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

Views and Opinions.

The Passing of the Gods.

Who that has read Flaubert's *Temptation of St. Antony* can ever forget the magnificent procession of the gods which the author brings before his readers! They pass before the vision of the saint, a subtle but grim commentary on the value of his own faith. The gods are there great and small, black, brown and yellow, gods of the air, the earth and the sky, each of them once possessing their hordes of followers, and every one of them doomed to die by the very nature of their birth. The picture is a symphony in evanescence, a fantasia of delusion, a proof that the gods are as mortal as those that create them. Yet there is hardly anything that man makes with the same facility with which he makes his gods. He creates them on every possible occasion and for every conceivable purpose. He makes gods even while he dreads them, and veils his fear in a song of praise to them for their goodness. No wonder wise old Montaigne said that it filled him with amazement that man who could not create a flea should yet be making gods by the dozen.

But at least one thing may be said in extenuation of man the god-maker. He is also the god-destroyer. He serves as both midwife and executioner, and the process of destruction is, in the main, as unconsciously automatic as is the method of creation. The gods appear as an unwholesome exhalation of the intellect. They disappear in proportion as the intellect of man is better informed, clarified and strengthened. Every advance in knowledge, every improvement in civilization diminishes the power of the gods, until in the end they sink out of active memory. Of most of the gods that Flaubert brings into his gigantic parade their very names are now known only to the curious in such matters. Their temples have crumbled, their worship is forgotten; the name of the once mighty Jove has dwindled into a meaningless expletive in the mouth of a brainless fop.

Unemployed Gods.

Many centuries ago Lucretius wrote that he would get rid of the gods by showing that nature did all things without their aid. That was a sound indication of the way in which gods die. They die from lack of employment. Our primitive god-makers are really very practical men. They believe in the gods because they think they do something. The gods are responsible for the weather, for the crops, for success in war, for the prevention of disease. They are useful, not decorative, and they, so to speak, earn their keep. But the time comes when they do not pay for their sustenance. The things they were believed to do, and which they were praised for doing, it is found they do not. They have been gaining a living by false pretences, and in all directions one sees the gods fading out of existence as it is realized that things happen without their intervention. Unemployment, which is world-wide on earth, long ago invaded the heavens. All sorts of things, from star movements to stomach-ache got themselves done without any help from the gods. Unemployment experts have from time to time issued reports of a coming boom in the god-business, but the facts make it quite plain that we are faced with a dwindling industry that nothing seems able to revive. It is true that, as on the worldly side, there are certain labour exchanges which profess to be able to find employment for some of these out-of-work deities, but facts tell a different story. In truth, there is hardly anything to-day that even the chiefs of the Unemployed Deities Bureau can find for gods to do. The displacement of god-labour by modern machinery amounts to the wiping out of what was once the most powerful industry on earth.

\* \* \*

The Last Straw.

For example. If there is one thing in which the gods once had an unquestioned monopoly it was the birth of human babies. The young of other animals might have been produced "God knows how," but human babies were different. There is, indeed, every reason for believing that the fact of male parentage is as much a discovery as was the method of growing food. Anthropologists have collected proofs that all over the world it was once seriously believed all babies were incarnations of tribal godlets. The discovery of how babies were produced did not spell the death of the activity of the gods at once, but it did initiate a decline. Ordinary Toms, Dicks, or Harrys were not incarnations of tribal spirits, but great men were, and some of them took on the character of gods because of this incarnation. Still, the aura of something connected with the gods hung around the phenomena of birth as long as it did around anything.

And now some of the chief officials in the God-Employment Bureau have definitely announced that this

avenue of possible employment is closed. Bishop Barnes preaches that Christians must practice birth control or the consequences of unchecked births will be disastrous to civilization. The Bishop of Liverpool issues a book to inform the world that people must no longer apologize for large families on the score that "God sends them." It is, he says, a matter entirely at the discretion of men and women, and "in the new science of conception control there has been given us a power which cannot be refused." Shades of Carlyle, Place and Bradlaugh! Right up to yesterday "conception control" was denounced by the clergy as a wicked interference with the wishes of God. God, they said, did send the children. And now even that has been taken away from him. He no more sends human babies than he sends kittens and puppies. Which means that no longer need Christian parents go to Church to thank God for sending them their children. He has nothing to do with it. God is left looking for another job—that is, if there is any vacancy left for him anywhere.

#### The Attenuation of God.

This is surely the last straw. Long, long ago God did everything. He made the earth and the stars, and he kept them in their respective places. He sent disease, and maintained health. He elevated men to high places and he cast them down again. He did everything and was everything. A kind of celestial Poo-h-Bah who had a finger in everything and who had to be consulted on every occasion. And now he does nothing. The astronomer has for long worked without him. The Geologist and the Physicist have ceased to consider his actions. Politicians use him only as a kind of flat-catcher, for our Prime Minister, who is so assiduous in his attendance at Church—since he became Prime Minister—does not think of inviting him to settle the European situation. God has even lost control of the weather, and the B.B.C. gives its nightly weather forecast without the most casual "by your leave" to the deity.

The situation, for the religious world, is really a very serious one. It is not altogether a question of discovering whether there is a God or not. By itself that would be of just about as much interest to most people as would be the question of whether Martian ladies wear high-heeled shoes. Men have all along believed that God really did something, and that if he were offended by our not believing in him, or by our declining to pay him his meed of reverence, something serious would happen to all of us. But if there is nothing we can see that he does, if everything goes on as well without him as with him, if the Atheist, other things equal, gets through life as well as the Theist, the God of the present cannot but share the fate that has befallen the gods of long ago. A new Flaubert will have another dead deity to add to his procession.

So, I repeat, it is not a question of discovering whether God exists. Fundamentally, the question to-day is one of finding something for God to do, once we have discovered that he is really there. Christians are very fond of telling us that we offer nothing constructive, they ask for something that is of practical concern. May we not fairly retort in the same vein? We spend many millions every year in thanking and praising God. For what? We keep many thousands of men at work training our children and exhorting the elders to pay heed to God lest we suffer. Why? Where? In the name of sense and economy why do we keep praising God for doing nothing? In the vast world of phenomena, from star mist to sweepstakes will some believer tell us at what point God's action

is evident? Christians have told me time after time that if I would search I should find God. Assuming that to be so, my problem would immediately be, To what use can I put him? And there is simply no sense in working hard to create a new problem in a world that is over-stocked with unsolved ones. Let us be sensible, let us be constructive. Let us not merely find God, but let us also make up our minds as to what he can do, once we have found him. The world's most pressing problem at the moment is that of unemployment. Is there any sense in pursuing a quest which results in adding one more to the number of the unemployed?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Significance of Swinburne.

*The Poetical Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne.*  
12 Vols. (Heinemann, 3s. 6d. net per volume.)  
*Lafourcade (Georges) Swinburne.* (Bell, 1932.)  
*Lafourcade (G.) La Jeunesse de Swinburne.* (Strasbourg University) 1930.

THE publication of these handsome volumes will arouse mixed feelings. Had they been issued years ago it would have helped to widen the reputation of a great poet during his lifetime. As it is they will but increase the wreaths upon his tomb. For, by virtue of his splendid poetical gifts, Algernon Swinburne's best work remains among the first gems of English literature, rich in genius and talent. Tennyson has told us that when Byron died it was as though the heaven had lost a brilliant star, in whose vanishing the world was left to night. Swinburne was more to us than Byron, for he had been a living glory of our state for half a century, and the star of his genius had wheeled so long and with such majesty that we had grown inured to his presence, and looked upon him as essential to the aspect of our heaven. So continuous was his influence that the intellectual life of our time runs in a channel largely of his making, and to ends that but for him had been shaped other than they are.

A striking instance of present-day provincialism is the comparative unpopularity of Swinburne. Mr. Humbert Wolfe, for example, considers Swinburne "unfashionable," and "almost a symbol of all that poetry should not be." But popularity may mean nothing or everything. It may be that of "Round the Marble Arch," or of Beethoven's Sonata *Apassionata*, of the latest Edgar Wallace thriller, or of *Don Quixote*. It may be absolutely damning, or the one incontestable proof of supreme merit. The tests are universality and endurance, for only noble work shall win and keep a lasting position. The best appeals in the long run to all, like *Hamlet*, though not in equal degree. Against clerical cliques, against furious opposition, by dint of sheer genius, Swinburne won his place in art. Shelley has told us that great poets are tried by a jury of their peers. Hear what George Meredith said of Swinburne: "Song was his natural voice. He was the greatest of our lyrical poets—of the world's, I should say, considering what a language he had to wield." What a tribute! Mr. Wolfe should feel more modest in the company of his betters.

M. Lafourcade, to his credit, does not attempt to appraise Swinburne's genius with a small pocket-ruler. He finds some Hellenic and Gallic traits in the English singer, and suggests that he carried on the literary tradition of Ancient Greece and also of Victor Hugo, Villon, and Baudelaire, names so various that they point at once to the extraordinary range of Swinburne's poetic output. But in considering the man as distinguished from the poet, M. Lafourcade in-

sists on the irregularities of Swinburne's life, saying that he was addicted to drink.

But Swinburne was no mere sot. He lived to be over seventy years of age, so his habits, whatever they were, did not shorten his life to any serious extent. I am not wholly sure that the great poet might have produced more and better work had it not been for alcohol. On tea he could scarcely have bettered the superb choruses of *Atalanta in Calydon*; on lemonade he could hardly have chanted the praises of Landor or Mazzini more musically; on gingerade the *Songs Before Sunrise* could hardly have been more splendidly sonorous. However, well-balanced, virtuous, and temperate Swinburne might have been, he could have done no more than write his name forever beside Shelley and Keats, and the glorious company of England's choicest singers. Such as he was, Swinburne gave us what we treasure of him. It is an open question whether another kind of Swinburne would have given us the like magnificent manifestation of genius.

The greatest barriers in nineteenth-century England to Swinburne's extensive popularity were his Democratic tendencies. He was an avowed Free-thinker and unabashed Republican. It is not strange nor remarkable, for French literature is one blaze of splendid scepticism from Abelard to Anatole France. Even in England a Medieval Christianity does not always attract men and women of genius. Byron was a thorough sceptic; Shelley a convinced Atheist, Keats a perfect Pagan, and Edward Fitzgerald an epicurean as old Omar Khayyam himself. Tennyson was heterodox, and Matthew Arnold was Secularistic. James Thomson was a militant Freethinker, and George Meredith and William Morris were both sceptics. Thomas Hardy was as iconoclastic as Swinburne. The brains is at last out of Christianity, and therein lies its doom. Even the women, the last line of defence of any superstition, are forsaking Orthodoxy, and Emily Bronte, George Eliot, George Sand, Harriet Martineau, not to stretch the list till the crack of doom, show that women intend to stand side by side with civilized man in intellectual affairs no less than in the more material matters of modern life.

For half a century Swinburne expressed Freethought and Democratic ideas in his poetry, and his consistency is proved from the publication of *Atalanta in Calydon*, the work of his young manhood, to the august utterances of his later years. No one can doubt his passionate sincerity. Here the lyrical cry which burst from him in his "Song in Time of Order," a note of righteous indignation worthy to be remembered by every Democrat:—

"We have done with the kisses that sting,  
The thief's mouth red from the feast,  
The blood on the hands of the King,  
And the lie at the lips of the priest."

MIMNERMUS.

#### COMMUNION WINE.

(An advertisement urges the use of unfermented wine for the Holy Communion as "scriptural.")

When Solomon advised drink,  
To rid man of his sorrow,  
"Strong drink" was what he said, I think  
Gave courage for to-morrow.

When Christ turned water into wine,  
The wine was strong and red,  
Its quality was superfine—  
So those who drank it said.

What would the Canaanites have thought,  
Is easy to opine,  
Had all the miracle had wrought  
Been unfermented wine.—B.W.

## The Legal Aspects of Public Meetings.

(A Paper read at the National Secular Society's Annual Conference, Whit-Sunday, 1932.)

QUESTIONS as to the legality of public meetings really resolve themselves into a consideration of the right of assembly. A meeting of persons as such has no existence as an entity possessing legal rights. A limited company, for example, is an artificial person created by Statute and has an existence apart from the persons who are shareholders or members of the company. In other words it is a distinct legal entity. It can sue and be sued, but apart from punishments by way of fine, criminal acts punishable by imprisonment are aimed at directors or others who control the Company. So with regard to a meeting, such rights as exist arise out of individual rights. If a meeting is broken up, any proceedings must be for an assault by or on some person, or for conduct likely to lead to a breach of the peace alleged by or against some individual.

Dicey in his *Law of the Constitution* points out that for a proper understanding of questions connected with the right of public meeting it is necessary to grasp firmly the truth and the bearing of two indispensable but often neglected observations—first that English Law does not recognize any special right of public meeting either for a political or for any other purpose, and that the right of assembly is nothing more than the result of the view taken by the Courts of the individual liberty of person and individual liberty of speech, and secondly, that the most serious of the obscurities which beset the law of public meetings is due to the difficulty of determining how far a citizen is legally justified in using force for the protection of his person, liberty, or property. So that interference with a public meeting is not an invasion of a public right but is an attack upon the individual right of a person to hold or speak at a meeting.

A number of persons, then, can hold a meeting provided their conduct is not illegal, that is to say they must not commit a trespass, or become a nuisance, or conduct themselves in such a way as is likely to lead to a breach of the peace. If they hire a Hall no difficulty arises because they then rest on their contractual rights. And here it is interesting to note that we have travelled a long way since the case of *Cowan v. Milbourn* in 1867. In that case Charles Watts had hired some assembly rooms at Liverpool for the purpose of delivering a number of Freethought lectures. The owner of the rooms cancelled the contract at the instance of the Chief Constable. In an action for damages for breach of the agreement to let the rooms, the Defendant urged that the contract was not binding because the rooms were to be used for an illegal purpose in that the proposed lectures were of a blasphemous nature. Christianity was then said to be part and parcel of the law of England, but since the *Bowman* case in 1917, *Cowan v. Milbourn* is no longer an authority on the question of blasphemy. In fact Lord Sumner in the *Bowman* case said the phrase "Christianity is part of the law of England" was not law, but rhetoric. The *Bowman* case in turn was built up on the law as laid down in 1883 in the case of *Foote and Ramsay*, where Lord Coleridge expressed the view that so long as the decencies of controversy were observed, even the fundamentals of Christianity could be attacked. So it is not likely that a breach of agreement could now be justified on the grounds that prevailed in the case of *Cowan v. Milbourn*.

In certain localities there are open spaces and other areas set apart either by statute or custom for the

holding of public meetings, but in the absence of such special areas it might be illegal to hold a meeting, say, on the highway. A highway is dedicated to the public for the purpose of passing and repassing, and to cause a crowd to collect might constitute an obstruction because it is contrary to the right of free passage belonging to the ordinary user of the highway. A case decided under the Public Meeting Act of 1908 is of interest here. Under this Act any person who at a lawful public meeting acts in a disorderly manner for the purpose of preventing the transaction of the business for which the meeting was called together is to be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £5 or to imprisonment not exceeding one month, and if the offence is committed at a political meeting whilst an election campaign is in progress, such person shall be deemed to be guilty of an illegal practice within the meaning of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883. Inciting other persons to commit an offence is similarly punishable. The case referred to is that of *Burden v. Rigler* decided in 1911. This was a case where a Tariff Reform lecturer decided to hold a public meeting on the highway at Poole. The meeting was advertised and the Police informed. The Police did not object to the meeting, but the lecturer was not allowed to proceed with his lecture, and there was such a disturbance than the meeting had to be discontinued. The Lecturer instituted proceedings against the Interrupters and the Justices without hearing the case out dismissed the Summons on the ground that the meeting being held on the highway was therefore not a lawful public meeting. On appeal, however, this decision was upset, it being held that the mere fact that the meeting was held on the highway did not make it unlawful, and the Justices should have considered other factors as for example the actual circumstances of the meeting, the language used, and whether in fact there was an obstruction.

Meetings in public parks depend on the Regulations or bye-laws passed by the Local Authorities, and where such bye-laws exist they should be complied with.

There are three classes of meetings which are illegal, and which may render those who take part in them guilty of a criminal offence. They are (1) unlawful assemblies (2) routs, and (3) riots.

An unlawful assembly is where three or more persons assemble with intent, either to commit a crime by open force, or to carry out any common purpose, lawful or unlawful in such a manner as to give firm and courageous persons in the neighbourhood of such assembly reasonable grounds to apprehend a breach of the peace in consequence of it. To take part in such an assembly is a common law misdemeanour. (*Halsbury's Laws of England*, Vol. IX p. 469.)

A rout is where the members of an unlawful assembly take some step towards the accomplishment of their object, and a riot is where the purpose for which the unlawful meeting is held is actually put into operation. For an unlawful assembly, a rout, and a common law riot three persons are essential. All these offences are misdemeanours and are punishable by fine or imprisonment. With regard to a riot, however, if advantage is taken of the Riot Act of 1714 the offence may become a felony punishable with penal servitude for life. Under this Act there must be at least twelve persons engaged in the assembly which threatens the peace, and a proclamation must be read by a Magistrate advising the crowd to disperse. If at the end of an hour the crowd does not disperse force may be used and those acting with the Magistrate are then protected from liability in case of in-

juries or even death caused in dispersing such meeting.

It must be borne in mind that opponents may break up a meeting and be guilty of conduct likely to lead to a breach of the peace, but that will not render the conveners of the meeting liable, although they may have known of the possible consequences of holding the meeting. This is illustrated by the case of *Beatty v. Gillbanks*, a case decided in 1882, where a number of people assembled for the purpose of holding a public meeting, and with no intention of carrying it out unlawfully, but with the knowledge that their assembly would be opposed and with good reason to suppose that a breach of the peace would be committed by those who opposed it. Two Justices of the Peace issued a public notice forbidding the continuation of such assemblies. It was held that the conveners of the meeting could not be rightly convicted of an unlawful assembly. Another case decided in 1884, that of *Beatty v. Glenister*, illustrates the same principle. In that case three members of the Salvation Army led a crowd through the streets to their meeting place. One of the three was blowing a cornet loudly and in a discordant manner, the other two marching with him singing hymns, beating time and shouting loudly. Several inhabitants of the streets through which they passed were disturbed by the row, but there were not more than fifteen members of the Salvation Army present, much of the noise being caused by a mob of 400 or 500 persons following them and hostile to their proceedings. The three members of the Salvation Army were convicted of disturbing the public peace, but on appeal it was held there was no evidence of the offence charged, and upon which they could be rightly convicted of disturbing the public peace.

There are bye-laws in most areas against the use of insulting, abusive, or obscene language in the streets, but in any event the Town Police Clauses Act, of 1847 is available against persons using profane or obscene language, which is calculated to lead to a breach of the peace. Language of this sort would make the meeting unlawful, and an offender could be fined or bound over to be of good behaviour. This is illustrated by the case of *Wise v. Dunning* decided in 1902. In that case George Wise, a Protestant crusader, held meetings in the streets of Liverpool and had made use of language and gestures insulting and annoying to the Roman Catholics, and calculated to provoke them to commit a breach of the peace. In fact breaches of the peace had been committed. Wise did not himself commit any breach of the peace, and he advised his supporters not to do so, but at one of his meetings he said he had received a letter stating that the Catholics were going to bring sticks to a subsequent meeting. He told his supporters that the Police had refused him protection, and that he looked to his supporters to protect him. The meetings caused an obstruction in the streets. A local Act imposed a penalty upon every person who in any street used any threatening abusive or insulting words or behaviour whereby a breach of the peace might be occasioned. Wise threatened and intended to hold similar meetings, and was bound over by the Order of a Magistrate to keep the peace and be of good behaviour. Wise objected to being bound over, but it was held that the Order was valid.

Dacey has a very interesting discussion, arising out of a riot at Featherstone in 1893, as to how far a person is entitled to use force in support of his right to hold a meeting. A person is entitled to use such force as is necessary to preserve or protect his life or property, and in the last extremity may even use such force as may cause serious injury or death. But when holding a meeting only such force can be used

against interrupters as would quell or prevent a disturbance. If with the assistance of the Police that course fails, then the best plan is to bring the interrupters before the Justices with a view to their being fined or bound over.

It will be seen then that the legal position is not too clearly defined, and that all these offences depend on conduct by speech or action, which in some way becomes or may become a menace to the public peace, and the test is whether there is any appreciable interference with the tranquility of the State. If the conduct of those holding the meeting is such as is likely to disturb reasonable or average people, or to promote a breach of the peace, then it may become an unlawful meeting. But there is a limit to the action that may be taken against those who interfere with meetings, and I have tried to indicate that such action is not allowed to go so far in support of the right of public meeting as is available in defence of, say, life or property.

F. EDWIN MONKS.

## The Rift in the Church.

So far from scientists leaning to religion, religionists are leaning to science. Notions from Christianity do not characterize the speculations of scientists, but notions from science are entering into the advanced school of churchmen, and they bring some devastating results. It is a remarkable feature of contemporary scepticism that, unlike that of other ages, it has spread widely in the Churches themselves. For sometimes theologians begin to study philosophy, which is founded on the sciences. What prompts them to do this? Let us have the reason at first hand:—

In taking up the study of philosophy I searched for a view of things which would protect the realities of religion and ethics against all danger from naturalistic attacks. (*Contemp. Brit. Phil.*, section by Dr. A. E. Taylor.)

With me it is certainly religion that has supplied me with my primary motive in philosophizing. (*Ibid.*, C. C. J. Webb.)

These instances could be doubled and trebled. They point to one fact, that when a churchman delves into philosophy it is with the same intention as the scholastics of the middle ages, who acquainted themselves with Aristotelian reasoning for the purpose of vindicating theological dogmas.

But wait. There is an old saying of Quarles, that "he who sits down a philosopher rises up an Atheist," and this effect is at least discernible in the conclusions arrived at by "modern" churchmen.

Webb informs us that with regard to immortality his "imagination is not easily persuaded to reach forward into a world so different from this as must be any reserved for us at death." (*Divine Personality and Human Life*), while the Dean of St. Paul's remarks—this again from a professional defender of the faith!—that there is "no clear evidence for a future life," and says "there is no evidence that the historical Jesus ever intended to found a new institutional religion" (*Outspoken Essays*); he also renounces the Hebrew God.

Canon Storr admits in his lectures entitled "A Living God," that he is reduced to arguing in a circle for God's existence, which, he owns, cannot be proved. We must, however, quell our doubts by calling in our will to believe; so runs his argument. Storr disbelieves some of the most important tenets of his religion. As regards Hell, "it must not be the traditional hell. No material flames will scorch the

unrepentant sinner. It will be a spiritual judgment, spiritually administered" (*Ibid.*)

This same churchman, at a congress some thirty years ago, created a more than mild stir by observing, "How many teachers in schools if called upon to give a lesson on the Fall, would make plain to the children that the framework of the story is imaginative?"

The usual consequence of a churchman widening his range of knowledge is that he is brought to the rejection of some important doctrines imbibed in his early training, or else he is compelled to appreciate the difficulty and leave it in abeyance.

And here we have a glimpse of the conflict that is prevalent to-day within the Church. Advanced theologians are quarrelling with their orthodox brethren on matters vital to the Christian faith. Take two statements such as these:—

(a) It is clear to every honest mind that if miracles be incredible then Christianity is false. (*Witness of History to Christ*, Dean Farrar.)

(b) The time is past when Christianity could be presented as a revelation attested by miracles . . . There has been no special intervention of the divine will contrary to the natural order of things . . . Our belief must be based on moral conviction, not upon physical wonder. (*Introd. to Study of Scriptures*, Bp. Ripon.)

Or, at a more recent date, consider the differences in the Church over questions such as Birth Control or Sunday Entertainments.

What sort of a God is it that allows his *selected* spokesmen—bear in mind they were "called"—to quarrel among themselves, not on incidental, but on fundamental doctrines?

And what sort of a God is it that permits his accredited representatives to commit themselves for nearly 2,000 years, to doctrines which, at the end of that time, they admit to be false?

For a fuller dose of the scepticism in the Christian religion the reader might be referred to such books as the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, the Rev. L. P. Jacks' *Religious Perplexities*, Mathews' *God in Christian Experience*, Tennant's *Philosophical Theology*, and Bruce's *Dictionary of the Bible*. We find there that the temptation of Jesus is only "a symbolic representation of a spiritual experience"; the Crucifixion is "truth mixed with doubtful legend"; and the Trial has "picturesque accessories of doubtful authenticity."

By accepting the conclusions of biblical criticism theologians to-day are rejecting beliefs that have been held in Christendom for well nigh two millenniums. Their attempt to purify their religion by discarding its historic doctrines, is, to use Mr. Cohen's analogy, equal to a man trying to cure his indigestion by getting rid of his digestive organs. The controversies which rive the Church are an important fact helping to speed its end. The criticism passed by Dean Inge, Knox, Barnes, the late Bp. Gore, and others, on their more primitive co-religionists is severe in the extreme. Knox remarks: "They believe in God because he is necessary to their imagination, not because he is necessary to their thought; in immortality because it commends itself to their sentiment, not because it commends itself to their intellect. Confront them with a metaphysical speculation, and they excuse themselves on grounds of brain fag. Upon my word, I have more patience with Bertrand Russell. (As for these others) they have no stomach for the quest; to them truth is but a series of notice-boards announcing 'no road here,' and they slink, baffled, away." (*Caliban in Grub Street*.)

Dean Inge is not less pungent. "It is quite unnecessary," he opines, "to go to Central Africa or

Australia to find the savage. He is our next-door neighbour. The mentality of the Stone Age exists on our own platforms and in our own pulpits." (*Outspoken Essays*.)

Such is the state to which Christianity is reduced that if only those were admitted to Church who held all the articles of the faith without reservation, every single advanced theologian would be degraded from his office, and all the Churches with cultured congregations would be practically empty.

Meanwhile the Church strives to keep its head above water. It makes a pretence of interesting itself in social ameliorations, Birth Control, Sunday games, etc. What has forced its hand if it be not the growing spirit of Freethought? The Church is being compelled to keep pace with Freethought. It is the only chance of prolonging its existence. The term "Christianity," again, is being stretched and altered so as to denote very often nothing more than a sanction of morals. But the essential doctrines, and characteristic creeds, of Christianity do not alter, and it is those creeds and doctrines that are to-day being emphatically repudiated in science, in philosophy, in literature, in cinema films, in our everyday life, and in religion itself.

G. H. TAYLOR.

### Acid Drops.

The prolonged dispute between the State and the Roman Church in Malta is over. Lord Strickland, the head of the Government, has made an abject apology to the Pope, and that worthy, "being always ready to welcome strayed children who show they are sincerely sorry," has graciously accepted it, and instructed his local representatives, who were the main cause of the row, to do the same. This "settlement," coinciding with the King's birthday, "the Island was *en fete*, and after the trooping of the King's colour the Worcester Regiment was given a great ovation." Lord Strickland's submission means, it must be presumed, that the protest which the Government sent to Malta when the Catholic Bishops declared that religious equality in that possession would be an outrage, will have little or no effect. Lord Strickland dutifully promises to be "a faithful son of the Church," and, if he keeps his promise, its Bishops in Malta will have no further trouble with him whatever part they play in the politics of the Island. Having "withdrawn" and "humbly asked pardon" for what he said—no doubt truthfully—about his ecclesiastical political opponents, he can hardly go back on his word again. The whole incident is a glaring example of the truth that "Rome pleads for tolerance and aims at supremacy."

Dr. Orchard's visit to Rome, announced as a "holiday" has, as was suggested might be the case in these columns, "cured his indecision." He has been received into the Catholic Church. The congregation at King's Weigh House Church, having been served out with all the ritual and a good deal of the doctrine of Roman Catholicism for some time past, can hardly be surprised at this development. We have no doubt that in due course Dr. Orchard will give his reasons for this step and be much "boosted" as a notable "convert." But all the numerous "spiritual autobiographies" which relate their writers' road to Rome can be divided into two classes—those whose trouble was intellectual fear, and those whose trouble was moral cowardice. Newman, the greatest of all of the first class, feared unbelief with that fear which is more terrible in its consequences to thought than the fear of anything on earth. And that fear is the most successful of all the recruiting agents of Rome, and of other and more ancient superstitions.

Canon Dearmer of Westminster Abbey is frank enough to admit the Church has got an eye now on the Cinema.

The "Cinema is one of the greatest means of education in the world to-day," he tells us in the *Passing Show*, and he hopes the time is very near when we can hear "the Sermon on the Mount in the form of a talkie." Well we venture to predict that if that over-rated hotch-potch of mostly stale and impossible ethics were put on regularly—say two or three times a week—in all our Cinemas, delivered in a gen-u-ine American nasal drawl by some Four Square or Six Circle Red Hot Gospeller, it will do more to stamp out real Christianity in a month than we could do in a year. Why not try it?

Canon Dearmer is very sad when he reflects that the Cinema is not out to improve the morals of the people but to make money. This is where, he thinks, "the Church will have to use its influence." From the way he writes, one would imagine his Church, which is one of the richest in Christendom, is never out to make money but to improve morals! And this with the Church's ghastly history of murder, intolerance, witch-burning, torture, etc., before us. The Cinemas *do* make money, and they provide good employment for thousands of people as well, and give others many happy hours of sheer enjoyment. It will be a real disaster if the Church—any Church—ever gets its claws into the Cinema world.

The B.B.C. will broadcast the opening of the Dublin Roman Catholic Congress on June 22, and it will be very gratifying to listeners all over the country to hear "the voices of 500,000 people around the large altar in Phoenix Park during the Papal Legate's Mass." Moreover "fifteen miles of streets are to be lined so that 1,000,000 people can join in singing the hymns at the closing procession" of the Congress. Fortunately for us wireless sets can be shut off, but we wonder whether the B.B.C. would broadcast, say, a N.S.S. Conference if it were attended by a few thousand people? Would we be given the opportunity of letting listeners "all over the country" know something of the truth regarding the Christian religion? It would, in any case, be interesting to know how many Roman Catholics are holding responsible posts in the B.B.C.?

The Annual Meeting of the Yorkshire Association of Baptist Churches took place the other day at Halifax. The total membership in Yorkshire is 21,301, a decrease of 405 in twelve months. The Rev. Mr. Puttack (Leeds) referring to these figures said although "they fail to give encouragement" they do represent "live membership," and they had "a feeling of spring in the Churches just now." Well, we all know it has been a very wet spring so far, and if a decline of 405 per annum suggests spring, we may wonder "what will the harvest be?" We note that "some surprise was created when a hatless young woman joined the leaders in the pulpit." She brought fraternal greeting—and a request for prayers—from Germany for the Baptists in this country. If the request is acceded to, it is to be hoped the results of the prayers in Yorkshire for German Baptists will be more successful than those which appeal for the revival of their local forces.

Dr. Henley Henson, the Bishop of Durham, is the "candid friend" among the Bishops. Since, many years ago, he wrote a book called *Cross-bench Views of Current Church Questions*, and, notwithstanding that he has since attained episcopal eminence, he delights to drop argumentative bombs into the placid region of clerical convention. So far from having that hatred of "scandal" which, as appeared in a recent libel action between two priests of that communion, is a mark of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, Dr. Henson has unearthed one scandal after another, and, with the utmost candour and clarity, told his brethren what he thinks, and what they ought to think, about every one of them. The latest is a pamphlet entitled *Sibbes and Simeon*, which deals with the not very original subject of the traffic in "livings." We cannot see why it is worse for the "care of souls" to be bought and sold as between two lay

"patrons" than for one of the latter to dispose of his "gift" to a Party Trust. It is, we think, a little ruthless to suggest that the venerable Mr. Simeon "did evil that good may come" but the Simeon Trustees, which happen to be among the most successful of the recent purchasers of livings (so that "evangelical" Trusts are said to hold many more than "anglo-Catholic" Trusts), are, after all, only seeking to keep the parochial clergy true to the obligations which the law of the land has imposed upon them. This implies taking such steps as are necessary to see that lawless parsons do not get livings, and of course they will not get any living which is the gift of an "evangelical" Trust.

The "anglo-Catholics" will thank Dr. Henson for his statement that "Protestant" is an over-rated word, and that evangelicals "hold doctrines, methods of worship, and even modes of speech which have ceased, or are ceasing, to express the faith and devotion of sincere and educated Christians." But if the doctrine of the atonement, of justification by faith, of the Virgin Birth taught by the low churchmen "have ceased or are ceasing" to be believed by churchmen they have not ceased to be incorporated in the Articles, Homilies and formularies imposed upon the Protestant Reformed Religion established in law by Parliament. Dr. Henson says, "if the influences making for the unification of the Church were allowed free play"—that is, if the Church were disestablished but not disendowed and the Bishops, in consequence, given more power than ever—this particular variety of sectional opinion would fade away." Dr. Henson is supposed to be a "liberal" churchman, but, like that other "liberal," Dr. Barnes, his liberalism stops short when he comes to deal with its implications for persons with whom he does not agree. The *Daily Telegraph* observes that "there are obstacles in the way of ensuring compulsory transfers of patronage to the diocesan authorities by re-purchase." These obstacles are three—pounds, shillings and pence. Bishop Henson hopes that the patrons will "put themselves right with the Church by handing over all the patronage they have acquired by purchase." He must be as optimistic in his opinion of lay generosity as he is pessimistic about clerical intelligence. And it was only the other day that Dean Inge was boasting that the "sectional opinions" in the Church of England, so far from meaning disunion, are the characteristic notes of English Christianity! How dull and unhappy the Church of England would be without what it slyly calls "our unhappy divisions." And what would the Press and Publications Board have to do? Nothing is less interesting to the newspapers than "unity"—of any sort.

If Dr. Henson gave the Anglo-Catholics some jam, a few days after, his brother of Exeter (Lord William Gascoigne Cecil), speaking at the Convocation of Canterbury on the proposal that Convocation should "recognize" monastic and conventual institutions in the Church of England, gave them a bitter pill to swallow. As to convents, he said, "the young girl of eighteen, filled with the elation characteristic of a religious crisis becomes a novice." The natural uprising of human desires "are translated by her confessor to be the instigations of the devil." Her "heart yearns to bear the children God intended her to bear." She thinks every such thought and feeling is mortal sin, and "no prisoner in a convict prison suffers as such a poor young woman suffers." Of monasteries Lord Cecil said "the picture is even darker. A long record of abnormalities which have been developed by men almost maddened by segregation, cannot be put aside." He added that "even if the control is so complete that the body does not sin, the mind breaks loose, and the so-called religious life is that of a Whited Sepulchre—outside is all that is good, inside all that is vile and corrupt." Despite this plain speaking, and the fact that Convocation was now asked to "approve what it formerly condemned." Lord William found himself in a minority among the Bishops, and the Archbishop of Canterbury proposed that "at this stage they should simply receive the draft scheme (*i.e.*, for the recognition of these institutions) and invite the comments of the

Lower House." If we know anything about that body of clerically-minded gentlemen most of their comments will be less courageous and truthful than those of the Bishop of Exeter.

The Pope doesn't like Atheism. That much is evident from the way he deals with it in his latest Encyclical:—

Atheism has already spread through large masses of the people; well organized, it works its way into the elementary schools; it appears in theatres; it makes use of cinema films, the gramophone and the radio; it produces booklets in every language; it promotes special exhibitions and public parades; it has formed political parties and its own economic and military systems.

Dreadful isn't it? but we feel tempted to back-answer with the famous negro retort: "What you says I am, you is!" We are, however, delighted to think so much Atheistic activity is not only apparent, but causing the Pope and his satellites the gravest concern. That is exactly how it should be.

On the occasion of the opening of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Sir Ian Colquhoun inspected the troops at Holyrood Palace. He was "heralded by a fanfare of trumpets," and the band of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, while his coach was escorted by a troop of the 9th Queens Royal Lancers. The Rev. A. D. Belden (of Whitefield's) wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* asking "what all this has to do with the sitting of the General Assembly," and asserted that "nearly every Christian denomination has committed itself to the statement that war is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ." We should like to know when and where any recognized Christian denomination in this country has officially and in practise acted on this alleged commitment? There are still Anglican, Free Church and Roman Catholic chaplains on the pay lists of the Armed forces. If the Lord Mayor of London should propose to visit Whitefields in State, with a military escort of say the City of London Regiment, would Mr. Beldon say it was an unchristian proceeding, and refuse to function?

Nor was military pomp and parade the only feature of this year's General Assembly. We learn from Lady Oxford and Asquith, who, having been the guest there of Sir Ian Colquhoun, writes an account of her visit in the *News-Chronicle*, that at the dinner, for which she was requested "to wear her best dress," that the dinner table was ornamented with pink tulips, "nearly all the men were in uniform," and had "every sort of medal and decoration on their breasts." The toast of "the Church of Scotland," "we drank accompanied by the moving music of the 100th Psalm. It was as much as I could do to refrain from singing "All people that on earth do dwell." There was also a service at St. Giles' Cathedral, and "as we passed through the high iron gates on the way to the service a salute of twenty-one guns was fired from the castle." Thus the Church of Scotland, which is in the enviable position which the Church of England seeks to reach, that is established, yet free—a position which it attained in 1905, by an Act which was a masterpiece of ecclesiastical cupidity and political cowardice—sets forth "the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ." He did not, we believe have a salute from State soldiers when he rode into Jerusalem; but Jerusalem in those days and Edinburgh in these days are doubtless very different places. Then and now, however, in both places, the State religion and the profession of arms went and go together, and their association was never more intimate or so injurious as during the one thousand years when "the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ" filled Europe with despotism, darkness and death.

The religious objection to sweepstakes, and to gambling in general, takes on a curious appearance when we read, just before the Dublin draw, that, at St. Ives "throwing dice for Bibles under which three Anglican and three Nonconformist children receive a testa-

ment," is an annual event. Commenting on this "Observer" (of the *Observer*) says it:—

Emphasises the fact that there is a religious, as well as a secular, appeal to chance. "Casting lots" was for ages a recognized expedient for the settlement of difficult choices: and it is the fact that for a long period games of chance were prohibited, not from a sense of the evils of gambling, but on the ground that they were a reference of purely trivial matters to the adjudication of the Deity, and so constituted a sort of blasphemy.

God, we gather, must not be troubled with trifles; but we fear they are one of his main preoccupations.

Rev. R. J. Boggis, vicar of St. John, Torquay, speaking at a Deanery Conference in Devonshire, said that "What the world calls a gentleman is very seldom found in the ranks of the Nonconformist ministry." This allegation is justified by the statement—only true nowadays of a decreasing minority of Anglican clergy—that the latter "are Public School boys, and have taken degrees at a University." In his work, says Mr. Boggis, "the clergymen, unlike the dissenting minister, is not prepared to put himself under the thumb of some little committee." We commend this to the pious members of the Parochial Church Council of St. John's Torquay, who may be able to exercise some rights given them by the Enabling Act, but who, "if they try to dominate a clergyman will be discouraging a very excellent type of English gentleman." A type who triumphs is, apparently, still alive and blowing—in Torquay.

It is amusing to see the son of the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle expounding Spiritualism (in reply to a sermon by Mr. Allen, the parson of Frizinghall, Yorks) on the ground that "survivalism"—the new name for spiritualism—"is in a position to revive religion, as it now stands, and to give it that new impetus which it so sorely needs in its present parlous condition." Mr. Conan Doyle tells the parson that "a real knowledge of Spiritualism is the only thing which renders intelligible many incidents in the Bible which would otherwise be incomprehensible." It is certainly true that the Witch of Endor belongs, in the last analysis, to the same category as both the parson and the medium, but if this makes the Bible intelligible it is at the expense, and not to the advantage of religion. There is, however, one of the "spiritual gifts" which seems to be fairly prevalent in spiritist and clerical circles—the gift of tongues!

A *Christian World* writer puts in a kind of an apology for the opposition of Sir Charles Oman to Sunday entertainments by saying that he has a conscience. We do not deny it, but the operations of "conscience" are sometimes very queer. Besides, a conscience that prevents a man doing this or that may be quite good. But a conscience that makes a man wish to stop others acting in a way that he does not care to act is likely to become a confounded nuisance.

We remember listening to Sir Charles Oman on the Committee stage of the Bill for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, when he tried to horrify the Committee with tales of the horrible and indecent caricatures of religion which he had seen in France. He said he had many samples in his bag which he would show to members in private. If they were really indecent, we have no doubt that many Members of Parliament would greatly enjoy a private view. But we question their "indecentcy." Certainly we have never seen them publicly exhibited, and we question whether Sir Charles has either. And we have a wholesale and wholesome suspicion of the Christian on the Continent, whose conscience leads him to search for anything indecent that can be picked up. He might find them with the same amount of research in England, but here he is better known. And that makes a devil of a difference to the Puritan on the prowl.

However hard-up we are, however terribly the economic crisis presses upon us, singly and as a nation,

it is good to record, thank heaven, that money can always be found for religious purposes. £14,704 were paid by Catholics for various parish debts in Westminster. They have put up and maintained new churches and schools, and if more money is required more money will be found. No religion has ever died for want of funds. Even if a nation starves, people must have somewhere to praise God Almighty in. What a game it is!

The Governor of Kenya Colony says that "But for the locusts the country would be well on the way to seeing daylight." Well, if the Christians of Kenya are not enjoying the society of the locust pests, they had better suggest to the Great Inventor of the pests that he should destroy the locusts and try his hand at inventing something less harmful.

According to the Chief Scout, "The Scout Movement is a direct service to God and man, a service any religion will support." There's no harm in adding that although most church and chapel parsons support the Scout Movement, their chief motive for doing so has little concern with what is claimed for the Movement by the Chief Scout. That motive is a professional one. Scoutism, they think offers them an opportunity for retaining their grip on the young, and of keeping religion before the youthful mind. So far as we can judge, the main contribution of the parsons to the Scout Movement takes the form of suggesting and arranging "church parades"—of exploiting youthful love of exhibition, for youth likes to be all dressed up and on show. Possibly this kind of Scout activity may be rendering "a direct service" to the parsons, but it renders little or no kind of service to mankind generally. That, however, is only to be expected, since what helps the parsons is seldom if ever of any advantage to man.

### Fifty Years Ago.

MANY of our readers will regret to hear that Mr. James Thomson ("B.V.") died on Saturday evening, June 11, through the rupture of a blood vessel. Mr. Thomson was in his forty-eighth year, having been born on November 23, 1834. His parents were Scotch, and his birthplace, we believe, was Port Glasgow. He was trained for a schoolmaster in the army, and it was while occupying that post that he became acquainted with Mr. Bradlaugh. He left the service very early, and after some years of commercial life, he devoted himself to literature, in which he was eminently qualified to excel. His first serious poetry, written at the age of twenty-two, showed not only a remarkable power of imagination, but an extraordinary command of diction and metre. Many of his later poems, most of which have been collected in two volumes, were originally published in the *National Reformer*, the *Secularist*, and the *Liberal*. Only one important production appeared in a magazine, namely, "Sunday up the River," which first saw the light in *Fraser* while edited by Mr. Froude. Several of his poems have never been published, but as they exist in manuscript it is to be hoped that they will yet be given to the world. Mr. Thomson had far more than one man's share of unhappiness in his life, and his chronic melancholia affected nearly all his work. But his genius was of the highest order, and he was one of the few real poets of his generation. He may, indeed, be called the poet of Pessimism, to which, in "The City of Dreadful Night," he gave the finest and firmest expression; yet some productions of his lighter muse show a rare sympathy with the joyous aspects of common life. He undoubtedly possessed "the vision and the faculty divine," and his poetical reputation, already established in the minds of the most competent judges, will be more generally recognized by posterity. Mr. Thomson was a confirmed Atheist, and his remains have been interred in the same grave with those of Austin Holyoake, at Highgate Cemetery.

The "Freethinker," June 11, 1882.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. H. WILLIAMS.—The criticism was obviously not aimed against such as yourself who are doing what opportunities permit to help. If all Freethinkers did as much the position of Freethought would be far different from what it is. We cannot advise what each person should do; our only desire is that they should each do something. Circumstances must determine the rest.

R. TURNER.—Next week.

G. GIBSON.—The report of the lady who drew Celebrator in the Irish Sweepstake and remained in Church praying for the horse's victory until after the race, is very amusing. She probably did not make her desires quite clear, or the recording angel made a mistake in his entry. Probably the heavenly powers are more familiar with asses and pigeons than with horses.

C. R. HALEMY.—Glad you have found the *Freethinker* so useful. We do not think it possible to stop Christians telling lies about Freethinkers—or about anyone else where their religious feelings are excited.

J. ALMOND.—Will see the leaflets are well distributed. "A READER."—Birkenhead is a place that is evidently in need of a vigorous propaganda.

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

*The National Secular Society's Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.*

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

*When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.*

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

One of our correspondents enquires whether we could circulate a quantity of our *Rule of the Sabbatarian* leaflet in the Camborne (Cornwall) district. We should be very glad to do so, if anyone in that district will undertake the distribution. Those who reply should say how many copies they wish us to send.

Several of the papers, we are pleased to note, have followed the lead set by this journal with regard to the Sunday Bill. In London we are pleased to reckon the *Evening Standard* as among our converts. It has published several leading articles following our lines of criticism, without, of course, mentioning the *Freethinker*. That is the usual course, and we are neither surprised nor disappointed thereat. But it is strange that a Bill so thoroughly retrogressive as the Sunday Entertainment Bill should have been accepted as quietly as it has been. It goes further in its control of Sunday concerts and entertainments than any previous Bill has dared to go, and may make real reform more difficult than ever. As it stands it is a victory for Sabbatarianism.

We specially desire to call the attention of our readers to an article in the *Standard* for May 6, by Mr. A. P. Herbert. He agrees that the Bill is cowardly, hypocritical, and preposterous, and is surprised that the House of Commons should ever have accepted it. He

says that nothing now remains but rebellion. He follows our recent article in which we said that often the only way to repeal a bad law is to ignore it, and if Cinema proprietors will take their courage in both hands, and decline to be robbed in the name of religion, they could set this ridiculous Bill at defiance. At the worst the Cinema proprietors should refuse to open at all on Sunday, and "then there would be trouble."

We think that is good advice; it is indeed the advice we have already given. The Government is not likely to face the outcry against the cessation of Sunday entertainments. But Mr. Herbert is wrong in thinking that the Cinema people could, in order to test whether there is a "public demand," open their places free on one Sunday. Under the old Act a concert or an entertainment to which there was no charge for admission was quite legal. Under the new Bill theatres are not permitted, Cinemas may open under licence, and even concerts—which were quite free before—will in the future be controlled by a local council as to the kind of entertainment given. Substantially it puts everything under licence. The next move of the Government of jobs and jobbery will be to create an elaborate inspectorate which will provide a number of paid posts for its supporters.

Woolwich possesses an enthusiastic little band of workers. Meetings are held in Beresford Square each Sunday evening. There are enough Freethinkers in the district to make a really strong Branch of the N.S.S. The opposition is getting more Christian each week, last Sunday it consisted of a harmonium, cornet and choir, assisted by a leather-lunged dancing dervish, who gave an exhibition on a platform, with a Bible in place of a tom-tom. There was a splendid audience round the Freethought platform, and Mr. Rosetti had an enjoyable evening. Mr. S. Burke, 4 Lyford Street, Woolwich, S.E.18, will be pleased to receive applications for membership from unattached local Freethinkers.

*London for Heretics* is an interesting little handbook by William Kent, Watts & Co., 2s. d., that should prove interesting to many comparatively orthodox folk. Mr. Kent would, we expect, be the last to claim that he had exhausted the signs in houses, streets, buildings and institutions that London furnishes of the heretics, male and female, who have lived and worked within its borders, but such glimpses as he has given us in this little volume, will give to many a side of London life about which they have probably never thought, and may set others working on what is really a new field. We hope that this will be the case. *London for Heretics* is an alluring title, and we hope the sale of the book will incite Mr. Kent to essay a larger work. There are a number of illustrations to the text, including one of Carlile's famous Fleet Street shop, and one of the Rotunda, identified with both Richard Carlile and Robert Taylor. We should like to have seen one of the Hall of Science, for so long identified with Bradlaugh, but we do not know if any exists. We wish the work success.

The excellent Thinkers Library (Watts, 1s.) has, as its latest addition, James Thomson's ("B.V.") *The City of Dreadful Night and Other Poems*, with a Preface by Henry S. Salt. The general title suggests a liberal range, and the series, which already includes a work of fiction (Anatole France's *Penguin Island*) now enters the realm of poetry. This is all to the good, for there is a notion that neither novelists nor poets are thinkers, which is as absurd as to say that all novelists and poets come into that category. It were a work of supererogation to praise the merits, both in form and in language, of Thomson's masterpiece. Its tragic magnificence dwarfs the personal tragedy by which it was inspired.

Mr. Salt, in his brief, but adequate Preface, remarks that Bradlaugh, when he published this work in the *National Reformer*, was under no illusion as to its propagandist disadvantages. Here, as ever, generosity marked his decision. In fact, the poem, although the work of a

Freethinker, who suffered more than most because of his opinions, is not, in any exact sense, a Freethought work. Thomson wrote much in prose, and there are those who think that many of his writings in that form deserve republication. He was a fine critic—among the first to recognize the genius and predict the triumph of Hardy—and, in a lighter vein—as in the present volume in poems like "Sunday Up the River"—he handled his theme with many a flash of wisdom and wit. We believe Freethinkers would welcome a selection of his writings in prose which are of a distinctly Freethought character. It would make an admirable, and surely a suitable addition to this attractive series.

Mr. G. Whitehead reports that by carefully dodging the rain a number of successful meetings have been held. Bolton, Wigan, Blackburn, Nelson and Burnley were visited, and sympathetic crowds heard the message of Freethought. Mr. Sissons, Secretary of the Bolton Branch N.S.S., was well in evidence, helping wherever possible. Commencing to-day (Sunday) Mr. Whitehead will be in the Darlington area for a week. The Executive are hopeful that one result from the visit will be the reviving of the local N.S.S. Branch which has been dormant for some time.

## On Hebrew and Kindred Matters.

### III.

(Concluded from page 357.)

If the reader were to make up his mind to find out when, where and how the square (modern) Hebrew characters came to be used, he would soon discover that critics and authorities shirked the issue whenever possible or resorted to pure conjecture. No one knows anything about its origin at all, yet with the exception of the Samaritan Pentateuch and some small portions of certain books, the Old Testament, as we have it, is entirely in square Hebrew character. We can dismiss the Samaritan version very briefly. It is obviously a late copy of the Hebrew, but written in a special character of its own, evidently a bad imitation of the Phœnician. We do not know when it was made or how or why, though the stories associated with it need not necessarily be untrue. As far as I have been able to find out, the only work written in Samaritan characters is this version of the Pentateuch, and it is quite possible the only work in these characters in existence. It must have been made when the Hebrew Pentateuch had been written and the question for us now is in what language were the first Old Testament writings set down? I pointed out, in a previous article, that Babylonian cuneiform was certainly used in Canaan up to the seventh century B.C., and also that about 500 B.C., the Jews were corresponding with each other in Aramaic. Aramaic also is the language which, according to most authorities, was spoken in Palestine and Jerusalem in the beginning of our era. Did Ezra compile the Old Testament in Aramaic? No one knows. No one can tell what language he used. Not an inscription or manuscript has come down to us of the Old Testament except in square Hebrew characters (excepting, as I have already indicated, certain small portions and the Samaritan version).

Now, if Ezra re-wrote or compiled the work in Hebrew, no one could possibly have understood it except a few learned priests if Hebrew had previously been a living language. If he used Aramaic, it was certainly the living language of his time understood, if not read, by the people. Why then has no fragment come down to us (except those combined with the Hebrew in Daniel, etc.)? And why was the Aramaic

turned into a supposed *dead* language, Hebrew, which nobody understood? If this Hebrew was nothing but a "vulgar" dialect of Aramaic, I ask, is it conceivable that God's Holy Word (which must, in the nature of the case, have been adored by the Jews) be rendered into a very common dialect? Would a common dialect be referred to as God's own language? And where was this common dialect spoken? One authority (for whom I have the greatest respect, Dr. Naville) is certain that this dialect was spoken in Jerusalem. He has no proof, only conjecture, but even he can only say that the written Hebrew was "adapted" from the Jerusalem dialect. Almost all other authorities are certain that it was Aramaic that was spoken in Jerusalem, and I am content to leave it at that. The only "proof" that Hebrew was a spoken language is conjecture.

But the question is not quite settled without some attempt to understand the very difficult problem of the square Hebrew character. In the first place, compared with contemporary script, no one can deny that the Hebrew alphabet is very beautifully shaped. Indeed, each letter compares very favourably with the Roman characters (which form our own alphabet) engraved on the Trojan column in Rome. Moreover, these Hebrew characters are admirably adapted for special pen work. Who invented them? When? Why? The true answer is lost in the mists of time. We simply do not know. Why were twenty-two letters chosen with no vowels? Why are there five extra finals to make twenty-seven letters in all? Why does the smallest letter, the *yod*, stand for the number ten? Are the other letters all derivative shapes from the *yod*? I could ask a hundred questions on the alphabet alone, but I would find it extremely difficult to arrive at the *true* answer. The Old Testament in the form we have it is not an ordinary book. It is not just simply a recital of stories, true or myths, "leaving nothing to the imagination." Religions in the past were full of mystery and symbols. They had hidden meanings known only to the priests. These meanings took various forms exoterically, but it is useless for the reader to pick up the Authorized version of the Bible and read it as he would the *Arabian Nights* or one of Edgar Wallace's moving narratives. Sceptic as I am, I sometimes feel called upon to protest when some critic picks out a verse of twenty words and tells me that the first six, were due to an Elohist writer, the next two, to the Jahvist writer, four more to a Priestly writer, two more to an Elohist-Jahvist adaptor, and the whole eventually compiled by Ezra, put into shape by Ezra II, repointed by the Massorites in the sixth century, and finally explained either by Maimonides Rashi or Abu Ezra only a few hundred years ago. But if this is really the case, what about Hebrew once having been a spoken language? Is it possible that it passed through so many vicissitudes before it came down to us as God's Holy Word?

When we come to examine the contents as the "holy" book of a mystery religion, and not just as some simple Oriental narratives, we must be struck by a number of facts which are exceedingly difficult to explain. The Bible is packed with names, but they are hardly ever repeated. Why?

Are we to believe the Jews up to the time of the Maccabees at least, never had but one Moses, one David, one Abraham? In a period of 1500 years? If, however, the Jews had no history worth recording before the Babylonian exile, and started after that to compile one, where did all the names in the Bible come from? Here it is interesting to note the admissions of the *Encyclopedia Biblica* article on Names. This is one of the most important, and one of the longest in the whole book and the writer ad-

mits one great difficulty is due "to the fact that the Hebrew language is but imperfectly known." Another delightful admission is that "a considerable number of names in the Old Testament must be regarded as fictitious." This means they were made up. Why? Were they just mere sounds or names made up with a purpose? That is, have they a hidden meaning? Take the word "Abram," or "Abraham," for example. "Abram" certainly means "father"—Abraham was the Father of the race—and if the reader takes down Parkhurst's *Hebrew Lexicon*, he will find what the first word in it means, the word AB. He will then see how the word "Abram" was invented. Inman, in *Ancient Faiths in Ancient Names* analyses quite a large number of names, and shows how often they hide a phallic element. Now if so many names are pure inventions, why are they? And where did these inventions stop?

The place names in Palestine are on a different footing, and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* distinctly affirms that "in a considerable number of cases we know definitely they were not given by the Israelites." This is just what we should expect. It would be difficult to invent new place-names in a country which already had them.

I have no time or space here to go into the symbolism in the Old Testament, but the very great part numbers play in the "holy" book would surprise the reader (if he did not know it). Sevens and forties abound, but there is far more than a mere repetition of numbers. There is the long discussion on the word Iyhv or Ieve, translated in English by the word Jehovah, which really should be pronounced Yahve. At least so says Ewald. But if Hebrew was a spoken language, or if it had been a common dialect of Palestine, why all the mystery as to the pronunciation of the word? Why these interminable discussions on the famous tetragrammaton?

El and Elohim also have provided long discussions in innumerable books, and so have the other appellatives of the God Almighty of the Jews. And if one keeps a sharp look out in these discussions one gets an admission like this from the *Encyclopedia Biblica* about Yahwe: "It seems precarious to suppose that while Hebrew was still a living language, the people should have been so completely deluded as to the meaning of the most important and sacred name." Of course. But what if Hebrew never was a living language? What if Iyhv was an artificial name made up in this way for its numerical value?

To sum up my own investigations (I do not claim they are conclusive) but I do say that as far as I have read, I have come across no evidence that Hebrew, as we have it in the Old Testament, was ever spoken. All the evidence goes to show that Babylonian cuneiform, and later Aramaic, were the languages of Canaan, but of course there must have been dialects of various kinds in all districts. Whether these dialects were requisitioned in putting down the Hebrew text is not known, though possible, but the Old Testament as a whole is packed with symbolism in names and numbers which are admittedly artificial. The square Hebrew character is also a specially designed alphabet—and it may be agreed that this rendering of the old myths and legends with some true history of the Jewish race in the Old Testament in a beautiful script, made Hebrew a living literary language for the Jews. Its later literature and the efforts made now to force it on to the Zionist Jews in Palestine as their spoken language does not concern us here.

Finally this extract from the *Jewish Encyclopedia* is not without interest:—

Not only, however, can the question concerning the relative age of a language whose origin lies in

prehistoric times not be answered positively, but the necessity of the question itself is problematical. (Italics mine.)

Evidently the *Jewish Encyclopedia* was not too sure itself about the Hebrew language having been spoken. Why bother about asking inconvenient questions? I hope, at least, that what I have said proves they cannot be answered so glibly as some critics suppose.

H. CUTNER.

## "A Marriage Has Been Arranged."

THE PARTIES AND THE DATE.

THE Centenary of the British Medical Association occurs this year. The occasion is to be celebrated at the Annual Meeting. This year it is being held in London in the third week of July.

To mark the event certain things are to be done. The proposals are (1) to increase a small Hastings Charity, (2) to place a tablet on the house in Worcester, where Hastings practised, and (3) to erect a stained-glass window commemorating the founding of the association by Sir Charles Hastings. Connected with the latter there is to be a ceremony, conducted by the Bishop at the unveiling in July. A Pilgrimage from London to Worcester is arranged.

An appeal for funds to carry out this programme was sent out as long ago as last July, and has been followed by another since. Both stated that the church authorities were eager to see this proposal carried out, and to give every possible assistance in that direction.

A little time prior to the appeal the press contained accounts of the impasse between the Bishop of Birmingham and the Archbishop of Canterbury on the Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

During the celebrations the public will be privileged to read in the press a complete review of the medical advances of the last one hundred years. As we know, these are so remarkable that it may not improbably be estimated that they surpass those of all previous history put together. Also there will be press photos of the unveiling ceremony. Something will be broadcast about it, and finally, the cinema will show the procession headed by the Bishop of Worcester, in cope and mitre. Following him will appear the leading members of the profession, men high in social and public esteem, intermingled with lesser dignitaries of the church. Every cinema in the English-speaking world, and probably others, will show this in its news programme.

Small wonder is it that an event of such significance, and to the church of such eminent importance is welcomed and assisted in every possible way. The mental effect of the event on millions must be profound, and incalculable—the more so, as, when seeing it they will be off their intellectual guard and in an entirely uncritical mood. In effect it will convey to them that the advance of medical science and the safety they enjoy is due to, and associated with a belief in God, in the Christian God.

At the time of the first announcement, following the lamentable public exhibition of the dispute between the Archbishop and the Bishop, of fundamental doctrinal differences, it struck me as incongruous for the medical profession to thus support the church, and also it seemed humiliating. Having just been reading Anatole France's *Penguin Island*, I thereupon penned the Dedication Scroll for the Window, and the Prayer for the Occasion, which appear at the end hereof. I have thought of the matter a good deal since, and would now examine further this implication that

medical advances and the church's teaching are related.

#### SOURCE OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES.

During the two or three centuries preceding the last, the Socratic crime of "questioning established opinions," had been freely committed by those men who first hewed the openings into the mountain of ignorance on which men were crawling about, ant-like. The spirit of free enquiry had become more general and the effects were startling, and the whole field of man's vision was immensely broadened.

The Microscope, which has been one of our most powerful weapons, was invented by Leewenhoek late in the seventeenth century. In every sphere of pure science the principles and discoveries on which the last century's work has borne so much fruit, had prepared the way for them. It is legitimate to expect that a review of medical progress in the last one hundred years will set these foundations in true perspective. Should it fail to do this, and to indicate the value of the Socratic method it will be misleading and a distorted picture.

#### OPPOSITION TO FREE ENQUIRY.

Against this Socratic method of Free Enquiry the church has always fought. It was its duty to do so, as its source of authority is divine and final. The boast of the Roman Catholic Church "the Church never changes," is perfectly logical. And while it is the Established Church that is being favoured by the gift of a stained-glass window, and public and ceremonial acknowledgment, the suggestion received by the public mind will be applied by it to all Christian Churches—their own, to whichever they claim adherence. And the public will not be far wrong, for unless I am seriously misinformed, a majority of the Church of England opinion is what is called "Anglo-Catholic."

Janet Chance, in her new book, and each statement is separately documented, says: "Science has made many blunders. And has in time, by her own methods, acknowledged the blunders. Dogmatic religion has also committed those blunders; but has it ever acknowledged them of its own accord or ever made good the crime against truth by its own methods? Left to itself religion would still be teaching as it did fifty, a hundred, or nineteen hundred years ago, and not tentatively, provisionally, as in a sphere that was not its true one, but positively, arrogantly and with the penalties of the law and of persecution at its elbow. Left to itself, and to the revelations of its God, it would still be teaching that lightning is caused by the 'Prince of the Power of the Air,' that lightning conductors are irreligious, that protection from lightning is to be sought in prayers and bell-rings, that the crazy confessions of tortured women were proof of their association with demons in witches' sabbaths; that actors are not fit persons to receive the sacrament of marriage, that the fall of man is an historic fact; that geology is 'not a subject of lawful enquiry,' and that 'the principle of natural selection is an incompatible with the word of God.' Left to itself, it would still be censuring the Galileos and fighting the Darwins."

Following this, Mrs. Chance quotes the Pope's Encyclical of December, 1930, in which Birth Control is denounced as "this foul stain," etc., etc.

#### "UN MARIAGE DE CONVENANCE."

On this memorable occasion an alliance is to be proclaimed officially between the British Medical Association and the Church. But it seems to smack of the Mariage de Convenance. Such contracts arise out

of, on the one side material considerations, and on the other, vanity; the love of show or of social position or of title.

The Banns of Marriage have already been called twice. I had, not alone I think, believed, that the medical profession was already securely united in wedlock to Truth (Science), and that she had no dealing with divine revelation at all. So it appears to be a bigamous affair that is about to be enacted. (It is here necessary to indicate, using the trite phrase, but in no empty manner, that the writer has the honour to belong to the profession, and to the B.M.A.). Hence an objection may be lodged against the marriage being carried out, and as an interested party, I protest that there is in existence an Impediment that one of the contracting parties is already married.

What of our Hippocratic allegiance, of our vaunted tradition and origin from Hippocrates of Cos? Of Galen, Averroes and Avicenna? What will Æsculapius report to the Lord President of the Olympian Cabinet, Zeus, when he hands in the Report for 1932 of his department? One must anticipate that when this objection is brought to the notice of the Council that they will minimise the significance of the impending event, "Poo-poo! it doesn't amount to much after all—the cathedral is a kind of national property." If it does not amount to much why then has this courtship been sedulously promoted during twelve months? Why the mummery and waste of time? I wonder which of the parties is to materially benefit by this and which the vain one? I cannot but think that the Council have not given sufficient thought to its intrinsic importance and widespread significance, that the road on which they have proceeded has not been made unduly pleasant and easy by ecclesiastical diplomats.

#### A GRAND NATIONAL.

But Reason and Divine Revelation are antitheses; competitors. Humans play for safety, "having a bit on both ways." One would naturally back the horse Reason, for a win, but we have Revelation for a place—in case . . . "You never can tell." Reason is a good sound horse, but a slow starter, and makes rather heavy going, whereas the old grey mare, Revelation is always a slippery animal. She gets off the mark, with almost a flying start every time, while her past racing career—a long succession of wins—makes her "the danger." W. M. HEWETSON.

(To be concluded.)

#### EINSTEIN ON DISARMAMENT.

As long as the possibility of war is not eliminated Youth will be educated in warlike traditions and a narrow national vanity will be cultivated with glorification of warlike sentiments. Hence disarmament cannot take place by easy stages, but must come in one swoop or not at all.

The realization of such a profound change in the life of the people pre-supposes tremendous moral effort—a deliberate turning away from age-old traditions. He who is not ready to leave the destiny of his country to the decision of an international court of arbitration is not earnestly determined to avoid war. The slogan must be all or nothing.

Disarmament and security are attainable only in combination with each other. Security is assured only by the acceptance of the obligation by all nations to abide by international decisions.

Whether we find the road to peace or follow the trail of brutal force remains for us to declare. On the one hand freedom of the individual and general security beckon; on the other is the threat of enslavement of the individual and destruction of our civilization. Our destiny will be what we deserve.

## More Wayside Pulpit Wisdom.

THE wisecracs who are responsible for the Wayside Pulpit notices displayed outside certain places of worship are still merrily broadcasting their maxims for all who pass to read and profit by.

A few recent examples may be of interest to readers of the *Freethinker* as showing how these gentry completely ignore the truth when it suits their purpose.

For instance:—

It is religion which brings harmony into the melody of life.

Can you beat that? The history of religion from the earliest times on record to the present day shows that, instead of harmony, religion has always brought discord and strife.

It has been responsible for more bloodshed than any other cause, and crimes unspeakable have been committed and justified in its name. Its advocates have opposed every democratic reform until the pressure of enlightened public opinion has become too strong for them, and they have made a virtue of necessity and withdrawn their opposition when it has become obvious that it was futile. See how the priestly class bring harmony into the lives of the people. In to-day's press I read the following:—

An edict issued by Mgr. Duparc, the Bishop of Quimper and Leon, forbade dancing. At Plenevez-Forzay the priest who was to officiate at a wedding kicked a hole in the big drum when he saw the guests preparing to dance.

The rector of St. Servais, who has banned football shorts, rebuked the players in his sermon last Sunday, as "filthy," and threatened to "bury them like doys" if they were victims of a fatal accident while at play.

At Loperhet the rector has advised the women of his congregation to compel their husbands to obey the bishop's edict by withdrawing marital relations and serving burnt meals.

(From *Daily Herald*, April 13, 1932.)

Harmony forsooth!

Another specimen of false statement which was displayed on the wayside pulpit a short time ago:—

To put alcohol into the human system is like putting sand into the bearings of machinery.

This is demonstrably untrue as thousands can testify from experience. In my own small family we have two members both over eighty years of age who, from youth up, have always taken alcoholic refreshment in moderation and enjoy good health. Had the above statement been true they could never have survived. It would be nearer the truth to say that to put alcohol into the human system is like putting extra lubricating oil into the bearings of machinery.

One day this gem appeared on the notice board:—

Religion is best understood when it is most practised.

How does one practise religion? I suppose a parson would say by attending Church regularly, but some good Christian friends of mine tell me I can only practice the Christian religion by carrying out the teachings of Christ. They do not specify which particular teachings, but presumably "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor," would be one of them. I have yet to meet a Christian, either professional or amateur, who has done this to achieve understanding. Or "Love one another" is surely a vital teaching of Christ, but get the leaders of the various denominations to meet together—you'll be lucky if you can—to discuss what brand of Christianity shall be taught in the day schools, and then stand back and watch how they show their love for one another. Not long ago, in the village where I lived, a new rector came to the church, and before he had been there many months he succeeded in creating enmity between the children who attended his Sunday school and those who went to the Nonconformist school. He openly stated "God is not at the chapel," and used to refer to the latter children as "Those horrible chapel urchins." Thus did Christ's chief representative in that village show his flock how to attain to an understanding of religion.

One chapel which I pass frequently adjoins the offices

of the Public Assistance Committee, and a few weeks after the first batch of unemployed were disallowed insurance benefit and forced to apply for relief to the P.A.C., this message was posted in large letters on the Wayside Pulpit:—

Be content with such things as ye have.

It may have been just a coincidence that such a notice should appear at that particular time and in that place, but it is significant that it was allowed to remain for several weeks, apparently as an exhortation to poor people who were obliged to pass it, on their way to apply for relief, whereas the usual procedure was to change the message every week.

Finally, to be topical I suppose, the other day the message ran:—

Bring out the fine gold of your faith, it was never worth more than it is to-day.

With which sentiment we can all agree. It never was worth more than it is to-day and never will be. It hinders clear thinking, it stultifies the use of human reason, it stands in the path of progress, it is, it always has been and always will be, worth PRECISELY NOTHING.

FRED HOBDAV.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR J. A. THOMSON AND LIFE.

SIR,—I do not know what Sir J. A. Thomson wrote in the other books referred to by Mr. Taylor. I was dealing with the one book *Scientific Riddles*. And in that book the statement that "living creatures were first made by divine fiat" is specifically accepted by him as a true answer to the question: *How did life begin?* and not to the question: *Why did life begin?* Whatever implication may be contained in the added phrase "but our present question is a scientific one," it cannot change the "how" of this question into a "why." So I still hold to my original comment that Sir J. A. Thomson provides a religious answer to a scientific question—in the sense in which he himself uses these terms.

In my view this added phrase is a piece of verbal jugglery intended to distract the reader's attention from the unsatisfactory nature of the "true" religious answer by implying that there can be (and are) two sorts of problem involved in the same question. This is what I call obscurantism. As for the so-called "religious" question: "Why did life begin?" this reminds me of nothing so much as the question: "Why is a bee when it sings?" Both questions are nonsensical. One might ask, with as little or as much sense: "Why did length begin?"

C. S. FRASER.

## FOOD AND POPULATION.

SIR,—I only got my last week's *Freethinker* yesterday, hence my failure to reply to Mr. Kerr. We are not vegetarians. Frankly, I know nothing of "calories." My dictionary defines a "calorie" as "a unit of heat sufficient to raise a kilogramme of water 1 degree centigrade." What that has to do with my cultivations I don't know; but there is a lot I don't know even at seventy-eight.

But I do know we get a living, keep an animal, to wit, a horse, pay £20 in rent and rates from one acre of land, and I still assert that the land could be made to produce twice as much as it does.

What is Mr. Kerr trying to prove?—that the country could not support itself? If so, I differ from him entirely. I know the country could produce all its essential food, and if properly organized and managed many of its luxuries. I think Sir Daniel Hall once stated something of the sort. Fifty years ago no one had thought of the country producing its own sugar, to-day it produces a lot of that commodity. There is enough waste land in nearly every village in the country to supply its (the village) inhabitants with bread.

D. DAWSON.

## SUNDAY CINEMAS.

SIR,—The Property Owners Protection Association is an organization for looking after the interests of owners of property, and I believe Cinema owners have organizations for protecting their interests, and it seems to me that this is chiefly a matter for their concern, and you appear to be fighting their battles for them!

At any rate when the Government Bill is passed the solution clearly lies with the Cinema Industry. Sabbatarian Cinema owners (if there are such) will keep their places closed on Sundays in any case, while if the rest are content to put themselves to the trouble of opening on Sundays for nothing that is surely their own business. Whether the Cinema is owned by a Limited Company, a firm or a single individual, it is obvious that there will be at least some trouble for them for which the local authorities will be empowered to prevent any chance of their getting anything at all. That for business people is a striking innovation that does not appear to have been considered! But if the Cinema owners won't stand that, then it is for them to strike against the Bill, *i.e.*, get together and agree to close on Sundays until they obtain justice. It is obviously in their power to defeat the Bill, and I suggest you should appeal to them and try to convince them that it is in their interests to strike against the Bill. I think that is the only way in which there lies any hope of getting any thing more that is wanted. The general public will get interested when they find they cannot go to a Cinema on Sundays because they are shut.

J. A. DAVIES.

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 Obituary.
 

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MR. J. E. Fysh.

We learn with the deepest regret of the death of Mr. J. E. Fysh, of Big Bay, Santo, New Hebrides. Mr. Fysh left Chester many years ago, and was, we understand the successful owner of a plantation there. While in this country he was a very active Freethinker, one who never hid his opinions, and never lost an opportunity of spreading the light. Even in such an out of the way place as the New Hebrides his enthusiasm for Freethought found many opportunities of spreading the light. He kept in touch with the movement through the *Freethinker*, and for years we received regular communications from him. We understand there were many attempts to convert him by English missionaries, and when these attempts were not crowned with success he found them up against him in business competition. He died as he had lived a staunch Freethinker, and his many friends in this country will learn of his death with regret. We are not able to furnish further particulars of his illness and death, but they may come to hand later. All his English friends will be pleased to learn what they can of one who commanded the esteem of all who knew him.—C.C.

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, H. S. Wishart—"Gods and Atheism; in English and Esperanto."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road and North End Road, Fulham): 7.30, Saturday, June 11, Mr. A. J. Mathie and Mr. E. T. Bryant. *Freethinkers* on sale.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.0, Sunday, June 12, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Monday, June 13, South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Mr. C. Tuson. Thursday, June 16, Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town): 7.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Wednesday, June 15, The Triangle (opposite "Heaton Arms," Rye Lane, Peckham): 8.0, Mr. C. Tuson. Friday, June 17, Camberwell Gate, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of London Road, High Road, Wembley): 8.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture—"Freethought and Freethinkers."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. H. S. Wishart—"Secular Happiness and Usefulness Against Christian Misery and Fear."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): Wednesday, June 8, at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Wood. Thursday, June 9, at 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin. Friday, June 10, at 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine. Sunday, June 12, at 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Bryant and Wood; Platform No. 2, Messrs. B. A. Le Maine and Tuson. 6.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Wood, Tuson and Bryant; Platform No. 2, Messrs. Hyatt and Saphin.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S. (Beresford Square): 7.45, Mr. S. Burke—A Lecture.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, A. Yusuf Ali, M.A.—"New Horizons in the Far West: Canadian Reflections."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

COLNE (Spring Lane): Monday, June 13, at 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, June 12, H. Little and J. V. Shortt. Tuesday, June 14, Edge Hill Lamp: 8.0, H. Little and P. Sherwin. Thursday, June 16, corner of High Park Street and Park Road: 8./, A. Jackson, D. Robinson and A. Wollen. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at all meetings.

NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market): 7.30, Sunday June 12, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

RAWTENSTALL.—Sunday, June 12, at 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 7.30, Saturday, June 11, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 7.30, Wednesday, June 15, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND: 7.30, Monday, June 13, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

WORSTHORNE.—Friday, June 10, at 7.45, Mr. J. Clayton.

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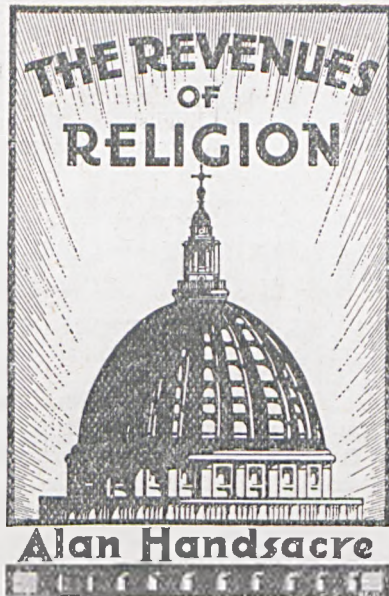
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