spent it on converting the heathen to Christ?

The Editor of the *Church Times* confronted with the "immorality" of Chicago and Madrid prefers that of Madrid. His argument is that however much we may deplore the "immorality" of Madrid it is at least due to Catholicism, while that of Chicago is due to "extreme Protestantism." The Catholic variety is far more fascinating, and it is obvious that he simply can't stand "extreme Protestantism," whether moral or immoral.

Fifty Years Ago.

MR. C. STOCKER, who has recently opened a Freethought newspaper and book store in Liverpool, has made acquaintance with the Christian charity of his neighbours. His window has been broken, and occasionally a handful of mud is cast over his goods. Pious humbugs and bigots visit his shop now and then, and open their minds pretty freely when they find nobody in but Mrs. Stocker. One visitor expressed a desire to burn the whole concern, another wondered at their audacity, and wished he could prosecute them. Two little girls were passing one day, and the elder said to the younger "Don't you look in that shop, the priest said you wasn't to." Mr. Stocker, however, is not frightened. He sells away to those who will buy, and already he finds a brisk demand for the *Freethinker* and the *National Reformer*.

The "*Freethinker*," October 2, 1881.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. NEWTON.—One has to allow a little for national vanity, even in the case of some Freethinkers. Very few shed all their superstitions at the same time.

R. C. OLSON (Chicago).—Mr. Cohen is pleased to have your high appreciation of his writings. Books have been sent.

W. WHITEHEAD.—The story is a very old one, and has appeared in various papers from time to time, told sometimes of one country, and sometimes of another.

L. GARWOOD.—We do not think that a change of name would make Christians in the least degree more friendly to the *Freethinker* than they are. Bigots dislike the character of the paper, not its name. We welcome your own appreciation of the paper.

E. COLES.—Yours is the right spirit. The man who looks forward to complete agreement with his fellows is looking for life in a dead world.

T. W. WARD (Bournemouth).—Your question on the Genealogies of Jesus cannot be answered in a few lines. We will have it dealt with in an article in the course of a week or two, which will deal with the Christian counter arguments. Thanks for good wishes.

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.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (October 4) Mr. Cohen will commence his autumn lectures with a meeting at the Picton Hall Liverpool. His subject is "The Disease that Kills Religion," and the chair will be taken at 7.0. Admission will be free, but there will be some reserved seats at one shilling each. Next Sunday Mr. Cohen visits Plymouth.

The Secular Society Limited will issue in the course of October a volume of essays by the late J. M. Wheeler, under the title of *Footsteps of the Past*. Wheeler was sub-editor of this journal for many years, and gave of his best to its columns. No other writer has ever had the same intimate knowledge of Freethought history that Wheeler, and it is hardly likely that anyone will arise completely to take his place. *Footsteps of the Past* are concerned with the anthropological side of religion, and they show Wheeler not as a mere populariser, but as a pioneer. It was, indeed work such as Wheeler's that gave the *Freethinker* the place it held in the esteem of those who knew good stuff when they saw it. Very few Freethought papers have ever had the "fundamental brain stuff" in it that the *Freethinker* has had, but it was plain-spoken and uncompromising, and so many timid people who knew better sought protection from Christian bullies and bigots by pretending that it was "coarse" and "vulgar." *Footsteps of the Past* will cover about 250 pages and will be published at the low price of 3s., by post 3s. 3d.

Our readers will regret to learn that our genial and welcome contributor, Mr. Andrew Millar, is confined to his bed with a nervous breakdown. We hope to hear better news of him soon, and trust that the knowledge of the sympathy felt with him will act as a tonic to help him along the road to health. Mr. Millar had many friends, and his gentle nature could hardly have brought him any ill-wishers.

There is a desire to found a Branch of the N.S.S. at Bournemouth. Will all those who are interested, and would like to help such an endeavour, communicate with 36 Victoria Park Road, Bournemouth.

Mr. F. P. Corrigan speaks at the Failsforth Secular Sunday School, Pole Lane, to-day (Sunday) at 2.45 p.m., on "the Whirligig of Time," and in the evening, at

6.40, on "The Place of Freethought in Society." Mr. Corrigan is assured of a warm welcome from the local students of Secularism, and we can promise them two interesting addresses from the speaker.

The West Ham Branch N.S.S. has arranged a Blackberry Ramble from Upminster to Warley to-day (Sunday). The Devil will have touched the fruit by then, and all Freethinkers are invited to help gather the harvest. Details of train, etc., will be found in the Lecture Notice column.

South London Freethinkers will be pleased to know the local Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged an excellent course of winter lectures, to be held in the New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4. Mr. W. P. Campbell-Everden, opens the course this evening (Sunday), at 7.30, with a lecture on "Jesus the Great Delusion."

Mr. G. Whitehead brought his summer tour of the provinces to a successful conclusion with a series of excellent meeting at Plymouth. The interest aroused promises good support for the formidable syllabus of winter lectures arranged by the local Branch of the N.S.S., which will be opened by Mr. C. Cohen, President of the N.S.S. on Sunday, October 11, at Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus.

The latest addition to Messrs. Watts & Co.'s "Thinker's Library" is a condensed version of Mr. John M. Robertson's *Short History of Christianity*. So far as we can judge the work has lost nothing of its value by being condensed. And it certainly shows Mr. Robertson in his most useful vein. There is none of that chasing of all kinds of Professors up and down every kind of alley, which however interesting to the already informed reader, is apt to leave the average one wondering what it is all about. It is a good straightforward story that Mr. Robertson tells in his work, and is told with an amount of authoritative information that is certain to do good. It is a wonderful shillingsworth, and should have a wonderful sale.

We sometimes hear of persons of advanced opinions who yet, thinking (like Dryden)

"That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb."

regard the established religion of this country as being a safeguard, not only against popery, but against revolution. But "revolution" is a term used with singular freedom, and at the time of the passing of such a meagre reform as the County franchise was used by the *Times* in a prediction of the likely results of that measure. It is well, therefore, to make it clear that the growth of toleration in this country owes nothing to Protestantism. So impartial an historian as S. R. Gardiner, points out that even the Puritans were animated by the joint desire to "make the will of the nation paramount over the Court" and "to keep Protestantism pure." Permission for the free development of religious opinion was, says Gardiner, at this time, "extorted by force and not conceded to reason." And force, whether that of arms or of growing knowledge and intelligence has made every concession that has been made up to know by the established religion. What converted opponents of it to Roman Catholic emancipation? The threat of revolt in Ireland. What ultimately overcame the resistance of piety in Parliament to Bradlaugh? Not a change of religious opinion but the growth of a tolerant opinion which has never since been effectively checked. It is that opinion, and not the Bible and the Protestant religion, that has given us the comparative freedom of to-day.

There was an encouraging response to the first meeting of the Study Circle, and in future meetings will be held at 8 o'clock on Monday evenings at the offices of the N.S.S., 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. On October 5, Mr. A. D. McLaren will open a discussion on "The Universality of Religion." The subject bristles with possibilities, and should provide that which is interesting and instructive.

Studies in the New Testament.

THE ENGLISH VERSIONS.

IV.

THERE is a little trick in debate known as "the trail of the red-herring." It is difficult to avoid sometimes, but in the hands of an experienced Christian it has done superb work. Its main object is to keep the anxious inquirer off the main track, and any doubting Thomas who has the temerity to ask for information regarding the authenticity or credibility of the New Testament generally finds himself chasing the illusive fish at full gallop. Take, for example, our version of the Bible. Directly you throw doubts about it being the one genuine revelation the Lord has given to his erring and sinful children, you will find yourself discussing it as literature. You will find its marvellous phrasing extolled. You will be asked to appreciate its wonderful poetry, its extraordinary narrative power and its capacity to arouse the highest spiritual feelings within your heart. You will be told of its tremendous influence on all England's greatest writers as well as on her humblest citizens; and you will discover every one of your *relevant* questions brushed aside as utterly beside the point. How can you doubt the truth of a Book (always with a capital B, of course) which is not merely the biggest seller in the world, a Book which lost and hungry souls ardently crave for, but which has been preserved for us in a version easily the noblest piece of literature existing in this unhappy and materialistic Universe?

Now I am not in this paper going to waste any time on the Bible as literature. Written in an archaic style—and it was archaic when first published—there can be no doubt that it has many high qualities as prose and poetry. It has rhythm and balance, and an extraordinary fitness for the purpose for which it was produced. I could cite a hundred passages which are fine examples of translation as well of English as such. But the question is not whether the Bible is literature and great literature at that. The question is, *is the Bible true?* That is, is it a Revelation from God specially given to save man from the sin of Adam and to lead him, yea, verily, to Christ Jesus, as the only Hope of Salvation? When one asks this question of an orthodox and thorough believer, and is not put off by the scent of a red-herring, one finds great difficulty in getting a coherent answer. For the first point to be noted is that the Authorized Version of the Bible is not the "original." It is a translation, and as such can or can not be faulty. But even its greatest defenders allow that the Authorized Version is packed with faulty renderings, and can only excuse these by admitting that while God endureth for ever man is a frail, frail creature, full of faults and failings, and therefore, is quite liable to make mistakes.

Moreover quite a hot discussion has always taken place, and still continues as to the exact worth and value of the Precious Copies of God's Holy Word used by the Translators. Nobody knows which were used. The libraries and churches of Europe are full of manuscript copies of the Bible—very few complete, it should be noted—in Greek, Latin and Syriac, and they are simply packed with various readings. "Various readings" is a polite and religious way of saying that the MSS. differ from each other so thoroughly and so hopelessly that there never has been a textual critic or editor who knows what a true text is or admits that he can ever know. There are partizans of the *Textus Receptus*, like the late Dean Burgon, who championed the MSS. on which it is supposed our Authorized Version is based. On the other hand, the producers of

the Revised Version based many of their readings on the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Vaticanus*, two Greek MSS. supposed to be of the fourth century, both of them differing in thousands of places from the received text. The row between Dean Burgon on the one hand and Drs. Westcott and Hort on the other, forms one of the most piquant chapters in the history of the English Bible, and the idea that the matter is in any way settled because the controversy has died down, is one of those delightful delusions Christians love to perpetuate.

When the genuine believer in God's Holy Word talks about the Bible being an infallible guide, it is good to ask him *which Bible?*

There have been dozens of translations into English. Even Sir Thomas More says:—

The hole byble was long before Wycliffe's days by vertuous and well learned men, translated into the English tong; and by good and godly people with devotion and soberness, wel and reverently red.

Whether Wycliffe did or did not translate the version that bears his name is by no means known. He certainly did some of it, but it was revised in 1388 by John Purvey. It seems to have very little value as a correct translation. In any case, Wycliffe made it from the Vulgate, but in his day there really was no method of judging the value of any particular MS. of Jerome's adaptation of the Old Latin. The church authorities objected to the translation mostly on the grounds of it being a faulty one, and every effort was made to suppress it.

Tyndale's English version of the New Testament was made from the Greek, the Latin, and from Luther's German version. According to Roman Catholic authorities, this seems to have also been about as faulty a version as it was possible to conceive. Copies were burnt by the order of the Bishop of London and Sir Thomas More. Again one must insist that the MSS. and printed Greek copies used by Tyndale were faulty in themselves. How could Tyndale know which were copies of the "true and original" text?

In succession came Coverdale's Bible, Matthew's Bible, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Bishop's Bible, the Douay Bible and finally, in 1611, our famous Authorized Version of the Bible. They were all more or less based on each other, all more or less based on faulty Greek and Latin MSS., or printed Greek and Latin copies about which the revisers and translators knew almost nothing; and they all were packed with deliberately false translations and biased readings emanating from sectarian jealousies. How can any one in his senses claim that any one of these versions is the inspired Word of God? To prove that it would be necessary to prove that the sources from which the various translations were made, are inspired, but they differ so much in themselves that even the most pious editors have given up hope ever to find the true text. At all events, whatever Dean Burgon might have thought about the Authorized Version, it is a fact not contested by anybody that this work, perhaps the most famous and worthy of all the translations of the Bible, is packed with errors and defects. So must have thought, at all events, many worthy and orthodox Christians for quite a crowd of them have spent many laborious years of their lives in preparing fresh translations. And remember, these translations were bound to be based on faulty Greek or Latin printed copies of faulty MSS. Dr. Conquest, Wesley, Goadly, Young, Boothroyd, Doddridge, Campbell, Wakefield, Sharpe, Epp, McClellan, Weymouth, Moffat and any number of others all produced fresh translations, all confident that at last God's Word was adequately translated, and all attacked by orthodox critics as being packed with errors or, at

least, renderings at variance with a large number of "originals." As for the Revised Version which has been before the public for fifty years now, who reads it? The Authorized Version is found in almost every church in the Empire, and when the more learned critic has to quote the Bible and knows he has to be as "correct" as possible, he quotes the Revised Version, but always rather apologetically. He infers, of course, that however beautiful is the Authorized Version, in the interests of truth the Revised Version must be used, but he never hints, if he can help it, that it also is packed with errors and renderings at variance with many "original" MSS.; and that quite holy and orthodox people like Dean Burgon claimed that the MSS. on which it was principally based were "full of the gravest errors from beginning to end."

I have not done with our English text, but for the moment space prevents further discussion. What I want to suggest to the younger generation of Free-thinkers, especially to those who are challenging, perhaps for the first time, Christian pretensions, is to acquaint themselves with the history of the Bible as far as they can. The Grand Old Book is not dethroned by any means. It is still the great Fetish of millions of our fellow countrymen. It is still looked upon as God's Holy Word. Christian scholars never cease to foster in every way this belief—though they themselves would be chary in making such claims for the Authorized Version or other English versions. Mr. E. S. Buchanan, an erudite and thoroughly whole-hearted believer says, "Every word in the autographs was plenary inspired by the Holy Ghost . . . could we find a copy of St. John's Gospel written by the evangelist's own hand, every word of that copy would be the inspired Word of God."

Mr. Buchanan is a product of this century, and so long as he and his like can write like that and produce fine and scholarly works in support of their thesis, how can we say that the Bible is now and for ever discredited?

It will not do to point merely to the absurdity of the Flood or Jonah and the Whale. The attack on the Bible must be met with knowledge of its history, and that requires a certain amount of study and discipline. The Bible is still the chief rock upon which religion and in England, at least, Christianity rests. It is our business to show the rock is no rock but worse than shifting sand. And we can easily do that.

II. CUTNER.

Are We Civilizing God?

AN ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY OF ANY DENOMINATION.

In the beginning, we are told, God produced the world, the animals multiplied, the trees bore fruit. Pleased with the experiment, he went a step further and produced Man and Woman. It would be vain to suggest that God, experimenting like any scientist of to-day, had not observed among his lesser creations an obvious tendency to mate, increase, reproduce their kind, so that when Man and Woman followed the same principle, surely his reactions cannot have been as they are represented in the Bible to have been—otherwise, we are forced to the conclusion that the God of those days was not the All-seeing-All-knowing-All-understanding-God we teach our children he is to-day.

He was like the scientist who finds after exhaustive tests that a certain force evokes the same reaction no matter upon what object he applies it. But apparently God was not so patient as the scientist, for he vented his disappointment upon the unhappy subjects of his efforts, and in effect destroyed them spiritually. Adam

and Eve, as we know, walked and talked with God in the Garden, and apparently came to a very fair estimate of his character, and we find them later offering him fruit and burnt sacrifice when they wanted anything, very much in the fashion that any savage tribe offers salt and other material tribute to their king. God, it seems, was rather finicky and preferred the meat of Abel to the fruit of Cain, but having accepted it he allowed Cain to murder his benefactor, afterwards, it is true, reproving him, but since he had no other humans to occupy his interest at that time, it is strange that with his All-Knowing powers he was not there to prevent crime in such an early stage of his experiment.

Later, as the tribes multiplied out of hand and began the battles for supremacy, which have continued in all their barbarism down to the present day, God, never a very impartial observer, began to take sides and to counsel one half of his creatures against the other, very much, one thinks, like a solo game of draughts, and it was at this period, when the outcome of the battles began to be doubtful, that God started the suggestion of "Free Will," so that if the fight were lost the blame might not be laid at his door. He was still rather partial to burnt offerings and sacrifice, which by now had mounted to the point of first-borns and favourite sons. But the mere receipt of these sacrifices had become somewhat monotonous, and since the theatre had not been invented, the element of ritual was introduced to attract his waning interest. God also reserved to himself the sole rights of Supremacy, Vengeance, Fear, Clairvoyance, Occultation, all, it is to be noted, powers that might have been selected by Charlemagne or Napoleon with equal effect in their respective periods.

But the creative powers of God must have begun to wane, for when things got so bad that the only expedient was a complete destruction of his plaything, he was compelled to advise Noah to preserve for him two of every kind in order that his Supremacy should not entirely dwindle to nothingness. And when the Flood had subsided and Noah began the old round of offerings, God was appeased and said: "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth . . ." Which was only just, since we are taught that all our thoughts come from God, and that we are created in his image.

And while our world revolves through the ages of kings and battles and individual torments, which form the subject matter of the Old Testament, we have time to face the general existence of God during that period. According to the Bible, the creation of Heaven and Earth took place at the same time, and apparently for a lengthy period Earth took pride of place in interest, and it was only when faced with the unforeseen element of Death, typified by the murder of Abel, that God saw the opportunity to establish his dominion permanently over the world of Man. Like the rich mine-owner who establishes his supremacy over Man by Man's own continuous labour, so God drew from his investment in Man and Woman a perpetual dividend of souls produced by Man's own unaided effort. No moneylender was ever so extortionate in his demands. But even in Heaven, God was a bit of a muddler: for we have the revolt of the Arch-angels and the establishment of another power equally as strong against which God seems to have waged a losing battle, since he was compelled to send his own son out into the world, presumably because his own affairs were in too involved a state to be left.

Or is it possible, that with three efforts: Heaven and Pre-Flood and Post-Flood Earth, God was at last beginning to learn something, and the advent of Jesus of Nazareth was a fourth attempt, in the nature

of a second Adam? Another name for God might have been Frankenstein, since his final creation turned out to be the greatest agent of destruction, atrocity and desolation the world has ever known. But in all his attempts at improvement, God was unable to achieve the utter selfishness necessary, for we find that the chief teaching of his son was the worship then and thereafter of God; a poor enough substitute for freedom of thought and endeavour without supernatural penalties. But, of course, too much must not be expected of a primitive mind which delighted in wars and bloodshed and human sacrifice, and which was unable to foresee the treatment that would be meted out to his latest emissary.

We are only left to wonder if God has developed and improved since those days: has there been a cessation of Religious Wars? Wars of Greed or Power? Has Man lost his old destructive urge and been inspired instead with a genius for construction? Or is God satisfied? Jesus having died on the cross to save us, it would be sacrilegious to suggest that we are not saved, and are all doomed to Heaven and the worship of God willy-nilly without any further effort on our part.

And then there is the hideous injustice of creating a race of negroes, condemned from the first to be outcasts from their fellow humans however much we may teach them the glory of God, and the fact that in God's eyes all men are equal. Or does the Christian Church advocate the inter-marriage of black and white? Of course, the correct answer is that God has his uses for all of us, but having been given brains to think with, we are permitted to ask: What? In the case of negroes, to make slaves of them in order that more money may be lavished in the worship of God?

The fact that nearly a third of the human race are Buddhists is presumably outside the orbit of the Christian Church, and it would perhaps not be polite to ask what interest God takes in this opposition force.

The true answer to the problem probably is that we are civilizing God out of all recognition, and that is so much the worse for the human race, for it is only by seeing God in his true light that there can ever be hope for universal advancement.

S. L. TESMAN.

On the Horrors of Hymn-books.

AN Elizabethian apologist for the immortality of the soul, Sir John Davies, put into a poem (*Nosce Teipsum*) his defence of that tenet, to the great detriment of an otherwise agreeable gift of versification. The poem begins:—

"I know my life's a pain, and but a span,
I know my sense is mocked with every thing:
And to conclude, I know myself a Man,
Which is a proud, and yet a wretched thing."

Sir John was orthodox, but his orthodoxy was expressed, like its consequent pessimism, in language that bears favourable comparison with much in rhyme and prose of later date to the same purpose. The "miserable sinners" of the Prayer Book may well think themselves suitably described, for elsewhere in its pages they are urged to "read the general sentences of God's cursing against impenitent sinners, gathered out of the seven and twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy and other places of scripture" to the intent that "being admonished of the great indignation of God against sinners, ye may the rather be moved to earnest and true repentance, and to walk more warily in these dangerous days, fleeing from such vices for which ye affirm with your own mouths the curse of God to be due." (*A Commination*) Also, in this service, those taking part describe themselves as "thy servants who are vile earth and miserable sinners"; they "meekly acknowledge their vileness" and express

the hope (not difficult to account for) that the Lord "will make haste to help us in this world."

The hymn and song books of evangelical origin are even more revelatory of the pessimism which must arise from belief in the Christian sort of immortality. *Sacred Songs and Solos*, the hymn-book of Moody and Sankey contains some terrible and glum doggerel. Some, like 110,, "The drunkard reached his cheerless home; he forced his weeping wife to roam," or 415, "I should like to die said Willie, if my Papa could die too. But he says he is'n't ready 'cause he has so much to do"; or 303, "Where is my wandering boy to-night," though no doubt written with grave intent must, in these days, amuse even pious persons who have a sense of humour. But the doleful doctrines about the wrath of God, and the fate of sinners, and the peril of sudden death to the unconverted, are set out in rhymes such as these, 220:—

"How vain the delusion that while you delay,
Your hearts may grow better, your chain melt away,
Come guilty, come wretched, come just as you are
All helpless and dying, to Jesus repair."

Or 232:—

"Hasten sinner to be wise,
Stay not for the morrow's sun
Wisdom if you still dispise,
Harder is it to be won.
Hasten sinner to be blest,
Stay not for the morrow's sun,
Lest perdition thee arrest,
Ere the morrow is begun."

From the *Voice of Praise* for "school and home," published by the Sunday School Union, we garner some good examples of the sort of stuff that Christians like their children to swallow. It explains how horrible some "good children" are, and makes us almost as pessimistic as Christians. For instance:—

"Not more than others I deserve
Yet God hath given me more
For I have food while other starve,
And beg from door to door.

How many children in the street
Half naked I behold!
While I am clothed from head to feet
And covered from the cold.

While some poor children scarce can tell
Where they may lay their head,
I have a home wherein to dwell,
And rest upon my bed.

While others early learn to swear
And curse and lie and steal
Lord I am taught thy name to fear
And do thy holy will.

Are these thy favours day by day
To me above the rest?
Then let me love thee more than they
And try to serve thee best."

Even the *Freethinker* would hesitate to print our thoughts on this unspeakable violation of childhood in the name of God.

It is of this creed of fear and superstition that another famous couple of evangelists used to sing as we find from *Alexander's Revival Hymns* now before us. No. 7:—

"Tis the old time religion
And it's good enough for me:
It was good for our mothers,
Makes me love everybody
It has saved our fathers
It was good for the Prophet Daniel,
It was good for Hebrew children,
It was tried in fiery furnace,
It was good for Paul and Silas,
It will do when I am dying,
It will take us all to heaven
And it's good enough for me."

Another of Torrey and Alexander's (102) is about "two babes were born in the self-same town on the very same bright day but one of them lived in the terraced house and one in the street below but they both grew up in the usual way as other children grow but one had curly hair but Jesus took them both above and in heaven none would know which of them lived in the terraced house"

and which in the street below!" We have omitted punctuation for we decline to print this as poetry to be sung, although that was the intention of the authors and publishers.

To come from these jazz-like evangelists to *Hymns Ancient and Modern* is to come from "the street below" to the "terraced house," if we may borrow a line from the former. But we get the same pessimistic and ignorant ideas, and we will give one example of a topical kind, namely, the "hymn to be sung when there is a deficiency of crops" or "in time of famine or scarcity." No. 389:—

"What our Father does is well,
Blessed truth his children tell!
Though he send, for plenty, want,
Though the harvest store be scant,
Yet we rest upon his love
Seeking better things above.

"What our Father does is well,
Shall the sinful heart rebel?
If a blessing be withheld,
In the field or in the fold,
Is he not himself to be
All our store eternally?"

In these days, when we are supposed to be in dire financial extremity, we are quite sure that this Christian nation will turn with relief to the last verse but one of this hymn and learn that:—

"What our Father does is well,
May the thought within us dwell,
Though no milk nor honey flow
In our barren Canaan now,
God can save us in our need
God can bless us, God can feed!"

If we seem to have wandered somewhat from our starting point, we may observe that we have done so in order to show that the longer it lasts the worse piety becomes. Hymns A. and M. are much the most used of any in this country, but they do not differ from Moody and Sankey, or Torrey and Alexander, except in style, and all the lot of them are not worth a ha'porth of old Sir John Davies apologetics, which were written, with a good many more pleasant things of his, in the days of Queen Elizabeth. A.H.

Religion in Our Village.

The old village of Wendesfield, Staffs., where I have resided for the past twenty-seven years, is a quiet, sleepy place, almost devoid of anything in the shape of intellectual activity. Of late years, however, quite a large number of people from outside districts have come to live among us, and their advent has served to raise the mental tone considerably. But the old native element is very clannish and still remains densely ignorant.

So far as I know, I am the only one in the place who reads the *Freethinker*, but a considerable quantity of irreligion prevails, in spite of the Church of England, Primitive Methodists, and Wesleyans, all of which hold regular services. The old fire and enthusiasm no longer lives, and on Sunday tobacconists, fruit and sweet shops open all day, and no one has ever attempted to stop them. The probable explanation of this lies in the fact that the local preachers know that their only chance of keeping a hold on their parishioners is by practising leniency with regard to what they previously called "sins," and by a judicious use of the "blind eye," and the provision of games, etc., for the young manage to retain some kind of professed following. But the old fear of hell, or the old professed desire for heaven, no longer seems to bulk very largely in the village consciousness.

I have seen men coming into the smoke room of the village public house, and after acting as "sidesmen" tell questionable stories, swear, etc., without appearing at all conscious of any incongruity. Church attendance, where it exists is little more than a habit. The vicar and curate both wink at what goes on, and explained that a little "clean swearing" is not a great sin. I am inclined to agree with them, but it is indicative of the change that has come over life.

I was acquainted with one earnest Christian, recently deceased, who acted as a bookmaker all the week, drank freely, but never missed the evening service on Sunday. He really felt it would have been wicked to stay away, and thought that an Atheist "ought to be shot." In spite of lack of education the old timers are not so subject to the clergy as they once were. They have a natural shrewdness, and when I have been among them have exhibited a keenness of criticism with regard to religion that has often surprised me. I have on these occasions endeavoured to put my side of the case forward, and there was no mistaking the interest excited. After I had left I have been informed that one comment was "Old Ben has got his head screwed on right."

The times are changing—have changed. Doubts about religion are current in our village, and there is not to-day the same tendency to whisper those questionings. Religion is being more and more regarded as a profession, and the parson as one who stands upon the same level as a lawyer or even a tradesman. The parson has ceased to be the semi-inspired personage he once was. Village life is not now as isolated as it once was, and as it has been brought within the stream of the larger life so it has shared in the larger thought.

Perhaps if the old pioneers could see our village they might recognize some of the effects of their work. And if we were to recognize this also it might serve to inspire us to greater efforts and strengthen the determination to see that their work had not been done in vain. For there is still much to do. The battle for freedom is never done, it is always in being, and the tide of thought in "Our Village" is, perhaps, but a reflection of that stronger tide that flows elsewhere.

B. A. MILLICHAMP.

Sunday.

(After a well known hymn.)

THE day thou gavest Lord is ended,
The darkness falls at thy behest,
At least this is too oft pretended
The reason for our Sunday "rest."

All through the week each man unsleeping
Must toil at thankless tasks for bread,
Yet still the church her watch is keeping
To rouse him from his Sunday bed.

As o'er each continent and island
The dawn dies on another day,
Her noisy bells are never silent
Nor dies the roar of rant away.

The sun that bids him rest is waking
Some clerics in a church near by,
And all night long their chants are making
A nightmare for his lullaby.

So be it Lord, some day for ever,
Thy noisy hoards shall pass away,
And man will be at rest, and never
Shall human creatures own thy sway.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

A CORRECTION.

That Wayside Pulpit.

By omitting the word "not" in the quotation from 1 Timothy v. 8, Mr. Printer has made the Bible contradiction into an agreement in my article last week.

The passage should read: "But if any provide not for his own, etc."

I trust you will find space for this correction and thus clear me of the suspicion of being as muddleheaded as the Christians who are responsible for the *Wayside Pulpit*.
FRED HOBDAV.

Obituary.

MR. DAVID WEIR.

WE regret to record the death of Mr. David Weir, who was connected with the Glasgow Branch for many years. He was a member of Committee for several years, and his term of office as Vice-President only terminated in May last.

The present writer had known him for thirty years, and like many more recognized, not only the sincerity of his opinions and judgments, but also the wholesome vigour of their expression. Christianity was too puerile for serious consideration; getting people to think meant the end of the supernatural. The study of science during his apprenticeship showed him the futility of Belief, and from then onwards he saw that only by Secular means was improvement here—and now—possible. He acted accordingly.

The end came with startling suddenness. Arriving home on Thursday, September 17, after the day's work—he was a Mechanical Engineer—he was only a few seconds in his home when the heart failed and he had passed. He would have willed it so.

At his residence and also at the Glasgow Crematorium, Secular services were conducted by Mr. James Ralston of Motherwell. At the Crematorium the attendance of his workmen was eloquent tribute to the esteem in which he was held. Only fifty-four years of age, yet he had done a mass of work which so many of his contemporaries could equal if they tried, but they do not try.

To his wife and to his other relations we offer our sincere sympathy.—E.H.

MISS HARRIETT TRUELOVE.

WE regret to record the death of Miss Harriett Truelove, at the advanced age of eighty-seven. Miss Truelove was the only daughter of Edward Truelove, a brave old fighter in the Freethought ranks. His bookshop in Holborn was a meeting place for men of advanced opinions. He published a number of heretical works, was one of the pioneers of the Birth Control Movement, and in 1878 was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for publishing Owen's *Moral Physiology*. Miss Truelove lost her sight about twenty-one years ago. Her death removes another link with the days of the pioneers.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shortlands Road, North End Road), Saturday, October 3, at 7.30, Mr. G. Whitehead. Saturday, October 10, at 7.30, Messrs. F. Day and E. Bryant.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Friday, October 2, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

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. E. Wood and C. Tuson; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, A. D. McLaren, B. A. Le Maine and E. C. Saphin. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; every Thursday, at 7.0, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and J. Darby; every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Blackberry Ramble, Book to Upminster, cheap ticket. Train 10 a.m. from Plaistow calling all stations. Lunch to be carried, tea arranged at the Horse and Groom, Warley, for 4.0 p.m. All Freethinkers invited. Mrs. H. Rosetti will act as guide.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, Hall No. 5, near Clapham North Station, Underground) : 7.30, Mr. W. P. Campbell-Rverden (President West London Branch)—"Jesus, the Great Delusion."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road) : 7.0, Miss Stella Browne—"Thinking of First Hand."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Dr. Bernard Hollander—"Ancient and Modern Methods of Mental Healing."

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Zealley's Cafe, 100 High Road, Wembley) : 7.30, Mr. P. V. Morris will read a paper on "The Morality of Jesus." Questions and discussion. Admission free.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

ACCINGTON MARKET.—Sunday, October 4, at 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton. If wet Covered Market at 7.0.

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

DURHAM (Market Place).—Tuesday, October 6, at 8.0—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market)—Wednesday, October 7, at 8.0—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Saturday, October 3, at 7.0, a Debate—"Has Christianity Benefitted Humanity?" Affir.: Mr. Heil; Wesleyan Church; Neg.: Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND (near Boilermakers' Hall).—Sunday, October 4, at 7.0—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street) : Bradford) : 7.30, Titus Townend—"Science and Citizenship."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"What we are Fighting For." Questions and discussion. All welcome.

FALLSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole Lane, Fallsworth, near Manchester) : 2.45, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"The Whirlygig of Time." Evening at 7.0—"The Place of Freethought in Society."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall, Liverpool) : Sunday, October 4, Mr. Chapman Cohen (London President N.S.S., will lecture on "The Disease that Kills Religion." Doors open at 6.30, commence at 7.0. Admission free.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, 5 Forbes Place) : 7.30, Mr. John McMillan will deliver the first of a series of three lectures on "A Survey of Economic History."

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